tempo mais conscientes das limitações do que os alunos iniciantes.

Por um lado, os resultados podem ser interessantes para os professores e os alunos do referido curso de Tradução. Por outro, pensando-se num público mais amplo, as limitações deste estudo são óbvias: o pequeno número de sujeitos e o uso exclusivo de questionário. Sugere-se, portanto, que pesquisas semelhantes sejam feitas em outros cursos de Tradução no Brasil e que, se possível, sejam empregados outros métodos, como a observação – para verificar como os alunos usam os dicionários de fato – ou mesmo testes, para medir a eficiência desse uso.

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DICTIONARY USE AND TRANSLATION ACTIVITIES IN THE CLASSROOM

ABSTRACT
Dictionary use is a key to autonomous learning as part of a learner-centered curriculum. Spanish students' dictionary use in English as a Second Language classes in Secondary Schools was analyzed over several academic years. The aim of the experiments was to show the importance of dictionary use in teaching and its role as a tool for learning (mainly) vocabulary and word grammar. Reference needs, dictionary use, attitudes, and skills involved in learning English were analyzed. This article presents the results and conclusions of part of this study, especially those dealing with translation activities, focusing on the use of bilingual dictionaries.

KEYWORDS
Pedagogical lexicography, dictionary use, dictionary skills, second language learning, case study

INTRODUCTION
Dictionaries have an important role in the second language teaching/learning process. As Wright (1998, p. 5) points out, "dictionaries are among the most readily available, widely used, and cheapest learning resource that find their way into the classroom". During the last decades, dictionaries, especially monolingual dictionaries for learners, have improved considerably. They offer more information about lexical items and are better organized to facilitate the search. Nevertheless, this process has not come to its end; dictionaries should continue adapting to the users' needs.

Over the past three decades, an increasing interest in dictionary use has developed. In fact, some lexicographers and language teachers believe that dictionary users do not get the best out of their dictionaries, and that dictionaries could be improved to better help their users. In fact, several studies on how dictionaries are used by language learners and the problems found by users of dictionaries have been carried out.

Some researchers have criticized parts of these studies on dictionary use [see HUMBLE, 2001, p. 41-50], mainly because of the utilization of questionnaires and the problems found when analysing results. However, several experiments based on tests and other activities were conducted during the last years, and some researchers agree with the interest of these studies, as they "are required in order to provide the essential information needed by lexicographers (for compiling dictionaries) and by language teachers (for teaching dictionary skills)" [ATKINS, 1998, p. 3].

The communicative methodologies that have dominated language classes in recent years partly explained the lack of the clear role of dictionaries in the teaching/learning process. We agree with the idea that regular access to a dictionary is absolutely essential for correct dictionary use [WRIGHT, 1998]. Besides, we have to take into account that many learners come to the second language class with little or no experience in using dictionaries. A dictionary is used as a tool by people who want to know information about a language. But we cannot use it properly unless we learn how it works and how it is organized. A dictionary is not a front-line pedagogical instrument the same way as a coursebook is, since you do not open a dictionary and proceed to learn the language. It may therefore be necessary to teach our students the reference skills needed to properly use a dictionary. In fact, "direct teaching of dictionary reference skills can be an effective tool for better language" [KIPFER, 1987, p. 50]. Many authors believe that "dictionary skills must be taught, carefully and thoroughly, if dictionary users are to extract from their dictionaries the information which lexicographers have put into them" [ATKINS, VARANTOLA, 1998, p. 115].

There is also a dichotomy between the use of monolingual and/or bilingual dictionaries in the learning/teaching process. As Atkins (1985, p. 23) states: "Bilingual or monolingual dictionary: which serves the learner best?" Teachers usually ban the use of bilingual dictionaries since communicative methodologies do not favour the use of the mother tongue in the classroom. Nevertheless, several studies carried out on dictionary use [TOMAZSCZYK, 1979; BÉHOINT, 1981; BATTENBURG, 1981; CORPAS PASTOR, 1994; TEJEDOR MARTÍNEZ, 1995; COTE GONZÁLEZ, TEJEDOR MARTÍNEZ, 1997] pointed out that students...
do possess and use bilingual dictionaries. This is the reason why our research focuses on the use of bilingual dictionaries, although we are aware of the problems that most of these reference works present for our students: one or two frequent meanings, no extra information, not many examples, etc. Some developments are found in English-Spanish bilingual dictionaries for learners, as can be appreciated in Diccionario Longman Advanced (2003).

The subject of dictionary use has been tackled in a number of scholarly papers in different countries, but few researchers have really dealt with it in Spain in the context of a second language classroom. As Hartmann (2001, p. 84) points out: “Dictionary use differs not only from country to country, but even within one country from Bundesland, county or other regional division to another, and certainly between educational levels”. Therefore, we have been working on this subject for more than ten years trying to analyse the insights of reference needs, use, attitudes and skills of users when learning English as a second language.

2. Experiments on dictionary use

Three experiments were carried out:

- Experiment A. The first survey on dictionary use in the context of a classroom – followed by an experiment – was done in the academic year 1995-1996.

- Experiment B. The second one took place in the same Secondary school during the academic year 1996-1997.

- Experiment C. Finally, a third step was carried out during the academic year 2000-2001 in a different Secondary school.

The last two researches, experiments B and C, dealt with translation work, from L1 to L2 and from L2 to L1.

2.1 Experiment A

The objectives of the experiment A were to point out the importance of the dictionary in the teaching-learning process for learners and teachers, and to show that the dictionary can be a helpful tool when learning a language and a key to autonomous learning. A total number of 50 students participated.

2.2. Dictionary use and translation activities (experiments B and C)

The main variable being evaluated in experiments B and C was the amount of errors in translation activities resulting from misinterpretation of the dictionary information and the lack of proficiency in dictionary use. The translation activities consisted of two short texts and a series of sentences. In Experiment C, two exercises were included. Their function was to draw the attention of lower-level students to some aspects of dictionary organisation that could help them
when looking up terms to translate the sentences.

Subjects in both cases were second language students, not trainee translators, therefore, we did not evaluate the translating process, but their language knowledge and the students' competence as dictionary users to find the necessary information.

An additional objective in experiment B was to determine if there was any difference between students who were already acquainted with the use of the dictionary and those who had not worked with it in terms of performance.

2.2.2. Preparation and development of experiment B

The activity was carried out during the last term of the academic year 96-97. Two different groups of students participated in the experiment: 2nd [24 subjects] and 3rd year [26 subjects] BUP [ages from 15 to 17]. It was completed during two 50 minutes sessions.

The exercise consisted of two short texts, taken from a magazine, which students would have to translate using their dictionaries, the first one from English into Spanish and the second one from Spanish into English, in this order. At the same time, they had to complete a sheet in which they had to note down the words they looked up, the procedure followed in the search, and the results they obtained. We prepared a sheet for each text. The texts were carefully chosen so that they contained a number of lexical items that are not part of their active vocabulary.

2.2.2. Analysis of the results of experiment B

When analysing the results of the translation activity, we had noticed that students had problems when using the dictionary. The problems can be caused by two factors:

a) The dictionary itself. Sometimes the dictionary doesn't provide enough information to enable students to discriminate and choose the correct option. Some students' dictionaries do not include words that are not of a high frequency use like inercidadumbre, confrontación or incidencia, or derivatives such as cultural or personal.

Sometimes students thought of other ways through which they could overcome the difficulties of not finding the word in the dictionary:

- Confrontation: One student tried to think of a synonym in Spanish, then looked up the word enfrentamiento and translated it as chilling.

  - Incertidumbre: In this case, some students had used their knowledge of word formation. They had looked up certeza = certidumbre and added the prefix inc- which means "lack of".

  - Cultural: One student looked up the base cultura but didn't take into account that it belonged to a different grammatical category, so the final result was not correct.

  - Personal: There were a number of students who looked up peatonal = walk pedestrian and added street to translate into English: calle peatonal. Others found calle peatonal in the same entry. And some others came across the expression peatonal precint in the entry calle.

Some other dictionaries, however, contain a lot of headwords and the entry for each headword includes a series of equivalents in the target language, but with no other additional information. When students lack the clues to choose among several equivalents, two tendencies have been observed:

a) they tend to pick up an equivalent similar in form to a Spanish word, or

b) they choose the first one in the entry.

This is the case for words such as: manifiestar = manifest, maravilla = marvel, rana = frog, habiante = inhabitant, provincia = province, determinación = determination, cliente = client, incertidumbre = uncertainty, contador = counter, range = alinearse, alcanzar.

b) Students' ability. In some other cases, mistakes were related to students' lack of knowledge of dictionaries. They read over the entry eager to find a quick answer to their problem and did not pay attention to any specific information that is presented to them straightforwardly. For example, the equivalents of viajero and contador as travelling and counting, respectively. We checked that travelling is the first equivalent of the entry, but it must be noted that it is preceded by the abbreviation adi., which means that the word is an adjective and not a noun, as the text requires. Here students chose the wrong word class, the adjective that comes first in the entry and not the noun which is a few lines below. Do they know the difference between a noun and an adjective? Of course, they do. So, what do they not know is that the dictionary includes word class information and they do not check it.

Even when translating into their own language, students picked up the first equivalent, not thinking of the correct sense of the sentence, the result was an awkward translation, as for example: "About 500 premises in the city...are devoted to culture, and all are working at full pelt. = Alrededor de 500 locales en la ciudad..., quieren mucho a la cultura y todos están trabajando a toda velocidad."
It is true that one of the meanings of devoted is \textit{querer mucho} and of working \textit{trabajando}. But, what does the verb \textit{devote refer to}? And \textit{working}? Which are their subjects? Are they human or inanimate objects? The correct answer is the second, and so we cannot give them human qualities. We must look for a more appropriate translation like \textit{dedicado} and \textit{funcionando}. Our conclusion is that they are not used to looking up information in the dictionary, that is why they do not pay attention to what is included in the entry.

There are words that some students don't look up because they think they know them. Words for the first text are the following: \textit{facilities}, \textit{located}, \textit{library}, \textit{large}, \textit{premises}, \textit{beneficial}. They are similar to Spanish, false friends. So they tried to guess their translations but, in most cases, they got them wrong.

Another problem was the low level some students had in L2 that led them to a poor performance. The fact is that they lack basic grammatical knowledge of rules and cohesive devices and, thus, sometimes they are unable to write a grammatically complete sentence.

We observed that there was a gap between the procedure they followed to search the words and the results they got. They guessed correctly the word required in each case. We could deduce this from the analysis of the sheet they had completed while translating. The problem arose when it comes to the organization of those words and expressions into sentences. Some grammatical mistakes we had come across when revising the translations were:

- \textit{el viajero nunca habia podido encontrar = the traveller never had could find}
- \textit{para invitar = for invite (purpose)}
- \textit{explorar a pie unas calles peatonales = foot a street pedestrian}
- \textit{lealtad por su ciudad = loyalty for him town}
- \textit{una ciudad en la que = a town on the that}
- \textit{Quiero que se vaya contento de Montreal = I want that you go happy of Montreal}

A good dictionary with appropriate grammar details would have helped them to solve such problems, but some of the dictionaries they possess do not provide them with enough grammatical information, either because they are small-sized or not very complete. Using better dictionaries and practising with them regularly, will improve their use of the English language and also their competence in dictionary skills, resulting in better learners.

If we compare the way in which each of the groups (2nd and 3rd year) accomplished the task, we observed some differences too:

- In both texts, 2nd year students took more risks when translating.
- In both texts, 3rd year students made a greater effort to look for the right equivalents and their choices were more suitable.

3rd year students made use of a more extensive range of resources when the solution to their problem was not found straightforward in their dictionaries. They resorted to their knowledge of synonyms, antonyms and word formation, trying at different headwords. The main reason to be able to use dictionaries better is that they had followed a dictionary skill training process, raising an awareness of the benefit of using dictionaries.

2.2.3 Preparation and development of experiment C

Further practice was carried out in the academic year 2000-2001 in a different context. It was a Secondary school in a completely different area and when a new system of education was being fully implemented\textsuperscript{7}. The test now consisted of four exercises\textsuperscript{8}, combining lexical and grammatical aims. Bearing in mind the same objective as for the previous stages, exercises 1 and 2 focused on grammar (inflected forms and parts of speech). Then, in exercises 3 and 4, our students had to translate sentences from Spanish into English and from English into Spanish paying special attention to certain words that can have more than one meaning. We tried to show students how the dictionary also provides them with grammatical information that will help them to express themselves with correctness.

There are many other aspects that can be dealt with, but, taking into account some of the results and conclusions from previous experiments, these two aspects mentioned before are the basics in order to start an effective search. The exercises proposed here are easier, adapted to the students' level, less global and clearly differentiating the areas we wanted to work. The activity was carried out in 2\textsuperscript{nd} [22 subjects] and 3\textsuperscript{rd} [24 subjects] year ESO\textsuperscript{9} (ages from 12 to 14). We will analyse both groups as a whole, since we did not find significant differences.

2.2.4 Analysis of the results of experiment C

The analysis of the results of these four activities proved that there were again two factors involved, although sometimes both are interrelated:

a) The dictionary itself. In some bilingual dictionaries that students possess, the entry for each headword may not contain all the possible equivalents in the other language, such is the case with the example "Hang the clothes on the line", which accounts for 79\% of incorrect answers. The correct equivalent is cuerdas, and it does not appear in their dictionaries.

\textsuperscript{7} Decreto 2000/2001 (Ley de Ordenación General del Sistema Educativo).
\textsuperscript{8} See Appendix 2.
\textsuperscript{9} Decreto 2000/2001 (Nueva Ley de Secundaria Obligatoria)
Regarding grammar information, they should know that the dictionary only provides the irregular forms of the words, they cannot expect to find the regular ones, but it is true that some dictionaries do not even provide the information about irregular forms. As an example, in the Diccionario de Inglés Contemporáneo para estudiantes only two of the words included in the exercises are found, namely hit and scarves. It does not provide other irregular forms such as better or data.

Once again, some bilingual dictionaries should not be recommended or used by second language learners, as they are not of help. Furthermore, their use can discourage students and they will never understand that dictionaries are a helpful tool for learning a language.

b) Students' ability when using the dictionary, mainly due to their lack of knowledge of dictionaries.

When we analyse the third exercise, we may be surprised when we read quite a number of translations of the sentence “¿Cuánto cuesta la entrada a Happy Hills?” as “How much slope the ticket a Happy Hills?” Students were asked to translate the sentence but paying special attention to the underlined word entrada, but in fact, it was the equivalent of the word slope that sprung to their eye. They had looked up the word cuesta, a noun in Spanish, they found it and copied the equivalent slope. Of course, they had not paid attention to the information indicating that it is a noun and not a verb. A similar example happened in sentence c: “Vas a perder el autobús”. Some students complained that they could not find Vas [an inflected form of the verb ir]. In the first example, they should have looked up the infinitive of the verb costar and in the second case the infinitive of the verb ir. This fact shows that students lack the necessary skills to use reference works, even in their mother tongue. They also ignore how a dictionary is organized. Therefore, the idea of the need of teaching dictionary skills is reinforced with these results.

They read over the entry eager to find a quick answer to their problem and did not pay attention to any specific information that is presented to them straightforwardly. For example: “How much slope the ticket to Happy Hills?” The equivalent tackle refers to sports, and this is specified in the dictionary (def). Other examples in which students usually read no further than the first equivalent were lose/lose waste the bus = perder el autobús or leaf paper = hola de papel. The information is included in the dictionary but they do not check it or do not know that it is there.

One of the main problems in exercise four was that students still translated words unaware of the context, choosing the first equivalent or trusting their knowledge or intuition and ignoring the function of a word in a sentence. These are some of the examples:

a) “I found a £5 note”. Many of the wrong answers were related to the possible equivalents of the word note, the verb observar and the noun nota o billete. Some of the translations were: “Encontré una nota de 5 libras.” / “He encontrado 5 libras para observar.” / “He descubierto observando 5 libras.” / “Me he gastado 5 libras en un billete.”

b) “This surface is not level”. This was the sentence with the second highest number of correct answers. Still, we found some awkward translations of the term nivel: terrreno, allanar, nivel, nivelar. For example: “Esta no es el nivel suficiente” / “Yo no tengo el nivel suficiente”. These mistakes were related to the fact of not checking word class information in the dictionary, this was even more surprisingly when they had completed an exercise on word class just before the translation of the sentences.

c) “We go up the drive to our house.” Only 8.5% of students answered this question correctly. Most students chose drive as the verb conducir, a meaning that students were acquainted with. They did not pay attention to the article preceding the word and indicating that it is a noun.

d) “Don’t smoke. There is already smoke in this room.” This was the sentence with the highest number of correct answers. But some students still did not realize that the first term is a verb and the second one a noun and, consequently, mistook verb [which is more familiar to them] and noun in their translations.

Exercise 2 is vital for the searching process, since we consider that knowing the part of speech a word belongs to is the first step every efficient user of a dictionary must follow. It saves time and avoids mistakes. In this exercise, students were asked to use their dictionaries to classify a set of words according to their part of speech. Some of them belong to more than one word-class, but most of ours students succeeded at least in one, since this is a piece of information that can be found easily in their dictionaries, once the teacher has explained where and how, that is, after some training of dictionary skills.

It seems that dealing with these translation activities, students concentrate in searching individual words, only looking for equivalents, not taking into account any other kind of information. Could it be possible that students (almost all of them) do not know how to write a correct sentence in English? Or, could it be that they are not accustomed to using dictionaries in the classroom as part of their learning process?

We believe that teaching word grammar would be the last and most complex step in teaching dictionary skills, that is, the rules by which students combine to come up with a meaningful and coherent utterance, but we are convinced that the earlier we start the better. The teacher who decides to start teaching dictionary skills should integrate it in smaller doses, starting with very easy and simple tasks, getting students familiar with linguistic concepts, abbreviations, and helping them to use other kind of information that students will come across when using a work of reference. This was the purpose of exercises 1 and 2. Only
good dictionaries are going to provide students with this type of information. Thus, students had to guess quite a number of answers making use of their grammar knowledge (for example, braved, better, biggest), or their intuition (for example, policies = policie?) to complete this set of exercises. Students need more instructions as, for example, what a base form is, or explanations of some of the abbreviations contained in their dictionaries. Therefore, dictionary makers should think more about how to improve small bilingual dictionaries.

3. Conclusions

In this article, we have given an account of several experiments on dictionary use for translation purposes in the language classroom context, explaining how they were carried out, and pointing out the strengths and weaknesses of the results and the process.

We can conclude that dictionaries are strangers to our students. They know they exist, but how they use them is devastating. The reason could be that reference works are not an integrated part of the curriculum, they are not consulted in classrooms as a source of information to do work on the different subjects, they are not really used during primary school, therefore, Secondary students can not be efficient dictionary users. Besides, as it has been mentioned before, bilingual dictionaries need to be improved.

Recent academic systems want students to be autonomous in their learning process, we should teach them skills, but a really helpful potential tool, the dictionary, is not yet considered as such in the Spanish educational system.

Dubois [1981, p. 248] expressed that dictionary needs may change over time; he states that: “The reference needs of dictionary users in the last quarter of this century are quite different from those of ten or twenty years ago”. In fact, they have already changed again, and the new electronic dictionaries are being widely used. But we ask ourselves if students will be able to get the best of these electronic reference works. Again, if the use of dictionaries is not included in the curriculum as part of the process of learning a language, their function will never be significant.

REFERENCES


APPENDIX 1

TRADUCE LOS SIGUIENTES TEXTOS HACIENDO USO DEL DICCIONARIO Y COMPLETA EL CUADRO ADJUNTO, SEÑALANDO LAS DIFICULTADES QUE HAYAS ENCONTRADO, LOS PASOS SEGUIDOS PARA RESOLVERLAS Y EL RESULTADO OBTENIDO.

TEXTO 1

Montreal takes it for granted that culture is both beneficial and necessary, and places all the facilities it can as its disposal. About five hundred different premises in the city, including large museums and small galleries, are devoted to culture, and all are working at full pelt. They range from small public libraries located inside the busiest subway stations to the esplanade alongside the port where the Cirque du Soleil has its tent.

TEXTO 2

A pesar de la inclemencia de sus inviernos, a pesar de las confrontaciones culturales, a pesar de la incertidumbre sobre la provincia de Québec, el habitante de Montreal manifiesta una rara lealtad por su ciudad, una determinación de compartir sus secretos y maravillas. El viajero nunca había podido encontrar una ciudad en la que un taxista pare el contador para invitar a su cliente a explorar a pie unas calles peatonales o un espacio verde. ‘Yo le espero aquí’. Su explicación: ‘Quiero que se vaya contento de Montreal’.

APPENDIX 2

DICTIONARY SKILLS

EJERCICIO 1: Encontrar la forma base de las palabras.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>braved</th>
<th>arguing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lit</td>
<td>data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>better</td>
<td>scarves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>policies</td>
<td>biggest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EJERCICIO 2: Categoría gramatical

Comprueba las siguientes palabras en el diccionario y clasifícalas en las columnas apropiadas según la categoría gramatical a la que pertenezcan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>possibly</th>
<th>Milky</th>
<th>nearly</th>
<th>hover</th>
<th>cease</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>but</td>
<td>yours</td>
<td>through</td>
<td>from</td>
<td>prose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jaw</td>
<td>weak</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nouns | Verbs | Adjectives | Adverbs | Pronouns | Prepositions | Conjunctions |

EJERCICIO 3: Elige la palabra correcta.

A veces las palabras tienen más de un significado. En el siguiente ejercicio traduce las frases al inglés. Utiliza tu diccionario para buscar las palabras subrayadas. Lee la entrada y presta especial atención para elegir la palabra que más se ajuste al sentido de la frase.

a) ¿Cuánto cuesta la entrada a Happy Hills?
b) Siéntate en el banco.
c) Ese chico es un pesado.
d) ¿Tienes una hoja de papel?
e) Vas a perder el autobús.

EJERCICIO 4: Palabras en inglés con más de un significado.

A veces una palabra en inglés tiene más de un equivalente español. Traduce las frases utilizando tu diccionario para buscar las palabras subrayadas. Lee toda la entrada para elegir el significado adecuado que de sentido a la frase. La información que viene entre parentesis te ayudará.

a) It's sunny today. Hang the clothes on the line.
b) I found a £ 5 note.
c) This surface is not level.
d) We go up the drive to our house.
e) Don't smoke. There is already a lot of smoke in this room.