

ARTICLE

## Dictionary Usage Preferences of Chinese Students Learning Turkish as a Foreign Language: The Case of Guangdong University of Foreign Studies

Ayça Çağlayan Özkan

Graduate School of Educational Sciences, Erciyes University, Kayseri 38039, Türkiye

### ABSTRACT

Dictionaries play a crucial role in developing vocabulary knowledge and language skills in foreign language education. With evolving user expectations and technological advances, dictionary design has shifted from traditional to corpus-based approaches. This study aims to reveal the dictionary usage preferences of native Chinese learners of Turkish as a foreign language and the content adequacy of the existing dictionaries in this field for language teaching. The research questions of the study are as follows: ‘What are the dictionary usage preferences of native Chinese learners of Turkish as a foreign language?’ and ‘How adequate is the content of the dictionaries commonly used by native Chinese learners during the process of learning Turkish for language teaching purposes?’ The study group consists of 48 undergraduate students from the Turkish Language Department of Guangdong University of Foreign Studies. A structured questionnaire captured their usage frequency, preferred dictionary types, and language combinations. Results show that students frequently use dictionaries, favoring printed and online Turkish-Chinese dictionaries, particularly Zhou Zheng Qing’s version. To evaluate content adequacy, the study compares the widely used traditional Turkish-Chinese dictionary with a corpus-based learner’s dictionary. Using a checklist derived from lexicographic theory, key differences in structural and functional features are analyzed. Findings suggest that traditional dictionaries lack contextual support, authentic examples, and production-oriented design. In contrast, the corpus-based dictionary offers rich, pedagogically valuable content aligned

#### \*CORRESPONDING AUTHOR:

Ayça Çağlayan Özkan, Graduate School of Educational Sciences, Erciyes University, Kayseri 38039, Türkiye; Email: [aycagclayanozkan@gmail.com](mailto:aycagclayanozkan@gmail.com)

#### ARTICLE INFO

Received: 28 June 2025 | Revised: 15 July 2025 | Accepted: 18 July 2025 | Published Online: 2 September 2025

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30564/fls.v7i9.10760>

#### CITATION

Çağlayan Özkan, A., 2025. Dictionary usage preferences of chinese students learning turkish as a foreign language: the case of guangdong university of foreign studies. *Forum for Linguistic Studies*. 7(9): 172–184. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30564/fls.v7i9.10760>

#### COPYRIGHT

Copyright © 2025 by the author(s). Published by Bilingual Publishing Group. This is an open access article under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0) License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>).

with modern language learning needs. The study recommends incorporating corpus-based resources into Turkish language instruction and promoting dictionary awareness among learners.

**Keywords:** Turkish Teaching; Turkish Teaching as a Foreign Language; Dictionary Usage in Language Teaching; Corpus-Based Dictionaries; Turkish–Chinese Dictionaries

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Dictionary in Language Teaching

Dictionaries have long served as essential reference sources in language teaching, proving indispensable not only for native speakers but also for those learning a language as a foreign or second language. In this context, dictionary developers often prioritize the specific needs of language learners and young users when designing user-centered reference tools<sup>[1]</sup>.

The process of preparing dictionaries consists of the basic stages of planning and implementation<sup>[2,3]</sup>. In the planning stage of lexicography, it is stated that one of the earliest decisions to be made before deciding what the macro and micro structure of the dictionary will look like is about the target user group<sup>[1]</sup>.

Regarding the point of dictionary planning, Sven Tarp<sup>[4]</sup> emphasizes that in order to make the concept less abstract (to concretize the process) and to make a detailed profile of the intended audience as dictionary users, at least variables such as the level of proficiency, whether they are adults or children, whether they are immigrants or other types of learners, whether they are from common or different cultures, and their general level of culture should be taken into account.

### 1.2. Dictionary in Foreign/Second Language Teaching

In the context of foreign language teaching, field experts have emphasized that little can be expressed without grammar, but nothing can be expressed without vocabulary<sup>[5]</sup>. Therefore, the importance of dictionary use in the development of vocabulary in foreign/second language teaching in general and in the processes of developing the vocabulary of Turkish as a foreign/second language learners in particular emerges.

Experts working on dictionary use in language teaching

argue that dictionary use, which is evaluated in the category of metacognitive strategies, supports students to become autonomous language users by enriching their language learning processes<sup>[6,7]</sup>. Nagy and Herman<sup>[8]</sup> argue that the variety and richness of vocabulary encountered in written texts contribute significantly to the breadth and depth of children's lexical knowledge. In addition, it is also stated that in order to use the dictionary correctly and effectively, students need to develop awareness about why and when they can use the dictionary, to be able to approach the acquired information critically, in short, to have dictionary awareness<sup>[6]</sup>.

### 1.3. Dictionary in Teaching Turkish as a Foreign Language

Foreign/second language learners' use of dictionaries is sometimes based on deciphering an item they have heard or read, and sometimes on discovering the context in which a word they know is used, in other words, on encryption. Therefore, foreign/second language learner dictionaries should prioritize encryption needs more than decoding needs<sup>[1]</sup>. In this context, the importance of including collocational structures in foreign/second language learner dictionaries becomes apparent. Çetinkaya states that collocational dictionaries can be counted among the dictionaries that help foreigners learn Turkish more quickly and easily in teaching Turkish as a foreign language<sup>[9]</sup>.

In addition, witnesses are included in all dictionaries, but they play a very important role, especially in foreign/second language learner dictionaries, and they should be numerous and prominent<sup>[1]</sup>. Experts have argued that authentic materials support foreign/second language learning in terms of meaningful and natural linguistic input<sup>[10]</sup>. It is expected that obtaining the witnesses in dictionaries, which are one of the important materials in the field of foreign/second language teaching, from authentic materials will contribute to the learning process.

In addition to the importance of authentic examples, it

is also necessary to consider the structural challenges specific to Turkish that affect dictionary use in language learning. Due to its agglutinative nature, the Turkish language has a morphologically rich vocabulary that allows for extensive word formation and variation. This structural characteristic leads to significant challenges for learners of Turkish as a foreign language, particularly in dictionary use<sup>[11]</sup>. Learners often know the dictionary definition of a word but struggle to apply it appropriately in context. This indicates that dictionaries should not only serve the purpose of decoding (receptive understanding) but also support encoding (productive use). Given the semantic richness and idiomatic nature of Turkish, it becomes essential for dictionaries to present contextualized usage examples along with accurate meaning representations<sup>[12]</sup>. As a result, the need for pedagogically oriented, corpus-based, and learner-friendly dictionaries is growing steadily within the field of Turkish language education.

#### 1.4. Types of Dictionaries

Dictionaries are classified as monolingual, bilingual, or multilingual according to their language; printed, electronic, or online according to the medium they are used in; and general dictionaries and learner dictionaries according to user skills<sup>[12]</sup>. Today, it is possible to come across dictionaries of various qualities shaped by the expectations of users and the purposes of dictionary authors.

Researchers have subjected dictionaries to various classifications in terms of their qualities. Within the framework of these qualities, it is seen that dictionaries are classified according to the number of languages they contain, the medium in which they are published, their size, function, the order of the articles, scope, and targeted user group<sup>[13]</sup>.

Atkins and Rundell<sup>[14]</sup> elaborate on the aspects that need to be considered and reflected upon in the process of classifying dictionaries:

- 1) *Language(s) of the dictionary*
  - a) *monolingual*
  - b) *bilingual (If bilingual, is it one-way or two-way?)*
  - c) *multilingual*
- 2) *Scope of the dictionary*
  - a) *general language*

- b) *encyclopedic and cultural materials*
  - c) *terminology or sub-languages (dictionary of legal terms, nursing, and so on)*
  - d) *a specific area of the language (collocation dictionary, dictionary of idioms, and so on)*
- 3) *Size of the dictionary*
  - a) *standard printing*
  - b) *concise edition*
  - c) *pocket edition*
- 4) *Medium of the dictionary*
  - a) *printed*
  - b) *electronic*
  - c) *online*
- 5) *Organization of the dictionary*
  - a) *word comprehension*
  - b) *word-to-word meaning*
- 6) *Language(s) of users*
  - a) *a group of users speaking the same language*
  - b) *two special groups of language speakers*
  - c) *learners of the lexicon around the world*
- 7) *User qualifications*
  - a) *linguists and other language specialists*
  - b) *literate adults*
  - c) *school students*
  - d) *young children*
  - e) *language learners*
- 8) *Purpose of consulting the dictionary*
  - a) *Decoding (learn the meaning of the word, translating a foreign language text into their own language)*
  - b) *Coding (using the word correctly, translating a text in their own language into a foreign language, and language teaching)*

Furthermore, Atkins and Rundell<sup>[14]</sup> state that the same classification elements proposed during dictionary planning can serve as analytical benchmarks when assessing the quality and usability of published dictionaries.

Hartmann<sup>[15]</sup>, with the aim of placing lexicographical criticism on a more objective basis, asks about the products to be evaluated “What are the aims of the dictionary? What are its features? How is its content presented? How are

categories of knowledge structured?” He emphasizes that the tools should be sharpened by asking specific questions, such as Hartmann mentioned in his work<sup>[15]</sup>. In addition, he mentions that important meta-studies in the field of dictionary criticism suggest “checklists” of points to be followed in order to reach more objective standards of criticism.

In dictionary criticism, it is seen that a number of macro- and micro-level evaluation points are put forward, although the exact boundaries are not clear. Hartmann<sup>[15]</sup> outlines that dictionary evaluations may address broad elements like editorial background and document sections (macro level), as well as more detailed aspects such as entry formatting, semantic fields, and supplementary tools like visuals or links (micro level), as proposed by Nakamoto<sup>[16]</sup>.

### 1.5. Lexicography in China

Chinese lexicography has a long history and a unique structure. The character-based structure of the Chinese language has brought about formal and phonetic differences in the organization of dictionaries. In this context, it is stated that Chinese dictionaries are generally organized according to either the sound of the character (pinyin) or its form, while phonetic dictionaries are more common<sup>[17]</sup>.

Erya, the first known Chinese dictionary in history, was compiled by Confucian scholars in the 2nd century BC. With its 19 category headings, this work shows that early lexicography was both semantic and encyclopedic<sup>[18,19]</sup>. The entries in Erya are based on semantic categorization, consisting of semantically similar expressions around a main word selected from standard Han literary language.

However, the first scientific dictionary work, which is considered to be the academic beginning of Chinese lexicography, is referred to as Shizhou. Although this work has not survived, its dating to the 9th century BC shows the depth of the lexicographical tradition in China<sup>[20]</sup>. This tradition was revived especially during the Han Dynasty (206 BC – 220 AD), and works such as Erya and Shuō wén Jiě zì became a reference source for making sense of classical texts.

Chinese lexicography finds its earliest and most influential foundation in Xu Shen’s *Shuo wen Jie zi*, compiled around 100 CE. As broadly acknowledged in lexicographic scholarship, this monumental work not only systematically organized characters by radicals but also provided phonological and etymological insights, effectively laying the cor-

nerstone for two millennia of Chinese dictionary-making<sup>[21]</sup>. The *Shuo wen*’s radical-based classification system and detailed character analyses established methodological standards that continued to shape lexicographic compilations well into the Tang dynasty and beyond, proving its enduring scholarly impact<sup>[21]</sup>.

In recent decades, lexicographic practice in China has undergone a notable transformation, moving from traditional prescriptive methods to more empirical, user-oriented approaches. Liu<sup>[22]</sup> explains that modern Chinese bilingual dictionaries increasingly adopt corpus-based methodologies to ensure that lexical entries reflect authentic language use, particularly in the context of second language learning. This shift is aligned with broader global trends that emphasize the importance of usability and descriptive accuracy in dictionary compilation. Such developments signify a growing recognition that dictionaries must serve not only as reference tools but also as instruments of language acquisition.

To sum up, Chinese lexicography was initially based on the systematization of notes for the annotation of classical texts, and over time, it has diversified in form and function, playing an important role in both modern education and foreign language teaching.

### 1.6. Electronic Lexicography

When we look at dictionary studies from the past to present, it is seen that dictionaries were created with approaches such as collecting witnesses, relying on personal information, creating a receipt index, and so on. When we look at the present day of lexicography, it is observed that new approaches have started to be used in parallel with information technologies. Methods such as tagging, classification, rewriting, and so on, which were used to create dictionaries in the historical process, have lost their validity today. These methods have been replaced by digital (electronic) platforms where real-time linguistic data can be analyzed and interpreted holistically<sup>[23]</sup>. Modern lexicography increasingly relies on corpus data, emphasizing actual language usage and evidence-based methods that enhance both reliability and educational applicability.

Moreover, the integration of corpus technology with electronic lexicography has facilitated not only the representation of authentic language use but also the development of interactive and learner-responsive dictionary inter-

faces<sup>[4,24]</sup>. Advances in computational linguistics have enabled lexicographers to extract multi-layered data, including collocational patterns, frequency information, and discourse markers, which were not systematically incorporated in traditional dictionaries<sup>[25]</sup>. In this context, learners' dictionaries have particularly benefited from corpus-based lexicographic models that aim to reflect how words function in context, rather than presenting isolated definitions. According to Rundell and Kilgariff<sup>[26]</sup>, corpus-driven approaches mark a paradigm shift from intuition-based compilation to empirical dictionary design, which enhances both linguistic accuracy and pedagogical value. As such, electronic lexicography today not only records language but also becomes a dynamic tool in language education, adapting to real-time linguistic change and user needs.

Using corpora, features such as headword, word type, pronunciation, meaning(s), witnesses, and syntax can be easily constructed. In this sense, corpora that can produce experimental and up-to-date data make important contributions to lexicography studies.

Determining the priority vocabulary in language teaching and revealing the lexicographical constructions that emerge with these lexical elements can always reveal the potential to make important contributions to the field of language teaching by using corpora.

## 2. Aim of the Study and Research Problem

### 2.1. Aim of the Study

The aim of the study is to reveal the tendency of native Chinese learners of Turkish as a foreign language to use dictionaries and the content adequacy of the existing dictionaries in this field for language teaching. In the first stage, the general view of the preferences of Chinese students learning Turkish as a foreign language in the process of learning Turkish according to various characteristics and types of dictionaries; In the second stage, it is aimed to reveal the differences between the content features of the printed dictionary, which is the most preferred dictionary in the field of Turkish teaching in China and prepared with traditional methods, and dictionaries created with modern methods.

### 2.2. Research Questions

In order to better understand the dictionary usage behavior of Chinese students learning Turkish as a foreign language and to evaluate the effectiveness of the dictionaries commonly used in this context, this study was designed around two central research questions. These questions aim to explore both learners' preferences and the pedagogical adequacy of the available lexicographic tools. Understanding how learners use dictionaries and whether these resources meet their linguistic needs is crucial for improving dictionary design and Turkish language pedagogy.

Accordingly, the research seeks to answer the following questions:

1. "What are the dictionary usage tendencies of Turkish as a foreign language learners who are native Chinese speakers?"
2. "How adequate is the content of the printed dictionaries used by Turkish as a foreign language learners who are native Chinese speakers for language teaching?"

## 3. Materials and Methods

### 3.1. Research Design

The research was conducted in a descriptive research design. Descriptive studies are studies that try to determine what is as it is, do not aim to find differences or relationships, and are generally handled as survey studies<sup>[27]</sup>. In this sense, data collection techniques such as observation, questionnaire, and document scanning are generally used in descriptive research.

### 3.2. Population and Sample

The population of the first research question consists of all students whose mother tongue is Chinese and who learn Turkish as a foreign language, and the study group consists of forty-eight Chinese students who are undergraduate students in the Turkish department of Guangdong University of Foreign Studies (GDUFS) in Guangdong Province of the People's Republic of China between the years 2022–2025. The distribution of the students in the sample according to their grade levels is given in **Table 1**.

**Table 1.** Distribution of the Students in the Sample According to Their Grade Levels.

Grade Level	Female	Male	Total
1st Year	5	3	8
2nd Year	12	5	17
3rd Year	10	3	13
4th Year	9	1	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>48</b>

Of the 48 students in the study group, 36 were female and 12 were male. When the distribution of the participants according to grade levels is examined, it is seen that there are 8 students in the 1st grade (5 females, 3 males), 17 students in the 2nd grade (12 females, 5 males), 13 students in the 3rd grade (10 females, 3 males) and 10 students in the 4th grade (9 females, 1 male). This distribution shows that the study reached students at different levels of education and that the data is diverse in terms of representativeness.

While the population of the second research question includes all dictionaries prepared for teaching Turkish as a foreign language, the sample includes the most widely used printed dictionary, “Turkish-Chinese Dictionary”<sup>[28]</sup>, and a corpus-based dictionary, “Turkish for Foreigners-1 Verbs in Turkey Turkish”<sup>[29]</sup>.

### 3.3. Data Collection and Analysis

#### 3.3.1. Data Collection Tool

In this study, a structured questionnaire form developed by the researcher was used as a data collection tool. The questionnaire was prepared to determine the attitudes and habits of Turkish as a foreign language learners regarding dictionary use. In addition to the demographic information of the participants (gender, grade level, and so on), the questionnaire includes variables such as frequency of dictionary use, preferred dictionary types (printed, digital, online), language of the dictionaries (Turkish-Chinese, Turkish-English, and so on) and the most frequently used digital dictionary platforms.

The questionnaire items were structured as multiple-choice. Participants were asked to mark more than one option. The content validity of the questionnaire form was evaluated in line with the opinions of field experts, and the questions were organized to cover different dimensions of dictionary use. The questionnaire used as a data collection tool was organized in terms of content validity by taking the opinions of three faculty members who are experts in the field.

Classical Likert-type rating scales were not included in the data collection tool. Therefore, classical reliability analyses (e.g., Cronbach’s Alpha) could not be applied to the questionnaire items. However, the way the questionnaire was structured supported consistency in terms of content as it focused on directly observable and measurable behaviors.

#### 3.3.2. Data Analysis

The data obtained in the study were organized in a Microsoft Excel environment, and the analysis process was carried out on the basis of descriptive statistics. In the analysis of the data, descriptive statistics were used to reveal the preferences and habits of the participants regarding the use of dictionaries with frequency and percentage distributions.

Since the items in the questionnaire form were multiple-choice and categorical, classical parametric tests and reliability analyses (e.g., Cronbach’s Alpha) were not applied. Instead, the distributions were evaluated in line with the content of each item, and the frequency of dictionary use, preferred dictionary types, and tendencies towards digital platforms were interpreted through tables and graphs.

The validity of the data was ensured in line with the principle of content validity of the questionnaire. For this purpose, the items of the questionnaire were prepared in line with expert opinions and designed to cover all the basic dimensions related to the targeted subject. In line with the purpose of the research, construct validity or factor analysis was not applied; the data were directly evaluated to reflect interpretable trends.

Data for the research questions were selected in accordance with descriptive research methods. The data for the first research question were collected through a structured written interview technique with a short questionnaire consisting of a few questions. The collected data were digitized and organized in the Microsoft Office Excel program, and each student’s responses to each question in the questionnaire were analyzed in the form of separate tables.

For the findings related to the second research question,

the document scanning technique was used to compare the dictionaries. Both dictionaries were scanned with a checklist in accordance with dictionary evaluation methods and

techniques in the field of lexicography (**Table 2**). The results are interpreted comparatively in terms of macro and microstructural features.

**Table 2.** Comparative Evaluation of Dictionaries According to Structural Characteristics (According to Atkins and Rundell, 2008).

Category	Evaluation Criteria
<b>Language Structure</b>	Is the dictionary monolingual, bilingual, or multilingual? If bilingual, is it unidirectional or bidirectional?
<b>Content Scope</b>	General language, encyclopedic content, or specific field (e.g., collocations, idioms)?
<b>Publication Format</b>	Is it printed, electronic, and/or available online?
<b>Purpose of Use</b>	Decoding (e.g., meaning search, translation), encoding (e.g., production, contextual use), teaching
<b>Target User Profile</b>	Language learners, students, experts, children, and so on.
<b>Organization</b>	Are the entries listed alphabetically? Is the structure from word to meaning or word to word?
<b>Microstructural Features</b>	Headword format, word class information, pronunciation, sense ordering Presence of example sentences, synonyms/antonyms, etymology, collocational elements

This checklist was used to systematically evaluate the structural and functional characteristics of both traditional and corpus-based dictionaries. The dictionaries were analyzed separately according to the above-mentioned headings, and a comparative analysis was made at the macro (general structure) and micro (item content) levels. In this way, the suitability of the dictionaries for language teaching was revealed more objectively.

## 4. Results

The findings and interpretations of the two research questions of the study are analyzed and evaluated separately.

### 4.1. Findings and Interpretations Related to the First Research Question

In the study, the results of the questionnaire applied to students whose mother tongue is Chinese and who learn Turkish as a foreign language are included.

When the answers given by the students to the question “How often do you use a dictionary while learning Turkish?” are evaluated, it can be concluded that the students “often” use a dictionary while learning Turkish, as expected (**Table 3**). It can be concluded from the answers of the majority of the participants who answered this question that they consider the dictionary as an important material.

**Table 3.** Frequency of Dictionary Usage.

How Often Do You Use a Dictionary While Learning Turkish?		
Often 43	Sometimes 5	Never 0

Considering the answers of the participants to the question “Which type of dictionaries do you use while learning Turkish?” (**Table 4**), it can be concluded that Turkish learn-

ers use “printed” and “online” dictionaries equally and that they also use electronic dictionaries in the process of learning Turkish.

**Table 4.** Dictionary Type Preferences.

What Type of Dictionary Do You Use While Learning Turkish?		
Printed 28	Online 39	Electronic (offline) 13

When the participants’ answers to the question “Which language dictionaries do you prefer while learning Turkish?” are evaluated, it is seen that they mostly use Turkish-Chinese dictionaries, followed by Turkish-English dictionary-

ies (**Table 5**). It is observed that the number of students who use Turkish-Turkish dictionaries is lower than those who use other dictionaries.

The majority of the participants use the Turkish-

Chinese dictionary (Zhou Zheng Qing) as a printed dictionary (Table 6). In this sense, it can be said that Zhou Zheng Qing's Turkish-Chinese dictionary is frequently and easily used due to its electronic format.

**Table 5.** Dictionary Language Preferences.

Which Type of Dictionary Do You Prefer While Learning Turkish?		
Turkish-Chinese (Zhou Zheng Qing) 41	Turkish-English 24	Turkish-Turkish 8

**Table 6.** Turkish Printed Dictionary Preference.

Which Printed Turkish Dictionary Do You Use Most Frequently?		
Turkish-Chinese (Zhou Zheng Qing) 46	Turkish-Chinese Dictionary (Yunshang) 1	Oxford Turkish Dictionary 1

Considering the use of online dictionaries, it was observed that Tureng, Yandex, Google Translate, TDK, and Glosbe Dictionary were used respectively when the distribution of the answers to the question “Which Turkish online dictionary do you use most frequently?” was analyzed (Table 7).

**Table 7.** Turkish Online Dictionary Preference.

Which Online Turkish Dictionary Do You Use Most Frequently?							
Tureng Dictionary 25	Yandex Translate 10	Google Translate 9	Glosbe Dictionary 1	TDK Dictionary 11	Oxford Turkish Dictionary 1	DeepL 5	Real-Life Based School Dictionary 1

Considering the students' answers to the question “Which Turkish electronic dictionary do you use most frequently?” (Table 8), it is seen that they use the Turkish-Chinese Dictionary<sup>[28]</sup> as an electronic resource.

**Table 8.** Turkish Electronic Dictionary Preference.

Which Turkish Electronic Dictionary Do You Use Most Frequently?			
Turkish-Chinese Dictionary (Zhou Zheng Qing) 25 10	Sesli Sözlük 9 1	Arkadaş (iOS) 11 1	I don't use electronic dictionaries 5 1

In light of these data, it is observed that students mostly prefer electronic or online dictionaries. It can be concluded that, in accordance with the spirit of the time, students' dictionary usage tendencies are realized in electronic or online environments. The results of another study conducted with thirty-two students learning Turkish as a foreign language at Çukurova University also reveal that the second most preferred dictionary type is electronic or online dictionaries<sup>[30]</sup>. In addition, another study conducted on one hundred foreign students learning Turkish at Gazi University shows that the majority of students prefer to use electronic dictionaries<sup>[11]</sup>. In this framework, it is an important criterion that electronic or online dictionaries should be functional and accessible.

## 4.2. Findings and Interpretations Related to the Second Research Question

Another field of study that is considered as important as the methods of creating dictionaries is dictionary criticism. Dictionary criticism is different from criticizing different types of books. It is stated that not all dictionaries are prepared to be read one by one and that it is not necessary to read all of them during the examination phase due to the fact that they contain a large number of texts<sup>[1]</sup>.

In dictionary analysis, techniques such as keeping a checklist of features that are thought to be investigated can be used<sup>[1]</sup>.



When we look at the first 20 items of the Turkish-Chinese dictionary for the findings that can answer the second research question of this study [Aa, A, a, aa(h), AB, aba(1), aba(2), abacı, abacılık, Abadan, abadî, ab'a düşmek, abajur, abajurcu, abaküs, abalı, abandone, abandırmak, abanmak, abanoz...], it can be easily said that many of these items support the judgment in question.

When the existing dictionaries are examined, it can be said that these dictionaries are generally encyclopedic dictionaries, and when the selection of the headings and their structuring within the article are evaluated, it is the impression that these dictionaries were created by translation and rewriting methods.

When we look at the selection of items, we observe that many of the items do not correspond to the vocabulary of current Turkish and that they are old, slang, and technical words.

On the other hand, it is observed that the meaning and witnesses are not authentic in the in-item constructions. In modern lexicography, it is a general approach to rank the meaning of an article according to the frequency of use<sup>[29]</sup>. However, in existing dictionaries, this order starts from the

general meaning and moves towards the special meaning.

Again, in Turkish language teaching, presenting word forms and syntactic structures to users can be considered as an approach that facilitates teaching. Two types of collocational dictionaries can be prepared: bilingual for beginners learning Turkish as a foreign language and monolingual for advanced learners<sup>[9]</sup>. The corpus-based collocational dictionary analyzed was prepared for A2-C1 levels.

When the headword "abanmak", which was created based on corpus data, is examined, it is seen that the meaning order is based on the frequency of use, and the witnesses are selected from authentic sources (Figures 1 and 2). In addition, it is possible to systematically access information on which inflections it has and with which words it is used synonymously, again depending on frequency, through word forms.

Of course, general-purpose and encyclopedic dictionaries are among the materials that can be used in language teaching. However, it is thought that dictionaries created with modern methods will be more functional for language teaching. In this framework, it is thought that dictionaries for language teaching can be put forward in a more functional quality with corpus linguistics methods.

**abanmak ~ e 1)** Bır yere veya bır kımseye yaslanmak, dayanmak. Masalardan birinin üstüne abanmış karışıklık iki kiři uyuyordu. **2)** Eğilerek bır şeyin, bır kımşenin üzerine kapanmak. Kız locanın kenarına abanmış, sözüm ona atlara bakıyordu. **3)** argo Bır şeyin veya bır kımşenin üzerine çökmek, çullanmak. Olanca gücüyle abanmıştı çocuğun üstüne. **4)** argo Birine yük olarak onun sırtından geçinmeye çalışmak. Çocukları, dört yandan, malına mülküne abandı!

**Söz biçimler:** abanmış | abandı | abanıyor | aban | abanır | abanıyordu | abanmıştı | abandım | abanıyordum | abanıyorlardı | abanma | abandılar | abanmaktadır | abanmayın | abanmışlar | abansa | abanmışlardı | abanmaz | abanıyordum | abanamadık | abanacaktı | abandınız | abanırdı | abanıyorlar | abanırsa | abanıyoruz

**Eş dizimler:** boylu boyunca | gayriihtiyari | gene | üzerine | üstüne

#### abanmak -e (verb)

1. **to lean on or against something or someone for support.**  
*Two people were sleeping across from each other, leaning on the table.*
2. **to bend over something or someone; to collapse onto.**  
*She had leaned on the edge of the lodge, her gaze fixed on the horses.*
3. **(argot) to collapse onto or burden someone or something physically.**  
*He had leaned with all his strength on top of the child.*
4. **(argot) to live off someone else as a burden; to exploit or freeloader.**  
*The children, from all sides, were living off his property.*

**Word Forms:** abanmış | abandı | abanıyor | aban | abanır | abanıyordu | abanmıştı | abandım | abanıyordum | abanıyorlardı | abanmama | abandılar | abanmaktadır | abanmayın | abanmışlar | abana | abanmışlardı | abanmaz | abanıyordum | abanamadık | abanacaktı | abandınız | abanırdı | abanıyorlar | abanırsa | abanıyoruz

(These are various conjugated forms of the Turkish verb "abanmak", meaning "to lean on", "to press on", or "to push against" depending on context.)

**Collocations:** all along | involuntarily | again | onto | upon

Figure 1. Example of a Headword in a Corpus-Based Dictionary<sup>[29]</sup>.

<p><b>abanmak (-e)</b> ① 扑向, 跌向, 俯身于: annesinin kucağına ~ 扑入母亲的怀抱 ayaklara (or yerlere) ~ 跌倒, 摔倒 üstüme ~ 倒在我身上 Üzeri kâğıtlarla örtülü bir masaya abanmış. 他俯身在堆满稿纸的桌子上。② 依, 扶, 傍, 撑, 靠: yatağa abanarak kalkmak 扶着床站起来 Abanarak ve korseli göğsünü âdeta kavalyesinin göğsünde ezerek dansediyordu. 她倾着身子跳着舞, 戴着文胸的胸脯几乎要压着舞伴的胸脯上。Yolcu küpeşteye abanmış, denize bakıyor. 这位乘客倚着船舷, 眺望大海。③ 【俚】依靠, 依赖, 靠某人赡养</p> <p><b>abanmak -e (verb)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>to lean on, to collapse onto, to press oneself against</b> He leaned into his mother's lap. He collapsed onto me. He had leaned onto a desk covered with papers.</li> <li>2. <b>to support oneself, to push against, to rise by leaning</b> He stood up by leaning on the bed. She was dancing, pressing her corseted chest almost against her partner's chest. The passenger was leaning on the railing, looking at the sea.</li> <li>3. <b>[figurative] to rely on, to depend on someone or something</b></li> </ol>
--

Figure 2. Example of a Headword in a Dictionary Created with the Traditional Method.<sup>[28]</sup>

While the Zhou Zheng Qing dictionary serves primarily as a translation tool aimed at basic meaning equivalence (Table 9), its use is limited in terms of contextual usage, production, and syntactic guidance. It functions well for beginner-level users focused on decoding.

In contrast, Özkan's<sup>[29]</sup> corpus-based verb dictionary

is designed to support language production and deeper semantic understanding (Table 9). It includes frequent verb usages, collocational patterns, example sentences from real corpora, and semantic decomposition. Thus, it aligns more closely with the user-oriented and production-based dictionary model promoted by Atkins and Rundell<sup>[14]</sup>.

Table 9. Dictionary Comparison Table with Checklist (Based on Atkins and Rundell, 2008).

Criterion	Zhou Zheng Qing Turkish-Chinese Dictionary	Özkan (2019) Corpus-Based Turkish Verb Dictionary
1. Purpose	Basic translation and meaning matching	Teaching Turkish verbs, production support, collocational learning
2. Target User	Chinese learners of Turkish	Foreigners learning Turkish (especially intermediate/advanced level)
3. Coverage	General vocabulary and basic meanings	Verbs in Turkish with frequency, semantic components, collocations
4. Macrostructure	Turkish headwords with Chinese equivalents	Verb-focused; sorted alphabetically or by frequency
5. Microstructure	Headword + simple definition or equivalent	Verb senses, corpus-based example sentences, syntactic patterns
6. Directionality	Unidirectional (Turkish → Chinese)	Monolingual (Turkish only, with explanations in Turkish)
7. Examples / Explanation	Limited number of examples	Rich, context-based examples drawn from corpus
8. Access / Format	Printed only	Printed (academic circulation); no online version

## 5. Discussion

This study investigated the dictionary usage preferences of Chinese students learning Turkish as a foreign language and evaluated the content adequacy of traditional and corpus-based dictionaries in the context of Turkish language teaching. The findings of the study offer insights into both learner behaviors and lexicographic materials currently in use.

The results of the questionnaire indicate that the majority of students frequently use dictionaries while learning Turkish. The preference for online and electronic dictionary

ies reflects the digital literacy and habits of contemporary learners. Consistent with previous research<sup>[11,30]</sup>, students increasingly rely on online tools such as Tureng, Google Translate, and Yandex for quick access to meanings and translations. However, this trend also raises questions about the accuracy and pedagogical value of such platforms.

The dominant preference for the Zhou Zheng Qing Turkish-Chinese dictionary—both in printed and electronic forms—highlights the strong demand for L1-based bilingual resources among Chinese learners. While this dictionary offers basic translation functions, the comparative evaluation showed that it lacks contextual examples, syntactic guidance,

and corpus-based usage information—features essential for effective language learning and production.

On the other hand, Özkan's<sup>[29]</sup> corpus-based Turkish verb dictionary provides a richer microstructure, including authentic example sentences, collocations, and frequency-based sense ordering. This aligns with modern lexicographic principles that emphasize user-centered design, production-oriented content, and data-driven development. According to Atkins and Rundell<sup>[14]</sup>, such features are critical for learner dictionaries, especially when the goal is not only comprehension (decoding) but also appropriate use in context (encoding).

The comparative analysis demonstrates that corpus-based dictionaries, though less commonly used by learners in the current study, offer greater pedagogical value and better support vocabulary acquisition and syntactic competence. These dictionaries are also more in line with current trends in applied linguistics, which prioritize authentic input and context-rich examples to facilitate second language acquisition.

Given the ongoing shift in lexicographic practice from traditional to digital and corpus-informed models, it is essential to reconsider the design and availability of learner dictionaries in Turkish as a foreign language education. Teachers and curriculum developers should guide students in selecting dictionaries that go beyond translation and contribute to deeper language competence.

Chinese lexicography was initially based on the systematization of notes for the annotation of classical texts, and over time, it has diversified in form and function, playing an important role in both modern education and foreign language teaching. The fact that Chinese learners still prefer to use dictionaries with traditional structures is an indication that this historical heritage has been carried forward to the present day.

Future research may explore how dictionary training or orientation sessions can shift learners' preferences from basic bilingual tools toward more pedagogically beneficial corpus-based dictionaries. Additionally, investigating the integration of such dictionaries into classroom practice or language learning platforms may further enhance their impact.

From the viewpoint of language learning science, frequent dictionary use should be interpreted as a metacognitive

strategy that enhances both learner autonomy and vocabulary acquisition. According to Nation<sup>[31]</sup>, dictionary consultation is categorized under direct vocabulary learning strategies and contributes to deductive and inductive knowledge of word use, facilitating both receptive and productive vocabulary development. Moreover, dictionaries function as external cognitive tools that learners intentionally employ for planning, monitoring, and evaluating their own learning processes—core aspects of self-regulated learning, as outlined in Pintrich's model<sup>[32]</sup>. Learner autonomy itself, defined by Holec<sup>[33]</sup> as “the ability to take charge of one's own learning,” is contingent on such strategic engagement. Consequently, the prevalent use of dictionaries observed in this study not only reflects reactive vocabulary lookup but also proactive self-regulatory activity aligned with contemporary second language acquisition paradigms. Therefore, promoting pedagogically designed, corpus-based dictionaries in teaching practices is not merely a lexicographic enhancement, but a strategic pedagogical choice rooted in language learning science and autonomy development.

## 6. Conclusions

The study, which aims to reveal the tendency of native Chinese learners of Turkish as a foreign language to use dictionaries and the content adequacy of the existing and most frequently used dictionaries in this field for language teaching, was carried out through the findings of two research questions.

As a result of the questionnaire applied in the first stage of the research, it was found that students whose mother tongue is Chinese and who learn Turkish as a foreign language:

- They frequently use dictionaries in the process of learning Turkish.
- They prefer printed and online dictionaries as reference sources simultaneously.
- They use Turkish-Chinese dictionaries more often than others.
- They also prefer the electronic format of Zhou Zheng Qing's Turkish-Chinese dictionary, which is a printed dictionary, more than other electronic dictionaries.
- As online resources, they tend to use Tureng, Yandex, Google Translate, TDK, and Glosbe Dictionary.

Based on the results of the study, it is observed that students mostly prefer electronic or online dictionaries. It can be concluded that, in accordance with the spirit of the time, students' dictionary usage practices are realized in electronic or online environments. In this framework, it is an important criterion that electronic or online dictionaries are functional and accessible. Considering the results of similar studies<sup>[11,30]</sup> that support the results of this study, it is thought that providing online or electronic dictionaries to learners of Turkish as a foreign/second language will make significant contributions to teaching Turkish as a foreign/second language.

In the second stage, while examining the contents of the dictionaries, the differences arising from traditional methods and modern methods were emphasized in the process of creating basic structural features such as headword, word type, pronunciation, meaning/meanings, witnesses, and syntax features. The differences between the content competencies of the most widely used printed dictionary in the field of Turkish language teaching in China<sup>[28]</sup> and a corpus-based learner dictionary created with modern methods<sup>[29]</sup> were tried to be revealed in general.

Looking at the content of the traditional dictionary, which is widely used in the field of Turkish language teaching in China, it is seen that this dictionary is prepared with traditional methods and is encyclopedic.

It can be stated that the restructuring of the existing dictionaries with a modern lexicography approach, in a way that meets the learning needs and by using corpora, will make significant contributions to the field.

## Funding

This work received no external funding.

## Institutional Review Board Statement

The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki and approved by the Institutional Review Board (or Ethics Committee) of FALC, Guangdong University of Foreign Studies (2 January 2025).

## Informed Consent Statement

Written informed consent was not obtained separately, as participation in the study was entirely voluntary, and all respondents completed the questionnaires of their own free will.

## Data Availability Statement

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request. Due to confidentiality agreements, the dataset is not publicly available.

## Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest. The funders had no role in the design of the study; in the collection, analyses, or interpretation of data; in the writing of the manuscript; or in the decision to publish the results.

## References

- [1] Jackson, H., 2016. Lexicography: an introduction. In: Gürlek, M., Patat, E. (eds.). Kesit Publishing: Istanbul, Türkiye. (in Turkish)
- [2] Svensén, B., 1993. Practical Lexicography: Principles and Methods of Dictionary-Making. In: Sykes, J., Schofield, K. (eds.). Oxford University Press: Oxford, UK.
- [3] Kocaman, A., 1998. Linguistics, Dictionary and Lexicography. *Kebikeç*. 6, 111–113. (in Turkish)
- [4] Tarp, S., 2009. Reflections on lexicographic user research. *Lexikos*. 19, 275–296. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5788/19-0-440>
- [5] Wilkins, D.A., 1972. *Linguistics in Language Teaching*. Edward Arnold: London, UK.
- [6] Golynskaia, A., 2017. A model of the monolingual learner's dictionary in teaching Turkish as a foreign language: model, methods and principles [Master's thesis]. Istanbul University Social Sciences Institute: Istanbul, Türkiye. (in Turkish)
- [7] Üseini, S., 2003. The Use of Dictionaries as a Learning Strategy by Students of English at the University of Tetova [Master's thesis]. Cyril and Methodius University: Skopje, Macedonia.

- [8] Nagy, W.E., Herman, P.A., 1987. Breadth and depth of vocabulary knowledge: Implications for acquisition and instruction. In: McKeown, M.G., Curtis, M.E. (eds.). *The Nature of Vocabulary Acquisition*. Lawrence Erlbaum: New York, USA; London, UK. pp. 19–35.
- [9] Çetinkaya, B., 2010. Collocational dictionaries and a collocational dictionary of Turkish. *Proceedings of the International Symposium on Dictionary Writing and Research in Türkiye and the World*. Kubbealtı Academy Culture and Arts Foundation: Istanbul, Türkiye. pp. 406–415. (in Turkish)
- [10] Durmuş, M., Demirel-Aydemir, G.D., 2019. Using authentic materials and teaching vocabulary in foreign language teaching. In: Okur, A., Göçen, G. (eds.). *Teaching Turkish as a foreign language/as a second language/for people of Turkish descent living abroad*. Nobel Academic Publishing: Ankara, Türkiye. pp. 309–345. (in Turkish)
- [11] Özbay, M., Melanhoğlu, D., 2013. An Investigation into Skills of Foreigner Turkish Learners' Dictionary Use. *Journal of Mother Tongue Education*. 1(1), 13–23. (in Turkish)
- [12] Halat, S., Firat, H., 2021. Student Opinions about the Use of Dictionary in Teaching Turkish as a Foreign Language. *Journal of Bayburt Education Faculty*. 16, 148–165. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.35675/befdergi.849926> (in Turkish)
- [13] Bekdaş, M., 2017. Sözlük türlerinin tasnifi. *Route Educational and Social Science Journal*. 4(4), 52–59. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17121/ressjournal.712> (in Turkish)
- [14] Atkins, B.T., Rundell, M., 2008. *The Oxford Guide to Practical Lexicography*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, UK.
- [15] Hartmann, R.R.K., 2001. *Teaching and Researching Lexicography*. Routledge: London, UK; New York, NY, USA.
- [16] Nakamoto, K., 1994. Establishing criteria for dictionary criticism: A checklist for reviewers of monolingual English learners' dictionaries [Master's thesis]. University of Exeter: Exeter, UK.
- [17] Cremer, T.B.I., 1991. Chinese lexicography. In: Hausmann, F.J. (ed.). *Dictionaries*. Walter de Gruyter: Berlin, Germany. pp.2595–2611.
- [18] Hausmann, F.J., 1991. Dictionaries and the standardization of languages. In: Reichmann, O., Wiegand, H.E., Zgusta, L. (eds.). *Dictionaries: An International Encyclopedia of Lexicography*. Walter de Gruyter: Berlin, Germany. pp.1–18.
- [19] Norman, J., 1988. *Chinese*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, UK.
- [20] Shiqi, X., 1982. Chinese lexicography past and present. *Dictionaries: Journal of the Dictionary Society of North America*. 4, 151–169.
- [21] Cremer, T.B.I., 1989. Shuo wen Jie zi and textual criticism in China. *International Journal of Lexicography*. 2(3), 176–187.
- [22] Liu, J.S., 2015. Developments in Chinese-English bilingual dictionary design: From tradition to innovation. *International Journal of Lexicography*. 28(3), 271–290. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1093/ijl/ecv011>
- [23] Özkan, B., 2013. Corpus Based Dictionary of Turkey Turkish's Lexicon: Method and Application. *bilig. Journal of Social Sciences of the Turkic World*. 66(3), 149–178. (in Turkish)
- [24] Lew, R., 2014. User-generated content (UGC) in electronic dictionaries. *OPAL—Online publizierte Arbeiten zur Linguistik*. 4, 8–26. (in German)
- [25] Granger, S., Paquot, M., 2012. *Electronic lexicography*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, UK. pp.257–281.
- [26] Rundell, M., Kilgariff, A., 2011. *Automating the creation of dictionaries: where will it all end?* John Benjamins: Amsterdam, Netherlands.
- [27] Erkuş, A., 2013. *Davranış bilimleri için bilimsel araştırma süreci*, 4th ed. Seçkin Publishing: Ankara, Türkiye. (in Turkish)
- [28] Zhou, Z.Q., 2008. *Turkish-Chinese Dictionary*. Commercial Press: Beijing, China. (in Turkish)
- [29] Özkan, B., 2019. *Turkish for Foreigners-1-Verbs in Turkey Turkish–frequency/vocabularies components/meaning/collocations—a corpus-based application*. Efe Academy Publishing: Istanbul, Türkiye. (in Turkish)
- [30] Tüm, G., 2017. Dictionary use of Turkish learners as a foreign language: A case study. *International Online Journal of Education and Teaching*. 4(4), 254–266. (in Turkish)
- [31] Nation, I.S.P., 2001. *Learning vocabulary in another language*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, UK.
- [32] Pintrich, P.R., 2004. A conceptual framework for assessing motivation and self-regulated learning in college students. *Educational Psychology Review*. 16(4), 385–407. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10648-004-0006-x>
- [33] Holec, H., 1981. *Autonomy and Foreign Language Learning*. Pergamon Press: Oxford, UK.