Dictionaries, Foreign Language Learners and Teachers. New Challenges in the digital era

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Outline

1. The use of dictionaries and lexicographic resources in foreign language learning and teaching

2. Research into dictionary use – empirical studies and their main results
   a. Foreign language learners
   b. Foreign language teachers

3. New challenges

1. The use of dictionaries and lexicographic resources in foreign language learning and teaching

Lexicographic products > necessary aids to improve language skills and facilitate the study of foreign languages

Dictionaries have changed in terms of structure, appearance and medium, but their importance for society, as well as for the individual, has by no means diminished fundamental

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2001, 2018)
- emphasis on *multilingualism* and *lifelong learning*
- Lexicographic resources are not only a fundamental tool for translating and learning a foreign language
- Their adequate use is an important *language learning strategy* and part of a well-developed *media literacy*
- Important: to be familiar with good-quality resources, to have a critical view and to be able to distinguish, with the help of pre-established criteria, what kind of resources are appropriate in a specific situation and context and for a particular task with a precise goal

1. The use of dictionaries and lexicographic resources in foreign language learning and teaching

o The use of dictionaries, especially bilingual, was always linked to the *hypotheses* regarding the relationship between first (L1) and second language (L2) acquisition

o Use of **bilingual** dictionaries:

+ Comparison between L1 – L2 as a strategy: *Grammar-Translation Method*

– Use of L1 not permitted: *Audiolingual/Audiovisual Method*

Bitte antworten Sie *Ich weiß nicht, ...:*

Wann kommt er?	*Ich weiß nicht, wann ...*
Wohin geht er?	*Ich weiß nicht, ...*
Was macht sie?	*Ich weiß nicht, ...*
Warum schreibt sie nicht?	*Ich weiß nicht, ...*
Wie lange bleibt er?	*Ich weiß nicht, ...*
Was hat er gesagt?	*Ich weiß nicht, ...*
Wo bleiben sie denn?	*Ich weiß nicht, ...*

o Use of **monolingual** dictionaries: *Communicative Method* (?)

1. The use of dictionaries and lexicographic resources in foreign language learning and teaching

CEFR (2001, 2018):

- ○ <u>aim</u>: to successfully cope with foreign language situations
  - ➤ Learner autonomy,
  - ➤ Language awareness
  - ➤ Use of strategies

Bildungsplan des Gymnasiums

Englisch als Zweite Fremdsprache

Baden-Württemberg (2016: 36)

| Die Schülerinnen und Schüler können |
| --- |
| **Strategien und Methoden** |
| (4) differenzierte Verfahren zum Memorieren, Dokumentieren und Strukturieren von lexikalischen Einheiten und Kollokationen anwenden (zum Beispiel Vokabelordner mit thematischem und themenunabhängigem Wortschatz) |
| (5) bei fehlendem Fachvokabular und zur Erläuterung kulturspezifischer Begriffe Strategien zur Umschreibung zielgerichtet anwenden (zum Beispiel Erläuterung, Oberbegriff, Beispiel), dabei gegebenenfalls Höflichkeitskonventionen beachten |
| (6) ein breites Repertoire an Wortbildungsregeln zur Erweiterung ihres rezeptiven, gegebenenfalls auch produktiven, Wortschatzes anwenden (zum Beispiel -ion, -ment, -al, mis-, dis-, im-, il-, in-, de-, compounding, conversion) |
| (7) differenzierte Hilfsmittel zur selbstständigen Erschließung und weitgehend differenzierten Verwendung neuen Wortschatzes und zur Korrektur des bestehenden Wortschatzes nutzen (zum Beispiel auch einsprachiges Wörterbuch, Online-Kollokationswörterbuch) |

1. The use of dictionaries and lexicographic resources in foreign language learning and teaching

- smartphones are still forbidden in classroom ?!
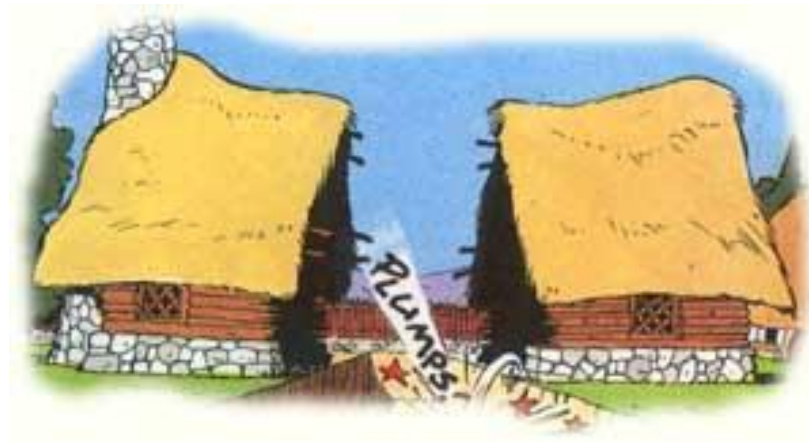
Students   Teacher

1. The use of dictionaries and lexicographic resources in foreign language learning and teaching

○ Curricular guidelines are too vague:

(10) Rechtschreibhilfen verwenden –
Wörterlisten und Wörterbuch nut-
zen:

Wörter nach dem Alphabet sortie-
ren

Wörter nach dem 2. Buchstaben
ordnen

Nachschlagübungen

Wörterlisten führen

Bildungsplan der Grundschule
Deutsch – *Texte verfassen, richtig schreiben*
Baden-Württemberg (2016)

○ Exercises in textbooks are not clear:

b Machen Sie Notizen für Ihre Antwort an
Lisa. Arbeiten Sie auch mit dem **Wörter-
buch**.

Alter:
Herkunft:
Sprachen:
Freizeit/Hobbys: ins Kino gehen, …

Menschen A1.1.
Arbeitsbuch. p. 58

2. Research into dictionary use – empirical studies and their main results

- «Wörterbuchbenutzungsforschung» (engl. *Research into Dictionary use*) (Herbert Ernst Wiegand 1936-2018)

- 2022: more than 250 empirical studies on dictionary use in the field of foreign language teaching or with a foreign language learner as a user

- «bekannter Unbekannter» (engl. 'known unknown') (Wiegand 1977: 59)
    1. the classic dictionary has changed fundamentally in its form,
    2. foreign language learners rarely use printed dictionaries any more, but rely on online dictionaries and apps,
    3. there are more and more hybrid forms, such as dictionaries + grammar tables and dictionaries + text translations, which foreign language learners like to use,
    4. dictionaries are sometimes also completely replaced by automatic translators, Google searches and also extra-lexicographic resources.

- Validity period?

2. Research into dictionary use – empirical studies and their main results

- *Andreas Herbert Welker* (2006, 2010)

- questionnaires

- studies on paper dictionaries are – for obvious reasons – disappearing

- concrete situation with a specific task

- few studies on the effect of dictionary didactics

- use of dictionaries in the context of English as a foreign language

2a. Research into dictionary use – empirical studies and their main results: Foreign language learners

Questionnaires (1/3):

o Foreign language learners prefer the bilingual dictionary.

o The monolingual dictionary is used at an advanced level of proficiency.

o Dictionary use generally decreases as the learner reaches a higher language level.

o Dictionaries are mostly used in translation, written reception and written production.

o Foreign language learners mainly look for the meaning of an unknown word (decoding).

o They often also look for pronunciation and grammatical information.

o In bilingual dictionaries, students concentrate on finding equivalents, but are often confused by the large number of equivalents.

2a. Research into dictionary use – empirical studies and their main results: Foreign language learners

https://dict.leo.org/italienisch-deutsch/cambiare (02.07.2022)

cambiare (engl. 'to change')

2a. Research into dictionary use – empirical studies and their main results: Foreign language learners

Questionnaires (3/3):

o Foreign language learners go directly to the information they are looking for and do not read the whole dictionary entry.

o Moreover, most students do not read the introductory notes (preface, instructions for use) before using it.

o The most important thing for students is that the search leads quickly and directly to a result.

o Many students are dissatisfied with dictionaries due to the lack of a) the headword, b) the definition or explanation, c) the examples.

o They also complain that the entries and explanations (especially in monolingual dictionaries) are too long or complex.

2a. Research into dictionary use – empirical studies and their main results: Foreign language learners

Foreign language learner

o are not familiar with the overview of dictionaries

o do not know which are suitable for their needs

o rarely use different types of dictionaries

o are not familiar with the dictionaries they use and often have unreasonable demands on them

o do not notice metalinguistic/ grammatical information and

o have difficulty deciphering abbreviations and symbols

2a. Research into dictionary use – empirical studies and their main results: Foreign language learners

Studies on actual use – Observations:

o They are mostly translation exercises.

o The results are very similar to those obtained through the questionnaires.

o In addition: detailed eye-tracking data found that users generally read dictionary entries as an "F".

o There is a tendency for foreign language learners to search for single words and much less for phrasemes or parts of sentences.

o Some studies have shown that there is a correlation between language level, language awareness and adequate dictionary use.

2a. Research into dictionary use – empirical studies and their main results: Foreign language learners

Research on the use of electronic dictionaries and online resources

o 1990s: electronic dictionaries ↔ printed dictionaries

o Students are motivated to use electronic dictionaries.

o Students mainly use online dictionaries and applications, also on mobile devices.

o Many foreign language learners no longer buy a printed dictionary.

o They appreciate the fast, easy access of online dictionaries and apps and the fact that they are free and always up-to-date.

o They also like the fact that by entering the first letters in the search mask, they are guided to the respective entry and they find the spell-checker very useful.

2a. Research into dictionary use – empirical studies and their main results: Foreign language learners

Parallels in the use of electronic dictionaries and paper dictionaries:

- disorientation,
- lack of knowledge about dictionaries,
- looking up single words,
- choosing the first equivalent,
- mainly consulting examples
- not reading all the information in the entry and do not 'scroll down'
- don't read grammatical information
- …

- eye-tracking data revealed that users generally proceed with a vertical reading

2a. Research into dictionary use – empirical studies and their main results: Foreign language learners

But it seems that the behavior of language learners is also changing:

o More and more learners are looking up words in a search engine.

o Search engines seem to be taking over the main functions of a monolingual dictionary such as providing definitions or examples, and partially replacing bilingual dictionaries, providing equivalents and spelling.

o Students expect the online dictionary to 'behave' like a search engine.

o In search engines, users often enter the unknown foreign word, together with a metalinguistic term or with a kind of "key word", e.g.:

2a. Research into dictionary use – empirical studies and their main results: Foreign language learners

Search string in *google*

google.it	wenn significato
google.it	costruzione con wann
google.it	einverstanden frasi
google.it	handeln coniugazioni
google.it	wenn costruzione
google.it	beendet esempi

Search string in a dictionary

dicios.it	wenn
Leo dictionary	quando
Leo dictionary	einverstanden
Pons Dictionary.pt	essere d accordo con te
Pons Dictionary.pt	trattare

(Müller-Spitzer/ Domínguez Vázquez/Silva Dias/ Nied Curcio/ Wolfer 2018)

2a. Research into dictionary use – empirical studies and their main results: Foreign language learners

Search string and resource
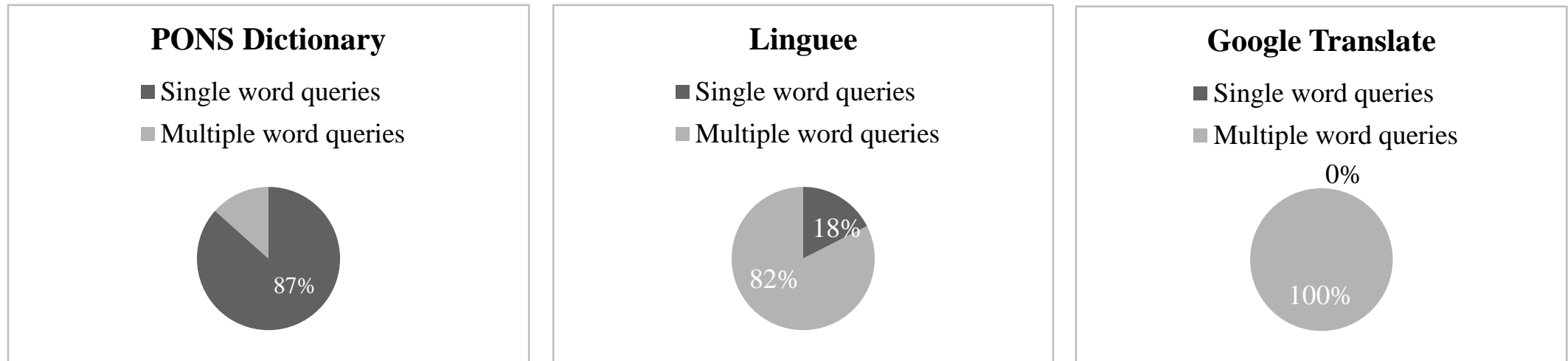
PONS Dictionary	Linguee	Google Translate
■ Single word queries	■ Single word queries	■ Single word queries
■ Multiple word queries	■ Multiple word queries	■ Multiple word queries
87%	18% / 82%	0% / 100%

(Müller-Spitzer/ Domínguez Vázquez/Silva Dias/ Nied Curcio/ Wolfer 2018)

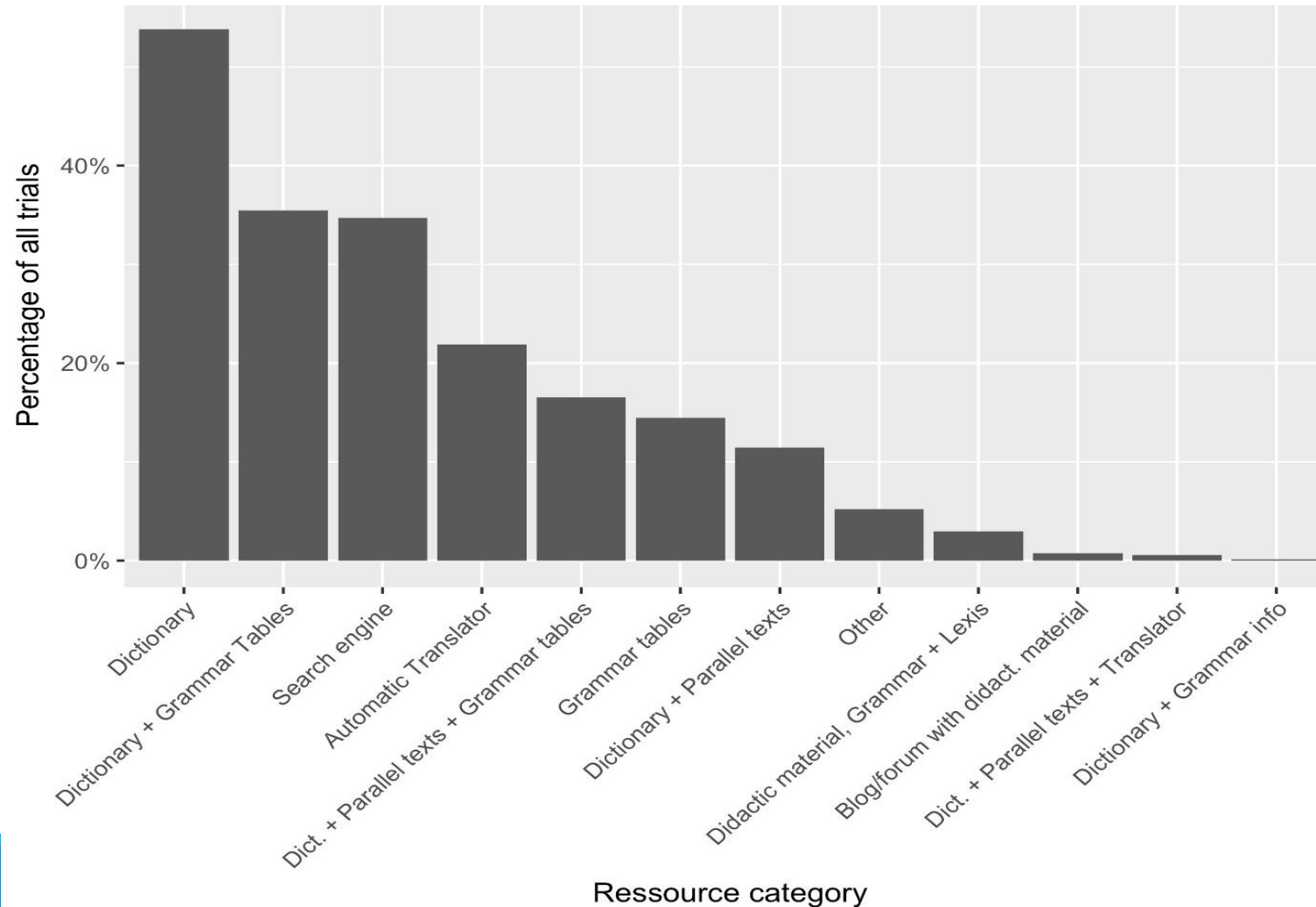# 2a. Research into dictionary use – empirical studies and their main results: Foreign language learners

(Müller-Spitzer/ Domínguez Vázquez/Silva Dias/ Nied Curcio/ Wolfer 2018)

2a. Research into dictionary use – empirical studies and their main results: Foreign language learners

○ **Time !**

Average time spent using the resources and correctness of the sentences

(Müller-Spitzer/ Domínguez Vázquez/Silva Dias/ Nied Curcio/ Wolfer 2018)

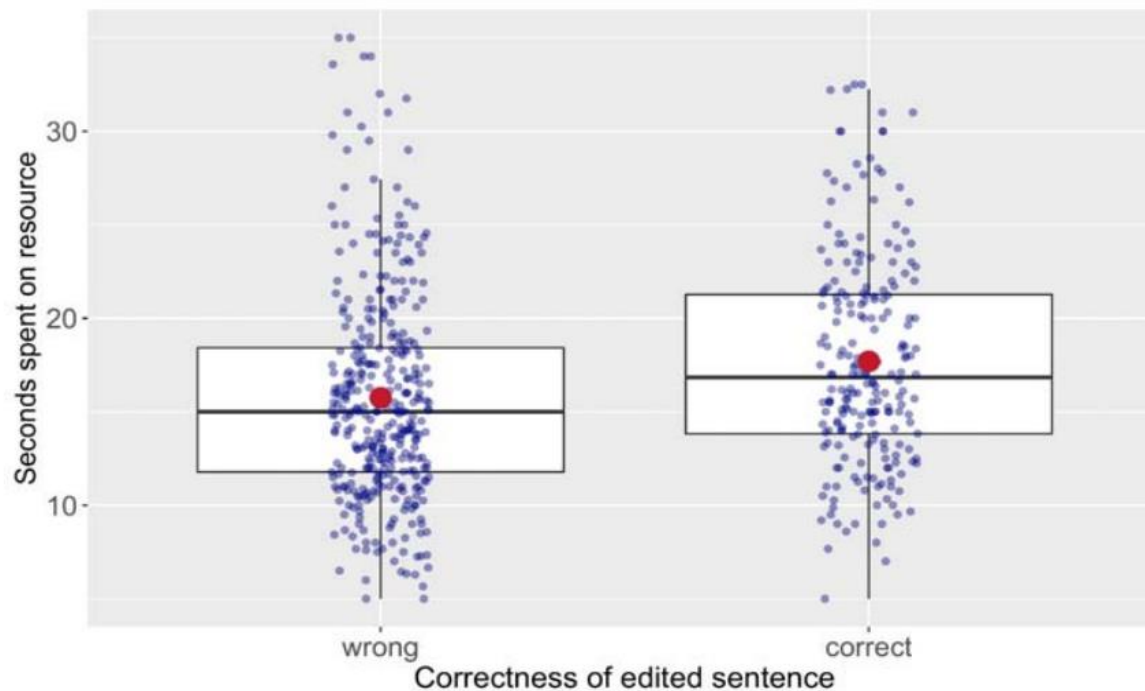# 2a. Research into dictionary use – empirical studies and their main results: Foreign language learners

1 So I read the first sentence [she reads the sentence] (Obwohl sich der Junge beeilt hat, hat er die U-
2 Bahn verloren) eh the section in bold is verloren so the verb ehm there are two sentences therefore
3 one is the main clause and one is the subordinate clause ehm so first I look for the verb verloren I
4 prefer google chrome # ehm # generally I use the online dictionary PONS because perhaps it shows
5 also the context and the use of a word and also some examples so therefore I search from German to
   Italian okay
6 so verloren ## which means # okay I see it's the past participle of the verb verlieren so lost the past
7 participle 'perduto' lost ok # so I lost the train even though the boy (hat beeilt) I look it up because I'm
8 not sure what does it mean so # beeilt (affrettarsi) okay (sich beeilen) so even though the boy hurried
9 he lost the train #perhaps the error would be that verloren is used in other contexts so I look for other
10 use contexts or a synonym of the verb verlieren so # I look up verlieren and it shows me (perdere
11 perdere la testa # disperdersi) okay

12 In Italian I look for a synonym of the verb perdere in German so I set Italian German and look for
13 perdere okay so (verlieren verlegen smarrire) # eh perdere il treno for example it shows (verpassen)
14 which means that I can use verpassen instead of verlieren and ehm okay it shows me (Zug) so okay I
15 use verpassen I will look for the past participle for being sure so I open a website with the name
16 REVERSO
17 ## so conjugation German verbs I search on google and it gives me REVERSO so I look for verpassen #
18 so (verpasst) okay I write agian the sentence on the right obwohl sich der Junge beeilt hat hat er die U-
19 Bahn verpasst [she finishes the sentence] okay I go continue with the second sentence

2a. Research into dictionary use – empirical studies and their main results: Foreign language learners

The effect of dictionary teaching

o A few empirical studies were carried out on the effectiveness of dictionary teaching.

o They show a significant improvement in the use of dictionaries by skilled users.

o looking up single words is not so efficient > teaching of word combinations, e.g. collocations, phrasal verbs and idioms and looking them up in dictionaries meant that students' attitudes improved and errors in this field decreased.

o When students are asked, they express a desire to learn more about the lexicographic tools available. They want to know which language learners' dictionaries are available, which are the most valid, how they are designed and structured and how to recognize reliable information. They show great interest in improving their skills in using dictionaries and online resources, with the aim of making fewer mistakes in the foreign language. > dictionary teaching !

2b. Research into dictionary use – empirical studies and their main results: Foreign language teachers

o Studies on foreign language teachers' competence in dictionary use are almost non-existent.

o It seems that teachers are still experienced users of printed dictionaries, but are not very familiar with online dictionaries and applications.

o Workshop on dictionary teaching in 2017, with 50 teachers of German as L2 in Italy, using a multi-methodological approach.
- 30' getting-to-know, introduction
- 20' Questionnaire 1 + short discussion
- 30' Presentation of some user studies and their results
- 5,5 h Workshop „Dictionary Teaching" (contrastive exercises in pairs or groups, inductive method (self exploring) with slots of reflexion and discussion in the plenary)
- 30' Presentation of online dictionaries (list)
- 20' Questionnaire + short discussion

2b. Research into dictionary use – empirical studies and their main results: Foreign language teachers

Questionnaire <u>before</u> the workshop (1/2):

o The majority of teachers allow the use of a printed dictionary in class (46 subjects give their students permission to use a bilingual printed dictionary and 5 allow the use of a monolingual printed dictionary).

o Only 18 teachers permit the use of online dictionaries on tablets and smartphones and only 7 of them allow the use of applications in class.

o Almost all the teachers (49) allow the use of dictionaries for homework.

o More than half of the teachers (27) think that students are able to use online dictionaries and related applications; 22 teachers are of the opposite opinion and one teacher did not answer.

2b. Research into dictionary use – empirical studies and their main results: Foreign language teachers

Questionnaire <u>before</u> the workshop (2/2):

o 16 teachers use monolingual printed dictionaries and the same number of teachers also use bilingual printed dictionaries.

o 21 teachers use online dictionaries on their smartphones, and 8 use apps on smartphones and tablets.

o 34 teachers admit that they are not familiar with the use of online dictionaries and lexicographic applications.

o only 4 teachers use translation programs (= problem of desirability: "Are subjects saying […] what they do, or what they think they ought to do, or indeed a mixture of all three? " (Hatherall 1984: 184)

2b. Research into dictionary use – empirical studies and their main results: Foreign language teachers

Questionnaire <u>after</u> the workshop (1/2):

o All teachers (50) indicated that the course had been very useful, that they had enjoyed it very much and that they especially felt that they were now more familiar with online dictionaries and lexicographic applications.

o The aspect of learning by doing, of exploring and experimenting with the various resources at first hand, and of comparing and evaluating them was rated as very positive.

o 22 teachers appreciated the fact that they had discovered many new online dictionaries and applications, and had thus gained a better overview of existing resources.

2b. Research into dictionary use – empirical studies and their main results: Foreign language teachers

Questionnaire after the workshop (2/2):

o Some teachers had already reflected on how to incorporate the use of online dictionaries and applications better in their teaching.

o All 50 teachers would now, after the course, incorporate online dictionaries and apps into their German lessons.

o Nearly all teachers (47) would be willing to participate in a further course and would especially like to learn specifically how to include the use of online dictionaries and applications in their teaching.

3. New challenges

o profound change in lexicographic resources

o neither the function nor the purpose of the online resource is clear

o the authors are generally not explicitly mentioned

o the quality is no longer transparent

o many resources are updated automatically and constantly > the individual stages of the update are no longer distinguishable

o the profound change in lexicographic practice is very often not perceived by the foreign language learners

3. New challenges

1. More empirical studies in the field of *Research into dictionary use* (the „new" known unknown has to become known)

2. Discussion of the consequences of the results with lexicographers

3. Focus on a specific user profile, i.e. student of German L2

4. Work at an educational policy level
   o publishing houses, textbook authors

5. Explicit and implicit training in dictionary use (teachers, students)
   ◦ Dictionary use as part of language learning process
   ◦ Dictionary use as part of promotion of the media literacy

3. New challenges
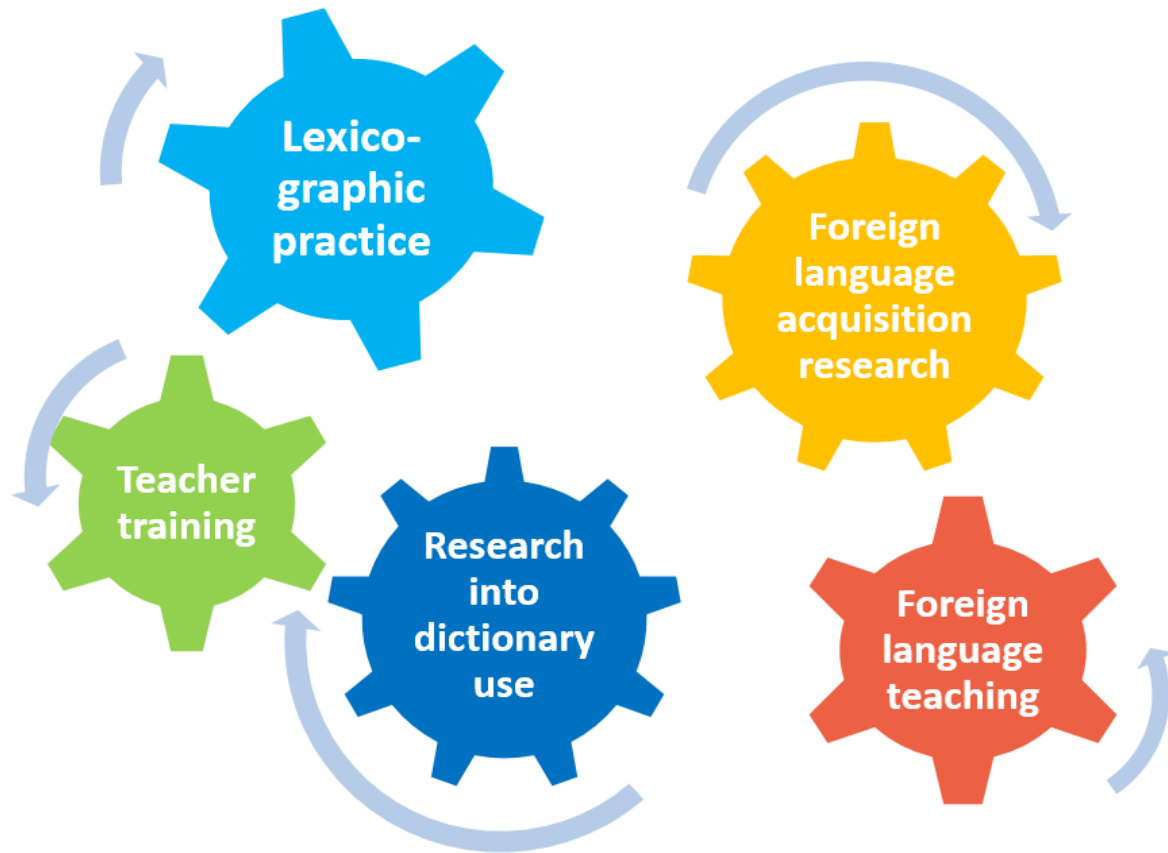
Aim:

- enabling foreign language learners to become skilled and successful users of online dictionaries and lexicographic resources and, in a broader sense, autonomous users in terms of critical media literacy

- the foreign language learner has to become a more 'known' user again

- Lexicographic resources should once again become a useful tool for foreign language users and their learning process

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Thank you
Vielen Dank
Grazie molto

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