

**Nenad M. Tomović<sup>±</sup>**

University of Belgrade  
Faculty of Philology

**Sofija A. Bilandžija<sup>\*\*</sup>**

University of Belgrade  
Faculty of Philology

**Jelena K. Kostić-Tomović<sup>\*\*\*</sup>**

University of Belgrade  
Faculty of Philology

## LEXICOGRAPHIC COMPETENCE OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE STUDENTS

Original scientific paper  
UDC 81'374:81'243-057.875

Although it is often considered that that successful use of a dictionary does not require any special knowledge or skills, research have shown that most users do not consult dictionaries frequently enough and with impaired efficiency. Users often avoid consulting dictionaries as much as they can, because they consider it to be a tedious and uninteresting task. Even when they consult a dictionary, most of them are not familiar with types of dictionaries, what type of dictionary would be the most useful one or how to assess the quality of a dictionary. Many information in a dictionary remain unnoticed and/or users fail to interpret them. These statements hold true for most users and for students of humanities or linguistics. Just like other users, students of linguistics fail to notice their own lack of user competence and are often unwilling to invest some time and effort to improve it. They may be willing to change this attitude only after being persuaded through a series of notable examples that they fail to notice a lot of useful information that would allow them to avoid certain mistakes or to solve a problem.

In this paper the authors will analyze responses to a questionnaire completed by students of English, Scandinavian languages and German at the Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade, which show their attitude to using dictionaries, their habits and what they know about the dictionaries that are crucial for their studies and future careers. The authors will use this analysis to point to the necessary improvements in user competence these students are supposed to achieve and possible ways of achieving it.

**Key words:** lexicographic competence, foreign language students, dictionaries.

---

\* Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade, Studentski trg 3, 11000 Belgrade; e-mail: nenad.tomovic@fil.bg.ac.rs

<sup>±</sup> This paper was presented at the International Interdisciplinary Conference *Languages, Cultures, Communications*, 8-9 June 2017, Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria.

\*\* Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade, Studentski trg 3, 11000 Belgrade; e-mail: sofija.bilandzija@fil.bg.ac.rs

\*\*\* Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade, Studentski trg 3, 11000 Belgrade; e-mail: jkostictomovic@fil.bg.ac.rs

## **1. Introduction**

Although dictionaries are usually not part of a standard foreign language course, they are still indispensable in foreign language studies at university level, and particularly if students are future language professionals, i.e. future teachers and translators/interpreters. In fact, since there are not so many research papers that focus on future language professionals, the authors decided to make a small contribution in that field by analyzing one of the aspects of their competence and to provide some guidelines for university language teachers. The focus of our research was lexicographic competence. Lexicographic competence is part of information literacy, and can be described as the ability to effectively use dictionaries. To be more precise, we must state that it involves the ability to identify a problem (e.g. usage, pattern, collocations, etc.), the ability to recognize the lexicographic character of the problem, to choose a proper dictionary, to find the necessary information in a proper dictionary and to interpret the information it provides (Kostić-Tomović 2017: 19, cf. Engelberg & Lemnitzer 2009: 82-133).

Lexicographic competence is rarely acquired spontaneously, i.e. without training or instruction. Although foreign language university students are surrounded by dictionaries and new words, they are no exception. In fact, all the authors of this paper have noticed that there are students who fail to perform certain vocabulary-related tasks in spite of being in possession of a dictionary or being able/allowed to use one. In fact, many students seem to be unaware of types of dictionaries and the kind of information they offer. In other words, it is obvious that some students do not know how to find the information they need or how to interpret and/or apply them. These observations made us reflect on our teaching methods and on certain courses. In order to avoid being misled by personal impressions, the authors decided to conduct this research and thus precisely define the problems their students face.

The authors have proposed the following hypotheses:

H1: The frequency of dictionary use depends on the language the respondents are majoring in.

H2: Use of dictionaries depends on the year of studies, because students start as "amateurs" and end up as professionals, which imposes different needs.

H3: Students' lexicographic competence is not sufficiently developed.

Since the authors teach Germanic languages, i.e. English, German and Scandinavian languages (Germanic), they decided to check their students' lexicographic competence.

## 2. Research

The aim of the whole research was to explore all aspects of lexicographic competence of Germanic language students at the Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade. Although the Faculty offers a degree in Dutch, there are very few students of Dutch and they were excluded because the findings would not have been statistically relevant. For the purposes of this paper the scope of the research was narrowed down to the following aim – to determine the most important aspects of students' lexicographic competence. The basic aspects of the questionnaire are the following:

- how frequently they use dictionaries
- how many dictionaries they have
- what types of dictionaries they use, and
- the kind of information they look for.

In order to get an insight into students' lexicographic competence, the authors prepared a questionnaire. The was developed by the authors for the purposes of the whole research. It comprised 39 questions, which were divided into nine sections: (1) data about the respondent (year of study, major language, GPA, etc.), (2) the purpose of using dictionaries, (3) using paper dictionaries, (4) using e-dictionaries, (5) favorite dictionaries, (6) criteria for choosing a dictionary, (7) using other parts of a dictionary (e.g. how to use it), (8) satisfaction with dictionaries and (9) the need for new dictionaries. Respondents could choose between several ready-made answers, but they were also allowed to add something if they didn't find the answers precise or if they wanted to add something.

The sample included a total of 218 students majoring in English (E-students; 81), German (G-students; 85) and Scandinavian languages<sup>3</sup> (S-students; 52) at the Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade. E-students have the best command of the language (B2-C1) when they enroll and they had been learning English for at least 12 years (2-5 classes per week, standard curriculum). G-students have limited prior

---

<sup>3</sup> Scandinavian languages include Norwegian, Swedish and Danish. S-students were taken as a homogenous group, although they normally major in one of these languages. However, since Scandinavian languages are very similar, and since S-students have to use reference books in all Scandinavian languages, they specialize in one language, but are able to understand or even speak the other two languages.

knowledge of the language (A2+ to B1) after 4-8 years of learning German (2 classes per week, standard curriculum). Although some students also attended private classes in English or German, this factor was not taken into account. With a few exceptions that are mentioned later, S-students usually have no prior knowledge of the languages they are majoring in and they start learning them at university.

It might be useful to add that a degree in German provides excellent job opportunities (virtually all of them can get a job in their field), while a degree in English provides fewer opportunities. A degree in Scandinavian languages provides more or less limited job opportunities.

Since students have to pass an entrance exam to enroll, the admission process is competitive. On the other hand, when we look at students' GPA, we might say that applicants who want to take up English or Scandinavian languages are usually very good, while those who take up German are average. The entrance exam is designed to assess applicants' knowledge of the language they want to take up (English, German) or in case of S-students, it can be any foreign language taught at schools (usually English). Apart from that, the exam also checks their knowledge of Serbian (candidates' L1), while the enrollment criteria are such to take into account both results from the two language tests and high school GPA.

Since it is impossible to present every finding from the questionnaire, the most important ones will be reduced to two major aspects – *how often* and *why* students use dictionaries. The most important questions, responses and statistics will be given in the text below. Each language students are majoring in will simply be referred to as a foreign language (FL).

Do you use dictionaries for the courses offered by the faculty?

**Yes. On a daily basis or almost every day.**

<b>Year of study</b>	<b>1st</b>	<b>2nd</b>	<b>3rd</b>	<b>4th</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Scandinavian languages</b>	7 (53.8%)	17 (100%)	4 (33.33%)	2 (20%)	30 (57.69%)
<b>German</b>	12 (50%)	11 (61.11%)	12 (57.14%)	6 (27.27%)	41 (48.24%)
<b>English</b>	10 (40%)	8 (42.11%)	7 (29.17%)	5 (38.46%)	30 (37.04%)

<b>Total</b>	29 (46.78%)	36 (66.67%)	23 (40.35%)	13 (28.89%)	101 (46.33%)
--------------	----------------	----------------	----------------	----------------	-----------------

Table 1.1

**Yes. At least once a week.**

<b>Year of study</b>	<b>1st</b>	<b>2nd</b>	<b>3rd</b>	<b>4th</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Scandinavian languages</b>	4 (30.7%)	0 (0%)	8 (66.66%)	7 (70%)	19 (36.53%)
<b>German</b>	10 (41.67%)	5 (27.78%)	5 (23.81%)	7 (31.82%)	27 (31.76%)
<b>English</b>	14 (56%)	11 (57.89%)	8 (33.33%)	5 (38.46%)	38 (46.91%)
<b>Total</b>	28 (45,16%)	16 (29.63%)	21 (36.84%)	19 (42.22%)	84 (38.53%)

Table 1.2

**Yes, but relatively rarely (e.g. a few times a month).**

<b>Year of study</b>	<b>1st</b>	<b>2nd</b>	<b>3rd</b>	<b>4th</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Scandinavian languages</b>	1 (7.69%)	0 (0%)	1 (8.33%)	1 (10%)	3 (5.76%)
<b>German</b>	2 (8.33%)	0 (0%)	3 (14.29%)	3 (13.64%)	8 (9.41%)
<b>English</b>	1 (4%)	0 (0%)	5 (20.83%)	2 (15.38%)	8 (9.88%)
<b>Total</b>	4 (6.45%)	0 (0%)	9 (15.79%)	6 (13.33%)	19 (8.72%)

Table 1.3

**Almost never.**

<b>Year of study</b>	<b>1st</b>	<b>2nd</b>	<b>3rd</b>	<b>4th</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Scandinavian languages</b>	1 (7.69%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.92%)

<b>German</b>	0 (0%)	2 (1.11%)	1 (4.76%)	1 (4.55%)	4 (4.71%)
<b>English</b>	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (16.67%)	1 (7.69%)	5 (6.17%)
<b>Total</b>	1 (1.61%)	2 (3.70%)	5 (8.77%)	2 (4.44%)	10 (4.59%)

Table 1.4

**Never.**

<b>Year of study</b>	<b>1st</b>	<b>2nd</b>	<b>3rd</b>	<b>4th</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Scandinavian languages</b>	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
<b>German</b>	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (4.55%)	1 (1.18%)
<b>English</b>	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
<b>Total</b>	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (2.22%)	1 (0.46%)

Table 1.5

These tables show us that the level of FL proficiency correlates with the frequency of dictionary use. S-students, who start as beginners (apart from 2-4 students per year), are frequent dictionary users in the first three years of study. However, fourth-year S-students achieve almost the same levels of FL proficiency as E and G-students, and all of them use dictionaries less frequently. Furthermore, if we look at Tables 1.1 and 1.2, we can see that the vast majority of students do use dictionaries frequently, ranging from every day to once a week.

The results indicate that the frequency of using dictionaries decreases as students progress in their studies. This means that students are less likely to use dictionaries when they master the FL they took up. On the one hand, it sounds reasonable, because their word stock has increased, but it also shows that they have not developed a habit of using a dictionary to adequately solve their professional tasks, because even a perfectly bilingual translator must use dictionaries frequently; it also holds true for an LSP teacher who is not familiar with the field.

It should be noted that respondents often try to show themselves in a better light, regardless of their anonymity, and we can reasonably assume that it was the case here, which means that the findings should be taken with a grain of salt. This phenomenon was further explained by Stephens-Davidowitz (2017).

Regarding their general interest in FL, students use dictionaries for other purposes apart from academic, such as learning another foreign language at a different institution, teaching FL or translating from into FL (if their level of proficiency is sufficient), to communicate with FL speakers, watching movies, listening to music and other leisure activities, which is presented in Tables 2.1-2.6.

**Learning a foreign language at a different institution.**

<b>Year of study</b>	<b>1st</b>	<b>2nd</b>	<b>3rd</b>	<b>4th</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Scandinavian languages</b>	3 (23.07%)	4 (23.52%)	3 (25%)	1 (10%)	11 (21.15%)
<b>German</b>	2 (8.22%)	3 (16.67%)	2 (9.52%)	3 (13.64%)	10 (11.76%)
<b>English</b>	1 (4%)	0 (0%)	4 (16.67%)	1 (7.69%)	6 (7.41%)
<b>Total</b>	6 (9.68%)	7 (12.96%)	9 (15.79%)	5 (11.11%)	27 (12.38%)

Table 2.1

**For teaching a foreign language.**

<b>Year of study</b>	<b>1st</b>	<b>2nd</b>	<b>3rd</b>	<b>4th</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Scandinavian languages</b>	2 (15.4%)	2 (11.76%)	4 (33.33%)	4 (40%)	12 (23.07%)
<b>German</b>	5 (20.83%)	4 (22.22%)	12 (57.14%)	17 (77.27%)	38 (44.71%)
<b>English</b>	2 (8%)	2 (10.53%)	7 (29.17%)	3 (23.08%)	14 (17.28%)
<b>Total</b>	9 (14.52%)	8 (14.81%)	23 (40.35%)	24 (53.33%)	64 (29.36%)

Table 2.2

**When hired as translators.**

<b>Year of study</b>	<b>1st</b>	<b>2nd</b>	<b>3rd</b>	<b>4th</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Scandinavian languages</b>	2 (15.4%)	3 (17.64%)	3 (25%)	3 (30%)	11 (21.15%)
<b>German</b>	1 (4.11%)	2 (11.11%)	4 (19.05%)	9 (40.91%)	16 (18.82%)
<b>English</b>	2 (8%)	1 (5.26%)	5 (20.83%)	6 (46.15%)	14 (17.28%)
<b>Total</b>	5 (8.06%)	6 (11.11%)	12 (21.05%)	18 (40%)	41 (18.81%)

Table 2.3

**To communicate with foreigners.**

<b>Year of study</b>	<b>1st</b>	<b>2nd</b>	<b>3rd</b>	<b>4th</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Scandinavian languages</b>	6 (46.15%)	5 (29.4%)	2 (16.66%)	2 (20%)	15 (28.84%)
<b>German</b>	1 (4.11%)	4 (22.22%)	10 (47.62%)	3 (13.64%)	18 (21.18%)
<b>English</b>	1 (4%)	2 (10.53%)	3 (12.5%)	1 (7.69%)	7 (8.64%)
<b>Total</b>	8 (12.90%)	11 (20.37%)	15 (26.32%)	6 (13.33%)	40 (18.35%)

Table 2.4

**Reading for pleasure (fiction and non-fiction).**

<b>Year of study</b>	<b>1st</b>	<b>2nd</b>	<b>3rd</b>	<b>4th</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Scandinavian languages</b>	13 (100%)	16 (94.11%)	6 (50%)	5 (50%)	40 (76.92%)
<b>German</b>	6 (25%)	15 (83.33%)	10 (47.61%)	18 (81.82%)	49 (57.65%)
<b>English</b>	22 (88%)	16 (84,21%)	12 (50%)	10 (76,92%)	60 (74.07%)
<b>Total</b>	41 (66.13%)	48 (88.89%)	28 (49.12%)	33 (73.33%)	149 (68.35%)

Table 2.5



**Watching movies and programs in a foreign language**

<b>Year of study</b>	<b>1st</b>	<b>2nd</b>	<b>3rd</b>	<b>4th</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Scandinavian languages</b>	8 (61.5%)	13 (76.4%)	3 (25%)	2 (20%)	26 (50%)
<b>German</b>	7 (29.17%)	9 (50%)	9 (42.86%)	7 (31.82%)	32 (37.65%)
<b>English</b>	12 (48%)	13 (68.42%)	9 (37.5%)	3 (23.08%)	37 (45.68%)
<b>Total</b>	27 (43.55%)	35 (64.81%)	21 (36.84%)	12 (26.67%)	95 (43.58%)

Table 2.6

Some students stated other reasons, like listening to music, unknown words in L1, participation in Internet forums etc, although these responses were given by one student of each department. These tables also show that most students are willing to expand their knowledge of FL by way of reading materials other than required for university exams or by using media in FL. On the other hand, we can also conclude that G-students, who have the best job opportunities, are most frequently hired as teachers or translators, while the number of S-students who do these jobs is small.

Another factor that was also taken into account was the availability of dictionaries. E-students are in the best position, because there are many excellent and easily available monolingual dictionaries, while there is also a fair number of good bilingual dictionaries, specialized dictionaries included. G-students are in a similar situation if they use monolingual dictionaries, because publishers from German-speaking countries offer the same quality like their British or American counterparts, while their dictionaries can be easily bought, downloaded or accessed online. On the other hand there is a relatively small number of good and comprehensive bilingual dictionaries (German-Serbian and vice versa) and there are just few specialized dictionaries that meet modern standards (Begenišić 2016, Kostić-Tomović 2017: 230-239). It can be said that S-students are in the worst position, because there is a small number of good monolingual dictionaries, very few or no bilingual dictionaries for Serbian learners, while in some cases students even have to use Scandinavian-English dictionaries. On the other hand, students of all languages possess roughly the same number of dictionaries, as can be seen in Table 3:

How many paper dictionaries do you have?

<b>Year of study</b>	<b>1st</b>	<b>2nd</b>	<b>3rd</b>	<b>4th</b>	<b>Average</b>
<b>Scandinavian languages</b>	4	3.5 <sup>4</sup>	6	4.5	4.5
<b>German</b>	3.9	4.9	4	5	4.45
<b>English</b>	5.96	5.05	5.75	5.54	5.58

Table 3

Paper dictionaries have definitely fallen out of favor, which is evident from students' responses. Many students (25-30%) use them once a week, while most of them (30-40%) use them just a few times a month. The rest (12-20%) use them never or almost never. In fact, students use libraries to borrow a dictionary quite rarely, while many of them never do it. S-students are the absolute majority in this category, because as many as 65% never borrow dictionaries from the library, followed by 50% of E-students and 25% of G-students. It is possible that these differences are due to the fact that even libraries cannot provide a sufficient number of dictionaries S-students might need; on the other hand, E-students have access to dictionaries that are easily available (in bookstores, home libraries, on the Internet). Many dictionaries that G-students need are not so easily available (out of stock, not available in Serbia, while bilingual dictionaries are much more expensive because they are offered to a small market and in a small number of copies, not likely to be found in home libraries because not many people have been studying German in the last few decades, etc.). Since the data are extracted from several tables which would take too much space, no tables will be given.

As expected, students follow current trends and use electronic dictionaries more frequently than paper dictionaries if electronic dictionaries are available. To be more precise, most commonly used electronic dictionaries are mobile applications and online dictionaries, while dictionaries available on CD-ROM are used very rarely. Pocket dictionaries are almost never used, which is not surprising, because they simply could not compete with mobile applications and online dictionaries. The ease of use of e-dictionaries, their availability and the time needed to find different kinds of information are the most important reasons for their popularity and widespread use. This is further

---

<sup>4</sup> One student stated 50 dictionaries. This response was not taken into account.

corroborated by the finding that the number of students who use electronic dictionaries on a daily basis is 70-80%. Tables 4.1 and 4.2 provide more detailed information:

Do you use electronic dictionaries?

**Yes. On a daily basis or almost every day.**

Year of study	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Total
<b>Scandinavian languages</b>	10 (76.9%)	16 (94.11%)	10 (83.33%)	7 (70%)	43 (82.69%)
<b>German</b>	16 (66.67%)	14 (77.78%)	17 (80.95%)	15 (68.18%)	62 (72.94%)
<b>English</b>	18 (72%)	13 (68.42%)	17 (70.83%)	9 (69.23%)	57 (70.37%)

Table 4.1

**Yes. At least once a week.**

Year of study	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Total
<b>Scandinavian languages</b>	3 (23.07%)	1 (5.88%)	1 (8.33%)	2 (20%)	7 (13.46%)
<b>German</b>	2 (8.33%)	4 (22.22%)	2 (9.52%)	4 (18.18%)	12 (14.12%)
<b>English</b>	5 (20%)	6 (31.58%)	6 (25%)	2 (15.38%)	19 (23.46%)

Table 4.2

Regarding the types of information students most commonly look for, all of them are primarily interested in Serbian equivalents of FL words. This points to the conclusion that students use dictionaries in the way other non-professionals do – to find equivalents of FL words which are interpreted as the information about the use of that FL lexeme (Herbst & Klotz 2003: 102-122).

Equivalents of Serbian words are also looked up, which also holds true for explanations of FL lexemes and synonyms. However, due to numerous irregularities in English spelling and weak spelling to sound correspondence, E-students often look for the pronunciation. They are followed by S-students, who started learning FL at the

university, while approximately 1% of G-students look for pronunciation of German words, because its orthography makes it easy to pronounce almost every word.

What information do you most commonly look for?

Year of study		1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Total
<b>Scandinavian languages</b>	equivalents	5 (38.46%)	10 (58.82%)	5 (41.66%)	2 (20%)	22 (42.3%)
	FL synonyms	1 (7.69%)	5 (29.4%)	3 (25%)	1 (10%)	10 (19.23%)
	grammar	5 (38.46%)	5 (29.4%)	2 (16.66%)	2 (20%)	14 (26.92%)
	explanation of meaning	1 (7.69%)	5 (29.4%)	3 (25%)	4 (40%)	13 (25%)
	pronunciation	1 (7.69%)	2 (11.76%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (5.76%)
	L1 spelling	2 (15.4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (3.84%)
<b>German</b>	equivalents	6 (25%)	5 (27.78%)	8 (38.1%)	6 <sup>5</sup> (27.27%)	25 (29.41%)
	FL synonyms	7 (29.17%)	7 (38.89%)	7 (33.33%)	8 (36.36%)	29 (34.12%)
	grammar	0 (0%)	5 (27.78%)	3 (14.29%)	3 (13.64%)	11 (12.94%)
	explanation of meaning	3 (12.5%)	7 (38.89%)	3 (14.29%)	10 (45.45%)	23 (27.06%)
	pronunciation	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 <sup>6</sup> (4.76%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.18%)
	spelling	2 (8.33%)	1 (5.56%)	1 (4.76%)	0 (0%)	4 (4.71%)
	patterns	2 (8.33%)	1 (5.56%)	0 (0%)	2 (9.09%)	5 (5.88%)
	collocations	2 (8.33%)	1 (5.56%)	0 (0%)	4 (18.18%)	7

<sup>5</sup> One response was not taken into account because the respondent stated "Foreign equivalents of foreign words".

<sup>6</sup> The respondent's remark was that it referred to English.

						(8.24%)
<b>English</b>	equivalents	17 (68%)	12 (63.16%)	18 (75%)	5 (38.46%)	52 (64.20%)
	FL synonyms	7 (28%)	3 (15.79%)	2 (8.33%)	7 (53.85%)	19 (23.46%)
	grammar	x (0%)	1 (5.26%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.23%)
	explanation of meaning	11 (44%)	8 (42.11%)	4 (1.67%)	4 (30.77%)	27 (33.33%)
	pronunciation	3 (12%)	4 (21.05%)	2 (8.33%)	2 (15.38%)	11 (13.58%)
	spelling	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (8.33%)	0 (0%)	2 (2.47%)
	patterns	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
	collocations	1 (4%)	2 (10.53%)	3 (12.5%)	2 (15.38%)	8 (9.88%)

Table 5

The information presented in Table 5 can be expanded by students' responses concerning the use of dictionary in language production and comprehension. To make the question easier, respondents were simply required to state if they use a dictionary when an activity involves one the four language skills (listening, reading, writing, speaking), as shown in Tables 6.1-6.4:

### Reading

Year of study	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Total
<b>Scandinavian languages</b>	10 (76.9%)	13 (76.4%)	9 (75%)	6 (60%)	38 (73.07%)
<b>German</b>	16 (66.67%)	13 (72.22%)	12 (57.14%)	15 (68.18%)	56 (65.88%)
<b>English</b>	9 (36%)	11 (57.89%)	11 (45.83%)	8 (61.54%)	39 (48.15%)

Table 6.1

### Listening

Year of study	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Total
<b>Scandinavian languages</b>	0 (0%)	0 (5.88%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.92%)
<b>German</b>	1 (4.11%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.18%)
<b>English</b>	0 (0%)	2 (10.53%)	1 (4.17%)	2 (15.38%)	5 (6.17%)

Table 6.2

### Writing

Year of study	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Total
<b>Scandinavian languages</b>	8 (61.5)	4 (23.52%)	7 (58.33%)	6 (60%)	25 (48.07%)
<b>German</b>	17 (70.83%)	8 (44.44%)	11 (52.38%)	12 (54.55%)	48 (56.47%)
<b>English</b>	20 (80%)	13 (68.42%)	19 (79.17%)	5 (38.46%)	57 (70.37%)

Table 6.3

### Speaking

Year of study	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Total
Scandinavian languages	1 (7.69%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (10%)	2 (3.84%)
German	5 (20.83%)	1 (5.56%)	3 (14.29%)	1 (4.55%)	10 (11.76%)
English	0 (0%)	2 (10.53%)	2 (8.33%)	2 (15.38%)	6 (7.41%)

**Table 6.4**

The responses given above make perfect sense, because dictionaries cannot be used that easily while speaking or listening.

Unlike professional and experienced linguists, most students state that they are quite satisfied with dictionaries, and many of them are completely satisfied, as shown below:

**Completely satisfied.**

Year of study	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Total
<b>Scandinavian languages</b>	1 (7.69%)	6 (35.3%)	1 (8.33%)	1 (10%)	9 (17.3%)
<b>German</b>	3 (12.5%)	5 (27.78%)	4 (19.05%)	6 (27.27%)	18 (21.18%)
<b>English</b>	9 (36%)	9 (47.37%)	8 (33.33%)	4 (30.77%)	30 (37.04%)

Table 7.1

**Mostly satisfied.**

Year of study	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Total
Scandinavian languages	12 (92.3%)	11 (64.7%)	9 (75%)	9 (90%)	41 (78.84%)
German	19 (79.17%)	13 (72.22%)	15 (71.43%)	17 (77.27%)	64 (75.29%)
English	16 (64%)	9 (47.37%)	16 (66.67%)	9 (69.23%)	50 (61.73%)

Table 7.2

**Mostly dissatisfied.**

Year of study	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Total
<b>Scandinavian languages</b>	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (16.66%)	0 (0%)	2 (3.84%)
<b>German</b>	2 (8.33%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (2.35%)
<b>English</b>	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Table 7.3

**Completely dissatisfied.**

<b>Year of study</b>	<b>1st</b>	<b>2nd</b>	<b>3rd</b>	<b>4th</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Scandinavian languages</b>	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
<b>German</b>	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
<b>English</b>	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Table 7.4

Responses given in Tables 7.1-7.4 seem strange, especially in the case of S-students, who have a very small number of dictionaries at their disposal, although G-students are in a very similar situation, because there are no up-to-date and comprehensive bilingual general or technical dictionaries.

### **3. Conclusions**

The findings of this research will help us reach certain conclusions regarding the problems described at the beginning of this paper and will be useful for further development of several language courses.

The first hypothesis (H1: The frequency of dictionary use depends on the language the respondents are majoring in) is true to a certain extent, which also holds true for the second one (H2: Use of dictionaries depends on the year of studies, because students start as "amateurs" and end up as professionals, which imposes different needs). 84% of first-year S-students use dictionaries every day or at least once a week, followed by 91.67% of first-year G-students and 96% of E-students. Since first-year S-students are beginners, their language courses cannot include so much vocabulary and other information that can be found in dictionaries, we can assume that many of them rely on what they learn in class. On the other hand, first-year E-students, whose level of FL proficiency is the highest, have demanding tasks and must use them more frequently.

However, all second-year S-students (100%) use dictionaries every day, and not a single one opted to state 'at least once a week'. 88.89% of second-year G-students use dictionaries once in a few days or at least once a week, and are followed by 68.89% of E-students. It is also interesting to note that there are only 11% of



second-year G-students and 8% of E-students who use dictionaries on a daily basis or almost every day.

Third-year S-students have the same tendency, and 100% of them use dictionaries every day or at least once a week, while 80.95% of G-students display a difference of almost 20%. On the other hand, third-year E-students seem to be able to do without a dictionary in the same interval, and 62.5% of them stated the same frequency (17% use them every day, 33.33% at least once a week).

Fourth-year students of all languages tend to use dictionaries less frequently. S-students are again the most frequent users, although the number of those who use them every day decreases to 20%, while there are 70% of those who use them at least once a week. They are now followed by E-students (38.46% who use dictionaries every day, and the same number of those who use them at least once a week), while a total 59.09% of G-students use dictionaries either every day or at least once a week.

Although there were no tasks that could directly prove or refute the third hypothesis (H3: Students' lexicographic competence is not sufficiently developed), since the questionnaire did not involve any linguistic tasks, it is still possible to prove it indirectly. Apart from the frequency of use, one of the key questions which is based on lexicographic competence in practice is the one which refers to their satisfaction with dictionaries. The number of those who are completely satisfied with the dictionaries they have used does not much differ in case of S-students and G-students (17.3% and 21.18%, respectively, all four years included). 37.04% of E-students (all four years) were completely satisfied, and it is interesting to note that there are least variations in this level of satisfaction among E-students, while second-year students of all departments display greatest level of satisfaction with dictionaries. However, we must repeat that E-students have access to best dictionaries, followed by G-students, who cannot find so many specialized dictionaries whose quality is acceptable, while S-students have just a few dictionaries at their disposal. Concerning the next criterion, e.g. mostly satisfied, S-students are very tolerant, because 78.84% (all four years) opted for this response, followed by G-students (75.29%) and 61.73% of E-students. It seems that E-students, who are mostly satisfied, are slightly more competent than their peers, although have best dictionaries at their disposal. There are only two first-year G-students and two third-year S-students who were 'mostly dissatisfied' with dictionaries available to them, while there was not a single student whose response was 'completely dissatisfied'.

Another argument in favor of H3 would be students' replies to the question concerning the types of information they look for most often. For instance, G-students rarely look for information on patterns and valency, although these are their weak points. Furthermore, their replies to the question about the types of dictionaries they most commonly use, which were not given in the tables, suggest they are not familiar with many types of dictionaries, and especially with those that provide the information they need.

Our findings do not confirm the initial hypotheses, as there are no major differences between students of different years or between students majoring in different languages. Therefore, our findings suggest that students have deeply rooted user habits which do not change much, while these habits depend on the problems they can solve by using dictionaries.

Although this questionnaire provides limited findings, it does seem that students have insufficient knowledge about dictionaries and their use, and that they do not use them frequently enough. A next step would be a test comprised of tasks that could be solved through adequate use of dictionaries, which would provide a proper insight into their weaknesses. Since user habits cannot be changed simply by emphasizing the importance of dictionaries, exposure to adequate tasks should be incorporated into the curriculum.

## References

- Begenišić, D. (2016). *Dometi stručne leksikografije nemačkog i srpskog jezika*. Beograd: Miroslav.
- Engelberg, S. & Lemnitzer, L. (2009). *Lexikographie und Wörterbuchbenutzung*. 4., überarbeitete und erweiterte Auflage. Tübingen: Stauffenburg Verlag.
- Herbst, T. & Klotz, M. (2003). *Lexikografie*. Paderborn et al.: Ferdinand Schöningh Verlag.
- Kostić-Tomović, J. (2017). *Savremena nemačka leksikografija*. Beograd: FOKUS – Forum za interkulturalnu komunikaciju.
- Stephens-Davidowitz, S. (2017). *Everybody lies. What the Internet can tell us about who we really are*. London et al.: Bloomsbury.