

## The Dictionary Use among Generation Z Students of English: A Survey Study\*

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### ABSTRACT

Dictionaries are indispensable tools for language learning. Today, every area of life has been changing rapidly with technology. In such a rapidly changing world, it is inevitable to witness changes in the dictionary behaviors of today's generation. Thus, the present study aims to explore the dictionary preferences and usage habits of Generation Z students of English. In the study, the data was collected through an online survey, and the participants were university preparatory-class students of English. According to the results, Generation Z students of English prefer electronic dictionaries to printed dictionaries since they believe using them saves time. Additionally, they think that dictionaries are beneficial and necessary because they help them improve their language skills while learning English. Further research on dictionary use can explore several avenues to deepen the understanding of how dictionaries are utilized, their impact on language learning, and ways to enhance their effectiveness.

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### Authors' Contribution Rate

Both authors were equally involved in all the sections of the study.

### Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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## Introduction

A dictionary can be defined as “a reference source in print or electronic form containing words usually alphabetically arranged along with information about their forms, pronunciation, functions, etymologies, meanings, and syntactic and idiomatic uses” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary). There are many types of dictionaries, such as monolingual, bilingual, electronic, etymological, and pocket dictionaries. Dictionaries generally provide information on the meaning, spelling, pronunciation, and word origin, and a qualified dictionary also contains additional information regarding grammar and usage, synonyms, word origin, and the differences between spoken and written language (Lew & Schryver, 2014). They are the most successful and essential tools for language learning (Li, 1998).

Dictionary use among students of English is a well-researched area that sheds light on how learners utilize these linguistic tools, their preferences, and the impact on language acquisition. Most early studies as well as current work focused on English language learners’ preferences concerning the language of a dictionary, that is, monolingual and bilingual dictionaries. For instance, Tomaszczyk (1979) marked the initial investigation into the dictionary requirements of English language learners. Among the 449 participants, there was expressed interest in word meanings, spelling, and grammatical information. Interestingly, they showed a greater preference for bilingual dictionaries over monolingual ones, despite perceiving bilingual dictionaries as having lower content quality and reliability. The study also revealed a decline in dictionary use as language proficiency increased, but even advanced learners occasionally resorted to using bilingual dictionaries. Laufer and Kimmel (1997) conducted a study revealing that students, especially those learning English as a foreign language, regularly turned to dictionaries as part of their learning process. This study emphasized the popularity of bilingual dictionaries among these learners, indicating a need for linguistic support when grappling with an unfamiliar language (Laufer & Kimmel, 1997). Likewise, Tono (2001) found that many learners preferred bilingual dictionaries when encountering unfamiliar words in their second language. This preference stems from the convenience of bilingual dictionaries, which provide translations that can be particularly useful for beginners (Tono, 2001). Barın & Gür (2015) investigated the needs and habits, i.e., the dictionary behaviors of Turkish students majoring in an English department in using English dictionaries. The findings and results showed that students preferred monolingual and bilingual dictionaries to other types of dictionaries and that they generally benefited from the information contained in the appendices. In addition, age, gender and level of study were not effective factors on the students’ culture of dictionary use. In a recent study on the sub-strategies employed by English major students from Saudi Arabia when utilizing dictionaries, Alhatmi (2019) found that learners favored the bilingual English-Arabic dictionary due to its features they liked such as ease of use.

While dictionaries remain a popular resource, the preference for dictionary types has evolved with technological advancements. There have been numerous studies to investigate English learners’ preferences regarding electronic dictionaries and printed dictionaries. Lew and Schryver (2014) explored the impact of the digital revolution on lexicography, focusing on the viewpoint of dictionary users, and noted that in the

information age, the role of dictionaries was evolving, and user behavior patterns were shifting. Another study by Jian et al. (2009) on Chinese EFL learners highlighted a shift towards electronic dictionaries. The results demonstrated that learners favored electronic dictionaries due to their user-friendly features, such as searchability and pronunciation guides, thus reflecting the digital age's influence on language learning resources. Additionally, Jin and Deifell (2013) investigated the potential of online dictionaries for language learners. These resources offer advantages such as real-time updates and multimedia elements that can significantly enhance the language learning experience. Hamouda (2013) also uncovered that students tended to use online dictionaries more frequently than other types. According to the medium of a dictionary, the recent research by Alhatmi (2019) found that English major students preferred electronic dictionaries due to being free, portable, and easy to use. The above studies suggest that the digital era has ushered in a new era of dictionaries, notably online dictionaries.

The previous research on dictionary use also focused on other points. For instance, Barın and Gür (2013) displayed that students used dictionaries most frequently for reading, translating and writing tasks, emphasizing the practical value of dictionaries in language learning. Likewise, according to Alhatmi (2019), English learners used their dictionaries mainly to understand new words while reading. These findings underline the role of dictionaries as integral components of language learners' routines and the potential benefits of fostering a habit of dictionary use. Furthermore, Barın and Gür's study (2015) revealed that students generally hold positive attitudes toward dictionaries, viewing them as helpful tools for language learning. As this favorable perception can contribute to more effective language acquisition, it highlights the importance of instilling a positive attitude towards dictionary use in learners.

### **The Present Study**

The most basic aspect of language learning is learning vocabulary. Language and vocabulary learning are inseparable. Dictionaries are indispensable tools for creating this building block. With technology, dictionaries have changed, and the new generation has started using dictionaries differently. Many language learners need to be made aware of how they use a dictionary (Wingate, 2004). There are studies (e.g. Dziemianko, 2012; Koyama & Takeuchi, 2003) comparing printed and electronic dictionaries for dictionary use; however, there needs to be more research on the dictionary use of Generation Z<sup>†</sup>, which is the link between the old generation and technology. Dictionary research not only focuses on how language is learned but also emphasizes whether the language is learned correctly and effectively (Tono, 2001).

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<sup>†</sup> Generation Z is the demographic cohort that comes after the Millennials and before the Alpha Generation. Researchers and popular media consider the mid and late 1990s to be the beginning of birth years and the early 2010s to be the end of birth years (Nielsen Total Audience Report, 2017). This generation tends to be digital natives, fast decision makers, and highly connected (Consultancy.uk, 2015).

As there have been changes in every field with technological developments, there have also been changes in attitudes, behaviors, and habits towards dictionaries. For instance, mobile devices are widely used in learning due to their accessibility and portability; many young learners prefer to use them (Kacetly & Klímová, 2019). In several studies (e.g., Chen, 2010; Bingöl, 2006), the differences between electronic dictionaries and printed dictionaries have been mentioned. Furthermore, some studies combined these two and conducted studies in a comparative way (e.g., Koyama & Takeuchi, 2003; Hakim et al., 2018). Nevertheless, to the best of our knowledge, a detailed survey has yet to be found on the dictionary use by Generation Z Turkish students of English. In the present study, research will be conducted with university English preparatory class students studying in Turkey, and the perspectives of this age group on the dictionary will be examined.

Dictionaries are indispensable helping tools for learning a foreign language. However, with the new era, the perspective on dictionaries and usage of dictionaries have been changed by technology (Hakim et al., 2018). The present study is designed to investigate the dictionary culture of Generation Z students of English in Turkey at the university level. Thus, this study aims to examine the needs, habits, and preferences of this generation about dictionary use. It will shed light on the role of dictionaries in modern foreign language learning and the dictionary culture of Generation Z in a rapidly changing, technology-driven world. The research questions expected to be answered through the present study are the following:

- i. How are the behaviors and attitudes of Generation Z students of English towards printed dictionaries?
- ii. How are the behaviors and attitudes of Generation Z students of English towards electronic dictionaries?
- iii. How are the behaviors and attitudes of Generation Z students of English towards dictionary use in general?

### **Methodology**

The primary purpose of this study is to gain insights into the dictionary culture of Generation Z. The findings are expected to make an essential contribution to the field of dictionary research. Generation Z is a topic that has been on the agenda a lot lately, but it needs to be researched more (Akbaş et al., 2022). This study is carried out to capture the dynamics of today's age and examine the subjects' perspectives on dictionary use.

### **Data Collection Tool**

This study employed a survey study approach with a quantitative method to investigate the behaviors and attitudes of Generation Z towards dictionaries. A questionnaire survey was used to collect the data for the present research. It consisted of two parts: multiple-choice questions adapted from Hartmann (1999) and a 5-point Likert-scale questionnaire.

Participants were requested to indicate their responses by selecting the option that best reflected their viewpoints. For items 3, 8, 10, 14, 16, and 17, it was stated that

students may select more than one option. For the Likert scale, a 5-point scale (i.e., strongly disagree, disagree, neither disagree nor agree, agree, strongly agree) was given to students, and they were asked to choose the most appropriate point. The questionnaire consisted of 43 items, including age, gender, and department. The first 17 items included multiple-choice questions. The rest of the questions (23 items) were the Likert scale statements.

Each question was carefully selected to assess the viewpoints of students regarding dictionaries, as well as to evaluate and compare the perspectives of Generation Z on both print and electronic dictionaries. The first ten items were chosen to measure students' perspectives on printed dictionaries. Items 3, 5, and 6 were planned to determine whether students use different types of printed dictionaries. Items 9 and 10 were organized to evaluate the information about the appendix part of the dictionaries. Item 11 was designed to assess the knowledge of the phonetic alphabet. Items 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17 were specifically formulated to assess the perspectives of students regarding electronic dictionaries. As for the 5-point Likert scale, 23 statements were designed to gain insights into the dictionary habits of Generation Z students of English in general.

### **Reliability and Validity of the Instrument**

The reliability analysis of the questions and statements in the research scale was made according to Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficient. As a result of the analysis, Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficient for the first part of the survey (17 items) was found as 0.73. For the second part of the survey (23 items), it was found as 0.95. The reliability coefficients were found to be high; thus, the scale used to measure the dictionary culture of Generation Z can be considered a reliable scale.

The validity of the questionnaire used in this study was evaluated through certain considerations to ensure that it accurately measured the intended constructs and provided meaningful results. First of all, a comprehensive literature review was conducted to ensure that the questionnaire items were grounded in established knowledge related to the research topic. Secondly, the questionnaire was reviewed by subject-matter experts in the field to assess the relevance and completeness of the questions. Furthermore, during the development of the questionnaire, efforts were made to ensure that the questions appeared relevant and clear to the study participants.

### **Participants**

In this study, 112 students participated in the questionnaire survey. The participants of the study consist of 74 female and 38 male students. When evaluated in terms of age, all participants were in the Generation Z age range. The vast majority of participants (107 individuals) were between the ages of 18-21. Only 5 participants were between the ages of 22-25. The study was conducted with the students of Generation Z who study at the departments whose language of instruction is English at Atatürk University in Erzurum / Turkey. As a result, the survey was applied to preparatory-class students studying in four different departments of Atatürk University in Turkey: American Culture and Literature,

English Language and Literature, English Language Teaching, Translation, and Interpreting.

As seen in Table 1, 66.1% of the Generation Z students participating in the research are female, and 33.9% are male. In terms of age, 95.5% of the participants were between the ages of 18 and 21, and 4.5% of them were between the ages of 22 and 25. In terms of the department, it was determined that 28.6% of the students studied American Culture and Literature, 20.5% English Language and Literature, 23.2% English Language Teaching, and 27.7% Translation and Interpreting.

**Table 1.** The Sociodemographic Characteristics of the Participants

Valid	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Female	74	66,1
Male	38	33,9
Age		
18-21	107	95,5
22-25	5	4,5
Department		
American Culture and Literature	32	28,6
English Language and Literature	23	20,5
English Language Teaching	26	23,2
English Translation and Interpreting	31	27,7
Total	112	100,0

### Data Collection Procedure and Data Analysis

The data for this study were gathered from a sample of participants enrolled in preparatory classes. Specifically, all students were preparatory class students at the School of Foreign Languages when the questionnaire was administered. Before the data collection, written permission for the application of the research was received from the School of Foreign Languages. At the beginning of the survey, there was a background information section. In this section, it was stated that the participation in this survey is completely voluntary. In addition, Ethics Committee Approval was obtained from the Atatürk University Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee.

Online methods (i.e., Google Survey) were employed for questionnaire distribution to maximize the response rate and minimize potential biases. The questionnaire was prepared in Turkish, which is the student's native language, and was made based on considerations of question comprehensibility and the potential for enhanced data accuracy when utilizing the participants' native language. The content of the survey was designed to be understandable and simple. The estimated time for its application was approximately 15 minutes.

The data obtained from the survey was recorded in the SPSS program. In the analysis of the data, descriptive statistics such as frequency distributions, percentages,

averages, standard deviation values of the answers given by the participants, reliability analyses of the instrument, and some demographic characteristics were tested through the SPSS 25.0 program.

## Results

In this section, the results are presented under three subsections parallel with the research questions. The first analysis is for the behaviors and attitudes of Generation Z students towards printed dictionaries; the second one is for their behaviors and attitudes towards electronic dictionaries, and the third is for their behaviors and attitudes towards dictionary use in general. The results are displayed in tables for a better understanding.

### The Behaviors and Attitudes of Generation Z Students towards Printed Dictionaries

Based on the first research question of the present study, the results obtained from data analysis show that most participants (60,7%) mentioned that they started using printed dictionaries in their primary school years, and they (62,5%) got their first printed dictionaries during that time. Additionally, 31,3 % of the students stated that they had two printed dictionaries and that they (92,9 %) preferred bilingual ones when purchasing printed dictionaries. 72,3% of the students stated that the dictionary they preferred to use was bilingual although they thought that monolingual dictionaries were as useful as bilingual ones. The participants also mentioned that they purchased their most recent printed dictionaries because their teachers recommended them and that while choosing dictionaries, they primarily paid attention to the suitability of their needs. More than half of the students stated that they read the appendices section in printed dictionaries. In addition, most students (69,6 %) mentioned that they knew how to read the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA).

The answers given to the questions regarding the behaviors and attitudes of Generation Z students towards printed dictionaries are also demonstrated in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Findings about the Behaviors and Attitudes of the Generation Z Students towards the Printed Dictionaries

		Frequency	Percent
When did you start using a printed dictionary?	at primary school	68	60,7
	at secondary school	36	32,1
	at high school	5	4,5
	at university	3	2,7
When did you purchase your first printed dictionary?	at primary school	70	62,5
	at secondary school	37	33,0
	at high school	3	2,7
	at university	2	1,8
What kind of printed dictionaries have you had so far? (You can select more than one option)	monolingual dictionaries	42	37,5
	bilingual dictionaries	104	92,9
	thesaurus	14	12,5
	encyclopedic dictionaries	9	8,0
	special subject dictionaries	2	1,8
	dictionary of idioms	32	28,6
dictionary of concepts	3	2,7	
How many printed	none	10	8,9

dictionaries do you currently have?	one	29	25,9
	two	35	31,3
	three	20	17,9
	more than three	18	16,1
What type of printed dictionaries do you usually use?	monolingual dictionaries	24	21,4
	bilingual dictionaries	81	72,3
	thesaurus	2	1,8
	encyclopedic dictionary	1	0,9
	special subject dictionary	3	2,7
	other dictionaries	1	0,9
Which type of printed dictionary is more useful in your opinion?	monolingual dictionaries	52	46,4
	bilingual dictionaries	56	50,0
	thesaurus	2	1,8
	encyclopedic dictionary	2	1,8
Why did you buy the most recent printed dictionary you own?	because my teacher suggested it	57	50,9
	recommended by a friend or relative	3	2,7
	as a result of my own research	24	21,4
	as a result of an advertisement	1	0,9
	I couldn't remember	20	17,9
	other reasons	7	6,3
What are your priorities when choosing a printed dictionary? (You can select more than one option)	pay attention to the suitability of my needs	92	82,1
	the number of words	47	42,0
	the number of sample sentences given for the word	44	39,3
	being affordable	44	39,3
	the reputation of the publisher	27	24,1
	suitability to carry	21	18,8
Have you ever read front-matter guidance notes to know how to use your printed dictionary/ies?	yes	58	51,8
	no	54	48,2
Have you ever used the information in the appendices of your printed dictionary/ies?	yes	68	60,7
	no	44	39,3
Do you know how to read the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)?	yes	78	69,6
	no	34	30,4

Generally, the results suggest that students rely heavily on printed dictionaries, particularly bilingual and monolingual ones, and consider these resources valuable for language learning. Teachers play a significant role in influencing their choices. Additionally, there is a substantial interest in additional resources, such as thesaurus and encyclopedic dictionaries, indicating diverse language needs among students.

### **The Behaviors and Attitudes of Generation Z Students towards Electronic Dictionaries**

The results obtained from data analysis based on the second research question of the present study present that most of the participants indicated that they (99,1%) used electronic dictionaries and that they (75,9%) preferred bilingual ones while using electronic dictionaries. They also stated that they primarily used a bilingual dictionary (i.e., Tureng) on online platforms. 53,6% of the participants responded that the most important



reason to use an electronic dictionary was the quick access to information. In addition, 85,7% of them stated that they paid attention to whether the pronunciation of words was included when using an electronic dictionary. It was also among the most common responses that they mostly used electronic dictionaries while translating (84,8%), writing (83%), and reading (81,3%).

The answers given to the questions regarding the behaviors and attitudes of Generation Z students towards electronic dictionaries are also demonstrated in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Findings about the Behaviors and Attitudes of the Generation Z Students towards the Electronic Dictionaries

		Frequency	Percent
Do you use an electronic dictionary?	yes	111	99,1
	no	1	0,9
What kind of dictionary do you use as an electronic dictionary?	a monolingual dictionary	27	24,1
	a bilingual dictionary	85	75,9
Which electronic dictionary platform do you use the most? (You can select more than one option)	Google Translate	43	38,4
	Yandex Translate	17	15,2
	Oxford Dictionary	59	52,7
	Tureng	90	80,4
	Cambridge Dictionary	57	50,9
	Longman Dictionary	33	29,5
	Collins Dictionary	2	1,8
	dictionary.com	5	4,5
	another online platform	9	8,1
The most important reason why I use an electronic dictionary is ...	quick access to information	60	53,6
	being able to hear the pronunciation of a word to reach the right meaning	29	25,9
	being constantly updated	19	17,0
		4	3,6
When using an electronic dictionary, I pay attention to ... (You can select more than one option)	whether the pronunciation of the word is included	96	85,7
	example sentences	68	60,7
	being used without internet	34	30,4
	word count	32	28,6
	that the word can be pronounced in more than one accent	61	54,5
	its popularity	18	16,1
I use electronic dictionaries while ... (You can select more than one option)	reading textbooks or academic articles	91	81,3
	reading for fun	28	25,0
	writing (working on writing assignments)	93	83,0
	translating (working on translation assignments)	95	84,8
	playing word games	19	17,0

These findings suggest that electronic dictionaries are widely used among students, with quick access to information and pronunciation which are significant factors influencing their choice of dictionaries. The preferences for specific platforms and the range of activities for which electronic dictionaries are used also provide important

insights into how students incorporate these tools into their language learning and communication processes.

### The Behaviors and Attitudes of Generation Z Students towards Dictionary Use in General

The results obtained from data analysis based on the third research question of the study are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Findings about the Behaviors and Attitudes of Generation Z Students in General

Scale questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	N	Frequency Averages	Standard Deviations
I look up the pronunciation of words when I have difficulty reading.	22(19,6)	3(2,7)	2(1,8)	29(25,9)	56(50)	112	3,84	1,545
While learning English, dictionaries improve my skills in that language.	21(18,8)	3(2,7)	8(7,1)	31(27,7)	49(43,8)	112	3,75	1,504
I prefer electronic dictionaries to avoid wasting time using a dictionary.	24(21,4)	4(3,6)	7(6,3)	21(18,8)	56(50,0)	112	3,72	1,606
Using an online dictionary is more useful than using a printed dictionary.	21(18,8)	7(6,3)	16(14,3)	25(22,3)	43(38,4)	112	3,55	1,512
I know how I can use a dictionary.	20(17,9)	7(6,3)	11(9,8)	42(37,5)	32(28,6)	112	3,53	1,427
I'm learning new words while using monolingual dictionaries.	23(20,5)	6(5,4)	14(12,5)	32(28,6)	37(33,0)	112	3,48	1,507
I try to decipher the unknown word's meaning by looking at the context.	22(19,6)	5(4,5)	10(8,9)	47(42,0)	28(25,0)	112	3,48	1,427
I believe that	23(20,5)	7(6,3)	12(10,7)	35(31,3)	35(31,3)	112	3,46	1,500

using a dictionary will improve speaking skills in a foreign language.								
I am satisfied with my ability to use the dictionary.	17(15,2)	12(10,7)	16(14,3)	39(34,8)	28(25,0)	112	3,44	1,374
I always use a dictionary while learning English.	16(14,3)	18(16,1)	19(17,0)	32(28,6)	27(24,1)	112	3,32	1,377
I usually use the dictionary when reading and writing.	20(17,9)	14(12,5)	17(15,2)	40(35,7)	21(18,8)	112	3,25	1,379
I think monolingual dictionaries are more useful in learning a new language.	24(21,4)	14(12,5)	17(15,2)	26(23,2)	31(27,7)	112	3,23	1,513
Using a bilingual dictionary is more practical.	23(20,5)	16(14,3)	18(16,1)	24(21,4)	31(27,7)	112	3,21	1,503
I remember the word better when using a bilingual dictionary.	18(16,1)	20(17,9)	21(18,8)	28(25,0)	25(22,3)	112	3,20	1,394
Looking through the printed dictionary feels like a waste of time.	20(17,9)	20(17,9)	23(20,5)	19(17,0)	30(25,8)	112	3,17	1,457
I can find each word that I'm looking for in the dictionary.	17(15,2)	24(21,4)	24(21,4)	26(23,2)	21(18,8)	112	3,09	1,346
I think a monolingual dictionary is more useful than a bilingual one.	23(20,5)	17(15,2)	26(23,2)	21(18,8)	25(22,3)	112	3,07	1,438
I have no difficulties using a dictionary	18(16,1)	28(25,0)	22(19,6)	26(23,2)	18(16,1)	112	2,98	1,335
Sometimes, there are words that I cannot find in the	21(18,8)	27(24,1)	13(11,6)	36(32,1)	15(13,4)	112	2,97	1,365

dictionaries.								
I find the pronunciation part difficult in printed dictionaries.	19(17,0)	34(30,4)	29(25,9)	20(17,9)	10(8,9)	112	2,71	1,204
When using a monolingual dictionary, I cannot extract the meaning of the word from the context.	21(18,8)	44(39,3)	32(28,6)	12(10,7)	3(2,7)	112	2,39	0,999
I find using a dictionary boring.	36(32,1)	38(33,9)	23(20,5)	10(8,9)	5(4,5)	112	2,20	1,122
I find it unnecessary to use a dictionary.	69(61,6)	33(29,5)	5(4,5)	1(0,9)	4(3,6)	112	1,55	0,909

Considering the propositions with the highest participation levels based on frequency average values of the first five propositions; the highest level of participation among Generation Z students is 3,84 on average for *I look at the pronunciation of words when I have difficulty reading*, 3,75 on average for *While learning English, dictionaries improve my skills in that language*, 3,72 on average for *I prefer electronic dictionaries to avoid wasting time using a dictionary*, on average for 3,55 *Using an online dictionary is more useful than using a printed dictionary*, 3,53 on average for *I know how I can use a dictionary*. (Table 3). It can be observed that participant Generation Z students evaluated the proposition with the highest five levels of participation as *agree*.

Considering the propositions with the lowest participation levels based on frequency average values of the first five propositions; the lowest level of participation among Generation Z students is 1,55 on average for *I find it unnecessary to use a dictionary*, 2,20 on average for *I find using a dictionary boring*, 2,39 on average for *When using a monolingual dictionary I cannot extract the meaning of the word from the context*, 2,71 on average for *I find the pronunciation part difficult in printed dictionaries*, 2,97 on average for *sometimes, there are words that I cannot find in the dictionaries*. It can be concluded that participant Generation Z students evaluated the proposition with the lowest five levels of participants as *disagree* with the first three statements and *neither disagree nor agree* with the remaining two statements.

When considering the propositions other than the ones mentioned above with the highest and lowest levels of participation in the study, it is observed that the participation level average of Generation Z students ranges from 3,48 to 2,98. Generally, they evaluated these propositions as *neither disagree nor agree*.

In conclusion, the majority of respondents indicated that they looked at the pronunciations of words while reading and believed that dictionaries assisted them in language learning. They preferred using electronic dictionaries to avoid time waste and found them more beneficial than printed dictionaries. Most of them felt confident in their

ability to use dictionaries effectively, rarely encountering situations where they could not find a word or deduce its meaning from monolingual dictionaries. Additionally, they did not find using dictionaries boring or unnecessary. Broadly, it appears that Generation Z students find dictionaries to be valuable resources for language learning but have varying levels of agreement when it comes to specific aspects of dictionary use and certain limitations they may encounter.

### Discussion

This study aims to quantitatively examine the dictionary habits and perspectives of Generation Z students studying English. A questionnaire survey was conducted on participants who are preparatory class students studying in the Department of English Language and Literature, English Language Teaching, American Culture and Literature, and English Translation and Interpreting, Faculty of Arts, Atatürk University, Erzurum in Turkey. 112 students participated in the questionnaire survey.

In terms of the first research question *How are the behaviors and attitudes of Generation Z students of English towards printed dictionaries?*, it was found out that the majority of participants acquired their first dictionaries during their elementary school years and started using them during the same period. Their preferences for printed dictionaries lean towards bilingual ones. A similar pattern of results was obtained in Tomaszczyk (1979), Laufer and Kimmel (1997), and Tono (2001). However, in the present study, most participants stated that bilingual dictionaries were the most useful type whereas a majority of learners in Tomaszczyk (1979) perceived bilingual dictionaries as having lower content quality and reliability despite showing a greater preference for them. A possible explanation for this difference is the advancement of technology. The widespread availability of digital resources, such as online translation tools and mobile applications, may have significantly influenced Generation Z students' preferences. They might perceive bilingual dictionaries as more convenient and readily accessible on digital platforms, making them more inclined to use and value them. Additionally, many students mentioned that they chose dictionaries based on their own needs. Despite the fact that most students had at least one printed dictionary, the number of students who read the appendices section was in the minority. This result is inconsistent with what was found in Barın and Gür (2015) concluding that students were mostly aware of the appendices section. This discrepancy could be attributed to the composition of the student samples. The present study focused exclusively on preparatory students while Barın and Gür (2015) included all levels of undergraduate students who were more advanced learners and were thus more likely to be aware of and utilize appendices.

In terms of the second research question, *What are the behaviors and attitudes of Generation Z students of English towards electronic dictionaries?*, the data obtained from this research showed that Generation Z students of English favored electronic dictionaries and while using electronic dictionaries, they chose bilingual dictionaries. From the standpoint of favoring electronic dictionaries, a similar conclusion was reached by several studies (e.g., Jian et al., 2009; Jin & Deifell, 2013; Hamouda, 2013; Alhatmi, 2019). According to the findings of Barın and Gür (2015), half of the students expressed that they

used electronic dictionaries while in the present study, all the students claimed that they used electronic dictionaries. The increase in the use of electronic dictionaries can be attributed to the convergence of technological advancements, changing student preferences, and generational differences, thus indicating the increasing reliance on digital tools in dictionary use. In addition, the results of the present study demonstrated that Generation Z students of English also preferred bilingual dictionaries while using electronic dictionaries in line with the studies on printed ones (e.g., Tomaszczyk, 1979; Laufer & Kimmel, 1997). Lastly, the feature of listening to the pronunciation of words has indeed been the most preferred feature of electronic dictionaries for Generation Z. This feature aligns with their needs and expectations in language learning.

In terms of the third research question *How are the behaviors and attitudes of Generation Z students of English towards dictionary use in general?*, Generation Z students of English prefer using electronic dictionaries over printed dictionaries since they believe that using electronic dictionaries has user-friendly features as it was found in Jian et al. (2009), Hamouda (2013), and Alhatmi (2019). Additionally, they think that dictionaries are beneficial and necessary because they help them improve their language skills while learning English in line with the study by Barın and Gür (2015). Last but not least, Generation Z students of English think that they know how to use dictionaries. Thus, they are satisfied with their reference skills.

### Conclusion and Suggestions

This study, by researching the dictionary use among Generation Z students of English, has provided instructors with a reference point on how to better engage students with dictionaries, considering the attitudes of Generation Z towards them. Also, while electronic dictionaries are favored by students for their speed, it is important to emphasize the need for context when learning new words. Encouraging them to focus on the richness in the content of dictionaries rather than just using it as a quick word-lookup tool can help them better understand how words are used in context, leading to more effective language learning. Additionally, providing Generation Z students with more information about the functionality of dictionaries and different types of dictionaries can make their dictionary use more effective. Organizing special training or workshops to enhance their dictionary skills can also contribute to their language learning processes.

This study has explored the dictionary use among preparatory English class students via a survey study. For further research, participants from all grade levels could be included instead of exclusively focusing on preparatory class students. Also, qualitative methods such as interviews could be integrated to enrich the confidence of the findings.

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