CHALLENGES AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS DICTIONARIES IN BOTSWANA JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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Abstract
Dictionaries are important repositories of language and provide important details of a language such as meaning, spelling, pronunciation, morphology, usage, and grammar. This study investigates attitudes of learners in Botswana junior secondary schools towards dictionaries and dictionary formats to determine the challenges they face in using dictionaries. The study uses a survey to elicit information from students and teachers from two schools. The study reveals that a dictionary is an important learning tool for most students. Electronic dictionaries in particular are useful because they are quick and easy to use while book dictionaries are preferred because they are easy to understand. The greatest difficulty encountered by students is failure to understand the definition of words and failure to select the right meaning where a word has multiple meanings. The study also reveals that although teachers do not offer dictionary education to students, they recommend a dictionary when the need arises, such as when students have spelling problems, or when they need to check the definition of a vocabulary item.

Keywords: Dictionaries, lexicography, Setswana, schools, education

1.0 History of dictionaries in Botswana

Dictionaries have been used in Botswana schools for a long time. The first English-Setswana dictionary to be published was in 1875 by the Reverend John Brown. English and Setswana dictionaries are used by learners across all educational levels from primary to senior secondary school level. English dictionaries used by learners in schools are English monolingual learner dictionaries published outside Botswana, whilst Setswana dictionaries used in schools are both bilingual and monolingual dictionaries published in Botswana.

According to Otlogetswe (2007, p. 26) Setswana has a long lexicographic tradition characterised by low dictionary production which may be traced to the first published Setswana dictionary *Lokwalo loa Mahuku a Secwana le Seeneles* (1875) compiled by John Brown of the London Missionary Society. The enlarged and revised version of the dictionary was published in 1895 and reprinted in 1914, 1921, and 1925. The Setswana monolingual dictionary tradition started in 1976 with *Thanodi ya Setswana ya Dikole* (Kgasa, 1976), targeting primary school pupils. In 1998, Kgasa and Tsonope published the second monolingual dictionary *Thanodi ya Setswana* which was for many years the definitive monolingual Setswana dictionary in South

Africa and Botswana. In 2008, a large Setswana dictionary of about 600 pages was compiled by the Setswana National Lexicographic Unit (SNLU) based in Mafikeng. It is called *Thanodi ya Setswana* (Mareme, 2008). This dictionary is not widely used in Botswana. The largest monolingual dictionary is *Tlhalosi ya Medi ya Setswana* (Otlogetswe, 2012) which is used widely both in Botswana and South Africa as a general dictionary. The design of *Tlhalosi ya Medi ya Setswana* is discussed in some detail in Otlogetswe (2013a).

Much of the Setswana lexicographic tradition is however dominated not by monolingual but by bilingual dictionaries. The origin of Setswana bilingual lexicography is traced to John Brown's bilingual dictionary published in 1875 and to Robert Moffat's Setswana version of the Gospel of St Luke produced in 1830, which has definitions of difficult words in its back pages. Cole (1955) dates Setswana lexicographic research to the plant names compilation of Miller (1936) and the list of kinship terms of Van Warmelo (1931). Mathumo (1993) is a revision of Brown's 1925 dictionary into what is now the *Setswana–English–Setswana Dictionary*. Prinsloo (2004) suggests how this dictionary may be revised. He argues that its revision should include the design and use of a multidimensional Ruler and Block System that measures and balances alphabetical stretches. Such alphabetical stretches would determine the time spent on developing each entry, the average length of articles and the number of pages per alphabetical category. Cole (1995) compiled a dictionary of plants and animals called *Setswana–Animals and Plants* (*Setswana–Ditshedi le Ditlhare*). It is a bi-directional bilingual dictionary, Setswana to English and English to Setswana, with some of the entries included with their Latin cognates. The publication by Créissels and Chebanne (2000), *Dictionnaire Français–Setswana Thanodi Sefora–Setswana*, is the only French-Setswana bilingual dictionary and its primary target group is students of French at secondary school and university. It was the first Setswana dictionary with Setswana phonemic transcriptions, though this part of the dictionary is limited. In 2007, Otlogetswe published a smaller uni-directional bilingual dictionary, the *English–Setswana Dictionary*, for use as a reference work in Botswana primary schools. Cole and Moncho–Warren (2012) published a bidirectional bilingual dictionary Setswana–English, English–Setswana dictionary of nearly 1200 pages titled *Macmillan Setswana and English Illustrated Dictionary*. The dictionary is "intended for use by scholars and teachers at tertiary level, and in libraries (Otlogetswe, 2012, p. 535). *The Oxford English-Setswana, Setswana-English School Dictionary* (Otlogetswe, 2013b) by Oxford University Press was compiled to satisfy the needs of Botswana secondary school learners.

The only Setswana trilingual dictionary, Setswana, English and Afrikaans is *Dikišinare ya Setswana English Afrikaans Dictionary/Woordeboek* (Snyman et al., 1990) whose target is secondary school and university users. This dictionary has proved useful in the South African market where Setswana, English and Afrikaans are official languages.

The discussion of the Setswana monolingual, bilingual and trilingual dictionaries presents an important background to this study since it maps out the dictionary landscape in Botswana.

Different types of dictionaries cater for different needs of learners. The most common dictionary types are the monolingual and the bilingual dictionaries. A monolingual dictionary consists of an alphabetical list of words or expressions in one language while a bilingual dictionary translates words from one language to another (Landau, 1989). It assumes that one of the languages is the user's native language. According to Atkins (1985) bilingual and monolingual dictionaries show systematic variations in their approach to the headword list. That is, in a monolingual dictionary no attempt is made to cover the whole vocabulary; the assumption being that having mastered the most frequent words in the language the learner will graduate to a native speakers' dictionary. Bilingual dictionaries generally have a much more flexible approach to the headword list, which may vary from the few thousand most frequent items. In addition, Waring (2001) asserts that bilingual dictionaries provide a faster way of getting the meaning for many students and can be helpful for students who do not have enough language ability to grasp new vocabulary. Moreover, Béjoint and Moulin (1987), cited in Laufer and Hadar (1997, p. 189), state that bilingual dictionaries are ideal for quick consultation, while monolingual dictionaries, though difficult to use, have the extra merit of directly introducing the user to the lexical system of the L2 (Kosem, et al., 2019).

Other dictionaries which are used by learners include learner dictionaries, picture dictionaries, multimedia dictionaries, production dictionaries and usage dictionaries. A learner dictionary is written for foreign language learners and contains simple definitions. Examples of learner dictionary include an *Elementary Oxford Essential Dictionary* (Waters, 2012), *Intermediate Oxford ESL Dictionary* (Ruse et al., 1991) and *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary* (Turnbull et al., 2005). A usage dictionary is a dictionary in which vocabulary items are used in particular contexts particularly with regards to their meanings. Examples of usage dictionaries include *Oxford Idioms Dictionary for Learners of English* (Parkinson, 2007), *Oxford Phrasal Verbs Dictionary for Learners of English* (McIntosh, 2006) and *The Oxford Collocations Dictionary for Students of English* (McIntosh et al., 2002). A picture dictionary illustrates the meanings of vocabulary items through pictorial images, an example is *The Oxford Picture Dictionary* (Shapiro, 1978).

Several studies have revealed that the dictionary that is mostly preferred by learners of English as a second language is a bilingual dictionary as learners feel they it is practical and easy to use over any other type 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 will help them acquire a foreign language more effectively (Ali, 2012).

Although research on dictionary attitudes has been conducted elsewhere (Ebanéga & Moussavou, 2008; Ali, 2012), no study on attitudes towards dictionary use and challenges associated with dictionary use has been conducted in Botswana, which provides a justification for this study. This study therefore aims to investigate the Botswana junior secondary school learners' attitudes towards English monolingual dictionaries they have been exposed to because they are the most widely used dictionaries in schools.

2.0 Aim of the study

The main aim of this study is to investigate attitudes of learners in Botswana junior secondary schools towards dictionaries they have been exposed to. It assesses their attitudes towards dictionary formats to determine the challenges learners face in using dictionaries.

3.0 Objectives of the study

The following are therefore the objectives of this study: a) to assess the attitude of the Botswana junior secondary school students towards the English monolingual dictionaries they have been exposed to, b) to determine the challenges encountered by Botswana junior secondary school students when using dictionaries, and c) to evaluate the role played by teachers in addressing the challenges and attitudes of junior secondary school students towards dictionaries.

4.0 Literature review
4.1 Dictionary challenges and attitudes

Students are usually confronted by language problems in the absence or presence of language teachers. Such problems may include spelling, meaning or pronunciation of terms. A dictionary can, therefore, become a useful tool in addressing language problems that learners encounter. The following studies have investigated student challenges and attitudes towards dictionaries**.**

Ebanéga and Moussavou (2008) conducted a study on dictionary use among 100 undergraduate and postgraduate Gabonese students at the University of Stellenbosch and Cape Peninsula University of Technology in South Africa. The objectives of their study were to gather information about the frequency of the use of dictionaries, difficulties with the lookup process, the causes of the difficulties, the instruction learners received to acquire dictionary skills, and to investigate users' attitudes towards different reference books, general dictionaries, bilingual dictionaries, and encyclopaedic dictionaries.

The results indicated that most participants show a preference for a bilingual dictionary than a general monolingual dictionary, followed by a thesaurus and encyclopaedia and lastly a specialised dictionary. This finding was similar to that of Tomaszczyk (1979) and Baxter (1980) who found that a larger percentage of students they studied preferred using a bilingual dictionary over any other type of dictionary. Ebanéga and Moussavou further found that 76% of the participants sometimes did not find the information they were looking for in a dictionary. The greatest part of the challenges that confronted participants were difficulties with the dictionary itself. Sixty-three percent of the students believed that there is insufficient information that they require in the dictionary. Others relate the problems to the unclear layout of the dictionary, lack of dictionary skills, not reading the user instructions and lack of dictionary knowledge. From a user point of view, dictionary skills need to be taught to users to avoid difficulties in dictionary consultation (Ebanéga & Moussavou, 2008).

Hamouda (2013) conducted a study on patterns of dictionary use by learners. The study sampled 124 Saudi students who studied English as a foreign language (EFL) at Qassim University in Saudi Arabia. The objectives were to identify types of dictionaries used by Saudi students, the frequency of use, as well as the lexical information searched for. Hamouda found that participants favoured bilingual dictionaries over monolingual dictionaries, which, at 40.3% use, is the least frequently used type of dictionary by Saudi EFL learners.

Similar to Hamouda's research, Laufer and Hadar (1997) and other researchers such as Tomaszczyk (1979), Baxter (1980), Ebanéga and Moussavou (2008) and Ali (2012) have discovered that participants prefer bilingual dictionaries over monolingual dictionaries. This finding is inconsistent with the views of most teachers and language teaching methodologists who highly recommend the monolingual dictionary (Hamouda, 2013). For example, the results of Ali (2012) reveal that most teachers prefer their students to use monolingual dictionaries because they believe these dictionaries will help learners acquire a foreign language more effectively.

Hamouda's results indicated that 78% of the Saudi EFL learners face a challenge of identifying the right word-meaning in an entry. 'Cannot find the word sought' is reported to be the second most frequently encountered problem with 66.9%. In the interviews, some interviewees complained that they could not find new words in their dictionaries, including technical terms and those read in newspapers. This finding is similar to the one identified by Ebanéga and Moussavou (2008) who report that 75% of the students found specialized technical terms as the most difficult type of information to find in a dictionary.

4.2 Electronic dictionaries in schools

Online and electronic dictionaries have become popular for their many advantages making them beneficial to students (Zheng & Wang, 2016). Unlike in Botswana where students are not permitted to use gadgets such as personal phones in schools, in other countries such as China, students freely use phones and have access to electronic dictionaries in class.

Yanping (2005) analysed college student's skills and strategies in dictionary use. The survey was carried on 80 non-English major students from the Computer Science Department at Huizhou College in China. Questionnaire and individual interviews were the main methods of data collection. The results reveal that although the students had obtained some elementary skills for looking up a word in a dictionary, most students failed in fully utilizing a dictionary and knew little about effective ways of dictionary consultation. This was because students lacked training and direction in dictionary use. Also, among the electronic dictionary users, most admitted that their electronic dictionary did not contain information like illustrations or collocations. Moreover, the participants complained about the heaviness in carrying a paper dictionary and its slowness of use which is why they preferred electronic dictionaries for the sake of convenience and time saving (Yanping, 2005).

The results further indicate that around 40% of the students did not adopt effective ways of looking up items in a dictionary. They performed poorly in strategies of determining, selecting, extracting, and using information when consulting a dictionary. Seventy percent used a pocket electronic dictionary with the declared advantages of convenience, having multiple functions and being user friendly. The results further reveal that 82% of the students are not good at utilizing reference tools and they consult the dictionary less than five times a week (Yanping, 2005).

Zheng and Wang (2016) studied the functionality of electronic dictionaries as well as determine why they are popular in an English as a foreign language (EFL) class. They observed a number of differences that existed between the traditional paper dictionary and the electronic ones. An electronic dictionary is faster in search speed, lighter in weight, smaller in size and more mobile than the paper one (Zheng & Wang, 2016, p. 146). The use of electronic dictionaries has some disadvantages. They are often very disturbing when students use them in the classroom. The sounds from electronic dictionaries can be very annoying or surprising to the teacher and other students who are busy doing their work. Zheng and Wang pointed out that electronic dictionaries can inhibit student's guessing skills and contextualized thinking in vocabulary acquisition. Moreover, EFL learners tend to separate words from the context and not realise that using context would help them understand the meanings.

Wu et al. (2016) studied college students' attitudes towards electronic dictionaries. The objectives were to find why learners prefer electronic dictionaries over traditional printed dictionaries and to find ways of improving electronic dictionaries in English learning. Copies of a questionnaire were distributed to college students online to collect information about reasons why many college students prefer electronic dictionaries, disadvantages of electronic dictionaries and how to improve the effectiveness of electronic dictionaries. Besides questionnaire survey, comparative analysis was also used to compare electronic dictionaries with paper dictionaries. When compared with paper dictionaries, electronic dictionaries have several disadvantages. The results revealed that most respondents believe the interpretation and examples are not authoritative enough and they have fewer entries. Respondents report that they often find the number of entries in electronic dictionaries less than the one in a paper dictionary (Wu et al. 2016). Results also showed that 90.91% of the respondents believe that the excessive use of electronic dictionary weakens learning ability and reduces the guessing work. This is consistent with Zheng and Wang (2016) who point that electronic dictionary inhibit students guessing skills.

This section served to explore studies on challenges and attitudes to dictionaries in different parts of the world. The studies focused on different types and formats of dictionaries that are used and preferred by students and the challenges encountered by students when using the dictionary, which is what the current study is investigating. As has been revealed above, the most preferred type of dictionary by students is a bilingual dictionary whilst teachers encourage students to use a monolingual dictionary. Additionally, most of the students do not use a dictionary fully and effectively as some of the participants had difficulties finding the

appropriate meaning of a word in question. It was also revealed that most of the participants did not take advantage of other dictionary features such as collocations and illustrations.

5.0 Methodology
5.1 The study design

The study used mixed methods, quantitative and qualitative approaches, for data collection. Creswell and Plano-Clark (2011), cited in Almalki (2016, p. 219), observe that mixed method approach enables a greater degree of understanding to be formulated than if a single approach were adopted to specific studies. The mixed methods approach was used mainly because dataset from quantitative approach (Questionnaire) was augmented by data from qualitative approach (Interview).

5.2 Data collection instruments

The research tools used in this study are a structured written questionnaire and interviews. The questionnaire was the main research tool distributed to learners and provided quantitative information while interviews were used with teachers and provided qualitative information. The questionnaire consisted of 20 questions which addressed objectives one and two of the study. The questions asked were based on students' attitudes on dictionaries they have been exposed to, preferences on dictionary formats (paper vs electronic dictionaries), and the challenges they encounter when using dictionaries. The interviews consisted of 14 questions in total. The questions asked were based on the role teachers play in addressing challenges faced by students when using dictionaries. The interview addressed objective three of the study.

5.3 Research subjects

The study had 227 language learner subjects from two different junior secondary schools. Eighty-three (83) 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 schools were chosen because the study wanted to engage participants from an urban area and rural area to cancel out any rural or urban bias. Junior secondary schools were selected deliberately because pupils in junior secondary school are believed to have become independent learners after transitioning from primary school. They are introduced to a different learning setup and, they relatively play a more active role in the learning process, hence they are a suitable target for the study.

Data was collected from three classes—Form 1 class, Form 2 class and Form 3 class—in each junior secondary school and in each of the junior secondary schools. The total number of participants from both schools were 73 Form 1 students, 75 Form 2 students and 79 Form 3 students. Consent was sought from the headteachers, English teachers and the participants. The respondents were both females and males with 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. 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, teachers, and the school in general in the teaching of dictionary skills.

6.0 Data analysis and results

The following section analyses data solicited from the participants; it examines their responses and presents them in tables as quantitative data. The data were processed using Microsoft Excel and descriptive statistics was used to gain a better understanding of the data. The results of the analysis are presented below. They cover the two broad areas of attitudes of learners towards dictionaries (S1-S10) and difficulties encountered by learners in their use of dictionaries (S11-S20).

6.1 Attitudes towards dictionaries

This part of data analysis looks at the attitudes of the participants towards dictionaries: whether they like using dictionaries or not, and if they value dictionaries in their studies.

S 1. I do not like using a dictionary.

Table 1: The dislike of dictionaries

RESPONSES	FORM 1		FORM 2		FORM 3		TOTAL	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
YES	3	4	9	12	8	10	20	9
NO	70	96	66	88	71	90	207	91
TOTAL	73	100	75	100	79	100	227	100

Most of the students, 91% (207), report that they like using a dictionary whilst 9% (20) report that they do not like using dictionaries. Even though there are those who dislike the use of dictionaries, most of the students (Form 1 = 96%, Form 2 = 88%, Form 3 = 90%) like to use a dictionary mainly because of its importance in language learning.

Comparing the results obtained by Hamouda (2013) with those of the current study, Hamouda records 35% of students reporting that they do not like using dictionaries and only 65% indicated that they like using dictionaries. A high number of students who do not like dictionaries is recorded by Hamouda as compared to the current study where 9% of the students are not in favour of dictionaries. Nonetheless, the results in both studies reveal that most of the students are in favour of using a dictionary. This information is important to both language teachers and lexicographers since it demonstrates positive reception to dictionaries by learners. Language teachers can therefore plan dictionary lessons with the knowledge that learners have a positive attitude towards dictionaries.

S2. A dictionary is an important learning tool for me.

Table 2: Dictionary as an important learning tool

RESPONSES	FORM 1		FORM 2		FORM 3		TOTAL	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
YES	73	100	71	95	78	99	222	98
NO	0	0	4	5	1	1	5	2
TOTAL	73	100	75	100	79	100	227	100

Results in Table 2 show that a dictionary is considered an important learning tool for most of the students. All Form 1 students (100%) agree that a dictionary is important in learning, followed by Form 3 students with 99% and lastly Form 2 students with 95%. Only an insignificant number of 2% (5) of the students report that a dictionary is not important to their learning process. This finding is important since it demonstrates that learners consider a dictionary an integral part of their learning process.

S3. I find the use of dictionaries helpful when I prepare for examinations and tests.

Table 3: The significance of dictionaries during preparation for examinations and tests

RESPONSES	FORM 1		FORM 2		FORM 3		TOTAL	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
YES	65	92	57	76	64	81	188	83
NO	5	8	18	24	15	19	39	17
TOTAL	73	100	75	100	79	100	227	100

Table 3 reveals that most students find the use of dictionaries helpful during preparation for examination and test: with 92% Form 1 students reporting that a dictionary is helpful during examinations, followed by Form 3 with 81% and lastly Form 2 with 76%. The results are different from those recorded by Hamouda (2013) who found that most of the students, 55.6% (69), do not like the use of dictionaries during preparation for examinations while only 44.4% (55) of the students reported that they used dictionaries during examinations. It is evident from the results of Tables 1, 2 and 3 that students in the current study have in general a very strong positive view of dictionaries.

6.2 Dictionary format

This subsection looks at whether the students like a printed dictionary and if they have had an encounter with an electronic dictionary. The subsection also considers reasons why students like a printed or electronic dictionary.

S4. I prefer a dictionary in a book format.

Table 4: Students preference of book dictionary

RESPONSES	FORM 1		FORM 2		FORM 3		TOTAL	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
YES	48	66	42	57	56	71	146	64
NO	25	34	33	43	23	29	81	36
TOTAL	73	100	75	100	79	100	227	100

Majority of the students, with 64% (146), report that they prefer a book dictionary whilst 36% (81) do not. The results reveal that most students prefer using a book dictionary possibly because they do not have easy access to electronic dictionaries in school since electronic gadgets like phones and laptops are not allowed in school premises. Besides this, book dictionaries are readily available in school libraries and sometimes in class. Although printed dictionaries are not enough for all students, they fully benefit from and seem to prefer them in large numbers. Form 3 students have the highest number of students, 56 (71%), who prefer a book dictionary compared to students at other levels. This is probably because they are advanced in learning and are likely to use them more often.

S5. Reasons why I like a book dictionary (It is easy to carry around)

Table 5: Reasons for liking a book dictionary (it is easy to carry around)

RESPONSES	FORM 1		FORM 2		FORM 3		TOTAL	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
YES	53	73	22	29	35	44	110	48
NO	20	27	53	71	45	56	117	52
TOTAL	73	100	75	100	79	100	227	100

In response to why the students like a book dictionary, Table 5 shows that 48% (110) report that it is easy to carry around, whilst the majority with 52% (117) report that it is not easy to carry around probably because the dictionaries provided in schools are big and heavy. Of all the respondents, the greatest number that did not prefer printed dictionaries is found amongst Form 2 students. Seventy one percent of them do not believe that the printed dictionary is easy to carry around. This finding demonstrates that although learners don't mind using a printed dictionary, many don't like carrying it around, suggesting that they would prefer to use it either in class or at home without having to carry it around.

S6. Reasons why I like a book dictionary (It is easy to understand)

Table 6: Reasons for liking a book dictionary (it is easy to understand)

RESPONSES	FORM 1		FORM 2		FORM 3		TOTAL	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
YES	68	93	71	95	67	85	206	91
NO	5	7	4	5	12	15	21	9
TOTAL	73	100	75	100	79	100	227	100

Table 6 reveals that 91% (206) of the students prefer a book dictionary because it is easy to understand. This preference is spread across different classes since most students find a printed dictionary easy to understand (Form 1 = 93%, Form 2 = 95% and Form 3 = 85%). Only 9% (21) of the students do not find a book dictionary easy to understand.

S7. I have used a dictionary in a computer or phone.

Table 7: Students use of electronic dictionaries

RESPONSES	FORM 1		FORM 2		FORM 3		TOTAL	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
YES	48	66	49	65	53	67	150	66
NO	25	34	26	35	26	33	77	34
TOTAL	73	100	75	100	79	100	227	100

When asked if they had used electronic dictionaries before, 66% (150) of the students report that they had used it before. Amongst the students who responded positively to the statement, Form 3 students have the highest number of 53 students. The results show that even though students do not have access to their phones and laptops in school, majority of them know about electronic dictionaries and have used them before.

S8. Reasons why I like a dictionary in a phone or a computer (Quick and easy to use)

Table 8: Reasons for liking electronic dictionaries (quick and easy to use)

RESPONSES	FORM 1		FORM 2		FORM 3		TOTAL	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
YES	61	84	65	87	66	84	192	85
NO	12	16	10	13	13	16	35	15
TOTAL	73	100	75	100	79	100	227	100

When asked why they like an electronic dictionary, Table 8 shows that 85% (192) of students report that it is quick and easy to use while 15% (35) report that they did not find an electronic dictionary quick and easy to use. The results are consistent with those of Hamouda (2013) who indicates that 79.8% of the students prefer an electronic dictionary because it is quick and easy to use.

According to Béjoint (2000, p. 168), cited in Svensén (2009, p. 460), using electronic dictionaries is at the same time easier and more difficult than using print dictionaries. It is easier in the sense that the means of access are more numerous and more diversified. It is more difficult in the sense that using typical print-dictionary look up strategies such as browsing or diagonal reading will hardly be possible.

S9. Reasons why I like a dictionary in a phone or a computer (It is easy to carry around)

Table 9: Reasons for liking electronic dictionaries (easy to carry around)

RESPONSES	FORM 1		FORM 2		FORM 3		TOTAL	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
YES	47	65	52	70	61	77	160	71
NO	25	35	22	30	18	23	65	29
TOTAL	72	100	74	100	79	100	225	100

The results in Table 9 show that 71% (160) of the students report that electronic dictionaries are easy to carry around because of their portability while 29% (65) report that it is not easy to carry electronic dictionaries around. This may plausibly be because electronic gadgets including phones and laptops are prohibited for students in school premises.

S10. Reason why I like a dictionary on a phone or computer (Availability of voiced pronunciation)

Table 10: Reasons for liking electronic dictionaries (availability of voice pronunciation)

RESPONSES	FORM 1		FORM 2		FORM 3		TOTAL	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
YES	55	75	49	66	66	84	170	75
NO	18	25	25	34	13	16	56	25
TOTAL	73	100	74	100	79	100	226	100

The results in Table 10 show that 75% (170) of the students like an electronic dictionary because it comprises a voiced pronunciation feature. The students are likely to like this feature in electronic dictionary because a book dictionary does not give a voice pronunciation but rather gives a phonetic transcription which needs some understanding. Twenty five percent (56) of the students report that they do not prefer an electronic dictionary because of the voiced pronunciation feature.

6.3 Difficulties in using a dictionary

In this part of the data analysis, the study seeks to find out the problems students encounter when using a dictionary.

S11. When I search a word in a dictionary, I usually do not find the words I am looking for.

Table 11: The challenge of not finding the words looked for

RESPONSES	FORM 1		FORM 2		FORM 3		TOTAL	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
MOST OF THE TIMES	16	22	13	17	10	13	39	17
SOMETIMES	26	36	35	47	28	35	89	39
RARELY	7	10	5	7	14	18	26	11
NEVER	24	33	22	29	27	34	73	32
TOTAL	73	100	75	100	79	100	227	100

The results in Table 11 reveal that 56% (128) of the students do not always get what they are searching for in a dictionary *most of the times* and *sometimes*. This could be due to insufficient knowledge of dictionary use since the junior secondary school has minimum training on dictionary use. Although students report that they know how to use a dictionary in large numbers, they seem to be having difficulties finding what they want. The inability to find information in a dictionary could also be due to very limited use of a dictionary that learners have. This difficult has a significant impact on the learners because either the dictionaries do not meet the needs of the learners, or the learners have poor dictionary skills which finally means that they do not fully benefit from using a dictionary.

S12 'Usually when I search for a word, I find that it is difficult to understand the definition written in the dictionary'.

Table 12: The challenge of not understanding dictionary definitions

RESPONSES	FORM 1		FORM 2		FORM 3		TOTAL	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
MOST OF THE TIMES	20	27	12	16	4	5	36	16
SOMETIMES	29	40	33	44	47	59	109	48
RARELY	9	12	12	16	12	15	33	15
NEVER	15	21	18	24	16	20	49	22
TOTAL	73	100	75	100	79	100	227	100

Sixty four percent of the participants report that *most of the times* and *sometimes* they find it difficult to understand dictionary definitions. This could indicate that some dictionary definitions are not simple enough for students to understand. Alternatively, students may not know how to choose the right definition for the right use in the event of polysemous entries. This is an important finding which suggests that there is a need for dictionary education from an early age. Additionally, learners need to own personal dictionaries so that they could attain full mastery of dictionary use.

S13. When a word has many meanings, I usually find it is difficult to understand the right meaning I am looking for.

Table 13: The challenge of not understanding the right meaning for a word with different meanings

RESPONSES	FORM 1		FORM 2		FORM 3		TOTAL	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
MOST OF THE TIMES	21	29	20	27	12	15	53	23
SOMETIMES	30	41	25	33	37	47	92	41
RARELY	8	11	13	17	9	11	30	13
NEVER	14	19	17	23	21	27	52	23
TOTAL	73	100	75	100	79	100	227	100

From Table 13 a substantial number of students, accounting for 64% (145), report that *most of the times* and *sometimes* they do not understand the right meaning of a polysemous entry. Many students have difficulties choosing the appropriate meaning of the word they want to use. This challenge calls for the intervention of teachers to facilitate dictionary education so that students become experts on dictionary use for them to be able to deal with cases of polysemy.

S14. When I use a dictionary, I usually find that it is difficult to find the information I want.

Table 14: The challenge of not finding the information looked for

RESPONSES	FORM 1		FORM 2		FORM 3		TOTAL	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
MOST OF THE TIMES	5	7	9	12	5	6	19	8
SOMETIMES	31	42	28	37	26	33	85	37
RARELY	14	19	12	16	23	29	49	22
NEVER	23	32	26	35	25	32	74	33
TOTAL	73	100	75	100	79	100	227	100

A small number, 45% (104) report that *most of the times* and *sometimes* they do not find the information they want while the majority with 55% (123) report that they *rarely* and *never* encounter this problem. Students who encounter this problem seem to face this challenge because they often think they know how to use a dictionary and eventually miss out other important information covered by a dictionary entry. Form 1 students have the leading number of students who report that they sometimes encounter this problem.

In addition, Kipfer (1985) did an investigation into the acquisition of dictionary skills and their influence on the language needs and abilities of intermediate level students' particularly tenth, eleventh and twelfth grade in an American high school. The students answering the questionnaire did not indicate that they had much difficulty in finding the

information they needed from dictionaries. Seventy two percent of the students agreed that they are lazy to look up information and many of those respondents reported that dictionaries are boring and claimed to use them when necessary (Kipfer, 1985).

S15. I cannot use the dictionary whenever I want.

Table 15: The challenge of not using the dictionary anytime

RESPONSES	FORM 1		FORM 2		FORM 3		TOTAL	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
MOST OF THE TIMES	6	8	9	12	14	18	29	13
SOMETIMES	25	34	30	40	32	41	87	38
RARELY	14	19	13	17	11	14	38	17
NEVER	28	38	23	31	22	28	73	32
TOTAL	73	100	75	100	79	100	227	100

Majority of 51% (116) report that they cannot use the dictionary whenever they want *most of the times* and *sometimes*. This result may be explained by the fact that students do not have personal copies of dictionaries hence they are unable to use a dictionary whenever they want. Furthermore, during this study it was established that dictionaries are usually stored in the English storeroom and not given to students to use whenever they want. There is therefore a need to extend dictionary access to students across subjects and not just during selected English classes.

S16. The information I find in the dictionary is not enough.

Table 16: The challenge of insufficient information in dictionaries

RESPONSES	FORM 1		FORM 2		FORM 3		TOTAL	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
MOST OF THE TIMES	12	16	9	12	10	13	31	14
SOMETIMES	28	38	28	37	23	29	79	35
RARELY	7	10	11	15	16	20	34	15
NEVER	26	36	27	36	30	38	83	37
TOTAL	73	100	75	100	79	100	227	100

About half of the students, which is 49% (110), report that the information they find in the dictionary is *sometimes* and *most of the times* not enough. This indicates that the students are not satisfied with the kind of information provided in the school dictionaries because it does not meet the learners' needs. Fifty percent of the participants report that they *rarely* and *never* encounter this challenge. The results reveal that almost half of the students report that the information is not enough while the other half of the respondents report that the information they find is enough.

S17. It takes too much time to use a dictionary.

Table 17: The challenge of too much time used on dictionary consultation

RESPONSES	FORM 1		FORM 2		FORM 3		TOTAL	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
MOST OF THE TIMES	14	19	12	16	15	19	41	18
SOMETIMES	19	26	19	25	22	28	60	26
RARELY	10	14	10	13	16	20	36	16
NEVER	30	41	34	45	26	33	90	40
TOTAL	73	100	75	100	79	100	227	100

When asked if it takes too much time to use a dictionary, 44% (101) of the participants report that *sometimes* and *most of the times* it takes too much time to use a dictionary, while 56% report that they *rarely* and *never* encounter this challenge. Although a substantial number report that a dictionary takes much time to use, majority say it does not take much time which indicates that a dictionary use does not take much time provided students know how it is used. Hamouda (2013) records that 24.2% (30) of the students report that it takes too much time to use a dictionary while the rest report that it does not take time. This opinion is worse amongst Botswana junior secondary school learners.

S18. There are too few examples of how a word is used in a dictionary.

Table 18: The challenge of few examples on usage of words

RESPONSES	FORM 1		FORM 2		FORM 3		TOTAL	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
MOST OF THE TIMES	20	27	18	24	13	16	51	22
SOMETIMES	28	38	30	40	31	39	89	39
RARELY	13	18	12	16	20	25	45	20
NEVER	12	16	15	20	15	19	42	19
TOTAL	73	100	75	100	79	100	227	100

When asked if there are very few examples of how a word is used in the dictionary, 61 % (140) of the students indicate that *most of the times* and *sometimes* the examples provided are few while 39% (87) report that they *rarely* and *never* meet this challenge when using a dictionary. The results suggest that students are not satisfied with examples provided in the dictionaries they use. Therefore, dictionaries should be user friendly and include usage example sentence. That is, lexicographers should add more simplified example sentence in the dictionary for students to fully understand the words they are looking for.

S19. There are unclear examples in the dictionary.

Table 19: The challenge of unclear examples in dictionaries

RESPONSES	FORM 1		FORM 2		FORM 3		TOTAL	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
MOST OF THE TIMES	8	11	11	15	5	6	24	11
SOMETIMES	25	34	24	32	31	39	80	35
RARELY	24	33	28	37	17	22	69	30
NEVER	16	22	12	16	26	33	54	24
TOTAL	73	100	75	100	79	100	227	100

When asked if there are unclear examples in a dictionary 46% (104) of the participants report that *most of the times* and *sometimes* when they use the dictionary, they encounter unclear examples, whilst 54% (123) report that they *rarely* and *never* encounter this problem. Drysdale (1987) points out that examples are often overlooked in the discussion of lexicography either because they are considered to be less important than definitions, which may be true, or because they are thought to involve less of the lexicographer's skills which is not true. In a dictionary designed for students, whether they are learning their first language or subsequent one, examples serve to clarify and enrich a dictionary definition. They illustrate specific usages, contrasts, or collocations. It is often difficult to find an example sentence that meets all these requirements concisely, even with the aid of a computer searching a large linguistic database. Reliance on made-up example sentences involves the risk of creating some sentences that are forced and artificial, whether awkwardly stilted or inappropriately colloquial (Drysdale, 1987).

S20. From reading the dictionary I usually fail to understand the pronunciation of a word I am looking for.

Table 20: The challenge of not understanding the pronunciation of words

RESPONSES	FORM 1		FORM 2		FORM 3		TOTAL	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
MOST OF THE TIMES	11	15	14	19	8	10	33	14
SOMETIMES	29	40	29	39	28	35	86	38
RARELY	11	15	10	13	16	20	37	16
NEVER	22	39	22	29	27	34	71	31
TOTAL	73	100	75	100	79	100	227	100

A number of students, 52% (109), report that *most of the times* and *sometimes* they have problems understanding the pronunciation of the dictionary entries. Since they are not taught how a dictionary is used, they lack knowledge of phonetic transcription. In contrast, 47% (108) report that they *rarely* and *never* encounter any problems with understanding the pronunciation in a printed dictionary which indicates that even though there are some students who have problems with pronunciation, a significant number does not have problems with pronunciation.

6.4 Data analysis of teachers' interview

This sub-section presents data analysis from teachers to whom questionnaires were distributed. When asked if they ever recommend the dictionary to students, all teachers responded that they recommended a dictionary only when the need arose, such as when students had spelling problems or needed to check the definition of vocabulary items. One of the teachers observed that he sometimes recommends a dictionary when students read short stories and encountered unknown vocabulary items.

The interviewed teachers expressed concern about the shortage of dictionaries in their school. They argued that such a lack limited dictionary use since most students did not have access to a personal dictionary on a daily basis. When asked on ways to overcome this challenge, one teacher said she believes students should be taught the importance of dictionaries in language learning before they can be given dictionaries to enable them to use dictionaries effectively. Another teacher pointed out that each student should own a copy of a dictionary just as they are provided with textbooks.

When asked if they teach dictionary use to students, all teachers indicated that they did not teach dictionary use because they were never trained on how to deliver dictionary education. Moreover, they indicated that the syllabus does not include dictionary use; therefore, it was difficult for them to teach students dictionary use when it was not in the syllabus.

The qualitative results demonstrate that while dictionary education is essential to a learner's educational success, learners at junior secondary school lack structured classes in dictionary use. The syllabus omits this subject either because it is assumed that learners already possess such a skill, or that they will pick such competence informally. There is now established literature on dictionary use that detail how learners can be equipped with dictionary use skills (cf. Béjoint, 1989, p. 211, cited in Svensén, 2009, p. 460). Béjoint argues that dictionary training should be practical rather than theoretical. The users should learn how to use dictionaries rather than how dictionaries are made. The training activities should be language oriented not dictionary oriented. The best way of practicing dictionary skills is to perform exercises that force students to use dictionaries to solve linguistic problems. Moreover, the activities should be integrated as much as possible into the language teaching curriculum and be spread as much as possible over the whole period of teaching. He argues that occasional lessons in dictionary use are not effective, and their outcome will be short-lived. Lastly, the activities should be adapted to the individual user groups, which will require prior analysis of their needs and capabilities. Although teachers seemed reluctant to encourage dictionary use both in class and at home, they acknowledge its importance to language learning and would like their students to have dictionary skills so that in the teacher's absence a dictionary would assist in finding the meaning of any unfamiliar vocabulary item. In addition, teachers believe that a dictionary will help learners avoid spelling errors and poor pronunciations of words as well as help them use words correctly in sentences.

7.0 Conclusion

The study was conducted at two junior secondary schools in Botswana, in Thamaga village and in the city of Francistown, to investigate dictionary use. The participants of the study were students and teachers. The questionnaire was the main research tool which provided quantitative information while interviews provided qualitative information. The objectives of the study were to assess the attitude of junior secondary school students towards different dictionary formats and dictionary use in general, to determine the challenges encountered by junior secondary school students when using dictionaries and to evaluate the role played by teachers in addressing the students' challenges and attitudes towards dictionaries. The study has revealed that a dictionary is an important learning tool for learners in a language class since it assists learners with essential vocabulary items and the processing of meaning. Though dictionaries are important to learners, most learners in secondary school lack personal dictionaries and dictionary-use skills. There is therefore a need for schools to introduce classes in dictionary use to assist learners to develop independent language skills. Dictionary-use skills are essential across the curriculum and if inculcated in learners early they will help learners succeed in classes across the curriculum.

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