A SURVEY STUDY OF THE ONLINE DICTIONARY USE: A CASE STUDY OF THAI UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN THE INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE FOR SUSTAINABILITY STUDIES

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how Thai undergraduate students in the international college for sustainability studies of Srinakharinwirot University use the online dictionary. The aims were to study types of language activities the students use online dictionary for, types of words or information frequently looked up in online dictionary and to study the reasons why the students frequently use the online dictionary. A questionnaire was constructed as the instrument for collecting data from the respondents. The questionnaire was concerned with personal data and information about online dictionary use. The results from statistical analysis are divided into three findings. The first finding shows that the respondents frequently use the online dictionary when listening to music or news in English. The respondents frequently use it for looking up any words that are important for the task they are doing. In the final finding, the respondents frequently use it to find meanings of an unknown word.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Nicharak Asswachaipaisan

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The most essential knowledge component in language learning is vocabulary knowledge. There are many studies about vocabulary learning. One of the focuses of these studies is on learning vocabulary through the internet. For example, Mustafa, Sain & Razak’s study (2012) investigated the technique of learning vocabulary through the internet. There were two groups of learners that participated in one experimental research. The processes are three steps, which are: pre-test, treatment and post-test. Both groups were given the same reading task. The experimental group used the internet to read the text and complete the task online whilst the control group used printed reading texts which were downloaded from the internet. The result showed there was a higher increase of scores in the experimental group compared to the control group. The increased score of the experimental group gained up to twenty-seven percent whereas the control group score gained up to twenty-three percent. This can be concluded that the learners gain better understanding of new vocabulary through the use of the internet. Moreover, the use of the internet helped learners to perform better in learning vocabulary compared to using the paper materials.

The development of internet technology has brought language learning resources such as dictionaries to personal computers (PCs), laptops, smart phones and other electronic devices. The dictionary is broadly recognized as one of the most important devices that help L2 learners learn or understand vocabulary (Kobayashi, 2006). The evolution of dictionary formats has been found ranging from; a paper dictionary, a pocket electronic dictionary, a dictionary on CD-ROM and an online dictionary. In recent times, the online dictionary has become more popular among L2 learners compared to the paper dictionary. Furthermore, Parrish (2010) stated that the next edition of the 126-year-old Oxford English Dictionary may not be printed on paper. Macmillan dictionaries will no longer appear as printed books. In the near future, they will be available only online (Macmillan Education, n.d.).
Regularly, second language (L2) learners use their personal computers, laptops or smart phones to look up words via the internet. There are many factors that influence the online dictionaries to become more popular. According to Truong (2012), he claimed that many dictionary users prefer online over paper dictionaries because of their speed and convenience. By typing in a word, definitions can be accessed faster than looking through pages in the paper ones. They are easily accessed by both teachers and learners because of the information available at ones’ finger tip (Mustafa, Sain & Razak, 2012). The online dictionaries are flexible; they can be updated to suite users’ needs (Nesi, n.d.). Besides, there are advanced search abilities on the web which allow immediate access to up-to-date information. The dictionary size is also an important factor which attracts users. It depends on the hardware devices such as laptops, tablets or smart phones. On the other hand, the smallest size of paper dictionaries seem to contain 500 pages. For instance, in the Oxford Mini Dictionary there are 672 pages.

Trong (2012) further suggests that one of the advantages of online dictionaries is that they allow users to manage information they are looking for. By clicking on the link, readers can read more definitions of a word or find out about its synonyms and antonyms. The audio pronunciation is extremely useful for words that are hard to say especially for foreigners. Importantly, almost all dictionary websites or applications on the internet can be used free of charge.

There have been some conflicts in the results of the research on using electronic dictionaries for reading foreign language (FL) learning. Golonka et al. (2014) studied learner attitudes towards reading in a FL and found that learners strongly prefer using electronic dictionaries over paper dictionaries. Therefore, they have a more positive attitude and willingness to read in a FL when using electronic dictionaries. Additionally, learners who used electronic dictionaries were significantly faster at completing reading tasks than the users of paper dictionaries.

L2 learners found using electronic dictionaries to be more beneficial than using paper dictionaries. For beginner language learners, the use of the electronic dictionaries helped to close the gap between stronger and weaker learners.
Although the online dictionaries have many benefits, there are some opinions that show conflict. One disagreement is that the online dictionary use is often so quick and convenient that there is a risk that users will be less inclined to question entry information or adjust it, according to the meaning of the context in which the word appears (Nesi, n.d.). In contrast, Koyama & Takeuchi (2004) found no significant difference in time needed to finish work when comparing users of the two types of dictionaries.

1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Presently, most of L2 learners use the online dictionary to look up unknown vocabulary. The researcher would like to explore how the learners use the online dictionary. The research objectives are:

1.2.1 To study types of language activities in which students frequently use an online dictionary.

1.2.2 To find out types of words in English that the students frequently look up in an online dictionary.

1.2.3 To study the reasons that the students frequently use an online dictionary.

1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

This study is a survey of the online dictionaries usage amongst Thai undergraduate students. Thai students usually translate every word when they hear, speak, read or write English. In this digital era, the online dictionaries are very easy and convenient for students. However, sometimes the online dictionaries could be overused. This study will be useful to obtain further understanding about students’ behavior for using the online dictionaries and how to control or manage them.

1.4 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study is aimed at surveying students’ use of monolingual (English-English) or bilingual (English-Thai) online dictionaries outside the classroom. The
participants of this study are students of the international college for sustainability studies of Srinakharinwirot University. This college was established in 2004. The programs address the major dilemma facing the tourist industry. The college offers English language degree programs in Sustainable Tourism, Ecotourism, Recreation and Hospitality Management. They are designed to expand students’ thinking on contemporary issues in tourism management by incorporating knowledge of the importance of sustainability, the environment, heritage preservation and cross-cultural communication (International College for Sustainability Studies, 2008).

1.5 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

This study is divided into six chapters:

Chapter 1 provides background of the study, research objectives, research significance and scope of the study.

Chapter 2 reviews the related theories and other previous research.

Chapter 3 explains the research questions, research method, participants and procedure of the data collection and data analysis.

Chapter 4 presents the results of the research presented in tables with descriptive statements.

Chapter 5 discusses the overall results and answers of the research questions.

Chapter 6 provides the conclusion of the study and recommendations for further research.

References and an appendix providing the questionnaire used to gather data for this study are found in the last part of this research paper.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews literature and research studies related to the online dictionary usage in English language learning. The literature concerns (1) vocabulary learning, (2) the types of vocabulary, (3) the purposes for using an online dictionary in English language learning, (4) discussion about the online dictionary in general and (5) the online dictionary usage in Thailand.

2.1 VOCABULARY LEARNING

“Learning a second language means learning its vocabulary because vocabulary skill makes a significant contribution to almost all aspects of L2 proficiency” (Dakun, 2000: 15). Vocabulary learning is necessary for English as a second language (ESL) learners to acquire knowledge and competency in other skills such as writing and reading (Ahmad, 2011). There are different methods for teaching and learning vocabularies.

2.1.1 Implicit and Explicit Vocabulary Learning

Implicit vocabulary learning is regularly described as “acquisition of knowledge by a process which takes place naturally, simply and without conscious operation” (Ellis 1994: 1). It happens in all areas of life and occurs when the mind is concentrated elsewhere. One assumption of implicit vocabulary learning is new words should not be presented in separation of context and should not be learned by mere repetitional memorization (Marzban & Kamalian, 2013). Additionally, “the implicit learning hypothesis holds that the meaning of a new word is acquired totally unconsciously as a result of abstraction from repeated exposures in a range of activated contexts” (Dakun 2000: 15).

Explicit vocabulary learning is characterized by “a more conscious operation where the individual makes and tests hypothesis in a search for structure” (Ellis 1994: 1). It engages learners in activities that concentrate attention fundamentally on
vocabulary (Marzban & Kamalian, 2013). The hypothesis of explicit learning maintains that “there are benefits from applying cognitive strategies to consolidate a newly uncounted word by note taking or dictionary consulting and by associational learning strategies and various mnemonic techniques” (Dakun 2000: 16).

2.1.2 Intentional and Incidental Vocabulary Learning

Intentional vocabulary learning is defined as “any activity geared at committing lexical information to memory” (Hulstijn 2001: 271). It bases on synonyms, antonyms, word substitution and crossword puzzles. Intentional learning is not very effective because learners are much more prone to rote learning (Ahmad, 2011).

Incidental vocabulary learning is described as “the learning of vocabulary as the by-product of any activity not explicitly geared to vocabulary learning” (Hulstijn 2001: 271). It is the process of learning new words without intention and learning occurs while planning to learn another thing (Ahmad, 2011). Incidental learning is mostly developed while learners are doing extensive reading activities. As Paribakht & Wesche (1999) conducted the study about the relationship between reading and incidental L2 vocabulary acquisition, it shows the incidental acquisition of new words through reading text. Thus, vocabulary knowledge might be obtained as a by-product of comprehensive reading.

In conclusion, the learners can learn vocabulary by themselves. The teacher is not always important for vocabulary knowledge development among learners. A dictionary is one of the options to help learners learn vocabulary. When the learners want to know vocabulary, they can directly look it up.

2.2 TYPES OF VOCABULARY

2.2.1 High-frequency, Academic, Technical Vocabularies

Nation (2001) distinguishes types of vocabulary in the text which are: high-frequency, academic and technical vocabularies. West’s (1953 as cited in Nation, 2001) list of high-frequency words contains around 2,000 word families. Most
scholars support the idea that the high-frequency words are very important and useful for learners because these words “cover a large proportion of the running words in spoken and written texts and occur in all kind of uses of the language” (Nation, 2001: 13). For this reason, learners will be able to manage and succeed in an everyday situation if they acquire high frequency words. On the contrary, some scholars mention that the frequency of these words does not seem to lead to a better acquisition and deeper knowledge of them (Varela, 2013).

For the academic types of vocabulary, the Common Core State Standard (CCSS), which is an educational initiative in the United States (2013), defines academic vocabulary as words which are generally used in both spoken and written academic dialogue and text. There are words listed as essential for English for academic purposes (Nation, 2001). These words are not used in everyday conversation. They are essential for people who learn or work in an academic area.

The third type is the technical vocabulary group. “Technical Vocabulary is the specialized vocabulary of any field to communicate with clarity, precision, relevance and brevity” (Ragini, n.d.: 3). It concerns learners who have special purposes in language learning. Moreover, technical vocabulary is part of a system of subject knowledge. It can be recognized by referring to specialists (Chung & Nation, 2004).

2.2.2 Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing Vocabularies

Montgomery (2007) divides vocabularies into four types according to language skills, which are: listening, speaking, reading and writing vocabularies. Although each type of vocabulary is used for different purposes, the development in one type facilitates growth in another.

Listening vocabularies are the words contained in spoken language that people are listening to. The learners are able to connect the word being spoken to their meaning when they have enough knowledge of listening vocabularies. The understanding of listeners is aided by word context, intonation or visual contact with the speaker by using gestures and facial expressions. L2 learners might recognize and understand up to 50,000 words.
Speaking vocabularies are the words that people use when they speak. Speaking can demonstrate a person’s knowledge of words. Moreover, speaking to transfer meaning relies on other elements such as facial expression, intonation or gestures to help the others understand. When L2 learners communicate to other people, they might know and use around 5,000 – 10,000 words.

Reading vocabularies are the written words contained in reading text. It is understood by the readers when they have knowledge of vocabularies to read a piece of written text.

Writing vocabularies are the words that people retrieve to write in order to express themselves. The writers demonstrate their knowledge of a word in terms of vocabulary meaning and how to spell and use it correctly.

2.2.3 Three Tiers of Vocabulary

The other useful model for conceptualizing categories of words is proposed by Beck, McKeown & Kucan (2002). They divide words into three tiers and order the words in a form of ranking depending on how frequently they occur.

Tier 1 consists of the most basic words which are words for everyday speech. These words rarely require direct instruction and do not have multiple meanings (Hutton, 2008). Tier 1’s words are not complex, though the English language learners will have to attend carefully to them (Beck, McKeown & Kucan, 2002). There are about 8,000 word families in English.

Tier 2 words are more likely to appear in written texts than in speech. They are strongly influenced in reading. Furthermore, these words appear in all sorts of texts such as information texts, technical texts, or literary texts. There are 7,000 word families in English (Hutton, 2008).

Tier 3 consists of low frequency words that happen in a specific domain which are specific to the domain or field of study. This tier is far more common in informational texts than in literature. There are 400,000 words remaining.
2.3 DICTIONARY USE FOR VARIOUS PURPOSES

A dictionary can serve many purposes for vocabulary learning and usage. The choice of dictionary should depend on what it is to be used for. The most important purpose of dictionary use is to check the meaning of words in the passage or text for comprehension. The next most frequent uses are to check spelling and pronunciation. Furthermore, choosing the right form of vocabulary is also a main purpose when using a dictionary. For instance, if the learners’ purpose is to write academic essays, then they will need to find the written academic words in the dictionary for their tasks.

According to Nation, (2001: 281) he suggests that “dictionaries can be used for a wide range of purposes”. He divided these purposes into two groups of comprehension and production purposes.

2.3.1 Dictionary Use for Comprehension

This comprehension purpose refers to the use of a dictionary for listening, reading or translating. Learners might look up unknown words while they are doing these activities. In another way, the learners used it to confirm the meaning from their guessing. The study conducted by Hartmann (2001) concluded that dictionaries are used in reading tasks more than verbal activities. A study of Ramos (2005) stated that non-expert translators usually used a bilingual dictionary mainly for direct translation and reading comprehension. Another supported study was to report learners use dictionaries while engaging in listening activities.

2.3.2 Dictionary Use for Production

Speaking and writing are the activities which users usually use a dictionary for with regards to production. There are many options in this area such as to look up unknown words needed to speak or write, to confirm the pronunciation or spelling. Midlane (2005) mentioned that learners are likely to use a dictionary whilst they are writing more than when they are speaking. “Dictionaries can be useful either when learners do not know how to correct an item which they believe is wrong or when they are not sure if an item is correct, and they want to check it” (Jacob, 1989: 3). In
contrast, Bruton (2007) claimed that using a dictionary distracts attention. For speaking tasks, dictionaries also can help learners on pronunciation. A study of Acton (1984) suggested that, “phonetic transcription is very useful in correcting learners’ pronunciation. Many learners are able to hear their pronunciation errors better when they can compare with what they have said with the text” (p.78)

2.4 MONOLINGUAL AND BILINGUAL DICTIONARY

A dictionary is the most important thing for L2 learners. They often carry the dictionary more than other English books. There are two main types of popular dictionaries; a monolingual and a bilingual dictionary.

2.4.1 Monolingual Dictionary

A monolingual dictionary consists of the meanings of the words in the target language. Some scholars have supported that the contributions of the monolingual dictionary leads to vocabulary learning. Baxter (1980) believes that the use of the monolingual dictionary promotes fluency among learners by offering definition of words in context. Besides, the monolingual dictionary is very helpful for learners to find the relevant information of a particular word, such as an example of the use of the word in sentences plus, its antonyms or synonyms. The monolingual dictionary provides more detailed information about the words than the bilingual one (Laufer & Melamed, 1994). On the contrary, Scholfield (2005) argued that the monolingual dictionary would not be complacent for all learners because it consists of many difficult and complex definitions which are too hard for learners’ understanding.

2.4.2 Bilingual Dictionary

A bilingual dictionary provides a translation or explanation using the native language of the learners. According to Baxter (1980), he mentioned that the bilingual dictionary tends to convey learners towards single-word translation equivalents. There is a study of learners in seven European countries which shows that the bilingual dictionary is used by the majority of students or 75 percent of 1000 learners in seven European countries (Laufer & Melamed, 1994). There are some disagreements of
using the bilingual dictionary to learn new words. Scholfield (2005) commented that learners will not be efficient English users if they always translate into their first language.

2.5 ONLINE DICTIONARY

An online dictionary is a kind of electronic dictionary which serves through the internet network. Sometimes, it is called “Internet Dictionary or Web Dictionary”. The online dictionary providers or programmers could collaborate closely with dictionary users because the users can directly contact the programmers via e-mail for any changing on its website. Most of online dictionary developers used to be developers of offline dictionaries before. Nowadays, the online dictionary is very popular for many internet users. Zaher (2004) believes that technological progress is inexorable, so it seems that the paper dictionary will be obsolete. Although there are many advantages of using the online dictionary, some experts disagree. Very few of the online dictionaries give more than merely spelling, parts of speech and one or two translations (El-Sayed & Siddiek, 2013).

2.6 ONLINE DICTIONARY IN THAILAND

There are two popular online dictionaries in Thailand. First, Lexitron dictionary which was invented by Nectec. The purpose of this dictionary is to build a great English and Thai vocabulary store. Its store is up to date because it has partners from many websites. Not only can learners look up the word definition, but also they can find word pronunciation or suggestion of related words. It is beneficial for any students or researchers. The average amount of visitors is about 1,500 people per day (Palingoon, Trakultaweekoon, 2012).

The second dictionary is Longdo dictionary. It has been invented by Meta Media Teachnology Company. The purpose of the website is to provide online tools for building a collaborative and open Bilingual-Thai dictionary. It has became a very popular website because it contains five languages: English, Thai, Japanese, German and French. Moreover, the data base is linked to other dictionaries: Nectec, CMU pronunciation dictionary or JDDICT (Palingoon, Trakultaweekoon, 2012).
2.7 PREVIOUS STUDIES ON DICTIONARY USAGE IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

Mustafa, Sain, & Razak (2012) investigated whether the technique of using the internet as a tool assisted the learning of vocabulary among second language learners in Saburban Secondary School in Malaysia. The steps involved a pre-test, treatment and post-test for both experimental and control groups of second language learners. Both groups were given the same reading task but with different methods. The experimental group used the internet to read the text and complete the reading task only whereas the control group was given printed reading material together with the reading tasks which were downloaded from the internet. The finding of this study showed that the experimental group gained great result in learning vocabulary using the internet. The experimental group gained better between 10 – 27 percent; on the other hand, the control group gained between 3 - 23 percent.

Wang (2014) focused on the pedagogical outcomes connected with the use of e-dictionary by intermediate and advanced learners of Chinese as the participants were aided in reading an expository Chinese e-text. The participants read an e-text twice aided by an e-dictionary and wrote recalls of the text in English. The e-dictionary helped intermediate learners consolidate to learn words, acquire new words, and effectively close the vocabulary knowledge gap between them and advanced learners. Furthermore, the e-dictionary improved the reading comprehension of intermediate learners to a level comparable to advanced learners; in contrast, the e-dictionary rewarded less reading development for the advanced group.

Laufer (n.d.) investigates incidental vocabulary acquisition in two reading conditions: when unknown words are encountered in a paper text and glossed in the margin, and when they are read on a computer screen and explained in an electronic dictionary. Two were groups of adult learners of English as a foreign language. In her study, the paper group did not have to search for the meaning of the words, while the computer group was actively involved in searching for the meaning of the target words. In the two research conditions, the words looked up in an electronic gloss were
retained better than words glossed in the margin of the text. Overall, the electronic
text group performed significantly better than the paper text group.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes: (1) research questions, (2) research method, (3) participants, (4) procedure of data collection, and (5) validity and reliability of the research.

3.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What types of language activities do the students frequently use an online dictionary for?

2. What kinds of words in English do the students frequently look up in an online dictionary?

3. Why do the students frequently use an online dictionary?

3.2 RESEARCH METHOD

This is quantitative research which uses a questionnaire as the main tool for collecting data. A questionnaire is adapted from Sumritpol (2009) to use in this study to collect the data. The questionnaire is examined by an advisor and all questions are written in English.

3.3 PARTICIPANTS

The survey was conducted with 50 students who are studying first year to fourth year at the international college for sustainability studies of Srinakharinwirot University. These participants were asked about their personal information which is year of study and gender. Frequency and percentage of the responses were shown in Table 1.
Table 1. Year of Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of Study</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1\textsuperscript{st} year</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>36.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2\textsuperscript{nd} year</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>34.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3\textsuperscript{rd} year</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4\textsuperscript{th} year</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 shows the number of the respondents. The largest group of them (36%) was in 1\textsuperscript{st} year of study. The second largest group was 2\textsuperscript{nd} year (34%). The third largest group was 3\textsuperscript{rd} year (16%) and the remaining (14%) were 4\textsuperscript{th} year students.

Table 2. Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>42.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>58.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 2, there were 21 (42%) male and 29 (58%) female respondents.
3.4 PROCEDURE OF DATA COLLECTION

3.4.1 Questionnaire development

The questionnaire consisted of three parts. The first part includes questions asked for personal information, year of study and gender of the subjects.

The second part contains questions which are about whether participants have used the online dictionary and if so, which online dictionary have they used. For the latter question, the participants can answer more than one. The questions were in a checklist item form.

The third part consisted of 20 statements which are designed to ask the participants to determine the frequency of the online dictionary used according to each statement. These statements can be divided into three topics according to the research objectives, First topic, there are five statements which ask what language activities do the subjects frequently use an online dictionary for.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I use an online dictionary when:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. I read textbooks in English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I read other texts (e.g. newspaper, magazines, websites, etc.) in English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I do assignments or homework in English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I speak to a foreigner in English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I listen to music or news in English.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second topic, four statements asked what types of words in English do the subjects frequently look for.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I use an online dictionary to look up for:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Frequently used words in English (words in everyday use)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Academic words in English (words in an academic text)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Technical words in English (Specialize words of any field of knowledge)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Any words in English that are important for the task I am doing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The third topic, eleven statements asked for what reasons do the subjects frequently use the online dictionary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I use an online dictionary to:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10. Check the spelling of a word in English.                               |
11. Hear how a word is pronounced in English.                               |
12. Check the part of speech of a word (e.g. noun, verb, adjective, etc) in English. |
13. Check other forms of a word (e.g. plural form, past tense form, comparative form etc.) in English. |
14. Find meanings of an unknown word in English.                            |
15. Confirm that the meaning, I guess of an English word is correct.        |
16. Check if a word exists in English.                                      |
17. Find words in English with similar meaning.                            |
18. Find words in English with opposite meaning.                           |
19. Check how a word in English is used in a sentence.                      |
20. Find a sample sentence of how the word in English used.                |

This part was measured by a five-point Likert scale to access frequency with each item. The rating criteria were as follows:

5 = Very often
4 = Often
3 = Sometimes
2 = Rarely
1 = Never
3.4.2 Data collection

This research used the questionnaire to survey the students’ usage of the online dictionary. The questionnaire was revised under the close supervision and guidance of an IS advisor.

To collect the data, the survey was conducted and the questionnaires were distributed to 50 participants by convenient sampling. The researcher waited for the participants outside of their classroom, and requested convenient students to do the questionnaire.

The participants are first to fourth year students who are studying in the international college for sustainability studies at Srinakharinwirot University in academic year 2013. The distribution of the questionnaire was carried out during April 1 - 4, 2013. The students were asked to complete the questionnaire outside the classroom during their break and return it to the researcher afterward. It took about ten minutes to complete the questionnaire.

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

For all the analyses, SPSS program was used to answer the research questions quantitatively.

The data that derived from the first part of the questionnaire was analyzed in the form of descriptive statistics, which includes frequency and percentage.

The data from the second part is presented in the form of descriptive statistics as a percentage.

The data from the third part, which used a five-point Likert scale, was also analyzed in the form of descriptive statistics. The scale used in the questionnaire, specified the level of frequency based on the criteria of Likert (1932) as follows.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Level of frequency</th>
<th>Mean Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Very often (81-100%)</td>
<td>4.50 – 5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Often (51-80%)</td>
<td>3.50 – 4.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sometimes (21-50%)</td>
<td>2.50 – 3.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Rarely (1-20%)</td>
<td>1.50 – 2.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Never (0%)</td>
<td>1.00 – 1.49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean (\(\bar{x}\)) was used to interpret the level of frequency using the online dictionary.

### 3.6 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE RESEARCH

For validity and reliability of this study, the questionnaire was adapted from Sumritpol (2009) and checked by an IS advisor. Before the data collection, the questionnaire was tested by subjects who are not real subjects for checking.

In summary, this chapter illustrated the methodology of this research study about the research question, research method, participants, procedure of data collection, data analysis and validity and reliability of the research. In the next chapter, the results of this study will be presented.
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter reports the result of the study from the survey of 50 undergraduate students’ usage of the online dictionary. The results are divided into four parts based on themed topics of the questionnaire.

4.1 ONLINE DICTIONARY USE

This part of the questionnaire aims to explore the usage of the online dictionary among first to fourth year undergraduate students. Frequency and percentage of the respondents were shown in Table 3 and 4.

Table 3. Online dictionary usage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have used an online dictionary</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>50</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 shows the number of the respondents who reported that they have used the online dictionary. It found that all the respondents (100%) have used the online dictionary.

Table 4. Names of online dictionaries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Names of online dictionaries</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Google Translation(translate.google.com)</td>
<td>32</td>
<td><strong>30.19</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dictionary (Dictionary.com)</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>29.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxford (Oxforddictionaries.com)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambridge (Dictionary.cambridge.org)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longdo (Dict.longdo.com)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longman (Longmandictionariesonline.com)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Table 4. Specific Online Dictionary Frequency and Percentage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Names of online dictionaries</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sanook (Guru.sanook.com/dictionary)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lexitron (Lexitron.nectec.or.th)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>106</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The respondents can answer more than one.

Table 4 shows frequency and percentage of the specific online dictionary the respondents have used. The highest online dictionary frequency use was Google Translation (30.19%). The lowest online dictionary frequency use was Lexitron (0.94%). The second frequency use was Dictionary (29.25%). The third is being Oxford (12.26%). The fourth tied between Cambridge and Longdo (9.43%). The sixth was Longman (4.72) and the seventh was Sanook (3.77%).

### 4.2 INFORMATION ABOUT ONLINE DICTIONARY USE

Next part of the questionnaire aims to identify when and why the respondents use the online dictionary. Situation for checking, specific types of vocabulary checked and the reasoning for checking will all be shown in Table 5 to 7.

#### Table 5. Respondents’ answers for types of language activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>( \bar{x} )</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Level of frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I use an online dictionary when:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I read textbooks in English</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I read other texts in English</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do assignments or homework in English.</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I speak to a foreigner in English.</td>
<td><strong>3.22</strong></td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I listen to music or news in English.</td>
<td><strong>3.88</strong></td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 shows frequency of language activities that the respondents use the online dictionary for. It was found that the respondents often use it when they listen to music or news (\( \bar{x} = 3.88 \)). On the contrary, the respondents sometimes use it when they speak to foreigners in English (\( \bar{x} = 3.22 \)). There are three more language activities for that the respondents often use the online dictionary. They do
assignments or homework in English ($\bar{x} = 3.86$). Finally, reading textbooks and other texts are equal ($\bar{x} = 3.54$).

Table 6. Respondents’ answers for types of words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>$\bar{x}$</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Level of frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequently used words in English</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic words in English</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical words in English</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any words in English that are important for the task I am doing.</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 shows the frequency of the different vocabulary looked up by the respondents. It was found that the highest amount of respondents often look up any words in English that are important for the task they are doing ($\bar{x} = 3.76$). On the other hand, the lowest amount often look up technical words in English ($\bar{x} = 3.52$). They also often look up academic words in English ($\bar{x} = 3.72$) and look up frequently used words in English ($\bar{x} = 3.68$). There is an interesting question why the respondents look up technical words less than other words. In my opinion, some words cannot be found in the regular dictionary especially abbreviated words. They would exist in a specialized dictionary. For example, RRM (Room Revenue Multiplier) means the ration of value to room revenue.

Table 7. Respondents’ answers for reasoning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>$\bar{x}$</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Level of frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Check the spelling of a word in English.</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hear how a word is pronounced in English.</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check the part of speech of a word English.</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check other forms of a word in English.</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statements</td>
<td>$\bar{x}$</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>Level of frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use an online dictionary to:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find meanings of an unknown word in English.</td>
<td><strong>3.84</strong></td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirm that the meaning, I guess of an English word is correct.</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check if a word exists in English.</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find words in English with similar meaning.</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find words in English with opposite meaning.</td>
<td><strong>3.16</strong></td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check how a word in English is used in a sentence.</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find a sample sentence of how the word in English is used.</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7 shows frequency of reasons as to why the respondents use the online dictionary. The respondents most often find meanings of an unknown word in English ($\bar{x} = 3.84$). In contrast, they sometimes find words in English with opposite meanings ($\bar{x} = 3.16$). There are nine more reasons that the respondents often use the online dictionary. They check if a word exists in English ($\bar{x} = 3.70$). Confirm that the meaning, they guess of an English word is correct and find a sample sentence of how the word in English is used ($\bar{x} = 3.62$), check the spelling of a word in English and find words in English with a similar meaning ($\bar{x} = 3.58$). Hear how a word is pronounced in English ($\bar{x} = 3.54$) and check how a word in English is used in a sentence ($\bar{x} = 3.50$). Lastly, they sometimes check the part of speech of a word in English ($\bar{x} = 3.36$) and check other forms of a word in English ($\bar{x} = 3.26$).

The finding of the study will be discussed in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSIONS

This chapter concerns the discussion of the results of this study in answer to the research questions.

5.1 Types of language activities that the respondents frequently use an online dictionary for

The result from this research question shows that the respondents often use the online dictionary for almost all language activities because they attend an international college. They use English in their everyday life both inside and outside the classroom. For example, they use the English language textbooks or speak to foreigners in their class. They listen to English songs in their free time. Unsurprisingly, the respondents frequently use the online dictionary for all language activities. From the result, the respondents highly use the online dictionary when they listen to music or news in English. In my opinion, they like listening to music because of their interests. Normally, most teenagers are interested in music. In the real life, when someone speaks to another person, they do not have enough time to open the dictionary. To relate to literature review, Midlane (2005) said that the students use a dictionary while in writing more than speaking. Additionally, the study of Hartmann (2001) mentioned that the dictionaries are used in reading tasks more than verbal activities. These two studies have the same result which involves speaking to foreigners with English being the least frequent.

5.2 Types of words in English that the respondents frequently look up on an online dictionary

All results of this research question show that the respondents often use the online dictionary to look up all kinds of vocabularies. In my opinion, they mostly look up words that are important for their current task. Thai students do not like memorizing vocabulary when they study English. Moreover, they like searching the words to find the meanings in the dictionary. As I mentioned significantly in the
research part, Thai students usually translate every word in English. They often carry the dictionary more than other English books. As for the technical words, which are the least looked up. Technical words in English, are the specialized vocabularies for people who have special purposes. Thus, if the majority of students are not doing these specific tasks, then that would explain why these were looked up the least.

5.3 The reasons the respondents frequently use an online dictionary

The results of this research question show the frequency of the reasoning to which the respondents use the online dictionary. The top three findings suggest the respondents frequently use the online dictionary to find meanings of unknown words and to check the words exist. To relate to the literature review, dictionaries can be useful when students do not know or they simply want to check whether the words are right or wrong (Jacob, 1989). Besides, the finding also suggests that the respondents use the online dictionary to find a sample sentence or to find words with similar meanings. The dictionary is very useful for students to find the information such as synonyms or example sentences (Baxter, 1980).

These findings can be applied in vocabulary learning or teaching. The students like listening to music or news. Thus, using songs in vocabulary teaching is another choice to motivate students to learn English vocabulary. Besides, some students worry when they spell English words. The teacher might use games to build their confidence such as hangman games.
CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Vocabulary knowledge is very important for learning a foreign language (FL). In the past, the useful material for learning vocabulary was the paper dictionary. Nowadays, the internet influences language learning. The online dictionary was invented for helping learners to look up vocabulary because it is faster and more convenient. Thus, many learners frequently use the online dictionary more than the paper dictionary. Although the online dictionary has many advantages, some theorists disagree. They believe that the online dictionary can be a risk for the learners.

The main purpose of this study was conducted to find out about the online dictionary usage of undergraduate students in three ways which are: types of language activities, types of words and the reasons. The subjects of this study consisted of 50 undergraduate students who are studying in the international college for sustainability studies of Srinakharinwirot University. The material in this study is the questionnaire for collecting data. The questionnaire consists of three main parts: the subjects’ personal information, the subjects’ online dictionary use and the information of dictionary usage amongst the subjects. The data collection was conducted during April 1-4, 2013 and the data obtained was processed and analyzed using the descriptive statistics.

All of the subjects have used the online dictionary. There were eight online dictionaries in the questionnaire. They were divided into two groups; four monolingual and four bilingual dictionaries. The most popular online dictionary is “Google translation”. The following are “Dictionary”, “Oxford”, “Cambridge”, “Longdo”, “Longman” and “Sanook”. The least popular online dictionary is “Lexitron”.

The results of using the online dictionary reported that the subjects often use an online dictionary for all language activities. They most often use it when they listen to music or news. Next, they use the online dictionary when they do
assignments or homework. Followed by reading text books or other texts in English. Lastly, the finding reported that the subjects use the online dictionary least when they speak to a foreigner in English.

The subjects were asked about what kind of vocabulary they frequently look up. Subjects’ answers are all often. They most often look up any words in English that are important for the task they are doing. Secondly, they find academic words. Thirdly, they look up frequently used words. Finally, they use the online dictionary to look up technical words.

There are many reasons for the subjects to look up vocabulary in the online dictionary. They are divided into two groups which are ‘often’ and ‘sometimes’ groups. Eight reasons are found in the often group. The subjects mostly use the online dictionary when finding meanings of an unknown word in English. Next, they check if a word exists in English. Followed by confirming that the meaning, they guess of an English word is correct and finding a sample sentence of how the word is used in English. They also find words in English with similar meaning. Finally, they check how a word in English is used in a sentence. The other three reasons are in the sometimes group. They check the part of speech of a word in English, check other forms of a word in English and find words in English with opposite meaning.

In conclusion, there are two points that can be summarized from the findings. Almost all of the results show that the respondents often use the online dictionary in various ways. They often use it to do any language activity. They often look up any words in the online dictionary. These might be due to the fact that they are studying at the international college so they are familiar with the English language. Additionally, the respondents most frequently find meanings of unknown words in English. It concerns Thai students who study English. If they do not know any vocabulary, they will consult the dictionary instead of guessing.

This study is useful for teachers who teach English vocabulary. The results could help teachers to understand when and why their students use the online dictionary.
Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made for future research. First, the results of this research show the online dictionary usage of undergraduate students. To be more specific, further research should be conducted to find out students’ attitude for using the online dictionary. Second, in this research, the researcher investigated only a specific group of students from Srinakharinwirot University. A larger sample size in the future research would lead to more reliable data. Finally, this study only focuses on one group of participants. For the future study, it could focus on more than one group. Therefore variable comparisons could be made between a number of groups.
REFERENCES


Appendix

Questionnaire of Online Dictionary Use of Students at Srinakharinwirot University

Personal Information

Class:  □ First year  □ Second year
       □ Third year  □ Fourth year
Gender:  □ Male  □ Female

Online Dictionary Use

Have you ever used the online dictionary?

□  Yes.
□  No.

If you have used the online dictionary, which one have you ever used?

(You can tick more than one)

□  Dictionary  □  Longdo
□  Cambridge  □  Sanook
□  Oxford  □  Lexitron
□  Longman  □  Google Translation
□  Other (please specify) __________________
Please choose by ticking (✓) how often you use online dictionary in the following statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Very often</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I use an online dictionary when:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. I read textbooks in English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I read other texts (e.g. newspaper, magazines, websites, etc.) in English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I do assignments or homeworks in English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I speak to a foreigner in English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I listen to music or news in English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use an online dictionary to look up for:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Frequently used words in English (words in everyday use)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Academic words in English (words in an academic text)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Technical words in English (Specialize words of any field of knowledge)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Any words in English that is important for the task I am doing.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use an online dictionary to:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Check the spelling of a word in English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Hear how a word is pronounced in English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Check the part of speech of a word (e.g. noun, verb, adjective, etc) in English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Check other forms of a word (e.g. plural form, past tense form, comparative form etc) in English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Find meanings of an unknown word in English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Confirm that the meaning, I guess of an English word is correct</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statements</td>
<td>Very often</td>
<td>often</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Check if a word exists in English.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Find words in English with similar meaning.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Find words in English with opposite meaning.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Check how a word in English is used in a sentence.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Find a sample sentence of how the word in English used.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

-Thank you for your time-