



Students' Reliance on English Dictionary in Speaking English

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Abstract

In the current era of globalization, proficiency in English communication is crucial. The intriguing utilization of dictionaries by fifth-semester students at Universitas Nias raises questions about their approach to comprehending and expressing ideas. Dictionary is a collection of words that functions as a reference for understanding the meaning of a word, phrase or expression in a language. Harris (2015: 34) observes the convenience of electronic access to various dictionaries, prompting inquiry into whether this ease affects students' reliance on dictionaries in daily conversations. Recognizing the importance of developing communication skills beyond dictionary dependence, this research aims to identify the reasons behind dictionary use and explore its impact on the speaking proficiency of fifth-semester English Education students at Universitas Nias. The research method used was qualitative research method, with data collected through a questionnaire survey. The survey, distributed to 82 participants, involves Likert-scale items to understand students' perspectives on dictionary use. Findings reveal that a considerable number of students still heavily rely on dictionaries when speaking English, indicating a need for further exploration into the effectiveness of dictionary-based learning methods. The research concludes that dictionaries play a crucial role for students in comprehending and expressing ideas in English, yet a balanced approach that integrates vocabulary memorization and natural usage is essential for effective language learning.

Keywords: *Dictionary; English; Speaking*

INTRODUCTION

In the current era of globalization, the ability to communicate in English has become a very important skill. The use of dictionaries by 5th semester students at Nias University in speaking English raises interesting questions related to their approach to understanding and expressing ideas. Keraf (in Rosmanuddin, 2019) defines a dictionary as a reference book, containing a list of words found in a language, arranged alphabetically, accompanied by information on how to use the words, while Kurshartanti (in Setiawati 2016: 46) states that a dictionary is a work that functions as a reference. Dictionaries not only provide definitions, but also provide additional information such as the use

of words in sentences, providing a basis of understanding for investigating this phenomenon further.

Technological developments and easy access to online dictionaries are also factors to consider. Nowadays, the students have easy access to various types of dictionaries via their electronic devices. The question arises whether this convenience factor influences students' tendency to rely on dictionaries in everyday conversation situations.

Students may use dictionaries as a key to understanding and conveying ideas, but does this reflect a deficiency in their learning? It is important to know that it is important to develop communication skills that do not only rely on dictionaries. Therefore, this research aims to identify the reasons for using dictionaries and explore their impact on the development of English speaking skills of 5th semester students at Nias University.

Previous research, such as that conducted by Brown (2012: 58), highlights the benefits of using dictionaries in enriching vocabulary and understanding the nuances of words. However, the question arises to what extent students can integrate knowledge from dictionaries into their daily conversations naturally. This can provide further insight into the effectiveness of existing dictionary learning methods.

It is important to understand that the use of dictionaries in speaking English by 5th semester students at Nias University may reflect certain needs or uncertainties in their understanding. Gardner (2013: 72) suggests that learning motivation is influenced by an individual's basic needs. Therefore, this research will try to detail whether the use of this dictionary is largely triggered by the need for clarity of meaning or by the desire to increase self-expression.

Additionally, this research will involve collecting information through questionnaires to gain direct views from students. Involving this direct perspective can provide a more complete and contextual picture regarding the use of dictionaries in their daily language practice.

Through an in-depth understanding of the reasons and impacts of using dictionaries by 5th semester students at Nias University in speaking English, it is hoped that this research can make a constructive contribution in the development of more contextual and effective learning methods. This research can give improve students by having contextual and effective learning method for the 5th semester level students at Nias University.

METHODS

The research method used in this research is qualitative research. Creswell (2009: 204) defines qualitative as a research approach that produces in-depth descriptions of human phenomena and the environment they live in. Meanwhile, Patton (2015: 39) states that qualitative methods are a research approach used to understand the meaning given by individuals and groups to the phenomena they experience. From these two expert opinions, it can be concluded that qualitative research methods are research methods used to understand social phenomena and human behavior.

In this research, the research instrument used was a questionnaire. According to Sugiyono (2017), a questionnaire is a data collection technique that is carried out by giving a set of questions or written questions to respondents. A questionnaire can be open, where respondents write answers in descriptive form, or closed, where respondents choose one answer from the options provided.

Based on the methods and instruments of this research, data will be collected using a survey method. Babbie (2016: 174) defines the survey method as a data collection technique that is carried out by giving questionnaires or structured interviews to a population sample to obtain information about the characteristics of that population. In this case, the survey method aims to collect data as appropriate by giving questionnaires to the sample to be studied. To maximize the data collected, the survey that the researchers distributed used a Likert Item scale. Likert is the most commonly used response format in attitude scales. Likert-style scales, which range from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) or which typically include a 5-point response range, for example, A = "strongly agree" to E = "strongly disagree", but can cover any range. Clearly A = strongly agree, B = agree, C = Neutral, D = disagree, and E = strongly disagree.

In this research, the research participants were 82 fifth semester students of English Language Education at Nias University.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Use of a dictionary

Etymologically, the word dictionary comes from the Arabic word, namely *qamus*. Arabic absorbed the dictionary word from the ancient Greek word, *okeanos*, which means "ocean". The history of that word explain to us that the ocean word has the basic meaning of a "container of knowledge", especially language knowledge that is infinitely deep and broad, as wide and deep as the ocean (Chaer, 2007: 179)

According to the *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI)*, a dictionary is a collection of words arranged alphabetically and equipped with meaning, usage and so on. Kridaklasana (2008) defines that a dictionary is a collection of words that are given meanings and/or explanations, usually arranged alphabetically, and used as an aid in understanding and expressing the meaning of words in a language. In this case, it can be concluded that the dictionary functions as a reference for understanding the meaning of a word, phrase or expression in a language.

Dictionaries have an important role for students, especially if the student is a beginner in English. Dictionaries are often used to find out the meaning of words or translations of words that we don't know the meaning of. Dictionaries are divided into two types, namely dictionaries in book form (offline) or electronic ones (online). Both types have advantages and disadvantages, but they only have one function, namely helping us understand the meaning or significance of words.

In this research, the main focus is the use of dictionaries for students who always rely on dictionaries, both offline and online, when speaking English.

Dictionaries are indeed one of the tools that provide a big tool for students in understanding the meaning of a word. Especially if the words being used are very rarely used in everyday life.

Research Results

One of the big questions for a reserscher this time is whether the dictionary improve students' speaking skills in English or whether the use of dictionaries has a negative impact on students. On the other hand, the researcher found that many students still rely on dictionaries when speaking English. This is due to limitations in mastering English vocabulary, thus encouraging students to use dictionaries.

Based on the data collected, among 82 students only 62 responded, even though basically they were always reminded. Therefore, the following are the results of a survey on dictionary use for 5th semester students at Nias University:

The first statement shows that 27.4% agree, 50% of students are neutral and 17.7% disagree which informs how often students use an English dictionary when speaking in English. It is seen in Figure 1 below.

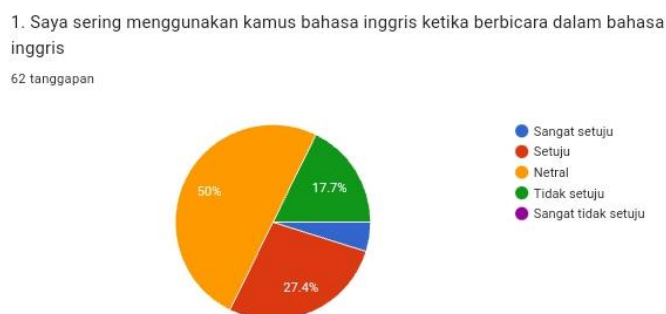


Figure 1. How often students use an English dictionary

The second statement shows that 46.8% of students believe that the dictionary increases their confidence when speaking English in the agree category, 37.1% in the neutral category, and 11.3% in the strongly agree category. It is seen in Figure 2 below.

2. Saya percaya penggunaan kamus bahasa inggris meningkatkan kepercayaan diri saya dalam berbicara bahasa inggris
62 tanggapan

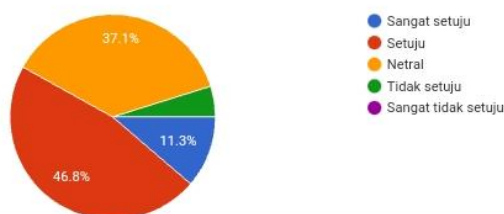


Figure 2. Self convidence

The third statement shows that 51.6% of students believe that using a dictionary positively influences English speaking fluency in the agree category,

29% in the neutral category, and 17.7% in the strongly agree category. It is seen in Figure 3 below.

3. Penggunaan kamus bahasa inggris secara positif mempengaruhi kelancaran berbicara bahasa inggris saya

62 tanggapan

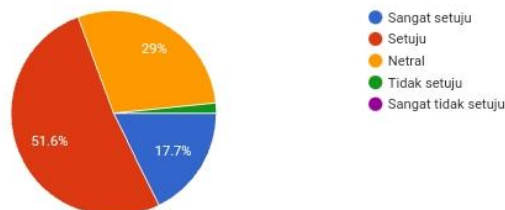


Figure 3. English speaking fluency

The fourth statement shows 58.8% agree, 9.7% of students are neutral and 54.8% strongly agree which informs how confident students are that using an English dictionary helps broaden their horizons. It is seen in Figure 4 below.

4. Saya yakin penggunaan kamus bahasa inggris membantu memperluas wawasan saya

62 tanggapan

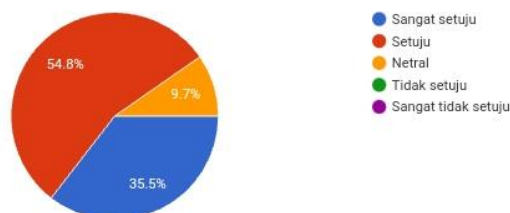


Figure 4. Using an English dictionary helps broaden their horizons

The fifth statement which informs that students use a dictionary when speaking because it improves their understanding is 48.4% in the neutral category and 38.7% in the agree category. It is seen in Figure 5 below.

5. Saya memilih menggunakan kamus bahasa inggris saat berbicara karena itu meningkatkan pemahaman saya

62 tanggapan

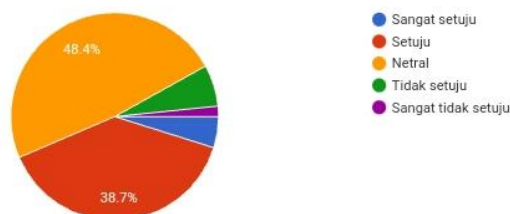


Figure 5. Increased understanding

The sixth statement shows that 48.4% of students believe that dictionaries are the only effective alternative when speaking English in the neutral category, 29% in the disagree category, and 17.7% in the agree category. It is seen in Figure 6 below.

6. Saya yakin tidak ada alternatif yang lebih efektif daripada penggunaan kamus dalam berbicara bahasa Inggris

62 tanggapan

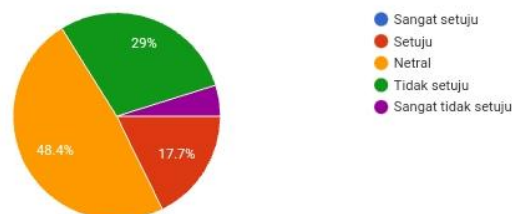


Figure 6. Dictionaries are the only effective alternative

The seventh statement shows that 59.7% of students believe that the use of an English dictionary positively influences their understanding of the conversation context in the agree category and 32.3% in the neutral category. It is seen in Figure 7 below.

7. Penggunaan kamus bahasa Inggris secara positif mempengaruhi pemahaman saya terhadap konteks percakapan

62 tanggapan

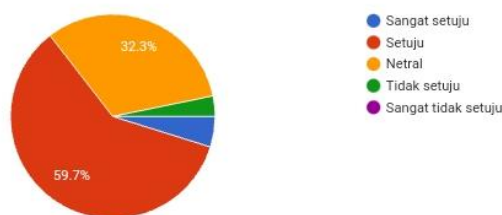


Figure 7. Conversation context

The eighth statement shows 30.6% agree, 48.4% of students are neutral and 16.1% disagree which indicates confidence in using a dictionary in formal rather than informal conversations. It is seen in Figure 8 below.

8. Saya merasa lebih percaya diri menggunakan kamus dalam percakapan formal daripada informal

62 tanggapan

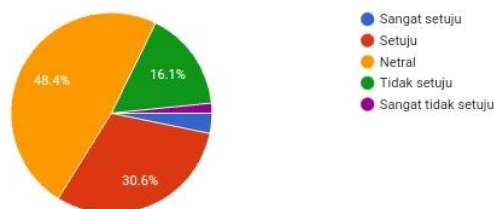


Figure 8. Formal and informal conversations

The ninth statement shows that 37.1% of students often look for certain words or phrases in the dictionary when speaking English in the neutral category and 38.7% in the agree category, 11.3% in the disagree category, and 12.9% in the category strongly agree. It is seen in Figure 9 below.

9. Saya sering mencari kata atau frase tertentu dalam kamus ketika berbicara bahasa Inggris

62 tanggapan

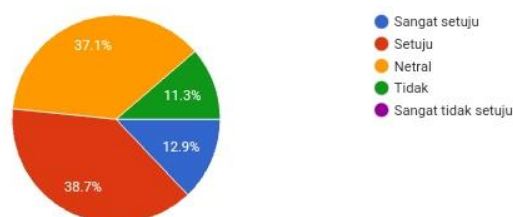


Figure 9. How students often look for certain words or phrases in the dictionary

The final statement showed that 32.3% agreed, 45.2% of students were neutral, 11.3% disagreed, and 9.7% strongly agreed, which indicates that students' reliance on dictionaries can help develop English speaking skills. It is seen in Figure 10 below.

10. Ketergantungan saya pada kamus membantu perkembangan kemampuan berbicara bahasa Inggris saya

62 tanggapan

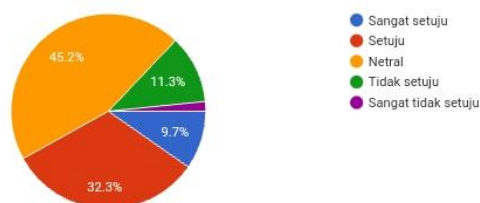


Figure 10. Students' reliance on dictionaries

Based on the findings above, it shows how important dictionaries are for students when speaking English. In the first position, many students chose the category of agreeing with the use of dictionaries with a total of 398.3% of the ten statements available. This proves that students in the 5th semester of English education still rely on dictionaries when speaking English.

According to the author's understanding, using a dictionary is important to know the meaning of words and so on. However, this does not always have a positive effect on students. It would be a good idea to try to memorize new vocabulary and apply it when talking to others.

CONCLUSION

A dictionary is a collection of words and phrases arranged alphabetically and given meanings along with translations in two or more languages. Dictionaries can be in book form or electronic form, both of which function to help someone interpret a word. This study helps us understand how important dictionaries are for 5th semester English language education students. Based on the findings above, it shows that dictionaries are very important for students to get information about the meaning and translation of words.

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