

ELECTRONIC DICTIONARIES AND THEIR DIFFERENCES FROM
TRADITIONAL DICTIONARIES

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Abstract

This study investigates the differences between electronic and traditional dictionaries in foreign language learning through a classroom-based experimental design. The research focuses on their impact on students' translation speed, task performance, and engagement during vocabulary-related activities. The study was conducted with seventh-grade students divided into a control group (traditional dictionaries) and an experimental group (electronic dictionaries). Both groups completed the same translation task under identical conditions. The results show that students using electronic dictionaries completed the task significantly faster and demonstrated higher engagement compared to those using traditional dictionaries. The findings suggest that electronic dictionaries enhance learning efficiency, while traditional dictionaries support more careful lexical processing. The study concludes that combining both types of dictionaries can improve vocabulary learning outcomes in language education.

Keywords: electronic dictionaries, traditional dictionaries, translation tasks, vocabulary learning, learning efficiency, classroom experiment, language learning tools.

Аннотация

Данное исследование рассматривает различия между электронными и традиционными словарями в изучении иностранного языка на основе экспериментального подхода, проведённого в классе. Основное внимание уделяется их влиянию на скорость перевода, выполнение заданий и вовлечённость учащихся в процессе работы с лексикой. Исследование проводилось среди учащихся седьмого класса, разделённых на контрольную группу (традиционные словари) и экспериментальную группу (электронные словари). Обе группы выполняли одно и то же переводческое задание в одинаковых условиях. Результаты показали, что учащиеся, использовавшие электронные словари, выполнили задание значительно быстрее и продемонстрировали более высокий уровень вовлечённости по сравнению с учащимися, использовавшими традиционные словари. Полученные данные свидетельствуют о том, что электронные словари повышают эффективность обучения, тогда как традиционные словари способствуют более тщательной лексической обработке. В заключение делается вывод о том, что сочетание обоих типов словарей может улучшить результаты обучения лексике в процессе изучения иностранного языка.

Ключевые слова: электронные словари, традиционные словари, переводческие задания, изучение лексики, эффективность обучения, классный эксперимент, инструменты изучения языка.

Introduction

An electronic dictionary is a digital reference tool designed to function on computers or other electronic devices. It enables users to quickly search for words and phrases using advanced features such as morphological analysis, contextual examples, and flexible translation options. Unlike traditional printed dictionaries, electronic dictionaries can integrate multimedia elements, including audio, images, video, and

animations, which enhance the learning experience. Electronic dictionaries differ from traditional dictionaries in terms of accessibility, structure, and functionality. While printed dictionaries present information in a static alphabetical format, electronic dictionaries provide dynamic access through search systems and hyperlinks, allowing users to navigate between related lexical items more efficiently. Despite the growing popularity of electronic dictionaries in modern education, there is still insufficient empirical evidence comparing their effectiveness with traditional dictionaries in real classroom settings, particularly in translation tasks. This creates a need to investigate how different dictionary types influence learners' performance, speed, and engagement during vocabulary-related activities. The development of dictionaries has a long historical background. Early lexicographic works by scholars such as Mahmud Koshgari, Khalil ibn Ahmad al-Farahidi, and Sibawayh laid the foundation for systematic vocabulary recording and analysis. Over time, these traditional approaches have evolved into modern electronic lexicography, which combines linguistic knowledge with digital technologies to support language learning more effectively.

Methods

This study was conducted during a teaching practicum at a secondary school 17 which is located in Altyarik district, Fergana, to investigate the differences between the use of traditional and electronic dictionaries in translation tasks. The participants were seventh-grade students from two different classes: 7A and 7D. For the purpose of the experiment, class 7A (Group A) was assigned as the control group, while class 7D (Group B) was designated as the experimental group. Both groups were given the same reading passage for the experiment. The passage used in this study was "Adventure Travel", which was taken exactly as it appears below:

Adventure travel

Time for an adventure?

Are you a bit bored with your nine-to-five routine? Have a look at our exciting range of holidays and decide what type of adventure you'd like.

Activity holidays

Our activity holidays are for everyone, people who love danger or who just like sports. We have a huge variety of water, snow or desert holidays. We'll take you SCUBA diving in the Red Sea or kayaking and white water rafting in Canada. If you prefer snow, you can try skiing or snowboarding in the Alps or even igloo-building. For those who like warmer weather, we also have sandboarding (the desert version of skateboarding) or camel safaris.

Polar expeditions

Take a cruise to Antarctica or the northern Arctic; explore a land of white natural beauty and wonderful wildlife. Our experts will explain everything about the two poles as you watch the penguins in Antarctica or whales and polar bears in the Arctic. There's no greater adventure than travelling to the ends of the earth. A once-in-a-lifetime experience!

Cultural journeys

Our cultural journeys will help you discover ancient civilisations: India, Thailand, Egypt and many more. Visit temples, palaces and ancient ruins – just remember to bring your camera! Get to know local ways of life by exploring markets, trying exotic foods and meeting local people.

Trekking tours

We have trekking holidays to famous places such as Machu Picchu or the Everest Base Camp Trek, as well as some nearer to home in the Highlands of Scotland. You don't need to be very sporty, just fairly fit. You'll have a great time enjoying

nature with a group of new friends. Some of the holidays include camping, but we'll transport the tents for you!

Wildlife holidays

We organise small-group tours to get closer to nature in Africa, Asia or South America. Go on safari in Africa and watch lions and giraffes. Meet the famous turtles of the Galapagos Islands. Look for tigers in India, or take an elephant safari in Sri Lanka. We use local guides and stay in a range of accommodation, from tents to tree houses.

The task required students to translate the passage into their native language. The procedure differed only in the type of dictionary used. The control group (7A, Group A) completed the task using traditional printed dictionaries, while the experimental group (7D, Group B) used electronic dictionaries, such as mobile dictionary applications, to assist their translation. All students were given identical instructions and the same amount of time to complete the task in order to ensure consistency and fairness. The activity was carried out individually under teacher supervision. During the experiment, attention was paid to students' translation performance, task completion time, and engagement while using dictionaries. The results from both groups were then compared to evaluate the effectiveness of electronic dictionaries versus traditional dictionaries in facilitating translation tasks.

Results

The results of the experiment revealed a clear difference in the performance of the two groups who completed the same translation task using different types of dictionaries. The control group (7A), which used traditional printed dictionaries, completed the task in 40 minutes, while the experimental group (7D), which used electronic dictionaries, completed the same task in 18 minutes. This shows a 22-minute difference in favor of the experimental group. In addition to completion time, observational data collected during the activity indicated that students using electronic

dictionaries were more engaged and spent less time searching for word meanings due to instant search and contextual support features. Overall, the findings demonstrate that electronic dictionaries significantly improve translation speed and task efficiency compared to traditional dictionaries under the same learning conditions.

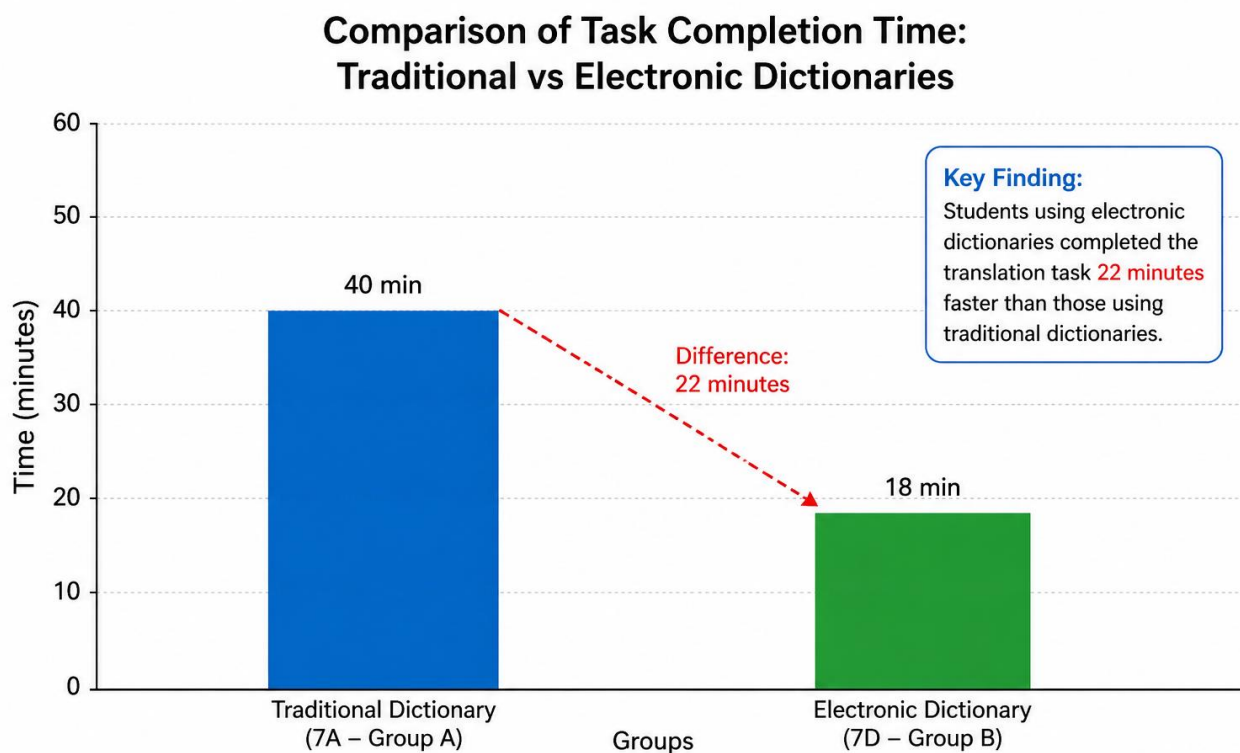


Figure 1. Comparison of task completion time between the control group (traditional dictionary) and the experimental group (electronic dictionary).

Discussion

The results clearly indicate that students who used electronic dictionaries performed the translation task significantly faster than those using traditional printed dictionaries. The 22-minute difference suggests that dictionary type has a direct impact on learners' task completion efficiency. This improvement can be explained by the functional advantages of electronic dictionaries, such as instant word search, automatic suggestions, and multimedia support. These features reduce the cognitive load required for searching unfamiliar vocabulary, allowing learners to focus more on meaning

construction rather than word lookup. In contrast, students using traditional dictionaries spent more time navigating alphabetical entries and selecting appropriate meanings, which slowed down the translation process. However, this slower process may also encourage deeper lexical analysis and more deliberate learning. Therefore, the results support the idea that electronic dictionaries enhance speed and accessibility, while traditional dictionaries may contribute more to careful lexical understanding.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the use of electronic dictionaries significantly improves students' translation speed and task efficiency compared to traditional printed dictionaries. The experimental results show that learners using electronic dictionaries completed the same task 22 minutes faster, highlighting the impact of digital tools on language learning performance. However, the findings also suggest that traditional dictionaries still hold pedagogical value in promoting careful word analysis and structured vocabulary learning. Therefore, both dictionary types serve different but complementary roles in foreign language learning. The most effective approach is the integration of electronic dictionaries for efficiency and traditional dictionaries for deeper lexical understanding within a balanced, learner-centered teaching environment.

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