

THE USE OF THE MONOLINGUAL ENGLISH DICTIONARY IN BOTSWANA JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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Abstract

The study investigates dictionary use by learners in Botswana junior secondary schools. It investigates when and how junior secondary school students encounter and use dictionaries and determine the kind of information they look up. The paper also evaluates teachers' role in creating awareness of dictionary use. The study uses a survey to elicit information from two junior secondary schools in Thamaga and Francistown. The findings of the paper are that majority of students encounter a dictionary for the first time at primary school; that teachers in junior secondary schools do not teach dictionary education though many students have used electronic dictionaries previously and prefer them because they are quick and easy to use; and that many learners prefer a book dictionary because they do not have access to electronic dictionaries since gadgets like phones and laptops are not allowed in the school premises. In addition, the teachers indicate that they did not teach dictionary use because they were never trained on how to deliver dictionary education to students; that dictionary education is not well outlined in the school curriculum; and that although teachers do not offer dictionary education to students, they do recommend a dictionary to students when the need arises during class.

Keywords: Dictionary use, secondary school, Botswana, lexicography, monolingual dictionary

1. Introduction and Background on Dictionaries

Dictionary use in Botswana may be traced to the first English-Setswana dictionary which was published in 1875 by the Reverend John Brown of the London Missionary Society. It bore the title: *Lokwalo loa Mahuku a Secwana leSeeneles* "A book of Setswana and English words". This marked the beginning of the English-Setswana bilingual lexicography. An enlarged and revised version of the same dictionary appeared in 1895, was reprinted in 1914 and 1921 and was later revised in 1925. The only monolingual dictionaries written in Botswana are the Setswana monolingual dictionaries such as *Thanodi ya Setswana ya dikole* (Kgasa, 1976), *Thanodi ya Setswana* (Kgasa & Tsonope, 1998) and *Tlhalosi ya medi ya Setswana* (Otlogetswe, 2012). Botswana schools use English and Setswana dictionaries across all educational levels. The English dictionaries that are used by learners in schools are monolingual learner dictionaries which are not published in Botswana, but, rather, are published in the United Kingdom and imported into the country. Setswana dictionaries used in schools are both bilingual and monolingual dictionaries

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published in Botswana. However, this study investigates the use of the English monolingual dictionaries at junior secondary schools. Botswana junior secondary schools use multiple dictionaries which include *Oxford word power dictionary for English learners* (Turnbull, 2012), *Macmillan essential dictionary* (Rundell, 1982), *Longman dictionary of common errors* (Heaton et al., 1997), *Longman word wise dictionary* (Murphy, 2001) and *Longman active study dictionary* (Summers, 1983).

Dictionaries have been in existence for centuries and they play a key role in the language learning and teaching process. Landau (1989) defines a dictionary as a book that lists words in alphabetical order and describes their meanings. Modern dictionaries often include information about spelling, syllabication, pronunciation, etymology, usage, synonymy, and grammar (Svensén, 2009). A dictionary has been identified as an essential resource in language learning since it fosters learner independence from the teacher (Sarigul, 1999).

Several studies have revealed that most learners of English as a second language prefer bilingual dictionaries as they feel that they are more practical and easier to use than other types of dictionary (Ebanéga & Moussavou, 2008; Hamouda, 2013; Day, 2013). However, a vast number of teachers prefer their students to use English monolingual dictionaries because they help them acquire a foreign language more effectively (Ali, 2012).

This study therefore sets out to determine junior secondary school students' encounter with a monolingual English dictionary and determine whether students are given any training on dictionary use. It also aims to determine the kind of information junior secondary school students look up in a dictionary as well as evaluate the role played by teachers in fostering dictionary awareness amongst learners.

2. Literature Review

Various studies have been conducted on dictionary use and its effectiveness in second language learning. The studies suggest that most learners use a dictionary to find the spelling and meaning of unknown words (Tomaszczyk, 1979; Ali, 2012; Hamouda, 2013; Raheem et al., 2008). Research on English dictionaries and dictionary use has been of great interest to lexicographers. Much research on dictionary use has been conducted from different angles using different approaches and methods. Studies have focused on different dictionaries used by learners. For example, the works of Ali (2002), Lew (2004), and Laufer and Hadar (1997) and other scholars are similar to this study since they focus on the general patterns of dictionary use (Hamouda, 2013; Ali, 2012; Yangping, 2005; Knight, 1994). Other studies focus exclusively on learners' use of electronic dictionaries (Loucky, 2010) and the use of dictionaries for vocabulary acquisition (Gonzales, 1999).

Tomaszczyk (1979) was the first researcher to investigate dictionary use by non-native speakers of English (Hamouda, 2013). The study had 449 Polish university students, some of them studying English as a foreign

language in order to become language instructors and translators, among other professions. The results reveal that most students used the dictionary for word meanings, spellings, and grammatical information (Nesi, 2013). They also show that participants expressed their satisfaction with monolingual dictionaries although the majority preferred to use English-Polish bilingual dictionaries (Hamouda, 2013). Furthermore, Tomaszczyk's (1979) analysis of errors committed by Polish students of translation found that the great majority of errors would not have occurred had dictionaries been consulted (Cowie, 1987). This finding suggests that lack of dictionary use can lead to numerous errors amongst language learners. The study also found that dictionary use declined as language proficiency increased although advanced learners continued to use bilingual dictionaries. Tomaszczyk suggests that his respondents may have been influenced by the educational approaches of the time, which condemned the use of the L1 in the L2 classroom (Nesi, 2013).

Baxter (1980) studied the dictionary and vocabulary behaviour of university students in Japan. He found that the participants in the study used bilingual dictionaries much more than monolingual dictionaries. Many of the participants complained that monolingual dictionaries were too difficult to understand (Nesi, 2013). This finding is similar to Tomaszczyk's finding which indicates a great preference for bilingual dictionaries. Despite this finding, Baxter argues that monolingual learners' dictionaries were better for developing oral fluency (Nesi, 2013), thus echoing and contributing to the general belief that monolingual dictionaries are more effective language learning tools than the bilingual ones.

Béjoint (1981) built on the work of Baxter (1980) and Tomaszczyk (1979), but concentrated on monolingual dictionary use (Nesi, 2013). His study focused on French students learning English, 96% of whom possessed monolingual dictionaries. In contrast to the findings of Tomaszczyk and Baxter, only 17% of the students claimed that they preferred bilingual dictionaries.

Ebanéga and Moussavou's (2008) study of 100 undergraduate and postgraduate Gabonese students studying at the University of Stellenbosch and Cape Peninsula University of Technology in South Africa had the following objectives: to gather information about the participants' frequent use of dictionaries, their difficulties with the lookup process, the causes of the difficulties as well as the instruction they received to acquire dictionary skills and their attitudes towards different reference books, general dictionaries, bilingual dictionaries and encyclopaedic dictionaries. The study was based on the premise that lexicographers should know the target users and their needs, so that they could develop dictionaries that respond to those needs. Like Tomaszczyk (1979) and Baxter (1980), the study revealed that most participants showed a preference for bilingual rather than monolingual dictionaries. The results also showed that the majority of Gabonese students (91%) use dictionaries when studying at home; that a fewer number (59%) use

them when studying in a library; and that only 20% of them use a dictionary during class.

Concerning the type of information searched for in a dictionary, the study reveals that most Gabonese students use a dictionary to check the meanings words, spelling, synonyms, pronunciation, usage, grammar and encyclopaedic information. This finding supports the view that most learners use the dictionary mainly for meaning and spelling; other dictionary uses such as pronunciation and encyclopaedic information are hardly explored by students. Moreover, the study found that in terms of the problems associated with the dictionary, a large percentage, 76, sometimes did not find the information they needed. Some of them related the problems to the unclear layout of the dictionary, lack of dictionary skills, not reading the user instructions and lack of dictionary knowledge. However, in terms of attitudes, many of the study participants report that the use of a dictionary is exciting and fun, and easy to use. And in terms of gains, majority also report that using dictionaries improve their writing, reading, and speaking skills. But as about 70% of them indicate that they had (hardly) been instructed in dictionary use, dictionary skills need to be taught to users to avoid difficulties in dictionary consultation (Ebanéga & Moussavou, 2008).

Ali (2012) conducted a questionnaire study which measured 20 teachers' and 100 students' attitudes towards dictionary use and training. The study considered students' and teachers' assumptions and perceptions about monolingual and bilingual dictionary use at Foundation Studies, Caledonian College of Engineering. The study found that many teachers preferred that their students use monolingual dictionaries since they believed that it would help them acquire a foreign language more effectively. Most students preferred bilingual and bilingualised dictionaries. On the one hand, the participants argued that bilingual dictionaries were practical and easy to use compared to any other type of dictionary. They felt that the bilingual dictionaries were straightforward and timesaving. On the other hand, they found monolingual dictionaries confusing and difficult as well as time-consuming during lessons. Unlike the respondents in Ebanéga and Moussavou (2008), many of the students in the study did not find dictionaries fun and exciting. Furthermore, half of the respondents (50%) indicated that they knew how to use dictionaries effectively. Ali's study is of a great interest to the current study because its focus was both on the teachers and students; it was thus possible to get a fuller picture on attitudes towards dictionary use.

Raheem et al.'s (2014) study discussed the results of a questionnaire distributed to a random sample of students at the University of Kufa in Iraq regarding the dictionaries they use, and the frequency of use. Like the other studies reviewed in this section, most students used their dictionaries to find meaning. Again, like Ali (2012), Hamouda (2013) and Day (2013), the study found that majority of the participants hardly used the dictionary to ascertain pronunciation. Apparently, the participants were not taught the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) symbols used in phonetic transcriptions. Finally,

many of the teachers did not advise their students on which dictionary to buy. This was especially so for teachers in the liberal arts courses, especially English. That is why the role of teachers in teaching their students how to use dictionaries is an essential part of this study.

Although research on dictionary use has been conducted elsewhere, as demonstrated in this literature review, no similar research has been conducted in Botswana. Thus, it is of great interest to conduct research on dictionary use in Botswana junior secondary schools in order to understand the dictionary use patterns.

3. Methodology

The data for this study was collected and analysed using both the quantitative and qualitative approaches. Mixing these methods, as Creswell and Plano-Clark (2011) cited in Almalki (2016, p. 219) show, enables a greater degree of understanding to be formulated than if a single approach were adopted.

The research tools used in this study are (a) a structured written questionnaire and (b) interviews. A questionnaire is the main research tool which was distributed to learners while teachers were interviewed. The questionnaire elicited quantitative information while the teachers' interviews provided qualitative information. The study used 227 subjects from two junior secondary schools – one from a village and another one from a city. Eighty-three participants were from Letlole Mosielele Junior Secondary School (in Thamaga, Kweneng district) which has a population of 400 students. One hundred and forty-four (144) participants were from Montsamaisa Junior Secondary School (in Francistown, a city in the North Eastern part of Botswana) which has a population of 810 students. The two schools were randomly chosen to capture dictionary use patterns of subjects from urban and rural areas in different parts of the country. Data was collected from three classes (Form 1, Form 2 and Form 3) in each junior secondary school. For each level, a class was randomly selected. A hundred and twenty-five (125) of the respondents were females and a hundred and two (102) were males; both groups had an age range of 13 to 15.

The second group of participants comprised English teachers from the two selected junior secondary schools. Four teachers in total were interviewed. One of the teachers in each school taught two classes which were sampled. For instance, teacher A in school Z taught both Form 1 and Form 3 English classes while teacher B in school K taught form 2 and form 3 English classes. One of the interviewed teachers in both schools only taught one sampled English class. The teachers were interviewed to balance off information collected from learners and to get a better understanding of the English language curriculum as well as the challenges faced by the learners and teachers regarding teaching the use of monolingual English dictionaries.

The data is presented in the next section in raw and percentile scores to better understand the patterns of dictionary use across classes. It is important to observe that every question was answered by every student who

participated in the study.

4. Presentation and Discussion of Results

4.1 Dictionary Encounter and Training

This section reports the results of questions that relate to the students' encounter with the dictionary and the education offered to them on dictionary use. It attempted to determine whether the students were provided with dictionaries at school, when they began using dictionaries and whether they were taught how to use a dictionary. The results of whether the learners were provided with personal dictionaries are presented in Tables 1a and 1b.

Q1. Has the school provided you with a personal dictionary?

Table 1a: Montsamaisa CJSS School provision of personal dictionaries

	Form 1			Form 2			Form 3			Overall Total
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	
Raw #	2	41	43	6	41	47	15	39	54	144
% of form	4.7	95.3	100.0	12.8	87.2	100.0	27.8	72.2	100.0	
% of All	1.4	28.5		4.2	28.5		10.4	27.1		

Table 1b: Letlole Mosielele CJSS School provision of personal dictionaries

Ques 1	Form 1			Form 2			Form 3			Overall Total
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	
Raw #	28	2	30	4	24	28	19	6	25	83
% of form	93.3	6.7	100.0	14.3	85.7	100.0	76	24	100	
% of All	33.7	2.4		4.8	28.9		22.9	7.2		

Most students (Form 1 (95.3%), Form 2 (87.2%) and Form 3 (72.2)) from Montsamaisa CJSS report that they do not have personal dictionaries. This result is similar to data from Letlole Mosielele CJSS in which most students (Form 1 (93.3%), Form 2 (14.3) Form 3 (76%)) reported that they do not have any personal dictionaries. Only the majority of Letlole Mosielele CJSS Form 1 (93.3%) students reported to have been allocated personal dictionary copies.

Although some students reported that they had personal dictionaries, interview responses from the teachers confirmed that no student owns a dictionary. They reported that students share a single dictionary in groups of 6 at Letlole Mosielele CJSS whilst at Montsamaisa CJSS the English teacher brings dictionaries to class whenever class activities require dictionary use. When asked the best way to address the issue of lack of dictionaries, one teacher responded:

I feel the government should provide more copies of dictionaries to the

schools just like they are doing with any other English textbook.

While another teacher said:

The best way is for students to be taught the importance of dictionaries in language learning before they can own personal copies so that they use them effectively knowing their importance.

The teachers' responses clarify the dictionary situation in schools. They show a grim situation, which is that students do not have personal dictionaries. The lack of personal dictionaries means that students are unable to use dictionaries independently during study period, at home or during other classes. The danger in this scenario is that learners may go through the education system with a poor dictionary culture and a weak vocabulary. As demonstrated by Yangping (2005), Ali (2012) and Hamouda (2013), dictionary ownership remains critical in a student's general education.

It was also essential to determine the learners' interest in dictionary ownership, whether they were interested in having the school provide them with personal copies of dictionaries. The results of this enquiry are presented in Tables 2a and 2b.

Q2. If you don't have a personal dictionary, would you like the school to provide you with one?

Table 2a: Letlole Mosielele CJSS Views on owning personal copies of dictionaries

	Form 1			Form 2			Form 3			Overall Total
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	
Raw #	29	0	29	25	3	28	22	3	25	82
% of form	100	0	100	89.3	10.7	100.0	88	12	100	
% of All	35.4	0		30.5	3.7		26.8	3.7		

Table 2b: Montsamaisa CJSS Views on owning personal copies of dictionaries

	Form 1			Form 2			Form 3			Overall Total
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	
Raw #	41	2	43	42	5	47	49	5	54	144
% of form	95.3	4.7	100.0	89.4	10.6	100.0	90.7	9.3	100.0	
% of All	28.5	1.4		29.2	3.5		34.0	3.5		

According to Tables 2a and 2b, there is an overwhelming desire by all students across all school forms to be allocated personal dictionaries. This finding is important since it demonstrates that learners do not have negative attitudes towards dictionary ownership; and that they are interested in owning a personal dictionary. Learners therefore need to be supported in the acquisition of personal dictionaries, so that they can benefit from

dictionary information anytime they encounter challenges with grammar, spelling, meaning and pronunciation of words whether in school or at home (Tomaszczyk, 1979).

Having established that most students are not allocated personal dictionaries and would like to own some, we wanted to establish whether students possessed dictionary skills. They were therefore asked whether they knew how to use a dictionary. The results of this question are presented in Tables 3a and 3b.

Q3. Do you know how to use a dictionary?

Table 3a: Montsamaisa CJSS Knowledge of dictionary use

	Form 1			Form 2			Form 3			Overall Total
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	
Raw #	40	3	43	38	9	47	51	3	54	144
% of form	93.0	7.0	100.0	80.9	19.1	100.0	94.4	5.6	100.0	
% of All	27.8	2.1		26.4	6.3		35.4	2.1		

Table 3b: Letlole Mosielele CJSS Knowledge of dictionary use

	Form 1			Form 2			Form 3			Overall Total
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	
Raw #	28	2	30	27	1	28	23	2	25	83
% of form	93.3	6.7	100.0	96.4	3.6	100.0	92	8	100	
% of All	33.7	2.4		32.5	1.2		27.7	2.4		

When asked if they knew how to use a dictionary, most learners reported that they knew how to do so. This is despite the fact that they had never received any formal training from their school curriculum. We therefore inquired further to establish where the learners acquired their claimed dictionary use capabilities. The first question on dictionary education is whether the students were taught dictionary use at school. The results of this question are in Tables 4a and 4b.

Q4. Have you been taught how to use a dictionary in an English Class?

Table 4a: Letlole Mosielele CJSS Education facilitated on dictionary use in an English lesson

	Form 1			Form 2			Form 3			Overall Total
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	
Raw #	20	10	30	5	23	28	23	2	25	83
% of form	66.7	33.3	100.0	17.9	82.1	100.0	92	8	100	
% of All	24.1	12.0		6.0	27.7		27.7	2.4		

Table 4b: Montsamaisa CJSS Education facilitated on dictionary use in an English lesson

	Form 1			Form 2			Form 3			Overall Total
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	
Raw #	7	36	43	17	30	47	33	21	54	144
% of form	16.3	83.7	100.0	36.2	63.8	100.0	61.1	38.9	100.0	
% of All	4.9	25.0		11.8	20.8		22.9	14.6		

Although an overwhelming majority of the students claimed to know how to use a dictionary, most students at Montsamaisa CJSS (Form 1 = 83.7%; Form 2 = 63.8%; Form 3 = 38.9%) indicated that they had never received training on dictionary use in an English class. However, most students at Letlole Mosielele CJSS (Form 1 = 66.7%; Form 2 = 17.9%; Form 3 = 92%) claimed to have received dictionary use training.

The results from Letlole Mosielele CJSS are not supported by data from teacher interviews. When teachers were asked if they offer any training to students on dictionary use, all of them indicated that they did not since they assumed that students already knew how to use a dictionary. One of the interviewed teachers observed that she did not teach dictionary use because the syllabus did not state the teaching objectives on dictionary use. The junior secondary school syllabus does not have teaching objectives on dictionary use. Instead, the dictionary is merely listed as a reference material for students in the syllabus. The English teachers' responses therefore help us reconcile the disparity in the students' answers by establishing what happens in class, which is that there is no formal teaching of dictionary use in Botswana junior secondary schools.

The observation that schools do not offer dictionary training is similar to the one made by Hamouda (2013) whose results showed that 59.7% (74) of the participants in his study did not receive any dictionary training while 40.3% (50) reported that they did. Hamouda argues that secondary schools in Saudi Arabia provide only superficial instruction in dictionary use. In his study he had asked the participants whether they received a systematic or well-planned training on dictionary use. The results showed that only 9.7% said they did. This indicates that there is hardly any training offered on dictionary use in Saudi Arabia schools. This is similar to what happens in Botswana junior secondary schools.

Dictionary education is however vital to learners as it equips them with important dictionary skills. According to Svensén (2009), dictionary education can be facilitated through regular and target-oriented use of dictionaries as an integral part of the language curriculum. In such cases, the teacher gives students dictionary-use exercises which are usually contained in special workbooks found as appendices in certain dictionaries. It is through such exercises that the teacher is able to continuously monitor the students' progress.

Apart from receiving formal dictionary education, the study enquired whether students had received dictionary training from someone other than the teacher. The results of the students’ feedback are captured in Tables 5a and 5b.

Q5. Have you received skills of using a dictionary from anyone besides your teacher?

Table 5a. Montsamaisa CJSS Education facilitated on dictionary use from some people besides the teacher

	Form 1					Form 2					Form 3					
	N	F	S	P	T	N	F	S	P	T	N	F	S	P	T	OT
Raw	7	12	14	10	43	24	11	8	4	47	15	23	8	8	54	144
% of Form	16.3	27.9	32.6	23.3	100	51.1	23.4	17.0	8.5	100	27.8	42.6	14.8	14.8	100	
% of ALL	4.9	8.3	9.7	6.9		16.7	7.6	5.6	2.8		10.4	16.0	5.6	5.6		

Key: N = Nobody; F = Friend; S = Sibling; P = Parent; T = Total; OT = Overall total

Table 5b. Letlole Mosielele CJSS Education facilitated on dictionary use from some people besides the teacher

	Form 1					Form 2					Form 3					
	N	F	S	P	T	N	F	S	P	T	N	F	S	P	T	OT
Raw	8	15	5	2	30	12	5	6	5	28	12	6	4	3	25	83
% of Form	26.6	50.0	16.6	6.6	100	42.8	17.8	21.4	17.8	100	48.0	24.0	16.0	12.0	100	
% of ALL	9.6	18.0	6.0	2.4		14.5	6.2	7.2	6.0		14.4	7.2	4.8	3.6		

Key: N = Nobody; F = Friend; S = Sibling; P = Parent; T = Total; OT = Overall total

The results of Tables 5a and 5b demonstrate that most students have received some informal skills on dictionary use from a friend, sibling or parent. This, in part, explains where learners acquired their dictionary use skills which were not offered formally at secondary school. It is not clear how good the informal skills transfer is to the students. However, since dictionary education is essential to independent learning and vocabulary development (Gonzales, 1999; Svensén, 2009), it is important that such training is not left to a random training and process, but rather learners should be trained formally in dictionary-use.

The study also tried to determine where the students used the dictionary. As the library is such a place, the students were asked whether they used a dictionary in the school library. The results of that enquiry are in Tables 6a and 6b.

Q6. Do you ever use a dictionary in the school library?

Table 6a: Montsamaisa CJSS Use of dictionaries in the school library

	Form 1					Form 2					Form 3					OT
	E	S	R	N	T	E	S	R	N	T	E	S	R	N	T	
RAW#	0	18	22	3	43	1	22	5	19	47	1	31	6	16	54	144
% of Form	0.0	41.9	51.2	7.0	100	2.1	46.8	10.6	40.4	100	1.9	57.4	11.1	29.6	100	
% of ALL	0.0	12.5	15.3	2.1	29.9	0.7	15.3	3.5	13.2	32.6	0.7	21.5	4.2	11.1	37.5	100

Key: E = Everyday; S = Sometimes; R = Rarely; N = Never; T = Total; OT = Overall total

Table 6b: Letlole Mosielele CJSS Use of dictionaries in the school library

	Form 1					Form 2					Form 3					OT
	E	S	R	N	T	E	S	R	N	T	E	S	R	N	T	
RAW#	5	24	1	0	30	1	19	5	3	28	0	24	1	0	25	83
% of Form	16.7	80	3.3	0	100	3.6	67.9	17.9	10.7	100	0	96	4	0	100	
% of ALL	6	28.9	1.2	0		1.2	22.9	6	3.6		0	28.9	1.2	0		100

Key: E = Everyday; S = Sometimes; R = Rarely; N = Never; T = Total; OT = Overall total

The results demonstrate that most students in both Montsamaisa CJSS (Form 1 = 41.9%; Form 2 = 46/8%; Form 3 = 57.4%) and Letlole Mosielele CJSS (Form 1 = 80%; Form 2 = 67.9%; Form 3 = 96%) use the dictionary sometimes. This suggests that the school libraries do have dictionaries which learners could use, should there be the need to do so. It was established during interviews with the teachers that the language classes have a library session where students are encouraged to use reference materials, read, and borrow books of their choice. As part of their library sessions, students are expected to record new words or expressions that they encounter and look them up in the dictionaries. The independent reading and use of dictionaries in the library is beneficial to learners since it increases their vocabulary and encourages leisure reading and independent research.

Apart from dictionary use in the school, we sought to find out if learners ever use a dictionary at home. The use of a dictionary at home indicates that learners engage in independent study and are developing an essential dictionary culture. The results are presented in Tables 7a and 7b.

Q7. Do you ever use a dictionary at home?

Table 7a: Letlole Mosielele CJSS Use of dictionary at home

	Form 1					Form 2					Form 3					OT
	E	S	R	N	T	E	S	R	N	T	E	S	R	N	T	
RAW#	0	26	1	3	30	3	20	1	4	28	0	22	0	3	25	83
% of Form	0.0	86.7	3.3	10.0	100	10.7	71.4	3.6	14.3	100	0.0	88.0	0.0	12.0	100	
% of ALL	0.0	31.3	1.2	3.6	36.1	3.6	24.1	1.2	4.8	33.7	0.0	26.5	0.0	3.6	30.1	100

Key: E = Everyday; S = Sometimes; R = Rarely; N = Never; T = Total; OT = Overall total

Table 7b: Montsamaisa CJSS Use of dictionary at home

	Form1					Form 2					Form 3					OT
	E	S	R	N	T	E	S	R	N	T	E	S	R	N	T	
RAW#	2	32	0	9	43	1	28	4	14	47	7	30	8	9	54	144
% of Form	4.7	74.4	0.0	20.9	100	2.1	59.6	8.5	29.8	100	13.0	55.6	14.8	16.7	100	
% of ALL	1.4	22.2	0.0	6.3	29.9	0.7	19.4	2.8	9.7	32.6	4.9	20.8	5.6	6.3	37.5	100

Key: E = Everyday; S = Sometimes; R = Rarely; N = Never; T = Total; OT = Overall total

Most participants from both schools reported that they use a dictionary “sometimes” at home. This result shows that although most students are not allocated a personal dictionary by the school, they are still able to use a dictionary at home. Our study did not resolve where the learners got dictionaries from at home. We can only speculate that they used dictionaries owned by other members of their families such as parents or siblings.

Apart from determining whether learners have dictionaries and whether they have received dictionary-use training, this study also investigated the kind of information that students looked for when they used the dictionary. The results of this enquiry follow in the next section.

4.2 The Kinds of Information Students Look Up in a Dictionary

This part of the analysis deals with different information students look up in the dictionary. It seeks to find out the most and least looked up information. We investigate whether students look for the meaning of words, check for spelling, pronunciation, synonyms, antonyms, parts of speech, etymology and morphology. The first results presented are on whether students use the dictionary for meaning. The results are presented in Tables 8a and 8b.

Q8. Statement: I use a dictionary to look up the meaning of a word.

Table 8a: Letlole Mosielele CJSS The use of a dictionary to check the meanings of words

	Form 1					Form 2					Form 3					
	M	S	R	N	T	M	S	R	N	T	M	S	R	N	T	OT
Raw #	15	14	1	0	30	8	20	0	0	28	10	13	1	1	25	83
% of Form	50.0	46.7	3.3	0	100.0	28.6	71.4	0.0	0.0	100.0	40.0	52.0	4.0	4.0	100.0	
% of ALL	18.1	16.9	1.2	0		9.6	24.1	0.0	0.0		12.0	15.7	1.2	1.2		

Key: M = Most of the time; S = Sometimes; R = Rarely; N = Never; T = Total; OT = Overall total

Table 8b: Montsamaisa CJSS The use of a dictionary to check the meanings of words

	Form 1					Form 2					Form 3					
	M	S	R	N	T	M	S	R	N	T	M	S	R	N	T	OT
Raw #	24	17	2	0	43	20	22	3	2	47	30	19	3	2	54	144
% of Form	55.8	39.5	4.7	0	100.0	42.6	46.8	6.4	4.3	100.0	55.6	35.2	5.6	3.7	100.0	
% of ALL	16.7	11.8	1.4	0		13.9	15.3	2.1	1.4		20.8	13.2	2.1	1.4		

Key: M = Most of the time; S = Sometimes; R = Rarely; N = Never; T = Total; OT = Overall total

Tables 8a and 8b show that most students in both schools use the dictionary to check for the meaning of words and expressions most of the time and sometimes. In lexicographic literature (Day, 2013; Hamouda, 2013; & Ebanéga & Moussavou, 2008), this is one of the primary reasons why students use dictionaries. Knowing the meaning of words facilitates better and easy flow of communication between language users.

Another important element that dictionary users sometimes search for is spelling. Learners were therefore questioned on whether they use dictionaries to confirm or check spelling. The results are presented in Tables 9a and 9b.

Q9. Statement: I use a dictionary to check the spelling of a word.

Table 9a: Montsamaisa CJSS The use of a dictionary to check spelling of words

	Form 1					Form 2					Form 3					OT
	M	S	R	N	T	M	S	R	N	T	M	S	R	N	T	
Raw #	21	18	2	2	43	13	22	7	5	47	13	33	3	5	54	144
% of Form	48.8	41.9	4.7	4.7	100.0	27.7	46.8	14.9	10.6	100.0	24.1	61.1	5.6	9.3	100.0	
% of ALL	14.6	12.5	1.4	1.4		9.0	15.3	4.9	3.5		9.0	22.9	2.1	3.5		

Key: M = Most of the time; S = Sometimes; R = Rarely; N = Never; T = Total; OT = Overall total

Table 9b: Letole Mosielele CJSS The use of a dictionary to check spelling of words

	Form 1					Form 2					Form 3					OT
	M	S	R	N	T	M	S	R	N	T	M	S	R	N	T	
Raw #	11	18	0	1	30	7	18	1	2	28	3	15	5	2	25	83
% of Form	36.7	60.0	0.0	3.33	100	25.0	64.3	3.6	7.1	100.0	12.0	60.0	20.0	8.0	100.0	
% of ALL	13.3	21.7	0.0	1.2		8.4	21.7	1.2	2.4		3.6	18.1	6.0	2.4		

Key: M = Most of the time; S = Sometimes; R = Rarely; N = Never; T = Total; OT = Overall total

Most students reported that they used the dictionary to search for spelling most of the time or sometimes. In spite of the students' response, most interviewed teachers complained that many of the students across various levels made numerous spelling errors, especially when they wrote essays and letters. The teachers reported that they often gave students spelling exercises and that they always recommended and encouraged students to use dictionaries when attempting the tasks given on spelling. Perhaps the challenge arises from the fact that students at junior secondary school in general do not have personal dictionaries which they can use to familiarise themselves with English spelling peculiarities.

Our study also measured whether students use the dictionary for pronunciation. The answers to that question are captured in Tables 10a and 10b.

Q10. Statement: I use a dictionary when I want to know how a word is pronounced.

Table 10a: Letlole Mosielele The use of a dictionary to check pronunciation of words

	Form 1					Form 2					Form 3					OT
	M	S	R	N	T	M	S	R	N	T	M	S	R	N	T	
Raw #	9	17	4	0	30	5	10	7	6	28	3	12	6	4	25	83
% of Form	30.0	56.7	13.3	0	100.0	17.9	35.7	25.0	21.4	100.0	12.0	48.0	24.0	16.0	100.0	
% of ALL	10.8	20.5	4.8	0		6.0	12.0	8.4	7.2		3.6	14.5	7.2	4.8		

Key: M = Most of the time; S = Sometimes; R = Rarely; N = Never; T = Total; OT = Overall total

Table 10b: Montsamaisa CJSS The use of a dictionary to check pronunciation of words

	Form 1					Form 2					Form 3					OT
	M	S	R	N	T	M	S	R	N	T	M	S	R	N	T	
Raw #	12	18	5	8	43	9	12	8	18	47	9	27	6	12	54	144
% of Form	27.9	41.9	11.6	18.6	100.0	19.1	25.5	17.0	38.3	100.0	16.7	50.0	11.1	22.2	100.0	
% of ALL	8.3	12.5	3.5	5.6		6.3	8.3	5.6	12.5		6.3	18.8	4.2	8.3		

Key: M = Most of the time; S = Sometimes; R = Rarely; N = Never; T = Total; OT = Overall total

The results reveal that most students check the dictionary for pronunciation information most of the time and sometimes. This is probably because pronunciation in dictionaries is written in phonemic script. Understanding how to read the phonemic transcription of dictionary entries is essential to understanding how a dictionary entry is pronounced. However, many teachers of English at secondary school and their students lack this skill.

Furthermore, when teachers were asked if they ever use a dictionary in class to teach pronunciation, one of them responded as follows:

I do use a dictionary in class but I only use it to address meaning and spelling challenges, I hardly use it to address pronunciation, unless if I want to confirm how a word is pronounced even though it is always difficult to understand and explain transcription to my students

The printed dictionary therefore presents a challenge to its users since,

unlike an electronic dictionary, it does not have audio files that users can play back to listen to pronunciation. Since most dictionary users have a minimum knowledge of phonemic transcription, the dictionary’s phonemic transcriptions are of little assistance to their quest for pronunciation information. The frustration with the dictionary phonemic transcriptions has been reported widely in the literature (Ali, 2012; Hamouda, 2013; and Day, 2013), and is confirmed by this study.

We also questioned participants on the use of the dictionary to find synonyms. A knowledge and use of synonyms help a student avoid using the same word repeatedly. The respondents’ answers on synonyms are captured on Tables 11a and 11b.

Q11. Statement: I use a dictionary to check words with similar meanings.

Table 11a: Montsamaisa CJSS The use of a dictionary to check words with similar meanings

	Form 1					Form 2					Form 3					
	M	S	R	N	T	M	S	R	N	T	M	S	R	N	T	OT
Raw #	8	26	2	7	43	8	25	4	10	47	8	31	5	10	54	144
% of Form	18.6	60.5	4.7	16.3	100	17.0	53.2	8.5	21.3	100	14.8	57.4	9.3	18.5	100	
% of ALL	5.6	18.1	1.4	4.9		5.6	17.4	2.8	6.9		5.6	21.5	3.5	6.9		

Key: M = Most of the time; S = Sometimes; R = Rarely; N = Never; T = Total; OT = Overall total

Table 11b: Letlole Mosielele CJSS The use of a dictionary to check words with similar meanings

	Form 1					Form 2					Form 3					
	M	S	R	N	T	M	S	R	N	T	M	S	R	N	T	OT
Raw #	7	14	4	5	30	3	16	4	5	28	7	13	3	2	25	83
% of Form	23.0	46.6	13.3	16.6	100	10.7	57.1	14.3	17.9	100	28.0	52.0	12.0	8.0	100	
% of ALL	8.4	16.8	4.8	6.0		3.6	19.2	4.8	6.0		8.4	15.6	3.6	2.4		

Key: M = Most of the time; S = Sometimes; R = Rarely; N = Never; T = Total; OT = Overall total

Results show that across all classes in both schools, most students indicated that they use the dictionary to search for synonyms. Only a few students indicated that they never search the dictionary for synonyms. Synonymy seems to be an important element that students use a dictionary to check for. Ebanéga and Moussavou (2008) have found that a monolingual dictionary

provides learners with invaluable lexical relation information through synonyms and antonyms.

Just like synonyms, the knowledge of a language's antonym structure is essential and serves as an additional strategy for increasing a language learner's vocabulary. We therefore asked the participants to indicate whether they used a dictionary to search for antonyms. The results are presented in Tables 12a and 12b.

Q12 Statement: I use a dictionary to check words with opposite meanings.

Table 12a: Letlole Mosielele CJSS The use of a dictionary to check opposite meanings of words

	Form 1					Form 2					Form 3					
	M	S	R	N	T	M	S	R	N	T	M	S	R	N	T	OT
Raw #	9	18	1	2	30	5	13	6	4	28	5	12	5	3	25	83
% of Form	30.0	60.0	3.3	6.7	100	17.9	46.4	21.4	14.3	100	20.0	48.0	20.0	12.0	100	
% of ALL	10.8	21.7	1.2	2.4		6.0	15.7	7.2	4.8		6.0	14.5	6.0	3.6		

Key: M = Most of the time; S = Sometimes; R = Rarely; N = Never; T = Total; OT = Overall total

Table 12b: Montsamaisa CJSS The use of a dictionary to check opposite meanings of words

	Form 1					Form 2					Form 3					
	M	S	R	N	T	M	S	R	N	T	M	S	R	N	T	OT
Raw #	0	32	7	4	43	0	24	4	19	47	0	40	8	6	54	144
% of Form	0.0	74.4	16.3	9.3	100	0.0	51.1	8.5	40.4	100	0.0	74.1	14.8	11.1	100	
% of ALL	0.0	22.2	4.9	2.8		0.0	16.7	2.8	13.2		0.0	27.8	5.6	4.2		

Key: M = Most of the time; S = Sometimes; R = Rarely; N = Never; T = Total; OT = Overall total

Just like in the case of synonyms, most learners, in both schools, report that they use dictionaries to search for antonyms sometimes or most of the time.

It is clear from the results that most students use dictionaries to check both synonyms and antonyms. This may be because the English syllabus for form 2 students has objectives on semantic relations and therefore teachers and students see the need to devote some time to the study of these lexical relations. While this may be the case, some of the interviewed teachers indicated that they discouraged students from using dictionaries during this exercise to avoid dictionary dependency and promote critical thinking skills

in class. This is most unfortunate since students need multiple exercises with dictionaries to develop their vocabulary and sharpen their dictionary use skills.

A good illustrative sentence supplies a specific context which helps to define the word being illustrated (Bartholomew & Schoenhals, 1983) and demonstrate its use better (Svensén, 2009). Dictionary example sentences therefore provide an essential context which demonstrates how a word is used. We therefore questioned the participants on whether they consult a dictionary to read example sentences which form part of an entry. The results of this question are given in Tables 13a and 13b.

Q13. Statement: I use a dictionary to see examples of how a word is used.

Table 13a: Montsamaisa CJSS The use of a dictionary to check examples on usage of words

	Form 1					Form 2					Form 3					
	M	S	R	N	T	M	S	R	N	T	M	S	R	N	T	OT
Raw #	10	21	5	7	43	10	15	10	12	47	14	23	8	9	54	144
% of Form	23.3	48.8	11.6	16.3	100.0	21.3	31.9	21.3	25.5	100.0	25.9	42.6	14.8	16.7	100.0	
% of ALL	6.9	14.6	3.5	4.9		6.9	10.4	6.9	8.3		9.7	16.0	5.6	6.3		

Key: M = Most of the time; S = Sometimes; R = Rarely; N = Never; T = Total; OT = Overall total

Table 13b: Letlole Mosielele CJSS The use of a dictionary to check examples on usage of words

	Form 1					Form 2					Form 3					
	M	S	R	N	T	M	S	R	N	T	M	S	R	N	T	OT
Raw #	8	11	5	6	30	5	17	4	2	28	7	12	2	4	25	83
% of Form	26.7	36.7	16.7	20	100.0	17.9	60.7	14.3	7.1	100.0	28.0	48.0	8.0	16.0	100.0	
% of ALL	9.6	13.3	6.0	7.2		6.0	20.5	4.8	2.4		8.4	14.5	2.4	4.8		

Key: M = Most of the time; S = Sometimes; R = Rarely; N = Never; T = Total; OT = Overall total

The results indicate that most students checked the dictionary for example sentences most of the time or sometimes. Example sentences demonstrate how a word is used in context. Ebanéga and Moussavou (2008) report that in their study only 37% of the students reported checking examples on how a word is used. The study suggests that generally students did not check word usage in a dictionary. However, our study indicates that most students consulted the dictionary for example sentences most of the time

and sometimes. This result is positive for Botswana CJSS since reading dictionary example sentences can affect a student's understanding of how a word is used contextually.

The final question pertains to whether students check words' parts of speech in a dictionary.

Q14. Statement: I use a dictionary to check what parts of speech a word is (noun, verb, adjectives etc.)

Table 14a: Letlole Mosielele CJSS The use of dictionaries to check parts of speech of words

	Form 1					Form 2					Form 3					OT
	M	S	R	N	T	M	S	R	N	T	M	S	R	N	T	
Raw #	10	16	3	1	30	7	13	3	5	28	5	12	5	3	25	83
% of Form	33.3	53.3	10.0	3.3	100.0	25.0	46.4	10.7	17.9	100.0	20.0	48.0	20.0	12.0	100.0	
% of ALL	12.0	19.3	3.6	1.2		8.4	15.7	3.6	6.0		6.0	14.5	6.0	3.6		

Key: M = Most of the time; S = Sometimes; R = Rarely; N = Never; T = Total; OT = Overall total

Table 14b: Letlole Mosielele CJSS The use of dictionaries to check parts of speech of words

	Form 1					Form 2					Form 3					OT
	M	S	R	N	T	M	S	R	N	T	M	S	R	N	T	
Raw #	10	16	6	11	43	5	18	9	15	47	7	23	11	13	54	144
% of Form	23.3	37.2	14.0	25.6	100.0	10.6	38.3	19.1	31.9	100.0	13.0	42.6	20.4	24.1	100.0	
% of ALL	6.9	11.1	4.2	7.6		3.5	12.5	6.3	10.4		4.9	16.0	7.6	9.0		

Key: M = Most of the time; S = Sometimes; R = Rarely; N = Never; T = Total; OT = Overall total

Most respondents reported that they use the dictionary to check for the part of speech of a word most of the time and sometimes. A similar study, Ebanéga and Moussavou (2008), found that only 20% of the students reported that they checked the part of speech of a word. This is a small number when it is compared to the one recorded in this study. It is however understandable that Form 1 to Form 3 students would need to consult the dictionary for parts of speech since their English language skills are still developing.

During interview sessions, one teacher pointed out that she sometimes recommended a dictionary to her students, especially because they lacked knowledge on how to identify words that can have many parts of speech depending on context of use. She gave the example of the word "fast" which

can function as an adjective, an adverb or a noun depending on how it is used in a sentence. In addition, Svensén (2009) states that the use of part of speech information in a dictionary is closely related to the question of what constitutes a headword. Information about parts of speech is needed primarily in dictionaries intended entirely or partly for finding information and not so much for when someone is producing a piece of writing.

5. Conclusion

This study has analysed the English monolingual dictionary-use patterns of students in Botswana junior secondary schools. It found that majority of the students have access to dictionaries at school. Majority also do not own personal copies of dictionaries, but that they share the few copies available during class exercises or when they are in the library. Although junior secondary school students do not own personal copies of dictionaries, many of them would like to have them, so that they could benefit from the dictionary's rich lexical information. Majority of students did not receive training in dictionary use in schools because their teachers do not facilitate dictionary education in the schools for various reasons. Dictionary education is not clearly outlined in the school curriculum and many teachers cannot make a direct link between dictionary skills and the students' final examination requirements. Additionally, many teachers do not teach dictionary use because they were never trained on how to deliver dictionary education to students. There is therefore a need to re-examine dictionary use and education at junior secondary schools in Botswana. Teachers need to be trained on dictionary use, so that they can better pass such skills to learners. The use of dictionaries must be considered integral to independent learning and must not be treated as peripheral. Dictionary education and use must also not be restricted to English classes because students are taught in the medium of English in Science, Mathematics, Social Studies, Agriculture, and other subjects. A dictionary is not only central to the acquisition and development of a learner's growing vocabulary, it is critical to a better understanding of an array of polysemous meanings of a word since it provides a learner with contextual information and collocational information for them to understand the various shades of a word's meaning. It is the key to a better understanding of other subjects in the curriculum and therefore must not be restricted only to language classes.

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