Beliefs and Preferences of EFL Iraqi Students towards English Dictionaries

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Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to explore the Iraqi 5th EFL students' beliefs and preferences towards the use and types of English dictionaries. The participants were twenty-six Iraqi EFL 5th grade (science stream) secondary school students in the Iraqi secondary school in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The data was gathered by a questionnaire comprising 26- items about learners' beliefs and preferences towards the use and types of the dictionaries. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics; mean and standard deviation were shown statistically. Additionally, these descriptive statistics were converted into percentages. The findings showed students' positive beliefs towards English dictionaries as facilitator tools help them in improving their English and enhancing their pronunciation skills. These students showed their preferable and positive beliefs to electronic and online dictionaries as compared with paper dictionaries. Additionally, these students showed their positive beliefs to monolingual dictionaries as compared with bilingual ones. These findings confirm the importance of utilizing English dictionaries to enhance learning of English, and it is therefore recommended that more attention be directed to training students in effective electronic and online monolingual dictionaries in order to enhance their learning process and to improve their pronunciation and other dictionary skills.

Keywords: dictionary use and types, beliefs and preferences, Iraqi secondary school students, English as a foreign language (EFL).

I.   INTRODUCTION

Dictionaries are seen essential resources of learning languages. They consider as one of the important tools that used widely to support learners in their language learning. Baxter (1980) mentioned that dictionary is the first thing that learners need to buy before anything else. Similarly, but in more obligation form, Allen (1993:86) mentioned that "There should be at least one copy of a learner's dictionary in every English classroom, and students should be encouraged to use it".

For this importance, dictionary use is no longer seen as neglected source of learning languages and enriching vocabulary knowledge. Using dictionaries has received an important interest in the context of foreign language learning and instruction (Lewis 2008; El-Sayed 2013; Huang 2003; Min 2013; Nation 2001). According to Lewis (2008:47), "There have been great developments in lexicography over the last few years, and modern dictionaries have many new features which can form an important resource for awareness-raising activities". Min (2013) mentioned that dictionary is one of the most essential resources for language learners. Similarly, Nation (2001:467) stated that "dictionary use is a kind of language focused learning - the deliberate explicit study of words". Tono (2001) adds that the role of dictionary use can cover three areas: vocabulary learning, decoding (reading comprehension) and, encoding (writing). Most importantly, dictionary can play essential role in expanding learners' word knowledge through providing different types of information about vocabulary such as meaning, synonyms, antonyms, pronunciation, spelling, part of speech, collocation, etc. This interest of dictionary is attributed to two reasons: (1) the great interest in the nature of dictionaries and vocabulary acquisition, and (2) the urgent need of the world development involves introducing modern dictionaries based on the most recent ideas and methods (El-Sayed 2013). Clearly, dictionary use is seen as the best way to reap the

numerous benefits regarding acquiring language and vocabulary learning. Therefore, it seems necessary to shed light on the learners' preferences and beliefs towards using dictionaries and their role can play in language learning and vocabulary enrichment.

Learners' preferences and beliefs towards the use of dictionaries as a specific vocabulary learning strategy considered one of the essential components in language learning. Based on the previous research, beliefs towards dictionary use are considered as one of the most neglected issues among EFL learners, especially in Iraqi context. Nessi (1999) reported that most informants have positive attitudes and beliefs regarding the importance of dictionaries. He emphasized the importance of good dictionary skills and considers them essential for any learner. However, dictionary training skills seem to be neglected among students. Many informants believed that their students had not received much instruction on dictionary use in their secondary school level before joining the tertiary level. One of the informants stated that 'I am always surprised how little training in this students have had at A level', '97% of students have no skills', and 'students don't in general ever use monolingual dictionaries. They use bilingual ones badly'.

However, there are some studies has been investigated the foreign language learners' preferences and beliefs towards the use of dictionaries and their effect on their learning of language (e.g., reading, writing, testing and translating) (Huang 2003; Nesi 1999; Al-salami & Hattab 2008; Martinez 2008). Martinez (2008) carried a study to 60 Pre-Basic English students (M=23; F=37) in the University of Puerto Rico Mayagüez (UPRM) in Spain. The students' ages were from 17-19 years old. These students were asked to express their attitudes towards using the bilingual and monolingual dictionary for the English class. The results revealed that more than 80% of these students reported they like using the bilingual dictionary and they found it important and a very helpful tool in learning. On the contrary, 20% of them reported they do not like looking up words in the bilingual dictionary, 13% do not like using the bilingual dictionary, and 13% do not use their bilingual dictionary. Regarding monolingual dictionaries, the results showed less positive attitudes than bilingual dictionaries, 58% of these students reported they found that monolingual dictionaries very helpful tools, 60% think that monolingual dictionaries are important, and 37% like using the monolingual dictionaries.

In other study conducted by Huang (2003) aiming at investigating 414 undergraduate and graduate English majors Taiwanese students' beliefs about English dictionaries in Taiwan University of Technology. The results revealed that students believed that using dictionaries was necessary to enrich English learning. 93% of the subjects agreed or strongly agreed that it was important to use dictionaries to help them translate while reading and writing English. In addition, 90% of the subjects believe that it was important to obtain as much information encoded in dictionaries as possible, 89% disagreed or strongly disagreed that it was unnecessary to use dictionaries to facilitate English learning, and 84% of them reported that their teachers believe that using dictionaries are important in facilitating English learning. Moreover, 65% of the subjects agreed or strongly agreed with the importance of English-Chinese dictionary to be helpful in helping them read English more effectively. Furthermore, 90 % of the subjects disagreed or strongly disagreed that it was unnecessary to read example sentences when using dictionaries. Regarding the type of dictionaries used, 86% of the subjects believe that monolingual dictionaries are helpful to understand the meaning of word better. On the contrary, 73% of the subjects disagreed or strongly disagreed that monolingual dictionaries did not help them think and express themselves in English. These subjects showed positive attitudes towards using dictionaries.

Al-salami & Hattab (2008) showed similar results to Huang (2003) in some aspects in his study to 300 Iraqi EFL undergraduate students in university of Kufa, Iraq. The results revealed that Iraqi students used dictionaries mainly while reading followed by writing and the written assignments. In addition, the subjects used dictionaries most commonly in translating texts from English to Arabic or vice versa. On the contrary, Al-salami & Hattab showed inconsistent results to Huang when the results revealed that bilingual dictionaries are widely preferred more than monolingual ones by Iraqi students. Moreover, only 13%, 24%, and 14% of the subjects at College of Education, College of Arts, and College of Engineering respectively were advised by their teachers on which dictionary is better to use. This finding is consistent with a study conducted by Sabah et al. (2014) aims to identify the kinds of dictionary skills of Iraqi EFL secondary school learners. The study revealed that most of the students showed their preference to electronic bilingual dictionaries to paper dictionaries.

In recent study, Chan (2011) conducted a study in Hong Kong to investigate 169 Cantonese ESL learners' preference for bilingualised dictionaries or monolingual dictionaries. The results showed that students have positive perceptions of the usefulness of both types of dictionaries; monolingual and bilingual dictionaries. Particularly, the results revealed that

students think that example sentences are extremely useful when using both types of these dictionaries. 76% of the respondents thought that example sentences while using monolingual dictionaries were very useful, whereas 67% of them thought that example sentences were very useful while using bilingual dictionaries. Additionally, the results showed that the respondents who use monolingual dictionary, reading and writing were the activities for which the respondents consulted their dictionaries most frequently: 74% and 64% of the participants reported that they used dictionaries for these two activities very or rather frequently.

It can be concluded that the results showed the percent for the positive expressions were slightly higher for the bilingual dictionary than for the monolingual dictionary. However, the importance of monolingual dictionaries was asserted in some studies such as Huang (2003), and Chan's (2011) studies. The students' preference to bilingual dictionaries may indicate that these students are lacking the enough depth of vocabulary knowledge that helps them to use and understand the monolingual dictionaries. In contrast with Taiwanese students, as shown by Huang (2003),   monolingual dictionaries were seen to be ignored by most of Iraqi students since they think that their teachers are not advised and guided them to use monolingual dictionaries. Additionally, they may do not have the sufficient vocabularies that may enable them to use monolingual dictionaries because they lack of training in these dictionaries.

Despite the importance of studying dictionary beliefs in foreign language learning, we still have very limit understanding of learners' dictionary preferences and beliefs, and a more comprehensive system of dictionary beliefs is still not in sight. Based on previous research, studying dictionary beliefs is still a very weak focused area in Iraqi context in other EFL environments. Therefore, the little attention which had been paid to this issue has created a wide gap in learning and understanding the importance of dictionaries in learning languages. Iraqi students were observed neglecting the important role dictionary plays in learning English. The students' preferences and beliefs towards dictionary use is seen one of the important neglected issues among these students and even teachers. Huang (2003) confirms that beliefs about or attitudes towards dictionaries considered as one of most neglected important learner factor that related dictionary use. Ignoring the importance of this issue in language learning has motivated the researcher to explore the students' preferences and beliefs towards the use of dictionaries. Hence, knowing learners' beliefs about dictionaries and their effect on language learning is one of the important issues that help to know about the importance of dictionary strategy in learning of language skills. Huang (2003) affirmed that understanding the beliefs of learners about dictionaries help in getting deeper and more extensive understanding of foreign language learners' reading and writing beliefs since dictionaries are essential element in these skills. Therefore, investigating the preference and beliefs of students towards dictionaries is expected to increase students' awareness to develop their language skills and make them engaged effectively with readings, writing, etc. Since, lack of studies on Iraqi students' preferences and beliefs towards dictionary use, and types of dictionaries this study set out to investigate this important issue among Iraqi students at preparatory level of study.

II.   AIM OF THE STUDY

The study intents to explore the 5th Iraqi EFL beliefs and preferences towards learning English dictionaries. Definitely, it explores these students' preferences and beliefs towards the important and use of English dictionaries.

III.   RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study set out to seek answers to the following research questions:

1: What are the 5th EFL Iraqi students' preferences and beliefs towards the use of English dictionaries?
2: What are the most common preferences and beliefs of these students towards the use of English dictionaries?

IV.   THE STUDY

Participants:

The sample of the study was 26 EFL 5th scientific grade students who are pursuing their secondary school study during the academic year 2013-2014 at Iraqi secondary school in Kula Lumpur, Malaysia. Their ages are ranging from 16 to 18. These students use "English for Iraq" (2012) written by Olivia Johnston and Caroline de Messieres as an English

textbook. This English textbook is designed to cover all 5th preparatory grades in all Iraqi schools, even those schools outside of Iraq.

Quantitative method research is employed in this research through applying a questionnaire instrument. The questionnaire (Questionnaire on Beliefs about English Dictionaries (QBED)) was administered in order to collect information about Iraqi students' preferences and beliefs towards English dictionaries.

It is necessary to approach the dictionary use attitudes. Students' attitudes towards dictionary use are expected to be positive beliefs. Therefore, BAEDQ will be used to measure the students' dictionary beliefs in overall. BAEDQ was adapted from Huang (2003) to be used in this research. Modifications for some items were completed by the researcher to be suitable for the sample population of the current study to measure their preferences and beliefs on English dictionaries. BAEDQ is used by Huang (2003) to assess the learners' beliefs about using English dictionaries in four fields: (1) the area of expectations and motivations for dictionary use, (2) the area of perceiving value of English dictionary use in English learning, (3) the area of perceiving value of unconventional vs. conventional English dictionaries, (4) relative strengths of different types of English dictionaries. Therefore, BAEDQ are used in this research with the aim of collecting information about Iraqi students' beliefs regarding dictionaries including these four mentioned above fields.

The questionnaire in its final form consists of 26 item-lists, divided into three parts, A (13 items), B (8 items), and C (5 items). Each item uses a modified 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 strongly disagree (SD) to 4 strongly agree (SA). The questionnaire was considered suitable for this study as it was used in Taiwan, where the EFL educational environment seems to be very similar to the Iraqi teaching and learning environment. Examples to each part can be shown as follows:

Part A: beliefs about English dictionaries in general:

1. It is more difficult to use English dictionaries than Arabic dictionaries.

2. I can use dictionaries better if my English teacher teaches me lookup skills or dictionary strategies.

Part B: beliefs about specific types of English dictionaries:

3. Electronic dictionaries with built-in vocal function help to improve English pronunciation.

4. English-English dictionaries are suitable only for people of high English proficiency.

Part C: beliefs about relative strengths of different types of English dictionaries:

5. English-Arabic dictionaries help to enhance English ability more than English-English dictionaries.

6. I like to use electronic dictionaries more than paper dictionaries.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive statistics including of the responses to the question items concerning the questionnaire beliefs about English dictionaries were computed using SPSS software version 20 where means and standard deviations were shown in order to address the first two research questions of the study.

Research Questions:

The findings are discussed in response to these research questions.

1: What are the 5th EFL Iraqi students' preferences and attitudes towards the use of English dictionaries?
2: What are the most common preferences and attitudes of these students towards the use of English dictionaries?

The means and standard deviations of the subjects' responses to the individual items were computed and presented in Table 1.1 below. The results showed that all the 26-item lists of beliefs about English dictionaries reported in the BAEDQ used by students at different levels. The results show that among the 26 question items, 10 items had a mean 3.0., and above (38%), and 16 items had a mean lower than 3.0., (62%). Among these 16 items, 8 items (50%) had a mean lower than 2.5. Table 4.1 shows the mean and standard deviation for each individual item used by the subjects.

Table I: Descriptive statistics, means and standard deviations for the BAEDQ items

No.	Item	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
A.	*GENERAL BELIEFS ABOUT USING ENGLISH DICTIONARIES*			
1.	When I consult dictionaries, I prefer to know only about the meaning of an English word.	26	2.85	.881
2.	It is more difficult to use English dictionaries than Arabic dictionaries	26	2.35	.892
3.	It is important to use dictionaries to help me translate while reading and writing English.	26	3.15	.967
4.	Our English teachers believe that it is very important to use dictionaries to facilitate English learning.	26	3.19	.749
5.	A good dictionary user is also a good English learner.	26	3.00	.566
6.	It is not necessary to use English dictionaries to facilitate learning.	26	2.08	.891
7.	Dictionaries help learners in reading more than in writing English.	26	2.65	.797
8.	I can use dictionaries better if my English teacher teaches me lookup skills or dictionary strategies.	26	2.96	.916
9.	How often people use dictionaries is associated with their English proficiency.	26	2.38	.804
10.	People good at English are more skilled at using dictionaries than people not good at English.	26	2.62	.983
11.	It is not necessary to read example sentences when using dictionaries.	26	2.23	.863
12.	People should use suitable dictionaries intended for their English proficiency levels.	26	3.23	.815
13.	People with a strong motivation to learn English also have a strong motivation to use dictionaries.	26	2.81	.981
B.	*BELIEFS ABOUT SPECIFIC TYPES OF ENGLISH DICTIONARIES*			
14.	Electronic dictionaries with built-in vocal function help to improve English pronunciation.	26	3.50	.860
15.	The English translations supplied in Arabic-English dictionary help me write in English better.	26	2.73	.604
16.	English-English dictionaries help me to understand an English word's meanings better.	26	3.00	.938
17.	English-English dictionaries don't help me think and express myself in English.	26	2.12	.816
18.	English-English dictionaries are suitable only for people of high English proficiency.	26	2.96	.871
19.	The most important use of electronic dictionaries is to help me translate from English to Arabic.	26	3.00	.894
20.	The Arabic translations supplied in an English-Arabic dictionary help me read English more effectively.	26	2.46	.811
21.	In addition to my own dictionary, I use specialized dictionaries in learning.	26	2.31	.838
C.	*BELIEFS ABOUT RELATIVE STRENGTHS OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF ENGLISH DICTIONARIES*			
22.	English-Arabic dictionaries help to enhance English ability more than English-English dictionaries.	26	2.35	.892
23.	Electronic dictionaries help to enhance English ability more than paper dictionaries.	26	3.27	.827
24.	Online dictionaries are more helpful than paper or electronic dictionaries in fostering English reading and writing.	26	3.15	.925
25.	I like to use English-Arabic dictionaries more than English-English dictionaries.	26	2.65	.936
26.	I like to use electronic dictionaries more than paper dictionaries.	26	3.35	.797

As shown in table 4.1 in terms of general beliefs about using English dictionaries (items 1-13), the results showed that the means of the beliefs that "People should use suitable dictionaries intended for their English proficiency levels" (item 12 M= 3.23), "Our English teachers believe that it is very important to use dictionaries to facilitate English learning" (item 4 M=3.19), and "It is important to use dictionaries to help me translate while reading and writing English (item 3 M=3.15)" were the highest preferable beliefs among Iraqi EFL secondary school learners.

About 77 % of these learners agreed or strongly agreed that "people should use suitable dictionaries intended for their English proficiency levels". This result indicates that dictionaries have to be used based on learners' level of proficiency. Nowadays, there is diversity in the types of dictionaries which are designed based on the learner's age and level. Therefore, learners can choose or guided to use the suitable type of dictionaries based on their level of proficiency or level of study.

The other highest mean showed that students reported positive beliefs of their English teachers towards the important role dictionaries play in learning. The mean of the belief that "Our English teachers believe that it is very important to use dictionaries to facilitate English learning" is reported among the highest means of beliefs; about 88% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that their English teachers believe that it is very important to use dictionaries to facilitate English learning. This belief seems to be surprising, since the researcher thinks that most of English teachers may have negative attitudes toward the use of dictionaries in class. The English teachers may consider dictionary use is a waste of time and they have to finish the syllabus in the course of time so as not to break the ministry rule and regulations. Additionally, regarding the status of dictionary use in the curricula, dictionary use does not seem to be treated in the Iraqi school curricula. The emphasis on teaching dictionary skills has mostly been ignored in Iraq curricula. Because syllabus is not focus on dictionary use, dictionaries seem to be lack the official status in Iraqi primary and secondary schools curriculum, therefore, a decision for dictionary instruction and training seem to be not easy decision.

Additionally, the students reported that "It is important to use dictionaries to help them translate while reading and writing English" as the highest third belief on using dictionaries while reading and writing (item 3 M=3.15), about 85% of these students agreed or strongly agreed that it is important to use dictionaries to help them translate while reading and writing English. This result was consistent with Huang (2003) who revealed that Taiwan students believed that using dictionaries was necessary to enrich English learning. 93% of the subjects agreed or strongly agreed that it was important to use dictionaries to help them translate while reading and writing English.This finding may confirm that most of students at secondary school level might use dictionaries for the purpose of lateral translation to overcome their difficulties in reading and writing. These students may lack the sufficient knowledge of vocabularies help them to comprehend their reading texts or write a well-connected meaningful compositions or essays. Therefore, they tend to use bilingual dictionaries while their reading and writing.

This result was supported by other item of the questionnaire when the result showed that the means of the beliefs that "It is not necessary to use English dictionaries to facilitate learning" (item 6 M= 2.08), was reported as one of the least preferable beliefs among Iraqi EFL learners. Most of the students think that dictionaries are important tools in learning, therefore, they did not show their preference to the belief "It is not necessary to use English dictionaries to facilitate learning". About 73% of them disagreed or strongly disagreed that it is not necessary to use English dictionaries to facilitate learning". They think that dictionary is essential tool in learning. This result was consistent with Huang (2003) who revealed that 89% of Taiwan students disagreed or strongly disagreed that it was unnecessary to use dictionaries to facilitate English learning. Additionally, this belief is supported by other researchers who show the importance of dictionary use in learning (Nation 2001; Waring 2001; Leany 2007). For example, Nation (2001) stated that "dictionary use is a kind of language focused learning - the deliberate explicit study of words". Leany (2007: I) stated that "there is a tremendous amount of information in a good learner's dictionary – sometimes an overwhelming amount. Helping students tap into that information efficiently is one of the best ways to help them become independent, lifelong language learners".

On the other hand, the results showed that the means of the beliefs that "It is not necessary to read example sentences when using dictionaries" (item 11 M= 2.23), and "It is more difficult to use English dictionaries than Arabic dictionaries" (item 2 M= 2.35) were the least preferable general beliefs about using English dictionaries among Iraqi EFL learners. Surprisingly, the students did not think that "It is not necessary to read example sentences when using dictionaries", about 65% of the participants disagreed or strongly disagreed that it is not necessary to read example sentences when using dictionaries. Despite the importance of sentence examples, this result indicates that students are not aware about the

importance of dictionary skills such as sentence examples. They might think that dictionary is a source used to find the word meaning with its equivalent in their native language rather than a source of learning vocabulary knowledge and learning language skills. This result may indicate that Iraqi students need for training in dictionary skills. This result was inconsistent with Huang (2003) and Chan (2011) since they revealed a positive beliefs and preference towards example sentences. Huang revealed that 90% of EFL Taiwan participants disagreed or strongly disagreed that it was unnecessary to read example sentences when using dictionaries. Similarly, Chan revealed that examples sentences were one of the dictionary skills that Cantonese ESL students in Hong Kong thought very useful skill; 76% of the respondents thought that example sentences are very useful information.

Additionally, the students rejected the belief that English dictionaries are more difficult than Arabic dictionaries. They think that both dictionaries are difficult to be used. About 54% of the participants disagreed or strongly disagreed that "It is more difficult to use English dictionaries than Arabic dictionaries". However, about 46% of them agreed or strongly agreed that English dictionaries are more difficult than Arabic ones.

In terms of beliefs about specific types of English dictionaries (items 14-21), the results showed that the means of beliefs that "Electronic dictionaries with built-in vocal function help to improve English pronunciation" (item 14 M= 3.50), "The most important use of electronic dictionaries is to help me translate from English to Arabic" (item 19 M= 3.00), and "English-English dictionaries help me to understand an English word's meanings better" (item 16 M= 3.00) were the most preferable beliefs among Iraqi EFL learners.

About 92 % of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that "Electronic dictionaries with built-in vocal function help to improve English pronunciation", followed by English-English dictionaries help me to understand an English word's meanings better and then the important use of electronic dictionaries to translate from English to Arabic. These preferable beliefs have supported the use of electronic, monolingual dictionaries which provided by built-in vocal function in order to improve their pronunciations rather than translation from Arabic to English. This result was compatible with Sabah et al. who revealed that Iraqi students encounter difficulties in pronunciation; therefore, one of their most frequent uses of electronic dictionaries was to check their pronunciation of English words.

On the other hand, the results showed that the means of the beliefs that "English-English dictionaries don't help me think and express myself in English (item 17 M= 2.12)", "The Arabic translations supplied in an English-Arabic dictionary help me read English more effectively (item 20 M= 2.64)", and "In addition to my own dictionary, I use specialized dictionaries in learning" (item 21 M= 2.34) are the least preferable beliefs among these learners. As shown above, this result confirms the important of monolingual dictionaries (English-English dictionaries), since 69% of the students disagreed or strongly disagreed that monolingual dictionaries do not help them to think and express themselves in English. However, 31 of these students agree or strongly agree that monolingual do not help them to think and express themselves in English. Accordingly, 58% of these students agreed or strongly agreed that Arabic translations supplied in bilingual dictionary (English-Arabic dictionary) help them read English more effectively. This result was consistent with Huang (2003) who showed that most of the EFL Taiwanese students prefer monolingual dictionaries and they think they are useful tools in their learning. On the contrary, this result was inconsistent with Martinez (2008) and Al-salami & Hattab (2008) since they revealed less positive attitudes toward using monolingual dictionaries. According to Martinez (2008), more than 80% of the University of Puerto Rico Mayagüez (UPRM) students in Spain reported they like using the bilingual dictionary and they found it important and a very helpful tool in learning. Similarly, Al-salami & Hattab (2008) showed inconsistent result to Huang when they revealed that bilingual dictionaries are widely preferred more than monolingual ones by Iraqi learners. These beliefs may assert the effect of native language transfer to foreign language. In the current result, Iraqi students preferences to monolingual dictionaries may be attributed to their use English as a second language in their everyday life situations in Malaysia. Therefore, their everyday use of English may motivate them to use such types of dictionaries to enrich their vocabulary knowledge.

Moreover, In terms of beliefs about relative strengths of different types of English dictionaries (items 22-26), the results showed that the means of the beliefs that "I like to use electronic dictionaries more than paper dictionaries" (item 26 M= 3.35), "Electronic dictionaries help to enhance English ability more than paper dictionaries " (item 23 M= 3.27), and "Online dictionaries are more helpful than paper or electronic dictionaries in fostering English reading and writing "(item 24 M= 3.15) were the most preferable beliefs among Iraqi EFL learners. About 88%, 85%, and 81% respectively of the participants agreed or strongly agreed with the above three beliefs. These findings strongly confirm the necessity of the

electronic English-English dictionaries when learning English and when translation from English to Arabic or vice versa. The learners may prefer using electronic dictionaries because of their easiness of accessing information. This result was consistent with Sabah et al. (2014) who revealed that Iraqi students prefer using electronic dictionaries to paper dictionaries.

On the other hand the results showed that the means of the beliefs that "English-Arabic dictionaries help to enhance English ability more than English-English dictionaries" (item 22 M=2.35), and "I like to use English-Arabic dictionaries more than English-English dictionaries" (item 26 M=2.65) were the least preferable beliefs among these learners. These preferable beliefs support what has mentioned in the above discussion in that, monolingual dictionaries (English-English) are better than bilingual dictionaries (English-Arabic) in enhancing English learning. Consequently, 65% of these students either disagreed or strongly disagreed that they like to use English-Arabic dictionaries more than English-English dictionaries". Chan (2011:8:9) mentioned three reasons that why student prefer to use monolingual dictionaries and they did not want to use bilingual dictionaries: " that they wanted to learn English through English, that their overall English ability would improve more by using a monolingual dictionaries, and that their understanding of a word would be better".

To address research question the second research question, table 4.2 below shows the most ten commonly preferred dictionary beliefs reported by the Iraqi EFL students. It shows the ten most commonly preferred dictionary beliefs for (M ≥ 3.000).

Table II The most ten commonly preferred dictionary beliefs reported by the Iraqi students

No.	Item	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
14	Electronic dictionaries with built-in vocal function help to improve English pronunciation.	26	3.50	.860
26	I like to use electronic dictionaries more than paper dictionaries.	26	3.35	.797
23	Electronic dictionaries help to enhance English ability more than paper dictionaries.	26	3.27	.827
12	People should use suitable dictionaries intended for their English proficiency levels.	26	3.23	.815
4	Our English teachers believe that it is very important to use dictionaries to facilitate English learning.	26	3.19	.749
24	Online dictionaries are more helpful than paper or electronic dictionaries in fostering English reading and writing.	26	3.15	.925
3	It is important to use dictionaries to help me translate while reading and writing English.	26	3.15	.967
5	A good dictionary user is also a good English learner.	26	3.000	.566
16	English-English dictionaries help me to understand an English word's meanings better.	26	3.000	. 938
19	The most important use of electronic dictionaries is to help me translate from English to Arabic.	26	3.000	.894

Table 4.2 shows the ten most frequently preferable Iraqi students reported on dictionary use in the current study. The students' reflected their overall beliefs of a strongly positive role of Electronic English dictionaries in their learning process, especially those dictionaries provided by built-in vocal function. This indicates that electronic dictionaries provided with built-in vocal function are very important tools for students to enhance their pronunciation.

As compared with paper dictionaries, the responses of students showed the important role of both electronic and online dictionaries play in a great role in enhancing learners' English ability and in fostering English reading and writing process. In addition, the students believe that monolingual dictionaries are more effective to enhance English ability than other types of dictionaries such as bilingual and specialized dictionaries. Moreover, the students showed that these dictionaries should be suitable for their English proficiency levels. Therefore, most of the students agreed or strongly agreed that "a good dictionary user is also a good English learner".

Furthermore, these overall students' positive beliefs about English dictionaries has supported from the English teachers since these students believe that their teachers think that it is very important to use dictionaries to facilitate English learning.

VI.   CONCLUSION

This study has been conducted to understand what are the Iraqi students' preferences and beliefs about English dictionaries. As a conclusion to the results obtained in this study, Iraqi students showed their positive beliefs toward English dictionaries as facilitator tools help them in improving their English and enhancing their pronunciation. These students showed their strong preference to electronic and online dictionaries as compared with paper dictionaries. Additionally, these students showed their positive beliefs to monolingual dictionaries as compared with bilingual ones and other specialized dictionaries. Overall, these findings confirm the importance of utilizing English dictionaries as tools to support English learning.

VII.   PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The results of this study suggest encouraging students to make frequent use of electronic and online monolingual dictionaries based on their proficiency level. Teachers need to help English learners become more aware about these types of electronic English- English dictionaries. Additionally, they need to incorporate learner training programs to teach them appropriate dictionary skills such as pronunciation to enhance their language learning. Further research is necessary to be devoted to exploring the students' beliefs on the various types of English dictionaries and their effect on English learning in Iraqi contexts. Additionally, students' have to be motivated to use dictionaries as a source of learning languages rather than a reference to find out word and its meaning.

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