# Exploring Dictionary Preferences: A Comparative Study of EFL and GFL Learners in Hungarian Higher Education

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**Abstract:** This paper examines the usage patterns of monolingual and bilingual dictionaries among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and German as a Foreign Language (GFL) learners within the Hungarian higher education context. Despite the prevalent communicative approach in language teaching that often discourages dictionary use in favour of context-based learning, dictionaries are still important resources in acquiring and understanding linguistic nuances and terminology, especially in academic and business settings. Utilizing the quantitative research paradigm, this study gathered data from 371 university students, focusing on their preferences for specific dictionaries and exploring the relationship between their willingness to use these dictionaries and actual usage behaviours. The findings reveal that while EFL learners prefer renowned English monolingual dictionaries, such as Oxford and Cambridge, their willingness to use dictionaries does not necessarily correlate strongly with the frequency of use, suggesting other motivational or contextual influences at play. On the other hand, GFL learners displayed a lower overall engagement with both monolingual and bilingual dictionaries, underscoring potential differences in educational strategies or lower reliance on dictionaries.

**Keywords:** EFL AND GFL LEARNERS, DICTIONARY PREFERENCES, DICTIONARY USE HABITS, HIGHER EDUCATION, LANGUAGE PEDAGOGY

**Zusammenfassung: Erforschung von Wörterbuchpräferenzen: Eine verglei-chende Studie von Englisch als Fremdsprache- und Deutsch als Fremdsprache-Lernenden in der ungarischen Hochschulbildung.** Dieser Beitrag untersucht die Nut-zungsmuster von ein- und zweisprachigen Wörterbüchern unter Lernenden von Englisch als Fremdsprache und Deutsch als Fremdsprache im ungarischen Hochschulkontext. Trotz des vor-herrschenden kommunikativen Ansatzes im Sprachunterricht, der die Verwendung von Wörter-büchern oft zugunsten des kontextbezogenen Lernens ablehnt, sind Wörterbücher nach wie vor wichtige Ressourcen für den Erwerb und das Verständnis von sprachlichen Nuancen und Termino-logie, insbesondere im akademischen und geschäftlichen Umfeld. Unter Verwendung eines quantita-tiven Forschungsparadigmas wurden in dieser Arbeit Daten von 371 Universitätsstudenten gesammelt, wobei der Schwerpunkt auf ihren Vorlieben für bestimmte Wörterbücher lag und die Beziehung zwischen ihrer Bereitschaft, diese Wörterbücher zu benutzen, und ihrem tatsächlichen Nutzungs-verhalten untersucht wurde. Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass Englisch als Fremdsprache-Lernende zwar

renommierte einsprachige englische Wörterbücher wie Oxford und Cambridge bevorzugen, ihre Bereitschaft zur Nutzung von Wörterbüchern jedoch nicht unbedingt stark mit der Nutzungshäufigkeit korreliert, was auf andere motivationale oder kontextbezogene Einflüsse schließen lässt. Andererseits zeigten Deutsch als Fremdsprache-Lernende insgesamt eine geringere Bereitschaft, sowohl einsprachige als auch zweisprachige Wörterbücher zu benutzen, was auf mögliche Unterschiede in den Lernstrategien oder eine geringere Abhängigkeit von Wörterbüchern hindeutet.

**Schlüsselwörter:** ENGLISCH ALS FREMDSPRACHE- UND DEUTSCH ALS FREMD-SPRACHE-LERNENDE, WÖRTERBUCHPRÄFERENZEN, GEWOHNHEITEN BEIM WÖRTER-BUCHGEBRAUCH, HOCHSCHULBILDUNG, SPRACHPÄDAGOGIK

## 1.     Introduction

Language learning is a dynamic and continuous journey, often characterized by diverse methodologies and pedagogical strategies aimed at maximizing learner engagement and proficiency. Among these methodologies, the communicative approach has been widely adopted since the '90s due to its focus on interaction and comprehension within context. However, this approach frequently discourages the use of dictionaries, urging learners to infer the meanings of new words from the context (Adamska-Sałaciak and Kernerman 2016; Augustyn 2013). While contextual learning is undeniably valuable, this discouragement from dictionary use overlooks the benefits that dictionaries can provide as tools for widening linguistic knowledge and enhancing vocabulary acquisition. In addition, the importance of dictionaries extends beyond simple translation (Fuertes-Olivera 2013; P. Márkus 2023); they are crucial for comprehensive language understanding, offering detailed explanations, usage examples, and phonetic information that contextual clues alone may not provide. Furthermore, dictionary skills are a fundamental component of life-long learning in language education (Leaney 2007; P. Márkus 2023), aiding learners not only during formal education but throughout their lives as they encounter new words and expressions.

This article aims to investigate the extent to which English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and German as a Foreign Language (GFL) learners use monolingual and bilingual dictionaries and which specific dictionaries are preferred by learners. Additionally, it seeks to explore the relationship between learners' willingness to use dictionaries and their actual use of popular dictionaries in Hungary. Through this analysis, the study intends to uncover which of these tools could be integrated into language learning (and teaching).

## 2.     Background

In the context under examination in this article, dictionary usage assumes a pivotal role, particularly within business settings. This study specifically focuses on university students from a university in Hungary offering business pro-

grammes, where mastering business terminology in both the native language and foreign languages is crucial. For these learners, dictionaries are indispensable tools that facilitate the appropriate understanding and usage of specialized terminology critical to their fields of study. In Hungary, the importance of business English is underscored by the presence of numerous international companies operating within the country. Additionally, due to historical connections and the presence of German companies in the region, the German language is a regionally important foreign language (Csizér and Lukács 2010), thus German proficiency is also highly valued in Central and Eastern Europe. This dual demand shapes the language education landscape, influencing which languages are taught and the resources provided to learners. Furthermore, there is a noteworthy aspect of digital dictionary use to consider — accessibility. Lew (2016) points out that in many parts of the world, there is a low willingness to pay for subscription-based services, let alone paper-based dictionaries. This is also true for the Hungarian context (P. Márkus et al. 2023). Therefore, it is relatively safe to assume that regular users are likely to favour free digital dictionaries. This preference not only reflects broader trends in digital resource usage but also highlights economic considerations that can influence educational tools and their adoption.

## 3.     Monolingual and bilingual dictionaries in L2 learning

In second language acquisition, dictionaries serve as crucial tools, providing learners with essential linguistic resources (Lew 2016; Nesi 2014; Nied Curcio 2022). The choice between monolingual and bilingual dictionaries significantly influences the second language learning process, each type bearing its unique advantages and drawbacks. The subsequent sections elaborate on these advantages and drawbacks, alongside an overview of related previous research in the Hungarian context.

Monolingual dictionaries define words and phrases using exclusively the target language. Their main benefit is that they offer a wide range of lexical and grammatical information (e.g., collocations, countability, etc.) about a given entry This kind of information helps develop a more nuanced understanding of word meanings, usage, connotations, etc., which are often lost in translation. Monolingual dictionaries may also encourage learners to think in the given target language and can also make them realize that meaning very often cannot be expressed in a single word (Thompson 1987). On the other hand, however, they can be challenging for beginners who may not have sufficient language proficiency to fully comprehend definitions (Lew and Adamska-Sałaciak 2015). In addition, the process of understanding definitions in a second language can be time-consuming and may frustrate learners who need quick translations.

Bilingual dictionaries provide translations between the given second language and the learner's first language. These dictionaries are often favoured by beginners and even intermediate learners for their straightforward approach to understanding and vocabulary building (Laufer and Levitzky-Aviad 2006). Bilin-

gual dictionaries offer immediate comprehension of unfamiliar words, making them accessible and user-friendly for all proficiency levels (Nied Curcio 2022). Bilingual dictionaries can accelerate learning by facilitating quicker word recognition and comprehension, which is especially beneficial during early stages of language study (Loucky 2002, 2005). On the other hand, however, there is a risk of developing too much dependency on the learner's first language, which can hinder immersion in the second given language and slow down the acquisition of the language learning process (Baxter 1980). In addition, translations may not always capture the full meaning or cultural nuances of words, potentially leading to misunderstandings or incomplete learning (Thompson 1987). Previous research also shows that learners often prefer bilingual dictionaries over monolingual ones (Atkins and Varantola 1997; Lew 2004; Nesi 2013).

Both dictionary types have their advantages and drawback, but the choice between monolingual and bilingual dictionaries in second language learning should be informed by the learners' proficiency level, learning objectives, and the specific linguistic nuances of the language being studied. Both types of dictionaries have their place in language education, each contributing uniquely to the linguistic and cognitive development of the learner.

## 4.     Previous research on dictionary users

Over the past decade, the number of studies focussing on dictionary users has been gradually increasing. In the international context, studies investigated language teachers, translators and language learners, too (cf. Knežević et al. 2021; Kosem et al. 2019; Müller-Spitzer et al. 2012; Müller-Spitzer 2014; Wolfer et al. 2018). In addition to these studies, further research in recent years (cf. Simonsen 2011; Hult 2012; Lew 2015; Lorentzen and Theilgaard 2012; Müller-Spitzer et al. 2015), has focused on online dictionary usage. In Hungary, less attention has been paid to the use of online dictionaries. Dringó-Horváth (2017) conducted a questionnaire-based study involving 80 university students majoring in German. The largest Hungarian study on online dictionary use was conducted by Gaál in 2016 and 2017, which involved translators and language teachers (Gaál 2016, 2017). In addition, recently another piece of research carried about by P. Márkus et al. (2023) also investigated EFL and GFL majors.

However, it is important to underscore that Varantola (2002: 33) identifies three distinct groups of dictionary users: professional users (e.g., L2 teachers, translators, etc.), non-professional users (e.g., someone simply looking up a word in a dictionary), and language learners. Research predominantly focuses on professional users, a trend that holds true in the Hungarian context, too, with little attention given to language learners. Given this issue, there is a compelling argument for broadening research horizons in order to investigate "general users" as well. This is particularly important because, as Lew (2015) along with Gaál (2020) point out, professional users often engage with languages and dictionaries in a much more sophisticated manner than regular users due to their

academic backgrounds and extensive knowledge about dictionaries. Consequently, conclusions drawn from studies focusing solely on professional users may not be applicable to the average dictionary user, who undeniably significantly outnumber professional users.

## 5.     Research methods

In line with the above theoretical consideration, the following research questions (RQs) were formulated:

— RQ1: What monolingual and bilingual dictionaries do participants prefer to use?
— RQ2: What is the relationship between university students' willingness to use dictionaries and frequency of monolingual and bilingual dictionary use?

In order to find answers to the above research questions, the quantitative research paradigm was adopted and quantitative data were collected using a self-constructed questionnaire relying on previous research (Dringó-Horváth et al. 2020).

### 5.1     Participants

This study involved a total of 371 participants, who were recruited through purposive sampling from a Hungarian higher education institution. This purposive sampling strategy was aimed at ensuring a relatively homogeneous sample in order to obtain insights into the L2 learning experiences typical of one academic context. Of all participants, 40.7% were male (n=151) and 59.3% were female (n=220). The average age of the participants was 20.59 years, with a standard deviation (SD) of 1.59 years. Participants reported an average of 9.23 years of learning a second language (L2), with a standard deviation (SD) of 4.29 years. Regarding the learned L2s, around half of the participants learn English (49.1%, n=182) and the other half German (51.9%, n=189).

### 5.2     Research instrument

To assess the willingness of participants to use dictionaries, a multi-item Likert scale consisting of four items was adopted from a previous research paper (Fajt et al. 2024). Participants rated their agreement with each statement on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The internal consistency of the items was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, yielding a coefficient of .750, indicating an acceptable level of reliability. This suggests that the items on the scale are adequately correlated and collectively provide a consistent measure of the construct of willingness to use dictionaries.

For the measurement of the frequency of use of different dictionaries, single-item scales were employed. Single-item scales have been subject to methodological criticism primarily due to concerns about their reliability and validity compared to multi-item scales. Critics often argue that single-item scales may not adequately capture complex constructs because they cannot account for various facets of the construct the way multi-item scales can. However, when a construct is sufficiently narrow and the questions are concrete, such as behavioural questions (i.e., how frequently someone uses a certain type of dictionary) that all respondents understand uniformly, single item scales may be used (Rossiter 2011).

These single item scales targeted various monolingual and bilingual dictionaries that are — based on the results of previous research — prevalent in Hungary. The selection of these dictionaries is justified by their widespread use in the Hungarian context, as identified in a study carried out by P. Márkus et al. (2023). This research paper pinpointed these dictionaries as the most popular ones in a pilot study conducted prior to that study. Each dictionary type was assessed by a specific item asking participants to report the frequency of their dictionary use on a scale from 1 (never) to 5 (very frequently). The dictionaries included both monolingual and bilingual digital dictionaries. English monolingual dictionaries:

1. **Oxford Learner's Dictionaries:** a widely respected source for EFL learners;
2. **Cambridge Learner's Dictionary:** a widely respected source for EFL learners;
3. **Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English:** well-regarded for its clear explanations and reliable example sentences;
4. **The Free Dictionary:** provides a vast range of linguistic resources, including idioms, thesaurus entries, and encyclopaedia facts;
5. **Macmillan Dictionary**[1]: features detailed definitions with particular emphasis on contemporary language and practical usage examples.
6. **Urban Dictionary:** a community-edited dictionary well-known for its informal and slang language content.

German monolingual dictionaries:

1. **Duden:** a widely respected source for GFL language learners;
2. **Langenscheidt:** a source known for its comprehensive coverage of German vocabulary;
3. **Pons:** a source utilized for its clear definitions and usage examples.

Bilingual dictionaries (all of these dictionaries provide both English–Hungarian and German–Hungarian translations):

1. **SZTAKI:** a widely used online Hungarian–English (and Hungarian–German) dictionary; SZTAKI is known for its extensive database, which includes both general language and technical terms. Its user-friendly interface makes it popular among students and professionals alike.

2. **DictZone:** this dictionary stands out for its comparison features, allowing users to see multiple translations for a single entry. Its large vocabulary database, including idiomatic expressions and phrases, is particularly useful for language learners looking for nuanced translations.

3. **Akadémiai Publishers:** this dictionary is recognized for its academic precision and comprehensive coverage of both Hungarian–English and Hungarian–German translations. Often used in educational and professional settings, it provides detailed entries with contextual usage, making it suitable for advanced language learners.

4. **Maxim-dictionaries:** as one of Hungary's leading dictionary publishers, Maxim offers both print and digital versions. Its bilingual dictionaries are appreciated for their rich, authoritative content, including cultural and idiomatic expressions, which cater to a wide audience ranging from beginners to advanced learners.

5. **MorphoLogic:** specializing in Hungarian language software, MorphoLogic develops digital bilingual dictionaries that integrate seamlessly with language processing tools. It emphasizes linguistic accuracy and up-to-date terminology, particularly in technical and specialized fields.

6. **English–Hungarian/German–Hungarian dictionary[2]:** Frequently consulted for quick translations, these dictionaries typically feature straightforward entries, making them highly accessible for users seeking rapid, practical solutions for everyday language needs. They are often less detailed but provide immediate, relatively reliable translations.

### 5.3     Data collection and data analysis

Data for the study were collected during autumn 2023 utilizing a quantitative survey instrument administered online via Google Forms. Participation in the survey was entirely voluntary and anonymous, ensuring that participants could freely decide to engage without any disclosure of their identity. Additionally, participants were informed that they could interrupt filling in the questionnaire at any time without any consequences, allowing them the flexibility to participate according to their comfort and availability.

The data analysis for the study was conducted using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Initially, descriptive statistics such as mean scores and corresponding standard deviations were calculated to provide a basic understanding of the data distributions and central tendencies of the variables studied. For inferential statistics, the study employed two techniques to examine the relationships and differences within the data: independent samples t-tests were used to compare the means of two independent groups on the same continuous, dependent variable. This analysis helped to identify any statistically significant differences between groups (i.e. EFL and GFL learners) within the study. Additionally, Pearson correlation was utilized to assess the strength of potential linear relationships among variables. This analysis was crucial for under-

standing how variables related to each other within the context of the study. All statistical analyses were performed using SPSS 28.0 software and all results were considered statistically significant at p<.05.

## 6.    Results

The English monolingual dictionary use, as represented in Table 1, displays a range of mean scores indicating varying levels of usage among the dictionaries listed. The Oxford, Urban, and Cambridge dictionaries have relatively higher mean scores (2.32, 2.29, and 2.13, respectively) compared to other dictionaries, suggesting they are more frequently used among participants. These dictionaries also exhibit higher standard deviations (1.49, 1.46, and 1.40, respectively), indicating a greater variability in their usage rates among our respondents. In contrast, The Free Dictionary, Macmillan, and Longman dictionaries have significantly lower mean scores (1.31, 1.20, and 1.19 respectively) and smaller standard deviations (.84, .60, and .64 respectively).

**Table 1:**    English monolingual dictionary use

| Dictionary | M | SD |
|---|---|---|
| Oxford (https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com) | 2.32 | 1.49 |
| Urban Dictionary (https://www.urbandictionary.com) | 2.29 | 1.46 |
| Cambridge (https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/learner-english/) | 2.13 | 1.40 |
| The Free Dictionary (https://www.thefreedictionary.com) | 1.31 | .84 |
| Macmillan (https://www.macmillandictionary.com) | 1.20 | .60 |
| Longman (https://www.ldoceonline.com) | 1.19 | .64 |

The usage data for German monolingual dictionaries (Table 2) generally indicate lower usage levels across all listed dictionaries compared to the English ones.

**Table 2:**    German monolingual dictionary use

| Dictionary | M | SD |
|---|---|---|
| Duden (https://www.duden.de/) | 1.62 | 1.28 |
| Pons (http://de.pons.com/) | 1.23 | .75 |
| Langenscheidt (https://de.langenscheidt.com/) | 1.19 | .64 |

The Duden dictionary has the highest mean usage score (1.62) among the German dictionaries, but this is still lower than the top scores in the English dictionary list. Pons and Langenscheidt have lower mean scores (1.23 and 1.19, respectively) and lower standard deviations (.75 and .64, respectively), indicating less frequent and more consistent usage patterns among the respondents.

As a next step, EFL and GFL learners' use of bilingual dictionaries was compared using independent samples t-tests. The p-values obtained for all dictionaries range from .205 to .867 suggesting that the differences in dictionary usage between EFL and GFL learners are not statistically significant.

**Table 3:** The comparison of bilingual dictionary use among EFL and GFL learners

| | EFL (n=182) | | GFL (n=187) | | t | p | d |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Dictionaries | M | SD | M | SD | | | |
| English/German–Hungarian dictionary | 3.26 | 1.46 | 3.11 | 1.70 | -.89 | .372 | .09 |
| SZTAKI | 2.04 | 1.31 | 2.20 | 1.42 | 1.15 | .252 | .12 |
| Akadémiai Publishers | 1.91 | 1.27 | 1.88 | 1.37 | -.17 | .867 | .02 |
| Maxim | 1.77 | 1.32 | 1.95 | 1.45 | 1.27 | .205 | .13 |
| DictZone | 1.76 | 1.21 | 1.88 | 1.48 | .86 | .392 | .09 |
| Morpho-Logic | 1.12 | .40 | 1.14 | .55 | .33 | .739 | .03 |

The minimal differences in mean scores and the trivial effect sizes (d) suggest that both groups of language learners may have similar needs and preferences when it comes to dictionaries. In the case of the above dictionaries, these results could imply that factors such as the design and features of dictionaries (e.g., ease of use, quality of translations, comprehensiveness of entries) are likely to be more influential in determining dictionary use than the specific language being learned; however, this should be investigated further through qualitative methods (e.g., interviews).

As a next step, correlation analyses using Pearson's correlation were used to investigate the potential interrelationships among variables. Correlation is a statistical procedure that describes the extent to which two variables are related and "go together". Correlation is expressed as a correlation coefficient (r) ranging

from -1 to 1. A correlation coefficient close to 1 indicates a strong positive rela-
tionship, meaning as one variable increases, the other also tends to increase.
Conversely, a coefficient close to -1 signifies a strong negative (inverse) rela-
tionship, in case of which an increase in one variable results in a decrease in the
other. A correlation of zero suggests no linear relationship between the varia-
bles. It is important to note, however, that correlation does not imply causation;
it merely indicates the presence of a relationship between variables, without
attributing cause.

Table 4 offers a correlation matrix that explores the relationships between
EFL learners' willingness to use dictionaries and their frequency of using vari-
ous monolingual (ML) and bilingual (BL) dictionaries. In Table 4, only statisti-
cally significant correlations are presented.

**Table 4:**    Significant correlations among EFL learners' willingness to use dic-
tionaries and the frequency of use of different monolingual (ML)
and bilingual (BL) dictionaries

| Scales | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Willingness to use dictionaries | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2. Cambridge (ML) | .22 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3. Oxford (ML) | | .76 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4. Urban Dictionary (ML) | .16 | | .18 | 1 | | | | | | | | | |
| 5. Macmillan (ML) | | .19 | .23 | .27 | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| 6. The Free Dictionary (ML) | | .29 | .26 | | .58 | 1 | | | | | | | |
| 7. Longman (ML) | .23 | .28 | .26 | | .66 | .54 | 1 | | | | | | |
| 8. SZTAKI (BL) | .29 | .27 | | | | | | 1 | | | | | |
| 9. DictZone (BL) | .28 | .56 | .38 | | | .26 | | .32 | 1 | | | | |
| 10. Akadémiai Publishers (BL) | | .36 | .40 | .16 | .28 | .35 | .22 | .31 | .21 | 1 | | | |
| 11. Maxim-dictionaries (BL) | | .24 | .21 | .19 | .23 | | .22 | | .18 | .26 | 1 | | |
| 12. MorphoLogic (BL) | | | | | .40 | .23 | .29 | | | | .23 | 1 | |
| 13. English/German–Hungarian dictionary | .17 | .26 | .23 | | | .21 | | | | | .21 | | 1 |

Regarding monolingual dictionaries, Oxford, despite its prominence, shows no correlation with willingness to use dictionaries, suggesting that factors other than general willingness might drive its use. On the other hand, however, Cambridge shows a positive correlation, indicating that learners who are willing to use dictionaries are somewhat likely to use Cambridge, which — in Hungary as well as other parts of the world — is known for its academic credibility. Urban Dictionary exhibits a negligible correlation, possibly because it is often used for informal language learning or specific queries rather than in-school EFL learning purposes. Finally, The Free Dictionary, Macmillan, and Longman show low to no correlation with willingness to use dictionaries. Regarding bilingual dictionaries, SZTAKI, DictZone and the English–Hungarian dictionary show correlation with willingness to use dictionaries but the strength of correlation is negligible even in the case of these dictionaries. The other bilingual dictionaries also show variable correlations with one another ranging from zero to .32. indicating selective preferences among learners.

As a next step, correlation was employed to create a correlation matrix that explores the relationships between GFL learners' willingness to use dictionaries and their frequency of using various monolingual (ML) and bilingual (BL) dictionaries (Table 5). In Table 5, only statistically significant correlations are presented.

**Table 5:**    Significant correlations among GFL learners' willingness to use dictionaries and the frequency of use of different monolingual (ML) and bilingual (BL) dictionaries

| Scales | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Willingness to use dictionaries | 1 | | | | | | | | | |
| 2. Duden (ML) | | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| 3. Langenscheidt (ML) | | .42 | 1 | | | | | | | |
| 3. Pons (ML) | | .47 | .59 | 1 | | | | | | |
| 2. SZTAKI (BL) | | | | | 1 | | | | | |
| 2. DictZone (BL) | | | .19 | | .20 | 1 | | | | |
| 2. Akadémiai Publishers (BL) | | .22 | .34 | .22 | | | 1 | | | |
| 2. Maxim-dictionaries (BL) | | | .20 | | .27 | | .32 | 1 | | |
| 2. MorphoLogic (BL) | | .19 | .52 | .44 | .19 | .22 | .35 | .28 | 1 | |
| 2. English–Hungarian/German–Hungarian (BL) | | .15 | .18 | .20 | | | | | | 1 |

The data indicate that there is no correlation between the GFL learner participants' willingness to use dictionaries and their use of any specific dictionary, whether monolingual or bilingual. This suggests that the willingness to engage with dictionaries does not directly influence which dictionaries are used among these GFL learners; this indicates that other factors are at play in dictionary selection. Regarding monolingual dictionaries, they have inter-dictionary correlations (.42 for Duden and Langenscheidt, .47 and .59 for Langenscheidt and Pons respectively), highlighting a pattern of use among those who favour monolingual options. Pons also correlates with Langenscheidt, which implies a preference chain among monolingual dictionaries with users of one being more likely to use the others, perhaps due to their comprehensive coverage and similar linguistic focus. Regarding bilingual dictionaries, MorphoLogic exhibits strong correlations with other bilingual dictionaries and even some monolingual ones (e.g., .52 with Langenscheidt and .44 with Pons). DictZone and Akadémiai Publishers also show correlations with monolingual dictionaries and among themselves. Finally, Maxim-dictionaries and Hungarian–German also demonstrate correlation with other dictionaries.

## 7.    Discussion and implications

The data suggest that there are distinct usage patterns for English and German monolingual dictionaries, which may be influenced by various linguistic, cultural, and educational contexts.

In terms of linguistic features, English dictionaries such as Oxford and Cambridge appear to be more widely used, possibly due to their extensive vocabulary, detailed definitions, and incorporation of idiomatic and colloquial expressions. Their comprehensive entries and inclusion of contemporary usage may make them more appealing for English learners looking to understand nuances in the language. Urban Dictionary, on the other hand, offers a more user-driven approach by focusing on modern slang and informal terms, which could explain its popularity for quick, informal lookups, especially among younger learners or those engaged with English media.

In contrast, German monolingual dictionaries seem to exhibit lower usage rates overall. The limited range of German dictionaries considered in this study could contribute to this pattern, as learners might not find these dictionaries comprehensive enough to meet their language needs. Additionally, the nature of the German language, with its complex grammatical structures and extensive compound words, might make monolingual dictionaries less user-friendly, particularly for beginner and intermediate learners. This linguistic complexity may lead GFL learners to prefer bilingual dictionaries that provide more straightforward translations.

Cultural factors could also play a role in the observed differences. English dictionaries like Oxford, Cambridge, and even Urban Dictionary benefit from a global cultural presence due to the widespread use of English in media, aca-

demia, and international communication. This widespread use may lead to a preference for these resources, as learners become familiar with them through cultural exposure.

On the other hand, German dictionaries may not enjoy the same level of international recognition. The lower usage patterns of German dictionaries in this study could reflect a more localized cultural context, where learners of German in Hungary may not feel the same level of cultural connection or necessity to engage with monolingual German dictionaries. This could also stem from a lesser emphasis on German in global media and fewer online resources dedicated to German language learning compared to English.

Educational practices and resources in Hungary could also significantly influence dictionary usage patterns. English dictionaries such as Oxford and Cambridge are often incorporated into the curriculum through widely used coursebooks in primary and secondary schools. Students are introduced to these dictionaries early on, which may create a familiarity effect and a preference for these resources. Furthermore, English language instruction in Hungary generally emphasizes the importance of developing a broad vocabulary and understanding nuanced language use, which aligns with the capabilities of these monolingual English dictionaries.

In contrast, German language instruction might not emphasize monolingual dictionary use to the same extent. The potentially lower motivation levels among GFL learners, as suggested by previous research (Öveges and Csizér 2018), could result in a reduced inclination to use German monolingual dictionaries for language improvement. Additionally, the smaller number of German monolingual dictionaries investigated in this study might limit the available options for learners, potentially influencing the observed usage patterns.

The study found that English monolingual dictionaries like Oxford, Cambridge, and Urban Dictionary are more frequently used and exhibit broader application among learners, likely due to their linguistic comprehensiveness, cultural recognition, and integration into educational practices. German dictionaries, however, showed lower overall usage and greater variability, indicating a more specialized or niche use among GFL learners. These differences may be attributed to the more complex linguistic nature of the German language, cultural factors that do not promote the same level of international usage as English, and educational contexts that do not emphasize German monolingual dictionaries as much.

Compared to monolingual dictionaries, in line with the results of pervious research (Atkins and Varantola 1997; Lew 2004; Nesi 2014), it was also identified here that both EFL and GFL learners demonstrate a higher preference for bilingual dictionaries over monolingual ones. In addition, the analysis of bilingual dictionary usage among EFL and GFL learners revealed subtle but not statistically significant differences in how these dictionaries are used by the two groups. This trend might imply that the choice and usage of bilingual dictionaries are influenced by potential factors that are common to both groups; these

may include the accessibility of dictionaries, the learners' perceived ease of use of these tools, or the general educational practices that do not distinctly favour certain dictionaries over others. The lack of significant differences might also suggest that both EFL and GFL learners see equal value in using bilingual dictionaries as a resource for language learning, regardless of the specific language being studied. Given the minimal differences observed, further research could explore other underlying factors that influence dictionary usage, such as individual learner strategies, specific educational contexts, or the design or layout of the dictionaries themselves. Additionally, qualitative methods could provide deeper insights into the subjective preferences and experiences of learners with these tools, potentially uncovering nuanced explanations that quantitative data alone may not reveal.

## 8.     Conclusion

This article sought to explore the extent and manner in which EFL and GFL learners use monolingual and bilingual dictionaries, and to assess the correlation between their willingness to engage with these resources and their actual usage patterns. The findings of this study offer several insights into the dynamics of dictionary use among university students in Hungary, particularly within the context of business language learning.

Regarding the first research question, the data revealed that EFL learners showed a preference for well-established and renowned English monolingual dictionaries, such as Oxford, Cambridge, and Urban Dictionary, which may be useful resources in both academic and informal settings. GFL learners, on the other hand, showed usage across multiple German dictionaries with Duden and Langenscheidt being the most commonly used. Bilingual dictionaries, such as SZTAKI and DictZone were also frequently used by both groups, indicating a broader prevalence in bilingual language contexts. For the second research question, which examined the relationship between university students' willingness to use dictionaries and the frequency of monolingual and bilingual dictionary use, the findings suggest a nuanced landscape. While one might expect a strong correlation between the willingness to engage with dictionaries and their actual usage, the results indicate that this relationship is not straightforward or uniformly strong across different types of dictionaries and languages as well. Among EFL learners, the analysis indicated that there is a relationship between willingness to use dictionaries and the usage of certain bilingual dictionaries, such as SZTAKI and DictZone, which are both commonly used for English–Hungarian translations. This suggests that EFL learners who are more willing to use dictionaries are somewhat more likely to use bilingual resources, potentially to support their language comprehension and translation needs. However, surprisingly, this willingness did not strongly go together with the use of renowned monolingual dictionaries, such as Oxford and Cambridge. This could suggest that EFL learners might not view these prestigious dictionaries as imme-

diately necessary for their learning processes, possibly due to sufficient proficiency or alternative learning resources that are less dictionary-dependent or maybe because of lack of skills in how to use a monolingual dictionary. For GFL learners, the analysis did not show significant correlations between willingness and the use of popular bilingual dictionaries or monolingual dictionaries such as Duden and Langenscheidt. This might indicate that GFL learners either rely less on dictionaries as a learning tool or that their willingness to engage with dictionaries does not necessarily translate into frequent use. This could be attributed to different educational approaches, where perhaps a greater emphasis is placed on contextual and immersive learning strategies rather than dictionary-based learning.

The findings suggest that dictionary use among language learners is influenced by a combination of factors. The fact that willingness did not strongly correlate with the use of certain popular dictionaries suggests that motivations for dictionary use are complex and may be driven by specific learning contexts or tasks rather than a general propensity towards using language resources. For future research, it would be beneficial to explore these motivational and contextual factors in more detail, perhaps through qualitative studies that could provide deeper insights into why learners choose to use or not use dictionaries. Such studies could examine the impact of teaching methodologies on dictionary use, learner attitudes towards different types of dictionaries, and the role of dictionaries in developing language competence over time. Furthermore, as digital resources continue to evolve, ongoing evaluation of how digital dictionaries are integrated into language learning curricula could provide valuable feedback for both educational technology developers and language educators aiming to optimize the tools available to learners.

While this study provides valuable insights into the use of dictionaries among EFL and GFL learners in Hungary, several limitations should be acknowledged. Participants were exclusively recruited from a single Hungarian higher education institution, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Learners from different educational backgrounds might exhibit different patterns of dictionary use. In addition, while the study included several commonly used dictionaries, it did not encompass all possible dictionary options available to learners, potentially overlooking emerging or less mainstream resources that might also be useful resources. Finally, while useful for establishing broad patterns and correlations, quantitative research does not capture the nuanced reasons behind learners' preferences and behaviours. Qualitative data — as explained previously — could provide deeper insights into the motivations and contextual factors influencing dictionary use.

## Endnotes

1.    Macmillan Dictionary has not been available online since 30 June 2023.
2.    https://angol-magyar-szotar.hu/ and https://nemet-magyar-szotar.hu/

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