

The Role of Electronic Dictionary in Kikamba Language Learning

Dorcus Mino Kimongo

Department of Linguistics and Languages, Machakos University

Abstract

The role of a dictionary in language learning process cannot be denied. The dictionary can be extremely useful learning resource, particularly as it makes the learner more independent of the teacher. Dictionary is a treasure house for any language. The policy of language in Kenya emphasizes on the importance of first language. Presently in the new curriculum of education (CBC) the role of Mother tongue has been re-emphasized because it has not received as much attention in the 8-4-4 curriculum. It is on this basis that this paper examines the role of e-dictionary in Kikamba language. Electronic dictionaries are gaining popularity with the development of technologies that makes it possible to develop new lexicographical on-line and off-line products meeting demands of Kikamba language students, lexicologists, translators, and other stakeholders. The advantages of electronic dictionaries such as sophisticated searching, unlimited storage capability, speed and types of search among others will be described. This paper will examine types of electronic dictionaries and the role of the dictionary in Kikamba language learning. Language learning by acquiring language skills is assuming more importance in learning. If one could acquire listening skills, one could achieve other skills such as speaking, reading and writing. Listening skill can be developed by using technical gadgets. In this paper using technical gadgets such as e - library, language laboratory, and e- dictionary to acquire knowledge in language was examined. Learners were motivated to use technological gadgets to learn language and were given opportunity to develop their vocabulary by using electronic dictionary. The researcher found out that, use of electronic dictionary in Kikamba language learning helps bring out hidden talents of the slow Learners and develop learner's in language learning.

Keywords: *Online dictionary, offline dictionary, printed dictionary, language skills, Language learning, lexicography*

INTRODUCTION

In the present context, Technology - Enhanced learning has taken huge leaps. Online educational resources are drawing popularity day by day. Among the online educational resources e-dictionary is an important tool in the learning process. Language learning is mainly for proficiency and fluency in communication in the speaking and graphic form. The present need of researchers and language learners cannot be satisfied by depending on compiling the manual

dictionaries. Kikamba language learners, in this technological scenario, should be motivated to learn the language easily by using electronic dictionary in the classroom because it provides an accessible and easy way of learning Kikamba words. It is a powerful learning aid that stimulates a desire to learn independently and promotes the better understanding of the language.

The word dictionary is taken from Latin word "dictionaries". It is derived from the word 'diction' which means 'style'. Lexicography deals with the practice of compiling dictionaries. Learners use electronic dictionaries in learning process to acquire language skills. Learners could be motivated themselves by improving vocabulary by referring to the different dictionaries which come under the reference materials. Learners could be attracted by the teaching methodology using technological gadgets in the classroom. The role of dictionary is to express the semantics and to expose the etymology of a word. Dictionary functions to accumulate word power, the modeling of using an apt word in the apt place and the usage of the word in different occasions and periods. No manual compilation could be vast and vivid as the expectation of the learners, moreover using manual dictionary which is full of time consuming and laborious. But giving semantics, syntactic and etymological forms of lexis by electronic dictionary can be much more beneficial and very quick access to learners. Therefore, introducing e- dictionaries is a welcoming factor in the language learning especially in Kikamba language. Learning Kikamba is found to be deteriorating in stranded with reference to vocabulary among children in lower CBC grades.

Types of Dictionaries

In general dictionaries are categorized into Traditional or printed dictionary, Mobile dictionary Electronic, dictionary or e- dictionary, Daniel Jones phonetic dictionary, online dictionary, Encyclopedia andan Thesaurus. Of these dictionaries, this paper lays emphasis on electronic dictionary.

Electronic dictionary is a dictionary in the digital form. It can also be said to be dictionary of digital form which can be used to access any number of words or lexemes. Any reference material stored in electronic form that gives information about the spelling, meaning, or use of words can be referred to as electronic dictionary (ED). Electronic dictionaries may be divided into two main groups: those intended to be used automatically by computers for various

applications, for instance in language technology contexts such as machine translation, and those intended to be used interactively by people for consultation or reading. An electronic dictionary can be intended for on-line and use off-line. Whereas an on-line dictionary has been published on the internet and is consulted via the internet and not stored with the individual user, an off-line dictionary is stored with the individual user, either in an electronic pocket calculator or reading pen (PED) or in a personal computer (PCD). Like the print dictionary, the off-line dictionary can be regarded as a finished product, the on-line dictionary can be continuously revised and enlarged and is in principle an unfinished product etc. V. Dubichinskiy considers this characteristic to be a valuable one as at any stage the electronic on-line dictionary can be edited and perfected.

An additional type of electronic dictionary which is described by B. Svensen [13, c. 438] as a hybrid form between an on-line dictionary and off-line one – is stored on a server in the intranet of a company or institution, and is updated and consulted via that intranet and called Intranet dictionary.

At present, there are different types of Kikamba dictionaries which can be downloaded in the tablets, smart phones or as apps. It is user friendly and easy to learners to learn more words within the short time. It is better and faster for class- based activities. Even though it may create a great distraction in the classroom teaching, electronic dictionary is more useful in the classroom teaching than paper dictionary. While we teach the grammar elements in Kikamba such as verbs, Idiomatic phrase, Nouns, sentence structure among others, it is easy to interact with the learners and easy to search a word for meaning.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Works carried out on electronic dictionaries by researchers include; Aust, R.et al. (1993), View that an electronic dictionary is “an electronic aid that offers immediate access to reference information with clear and direct return path to the target information”

Razaei and Davpudo (2016) opine that electronic dictionaries have advanced rapidly in the last three decades. Electronic dictionaries are made available in CD-ROM, small hand- held calculator - type reference works and online (Nesi, 2009). Moreover, CD- ROM and hand - held devices used by researchers show interest in online dictionaries due to rapid advance of the

internet, smart phones and iPads (Rezaei and Davoudi, 2016). Electronic Dictionaries used more by language learners are becoming a new technological tool of vocabulary learning among language learners.

Hulstijn et.al. (1996) confirmed that learners checking dictionaries are to find the meaning of words which have reading and listening leading to learning vocabulary. They highlighted the vocabulary learning strategies which illustrates that language learners can find out new vocabularies on their own using dictionaries.

Stifling (2003) Kobayashi (2006) as cited in Rezaei and Davoudi (2016) have compared with the bulk of paper dictionaries and slow retrieve, the increasing popularity of electronic dictionaries can be credited to better readability and their ease of use, which makes the consultation process less time- consuming.

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Although [Roby 1999] reports a few 1980s experiments involving the use of online glosses, the study of electronic dictionary use is still in its infancy. The linking of language learning materials with dictionary definitions only really became feasible in the 1990s, as hypertext became a standard feature of computer systems. To date, most ED research has been concerned with the use of glossaries relating to modern language course materials, such as the German Cyberbuch [Chun / Plass 1996], Spanish magazine articles [Aust et al 1993, Knight 1994, Roby 1999], and

excerpts from a French novel and poem [Lyman-Hager et al 1993, Lomicka 1998].

The results of these experiments strongly favour the use of computer-based lexical information. [Aust et al 1993 and Roby 1999] found that users of online glosses looked up significantly more words than subjects with hardcopy glosses, in Knight's study, for where subjects read text with and without access to online glosses, those with glosses took longer to read the passage but achieved higher vocabulary and reading comprehension scores. In these two studies though, differences in comprehension scores were found to be insignificant.

[Lyman-Hager et al 1993] the subjects who used online glossing achieved significantly higher vocabulary quiz scores than those using glosses on paper. [Chun / Plass 1996] and [Lomicka 1998] also experimented with multimedia glossing online, and found that access to glosses with still pictures as well as text improved word recall. From those works reviewed, it is understood that electronic dictionary offers immediate access to abstract information and it consumes less processing time for learners or users. It is in view of this that this study feels in Kikamba classroom, the use of electronic dictionary is more useful to the learners. Thus, Electronic dictionaries used by language learning are more growing in the academic area.

Classification of Electronic Dictionary

Electronic dictionaries can be classified into various types according to different norms. The development of new technology and the Internet have progressed the dictionary concept. . An Electronic dictionary typology is that by Schryver (2003). He focuses on technical and Lexicographic evaluation. He distinguishes to between offline and online dictionaries based on technical evaluation. Offline dictionary embraces printed electronic dictionaries and personal computer dictionaries (PCD). Based on lexicographic evaluation, this typology distinguishes between electronic dictionaries based on lexicographic evaluation, this typology distinguishes between electronic dictionaries based on their paper versions and also newly developed electronic dictionaries with both innovative and printable appearances.

Speed of an Electronic Dictionary

Electronic Dictionary provides users with a stronger search function in the digital form. Speed is seen as one of the main advantages of using electronic dictionaries in particular those online and CD - ROMs. Wescher and Pitts (2000) are of the view that electronic dictionary is speed of the unknown words (searching words), students are looked up by the users and the students can find quickly the words faster with an electronic dictionary than with a paper dictionary. Speed is often perceived as an advantage of Electronic Dictionaries but it been recommended that speedy reason must therefore be observed as a deliberate activity.

Use of Electronic Dictionary

It is a boon for language learners and also brings out hidden talents of the slow learners. It helps to develop learner's knowledge in language learning and enhances the learners to develop receptive skills. One can easily update some of the brands by using internet and software. Individual attention can be given by teachers while using electronic dictionary in the class. Learners' educational qualification level can be raised. E- Dictionary provides storage and retrieval become quick and easy, active learning opportunity, tension free environment and gives feedback immediately.

As far as the learning situation is concerned, E- dictionary is used in the following domain. They are: The electronic dictionary extends educational opportunity to develop new ways of learning and increases the array of learning opportunity; It encourages cooperative attitude among users because a view of the screen is more easily shared than a view of the page; It inspires the students in finding, evaluating and sharing information; It provides proper motivation and instils interest towards the self- learning; The learners can learn at anytime, anywhere without other external help; This enables the learners to learn more depending on their aptitude, attitude and also ability; Providing users with authentic recorded voice facilities for better pronunciation.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Using e- dictionary is considered as a skill and dictionaries are considered as pillar of language learning. Electronic dictionaries may not replace the traditional paper dictionaries but they can surely supplement the paper dictionaries. Electronic gadgets are valuable in teaching and

learning process. The E- dictionary revitalize and helps to overcome from the formal learning to informal learning. The present situation, the language learners need not carry any dictionaries along with them and wherever they go. The ordinary library functions in certain period of time, but the E- dictionary helps a lot 24/7 and whenever we need to refer to the learning materials. This could help the Kikamba language learners in different levels of vocabulary learning and also used both in class and outside of the class. So, preparing and learning the E- dictionaries can surely be an unconventional and fashionable trend in Kikamba language learning. The E- dictionaries will help a lot for the Kikamba language learners and particularly the CBC lower grade pupils.

Kikamba language should be taught with proper phonetic sound. An electronic gadget such as language laboratory and e- dictionary, among others, help the learners to learn the language properly. Opportunities should be provided for using technological gadgets to the learners to learn Kikamba language effectively and properly. Kikamba language class must be provided with digital board, electronic dictionary, Kikamba language laboratory and internet facility. More exposure should be given to the learners to use technical gadgets in learning Kikamba language.

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