

# **An investigation into dictionary use by Saudi tertiary EFL students**

Submitted by

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## **Abstract**

The main purpose of this study was to investigate empirically the impacts of dictionary strategy instruction and exposure on the dictionary performance, perceptions of and attitudes towards dictionary use, and knowledge of dictionary strategy and use by tertiary students of English in Saudi Arabia.

Data were collected by means of questionnaires, interviews, observation and students interview feedback. The study was carried out in two phases; phase I, in which 14 participants were chosen to carry out the interviews, and in which the questionnaire was conducted on 77 male students in the preparatory year at the College of Applied Health Science of Qassim University in Saudi Arabia; and phase II where four participants were chosen to carry out the training in dictionary use through a one-to-one tutorial mode. The data in the second phase were collected through observation and students interview feedback.

The findings from phase I of the study indicated that the Saudi students did not have appropriate knowledge of their own dictionary. It revealed some instances of failing to take advantage of the potential of dictionary use for language learning and identified factors behind this ineffective use. It demonstrated how the teacher's role was essential in this respect and could directly influence the process of dictionary implementation inside the classroom

The results of phase II demonstrated that strategy training was effective in disseminating the knowledge and skills required of students in using their dictionaries to solve linguistic problems. More importantly, the results showed that the strategy training approach holds great potential for developing students' independence and that it moves them towards greater autonomy. Thus, it is recommended that training be provided to English language learners to optimise their use of this important tool. Finally, specific implications for both teaching and future research are identified.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the study

The dictionary is one of the most readily accessible, commonly used and least expensive learning resources (Wright, 1998, p. 5). It is a goldmine of information for language learners, providing them with knowledge about vocabulary ranging from meaning, pronunciation, parts of speech, collocation and structure to detailed information such as etymology and usage (Nakamura, 2000). Its role extends to supporting language learners in the comprehension and production of a text (Nation, 2001). With the recent revival of traditional interest in vocabulary (versus grammar) in applied linguistics (Davies, 2007), the dictionary has attracted a significant amount of attention. This revival was justified by Wilkins' (1972, p. 111) words, "*without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed*" (as cited in Thornbury, 2002); Schmitt (2010, p. 4) noted that this is consistent with the regular observation of language learners carrying dictionaries rather than grammar books. Therefore, one can say that the dictionary becomes essential in language learning due to its importance for, and association with, vocabulary learning in particular and language learning in general.

It was not until the 1960s that dictionary makers paid attention to dictionary users and took their needs into consideration, as at the Lexicography Conference held in 1960 at Indiana University (Josselin-Leray & Roberts, 2005). Householder (1967) noted the general concurrence among conference participants on the need to produce dictionaries that took into account the specific users for whom they were produced, and their needs (p. 279). The lexicographer, Barnhart, took an important step which was regarded as a milestone in the field because it lighted the path to further empirical research. According to Hartmann (2009, p. 207), Barnhart's influential questionnaire, published in 1962, contributed substantially to the removal of historical facts from general and learners' dictionaries, in favour of semantic and orthographic information (Hartmann, 2009, p. 207). Later, in 1979, Tomaszczyk led investigation into dictionary users and dictionary use.

Following in the steps of these pioneers, many studies have been performed in this area (Hulstijn & Atkins, 1998). These studies have shown a discrepancy between the role a dictionary can play and the approach language learners actually utilise in their language learning process; the dictionary is neglected by some language learners. Béjoint (1989, p. 208) argued that dictionaries are not used as intended by their compilers. In addition, significant numbers of language learners are unaware of the benefits that dictionaries offer. Even learners who are aware of their usefulness do not always put this awareness into practice. Moreover, some researchers have argued that a gap exists between the sophistication of the typical dictionary structure and the inadequacy of the reference skills of the average dictionary user (Lew & Galas, 2008). Béjoint (1989) argued that many dictionary users think of their dictionaries as infallible resources, to the extent that they make judgements about the existence vs. the non-existence of a lexical item in a language based on its inclusion in, or exclusion from, a dictionary.

Many teachers believe that the dictionary is a hindrance rather than a facilitator for language learners, especially those with low proficiency (Poulet, 1999, p. 78). In addition, teachers have been blamed for being ignorant of the actual dictionary use behaviour of their students. Barnes, Hunt and Powell (1999, p. 22) emphasised that *“many foreign language teachers appear to be unaware of how familiar their pupils are with English dictionaries”*. Tomaszczyk (1983, p. 46) criticised teachers because they discouraged their students from using bilingual dictionaries even though they themselves used them. He maintained that these teachers did not practice what they preached in terms of dictionary use. Scholfield (2002) claimed that language teachers had often considered dictionary use adversely, taking the perspective that it promotes laziness as learners should make the attempt to guess unknown words or that it distracts a class's attention from the teacher. He added that teachers regarded use of a bilingual dictionary negatively, in the belief that it leads learners to thinking in their mother tongue instead of in the target language.

The problems outlined above still exist today and underlie the motivation for the current study. Thus, this study focuses on dictionary use by a group of foreign learners (EFL) and the influence of the teachers in the way the student interacted with their dictionaries. It also attempts to explore the possibility of teaching dictionary skills to students through explicit teaching.

Thorough investigation of these problems uncovered further areas for examination, thus broadening the scope of the research. In addition, although dictionary production has witnessed a number of significant improvements, this progress has been insufficiently reinforced by comprehensive studies on dictionary use (Scholfield, 1997). Therefore, further research is required to move the pedagogical lexicography forwards (Hartmann, 1999). The trend in empirical studies that adopt novel and experimental techniques to broaden the cognizance of all aspects of dictionary use should continue (Hartmann, 2009). Thus, the current study is a result of the demand for further research in the dictionary use area.

## **1.2 Context of the study**

This section provides a brief description of the study context, which includes a short review of the Saudi education system and the College of Applied Health Sciences (CAHS)<sup>1</sup>, and explains the importance of the study to that context.

### **1.2.1 Administration and organization of the Saudi education system**

The education system in Saudi Arabia is primarily under the control of three authorities: the Ministry of Education (MOE), the Ministry of Higher Education and the General Organization for Technical Education and Vocational Training. Other authorities, such as the Ministry of Defence and Aviation, the Presidency of the National Guard and the Ministry of the Interior, have some responsibility to provide education for their staff and/or their children, consistent with Ministry of Education guidelines. The highest authority that supervises education in Saudi Arabia is the Supreme Committee for Educational Policy, established in 1963.

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<sup>1</sup> This became a part of Qassim University during 2010-2011.

When it comes to the organization of the years of study in Saudi schools, there are five divisions. The first four are: kindergarten for children from three to six years old, elementary (6-11), intermediate (12-15) and secondary level (16-18). The secondary stage is the final phase of general education in the Kingdom. This is regarded as the most important stage because students who succeed here become eligible to apply for universities and other higher education institutions. The fifth division, the university level, usually lasts four years depending on the subject studied. Saudi students are usually admitted to the next stage if they have obtained certification from the previous one. For example, students in the intermediate stage can be admitted to the secondary stage once they have obtained their intermediate stage certificate.

Similar to most Gulf countries, and due to religious considerations, Saudi students are segregated based on sex in all grades as well as separate sections in universities, though they study the same materials. Moreover, teachers are of the same sex as the students (with the exception of the College of Medicine).

### **1.2.2 English in Saudi Arabia**

English in Saudi Arabia is spoken as a foreign language. Kachru (1985) provided the concept of the three concentric circles of English language use, the “inner”, “outer” and “expanding” circles, which differ by *“the types of spread, the patterns of acquisition and the functional domains in which English is used across cultures and languages”* (p: 12). The “inner circle” consists of the traditional bases of English where English is the primary language of communication. This includes countries such as the USA, the UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The “outer circle” comprises countries which were former colonies of the UK or the USA where English has developed institutionalized functions. Countries such as India and Malaysia are good examples of this circle. The “expanding circle” includes the rest of the world, where the language is usually used in restricted contexts. English in this circle is used as a tool for international communication, and for specific purposes as

in business, diplomacy, travel and as a medium in higher education. Saudi Arabia belongs to this circle with other countries such as China and Egypt.

The problems of teaching and learning English language in Saudi Arabia have a particular feature. This is related to the fact that the role of English inside and outside Saudi educational institutions is rather limited in comparison with its place in Asian countries such as Malaysia, India and Pakistan. In the latter, English serves as a means of communication in international business. In the case of Saudi Arabia, English is used as a means of communication in only some places and in a more limited sense. Companies that deal commercially with industrialised countries often require their employees to have an advanced level in spoken and written English. They usually provide them with training courses where English is used as a medium of instruction.

It can be said that the local use of English is challenged by those who, motivated by fallacious religious arguments, air their resentment against English language and advocate replacing it with Arabic. However, the trend towards using English is evident in formal written communication in private, commercial and industrial sectors as well as in areas where English is used as a medium of instruction, for example in the medical and engineering departments of Saudi universities. The opposition to English language use has expanded to oppose English in the elementary school curriculum. Such opponents hold that students need to learn their mother tongue before learning foreign languages.

English language as a subject has been part of the curriculum in Saudi Arabia since 1972. Until recently, the teaching of English as a foreign language was practised from the first intermediate stage until university level. In 2002, it was also introduced from the sixth grade of primary school. Although English is taught for more than six years (from 7<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade), students usually leave school having achieved a rather poor standard. Al-Akloby found that Saudi students completed the high school stage with a very low vocabulary level after more than six years of English language education (cited in Algahtani, 2005). It may be that this situation continues up to university level.

At university, English is a compulsory foreign language subject for all non-major students, as follows. Students should complete an English course for general purposes during the first semester of the university entry year (known as preparatory year). Generally speaking, the course aims to equip learners with basic skills in English such as reading, writing and vocabulary development. Secondly, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses are taught to students in schools such as medicine, business administration and computer science. The aim of these courses is to improve learners' writing skills and to expand their vocabulary. They also aim to familiarise students with the terminology of their field. With regards to English majors, Saudi universities run various English major programmes leading to a Bachelor's degree in English language. This is an international English teacher/translator qualification.

In 2004, a new program entitled "SAY IT IN ENGLISH" was introduced at the intermediate stage. The curriculum was developed with special attention to Saudi society's cultural and moral demands. Despite the endeavours and plans of the MOE to produce modifications in the teaching materials as well as the curriculum level, the quality of English teaching remains low. This might be because of the fact that such adjustment in syllabus and teaching materials was not associated with a parallel change in assessment and examination methods. Moreover, these attempts did not deal with the programs of teacher preparation.

The Saudi English classroom remains a teacher-centred one. It can be said that the grammar translation instructional approach is used in most classes and that the formal teaching of grammar is still dominant in the classroom. Teachers in this context are thought of as the transmitters of knowledge who are empowered with the expertise to set goals, designate tasks and examine progress. In comparison, students are mostly passive recipients who are easily filled up with grammatical rules and vocabulary. The teacher in the Saudi context can be considered as the expert or master who knows the way to pass the final tests and obtain high marks. Obtaining a high rating is regarded as the ultimate goal of the learning process, not only by students but also by parents and teachers.

However, some recent studies conducted in the Saudi context have shown an increasingly positive stance towards English language learning, such as Alam et al. (1988), Abdulhaq & Sami (1996), Elyas (2008) and Al-Zahrani (2008). In these studies, Saudi students, teachers and parents showed overwhelmingly positive attitudes towards learning English for its social and instrumental gains. The majority of the respondents in the above studies recognized the international importance of English, indicating that English has global applications in business, education and communication. Moreover, English language in the Saudi context is becoming the medium of instruction in some universities. New fields in the polytechnic and science universities mandate the use of English language within communicative learning situations.

### **1.2.3 Cultural influences**

The behaviour of teachers and students in the classroom can help to understand the styles of interaction accepted in teaching situations in Saudi Arabia. Krasnick (1988) noted that, although cultural and interactional influences may not be obvious, this does not mean that they do not exist. Thus, it can be said that the role of the source of knowledge and information is assigned to Saudi teachers by tradition and cultural values. Therefore, it is important to shed light on the cultural influences that affect teacher and learner beliefs and interactions during the process of transmitting knowledge. The discussion below attempts to shed light on the influence of the teacher's role and authority, and the students' individualism and dependence.

#### **A. Authority**

This section on "authority" looks at how teachers are socialised and inducted into their roles as teachers, their responsibilities and rights as teachers, and the source of their beliefs and assumptions about the nature of classroom interaction.

Teachers are always in the role of class manager and are required to have power over classes. This authority has its impact on the students' learning behaviours. Looking at the manner of interaction in wider social settings, and traditional forms of

behaviour in Saudi society, can assist in understanding teachers' behaviour in the classroom.

Saudi society believes in a single voice or authority figure in the family, which is the father in most cases. Thus it makes the father a significant figure. Saudis are raised in a community that is more likely to believe in the importance of one voice and one responsible person in their lives. The general mode of interaction in Saudi society emphasizes the authority of the parent, elder brother, teacher, lecturer or any person who holds a high position in the family, e.g. grandparent, which is imposed on the young person at home or at school. Obedience and loyalty to authority figures is expected from individuals and is rated positively as a sign of good behaviour.

It can be said that the majority of Saudi parents consider their children as passive learners who should obey and learn from people older than themselves or who have authority over them. For example, parents are likely to be the ones who determine the student's academic choices. Furthermore, if pupils do not show progress at school, it is the parents who are held responsible, not their children. Similarly, if the children reveal achievements at school it is the parents who receive acknowledgment for this success (Al-Nafisah, 2001).

The teachers who are brought up in this community carry these norms into their classes. They are likely to be seen as the source of knowledge and that makes for teacher-centred classes; students are the obedient followers of their teachers who are the authority. With this view, teachers may directly or indirectly impact the attitudes, thoughts and emotions of their students. They may transfer knowledge to their students through their own learning styles and strategies, and recommend their students to use the assistive tools that the teachers themselves used to employ when they were students. It is uncommon for teachers explicitly to explain the importance of certain tasks to students, or to provide detailed information about why they recommend their students to purchase certain learning tools. Teachers in Saudi Arabia are provided with an authoritative book, the 'Teacher's Book' (Al-Ansari, 1995) where the guidelines and instructions are presented to them to follow. However, this leaves no space for teacher creativity.

It can be said that the hierarchy of authority in the Saudi community as a norm of life is reflected in the educational system where emphasis is given to passive reception rather than a communicative approach to learning. Students are likely to receive the information presented to them and rarely ask the reason for learning certain subjects (Al-Ansari, 1995) or why they need to possess specific supportive learning tools.

### **B. Individuality and improvement**

It is uncommon in Saudi culture for parents and teachers to acknowledge that each individual is unique (Al-Mandil, 1999). At home, children are expected to reproduce their father's ideas and opinions and to obey his authority. Consequently, when children go against family rules or opinions, they may suffer and be seen as badly behaved. In the school, classroom interaction is similar to home interaction. Students are not allowed to be independent or to create their own ways of learning; they are not allowed to interfere in the process of learning. Al-Osaimi (2001) explained that it is seen that, if learners interfere in the learning process, teachers may lose control of the class. Therefore, it is assumed that teachers follow their own style of transmitting knowledge, leaving students with no chance of participating in formulating their own learning. Teachers may repeatedly employ the same methods of transmitting knowledge to their students.

The independence of the learner to search for what suits their own style of learning is influenced by this view of their teachers. Similarly, it is influenced by the teachers' views of their students as receivers, rather than sharers, of knowledge during classroom practice. This cultural issue remains pertinent today because it is present in the home and school and in normal patterns of everyday interaction.

Teachers may not merely ignore their students' individuality but also interfere in their learning choices. For example, they may advise students to employ the methods or purchase the equipment that they used when they were students. Instead, it would be more appropriate for teachers to share their knowledge with their students and allow them to select an appropriate style for themselves as individuals. By imposing their way of learning on students, teachers are more likely to reinforce the lack of

individualism in learning which is commonly present in the Saudi community. This situation seems to perpetuate the familiar parental pattern of life rather than introduce varied styles of teaching.

Students lack the skills to appreciate the knowledge transferred to them. They do not know how to choose the most useful methods and tools to assist their learning because they merely follow their teacher's way of teaching. Again, in the Saudi language classroom, it is the teachers who take responsibility for evaluating learners' progress, as part of their assertion of authority and domination over the class. Thus, teaching students to assess and monitor their own learning is rare in Saudi schools. This lack of individualism, and the conception of students as inactive figures, prevents students from looking at themselves as active participants with teachers in the classroom setting.

It can be said that Saudi students consider that they should not dispute, discuss, negotiate, plan or monitor changes in themselves (Al-Mandil, 1999). Assisting students to observe changes, to review their success in learning and to be independent is not yet recognized as important in the Saudi context.

#### **1.2.4 LLSs inside the Saudi classroom**

The teacher in the Saudi context is an important person in the classroom. Students in Saudi Arabia in general, and at the university level in particular, have been studying in teacher-centred classrooms where teachers feed them all the information they need to know throughout the different courses. They are occasionally requested to do research or obtain the knowledge they need on their own. Students are assumed to be in a position where they lack the knowledge and the skills that would assist them to be independent learners. Therefore, it can be said that the approach used in teaching the language learning is usually teacher-centred. Many of the language learning tasks and activities which students carry out during English language classes are done with direct instructions from teachers. Thus, the teachers are considered the centre of the classroom, and they offer the spoon-feeding mode of teaching to their students throughout the whole year.

The authority of the teachers in the Saudi context as discussed above implies that the language is learnt through the teachers. Moreover, some of the teachers may consider

themselves as knowledge transmitters where they simply pass the language on to the students. For example, if the students learnt all the new vocabulary from the teacher, then they would acquire the language. This may encourage more of the teacher-centred classroom, in which the teacher is the only source of knowledge, and has the power to manage and evaluate the learning process.

The lack of teaching language learning strategies to the Saudi students inside the classroom may lead to more dependent learners. It was found that Saudi students are taught to memorize information throughout their schooling, beginning in elementary school (Al-Mohanna, 2010; Rugh, 2002). Inside classrooms that encourage memorization, the teacher's role is quite clear: the teacher dominates, decides what students should learn and is seen as the only source of information. There is no attempt made to engage the student in any interaction with the teacher or other students. To reduce dependence on memorization, students need to actively engage with the material through the learning strategies that impose more emphasis on the students' role in the learning process.

Al-Mohanna (2010) stated that students learning English in secondary schools in Saudi Arabia were mainly exposed to the Grammar Translation Method and the Audiolingual Method. Both of these methods allow limited role to the students and focus on memorization and repetition. The study shows as well, that most of the teaching was teacher-centered and students were given little or no opportunity to communicate and apply any of the LLSs. Other studies also indicate that students in Saudi Arabia are not given enough opportunities to develop problem-solving skills, communicative skills to use their creativity (AlMunajjed, 2010; Rugh, 2002). Al-Mohanna (2010) who attempted to explore the background of teachers to see if they had been exposed to communicative ways of learning noted that teachers study only four courses that directly related to teaching methodology in the education colleges. However, LLSs training were ignored. He said that given the fact that new teachers lacked the opportunities to be exposed to new ways of teaching during their college study, they were likely to teach in the same way that they were taught.

The lecture format remains to be the dominant mode in Saudi educational settings which may indicate to the fact that the students in the English language classroom

are not taught the LLSs that allow them to be more autonomous and self-directed learners. Luckey argues that teachers need to modify their teaching methods and not to depend on the lecture as the method of instruction (as cited in Fasko, 2003). Teachers should teach techniques and strategies that create real learning situations allowing students to learn the language by applying their own learning strategies. Unfortunately, in the Saudi context the LLSs do not weigh much in the classroom learning. This could make the student heavy reliant on their teachers when practicing the language. In these classrooms, students are not provided with opportunities to learn in ways that are useful to them, while the teacher plays the role of the facilitator.

It was found that the teachers in Saudi Arabia usually offer students with ready information as if they were containers need to be filled. So, it is seems true to say that learners rely totally on their teachers to learn from them. As this study investigates the dictionaries use strategies which are a sub-category of vocabulary learning strategies, I will briefly review some of the studies' findings about the teaching of the vocabulary learning strategies inside the Saudi classroom. Alqahtani (2005) found that VLSs have little or no space in English language teaching in the Saudi Arabia. Arishi (2004) argued that Saudi EFL disregard using their dictionaries inside the classroom due to the lack of encouragement from their teachers. Thus, teacher need to be taught and trained the VLSs and familiarized with their purpose and importance in the language learning process. Al-Akloby suggested that *“well-planned in-service training programme for teachers should be established. The occasional one, two or three, day refresher programmes are not enough”* (2001. P:253).

To sum up, it seems from this presentation of the status of EFL teaching in Saudi Arabia that LLS is still the overlooked or neglected in the public learning schools and university level. However, there is hope that curriculum designers and university organizers of EL programmes in Saudi Arabia might start to realize the important role LLSs plays in promoting the overall language proficiency. Then they would go up to deal with the current trend calling for paying much attention to teaching and developing. It is thought that this study might be a step forward to opening new

avenues towards knowing and managing one important dimension that hinders the success of proper EFL teaching in Saudi context, namely the absence of vocabulary learning strategies from the EFL teaching practice.

### **1.2.5 College of Applied Health Sciences**

The College was established under the name of College of Health Sciences for Boys and started admitting students at the beginning of the academic year 1994-1995. The degree awarded was a medium bachelor degree in a number of health disciplines such as nursing, anaesthesia, nutrition, laboratory work, dental assistant and pharmacy. During the academic year 2009 - 2010 the College was transferred from the Ministry of Health to the University of Qassim and restructured as the College of Applied Health Sciences (CAHS). Under the restructuring, the College now provides BSc degrees in the following subjects: Clinical Nutrition, Diagnostic Radiology, Medical Devices, Oral and Dental Health and Dental Technology. Students were accepted in the preparatory year during the academic year 2009 - 2010 and would be joining their selected courses according to the new structure at beginning of the academic year 2010-2011.

The programmes in the College are structured to consist of eight academic semesters in addition to the preparatory year. The preparatory year comprises two semesters. Students follow elective courses from the third semester onwards, the specialist stage. In addition to other academic subjects such as biology and physiology, English is taught intensively for 22 hours per week in the preparatory year. This English course covers the four language skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking.

The course aims to equip the students with the language skills that will help them to use English. However, instruction in dictionary use in the course curriculum is relatively poor. Students need to pass an examination in all subjects at the end of the preparatory year before proceeding to the specialist stage. After the intensive phase of language learning in the first and second semesters, all modules in speciality departments are taught in English. In all College departments, students initially learn the theoretical concepts for seven semesters before they carry out their practical work in the final semester.

The English Department is responsible for teaching the materials chosen by the university. The teachers in the Department are all non-native English speakers, originating mainly from Saudi Arabia or other Arab countries such as Egypt or Jordan, with some from India or Pakistan. All of them are qualified teachers of English and have long experience in teaching English to foreign students in different countries including Egypt, Oman, Jordan, India and Saudi Arabia. They have worked in teaching English language in Saudi Arabia for several years. They have all completed a master's degree in an area relevant to teaching English to foreign speakers.

The students are not provided with any courses related to strategies of dictionary use or even strategies of language learning. However, they may refer to their dictionary either in class or at home. They probably resort to their dictionaries when doing an assignment at home. The students are encouraged to obtain a dictionary at the beginning of their course in the college.

In the Saudi education system, vocabulary is taught using the audio-lingual and translation methods from the very early stages. Teachers provide students with word lists in almost every English class and explain these words to the students, usually in isolation or out of context. It seems that teachers are only interested in rote learning of words; new methods, such as communicative approaches, are never tried by the teachers (Abu-Ras, 2002; Bakarman, 2004). Students are expected to learn and memorize the new words in the next class. The teaching of vocabulary lasts through the few first semesters at university level where it becomes integrated with other skills like reading, writing and listening.

Dictionary use is not supported by the curriculum. English teachers in public schools do not allocate the space needed for dictionary use during lessons. This ignorance of dictionary use may be attributed to time constraints, as it seems very difficult for the teachers to squeeze dictionary skills into 45 minute lessons. Thus students reach university level with no prior knowledge of the dictionary or how to use it to obtain the meanings of words.

In the CAHS, students have to buy textbooks for the taught courses and, in addition, they are recommended to buy an English-English-Arabic dictionary. English language at this level presents severe problems for the majority of students, who experience a disjuncture between the levels of English language in school and in the College. Therefore, students follow the teachers' recommendation and buy the dictionary. However, the teaching of dictionary use remains inadequate. Based on my experience, I saw how dictionary use was neglected by the teachers in the College, which negates the value of buying the dictionary in the first place. It is important to say that students put their trust in the teachers' advice, expecting that they would be encouraged by the teachers to regularly use the dictionary in classes.

In conclusion, this section has provided a brief description of the context of this study, including the Saudi education system, the status of English in Saudi Arabia, and the CAHS.

### **1.3 Purpose of the study**

The main impulse driving this research was to assist students of English in Saudi Arabia learn how to go about using an English-Arabic dictionary and how to overcome their problems with encountering unknown words in English. Therefore, this study planned to design dictionary training instructional sessions based upon strategy instruction and to probe its effects on developing knowledge of dictionary use among students of English. To achieve this goal, the study was carried out in two main phases: each of which had its aims, instruments and procedures. Phase I, which was of an exploratory nature, was performed to reveal a number of issues that were assumed to be essential for the second phase. The phase I findings would be used as direction key points for phase II in deciding on the strategies to be included in the dictionary strategy instruction course, as well as to match these strategies with the students' problems with the dictionary. Furthermore, phase I aimed to provide insights into the students' personal knowledge and their use of the dictionary.

Based on the results from phase I, dictionary strategy instruction sessions were planned to be used in phase II, which aimed at looking at the consequences of

dictionary strategy training on students' performance and on their attitudes towards dictionary use. It also tried to examine the effects of this training on students' knowledge and use of strategy, as well as on their perceived value of the use of strategy. It is anticipated that studying the effects of the strategy training sessions would have methodological as well as pedagogical implications.

#### **1.4 Research questions**

The current study aims to answer five research questions:

What knowledge do Saudi students have about their dictionaries?

What attitudes do Saudi students have towards their dictionaries?

What difficulties do Saudi students encounter when using the dictionary?

What factors affect Saudi students' use of the dictionary?

What are Saudi students' perceptions of the training in dictionary use?

#### **1.5 Importance of dictionary use research**

The increased significance of English as an international language has led to a rapid development in the use of dictionaries over the past years. This growth reflects the demand for learners' dictionaries in English as a foreign language (EFL) and English as a second language (ESL) in learning settings across the world. Many EFL learners see dictionaries to be beneficial in learning English, and dictionary use is fairly common in many countries and probably necessary in language learning (Huang, 2003). Dictionaries are among the most significant resources for knowledge of languages. They play a critical role in both native language acquisition and foreign language learning (Li, 1998). Furthermore, dictionaries of different types are considered indispensable tools in language use for a variety of purposes (e.g. reading, writing and translating) (Violet, 2003). Dictionaries are valuable not only to foreign learners, but also to non-native speaker teachers of languages in addressing their teaching and language needs.

Although dictionary use has been neglected in research, the situation is gradually changing as more attention is being given to new types of learners' dictionaries. This has accompanied the recognition that lexical knowledge is a central element across the whole spectrum of second language activities. Over the last two decades,

developments in lexicography have been directed at improving the image of dictionaries within the sphere of language teaching (Tono, 2001). Carter (1988) indicated that the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (LDOCE) and the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English (OALD) have impacted significantly on the advances in the design of dictionaries for non-native learners of English. In 1995, three major English monolingual learners' dictionaries, LDOCE, OALD, and the Collins COBUILD English Dictionary (COBUILD), were revised and a fourth dictionary, the Cambridge International Dictionary for English (CIDE) was published; these dictionaries were dominated by the computer and related knowledge. Consequently, learners' dictionaries began to flourish, striving for successful communication in terms of different learning purposes, different learning styles and different levels of attainment (Li, 1998). With regards to dictionary research, Hartmann (2001) categorized it as: "*dictionary history, dictionary criticism, dictionary structure, dictionary typology, dictionary use and others*". The present study is intended to investigate dictionary use.

Although most dictionaries are still in traditional paper format, a new development is their computerized descendants. Pocket versions, desk-top versions and online versions are all available, but their use has not been thoroughly examined. In the present study, the use of all these dictionary types is investigated with regards to ownership, attitude and success in use. Béjoint (1994:2) stated that "*whatever the dictionary of the future will be like, there is still ample room for improvement, and the metalexigrapher is in no danger of being unemployed: there is still much that has been to be done in order to adapt the dictionary to its users and different uses*".

Since the 1970s, researchers and lexicographers have focused not only on dictionary design but also on users' needs and expectations (Hartmann, 1989). Researchers have realized that there is great value in considering the way in which language is described and presented in dictionaries. Moreover, Stein (1984, cited in Battenburg, 1991) proposed that no account of dictionaries is comprehensive without noting user needs, expectations and biases. In addition, some researchers have advised EFL lexicographers to devote more attention to assisting understanding of the second language (L2) than to providing the "*kinds of information for which the vast majority*

*of users have no need” (Jackson, 1988, p.198). Determining and meeting users’ needs has become a significant issue in lexicographic work. Ilson (1985, p. 4) stated that “dictionaries have in the past been considered simply as systems of information storage. Too little attention has been devoted to the problem of information retrieval. Do people know what is in dictionaries? Can they find it? And if they find it, can they use it?”*

Although the initial concentration was only on dictionaries themselves and how to develop them, increasing attention in pedagogical lexicography and the important role of such dictionaries in language learning, plus increased attention and interest in research into the process of language learning and use, autonomy and strategies, have led to a number of empirical studies of dictionary use (Atkins, 1997; Tono, 2001). There has been much work on creating scientific principles and rules for dictionary assessment and some research on dictionary use and users. However, there has still been far less investigation on dictionary use in language learning than of L2 vocabulary learning in general, despite the recent boom in publications in this area. Even though it may be on the increase, good research is still rare and often centred on highly specific aspects of dictionary use, so that no clear overall picture has emerged. However, more effort is now dedicated to studying various aspects of the dictionary associated with the process of vocabulary learning and productive and receptive skills (Tono, 2001:2).

As mentioned earlier, in the last few years, an interest in dictionary users has appeared. Research has been conducted to examine users’ difficulties and needs with regards to consulting dictionaries and look-up strategies, but this research has been limited; for example, issues such as dictionary training have not been explored in dictionary research. Investigating users’ interaction with dictionaries is necessary because their opinions and difficulties highlight how dictionaries can be better created and more effectively adapted for language use. These days, specialists in different language-related fields are researching the types of dictionaries and their uses by various groups of learners. Therefore, different studies have studied dictionary use by language learners, as reviewed in Chapter Two (e.g. Tomaszczyk, 1979; Béjoint, 1981; Baxter, 1980; Hartmann, 1983, 1999; Iqbal, 1987; Al-Ajmi,

1992; Li, 1998; Papanikolaou, 2003; Lew, 2004; Almuzainy, 2005). Some of these researchers were concerned with only one type of dictionary, the monolingual dictionary, as in Battenburg (1991) and Béjoint (1981), or the bilingualised dictionary, as in Fan (2000). The present study investigates all types of dictionaries in terms of language included (bilingual, monolingual and bilingualised) and in terms of medium (paper dictionary, hand-held electronic dictionary, online dictionary, CD-ROM dictionary).

The present study also investigates detailed student-dictionary interactions and how often dictionaries are used. Moreover, most previous studies into dictionary use have relied exclusively on the questionnaire, but in this study three instruments (questionnaire, interview, observation and interview feedback) are used to help in gaining valuable and reliable information.

### **1.6 The situation of dictionary use in Saudi Arabia**

Based on my own experience, the dictionary does not have a space inside the English classes in Saudi Arabia. This is because nothing is mentioned about using the dictionary as a support in teaching English in the formal objectives of teaching English to Saudi students. Therefore, the dictionary use inside the classroom occurs according to the teachers' judgement. However, a number of Saudi learners of English take the lead in using their English dictionaries, but only a fraction of them carry the dictionary to class. This is an alarming aspect of the learning process because students may need the dictionary in class to complete their learning, which cannot be accomplished by relying exclusively on the teacher (Arishi, 2004).

Arishi (2004) claimed that Saudi learners of English ignore using their dictionaries in class. There are several causes for this, chief of which is lack of encouragement from teachers. Students still need the teacher to tutor them in using the dictionary. I think that when learners realise that their teachers do not require them to carry dictionaries to class, they will not use them. Good teachers not only support students in using the dictionary but also persuade them of the advantages of this learning aid. Nowadays, few English students in Saudi Arabia are likely to understand the effectiveness of the dictionary in learning English because they still consider learning English through

their teachers. However, they should not be blamed for this deficiency because they are not instructed and guided to the effectiveness of using the dictionary in learning English.

It can be said that the formal educational aims of the English curriculum have nothing regarding the English dictionary and that it should be employed by Saudi EFL. Therefore, dictionaries do not figure much in class. However, this does not necessarily imply that there is no dictionary use outside of class.

### **1.7 Significance of the study**

It is expected that this research will lead to a considerable variety of theoretical and practical applications in the field of L2 learning. It is significant for the potentially important contributions it could make to the field of ELT in terms of the following interrelated areas: language learning, dictionary use instruction and research in dictionary use strategy teaching. The study's contribution to the area of language learning may be categorised as follows:

#### **A. Language learning**

In terms of its contribution to language learning, this study may give insights for teachers about the need to abandon the view that learners are containers to be filled up with facts and to embrace the view that learners are sharers in the language learning/teaching process. There is a need to improve students' perceptions of their abilities and responsibilities as learners, identifying the causes of their achievements and failures in studying the English language.

The present study could highlight learners' beliefs and knowledge about factors affecting their own learning processes, either positively or negatively. It could also raise the issue of giving learners the opportunity to understand their own capabilities and to recognise their own learning styles.

This research could underline the significance of training students to use alternative language learning strategies apart from their accustomed ones. It could modify the learning process to become more learner-centred and move away from the widespread teacher-centred approach used in educational settings in the Middle East.

### **B. Instruction in dictionary use**

In terms of the prospective implications this study may have for instruction in dictionary use, it is hoped that the results will initiate an attempt to promote dictionary teaching in various EFL contexts, including Saudi Arabia, by raising EFL teachers' awareness of the importance of giving dictionaries due attention in the classroom. The study findings could be significant for other EFL contexts, promoting the inclusion of dictionary strategies training in programmes for preparing English teachers, as well as including how to teach and how to assess dictionary strategies as part of teaching methodology programmes.

The study may stimulate teachers of English working in EFL contexts to raise their students' awareness of the dictionary as a supportive tool which good learners use to achieve better comprehension of English. The study may also highlight the need to alter conceptions such as the assumption of student dependency on the teacher, and that of the teacher as authority figure, which many students adhere to due to their long exposure to teacher-centred approaches.

### **C. Research in dictionary and strategy instruction**

It is hoped that the study will contribute to improving the understanding of dictionary training which is an area that is under-investigated in the Saudi context. It should complement the growing literature of research into dictionary use strategies in general and in dictionary use strategies instruction in particular.

The study may, along with other studies that have demonstrated the positive effects of strategy training on dictionary use (e.g. Chi, 2003; Lew and Galas, 2008), reinforce claims for more attention to dictionary use training.

The study may establish an example of using a multi-dimensional approach in data collection and data analysis in dictionary use strategies training where many of the previous studies in this area adopted the scientific pre- and post-test mode. The current study creates the foundation for further research in dictionary strategies instruction in terms of using a mixed method approach that requires mixing

quantitative and qualitative modes of inquiry and making use of triangulation between methods.

### **1.7.1 Significance of the study for Saudi Arabia**

It is hoped that this research could lead to a variety of applied and theoretical outcomes in the field of L2 in Saudi Arabia.

This study is essential for Saudi students and EFL teaching in Saudi Arabia for several reasons. First, English started to gain its status in Saudi Arabia and it comes after Arabic. It is also the medium of instruction in certain tertiary academic fields and is a compulsory subject in intermediate and secondary schools. Passing English is a prerequisite for students to move from one grade to another. Therefore, it is true to say that all research on learning English in Saudi Arabia is necessary.

Second, this study is necessary for Saudi dictionary users because the dictionary use research for Saudi learners is still scarce. Additionally, it is unlikely to rely on the results from studies carried out in other countries because each context has its own features. For example, European languages tend to share cognates with English, while languages such as Arabic have few. Moreover, the linguistics needs varies according the groups of learners, behaviour and attitudes and thus studies of dictionaries should be conducted with particular attention to specific social and cultural features.

Third, this study may also have important pedagogical implications. Despite their importance for L2 learning, dictionary skills do not have enough space in many classrooms in Saudi Arabia and are left to individual learners. Moreover, the teachers' attempts to transfer dictionary use to the students are more likely to be built on personal experience or intuition. This is probably because there has been no empirical research on dictionary use for Saudi learners on which teachers can build their teaching. The findings from this study should present teachers with insights into students' dictionary use and provide the basic information required to improve the ways that teachers train their students in dictionary skills.

## 1.8 Definition of terms

Terms used throughout this research are defined below to explain how they are used in this study. They are listed in alphabetical order for quick reference.

**Bilingualised dictionary:** The bilingualised dictionary has hybrid features of the monolingual dictionary for native speakers and the traditional bilingual learner's dictionary for foreign language learners (Hartmann, 1992, 1994). It reflects "*the results of an adaptation of unilingual and monolingual English learners' dictionaries which have all or part of their entries translated into the mother tongue of the learner*" (ibid.). The bilingualised dictionary was defined by Laufer (1997.p. 361) as "*a dictionary that contains the monolingual information about a word and its translation in the learner's mother tongue*". If the target English word has several meanings, each meaning is translated.

**Dictionary:** This is a record of words, usually alphabetically listed, in a specific language with definitions, etymologies, pronunciations and other information; or a record of alphabetically listed words in one language with their equivalents in another.

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language means that the language being learned is not that which is spoken in the community in which it is being learned (Cohen 1998).

**ESL:** English as a Second Language refers to where "*the language being learned is that which is spoken in the community in which it is being learned*" (Cohen 1998: 4).

**L1:** is the native language of the learners.

**L2:** is the second language learned or taught.

**Language Learning Strategy:** Language learning strategy (LLS) is defined as a behavioural or mental action performed by learners consciously or subconsciously to develop their language learning and for other purposes, such as to make learning easier, faster (Alqahtani, 2005).

**Look-up strategy:** A look-up strategy is “*a systematic application of certain skills to retrieve the meaning of a word during the process of dictionary consultation*” (Scholfield, 1982:185). More accurately, a look-up strategy is “*those mental operations and decisions made by users in the process of consultation, from the selection of the relevant reference work, through the appropriate search and retrieval acts, to integration of the information obtained with original reference needs*” (Hartmann & James, 1998:152).

**Strategy:** a strategy is “*a plan of action or policy designed to achieve a major or overall aim*” (the New Oxford Dictionary of English, 1998: 1837). A more accepted sense of a strategy in the context of applied linguistics is associated with compensation and focuses on the learner’s ability to communicate despite inadequate linguistic knowledge or performance difficulties (McDonough, 1995).

**Vocabulary Learning Strategies:** Vocabulary learning strategies (VLSs) are a subcategory of LLSs used by learners to assist and facilitate the learning process associated with vocabulary items.

## **1.6 Organisation of the thesis**

This thesis is organised into six chapters. Chapter One describes the background of the study, the importance of learner dictionary research, the significance of the study for SA, the definition of terms and the organisation of the thesis. Chapter Two reviews the literature pertaining to learner dictionary use. It covers LLSs, their definition and taxonomies, and VLSs, a branch of LLSs. The chapter also contains sections that cover factors affecting dictionary use (e.g. ownership of dictionary, involvement of the teacher, difficulties students face when using their dictionaries, training in dictionary use). It also includes a review of selected key studies in dictionary use research. In addition, it includes a review of the development of the method used in dictionary use research. In Chapter Three, the design and method of the empirical part of the study are shown. The chapter provides information about the procedure for data collection, the participants, the materials used, statistical tests used for analysis and the analysis of dictionary training data. Chapter Four presents

the results obtained from the quantitative data (questionnaire) supported by interview data. There is space to show the results of the data gained in tutorial sessions. Chapter Five consists of discussion of the findings of the data analysis of the two phases of the study. Chapter Six contains a summary of the main findings from all the instruments together and a summary of the results of the research questions, the overall contribution of the thesis, limitations of the study, recommendations for further research and implications for L2 teaching.

### **1.9 Summary of the chapter**

This chapter aimed to familiarise the reader with the background of the study, its problem, purpose and significance. It highlighted the need for the current study on dictionary use research among Saudi EFL students. As shown throughout this chapter, little attention is given to dictionary instruction in the wider ELT context and almost no space is given for dictionary instruction at all in the Saudi context either at the pre-university stage or in the tertiary level, though a number of previous studies in dictionary research have acknowledged its vital role in the language learning process, and that it needs systematic instruction. The aims, research questions and significance of the current study were then highlighted.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of the literature related to this study. The chapter is divided into three main sections: review of the literature on language learning strategies (LLSs), its definitions and classifications, and the role of the dictionary in vocabulary acquisition. The chapter also covers issues related to dictionary use (e.g. ownership of dictionary, involvement of teachers, difficulties faced by students when utilizing their dictionaries, training on dictionary use). Finally it presents a review of selected key studies in dictionary use research. It discusses the analysis of research methods used in previous dictionary use research

#### 2.2 Theoretical framework

This study was intended to investigate the effectiveness of teaching dictionary use strategies, which are a subclass of vocabulary learning strategies, for English language learners at the College of Applied Health Sciences, Qassim University, Saudi Arabia. Its primary goal was to create avenues for instigating dictionary strategies training and reflecting upon the changes this kind of implementation may bring about in students' knowledge and use of the dictionary. The relationship in teaching learning strategies lies among the teacher, the learner, and the learning environment where the learning process occurs. Psychologists and language researchers have presented this kind of learning-teaching relationship process in different frameworks (e.g. Wenden, 1987; Williams & Burden, 1997; Cohen, 2001).

Williams and Burden's framework is known as the Social Constructivist Model (SCM) and consists of four factors: teachers, learners, tasks and contexts. The main theme of this model is that the learning process occurs through the interaction between teacher and learner while accomplishing a specific task or activity within a particular social context (learning environment). The four factors are linked; they interact in an ongoing process. The teacher establishes the task, which reflects what he or she believes about teaching and the learning process (Williams & Burden, 1997). The learner then understands the task in a way that is meaningful and suitable

to his or her personal life. The task becomes the link between teacher and learner. The context in which this relationship occurs will shape ‘what happens within it’ (Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 44).

By comparing this model to previous work presented by earlier psychologists such as Vygotsky, one can notice that Vygotsky’s theory (Sociocultural Theory) resembles the social constructivist theory in the idea of learning from interaction between people. Vygotsky believed that learning occurs through communication among society members. This kind of interaction entails people’s social and cultural characteristics that shape their learning process. One of the sociocultural concepts is the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which can be defined as:

*“The difference between the child's developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the higher level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers.”* (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86)

The ZPD refers to the gap between what *“the learner is currently capable of”* (Williams & Burden, 1997: 40) and what the learner can accomplish with the help of others (teachers, parents or peers). In other words, proper instruction can raise the learner’s ability to solve problems and build knowledge through the ZPD.

The current study adopted the works of Vygotsky and Williams and Burden to formulate a theoretical framework that emphasizes the importance of the teacher’s role in the learning process and the interaction between the guide and learner and their task within their sociocultural context (environment or studying setting) (see Figure 2.1). The teacher plays the role of the mediator who can select and present activities that will assist learners to learn and understand how to use the dictionary. The cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies for using the dictionary can be shared with the receiver (the learner) during lessons. The ways in which teachers structure learning activities could reflect their opinions and beliefs about the language learning process in general and dictionary use in particular. Learner reaction to the teacher is

influenced by the feeling that the teacher wants to convey. The changes teachers make to the tasks (activities) by implementing dictionary use strategies affect the learner and his techniques for solving learning problems and facilitating the learning process (Williams & Burden, 1997). Students' learning progress is likely to be affected by their social and cultural beliefs that reflect their schemata about the information to be learnt.

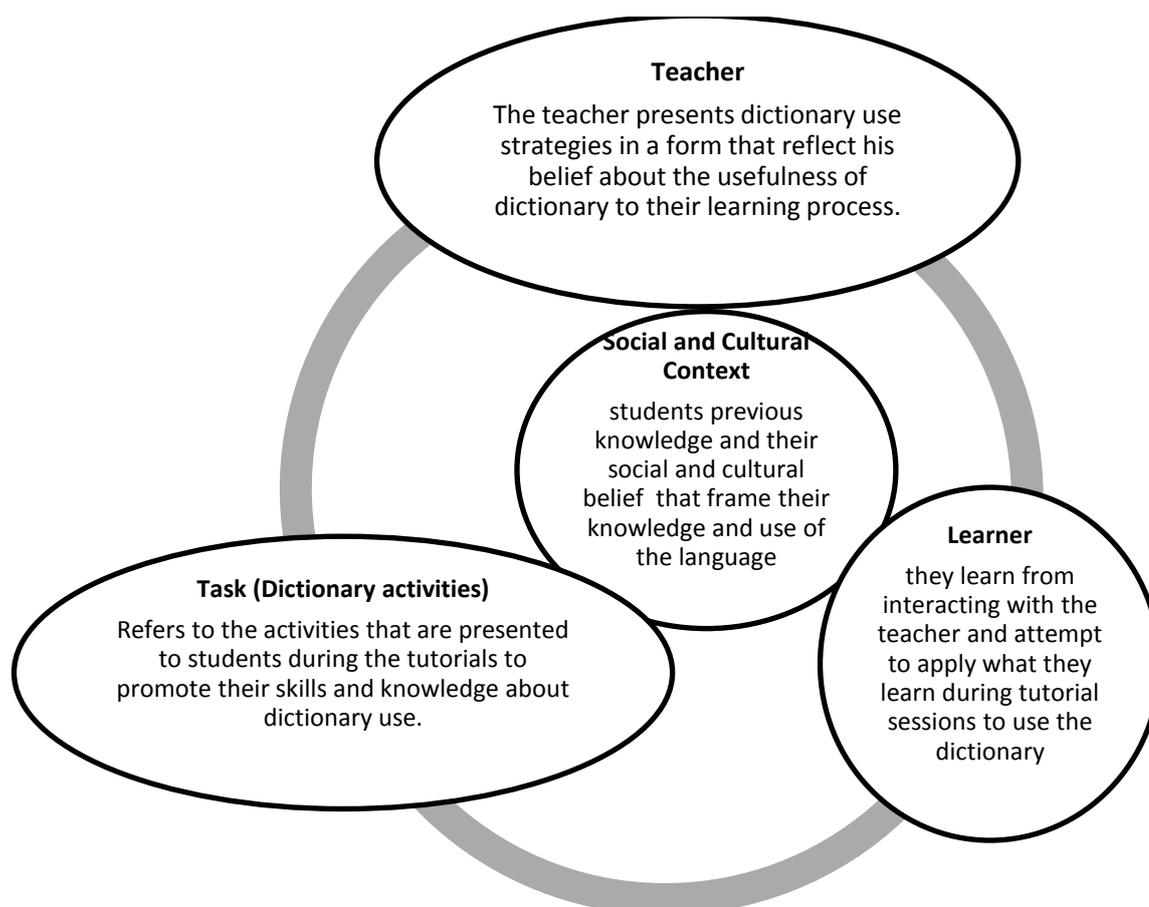


Figure 2.1: Theoretical framework for the four aspects of the study (based on Williams and Burden, 1997)

### 2.3 Language learning strategies (LLS)

The importance of study techniques is becoming generally acknowledged following a gradual but considerable shift over the last few years in teaching and learning research that has led to less emphasis on teachers and teaching and greater attention to learners. In other words, parallel with the progress of learner-centred, self-directed communicative approaches to teaching, second language research efforts have

gradually been devoted to learning strategies used by L2 learners (Wenden & Rubin, 1987; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). As a result of this change, the literature on learning strategies in second language acquisition (SLA) emerged from concern over identifying the characteristics of effective learners, as detailed by O'Malley and Chamot (1990). They called effective learners 'good language learners'; see also Green (1995). A list of characteristics of good language learners was created; it included taking advantage of practice opportunities, accurately guessing, handling emotional issues in language learning and consciously developing the L2 as a meaning and structure system, among other suggestions, as reported by Naiman et al. (1978), Rubin (1975) and Stem (1983). Furthermore, according to diary research by Lavine and Oxford, cited in Green (1995), effective L2 learners are conscious of the strategies they employ and why they use them. Such learners can tailor their strategies to language tasks and to their own linguistics needs as learners. In contrast, learners who are less successful at language learning are likewise capable of detecting their own strategies, but they do not recognize how to select the most suitable strategy or how to link strategies together into a useful 'strategy chain' (Block, 1986; Vann & Abraham, 1990). LLSs are substantial because research has suggested that training students to use LLSs can assist them become successful language learners. LLSs allow students to obtain a large measure of responsibility and to propel their own improvement in developing L2 skills. LLSs encompass a wide range of behaviours that can contribute to the expansion of language proficiency in many ways. Many studies (such as McGroarty, 1987; Vann and Abraham, 1990) have revealed the relationship between language proficiency and language learning strategies. MacIntyre (1994) highlighted that strategies are outcomes from and causes to increased proficiency. According to Chamot & Kupper (1989), it appears that language learners use some particular types of language learning strategies to a certain level, but there are distinctions in the regularity and preference of use among different learners. Oxford (1990) said that successful language learners are capable of choosing and combining certain kinds of language learning strategies into efficient methods according to their own needs (Oxford, 1990). Thus, LLSs are considered to be the key to facilitate the learners' language learning and to promote their autonomy. They are also important because learners need to continue learning even when they are no longer in a formal classroom setting

(Crookall, 1988, cited in Oxford, 1989). They also assist students to integrate new information into their mental schemata.

### 2.3.1 Definition and features of learning strategies

Before reviewing the dictionary use related literature, it seems pertinent to shed light on what LLSs are. Thus, this part of the current chapter is devoted to giving a detailed description of LLSs' definitions and classifications. Then it presents the classification of vocabulary learning strategies (VLSs), followed by the dictionary use strategies.

LLSs have been the interest of many researchers as being a key factor in facilitating and assisting language learning. However, there has been a lack of agreement on what a 'learning strategy' pertains to, and this was underlined by those who are intrigued with language learning strategies. In this respect, researchers have provided us with a number of definitions of the word 'strategy' which are difficult to understand and sometimes lead to the confusion of the reader.

First, there are various views as to the difference between learner strategies and learning strategies. Wenden and Rubin (1987) used 'learner strategies' in the title of their book, whereas Rubin (1987) provided her own definition of 'learning strategies' in her article. On the other hand, O'Malley and Chamot (1990), Oxford (1990) and Cohen (1990) referred to 'learning strategies' in their books. Therefore, one can argue that learner and learning are distinct. However, strategies are used in the literature without making a clear distinction between the terms.

Second, in addition to the distinct terms used by the researchers, there seems to be a difference between micro-strategies and tactics, on the one hand, and macro-strategies on the other (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991, cited in Cohen, 1998: 10). Wenden (1987: 7) reviewed these researchers' efforts as follows: "*strategies have been referred to as 'techniques', 'tactics', 'potentially conscious plans', 'consciously employed operation', 'learning skills', 'cognitive ability', 'language processing strategies', 'problem solving procedures'*". It seems that the labels that researchers attach to strategies vary to a great degree. Cohen (1998) proposed

referring to all these terms as ‘strategies’ to resolve the problem while recognising that strategies range from general to specific.

Third, another problem is related to the “*absence of agreement as to whether strategies need to be conscious in order to be considered strategies*” (Cohen, 1998: 10). In other words, many of the definitions do not identify whether strategies must be conscious for them to be regarded as strategies, with the exception of Stem (1983) and Wenden (1987), who referred to strategies as ‘conscious’ behaviours. Glamor (1987) identified in her definition that learning strategies are ‘techniques or deliberate actions’, which indicates that they are used consciously by learners. Cohen (1990), by including the word ‘consciously’ in his definition, made it clear that consciousness is an important element underlying his concept of learning strategies. He said clearly that “*the element of consciousness is what distinguishes strategies from the processes that are not strategic*” (Cohen, 1998: 4). He also claimed that behaviour would be denoted as a ‘process’, not a ‘strategy’, when a strategy is so habitual that it is no longer under the learner’s conscious awareness and control. Oxford (1990) did not include the role of consciousness in her definition as Cohen did, but her use of the words ‘action taken’ seems to imply that strategies are used consciously. O’Malley and Chamot (1990) asserted that at later stages strategies are performed unconsciously, while accepting the involvement of consciousness in the early stage of learning. However, Rabinowitz & Chi (1987, cited in O’Malley and Chamot, 1990), suggested that strategies have to be conscious in order to be ‘strategic’; consequently, they should not be considered as strategic behaviour when they are used habitually. This is consistent with Ellis (1994), who pointed out that strategies miss their importance as strategies when they become so automatic that learners become unconscious of employing them. However, this disagrees with psycholinguistic usage, where all types of unconscious practices are called strategies (Hsiao & Oxford, 2002). Some researchers see the term strategy as applying to both conscious and unconscious habit, such as Davies (1995). In contrast, Bialystok (1990) believed strategies employed by people to be unconscious. However, other researchers, such as Chamot and El-Dinary (1996) and Charnot, et al (1996), among others, cited in Cohen (1998), found that students were capable of defining their strategies, which must therefore have been conscious.

Fourth, it is not clear whether LLSs are to be regarded as behavioural and therefore can be observed, as mental or as both. Cohen (1984) appeared to view them as mental actions, whereas O'Malley and Chamot (1990) viewed them as both behavioural and mental. However, several researchers have only mentioned 'means' or 'steps', or 'techniques', which leaves us in doubt about whether they think of LLSs as mental, physical or both. The discussion now turns to cover the distinction between skills and strategies.

### 2.3.2 Skills versus strategies

After presenting some characteristic features of strategies and its definitions, it is essential to distinguish strategies from skills, although this is not easy, "*partly because terms such as skills, strategies, executive processes, micro-strategies and macro-strategies are used differently by different people*" (Williams & Burden, 1997: 145). Despite the attempts that have been made to distinguish the two, the distinction is still unclear. Paris et al. (1991), for example, claimed that the manner in which activities are executed during comprehension is the crucial part differentiating the two. That is because strategies require deliberate activation (goal and problem orientation) whereas skills are used subconsciously. They argued that the variation is obvious in all operations ranging from grapheme-phoneme mapping to textual content summarization, regardless of processing levels or tasks. Their argument was that a developing skill can be designed as a strategy whenever its use includes conscious activation, thereby implying that strategies, in fact, are skills under consideration. Although this is not significant in explaining what learners do, Koda (2005) stated that this is considerable when implications of learners' actions are formulated.

Williams and Burden (1997) rejected this clear-cut division, stating that "*it is more realistic to conceive of strategies as more or less global or task specific; in other words as higher order or lower order*" (pp. 146-147). I found this to be the most useful idea of the distinction between a strategy and a skill, because the word strategy in its unique meaning is "*a long-term plan of aimed actions employed to reach a particular goal and solving problem*" Duffy (1993), while a skill is "*an ability, usually learned, to perform actions and is repeated every time by the*

*learner*". Moreover, strategic behaviour is meant to be topic and goal oriented, while skills are abilities an individual has that may not be apparent at that moment. Thus, learning strategies can be considered as operating at a level above skills.

### 2.3.3 Classification of language learning strategies

As one of the first researchers in the field of strategies in English language teaching (ELT), Rubin (1975, p. 43) provided a wide definition of learning strategies as "*the techniques or devices which a learner may use to acquire knowledge*" (cited in Griffiths, 2004). In 1981, she identified two comprehensive and wide categories of learning strategies: *direct learning strategies* that contribute directly to the learning process and *indirect learning strategies* that have an indirect effect on learning processes. She divided direct learning strategies into five categories: *clarification/verification, monitoring, guessing/inductive inferencing, deductive reasoning, and practice*; whilst indirect learning strategies were divided into two kinds: *creating opportunities for practice* and *production tricks*. Under production tricks, Rubin included communication strategies. This was a controversial inclusion because some scholars see learning strategies and communication strategies as two quite separate manifestations of language learner behaviour.

Somewhat later, O'Malley et al. (1985) improved a distinctive taxonomy detecting 26 strategies that they divided into three classes: metacognitive, cognitive and social. The metacognitive and cognitive categories approximately resemble Rubin's direct and indirect learning strategies. However, adding the social mediation category was significant in admitting the impact of interactional strategies in language learning. According to O'Malley et al., the nature and purpose of metacognitive, cognitive and social affective strategies are:

***Metacognitive strategies:*** Executive processes employed in planning for learning; monitoring one's comprehension and production; and assessing how well one has attained a learning objective.

***Cognitive strategies:*** Manipulating material to be learned manually (e.g. making images, inferring meaning, elaborating on previous knowledge) or physically (e.g. grouping items to be learned together, taking notes).

***Social affective strategies:*** Either interacting with another to support learning (e.g. cooperative learning, asking questions for clarification) or using affective control to help in learning tasks.

Influenced by Rubin (1975), Oxford (1990) moved the process of taxonomy a step further. She presented a valuable and comprehensive taxonomy scheme for the several strategies used by language learners. She divided them into two main classes, direct and indirect, which are further subdivided into 6 groups: memory, cognitive, compensation strategies, metacognitive strategies, affective strategies and social strategies. Stern (1992) classified Language Learning Strategies into five main language learning strategies: management and planning strategies, cognitive strategies, communicative experiential strategies, interpersonal strategies and affective strategies.

Hsiao and Oxford (2002) attempted to compare the three classification systems employed in the field (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990; Rubin, 1981). They concluded that the Oxford (1990) system of six types of language learning strategies (Metacognitive, Cognitive, Memory, Compensation, Social, and Affective) was excellent in explaining the variety of strategies revealed by language learners.

Research on language learning strategies has developed to include the learners and metacognition and how to understand their own thinking and learning process. A metacognitive model has been designed to organize learning strategy instruction that includes four processes: planning, monitoring, problem-solving, and evaluating. Teachers in this model choose learning strategies to teach relying on the point in a learning task in which students need help with. According to Chamot (1999), students, who cannot realize that they are not making any advancement in the learning task, can be taught to monitor their comprehension, production, or recall so

that they can determine difficulties and choose problem-solving strategies to address the difficulties. This model can allow the learners to monitor and control their own learning.

Another exciting development in second language learning is the models of learner's self-regulation (Oxford, 2011). The models were called by different names: "learner-self-management" (Rubin, 2011), "learner self-direction" (Dickinson, 1987). Oxford (1999) called this "self-regulated or autonomous L2 learning", while Scarcella & Oxford named it "mediated learning". Recently, Oxford has named it the Strategic Self-Regulation model of language learning (2011).

The different models mentioned above provided the self-regulated learning (SRL) concept which is related to the learner metacognition. SRL is understood as a learner's ability to plan, guide, and monitor his or her behavior from within and flexibly according to changing circumstances (Diaz, Neal, & Amaya-Williams, 1990). It "emphasizes autonomy and control by the individual who monitors, directs, and regulates actions toward goals of information acquisition, expanding expertise and self-improvement" (Paris and Paris 2001, p: 89). Self-regulated learners set targets for themselves and evaluate their process to reach the targets (Wang et al., 2009), actively play a part in their own learning (Griffiths, 2008), choose suitable strategies through assessing the setting, purposes, and learning styles (Cohen & Macaro, 2007; Ehrman & Oxford, 2003), and self-consciously regulate their cognitive, affective, and sociocultural interactive strategies to reach the desired goals (Oxford, 2011).

Oxford (2011) retains the three categories of affective, cognitive, and sociocultural-interactive from her earlier categorization in (2008), but expands metacognitive strategies into metastrategies, which refer to methods in which learners control their learning in all three areas. These form the foundation for the strategic self-regulation model of L2 Learning. Oxford's model is centered on four factors of self-regulated learning-metacognitive, motivation, cognitive, and behaviours.

To sum up, this section provided detailed description of the LLSs definitions, classifications and features. The next section presents the classifications of vocabulary learning strategies.

#### **2.3.4 Classification system for vocabulary learning strategies**

The field of vocabulary learning strategies (VLSs) has received growing interest from researchers during the last decades. Supporting Skehan's (1989) remark that the field of learner strategies is still in the primary stage of growth, Schmitt (1997) pointed out that there is not yet an inclusive list or classification of strategies in this area. To deal with this issue, Schmitt (1997) suggested a list of VLSs and classified them based on existing systems. He primarily depended on Oxford's (1990) taxonomy scheme and adopted four strategy sets (social, memory, cognitive and metacognitive) that seemed best able to illuminate the broad variety of VLSs. Social strategies include learners interaction with other people to simplify their learning. Memory strategies consist of approaches that help link new materials to current knowledge systems. Skills that involve "*manipulation or transformation of the target language by the learner*" fall into the cognitive strategies (Oxford 1990, p. 43). Metacognitive strategies "*involve a conscious overview of the learning process and making decisions about planning, monitoring, or evaluating the best way to study*" (Schmitt, 1997, p. 205).

Schmitt made a classification for those strategies that learners use when learning a new word's meaning without asking other people, namely, determination strategies. In addition, a helpful distinction suggested by Nation (1990) was integrated into Schmitt's taxonomy scheme. That is, in terms of the process involved in vocabulary learning, strategies can be separated into two groups: (a) those for the discovery of a new word's meaning and (b) those for consolidating a word once it has been encountered. Nation (2001) developed his classification of vocabulary learning strategies suggested in (1990). He classified VLS into: (a) planning which includes (choosing words, choosing the aspects of word knowledge, planning and repetition), (b) sources of vocabulary knowledge which contains (analyzing words parts, using context, consulting a reference source in L1 or L2 and using parallels with other languages) and (c) processes (establishing vocabulary knowledge) which includes (noticing, retrieving and generating). GU (2003) categorized second language (L2) VLC as cognitive,

metacognitive, memory and activation strategies. Fan (2003) refined Gu (2003)'s classification and classified VLC into a "primary category" which includes dictionary use strategies and "remembering category" which contains repetition, association, known words strategies, analysis and grouping. Classification of VLSs suggested by previous studies can support the learners to identify which types of strategies they regularly employ to learn English vocabulary. Although there are many attempts to classify VLSs; however, the most popular taxonomy is Schmitt's (1997).

Table 2.1 shows the classification scheme suggested by Schmitt.

Discovery strategies	Determination strategies
	Social strategies
Consolidation strategies	Social strategies
	Memory strategies
	Cognitive strategies
	Metacognitive strategies

#### 2.3.4.1 Discovery strategies

Discovery strategies comprise various determination strategies and social strategies. A student may discover the meaning of new word by guessing from the context, referring to a dictionary, or requesting help from someone else (e.g. the teacher or colleague). It can be said that almost all of the strategies applied to discovery activities can be employed as consolidation strategies during later stages of vocabulary learning as suggested by Schmitt (1997). Because of the word limitation in this study, only dictionary use strategy, which is a strategy from the discovery strategies group, is explained below.

- **Dictionary Use**

Dictionaries can be employed as a receptive or a productive skill in English language learning. However, since it is impossible for listeners to have sufficient time to refer to a dictionary during spoken text settings, more look-up works occur with reading and writing activities. For example, a common condition occurs when a learner encounters an unfamiliar word in a text and is unable to infer the meaning from the context, the learner might then check a dictionary. Retrieving the meaning of unknown words from a dictionary is *"far from performing a purely mechanical*

*operation*” (Scholfield, 1982, p. 185); instead, a proficient dictionary user “*is often required to formulate and pursue several hypotheses and make use of prior knowledge of various sorts, especially information derived from context*” (Scholfield 1982, p. 185). Except for locating the unfamiliar word in an alphabetic list, which seems to be the skill most dealt with in respect to training in dictionary use, other essential facets comprising effective dictionary use have received little attention (Scholfield, 1982). Since several words in a language have more than one meaning, learners should be taught in how to eliminate multiple options. Scanning all the entry definitions before judging which one fits is an approach suggested by Underhill (1985). After selecting a seemingly sensible meaning from the definitions in the entry, a user then needs to “*understand the definition and integrate it into the context where the unknown was met*” (Scholfield, 1982, p. 190). The most sophisticated aspects of dictionary use arise when none of the meanings seems to be appropriate for the context, or more than one fits. In these situations, a learner may infer the meaning from the entry or “*seek further contextual clues in the source text to disambiguate*” (Scholfield, 1982, p. 193). Therefore, it can be said that the above skills may be used independently through well-designed activities and only in this way can dictionary use be improved and misunderstanding reduced.

Until the mid-1980s, vocabulary was considered a “neglected aspect” of second language teaching and learning (Meara, 1981). After a surge in vocabulary research, an interest in lexical acquisition has been reintroduced. Lexis is now recognised as essential to any language acquisition process, native or non-native (Laufer, 1997). The teaching of vocabulary has gained status as a fundamental aspect of language development (Nunan, 1999). The core role of vocabulary in second language communication is being highlighted. For example, Hatch (1983) stated that the lexical level is the most essential as it makes primary interaction possible. Moreover, McCarthy (1990) claimed that:

*“No matter how well the student learns grammar, no matter how successfully the sounds of L2 are mastered, without words to express a wider range of meanings, communication in an L2 just cannot happen in any meaningful way.”*

This new concern in research also reveals the importance of vocabulary in second language learning as viewed by both teachers and students. Teachers regard a solid vocabulary foundation as necessary for every stage of language learning (Laufer, 1997) and Horwitz (1988) discovered from her questionnaire that a large number of English as a second language (ESL) students (between 25 % and 39 %) either agree or strongly agree that the most crucial part of learning a foreign language is vocabulary learning. Therefore, studies that lead to greater understanding of vocabulary acquisition processes and methods of improving vocabulary teaching and learning are appreciated.

### **2.3.5 Role of dictionaries in vocabulary acquisition**

Dictionary is extremely effective for vocabulary learning strategy, although it has been received little attention in the English language classroom. Lee (1998) indicated that few studies exist on the influence of dictionary use on incidental vocabulary learning and retention. Moreover, dictionaries in language learning have been neglected due to a strong claim that words should not be taught alone or in isolation; dictionaries are seen as supporting students' tendency to learn individual words when acquiring a second language. Rhoder and Huerster (2002) argued that there are various criticisms of using dictionaries to learn vocabulary. They believed that learners may not be interested to pause in their reading and look up a word that appears in a short and abstract text, so they skip those words hoping that they can guess from the context. Moreover, a student must know how to spell a word, pause reading and search for the word in alphabetical order and then select the appropriate meaning which makes dictionaries use cognitively disruptive. This will interrupt the process of making a cohesive connection on both the sentence and full text level. Therefore, it can be said that using a dictionary may intrude the flow of reading comprehension while reading (Scholfield, 1982; Summers, 1988).

However, Al-Hadlaq (2003) explained that the use of dictionaries is reinforced by two psychological hypotheses: the Depth of Processing and the Involvement Load Hypothesis. The Depth of Processing model was presented by Craik and Lockhart (1972), who suggested that memory is an operation of the depth or shallowness of

the processing which people interact with when experiencing new content in the input. Moreover, they stated that different stages of processing are available. With regards to the processing of word items, they suggested that the phonological and orthographical factors of a sentence product are processed at a less deep level than the processing of its meaning. Most SLA researchers (e.g. Hulstijn, 2001; Schmidt, 1990) have argued that processing word information more elaborately leads to better retention than processing it less elaborately, both incidentally and intentionally. This deeply semantic processing increases memory by developing its records, and these are more powerful than the records developed when items are shallowly prepared (Baddeley, 1997). Learners should carry out useful linguistic processing of lexical items when they search for them. They should link an inflected word to its base form, and then identify and assess the different entries for each word (Summers, 1988).

The Involvement Load Hypothesis was established by Hulstijn and Laufer (2001) as a method to translate and link the Depth of Processing Model to L2 vocabulary learning tasks. It maintains that the retaining of newly faced words is conditioned on three aspects. The first is the need (i.e. who has established the task). The motivational part refers to the need to accomplish or carry out a task. Two degrees of prominence were suggested: modest and strong. The need can be moderated if it is enforced by an outside agent (e.g. the teacher). It can be strong if enforced by an intrinsic agent (e.g. the learner who needs to check a word in the dictionary before using it in a task).

The second factor is the search. It denotes to the attempt and effort to locate the meaning of an unknown L2 word or the endeavour to find the L2 word form expressing a concept (e.g. using a dictionary to search for the meaning). The third factor is the evaluation, which involves comparing a given word with other words, a specific meaning of an unknown word with its other meanings, or the word with other words to assess whether it suits the context. Search and evaluation denote the cognitive scope of the concept of task-induced involvement. The combination of these factors creates what the researchers called envelopment load. The greater the association load, the better the retention. When students search for a word in a dictionary, they may feel the need to look for its meaning. Consequently, they try to

find the word meaning or form for a specific concept. Then, they assess the different senses of this word to select the sense that suits the context. Each of these influences can be absent or present when dealing with a word in a natural or unnatural devised task. These factors with their degrees of importance create involvement load.

Therefore, employing dictionaries solves the inadequacy of incidental learning for the following reasons: (a) the deep elaboration of unfamiliar words positively influences the retention of incidental vocabulary; (b) using dictionaries and marginal glosses improves that deep elaboration, which in turn influences the retention of incidental vocabulary learning and text understanding (Knight, 1994; Hulstijn, 1992).

Son (2001) stated that referring to the dictionary is one of the vital strategies suggested by reading investigators (Hosenfeld, Arnold, Kirchofer, Laciura, & Wilson, 1981; Nuttall, 1982). He cited Barnett (1989), who pointed out that *“efficient dictionary use is a strategy in itself and crucial to reading with understanding. Students need to know when to use a dictionary (and which kind) and how to use it”* (p. 133). Therefore, EFL learners or readers need to know how to find the meaning of unknown words by using dictionaries, which is a skill in itself. Summers (1988) asserted that the dictionary is a useful tool for students and non-native teachers not only for reading, but also for other receptive and productive skills such as writing.

Lee (1984) also proposed that the dictionary seems to be as valuable as the teacher in facilitating students' vocabulary learning. Lee conducted a study to investigate the differential consequences of two approaches to schema-building word meaning instruction on the acquisition of target word meanings. 71 fifth grade participants were randomly allocated to three treatment conditions: (a) the teacher interaction treatment, (b) the dictionary context treatment, or (c) the incidental reading (control) group. Participants read 20 target words in the context of a novel and then were asked to complete a test of multiple choice items and irregular sentences. In this study, students used the dictionary to find the definition appropriate for a particular context, to give examples and to provide their personal definition. The findings displayed that the two treatment groups performed higher than the control group (i.e.

the incidental learning group). Moreover, no difference between the two treatments was observed which may indicate that the dictionary was as effective as the teacher in teaching vocabulary.

In 1980, a group of researchers at the Longman ELT Dictionaries Department conducted a needs research project on the use of the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (LDOCE)* by intermediate students in secondary schools and colleges in the UK, Japan, Germany, the US, Mexico and Nigeria. They examined the relative use of the dictionary entry and associated this with the frequency of dictionary use for reading versus active uses like writing. Students employed the dictionary to check spelling and meaning. 60% of the students refer to their dictionary mainly to obtain the meaning. Consequently, it seemed that the students were referring to the dictionary to enhance their vocabulary, although how the dictionary assisted the process and its efficacy was not fully clarified in the research (Summers, 1988).

Al-Asmary (2007) studied vocabulary learning strategies in the Saudi context. He wanted to examine the vocabulary learning strategies used by 47 EFL learners at King Saud University and how these strategies influenced the students' overall vocabulary learning achievement. He observed strategies such as guessing strategies, note-taking, metacognitive strategies, and dictionary look-up strategies. Although students think reading to be a main resource for expanding their vocabulary, the findings suggest that learners should use other methods to obtain the meaning of unknown words or uses such as depending on variety of learning styles when learning language. For example, Al-Asmary found that his students seem to use more comprehension strategies when employing their dictionaries. They checked words when thinking they were crucial for understanding or when the words appeared many times in various contexts. However, Al-Asmary also stated that students used fewer look-up strategies (e.g. eliminating the inflection of the word, employing the basic form and excluding prefixes or suffixes, using the definition in the context if suitable) and extended strategies (e.g. checking examples, related expressions). Students employed the dictionary only to know the meaning of unknown words while ignoring the use of other available information provided, such as examples and

inflections. Therefore, one can say that students were not fully equipped with competent knowledge to employ the dictionary efficiently for their language learning. Al-Asmary's findings about his students' dictionary use to deal with vocabulary learning seem very interesting and are relevant to this study. In the current study, the dictionary use strategies employed by the participants will be explored to see whether they have the knowledge to effectively extract all the needed types of information.

Harvey and Yuill (1997) studied the role played by a dictionary (in this case, the *Collins COBUILD English Language Dictionary*, 1987) in the completion of written tasks by EFL learners. The study employed an introspective methodology based on the completion of flow charts. The findings emphasized, in particular, the significance of information on spelling and meaning and the essential role of examples in finding a wide variety of information, notably on meaning, grammar and register. The full-sentence definitions and its real examples in the COBUILD dictionary were demonstrated to be of substantial use to learners, while coded syntactic information in the dictionary was largely ignored by learners.

Hulstijn, Hollander, and Greidanus (1996) studied how the dictionary look-up or the presence of glosses for targeted words in a written text might impact on incidental vocabulary learning. They studied the retention of incidental vocabulary acquisition of Dutch learners provided with a French short story to read under three conditions: marginal glosses, dictionary and reading-only group. After a week of reading the text, the students completed a later vocabulary test to determine their long-term retention of the acquired vocabulary. The researchers discovered that incidental learning of words appearing in a text was more likely when learners had been offered with word meanings either by using dictionaries or through marginal glosses than when no supportive information was available to them.

To sum up, this section has briefly presented the LLSs definitions and classification, and VLSs classifications as a sub-category of LLSs. It also explored the relationship between dictionary use and vocabulary acquisition. It can be said that the role of the dictionary in enhancing vocabulary learning is valid based on several studies on

vocabulary acquisition. Although some researchers and teachers still feel that using a dictionary during a task (e.g. reading) can distract the comprehension and interrupt the flow of concentration, dictionary use can support vocabulary acquisition and support in retaining the looked-up words in the tasks. The discussion below attempts to shed light on the learning strategies and the social-cognitive theory of Vygotsky.

### **2.3.6 Learning strategies and social constructivism**

Vygotsky's social-cognitive psychology provides an essential concept of the roles and functions of LLSs in assisting second and foreign language learning. According to Vygotsky, an individual's cognitive system is a result of social interaction (Oxford, 1996). Such interaction is crucial for the growth of language acquisition within formal learning conditions and in natural settings. Determined by his theory of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), a learner will have the ability to perform at a level exceeding his or her potential limit with the scaffolding of a teacher or a more competent peer (Vygotsky, 1978). With such scaffolding and guidance, the learner then gradually becomes more independent in his or her learning. As the learner becomes significantly prepared with what is required to be an autonomous and self-sufficient learner, the scaffolding should be gradually removed (Yang & Wilson, 2006).

The scaffolding concept presented by the teacher in the learning process incorporates all types of support to assist and increase learning. Language learning strategies are types of scaffolding that educators can deliver and students can apply. In other words, teachers can equip students with new strategies and assist them improve existing ones. Equipped with LLSs through instruction, students will be competent to employ them on their own to continue on their learning process even with insufficient teacher support. However, with the gain of "*self-control and autonomy through strategy use*" (Oxford & Nyikos, 1989), learners will be capable of continuing their journey in the learning of language.

This theory has received criticism for its strong weight on social interaction. Because of the focus on the teacher-student relationship, other concerns in the process of learning may be ignored. Imposing too much concentration on the more proficient

students or the teacher might reject the individual roles the learners. Indeed, Fox (2001, p. 30) belittled the concept of shared learning:

*“To focus on teaching as the shared construction of knowledge...risks ignoring the extent to which learning depends on independent practice and problem-solving. It tends to highlight learning as conceptualisation and to ignore learning as the formation, or revision, of skills.... As well as sharing knowledge, we have to make knowledge our own”.*

Moreover, the theory has also been criticised for its under-emphasis on learner motivation and experiential learning.

#### **2.4 Importance of strategies teaching**

Oxford and Scarcella (1994) argued that it is essential to teach students explicit strategies for learning vocabulary (cited in Coady, 1997, p. 277). Vocabulary learning has been presented as an academic literacy skill not acquired naturally, but requiring instruction and training. The intent of strategy instruction is to help all students become better language learners. When students start to understand their own learning development and can apply some control over these processes, they tend to take more responsibility for their own learning (Pressley & Afflerbach, 1995). This self-knowledge and skill in controlling one's own learning is a feature of good learners, including high achieving learners. Research with both first and second language learners has been revealing the methods of thinking that guide and assist an individual's attempts to learn more effectively (Paris & Winograd, 1990). Promoting the use of strategies is considered beneficial to learners. Students who use strategies for learning have a higher sense of self-efficacy and confidence in their own learning ability (Zimmerman, 1990). Moreover, strategy research has suggested that less competent learners may improve their skills through training on strategies evidenced by more successful learners (Carrell, 1989). Another reason behind the urge for strategy training is the narrow range of strategies that learners use and the fact that they favour a shallow application of these strategies. Lawson and Hogben's study (1996, cited in Gu, 2005, p. 71) observed that repetition was not only used by

students in almost two-thirds of the opportunities, but it was also used on most of the words by most of the students. Very few of the reported strategies involved detailed elaboration of the word-meaning complex or the context. The findings suggest that students typically do not use complex vocabulary learning strategies. However, it is worthwhile looking at the factor attributes for this whether the lack of use is merely a matter of preference or a lack of exposure to strategies and related training.

Research in the field of the effects of strategy training on language learning has received meagre attention as strategy use and its relative influence on learning outcomes. Gu (2005) considered it “*astonishing to see how little empirical research has been done within the field of SLA to attest the usefulness of language learning strategy instruction*” (p. 41). There may be limitations in terms of research design, particularly in looking at long-term effects on learners. Research that provided relatively relevant insight was carried out by O’Malley and Chamot (1990). Their study showed that Hispanic participants who had strategy training improved their vocabulary scores compared to the control group, but Asians in the strategy training groups who resisted training performed worse than the Asian control group that used the familiar rote repetition strategy (cited in Schmitt, 1997, p. 202).

According to Nation (2001), strategies research has demonstrated that there is value in being able to practise a varied range of strategies and that many students are limited to too narrow a range. He also asserted that strategy training plays an essential role in second language vocabulary progress. If strategies can be taught, and the vocabulary learning can be improved, learners can gain advantage from training.

To sum up, this part of the literature review has provided a thorough look at LLSs and VLSs and the validity of teaching learning strategies (dictionary strategies in this study) to learners of English. The discussion in the next section will attempt to cover dictionary use by discussing issues relevant to the current study.

## **2.5 Dictionary use research**

The research in dictionary use and users has long been an area of concern. The last three decades or so have witnessed growing interest in investigating user

perspectives. Many published studies examined the reference needs of foreign languages learners, and most of these studies were by PhD students studying the uses and needs of dictionaries by their home university students. Béjoint remarks that “*it is difficult to keep track all of them*”. Most of these empirical studies explored the preference and reference habits of the dictionary by users who were foreign language teachers or learners usually from primary school, secondary school and university level. The focus ranged from understanding students’ reference needs and habits to investigating and observing the look-up strategies. Bilingual, monolingual and bilingualised dictionaries were used by the researchers of most of the previous studies. Most of the work was questionnaire-based research verified by semi-structured interviews. A recent shift in trend has occurred towards integrating more complicated social science experimental methods in dictionary use research.

Many of the previous dictionary studies revolved around what is called “*needs typology*” (Hartmann, 1987). Needs typology focuses on certain aspects of dictionary use, such as the type of dictionary learners own and/or use; the information looked up (e.g. meaning, spelling, pronunciation.); and the activity context (i.e. whether the dictionary is used for reading, writing, listening, speaking or translating from L2 into L1 or vice versa).

This section of the chapter attempts to cover some of the above issues in addition to such other issues as learners’ knowledge about their dictionaries and the difficulties they face when using their dictionaries.

## **2.6 Dictionary ownership and attitudes**

The ownership of a dictionary was always a concern of dictionary use researchers. Many studies explored the ownership of the participants in their studies with the aim of identifying what type of dictionary/dictionaries students owned. In his study about French students, Béjoint (1981) explored his students’ ownership of monolingual dictionaries, excluding both bilingual dictionaries and specialised dictionaries from his study. He found that 96% of his students possessed monolingual English dictionaries. Atkins and Knowles (1990) discovered in their project, beginning in

1987 and completed in 1990, that more than half of the respondents owned at least one dictionary. Li (1998) explored the ownership and the frequency of dictionary use among Chinese ESP students as a part of her research that planned to find how 801 teachers and students at a Chinese university of science and technology used their dictionaries in their work and studies. She found that 96.8% of the respondents owned English-Chinese dictionaries, 45.3% owned Chinese-English dictionaries, 32.3% owned special purpose dictionaries and finally 27.7% owned monolingual dictionaries. In a recent study about dictionary use by Korean EFL university students, Ryu (2006) found that 90% of the students owned at least one English paper dictionary. Forty-nine (27%) students had two dictionaries and 23 (12.7%) students owned three dictionaries. Only one student had more than three dictionaries. Only 57 (31.5%) out of 181 respondents reported they owned monolingual dictionaries. Four students had more than two monolingual dictionaries. Unlike monolingual dictionaries, bilingual dictionaries were owned by the majority of the students (n=128, 70.7%), and 22 participants (12%) possessed two bilingual dictionaries. With respect to ownership of hand-held electronic dictionaries (HHE), 70 (38.6%) students reported such ownership. Kobayashi (2006) investigated the use of HHE dictionaries compared with printed dictionaries by Japanese university learners of English. He found that 72% of his students had an HHE dictionary.

Regarding studies conducted in Arabic countries, Kharma (1985) found that his participants, who are students of English at Kuwait University, owned both monolingual and bilingual dictionaries. However, he found that the bilingual ones were used well all the time, sometimes in conjunction with a monolingual one. El-Badry (1990) found that about 95% of the respondents reported that they needed to consult dictionaries and that bilingual English-Arabic dictionaries were used more frequently than monolingual English dictionaries or bilingual Arabic-English ones. Al-Ajmi (1992) found in his study that the majority of his EM and NEM Kuwaiti students possessed a bilingual E-A dictionary (English 95.4%, Science 97.4%), while the monolingual dictionary came next with 73.3% of English majors and 42.5% of science majors having one or more. He realised that the reliance on ownership of monolingual dictionaries seemed to increase sharply among students of English as the students moved to higher levels of English language study.

The above studies, among others, suggested that most foreign students chose to have a dictionary for their learning of English. This may indicate that dictionaries are perceived positively by the learners. The concern regarding the students' dictionary ownership pertains to how much the dictionary is used. Although students may own one or more dictionaries, it does not mean that they rely on them or know how to use them for linguistics needs. Students need to make much effort and learn special skills in order to understand or to learn from the dictionary, especially at the initial stages of using it to assist learning.

### **2.6.1 Types of dictionaries**

Dictionaries can be divided into different types according to various criteria. Among these criteria are the division based on the dictionary language included and the dictionary means (e.g. PD, ED, online dictionary etc) to the age of the users, the size of the dictionary etc. The type of dictionaries owned by students was tested by researchers who aimed to evaluate the students' choice and preference for one type of dictionary over others.

#### **2.6.1.1 Types of dictionaries in terms of language included**

The discussion on the type of dictionary, based on the included language that best served learners of English, dated back to the '80s when Béjoint (1981) and Baxter (1980) conducted their first evaluation of the use of monolingual dictionaries by foreign language learners in France and Japan, respectively. Later studies raised the question of whether monolingual or bilingual dictionaries could better serve the students' needs. This discussion has recently included the bilingualised (the hybrid) dictionary. Studies have been conducted to compare these dictionaries in terms of students' preferences for using one dictionary type rather than the others and in terms of the effectiveness of each dictionary type. It can be said that the literature has not provided a definite answer for this debate. In the following paragraphs more discussion is presented.

##### **A. Bilingual Dictionary**

The bilingual dictionary can be considered the most frequently used and preferred dictionary type among foreign language learners regardless of their proficiency level.

Studies conducted in different parts of the world have indicated that EFL learners, especially at the initial stages, depend heavily on this type of dictionary (Tomaszczyk, 1979; Kharma, 1985; Battenburg, 1989; Schmitt, 1997; Kent, 2001; Marin-Marín, 2005). Hartmann (1983, 1994) says that bilingual dictionaries are particularly useful for beginners. Baxter (1980) discovered that Japanese students attribute to the bilingual dictionary, in contrast to other reference materials, the greatest degree of importance in their studies of English. One of the most comprehensive studies, comprising more than 1,000 learners in seven European countries (Atkins and Knowles, 1990), showed that the majority of learners (75%) used bilingual dictionaries. Atkins and Varantola (1998) found that 63% their participants refer to their bilingual dictionaries while 37% used monolingual dictionaries. They also found that the participants resort to the bilingual dictionaries when looking for equivalents, while monolingual dictionaries were often used for secondary operations such as checking a guess about an equivalent. Hartmann (1983) conducted his study on dictionary use by learners of German in southeast England and found that the use of bilingual dictionaries was so embedded outside of formal language classes, where translation activities still reign supreme, that the idea of preventing the learner from using the translation dictionary seemed rather unrealistic. Tomaszczyk (1979) and Nuccorini (1992) found that their participants disparaged bilingual dictionaries, but they relied on them more often than monolingual dictionaries. Laufer (1997) and Schmitt (1997) also found that the majority of L2 learners were reported to use bilingual dictionaries more frequently than monolingual dictionaries and this included even those who had achieved a good level of proficiency. Laufer claimed that even L2 learners trained in academic skills, including dictionary use, still employed a bilingual dictionary.

Al-Smael (2000) conducted his study on the Saudi context and found that the bilingual dictionary was more popular than the monolingual dictionary among his Saudi undergraduate English major students. Similarly, Al-Fuhaid (2004) found that the majority of his Saudi English major university students employed the bilingual dictionary more than other types of dictionaries. In his survey of studies of dictionary use, Piotrowski (1989: p. 73) argued that, regardless of their level of competence, foreign learners and dictionary users depend on their bilingual dictionaries as long as they use dictionaries at all.

There are various causes that lead L2 learners to refer to the bilingual dictionary. Scholfield (1982) claimed that the primary reason that referring to bilingual dictionaries might be preferred is that the meaning of unknown L2 words can be reached more easily because it is in L1. He added that bilingual dictionaries are easier for learners to use and understand precisely when compared to monolingual dictionaries because they involve the L1 equivalent and this made them popular among L2 learners. Therefore, what makes students choose this type of dictionary is something within the entry itself. Bilingual entries are appreciated for finding the right sense (Scholfield, 1997); and are suitable for quick consultation and quick understanding (Bejoint and Moulin, 1987; Stein, 1984). According to Kent (2001) L2 learners rely on their bilingual dictionary because they feel that it allows them better to search for terms they wish to express in the target language.

Another reason that L2 learners prefer to consult to a bilingual dictionary is the easy access to the needed information. Carter and McCarthy (1988) claimed that it seems effortless for students to think they are saving time by consulting their bilingual dictionaries when encountering unfamiliar words within texts and unable to deduce from the contextual clues, and definitions given in monolingual dictionaries are not sufficiently and fully understood. They may need to have a concrete idea of the word, or they may feel their vocabulary in English is too limited to handle an entry. Hofling (2006) found that bilingual dictionaries were preferred by students because they are easy to consult, enable finding of information quickly, and have a practical format.

Scholfield believes that a bilingual dictionary, unlike a monolingual one, is a self-study resource capable of being employed by learners of English. He argued that low achiever learners might use bilingual dictionaries because they do not feel confident when using monolingual dictionaries. Tomaszczyk (1983, p.43) claims that “*some semantic and syntactic properties of words do not become apparent until one has confronted them with counterparts in other languages*”.

According to Al-Ajmi (1992), Kuwaiti English majors and non-English major students depended heavily on the bilingual dictionary; they indicated that the bilingual dictionary was the preferred dictionary and thought of it as the best learning aid to get the appropriate meaning of L2 words. Similarly, Al-Fuhaid's (2004)

students agreed that they use BDs most often because such dictionaries save time and provide a clearer meaning of unknown words than the MDs. Alqahtani (2005) found that Saudi intermediate and high pupils employ the BD more than the MD because of its light weight.

Stein (1989, p.41) believes that employing bilingual dictionaries is beneficial for comprehension because it offers '*quick general understanding*' for certain kinds of words, such as the names of plants, animals, cultural institutions, technical and scientific terms. He claims that the use of bilingual dictionaries for production is also effective and can facilitate the learning because they provide 'ready translation equivalents' for common words, and 'exact translation equivalents for scientific, technical and institutional terms'. On the other hand, one of the arguments against the bilingual dictionary, according to Laufer (1997) is that the preference for bilingual dictionaries over monolingual does not mean that bilingual dictionaries are more expedient than monolingual dictionaries. Bilingual dictionaries have some weaknesses.

Laufer (1995) claims that a one-word translation in bilingual dictionaries can even be confusing and misleading when there is lack of semantic equivalence between the two languages. Additionally, bilingual dictionaries do not allow L2 learners to think in the target language; or rather they tend to foster a tendency to always understand L2 words by translating them into their mother tongue (Baxter, 1980; Thompson, 1987; Scholfield, 1995). This tendency might enhance the learners' belief that there is a one-to-one equivalence at word level between the two languages (Thompson, 1987), which according to Baxter (1980) can make it considerably harder for the students to find an alternative equivalent for a particular L2 word usually supplied in a MD when they cannot access to that lexical item. Moreover, as claimed by Laufer (1995), bilingual dictionaries provide only-single word translations which are likely to deceive the learners (Underhill, 1985; Laufer and Hadar, 1997). This is because bilingual dictionaries match lexical items of the two languages instead of actually supplying definitions. It can be claimed that the bilingual dictionary often lists synonyms in the target language and leaves the students confused trying to figure out how to employ these meanings. It usually fails to describe adequately the syntactic behaviour of words and it often bases the ordering of meanings on such as historical

development rather than on principles like frequency or wide range of use which are of more help to the learner; and so on (Thompson, 1987). Fan (2000) claimed that the bilingual dictionary offers limited information about L2 words and thereby reduces users' awareness of the important fact that different languages may have various semantic and stylistic characteristics. Tomaszczyk (1984) found that the English equivalents of the culture-bound items in Polish-English dictionaries are of little help to Polish-English speakers, writers and translators and that some of these words make communication difficulties. Furthermore, Baxter (1980) criticised the role of bilingual dictionaries in EFL learning, nevertheless coming to the conclusion that students should not be encouraged to exclude their bilingual dictionaries totally, and adding that a judicious combination of the two would be the most productive.

Another problem in the bilingual dictionary seems to be related to the entries. The accumulation of synonyms as possible translations for the entry word in an L1-L2 dictionary causes severe translation difficulties for dictionary users. For example, Al-Ajmi found that his participants frequently encountered the problem of selecting an appropriate equivalent from a long list of English synonyms in Arabic-English dictionaries (Al-Ajmi, 1992). Nesi and Meara (1994) argued that L1-L2 bilingual dictionaries are referred to for production, and they usually fail to draw a suitable difference between L2 vocabulary items which correspond to each L1 word (Scholfield, 1982). Therefore, L1-L2 bilingual dictionaries should be used in combination with a good monolingual dictionary to avoid any misconceptions resulting from the insufficient description of the syntactic behaviour of words and of the relationship between L2 items in terms of their connotations or meaning associations.

### **B. Monolingual dictionary**

Most of the literature in dictionary research indicates that the monolingual dictionary is infrequently used compared with the bilingual dictionary. This lack of preference for use of the monolingual dictionary may explain the high percentage of bilingual dictionary ownership among foreign learners. Tomaszczyk (1979) found that monolingual dictionary use was considerably lower than bilingual dictionary use, even though most of his participants were either language professionals including teachers and translators or advanced students. Baxter's (1980) study conducted on

Japanese students confirmed Tomaszczyk's findings. Baxter found that only English major students used monolingual dictionaries. Atkins and Varantola (1998) conducted a study about dictionary use in translation and found that only 28% of the dictionary search processes were in the monolingual dictionary. In the Saudi context, Al-Jarf (1999) found that 23% of the Saudi university students used the monolingual dictionary. In his study conducted on exploring the use of VLSs, Al-Fuhaid (2004) found that the MD was moderately used by his Saudi English major students. He commented that the more frequent use of the bilingual dictionary was likely to reduce the frequency of use of the monolingual dictionary.

Conversely, some studies on dictionary use revealed that the monolingual dictionary was used more frequently than the bilingual one. Béjoint's (1981) found that French English major students used the monolingual dictionary more than the bilingual one. However, Béjoint's study was a questionnaire-based study and was solely concerned with the use of monolingual dictionaries which, to a considerable extent, may have shaped the responses of the students (Lew, 2004). Diab (1990) conducted his study on the use of dictionaries among Jordanian nurses learning ESP at university and his study revealed that the nurses used the monolingual dictionary more than the bilingual dictionary. Diab (1990) concluded that his students relied on the monolingual dictionary more than the bilingual ones because they were unsatisfied with the bilingual Arabic dictionaries. He added that the reason for that was because they felt that bilingual Arabic dictionaries had less information and sometimes provided general information which was not related to their field as nurses. This result has been confirmed by Lew (2004). Iqbal (1987) conducted his study on Pakistani English major and found that they employed the monolingual dictionary more frequently when compared with the bilingual dictionary.

It can be claimed that English competence plays a role in the students' attitudes toward this type of dictionary as not being preferred by low achiever students. Researchers have found that advanced learners use monolingual dictionaries more than bilingual dictionaries. Studies such as, Tomaszczyk (1979), Baxter (1980), Bennisoussan, Sim and Weiss (1984), Battenburg (1991), Al-Ajmi (1992), Atkins and Varantola (1998) and Ramos (2005) found that highly proficient students tended to use monolingual dictionaries to a greater extent than less proficient students.

Alqahtani (2005) found that those students with greater vocabulary knowledge used the monolingual dictionary more frequently than did less proficient students. Similarly, Al-Ajmi (1992) found that advanced English major students used the monolingual dictionaries more than the bilingual ones. He also said that Kuwaiti university students indicated that monolingual dictionaries provided them with pronunciation, grammatical information and word origins, and that such information was unobtainable from bilingual dictionaries (Al-Ajmi, 1992). Ahmed (1989) conducted a study on Sudanese EFL learners of English and found that lower level learners used the bilingual dictionaries more than the monolingual ones while good university students relied heavily on the monolingual dictionaries.

Consequently, it can be said that the infrequent use of the monolingual dictionary could be attributed to the lack of L2 vocabulary knowledge with which to understand the monolingual entries. According to Nesi and Meara (1994), the monolingual explanation is not always fully understood by learners and may be misunderstood by some. Kharma (1985) mentioned that the main two reasons for dissatisfaction with the monolingual dictionary and consequently its infrequent use were that the vocabulary employed in definitions was difficult to understand and that an insufficient number of illustrative sentences were included. Dictionary users may find themselves in front of an endless search because they need to search for the meaning of unknown words in the definition.

- **Advantages of the monolingual dictionary**

For many years, dictionary researchers and language educators have acknowledged that learners should be encouraged to use monolingual dictionaries rather than bilingual dictionaries (Underhill, 1985; Atkins, 1985). Different studies have indicated that monolingual dictionaries are more useful than bilingual dictionaries. For example, Béjoint & Moulin (1987) showed in their study, investigating the roles of bilingual and monolingual dictionaries, that monolingual dictionaries provide learners with direct access to the lexical system of the target language. Thompson (1987) asserts that monolingual dictionaries include useful information about the English language, particularly in the field of the syntactic behaviour of words. Laufer and Hadar (1997) concluded that monolingual dictionaries were more successful in helping users find the relevant information than bilingual dictionaries. Additionally,

the monolingual entry can usually provide more detailed and precise lexical information than the bilingual entry, for example, information about idiomatic usage, common collocations, connotations and register. Atkins and Knowles (1990) argue that this type of dictionary contains impeccable information which is effective in allowing students to obtain useful lexical materials. Monolingual dictionaries offer learner-centered descriptions of vocabulary and the syntactic use of terms in actual examples (Stein, 1989). Baxter (1980) thinks that monolingual dictionaries expose students to a wider range of lexical possibilities.

It can be said that monolingual dictionaries provide advantages for the EFL student, namely, the process of engagement within the target language when seeking to understand new words. In this case, the monolingual dictionary proves to be a beneficial language learning tool in terms of providing both a means for practical use of acquired language skills and the development of lexical knowledge (Kent, 2001). Sokeimi (1989) argues that allowing and encouraging students to use monolingual dictionaries can train them to think in English and prevent them from the habit of mental translation.

In contrast, monolingual dictionaries have their defects. The main shortcoming of monolingual dictionaries is that these kinds of dictionaries are written only in the foreign language. Therefore it can be said that, if the students' level of English is not high, they are not likely to be able to find and understand what they want (Fan, 2000). Bensoussan, Sim and Weiss (1984), found that low achiever students were frustrated and confused with monolingual dictionaries and often resorted to bilingual ones. Another problem might be related to distinguishing among types of information within an entry, or to the inappropriate explanations and examples involving syntactic complexity, idiomaticity and cultural specificity within the definitions (Amritavalli, 1999). Monolingual dictionaries were criticised by Piotrowski (1989) who claimed that these types of dictionaries are inherently circular. This means that they can be used by native speakers. He suggests that both types of dictionaries, bilingual and monolingual, are complementary and both offer something different to their users. Thompson (1987) identifies two points against monolingual dictionaries and argues that, in monolingual dictionaries, learners cannot gain access to an L2 item when they do not know it; and the use of L2

definitions and examples may cause difficulty for learners. Another problem of monolingual dictionaries is raised by Nesi and Meara (1994). They show that many adult learners systematically misinterpret dictionary entries while using learner's monolingual dictionaries. They identified two reasons for this (Nesi and Meara, 1994, p. 14): (a) *“dictionary users latch onto a part of the dictionary definition, without really understanding how it relates to the word they are looking up.”* (b). *“the dictionary entries were actually misleading given the starting point of the user.”* The authors did not suggest using bilingual dictionaries, but they hoped their study would assist dictionary compilers to improve their dictionaries, and teachers to train their students in using the dictionaries. According to Nation (1989), monolingual dictionaries should be improved as this would make language learning better.

While monolingual dictionaries are considered to be more valuable to language learners, some researchers are uncertain if learners have satisfactory skills to use them. In Thompson's (1987:284) study, he argues that monolingual dictionaries are *“simply not cost-effective for many learners in terms of rewards (correct choice of word) versus effort”*. Horsfall (1997, p.7) also suggests that *“a whole set of separate training skills is required to enable students to encode words properly and to get the most out of a monolingual dictionary”*, otherwise, students would face great difficulty in learning the words. Although the monolingual dictionary entry contains detailed and comprehensive information, language learners do not have the skills to utilise its functions.

In conclusion, it can be said that many researchers consider bilingual dictionaries to be very essential especially for less achiever students; others might state that monolingual dictionaries are more beneficial and have wealthy and detailed information that can assist the students to overcome their lexical difficulties. Some of the researchers believe that the positive aspects of monolingual dictionaries in terms of their dependency on the target language compensate for the drawbacks.

### **C. Bilingualised dictionary**

The bilingualised dictionary is a dictionary with hybrid features of the monolingual one for native speakers and the bilingual dictionary for foreign language learners (Hartmann, 1992, 1994). According to Hartmann, the bilingualised dictionaries are

*“the results of an adaptation of unilingual and monolingual English learners’ dictionaries which have all or part of their entries translated into the mother tongue of the learner”* (Hartmann, 1994). Laufer (1997) defines the bilingualised dictionary as *“a dictionary that contains the monolingual information about a word and its translation into the learner’s mother tongue”* (p: 361). The history of bilingualised dictionaries dated back to 1970s. The first bilingualised dictionary was English-English-Hebrew and appeared in 1978. Since then similar dictionaries were published in other languages such as Portuguese, Arabic, Greek, French, Spanish, Italian, Polish, Czech, Slovenian, Thai and Chinese. Raudaskoski (2002) argues that the bilingualised dictionary is often built on an existing monolingual learner's dictionary. The emphasis in the entries is on the L2 material, and for this reason the equivalents serve as aids for understanding rather than stand-alone translations of the headword.

Dictionary researchers have attempted to study this type of dictionary and explore the students’ preferences and attitudes towards using it. One of the most detailed studies is that of Hartmann (1994). He found that most of the participants checked both the English definition and the equivalent translation in the dictionary entry when looking up the unfamiliar words. Laufer and Melamed (1994) studied the relative effectiveness of monolingual, bilingual, and bilingualised dictionaries in text reception and in text production linguistics of EFL learners. 122 EFL students (76 pre-advanced and 46 advanced) were given a list of 15 low frequency target words with their dictionary entries and were asked to take a multiple-choice test which administered to check the students' comprehension. Then the participants were requested to write original sentences with each of the target words to compare the three types of dictionaries. The findings revealed that the bilingualised dictionary was significantly more effective than the other two types of dictionaries for comprehension. They also found that the bilingualised dictionary was the best choice in comprehension and production for unskilled or average learners, while for good learners there was no significant difference between the three types of dictionaries in comprehension, production or both.

Laufer and Hadar (1997) wanted to examine the differences in the effectiveness of three types of dictionaries: learner’s monolingual, bilingual and bilingualised

dictionaries. They attempted to identify which type of dictionary entry would be most helpful in the comprehension and production of original sentences with unknown words. They adopted the controlled study mode in order to determine the relative effectiveness of the three types of dictionaries. The participants were 123 high school and university EFL learners. Each one of the participants was given a list of 15 target words with their dictionary definitions. Five target words were supplied with entries from a monolingual learner's dictionary, from a bilingual learner's dictionary, and from a bilingualised dictionary. This means that each word was checked in the three dictionaries. The method of measurement used was the respondents' ability to use the target words in sentences and comprehend them. They found that students achieved significantly higher scores when consulting the bilingualised dictionary. This may indicate that bilingualised dictionary was significantly superior to the other two dictionaries for reception and production.

Laufer and Kimmel (1997) conducted a study on 70 native speakers of Hebrew (39 high school students, 31 university students) who were studying English as a foreign language, to investigate how they employed bilingualised dictionaries. They aimed at obtaining some insights into the part of the entry that learners read when looking up an unfamiliar word: monolingual, bilingual or both. In other words, they wanted to discover whether students really take advantage of the existence of both definitions and equivalents on the bilingualised dictionaries. Students were asked to look up the same 15 low-frequency words (10 targets, 5 distractors) and complete multiple choice tests. The results revealed that students preferred to read the definition of the words in one language only, whether Hebrew or English. On average, the percentage of look-up behaviour in the two groups was Hebrew 31%, followed closely by English 27%. Laufer and Kimmel concluded that this could be explained by what they named the 'availability principle' which means that students naturally choose the bilingual dictionary if they have a choice and once information is given in both L1 and L2, the monolingual information will be seen as well. For both look-up preference patterns, it was revealed that the reading the entire bilingualised entry was not common (13% on average for both groups of participants). This may indicate that the bilingualised dictionary is not as valuable as it is believed to be. Yet it can be argued that this interpretation is too hasty because, when the bilingualised dictionary is consulted, both the L1 and L2 information is referred to as learners may refer

to one language for some words, another language for others, or to both languages in some cases. In Laufer and Kimmel's (1997) study, about 9.5% of the students switched between L1 (Hebrew) and L2 (English) in their checking of different words. They concluded that *"both languages are used, albeit not simultaneously and not for each word"* and that the bilingualised dictionary *"seems to cater for a variety of look-up possibilities and individual preferences"* (p. 368).

Fan (2000) conducted a study to explore look-up behaviour using the bilingualised dictionary among Hong Kong students. The aim of the study was to focus on the frequency of use of dictionary information and how students perceived such information. About 1,076 first year degree students from seven tertiary institutions of Hong Kong completed the questionnaire and took the Word Levels Test. She divided her participants into two groups according to their competence in order to compare more proficient students with less proficient students and to determine the dictionary look-up behaviour which may enhance L2 vocabulary learning. Fan found that the students used the bilingualised dictionary quite often and considered it very useful especially when using it for the contextual meaning of words. She added that her participants sometimes looked up the Chinese equivalent while using their dictionaries for pronunciation. Finally, she found that advanced learners used the dictionary for gaining more information than did those who were less proficient.

Thumb (2002) studied the dictionary look-up strategies of Hong Kong university students when checking the meaning of unfamiliar words. Her study involved 18 university students from a university in Hong Kong who were requested to use the bilingualised (English-Chinese) dictionary that they habitually used during think-aloud sessions. She chose the following research methods: thinking-aloud as the major method for collecting verbal data, simulated recall interview, English comprehension exercise, observation and follow-up questionnaire. Her findings repeat some results in Laufer and Kimmel's (1997) study. She found that the students preferred to look up the definition of the words in one language only. In another study, Chan (2004) investigated the use of the dictionary among 16 high school Chinese students. She found that her participants consulted the bilingualised dictionary more than the bilingual and the monolingual dictionary.

As for the advantage of bilingualised dictionaries, Hartmann (1991) remarks that *“the trend towards bilingualised LD’s is in line with the double criticism that, on the one hand, monolingual LD’s are still too much like 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 equivalence”* (p: 79). Cowie (1999) believes that a bilingualised dictionary can serve as a bridge between a standard bilingual and a fully-fledged monolingual work. A major variety of bilingualised dictionary is one which is transformed into a learner’s dictionary (by adding translations into the language of the learners) from the monolingual work originally designed for native speakers of the language (James, 1994). Nakamoto (1994:7-8) mentioned six advantages of bilingualised dictionaries:

1. L1 translation equivalent in bilingualised dictionaries complements the L2 definition when the user is unsure of its meaning.
2. L1 translation equivalent rectifies a misconception when misinterpreting the L2 definition.
3. L1 translation equivalent enhances the user’s understanding of L2 lexical item and assures retrieval of correct meaning.
4. L1 translation equivalent eliminates the frustration caused by the user’s psychological need to know the L1 translation.
5. The bilingualised dictionary prevents users from reinforcing the equation of one-to-one equivalence between L1 and L2.
6. It targets all types of users from different backgrounds who can use a bilingualised version of the same monolingual learner’s dictionary. For example, Japanese and Hebrew learners of English can each have access to the same original monolingual dictionary.

The above advantages assume that users read the L2 definitions. If learners use both L1 and L2 together, they will benefit from the bilingualised dictionaries but if they use the bilingual side, then there may be problems because it is not designed to have the

strengths of a good bilingual dictionary (Zöfgen, 1991). Thumb (2002) recommended teachers to explain to their students how to make use of the English definition in the bilingualised dictionary and substantiate this by the equivalent meaning in L1. She warns of the dangers of using the bilingualised dictionary like the bilingual one by ignoring the definition in English and directly reading the meaning in L1.

Laufer and Harder (1997) indicate that a:

*“Good bilingualised dictionary is suitable for all types of learners. When the learner is still unskilled in dictionary use, he or she may rely mostly on the bilingual dictionary information. With progress in these skills, the monolingual information will gain relevance and importance, first in comprehension and later in production. Even when the monolingual part of the entry is used to its full potential, as in the case of our good dictionary users, the translations may still be helpful in reassuring and reinforcing the learner’s decision about the meaning and use of new words.”* (Laufer and Hadar, 1997:195)

They concluded that the bilingualised dictionary provides more information than other types of dictionary as it allows users to select the needed information in the language that is more comfortable for them or in both languages for reassurance and enhancement. Thumb (2002) argued that the usefulness of bilingualised dictionaries is undeniable because definitions and examples are presented in both L1 and L2 which may suit the needs of different learners at different levels.

In short, it can be said that bilingualised dictionaries are a way to overcome the shortcomings of using the monolingual or bilingual dictionary alone and to bring the advantages of the two dictionaries together in one place. They provide more information than bilingual and monolingual dictionaries and allow the user to choose explanations in the one language that is more comfortable or in both languages for reassurance and reinforcement (Laufer and Hadar, 1997).

## 2.6.2 Types of dictionaries in terms of medium

Dictionaries can also be divided based on the medium into paper, electronic dictionaries (which can take different forms such as HDDs, CD-ROMs) and mobile dictionaries. More discussion is presented below.

### A. Print dictionary

‘Paper dictionary’ refers to all conventional dictionaries that are printed on paper. This type of dictionary is very common and used among L2 language learners and native speakers. Print dictionaries give the students much information (Koren, 1997). Although previous studies have not devoted enough space to showing the effectiveness of the print versus electronic dictionaries, some studies have revealed that paper dictionaries are still highly appreciated by students for enabling them to see a whole page at once, with other words from the same family. Taylor and Chan (1994) conducted a study on the growing use of bilingual electronic dictionaries in Hong Kong and reported that their English teachers preferred the students to consult printed dictionaries (cited in Nesi, 1999b, p: 57). Many of the students admitted that paper dictionaries were more comprehensive and detailed than the electronic ones.

It is important to say that print dictionaries require more effort than electronic ones from the user, especially those who lack practical reference skills. This extra effort to employ these dictionaries may lead to better retention. Schmitt and McCarthy (1997: 3) suggests: *“The more cognitive energy a person expends when manipulating and thinking about a word, the more likely it is that they will be able to recall and use it later.... learning strategies which involve deeper engagement with words should lead to higher retention than ‘shallower’ activities.”* Another advantage is allowing students to improve reading skills such as skimming and scanning (Kent, 2001).

On the other hand, one of the major disadvantages of print dictionaries is that they require the user to flip pages to search for the needed type of information which makes the searching process a time-consuming task. Other disadvantages of print dictionaries can be their small font size, thinness of pages and differences in phonetic symbols between dictionaries (McCarthy, 1999). Unlike electronic dictionaries, paper dictionaries require knowledge of alphabetical order to reach the target word. It

is also well recognised that the inclusion of phonetic symbols after each headword to illustrate the pronunciation can be technologically substituted by actually hearing of the term vocalised in the electronic dictionary. The next section includes a discussion of electronic dictionaries.

### **B. Electronic dictionary**

With the explosion in technology, electronic dictionaries exist in various formats and can be accessed in several ways. There are those that are available on the internet “*online dictionaries*”, on CD-ROM, in hand held devices “*portable dictionaries*” and recently in cell phones. Recent dictionary studies (Chi, 2003; Li, 1998; Li, 2003) found that the hand-held electronic dictionary and online dictionaries are gaining acceptance among students. These studies also showed that electronic dictionaries have become one of the reference implements that students often use. Therefore, it can be said that its prominence in students’ reference skills cannot be exaggerated.

Compared with traditional printed resources, the electronic dictionary can present a greater range of lexical information. For example, the types of information, such as thesaurus, corpus and lexical relationship information, can be found in electronic dictionaries. Another major feature is the availability of diverse exploration paths (Cumming, Cropp and Sussex, 1994, p. 369)

Recently, technology has brought in on-line dictionaries and CD dictionaries and HHDs which allow learners fast and convenient access to the needed word, with extra features such as the ‘real sound’ word pronunciation. These types of dictionaries provide students with the opportunity to experience listening to a real native speaker, from which students may practice pronunciation (Kent, 2001). Nesi (1999b) argues that the spoken headwords in these dictionaries are a very practical and much better guide to pronunciation than the IPA symbols in the paper dictionaries. Electronic dictionaries can be stored and accessed in a number of different ways, as stated earlier. According to Nesi (1999b) an electronic dictionary can be stored on a hard disk or a CD-ROM to be used with a computer, which makes it more portable than a dictionary-sized book, and able to supply many times the quantity of information (Nesi, 1999b, p. 56).

However, although HHDs were relatively new at the time of Nesi's study, they were more commonly used by L2 learners than the other forms of electronic dictionaries. They were also preferred by learners over paper dictionaries. The students' preference for HHE dictionaries was due to its main advantage, which is speed (Koren, 1997). For example, Weschler and Pitts (2000) found in their study that students could identify words 23% faster with a HHE dictionary than with a paper bilingual dictionary. HHE dictionaries are also more portable than conventional dictionaries. Furthermore, they can offer users information about antonyms, idioms and synonyms, as well as store different dictionaries for several languages (Kent, 2001). Kent (2001) believes that the speed and convenience of HHE dictionaries could also provide the students with an instant feeling of control over the learning environment.

However, there are drawbacks in using HHE dictionaries. Kent (2001) criticises HHE dictionaries as they provide only narrow learning through presentation of the entry. Moreover, Koren (1997) claims that HHE dictionaries assist students to find out the meaning of words, while paper dictionaries help them to learn words. Sharp (1995:50) claims that *"one fear ... expressed by teachers ... is that the speed with which these [portable electronic dictionaries] retrieve information may not necessarily aid the memory's retention of information for language learning purposes"*. Therefore, the retention of words is likely to be better with a paper dictionary than with electronic one. HHE dictionaries also suffer from lack of sufficient information about words that is needed by users.

For example, those dictionaries with a small amount of memory have serious restrictions and limited storage capacity, thereby limiting the range of words available. Similarly, inadequate translations and limited numbers of examples could lead to misunderstanding or lack of comprehension, though the same is true of very small print dictionaries (Kent, 2001). She also adds that HHE dictionaries require power so batteries must be recharged after use (Kent, 2001).

As said earlier, HHE dictionaries have a short history. Therefore, few studies have been conducted on their role and the users' attitudes towards them. In the Saudi Context, Al-Jarf (1999) conducted a study to find out the percentage of EFL students

who employed portable electronic dictionaries. The participants were 234 students, female and male, at the College of Language and Translation, King Saud University, Riyadh. She used a questionnaire and post-questionnaire interview. She found that almost all her participants used a general bilingual HHE dictionary. They correctly identified 80% of the words they needed. She also found that the EFL students used HHE dictionaries for reading and writing purposes whereas translation students mainly used it in translation courses. Most EFL students preferred to use electronic dictionaries and described them as fast, portable and easy to use. Students also preferred using HHE dictionaries because they saved time and effort. They could use their HHE dictionaries to check the spelling of a word and hear its pronunciation. Al-Jarf concluded that, although HHE dictionaries have many features such as being fast, portable and easy to use, conventional dictionaries are still superior in their word coverage and comprehensiveness. Paper dictionaries can give all the meanings of the word and many kinds of information about it. Many of the students indicated that HHE dictionaries should be used in combination with a paper dictionary.

Nesi (1999b) conducted a survey of dictionary-using habits of ten international students entering Warwick University. All ten students were extremely enthusiastic about portable electronic dictionary use, eight of them stating that they used them on a daily basis, while the other two claimed that they used them every week. Although all these students owned print dictionaries, eight of them consulted portable electronic dictionaries more frequently than print dictionaries. The advantages reported by the hand held electronic dictionary users were that they were easy to carry around and use; a sound feature was available; there were a variety of access routes that HHE dictionaries provided; HHE dictionaries could be expanded and/or linked to other applications; and the database contained extra information. Students also noted that, rather than typing in the search box, they could look up words via their synonyms, antonyms, similar spelling or a first language equivalent. Students' complaints against the HHE dictionaries were that they needed more information.

Tang (1997) conducted her study on 254 Chinese students of English and 20 ESL teachers in Vancouver, Canada. She aimed at examining the students' use of the HHE dictionary as a tool for learning English and its strengths and weaknesses as perceived by ESL teachers. Tang found that 87% of the students owned HHE

dictionaries. HHE dictionaries appeared to assist students both with reception and production of English. Those with a good knowledge of grammatical terms benefited the most from electronic dictionaries. Although many students found it difficult to decide on the most appropriate meaning from multiple meanings provided in the dictionary, they attempted to use different strategies for meaning-discovery. For example, most students read the various meanings, looked at the context, and guessed the meaning when using the HHE dictionary to search for unfamiliar words. Students considered their dictionaries beneficial because of their portability, speed, availability of sound, and availability of their L1.

On the other hand, teachers expressed their concerns about their students' use of electronic dictionaries, although they noticed some advantages in using them. Tang's study may indicate that electronic dictionaries are not as harmful as many educators think.

It could be argued that CD-ROM, online and computer dictionaries have sufficient information about words but that access to these types of dictionaries is not available to all students inside the classroom. This is because students need to have computers that are connected to the internet to use online dictionaries. In Saudi Arabia, access to computers and to the internet is not available to students in all schools. However, this study will investigate all these types of dictionaries to see if the Saudi students use them and which type they use more frequently.

### **2.6.3 Choice of dictionary (pre-ownership knowledge)**

Looking at the characteristic features of the above types of dictionaries, the literature showed that dictionary choices are linked to the students' preferences for one type over others. For example, previous studies such as Tomaszczyk(1979), Schmitt (1997) and Li (1998) revealed the users preferred to use a bilingual dictionary more frequently than monolingual or bilingualised dictionaries. On the other side of this argument, teachers may prefer their students to use monolingual dictionaries because of their comprehensiveness and coverage of many types of information. Stein (1989) recommends monolingual dictionaries to intermediate level students. Diab (1990) found that his participants preferred to use monolingual dictionaries over bilingual

dictionaries because they were disappointed with the bilingual Arabic dictionaries available.

The earlier discussion in Section 2.2 indicated that dictionaries vary in their features from one type to another. Thus, a student needs to think carefully and purchase the best types of dictionary that serve his/her needs. It is undeniable that other factors may affect the students' choice of the dictionary (see Béjoint, 1981; Iqbal, 1987; Diab, 1990). The knowledge that precedes the ownership of the first dictionary, which is more likely to be influenced by the teacher's recommendations, can be seen as the main factor that affects dictionary selection. Some of the previous studies showed the impact of the teachers on the students' choice of their dictionaries (Béjoint, 1981; Iqbal, 1987; among others). Li (1998) found that some of her participants followed their teacher's advice in choosing to buy a dictionary. All of her students owned at least one dictionary, with about one third owning a combination of monolingual English and bilingualised English-Chinese dictionaries, and another one third owning these two and an electronic dictionary (Chi, 2003: 46). Two thirds of them used the dictionary all the time, very often and quite often during term time. Only one third of them had been taught how to use a dictionary to assist their learning of English. Two thirds were willing to join workshops on dictionary use training (Chi, 2003: 50).

The choice of a suitable dictionary requires the student to have a broad knowledge of the dictionary market and how to evaluate among recent dictionaries. Teachers should transfer their knowledge about the characteristic features that distinguish dictionaries from each other to the students. However, it is argued at the same time that teachers should not interfere in their students' choice or name a particular dictionary for their students. Studies such as Béjoint (1981), Iqbal (1987), Li (1998) and Chi (2003) revealed that teachers went beyond showing the students how to choose their dictionaries by nominating a particular dictionary and asking the students to buy it.

Previous studies have shown that teachers are more knowledgeable than their students; however it is argued that new dictionaries improve quickly and that

teachers cannot keep track of new editions (Diab, 1990). Advances in e-dictionary production can create great challenges for teachers in terms of becoming acquainted with the latest dictionaries and their features. Therefore, teachers should be very cautious when suggesting a dictionary to the students as new generations are attracted to the new technology. Thus, it is argued that electronic dictionaries are generally preferred over paper dictionaries. The present study investigates the involvement of other factors in dictionary purchasing choice and what influences this can have on the students' attitudes towards dictionary use.

## 2.7 Reference needs

'Reference needs' refers to all the situations where the students refer to their dictionary to search for lexical information. The reference needs of dictionary users have long been an area of concern. Reference needs are defined by Hartmann and James (1998: 116) as "*the circumstances that drive individuals to seek information in reference works such as dictionaries*". Studies of users' reference needs have covered areas including the sort of situation in which the users feel the need to consult dictionaries, language activities in which the users participate (for instance, whether dictionary use is for decoding or encoding purpose), the kind of information consulted most and least, language needs not satisfied by the dictionary, and so on (Béjoint, 2000). In general, studying users' reference needs means to identify what people use their dictionaries for.

Tomaszczyk (1979) conducted the first study on dictionary use among foreign language learners, aiming at investigating the use of the dictionary by two groups of students, 284 Polish university students on the one hand and 165 instructors and translators on the other. The comparison between the use of bilingual and monolingual dictionaries was examined by a questionnaire with 57 items. Tomaszczyk's study revealed that the lexical information that was needed most by the respondents when looking up a word in a dictionary was the meaning of that word (95.3% in bilingual and 85.4% in monolingual). The other types of information are reported in frequency order as follows: 74% of the subjects looked for synonyms, 72% for spelling and idioms, 65% for pronunciation, 45% for swear words and obscenities, 36% for word division and 19% for etymology. Concerning the types of

study activity in which dictionaries (bilingual or/and monolingual) were used most often, the subjects stated that they used them most frequently for reading comprehension and written composition, and rather less for translation, listening comprehension or speaking. Activities in reading texts for decoding purposes were referred to more often than those in spoken forms. Although Tomaszczyk's (1979) survey on dictionary users' reference needs was comprehensive, some researchers aired their reservations about it. First, it is argued that the questionnaire was not published for reference and review. Furthermore, the nature of the two groups and the different proficiency of subjects might muddle the picture and make the comparison and the subsequent of generalisation of findings extremely challenging. Thumb (2002) criticised Tomaszczyk's study for its incomplete statistical analysis and for its unclear presentations which have undermined the reliability and validity of his results. Another similar study was Béjoint (1981), which is probably the most frequently cited study of the dictionary needs of foreign language learners. It aimed at revealing how 122 French university students of English used their monolingual general English dictionaries. 87% of the subjects reported using their monolingual dictionary to check meaning. Other types of information were as follows: grammar 53%, synonyms 52%, spelling/pronunciation 25%, language variety 19% and etymology 5%. It was also found that dictionaries were mainly used for reading comprehension and writing rather than for speaking. It was also found that 86% of the subjects used the dictionary for translation from L2-L1, 60% for reading, 58% for written composition, 14% for oral comprehension, and 9% for oral composition. In other words, the subjects used their dictionaries for decoding more than encoding purposes, as in Tomaszczyk's study. Béjoint concluded that the monolingual dictionaries were more satisfactory and useful than bilingual ones according to the students' judgments. However, in terms of information utilisation, the subjects seemed not to use their monolingual dictionaries as fully as possible since they did not appear to notice the abundance of information provided in these dictionaries.

Hartmann (1983) conducted a study on investigating the use of bilingual dictionaries among English-speaking learners and teachers of German. The participants were 118 university students and 17 teachers. He collected his data through a 23-item questionnaire concerning ownership, frequency of use, type of information sought, and the context of dictionary use etc. He found that the students used their dictionary

first to get the meaning and secondly for grammar (82%), thirdly for using in context (69%), fourthly for spelling (68%) and fifthly for synonyms (58%) but they rarely used it for pronunciation (15%) or etymology (12%). In terms of the type of study activity, he found that the subjects used the dictionary for L2-L1 translation (90%), followed by reading (83%), writing (74%), listening (19%) and speaking (16%).

Galisson (1983) cited in Tono (2001), conducted his studies on both learners of French in the US and French native speakers. His findings were that the information that users most often searched for was word meaning, followed by spelling, both in the foreign language as well as in the native language. Nuccorini (1992) found that dictionaries were used in all cases for meanings (75%), followed by pronunciation (14.2%). Similarly, Iqbal (1987) found that meaning was the most frequent look-up information among advanced Pakistani L2 learners of English, followed by spelling and pronunciation. Summers and her colleagues (1988) conducted a study on the frequency and purpose of dictionary use and the use of the entries in the dictionary while reading. They found that the dictionary was used to look up a meaning, check spelling and find examples, check pronunciation and look for grammar information. The dictionary was referred to four times as often to look up meanings, about 60% of the total usage, which is usually most needed when reading. Similar to the results found in most of the other studies, Taylor (1988) found that checking word meanings and spelling were the two most needed types of information in dictionary use. On the other hand, pronunciation, grammar and information on usage were the least needed types of information sought when using the dictionary.

Table 2-0-1: List of studies investigating the lexical information that L2 learners check in a dictionary

Researcher		Order					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
Tomaszczyk (1979)	PODU	Reading	Writing	Translation	Listening	Speaking	-----
	TIN	Meaning	Spelling	Status	Usage	Grammar	-----
Béjoint (1981)	PODU	Reading	Writing	Listening	Speaking	-----	-----
	TIN	Meaning	Syntactic information	Synonyms	Spelling & Pronunciation	Language variety	Etymology
Hartmann (1983)	PODU	Translation	Reading	Writing	Listening	Speaking	-----
	TIN	Meaning	Grammar	Spelling	Synonyms	Pronunciation	Etymology
Iqbal (1987)	PODU	Reading	Writing	Translating from L2 into L1	Translating from L1 into L2	Listening	Speaking
	TIN	Meaning	Spelling	Pronunciation	Idioms	-----	-----
Diab (1990)	PODU						
	TIN	Meaning	Phonetic information	Spelling	Illustrations	Etymology	Syllabification
Battenburg (1990)	PODU	Reading	Writing	Translating from L2 into L1	Listening	Speaking	-----
	TIN	Meaning	definitions	spelling	Synonyms	Derived forms	Pronunciation
Al-Ajmi (1992)	PODU	Translation	Reading	Writing	Listening	Speaking	-----
	TIN	Meaning	Grammar	Spelling	Pronunciation	Collocations	-----
Li (1998)	PODU	Reading	Writing	Listening	Speaking	-----	-----
	TIN	Meaning	Usage	Spelling	Pronunciation	-----	-----
Al-Jarf (1999)	PODU	Writing	Reading	Vocabulary building	Speaking	Listening	-----
	TIN	Meaning	Part of speech	Illustrative examples	Meaning of English words in Arabic	Spelling	Pronunciation

(PODU = Purpose of dictionary use) (TIN = Type of information needed)

Battenburg (1991) found that dictionaries were used most frequently to check meaning by his ESL students. The other lexical information followed in frequency order: definitions, spelling, synonyms, derived forms, pronunciation, pictures and diagrams, parts of speech and syntactic patterns, cross-references, illustrative sentences, usage labels and finally etymology. He also found that his elementary and intermediate students used the dictionaries primarily for reading activities while his advanced students used their dictionaries for writing tasks. Students also reported using dictionaries considerably for translation from English to their L1. Fan (2000) found in his study investigating the dictionary look-up behaviour of Chinese learners of English that his respondents made only limited use of the dictionaries, mainly for checking the meaning of new words, which is again a kind of decoding activity.

Diab and Hamdan (1999) performed a case study of how 50 Jordanian Arab undergraduates of English interacted with words in their dictionaries while reading a 25-page text in linguistics. They adopted dictionary use records (which are also a form of questionnaire) and structured interviews as forms of data gathering. It was discovered that the students referred to monolingual dictionaries more than bilingual ones, and they found that the monolingual dictionary was more satisfactory. The results also indicated that meaning and pronunciation were mostly consulted (meaning, 85%, and pronunciation, 15%) because of the subjects' needs to comprehend the linguistics text, while grammar, collocation and other types were not considered as relevant in this case. It can be claimed that the findings in the project generally echo the points made by Béjoint (1981) about the use of the dictionary mostly for word meaning and the participants' satisfaction with monolingual dictionaries as well as the inadequate use of dictionary information.

Al-Jarf (1999) conducted her study in the Saudi context, which is relevant to the current study. She aimed to find out the percentage of EFL students and translation students who used portable electronic dictionaries, and the differences between the two groups' uses of their dictionaries. The participants were about 234 students, female and male, who were selected on a random basis from the College of Language and Translation, King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. She used a questionnaire and interviews for data gathering. She found that 43% of the students used their dictionaries for writing, 39% for reading, 39% for building vocabulary,

16% for speaking and 10% for listening purposes. Finding the meaning of the Arabic equivalent was the most needed type of information, followed by: part of speech, illustrative examples, spelling and pronunciation. Although Al-Jarf's study was very informative about the Saudi dictionary users, it has some differences from the current study. Al-Jarf aimed to study the use of the electronic dictionary (ED) among Saudi EFL students, while the current study explores the use of all types of dictionaries used by the students. Additionally it aims to investigate the impact of dictionary training on students, which was not covered by Al-Jarf's study.

It has been shown so far that students very often used their dictionaries for decoding activities like reading comprehension. It can be concluded that dictionaries are used predominantly for searching for the meaning of the L2 item, although these findings did not clarify whether meanings are looked up when encountering unknown words while reading or for long term retention. This can be considered as a receptive use of dictionaries, though it seems practically difficult and unjustifiable to regard 'receptive' and 'productive' purposes as mutually exclusive, for both dictionary compilers and dictionary users. It should be noted here that the relative need for specific information types is more likely to be based on the specific task that the dictionary is being used for (Lew, 2004). Harvey and Yuill (1997), for instance, conducted a study to investigate the use of the monolingual dictionary by L2 learners while writing. The participants reported referring to their dictionaries for the purpose of checking spelling more than other types of lexical information.

### **2.7.1 Difficulties of dictionary use**

It should be noted that, although dictionary use can facilitate the learning of the language, using a dictionary is a demanding job that require learners to possess knowledge of reference skills. All situations where users cannot adequately reach the needed lexical information are known as dictionary use difficulties. It is argued though that these occasions of failure to reach the needed type of information are attributed to the impractical reference skills that the users have rather than to any deficiencies in the dictionaries used (Chi, 2003).

The study of the students' difficulties with dictionary use has been an interest of lexicographers and researchers of dictionary use. The previous studies showed that

the difficulties of the dictionary can be divided into the difficulties reported by students or those observed by researchers. For students, the difficulties of using the dictionaries were highlighted in various studies. Béjoint (1981) found that his French university students encountered different challenges and complications with their dictionary. They ranked these difficulties as follows, in descending order: unsatisfactory definitions, 29%; words missing, 28%; unsatisfactory syntactic guidance, 25%; excessively long entries, 16%; incomprehensible coding, 10%; pronunciation not indicated or not clear, 9%. Kharma (1985) found in his study on Kuwaiti students that most of his respondents were dissatisfied with the monolingual dictionary (90%) as well as the bilingual dictionaries (96%). They related their dissatisfaction to various causes: difficulty of the defining vocabulary 87%; word missing 84% in monolingual dictionary (MD)/ 87% in bilingual dictionary (BD); confusing arrangement of meanings 80% (MD)/ 68% (BD); meaning missing 79% (MD)/ 77% (BD); lack of example sentences 73% (MD)/ 65% (BD); lack of clearness of grammatical labels 57% (MD)/ 65% (BD); and difficult phonetic transcription 50% (MD)/ 55% (BD). Iqbal (1987) found that many of his students emphasised that the definitions were too difficult. Taylor (1988) conducted a small-scale survey on students at the City Polytechnic of Hong Kong. He found that understanding pronunciation symbols created the main problems of dictionary use with about 48%, followed by identifying the right meaning (33% MD; 27% BD). They also complained against the amount of time used to consult a dictionary.

Hartmann (1999) conducted a study on dictionary use among Exeter university students. He distributed questionnaires to 2,040 undergraduate and postgraduate students at five schools (Business & Economics, Education, Engineering & Computer Science, English and Modern Languages) and two centres (Foreign Language Centre and English Language Centre). Among seven hundred and ten questionnaires (i.e. 35%) returned, he discovered that the most difficult types of information to find are related to specialised technical terms 52.2%; idioms and phrases 42.3%; “common English words in a special subject area” 29.1%; general English words 6.4%. The students reported that these difficulties were attributed to some reasons such as: “not enough information in the dictionary” 63.7%; “unclear layout” 19.7%; “I don’t read the instruction to the user” 12%; “my lack of dictionary knowledge” 8.2%; “my lack of dictionary skills” 8.0%.

The students in Scholfield's (1999) study reported their failure to locate the word sought or to identify the appropriate meaning. Neubach and Cohen (1988) conducted a study on six students from different proficiency levels to explore the dictionary use difficulties that students encountered during a dictionary-use-based reading task. The students listed a series of problems that faced them with both bilingual and monolingual dictionaries. When using the dictionary, students reported that they encountered problems with vocabulary and terminology in the definitions of the words. They also mentioned that the alphabetical order created problems for them when searching for words. They also reported their failure to find the word sought either in monolingual or bilingual dictionaries as one of the greatest problems facing them when using their dictionaries (Neubach and Cohen, 1988, pp. 7-8). Papanikolaou (2003) conducted a study on Greek students at secondary level and found that they experienced failure to find the appropriate entry in the dictionary, especially with multiword items.

Ramos (2005) found that the major dictionary use problem encountered by her Spanish university students was their lack of ability to find the words they were looking for. Of the students, 32.7% also stated that it was difficult for them to find the specific information they needed in their dictionaries. Additionally, about 26.5% of the students were unable to understand the definitions. She noted that students related their difficulties with their dictionary to the dictionary itself. Nearly 45.9% of the students claimed that they faced these problems because of the dictionary they owned and very few considered these problems were attributed to other factors such as their lack of familiarity with the dictionary (25.5%), lack of dictionary skills (10.3%) or unclear layout of the dictionary (12.2%). Wingate (2004) found that failing to identify the unknown word in the dictionary was a common problem amongst the subjects. She found that the students encountered problems in locating compound nouns, idiomatic phrases and citation forms of the past participle. She argued that the main cause for being unable to locate the compound word was that learners attempted to look up the compounds as a whole and failed to locate the right entry. Vital (2006) conducted a study on a dictionary use among Brazilian students. She asked about 361 Brazilian elementary and secondary school students and an unknown number of teachers to complete her questionnaires. In term of dictionary

difficulties, students stated that the major difficulties during consultations were locating the word to be looked up and choosing the appropriate meaning.

The researchers of dictionary use could highlight some of the difficulties they noticed their students encounter while doing linguistics activities and some of the reasons for these difficulties. The researchers believed that their participants had dictionary difficulties that students were not aware of. Tono (1984) found that his students always chose the first definition whenever the necessary information to reject the first one was not provided in the dictionaries. He commented that the subjects did not appropriately use the information in question but relied on some other clues to select definitions because students chose wrong definitions in spite of the information available in the dictionary. Neubach and Cohen (1988) found that their participants were reported to formulate an inappropriate expectation before using the dictionary as to the possible meaning of the word, and that this expectation may have impacted their final decision.

Nesi and Hail (2002, p. 282) identified five categories of look-up matters which encountered six groups of international students at Oxford Brookes University in the context of word decoding: (a) selecting the wrong entry or sub-entry; (b) selecting the correct dictionary entry or sub-entry but misinterpreting the information it contained; (c) choosing the correct dictionary entry or sub-entry but not realising that the word had a slightly different (often figurative) meaning in the context; (d) locating the correct dictionary entry or sub-entry but rejecting it as inappropriate in context; (e) failing to identify the word or its appropriate meaning in any of the dictionaries the subjects utilised.

Papanikolaou (2003) described in her study that her students encountered difficulties with their dictionary such as: (a) failure to recognise that the word is inflected; (b) long entries and (c) failure to understand the L1 concept. Ramos (2005) noted two reasons attributed to the students' failure to identify idiomatic phrases. The reasons were: (a) the partial reading of the entry and (b) the lack of knowledge of where their dictionary lists idiomatic phrases. She also found that her subjects failed to locate the citation form of past participles because they were not aware that their dictionary lists the participles of irregular verbs.

In a recent study, Zucchi (2010) investigated the effects of dictionary use on the comprehension of Italian lexical items. The participants were 24 Brazilian university students majoring in Italian. About half of the subjects were in their first semester and the other half in their fifth. They were randomly divided into three groups: the first was allowed to use a monolingual dictionary and the second a bilingual dictionary; the third group had no dictionary. She found that students did not select the right image (i.e. did not understand the target word) for one of the following reasons: (a) not reading the whole entry; (b) not searching the right form of an inflected verb, but rather stopping at an entry word that had the same form as the inflected verb; (c) not comprehending important words in the dictionary definition; (d) not understanding the infinitive form of a verb; (e) not making use of information on usage or grammar; (f) imagining when they did not understand the whole definition.

In conclusion, it can be said that the above studies, among others, show that students sometimes employed poor strategies while using their dictionaries. Some students had a problem when employing their dictionaries as they did not know how to find what they were looking for. Scholfield and Rundell (1999) argued that many dictionary users can be entangled in the failure to locate the right entry during the consultation process. Garcia (2006) argued that many of the dictionary problems that faced students may be related either to using the wrong reference or related to the lack of skills, rather than to shortcomings of the reference works and this shows the importance of skill training.

It is true to claim that different groups of students face different difficulties according to their context and culture. This is shown in the various scopes of dictionary problems reported in previous studies. In the current study, it is essential that difficulties are investigated with the aim of knowing the types of difficulties and whether these difficulties arose from students' lack of skills in dictionary use or because of the dictionaries themselves.

## **2.8 Key studies in dictionary use research**

The following is a brief description of some of the key studies carried out on the use of dictionaries. They are chosen because it is believed they are crucial to the area under investigation in this thesis. They are also related to the current study with

regard to the data gathering methods employed, the aim underpinning some of these studies, or the similarities between the participants of these studies and those in this research.

### **Béjoint (1981)**

This is one of the most frequently cited studies in dictionary use research. Béjoint (1981) carried out a study with some limitations. He was exclusively interested in the use of the monolingual dictionary. In addition, his sample of respondents was homogeneous and few in number as it consisted of 122 French university students of English. The results obtained from Béjoint's questionnaire indicated an overriding interest in meaning and a lack of attention paid to etymology as far as the information looked up in a dictionary was concerned. In descending order, information checked in a dictionary is claimed to be as follows: (1) meaning (87%); (2) syntactic information (53%); (3) synonyms (52%); (4) spelling (25%); (5) pronunciation (25%); (6) language variety (19%); and (7) etymology (5%). The results also identified decoding as the most frequently used type of activity involving a monolingual dictionary, since dictionary meaning is unlikely to be used for encoding purposes.

Béjoint's study also confirms that learners are generally more satisfied with their monolingual dictionaries than with their bilingual ones. This may be attributed to the fact that monolingual dictionaries have more in the information they provide, as discussed above (see 2.6.1.1). There also are some other interesting findings about Béjoint's informants, which are of great importance to this study. Of his respondents, 96% owned at least one monolingual dictionary and 85% indicated that they selected their dictionary because of the recommendation of a teacher. Finally, only 11% mentioned that they look at the introduction to the dictionary thoroughly, which seem to be very disappointing to lexicographers who, in the introduction, spare no effort in explaining the way a dictionary should be used. These problems discussed by Béjoint are of great importance to the current study. They form the basis for the items in the questionnaire.

**Diab (1990)**

To my best knowledge, this study was the first empirical investigation into aspects of dictionary use in English for specific purposes. Motivated by the ESP teaching context, Diab decided to devote his research to studying aspects of dictionary use by student nurses at the University of Jordan. His study aimed to investigate the relationship between ESP learners and dictionaries. He tried to get as large a response as possible, targeting the total population of student nurses (n=405) and the total number of nursing staff (n=24) at the university. In his investigation of the whole context, Diab employed three data-gathering tools and analysed syllabuses, study plans, teaching materials, design documents and the test results. He first collected data by means of two questionnaires: one was written in Arabic for the students, and the other was written in English for the nursing staff. The 405 student respondents were approached during their classes, while the nursing teachers, whose number was ultimately 24, filled in their questionnaires at home. The second data eliciting tool was a structured interview, which targeted 6 ESP teachers (out of 8 in total) and randomly selected 41 nursing students. It aimed to complement and enhance the questionnaire data. Some senior members of nursing staff helped in collecting this type of data. The third method investigated look-up strategies by adopting dictionary use diaries. Thirteen first-year nursing students from Diab's class participated in this method. They were given small form-like slips of paper and instructed to fill in one with specific information each time they consulted a dictionary. One significant finding of this research, related to the ESP context, is that only a few dictionaries from the existing ESP ones have taken ESP learners' needs into consideration. Besides, the popular monolingual English-English dictionaries are of some help to ESP learners. However, they are general in purpose and contain a lot of information that is irrelevant to ESP learners. With regard to the bilingual English-Arabic dictionaries, they lag behind and cannot be taken as ESP dictionaries despite their frequent use as such. Diab also found that there was a great need to help the nursing students in both receptive and productive communication tasks.

He also found that his students glossed in Arabic the vocabulary they looked up in their reading texts. Monolingual and bilingual Arabic-English dictionaries were reported not to be used much by the students in the school. Monolingual English

dictionaries tended to be generally too complicated for the low achiever students. Students reported their dissatisfaction with bilingual English-Arabic dictionaries and showed a need to use both medical dictionaries and English monolingual learners' dictionaries. Students in his study felt that they were inadequately trained to use monolingual learners' dictionaries.

Diab's contributed significantly to ESP in particular and to Arab EFL learners in general. His findings and pedagogical recommendations were insightful to dictionary user and their needs in EFL teaching. Another advantage of Diab's study is the integration of three data-gathering methods which provided a very large amount of data. The study offered detailed pictures of dictionary users and how they cope with their dictionaries in specific language learning activities. Battenburg (1991:87) says: *"Diab's study marks a new era in user-based lexicographic research because he truly considers language learners who have a limited and well-defined number of questions needing to be answered"*.

The relevance of Diab's study to the current research is that it is expected that some similarities between the participants in this study and his study because Arabic is the L1 and English is the L2 for the subjects of both studies and the historical and cultural backgrounds are quite similar. Furthermore, Diab investigated the use of the dictionary for ESP which is similar to this study. Diab's study has strong methodological points which this study will adopt, such as the use of a variety of research instruments.

### **Al-Ajmi (1992)**

Al-Ajmi conducted his study on the use of dictionaries by students of English and science at Kuwait University, with particular focus on bilingual Arabic-English dictionaries. The participants of the study were 320 undergraduate students, 80 from the Faculty of Science and 240 from the Department of English Language and Literature at Kuwait University. The students were from similar English proficiency levels since English was the language of instruction and textbooks in their departments. He studied the background of dictionary use, preferences, and reference skills in order to determine whether these are considered by dictionary compilers, and how far errors are caused by lack of experience and training.

In order to study proficiency effect on the students' needs and reference skills, only second and fourth year students were included because Al-Ajmi chose to measure the English language proficiency by 'year of study'. He allocated his students into two groups; low level (second year) and high level (fourth year). He mentioned that, at the time of conducting his study, most of other reliable sources for determining the subjects' proficiency levels (i.e. departmental records, past examinations results, TOEFL scores) were destroyed or plundered shortly before and during the Gulf war 1990.

He used a questionnaire included 50 multiple-choice items distributed on four sections. He stated that some were derived from previous dictionary use studies (Tomaszczyk, 1979; Béjoint, 1981; Iqbal, 1987). In order to seek confirmation of the questionnaire results, he also conducted translation tests from and into English using the three most popular dictionaries in the Arab world to discover how successfully students obtained the needed information and to find out whether single or combined dictionary use was the most fruitful look-up strategy. Only English majors took part in the translation test.

He found that all the participants referred to bilingual English-Arabic more frequently than any other types of dictionaries. He also found that general purpose dictionaries played a dominant role at the advanced EFL level in Kuwait in terms of ownership, frequency of use and preference, but dependence on them seemed to decrease as students progressed to higher levels. He also found that the main source of structural problems in the E-A dictionary was it was written without identifying the precise needs of the Arab user and it followed the shadow of monolingual English dictionaries. He acclaimed that A-E dictionaries were inappropriate for Arab writers and translators since they were intended to serve the English-speaking user wishing to read Arabic texts.

Al-Ajmi also found that monolingual dictionaries were less popular among beginners than among advanced learners and more beneficial in translation only when combined with a bilingual dictionary. He also found that English majors referred to monolingual dictionaries more than non-English majors. However, he claimed that both used bilingual more than monolingual dictionaries. More significance was assigned to the monolingual dictionary by the students as an effective writing

assistance tool and they were rated highly as a reliable source of information on the grammar of English words. The students indicated that they used the dictionary to refer to meaning and less often for spelling, collocations and grammar.

Al-Ajmi also found that the majority of the subjects stressed the need for training. However, only half of them claimed that they received some sort of instruction in dictionary use. According to Al-Ajmi (1992, p. 239), this may indicate to the need to do more and address dictionary use in the curriculum since it had not received any official recognition by curriculum development. Al-Ajmi made some suggestions on how to improve existing bilingual dictionaries: to update bilingual dictionaries to reflect recent innovations in lexicographic design, especially in EFL dictionaries; to balance the categories and quantities of dictionary information against the needs of users and the most widely practised language skills; to promote co-operation between lexicographers in native English-speaking countries and the nations in the 'expanding circle'.

The relevance to the current study of Al-Ajmi's is that it is expected that some similarities will emerge between the subjects' use of the dictionary in the two studies because Arabic is the L1 and English is the L2 for the subjects of both studies and the historical and cultural backgrounds are quite similar. In his study, Al-Ajmi emphasised bilingual Arabic –English dictionaries and did not pay much attention to monolingual dictionaries. The current study widens the scope as it covers a variety of dictionaries of various kinds and formats. It can be argued that the types and formats of dictionaries under investigation in this research might not have been popular or not even introduced in the 1990s. This is certainly true for some types of dictionary and it supports conducting not only the same sort of investigation, but also one with more research-gathering tools.

#### **Al-Fuhaid (2004)**

Al-Fuhaid conducted a study to investigate the use and evaluation of vocabulary learning strategies (VLSs) by Saudi EFL learners majoring in English. He examined the VLSs of 50 Saudi undergraduate students in their final year at the department of English and translation in Qassim Imam University (now Qassim University), Saudi Arabia. He divided his subjects into two groups, highly proficient and less proficient

based on their vocabulary and grammar knowledge. Al-Fuhaid used a think-aloud questionnaire, and interview to collect the data for this study..

The three data collections were administered according to a specific sequence. The TA was conducted first because he was thought that the students' performance might be affected by the concepts discussed in the interviews or by the content of the questionnaire items. After conducting the TA, the researcher distributed the questionnaire in two sessions. The interviews were conducted three days later after the subjects filled in the questionnaire. He claimed that he did that for two reasons: (1) it gives him sufficient time to read the subjects' responses and comments on the VLSs investigated in the questionnaire; (2) the interviewees would then have a better understanding of the study in terms of background, aims and research questions and it is assumed that they would provide valuable interview data to be used in interpreting the results and findings of the questionnaire (p.133).

47 of the 50 participants who completed in the questionnaire participated in the think-aloud test where they were requested to read five texts and verbalise their thoughts. Al-Fuhaid mentioned that he excluded three subjects due to the poor sound quality of the recordings. A further two subjects were excluded because they were not cooperative in that they did not follow the task instructions as they were told to. The interviews were conducted with 25 respondents after completing the TA and questionnaire.

Al-Fuhaid found that the strategies of using dictionaries were more popular than other discovery strategies for the meaning of words. He stated that the participants largely agreed that they tended to employ bilingual dictionaries most often because they saved time and provided clearer concepts of unfamiliar words than monolingual dictionaries. In addition, the majority of the students claimed using more than one dictionary. He also found that the monolingual dictionary came second with a moderate frequency. He stated that the more frequent use of a bilingual dictionary is likely lead to less frequent use of a monolingual dictionary. Furthermore, the findings revealed that the students usually preferred pocket or hand-held electronic dictionaries in class whereas larger dictionaries were used at home. He also stated that A-E dictionaries were the least frequently used type of dictionary. Al-Fuhaid

also found the use of electronic dictionary seemed to have overlapped with using bilingual and monolingual dictionaries (p.171).

The results of TA revealed that more successful students were more successful in choosing the most suitable meanings from the dictionary. He found that high achiever students used the dictionary in a more flexible way than less achiever ones. The former used the dictionary to improve their comprehension, whereas the latter were mainly searching for Arabic equivalents. Al-Fuhaid's study is relevant to the current study in different aspects. Firstly, both studies share the same context, namely the Saudi EFL context. Secondly, the two studies share similar instruments of data collection (questionnaire, interview). Finally, both of the studies investigate the Saudi EFLs' use of their dictionary.

### **Nesi (1999a)**

Nesi reported in her study that she aimed at specifying the dictionary skills that might be taught at university level; the second part reported on the way these skills were actually being taught by informants at a range of universities in the UK and other countries, and the third part reported on the informants' attitudes and beliefs relating to the teaching of dictionary skills.

Having sent a request for information on that subject through five mailing lists, she received responses from 35 lecturers, who taught either linguistics or one of seven foreign languages. Most of the respondents were based at UK universities, but Nesi also received replies from Australia, Brunei, Denmark, France, Israel, Japan and Russia. Nesi explained that her report did not show quantitative information because the amount of information acquired from each informant varied, and because the informants were self-selected and therefore had an actual interest in the teaching of dictionary skills.

Nesi's study yielded four main themes from discussion with the participants:

(1) Students entered university with poor dictionary skills. Many informants believed that their students had not received much dictionary skills instruction prior to tertiary level. She also found that about 97% of students had no skills, and the majority of the students never used monolingual dictionaries. However, they used bilingual ones

'badly'. Nesi stated that there was also some suggestion that dictionary skills training might fall between two stools. One informant pointed out that while foreign-language teachers assumed that dictionary skills had been covered by first language teachers, first-language teachers were in fact 'working to a different agenda entirely' - 'the school system assumes that skills are transferable and self-evident, but more often than not students assume they are isolated'. Not all informants were conscious of falling standards, however. Training in dictionary skills was not given at one informant's (non-UK) institution because 'we all recommend dictionaries, but students are expected to already know how to use them'.

(2) There is insufficient dictionary training at university level. Most of the informants reported dictionary skills training on pre-sessional courses, in first year programmes, or in an isolated series of lectures, rather than as regular input throughout a student's university life. Only two informants reported providing an introduction to dictionary use on courses at all levels with "progression over the years".

One interesting finding of the Nesi study is related to the link between the time constraint and incorporating dictionary skills into teaching materials. Nesi received comments from her respondents saying that "*much more time needs to be devoted to the development of dictionary skills, but of course modularisation does not allow for it*". She also reported other comments suggesting a lot of room for improvement in dictionary skills. Nesi also stated that several informants expressed dissatisfaction with current practice, describing it as "*far from enough*" (p. 6).

(3) Some dictionary training tasks were unpopular with staff and students. Several informants noted that dictionary skills training was not 'sexy' and that students and tutors found it boring. She reported the experience of one of the respondents in teaching dictionary in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses saying that he/she failed in their attempt to include dictionary skills exercises and a system of vocabulary record keeping because "*the students were bored and the teachers hated it, so I gave up*" (p. 67). This finding is very interesting and shows the reaction and attitude students and teachers may have towards the teaching of dictionary skills. This study will attempt to tap into this issue to investigate the students' feelings about dictionary skills training.

(4) The teaching of dictionary skills was believed to be important. The majority of the respondents believed that training in dictionary use was very useful and beneficial. This is not surprising as the informants in Nesi's study were self-selecting, so it is possibly hardly surprising that many of them considered dictionary skills training 'essential'. One informant said: *"I would have thought that's something any language teacher worth her/his salt would do"*. Three informants also emphasised the importance of good dictionary skills when studying at a distance: *"we consider they are essential for any learner, but even more so for the distance learner"*.

From Nesi's (1999) study, there are a number of important findings related to this research. Nesi detected the ignorance of dictionary teaching during the stages that precede university level. In other words, students might reach university level with relatively low reference skills. The study of Nesi (1999), moreover, also draws attention to the lack of space for dictionary teaching to university students. The findings of the current study will be compared to Nesi's results.

## **2.9 Training in dictionary use**

Training in dictionary use appeared in previous studies and referred to all those situations where students were taught explicitly how to use their dictionaries. Although studies in teaching dictionary skills are scarce in the literature, this section attempts to cover the discussion on dictionary training and explore the previous related studies.

Training in dictionary use was called for in many of the previous studies in dictionary research. However, there is agreement that the literature lacks studies on what dictionary use strategies are more effective for the students. Some of those studies indicated that the difficulties of dictionary use that might face students are more likely to be attributed to the lack of reference skills rather than to deficiencies in the dictionaries. It can be argued that developments have occurred in lexicography leading to production of dictionaries with many friendly features. This might be the reason why some lexicographers claim that they should not be blamed for the difficulties and problems with learners not using or under-using their dictionaries. For example, Frawley (1988, p. 208) argues:

*“It is not at all clear to me why we ought to make dictionaries more learner-friendly by changing them to be more in accord with learners’ needs. No other book caters to its learners in such a way – least of all a reference book – and I am not yet convinced that such changes will increase the ‘usability.’”*

It can be said that during the last two decades dictionaries have become more user-friendly, and this progress has created new dictionaries with beneficial features. Perhaps it is time the focus was shifted to other vital aspects of dictionary use, such as exposing students to explicit training. It is expected that such training would assist students to employ their dictionaries appropriately.

The greatest challenge to the concept of dictionary training is that teaching dictionary has not been given a space in the classroom because dictionaries are not seen by teachers as part of the English language curriculum and certainly not in the examination system regulations (Chi, 2003). It has been found that, while dictionaries are considered by most teachers an effective learning tool, many of them express concern about dictionary use inside the classroom. Barns et al. (1999:21-22; cited in Carduner, 2003) argues that some teachers feel that learners fail to use a dictionary properly due to inadequate metalinguistic skills in relation to knowledge of dictionary conventions. Herbst and Stein (1985) found that respondents received little training in how to use the dictionary, particularly with encoding, so students were unable to use the dictionary to their advantage. They recommended that dictionary use be taught and practised in the language classroom because users need to be shown how to apply a variety of reference skills.

Although some teachers may have found their students lacking the skills to use dictionaries, they have not devoted the time to teach these skills in class. Those who have taught the skills have not accurately explored their students’ needs before teaching them dictionary skills. For example, Chi & Yeung (1998) conducted a survey-study and found that there appeared to be a discrepancy between the teachers’ focuses and the students’ real needs in the use of dictionaries in Hong Kong. Surprisingly, they found that 75% of the students who admitted they had received dictionary training said they had been taught the meanings of dictionary symbols for

grammatical information. However, in the same study the researchers found that grammar was the item that the respondents would look up least frequently.

It can be claimed that teachers should accurately judge their students' level and accommodate the reference skills that can assist them to utilise the dictionary for linguistic purposes. Therefore, proposing a dictionary training course to the students without identifying their linguistics needs and dictionary difficulties would not be worth the effort. Teachers need to take into account the students' dictionary practice and problems they encounter with their dictionaries. This can provide a possibility for suitable progress and avoid any discrepancies that might occur from teaching un-needed dictionary skills, as in Chi & Yeung's (1998) study. In the current study, the students' dictionary needs and difficulties are explored first before suggesting the dictionary skills that are to be included in the dictionary training.

The literature review is presenting studies that have attempted to explore the teaching of the dictionary to students of English. The following paragraphs include some selected studies in greater detail.

### **Kipfer (1987)**

Kiefer conducted an investigation into the acquisition of dictionary skills and their influence on the language needs and abilities of American high school students. 292 students were assigned to complete the questionnaire and 30 took the tests based on the chosen exercises from the LDOCE workbook. Kipfer's study covered four parts: (a) the relationship between language needs and dictionary skills; (b) the acquisition of dictionary skills and its relationship to needs and attitudes; (c) the influence of dictionary skills on reading and writing ability, and (d) the result of instructing the use of learners' dictionaries to native speakers (Kipfer, 1987; p: 44).

According to Kipfer, the students did not encounter much difficulty in locating the information they wanted from dictionaries during the test, but found it tedious to look up all the details in the time allowed, due to their infrequent use of reference works (Kipfer, 1987, p. 47). The results revealed that the respondents admitted their lack of knowledge about their dictionaries. The study findings also showed that they had never been provided with any information about differences between the available commercial dictionaries or guidance on dictionary use.

Kipfer found that direct teaching of dictionary reference skills could be an effective means of improving language understanding and could also widened the range of information to which students gain access. Although the learners' dictionary is usually considered to be for foreign language learners, she claimed that "*it a good learning tool for native-language intermediate level users*" (p. 49). The idea gained from this research is that if native students need reference training and can benefit from it, foreign learners will gain more from such training.

### **Jacobs (1989)**

Jacobs conducted a study to investigate whether instruction in how to use a dictionary can lead to improved second language performance and greater dictionary use among Thai English majors in a reading and writing course at a Thai university. The 54 subjects were divided into three classes A, B and C. One of the participating classes was instructed in the use of a monolingual learner's dictionary (MLD) while the other received only the normal detailed correction of composition without instruction in dictionary use. The researcher followed the pre-test/ post-test mode with a two week treatment assigned to class C. The passage correction test administered before and after the instruction was used to assess instructional effectiveness. The researcher also aimed at investigating whether dictionary instruction could motivate students to use MLDs in the final examination. The type and amount of dictionary use in the course's final examination measured whether the dictionary training had led to greater use of MLDs. The results showed significant improvement on the passage correction test for the class C that received instruction in dictionary use, but none for the other two classes. Also, the result showed that no students from class A brought MLDs to the final exam, 60% brought bilingual dictionaries, and 40% did not bring any dictionary. Only 29% from class B had MLDs during exam, while about 46% had no dictionary. Students from class C used monolingual dictionaries much more on the final exam. 79% of the students in group C brought dictionaries while the other 21% had no dictionary.

### **Doppagne (1998)**

With the aim of teaching her Belgian students how to use English MLDs, Doppagne first showed them how many writing errors in a composition could be avoided if

such dictionaries had been consulted. However, she then decided to attempt to convince her students that MLDs are useful not only as “anti-error” aids, but also as tools for enhancing language knowledge.

In her lessons, she used COBUILD2’s workbook. At the end of her article, Doppagne announced that she administered a test to determine whether the dictionary teaching had improved the use of MLDs. Apparently, the report of such a test has not been published yet.

### **Bishop (2001)**

Bishop conducted his study to find out to what extent dictionary skills training can increase performance in composition writing. He chose 30 students of French with different proficiency levels studying at the Open University. They were divided into two groups of 15 participants each: a control group (CG) and a test group (TG). They were asked to write a short essay in 90 minutes, at home, which was sent to the researcher to make a copy and return with no error correction or comments. After writing the first draft, the students of the TG were sent to a dictionary training course. After a period of time, the respondents were asked to look at their unmarked essay again to think about what improvements they could make and to write a second draft. Similarly, the second draft was sent to the researcher.

Bishop explains in some detail the design of the study instrument. He planned to measure “*Accuracy and Quality of Language*”. He adopted for accuracy a distinction between ‘mistakes’ and ‘errors’. He defined ‘mistakes’ as “*lower level inaccuracies correctable within the knowledge of the learner*”, while errors were defined as “*unlikely to be correctable within the grammatical, lexical and idiomatic knowledge of the learner at this stage*” (p. 64). For the quality of the essay, Bishop stated some criteria such as the combination of verbs and adverbs, use of adverbial expressions, the use of complex sentences and the use of the subjunctive.

Bishop received the two drafts of the essay and counted the number of words. He then divided this number by the number of mistakes or errors and by the number of quality features. For instance, if a draft of 312 words contained 30 inaccuracies, the accuracy rating would be 10.4; and with 85 quality features, the quality rating would

be 3.6. Bishop explained that the higher the first rating and the lower the second one, the better the final score.

The results for each student of the TG showed great individual differences (for example, the length of the essay varied between 193 and 840 words). The result also revealed that the second version in the TG was 10% longer than the first one. It was found that correctness and quality developed 14.3% and 11.8%, respectively. For the CG, the correctness and quality improved slightly by 1.5% and 2.2%, respectively.

It can be said that, apparently, the dictionary skills training course improved the students' performance in writing an essay. However, it can be argued that the criteria of the test evaluation were not totally objective. Another problem is that the researcher was apparently the only rater of the study and could have been biased, either consciously or unconsciously.

### **Carduner (2003)**

Carduner conducted his study over three separate semesters of a third-year, college level Spanish grammar and composition course at an American university. The participants' number was not revealed by the researcher but, apart from two students, all of the students were native speakers of English. *"All lessons on using a dictionary were taught within the context of the course goals, which were to improve students' grammatical knowledge base and writing proficiency in Spanish and to provide a foundation for continued, independent language learning after completion of the course. ... Students were instructed in how to use reference books, including a bilingual dictionary, primarily for encoding purposes, i.e. writing in, or translating into, the foreign language ..."* (p. 71). All lessons on dictionary use were incorporated into the course syllabus except for a few consciousness-raising activities (p. 71). During the course, emphasis was given to the skills of looking up. For example, when teaching nouns, students were presented with how to look up *"a noun's gender and plural form, and during the unit on verbs, they were shown how to use the verb conjugation charts found in most bilingual dictionaries"*. Students were asked to rate their overall skill in using bilingual dictionaries at the beginning and end of the semester in order to evaluate the overall usefulness and effectiveness of dictionary-skills training. Carduner chose the following skills and strategies to be examined in his study, which include: (a) raising students' awareness of polysemy;

(b) familiarising students with common abbreviations; (c) encouraging students to consult multiple sources, and (d) encouraging them to consult their dictionary or grammar book to reduce errors and verb conjugation misspellings.

The results revealed that students held positive attitudes towards their dictionary course training. They found the lessons on using the dictionary very useful. Moreover, the course raised students' awareness of the polysemy within the definition and how this affects the meaning selection in different contexts. Responses from students also illustrated their increased awareness of the care with which dictionary selection must be made. Carduner claims in his conclusion that the *“favourable findings in the data suggest that foreign language students benefit from dictionary skills training”* (p. 73).

### **Chi (2003)**

Chi conducted a research project on students' habits and choices when using dictionaries to assist their English learning and on the content and methodology to teach or learn dictionary use. Chi also aimed at exploring the effectiveness of teaching dictionary use for improving students' reference abilities. She carried out her study by identifying the students' needs and the nature of the existing English course at the university where they were studying before employing tailor-made teaching materials on dictionary use. The subjects were 248 non-native students at tertiary level in Hong Kong. The data were collected and analysed statistically and qualitatively. The questionnaire was completed by 248 students and 15 of them attended the interviews. Her other research method was to teach students selected dictionary use items and evaluate students' progress by employing a pre-test and post-test experimental mode. The dictionary training was carried out through a conventional English enhancement course.

The results proved that teaching dictionary use to students is effective in enhancing the knowledge and skills required to use English learners' dictionaries and solve some lexical complications. Based on the findings, it is recommended that support and training should be provided to English teachers to ensure that they are conversant with the development of, and innovations in, English learners' dictionaries. Chi concluded that there needs to be further research in this area and investigations into

the effectiveness of training in dictionary use. It should be noted that Chi limited her study to the following five skill themes: selecting verb-noun collocations, recognising style labels, extracting cultural information, alphabetical ordering, and recognising phonetic transcription symbols.

### **Wang (2007)**

Wang conducted his study to assess the effect of dictionary skills instruction on the reading comprehension of junior high EFL students in Taiwan. He carried out dictionary skills instruction in English classrooms. The numbers of the participants were 40 second-year junior high students of two classes from Tainan Municipal Chen-gong Junior High School. He adopted the experimental mode, where each class was randomly assigned to the experimental or the control group. First, the students were asked to complete a questionnaire about their dictionary use. Then, they were requested to take a pre-test on local reading comprehension and their dictionary skills. After the pre-test, the experimental group received dictionary skills instruction for about 20 minutes during each class. The duration of the instruction lasted about three weeks before the students were asked to take the post-test.

In the findings, Wang first indicated the problems that the subjects encountered with their dictionaries. The problems included: understanding short forms, labels and grammar codes of the dictionary, getting familiar with the alphabetical order, making use of guide words, scanning a dictionary page, distinguishing a homograph, removing regular inflections, removing affixes of derivatives, scanning nearby entries or seeking in the addendum, recognising compounds or idioms, and finding the right meaning in a polysomic entry. He also noticed the frequent application of '*Kidrule strategy*' where the participants selected any Chinese fragments 'near' the target words or other words with similar spellings. Then Wang claimed that most of the above mentioned difficulties were reduced after receiving dictionary skills instruction. However he commented that some difficulties were not improved even though with the dictionary training. For example, distinguishing a homograph cannot be improved and Wang related that to the respondents' grammatical knowledge. Wang concluded that the use of dictionaries with proper dictionary skills instruction and practice could significantly improve the performance of local reading comprehension tasks.

**Lew and Galas (2008)**

The aim of Lew and Galas' study was to examine the question of whether dictionary reference skills can be taught effectively in the classroom. They intended to verify whether explicit teaching of dictionary use as part of English language instruction improved the students' dictionary reference skills. Further, they also wanted to explore whether dictionary skills were routinely taught at primary school level, the students' views of their dictionary skills, and the extent to which dictionary skills were acquired naturally without guided dictionary use.

The participants were 57 Polish final-year primary school children, aged between 12 and 13. They were assigned to two groups: an experimental group (28) and a control group (29). At the beginning of the study, all participants were asked to accomplish a questionnaire with items pertaining to their dictionary habits, attitudes and dictionary skills. After that, a pre-test on dictionary skills was given. The test was administered during the 45 minutes of lesson time. The treatment in the form of direct teaching of dictionary reference skills was given to the experimental group. The dictionary skills training course was given in 12 sessions over the course of four weeks. The material on dictionary use was integrated into the language course and taught in normal class time.

The results of the questionnaire revealed that most subjects did not receive training in dictionary skills, and neglected studying the front matter instructions in their dictionaries. Most of the students were confident of their dictionary skills and believed such skills could be learned, which may imply that they learned dictionary skills through natural dictionary use. However, the results of the pre-test showed that the subjects had performed rather poorly. They also found that the performance of the experimental group improved substantially and significantly after joining the training programme. This result proposes that teaching dictionary to students at this level can be effective in assisting them to use dictionaries more efficiently. They concluded that future research in this area should identify the most effective training procedures for specific dictionary skills, user levels and types.

## **2.10 Analysis of research methods used in previous research**

Dictionary research has had a relatively short history. The first study on dictionary use was conducted by Barnhart (1962) who attempted to explore how teachers and students used their dictionary. It is important to note that Barnhart was commercially motivated to do the study. He conducted his study on English native dictionary users.

Other studies were conducted in non-English native speakers' context such as Tomaszczyk, (1979) and Béjoint (1981) who studied dictionary use strategies among Polish and French learners respectively. These studies tended to rely on one indirect method (e.g. questionnaire) of data collection. Thus, there were different calls by researchers (such as Hartmann, 1987 and 1989) to change dictionary use investigation methods from indirect to more direct ones, and from using a single gathering tool to employing a number of data tools to elicit information and improve data analysis with triangulation. Hartmann (2009) has highlighted this change in the trend in dictionary research methods. He also hopes that this trend towards more empirical research methods, such as experiments and verbal aloud protocol, will continue as this provides us with wider awareness of all dictionary use related factors (2009, p. 208).

There follows a brief review of a number of data-gathering tools which have been used in previous studies that investigate different aspects of the dictionary.

### **2.10.1 Questionnaire**

The questionnaire is widely employed in examining dictionary use by English language learners (Nesi, 2000, p.3), and was used at the start of research into dictionary users and their needs, such as in Barnhart's study (1962). Humblé (2001, p. 44), argues that using this tool in dictionary research gives the first sign of a new relationship between lexicographers and the dictionary users who are their audience. Welker (2010, p. 11) thinks that employing a questionnaire has been an advantage in dictionary research because not much information was previously available about the dictionary users' profiles.

However, Hartmann (1987) criticised the questionnaire and suggested that indirect survey studies need to be supplemented or replaced by more carefully controlled direct observation of students while employing dictionary (p. 15). Another criticism

of the questionnaire was made by Nesi (2000), who pointed out the drawbacks of retrospective answers in various questionnaire-based dictionary studies. Crystal (1986) also raised concerns about the accuracy of questions and that such questions may place heavy demands on memory. He also queried whether everyone could confidently write down when they last used a dictionary, why they used it, and how often they consulted one.

Welker (2010) categorises the questions that are normally found in questionnaire-based studies into three types. The first are questions which probe into the facts that can be easily remembered by the respondents, such as the type or the number of dictionaries owned. According to Welker, these questions are of no problem for many of the respondents. The second one is associated with the respondents' views and opinions, for example, whether they are satisfied with their dictionary. The third type of question asks about how the respondents interact with the dictionary such as: What do you search for most in a dictionary? In which circumstances do you consult it most? Does the dictionary help (and what is the percentage of success)? Which part of the entry helps most? (2010, p. 13). Welker claims that the first two types of questions do not normally have a risk factor for the reliability of the answers, but the problem is with the third type.

Questionnaire-based dictionary research in the existing literature has also been criticised for including technical jargon or terminology. Nesi (2000) argues that researchers in some cases may find themselves forced to include these terms in their questionnaires items because they best describe the language issues under investigation. However, according to Nesi (2000), such terminology means either nothing or something else to the participants. For example, technical terms such as etymology, synonyms and antonyms are sometimes hardly comprehended by the ordinary respondent, especially when the group targeted have a low English proficiency level. Therefore, as Nesi (2000) proposes, misunderstanding of both the questions and the answers is very likely to happen on the part of the researcher and the respondents, especially in large-scale sample studies where the chances for the participants to ask about the meaning of the questions is low.

One of the important criticisms frequently cited is related to the respondents' preconceptions about their dictionary practice. Hatherall (1984) criticised the use of questionnaires in dictionary research and argued that people's presumptions about their dictionary practice affects their response: "*Are subjects here saying what they do, or what they think they do, or what they think they ought to do, or indeed a mixture of all three? Do they all define the categories in the same way as the researcher? When all is said and done, do we not, on this basis, arrive at a consensus on how subjects are likely to behave when faced with a particular questionnaire, rather than authentic data on what they use the dictionary for?*" (1984, p. 148).

Researchers should always pay attention to the fact that human based research is difficult to handle. In some instances, respondents could read and act according to the researcher's desires or the society's norms. Nesi (2000) pointed to a situation where Béjoint (1981) found that a less than expected number of his respondents admitted their inability to understand dictionary codes. He commented on that, saying: "*Informants are often reluctant to confess to a failure to understand*". Nesi thought that this reluctance may disprove the responses of a number of items in the questionnaire. Crystal (1986, p. 78) criticised the dictionary-related questionnaire as restricting and directing the respondents towards some kind of prejudiced answers and ideas. He noted "*Because we know what "should" be in a dictionary, as good linguists and lexicographers, we ask questions relating only to these notions, questions to do with lexical relationships, form, class, etymology and so on. But an ideal lexicographer should always be striving to go beyond this to discover whether there are other parameters of relevance to the user*". (1986, p. 78)

It can be said that the questionnaire has received a lot of attention and criticism because of its wide use across time and place. However, a good deal of the criticism discussed above can be raised against other methods of data-collection. For example, reluctance to display failure on the part of respondents and directing them towards certain responses, are all potential matters in both the questionnaire and the interview. Hatherall's (1984, p. 148) criticism mentioned above, which advocated direct observation as a replacement for the questionnaire, was challenged by Lew (2002). Lew (2002) claimed that Hatherall's major criticism about the questionnaire

was linked to its validity as a measurement tool, for not measuring what it is supposed to measure. According to Lew (2002), this charge can be justifiably made against direct observation techniques. Therefore, the criticism discussed earlier should be given its appropriate value in modifying, rather than disregarding, the role that can be played by the questionnaire. It can be said that dictionary use research would not have received interest or improved its current status without the support of questionnaires. Many of the well-known studies that are often cited in the present study are primarily or solely questionnaire-based, e.g. Iqbal (1987), Marelllo (1987), Li (1998).

One of the most important advantages of the questionnaire is its ability to be used for a large-scale sample which may increase the representativeness of the participants to the population. This feature distinguishes the questionnaire over other data gathering methods. Conversely, studies choosing questionnaires as a method of data collection on a small number of participants are in danger of lacking the representativeness feature, as in El-Sakran's (1984) study distributing questionnaires to only 36 respondents.

The above discussion on the questionnaire as a research method is highly relevant to the current study. This research employed the questionnaire as a method of data collection based on Welker's (2010) positive assessment of the questionnaire as being an advance if less is known about dictionary-user profiles. Moreover, attention is paid to the criticism of questionnaires to avoid potential problems. More discussion about these difficulties is presented in the methodology chapter. Now, a brief discussion is presented about the use of the questionnaire in dictionary use studies.

Using questionnaires in dictionary research is very common. The questionnaire was used by the majority of all previous studies conducted on dictionary use strategies such as (Barnhart, 1962; Tomaszczyk, 1979; Baxter, 1980; Béjoint, 1981; Hartmann, 1983; Diab, 1990; Battenburg, 1991; Nesi, 1999) However, there are great differences in terms of sample size and in terms of numbers of questions. The largest number of participants was more than 1,000 in studies such as Bensoussan, (1984), Atkins et al, (1990) and the smallest number was 16 in Nuccorini (1992). In terms of questions, the range was from 108 items in Barnhart (1962) to six in Baxter (1980).

Nesi (1999) used an internet questionnaire which aimed to obtain factual data on dictionary use among a large number of experts via web site discussion groups and mailing lists, asking for responses on the type of dictionary reference skills they considered to be important in the higher education context and the type of deliberate guidance and teaching provided to practice these. According to many research methods experts, such as Seliger and Shohamy (1989) and McDonough (1995), questionnaires are a suitable way of tapping into the knowledge, opinions, attitudes, ideas and experiences of participants.

The questions in questionnaires are set out in a very systematic way and answered by reading them and ticking the responses or writing in short answers. Administration is easy and a large number of subjects can be covered in a short time. Data from questionnaires are easier to analyse than those from other instruments. Moreover, there is no doubt that a questionnaire is one of the most important and well-known tools for gathering research data. It is considered the most accessible and familiar method of collecting language learning strategies data. Oxford (1996: 38) asserts that questionnaires have great advantages: they are appropriate for identifying the 'typical' strategies used by an individual; they can be aggregated into group results; and a wide array of strategies can be measured. They can be also analysed in numerical terms, as frequencies of particular categories.

### **2.10.2 Interviews**

The interview is used as a qualitative data gathering tool as supportive method to the questionnaire in the dictionary research such as in (Diab, 1990; Li, 1998). It offers a good space for the researcher to gain a more detailed discussion of the students' dictionary behaviours. It has an advantage over the questionnaire as it prevents cheating in a situation; for example, if participants are asked what they know about their dictionary, they cannot check it to find out (Welker, 2010, p. 14). According to Dörnyei (2007, p. 136), it is the most frequently used type in applied linguistics and may also be so in dictionary use research. The interview can be used as a supplement, gathering data to verify the responses given to the questionnaire. The interview in this study is unstructured and conducted in Phase I of this research. It is used with the questionnaire as a springboard to the dictionary training in Phase II.

### **2.10.3 The protocol**

The protocol is an observational technique which keeps a record of what occurs during the dictionary consultation act. In the protocol, participants report and express their reasons and other thoughts which occur to them during the consultation. It is also known as self-observation protocol, thinking-aloud record or protocol. The protocol can often unveil characteristics of individuals or groups which would be difficult to determine by other means such as questionnaires.

The protocol in dictionary research came as a response to different calls by (Hartmann, 1987 and others) who advocated its features to allow researcher to directly obtain data from dictionary users. According to Wiegand (1998) written protocols are written during or after the consultation process. Not only can the proper consultation acts be annotated, but even the cases in which subjects thought of consulting a dictionary but then desisted can be recorded.

The think-aloud protocol can be seen through very useful for the participants verbalise their thoughts while searching in their dictionaries. Unlike questionnaire, protocol allows students to describe their dictionary use behaviour without attending to their short or long-term memories. Questionnaires and interviews offer important data, but they capture impressions by indirect means rather than by the direct observation of real consultation processes. They tell us only how respondents perceive what happens, not what really happens. In dictionary user studies, direct observation can be more trustworthy than user reports. The research by Ard (1982), Gallisson (1983), Hatherall (1984), Al-Besbasi (1991) and Thumb (2002) are examples of protocol studies whose aim was to directly reach to the reference strategies of particular dictionary user groups.

### **2.10.4 Observation**

Observation means any form of monitoring or observing dictionary users' behaviours by the researcher. Although it is simple to be conducted, it is very beneficial in revealing the participants' performance (Tono, 1998, p. 102). Tono (1998) states that observation is the first resort for the researcher who does not have a specific hypothesis or aspect of dictionary use to examine. Compared with questionnaire surveys and interviews in dictionary research, Nesi believes that it has an advantage over indirect methods (e.g. questionnaire) as it reflects the real use of the dictionary

and reduces the incidence where the students claim something they do not actually do (Nesi, 2000).

Wiegand (1998, p. 574) mentioned that not all the information the researcher needs about dictionary use is retrievable, but only *“the external aspects of look-ups”*. Therefore, according to Welker (2010), the causes behind look-ups, how useful the consultation experience was, and to what degree the user was satisfied, cannot be confirmed in all cases. Moreover, Welker raises some concerns about the studies that used observation: although they display actual dictionary use, they cannot assure that the participants' use reflects their real dictionary use; the use might be influenced by being observed, especially with the laboratory type of observation or open field observation. There is another constraint which might be more noticeable with observation. Nesi (2000, p. 54) argues that there have been observation-based studies in the dictionary research which accomplish the suitable balance and *“adjust their research questions and data collection task accordingly, but in some studies there are clearly defects in the experimental design, which threaten to, at least partially, invalidate the findings”*.

This study employs the observation method as a data gathering technique in the second phase. Students are observed while doing the dictionary tasks. The remarks shown above are considered when doing the observation to guarantee that the observation has minimal influence on the students' dictionary use.

## **2. 11 Summary and implications**

This chapter adopts three approaches in presenting the literature review of dictionary use research. The first presents language learning strategies and its features, the relationship between vocabulary learning strategies and dictionary use. The second presents a review of some aspects of dictionary *“needs typology”*, as called by Hartmann (1987); it also shows chronologically studies that have investigated these aspects from different angles, using a number of data research tools, and employing them to gather data from different groups of learners. The third approach identifies specific data research tools on the grounds of their central importance to the investigation, discussing their potential and limitations with reference, whenever

possible, to dictionary use research. Two main points in relation to this research emerge from the discussion.

The first point is the trend in dictionary use research from simple research questions using simple investigative tools to more complex questions and sophisticated tools: Barnhart's (1962) study, the first well-known research, used a questionnaire, which is an indirect research tool, to elicit information from the teachers about their students' behaviour. Subsequent studies were initially exclusively based on the questionnaire. However, with advances in the field, there emerged a number of aspects or issues that could not be investigated by traditional indirect methods. In addition, a number of researchers highlighted the limitations of these investigative research tools. For example, after employing a questionnaire survey, Hartmann admitted that "*the methods we have employed need to be further refined, e.g. questionnaires and interview supplemented by direct observation and in-action tests*" (1999, p. 52). Thus, dictionary use research moved forward to employ more direct tools and investigate more complex issues.

The second point is relevant to the selection of the data-gathering instrument that best serves in answering the research questions. The literature review reveals that those researchers who belittled indirect data-gathering methods have themselves used them when needed. For example, Hartmann deprecated the questionnaire in 1987, but used this "indirect method" a few years later to collect details from a large sample of participants in a later study in 1999. Furthermore, the discussion above shows that all data collecting resources have shortcomings. Therefore, as suggested by Lew, if "*no single method is without its problems, restricting dictionary use research to just one specific method or technique is not the best policy to follow*" (2002, p. 268). Nesi (2000, p. 1) agrees with the calls of using a multi-technique for data gathering, justifying it with the declaration that: "*dictionary use is not an easy topic to discover. Basically it is a personal matter, quickly deformed by invasive detective techniques*". It is, indeed, the researcher's responsibility to identify the restrictions of the different data-gathering methods and attempt to compensate for them as far as possible (Lew, 2002, p. 268).

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology of the study. The chapter begins by presenting a brief description of the three main modes of enquiry: the positivist, the interpretative-constructivist, and the critical. This is followed by a rationale for the ontological, epistemological and the methodological assumptions underlying the research. Then data collection procedures are defined which include design and administration of the methods through the fieldwork processes. Two types of data were obtained: quantitative and qualitative. The design and administration of the instruments to gather these two types of evidence are described. This is followed by a description of the data analysis processes which included both quantitative and qualitative analyses. Ethical considerations guiding the research are then outlined.

#### 3.2 Research paradigms in educational research

A paradigm is a view of life that guides the researcher's actions and judgments. Guba (1990, p: 17, cited in Creswell, 2007), defines a paradigm or worldview as "*a basic set of beliefs that guide action*". It is a set of assumptions and perceptual orientations shared by members of a research community. Paradigms determine how the research communities view the phenomena, their particular community studies and the research methods that should be employed to study those phenomena. For researchers, the problem of the study, its research purposes, and the characteristics of the data are important to note before choosing a particular research paradigm. Research in educational and social sciences should fall into one of the three main paradigms; namely the positivist, the interpretive or the critical.

These three research stances have dominated the scene and become the most popular. Each of these stances has its opponents who query its philosophical beliefs. This results in the paradigm conflicts that have existed throughout the field of education research. For example, Lincoln and Guba believed that paradigms are incommensurable. One cannot choose both the positivist and the naturalistic-constructivist paradigm; they argued that one must choose sides and embrace only

one paradigmatic perspective (Given & Saumure, 2008). It is therefore a requirement that researchers state their ontological assumption at the outset, which in turn will guide the methodology they employ. However, the incommensurability of paradigms has faced criticism from Lewis & Grimes (1999), claiming that theory can be built and developed from multiple paradigms using multiple theoretical perspectives (Sun, 2006).

However, Tashakkori & Teddlie (1998, p. 21) argue that this is an unproductive debate. Some argue that this is because it is now clear that there is a basic incompatibility between the two approaches, hence it is time to stop the talking and get on with one's own thing. Another alternative approach is the pragmatist paradigm which means to employ whatever philosophical or methodological approach works best for a particular research problem at issue. This leads to "*mixed methods*" of studies where both quantitative and qualitative approaches are adopted under one unified paradigm.

### **3.2.1 The paradigm followed in this study**

This research is a predominantly naturalistic and so falls mainly within the interpretive paradigm of educational research. That is, it believes "*the social world can only be understood from the standpoint of the individuals who are part of the ongoing action being investigated*" (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2005, p: 19). In other words, in order to understand the students' difficulties with dictionary use, I have to elicit their own views, perceptions and previous experiences. Moreover, since the aim is to discover the human behaviours and characteristics rather than providing generalizable hunches on human phenomena, it seems that the interpretive paradigm is a suitable selection for this study.

The naturalistic approach was adopted as a mode of inquiry for this research because it is hoped to explore and describe human behaviour with regards to the reasons individuals have for behaving in certain ways. Furthermore, the study desired to find the motives that underlie certain actions. Since this research aimed at developing an understanding of the dictionary use of Saudi learners, it had no prior assumptions and the later phase of the analysis was based upon the information that emerged

inductively from the earlier phase. As suggested by Cohen et al. (2001), issues related to human behaviour in educational contexts lead to an inductive-naturalistic research method; therefore the enquiry was performed within the respondents' natural environment,

In inductive-naturalistic research, the focus is on the understanding of the social world through an examination of the interpretation of that world by its participants (Bryman, 2004). Moreover, the social world can only be understood from the standpoint of the individuals who are part of the continuous action being examined. Thus, the aim of the researchers is to understand social reality as different individuals see it and to show how their views form the actions which they take within that reality (Cohen et al., 2001).

In this study, the interpretive approach is for understanding the context within which participants act, and for understanding the process by which events and actions take place (Maxwell, 1996). Thus, the interpretive mode of inquiry is appropriate for this study since it investigates different realities. Those realities are: (a) is the extent to which students' dictionary use strategies are interactively influenced by their socio-contextual factors. (b) To what extent is their dictionary strategies are influenced by their previous experience? (c) To what level the training on dictionary use improve their perceived knowledge. Those realities are socially constructed. It is assumed that students are capable of supplying valuable information about their processes of dictionary use. Observing and discussing issues with them can construct realities between the researcher and the students.

The interpretive mode of inquiry has the potential to give the students a space to express their ideas, beliefs and thought processes in certain situations. It gives them the chance to clarify what they believe in, aspire to, and seek to achieve. Moreover, it gives them the chance to explicate their behaviours and the reasons for them. This is quite consistent with the constructivist philosophy in which learners are seen as constructors of their own knowledge through active participation in the learning process. Through interviews and tutorial discussions, students have the chance to interact in the learning process. This allows students to solve their problems through building new experiences and knowledge. This can guarantee the subjectivity of the

researcher throughout the processes of study. Thus, in designing this research study, I chose the pragmatic view that *"decisions regarding the use of qualitative or quantitative methods (or both) depend upon the research question as it is currently posed and the phase of the research cycle that is ongoing"* (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998, p. 22).

### **3.3 Methods framework of the study**

For the purpose of collecting data to explore dictionary use by freshmen Saudi learners, the factors that affect their use, and the impact of teaching dictionary use strategies, a two-phase study was conducted based on the principles and assumptions of the interpretive paradigm. The data collection of the study was conducted using four types of instruments: students' questionnaires and interviews in phase I; and observation and students feedback in Phase II.

For the purpose and nature of this study, different methods of data collection have been selected to assist in obtaining a clear picture and answering the research questions raised by the research. As discussed above (2.10), dictionary research went through different stages in its methodology. However, some concerns still remain about the best way to collect data from dictionary users. In the present study, attention is paid to the risks highlighted in previous research about employing such methods. For example, as noted by Welker (2010), questionnaire items are not suspect when asking about facts and opinions, but danger occurs when they ask about how respondents interact with their dictionary. This is because students need to depend on memory to answer such questions. Nesi (2000) criticized retrospective questions in questionnaires. However, despite these defects, questionnaires remain helpful for obtaining information about students' dictionary behaviours.

Additionally, questionnaires are still commonly used in most research (e.g. Kobayashi, 2006; Lew and Galas, 2008; Law, 2009). To avoid the shortcomings that might occur from using the questionnaire alone, this study employed multiple methods during phase I. This was repeatedly emphasized by researchers such as Hartmann (1987), who called for using questionnaires alongside other methods of data collection to supplement its results. Questionnaires in dictionary research have

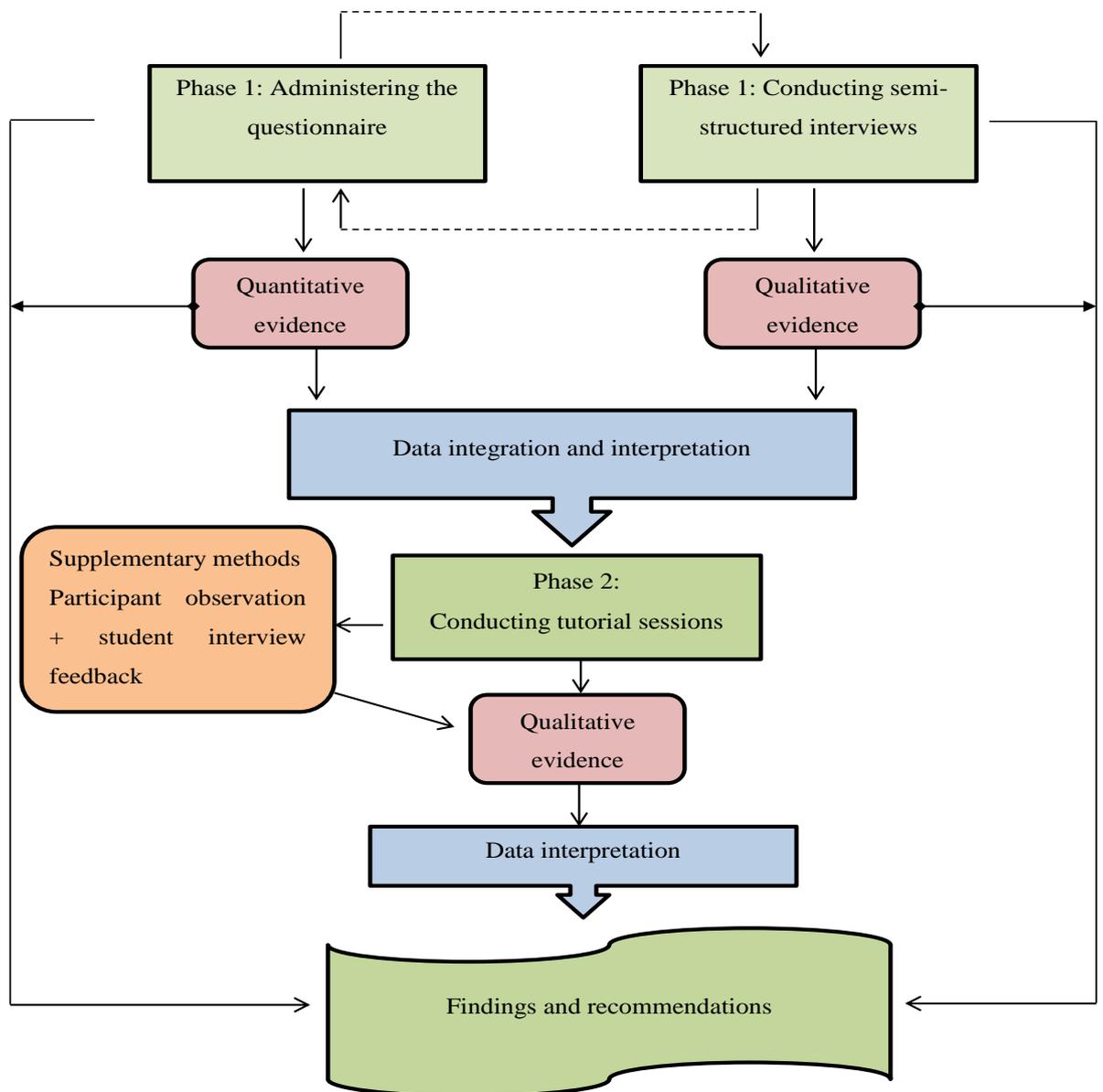
been criticised for including jargon terms. For example, Nesi (2000) warned against using technical terms which are not known to all respondents. Therefore, in this study, I have attempted to explain all the terms which students may not know. For instance, the word 'collocation' was used in the questionnaire so I included an example (Commit a crime) after the item. The items looked like the following: "*My dictionary provides information about collocation (e.g. Commit a crime)*". Therefore, it can be said that phase I of this study safely avoided some of the potential problems identified by previous researchers.

Additionally, further methods were used to probe the students' knowledge about, attitude towards, and difficulties of dictionary use. In phase II, the study attempted to apply direct methods such as observation of the students during tutorial sessions. Observation was recommended by dictionary researchers such as Nesi (2000), who believes that observation has an advantage over indirect methods (e.g. questionnaire and interview) since it reflects the real use of the dictionary and eliminates the chances that the students claim something different from what they actually do. In addition to observation, this study obtained students' feedback after sessions. Students were requested to verbally comment on the training they had received and how this had affected their attitude towards their dictionary use and their language learning.

As shown in Figure 3.1, multiple methods informed the findings of the study. The current study began with conducting interviews and questionnaires, which were administered to 77 freshmen Saudi students at the College of Applied Health Science in Arrass. Therefore, Phase I involved both conducting questionnaires and interviews. Conducting the questionnaires was carried out in March 2010. It was crucial to conduct the questionnaires and interview in Phase I to develop a general idea of the learning styles and strategic processes of the entire group of students. However, the six students involved in Phase II provided a different and equally important focus.

One benefit of applying a mixed-method approach was that it made it possible for patterns emerging in the survey data to be verified by, and explored further, through the interviews (Lamb, 2007).

As claimed by Aldridge, Fraser and Huang (1999), various research methods from several paradigms could be applied in an interpretive research. They emphasised the necessity for mixing methods for gathering quantitative data, such as questionnaires, with others for collecting qualitative data, including interviews. Therefore, it can be claimed that using multiple methods through the phases of the current research would provide an in-depth understanding of the students' use of the dictionary.



**Figure 3-1** Research process of the study

### 3.4 Sample of the study

The total population of this study is 77 students who were chosen from a Saudi Health College to participate in answering the questionnaire. 14 out of the 77 provided interviews. Four students were selected from the main population to participate in the tutorials. Those students were male students, due to the sex

separation policy adopted in the Saudi higher education system, and the difficulty of having access to female students.

The students in the Health College come from different cities across the whole of Saudi Arabia. All subjects speak the same native language (Arabic). Regarding their EFL background, they had all started to learn the English language from the first stage of their intermediate schooling. Thus, all the students had studied English for three years in intermediate school and another three years in high school, a total of six years. Secondary schools in Saudi Arabia study the same curriculum and they receive the same teaching prescribed by the Ministry of Education. Hence, it can be claimed that the students' level of English is similar.

In the Health College in Arrass, the students obtain a BSc in different areas after completing the requirements of the degree. BScs are in clinical laboratory, nursing, pharmacology, dental health and radiology. Students are admitted to the college after passing the entrance examinations. The examinations include mathematics, English language and biology. Those who are admitted to the College should attend intensive courses in English for two semesters during the first year covering the four English language skills (reading, listening, writing and speaking). Furthermore, they study different courses in biology, anatomy and so on. This year is called the foundation year and it aims at preparing the students to be able to start their major.

Students are required to take a variety of statutory non-English related modules such as Islamic culture and Arabic language. The medium of instruction for all classes is English except in the Islamic and Arabic classes. The students do not take any courses related to dictionary use strategies or even language learning strategies. They may use their dictionary in class and at home; they probably refer to their dictionaries when they do an assignment at home.

The sampling procedures are presented below according to the method of data collection used.

### **3.4.1 Sampling procedure**

According to the instruments employed in this study, sampling procedures come in three stages as follows:

*Stage one:* In this stage the sample for the interview was drawn from the freshmen Saudi students at the College of Applied Health Sciences. The sample comprised 14 students who were selected from the preparatory year students in the College. Since this was the first of the methods to be applied, the selection of the participants was done with care and caution. The teachers' advice and suggestions were sought to nominate the most suitable high achieving students who would be willing to speak about their dictionary use.

*Stage two:* This was the questionnaire data collection stage. 77 students participated in completing a questionnaire which was distributed to them after the interviews.

*Stage three:* It consisted of four students chosen from the interview sample. Having gained their consent for conducting the dictionary training activities, and having their willingness to participate, four students were chosen. It is important to say that the planned total number of the students to participate in the tutorial session was six students. However, two students withdrew from the training sessions and thus I had to complete with the remaining four. Compensating the students by another two was not a possible option due to the time constraint. Moreover, the original four students were approaching the fourth session when this problem happened. Therefore, I felt that choosing two new students from the total population to substitute the withdrawn ones would disturb the flow of teaching and observation of the students' dictionary progress.

### **3.5 Data collection**

Two types of data were collected in the current study. These were quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data was collected by means of a questionnaire. Qualitative data was collected through a semi-structured interview, the one-to-one interview feedback and observation. The aim of this section is to provide a detailed account of the procedures of data collection to ensure the trustworthiness of the

collected data. The construction of the tools and process of both types of data collection are presented in the following pages.

Before embarking on the collection of data for the main study, the required paper work had to be completed from the Graduate School of Education at the University of Exeter and the university authorities in Saudi Arabia. An ethical approval certificate was completed to conduct the field study for three months from March to June 2010. The certificate was approved by the head of the ethical committee in the Graduate School of Education, University of Exeter. In addition, an agreement had to be obtained from the university authorities in Saudi Arabia to conduct the field study at the College of Applied Health Sciences. I had also to obtain the students' consent to participate in the different phases of the study. Once all the papers were obtained, the first phase of the field study started. The data collection process lasted for almost three months.

### **3.5.1 Methods of data collection in Phase I**

In this section the rationale of each method of the data collection in this study is presented.

#### **3.5.1.1 Interview**

Interviews have been extensively used for eliciting language learning strategies because they can provide the most detailed information about learning strategies (Wenden, 1986). Interviews let the student reflect on all phases of a learning task. Furthermore, interviews can provide in-depth information about the use of strategies with individual tasks (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). The aim of the interview is to allow the respondents to report their own stories and to give their personal views in their own words so that the researcher can obtain more insights and a clear understanding. In the semi-structured interview, as used in the present research, the researcher has some control over the interview, although the interviewees are allowed to negotiate what is being discussed (Nunan 1992; Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007). Moreover, in this type of interview, more information can be generated from the conversation between the interviewer and the interviewee. In this way, the researcher needs to listen carefully to the participant's responses and follow

his or her lead. Many studies in dictionary research have used interviews as supplementary to the main data (Diab, 1990; Li, 1998).

The first phase of the study included conducting semi-structured interviews with students. The rationale for using the students' interviews is to explore what difficulties they had with regards to their dictionary use. The interviews also concentrated on discovering the most appropriate method to teach dictionary use to the students. In this study, semi-structured interviews are used as a standpoint and a step to design the questionnaire. The interview would also be of assistance to generate data on teachers' experience and beliefs towards dictionary use and dictionary training inside the classroom, which would be difficult to canvass through the use of solely one statistical method of data collection (e.g. questionnaire).

The semi-structured interview used questions which helped in diagnosing the problems students had with their dictionary. Students were asked to provide information about their use of dictionaries and the problems which accompanied their dictionary usage. It was hoped that the data collected from the interviews could provide detailed information which would be useful in planning for designing both the questionnaire and content of dictionary training in the intervention phase.

### **3.5.1.2 Questionnaire**

The second method used in this phase was administering the questionnaire as a method to collect quantifiable data. The aim of the questionnaire was to discover the Saudi health college students' knowledge about the information in their dictionaries, attitudes, frequency of dictionary use and whether they had received any training during their previous years of learning. It also investigated their thoughts and common sources of difficulty that had been highlighted in previous studies. Questionnaires and interviews assisted in designing the tutorial sessions content and dictionary skills in the second phase. Questionnaires can provide a wealth of data which is easily collected and relatively easily comparable across subjects. Thus the questionnaire could give an overall picture of the dictionary use strategies of the preparatory year at the Health College, while the use of the interview was limited to only some students. Seliger and Shohamy (1989) found questionnaires very useful

for collecting data about language learning strategies, especially from large groups of participants.

Being aware of the constraints of the questionnaire, many researchers now try to combine it with some qualitative methods such as interview and think aloud reports. In this study, the questionnaire is combined with the student interviews to avoid shortcomings in the data. Despite all the hitches of the questionnaire, by carefully designing items, and using the interview, the data should provide reliable and valid results.

### **3.5.2 Methods of data collection in Phase II**

Phase II in this study included the conduction of the tutorial sessions. Four students were chosen to meet with the researcher every week for the whole semester. They were observed during the sessions and interviewed after sessions to hear their opinions about what they learnt from the training.

#### **3.5.2.1 Students' observation**

During the tutoring sessions data was collected using including the researcher's note-taking while observing the participants' use of the dictionary. The reasons for using this method is that they are in line with Hartmann's (1987) request that new dictionary research should apply non-direct observation methods. He called for carefully controlled direct observation. The observation was used in the current study to collect data related to the changes in the students' dictionary practices and knowledge after joining the training sessions. In the observation, I was interested in what actually happened with the students' dictionary interaction after being taught how to retrieve types of information from their paper dictionary. Interpretations of these interactions were helpful to understand why the students acted in certain ways and what changes in their knowledge that informed their practice. Throughout the phase II of the current study, the participants' dictionary use skills were observed directly by the researcher and through the note-taking and received comments and feedback.

During the sessions I took notes when observing the participants completing the dictionary tasks. When necessary, I asked the participants some questions regarding

their look-up problems and tried to find out the possible reasons. I could also observe the way the students reacted to the dictionary tasks given to them. After each training session, I conducted follow-up interviews with the students to discuss with them the training received as will be explain below.

### **3.5.2.2 Students' Interview and Feedback**

The main reason to interview students in this phase of the study is because I needed to allow students to express their opinions about what impact the training sessions has on them as dictionary users. This method was chosen as a subordinate method as it allowed the participants to comment on what they were being taught and compare that to the observation note takings by me. I encouraged the students to give their comments based on the tasks they had completed and the knowledge they had grasped about their dictionary use. This would allow me to hear direct responses from the students about the procedures, activities, difficulties and tasks they had been through during the training sessions.

## **3. 6 Use of triangulation of the research instruments**

Triangulation was first employed in research by Campbell and Fiske (1959) and developed by Webb (1966), who argued that researchers should use more than one instrument to measure variables. This implies that triangulation was first associated with quantitative research. However, its relevance to qualitative methods was soon explored. Denzin (1978) was a major proponent of the use of triangulation by researchers working within the interpretive paradigm. Triangulation in research means *"the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour"* (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2005: 112). Researchers refer to the combination of both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques in order to maintain a balance between qualitative in-depth data and quantitative data (Lewin, 1990). Resorting to this multi-method approach is common in social research because of its various advantages. The dependence on one method for data collection may distort the researcher's picture of the particular problem under investigation. Besides, dependence on a one method of data collection would be risky as it only presents a narrow view of the complexity of human behaviours and the situations experienced by human beings. The use of the technique of triangulation

could fill the traditional gap between quantitative and interpretative approaches and increases the trustworthiness of the data collected (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992).

Denzin (1970 cited in Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2005, p. 113) determined six categories of triangulation: 1) time triangulation, 2) space triangulation, 3) combined levels of triangulation, 4) theoretical triangulation, 5) investigator triangulation, and 6) methodological triangulation. Time triangulation is applied to attain diachronic and synchronic reliability (stability and similarity) at the same time. Space triangulation indicates that the collection of data from different areas representing different variables and perspectives. The combined level of triangulation is where researchers can combine the levels (e.g. individual, group, organisational or societal) of triangulation. Theoretical triangulation is used when two similar or related theories have support or when two or more theories are combined to generate a more comprehensive theory. Investigator triangulation occurs when several observers and researchers are engaged in the same research. Methodological triangulation occurs when researchers can apply the same method on different occasions, or different techniques on the same topic of the research (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2005). According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2005), methodological triangulation is the most commonly used type and the one that feasibly has the most to provide. Use of several methods should lead to greater validity and reliability (Patton, 1990). Denzin and Lincoln (1994: 2) illuminate this, asserting that *"the combination of multiple methods in a single study is best understood as a strategy that adds rigour, breadth and depth to any investigation"*.

In this study, both qualitative and quantitative data collection are incorporated into the research design (Robson, 1993). The methodological design is shaped by the nature of the research questions and by the scope and aims of the study. To investigate the relationship between training in dictionary use and the success in solving vocabulary learning problem by Saudi students, this study adopted a mixed methods approach which involves the gathering of in-depth qualitative data from a small number of students (interview) and causal connection statistical quantitative data (questionnaire). For the second purpose of the study, that is, examining the teachability of dictionary use strategies and evaluating what could be expected of

students after being taught how to use the dictionary, the one-to-one tutorial sessions is selected as the most appropriate approach of its capacity to generate data from very small group of students. In the tutorial sessions students were observed and interviewed afterward to hear their voice about the training they received and what influence it has on them.

### **3.7 Methods design and procedures**

In this section the design of the methods used to collect the data in the current study are presented. This is followed by the procedures and application of the methods in the two phases.

#### **3.7.1 Phase I**

As stated earlier, in this phase two methods of data collection were selected, namely interview and questionnaire. Issues related to the phase I methods are briefly discussed such as selection of the interviewees, interview translation and transcript, questionnaire design, questionnaire distribution etc..

##### **3.7.1.1 Interview**

Interview is one of the most frequently used methods when generating data (King & Horrocks, 2010). According to Dörnyei, (2007), the most discussed classification concerns how structured the interview is (p. 134). The first type is the structured interview which has some features that are similar to the questionnaire. Hence, it might be administered to a rather large sample as in Diab's study (1990) involving 41 respondents, though it is infrequent to do this. The well-defined structure of the structured interview may also provide some tolerance to the data being collected by a collector other than the researcher. The second type is the unstructured interview, which is different from the situation of the structured interview as it tolerates much freedom for the participants to speak, and imposes some restrictions on the researcher to direct the flow of the dialogue according to a pre-planned agenda (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 135). It is not surprising that it is the least commonly used investigative tool in dictionary research because it is very difficult both to handle and to code (Diab, 1990, p. 61). Also, the type of information elicited from this type of interview is unpredictable. The third type of the interview is the one that falls

between the two types mentioned above. It is called the semi-structured interview as it is a compromise between the other two. according to Dörnyei (2007, p. 136), it is the most used type in applied linguistics and might be so as far as dictionary use research is concerned. The interview can be used as supplement gathering data to verify the responses given to the questionnaire.

According to Diab (1990), the interview as a research tool is also time consuming and might be expensive (p. 61). Therefore, it is not uncommon that few number of dictionary use researchers have used this data gathering tool (Welker, 2010, p. 14). Some of these researchers are Iqbal (1987), Christianson (1997), Diab and Hamdan (1999). The interview in this study is unstructured and conducted in Phase I of this research. It is used with the questionnaire as a spring board to the dictionary training in Phase II.

### **I. Interviewee selection and familiarity with the research**

The main purpose of interviewing students at this early stage was to view this issue from the students' side. Hearing the students' voice in this study was important, in order to shed light on their dictionary use and their relationship with their dictionaries. The main purpose of the student interview method was to gain a deeper understanding of the students' practice of dictionary use and the difficulties they experienced when consulting the dictionary. It explored the factors that were thought to be sources of dictionary use difficulty. It sought to investigate what made them less reliant on their dictionary. Additionally, it enquired whether they had received any kind of training on using the dictionary. The student interview mainly revolved around the student's interaction with the dictionary. It also attempted to cover the impact of previous experience during schooling on their present use of the dictionary.

It was essential to obtain official permission from the informants before conducting the interview. Fourteen students were selected to attend semi-structured interviews. Those fourteen were chosen based on their records of the previous semester and their tutors' judgements. All of them were from the high achiever students because high achiever students usually depend on variety of vocabulary learning strategies (Ahmed, 1989). In fact, interviews are quite uncommon data gathering tool in educational research in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, worries were present while

choosing the interviewees that the students may be unwilling to speak freely. However, I saw the enthusiasm and willingness of students to be chosen to the extent that they sat with me and asked my advice on choosing the second dictionary. Those students selected were very enthusiastic and eager to do the interviews. This interview sample can be regarded as an expedient sample, as they were chosen because of their willingness to talk (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2005). This willingness helped me obtain detailed information from the students' interview.

For the familiarity with the research, I informed the interviewees about the aims of the research and the aims of the interview. The participants were guaranteed safety of their data and confidentiality before their permission was obtained to record the interview. In some cases the discussion with the interviewee went well beyond the list of issues to be covered but the material was still important to the overall aims of the study.

## **II. Conducting the interviews**

The appointment for the interviews was up at a convenient time for the informants so that they would feel stress-free and speak openly about themselves. The participants were told that they would be recorded for the purpose of the study. A small portable digital recorder was used to record the interviews. Information such as date, time and duration of each interview was detailed and programmed automatically by the recorder. For the purpose of the safety of the data, all interviews were transferred from the digital voice recorder to a computer where they were saved in protected folders.

At the beginning of each interview, I introduced myself in Arabic to each subject and told him the purpose of this research. All respondents were told that their identities would be concealed. Furthermore, they were informed of their right to refuse to participate in the interview. Following this, there was a conversation in Arabic to make the interviewee feel comfortable and relaxed. The time assigned for each interview was set by the interviewee and lasted for an hour to one and half hours. This assisted me to conduct the interview without interruption. Only two interviews

were stopped in the middle and carried out later in the same day because they were performed during students' non-study time.

All the interviews were performed in person to establish a relationship with the interviewees. I also planned to refer to the interview schedule as little as possible to yield a smooth flow of the interview. However, the schedule was used to make sure that all relevant areas were included in the interview.

### **III. Translation and transcription**

Students were asked at the beginning of the interview whether they preferred the interviews to be conducted in Arabic or English. All of them preferred to speak in Arabic to allow them to talk freely. This was the most suitable option to avoid language being an obstacle and to avoid any misunderstanding that might occur by using English. The transcripts were translated and validated by a professional translator with my help. After having the full transcripts translated into English, the code scheme analysis started and the table codes were created.

#### **3.7.1.2 Questionnaire**

##### **I. Design of the questionnaire**

The construction of the questionnaire items was carried out by reviewing the related literature and using the information obtained from the students' interview in phase one. Therefore, the questionnaire was exclusively based on careful examination of previous studies (such as Tomaszczyk, 1979; Béjoint, 1981; Hartmann, 1983; Diab, 1990; Battenburg, 1991). Previous studies acted as a springboard for obtaining a clear idea of how to design the questionnaire. In this study, the main aim of employing the questionnaire was to explore the Saudi students' preferences, attitudes, knowledge about the information in their dictionaries, frequency of dictionary use and whether they had received any training during their previous years of learning. It also shed light on the common use problems that students reported in the interviews. To achieve this, students were first asked to complete the questionnaire which consisted of two parts. The first part sought information about the students' dictionary ownership, types of dictionary owned, first time exposed to

the dictionary, the stage at which students obtained their first dictionary. The second part was further divided into five sections, as follows:

- Knowledge about the dictionary
- Attitude and perception of the dictionary's role in language learning
- Lexical information needed
- Difficulties and problems of dictionary use
- Training in dictionary use.

The first section sought information about the subjects' dictionary knowledge. This section was added after receiving comments from students which showed their misunderstanding of what the dictionary contained. The next section explored their attitude towards the dictionary they owned and their preference regarding the type of dictionary used. The type of dictionary was described in terms of the language included, that is bilingual, monolingual or bilingualised, and in terms of the medium, that is paper, handheld electronic, CD-ROM or online. The third section concerned the lexical information most needed by the students. The fourth section dealt with the common problems that students encountered when consulting their dictionaries. The fifth section sought information on whether the participants had received training in dictionary use.

In addition to the face validity, the results of the questionnaire were checked against the respondents' justifications of their answers. The findings were also compared to the relevant existing literature. While not all findings would be expected to go with the literature, checking findings against the literature was done to assist the argument that the similarities between some of the findings of this study and those in the existing literature would give confidence in the validity of the questionnaire and the credibility of the participants' responses. Thus, the convergent validity of some parts of the questionnaire could be ensured. A Likert 5-level scale was used in this part of the questionnaire. This type of scale is a widely used technique and is relatively easy to construct; additionally, it offers accurate information about a respondent's degree of agreement or disagreement (Oppenheim, 2001). The overall consistency measure of the questionnaire was 0.731 (see below, section III). This level is acceptable given that the study is mainly interpretive.

## **II. Questionnaire piloting**

According to Flower (1988:203), “*every questionnaire should be piloted, no matter how skilled the researcher*”. A questionnaire may need to be modified in some way to guarantee that respondents meet the research’s objectives, following the piloting. The more realistic the piloting is, the more the researcher can know about all factors and features of the investigative procedure chosen. 25 students were asked to participate in piloting the questionnaire. The questionnaire was written in English and translated into Arabic to ensure the clarity of the statements. Participants were asked the following questions at the end of the questionnaire: (a) Were the instructions clear and easy to follow? (b) Were the items clear? If not which questions were unclear? (c) Were you able to answer all the questions? If the answer was “no”, why not? (d) What did you think about the format and the style?

All explanations and instructions were written in Arabic to avoid possible misunderstandings. It took between 30 to 45 minutes for the students to complete the questionnaire. By piloting the questionnaire, it would be possible to identify problems in its layout and structure which may affect the findings of the study. Moreover, the returned questionnaires from the pilot study helped in revising the wording of the questions by adding or deleting words based on the participants’ answers. It also revealed any questions that students were likely to ignore or leave blank, since the lack of comments would certainly pose difficulties in understanding their behaviour and the problems they have had with their dictionaries.

## **III. Reliability**

The reliability analysis was performed using Cronbach’s alpha to define the extent of agreement between answers to the items in the questionnaire. Alpha shows the internal consistency for the questionnaire, which was 0.731. This is generally considered to be a good level of agreement.

## **IV. Translation of the questionnaire**

After agreement was obtained from the supervisor to the final draft of the questionnaire, an Arabic version of the questionnaire was made. Similar to the pilot questionnaire, the final questionnaire, its explanation and instructions, were written

and translated into Arabic. In order to make the Arabic version of the questionnaire very clear it was given to a professor of translation in the Department of Foreign Languages at Qassim University.

Translating the questionnaire into the participants' native language (Arabic) proved to be useful and advisable for the following reasons. First, all the target students speak the same mother tongue and were non-native speakers of English. Second, asking student to complete a questionnaire in their native language would make it easier to complete and require a shorter time for the respondent to fill. Third, the translation of the questionnaire reduced ambiguity resulting from the words encountered in some items, with which some students may not have been familiar.

## **V. Distribution of the questionnaire**

I took the responsibility for distributing the questionnaire forms to the students at the College and was present while they completed the questionnaire. This was because a questionnaire's response rate is one of the basic parameters for evaluating a data collection effort. I was introduced to the students by their English teachers as a PhD student at a UK University who intended to collect data for his research. The students were assured that there were no right or wrong answers, and that the instrument was for the purpose of research and in no way would it affect their results or marks or be used to grade them. The teachers encouraged and asked the students to partake seriously and truthfully and made clear that the identity of each questionnaire was confidential, which encouraged them to participate honestly. They were also informed that their participation was their choice and that they could withdraw from the research at any time. However, none of them chose not to participate, which was very encouraging.

### **3.7.2 Phase II**

#### **3.7.2.1 Observations procedure**

The participant observations were implemented in this study. The focus of the observations was to provide additional information about students' improvement in the dictionary use after they received formal instructions.

The observation allowed me to formulate a direct view of the participants' dictionary interactions and of the situation in which these interactions occur. In this respect, the observations allowed to construct a view about the influence of the training on the students, and explore the difficulties that affect the participants' dictionary use. The observations were guided by the use of an observation schedule (see Appendix E). This schedule is divided into four parts. The first part was devoted to a description of the dictionary use activity and the interactions and strategies used in the tutorial which was observed. The second part was to describe the processes observed and of particular incidents related to the interaction between students and dictionary and the needs to refer to it.

The third part of the observation schedule aimed to gather data on students' behaviour during the tutorial sessions. Notes were kept in relation to the way that they were using the dictionary; the way that they were presenting their progress in knowledge. This section of the schedule allowed also the recording of the frequency of dictionary use strategies while completing the task during the tutorial and the time spent by the students to finish the tasks.

The fourth section of the schedule was allocated to note information that could not fall under any other part but can be considered as crucial and relevant during the observation. It also was for the questions that arose from the observations to enable me to address them in the feedback interviews with students. Data from the observations were kept secured and anonymous. These observations took place in a comfortable room in the college.

### **3.7.2.2 Student feedback interview procedures**

The interview was conducted after the teaching sessions. This can allow students to comment on their learning without relying much on their memory to remember the skills they learnt. I used a small portable digital recorder to record the interviews. The participants were told that they would be recorded for the purpose of the study. Regarding the safety of the data, all interviews were transferred from the digital voice recorder and saved in a secured folder in a computer. All respondents were told that their identities would be concealed. The time assigned for each interview was set by the interviewee and lasted for half an hour. This assisted me to conduct the

interview without interruption. The conversations were conducted on Arabic to avoid any ambiguity that might occur during the interview.

The interview aimed to tap on issues such as: what knowledge students gained from the training, what difference the training makes on the students attitudes and motivation to English learning. The interview also explored whether the dictionary training helped students to overcome their dictionary difficulties.

### **3.8 Data analysis**

Both qualitative and quantitative data analyses were carried out in this study. Some parts of the analysis, such as the preliminary analysis of the questionnaire and classroom observation, were carried out while conducting the field study. In addition, analysis of the closed-ended responses to the questionnaire was done electronically whereas the rest of analyses were carried out manually.

#### **3.8.1 Interview data analysis**

After transcription and respondent validation of the interview transcripts, I went through the transcripts to break the oral interviews into chunks through coding and labelling to assign units of meaning to the data. Data analysis was supported by my personal experience and reading of the literature. It was also informed by discussion with similarly experienced colleagues at the University of Exeter. Thus, the process employed for data analysis “*occurred in a reciprocal way rather than as discrete activities*” (Little, 1999, p. 700). Contrary to the quantitative data which was analysed electronically, the data analysis of the interview was completed manually and inductively. The categories and sub-categories of the first interviews analysed were given codes. These codes were then employed to the rest of the interviews. Other codes came out during the analysis (For the list of analytical codes see Appendix D). Codes reflected different levels of analysis ranging from the descriptive to the inferential. Some codes were created from the first reading of the transcripts while others appeared in the second and others in the third. Data was reduced as the coding continued by excluding the coding of repeated or irrelevant data. The data was then divided into the initial and emergent codes. The division process was completed manually by putting transcripts into boxes where all related cut pieces of data representing a particular code were saved. The contents of each

box were fully analysed. Data was further decreased during this stage as repeated quotations and irrelevant points to the category being constructed were excluded. This was done for the purpose of easy reference because the main purpose of the analysis was that the data appeared sensible and to make meaning, as Merriam (1998) recommended. Therefore, care was taken to allow the themes to appear from the data.

The presentation of the interview analysis in Chapter Four is supported by the students' quotes on the issues being discussed. However, when there are similar quotes selective ones are chosen. The presentation also includes some interview excerpts of the interchange between the researcher and the participants when it serves better to reinforce the ideas in the data analysis.

For the reliability of the interview analysis, it was checked at two phases: firstly, through the coding system and, secondly, through the categorisation. Concerning coding, it was intended to make sure that the codes fit into the structure and with one another. They also relate to or are different from other codes. Re-reading of the coding of the transcripts was also beneficial as a reliability check. This was done by performing the coding twice at two periods of time; and by requesting one of my friends from the same field to code three interviews and compare his codes to mine. The first approach of check coding demonstrated a satisfactory reliability. I went through the same codes to check the extent of their representation of the same data chunks. A tick was placed in case of agreement, and for disagreement, a cross (x) was placed. For the second approach, reliability was achieved between both my friend's coding and my own coding. After some meetings with my friends to compare and discuss the two codings, agreement was also achieved on the operational definition of codes.

### **3.8.2 Questionnaire data analysis**

Quantitative analysis of the data was performed using the SPSS programme. Descriptive statistical analysis was used to find out the frequency and percentage of agreement and disagreement among the participants regarding the various issues

raised in the questionnaire. The students' responses fed into and were integrated with the qualitative analysis.

### **3.8.3 Analysis of the data in phase II**

The analysis of phase I informed the application and analysis of phase II. For example, the material designed to teach alphabetical order was based on, and analysed against, the findings of the interview and questionnaire data. The data obtained from the supplementary material (observation and student feedback) was mainly qualitative. Therefore, the procedures followed to analyse the semi-structured interview data were used to analyse observation and feedback data. In addition, preliminary analysis of the participant observation during the one-to-one tutoring sessions informed the issues and comments raised in the recorded lessons and the activity sheets.

This analysis was done manually, which was more convenient due to the form of the collected data. The observation sessions were audio-taped material. Therefore, the returned responses, comments and questions were manually transcribed and analysed. It proved useful because, while doing the transcripts, I had familiarity with that data and what it involved. It helped me to engage well with the data. Although there is no simple formula to ensure the good analytic quality of the data, especially for the observation, careful and comprehensive analysis could help in achieving this goal (Gibbs, 2007). To achieve good data analysis, I carried out repeated reading of the data scripts and refined the analysis more than once based on the feedback received from the students and the feedback from supervisors about the quality of the analysis. Moreover, discussions with colleagues regarding the suitability of certain ideas under certain categories were all beneficial. I had to drop some of the categories because, when comparing them against the received feedback from the students, they seemed to be irrelevant.

The feedback received from the students was also linked to their dictionary activities during the sessions. Additionally, the notes taken while observing the students could assist in comprehending the students' progression and evaluation, and also assist in formulating the categories of the analysed data.

### **3.9 The dictionary intervention (one-to-one tutorial sessions)**

The dictionary training in the current study adopted the one-to-one tutoring mode. One-to-one tutoring is a particularly effective mode of instruction where students learn the subject matter with their tutor. According to Hume et al (1996), the tactic commonly used in one-to-one tutoring is hinting, which depends on prompting a student to recollect information presumed to be known to him or her, or prompting of a student to make an inference needed to solve a problem or answer a question, or both. Hints may directly convey information or may point to information the student already possesses. Another tactic takes the student in a step-by-step manner to an answer.

One-to-one tutoring was chosen in this study because it allowed me to adjust the level of instruction to the individual's needs and knowledge deficits (Person et al, 2002). This feature is valuable because students' dictionary skills and linguistic needs may vary among the participants. Therefore, the one-to-one mode allowed me to explore the progress of the students and accommodate the training based on that. Similarly, this mode assisted me to pursue a given skill or problem until the students had mastered it (Chi et al., 2001).

This mode of training allowed me to play different roles during the tutorial sessions. I was the teacher, the researcher. I could provide the students with the information they needed to learn, and guide them to use their dictionary. I also could observe their behaviour and response to what they learnt. I could also ask the students and receive their comments or questions about the difficulties they encountered with their dictionaries. Moreover, the one-to-one tutoring offered me the flexibility to interrupt the student's dictionary use and interrogate or given confirmatory feedback.

Additionally this method was chosen to overcome the time constraint in the current study. That means I needed less time to spend trying to determine the student's exact state of knowledge and their increased ability, to predict students' follow-up performance as suggested by Lesh and Kelly (1997). By this method, teachers can accomplish the session with a great deal of understanding about his/her students' capabilities. Detailed information can be obtained in the most direct way possible,

which is asking the participants to describe their learning difficulties and the procedures they employed to learn or complete the dictionary tasks.

Additionally, the adaptation of this method fits with the repeated calls for applying direct methods in dictionary use research (Hartmann, 1987, 2002). The one-to-one dictionary teaching allowed space for the researcher to observe the students' completion of the task, receive their questions and comments about what they had learnt and interview them about how they applied the learned skills in their own dictionary use while learning English.

The main purpose of the intervention was for students to increase their dictionary skills using the activities given to them. Therefore, it is important to note that this study did not aim at comparing this method with other educational methods; however, it aimed at providing the researcher a wider space to teach dictionary use strategies through the interactions with the student at his own level and directed at his own linguistic needs, as well as to observe the way the teaching had an impact on their learning and use of the dictionary.

### **3.9.1.1 Aim of the course**

The sessions aimed at accustoming students to the information contained in the dictionary and showing them how to use such information. Its objective was to meet students' needs and provide them with the skills required to become literate in using the dictionary.

It is worth pointing out that the primary concern of this course was with teaching the strategies that enable students to become adept at employing and interacting with the dictionary. The course was concerned with instructing students when and how to use their dictionaries. It also aimed to give students the ability to use the dictionary with the four linguistic skills, as shown below in unit four. The objectives of the course were that students will be able to:

- Employ search skills (e.g. alphabetical order)

- Navigate the dictionary to locate particular entries

- Obtain maximum information from explanations (e.g. definitions, examples)

- Obtain and use grammatical information

Understand phonetics symbols, homographs and homophones.

### **3.9.1.2 Design and content of the tutorial sessions**

Regarding the design of the strategy training, the tutorial session instructions included: (a) making explicit the purpose and content, (b) choosing strategies to be supportive of each other, (c) providing a relaxed and warm atmosphere for learning, (d) offering plenty of practice, (e) building upon strategies which students had already used. Before describing the content of the teaching material, it is essential to discuss some relevant issues.

#### **3.9.1.2.1 Issues to be tackled when designing training in dictionary use**

When designing a training course, it is important to take some factors into consideration. Proficiency level, type of dictionary and content of the course should be consistent with students' level and their dictionaries. In this study attention was paid to the level of the students, the preferred type of dictionary to be used in the course training, and the elective activities to be included. In the following paragraphs more details will be given about these factors.

##### **A. Proficiency level**

Considering students' proficiency, it has been demonstrated that students' dictionary use strategies vary according to their level of English language. Higher achievers usually use their dictionary more effectively than lower achievers. However, it is arguably accepted that all students at a particular instructional level are to some extent at the same proficiency level. Thus, it is presumably acceptable to claim that there is some consistency between students' proficiency level and the training course as all students study at the same instructional level in the College.

##### **B. Type of dictionary used**

Based on the data obtained from the interview and the questionnaire in phase one, the selected dictionary that was suggested to be used in this study was the bilingualised dictionary (MOD). Students mentioned that they were advised to buy this type of dictionary, so it seemed inconvenient to choose another type of dictionary for the tutorial sessions. I would claim that it would be more appropriate to use the bilingualised dictionary in this phase. All sentences and examples that were used in the units' activities were selected from the MOD entries.

### C. Number of sessions

The students were assigned to seven meetings. Each student should attend a session of an hour to one-and-a-half hours every week. Table 3.1 shows the tutorial sessions and the time allocated over the seven weeks.

Table 3-1: Time plan of the tutorial sessions

Weeks	Training sessions	Student 1	S 2	S 3	S 4	S 5	S 6
1	Introducing dictionary	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	Alphabetical order	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3	Navigating dictionary	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4	Pronunciation IPA	✓	✓	✓	✓		
5	Pronunciation IPA	✓	✓	✓	✓		
6	Grammar code	✓	✓	✓	✓		
7	Grammar code	✓	✓	✓	✓		

As stated earlier, two students dropped out of the training tutorials. I was not able to reach them to know their feeling about the training and the reason that made them leave it. Allocating another two students to compensate for those withdrawn was not possible because of the time constraint of the field study.

### D. Procedure of tutorials

First, a timetable was created for the students with free slots for them to choose from according to their own time schedules. Therefore, choices for each student were up to him to feel stress-free and act normally with the dictionary training during the sessions. The participants were told that they would be recorded for the purpose of the study. I recorded the tutorials session with the same digital recorder as for the interviews, after transferring the recorded interviews to the PC to provide capacity in the digital recorder memory.

At the beginning of the first session with each student, I introduced myself again in Arabic and told him the purpose of this training. All students were told that they would not be judged for their wrong answers and that the course was only for research purposes. They were assured that their identities would not be disclosed. Furthermore, they were informed of their right to refuse to participate at any stage of

the study. The time assigned for each session ranged from an hour to one-and-a-half hours. This length of time was ideal as it allowed students to grasp the knowledge and share their difficulties and problems. The activities presented during the teaching sessions were all needed by the students. All students reported that they lacked the knowledge that would be taught in each session.

### 3.9.1.3 Proposed content

The main aim of teaching dictionary use in this study was to clarify dictionaries by providing introductory sessions aimed at disclosing the features and lexical information found in the MOD. The qualitative and quantitative data obtained also signposted some areas of dictionary use which students reported as difficult or expressed interest in learning. Therefore, these two criteria were used in choosing the content of the dictionary teaching. For example, the phonetics symbols and syntactic information were the two areas that had the highest response as difficulties in the interviews when students were asked about the difficulties encountered with their dictionaries. These criteria were used as the bases of the dictionary use teaching in the second stage of the current study. The data obtained also suggested that users were relatively unaware of how to retrieve information from their dictionaries to assist their learning. The student interviews revealed that the knowledge students needed to obtain from the dictionary was, to a degree, rudimentary. The table below shows the dictionary skills that were taught:

Table 3-2: Dictionary skills included in the training sessions

<b>Skill</b>	<b>Reference</b>
Getting to know the dictionary	To know about the available types of information To understand how information is presented in the entry
Alphabetical order	Knowledge of alphabetical order Locating words using initial letters Identifying words using the second or third letters
Navigating the dictionary	Navigating the dictionary quickly and accurately Locating an entry Ability to interpret meaning
Pronunciation features	Understanding pronunciation symbols Reading stress marks
Grammatical information	Understanding and obtaining grammatical information Understanding the grammatical coding system

#### **3.9.1.4 Proposed methodology and teaching procedures**

As stated earlier, the teaching of the dictionary sessions was constrained by the course time and that left no space for the researcher to formulate objectives for each session. Therefore, exposing students to the dictionary and raising their knowledge about it served as a supplement to dictionary strategies' use. Students were taught the skills that were necessary for them to retrieve information from the dictionaries while using them to solve learning problems.

Students were taught the dictionary skills through on-to-one tutorials. The aim of choosing this method was because it allowed for direct observation of the students. It also assisted in exchange of ideas and permitted sharing of participants' dictionary experiences. This method was a great help as it avoided non-direct observational methods, such as a questionnaire, to explore the influence of dictionary training. The duration of each session lasted for about one hour. During the sessions, students were asked whether they knew how to retrieve the type of information they would be taught about and what type of difficulties they had when searching for such information. Then they were instructed and shown how to find and deal with the needed type of information. After that, a chosen task utilising the taught skills was given to the students. Students were told that they were allowed to ask questions, make comments about the lessons and share their experiences and memories about their previous use of their dictionaries. This provided information of value in regard to the quality and efficacy of the dictionary teaching.

Students were interviewed at the end of the training to share their perceptions about their improvement in the classroom after attending the tutorial sessions for a semester. This was to make sure that other points of views were considered.

#### **3.9.1.5 Limitations of the one-to-one tutoring method**

The individual tutoring method has shortcomings which are related to the setting of the teaching. The main defects of this method are as follows.

The first limitation is the student's anxiety at being observed by someone. Some students may feel anxious about being under direct observation. This could affect the data obtained from the tutorials. Students were assured, however, that their participation was very important, and that they did not need to be worried about their incorrect attempts while using the dictionary. They were reassured that this was not a form of test and they did not need to worry about their assessment in the course.

The second issue was that the shyness of the students could hinder the application of this method. Therefore, the students in the tutorial were encouraged to chat with the researcher at the beginning of the lessons to build a relationship and remove the shyness that may occur during the dictionary training. Additionally, the tutorials were conducted in the first language of the students (Arabic) which relieved the students' anxiety of committing mistakes in English.

### **3. 10 Ethical issues**

This study involves the participation of human beings as the source of information, so a set of ethical issues should be taking into consideration. Wellington (2000) stated that "*ethical concerns should be at the forefront of any research project and should continue through the write-up and dissemination stages*" (p.3). Since this study employs interviews, questionnaires and one-to-one discussion with students as methods of collecting data, there are some ethical and legal issues that have to be considered, especially with regards the participants' identity protection. This is particularly important with regard to the interviews and tutorial sessions.

It was necessary to first gain ethical approval from the place where the study would be conducted: the Health College in Arrass. Then, after obtaining the authority's approval, I attempted to present the research aims to the students and their personal agreement to participate. Before conducting the interview and distributing the questionnaire, I informed them about the nature of the research and what involvement was to be required of them. Thus, it was essential to reveal the stages through which students would go during the research (BERA, 2004: 6). I informed them that this research was not a test and did not affect the progress of their study. Additionally, they were told that their participation in this research was voluntary and that withdrawal from the study at any time was their right (BERA, 2004: 6).

Those who were willing to participate in the research were reassured that their anonymity and confidentiality would be kept secure. I informed participants that their information was anonymous; actual names would not be used when reporting the results of the study. They were told that no one other than the researcher would have any access to the information collected (BERA, 2004: 9). I also assured them that this data was not for further publication by other researchers (BERA, 2004: 9).

### **3.11 Summary**

This chapter started with a detailed description of the ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions guiding this two-phase study. The rationale for choosing a mixed-method design was given, followed by a description of the data collection process and an explanation of the triangulation model. Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were described. This was followed by a description of the study sample and procedures of sampling. The data analysis carried out in the study was then illustrated. This was followed by a discussion of ethical considerations.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSIS

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter is mainly based on the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the questionnaire and the interview and training sessions (see Appendix A). The analysis falls into two sections according to the phases of the study. The first phase includes the analysis of the questionnaire and interview. It reports the findings of the two methods of data collection in order to answer the research questions of the study. Therefore, this chapter presents the findings on the students' knowledge about, attitudes towards, difficulties of, and training on, dictionary use. The second section covers the results of the training students had through designed tutorial sessions.

#### 4.2 Phase I: Analysis of questionnaire and interview

The results throw light on the current status and use of the dictionary by Saudi students. These results will be compared and contrasted with the findings that other researchers have found in their studies. The results are presented under five main headings to answer research questions:

- What knowledge do Saudi students have about their dictionary?
- What attitude do Saudi students have towards the use of the dictionary in learning English?
- What difficulties do Saudi students encounter when using the dictionary?
- What factors affect Saudi students' dictionary use?
- What influence does training in dictionary use have on students?

##### 4.2.1 Dictionary knowledge

The students' knowledge about the dictionary was explored in several studies in the literature. Those studies aimed to investigate what students knew about the level of assistance their dictionary are able to provide them with and whether students knew how to retrieve the needed information. Similarly, this study attempts to investigate those areas, but it also sheds light on the students' knowledge about dictionaries before they first possessed one and how they chose their first dictionary. Therefore,

as explained in the literature chapter, the analysis of the students' dictionary knowledge in this chapter is divided into two types: pre-ownership and post-ownership knowledge.

This section of the analysis includes the findings about the students' dictionary pre/post-ownership knowledge. In other words, it explores the level of knowledge students had about their dictionaries and what types of information their dictionaries contained. Generally, the data show that both students' pre-ownership and post-ownership knowledge were very limited. The questionnaire comprised 12 statements each with "true," "false," or "don't know" response choices. The quantitative analysis used was descriptive statistical analyses.

#### **4.2.1.1 Dictionary pre-ownership knowledge**

Under this title the results of the analysis obtained from the methods of data collection about the level of knowledge about dictionaries that students had before purchasing their dictionaries. Firstly, it is important to explore how many students owned a dictionary and what type of dictionary they had. Knowing this is essential before discussing the students' ownership knowledge.

##### **A. Dictionary ownership**

Dictionary ownership is repeatedly examined in the literature as researchers need to make sure that the students s/he conducted the study on possessed a dictionary. It includes all the types of dictionary that students have and use for linguistics activities and needs. In the current study, it was essential to explore the students' dictionary ownership first before investigating their knowledge about, and skills in the dictionary.

Table 4.1 shows the percentage of the students who owned a dictionary. Descriptive statistics were used to show how many students possessed a dictionary. Out of the 77 students who participated in the questionnaire, 75 students confirmed their ownership of at least one type of dictionary, or 97.4%. The result confirms findings from previous studies that the percentage of students who own dictionaries is very high. See Diab, (1990); Al-Ajmi, (1992); Li, (1998); Hartmann, (1998); Kent, (2001); Chi, (2003); etc. For instance, Atkins and Knowles (1988) found that 90.8% of their

students owned at least one dictionary, though their students were from secondary school, colleges, universities and adult education classes. Similar results were reflected in other studies such as Al-Ajmi (1992) and Li (1998).

Table 4-1 Students' dictionary ownership

Dictionary ownership				
Statement	Percentage		Count	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Do you own a dictionary?	97.4	2.6	75	2

This result is further confirmed by qualitative data obtained from interviews in the current study. Almost all of the interviewees said that they owned at least one dictionary. The high percentage of the student ownership of dictionaries may imply a perception that the dictionary performs a valuable role in facilitating English learning. Al-Ajmi (1992) that students' ownership of more than one dictionary increased among advanced learners. Thus, one may claim that ownership of a dictionary can be linked to the students' views of the dictionary's role in learning English. It can be said that the high percentage of dictionary ownership found in the previous studies and confirmed by the current research may indicate that students appreciate the dictionary's role in language learning, even though they ignore different types of lexical information founded in their dictionaries.

#### 4.2.1.2 Dictionary ownership according to language and medium

Two types of criteria were used in this study in terms of the classification of the dictionary by type and student ownership. These two criteria have been repeatedly used by dictionary researchers when considering dictionary users' patterns and preferences (e.g. Li, 1998; Chi 2003). The first criterion concerns the dictionary types according to the languages they cover (e.g. monolingual, bilingual, bilingulized). The second criterion looks at dictionary types in term of the medium (e.g. paper, electronic, online).

Table 4.2 displays the types of dictionaries owned by students in term of medium and languages included. Both bilingualised and bilingual E-A dictionaries ranked higher than bilingual A-E and monolingual dictionaries. The number of students who owned monolingual and bilingual A-E was very low compared to those who owned the

other two types. Only four students out of the 75 respondents claimed that they owned bilingual A-E and one other student claimed that he had a monolingual dictionary. This result may imply that students used their dictionary more for decoding than for encoding.

Table 0-2 Type of dictionary owned in term of language included and medium

<b>Type of dictionary owned in terms of language included</b>	<b>Percent %</b>	<b>Type of dictionary owned in terms of medium</b>	<b>Percent %</b>
Bilingualised E-E-A	49.3	Paper	72.0
Bilingual E-A	44.0	HHE d	21.3
Bilingual A-E d	5.3	Mobile phone	4.0
Monolingual E-E	1.3	CD-ROM	2.7
Total	100.0	Total	100.0

The interpretation of the students' ownership of the bilingualised and bilingual dictionaries could be that: (1) these types of dictionaries seem to be easier than monolingual dictionaries when looking up the meaning of unknown words. The reason is that the meaning of the sought word is given in L1 (Scholfield, 1982; Underhill, 1985); (2) students have a psychological need to obtain the equivalent L1 meaning of the unknown word which may encourage the students to choose the bilingual and bilingualised dictionaries instead of monolingual dictionary (Laufer, 1997); (3) the monolingual dictionary is difficult to use because students sometimes need to look for the meaning of words they encounter while reading the definition of the word they want to obtain its meaning; (4) teachers' advice influenced the students to buy the bilingualised dictionary; indeed, students reported that they had bought the dictionary because they were asked to do so by their teachers (Béjoint, 1981; Iqbal, 1987; Li, 1998).

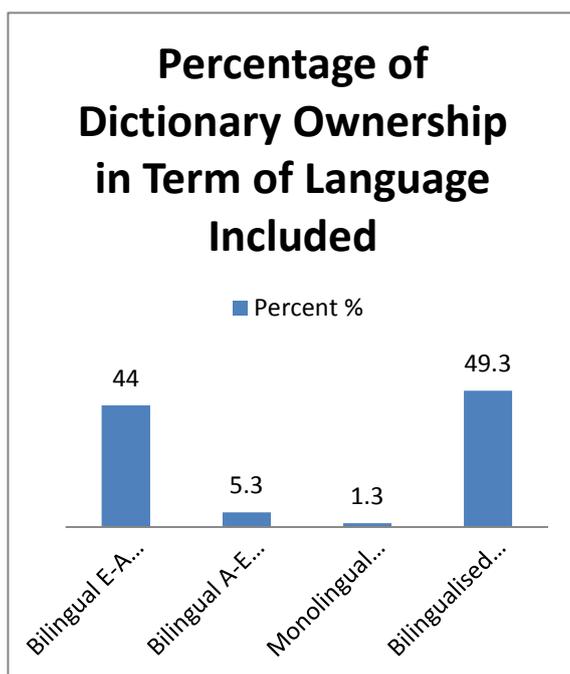


Figure 4-1: Percentage of dictionary ownership in terms of language included

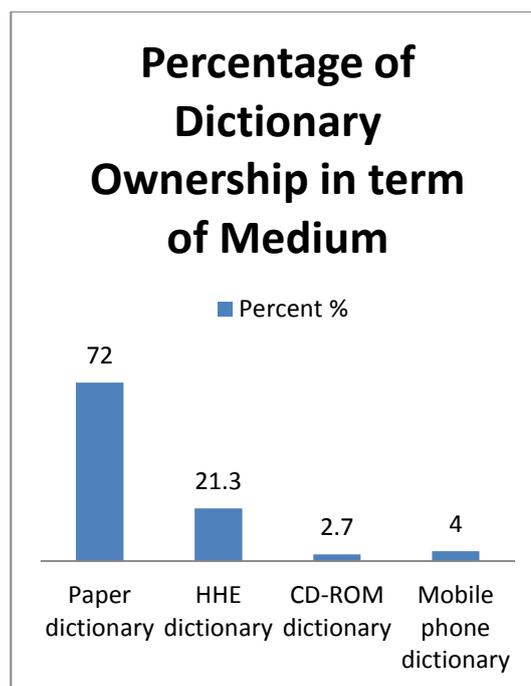


Figure 4-2: Percentage of dictionary ownership in terms of medium

The Figures 4.1 and 4.2 show the types of dictionary that students owned in terms of medium and language included. It seems that the paper dictionary was owned by the majority of the students (72%). HHE comes next (21%); while 2.7% claimed that they owned CD-ROM dictionaries. 4% mentioned that they had a mobile phone dictionary, as shown in Figure 4.2. Figure 4.1 shows that dictionary ownership was based on the language included. As stated earlier, the bilingualised dictionary was owned by 49.3%; followed by the bilingual E-A dictionary with 44%. Both bilingual A-E and monolingual dictionaries were owned by small number of students with 5.2% and 1.3% respectively. The high percentage student ownership of a paper dictionary could be linked to the bilingualised dictionary (49.3%). This is because the paper dictionary owned by the majority of the students was a bilingualised one. This finding may indicate the students' preference for this type of dictionary. It may also imply that the ownership of this type of dictionary was based on received recommendations or because it was affordable. According to one of the students in the interview, the reason for his choice of a paper dictionary was that paper dictionaries were cheaper than electronic ones. Some of the students also liked a paper dictionary for reasons such as the ease of reading, and the idea of browsing for

information. Therefore, it is important to explore why students chose their particular dictionary and whether they had the knowledge to select the most appropriate dictionary.

#### 4.2.1.3 Factors affecting dictionary choice

Students are usually requested to buy the same specific textbooks, but they are permitted their own choice of dictionary (Li, 1998). Thus, students' knowledge about the types and features of the dictionary they want to buy is essential. Previous studies have shown that the students' decision of which dictionary to buy is affected by several factors, chief of which is the influence of teachers' recommendations and advice, which could resonate with many students. The table below (4.3) is asking students to choose who affected their choice to buy their owned dictionary. The questionnaire has four choices for the question "*who advised you to buy the dictionary you own*".

Table 4-3: Advice received on dictionary ownership

<b>Who advised you to buy the dictionary you own?</b>				
	<b>My parent</b>	<b>My teachers</b>	<b>The seller</b>	<b>I chose it myself</b>
Percentage	5.3%	88%	4.0	2.7
Count	4	66	3	2

##### 4.2.1.3.1 Teachers' recommendation

Table 4.3 shows that the influence of teachers was very significant when students bought their dictionaries. 88% of the total sample of students reported that they followed their teachers' recommendations, while 5.3% accepted parental advice. The seller's recommendations came next with 4.0%, while students' evaluation of the dictionary came last with 2.7%. The interpretation of the students' dependence on their teachers is explained from three points: (1) students follow their teachers' recommendations (Iqbal, (1987); Li, (1998) and deal with their suggestions as requests; (2) students trust their teachers' suggestions to buy the recommended dictionary; (3) students lack knowledge about types of dictionaries and how to choose the most appropriate one for them.

During the interview, students mentioned that they followed their teachers' advice to buy their dictionary. Students said that they were given the name of a specific

dictionary and asked to buy it by their teachers. They confirmed that their teachers told them to buy the Modern Oxford Dictionary (MOD). They also said that they were told that having a dictionary was very important to improve their language acquisition. For example:

Example (1)

*The researcher: Did you receive any piece of advice to buy the dictionary you own?*

*The interviewee 2: Yes, during the first week, teachers said that we have to buy a dictionary. (And) they recommended us to buy MOD.*

Example (2)

*The researcher: who advised you to have this type of dictionary?*

*The interviewee 5: our English language teachers in the intensive course told us to buy a dictionary. They said it helps us to learn English.*

*The researcher: Okay, did they give you a name?*

*The interviewee 5: Yes, they advised us to buy Oxford dictionary.*

This result echoes the finding of previous studies, such as Iqbal (1987) and Marelllo (1987) who found that teachers guided their students to buy their own dictionaries. Iqbal (1987) found that half of the teachers recommended MLD to their students. However, he commented that more than 90% of the students did not know that dictionary very well. Marelllo (1987) also mentioned that nearly 70% of high school teachers and 81% of university teachers recommended the acquisition of a bilingual dictionary. Béjoint (1981) asked his participants the following question: “*Why did choose the one(s) you bought?*” 85% of the students chose “*recommended by tutors*”. Hofling (2006) found that 71% of his participants bought their dictionaries based on their teachers’ recommendation and advice.

#### 4.2.1.3.2 Lack of knowledge

It seems from the above findings that the participants in this study lacked knowledge about the distinctions between the types of dictionaries. To explore whether this assumption was true, the questionnaire included the following item: “*Dictionaries are classified into different types*”. Out of 77 students, 46 could answer this item correctly accounting for 62.2% (see Figure 4.3 below). This may imply that students possess a kind of prior knowledge about the dictionaries types which are available in the market. Only 37.8% answered this item incorrectly or chose the “do not know” answer.

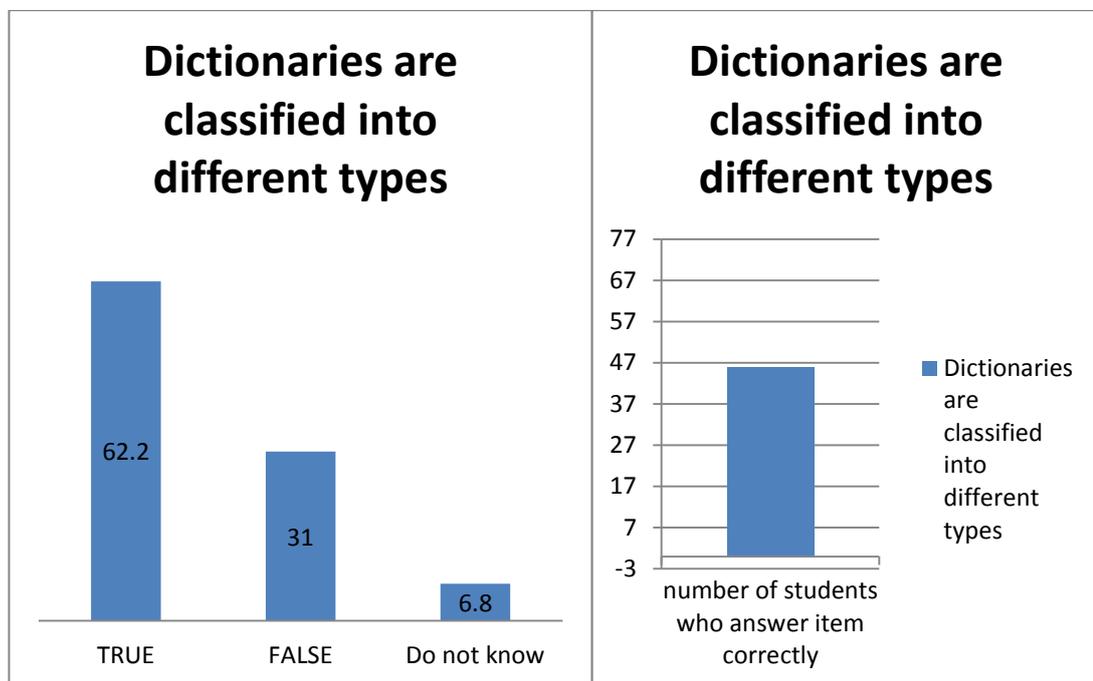


Figure 4-3: Knowledge about dictionary types

In contrast, the data from the interview suggests that students did not understand the difference between the dictionary types. The majority of the students said in the interview that they were not aware of the different types of dictionaries while others had more knowledge about such information. For example, some of the chosen answers from some of the interviewees are presented below:

*The researcher: do you know any other types of dictionary than the one you own?*

*The interviewee 3: no, I don't know.*

*The interviewee 11: I know that there are different types of dictionaries, but I do not know much about them.*

The above examples show that the lack of knowledge about typology can be seen as one of the factors that affects the choice of dictionary. The participants' lacks of knowledge about the different types of dictionaries that are available for them to choose from were common among the subjects of the study. It is assumed that knowing these types of dictionaries and the criteria of classification can assist students to choose the most appropriate dictionary for their learning of English. Thus students tend to seek their teachers' assistance and recommendation on this issue. This finding is in line with previous studies Diab, (1990); Béjoint, (1981) which found that their participants were not aware of the different kinds of dictionaries available to them in the market.

#### 4.2.1.3.3 Lack of experience

The participants in this study did not seem to be exposed to dictionary use during intermediate and secondary schooling. The questionnaire results show that the majority of students started using the dictionary after being enrolled in college. According to Table 4.5, 71.1% of the student claimed that they used the dictionary for the first time after they joined the college, while 22% of them mentioned that they used it for the first time in secondary school. Only 7% claimed to use it for the first time in intermediate school.

Table 4-4: Initial dictionary use

<i>When did you start using your dictionary?</i>		
Intermediate school	Secondary school	College/university level
Percent 6.6%	Percent 22.4%	Percent 71.1%

During the interview, the majority of the students reported that the use of a dictionary inside the classroom was not supported by their teachers. Therefore, students did not seem to build any kind of prior knowledge or experience of dictionary use during their previous learning before joining the college. The majority of them claimed that dictionary use was not introduced to them during their learning in the public schools. Some of them mentioned that they used the dictionary for the first time after joining the college.

This finding showed that students were not very accustomed to dictionary use during their previous study. It can be argued that this negatively affected their knowledge and use of the dictionary inside and outside the classroom before joining the college. This also affected their choice of the dictionary they wanted to buy and use while learning English. This late awareness of dictionary use possibly influenced their selection of the dictionary.

To sum up, the students' dictionary knowledge that preceded their ownership was meagre and inadequate. Certain factors kept the level of knowledge below the required standard. Teachers' recommendation, lack of experience, lack of knowledge and teachers trustworthiness can be seen as factors that confined the students' dictionary choice. The majority of the students in this study followed their teachers' advice and bought the type of dictionary recommended for them by the teachers. Many students related their decision of dictionary ownership to their teachers' influences. In term of the students' self-efficacy to evaluate dictionary choice, the results reveal the meagre knowledge possessed by the students regarding dictionary types and features.

#### **4.2.2 Dictionary post-ownership knowledge**

Post-ownership knowledge means that all students knew at least what they could use their dictionary for. This is important for the user's knowledge with regard to dictionary use. Dictionary users should grasp sufficient knowledge about the types of information available in their dictionaries and the level of assistance these dictionaries can provide to them while learning English. One of the aims of this study was to explore this knowledge by testing what students knew about the types of information included in most dictionaries. Both qualitative and quantitative results will be presented and integrated into each other in the analysis.

The students' dictionary knowledge about the information contained in the dictionary and how to retrieve such information is labelled 'post-ownership knowledge'. In the current study, the statistical data includes 11 statements with three answers: true, false and 'do not know'. An exploratory test was chosen to explore the students'

responses to the items. With a quick glance at Table 4.6, it is clear that only four statements were correctly answered by more than half of the participants, which may indicate that students' knowledge about the dictionary's features, and the types of information included, was limited. During interviews, students exhibited their inadequate knowledge and understanding of the linguistic information available in their dictionary. Analysis of the interview data showed that students were not aware of the potential assistance that their dictionaries could offer them. It also revealed that the majority of the students did not know about the types of information included in their dictionary. It was apparent that the participants consulted a dictionary mainly to obtain the meaning of unknown words (Bejoint, 1981; Snell-Hornby, 1987; Summers, 1988; Amaral, 1995; Hartmann, 1999; Lew, 2002 among others). This may imply that types of information other than the meaning of unknown words are neglected by students because either they do not need them or they do not know that such information exists in the dictionary. This lack of knowledge about dictionary information might bring us to the fact that dictionary is not exploited by the students.

The first statement "*My dictionary is organized alphabetically*" was answered correctly by almost all the participants. 70 students out of the total number of the students choose the right answer. The reason for the high number of the correct responses for this item might be because students need to use their dictionary alphabetically when searching for word meaning and this gave them the sense that their dictionaries are organized alphabetically. Another reason is that because the teachers explained to the students how to use their dictionaries using the alphabet. More discussion about this point is presented in the difficulties section.

The statement "*My dictionary has information about how words sound in English*" was answered correctly by 53 students, while 12 students answered this wrongly. Only 9 students out of the total population chose the answer "*I do not know*". The interview data indirectly support the students' knowledge about the pronunciation features in their dictionaries. Many of them stated that they faced great difficulty with pronunciation. This might imply that they knew that their dictionary contained this type of information, but they did not know how to obtain it, especially from the

paper dictionaries. It would be wrong to say that all students knew that such information existed in their dictionaries since some of the interviewees stated that they were not aware of the pronunciation information in the paper dictionary.

Table 4-5: Students' knowledge of the information included in the dictionary

Statement				
My dictionary is organized alphabetically	Correct answers	70		
	Responses %	True	False	Don't know
		94.6	4.1	1.4
My dictionary has information about how words sound in English	Correct answers	53		
	Responses %	True	False	Don't know
		71.6	16.2	12.2
My dictionary gives information about singular and plural nouns	Correct answers	51		
	Responses %	True	False	Don't know
		68.9	20.3	10.8
My dictionary includes examples that explain the meaning of the words.	Correct answers	47		
	Responses %	True	False	Don't know
		64	20	16
My dictionary has information about the derivation of a word (e.g. success, successful).	Correct answers	39		
	Responses %	True	False	Don't know
		53	27	20
My dictionary tells me about the preposition that follow some verbs	Correct answers	34		
	Responses %	True	False	Don't know
		46	27	27
My dictionary has information about how it should be used	Correct answers	33		
	Responses %	True	False	Don't know
		45	28	27
My dictionary has pictures of parts such as (human body parts)	Correct answers	27		
	Responses %	True	False	Don't know
		36	34	30
My dictionary provides information about collocation (e.g. Commit a crime)	Correct answers	21		
	Responses %	True	False	Don't know
		28	27.0	45
My dictionary has information about origin of the word	Correct answers	19		
	Responses %	True	False	Don't know
		38	26	37
My dictionary cannot tell me about synonyms and antonyms.	Correct answers	17		
	Responses %	True	False	Don't know
		47	23	30

*“My dictionary gives information about singular and plural nouns”* comes next. 51 students answered this correctly. This high percentage can be explained by the fact that students used this type of information frequently (see Needed Lexical Information section). In the interview, students were divided into two groups. Some of the students knew about this type of information, which may indicate that they used their dictionary frequently to look for this type of information. For example, one of the students said: *“I can figure out this type of information. I know how to get it”*. Some other students did not know much about this type of information and did not realize that they could find this information in their dictionaries. For instance, one of the students answered my question saying: *“I do not know about this information in my dictionary”* I asked him *why?* He replied *“maybe because we have not been taught about this in classes”*. It can be said that some grammatical information such as singular and plural might be related to the student’s proficiency. It is assumed, therefore, that those students who claimed that they did not know about this type of information in their dictionaries were from the low achiever students. It is possibly true to claim that students’ needs for a specific type of information can augment their knowledge about that information.

The next statement is: *“My dictionary includes examples that explain the meaning of the words”*, which was answered correctly by 47 students. This result is supported by the interview data. During the interview, students confirmed that they used such examples when searching for word meanings, which could lend some support to the findings of the questionnaire. However, it is important to note that some of the students were unaware of this type of information in their dictionaries. For instance, one of the students said: *“I do not know about that. I only know how to use my dictionary for meaning”*. Some other students complained that they could not make use of the example when searching for word meaning, especially when the definition of the word was very difficult to comprehend (see Difficulties for more details).

*“My dictionary has information about the derivation of a word (e.g. success, successful)”* came next and was answered correctly by 39 students. Students in the interview claimed that they knew this type of information and they were exposed to an extra dose inside classes about this grammatical information. One of the students

said that his teachers emphasised this grammatical information in the grammar classes. He said: *“Yes, I know about this information and I can obtain this from my dictionary.....My teacher (Yahiya) kept helping us with this during lessons”*. Contrary to other grammatical information, such as plurality and verb forms, the part of speech information seemed to be easily obtainable by students.

The next statement was: *“My dictionary tells me about the preposition that follows some verbs”*. Less than half of the total number of the students chose the right answer. 21 students chose the incorrect answer while 20 students chose the answer *“do not know”*. It seems that students did not know much about this type of information because they did not frequently use their dictionary for such information. In the interview, students said that they used their dictionaries for some specific needs, and finding prepositions was not one of these needs. For example, I asked the students the following question: *“How easy do you find it to figure out preposition information in your dictionary?”* One of the students said: *“I do not find it easy and I do not need it.”* Another student confirmed that he did not know about this information in his dictionary. I explained to him how some verbs are followed by some specific preposition. He said to me that: *“I did not imagine that this information is there in my dictionary”*. The literature shows that students do not use their dictionaries to search for preposition information. Almuzainy, (2005) found that using a dictionary to seek preposition information was one of the least used types of lexical information by his participants.

The next statement, *“My dictionary has information about how it should be used”*, was answered correctly by 33 students. This result supports the findings of some of the previous studies such as Béjoint, (1981); Kipfer, (1987) who found that dictionary users did not read or benefit from their dictionary’s introduction. In the interview, students confirmed that they did not read the introduction or the dictionary guide. For example, one of the participants answered the question: *“Did you read the introduction of your dictionary which explains how to use it?”* by saying *“ No, I did not read the introduction”*. Literature proved that students do not take the initiative to read the dictionary introduction. In her study, Kipfer (1987) found that only 5% of her participants read the preface or introduction. However, this

contradicts Wolf's (1992) findings. Wolf found that 60% of the students read the introduction while 15% read it once before the first consultation. The rest of the participants considered reading the introduction or user guide to be unnecessary and too much work.

Interestingly, it was found that some of the participants of this study lacked awareness of the explanations in the introduction and appendices. Some of the answers to the question: "*Have you read the introduction of your dictionary?*" affirmed that students did not know that the introduction could guide them to use the dictionary properly. For example, interviewee 13 answered this question by saying that he "*did not know that there are illustrations about dictionary use in [his] dictionary introduction*". It can be argued that, because the introduction is usually written in English, this makes it very difficult for students to take the initiative to read it.

The next statement was "*My dictionary has pictures of parts such as (human body parts)*". 27 students gave the right answer while 25 answered it incorrectly. The remaining students (22) chose the option "*do not know*". In some of the previous studies, such as Tomaszczyk (1979), students claimed that using pictures in the dictionary could facilitate the understanding of words. In the interview, some of the students mentioned that they browsed the pictures and tried to know the names of the parts while some others said that they saw pictures in their dictionaries but they never looked at them. It is important to say that presentation of pictures and diagrams varies from one dictionary to another. Monolingual dictionaries, such as *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, have more pictures and diagrams than bilingual and bilingualised dictionaries. Bearing in mind that the majority of the students owned the MOD, they were less likely to know or use the pictures or the diagrams in their dictionaries.

The next statement was "*My dictionary provides information about collocation (e.g. Commit a crime)*". This statement was answered correctly by only 21 students while 54 students chose either the wrong answer or "*do not know*". This type of information was unknown for the majority of the students and seems to be one of the

most difficult sorts of information to be obtained from the dictionary. Some of the students in the interview said that they do not know about collocation and asked for the meaning of collocation in English. I explained to them that certain words are often found together. It was clear through the interviews that students did not have any prior knowledge of collocation. A typical answer was: *“I never heard of this before and do not know where to find this in the dictionary”*. It is argued that collocation information is probably one of the least sought types of information in the dictionary. Previous studies, such as Fan (2000), Chow (2004) and Almuzainy (2005), had also found that checking collocation appropriateness was not frequent.

The next statement, *“My dictionary has information about origin of the word”* was only answered correctly by 19 students. In the interview, students were not very aware of this type of information. Many of the students said that this information was not known to them and they did not need it while studying. For instance, one answer was: *“No, we have not been told about this information..... I do not know it exists in the dictionary....May be because I do not think that it is important for me.”* My explanation is that information like the origins of words is rarely used or needed by language learners, and ignorance of this type of information persists when students are not taught about it in class. Teachers seem not to pay much attention to this information. This includes explaining to the students that their dictionaries contain such information.

The statement *“My dictionary cannot tell me about synonyms and antonyms”* was answered correctly by only 17 students. Although students in the interview were very different in their knowledge about synonyms and antonyms in the dictionary, I can say that the wording of this item might be the reason for this low number of students who selected the right answer. The item is a negative statement and all other items are affirmative. This was not spotted as a problem when conducting the questionnaire piloting. As stated above, students were divided into two groups. Some of the students claimed that they knew this type of information while some others did not. For instance, one of the participants said that *“I did not realize that dictionary can provide similar meaning of the word..... teachers never taught us this in the beginning of our study”*. This student means that he and his colleagues were not

taught during the intensive week's course that synonyms were obtainable from their dictionaries. I found this claim repeated by other students during the interview.

In summary, the students' dictionary knowledge was below the level expected, particularly the knowledge that preceded ownership of the dictionary. The choice of dictionary seemed to be based on insufficient knowledge about the type of dictionary that could suit the student. The dictionary post-ownership knowledge was also seen as imperfect. Students' use of the dictionary was more likely to be associated with their awareness of what dictionary could offer them. It was found that many of the students were not aware of what their dictionaries contained.

#### **4.2.3 Students' dictionary attitudes and preferences**

This part of the analysis consists of the questionnaire and interview findings about the students' attitudes towards their dictionaries. The questionnaire part comprises seven statements and aims to explore what attitudes students have towards using paper and electronic dictionaries. It also explores their preference towards their consultation of dictionaries while doing linguistic activities such as reading, writing, listening and speaking. Descriptive statistics were used to explore the mean frequency of the items and thus identify what type of dictionary students preferred in terms of language and medium. One has to bear in mind that HHE dictionaries owned by students were mostly bilingual while paper dictionaries owned by students were mainly bilingualised.

The statement *"I found the dictionary role is very important for the learning process"* had the highest percentage of students who strongly agree with the statement with 48.9%. Similarly, 30.4% of the students agree with the statement which indicates to a positive attitude towards the role of the dictionary in learning English. In showing the students' positive attitudes towards the importance of the dictionary for learning English, these results lend support to previous studies, such as Kipfer (1985), Diab (1989) and Muller (2000), which found that the dictionary's role is seen essential and that it can facilitate the learning of the language.

Table 4-6: Students' attitudes and preferences about the dictionary

Statement	Responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I found the dictionary role is very important for learning process.	Percentage	49%	30%	14%	5%	2%
	Numbers	37	19	11	5	1
I can solve my vocabulary problem by using my dictionary.	Percentage	47%	25%	15%	10%	4%
	Numbers	33	18	11	7	3
Using dictionary makes the learning of English easy.	Percentage	43%	34%	17%	3%	2%
	Numbers	33	23	14	2	1
I cannot learn English without the help of my dictionary.	Percentage	25%	41%	9%	15	10%
	Numbers	17	28	6	10	7
I do not have the feel to use the dictionary when learning English.	Percentage	7%	10%	17%	31%	36%
	Numbers	5	11	14	22	26
Using dictionary is a demanding job.	Percentage	32%	34%	13%	14%	6%
	Numbers	22	24	10	12	5

Findings from the interviews confirm that students held positive attitudes towards the dictionary and its role in language learning. Many of them agreed that the dictionary played the role of facilitator to their study. The students were asked the following question: *"How do you see the role of your dictionary in learning English?"* The answers received for this question were almost identical in that the dictionary was seen to play an essential role in the learning of English. The majority of the students saw the advantage of dictionary use in learning the meaning of new words. For example, interviewee 11 said that *"I believe that my dictionary is beneficial when searching for meaning"*. This could indicate that the majority of the participants realised the usefulness of the dictionary for the learning of English.

The statement: *"I can solve my vocabulary problem by using my dictionary"* came second in order of positive attitude. 47% and 25% of the participants chose to

strongly agree and agree with the statement, while 10% and 4% selected to strongly disagree and disagree with it. This result supports the previous statement about the positive attitude towards the role of the dictionary in learning English, but more specifically refers to vocabulary. It also agrees with some of the previous studies' findings e.g. Chatzidimou, (2007); El-Badry, (1990) which found that students had a positive attitude towards the dictionary's assistance in answering linguistics questions. In the interview, the interviewees stated that their dictionaries assisted them with the lexical problems they encountered while studying. For example, one of the interviewees said: *"I need my dictionary. I believe my dictionary can answer all my language questions"*. It can be said that some of the participants in this study had reached the level where they could tangibly appreciate the efficiency and benefits of their dictionaries.

43% and 34% of the respondents strongly agree and agree respectively with the statement *"using the dictionary makes the learning of English easy"*, while only 3% and 2% either strongly disagree or disagree with the statement. This positive stance to the role of the dictionaries in facilitating the learning of English echoes the findings of some of the previous studies such as that of Huang (2003). Huang's results suggested that learners believed that employing the dictionary was essential to facilitate English learning. However, my findings contradict Jakubowski's (2001) findings where dictionaries were placed at the very bottom of the list of learning facilities ranked by participants. In the interviews, students pointed out that using the dictionary assisted them when encountering word difficulties.

32% and 34% of the participants chose to strongly agree or agree with the statement *"using my dictionary is a demanding job"*. In contrast, 14% and 6% of them chose to strongly disagree or disagree respectively with the same statement. It could be that the students' lack of reference skills was a major reason for describing dictionary use as challenging process. In the interviews, students aired their resentment against their paper dictionary, describing retrieving information from such a dictionary as a time-consuming process. This could probably be attributed to the fact that students did not possess the basic reference skills, which made checking a paper dictionary very difficult (Miller, 2006). For example, they agreed that it was very difficult to use,

with one commenting that *“it does not deserve the effort”*. This finding agrees with Kipfer (1987) who found that 16% of her participants claimed that employing a dictionary was not worth the trouble. One of the disadvantages of using a paper dictionary is that it can be a long process and requires some reference skills. It can be argued that the students lacked the basic skills to use their dictionaries. Further disadvantages of print dictionaries, aside from being time consuming to search through, include such things as small font size, thinness of pages and differences in phonetic symbols between dictionaries (McCarthy, 1999, cited in Kent, 2001). Students criticized the size of their paper dictionary describing it as *“heavy to be carried”*.

Some of the students mentioned that they were using the MOD infrequently because the English definitions were difficult to understand and that insufficient numbers of Arabic words were used. This probably created the reluctance and the procrastination to use the paper dictionary and compelled them to apply some of the non-dictionary strategies such as vocabulary guessing or ignoring strategies. For example, one of the participants said, explaining his methods of using his dictionary, that *“I try to find it (the word) in the dictionary.....if I cannot find the word I ignore it.....”*

65% of the students chose to strongly agree and agree with the statement *“I cannot learn English without the help of my dictionary”*, while nearly 26% of the students strongly disagree or disagree with the statement. It can be said that dictionaries give students confidence. In a previous study conducted by East (2005), she found that employing dictionaries could assist students to be more confident. Students confirmed that the dictionary made them feel confident with the word’s meaning. They stated that learning English without their dictionary’s assistance seemed impossible. For example, one of the interviewees said *“.....dictionary is a second teacher. I learn from it when my teacher is not available....I think without it my learning will be more difficult....”*

67% of the respondents seem to strongly disagree with the statement *“I do not have the feel to use the dictionary when learning English”*. In contrast, 18% of them seem to agree that they do not have the feel to use the dictionary to learn English. This

result may suggest that these students held positive attitudes regarding their dictionaries and their roles in learning English, because they had a low score on a negatively worded item. However, some of the students were dissatisfied with their dictionaries and the absence of the desired word in them. The high standard deviation indicates a wide spread of responses on this item.

With regards to the students' preference in terms of types of dictionary used while doing linguistic activities, the questionnaire contained eight statements. The statements concerned students' preferences towards using paper or electronic dictionaries. Descriptive statistics were used to explore which type of dictionary students preferred. The items were equally distributed in this part of the questionnaire, but in no particular order.

A glance at the table below reveals that students preferred to use electronic dictionaries while doing linguistic activities, as these scored higher than paper dictionaries. This was confirmed by the qualitative findings from the interviews where students aired their displeasure at the use of their paper dictionaries.

Table 4-7: Attitudes towards types of dictionary

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Not Sure</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
I prefer to refer to my electronic dictionary while writing.	percentages	59%	36%	3.0%	1%	2%
	Numbers	43	26	3	1	2
I prefer to refer to my paper dictionary while writing.	percentages	7%	10%	29%	40%	15%
	Numbers	5	7	21	29	11
I prefer to refer to my electronic dictionary while reading.	percentages	55%	32%	8%	4%	2%
	Numbers	40	23	6	4	2
I prefer to refer to my paper dictionary while reading.	percentages	10%	22%	27%	29%	12%
	Numbers	8	16	20	21	9
When hearing a new word I prefer to consult my electronic dictionary.	percentages	48%	35%	12%	4%	1%
	Numbers	35	25	9	3	1
When hearing a new word I prefer to consult my paper dictionary.	percentages	14%	8%	16%	37%	25%
	Numbers	10	6	12	27	18
I prefer to use my electronic dictionary for quick consultation while studying.	percentages	60%	29%	4%	6%	2%
	Numbers	44	21	4	5	2

I prefer to use my paper dictionary for quick consultation while studying.	percentages	11.0%	15.0%	8.2%	41%	25%
	Numbers	8	11	6	30	18

For writing activities, the statements *"I prefer to refer to my electronic dictionary while writing"* and *"I prefer to refer to my paper dictionary while writing"* showed a difference in the students' preferences. As seen in Table 4.7, 59% and 36% of the students chose to strongly agree and agree respectively with the statement, while writing. In contrast, only 16% of the participants preferred to refer to the paper dictionary while writing. This indicates that the electronic dictionary was preferred to the paper dictionary while writing. This result agrees with the findings of Nesi (2010) who found that her students preferred to use an electronic dictionary while writing. She says:

*"Whilst software is used for reading and writing at the computer, a PED is preferred for reading and writing with paper-based materials, and for speaking and listening. Almost all prior dictionary research has been concerned with hard-copy dictionaries, and has reported greater dictionary use while reading than while writing, and almost no use for speaking and listening. It is interesting to see how the electronic format is changing consultation patterns."* (Nesi, 2010: 218)

In the interviews, interviewees stated that they favoured the use of electronic dictionaries than paper dictionaries while writing. Some of them claimed that electronic dictionaries surpassed paper ones with effortless access to word information. For example, one of the participants said: *"I always prefer to use my sister's electronic dictionary.....because it is quick and easy"*. Another student said *"when I have essay writing .... for me I prefer to use electronic dictionary because it is easier than paper dictionaries"*. It is important to say that the students' tendency to employ the electronic dictionary is also common while reading, as will be seen below.

For reading activities, the preference was for electronic dictionaries. As seen in Table 4.7, 55% strongly agree with the statement *"I prefer to refer to my electronic dictionary while reading"*; while in contrast only 22% of the students chose to

strongly agree or agree with the statement *“I prefer to use my paper dictionary while reading”*. During the interview, I asked the students which type of dictionary they preferred to use when reading a text. Most of them pointed out that they favoured the electronic dictionary when looking for a quick definition. For instance, one of the answers was: *“Of course, electronic dictionaries are more preferable for me. In most cases, I only need to know what this word means in Arabic. Therefore, I check it in the electronic dictionary and continue my reading”*. It is important to note that, although the paper dictionary (MOD) was owned by the majority of the students, they still preferred the electronic dictionary. For those who did not have electronic dictionaries, they claimed that they used their siblings’ or friends’ dictionaries whenever possible. For instance, a student said: *“I always prefer to use my sister’s electronic dictionary over my paper dictionary”*. He also adds that his sister *“...is an English major student in another college.”* Some of the students claimed that they used CD-ROM and online dictionaries especially when reading English texts on the internet. For example, one of the students stated *“....., but when working on the computer I prefer to use CD-ROM or online dictionaries. It needs only a click”*.

The attitude towards using the electronic dictionary while listening was more positive than the attitude towards the paper one. Comparing the two statements *“When hearing a new word I prefer to consult my electronic dictionary”* and *“When hearing a new word I prefer to consult my paper dictionary”* it can be noticed that 82% of the respondents prefer to use electronic dictionary when listening to new words, while only 22% of them prefer using paper dictionary. It is not surprising that students preferred electronic dictionaries because they are quick, portable and can pronounce words. In the interview, some of the students said that electronic dictionaries were easy to refer to when listening to unfamiliar words. For example, one of the students said: *“I prefer to use the electronic dictionary because it suggests spelling for me. It also pronounces the word for me. If the word pronunciation in the electronic dictionary sounds similar to the word that I heard, I can be sure that it is the needed word”*. This result is supported by Chen’s (2010) findings, where none of the participants considered paper dictionaries useful for listening or speaking. This perception of the usefulness of the electronic dictionary for improving students’ language skills may also imply that the paper dictionary was not preferred by the

majority of the learners when encountering verbal and aural texts.

Students also were asked to describe their attitude towards the use of paper and electronic dictionaries while studying language. 89 % of the respondents agree with the statement *“I prefer to use my electronic dictionary for quick consultation while studying”*. In contrast, 16% of them indicated to agree with the statement *“I prefer to use my paper dictionary for quick consultation while studying”*. This finding explains the general view of the students with regard to their preference to use ED over PD. It is true to say that the ED is preferred for the extra features that allow them to access information easily.

This means that students saw their paper dictionary as very challenging to use and as needing more effort than the electronic dictionary. In the interview, students complained about their paper dictionary, describing retrieving information as a time consuming process. This may be attributable to the fact that students did not have the basic reference skills, which made checking the paper dictionary difficult (Miller, 2006). For example, one of the interviewees described his paper dictionary consultation as a challenging process that did not always succeed. I asked some of the respondents about searching types of information in the MOD.

To conclude, it can be noticed that students held positive attitudes towards the dictionary's role in learning English. They appreciated the importance of the dictionary as a subordinate tool for their learning of the English language. However, some of the students were dissatisfied with their own paper dictionary. This may imply that, although they owned a dictionary, they did not use it very often. It can also be said that resistance to having the HHE dictionary came from other sources, including their teachers' influence.

#### **4.2.4 Lexical information looked up**

This part of the analysis concerns the findings of what type of lexical information is looked up by the students when referring to their dictionaries. It contains nine statements that attempt to find out the kind of information that students most frequently look up in their dictionaries (Table 4.8). Mean scores and standard

deviations, on a Likert scale of 1 to 5, are presented. At first glance, the table seems to show that the participants seek every kind of information available in the dictionary.

Table 4-8: Lexical information needed by students

Statement	responses	Always	Sometimes	Often	Rarely	Never
I use my dictionary to find the meaning in Arabic.	Percentage	50%	41%	7%	1%	1%
	Numbers	36	30	6	1	1
I use my dictionary to know the spelling of the word.	Percentage	44%	22%	13%	17%	5%
	Numbers	32	16	10	14	3
I use my dictionary to know the pronunciation of the word.	Percentage	14%	24%	25%	25%	12%
	Numbers	11	17	18	18	9
I use my dictionary to see parts of speech.	Percentage	11%	17%	24%	33%	15%
	Numbers	8	13	20	24	11
I use my dictionary to see the example that illustrates the meaning of the word.	Percentage	7%	31%	28%	19%	7%
	Numbers	6	23	21	17	5
I use my dictionary to know the derivation of the word.	Percentage	9%	20%	22%	28%	21%
	Numbers	7	15	16	22	16
I use my dictionary to see the plural /singular of the word.	Percentage	7%	19%	21%	28%	25.0
	Numbers	5	14	16	22	19
I use my dictionary to know the verb tense forms.	Percentage	4%	19%	22%	35%	19%
	Numbers	3	14	18	25	13
I use my dictionary to know the synonyms and antonyms of the word (e.g. fast = quick, expensive # cheap).	Percentage	3%	10%	21%	19%	47%
	Numbers	1	8	16	13	34

The table above shows that "*finding meaning in Arabic*" was the main purpose for the majority of the participants to refer to the dictionary. 66 students out of 77 reported that always and sometimes refer to the dictionary to obtain the meaning of the word in Arabic. This might indicate that students used their dictionaries for this purpose more frequently than for any other purpose. This finding is in line with previous key studies on dictionary use, that participants mostly checked meanings (Tomaszczyk, 1979; Béjoint, 1981; Battenburg, 1991; Alqahtani, 2005). The findings from the interview confirm that the dictionary is mainly used for obtaining the meaning of new words. In the interview, most of the students claimed that meaning was the most important item for them when referring to their dictionary. For example, one of the students answered my question saying that he mostly used his dictionary to know the meaning of new words. He said: "*I mainly use my dictionary*

*for meaning*". Al-Jarf (1999) found that 79% of her students wanted to find the Arabic equivalents for English words. This finding looks like a worldwide phenomenon, regardless of L2 learners' nationality, as shown in the above-mentioned studies.

Spelling was ranked second in order of frequency of use among lexical information checked by the students. 67% of the students chose to refer always and sometimes to their dictionary for spelling purposes. This concurs with the findings of Tomaszczyk (1979) and Alqahtani (2005). Greenbaum et al. (1984) found that her US students rank spelling as the most common reason for their own resorting to a dictionary. This finding may also indicate that spelling is checked in the dictionary not only by L2 learners but also by native speakers see Quirk, (1972); Kipfer, (1985). Harvey and Yuill (1997) found that their students checked spellings in the dictionary while writing. In the interview, most of the interviewees claimed that spelling was important for them. They pointed out that they searched for the spelling of words in their dictionaries when doing linguistic activities. This result agrees with Li's (1998) findings where she found that spelling ranked first to be looked up by her students. However, this result disagrees with Béjoint (1981) and Diab (1990) who reported that their participants search for spelling quite infrequently in comparison to other types of information. Battenburg (1991) claimed that the results with foreign students are slightly mixed.

Pronunciation was the third kind of lexical information that these Saudi students checked in their dictionaries. 14% and 24% of the students chose to always and sometimes check their dictionary for pronunciation. This means that pronunciation information tended to be consulted less frequently by the students. This result from the questionnaire is substantiated by the findings of the interview. In the interview, there was a concurrence among all the participants that they did not frequently consult their dictionaries for pronunciation information. This result is in line with the findings of some of the previous studies in the literature, that no group of users commonly reported consulting pronunciation in the dictionary. Béjoint (1981), Kharma (1985), Iqbal (1987), Diab (1990), Al-Jarf (1999), among others stated in their studies that their participants refer to their dictionaries to retrieve pronunciation

relatively infrequently. This might imply that language learners need assistance with pronunciation. Battenburg (1991) argue that the problem pertains to the difficulty in understanding the symbolic system employed in paper dictionaries. He added that instructors should teach their students how to use the pronunciation key and material concerning it (Battenburg, 1991).

In the interviews, the majority of the students complained that their teachers failed to help with regards to pronunciation. The students claimed that their teachers did not teach them how to obtain sounds from the dictionary. Thus, students found electronic dictionaries preferable and more accessible than paper dictionaries. Students confirmed that they had not taken any classes in phonetics. As a result, they did not have any prior knowledge of the phonetic symbols and thus had difficulty in reading these symbols in the paper dictionaries. This might explain their preference for using electronic and online dictionaries for obtaining this type of information. For example, one of the answers received in this regard was: *“I prefer to use the electronic dictionary when needing to know the pronunciation of the new words.”* Some of the students mentioned that they used online dictionaries to get pronunciation while reading English texts on the internet. One of the students said: *“I sometimes use the internet to know the pronunciation of the unknown words.”*

It seems that the problem is whether students can read the pronunciation information in the dictionary or not. Research findings revealed that when students have the knowledge to say a word, it becomes easier for them to commit the word to memory (Fan, 1998). However, students still encounter this difficulty with reading phonetic transcriptions (Taylor 1988) and this will remain unsolved unless they are taught how to obtain this information by teachers or use electronic dictionaries with good speech facilities.

Parts of speech were reported to be checked frequently by the students. 47% of the participants reported referring to the dictionary in order to check parts of speech, sometimes, often or always. This result seems to contradict the students' interview findings as the majority of the students stated that they did not regularly check their dictionary to know the part of speech. The reason for the somewhat frequent

consultation by students may be attributed to students' adequate knowledge of parts of speech. Students reported that they knew this type of information (parts of speech) from their grammar lessons. Teachers devoted enough space for teaching parts of speech in the grammar lessons. For example, one of them said: "*I know this from English classes with Mr. Yahyia (grammar teacher)*". This result agrees with those of Diab (1989), Battenburg (1990) and El-Badry (1990). For example, El-Badry found that 59% of her Arabic students claimed to use their dictionaries to check part of speech.

The statement "*I use a dictionary to find out examples illustrating the word*" ranked fifth among types of lexical information that are sought by participants. 29% stated that they always or sometimes refer to their dictionary to obtain this type of information. This result is, to some extent, in line with what the students pointed out in the interview. The majority of the students claimed that they read the examples that illustrate the word as this helped them to understand its meaning. Furthermore, some of them considered examples to be vital to facilitate English production, because by reading example sentences they believed they could tap knowledge of word usage and improve their writing. In her study of Taiwanese students, Huang (2003) found that the majority of her participants reported referring to their dictionaries to find examples illustrating a word. It is true to claim that it is not easy for low proficiency learners to read examples as they encountered with difficulties in understanding the words used in these examples. Thus, it can be said that facing this problem may be due to the fact that students had low vocabulary knowledge and their teachers did not point out to them how to use examples when searching for word meaning.

Finding out the derivation of a word came in sixth position. 25% of the students reported that they always or sometimes use the dictionary for the words derivations. This concurs with Al-Jarf (1999) findings about her Saudi students who found that only 16% of her participants reported using their dictionaries to find out the derivation of a word. It is also in line with Almuzainy's (2005) in his study about Saudi university students. However, the result contradicts some of the previous studies such as Battenburg (1991). He found that his elementary students look for

derived forms more frequently than other respondents. The reason seems to be due to the difference in the proficiency level between the participants of the current study and Battenburg's students. Battenburg's participants were registered in ESL program at Ohio University which may indicate that their exposure to the language was different from the informants of the current study.

Using a dictionary to find out whether a word is singular or plural ranked seventh among the ten lexical information types included in the questionnaire. 54% of the students stated that they either rarely or never to check their dictionary for the countability information. This response was very much in line with what Almuzainy (2005) found among Saudi students. It also agrees with Gomes (2006) who found that plurality information ranked lower among other information sought by his students with percentage 8%. It is possibly true to say that every word belongs to a part of speech, but singular/plural only applies to nouns and tense forms only to verbs and that can reduce the potential look up of singular/plural and tense.

The use of a dictionary to check an irregular tense form ranked eighth among types of lexical information consulted by the students. 17 students stated that they always/sometimes refer to their dictionary to check verb tense. This result indicates that checking verb regularity in the dictionary was not common among the students. This finding concurs with Fan (2000) who found that this type of information was not much referred to by his participants. Furthermore, Al-Jarf (1999) found that only 37% of her Saudi students referred to their dictionaries to check verb tense forms. It could be argued that because English language teachers in Saudi Arabia are more likely to concentrate on teaching grammar, some learners may not need to check these forms in the dictionary as they have already obtained them from their teachers. Moreover, at the end of each textbook in intermediate and high schools irregular verbs are listed and students in most cases are asked to memorize them. Therefore it can be claimed that this may lead to the lack of need to refer to the dictionaries to check the tense form. In the interviews, students confirmed this finding as most of them stated that they did not search their dictionaries for verb tense forms. For example, one of the students said: *"I do not usually feel any need to know this type of information from the dictionary"*. The effect of vocabulary knowledge on irregular

verb understanding has also been found a reason for infrequent searching for verb tenses. Fan (2000) found that students who had greater vocabulary knowledge consulted their dictionaries to look at tense forms considerably more than those with lower vocabulary knowledge.

Searching for synonyms and antonyms was reported to be used infrequently. Only 13% claimed to check this information, made up of 10% sometimes and 3% always. In the interview, the majority of the students claimed that they did not use their dictionaries to find out synonyms. This is in line with some of the previous studies, such as Kipfer (1985) and Harvey and Yuill (1997), who found that synonyms ranked lowest with users' percentage rating below 10%. However, it contradicts the findings of El-Badry (1990) who found that 73% of her subjects referred to their dictionaries to find synonyms. Moreover, Tomaszczyk (1979) found that 74% of his subjects used their dictionaries for checking synonyms. The reason for the less frequent use of the dictionary for synonyms and antonyms seems to be that, in the questionnaire, both synonyms and antonyms were included together in one statement and this might have affected the results.

In conclusion, it can be said that some of the statements that were ranked lowest in frequency were reported by the students in the interview as difficulties. Students confirmed that these types of information were less needed by them or that they didn't succeed in finding them in the dictionary when they needed to.

#### **4.2.5 Challenges of utilizing the dictionary**

This section devotes space to the findings regarding the students' difficulties when employing their dictionary. It aims at identifying the types of difficulties that students encountered with their dictionary. Knowing the difficulties that students had when using the dictionary is important in order to identify the types of reference skills that they may need to overcome such difficulties. Both qualitative and quantitative data were obtained during the stages of the study. Questionnaire analysis is presented first and then the qualitative findings are consistently incorporated into the analysis.

The findings show that the students encountered some difficulties with their dictionaries use. The majority of the participants indicated that such difficulties could thwart and limited their dependence on their dictionaries. These difficulties may also impede the usefulness of dictionaries. The difficulties were more likely to be related to the impractical reference skills that students had, that were needed to employ the dictionary successfully. It is important to note that only difficulties that were seen as common problems among students are counted in this study. Such difficulties were not faced by all of the participants, but by the majority of them.

#### 4.2.5.1 Students' difficulties

The following table shows the statistics findings for the difficulties that students encounter when using their dictionaries.

Table 4-9: Difficulties students have with their dictionary

Statement	Responses	Always	Sometimes	Often	Rarely	Never
I cannot understand information about pronunciation (e.g. phonetic symbols, word stress) from my dictionary.	Percentage	56%	24%	5%	11%	3%
	Numbers	42	17	4	8	2
I cannot get the grammatical information from my dictionary.	Percentage	24%	34%	23%	14%	6%
	Numbers	18	25	17	11	4
I cannot find the right word.	Percentage	13%	32%	31%	18%	6%
	Numbers	11	22	22	16	4
I cannot identify the correct word meaning within an entry.	Percentage	9%	30%	37%	24%	1%
	Numbers	8	20	26	19	1
I cannot understand the examples that are used to help me understand the meaning of a word.	Percentage	11%	35%	34%	18%	2%
	Numbers	9	25	24	17	1
I cannot understand the definitions of words in my dictionary (the way that the word is explained).	Percentage	13%	14%	38%	30%	7%
	Numbers	11	12	28	20	5

This part of the questionnaire includes statements dealing with difficulties that students may face when using their dictionaries. The findings of this section will assist in answering the third research question (RQ 3). The above table presents that failing to “*work out the correct pronunciation of English words from my paper dictionary*” is the most common problem reported facing 59 students. This finding is confirmed by the interview results where the majority of the students claimed that

they were confronted by great difficulties when checking pronunciation in the print dictionaries as they could not understand the phonetic symbols. For example:

*The researcher: How easy do you find it to figure out how words sound in English when using the dictionary?*

*The interviewee 7: It is very difficult.*

The result from the two sources of data showed that pronunciation was the most common problem that students reported facing when employing their dictionary. This finding agrees with (Taylor, 1988) who found that students ranked pronunciation difficulty to be the main challenge they had with their dictionary. It is also agrees with what Béjoint (1981) found among his participants. He argued that dictionaries should all show the IPA, and the pronunciation of all words, even derived forms (Béjoint, 1981. p .217).

Some of the students reported that they did not try to check pronunciation and understand the phonetic transcription when looking for a new word's meaning. Therefore, it can be said that they were not keen to know the pronunciation of the word or they received no assistance from their teachers to help them understand the phonetic transcriptions. For instance, I asked one of the interviewees: “*Why did not you try to understand the transcription symbols?*” He replied that “*the teachers did not teach us this. They didn't pay any attention to phonetic symbols reading.*”

As stated earlier, the interviews revealed that students preferred to employ electronic dictionaries when searching for pronunciation information. Students favoured the electronic dictionaries because they use a voice to provide a word's pronunciation which makes imitating a word's sound easier for students than deciphering phonetics symbols from paper dictionaries. The following exchange shows this:

*The researcher: How easy do you find it to figure out how words sound in English when using the dictionary?*

*The interviewee 3: It is easy when using electronic dictionary.*

*The researcher: What about the paper dictionary?*

*The interviewee 3: Of course, it is more difficult than the electronic one. For me, I do not know how to get the pronunciation from the paper dictionary.*

It seems that the students could find alternative effortless solutions to know a new word's pronunciation by hearing how new words sound in their machines and emulating them.

To sum up, understanding phonetic symbols is the first significant challenge that faces Saudi students with their paper dictionaries. This difficulty is attributed to students' lack of reference skills. The students stated that they did not know such information was obtainable from the dictionary. Alternatively, students may apply other methods that help them to know the pronunciation of new words. For example, the interview data also showed that most of the students preferred to depend on electronic dictionaries when searching for pronunciation. This reliance on speech dictionaries created an alternative choice for students and made them more reluctant to use paper dictionaries for pronunciation.

Retrieving grammatical information from the dictionary was reported to always and sometimes difficulties by 58% of the respondents. It is the second most significant problem that faced the participants when using the dictionary. In the interview, students were asked whether they faced any difficulties when retrieving these types of information from the dictionary. The majority of them reported that it was not an easy job for them. This finding is in line with some of the previous studies' results (such as Wolf, 1992) who found that 25% of his students had difficulty in understanding the grammatical information. This was despite students' previously mentioned claim that they knew about grammar from their English lessons. As two of the interviewees reported:

*The interviewee 11: it is very difficult. I do not know how to find this information.*

*The interviewee 7: I do not look up such information in the dictionary.*

In previous studies it has been found that proficiency level plays an important role in understanding grammatical information. Low proficiency students usually fail to

determine the type of grammatical information of the looked up words. This leads to incorrect expectations at the sentence and word level, and problems with other words in the definitions. Fan (2000) found that advanced Chinese students checked parts of speech in their dictionaries more frequently than low proficiency ones. Chi and Yeung (1998) revealed that participants seldom consulted their learners' dictionaries for grammatical information, even when they had been shown how to access this facility. I think it is not only a matter of dictionary use strategies, but also a matter of language knowledge and need for this information.

45% of the students stated that they always or sometimes encounter the difficulty of finding the right word in their dictionary. Findings from the interview confirm the statistical results. It was found that “*finding the right word*” was reported by many of the students as a dictionary problem. This result echoes the findings of previous studies such as Al-Ajmi (2002) and Nesi and Hail (2002). Al-Ajmi analyzed 46 students’ look-up errors while doing translation tasks. He was trying to identify some possible links between these errors and the structural features of two English-Arabic paper dictionaries. One of his findings was that students failed to find the (existing) entry. Nesi and Hail (2002) analysed 89 students’ look-up errors in their use of several paper dictionaries while doing reading tasks. They found that word was lacking in the dictionaries that were consulted by the students. In a recent study, Vital (2006) found that one of the major difficulties that her students faced during consultations was locating the word to be looked up.

In the current study, many of the students reported that they encountered this difficulty because of their lack of knowledge of alphabetical order. For example:

*The researcher: How easy do you find the sought word in the dictionary?*

*The interviewee 14: I do not always succeed in finding the wanted word in my dictionary which makes the search process a demanding job.*

*The researcher: Can you explain more?*

*The interviewee 14: Every time I search my dictionary I have to remember the alphabetical order to find the word entry. This is not easy and makes the search process very long and time consuming.*

This is similar to what Mitchell (1983) found in her study. She found that the participants of her study had difficulties with finding entries due to problems with alphabetical order. However, the findings of the current study contradict Li's findings about her Chinese students. Li (1998) found that her participants were confident when using the alphabetical system in order to locate the headwords. She observed them while doing a translation test and discovered that most of the students could locate headwords by means of guide words at the top of the pages and the thumb index.

The difficulty of locating the right word becomes greater when the needed word is inflected as it needs more complicated skills to return the word to its base form and search for its meaning in the dictionary. The lack of the reference skill of returning words to their base form may result in an endless search in the dictionary. Thus, the unsuccessful search might make the students uncertain to use dictionary to search for a word's meaning. These attempts also compel students to employ alternative strategies, such as asking teachers or friends about the words they fail to appropriately reach in their dictionaries. They might create dissatisfaction with the dictionary.

*The researcher: How easy do you find the sought word in your dictionary?*

*The interviewee 6: Some words are not there in the dictionary such as irregular verbs or adverbs.*

*The researcher: So what do you do to know their meanings?*

*The interviewee 6: Nothing, because the search in the dictionary becomes useless. Sometimes I prefer to ask my teachers about the meaning of the new words instead of using dictionary.*

The data from the student interviews also revealed that students chose to employ other vocabulary learning strategies when failing to find the needed word in the dictionary, by guessing its meaning. For example, one of the interviewees said that *"I search for the meaning in the dictionary. If I cannot find the meaning, I complete reading and try to guess the meaning."*

The statement *“I cannot identify the correct word meaning within an entry”* was a reported difficulty for 39% of the students who always or sometimes encountered it. Qualitative data obtained from the interview showed that some of the students faced great difficulty when searching for the right meaning of the unknown word within the entry. Students reported that a word with more than one meaning created a great challenge for them.

*The researcher: How easy do you find the sought word in the dictionary?*

*The interviewee 4: It is not an easy work. Sometimes, even if I find the word in the dictionary I cannot choose the right meaning for my reading text.*

*The interviewee 3: Some words have many meaning and I do not know which one is correct for me.*

This agrees with Taylor (1988), who found that one of her participants' difficulties was identifying the right meaning of words. It is also in line with Al-Fuhaid (2004), who found that some of his Saudi university students, especially those with low proficiency levels, faced difficulties in identifying the right meaning of a word in the entry. This is also similar to Beech (1997) who found that his students could not find the correct equivalent, although the entry contained it. According to Scholfield (1999), the goal of the dictionary consultation process when reading is to understand the meaning of the information given in the entry and to incorporate this into the text where the unknown word is met. It is clear that one of the reasons for the unsuccessful look up is that students fail to select the appropriate sense from the polysemous entries. A word that has two or more different meanings in the entry might confuse students with various choices even though the right meaning is there.

*“Understanding the examples that are used to help me understand the meaning of a word”* was reported to be the next one of the difficulties that either always or sometimes facing 46% of the students with their dictionaries. This result is substantiated by the interview findings. The data from the interview showed that students did not rely heavily on the illustrating examples of the unknown words in their dictionaries. Many of the students reported that they did not use the examples

while some of them confirmed that they did not know how these examples could assist them in understanding the meaning of the wanted words. Students who referred to examples in their dictionaries complained of the lack of clarity in the examples.

*The researcher: how easy do you figure out to understand the example of the word in your dictionary?*

*The interviewee 4: .....When I use my dictionary to search for word meaning, I sometimes do not find clear examples that can help me to understand the meaning of the word.*

Another problem with regards to the use of examples is the difficulty of the word definition and its example. In other words, students claimed that they could understand the easy words' examples, but not the difficult ones. They also mentioned that they concentrated on the definition only when the example was very difficult to understand.

*The researcher: How easy do you figure out to understand the example of the word in your dictionary?*

*The interviewee 12: If the word is easy I can understand the example, but if it is not I just concentrate on the meaning.*

It can be said that encountering this problem might be due to the fact that students have very low vocabulary knowledge and this may necessitate extra effort to understand the examples presented in the dictionary. Moreover, teachers did not point out to their students how to use examples when searching for word meaning.

The importance of examples in learners' dictionaries has long been recognized. According to Drysdale (1987), examples in the dictionary include supplementing the information in a definition, showing how words are used in context and furnishing grammatical and collocational patterns. Examples can clarify a definition and show the ways the entry can be applied to different contexts by demonstrating the use of a word in its natural environment (Creamer, 1987).

The next difficulty reported was “*understanding the definitions of words*” which was a problem to 27% of the students. This is one of the least significant difficulties that faced the participants. This means that they did not, in practice, face this problem. The findings agree with other reported studies which reported students’ difficulties with the quality of the definition, or understanding it, particularly in MDs (Béjoint, 1981; Neubach & Cohen, 1988; Ramos, 2005). However, these findings contradict Winkler (2002) who found that most of his students indicated that unclear definitions were one of their main problems. It also contradicts Hernandez’s (1989) findings where lack of clarity of the definition was ranked second among participants’ complaints.

The reason for the low ranking of this difficulty may be the students’ heavy reliance on MODs. This type of dictionary is owned by the majority of the students and provides the meaning in both English and Arabic. It can be said that the equivalent word’s meaning in Arabic can assist students to absorb and comprehend the definition of the target word.

In conclusion, the results in this section echo the results in previous studies. Dictionary users encounter many difficulties that impede the useful exploitation of the dictionary. Reasons for these difficulties are probably related to the teachers and teaching practice, to the type of dictionary used and to the learners themselves. More discussion about these reasons is presented in Chapter Five.

#### **4.2.6 Training in dictionary use**

This part of the analysis concerns the findings regarding training in how to use a dictionary. It consists of five statements that attempted to explore how students saw the training they had received inside the classroom on the use of the dictionary (Table 4.10). The test used is the descriptive test with total frequency mean and standard deviation. At first, it was important to determine how many students had received formal training in dictionary use.

##### **4.2.6.1 Previous training in dictionary use**

Table 4.10 shows that only 29 of the 77 students confirmed that they had received training in dictionary use, while 42 students claimed that they had not received any

kind of instruction. In the interview, some of the students confirmed that they were taught some basic skills, such as finding a word in the entry and use of alphabetical order.

Table 4-10: Previous training in dictionary use

	<b>Percent %</b>	<b>Number of students</b>
Yes	40.8	29
No	59.2	42
Total	100	71

This is consistent with Atkins and Varantola (1998) who reported in their multi-national study of 723 respondents that 60% had had no instruction in dictionary use. Diab (1990) found in his study that less than one third of the students at Jordan University had received training in dictionary use. He found that less than one third of his Jordanian nurses had received training in dictionary use. Similar results were found by Kharma (1985). Kipfer (1985) found that only 24% of her participants had received some training in dictionary use. Hernandez (1989) found that 95% of the students in his sample had never received any instruction in dictionary use and 5% had received some infrequent training. Tono's (1991:4) qualitative study with ten Japanese university students showed that the students did not learn to use the dictionary from teaching settings, but by repetitive use.

By contrast, about half of the students surveyed at Kuwait University had received guidance on the use of English-Arabic, Arabic-English and monolingual dictionaries (Al-Ajmi, 1992). The results of the present study also contradict Battenberg's (1991) findings that 75% of the intermediate foreign students and 50% of the elementary and advanced students at Ohio University in the United States had been taught about dictionary use in their ESL classes (Battenburg, 1991). It can be argued that students often receive insufficient instruction in dictionary use.

#### **4.2.7 Students' opinions about their dictionary training**

The next table, 4.11, shows the opinions of those students who were trained in using the dictionary. 28 students answered this section. This part of the questionnaire included five statements. The frequency test was conducted with means and standard derivations to explore the students' opinions based on a five-point Likert scale for

each item (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree), with ‘strongly agree’ scoring 5 and ‘strongly disagree’ scoring 1. The result of each statement is shown in the table below.

Table 4-11: Opinions on training in dictionary use

Statement	Responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I found training on dictionary is very useful.	Percentage	63%	25%	9%	2%	1%
	Numbers	45	18	6	2	1
I think training on dictionary should be integrated into English classes.	Percentage	48%	38%	10%	3%	1%
	Numbers	35	29	7	2	1
I think there is no need for dictionary training.	Percentage	6%	18%	21%	36%	18%
	Numbers	4	14	16	26	13
I think teaching dictionary should be introduced in the curriculum of secondary level.	Percentage	45%	42%	8%	3%	1%
	Numbers	34	31	6	2	1
I think teachers do not pay much attention to dictionary training.	Percentage	55%	36%	6%	2%	1%
	Numbers	42	26	5	2	1

A glance at the table shows that students showed positive opinions about the training received in dictionary use. 88% of the students showed their agreement with the statement *"I found training on dictionary very useful"*. This finding confirms the interview results. During the interview, those who received dictionary instruction described the teaching on dictionary use as very beneficial. This result is similar to Al-Ajmi (1992), who found that half of his Kuwaiti university students claimed that they received some useful guidance on how to use the dictionary. This finding also lends support to Carduner's (2003) results. He found that some findings of his data suggest that foreign language students benefit from dictionary skills training.

The statement *"I think teachers do not pay much attention to dictionary training"* has agreement by 91% of the participants in this study. This result is confirmed by the interview data. Students in the interview complained that their teachers did not allow sufficient space for dictionary teaching. The majority of the students pointed out in the interview that they had been taught how to search alphabetically and to find the word, but not how to get the right meaning of the word as stated above. They said

that they hoped that the training received during the first intensive week could include all types of information in the dictionary. One of the students said about dictionary training: *"Yes, training was very helpful, but I think they didn't teach us everything about dictionary.....they did not teach us how to use pronunciation how to use the dictionary like professionals"*. It is assumed that teachers did not have the time to squeeze the teaching of dictionary skills into the classroom alongside the rest of the curriculum and textbooks.

It could be argued that it depends on the teachers themselves. Some teachers are interested in spending considerable time and energy on teaching the students every skill that they may need, even if these skills are not part of the syllabus, while some teachers stick to the curriculum only. It is argued that many English language teachers in Saudi Arabia do not think it is essential to teach dictionary use and they have no idea about effective dictionary use strategies. Teachers may also suffer from the time constraints that hinder them from teaching what they know about the dictionary to their students. In this study it was clear that teachers did not regard the dictionary as part of the curriculum and they did not pay much attention to it.

The statements *"I think training on dictionary should be integrated into English classes"* and *"I think teaching dictionary should be introduced in the curriculum of secondary level"* came next as agreed by 86% and 87% of the students respectively. In the interviews, students who had received some dictionary training claimed that the need for dictionary training was very high. There was an agreement among the participants that training in dictionary use should be provided for the students from the intermediate school and continued in high school. They stated that it was better to start teaching dictionary use in intermediate school when students are young and it is easier for them to develop their habits of consulting dictionaries. For example, one of the interviewees said: *"It is important to teach dictionary during intermediate and secondary schools. I could know the dictionary if I was taught how to use it during my previous study"*. Furthermore, the interviewees urged that teachers should motivate their students to use the dictionary frequently so as to be familiar with it. One of the respondents said to me that *"the teachers do not teach us how to use the dictionary and do not encourage us to bring it to classroom"*. Arishi (2004) argued

that Saudi learners of English do not pay much attention to the use of the English dictionary in their classes. The chief reason for that is the absence of encouragement from teachers. In his study, Wolf (1992) found that 86% of his participants believed that dictionary use can be learned while 68% of them thought that instruction in dictionary use was necessary.

According to Herbst and Stein (1985), the main obstacle to the acquisition of dictionary use skills at school seems to be the limited time spent on the teaching of those skills. Some of the previous studies, such as (Nesi, 1999), found that "*several informants noted that dictionary skills training was not 'sexy' and that students and tutors found it boring*" (p: 66).

The statement "*I think there is no need for dictionary training*" came last as only 24.3% of the students agreed with the statement. However, the low percentage for this statement indicates a positive stance students have about of the dictionary training, due to the negative wording of the statement. Although the training in dictionary use was very short and non-intensive, the students appreciated the training and saw it as useful. This result contradicts Li's findings in her study. She found that 12% of her science students and 15% of her arts students saw training in dictionary as "*not necessary*".

In conclusion, it is argued that immature students still need the teacher to assist them in using the dictionary. In my experience, when students feel that their teachers do not encourage or require them to bring dictionaries to class, they will not use them. The learners' awareness of using a dictionary for all types of purposes, not merely getting the meaning, should be raised so that all information such as pronunciation, collocation, usage and grammar will be made use of.

#### **4.3 Phase II: Intervention**

One of the aims of the present study was to explore the possibility of teaching the dictionary to students. The objectives of the dictionary training were: (1) to identify to what extent students could obtain information from their dictionaries to help them learn English; (2) to explore whether the training in dictionary use was effective in

teaching students to use dictionaries to assist learning; (3) to investigate the students' attitudes towards receiving explicit dictionary use training.

The teaching of dictionary use was chosen in this study to increase students' knowledge of appropriate reference skills. The data obtained from the questionnaire and the interview uncovered the students' inadequate knowledge of dictionary use strategies. The students reported their failing attempts to obtain the information they wanted from their dictionaries. Thus, the dictionary teaching in the current study aimed at increasing the students' knowledge and enhancing their skills of dictionary use. Thus the research explores the extent to which the dictionary training had improved students' dictionary interactions including enhancing their knowledge, attitude and skills.

#### **4.3.1 The content of the training**

The findings from the questionnaires and interviews yielded some areas where students lacked knowledge or encountered difficulties when using the dictionary. Therefore, the proposed materials fell into five main areas in which students needed to improve. These were as follows:

##### **A. Getting students to know their dictionaries**

Knowledge about the dictionary is essential for students to use it effectively for their learning purposes. According to Nesi's (1999) taxonomy of dictionary teaching stages (see Chapter Two), knowing what types of dictionary exist, choosing which dictionary to buy, and knowing what kinds of information are found in dictionaries, come in the first stage. It was found in phase I in this study that students did not have the knowledge to use the dictionary chosen for them by their teachers. Additionally, previous studies in dictionary use research had pointed out that students had inadequate knowledge about their owned dictionaries. They claimed that training which exposed students to the wealth of information contained in their dictionaries was indispensable for them. Béjoint (1981) argued that students in his study had incomplete understanding of the types of information included in their dictionaries. He also found that they did not read the introduction where much explanation about the dictionaries could be found. Thus, they developed a deficient understanding of

the level of support that their dictionary might offer them. Iqbal also found that his students knew little about the dictionary they had bought and did not completely know it. The data from the questionnaires and the interviews showed similar findings to the previous studies with regards to the imperfect knowledge that students possess about their dictionaries. They revealed that students did not know what type of information was obtainable from their dictionary, nor how to retrieve such information. Therefore, it is important for the student to understand and know their dictionaries properly before introducing them to search techniques.

### **B. Locating entry information using alphabetical order**

Alphabetical ordering is regarded as the key for accessing dictionary information (Stark, 1999). Misunderstanding of this skill may result from two causes: the students' lack of interest in knowing the reference strategies or due to their ignorance of the fact that dictionaries are organized alphabetically. Consequently, lacking knowledge of alphabetical order may affect the students' search for one-word entries including derivatives, abbreviations and compounds words.

The data from the questionnaires and interviews revealed that alphabetical order was one of the major dictionary difficulties which impeded students from employing their dictionaries properly. Students aired their complaint against the paper dictionary's alphabetical system as they needed to recall the order of the alphabet every time they needed to refer to their dictionaries. According to the students in the interview, alphabetical order makes the dictionary search a time-consuming process. The focus of this session was to enhance the students' alphabetical skills in order to search more effectively in the paper dictionary.

### **C. Navigating the dictionary**

After exposing students to alphabetical order and explaining the importance of remembering the order of the alphabet for navigating their dictionaries, students were taught how to locate the word quickly in their dictionaries. Students were taught how to locate the needed word by identifying the first letter that the needed word started with. The students were also informed about how to make use of the guidewords that could be found at the top of the pages. The aim of this activity was to teach students

how to practise locating letter sections in the dictionary and then the target word. It also aimed at returning inflected words to the base form before looking for them in the dictionary. It also focused on practising alphabetical order. Therefore, this session targeted some of the skills needed by the students in order accurately and quickly to locate the needed words. Students in the interviews reported identification of the needed words as one of the major difficulties they encountered with their dictionaries. They complained that they could not always find the existing word in their dictionary.

#### **D. Teaching pronunciation**

Good dictionaries usually provide description of pronunciation (phonemic transcription) of all headwords, mark word stress, and indicate differences in pronunciation across language varieties such as British and American English. The activities in this session revolved around pronunciation information. The activities were designed to work with the MOD dictionary. The aim of this session was to assist students to understand the IPA table and stress marks provided in their dictionaries. Previous studies had found that retrieving this type of information from printed dictionaries was very challenging as students needed to be trained in the IPA and the target language sound system. However, it can be said that the electronic dictionaries helped the students to prevail over this difficulty by inventing devices with human pronunciation features. Most of the new electronic dictionaries overcome the problem students have with phonetic symbols by replacing this feature with the human voice articulation of the words. These dictionaries go beyond that and have a facility for students to record their own pronunciations and compare theirs with the voice model. However, for the scope of the current study only paper dictionary phonemic transcriptions were taught to the students.

The data obtained from the interview and the questionnaire showed that the majority of the students had problems with retrieving pronunciation from their dictionaries, while some others stated that they did not know that such information could be obtained from their dictionaries. In the questionnaire, the pronunciation ranked first as the most serious difficulty facing them when using their dictionaries. In the interview, some of the students also reported the retrieval of pronunciation from their

paper dictionaries as a problem. Some others stated that they were not aware of this problem because they did not use their dictionaries for pronunciation and did not know that they could obtain pronunciation information from their paper MODs. Therefore, the aim of the dictionary teaching in this session was to practise using the pronunciation symbols and to identify syllable breaks and word stress.

### **E. Teaching grammar codes**

Grammar and usage notes have improved a lot and are presented more accurately in recent dictionaries. Old-style grammar codes were often complicated and difficult to follow. The trend has been to make them simpler and more easily available in recent learner dictionaries. Of course, a lot of grammar information is presented or reinforced through the example sentences. The importance of obtaining grammar information from the dictionary is to some extent linked to productive purposes, such as writing and speaking, more than to receptive purposes. Thus the difficulties of obtaining this information are probably linked to the nature of the activities. The current study revealed two important findings: (a) some of the students did not know that their own dictionaries contained information about grammar, such as plurality and part of speech; (b) some other students reported that they faced difficulties when they needed grammatical information. For example, during the interview, some of the students claimed that some of the grammar codes in the dictionary entries were very difficult for them to grasp. Therefore, the aim of this session was to teach students about the grammatical coding systems used in the dictionary and how to receive such information.

### **4.3.2 Analysis and interpretation of the training sessions**

The analysis of the training sessions is presented according to their occurrence in the teaching timetable. Thus, the topics to be analysed are:

#### **A. Understanding the information available in the dictionary (introducing the dictionary to the students)**

The students' understanding of the dictionary and the information included were found to be inaccurate and insufficient based on the data from phase I, which may deprive students from using the dictionary efficiently. The study showed that the

students did not know about the different types of dictionaries. They also showed their inadequate understanding of what linguistic information was available in their dictionaries and thus were unaware of the potential assistance that their dictionaries could provide. According to the answers received about the purposes for which the students referred to their dictionaries, many of the participants claimed that their use of the dictionary was mainly to retrieve the meaning of the unknown words. Moreover, some of the participants lacked awareness of the explanation in the dictionary's introduction and appendices. Therefore, it can be said that the students' dictionary knowledge needed to be raised by exposing the students to explicit teaching sessions.

Students who joined the training sessions were asked to comment on the training received. They reported that the lesson could enhance their knowledge about the lexical information available for them in the dictionary. Students showed enthusiasm to learn and complete the session task. All four students who participated in this task commented on the wealth of information they could obtain from their dictionaries. For example, Ali: *"I did not know that these short lines can offer me with all these type of information"* while Ahmed complained that his knowledge did not go beyond obtaining meaning from the dictionary. He said: *"I always think that my dictionary is useful to get words' meanings"*. The task successfully achieved its main goal which was to familiarize the students with their dictionaries and to enhance their knowledge of the level of assistance that their dictionaries could supply.

Students' knowledge had increased by the end of the session as it had changed the way they looked at their dictionaries. One of the students commented: *"the teaching changed my previous ideas about my (dictionary) use"*. Students claimed that they would have utilized their dictionaries properly if they had been taught how to use them inside the classroom. The students stated that they had previously ignored the extra information about vocabulary that was provided by the dictionaries. One of the students reported that his knowledge about the types of information in the dictionary had increased and that henceforth he would start reading all types of *"word information provided in the entry"*.

Teaching what the dictionary included and what to expect from their dictionaries was a milestone in the dictionary training. It opened the way to further dictionary skills training. It was important to broaden the students' expectations by introducing them to the level of assistance offered by their dictionaries as this could modify their perceptions of the dictionary. It was found that, although students perceived their dictionary as a useful tool to assist their language learning, those who attended the first session claimed that it helped raise their understanding about the types of information the dictionary contained. One of the students said: *"I knew that the dictionary is useful, but I did not know it is useful as this much"*. Similar responses were received from other students who revealed their positive anticipation of the next dictionary training session.

### **B. Increasing knowledge about locating information**

Although alphabetical ordering may appear to be an easy topic at university level, the result of the current study showed that mastering this skill is not necessarily simple. The efficacy of the explanation giving by the dictionary compiler in the front pages, showing that words are listed in the dictionary alphabetically, does not seem obvious. Moreover, thinking that the explanation given in the dictionary could assist students' understanding of the macrostructure of the dictionary was very optimistic.

The data from the phase I showed that students encountered difficulty searching their dictionaries due to their limited understanding of alphabetical order (see 4.4). Students reported that recalling the order of the alphabet every time they referred to their dictionaries was time consuming and unsuccessful in most cases. The students also stated that they could not identify the right entry in the dictionary because they lacked knowledge of alphabetical order. One of the comments received regarding this was: *"I do not always succeed in finding the wanted word in my dictionary which makes the search process a demanding job..... every time I search my dictionary I have to remember the alphabetical order to find the word entry. This is not easy and makes the search process very long and time consuming."*

The teaching of how to use alphabetical order when referring to the dictionary confirmed that this skill is worth teaching. The students could achieve progress in

the accuracy and speed of location of words. The students reported after the course that knowledge of the alphabet created a great challenge for them. The exercises and frequent reference to the dictionary assisted them in mastering the skill of locating the needed words between two letters.

The students who participated in the tutorial explained how important knowing alphabetical order was for them. During the tutorials, students were individually given jumbled words and were asked to re-order them in alphabetical order. The data obtained from these exercises showed remarkable improvement in the students' comprehension of alphabetical order and thus the arrangement of the dictionary. Although none of the students could locate all the words correctly, the students commented that the teaching they had received on alphabetical ordering was beneficial and constructive. Students mixed the order of some words, especially those that had similar starting letters, such as 'procedure' and 'produce'. Students were asked to rearrange 12 words alphabetically and were allowed to use their dictionaries where necessary. The findings showed that students' alphabet skills were improved considerably by the teaching during the session and that this persisted to later sessions requiring locating of entries using alphabetical order.

Although dictionaries contain an explanation about how the information is arranged, previous studies showed that students did not take the initiative to read those pages. Most of the students may not even have been aware of the existence of these pages (Béjoint, 1981). Therefore, students should be explicitly exposed to knowledge of alphabetical order as one of the arrangements of information in the dictionary and how to retrieve what they want from it. The lack of this skill could result in tedious and time consuming searches and eventually a lack of interest in referring to the dictionary when encountering unknown words.

To sum up, it seems that there is a need to enhance the students' knowledge and skills required for following the conventions of alphabetical ordering by exposing them to formal instruction. It is argued that the teaching should be carried out in the classroom and teachers should be given the flexibility, in terms of time and materials, to allow space for the teaching of dictionary during English lessons. For example,

students should be informed about the alphabetical order arrangement used in their dictionaries and provided with training in how to retrieve words organized in alphabetical order. A special difficulty that might face the participants of the current study is their inability to follow the Latin alphabet, which is different in the graphemes and the number of letters from the Arabic language (Béjoint, 1981; Underhill, 1985). Another related problem might be that the letter-ordering system in Arabic is different from in the Latin languages. Also the search procedure for Arabic words in the Arabic-Arabic dictionary does not follow alphabetical order, which may negatively affect the students' search in the English dictionary.

### **C. Navigating the dictionary**

The data from the questionnaires and interviews showed that students lacked knowledge of the layout of their dictionary page. Students reported that they failed in locating the needed lexical information in their dictionaries due to their incomplete knowledge of the types of entry information. They also showed inappropriate understanding of the layout of dictionary pages and the assisting features that help accurately and quickly to reach and comprehend the entry.

The aim of this activity was to teach students how to identify the wanted word as quickly as possible by using the features available in their dictionaries. During the session, the students showed that they did not understand the function of these guidewords and signposts on the dictionary pages. One of the students said that "*it's probably for decoration purpose*", while another student considered guidewords as headwords. He explained that he thought guidewords were also an entry. Therefore, each student was assigned a search task using their paper dictionary. During the task, students were asked to find the target words in the dictionary as quickly as they could and close the page as soon as they found it.

Students did not locate all the given words correctly, as some of the students sometimes ended up choosing the incorrect headwords. For example, when asking one of the participants to scan the dictionary to find the right headwords, he chose wrong headwords with similar spellings. Some of the participants chose the wrong headword of similar meaning and spelling but of incorrect word class. Once they

located the target word correctly they wrote it down, including the syllabic dots in the target word as well.

The session showed that the students' skills in searching in dictionary could be advanced by teaching them how to use guidewords to look up the correct headword. The task was not very difficult as almost all of them could locate most of the given words correctly. They commented that the teaching session greatly assisted them to quickly identify the headwords. One of the students said while completing his task: *"I feel that I can find all the words in my dictionary"*. The change in the students' views about their ability to rapidly locate words is attributable to the dictionary teaching.

Although navigating the dictionary is seen as an elementary level of reference skill, students of the current study reported that it created problems for them when using their dictionaries. Teachers should rectify their assumption that dictionaries are easy to use and that most students know how to use them. Previous studies showed that students encountered various types of difficulties when using their dictionaries, especially to locate the headword (Béjoint, 1981; Iqbal, 1987; Diab, 1989; Thumb, 2002, among others). Students complained that their dictionaries did not contain the word they sought for. In fact, it is true to claim that the students' inappropriate skills hindered them from reaching the target words in their dictionaries. Thus, students may have felt that their dictionary did not contain what they were looking for. With little attention being paid to dictionary teaching from the teachers, students were left struggling with their dictionaries, trying to decipher their features and how to use them. As shown earlier, some participants in the current study were not exposed to the layout of dictionary pages or how to use signposts to help them search for words. It was found that some students did not have the concept of "signposting and guidewords." However, the training increased students' knowledge of how to navigate the pages of the dictionary to find the information they needed.

#### **D. Change in students' pronunciation**

Pronunciation information was reported to be the most difficult type of information for foreign students in some of the previous studies, such as Béjoint (1981) and

Taylor (1988). Previous studies also showed that interest in obtaining pronunciation information was low, with the exception of studies where the participants were English majors. English majors could be regarded as more advanced students than subjects in other studies.

During the training session, students were given short exercises to practise the sound system used in their dictionary. The students' answers were not all correct and students were confused between sound symbols and the English letters. Some of the students said: *"I am confused and mix them (sound symbol and letter) up"*. When marking the students' answers on the practice sheet, it was found that students brought inaccurate transcription from their dictionaries. It was also found that students returned the sheet with unattempted answers. With regard to the stress mark, students could learn how to practice it in multi-syllabic words. Students also could identify primary and secondary stress and how to place them on some of the selected words.

The data from phase I showed that obtaining pronunciation from the dictionary ranked first as the greatest difficulty students had with their dictionaries. Taking the students' background knowledge into account, it was clear that the students in this study had not been taught phonetics. Consequently, they did not have any prior knowledge of the phonetic symbols and the IPA. It was assumed that students would understand how to retrieve the sound information provided in their dictionary after being given some guidance. However, it seemed that the students lacked knowledge of the idea that words in English are controlled by pronunciation. Although students' awareness of pronunciation information was raised, the students failed to use the IPA chart as expected or to retrieve pronunciation information from the dictionary.

In fact, it is difficult to understand why lexicographers have confidence in the sound symbols being helpful to users. It seems very complicating for students to comprehend and apply the sound information used in the recent dictionary. One of the challenges that face students is the resemblance between a word's spelling and its pronunciation transcription, which is very confusing. One of the students stated that he could not distinguish letters from sounds symbols. Another related reason for the

students' failure to understand the pronunciation symbols in their dictionaries was that some of the English language sounds were not found in the students' first language.

Students need to be introduced to the IPA chart and English phonetic symbols before being presented with any dictionary training. It seems a false assumption by lexicographers that English sound rules would be taught in schools. For example, it was noticed that the students returned their answer sheets with unanswered items. It can be said that this is an indication that the students' inability to garner pronunciation information from the dictionary is more a linguistic problem than a lack of reference skills. In the Saudi context, students are not taught English phonetics. Words are usually pronounced for them by the teachers and students imitate the teacher's pronunciation.

To sum up, students acknowledged the usefulness of being taught the sounds and blamed their teachers for not teaching them this. One of the students commented that *".....I realised that I was not using my dictionary as a good student.....I did not know that I would be able to pronounce the word using these symbols"*. The teaching of pronunciation information should be integrated into the curriculum and presented to students from an early stage. Teachers need to pay attention to the transcription system used in the dictionary and teach this information to their students.

#### **E. Enhancing knowledge of grammar codes**

The aim of this activity was to introduce and practise the use of grammar codes in the dictionary. It also aimed at enhancing students' understanding and knowledge of the grammatical information in the dictionary. It was found that this was not a simple task as students' limited grammar knowledge absorbed the teaching during the session. I needed to spend time explaining verb regularity and noun countability in English before I could explain how these types of information could be found in the dictionary.

During the session, students could not tell how to read parts of speech accurately, obtain countable and uncountable noun information, or tell verb regularity or verb

tense from the dictionary. Despite the explanations given to them, they often failed to obtain the grammatical information as accurately as expected. Almost all of the students failed to answer the grammar exercises and failed, in most cases, to read the grammatical labels in the dictionary.

The most difficult exercise was the one related to noun countability. Students found it very difficult to glean this information from the dictionary. This may have been because they had had insufficient teaching about countability, or because they had an inappropriate level of proficiency. Another important factor may be that Arabic does not have this distinction with regard to the countability.

The data showed that the participants of this study faced great difficulty in finding and understanding grammatical labels. Students were confused and dissatisfied with their dictionary skills and stated that they could not find or understand the grammar labels. The finding that grammatical information was not frequently sought by the participants is consistent with their limited awareness of the availability of such information in their dictionaries and their subsequent difficulty in obtaining such information.

Although students showed some understanding of the grammatical coding system in their dictionaries after the training, they answered the exercises poorly. The results show that students were unfamiliar with these short forms or labels as some of them could not finish the exercises within the allocated time which ranged from 10 to 15 minutes for each exercise. However, the participants complained that the tasks of this session were very difficult and that they needed more time. While observing them finishing the exercises, I noticed that the students were using the dictionary inappropriately. In the literature, similar findings on students' difficulties were found in Wolf (1992), and by Chi and Yeung (1998) who found that their participants seldom consulted their learners' dictionaries for grammatical information, even when they had been shown how to access this facility. It is important to note that in some previous studies the students ranked meaning as the most needed type of information while other types of information such as grammar were ranked lowest. Similar findings were found in this study. However, the participants of the current study

seemed to rank grammar code lowest for the reason that they were not aware that such information was obtainable from their dictionary. They stated that they chose them last because they did not know their dictionaries could help them with such information. Therefore, it seems that the reason for the ranking may be related to their linguistic knowledge rather than their real needs.

It is argued that obtaining grammatical information from the dictionary is influenced by various factors, chief of which is language proficiency. It seems that in order to retrieve grammatical information the students' proficiency should be at high level. Another related factor that may affect the students' use of the grammatical information in the dictionary is teaching input. Students reported that some of the English grammar information presented in the session was not taught in class by their teachers. It is important to raise the students' knowledge of English grammar as this can assist them in searching for such information in their dictionaries. The grammar code teaching was acknowledged by the students. They showed enthusiasm to learn the grammar information in the dictionary and confirmed that the training on retrieving grammar information from the dictionary was useful. The students also claimed that their teachers did not explain how to find this information in their dictionaries.

To conclude, all the previous studies agreed that students need to be trained on how to use the dictionary. The studies found that students fail to use the dictionary properly due to inadequate metalinguistic skills in relation to knowledge of dictionary conventions. In the current study, it was also found that participants had received little or no training in how to use the dictionary, particularly with encoding, so students were unable to use the dictionary to their advantage. The dictionary teaching proved to enhance the students' knowledge and skills about their dictionary. Therefore, it is recommended that dictionary use be taught and practised in the language classroom because students need to be shown how to apply a variety of reference skills. The teaching materials should be designed and presented according to the students' dictionary needs and difficulties.

### **4.3.3 The impact of training**

It is important to explore the changes in students during or after attending the training sessions. This section aims to show whether the dictionary training had an influence on the students' dictionary use.

In discussion with students, they placed a strong emphasis on how their dictionary knowledge had improved because of the training they had received. What they described was no less than a significant learning change, which left a positive imprint on their knowledge, attitudes and use. The influence of the training can be summarized in the following points:

#### **A. Clear understanding**

Based on the data obtained, students had little knowledge about their dictionary before joining the training or of how it could be useful in learning English (see 4.2.5). However, after the training, students had expanded their understanding and improved their capability to take advantage of their dictionary in two ways. First, students were able to rectify their misconceptions about their dictionary. The data also revealed that the reason for this low knowledge was that students purchased the dictionary based on recommendations from their teachers without receiving any kind of assistance with how to utilize it for their learning. The students complained that their dictionary use was based on their own efforts to learn, as their teachers failed to teach or encourage them to use their dictionaries inside the classroom. Moreover, the data also showed that students were not able to name the possible lexical information that was retrievable from the dictionary. During the interviews, students reported that they did not understand what the other details in the entry meant. They also stated that they did not know what transcription symbols referred to or how to read them. In addition, other types of information, such as plural/singular codes and noun countability, were ignored by the students because they could not fully read them.

After joining the training, the students' knowledge increased significantly. Comparing the students' knowledge before and after the training, it is clear that teaching dictionary use provided students with the details they needed in order to use the dictionary effectively. Students became aware of the details available that could

facilitate their learning. Students showed their appreciation in their feedback to the training for expanding their understanding of the dictionary.

Second, the training assisted the students to become more confident when looking for and retrieving information from the dictionary. The students showed progress during the training course and mastered the knowledge of where and how to search for the needed lexical information. For example, it was found that one of the students' major problems was locating the item in the dictionary (see 4.2.5). After the dictionary training sessions, students demonstrated their ability to identify the information they wanted from the dictionary. This development in the students' understanding can be seen as a clear indication of the positive impact the dictionary can have on students' knowledge.

### **B. Overcoming difficulties**

The students in this study reported various difficulties that they encountered when referring to the dictionary. They related these difficulties to their teachers' ignorance about dictionary use. Students placed great emphasis on their teachers' reluctance to leave space for dictionary use inside the classroom. Therefore, the difficulties encountered with their dictionaries were likely to be related to their lack of reference skills. The training sessions were designed in accordance with the students' reported dictionary problems. The sessions aided the students to improve their skills and overcome the difficulties they faced with their MOD. For example, the students were found to lack accurate knowledge of alphabetical order where they failed to locate the wanted word under different entries. This is simply because students missed the order of the English alphabet. They showed progress in this area after receiving training and practising alphabetical order.

The training was significant in enhancing students' skills regarding other lexical information which they had ignored before the training. For example, as stated earlier, students did not pay attention to the richness of their dictionary. They did not know what the different grammatical and usage codes meant in the dictionary entry. The training was evidently useful in equipping the students with knowledge of what these codes mean and how to retrieve them. During the task, students showed their

ability to distinguish between countable and uncountable nouns, regular and irregular verbs etc. The training was beneficial in helping the students to deal with the dictionary difficulties they encountered.

To sum up, it can be said that dictionary difficulties were reduced significantly through the training sessions. The students' reference skills improved and reached a standard where they could be described as developed strategies.

### **C. Performance improvement**

The dictionary training had a positive impact on the students' dictionary performance. The students' performance increased during and after the dictionary training sessions. When comparing students before and after the training, students had described their weakness in phase one of this study, reporting poor knowledge and reference skills before being taught dictionary skills. For example, they lacked the required skills to obtain grammatical information from the dictionary which they were able to obtain after the training course.

Additionally, the students' accuracy in reaching the needed types of information increased greatly during the time of the training sessions. The training assisted the students to perform more accurately and retrieve the type of information they wanted. They showed fewer mistakes in later sessions, indicating that teaching the dictionary was beneficial in reducing their effort in searching in the MOD. They demonstrated progress in their ability better to navigate their MODs during tasks. They reported in their feedback that their skills had gradually improved each time they attended the sessions.

The training helped the students attain a growing level of confidence in their ability to employ the dictionary and helped them decrease the time needed to look up information. Giving students regular teaching could assist in reviewing their progress and observing the impact of strategies to promote their dictionary behaviours.

#### **D. Attitude change**

Attitude modification was one of the important findings showing the influence of the training on the students. Before the training, students had expressed a negative attitude towards their dictionary, describing it as difficult to use. The data obtained revealed that the students had negative attitudes towards the MOD. They were unable to use it for their learning and found retrieving information from it very difficult. After attending the training, students changed the way they viewed their dictionary. They found it less demanding than it was before the training. The training helped to solve the problems they frequently faced with their dictionaries. It also assisted them to know more about their own dictionary and how to use it to support their language learning.

The dictionary training had a significant impact on the students' preference for using their dictionary to search for lexical information. The students reported that the dictionary was rich with lexical information and that they were able to obtain what they wanted from it. It is argued that once students were offered clear enough and sufficient guidance on dictionary use they were able to exploit the useful opportunities to develop their skills.

#### **F. Other important findings**

The training detected other valuable findings. They are as follows:

1. The students reported that they became more dependent on their dictionary after joining the dictionary training.
2. The training modified the participants' attitudes towards their dictionary. It proved to be efficient in changing the negative stances students had about the dictionary, such as being difficult and time consuming.
3. The dictionary training served to increase students' confidence and self-esteem which led to an improvement in their language learning behaviour.

4. The findings in the current study suggest that dictionary strategies are teachable and that explicit instruction aids in their use.
5. The teachers' impact on formulating the students' dictionary behaviour is irrefutable.

#### **4.4 Summary of the study**

This chapter is divided into two parts presenting the findings according to the phases of the study. The first part presented the findings obtained from the questionnaire and the interview which examined the students' dictionary ownership, knowledge about, frequency of, difficulties of, and attitudes towards, their dictionary use. The findings suggested that ownership was high among the participants. They also showed the inaccurate and incomplete knowledge students possessed about dictionary use. They reported various difficulties that impeded their utilisation of the dictionary in learning English. Students also reported a negative attitude towards dictionary use. The first part of the study served as a diagnostic step before the second part which included the intervention.

The findings of the second part of this study suggest that students developed considerably after being trained in dictionary use and could obtain information from their dictionaries more accurately and efficiently. The study also showed that the training in dictionary use was effective for the students' English learning strategies. Moreover, the students expressed positive attitudes towards receiving explicit dictionary use training. The intervention also demonstrated that strategy training is an incremental process where learners grasp the new skills gradually.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION

#### 5.1 Introduction

This discussion chapter is divided into two sections: the first summarises the findings according to the research questions, and the second presents a more detailed discussion of the main findings that explains the influential factors related to the key areas of the study.

#### 5.2 Study overview

The aim of this study was to seek ways to help students of English in Saudi Arabia with their dictionary use strategies. The study sought to examine the effects of exposing students to explicit forms of dictionary training on their interactions with dictionaries, their knowledge, their self-efficacy, and their attitudes toward the dictionary and its use for learning English. Participants completed a questionnaire and were interviewed to explore their dictionary use and the problems they encountered in using the dictionary.

##### 5.2.1 Summary of results related to the research questions

This section presents the answers to the research questions of the present study.

##### **The first question asked: What knowledge do Saudi students have about their dictionaries?**

It was discovered that the students had MODs based on their teachers' recommendations. However, the majority of the students showed inappropriate knowledge about dictionary use. They lacked knowledge related to choosing the most suitable dictionary that could serve their learning needs. The students, therefore, had meagre understanding of the dictionary. They limited their use of the dictionary to obtaining the meaning of unknown words and ignored all other types of information available to them. The students also showed a lack of understanding of what to expect from their dictionary. They believed that the dictionary's role was

limited to gaining the meaning of words. This view was prevalent among the majority of the students who commented in later stages of the study that they were unaware that other types of information could be obtained from the dictionary.

It seems that student dictionary use is affected by their knowledge of and expectations for their dictionary. In the present study, the dictionary was more frequently used to discover word meanings than any other type of information. This may draw attention to the fact that students search the dictionary according to their expectations. This also indicates the idea repeated in previous studies that students do not exploit their dictionary to search for all available lexical information when they are learning English.

**The second research question asked: What attitudes do Saudi students have toward their dictionaries?**

The answer to this question was revealed from two angles. The first angle relates to the students' attitudes toward the role of the dictionary in learning a language. The students showed a positive attitude and appreciation for the irrefutable role dictionaries play in language teaching and learning. The participants revealed their belief that the dictionary is one of the most useful tools for language learning. This may indicate that the students in this study appreciate the importance of using dictionaries to learn vocabulary.

The second angle that helped answer this research question relates to the students' resentment toward their paper dictionary and the low level of satisfaction it can offer to users. The present study showed that students disliked using their own paper dictionary, describing the process of searching through the pages as time consuming and tedious. The results of the present study thus revealed another issue related to students' attitudes, that is, the learners' attitudes and preferences for electronic dictionaries rather than paper books. The students noted that electronic devices added more features to the dictionary such as speed, ease of use, and the all-important issue of weight. Students who own HHDs in addition to the MOD normally preferred using these tools in class, and they left their larger dictionaries for use at home. This

study also recognises the increasing interest among the majority of the participants in replacing their MODs with various types of e-dictionaries.

**The third research question asked: What difficulties do Saudi students encounter when using the dictionary?**

This study found that the dictionary is a very sophisticated tool. The students who participated in this study suffered from various dictionary difficulties, ranging from knowing alphabetical order to obtaining the meaning from a polysemous entry. The present study showed that students faced difficulties in understanding the explanation of the word in their MOD, especially the definition written in English. The present study also found that most students had difficulty with phonetic transcriptions; as such, they switched to electronic dictionaries that include effective speech facilities.

Such dictionary difficulties could thwart and limit the students' dependence on their dictionaries. They may also impede the usefulness of dictionaries for learning. Relatedly, these difficulties were more likely to force the students to employ non-dictionary strategies when encountering unknown lexical information. Strategies to overcome difficulties included asking teachers and peers or applying other strategies such as guessing.

The teachers' influence related to the students' dictionary difficulties were revealed in student statements during the interview portions of this study. Some students blamed their teachers for the lack of guidance they provided during classes. This is one of the major findings in this study, and one that shaped the way students dealt with their dictionary. This finding also supports previous findings that teachers may not give encouragement to their students (Béjoint, 1981; Iqbal, 1987; Diab, 1990; Chi, 2003; among others).

**The fourth research question asked: What factors affect the Saudi students' use of the dictionary?**

The present study detected some factors that are attributed to the students' use of the dictionary. The first factor is the influence of the teacher, which was found to be an important factor. Teachers did not consider the dictionary market when suggesting their students purchase a particular type of dictionary. Indeed, the recommended dictionary was one that teachers of English had used for many years. Furthermore, teachers did not attempt to increase their students' knowledge and skills about the MOD. Students were left struggling with the dictionary until many of them became disillusioned with it.

The present study also found that teachers usually provided their students with the meaning of new words. It is accurate, therefore, to blame the "spoon-feeding" system of teaching practices, in which students used to ask their teachers to explain every new word. Students reported that their teachers did not ask them to refer to the dictionary when asked about new words; instead, teachers in most cases just tell the student the word's meaning.

The present study also revealed that students start their university learning with no experience in dictionary use. Many of the participants reported that they had not owned a dictionary in their life until they began undergraduate studies. Being exposed to the dictionary at such a late stage of development deprived students of building dictionary skills in their early stages of learning the English language.

Another related factor is learner motivation. It was found that students did not take the initiative to teach themselves about their dictionary by reading the introductory pages. During the training phase of the present study, the dictionary information found in the front matter was explained, emphasising that learners needed to understand the information presented to be more knowledgeable about their dictionary. It should be noted, however, that such guidelines and information are presented in English, which explains why students were reluctant to read them.

The course designers' ignorance of allowing time for dictionary training in the classroom can also be considered an influential factor that affected the students' use of the dictionary. Some publishers of language learning materials attach a small dictionary to their textbooks, which includes new or unknown vocabulary that new language learners may encounter in the materials. This is an excellent strategy as a starting point to familiarise learners with the dictionary. Improperly preparing the students to employ such dictionaries, however, reveals a problematic area that needs to be addressed among language teachers and curriculum planners.

**The last research question asked was: What are the Saudi students' perceptions of the training in dictionary use?**

The participants credited explicit dictionary instruction as one of the recognized tools for learning vocabulary. The findings that emerged from the observations revealed that students perceived the dictionary as a helping tool, but they did not know how to use it effectively when learning English. This may indicate that the participants perceive that their dictionary, regardless of their level of proficiency, is a helping tool to learn the language. Through a training module, students extended their knowledge about dictionary use and how to use the dictionary within their learning strategies. The students reported that the dictionary became the first tool they used when seeking lexical information. This was an exhibited change in the students' learning habits, which was a direct result of the training they received. The students reported that they gained control over various tasks related to seeking out vocabulary information.

It is important to mention that the students reported that the dictionary was boring for some tasks. Another problem learners faced with the training was understanding complicated uses of the dictionary such as reading pronunciation transcription. Some of the students also expressed difficulties when applying other strategies presented in the training program. For example, they became confused by inflected words related to various topics and had doubts about returning a vocabulary word to its base form in order to locate that word in the dictionary.

### 5.2.2 Three key findings affecting dictionary use

This study yielded three interrelated factors that shaped students' relationships with the dictionary, and each finding is linked directly to this study's three research questions. To establish the context, the three research questions are presented first. Then, the findings are presented to highlight their influence on students' use of the dictionary.

The first research question attempts to explore the level of knowledge Saudi students at the university level possess: "*What knowledge do Saudi students have about their dictionaries?*" The reasons for studying learner knowledge to answer this question are threefold. First, it helps evaluate the influence of knowledge on students' preferences and interactions with their own dictionaries. Second, knowledge about the dictionary seems essential for learners' strategic learning behaviours. Third and finally, it helps develop a clear picture of the level of student dictionary knowledge and the factors affecting that knowledge.

The second research question attempts to understand Saudi students' attitudes toward their dictionaries: "*What attitudes do Saudi students have toward their dictionaries?*" Studying users' attitudes in dictionary research develops an understanding of the students' satisfaction with their own dictionaries. In other words, it reflects the extent to which the students prefer to use their own dictionaries rather than any other type of dictionary. Studying this issue is very informative for the literature as it offers information about the relationship between users and their dictionaries and how frequently students resort to using them. Dictionary attitude was tested first by Tomaszczyk (1979) who explored whether his participants preferred monolingual or bilingual dictionaries. As the lexicography production progressed by introducing new types of dictionaries, such as HHD and CD-ROM dictionaries, recent studies have tended to uncover users' attitudes toward new media by which dictionaries are accessible. A positive attitude towards a dictionary is linked to the level of satisfaction with the information provided, as well as the students' ability to find the needed type of information. Students' views about the

important role of using the dictionary for learning a language may indicate their positive attitude towards the dictionary.

The third research question explores the difficulties students encounter when using their dictionary: “*What difficulties do Saudi students encounter when using their dictionary?*” The difficulties of using a dictionary have been examined repeatedly by previous dictionary studies. However, studying difficulties in the context of the present study helps identify what affects the students’ use of the dictionary. Moreover, it is important to detect the reasons for dictionary difficulties based on the students’ views of such difficulties. Another important issue related to the difficulties is whether they are linked to dictionary deficiencies or to the students’ lack of skills.

### **5.2.3 Putting these three together**

The data obtained from phase I of this study showed that lack of knowledge about dictionary skills can be attributed to the dictionary difficulties students encounter when searching for new words. Such the difficulties resulted in students becoming very reluctant to resort to using the dictionary. This indicates a link among these issues, which can greatly influence the learners’ dictionary use when learning English (see Figure 5.1.).

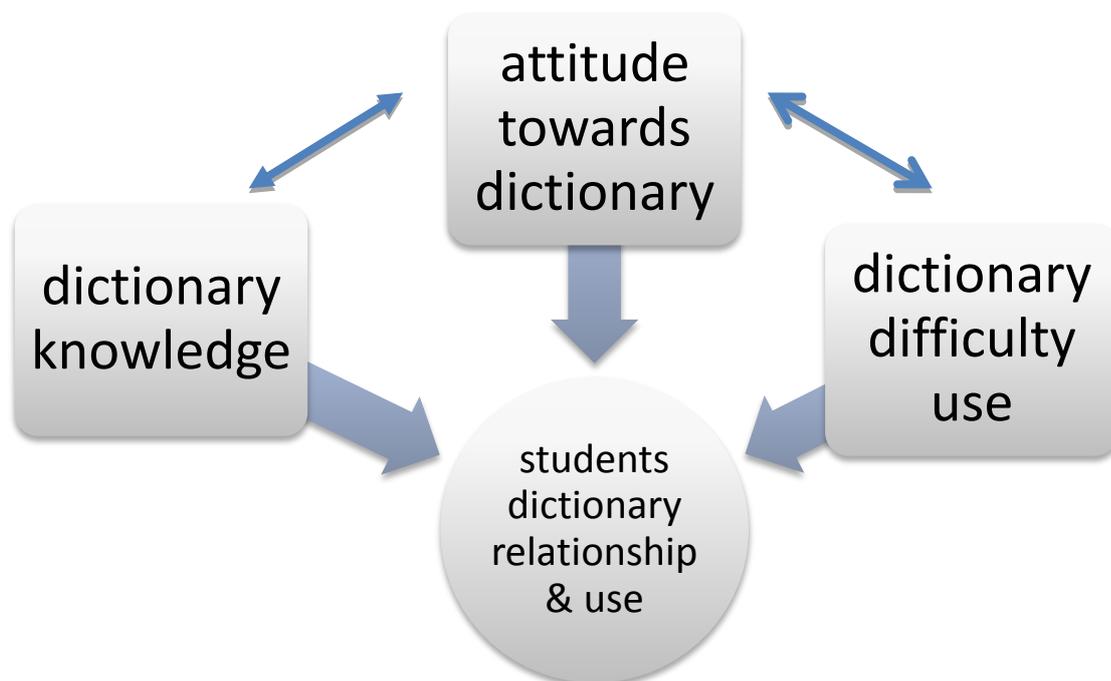


Figure 5-1: The relation between the three factors that affect students' use of the dictionary

Referring back to the data presented in Chapter 4, the level of knowledge students acquire about their dictionaries is inadequate and constrained. The majority of students developed incomplete understanding of the dictionary before obtaining their first dictionary. The students also lacked the skills to employ their dictionary accurately when learning English. The present study's data show that students knew little about two important issues related to the dictionary: (a) a broad understanding of the types of dictionary available to them and the features that distinguish dictionaries from each other; (b) the level of assistance that their own dictionaries could offer them. These effects were caused by immature knowledge about the dictionary; namely, that students falsely believed that they could only obtain meanings from using the dictionary.

The present study displayed that several factors contributed to the participants' lower level of knowledge and their choice of their first dictionaries. The detailed discussion about these factors and how they affected the students' interaction with their dictionaries are presented in the second section of this chapter.

Turning to the students' attitudes toward the dictionary in the current study, it was found that, although students showed little dependence on their dictionaries, they held positive attitudes toward its importance as a tool to learn English. Students showed they preferred to refer to other types of dictionaries than to use their own paper dictionary. The students indicated that electronic dictionaries are more accessible and easier to use than the paper versions. The influence of the injudicious selection of the dictionary, which teachers suggested, caused a negative impact on the students' preference to use their own dictionaries. More discussion about this is presented below.

Talking about the difficulties students encountered with their dictionary, the data presented in Chapter Four indicates that students considered that their paper dictionary was challenging to use. Students complained and aired concerns against their paper dictionary by describing how retrieving information in the paper dictionary format was a time consuming process. This could be attributed to the fact that either students lack knowledge of the basic reference skills that make checking the paper dictionary very difficult (Miller, 2006) or to the dictionary's format and presentation layout. Some of the students mentioned that they used the MOD infrequently because the English definitions were difficult to understand and insufficient numbers of Arabic words were used. These issues could have created reluctance and procrastination to use the paper dictionary and compelled the students to apply some of the observed non-dictionary strategies such as vocabulary guessing or ignoring. Furthermore, the present study showed that in some cases students preferred to use electronic dictionaries, such as the HHE or online dictionary. The discussion below explains the factors that affected the student–dictionary relationship. The discussion includes factors that lead to lack of knowledge and links this to the students' dictionary attitudes and difficulties.

#### **5.2.4 Students' dictionary knowledge**

Knowledge about using the dictionary is one of the keys to solving unknown vocabulary matters in the English language. Although lexical information is presented in the dictionary more appropriately than it was years ago, learners still need to be equipped with factual knowledge about successful approaches to reaching

the right type of information accurately and properly. Knowledge about the dictionary can be considered an interrelated factor that could affect other elements in the students' relationship with their dictionaries, including their attitudes and preferences in using the dictionary and the difficulties they faced with usage. This is an important concept that needs to be recognized when discussing the present study's findings. The present study found that students had insufficient background about the dictionary and how to use it suitably. Some other factors were also revealed that attributed to their immature dictionary practice. The factors that affected students' dictionary knowledge are discussed below.

In the present study, students obtained their dictionaries with meagre experience in dealing with reference books. They had not developed the habit of resorting to the dictionary to gain information about vocabulary when learning English. This inappropriate understanding of employing supportive learning tools, such as the dictionary, negatively influenced their attitude toward referring to it. Furthermore, lack of knowledge about how to obtain information from the dictionary resulted in frequent unsuccessful attempts to use the dictionary, causing students to become less attracted to using the dictionary. The difficulties students encountered with their dictionaries are probably the outcomes of their inaccurate knowledge. The discussion in the next sections will attempt to show how the participants obtained an inappropriate understanding of their dictionaries as they were learning English and what influential factors affected the students' dictionary knowledge. How knowledge generally affects the students' relationship with their dictionaries, including issues such as attitude and difficulties (see Figure 5.2), are then presented.

#### **5.2.5 Factors affecting dictionary knowledge**

As stated, this study's findings suggest that several factors contributed to the students' lack of dictionary knowledge. The main factors are past experience, teachers' influence, and students' learning motivations.

### **A. Past experience**

The findings showed that the students' practice of using the dictionary during study time in public schools before attending college was either extremely limited or absent. With such little attention paid to using the dictionary, students were less familiar with the idea of employing it to help facilitate learning a language (Nesi, 1999a). The number of students who used or obtained a dictionary during the secondary stage of their education was insignificant. Chi (2003) claimed that, in China, students are not commonly exposed to dictionary use during high school. In the Saudi context, Saudi students are not always requested to buy an English dictionary. Moreover, the practice of vocabulary teaching inside the classroom gives no weight to dictionary use. Teachers mostly provide their students with word meanings. Therefore, it can be said that instead of teaching students how to efficiently use the dictionary to learn and add to their experience, teachers in Saudi Arabia directly provide students with the meaning of new words in each lesson. This can lead students to rely heavily on their teachers' translations and explanations rather than resorting to dictionaries. Thus, it can be said that the educators' ignorance of dictionary use may reduce the chances of transferring dictionary skills from teachers to students.

Learning is viewed as a complicated and cumulative process involving the interaction of past experience and new experience, where the past schemata reinforce the present. The educational stage in which the respondents acquired their own first dictionary could impact the development of their use of it. Although some researchers, such as Chi (2003), may have claimed that the ownership of a dictionary does not assure complete reliance on it, it can likewise be argued that students who own a dictionary are much more likely to use it than those who do not. This is considered the reason for the correlation detected in the relevant literature between dictionary use and ownership (Battenburg, 1989, p. 92). The majority of the participants in the present study did not own a dictionary before joining the university, while the remainder claimed to have acquired one at the secondary and intermediate stages of their education. It was very unlikely any student acquired their dictionary at the elementary school stage, because learning English only began at the intermediate stage among the participants in the current research.

This may suggest that the later the students' educational stage, the more likely it is that they have obtained their own dictionary and have started using it, as Al-Ajmi found (1992 p.149). The difference between Al-Ajmi's participants and the participants of the current study related to pre-university dictionary ownership might be related to the attention paid to English language teaching by the educational authorities in both countries. According to Al-Mutawa, (1996), English is taught at the first grade of primary school in Kuwait, whereas in Saudi Arabia such language training starts in the sixth grade. Therefore, the status of English language learning in the public schools could affect the way students own or use the dictionary for language learning. In a non-Arab environment, Baxter's (1980) students were found to be far more experienced than the students in the present study. Here again, a cultural element might be added to education because some researchers, such as Ard (1982, p. 2) and Nesi (2000), have identified a role that might be attributed to culture in some aspects of dictionary use (p. 104).

Li (1998) described how Chinese learners are equipped with the idea of leaning on and using the dictionary from the primary stage of formal education. They learn and are taught how to use a mother-tongue dictionary, such as Zidan or Xuesheng Zidan, beginning from first grade in primary school. Formal training on dictionary content and frequent dictionary use in primary schools assists children in China improve their fairly strong dictionary awareness and good study habits in consulting dictionaries. Li (1998) added that training in dictionary use is presented gradually to the students until the final year of primary school, and skills are evaluated at the end of each term. The idea is that skilful and controlled dictionary use can facilitate more independent language learning.

According to Chi (2003), when Chinese students start studying English during primary school in China, educators offer them the details about vocabulary: meaning, pronunciation, spelling and grammar. When reaching the secondary stage of education, the teacher remains the main source of information or in some cases the glossary of the textbook. There is no statement in the syllabus about dictionary training. Some attention to dictionaries likely results from the Chinese model of

dictionary training in early L1 education. She added that, early on, learners realise the importance of the dictionary as a tool for studying a language, and yet they have only a relatively small understanding of the features, structure, use and features of bilingual dictionaries and their difference from the Chinese dictionaries. Learners at the university level in China are required to reach a certain standard in English language before they can be granted a degree. Therefore, they attend English classes in their first two years at university. When learners start their English course, the trainer in most situations is likely to encourage them to buy and use method dimension multilingual dictionaries. Despite the fact that no clear description of the dictionary training is stated in the program, many course guides enclose language worksheets based on dictionary skills, such as discriminating meanings and forming words. However, there is no systematic dictionary teaching offered at all (Li, 1998).

The situation in Saudi Arabia differs from the Chinese and other parts of the world regarding the use of dictionaries in the primary or intermediate school. Students reach the university level with very limited experience in dictionary learning and usage. Additionally, unlike the Chinese students, the use of the Arabic monolingual dictionary is uncommon among Saudi students within their schools. Consequently, it is uncommon that transferable skills form based on using the monolingual Arabic dictionary to search in the bilingual English dictionary in the Saudi context. Thus, students reach later ages of their education before being shown any reference materials. It thus seems logical to claim that students who have the chance to practice and use the dictionary during their early stages of learning are likely to have more opportunities to improve their English language and reference skills.

Regarding dictionary use and training in classroom practice, it can be argued that Saudi learners of English are not aware of the use of the English dictionary during their classes. Dictionary use in the pre-university stages is scarce during classroom practice as no space is given to it when English is being taught. Indeed, immature students still need their teachers to aid them in using the dictionary. Perhaps once students experience that their instructors do not require them to bring dictionaries to classes, they will not use them. Therefore, on the practical side of dictionary use, it seems that few English students in Saudi Arabia realize the effectiveness of the

dictionary in learning English, because they still only think of learning English through their teacher. It is thus unfair to blame them for this situation because students are not directed on the effectiveness of employing the dictionary in learning a foreign language.

To conclude, students surveyed for the present study started their study at the college level with little knowledge related to dictionary use (Nesi, 1999a; Chi, 2003). Students disclosed their unhappiness that through their learning of the English language, their English classes did not include a component that taught them how to obtain vocabulary information or how to become good dictionary users. The students claimed that they had not studied anything related to dictionary use for either receptive or productive activities. They also claimed that they only obtained their first dictionary after being advised by their teachers to buy one to improve their English language learning. This happened only when they began their higher education.

## **B. Teachers' influences**

Teachers play an important role in raising students' dictionary awareness and knowledge. As stated, teachers advised their students to obtain a dictionary during the first weeks of their college studies. The teachers explained that the dictionary could facilitate their learning of English and open new sources of vocabulary learning. This movement from the teachers can be seen as an advantage of their teaching practice. However, findings showed that there was a negative influence of the teachers on the students' relationship with their dictionaries, as will be shown in the discussion below.

### **1. Selecting the dictionary**

The choice of a particular dictionary can be regarded as an important issue for dictionary users. Selection falls under the dictionary pre-ownership knowledge, which is related to all that students' knowledge about the distinguishing features of the dictionary types from which they can select. Both teachers and students may ignore the importance of a wise selection among the available types of dictionaries

found on the market, especially considering the advances in technology in recent years.

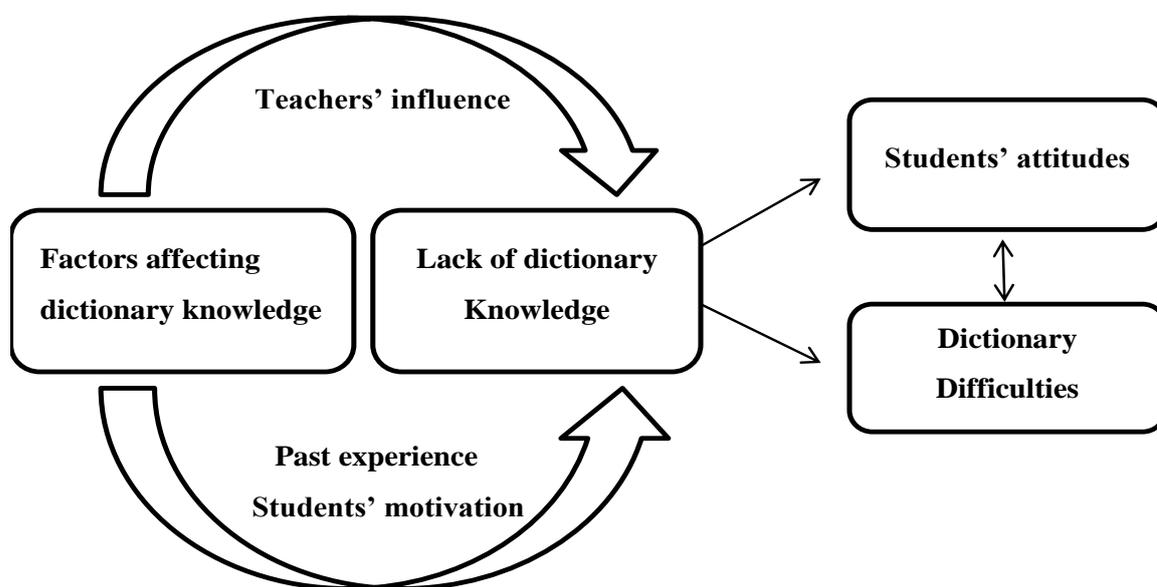


Figure 5-2: Factors affecting dictionary knowledge

Indeed, dictionary production has seen explosive growth, such that the industry is introducing dictionaries using different types of media such as HHDs and mobile phones. This rapid progress creates a great challenge to both the teachers and the students as they need to be knowledgeable about the changes in how dictionaries are produced, and the latest editions of the various dictionaries, before purchasing their own dictionaries.

Findings from the current study reveal this issue to be one of the factors that affected the students' use of their dictionaries. Students claimed that their teachers chose a particular type of dictionary and asked them to buy it. For no obvious reason, the teacher recommended a specific dictionary to the students. However, Tickoo (1989) believed that this is often due to the fact that teachers are unaware of the quality of various dictionaries. Therefore, although there are a variety of dictionaries designed for learners, especially for English, these dictionaries remain *"a poorly used rich*

*resource*" (Lau 1989: iii). As Strevens asserted, "*the use, and hence the effectiveness, of LDs (learners' dictionaries) depends centrally on the teacher ...*" (1987: 5).

More important, recommending a specific type of dictionary may not be suitable for all students. The literature revealed that students mostly buy their dictionaries based on their teachers' advice (Béjoint, 1981; Iqbal, 1987; Diab, 1989; Li, 1998; Chi, 2003; among others). Thus, it is important that the teachers consider the impact of their involvement, because an inappropriate dictionary that does not serve the students' linguistics needs may negatively influence their use of this important tool. In the present research, the majority of the students bought MODs based on their teachers' advice. However, they aired their resentment against using that particular dictionary. Students claimed that their own dictionary (MOD) was not their first choice when consulting a dictionary.

Family assistance in dictionary selection is not common among foreign language learners. In the current study, the majority of participants claimed that they did not receive any suggestions from their parents before buying their dictionaries. Only a small number of students reported that their siblings provided them with some suggestions. One of the students indicated his sister helped him buy a HHD. Similarly, a small number of students chose to buy their dictionaries by relying on the bookseller's recommendation. One of the students explained how he chose the electronic dictionary that he owns based on the seller's advice. These findings suggest that the students did not attempt to provide themselves with enough knowledge to decide on the type of dictionary to purchase.

Whether teachers should provide students with their advice and suggestions about the dictionaries or whether students choose to buy the dictionary they prefer is a complicated issue. The teachers' advice to their students to buy the dictionary with which the teachers were very familiar is common (Li, 1998; Chi, 2003). Diab (1990) discussed the teachers' role in dictionary choice and argued that teachers should provide pieces of advice to students and help them with the purchasing choice. According to Cowie (1999: 184), students "*rely overwhelmingly on the advice of their teachers*" when buying dictionaries. However, at present, we have little

knowledge about the appropriateness of dictionaries for students of different proficiencies from which teachers can underpin their advice. One suggestion recommends students switch from the bilingual to the monolingual dictionary.

It is important to say that someone may argue that teacher' beliefs about the dictionary as a hindrance rather than a facilitator for learning English, especially for low achievers students may negatively affect the dictionary use (Poulet, 1999: p.78). Moreover, tutors were blamed for being ignorant of the real level to which their students could use a dictionary. Moreover, it is argued that many English language educators appeared to be uninformed about how familiar their students are with dictionaries (Barnes et al, 1999, p. 22).

Teachers are unlikely to be familiar with updates to the new kinds and new editions of dictionaries available on the market. Therefore, it is suggested that teachers themselves should be taught how to use the dictionary (Chi, 2003). Moreover, educators need to research their students' dictionary needs before suggesting they buy a particular type of dictionary. They need to know what kinds of dictionary (in terms of the medium) could motivate learners to use their dictionaries in the best way.

It is important to note that teachers' beliefs about dictionary preference can affect their advice to the students. For example, teachers may suggest a paper dictionary to their students rather than the HHD (Pollute, 1999). They believed that the information obtained from the paper dictionary was retained more effectively than was the case with the HHD. They also claimed that students extracting information from the paper dictionary allowed them to read extra details while searching in the paper dictionary (Pollute, 1999). In contrast, teachers believed that the electronic dictionary provided only the entry information of the needed word. It was also found that many EFL teachers thought that a monolingual dictionary is better than a bilingual dictionary for the students to use when learning English (see Chapter Two). These beliefs about the dictionary could threaten the wise choice of dictionary usage, which could definitely affect the students' attitudes toward the dictionary.

I believe that teachers should provide assistance to students by presenting the characteristics and features that distinguish various dictionaries from one another. The teacher should then allow students to select the most suitable dictionary that helps them learn the language. Teachers also need to exploit electronic advantages and students' love of technology when considering recommending a dictionary. This is the case because the last few years have witnessed a huge growth in the interest of employing technology to support various fields of language learning and teaching. Indeed, the claims about the electronic dictionary being limited and not providing the same entry details as provided in a paper dictionary need to be reconsidered. It can also be said that dictionary suppliers have updated their products to provide dictionary versions compatible with new smartphones. These versions provide, to some extent, the same information students can find in the paper dictionary. Additionally, I believe that the HHD or smartphone dictionaries are preferable to the paper dictionary for their speed and ease of use. Electronic dictionaries also offer other features such as human pronunciation and a spell checker.

To conclude, the teachers' worthiness can be seen as a source factor of persuasion and motivation. In the current study, the students were very influenced by the teachers' encouragement to own a dictionary. Students commented on the teachers' reinforcement to own a dictionary in order to learn English by saying that they believed in what the teacher told them. Students followed their teachers' instructions and bought the dictionary they were told to buy.

## **2. Teaching practices: lack of time, support and resources**

It is important to realize that dictionary use is not the only way to learn a language, but it is seen as the most reliable facilitator in this educational activity. Teachers in some cases find it very challenging to integrate the dictionary as a facilitator in lesson practice, unless dictionary use is part of the curriculum they teach. Chi (2003) argued that the teacher cannot incorporate dictionary use inside the classroom because of time constraints. This can lead the teachers to reduce the time allocated to using supportive learning tools (e.g., the dictionary) inside the classroom.

English teachers may have concerns about including the use of the dictionary inside the classroom because the consultation process interrupts the flow of the lessons (Chi,1998) or view the dictionary as a hindrance to learning English rather than as a facilitator (pollute, 1999). The teachers, especially non-native speakers, are partly to blame for this issue because they are dictionary users themselves and know the role it has played in overcoming their own vocabulary difficulties. Integrating dictionary use into the classroom requires extra time and effort, which makes the teachers refrain from allowing students to refer to every unknown word they come across. Additionally, allowing dictionary use in every lesson is very tedious for the teachers. Instead, dictionary use can be maintained inside the classroom when the teachers allocate space for this activity and encourage students to refer to it outside the classroom. In my experience, teachers will not allow space for the dictionary unless their curriculum guides state that the dictionary must be included in teaching practice.

Arishi (2004) argued that Saudi learners of English are not aware of the use of the English dictionary inside the classroom. There are certainly some causes supporting this fact, chief of which is the absence of encouragement from teachers. Of course, students still want the tutor to assist them in using the dictionary. In my experience, when teachers lack interest in allowing students to use the dictionary in class, students neglect bringing the dictionary to school. I think teachers should not only encourage students to bring the dictionary and use it inside the classroom, but also encourage them to employ this learning aid at home. Some students of English in Saudi Arabia probably ignore the effectiveness of the dictionary in learning the language because they still only consider learning English is accomplished through the teacher. The students should not be blamed because they are not directed on the efficacy of using the dictionary in learning English. Additionally, they learn the meaning of various vocabulary words by relying on their teachers, most of whom are not motivated to encourage dictionary use during lessons.

Therefore, it can be concluded that Saudi students do not gain proper teaching on dictionary use. This fact should attract the attention of both curriculum developers and language teachers in the Saudi context. Curriculum designers should include

instruction on dictionary use at different levels of language learning development. Training should start with lessons increasing students' knowledge of dictionary-related components that facilitate the use of the dictionary.

### **3. Students' expectations and needs**

There seems to be a lack of a connection between the teachers' teaching practices and the students' expectations and needs in terms of using vocabulary learning tools such as the dictionary. Concerning vocabulary learning, teachers' practices in terms of improving students' learning skills about vocabulary resources and how to use them inside and outside the classroom does not match the students' expectations in the current study. Although the teacher asked students to obtain their own dictionary at the beginning of the course (describing it as a very useful and important for the students' learning), it was not possible to use the dictionary in the classroom because the teachers' were reluctant to encourage students to depend on the dictionary to obtain lexical information. Students referred to this problem in the interview criticizing their teachers' lack of interest in incorporating the dictionary into learning and teaching practice. They stated that dictionary use was virtually ignored by the teachers, which compelled them to employ non-dictionary strategies to obtain information about words. The non-dictionary strategies were found to be used by the Saudi students in several studies such as Almuzainy, (2005; Al-Fuhaid, (2004); Alqahtani, (2005; and Al-Sweed, (2004).

The teachers' encouragement for the students to buy the dictionary at the beginning of their study was more likely to positively raise the students' expectation about the dictionary's role in their language leaning. I believe that students expected their teacher to encourage them to use their dictionary to improve their language, because the teachers had suggested purchasing the tool at the beginning of course. Students abandoned this idea, however, after realizing the teachers hesitated to allow space in the curriculum to use the dictionary inside the classroom. Accordingly, students were not enthusiastic about bringing the dictionary to their classes every day. It is possibly true to say that students do not take the initiative to use their English dictionaries and bring them to class if they were not urged to do so. This is of course a disconcerting aspect of the learning process because students may perhaps need the dictionary in

the class to do one of the things that cannot be done properly by the teacher (Arishi, 2004).

Similar views were found among the participants in this study who did not take the dictionary to their study classes and were not using them when they needed to know new lexical information. It can be claimed, therefore, that the students' discouragement and reaction about the teachers' lack of attention to using and teaching the dictionary could be an undermining factor that might have a negative effect on the students' dictionary use. Indeed, the teachers failed to put knowledge of English and its assistive learning tools into practice. Dictionary use could satisfy students' needs regarding vocabulary learning. Students pointed out, however, that the teachers' vocabulary teaching approach depended mainly on providing the students with the meaning of new words in each lesson.

To summarize, the teachers' influence regarding dictionary use is very common and can direct the students' future relationship with using the dictionary. Implementing dictionary strategies in the classroom to teach English would be an ideal way to help the learners depend more on their dictionaries than on any other vocabulary learning strategies. Next, the discussion covers the students' initiatives to learn how to use the dictionary depending on the guidelines and workbook materials.

#### **5.2.6 Students' motivation to use the dictionary**

Students' motivation to teach themselves how to use the dictionary is more likely to fill their knowledge gap. The students were found, however, to be reluctant to read the introductory pages of the dictionary to enhance their skills about the appropriate ways to search the dictionary. Several studies (e.g. Béjoint, 1981; Diab, 1990; Al-Ajmi, 1992; Hartmann, 1999) explored reading the front guidance pages. These studies showed that it seems unlikely that foreign learners teach themselves through the instruction found in the introduction pages. It is true to say that reading the instructions in the introduction pages of dictionaries can indicate to better understanding of the dictionary use (Al-Ajmi, 1992).

The results of the current study revealed that the students were ignorant of how to use a dictionary's introductory notes. The majority of the participants stated during the interviews that they were not even aware that dictionary guidelines existed in the introduction. One of the interviewees, however, expressed great interest in the introduction to the dictionary and thought it was very useful, but he did not read all the instructions. He reported that he could not completely read the instructions because it was written in English and thus was very difficult to understand.

It seems to be very optimistic to think that students will be aware of the introductory notes or be able to understand them on their own. Before reaching this level of understanding of the introductory guidelines, foreign students will struggle significantly in comprehending the information provided in the introduction to the dictionary when they begin their English language learning. It can be claimed, therefore, that this is probably the case with all beginners in language learning, as various dictionary research has shown (Béjoint, 1981; Diab, 1990; among others). The challenging and sophisticated instructions found in the dictionary introductory pages, however, have put foreign learners off reading the guidance notes and being proficient dictionary users. It can be said that although these findings seem frustrating, they might be used to confront teachers who have not provided their students with any support for dictionary use. Many teachers think that students can acquire dictionary reference skills from the dictionary's introductory guidance, which is written in English. Chi (2003), however, described that this view as likely to be an unrealistic opinion (p. 2).

This study attributed such lack of interest in the dictionary guidance to an unawareness of its importance (see Béjoint, 1981; Igbal, 1987; Diab, 1990). Diab (1990, p. 174) suggested that the introductory notes should be written in the users' first language. I believe that lexicographers and dictionary compilers should consider this suggestion, especially for the bilingual and bilingualised types of dictionaries. Such an initiative could overcome the challenges that occur from having to read instructions in English. Alternatively, teachers could spend a good deal of time in their lessons reading the introduction to the dictionary and clarifying what might be problematic. In this way, they can familiarise their students with all the dictionary's

characteristics. Added to the students' lack of awareness that Diab (1990) mentioned, teachers sometimes fail to discuss the distinctions among dictionary types. Students might think that what is true for one dictionary is the same for others; hence, they assume that they do not need to refer to the dictionary's introduction (if they already know some of these aspects). The students' lack of awareness about employing the introduction might be related to both language teachers and lexicographers, although the latter group might be more involved in the published research and thus the least likely to fall victim to unawareness. It is expected that the present study can serve, with other dictionary research, to elevate awareness of the insufficient use of the introductory guidance. On the contrary, both teachers and curriculum planners are accountable for increasing attention regarding its importance (Diab, 1990, p. 174). Crystal (1986) suggested that perhaps it might be useful if lexicographers launched "*at the very least, a national campaign to persuade dictionary users to read their prefaces*" (p. 79).

I believe, however, that the front pages are not enough for the students to teach themselves how to navigate the dictionary or search for types of information in the entries. It is important for the teachers not to rely on the idea that students can know how to use dictionary from reading the guidelines pages. This can be attributed to the two main reasons shown above. First, students are unlikely to be aware of the information provided in these pages. Frequent reports from previous studies such as Béjoint, (1981); Diab, (1990); Al-Ajmi, (1992) among others showed the students were not aware that the guideline information existed. Second, the guideline information is usually written in English, which creates a real challenge for students, especially the lower achievers. It is argued that students may have incomplete understanding of the types of information included in their dictionaries (Béjoint, 1981; Iqbal, 1987). It can also be claimed that students do not read the introduction where much explanation about the dictionaries could be found. Thus, students developed an inappropriate understanding of the level of support that their dictionary might offer to them.

Some of the participants in the current study lacked awareness of the dictionary explanation in the introduction and appendices, whereas some others stated that they

could not understand all the information provided in it. Therefore, it can be said that based on the data obtained, the students' dictionary knowledge needs to be increased by exposing the students to an explicit teaching session.

To conclude, knowledge about the dictionary is essential for the tool to be used accurately. It is important because it is more likely to be the key to understand the use of this assistive learning tool. This research draws attention to the fact that there were some factors that affected the perfect use of the dictionary. Previously built knowledge about the use of reference skills can noticeably affect the students' interaction with the dictionary. Students who built this type of skill did so either by transferring this from using a mother-tongue dictionary or being exposed early to using a bilingual dictionary at the pre-tertiary level.

### **5.2.7 The influence of dictionary knowledge on students' attitudes and difficulties**

Studying attitudes toward the dictionary that students own is as old as dictionary use research. It aimed to measure how satisfied users are with their dictionaries. In studies such as those by Tomaszczyk (1979), students were unhappy with their dictionaries, which were missing some additional useful features (e.g., illustrative images). Recent studies have shown that different degrees of satisfaction can be achieved as dictionaries become more user-friendly. The link between the knowledge and attitude toward the dictionary revolves around the fact that lack of knowledge about the dictionary can lead to a negative stance toward dictionary use. In the current research, the respondents' attitudes toward their dictionary began with the students' selection of an inappropriate dictionary. The unwise choice of a dictionary put the students in an unreal situation of learning when they were required to refer to a dictionary that was not usable and handy for them. Additionally, students were left struggling to understand how to use their dictionary to learn English. Thus, impractical knowledge about the dictionary that was unsuitably chosen results in less reliance on this tool as students attempted to employ non-dictionary strategies to solve their vocabulary problems. The students spell out their negative attitudes toward their MODs, describing its use as time consuming and difficult, and as being heavy to carry to class. Indeed, the key element in dictionary attitude may be related

to dictionary knowledge. This starts from carefully selecting the most appropriate type of dictionary that suits the user and ends with exposing the students to formal instruction on the dictionary.

The difficulties of dictionary use have been examined by dictionary use researchers. Certainly, the reasons students are unsuccessful in consulting their dictionary highlight the need for training in dictionary use. The results of the present research show that even tertiary-level students do not possess the necessary reference skills. It was interesting to find that students attribute the majority of their difficulties to their own limitations in terms of 'skills' or 'knowledge' rather than to the dictionary itself if, indeed, they appreciated any distinction between these two notions. My interpretation of this is that students may lack confidence when using their dictionaries and as a result attribute the problem to themselves rather than to any deficiencies with the tool. During the interview, students complained about the insufficient dictionary instruction given to them. Findings in the present study make it clear that teaching dictionary strategy is essential, as the lack of appropriate strategies appeared to be a frequent cause of unsuccessful dictionary consultation, which is the outcome of their inadequate reference skills.

Teachers' beliefs regarding the use and teaching of the dictionary are worrying. It is repeatedly found in the literature that educators ignore dictionary use inside the classroom, which can be related to their belief about the need to allow students to refer to the dictionary while doing linguistics activities. It is advised that teachers reconsider their opinions about dictionary use during lessons. To conclude, this study indicates that few students received instruction in dictionary use before joining college, which can result in the student possessing improper dictionary knowledge. This incomplete knowledge threatens the student's interest in using the dictionary as repeated inaccurate consultations lead to a negative view of the dictionary. They will also be confronted with a challenge when they want to put their limited skills into practice to retrieve information from the dictionary.

### **5.3 Discussion of dictionary training (Phase II)**

Phase II of this study exposed four individual students to formal dictionary instruction with the aim of improving their mastery of the dictionary. The training yielded positive improvements in the students' relationship with the dictionary, confirming the results of previous studies about the impact of such teaching strategies on students' knowledge, skills, attitudes, confidence and autonomy. Phase II revealed four significant findings that students attributed to the training they received during the tutorials: improved knowledge, more positive attitudes, greater confidence and independence in learning (see Fig 5.3.). The next sections show the influence of dictionary strategies training on the students' learning of English in general and dictionary use in particular.

#### **5.3.1 The impact of training on student knowledge**

Things that students already understand have a very significant impact on whether and how well they can learn something new (Bennett et al., 2004). Therefore, it is important to identify their background knowledge, which may have been derived from personal experience prior to formal study in order to build on that knowledge. As shown earlier in this chapter, it was found that the students' dictionary knowledge was greatly limited and impacted by their past experience, their teachers' role, and their own motivation as well as the dictionary situation inside the classroom (see above). Thus, dictionary teaching aimed at enhancing the students' knowledge about the dictionary and attempted to fill the gap between the dictionary and the students' use. It was also important to explore how the training would add any changes to the students' dictionary interactions and how this could add to their knowledge about strategies.

The present study suggested that students know little about the use of the dictionary as many of them reported in the questionnaire and interviews that they were ignorant of the dictionary's rich content. However, the students who completed the training course highlighted a powerful influence regarding the usefulness of the dictionary as a goldmine of vocabulary information.

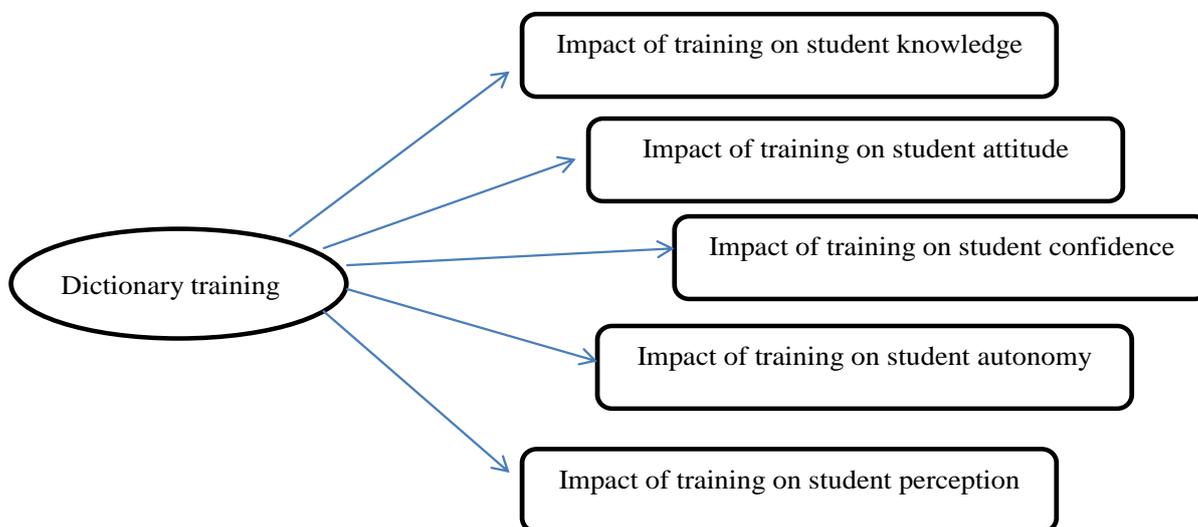


Figure 5-3: Outcomes of dictionary use training

The present study revealed that students' knowledge of dictionary strategies, their use and how they valued these strategies as effective tools for using the dictionary evolved gradually. Indeed, students became self-assured and more able to use the dictionary for help. In particular, the results of the student training sessions revealed that there were significant differences between the students' dictionary knowledge before and after the training. Students in the tutorial sessions reported an increase in their knowledge of strategies, a greater deployment of strategies, and greater emphasis on the value of strategies as tools for effective learning.

The tutorial students reported a growth in their knowledge and repertoire of strategies and that they were more confident in their dictionary strategies after the training. Moreover, the students concurred that their knowledge of the dictionary improved the way that they dealt with new vocabulary. Thus, it can be said that teaching dictionary can develop a method for dealing with new vocabulary.

Importantly, the study showed that the students expanded their knowledge about the various types of information that can be obtained from their dictionaries. They valued the role of the dictionary as one of the reliable options to enlarge and assist their learning of vocabulary. The students commented on the training saying that their dictionary knowledge went beyond obtaining the meaning of unknown words to include other aspects of lexis information such as noun countability and noun/verb regularity.

The dictionary training expanded the students' knowledge and expectations from their dictionaries. The fact that the students appreciated the influence of the dictionary training can be used as a clear call for the importance of teachers increasing their students' knowledge of the dictionary. It is essential that teachers allocate time to raise the level of their students' understanding in this area. Teachers should also know that their beliefs about students' prior knowledge are not always accurate. Previous studies have shown that teachers fail to pass on some of their own knowledge about the dictionary because they anticipate that their students already have that knowledge (Li, 1998; Cowie, 1999; Nesi, 1999a; Chi, 2003; Wingate, 2001; among others). Thus, some teachers' expectations that students do not require assistance to enhance their competence in using the dictionary are likely to be based on unrealistic assumptions. The present study suggests similar claims because teachers neglected to increase the students' knowledge of what to expect from the dictionary when learning English. It is advised that teachers pay attention to increasing students' knowledge and acceptance of the proper uses of the dictionary as one of the appropriate alternative techniques for acquiring the meaning of unknown words. However, teachers may have particular reasons behind their approach to dictionary training in their classrooms. I believe that teachers at the tertiary level hesitate to pass on transferrable dictionary knowledge to students because they may think that the students have already grasped this understanding from their previous teachers in public schools (Li, 1998; Cowie, 1999). Another possible interpretation is linked to the teaching practice and time constraints which make it difficult to squeeze dictionary skills into lessons.

In conclusion, it seems that teachers do not realize the danger of failing to introduce students to their dictionary or assist them by making known the level of help offered by the dictionary. Prior studies have highlighted this result by claiming that teachers were reluctant to transfer their knowledge of dictionary use to their students.

### **5.3.2 The impact of training on student attitudes**

Dictionary research has shown that students usually have a negative stance towards their dictionaries for various reasons. Some of these reasons are linked to the non-linguistic features of the resource, such as the size, cost and format. Dictionary users' attitudes can also be linked to linguistic characteristics, such as coverage, accessibility, presentation and clarity of definitions for the monolingual and bilingualized dictionaries. Therefore, students may express their dissatisfaction toward their dictionary because they cannot locate needed information or because the dictionary does not include the word the students need. The linguistic dissatisfaction about the dictionary is attributed more to the students' lack of skills than to the deficiency in the dictionary itself, especially recent versions. According to the scope of the present study, students' attitudes toward the dictionary can be changed once they are exposed to formal training.

The intervention data analysis demonstrated that dictionary training has different effects on students' attitudes. More specifically, there was a positive change in attitudes in both the students' dictionary use and choosing it as a source of vocabulary learning. Although electronic dictionaries, especially hand-held types, were preferred most by the majority, the participants who joined the training revealed a significant positive attitude and appreciation toward their own paper dictionaries compared to before they underwent training. Thus, dictionary training can modestly change the students' attitudes toward paper dictionaries.

The findings of phase I in this study showed that using the paper dictionary was described by the majority of the students as time consuming, difficult and boring. They explained their reasons for these negative views as being influenced by their unwise choice of a dictionary and the difficulties they faced when referring to it. The

students who joined the training reported that their opinions had been modified as they became positively attracted to using the dictionary for linguistic purposes.

The difficulties students encountered before the training were overcome after they accomplished the course. For example, recalling alphabetical order when attempting to retrieve lexical information from MODs was reported as the one of the issues that restrained them from employing their dictionaries. This is because mistaking the order of the alphabet led them astray in searching the MOD. This difficulty was found to be challenging for students in some of the previous studies, such as (Mitchell, 1983). Failing to find the needed type of information is more likely to be linked to the students' knowledge of where to search. One of the major difficulties during consultations were locating the word to be looked up and choosing the appropriate meaning (Vital, 2006).

Inaccurate knowledge about how to reach the appropriate entry in the MOD can lead to a negative attitude towards using it. The lack of reference skills can put the process of searching in the dictionary tedious and time consuming. However, providing students with dictionary skills seems to modify their negative stances to the dictionary use. The students reported that the training assisted them in searching the dictionary more quickly and accurately.

Therefore, it is evident that teaching dictionary skills to students improves the way they feel about using it. The students described the way the teaching helped them to overcome the difficulties and improve their attitudes toward dictionary use.

The present study suggests that the dictionary training could also assist the students in changing their attitude toward English language learning. Students' attitude toward the language had changed in the way they paid attention in class and coped with texts more easily. Moreover, the training assisted the students to increase their vocabulary learning and overcome reading difficulties.

The participants felt that, after the dictionary training, they began to enjoy reading comprehension texts, and felt confident with English. Students became more able to

understand the words they encountered in the text and felt confident that they could look the words up easily.

The above observed improvements in the students' relationship with their dictionary are indications that a change of attitude can be attained by dictionary training. It also demonstrated that the negative attitudes and bad learning habits that learners may experience during their learning process can be modified through direct guidance from the teachers (MacIntyre and Noels, 1996).

To summarize, the evidence shows how teaching dictionary skills increases the learners' competence in dealing with varied and difficult tasks. Dictionary training proved to increase the students' success in using the dictionary, which increased their motivation to learn the English language and, consequently, changed their behaviours and attitudes toward studying the language.

### **5.3.3 The impact of training on fostering confidence**

The findings from phase I revealed that the majority of the students' felt frustration and lack of confidence in their attempts to understand English texts, with no dictionary skills to facilitate this work. An explanation for this lack of confidence is deeply rooted in the learners' lack of dictionary skills and knowledge, as this is more likely to decrease confidence and increase frustration. It can be said that the students lost their confidence while learning English and trying to recognize either written or spoken textual contents by employing the help of their dictionary.

The findings in phase I suggest that, even though students had access to the dictionary, their lack of skill in using it made them feel that they were incompetent language learners. Indeed, it was essential to be able to find the meanings of the words they did not know in the dictionary in order to understand English. Such knowledge has a direct influence on the students' perception of themselves as learners. It seems that dictionary skills are related to an overall feeling of language learning proficiency.

The results from the phase II in this study reveal the influence of dictionary strategy training on removing anxiety and fostering confidence. After joining the dictionary training, the students showed that strategy training enhanced their confidence when needing to refer to the dictionary. The training gave them confidence in their capacity to deal with texts that required them to refer to their dictionary. They could confidently resort to the dictionary when they needed to.

Nyikos (1996) argued that “*strategy instruction helps students overcome fear or anxiety*” (p. 112). Warding off anxiety, removing fear, and building self-confidence while dealing with unknown words and resorting to dictionary use was possibly a natural outcome of the training, which students gained by having been highly motivated and provided with sufficient knowledge. This confidence was enhanced by equipping students with specific strategies to deal with linguistic tasks that required them to employ dictionary (cognitive) strategies, more general strategies to regulate their learning (metacognitive), and provided students with sufficient practice over a long duration. During the last sessions, students revealed their happiness with the progress they could achieve with the help of their dictionary. This seems to correspond with MacIntyre and Noels (1996) who reported that “... *strategies contribute to a sense of mastery over the learning process that would reduce uncertainty and anxiety, and maintain or improve both attitudes and motivation*” (p. 383). Thus, it can be claimed that students felt happy with the training and pleased with every achievement they made in trying to overcome their weaknesses as they became motivated and confident.

To summarize, it is worthwhile for curriculum designers and teachers to consider dictionary training as it can open gates for learners to learn about the language. It also throws light on the students’ ways of improving their skills and becoming more confident in the English language. Moreover, the training shows that students can develop more confidence in retrieving necessary information from their dictionary by exposing them to various strategies.

### 5.3.4 The impact of training on student autonomy

Another issue that emerged from the training, and that was a manifestation of all the other issues discussed above, is student autonomy. Teaching about the dictionary use process unveiled students' self-confidence and autonomy based on the students' reports in the tutorials. Although strategy training advocates claim training has the capacity to promote learner autonomy (Cohen, 1998; Niykos & Oxford, 1996; Wenden, 1991; Wenden & Rubin, 1987; Chamot et al., 1999; Nunan, 1996), developing learner autonomy was not the focus of strategy training in the present study because such a relationship is complex and difficult to verify. This is the case because the context of the present study is dominated by a teacher-centred tradition; developing autonomy in case of the current study seemed an impossible aim.

However, because the issue of strategy training and learner autonomy emerged from the students' feedback, it is worthwhile to highlight and discuss this issue. The students demonstrated that the training was very effective in developing their skills and promoting their independence. The students reported that the more skills and knowledge they had about their dictionary, the more of an independent learner they became. One of the students explained this effectively when he described how he deals with new, unknown words. It appears that giving learners' opportunity to be independent learners can help them to understand more about their own language processes. In this study, learning about using the dictionary assisted them to direct their efforts and progress. Therefore, this change can be a means of raising awareness of their own strategies. As Wenden (1998: 9) remarked, "*without awareness learners will remain trapped in their old patterns of beliefs and behaviours and never be fully autonomous*". The students who joined the course in dictionary training experienced an opportunity for self-directed learning since it offered them a chance to assess their previous dictionary difficulties and how these could be overcome.

I believe that the teachers need to relinquish their authority in the classroom and allow space for the students to direct their own learning. Whether or not students take the opportunities provided to them, their own learning is a choice that should be left to them to create. As far as dictionary use strategies are concerned, Scholfield (2002) argued that a learner-centred approach is used in wider strategy training, but rarely

for dictionary use specifically. Therefore, it can be argued that it is important that more attention be given to this issue by both educators and curriculum planners.

Students taking responsibility for their learning can be seen as one of the main issues for developing independence in language learning. The training proved to be successful in equipping learners with effective strategies to help them maximise their skills and deal appropriately with the dictionary. The strategies that students were taught included strategies that sought to help students direct and self-regulate their learning and included cognitive strategies intended to help students actively employ the dictionary.

In conclusion, the training on strategies has the potential to promote a degree of learner autonomy as students could initiate independent dictionary activities by the fourth session of the dictionary training. In these activities, students showed that they could use the strategies independently, appropriately and flexibly.

### **5.3.5 Change in perceptions and performance**

Students who attended the tutorial sessions also stated that the dictionary use training helped them change their perceptions and of themselves as learners of English, users of the dictionary, and about learning in general. They also acknowledged that their tutorials helped correct some false concepts they held about their dictionaries. Some of the students also reported that the teaching on dictionary use rectified the approach they used to learn new vocabulary. Students claimed that they no longer believed that learning vocabulary using non-dictionary strategies was the best way to approach a learning task.

I believe that the key element to increasing dictionary use among EFL learners starts with dictionary skills training. This is because it provides the learners with satisfaction and confidence. Dictionary training can compensate for the missing part of the teachers' missions when teaching their students about new vocabulary. The students before and after the training were quite different in their performance when searching for lexical information. This is because students could obtain the information they needed without waiting for spoon-feeding.

The findings of the current study showed that students rely on their teachers for the meaning of new words. This mode of learning is more likely to limit learners' exposure to the target language. For example, in most cases teachers may be unable to provide all their students with the meaning of the unknown words. Thus, students may not be fully satisfied with the learning of the new words. The dictionary, however, can substitute the role of the teacher once learners are equipped with the necessary skills to navigate for the information and are encouraged by the teacher to use it inside the classroom.

The dictionary training did not only change the perception of learning vocabulary, but also of the learning of English, more broadly. Using the dictionary to deal with unknown vocabulary was one thing, but that it led to better learning of English and therefore to greater success and confidence with the language was another.

Moreover, the current study showed the positive effects of strategy training on improving dictionary use (e.g., Chi, 2003; Lew & Galas, 2008). The findings of the current study provide evidence for the positive impact of strategy instruction given that it addresses the principles of instruction and modifies students' perceptions. Students' perceptions before the training seemed to be shaped by their classroom environment and past experiences. Having only used dictionaries infrequently and solely to discover meanings formed the students' previous perceptions. Their lack of skills also formed and controlled the students' dictionary performance, which improved greatly for the students who underwent dictionary training practice. Several interpretations could be given regarding the performance of those who participated in dictionary training. One interpretation may be in the principles of effective strategy instruction highlighted in the literature and incorporated in the present study. These principles included diagnosing student knowledge and adopting a direct instructional approach (Chi, 2003; Lew & Galas, 2008) as well as providing sufficient time and practice.

#### **5.4 Summary of the chapter**

This chapter was divided into two main sections: the first section showed the main findings from phase I of the current study, while the second discussed the findings of the intervention part (phase II). The study revealed that dictionary knowledge is a key element in student dictionary interaction. The teachers' influence on student dictionary use is irrefutable. The teacher's impact includes the selection of the most suitable dictionary. It also includes the lack of regular training or encouragement to use the dictionary inside the classroom. The training part proved to impact on the participants and their dictionary use and increasing their knowledge. The study also indicated that dictionary strategies are teachable and can be accommodated into English activities. Students' views are changeable and they appreciate the effectiveness of strategies which facilitate their learning.

## CHAPTER SIX

### CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

#### 6.1 Introduction

The emphasis in the present study has been on investigating the effect of exposing students to formal instruction in dictionary use. It aimed to increase student knowledge about the dictionary and assist them in obtaining the types of information they need from the dictionary. The study was divided into two phases.

The first phase of the current study revealed students' attitudes toward the dictionary, their habits, the difficulties they faced and how frequently when using their own dictionary. Findings showed that, although students believed that the dictionary was beneficial to their learning, they did not use this learning tool frequently. Results from this stage of the current study revealed that the participants lacked knowledge of, and skills in, referencing dictionaries for the information they sought. To resolve the problems identified, the students were explicitly taught how to use the dictionary by teaching them individually in a one-to-one tutorial mode.

The second stage of this study explored the possibilities of, and uncovered the difficulties inherent in, teaching dictionary use within the constraints of my own time and the students' time. Findings from the teaching portion of this study proved that explicitly teaching selected dictionary use tools was effective. Students' feedback revealed that they highly appreciated the knowledge and skills imparted to them.

#### 6.2 Overview of the study

The first phase of the current study revealed the students' ownership, attitudes towards, and habits and frequency of using their own dictionaries. Findings showed that MODs were chiefly owned by the majority of the students which they purchased at the beginning of their study in the college. They selected this type of dictionary based on the teachers' advice who claimed that the MOD was the most suitable dictionary to assist their learning of English. According to the data, the participants had faith in dictionary use in general and believed that dictionaries were helpful to their learning. Nevertheless, the data indicated that these students did not use MODs

frequently. Results from the questionnaire and the interview demonstrated that the students lacked the knowledge of, and skills in, referencing their dictionaries for the information they sought. They reported encountering various difficulties when using their dictionaries to solve linguistic problems.

In the second phase of the study, I used a tailor-made course to explore the possibility of teaching reference skills and improving students' knowledge of the MOD. The training was conducted through a one-to-one mode of teaching and was established within the constraints of different institutional and educational factors as well as the time limits of the field study. To assist students to resolve the problems identified in phase I of the current study, I undertook to teach dictionary use explicitly in a comfortable room. Findings from this phase demonstrated that explicit teaching of the selected dictionary use items was effective and students' feedback revealed that they appreciated the knowledge and skills imparted to them. The students emphasized that the dictionary training was effective in extending their knowledge and skills required for effective dictionary use. The results showed that the strategy training approach holds great potential for developing students' independence and that it moved them closer to becoming autonomous learners.

The other remaining question in this study relates to the factors affecting the Saudi students' use of the dictionary. The present study identified some factors that can influence the students' use of the dictionary. The first factor is the impact of teachers' authority and their beliefs about teaching and about using the dictionary inside the classroom, which was found to be a significant factor. Moreover, teachers can directly affect their students' relationship with their dictionary when suggesting which type of dictionary to buy. It was found that teachers did not consider the new types of dictionary on the market but that they recommended the dictionary with which they had long familiarity. Furthermore, teachers did not attempt to increase their students' knowledge and skills about the MOD; students were left struggling with the dictionary until many of them became disillusioned with it.

Another factor found in this study was that teachers usually provided their students with the meaning of new words. It is correct, therefore, to blame the 'spoon-feeding'

mode of teaching, in which students seek their teachers' assistance to tell them the meaning of every new word. Students reported that their teachers did not direct them towards the dictionary when asked about new words; instead, teachers in most cases just provided their students with the word's meaning.

The present study also revealed that students begin their university learning with meagre experience in dictionary use. Many of the participants reported that they had never been exposed to a dictionary before joining the college. Being exposed to the dictionary at such a late stage of development prevented students from building dictionary skills in the early stages of learning English.

Another related factor is the learners' lack of enthusiasm for taking the initiative to teach themselves about their dictionary by reading the introductory pages. During the training sessions, the information found in the front matter was explained, which helped students realise that they could read these pages to learn about their dictionary. However, it should be noted that this information is presented in English, which explains why students were reluctant to read it.

The designers of the English language curriculum have neglected to leave time for dictionary training in the classroom. This can also be considered as an influential factor that can negatively affect the students' use of the dictionary. Some publishers of language learning materials insert a small dictionary to their textbooks, which gives meaning information about new vocabulary present in the materials. This is an excellent approach to familiarising learners with the dictionary. Inappropriate preparation of the students to use such dictionaries, however, reveals a problematic area that needs to be addressed among language teachers and curriculum planners.

### **6.3 Research contribution**

This study examined a group of students' learning strategies and their attitudes toward their dictionary use and English language learning after they received explicit training on how to use a dictionary. Although most previous research relates substantially to the significance of dictionary use for enhancing studying in general, a gap in knowledge exists regarding the impact of increasing students' dictionary

knowledge on their learning strategies and their attitude toward using the dictionary. Thus, this study added a new dimension to the currently available literature and extended existing knowledge concerning dictionary use.

By applying rigorous research practices, the present study delivers a new understanding of the ways in which knowledge about dictionary use provides learning strategies that can be used to assist in learning the English language. Furthermore, the study revealed that after acquiring dictionary skills, students became more proficient in using the dictionary as a strategy to build their vocabulary. Ultimately, the students experienced success in their attempts to use the dictionary to learn a language. Knowing various dictionary strategies turned the participants into self-directed students, gaining a skill that would assist them in their journey toward life-long learning.

It is believed that this research is original and significant. These features lie in the research design, the research questions and the results. This research implemented a triangulation technique. That is, it organized all three data-gathering instruments to reveal comprehensive results. This has been shown to be the best way to compensate for the individual constraints of each method of research and increase their overall potential. On the basis of the evidence collected for the present study, the research presents findings that can shed light on how dictionary knowledge, through systematic teaching, can become part of students' learning strategies and serve as a critical coping competence for their future academic learning.

#### **6.4 Pedagogical implications**

From the data of the present study, and in the light of the findings, several pedagogical recommendations have been formulated:

1. A large proportion of the current study participants started their studies at the university with no or little experience in using a dictionary. More than half of them (71%) did not own a dictionary before joining the university. Encouraging early ownership of the dictionary is believed to help EFL learners make effective use of this important tool. Language learners normally start new language

learning experiences with great enthusiasm. Therefore, it is a good idea to introduce the dictionary to students during this stage of enthusiasm. They may start initially with an easy-access, pocket-sized dictionary before moving to more advanced versions.

2. Teachers should be aware of the significant attention students pay to their recommendations on what dictionary to buy and use. The survey revealed that teachers accounted for nearly half of the sources of influential recommendations on the students' selection of their first dictionary. Some students may use the dictionary the teacher recommends during the entire duration of their language learning experience; that is, they would not use any other dictionary. Some students, however, may be faced with contradictory advice from different teachers on which dictionary to buy and use. These students may become discouraged from using the dictionary at all, as discussed in Section 4.1.2. Based on the consequences of teachers' recommendations, teachers should increase their responsibility to critically evaluate and seek professional advice on the best dictionary to suit their learners' needs.
3. Gaining knowledge of different aspects of dictionaries and understanding the differences between various types, formats, and even brands of dictionaries are essential to make effective use of these qualities. However, 80% of the Saudi EFL learners in the study paid little or no attention to the dictionary's introductory guidance despite this being an important aspect that instructs the learners on how to use each particular dictionary. Crystal (1986) suggested launching "*a national campaign to persuade dictionary users to read their prefaces*" (p. 79). A national campaign is perhaps needed to raise awareness of all aspects of the dictionary, but not only the importance of the introductory guidance. Indeed, this research detected numerous problems related to a lack of awareness.
4. The finding that some of the learners never or rarely use the dictionary draws attention to an area that needs to be addressed first by teachers and second by curriculum planners and lexicographers. Teachers need to monitor dictionary use

in order to detect infrequent use by some students and identify the reasons behind this deficiency. Teachers need to encourage their students as much as possible to exploit this significant language-learning tool. Equally, curriculum planners and lexicographers need to take responsibility and investigate issues that may discourage dictionary use, either with regard to the curriculum or with the art of making dictionaries.

5. The present study revealed that learners did not know what tools were available in the dictionary. It was found that they relied heavily on L1 equivalents and L2 definitions and tended to ignore other information. This finding was revealed via the questionnaire in which the students reported not using examples or pronunciation. When teaching dictionary skills it is essential to emphasise the importance of word knowledge. The students need to know that knowing a word involves not only knowing its L1 equivalent, but also other kinds of information about the word. A dictionary can provide students with various aspects of word knowledge (Fan, 2000). It is the teachers' responsibility to teach students about the word knowledge that can be gained by using a dictionary. Therefore, learners should be encouraged to read and refer to introductory material for information on how to use the dictionary. Notably, prior research has shown that selecting a dictionary and using it without guidance may have a negative impact on language learning (Baxter, 1980)
  
6. Teachers should also foster a close relationship between learners and their dictionaries, by making the use of a dictionary enjoyable. They could use a dictionary for activities such as discussions, debates or role-play (Wright, 1998). Such activities could also address the problems students face when looking up words, such as not finding the entry. For example, learners could compete during a reading task to look up words and discovering the relevant meanings. There are numerous activities that can be accomplished in a classroom that encourage learners to use a dictionary. Teachers should use such activities; in doing so, they will strengthen the relationship between students and their dictionaries and develop dictionary use strategies in the process. The results of the current study's questionnaire showed that high school students do not use the dictionary,

revealing that students rely heavily on their teachers' explanation. It is important that teachers engage in less explaining and encourage students to use dictionaries in class.

7. Much attention should be paid to training on how to use a dictionary effectively. The present research revealed that half of the Saudi EFL learners did not receive any training whatsoever on dictionary use. The other half had doubts about whether or not the level of training they received was sufficient. Therefore, we can conclude that Saudi EFL learners in general do not receive proper, systematic training in this area. This concerns curriculum planners and language teachers. Curriculum planners should integrate training on dictionary use at different levels of the language-learning process. Training should start with lessons that educate students and increase their awareness of dictionary-related aspects, including different activities that help EFL learners use the dictionary effectively. Teachers should involve the dictionary within various lessons, or parts of lessons, to enhance their students' relationship with dictionaries in the language learning process.
8. Recent changes in the form of the dictionary (i.e., electronic versions) have affected the way dictionaries are used. It is not guaranteed that dictionary use will continue in the same form, with the same characteristics and frequency because there is no way to guarantee that the dictionary's format will remain constant. In recent years, dictionaries have become available on smartphone platforms such as IOS or Android. This change can affect other aspects, such as students' needs and reference skills. Therefore, it is important that use of various dictionaries be evaluated from time to time. This should be the responsibility of researchers who study pedagogical lexicography. Teachers, however, should also conduct their own observations and evaluations, and adapt research findings to suit their specific students.

## 6.5 Methodological implications for strategies training

The present research used several research methods that proved effective; therefore, future investigations should consider numerous methodological factors in developing similar research. These factors are:

1. Review learners' needs, opinions, beliefs and attitudes towards using the dictionary (completed in phase I of the present research) and then use this knowledge in the second phase of the study (dictionary training). This led to learners' voluntary engagement in the procedure as if they felt part of it and, therefore, strove to attain success. It is suggested, therefore, that future studies start with the students' needs and apply diagnostic knowledge to the actual strategies they use and the problems they face when using the dictionary.
2. It is believed that, when instruction is provided for a longer duration, better outcomes can result from the strategies training. Long duration instruction could offer room for students to acclimate themselves to the new strategies with which they are presented; but also instruction time can be seen as part of their own study process. In this sense, it is suggested that future studies allow for more instruction time to give the students sufficient time to apply and implement the teaching successfully.
3. The findings of the current study contribute to research in dictionary strategies training. This training is currently dominated by a positivist paradigm, which views the research as identifiable, quantifiable and without personal bias. Some research in strategies training, especially related to dictionary use, are based solely on an 'interventionist experimental design'. The current study, however, attempted to triangulate the data, using quantitative and qualitative techniques to gather data. Triangulation proved very useful in providing deep insight into the underlying factors affecting students in the interventions they received and in adding rigour to the data obtained. Therefore, it recommended that new research use such an approach rather than being heavily weighted toward the experimental quantitative approach.

## 6.6 Study limitations

It is hoped that the current study has presented valuable information to research related to dictionary use by Saudi learners of English. As with other studies, this research suffers from some limitations. However, these research limitations seem to offer some suggestions and recommendations for future researchers on how the use of the dictionary might be studied and investigated further. The limitations of this study are as follows:

1. The participants in this study were male only due to the policy of the educational system in Saudi Arabia which prevented mixed sexes in classes; however, it was incredible difficult for me to conduct this study using female students. Thus, the results would restrict the generalization as both sexes were not included in the study.
2. The students were allowed to refuse to voluntarily take part participation in this research at any stage of this research. Therefore, the findings might be affected by students' motivation bias.
3. The obtained data from the questionnaire in the current study is based on self-reports. Therefore, it is possible that the students over- or under-estimate their frequency with which they use certain strategies in a strategy questionnaire (Cohen, 1998). Self-report data should be used carefully when it is involved for data collection. Participants should understand and follow all guidelines and instructions carefully.
4. The generalizability of the results to other populations may be limited. The second phase of the research focused only on training in dictionary strategy uses of four students. Therefore, generalising the results of the current research should be done with some caution. A larger-scale study involving a substantial number of students is necessary to ensure external validity to obtain a more representative picture about the strategies students use and the effects of strategy training.

5. Although I did my best to make the Arabic version of the questionnaire very clear by giving the translated version and an English version to a professor of translation in the Department of Foreign Languages at Qassim University, I recognise that some of the students faced with difficulties to understand some of the questionnaire items.
6. This study detected that there were indications or suggestions referring to the teachers' influence in several of the issues that were addressed. However, teachers were not approached in this research to voice their views on aspects of dictionary use.
7. The present study was carried out within a specific time constraint. The lessons gleaned from the strategy training were taken from only seven sessions due to the time constraint. The time spent on the presentation and practice during each session was limited to an hour and half. This period might be too short for the training and consequently impact the strategies. Therefore, spreading out the training over a longer period of time during which the learners can have more opportunities to practise applying the strategies presented to them is advisable.

### **6.7 Suggestions for future research**

As mentioned at the beginning of this study, there is a need for on-going research that accompanies the continuous process of updating dictionaries (Hartmann, 1987, 1999). This research addresses the use of, and training in, dictionary use by a specific group of learners: Saudi learners at the university level. Future research should target other levels of learners in the Saudi context as well as female students at the university level.

In the present study, the training was employed on a small sample because of its qualitative nature; therefore, it is characterized by low reliability and high validity, with limited generalisability. Quantitative research designs that can be implemented on a wider and more representative sample would increase the reliability of the findings and enable generalisation. It would be interesting to carry out a similar study addressing a larger group of learners. Further research could focus on the students'

further studies and investigate their achievements after being taught dictionary knowledge systematically.

This kind of study also leads to thoughts of the potential benefits that strategy training can bring to young learners. Questions such as: “Could training start at an earlier stage?” and “What would be the effects of strategy training on young learners?” are worth asking in future studies. Investigating such issues may yield insightful findings and provide directions for curriculum planners and educationalists.

It is also believed that, to design a programme that presents the teaching of dictionary knowledge systematically, further research is needed that will illuminate the different ways in which dictionary use may be taught.

Although the teacher and the curriculum were not the concern of the study, some indications might point to both teachers and the curriculum as influential factors affecting dictionary use. Therefore, it is suggested that future studies should concentrate on teachers by studying their own dictionary use, views, lexicographical knowledge, and of course their influence on learners as dictionary users. It can also be said that research on strategy use and training tends to be learner-oriented. Therefore, quantitative or qualitative research focusing on the teachers’ perspective should be carried out. Teachers’ opinions of students’ use of strategies and their beliefs about strategy training may determine the kinds of vocabulary learning activities that take place in the classroom. It is essential to raise teachers’ awareness about the importance of strategy training and provide teacher training, if necessary, to encourage efforts to include class discussions and practice with strategies known to facilitate task performance and language learning. Future research should also study the curriculum to determine how much training relevant to dictionary use is presented and how this could impact on students as dictionary users.

It is advised that this study be replicated but including Saudi female learners to gather results concerning whether gender can affect dictionary use and training.

Investigating the effect of training on dictionary use is a vital issue to consider in further research.

Moreover, studies could examine factors that were not targeted in this study, such as proficiency and study level. This focus was not applicable to the current study, because the participants were all at the same study level and probably had the same proficiency. How these factors influence dictionary use training and the students themselves, however, would be worth investigating.

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## **Appendices**

### **APPENDIX A:**

#### **The English version of the questionnaire**

Dear student,

The following are the questionnaire related to your use of the dictionary skills. You are kindly requested to fill it out taking into account the accuracy and honesty in your answer. Please note that this questionnaire does not contain any questions that may disclosure of your personal information.

The questionnaire is divided into two sections: the first section asks information relating to the ownership of the dictionaries and their types as well as the first time of your dictionary use during the previous study. The second part of the questionnaire seeks information about skills and strategies of your use of the dictionary.

## Section one:

### Dictionary ownership

#### 1. Do you own a dictionary?

A) Yes	B) No (if no go to question 3)
--------	--------------------------------

#### 2. What type (s) of dictionary (s) do you own now? (You can choose more than one)

- A. English Arabic/ Arabic English paper dictionary
- B. English-English paper dictionary
- C. English-English-Arabic paper dictionary
- D. English-Arabic/ Arabic English handheld electronic dictionary
- E. English-English hand-held electronic dictionary
- F. CD-ROM English-English dictionary
- G. English- Arabic medical dictionary
- H. English- English medical dictionary

Other, please state,

.....  
 .....  
 .....

#### 3. Have you ever used a dictionary?

- |        |  |
|--------|--|
| A. Yes | B. No. ( If the answer is (B) stop completing the questionnaire) |
|--------|--|

#### 4. When I started using the dictionary?

- |                            |                       |                  |                       |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| A. During the middle stage | B. During high school | C. Undergraduate | D. I've never used it |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|-----------------------|

### The types of dictionary used

Directions: You will find statement relating to the type of dictionary that you use when you learn English.

#### A. What kind of dictionary that you are using in terms of the language used?

- 6. I use the bilingual dictionary (English - Arabic).
- 7. I use the bilingual dictionary (Arabic - English)
- 8. I use the monolingual dictionary (English - English)
- 9. I use the bilingualized dictionary (that word and explained and examples given in English and the meaning of the word only as a translator for the

Arabic language, (English - English - Arabic)

**B. What kind of dictionary that you are using in terms of the method used?**

10. I use the dictionary paper  
dictionary

11. I use the handheld

12. I use the mobile phone dictionary  
dictionary

13. I use the CD-ROM

<b>14. Who advised you to buy the dictionary you own?</b>			
A. My parents	B. My teachers	C. The seller	D. I chose it myself

## Section two:

### Knowledge about dictionary

**Directions:** You will find statements regarding your knowledge about your dictionaries below. Please read each sentence carefully and respond in terms of how this statement describes your knowledge about dictionary.

Please note that true, false and don't know represent whether: the sentence is true, false or not known according to your best knowledge.

Statement	True	False	Do not know
15. My dictionary has information about how it should be used.			
16. My dictionary is organized alphabetically			
17. My dictionary has information about how words sound in English			
18. Dictionaries are classified into different types			
19. My dictionary includes examples that explain the meaning of the words.			
20. My dictionary provides information about collocation (e.g. Commit a crime)			
21. My dictionary tells me about the preposition that follow some verbs			
22. My dictionary has information about origin of the word			
23. My dictionary has pictures of parts such as (human body parts)			
24. My dictionary gives information about singular and plural nouns			
25. My dictionary has information about the derivation of a word (e.g. success, successful).			
26. My dictionary cannot tell me about synonyms and antonyms.			

### 1.1.1 Dictionary attitude and preference

Directions: please choose the appropriate answer that describes your attitude towards using dictionary:

(Note: 5 means strongly agree, 4 means agree, 3 mean not sure, 4 means disagree, 1 means strongly disagree)

Statement	strongly agree	agree	not sure	disagree	strongly disagree
27. Using dictionary is a demanding job	5	4	3	2	1
28. I found the dictionary role is very important for learning process.	5	4	3	2	1
29. I can solve my vocabulary problem by using my dictionary	5	4	3	2	1
30. I cannot learn English without the help of my dictionary	5	4	3	2	1
31. Using dictionary make the learning of English easy	5	4	3	2	1
32. I do not have the feel to use the dictionary when learning English	5	4	3	2	1
33. I prefer to refer to my electronic dictionary while writing	5	4	3	2	1
34. I prefer to use my paper dictionary for quick consultation while studying	5	4	3	2	1
35. I prefer to refer to my paper dictionary while reading	5	4	3	2	1
36. When hearing new word I prefer to consult my electronic dictionary	5	4	3	2	1
37. I prefer to use my electronic dictionary while studying	5	4	3	2	1
38. I prefer to refer to my paper dictionary while writing	5	4	3	2	1
39. When hearing new word I prefer to consult my paper dictionary	5	4	3	2	1
40. I prefer to refer to my electronic dictionary while reading	5	4	3	2	1

### 1.1.2 Lexical information looked up

Directions: please choose the appropriate answer that describes your needs to use of dictionary

(Note: 5 means always, 4 means often, 3 mean sometimes, 4 means rarely, 1 means never)

Statement	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
41. I use my dictionary to find the meaning in Arabic	5	4	3	2	1
42. I use my dictionary to see the example that illustrates the meaning of the word	5	4	3	2	1
43. I use my dictionary to know the pronunciation of the word.	5	4	3	2	1
44. I use my dictionary to know the verb tense forms (e.g. past, present).	5	4	3	2	1
45. I use my dictionary to see parts of speech (noun, verb, adjective).	5	4	3	2	1
46. I use my dictionary to see the plural /singular of the word	5	4	3	2	1
47. I use my dictionary to know the derivation of the word (e.g. success, successful).	5	4	3	2	1
48. I use my dictionary to know the synonyms and antonyms of the word (e.g. fast = quick, expensive # cheap).	5	4	3	2	1
49. I use my dictionary to know the spelling of the word.	5	4	3	2	1

### 1.1.3 Common problem of dictionary use

Directions: please choose the appropriate answer that describes your difficulties when using your dictionary:

(Note: 5 means always, 4 means often, 3 mean sometimes, 4 means rarely, 1 means never)

Statement	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
50. I cannot find the right word.	5	4	3	2	1
51. I cannot understand information about pronunciation (e.g. phonetic symbols, word stress) from my dictionary.	5	4	3	2	1
52. I cannot identify the correct word meaning within an entry.	5	4	3	2	1
53. I cannot get the grammatical information from my dictionary.	5	4	3	2	1
54. I cannot understand the examples that are used to help me understand the meaning of a word.	5	4	3	2	1

55. I cannot understand the definitions of words in my dictionary (the way that the word is explained).	5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---	---

**Training in dictionary use**

56. Have you received any sort of training on how to use dictionary?

- A. Yes  
B. No

**If yes.....**

Statement	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
57. I found training on dictionary use very useful	5	4	3	2	1
58. I think training on dictionary should be integrated into English classes.	5	4	3	2	1
59. I think there is no need for dictionary training	5	4	3	2	1
60. I think teaching dictionary should be introduced in the curriculum of secondary level	5	4	3	2	1
61. I think teachers do not pay much attention to dictionary training	5	4	3	2	1

**APPENDIX B: THE QUESTIONNAIRE: ARABIC VERSION****استبيان حول استراتيجيات استخدام القاموس**

عزيزي الطالب

فيما يلي تجد استبيانه لها علاقة بمهارات استخدامك للقاموس. نرجو منك التكرم بتعبئتها مع مراعاة الدقة والصراحة في اجابتك. مع العلم ان هذا الاستبيان لا يحتوي على اية اسئلة تتضمن الكشف عن معلوماتك الشخصية

علماً بان الإستبانة تنقسم الى قسمين: حيث يحتوي القسم الاول منها معلومات تتعلق بملكية القاموس ونوعه وكذلك بداية تعاملك مع القاموس خلال دراستك.

فيما يتعلق القسم الثاني بمهارات واستراتيجيات استخدامك للقاموس

## اسئلة القسم الاول

## ملكية القاموس

1. هل تملك قاموساً؟

أ. نعم

ب. لا. إذا كانت الاجابة ب (لا) توجه الى السؤال (3)

2. ماهو نوع/ انواع القاموس/ القواميس التي تملك الان؟ يمكنك اختيار اكثر من نوع

أ. قاموس ورقي عربي- انجليزي . قاموس إنجليزي- عربي

ب. قاموس ورقي انجليزي- انجليزي

ت. قاموس ورقي انجليزي- انجليزي- عربي

ث. قاموس اليكتروني انجليزي- عربي/ عربي- انجليزي

ج. قاموس اليكتروني انجليزي- انجليزي

ح. قاموس سي دي انجليزي- انجليزي

خ. قاموس طبي انجليزي- عربي

د. قاموس طبي انجليزي- انجليزي

ذ. قاموس عربي- عربي

5. هل سبق لك ان استخدمت القاموس؟

ب. نعم

أ. لا. إذا كانت الاجابة ب (لا) توقف عن اكمال تعبئة الاستبيان

6. متى بدأت استخدام القاموس؟

ت. خلال المرحلة المتوسطة

خلال المرحلة الثانوية

ب. خلال المرحلة الجامعية

أ. لم يسبق لي ان استخدمته

ث.

التوجيهات : تجدون في الاسفل جمل تتعلق بنوع القاموس الذي تستخدمه عند تعلم اللغة الانجليزية.

أ. مانوع القاموس الذي تستخدمه من حيث اللغة المستخدمة؟

6. استخدم القاموس ثنائي اللغة (انجليزي- عربي).
7. استخدم القاموس ثنائي اللغة (عربي- انجليزي)
8. استخدم القاموس احادي اللغة (انجليزي- انجليزي)
9. استخدم القاموس شبة ثنائي اللغة ( أن تكون الكلمة وشرحها والامثلة المعطاة باللغة الانجليزية ويكون معنى الكلمة فقط مترجماً للغة العربية, (انجليزي- انجليزي- عربي)

ب. مانوع القاموس الذي تستخدمه من حيث الوسيلة المستخدمة؟

10. استخدم القاموس الورقي
11. استخدم القاموس الاليكتروني
12. استخدم قاموس الجوال
13. استخدم قاموس الاقراص المدمجة
- (CD-Rom)

14. من نصحك بشراء القاموس الذي تملكه؟			
ب. والدي	أ. اساتذي	C. البائع	B. انا اخترته بنفسني

معرفتك حول القواميس احادية وثنائية اللغة

التوجيهات: الرجاء اختيار العبارة التي تصف معلوماتك حول القاموس الانجليزي

لا اعرف	خطا	صح	العبارة
			15. القاموس يحتوي على معلومات حول كيفية استخدامه.
			16. القاموس مرتب حسب الترتيب الأبجدي.
			17. القاموس يوفر معلومات عن نطق الكلمات لمساعدتي النطق.
			18. ينقسم القاموس الى عدة انواع من القواميس
			19. القاموس يحتوي على امثلة تبين كيفية معاني الكلمات.
			20. القاموس يقدم معلومات حول المصاحبات اللفظية للكلمات (commit a crime).
			21. القاموس يقول لي ما حرف الجر الذي يأتي بعد الفعل.
			22. القاموس يوفر معلومات عن أصل الكلمات.
			23. القاموس يقدم صوراً تحتوي على اجزاء الاشياء كجسم الانسان.
			24. القاموس يقدم معلومات عن الأسماء المفرد والجمع.
			25. القاموس يقدم معلومات عن الاشتقاقات للكلمة (success- successful-successfully)
			26. القاموس يحتوي على امثلة حول جميع الاصوات الانجليزية وكيفية نطقها

التوجهات: من فضلك اختر الإجابة المناسبة التي توضح موقفك تجاه استخدام القاموس الورقي والقاموس الإلكتروني

ملاحظة : (5) اوافق بشدة، (4) اوافق، (3) لست متاكداً، (2) لا اوافق، (1) لا اوافق بشدة

لا اوافق بشدة	لا اوافق	لست متاكداً	اوافق	اوافق بشدة	العبارة
					استخدام القاموس يتطلب جهداً
					أجد دور القاموس فعالاً في مجال نعلم اللغة الانجليزية
					اقوم بحل مشكلاتي مع المفردات عن طريق استخدام القاموس
					لا يمكنني ان اتعلم اللغة من دون مساعدة القاموس
					استخدام القاموس يجعل تعلم اللغة سهل
					انا لا أشعر بالحاجة لاستخدام القاموس عند تعلم اللغة الانجليزية
					انا افضل استخدام القاموس الاليكتروني لإجراء البحث السريع اثناء الكتابة
					انا افضل استشارة القاموس الاليكتروني اثناء الدراسة
					انا افضل استخدام القاموس الورقي عند البحث عن معنى كلمة غير معروفة عند القراءة
					عند سماع كلمة جديدة انا افضل أن استخدم القاموس الاليكتروني للتعرف على معناها.
					انا افضل استشارة القاموس الورقي اثناء الدراسة
					انا افضل استخدام القاموس الورقي لإجراء البحث السريع اثناء الكتابة
					عند سماع كلمة جديدة انا افضل أن استخدم القاموس الورقي للتعرف على معناها.
					انا افضل استخدام القاموس الورقي للبحث السريع أثناء القراءة.

التوجيهات: يرجى وضع علامة على الجواب المناسب الذي يصف احتياجاتك لاستخدام القاموس. ملاحظة : (5) دائماً ، (4) في كثير من الأحيان ، (3) في بعض الأحيان ، (2) نادراً ، (1) أبداً

لماذا تحتاج القاموس؟ (على سبيل المثال ما هي المشاكل المعجمية التي تحاول حلها باستخدام القاموس)

العبارة	دائماً	في كثير من الأحيان	في بعض الأحيان	نادراً	أبداً
15. أنا استخدم القاموس لمعرفة معنى الكلمة باللغة العربية.					
16. أنا استخدم القاموس لقراءة المثال الذي يوضح معنى الكلمة.					
17. أنا استخدم القاموس لمعرفة نطق الكلمة.					
18. أنا استخدم القاموس لمعرفة أشكال الفعل (على سبيل المثال في الماضي والمضارع).					
19. أنا استخدم القاموس لمعرفة أجزاء الكلمة (اسم ، فعل ، صفة).					
20. أنا استخدم القاموس لمعرفة المفرد/والجمع من الأسماء					
21. أنا استخدم القاموس لمعرفة اشتقاق الكلمة (على سبيل المثال النجاح ، ناجح).					
22. أنا استخدم القاموس لمعرفة المتردفات والمتضادات من الكلمات ( على سبيل المثال غالي#رخيص , "سريع" = fast and quick)					
23. أنا استخدم القاموس لمعرفة تهجئة الكلمة.					

التوجيهات: يرجى وضع علامة على الإجابة المناسبة التي تصف الصعوبات الخاصة بك والتي تواجهك عند استخدامك للقاموس. ملاحظة : (5) دائماً ، (4) في كثير من الأحيان ، (3) في بعض الأحيان ، (2) نادراً ، (1) أبداً

ما هي المشاكل التي غالباً ما تصادفك عند استخدام القاموس ؟

العبارة	دائماً	في كثير من الاحيان	في بعض الاحيان	نادراً	ابداً
24. لا أستطيع العثور على الكلمة المناسبة.					
25. لا أستطيع أن أفهم رموز نطق الكلمة (مثل الرموز الصوتية) من قاموسي					
26. لا أستطيع تحديد معنى الكلمة الصحيح داخل الشرح					
27. لا أستطيع الحصول على المعلومات النحوية من خلال استخدام القاموس.					
28. لا أستطيع أن أفهم الأمثلة التي تستخدم لمساعدتي على فهم معنى الكلمة الجديدة.					
29. لا أستطيع أن أفهم شرح معنى الكلمات في القاموس (الطريقة التي يتم بها تفسير معنى الكلمة ليست واضحة).					

الاراء والتصورات حول اي تدريب سابق على استخدام القاموس 1.5

30. هل سبق لك ان تلقيت اي تدريب على استخدام القاموس؟

أ. نعم      ب. لا      (إذا كانت الإجابة (لا) الرجاء التوجه للقسم التالي)

إذا كانت الإجابة نعم الرجاء اكمال اجابة هذا القسم

العبارة	اوافق بشدة	اوافق	لست متاكداً	لا اوافق	لا اوافق بشدة
31. لقد وجدت التدريب على استخدام القاموس مفيد جدا					
32. أعتقد أن التدريب على استخدام القاموس يجب أن يدمج مع مواد اللغة الانجليزية.					
33. أعتقد بانه ليست هناك حاجة للتدريب على استخدام القاموس.					
34. أعتقد أن استخدام القاموس يجب أن يدرس في المراحل السابقة كالمرحلة الثانوية.					
35. اعتقد ان المدرسين لا يولون اهتماما كافيا لتدريب القاموس.					

## APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### *I. Students' ownership, knowledge, attitude and preference:*

- Do you own a dictionary?
- If not why do not you have?
- Which type of dictionary do you use?
- Why do you have this type of dictionary?
- Have you received any pieces of advice to buy the type of dictionary you own?
- What type of dictionary do you prefer to use?
- When did you use the dictionary for your first time?
- Do you prefer using electronic and online dictionaries to the traditional paper dictionaries?
- What can a dictionary help you to do?
- Do you think that using dictionary is a demanding job? Why?

### *II. Difficulties students experiences with using dictionaries*

- Have you ever experienced any difficulties when using dictionary?
- If yes, what are these difficulties?
- Why do you think that you are faced with these types of difficulties?
- Did you get any support either from inside or outside your school to overcome these difficulties?
- If yes, could you elaborate in this?
- While completing a task (e.g. reading) and cannot find the meaning of an English word, what do you usually do?

### *III. Training in dictionary use*

- Have you had any dictionary training before enrolled in the college?
- Have you read the guideline found in your dictionary to understand how to use?
- Do you think that students should be taught how to use the dictionary? If yes, why?
- What strategies do you need to learn in order to use your dictionary effectively?

### *IV. Strategies needs for use of dictionary*

- What usually makes you refer to use your dictionary?
- What are the procedures you usually follow when encountering unknown words?
- What prevent you from using the dictionary?

- What kind of information do you look for in your dictionary?
- Do you go through all the information in one entry when you look up a word?
- Besides your textbooks, what are other materials do you read in English that you need a dictionary for?





<b>Section III</b>	
Date: Week:	Observation No.: Students No.:
<p>-Students behaviours/ progress in knowledge</p> <p>-Frequency of dictionary use</p> <p>-The time spent by the students to finish the tasks.</p>	

Section IV	
Date: Week:	Observation No.: Students No.:
Received questions:	
Students' comments and feedback	

## **APPENDIX E: The TUTORIAL SESSIONS**

### **TUTORIAL SESSIONS**

#### **Aim of the course:**

The course aims at accustoming students with the contained information in the dictionary and showing them how to use such information. Its objective is to meet students' needs and provide them with the skills required to become literate in using dictionary.

It is worthy to point out that the primary concern of this course is with teaching the strategies that make students become adept at employing and interacting with dictionary. The course is more directly concerned with instructing students when and how to use their dictionaries. It also aims to give students the ability to use dictionary with the four linguistics skills as shown below in unit four. By the end of this course students will be able to learn:

The basic reference skills.

How to find particular entries.

How to get a lot of information from explanations (e.g. definition, examples)

Grammatical information and how to use it when they find it.

Phonetics symbols, homographs and homophones.

Checking the meaning against the word in the passage.

#### **Issues to be tackled when designing training in dictionary use**

When designing a training course, it is important to take some factors into consideration. Proficiency level, type of dictionary and content of the course which is necessarily should be consistent to students' level and their dictionaries. In this study more attention will be paid to the level of the students, the preferred type of

dictionary to be used in the course training and the elected activities to be included. In the following paragraphs more details will be given about these factors.

#### **A. Proficiency level**

Considering students' proficiency, it has been proven that students dictionary use strategies vary according to their level of English language. Higher achievers usually exploit their dictionary more effectively than lower achiever. However, it is arguably accepted that all students at a particular instructional level are to some extent at the same proficiency level. Thus, it is assumably acceptable to claim that there is a kind of consistency between students' proficiency level and the training course as all students study at the same instructional level in the college.

#### **B. Type of dictionary used**

Based on the obtained data from the interview and the questionnaire in phase one and two respectively, the selected dictionary that is suggested to be used in this study is the Modern Oxford Dictionary. Students mentioned that they were advised to buy Modern Oxford Dictionary, so it seems inconvenient to choose another type of dictionary for the tutorial sessions. I can claim that it would be more appropriate to use the bilingualized Oxford Dictionary in this phase. All sentences and examples that are to be used in the units' activities will be selected from the bilingualized dictionary.

#### **Course Design**

The course will consist of six units. The following pages will describe them in some details.

### I. Finding words and phrases (getting the students to know the dictionary)

In this unit students will be trained the basic reference skills and assisted to know how and where they can find/locate/identify particular entries. This unit will aim to familiarize students with dictionary features. It will focus on getting students to know the parts of the dictionary entry.

**Aim** To practise getting to know the information presented in the dictionary

**Focus** presented information in the entry

**Level:** Intermediate

**Time** 20 minutes

#### Procedure

At this stage, I plan to familiarize students with the types of information that can be found in their bilingualized dictionary. This includes finding the meanings of words, definition understanding grammar information, reading phonetics symbols.....etc.

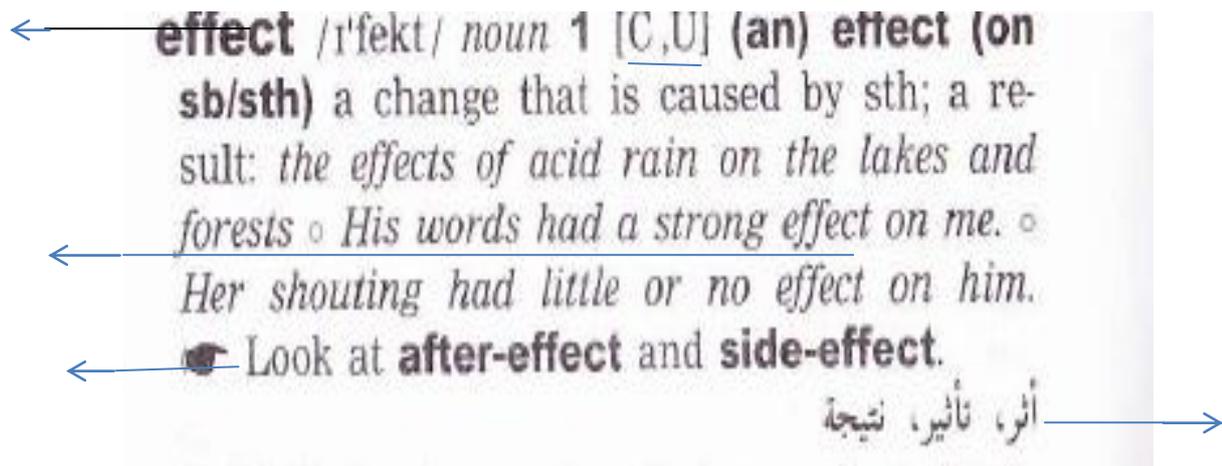
I will ask students to use the 'How to use this dictionary' section in the introduction of their dictionaries in order to help them recognize the parts of the entry. This will include (a) definitions; (b) grammatical abbreviations; (c) example of word used in a sentence; (d) part of speech; phonetics symbols etc.

#### Examples

##### a. *Introducing the basic layout of an entry*

**Directions:** Write what the presented arrow indicate to in the chosen entry below





## II. Knowing Alphabetical order

**Aim** To practise the alphabetical order to use the dictionary

**Focus** alphabetical

**Level:** Intermediate

**Time** 25 minutes

### Examples

#### A. Alphabetical order activity

The aim of this exercise is to practice the alphabetical order. Focus will be given first to words that begin with different letters such as in group A.

**Directions:** Alphabetize the words in each list below

Group (A)		Group (B)	
Hibiscus	1. _____	mouse	1. _____
Rose	2. _____	mule	2. _____
Display	3. _____	monkey	3. _____
Petunia	4. _____	month	4. _____
Honeysuckle	5. _____	manatee	5. _____
Daffodil	6. _____	mole	6. _____

## III. Navigating the dictionary

### Using explanations and examples show

It aims at showing students the explanation and other information that explain how the word is used. For examples, it aims to assist students to practise using example sentences to find the 'right' word.

### Procedures:

I will tell students that example sentences in learner dictionaries are very useful. They show how to use the word in a sentence, and also make the definition clearer. Then I can give students the words and sentences and ask them to use their dictionaries to check the meanings of each word. Students should decide which word to put in the blanks. They are all verbs so they may need to change the form.

### Example

Choose one word to complete the sentences. You may need to change the form.

Announce- brief- confide- divulge- relate- report

- 1 They \_\_\_\_\_ the death of their mother in the local paper.
- 2 We rang the insurance company to \_\_\_\_\_ the theft.
- 3 She \_\_\_\_\_ the events of the previous week to the police.
- 4 Journalists do not \_\_\_\_\_ their sources.
- 5 We had already been \_\_\_\_\_ on what the job would entail.
- 6 He \_\_\_\_\_ to her that his hair was not his own.

Grammar and usage notes have improved a lot since they were first introduced in learner dictionaries. The aim of this unit is to raise the awareness of the meaning of non-linguistic symbols used in dictionaries. It also aims at encouraging careful reading of dictionary entries for grammatical information.

## II

### Definitions

**Aim** To practise recognizing differences in definitions of similar words

**Focus** Definitions

**Level:** Intermediate

**Time** 25 minutes

### Example I

### Procedure

Students are asked to find the possible definition/s in their dictionary and write it in front of the listed words below

Word	definition
Visit	
Drive	
Sick	
Measure	
Absent	
Receive	

### Example II Procedure

- 1 Students can get the words and definitions.
- 2 They are informed that these words all mean *tell* but that they are used for different purposes.

**Directions:** Match the words and definitions. You can use your dictionary to match the words and definitions.

1 announce
2 brief
3 confide
4 divulge
5 relate
6 report
a to give a description of something or information about it to someone
b to give someone instructions or information about what they should do or say
c to tell somebody something that is secret
d to state or make known, especially publicly
e to tell a story or describe a series of events
f to tell something secret or personal to someone whom you trust not to tell anyone else

### Example B

#### Procedure

Choose one word to complete the sentences. You may need to change the form.

Announce- brief- confide- divulge- relate- report

- 1 They \_\_\_\_\_ the death of their mother in the local paper.
- 2 We rang the insurance company to \_\_\_\_\_ the theft.

- 3 She \_\_\_\_\_ the events of the previous week to the police.  
 4 Journalists do not \_\_\_\_\_ their sources.  
 5 We had already been \_\_\_\_\_ on what the job would entail.  
 6 He \_\_\_\_\_ to her that his hair was not his own.

### Navigating the dictionary: Using guidewords and signposts

**Aim** To introduce using guidewords to find the right sense of a word

**Focus** Recognizing guidewords

**Level** Lower-intermediate–Intermediate

**Time** 15–25 minutes

#### *Procedure*

Students work with the dictionary in order to complete the activity using their dictionaries.

#### Using guidewords

Use your dictionary to put the guidewords under the correct headword.

#### Headwords

charge	green	head	note
_____			
_____	_____		
_____	_____	_____	

#### Spell check

**Aim** To practise using alphabetical order to check spelling

**Focus** Common spelling errors

**Level** Intermediate and above

**Time** 10-15 minutes

#### **Procedure**

Students will be given the words and asked to use their dictionaries to find which word in each pair is spelled correctly.

#### **Example**

**Directions:** use your dictionary to find which word in each pair is spelled correctly

1. patience	a. patiense
2. recieve	b. receive

3. measurd	c. measured
4. simpliphy	d. simplify
5. recycel	e. recycle
6. ordinary	f. ordinery
7. comunicasion	g. communication
8. severel	h. several
9. uncomfortible	i. uncomfortable
10. accomodation	j. accomodation

### Using Dictionary Labels

**Aim** To familiarize students with dictionary labels

**Focus** Style and usage labels

**Level** Lower-intermediate–Intermediate

**Time** 15–20 minutes

#### Example

Directions: Use the list in table below and look them up in their dictionaries and find out what special usage labels they have.

1. Formal	a. way of writing a word that is used in conversation
2. Informal	b. not used in modern English – you might find these words in books, used by older people, or used in order to be funny
3. Spoken	c. the name of a product that is made by one company but which has become used as a general word
4. Trademark	d. used in books and poems, not in ordinary conversation
5. Literary	e. used in order to be funny or make a joke
6. Humours	f. used in serious writing or for communicating with people about things like business or law
7. Old-fashioned	g. used when you are speaking or communicating with people you know but not normally in serious writing

### IV. Pronunciation features activities

This unit aims to improve pronunciation and word recognition skills. It will help students to practise using the dictionary to understand pronunciation symbols and to identify syllable breaks and word stress.

#### A. Pronunciation symbols and transcripts I

**Aim:** to practise using the dictionary to identify pronunciation symbols.

**Focus:** expanding knowledge about pronunciation transcripts

**Level:** intermediate

**Time:** 20 minutes

**Direction:** use your dictionary to find the following words and write their transcription in the table below

divorce		meeting	
class		episode	
mission		face	
annual		division	
show		totally	
relative		represent	
entertainment		write	

### B. Pronunciation symbols and transcripts II

**Direction:** match the words below with the appropriate transcriptions. Use your dictionary to complete the activity.

**Shirt –Share- breath- Shoe- Box- Behaviour**

	ʃɛ:
	bɒks
	bɪ'heɪvjə
	ʃə:t
	ʃu:
	brɛθ

### C. Syllables and stress

#### Syllables and stress

**Aim** To practise using the dictionary to identify syllable breaks and word stress

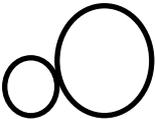
**Focus** Syllables and word stress

**Level** intermediate

**Time** 25 minutes

**Procedures:** You may want to give each student a master list of all the words to make notes in the feedback stage. Check the pronunciation conventions used in the dictionary you are using.

**Direction:** find out where is the stress in the following table? which of these words can be both a verb and a noun?

		
	Noun	Verb
Allow	-	B
Accent		
Commit		
Contract		
Damage		
Forgive		
Export		
Import		

## V. Grammatical information

**Aim:** to introduce and practise using dictionary grammar codes

**Focus:** grammatical code system

**Level:** intermediate upper-intermediate

**Time:** 20-25 minutes

### Procedure

Students are given chosen grammar codes and asked to write what they refer to (e.g. 'noun', 'verb')

### Example I

**Direction:** Use your dictionary below to write what the below codes refer to

Codes	Means
<b>Adj</b>	
<b>V</b>	
<b>C</b>	
<b>Prep</b>	
<b>Adv</b>	
<b>Conj</b>	
<b>Unc</b>	
<b>T</b>	
<b>Int</b>	

<b>Pron</b>	
<b>IDM</b>	

### Example II

#### Part of speech

Words that can be more than one part of speech (e.g. open or stand) are chosen to teach students to look it up and find out what parts of speech it can be.

**Procedures:** use your dictionary to find the words and put a tick ✓ in the boxes to show which parts of speech each word can be.

**Directions:** What part of speech can these words be?

	<b>Noun</b>	<b>Verb</b>	<b>Adjective</b>	<b>Adverb</b>
coat				
drink				
flat				
head				
junior				
slow				

### Appendix F: Interview Sample

The researcher: Do you own a dictionary?

The interviewee: yes

The researcher: Which type of dictionary do use?

The interviewee: I have English-English-Arabic

The researcher: Modern Oxford Dictionary?

The interviewee: yes. I also have hand-held electronic dictionary.

The researcher: who advised you to have this type of dictionary?

The interviewee: English language teachers in the intensive course. They advised us to buy oxford dictionary.

The researcher: Who about the electronic dictionary?

The interviewee: My brother bought it for me.

The researcher: is he an English language teacher?

The interviewee: No.

The researcher: Why do you have these types of dictionaries?

The interviewee: because I want to learn new words.

The researcher: Have you received any pieces of advice to buy the type of dictionary you own?

The interviewee: yes, my teachers told us to buy Modern Oxford Dictionary. They said it can give us the meaning in both Arabic and English languages.

The researcher: When did you use the dictionary for your first time?

The interviewee: I used it after I started my college.

The researcher: Do you prefer using electronic and online dictionaries to the traditional paper dictionaries?

The interviewee: yes, I usually prefer to look up words meaning in online dictionary.

The researcher: why do you prefer online dictionary?

The interviewee: it is easier and quicker. No need to use the alphabetical order to know the meaning.

The researcher: you mean here, you do not need to know the spelling of the word?

The interviewee: No, I mean it is very easy to use online dictionary because I just copy the word and paste it in the dictionary search engine. Then I get the meaning.

The researcher: What can a dictionary help you to do?

The interviewee: It helps me to know new words.

The researcher: Do you think that using dictionary is a demanding job? Why?

The interviewee: No, it is not a demanding job. I can use my dictionary very easily.

The researcher: When encountering unknown words from Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) what is your way to know the meaning?

The interviewee: I do not search for its meaning in the dictionary.

The researcher: Have you attended any course whether inside or outside the public schools where you have been taught how to use a dictionary?

The interviewee: No

**Difficulties students experience with using dictionary:**

The researcher: Have you ever experienced any difficulty when using dictionary? If yes, what are these difficulties?

The interviewee: Yes, especially when using paper dictionary.

The researcher: could you explain more please?

The interviewee: in many times I find myself in front of endless search because I can't find the wanted word. Therefore, I continue searching for it in the other pages..

The researcher: I see.../ the interviewee: and not find it.

The researcher: How easy do you find it to figure out how words sound in English when using the dictionary?

The interviewee: It is very difficult. I do not understand the symbols.

The researcher: what about the paper dictionary?

The interviewee: I do not know how to get the pronunciation from the paper dictionary.

The researcher: How easy can you figure out how you should use a word in a sentence when you use the dictionary?

The interviewee: It is difficult. Frankly speaking I only use my dictionary to get the meaning of the new words. I do not know how to use to get other information.

The researcher: How easy can you find it to figure out how words spell when you use the dictionary?

The interviewee: I have not used my dictionary to get the spelling of the word.

The researcher: How simple do you find it to understand the example illustrating a word when you the dictionary?

The interviewee: I read the example to help to know the meaning.... the researcher: is it easy for you?.../the interviewee: yes

The researcher: How easy do you find it to figure out the part of speech of a word (noun, verb, adjective) when using your dictionary?

The interviewee: Yes I know them. They are the letters written between two brackets.

The researcher: How easy can you find out the tense forms of a verb (e.g. past, present)?

The interviewee: I do not find this very easy. May be because I do not use them

The researcher: Have you received any support either inside or outside your school to help you with your dictionary?

The interviewee: Yes, from inside the college

The researcher: for how long did the course last?

The interviewee: One week.

The researcher: what about the dictionary? For how long did the teaching on dictionary use last?

The interviewee: One lecture.

The researcher: While completing a task (e.g. reading) and cannot find the meaning of an English word, what do you usually do?

The interviewee: I stop reading and search for meaning.

### **Training in dictionary:**

The researcher: Have you had any dictionary training before enrolling in college?

The interviewee: No

The researcher: Have you had any dictionary training after being enrolled in the college?

The interviewee: Yes some teachers taught us how to search for the word meaning.

The researcher: If you have received training how effective was it? and why?

The interviewee: I think it was good and helpful. When I came to the college I do not anything about dictionary. After the course I can help myself to understand what I'm reading.

The researcher: Do you think that students should be taught how to use the dictionary? If yes, why?

The interviewee: Yes, it is very important that dictionary is taught to students in earlier stages. This helps them to learn English faster.

The researcher: What usually makes you refer to use your dictionary?

The interviewee: When reading a passage and I do not know the meaning of the word I refer to my dictionary.

The researcher: What are the procedures you usually follow when encountering unknown words?

The interviewee: I look its meaning up in the dictionary.

The researcher: What prevent you from using the dictionary?

The interviewee: Nothing

The researcher: What kind of information do you look for in your dictionary?

The interviewee: the meaning of new words.

The researcher: Do you go through all the information in one entry when you look up a word?

The interviewee: yes, until I have the most suitable meaning.

The researcher: Besides your textbooks, what are other materials do you read in English that you need a dictionary for?

The interviewee: I only use my dictionary with my textbooks

**Feedback interview sample****Feedback students interview after session (3):**

The researcher: How was the session today?

The interviewee: it was good.

The researcher: Did you learn something new from today session?

The interviewee: Yes, I did.

The researcher: Can you explain more please? What are the new you things that you learnt today?

The interviewee: I knew the purpose of the heading words. I knew how to use the words in the top.

The researcher: You mean the signposting information?

The interviewee: Yes these ones like here (He showed me what he meant using his dictionary). I think this information is to help me to reach the definition quickly.

The researcher: did you start to use your dictionary more after the training?

The interviewee: Yes, I can use it at home to do the assignments.

The researcher: What else?

The interviewee: Also inside the classroom. The teacher sometimes does not give us the meaning of all the words. I can go to the dictionary to check the meaning.

The researcher: Did you that before the training?

The interviewee: No, not exactly. I did not use it frequently, but after attending the previous sessions I started to depend on my dictionary?

The researcher: Let us go back to the previous sessions. How does the dictionary training affect your use of the dictionary?

The interviewee: What do you mean?

The researcher: I mean what do you feel about your dictionary and you use of it?

The interviewee: I feel that I can find all the words in my dictionary.

What do you think of the importance of the dictionary training?

The interviewee: It is important. I realised that I was not using my dictionary perfectly.

That is enough for today. Thank you. See you next session.

The interviewee: Thank you

**APPENDIX J: SAMPLES OF THE STUDENTS' ANSWERS SHEETS IN PHASE II**

Date	12/5/1431
Session	1
Material used	my penpendictionary

Directions: Write what the presented arrow indicate to in the chosen entry below

definition
لغة
تعريف

example
أمثلة

SS
أثر، تأثير، نتيجة
meaning

**effect** /ɪ'fekt/ noun 1 [C,U] (an) **effect** (on sb/sth) a change that is caused by sth; a result: the effects of acid rain on the lakes and forests • His words had a strong effect on me. • Her shouting had little or no effect on him.

Look at **after-effect** and **side-effect**.

For the researcher use: (please leave it blank)

Student number	4
Time needed to accomplish the task	7 mins
Feedback about the session the d. change	(E) is weak. I did not know that it has all this.
Assessment	The student show how to refer to the guidelines in the front pages to help him understand the query layout.

He acknowledge the ~~course~~<sup>session</sup> & he wish to continue and learn more about his dictionary

Date	07-06-14 31
Session	2
Material used	Oxford dictionary

Directions: Alphabetize the words in each list below

Group (A)

Hibiscus	1.	3	_____
Rose	2.	6	_____
Display	3.	2	_____
Petunia	4.	5	_____
Honeysuckle	5.	4	_____
Daffodil	6.	1	_____

Group (B)

mouse	1.	5	_____
mule	2.	6	_____
monkey	3.	4	_____
month	4.	3	_____
manatee	5.	1	_____
mole	6.	2	_____

For the researcher use: (please leave it blank)

Student number	1
Time needed to accomplish the task	<del>about</del> 6 min
Feedback about the session	The session is insightful for me. I found it very useful to have this inside the classroom. The previous session was very interesting and <del>it</del> helpful to
Assessment	This student is <del>a</del> the quickest who could finish the exercise within <sup>about</sup> 6 mins. He used his dictionary.

Date	24-06-1431
Session	3
Material used	My dictionary

Directions: use your dictionary to find which word in each pair is spelled correctly

1. patience ✓	a. patiense X
2. recieve ✓	b. receive X
3. measurd X	c. measured ✓
4. simpliphy ✓	d. simplify X
5. recycel X	e. recycle ✓
6. ordinary X	f. ordinery ✓
7. communicasion X	g. communication ✓
8. severel X	h. several ✓
9. uncomfortible X	i. uncomfortable ✓
10. accomodation X	j. accomodation ✓

For the researcher use: (please leave it blank)

Student number	3
Time needed to accomplish the task	13 Min.
Feedback about the session Some of the words I know them before, but not all of them.	I never used dictionary for spelling before. It is very useful to use the dictionary to learn English. It is time consuming, but <del>it</del> makes my writing better.
Assessment	He does not use dictionary for <sup>to check</sup> all the words. His alphabetical skills improved. He makes small mistakes, but overall progress are fine so far.