Changing Skills of Dictionary Use

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Abstract. The article aims to investigate the potential of dictionaries and ESP (English for Specific Purposes) students’ preferences, ranging from the use of traditional to electronic tools of information. Studying academic and professional language involves extensive search for terminology and complex information in order to efficiently comprehend specialized texts as well as carry out related vocabulary tasks. The repository of reference sources is enormous, and it has been increasing with the development of electronic tools. Literature on dictionary types and use reveals benefits and drawbacks of different types of dictionaries (bilingual, monolingual, bilingualized, both printed and electronic). According to the data of the studies by researchers investigating dictionary use, few bilingual dictionaries preferred by learners when carrying out reading and writing assignments get close in diversity and relevance to monolingual target language dictionaries. Furthermore, as English constantly renews itself to integrate new ideas and new developments, and electronic media are updated on regular basis, students are inclined to refer to up-to-date online sources, requiring different search skills in comparison to traditional ones.

This paper is based on the author’s experience of teaching English for specific purposes as well as the analysis of a survey, the findings of which demonstrate the students’ use of reference sources, the problems they encounter, and the importance of their active engagement.