Digital Dictionary Vs Non-Digital Dictionary; The Needs, Challenges, and Effects in English Language Learning

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Abstract

This research explores the needs, challenges, and effects of using both digital and non-digital dictionaries in English language learning. The research design employed a qualitative study with data analysis conducted using Lisabella (2013)'s model. The participants involved 15 students as informants from several different universities in North Sulawesi. These participants were the sample who registered in the English Education Department / Study Program and English Literature Program. The research instruments used were observation and semi-structured interviews to collect data on students' perceptions related to the issue. Data analysis was carried out by identifying students' responses. Findings reveal that while both formats support vocabulary development and language comprehension, digital dictionaries are preferred for their speed, convenience, and rich features such as audio pronunciation and contextual examples. However, challenges such as internet dependency, distracting advertisements, and potential overreliance were identified. These limitations underscore the need for improved digital tool design and greater student awareness. The study highlights the importance of fostering digital literacy and strategic dictionary use to enhance long-term vocabulary retention, communication skills, and overall language proficiency.

Keywords: Digital Dictionaries, Non-Digital Dictionaries, English language learning

Introduction

The importance of digital and non-digital dictionaries in English language learning lies in their role in supporting accessibility, enhancing functionality, and meeting the cognitive demands of vocabulary development and language comprehension. Digital dictionaries, while providing immediate access to definitions, are often criticized for promoting passive learning. Students or users often rely on quick searches for word meanings, which can lead to superficial understanding rather than active engagement with the language. A major challenge, is that digital platforms often provide vast arrays of content, including synonyms, translations, usage examples, and multimedia elements. While this can be helpful, it can also lead to confusion or distraction for learners who may struggle to navigate the wealth of information presented. In contrast, non-digital dictionaries, though potentially more

thorough in terms of definition depth, often present usability issues. Paper dictionaries are bulky, making them cumbersome for on-the-go use compared to digital options (Pasqualina Sorrentino Massimo Salgaro, 2023). Students and professionals often find carrying heavy dictionaries impractical, especially when a single digital device can store multiple dictionaries and linguistic resources simultaneously. These issues point to the need for a balanced approach that addresses both the efficiency of digital tools and the deeper cognitive engagement encouraged by traditional methods.

In relation to their needs and challenges, the effects of using digital and non-digital dictionaries on students' language learning outcomes reveal fundamental problems in terms of vocabulary retention, cognitive processing, and learner autonomy. One problem base lies in how digital dictionaries influence short-term and long-term learning. While they offer the advantage of speed and convenience, Coxhead (2016) showed that digital dictionaries may result in lower retention rates due to their quick, surface-level engagement. This issue arises because students may not take the time to internalize the word, its context, or its various meanings, relying instead on immediate, often fragmented definitions. In contrast, non-digital dictionaries may promote deeper engagement, as learners are more likely to spend time understanding the word, but the problem lies in the fact that such engagement is not always sustainable. The following requires time and effort, and this can be demotivating, especially for students struggling with reading or unfamiliar vocabulary. Furthermore, there is another issue with learner autonomy, for example, digital dictionaries can encourage self-directed learning, but if students over-rely on them without developing essential strategies for context-based word acquisition, they may miss out on critical aspects of language development. This balance between quick access and deep learning creates a fundamental challenge in ensuring that both types of dictionaries effectively contribute to vocabulary acquisition or expansion and long-term language proficiency.

Studies state several experiences regarding the problems in using digital dictionaries. Such as Desnaranti et al (2022) described that undergraduate students faced some advantages like digital dictionaries useful for language learning, translation, and improving their English knowledge. However, they still find obstacles in using it, such as network issues. Previous studies support that the informants of the study positively showed a good attitude in using e-dictionaries, especially in language learning (Silviyanti et al., 2022). They put forward that e-dictionaries provided benefits such as ease of use, and flexibility in time and place, but presented challenges like incomplete word definitions, distracting advertisements, cost, and internet issues. Then, the study suggests that future applications of e-dictionaries should aim to resolve these problems to better assist students in language learning.

Other studies empirically say that ESL learners have a strong preference for using kinds of digital tools due to their ease of access and convenience (Mamona Yasmin Khan & Ambreen Ayaz, 2023). They added that ESL learners like in Pakistan used Google online dictionary and other mobile apps. Besides, ESL learners of the study faced challenges such as limited internet connectivity, distracting advertisements, difficulty understanding the terminology, and lack of guidance from the teachers in selecting the appropriate ones. Furthermore, research from Ratminingsih et al. (2022) stated that the use of a digital dictionary had a significantly better effect on young learners' literacy compared to a printed dictionary. Also, the digital dictionary had a large effect size on improving students' literacy skills. By then, students were more captivated by and preferred using the digital dictionary compared to the printed dictionary. Besides, research that focused on paper dictionaries has also their issues. Research from (Trinh et al., 2021) said that many students did not feel convenient and useful to use paper dictionaries. Yet, the role of the following dictionary is not still denied due to their belief to help explain exactly the word's meaning. (Zorigt & -Erdene Tumurbat, 2022) said that utilizing a paper dictionary enables the learner to repeat the word several times, either mentally or audibly, with the entire process typically requiring around a minute.

The previous related studies create a gap in meeting the deeper learning needs of students, especially in using digital or non-digital dictionaries to understand word meanings, connotations, and appropriate contexts. Students in general faced difficulties in determining the use of dictionaries (Hamouda, 2013). The researcher found out that the use of the English dictionary is not eventually functional for students of IAIN Manado, Universitas Nusantara also Universitas Sam Ratulangi. It shows when the researcher asked from the preliminary observation that students sometimes prefer to use online dictionaries rather than manual ones (paper dictionaries). In this case, students selected to use an effective and smart method to use a kind of tool such as a dictionary. On the other hand, students from different backgrounds are also still aware to use dictionaries and even lack support for dictionary use. Some factors appeared, such as lack of a dictionary and its knowledge of how to function, lack of a smartphone, laziness to open a dictionary, and even feeling nothing to use a dictionary.

Ratminingsih et al (2022) explained that both printed and digital resources are essential for learning. However, with the rapid advancement of technology, digital media has become increasingly popular. Various types of dictionaries have recently gained attention in research focused on improving reading and writing skills. These include printed dictionaries, digital dictionaries, monolingual dictionaries, and bilingual dictionaries (Majed A Alharbi, 2016). For this reason, the problems raised in this recent study are to maintain the essential of using dictionaries in English learning

particularly. The reasons the researcher put forward the identification are due to their needs, challenges, and effects to their study. It also differs with another different studies that Eastern Indonesian students especially Manadonese still concerned about the use of dictionaries in their learning. In addition, the motivation is to gain a deeper understanding of how these tools influence vocabulary acquisition or vocabulary expansion, language comprehension, and overall learning outcomes. By examining both the benefits and limitations of digital and non-digital dictionaries, the study formulated the research questions, such as; what are the needs, challenges, and effects of digital and non-digital dictionaries in English language learning?

Methodology

Research Design

This research belongs to qualitative research. In accordance with Small (2021) who said that qualitative research describes interpretation, then this research focuses on the objective of things like the nature of human's behavior, perceptions, motivations or even situations. For this reason, the researcher was employed to seek out the ideas, perceptions, and experiences related to the needs, challenges, and effects of using digital and non-digital dictionaries in English language learning.

Participants and Instruments

The participants of this research are undergraduate students from several different universities in North Sulawesi. The students came from Universitas Nusantara Manado, Universitas Sam Ratulangi Manado, and Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) Manado. These students were the sample who registered in the English Education Study Program and English Literature Program. By purposive sampling, the researcher took 15 students from the selected universities who have used and currently using a dictionary for specific requirements in English or another learning program. The reasons why to choose students are due to the current issue that the researcher observed. The students normally made an error without consulting to dictionaries. Otherwise, students have consulted the current dictionary in one reference only. They did not understand which dictionary is useful to look for.

The instruments of this research employed interview questions as the primary data while observation was the secondary data. Interview data helps to identify the sections of needs, challenges, and effects of those dictionaries. Meanwhile, observation explains the current phenomenon that the researcher observed using those dictionaries. Observation, in this case, the researcher collected information towards the application of both dictionaries of the informants used.

Data Collection

The information for this research was gathered through classroom observations and semi-structured interviews. Observations were employed to

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analyze how students engage with both digital and physical dictionaries during English learning tasks. Furthermore, interviews were conducted with chosen students to obtain a more profound understanding of their preferences, difficulties, and perceived impacts of using these two kinds of dictionaries.

Data Analysis

The gathered data underwent qualitative descriptive analysis through Lisabella (2013)'s model. Observation notes were assessed to pinpoint consistent patterns of dictionary utilization, and interview transcripts were coded and organized to reveal themes concerning needs, challenges, and learning results. The insights obtained from both approaches were subsequently compared and interpreted to provide a comprehensive understanding of the results' significance.

Findings

Observation

Based on the observation conducted among 15 informants, it was found that digital dictionaries are more frequently used compared to non-digital ones. The majority of students reported using dictionary applications or online platforms such as Kamusku, Oxford Learner's Dictionary Online, Cambridge Dictionary Online, U-dictionary, DeepL, Chat Gpt, and Google Translate due to their accessibility, speed, and pronunciation features. These tools were especially helpful during in-class activities, homework assignments, and independent learning, highlighting the growing reliance on technology in language acquisition.

However, the study also showed that, even if digital dictionaries are often preferred, some pupils still see the benefit of using non-digital (printed dictionaries). They pointed out that physical dictionaries such as John Echols help them concentrate more and lessen distractions from notifications and irrelevant internet content. In addition, printed ones help them study in a more structured and intentional way, especially in academic or exam-related settings where electronic devices may be prohibited.

Regarding requirements, all students concurred that having a dependable dictionary, whether in digital or physical form, is crucial for fostering vocabulary development and comprehension. However, difficulties were seen in both formats. When using digital dictionaries, some participants experienced connection problems and had difficulty with the sheer quantity of definitions, especially when the context was unclear. Yet, non-digital dictionaries were criticized for being time-consuming and less useful for quick reference, especially when multitasking during online or hybrid lessons. There was a wide range of impacts on language learning that were seen from using dictionaries. Due to audio features, students who used digital dictionaries displayed a faster comprehension of texts and greater assurance in their

pronunciation. On the other hand, the physical engagement with the text and the manual search procedure frequently resulted in greater retention of word meanings among users of non-digital dictionaries, the observation, in general, indicates that depending on the situation and learning objectives, a combination of both dictionary types provide the most balanced and practical strategy for English students.

Interview

Having done the research, the researcher employed an interview with English to obtain the data carefully. The researcher himself identified some respondents based on in-depth interviews with 15 students selected. The informants then answered in the English language. The questions being asked to them were about the usage of digital and non-digital dictionaries, including the needs, challenges, and effects of English language learning. The results show that most respondents prefer to use dictionaries in the form of digital. It can be explained through the following table 1,2 and 3.

Table 1. interview results with Universitas Nusantara students

Universitas Nusantara	Responses Needs	Challenges	Effects
1	Yes I do, I usually use John Ecolls dictionary and digital dictionary (kamusku)	The non-digital dictionary is heavy and needs more time to find 1 word. Compared to this, the digital dictionary is trouble when I got my phone dies or in a low battery	Yes. I do agree it has an effect on me in learning,. Dictionary digital or non-digital dictionary I can understand the material given by the teacher or lecturer, I can understand the questions, I can speak English, etc
2	Yes I use a dictionary, I use an online dictionary because it is easier. I literally can look for one simple word by only typing directly through my phone. Meanwhile, when I have a problem with my phone or a bad internet connection, I use the printed one.	Sometimes the vocabulary in the non-digital dictionary is incomplete, while in the digital, Sometimes a lot of words mean the same thing.	Yes, true. If I find new vocabulary I will look for it in the dictionary and write it in my book. I know more vocabulary then
3	I need to use a dictionary when I get an unfamiliar word or a word that I don't know what the meaning is. Besides, it made me easier to find unfamiliar words. I used my own dictionary since I	One of the challenges of using a non-digital dictionary is to be able to find a word one by one following the alphabet. Meanwhile, using digital ones, sometimes the	Yes, it has an effect on my language learning. It makes it easier to learn, such as when I find the meaning of a word, I will know the other meaning of that word. I also get the synonyms of that word.

studied as a high school student. In this era, mine has already been a digital dictionary. It caused me to use non-digital and wasted my time. At the moment also, we as the current generation of the school utilize digital dictionaries with the help of Google, or even the use of applications downloaded from our Play Store (home for Android apps). I also once used it through Appstore (home for Apple apps). We download it, translate it, and listen to it. Then I also improved that word to practice proper pronunciation.

translations would not match.

4	*Yes, I used a dictionary. I used it in the form of digital. I have been using it for 8 years. The need certainly exists. I will use it when I want to translate a word that I don't understand or I forget what it means. If I need to take into option, I prefer to use a Digital Dictionary. It helped me a lot.*	*In my opinion, it is not quite flexible to use a printed one because I have to carry it and sometimes I forget if I want to bring it. And I think the main challenge of using a digital dictionary is limited internet access*	*Yes, I think the dictionary has an effect on my English Language Learning. When I don't know or forget a word, I use my dictionary so I understand and remember it. Not only to remember but also being able to know how to pronounce it*
5	*It's been a while, but not so often used. I take a digital dictionary of course. I can find it easily, also we are in a digital era where we all definitely have our own devices. I'm just looking for a keyword to make a sentence or usually, I'm looking for a translation of a word that I don't understand.*	*It is different. It takes a lot of time to find something if I use a non-digital dictionary. Hmmm, if I need to compare it with a digital dictionary, I think users are aware that it must have internet access to run it. It will also be difficult if we don't have internet data in the required time*	*In my opinion, every foreign learner will definitely need a lot of vocabulary to learn. In my understanding, the dictionary is one of the media that we can use in learning English especially.*

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Table 2. interview results with Universitas Sam Ratulangi students

Universitas Sam Ratulangi	Responses		
	Needs	Challenges	Effects
1	I always use a dictionary but in the online form. Been using it since 2014. My necessity for this thing is to search for the word that I find hard to know the meaning. Constantly, I highly use digital ones, because it is located on my phone	I look for each word in the paper dictionary, while online, the slow internet connection is the main challenge.	The digital dictionary can help me to know the meaning of the answer at the moment I need it
2	Yes, I learn the English language using a dictionary, and I prefer to use a digital dictionary. I have been using it since the third semester of my study until now. I use it to look up definitions, synonyms, spelling, and sometimes new vocabulary.	The non-digital dictionary is not practical, it is heavy and takes up a lot of space. It takes some time to search for specific words and could be outdated and incomplete. Compared to digital, it is not that easy to find a good quality dictionary application because most of the free digital dictionaries have an unnecessary amount of ads and needs frequent update.	Yes, it is working. It helps since it gives me better definitions and understanding if I want to find different synonyms of words, the word syllables and spelling, and also pronunciation in a digital dictionary.
3	I do use it, Sir. I use it in my language learning activity and I prefer to use a digital dictionary. I have been using it since four years ago when I was labeled as a student of the English Department at UNSRAT. Personally, I like to use digital because it is easier to use. I need to use a dictionary to look for the meaning of difficult English words that I don't understand the meaning or translate a long English sentence	My challenges with using a non-digital dictionary are; that in form, the non-digital dictionary is so very heavy to bring everywhere and potentially broken soon or later. But sometimes, I prefer to choose a non-digital dictionary because it is more complete. My challenges of using a digital dictionary are: sometimes a digital dictionary is incomplete and if we use a digital dictionary online, we should have internet data. Then, it made we being a lazy person to searching the meaning of English words in long sentences and finally	Yes, I do. It has many effects on my English language learning. It makes it easy and fast to search the English words that I did not understand, improve my English vocabulary, and I can finally know the word class or grammatical changes.

		did not improve my English vocabulary.	
4	*I do use a dictionary especially online/digital. I prefer using a digital dictionary when doing assignments. It's easily accessible, and constantly up to date, and it can be accessed in almost any condition. It is more flexible in examples and the results usually turn up in just seconds.My need to use a digital dictionary is to expand my vocabulary and explore more word options in writing. Furthering my understanding of newer terms using a dictionary, helps me form better sentences.*	*The challenge of having a non-digital dictionary is about having to filter through the letter section in which the word starts. Meanwhile, I enjoyed using a non-digital dictionary, it took a while to find the words I needed. Compared to a digital dictionary, sometimes the meanings can be jumbled. I forgot which ward it was, but in the past, glancing at two different dictionaries with separate and perhaps contrastive definitions as well, increased my confusion about what the word meant*	*It has had a great effect on my learning. It affects it by helping me further define my understanding of words I have written down, enrich my vocabulary, and helping me think of other ways to use the vocabulary*
5	*Hi sir, yes I use a digital dictionary in my language learning activity. I have been using it since I was a high school student. I always use it to improve my vocabulary*	*My challenges in using a non-digital dictionary are... first, there are incomplete words, second, spend my time just looking the one word. The challenges to using a digital dictionary are first, sometimes when I use it without an internet network, there are some incomplete words. Second, when I use a digital dictionary with a good and active network (internet data), there are always advertisements that appear on the phone screen, and it disturbs me*	*Yes, I do feel the effect. The dictionary works when I don't know or suddenly forget one or a few words. Also, I can be easy to remember the words that I have got*

Table 3. interview results with IAIN Manado students

IAIN Manado	Responses Needs	Challenges	Effects
1	I have been using my dictionary in the form of an online application since semester 7 and until now. The digital dictionary is easier for me because it makes it easier to find vocabulary and also saves me time. I really need it to feel like speaking in formal and non-formal spaces.	I'm not too interested in using non-digital dictionaries, because I think non-digital dictionaries take a lot of time looking for vocabulary and sentences. On the other hand, some digital dictionaries require a stable internet connection to access definitions and additional features. In addition, digital dictionaries need to be updated regularly to ensure the latest definitions and information. Non-updated versions may not reflect the current language. Also, not all dictionaries have an intuitive or easy-to-use interface. Unclear features can make navigation difficult.	There are many effects of using dictionaries in my life. Such as understanding vocabulary. It helps me understand the meaning of new words, both in terms of definition and context. I also experienced my pronunciation can be guided properly and correctly. Last but not least, it is helping me to use because it has been a quick reference tool, allowing me to continue learning without interruption.
2	Yes, I do prefer to use a dictionary in the form of digital. It's been almost 4 years. It is easier for me to use daily. As a student, I need a dictionary in the process of learning English, especially to know the meaning of new vocabulary.	In my opinion, the challenge of using a non-digital is that is difficult to carry anywhere, and then it is quite difficult to find vocabulary in the dictionary because the size of the letters in the words is too small. Besides, the challenge of using a digital dictionary is that we always have to be connected to the internet because most digital dictionaries require an internet connection to be used.	Yes, I do. The dictionary helps me in adding new vocabulary in English. For Example, when I read a text and there is vocabulary that I didn't know before, then I use a dictionary to find out the meaning of the word, so I better understand the text I read.
3	I used it almost 8 years with digital dictionary. I think non-digital	In using a non-digital dictionary, I am still having to explore each word in a	I think it has an effect on me. I become better at expressing my vocabulary

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	dictionary replaced my need so much into digital area. It helped to easy know the vocabulary meaning	*thick dictionary. While digital dictionaries must have internet data.*	
4	*Thank you for asking Sir, I prefer to use an online dictionary. I've been using it for 4 years since I started studying at university. It is easy for me to use. I need it to find the meaning of the words, to hear the pronunciation of the words correctly, and to see how to use the example words in a sentence.*	*The challenge of using the non-digital dictionary is its efficiency. When I use a non-digital dictionary, I need to look at a certain page of the dictionary or at a certain part of the dictionary just to see the words that I am looking for. The challenge of using a digital dictionary is that I must be online to access the dictionary and I get distracted easily in using it.*	*Yes, I think so. Because of the dictionary especially the digital one, I can find the meaning of the words not only just the meaning of the words in my native language but also the deep meaning such as the definition of the word specifically.*
5	*Yes, I use a dictionary in my language-learning activities. I prefer to use a digital dictionary because of the ease of access and searching for words. From the seven years of use, I have several needs such as finding definitions, examples of the use of words, information on the pronunciation of words, and context information on the use of words.*	*Non-digital dictionaries usually do not have additional features such as pronunciation, example sentences, or comparison words that can help in language learning. Digital one depends on the internet.*	*Yes, the dictionary has a significant impact on my English learning such as understanding definitions, usage examples, different meanings, pronunciation, as well as the context of information used in everyday situations.*

The analysis of students' responses from Universitas Nusantara, Universitas Sam Ratulangi, and IAIN Manado describes that both printed and digital dictionaries play important roles in English language learning, with digital dictionaries being more widely preferred due to their speed, convenience, and multimedia features. While students still acknowledge the relevance of printed dictionaries in certain contexts. Despite their advantages, digital dictionaries present challenges such as reliance on internet connectivity, distracting ads, inconsistent information, and the risk of reduced concentration or passive learning. Similarly, printed dictionaries are often criticized for being bulky, outdated, and inefficient. Nevertheless, students from all three universities agree that dictionaries regardless of format enhance their learning, support a better understanding of English materials, and help them become more confident users of the language. The findings suggest that a balanced approach using

both formats, depending on learning goals and conditions, may offer the most effective strategy.

Discussion

Needs

According to the responses from Universitas Nusantara students, they reported using both non-digital (paper dictionaries) and digital dictionaries. Two students stated that they used both tools simultaneously for specific purposes, such as completing daily assignments. This situation emphasizes that printed dictionaries are still functional and relevant, depending on the users' needs. In other words, dictionary use is influenced by individual needs, backgrounds, and other related factors (Charpentier Jiménez, 2023). One of their primary needs was to expand their vocabulary by looking up unfamiliar words and learning their meanings and usage. Digital dictionaries offer a quick and efficient way to discover new vocabulary, helping students improve both their written and spoken communication. In addition, many students employed these tools to translate sentences from their native language into English, aiding in better understanding and more accurate expression. Another important need was to practice and improve English pronunciation, as digital dictionaries often provided audio features that allowed students to hear the correct pronunciation of words. By setting these goals, students could make the most of digital dictionaries to boost their language proficiency in a focused and structured way.

Moving forward to the next informants from Universitas Sam Ratulangi, the need for using dictionaries, particularly digital dictionaries, has become increasingly evident, especially in the context of language learning. One informant shared that he has been using an online dictionary/digital dictionary since 2014 and continues to rely on it today. In this case, he needed digital dictionaries for a very long time. Those were especially valuable for English language learners, as they provided quick and easy access to meanings, translations, synonyms, and example sentences (Desnaranti et al., 2022b). This immediate access to information allowed learners to continue their studies without interruption, improving their comprehension of new vocabulary. Additionally, digital dictionaries were frequently updated, ensuring that learners have access to the latest words and phrases, which is particularly important as language evolves. For students, the convenience and flexibility offered by digital dictionaries made them an indispensable tool. This ease of access is crucial, as English learners often encounter unfamiliar words in a variety of contexts whether in reading, listening, or speaking.

Students of IAIN Manado increasingly relied also on online dictionaries or digital dictionaries as their primary resource for language learning and understanding. As stated by previous experts, saying that digital dictionaries are now

essential for language learners, who often use multiple online tools to support vocabulary, pronunciation, and comprehension (Jin & Deifell, 2013). Many students have been using digital dictionaries for specific periods with some having relied on them for as long as one year, four years, seven years, or even eight years. The frequent and consistent use of these tools has made digital dictionaries an essential part of their daily lives.

Challenges

Coming to their challenges, the interview data from Universitas Nusantara students shows that they encounter both advantages and disadvantages when using both dictionaries. Due to its physical heft, the time it takes to search for words alphabetically, and occasionally lacking vocabulary, the printed dictionary is usually regarded as less useful. The interviewees stressed that searching for a word in a printed dictionary is both flexible and laborious, particularly when the dictionary is not carried along. Digital dictionaries are favored for their speed and convenience, but they also have drawbacks, such as requiring internet access (Desnaranti et al., 2022b), relying on phone batteries, and occasionally providing unclear or incorrect translations. Some users also think that digital dictionaries offer an excessive number of definitions of one word, which might be perplexing. These responses emphasize that, despite their greater efficiency, digital dictionaries still have restrictions that must be remedied for more successful use (Abecassis, 2007). This indicates that both the practical and technical facets of dictionary use should be considered.

Moving on to Universitas Sam Ratulangi issues, printed dictionaries were frequently characterized as outdated or lacking, heavy, inconvenient to use, and taking a lot of time. Students experienced frustration when attempting to find words manually, particularly when attempting to locate them alphabetically. However, despite their convenience and quicker access, digital dictionaries came with drawbacks like the requirement for a reliable internet connection, bothersome ads (Ferrett & Dollinger, 2021), and the possibility of finding definitions that were incomplete or inconsistent. Other students voiced worries that relying on digital resources could result in less work being put into expanding their vocabulary. The results suggest a compromise between the technical and motivational disadvantages of digital dictionaries and the physical inconvenience and reduced access to printed dictionaries.

Besides, IAIN Manado students encounter a number of common problems while using them. The primary drawbacks of printed dictionaries are their cumbersome and heavy shape, which makes them difficult to transport; their small, difficult-to-read text; their laborious manual word-searching procedure and their absence of interactive elements like example phrases or pronunciation guides that facilitate language acquisition. These drawbacks add to the impression that printed dictionaries are obsolete and ineffective. Digital ones, on the other hand, are quicker

and more convenient but come with their own set of problems. A major problem is the reliance on a stable internet connection, which can impede access in areas with low connectivity or offline. Furthermore, digital platforms may need constant updates to maintain relevance and accuracy, and users frequently encounter ambiguous interfaces like ads. Students also observed that using digital tools could result in decreased concentration and less enthusiasm for more profound learning. In conclusion, the findings demonstrate that despite the increased capabilities of digital dictionaries, both formats have notable restrictions that hinder students' learning experiences and ease of use (Ratminingsih et al., 2022).

Effects

Having seen the interview findings, it can be strongly suggested that students of Universitas Nusantara benefit from both digital and traditional ones. Every participant concurred that utilizing a dictionary, regardless of its format, aids in comprehending instructional materials, grasping unfamiliar words, and enhancing speaking, reading, and English comprehension skills. Students stated that dictionaries help with recalling and correctly pronouncing words, as well as finding synonyms and various meanings (Mariam et al., 2024), all of which contribute to a deeper understanding and wider vocabulary expansion. Others suggested reinforcing vocabulary acquisition by noting down new terms. This implies that dictionaries are essential to the process of learning a foreign language as active learning aids, not just as reference tools. (Boulton Alex & Cock de Sylvie, 2017)

Based on data from Universitas Sam Ratulangi students, it is evident that digital dictionaries have a significant and positive impact on English language learning rather than non-digital ones. Students reported that digital dictionaries provide immediate access to word meanings, synonyms, pronunciation, spelling, syllables, and grammatical information, which greatly supports comprehension and vocabulary development. Dwaik (2015) says that the speed and ease of use help learners quickly overcome language barriers, especially when encountering unfamiliar words. Additionally, digital dictionaries contribute to long-term retention and allow students to explore different ways of using vocabulary in context. The findings suggest that digital dictionaries serve not only as convenient reference tools but also as effective aids in enhancing learners' understanding, fluency, and confidence in using English (Winkler, 2001).

Last but not least, the interview results from students at IAIN Manado show that dictionaries, particularly digital ones, also play a crucial role in supporting their English language learning. Students highlighted that dictionaries help them understand new vocabulary more deeply, not just through basic translations but also by providing detailed definitions, usage in context, pronunciation, and examples. This comprehensive support enhances their reading comprehension, vocabulary

acquisition, and ability to express themselves more effectively in English (Benzitouni, 2016). Moreover, the quick and easy access to information allows for uninterrupted learning, making dictionaries a valuable and reliable reference tool in their language development process.

Conclusion

The findings show that both printed and digital dictionaries significantly support students' English language learning, with digital dictionaries becoming the preferred choice due to their speed, convenience, and comprehensive features such as audio pronunciation, up-to-date vocabulary, contextual examples, and instant translations. While printed dictionaries remain relevant for specific needs, they are often viewed as outdated, bulky, and time-consuming. Digital dictionaries, despite their advantages, present limitations such as reliance on internet access, distracting ads, inconsistent definitions, and the potential to reduce focus or encourage overreliance. These limitations highlight the need for improvements in digital tool design and point to important implications for students. To maximize the benefits, students should develop digital literacy skills to navigate these tools effectively, use them not just for quick answers but to explore word usage and context and manage their screen time to stay focused. They must also become more reflective and strategic in how they integrate dictionary use into their broader language learning process treating dictionaries as active learning aids that contribute to long-term vocabulary retention, communication skills, and overall language proficiency.

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