

The Use of Japanese Language Dictionary by the Students of Japanese Literature Study Program, Brawijaya University

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Abstract

Dictionary has an important role in learning a foreign language. In this research, the writers discuss the topic regarding the use of Japanese language dictionary by the students of Japanese Literature Study Program, Brawijaya University. The discussed problems are type of the used dictionary, kind of the used dictionary, kind of information to search, and the difficulty found when using a dictionary. This research is the quantitative research with the statistical descriptive method (Woodrow, 2014). The research shows the result that students of Japanese Literature Study Program tend to use application and online dictionaries in bilingual version; the information searched in the dictionary is still fundamental, such as finding the meaning of a word or example on how to use a word. Furthermore, another difficulty which is often found is that the example for the use of word is less complete. Therefore, it can be concluded that the skill of students in using dictionary is still considered low. In this case, students do not yet use the function of dictionary optimally. Therefore, it requires further management related to the use of dictionary.

Keywords: Japanese Language, Information, Dictionary, Learner, Use

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1. Introduction

The acquisition of foreign language can be with the use of a learning media, such as dictionary. *Dictionaries are considered good companions to language learners, especially to second or foreign language learners because dictionaries can provide a quick and direct access to the meaning of an unknown word* (Tseng, 2009). The definition of dictionary according to Kirkness (in Davies & Elder, 2004) is *an essential source, if not indeed the principal source, of information on language for all members of literate societies who might have questions on any aspect of the form, meaning, and/or use of a word or words in their own or in another language*. The research about the importance of dictionary for English learners attracts the language teachers in the last decade (Şevik, 2014). The research about the use of dictionary can contribute to the improvement of dictionary design and solve problems found in learning foreign language. Based on the assumption, the writers are interested to discuss the topic about the use of dictionary in this research. It can be said that there are only few researches about the use of dictionary by Japanese language learners in Indonesia to 2017. Based on the experience of writers as Japanese language teachers, there is a tendency of students in using less suitable vocabularies in learning the language skill courses (reading, writing, listening, and speaking). It is caused by the lack of knowledge about how to search vocabularies and use them according to the context.

The problems related to the use of dictionary by Japanese language learners in Japanese Literature Study Program of Brawijaya University are as follows:

1. What are the types of dictionaries used by students of Japanese Literature Study Program of Brawijaya University and their reasons for choosing them (paper dictionary, electronic dictionary, online dictionary, and application dictionary)?
2. What are the kinds of dictionaries used by students of Japanese Literature Study Program of Brawijaya University and their reasons for choosing them (monolingual vs bilingual)?
3. What is the kind of information searched in the dictionary?
4. What are the difficulties found by students when using dictionary?

The foreign language learners whose their mother languages do not have *kanji* will find more challenge when learning Japanese language. When searching the meaning of a word in the dictionary, there will be some stages; the learners must know how to read kanji first, convert the word into dictionary form (*jishokei*), and they finally can look for the meaning of word and adjust it with the context. It is certain challenge for foreign learners, particularly Indonesian students, when learning Japanese language.

Based on the aforementioned problem formulation, this research aims to conduct an investigation related to:

1. Type of dictionary used by students of Japanese Literature Study Program, Brawijaya University, and their reasons for choosing certain dictionary types. In this case, the writers wish to know the tendency and variation of dictionary type chosen by the students.

2. Kind of dictionary used by students of Japanese Literature Study Program, Brawijaya University. From this problem, the investigated aspects are tendency and variation in choosing dictionary type by the students.
3. Kind of information searched in the dictionary. Whether or not the students know kind of information which can be found in a dictionary (besides the meaning of word) is investigated in this section.
4. The difficulties found by students when using a dictionary. In this case, the writers wish to know several difficulties faced by students in using dictionary.

The writers wish to investigate the behaviour of students related to the use of dictionary. The result of this research shows whether or not the students of Japanese Literature Study Program, Brawijaya University have an adequate skill in using dictionary, as well as what needs to be improved or directed by the teachers related to the use of dictionary. The result of this research will be followed up to improve the skill of students in using dictionary.

2. Previous Researches

Previous researches about the use of several kinds of dictionaries were conducted by Al-Darayseh (2013), Hamouda (2013), Koca, Pojani, & Jashari-Cicko (2014), Şevik (2014), and Al-homoud & Arabia (2017). The problems discussed in some researches are kind and type of dictionary used by foreign students in learning English (English as a Foreign Language); frequency of the use of dictionary; information searched in the dictionary; and difficulty when using dictionary. The used method is quantitative and/or mixed methodology with the instruments of questionnaire and interview. From those researches, it is known that some learners tend to use electronic and online dictionaries in bilingual version based on frequency of the use of dictionary. Furthermore, the most searched kind of information in the dictionary is the meaning of word. Another information is related to pronunciation and word form. From these researches, it is known that the learners are not given lesson on how to use dictionary, so they find some difficulties when looking for information in the dictionary.

The research focused on the use of electronic and online dictionaries was conducted by Tseng (2009) and Dashtestani (2013). Dashtestani (2013) stated that the participants in his research stated a positive thing about using the electronic and online dictionaries, despite finding some difficulties and challenges, such as the lack of training in using electronic and online dictionaries, choosing a less suitable dictionary, and the lack of facility provided in the class. Meanwhile, Tseng (2009) stated that most of participants agreed that they were able to use the bilingual online dictionary (Yahoo!) to get the information they wanted to know. Besides, the level of satisfaction in using a dictionary is very high. However, half of the participants stated that they often used this kind of dictionary since they do not get internet access. Therefore, in the class, the participants tend to choose a dictionary in form of a book and electronic dictionary.

Some researches refer to the use of English dictionary as a foreign language. The writers with a background as learners and teachers of Japanese language are interested to know whether or not the cases found in some researches are also found in Indonesian students learning Japanese language. The research about the use of

Japanese language dictionary by the foreign speakers is not yet conducted frequently now. Some researches about this topic were conducted by Shojiue (2006), namely the use of dictionary by Japanese language learners at intermediate and top levels and the problems faced by the learners. The discussed problem is a kind of dictionary used by Japanese language learners and the problems in using a dictionary. Therefore, Shojiue (2006) wished to know the cause of problems. The used method is questionnaire for the learners of Japanese language at intermediate and top levels in Hokkaido University in which their mother languages are Korean, Chinese, Portuguese, Indonesian, and Urdu languages. There are 17 (seventeen) questions in the questionnaire, containing the history about the use of dictionary and kind and type of the used dictionary. The research shows the result that (1) all participants use bilingual dictionary. However, participants learning Japanese language more than 5 (five) years also use the monolingual dictionary (*kokugo jiten*). Besides, it is known that the participants tend to use electronic dictionary; (2) these two dictionary types (monolingual and bilingual dictionaries) have the same tendency in which there is no explanation about word pronunciation, kanji without *furigana*; explanation about the meaning of word and how to use it is not enough.

Suzuki (2012) discussed a research about the use of dictionary by foreign students in Japanese Language Program Tokyo University of Foreign Studies by distributing questionnaires to 117 participants and interview to 8 (eight) participants. Suzuki (2012) stated two important things from his research, namely (1) that teachers must consider training to make learner skillful in using dictionary; (2) the improvement of dictionary quality used by learners of Japanese language by providing many examples for the use of word in sentence. Besides, there are researches by Tanaka (2015) about how to use dictionary in the process of writing a text in Japanese language by Chinese students. Although this research is more specific than some previous researches, the obtained result shows a similarity in which the tendency of how to use electronic and bilingual dictionaries.

Some researches explained in this subchapter will be used as references in conducting this research. The problem discussed in this research is adopted from previous researches. The writer found the similar problems discussed in previous researches about the use of dictionary, such as type and kind of the used dictionary, information searched in the dictionary, and the difficulty in using dictionary. The difference from some previous researches is in the participants involved in the research, Indonesian students learning Japanese language in Indonesia.

3. Methodology

This research is quantitative research with the statistical descriptive method, in which the instrument of research is questionnaire in which this method was also used by Tseng (2009), Al-Darayseh (2013), Şevik (2014), Dashtestani (2013), Koca et al. (2014), and (Al-homoud & Arabia (2017). The questionnaire is used with the considerations as stated by Gillham (2000), namely (1) to save time and cost; (2) to get much information from many people in a short time; (3) the result of questionnaire in form of closed question which can be immediately processed for the analysis; (4) the absence of pressure for participants to answer questions; (5) the confidentiality of participant data; and (6) the standardization of questions asked to all participants. Therefore, in using questionnaire, the writers understand the general description about

the use of dictionary among students of Japanese Literature Study Program of Brawijaya University.

3.1 Participants

Total students are 606 (State Minister for Research and Technology, 2017). The questionnaires are not distributed to all students, but only to samples of students. Total sample is obtained by applying formula of Slovin in which the accuracy rate is 95% and margin of error is 5% (in Wiyono, 2011).

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

Explanation:

n : number of sample

N : number of population

e : error tolerance

The following is calculation for number of student samples from Japanese Literature Study Program of Brawijaya University involved in this research.

$$\begin{aligned} n &= \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2} = \frac{606}{1 + (606)(0.05)^2} \\ &= \frac{606}{1 + (606)(0.0025)} \\ &= \frac{606}{1 + 1,515} \\ &= \frac{606}{2,515} \\ &= 240.95 \\ &= 241 \end{aligned}$$

Formula 1. Calculation for Number of Student Samples

Based on the aforementioned calculation, there are 241 students to get questionnaire. The number includes the students from three classes (2017, 2016, and 2015) who are still active in the study.

3.2 Questionnaire

There are two questions asked in questionnaire, namely closed and open questions. The closed questions are made by applying Likert scale (in Woodrow, 2014). Meanwhile, open questions are used to obtain information in which the possible variation of answer from participants cannot be accommodated by the closed questions. It is in accordance with the questions stated by Dornyei (2011). The writer uses the list of questions in questionnaire stated by Suzuki (2012), Al-Darayseh (2013), Dashtestani (2013), Hamouda (2013), Şevik (2014), Koca et al. (2014), Al-homoud & Arabia (2017) adjusted to the characteristics of Japanese dictionary.

The components of question in the questionnaire consist of four aspects, namely (1) type of dictionary used by students; (2) kind of dictionary used by students; (3) kind of information searched in the dictionary; and (4) difficulties when using dictionary. Besides, open questions related to four aspects above are also asked. The modification of questions which the writers asked passed the validation process by the Native Speaker.

3.3 Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected by distributing questionnaires to 241 students for one week from 5 to 12 February 2018. From all incoming questionnaires, it is known that only 235 questionnaires were valid. It was caused by the technical mistake and carelessness of students when filling questionnaire. All valid questionnaires were counted with SPSS Statistics v23 program. All data were inputted into SPSS Statistics since the statistical descriptive analysis was performed to see the average value indicating the use of dictionary by students. Therefore, the information related to tendency and variability was obtained (Woodrow, 2014).

The obtained statistical data were used as the basis to analyze problem in this research which was also related with the experience of writers as teachers. From the relevance, the factors affecting the data tendency can be known. Besides, the data variation and the influencing factor can be known. Therefore, besides the data tendency, another data variation can be known.

3. Research Result

The result of questionnaire consisting of four sections is elaborated in this section. First section is about the type of dictionary used by students of Japanese Literature Study Program of Brawijaya University. The writers asked about what type of dictionary used by students, including printed dictionary, electronic dictionary, application dictionary, and online dictionary. Besides, the writers also asked open question about the reason for choosing dictionary type, including the category of "frequently" and "always" and name of the used dictionary. Table 1 about type of dictionary used by students is as follows:

Table 1. Type of the used dictionary

Descriptive Statistics					
Point	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
I use the printed dictionary	235	1.00	5.00	2.3106	.87785
I use electronic dictionary	235	1.00	5.00	1.3489	.76064
I use application dictionary	235	1.00	5.00	4.4723	.72374
I use online dictionary	235	1.00	5.00	3.4979	1.01010
Valid N (listwise)	235				

From Table 1, it is known that the use of dictionary in form of book belongs to the category of seldom used by the students with average use of 2.31. Furthermore, electronic dictionary belongs to the category of never or seldom used with the average use of 1.34. Meanwhile, application dictionary belongs to the category of often or

always used with the average use of 4.47. It is the dictionary type frequently used. In second position, dictionary type in the category of often or seldom used is online dictionary with average use of 3.49. The reason for choosing application and online dictionaries is that they are considered more practical than other dictionary types. Practical in this case means that this dictionary can be installed or accessed on the internet via mobile phone or notebook. Therefore, they are easy to be used everywhere and everytime.

The used dictionaries are (1) The printed dictionary, such as **Sakura, Kamus Saku Gramedia, Kamus Saku Gakushudo, Kamus Evergreen,** and **Kamus Kenjimatsura**; (2) Electronic dictionary, such as **Alfalink**; (3) Application dictionary, such as **Akebi, Takoboto, Shirabe Jisho, Kotoba, JED, JLPT Goi, Jisho, Yomiwa,** and **Obenkyou**; (4) Online dictionary, such as **Bing Translate, Google Translate, Kotobank, Weblio,** and **Line Dictionary**.

For second section, the writers conducted a survey about the kind of dictionary used by students. List of the asked questions includes the use of bilingual and monolingual dictionaries. Table 2 is as follows: Kind of dictionary used by students.

Table 2. Type of the used dictionary

Descriptive Statistics					
Point	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
I use bilingual dictionary	235	1.00	5.00	4.3447	.90365
I use monolingual dictionary	235	1.00	5.00	1.7319	.92937
Valid N (listwise)	235				

It is known that bilingual dictionary belongs to the category of often or always used with the average use of 4.34. Bilingual dictionary here includes Japanese language - Indonesian language and Japanese language - English dictionaries. Meanwhile, monolingual dictionary belongs to the category of seldom or never used with the average use of 1.73. The reason for choosing the kind of dictionary which is always or often used is that it is easier to be understood since the explanation of vocabularies uses mother language (Indonesian language) or English. However, some questionnaires state that monolingual dictionary is required when bilingual dictionary cannot explain the meaning of word in details.

For third section, the writers asked questions related to the kind of information searched in the dictionary. The list of questions includes the possibility which the writers considered done when using dictionary. Table 3 is as follows: Kind of information searched in the dictionary.

Table 3. Kind of information searched in the dictionary

Descriptive Statistics					
Point	N	Min	Max	Mean	Deviation
Searching meaning of word	235	1.00	5.00	4.6255	.57381
Searching pronunciation of word	235	1.00	5.00	3.1106	1.06443
Searching how to read a word	235	1.00	5.00	3.8553	.95872
Searching word class	235	1.00	5.00	3.0468	1.03875

Searching transitive and intransitive verbs	235	1.00	5.00	2.9404	1.10779
Searching synonym and antonym	235	1.00	5.00	2.6468	.95112
Searching basic word	235	1.00	22.00	3.8000	1.56838
Searching the example of using word in sentence	235	1.00	5.00	3.5745	.98590
Searching idiom or proverb	235	1.00	5.00	2.2128	1.03643
Searching compound word	235	1.00	5.00	2.2298	.91425
Searching grammatical function of a word	235	1.00	5.00	2.5106	1.10307
Searching origin of word	235	1.00	5.00	2.1362	1.08139
Valid N (listwise)	235				

It is known that information seldom or sometimes searched in the dictionary is the origin of word, idiom or proverb, compound word, synonym and antonym, grammatical function of a word, transitive and intransitive verbs with average value between 2.13 - 2.94. Meanwhile, information sometimes or often searched in the dictionary is word class, word pronunciation, the use of word in sentence, basic word, how to read word with average value of 3.05 - 3.85. Meanwhile, what belongs to the category of frequently or often searched is the meaning of word with average value of 4.63.

In fourth section, the writers asked question related to the difficulty when using dictionary. The list of question is compiled based on the possibility which will be met when using dictionary. Table 4 is as follows: The difficulties found when using dictionary.

Table 4. The difficulties found when using dictionary

Descriptive Statistics					
Point	N	Min	Max	Mean	Deviation
Must know how to read kanji first	235	1.00	5.00	3.6723	.98226
Must convert word into the dictionary form	235	1.00	5.00	2.9574	1.08914
Must understand context of the word use in sentence	235	1.00	5.00	3.3064	.99129
Example of how to use word is not enough or none at all	235	1.00	5.00	3.2851	.88650
Vocabularies are not found in the dictionary	235	1.00	5.00	2.8936	.92066
The meaning of word in dictionary is not accurate	235	1.00	5.00	2.8553	.94977
It is difficult to find the specific explanation about a word	235	1.00	5.00	3.3447	.81932
Cannot understand meaning or definition of word	235	1.00	5.00	2.8936	.85819
It requires time to search	235	1.00	5.00	3.1404	.99650

meaning of word in the dictionary					
Cannot understand the explanation about word pronunciation	235	1.00	5.00	2.6766	.91852
Valid N (listwise)	235				

The difficulties in the category of seldom or sometimes found are inability to understand the explanation about word pronunciation, meaning of word in the dictionary which is not accurate, the vocabulary which is not found in the dictionary, inability to understand meaning or definition of word, and obligation to change word into the form of dictionary with average value of 2.68 - 2.96. Furthermore, the difficulty in the category of seldom or often found is that it requires time to search the meaning of word in the dictionary, the example on how to use word is not enough or none at all, the learners must understand the context in the word use in sentence, it is difficult to find specific explanation about word, and learners must know how to read kanji first with average value between 3.14 and 3.67.

4. Finding and Discussion

Based on the result of questionnaire elaborated in the aforementioned research result, it is known that the types of dictionaries frequently used by students of Japanese Literature Study Program or Brawijaya University are application and online dictionaries. These dictionaries are more practical and easier to access on the internet through mobile phone or laptop. Besides, these dictionary types have advantages, such as the search of word with character of alphabet, so it does not require writing kanji, many examples of the use of word in sentence, feature to listen to word pronunciation, and translation of word in a short time. However, there are some functions of dictionary in form of a book which cannot be accommodated by application and online dictionaries. For example, the example of word in application and online dictionaries are seldom difficult to be understood since it is not acceptable grammatically in Japanese language. Dictionary in form of book or electronic dictionary is now less popular among students since it requires time when searching word and is heavy. However, dictionary in form of book is still used when application or online dictionary is considered unable to give the searched information. Meanwhile, almost nobody uses electronic dictionary.

The kind of dictionary most frequently used by the students of Japanese Literature Study Program is bilingual dictionary, such as Japanese language - Indonesian language dictionary or Japanese language - English dictionary. The reason for choosing this kind of dictionary is that it is easier to be understood by the learner. The users of bilingual dictionary are found in all classes from basic to intermediate level. However, the most dominant users are students of 2017-2016 classes who belong to basic - intermediate level. Meanwhile, the users of monolingual dictionary, from students of 2014-2015 classes belong to the upper middle level. It is in accordance with the statement of Imai (2010) in which the use of monolingual dictionary is limited on learners of high level.

The kind of information most frequently searched in the dictionary is the meaning of word, how to read word, basic word, and the use of word in sentence. The searched

information is often found when learning four language skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking). Furthermore, the information most rarely searched in the dictionary is the origin of word, idiom or proverb, compound word, and grammatical function. The information is seldom searched since the students also seldom find the problem. When finding a problem, students tend to ask to lectures or native speakers. In fact, the more frequent students use dictionary, the more skillful they are in finding several information in the dictionary.

The difficulty which is often found when using dictionary is how to read kanji first. However, it is reasonable since Indonesian learners use alphabet, not kanji. Therefore, students require longer time when searching the meaning of word in the dictionary. Besides, the difficulty which is frequently found is to find the less specific explanation about a word since the used dictionary is bilingual dictionary. Therefore, the explanation is seldom less complete. Understanding the context of a word in sentence is a difficulty when using dictionary. One of the examples is to find the meaning of "to take money (in ATM), the used verb should be *orosu* / 下ろす or *hikidasu* / 引き出す. However, students often use the verb *toru* / 取る since they directly translate the word "to take" from Indonesian language to Japanese language. In fact, many words in Japanese language mean to take. In the questionnaire distributed to students of 2017 and 2016 classes, it is found that the students still experience difficulty in converting word into the form of dictionary, while for students of 2015 and 2014 classes, this difficulty is seldom found.

5. Conclusion and Suggestion

The questionnaire shows the result that the skill of students when using dictionary can be considered inadequate. It becomes the concern of writers as teachers to improve the skill in using dictionary. Therefore, from the research result, writers propose some recommendations as follows:

- (1) Providing understanding about kind and function of dictionary;
- (2) Suggesting dictionary with some advantages as stated by Nation (in Hamouda, 2013), such as many words, clear definition, many examples of sentence, information related to grammar and collocation, word pronunciation, information related to context in using the word, information about frequency of the word use, information regarding the related word;
- (3) Giving opportunity to the students to learn the skill required to use dictionary with the help of teacher.
- (4) Providing specific training to achieve this purpose. For example, giving task or exercises in class and home which encourage students to use several dictionary types (Al-Darayseh, 2013). If the intensive specific training is given to students, the purpose in improving skill in using dictionary will be achieved (Chi, 1998) and Liu (2014).
- (5) Giving insight to students in checking monolingual dictionary instead of bilingual dictionary. Although this kind of dictionary is difficult to use for students at basic and intermediate levels, when it is often used, the Japanese language skill and capability in using this dictionary will be improved.

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