FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND VIETNAMESE

USING ONLINE COLLOCATION DICTIONARY FOR TRANSLATION PRACTICE AMONGST ENGLISH-MAJORED STUDENTS AT UNIVERSITY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE STUDIES, THE UNIVERSITY OF DANANG

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ABSTRACT: This study aims to investigate the use of Ozdic, an online English Collocation Dictionary in the practice of translation for English-majored at University of Foreign Language Studies, the University of Danang. Using quantitative and qualitative data collected from a survey questionnaire and practical exercise, the study shows that Ozdic is a very useful tool for the practice of translation, especially for those who are English majors. Besides, problems encountered by students when using Ozdic are discussed, and suggestions are proposed for enhancing the use of Ozdic in language learning in general and in translation training and practice in particular.

KEY WORDS: Ozdic; online English collocation dictionary; online tools; translation; English-majored students.

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1. Background to the study

The current context of information technology development and the emergence of internet-based learning has exerted enormous influence on the educational setting, especially on foreign language teaching and learning. There are many a modern educational technology that helps promote learner autonomy (Lengkanawati, 2021), and with the aid of technology, language learners have enjoyed ample opportunities to actively access the immense source of cultural input and native-like language skill proficiency (Fulford & Granell, 2004; Wang, 2011). Besides, it is impossible not to mention the impact of this computer-assisted medium on the field of translation, which is considered an appropriate skill when it comes to promoting successful message transfer and transliteration in communication.

In translation, information technology is not only capable of connecting and maintaining the relationship between translators and customers, but also a useful tool to help check and improve the quality of the translation work. Therefore, the demands for application of information technology in translation are on an increase, and many of those come from students majoring in languages. However, receiving information, selecting the right documents and finding a suitable translation support tool has not yet received great attention from students. Stemming from that actual need, a project investigating the use of online English collocation dictionary in translation practice for English-majored students can be deemed as necessary. This piece of research thus seeks to investigate how an online English collocation dictionary - Ozdic can be used in the practice of translation for third-year students of English at UD-UFLS. It aims to: (i) examine the students' perceptions on the use of Ozdic in translation practice; (ii) figure out problems encountered by students in using Ozdic to practise translation; (iii) suggest solutions for more effective use of this online dictionary tool for the practice of translation. The research thus proposes the following research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of third-year students of English at UD-UFLS towards the use of

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Ozdic Online Collocation Dictionary in translation practice?

2. What are some of the problems encountered by the students in using Ozdic to practise translation and how can these problems be handled?

The hypotheses set out for this piece of research are:

(i) Third-year students of English at UD-UFLS have a tendency of using Ozdic Online Collocation Dictionary in learning translation.

(ii) The use of this online tool is beneficial for students in the practice of translation.

It is hoped that results from this study can provide better insight into the benefits of using this online tool - Ozdic Collocation Dictionary in translation training and practice and give way to suggestions for improved competence in language learning in general and translation training and practice in particular.

2. Literature review and theoretical background

2.1. Literature review

The translation industry and training has been on the verge of using support tools with Ozdic – an online collocation dictionary being one of the tools receiving immense interest from translation trainers and practitioners. According to Fulford and Granell (2004), online tools and language resources help translators perform and deliver translations faster than before. Indeed, using the Internet for documents and terminology allows translators to control and improve the quality of translation output. For Wang (2011), translators can benefit as well from online tools and resources, including electronic dictionaries. Nguyen Quoc Hung (2021) also stresses the importance of integrating technologies in English language teaching. In 'Dạy tiếng Anh sử dụng công nghệ giáo dục' (literally translated 'Teaching English Using Educational Technologies') (2021), he introduces a number of techniques that English teachers can resort to, especially when delivering teaching content online. Chief amongst these are Didactic Conversation, Dictogloss, Mind Mapping, Predicting, Telling a Story, Role-play, Chaining, Culture Comparison, and Project. These techniques could be further enhanced by the use of online dictionaries, for example, when students are working together on a translation project, using such online tools as English collocation dictionaries as an enabler for quality assurance in translation production.

Research by Nguyen Thi Thu Hang and Trieu Thu Hang (2015) has shown that most students believe that online dictionaries and search engines are useful means for translation training, that is students can gradually become more aware of the transition from teacher-centered learning to autonomous learning. Gendell (2016) considers ozdic.com a very useful free tool for translating into English, especially the ability to find the exact collocation of verbs - prepositions. According to Ying and Jingyi (2014), such online dictionaries as Ozdic can give stronger focus on language clusters or collocations. In the research by Mai Lan (2015), most students believe that they can improve translation quality by using collocations. Given the fact that the benefits of using online tools for translation have been mentioned, there has been little, or no research situated in the context of language learning, especially its impact on the practice of translation amongst language students. This thus gives an impetus for this study to be carried out, looking at how an online collocation dictionary like Ozdic can be used in the practice of translation for third-year students of English at UD-UFLS.

2.2. Theoretical background

2.2.1 Online Dictionaries, Collocations and Ozdic

Looking first at online dictionaries, Fuertes-Olivera (2018) refers them to tools that provide information accessed through the Internet. In the definition of Nielsen (2011), online dictionaries are lexicographic products which are carried via a medium developed by means of computer science or educational technology.

Regarding collocations, many language experts define collocations in varying ways. Collocations, according to Zaabalawi and Gould (2017), are "a class of idiomatic expressions comprised of a sequence of words which, for mostly arbitrary reasons, occur together in a prescribed order… as a standard unit of meaning" (p.21). In this way, collocations are not necessarily grammatical, meaning that they cannot be generated through knowledge of rules or formulae. In this sense, collocations may barely be easily mastered by EFL learners and typically only dealt with during the latter phase of second language acquisition like the third-year students of English. According to Wu (2015), collocations provide learners with several ways of expressing meaning, either in in linguistic or non-linguistic or cultural terms. Put it aptly by Carthy and O'Dell (2005), collocation is a natural conjunction of words, denoting words that collocate together like 'pay' that goes with 'attention', or 'commit' that goes with 'crime', 'blond' with 'hair', and 'heavy' with 'rain'.

It is now important to look at Ozdic as an online dictionary allowing users to search collocations. Ozdic is generally viewed as a useful source of information to build linguistic knowledge especially in terms of vocabulary or lexical richness. According to Hutton (2014), ozdic.com is an online version of the Oxford Collocation for Advanced Learners of English, and it allows users to identify the collocations that go with a noun or what adjectives can be collocated with what nouns, or how a verb can be used in conjunction with a certain adverb amongst many. Chu and Wang (2018) point out that Ozdic provides meaning of the collocations as well as their usage, which means that the dictionary can be a good point of reference and can well be used in language production and transliteration in communication.

Ozdic English Collocation Dictionary is designed to help language learners and users write and speak natural-sounding English. It provides a comprehensive guide to the most frequently used word combinations, including both common and idiomatic expressions. The benefits of using Ozdic include (i) *Enhanced accuracy and fluency* – using collocations enables language learners to use the right words in the right context, which facilitates better and more natural communication; (ii) *Improved vocabulary* – meaning that language learners can use the dictionary to learn new vocabulary, and thus become familiar with common collocations in English; (iii) *Greater understanding of English* – with Ozdic, more precise information on the nuances and subtleties of the English language is provided, thus helping users develop deeper understanding of the language; (iv) *Time-saving*, meaning that the dictionary is organized in a user-friendly way, making it easy to find the most relevant collocations quickly; and (iv) *Professional use*, especially for those as translators, writers, and editors as a valuable resource for ensuring a precise rendition of meaning and effective use of English language *(https://ozdic.com/)*.

2.2.2. Information and Communication Technologies in Translation

Information and Communication Technologies, or ICT, according to Sarkar (2012), is a diverse set of technological tools and resources that are used to transmit, store, create, share, or exchange information. These technological tools and resources include such things as computers, the Internet (websites, blogs, and emails), live broadcasting technologies (radio, television and webcasting), recorded broadcasting technologies (podcasting, audio and video players, and storage devices) and telephony (fixed or mobile, satellite, videoconferencing). A research made by Stepanova (2014) reveals that using ICTs is part of the translators' job with the majority of translation experts and translation practitioners using ICTs in their job. More specifically, both translators and interpreters make maximal use of computers, online dictionaries, terms databases, and computer-assisted translation tools (CAT), search engines, and other types of ICTs in their day-to-day jobs. According to Ivanova (2016), ICT plays an important role in the process of knowledge creation as well as information retrieval, extraction, and processing. The research also reveals that, under the requirements constantly changing in the context of technological advances, translators will become

more proficient in using translation support tools to solve problems. including translation quality assurance, terminology management, pre- and post-editing.

3. Research methodology

3.1. Research design

This study is conducted building on the practice of translation using an online English Collocation Dictionary - Ozdic in the training of translation skills for third year students of English at UD-UFLS. The study adopted a mixed methods approach with both qualitative and quantitative data being collected from survey questionnaires and practical exercises administered to the research participants.

3.2. Research setting, population and sampling

This research was conducted at UD-UFLS, one of the three universities majoring in foreign language studies in Vietnam offering English language training programmes at the undergraduate level in English Language (ELP) and English Language Teaching (ELT). Translation training for English-majored students at UD-UFLS starts in year 3 with courses like Translation/Interpretation 1 & 2 and Translation Theory and proceeds to year 4 with Translation/Interpretation 3 and Advanced Translation/Interpretation (for students of ELP). During the training, students need to work on projects where practice of translation requires the use of support tools, including online collocation dictionaries. A survey questionnaire was thus administered to 105 third-year students of English at UD-UFLS, 55 in English Language and 50 in English Language Teaching. The practical exercise includes the translation of texts from Vietnamese into English, requiring students to use Ozdic as a support tool in translating.

4. Results

Figure 4.1

Number of students using online tools in translation

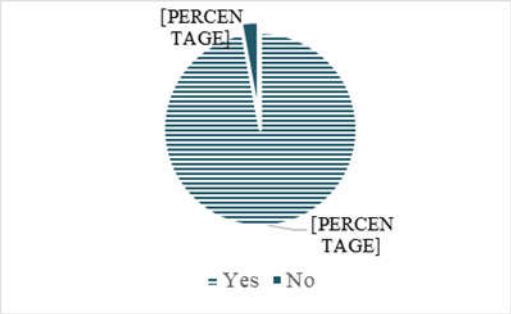
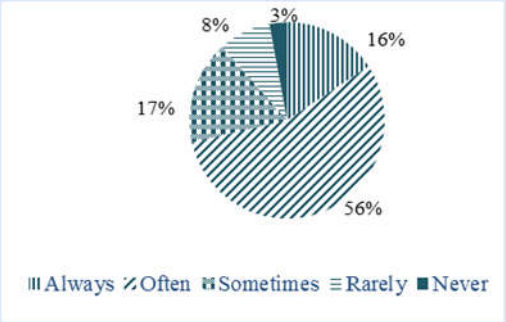


Figure 4.2.

Frequency of use of online tools in translation class



Figures 4.1 and **4.2** show the characteristics of the survey respondents, more specifically the number of students (both in ELP and ELT) using online tools in the training and practice of translation. While the former reveals that the majority of students surveyed used online tools for translation learning and practice, with up to 97%, the latter shows that more than half of the participants (56%) cited they often used online tools in their course of translation.

Table 4.1. *Online tools used in translation*

Online Tools	**Percentage**
Google Translate	85.7%
Oxford Learner's Dictionary – Online English Dictionary	60%
Cambridge Dictionary – Online English Dictionary	55.7%
Thesaurus.com –Dictionary for Synonyms and Antonyms	38.6%
Ozdic.com – Online Collocation Dictionary	37.1%
Others	27.1%

Table 4.1 shows that students used a variety of online tools in the process of translation. Most frequently amongst those are Google Translate, accounting for 85.7% of the sample, followed by Oxford Learner's Dictionary with 60%, and Cambridge Dictionary with 55.7%. Ozdic as an online collocation dictionary was cited by more than one-third of the students under survey.

As data from **Table 4.2** reveal, the majority of students agreed that online tools help users understand the meaning of words (83.8%). Compared with dictionaries and paper documents, online tools save more time, and this was quoted by 76.5% of the research participants. Regarding the difficulties encountered when using online tools for translation practice, all students (100% of the survey sample) said online tools hardly helped them in guessing the meaning of words in specific contexts while 91.8% cited the fee-paying characteristics for the availability of some tool features.

Table 4.2

Students' evaluation on the use of online tools for translation

Benefits	Looking up for meaning	83.8%
	Saving time compared with using paper dictionaries	76.5%
	Expressing ideas more naturally and precisely	39.7%
	Providing variations for expressing the same meaning	55.9%
	Expanding vocabulary	66.2%
	Understanding translation tasks	69.1%
	Being aware of accurate language use	50%
	Increasing confidence	30.9%
	Free of charge	60.3%
	Others	11.8%
Problems	Unable to guess the contextual meaning of words	100%
	Having little or no instruction on the use of online tools for practice of translation	27.9%
	Providing insufficient information	77%
	Becoming independent	41%
	Some functions available are fee-paying	91.8%
	Interfaces are not user-friendly	78.7%
	Others	18%

Figure 4.3.

Number of students using Ozdic

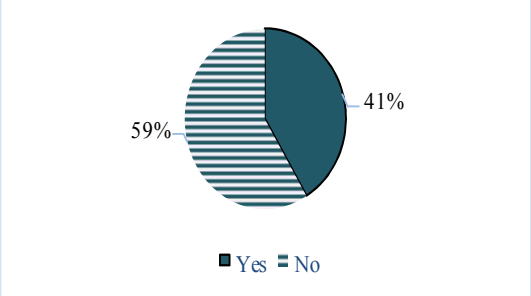


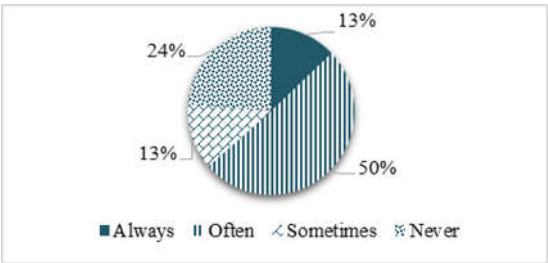
Figure 4.4.

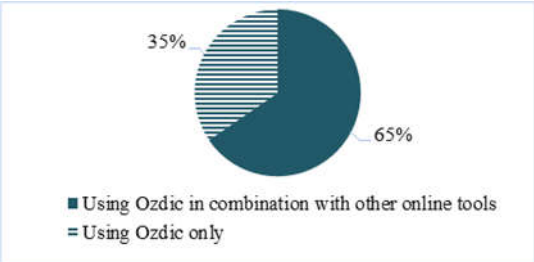
Degree of using Ozdic by Group 1 students

As **Figure 4.3** reveals, the number of students using Ozdic only accounted for 41%, showing that although students knew and used this tool, it had not been widely disseminated amongst the ELP and ELT students. This necessitates the segregation of the participants with students in Group 1 (41% - those who have used Ozdic) doing a survey on Ozdic usage habits, and the remaining Group 2 students (59%) were asked to do practical exercises in experiment with Ozdic.

Figure 4.5.

Ozdic usage habits by Group 1 students





Figures 4.4 and **4.5** show students' habits of using Ozdic for translation amongst Group 1 participants. The results show that the majority of the poll sample used Ozdic for the practice of translation with 13% of the surveyed students stating that they always used the tool, 50% citing *often,* and 13% quoting *sometimes.* Amongst these participants, two-thirds (65%) chose to combine Ozdic with other online tools rather than using a single tool in their learning and practice of translation.

Figure 4.6.
Group 2 students 'evaluation after using Ozdic

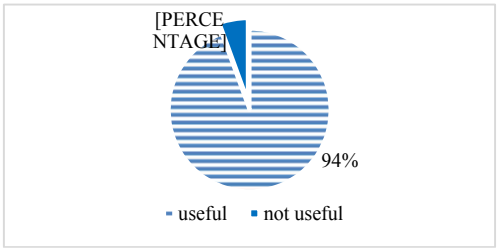
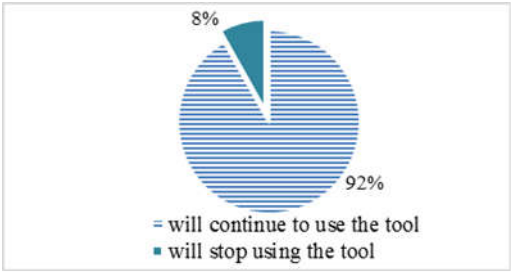


Figure 4.7.
Group 2 students' opinions after using Ozdic



Figures 4.6 and **4.7** show that most students in Group 2 (94%), after having done the practical exercise, stated that Ozdic was a useful tool, and the majority of them (92%) said they would continue to use Ozdic for their translation practice in the future.

Table 4.3.
Results from the practical exercise by Group 2 students

Original Text	Translated version by Group 2
Tuy vậy, nhiều người trong số những thân nhân này vẫn nuôi hy vọng những người thân yêu của họ có thể vẫn sống sót. Trong một tuyên bố mới đây, Bộ Ngoại giao Trung Quốc đã bày tỏ sự cảm thông sâu sắc và gửi lời chia buồn tới gia đình những nạn nhân trên MH370. *(congly.vn)*	*However, many of these relatives (still) kept alive/clung to/ lived in/cherished the hope that their loved ones might be alive. In a recent statement, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed/sent deep/sincere/heartfelt sympathy and condolences to the families of victims on MH370.*

Results from the practical exercise in **Table 4.3** show that students in Group 2 have effectively used Ozdic to try their experiment with Ozdic. It was found that, instead of literally rendering *nuôi hy vọng* into "*hope/ keep hoping*", students enjoyed more flexibility in word choice by using such

phrases as "*keep alive/cling to/live in/cherish the hope"*, making the translation richer in images. Similarly, for the translation of *bày tỏ sự cảm thông sâu sắc,* a series of verbs and adjectives were adopted by Group 2 students in the translation like "*express/send deep/sincere/heartfelt sympathy and condolences*".

Table 4.4.

Group 2 students 'opinions on the benefits of using Ozdic compared with other online tools

Totally free	100%
Interface being user-friendly	70.2%
Containing no advertisements	80.9%
Finding the right words/ expressions	51.1%
Improving the naturalness of translation	89.4%
Various collocations being applicable in many contexts	76.6%
Single focus on collocation	68.1%
Memorising new words in collocations and in context	87.2%
Others	31.9%

Regarding the advantages of using Ozdic to practice translation compared with other online tools, it is interesting to know that all students under survey agreed that Ozdic was *completely free* while *improving the naturalness of translation* was quoted by 89.4% of the poll sample, *memorizing new words in collocations and in context* coming closely behind with 87.2%, and *containing no advertising* with 80.9%.

Table 4.5.

Difficulties encountered by students when using Ozdic for translation practice

Becoming independent	21.2%
Becoming worried about making mistakes in translation	32.7%
Too many alternatives provided when looking up a certain new word	75%
Only one function – collocation being provided	65.9%
Being more effective when translating from Vietnamese into English	67.3%
Others	55.8%

Table 4.5 shows students' concern about experiencing *too many alternatives when looking up a certain new word* on Ozdic (75%). Besides, the majority of students (67.3%) mentioned that Ozdic was *more effective when translating from Vietnamese into English* and that the dictionary only *focuses on one function*, which is *collocation* (65.9%).

5. Discussion

5.1. Students' perceptions on the use of online tools for translation practice

Through the survey, it was found that almost all students used online tools for translation practice. Among the most frequently used are *Google Translate* and *Cambridge dictionaries*. In terms of benefits, the majority of students commented that online tools enabled users to identify the meaning of words while translating. Moreover, compared with dictionaries and paper documents, this medium was much more time efficient. However, alongside the positive aspects, online tools revealed certain limitations of their own like students having problems with guessing the meaning of sentences and paragraphs in context and resorting to fee-paying option to use some specific features.

Thus, it can be seen that online tools have been commonly used by most students in the process of translation training and practice. Given the fact that most students display a positive attitude, it is

inevitable that they will encounter obstacles when taking advantage of this support tool.

5.2. Students' perceptions on the use of Ozdic for translation practice

The results collected from the questionnaire show that the number of students using Ozdic is not as high as expected, showing that although it is familiar with some students, Ozdic has not been widely disseminated amongst language learners. Students were thus divided into two separate groups to voice their opinions with Group 1 containing those using Ozdic, and Group 2 with those never using it.

What can be realized via the survey results is that Ozdic gave students of both groups positive impressions. Most students in Group 1 chose Ozdic as a means to support their translation practice. They said that they chose to combine Ozdic with other online tools rather than using it alone. For students in Group 2, after conducting experimental exercises using Ozdic, the majority agreed that it was really helpful in practicing translation, and all chose to continue to use the tool in the future. Experimental results also show that students have more flexibility in choosing words and in refining translations.

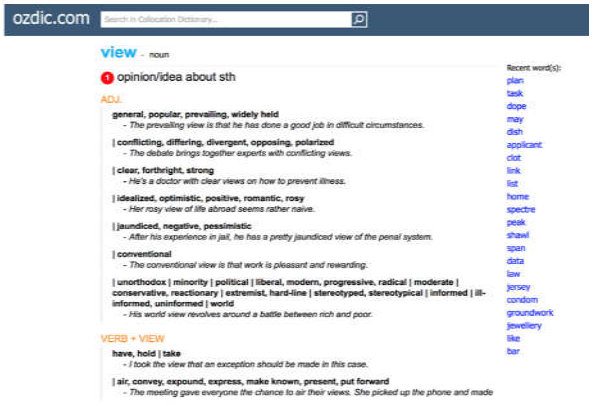
Regarding the benefits of practicing translation skills, Ozdic is completely free compared to online tools that offer limited features. Ozdic is also considered to have a user-friendly interface (**Figure 5.1**). Besides, both groups of students said that Ozdic helps make the translation more natural by providing collocations that are commonly used by native speakers in speaking and writing. Also, users can also remember new words in clusters through the way they work together in accompanying model sentences.

5.3. Difficulties encountered by students when using Ozdic Online Dictionary

Survey findings also show that Ozdic, besides advantages, presents problems encountered by students in the translation process. Here, it is possible to mention the rich source of information about words, phrases and collocations that Ozdic provides, which can make it difficult for students to make the best choice. For example, when looking up the noun *"view"*, users are often confused when selecting one amongst the many adjectives suggested like "*popular*", "*prevailing*", "*forthright*" (See **Figure 5.1**).

Figure 5.1

Example 1 of collocations with "view"



Another limitation of Ozdic is that it only focuses on the English collocation function. More specifically, Ozdic does not have the ability to render the meaning of different languages like *Google Translate* or explain word meaning in detail like *Cambridge* or *Oxford dictionaries* or look up words in equivalence between English and Vietnamese like *Vietgle*, to name only a few. Students, therefore, suggest that Ozdic can be effective for translating from Vietnamese to English only.

5.4. Recommendations

From the benefits and difficulties identified when using Ozdic, some feasible solutions can be suggested to maximise the strengths while minimising the limitations of this tool. First of all, to solve the problems related to appropriate word choice, students need to pay attention to the groups of words that are close in meaning. Looking back to the noun "*view*" (**Figure 5.1**), one can see the

words on the same row and enclosed in the sign are synonyms. For example, adjectives such as "*prevailing*" and "*popular*", "*conflicting*" and "*opposing*", "*rosy*" and "*optimistic*" "*forthright*" and "*clear*" are seen as synonymous. Therefore, students should choose words based on the meaning as expressed in the original sentence to produce the most relevant rendition. In addition, students do not have to memorize all the accompanying words. Instead, they can select a few phrases that are typical and easy to apply to many contexts.

What is more, being a collocation dictionary, Ozdic is itself a strength as well as a limitation. For that reason, to maximise translating experience, it is important that students use Ozdic in combination with other online tools in order to have a successful translation. Some online tools that can be suggested here include (i) *Google Translate; (ii) thesaurus.com; (iii) Online Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary; (iv)* Online *Cambridge English Dictionary;* and *(v) Grammarly.*

Besides, being a mono-lingual collocation dictionary, Ozdic hardly supports users in translating from English into Vietnamese. Rather, it can help improve the quality of translation when it comes to checking the language of translation to ensure naturalness of expression. Below are some suggested ways of using Ozdic to maximise students' translation competence, thus enhancing the quality of the translation:

+ Translating simple sentences from Vietnamese into English
+ Identifying new words to properly render the meaning expressed
+ Shifting verbs into nouns, using Ozdic to look for accompanying verbs with these nouns
+ Looking for an appropriate adjective that goes with certain nouns and vice versa, or nouns that can collocate with certain adjectives, using Ozdic to search for appropriate adjectives/ nouns.

For example, with the sentence *"Biến đổi khí hậu đang đe doạ loài người",* a simple literal translation into English of this sentence is "*Climate change is threatening mankind*." Here, the verb "*threaten*" can be shifted into the noun "*threat*", which creates an opportunity to use collocations. This is because when being converted into a noun, it is essential that a verb be used to collocate with this noun, thus creating a need for use of Ozdic for collocation with this noun.

When looking up the word "*threat*" on ozdic.com, a series of verbs are suggested, like *pose*, *present*, *be*, *represent*, and so forth. Inserting this verb into "*threat*", we have the sentence like this:

"Climate change is posing a threat to mankind."

Because "*threat*" is a noun, it can have an adjective that goes with this noun, and that expresses the meaning conveyed in the original sentence. A search in Ozdic allows users to choose one of the adjectives that can best be used with 'threat':

"Climate change is posing an imminent threat to mankind."

This is just an example, which shows the usefulness of using Ozdic for the practice of translation and for a natural rendition of meaning as expressed in the original text. However, the translated text should not be deviated from the original text in terms of the meaning of expression, which means the translator needs to consider the appropriacy and relevance of words used to express meaning in communication.

6. Conclusions

This piece of research has attempted to study the possibility of using Ozdic as an online English collocation dictionary in the practice of translation for English-majored students at UD-UFLS. With the qualitative supported by quantifiable data presented in tables and figures, the research findings have so far approved the hypotheses set out for the research regarding the usefulness of Ozdic in language learning and translation practice and the benefits assumed by the research participants through the survey questionnaires and experimental exercises. Rich data have confirmed the fact that students have a tendency of using Ozdic and will continue to use it as a tool for the practice of translation in the future.

The study also points out the specific benefits of Ozdic in improving translation skills for students

of English in their third year of the English language programme. However, some students still have difficulty in using this tool. A number of possible solutions have thus been proposed to promote the efficiency of using this online dictionary tool. In other words, Ozdic has supported students in their translation practice, and its impact can be maximised when Ozdic is used in combination with other online tools or internet-assisted resources.

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Khảo sát sử dụng từ điển thành ngữ trực tuyến trong thực hành dịch cho sinh viên chuyên ngành tiếng Anh tại Trường Đại học Ngoại ngữ, Đại học Đà Nẵng

Tóm tắt: Nghiên cứu này nhằm nghiên cứu khả năng khai thác Ozdic - từ điển thành ngữ tiếng Anh trực tuyến trong việc rèn luyện kĩ năng dịch của sinh viên tiếng Anh năm thứ ba, Trường Đại học Ngoại ngữ, Đại học Đà Nẵng. Từ dữ liệu định tính và định lượng thu thập được qua bảng câu hỏi và bài tập thực nghiệm, đề tài cho thấy Ozdic là một công cụ hữu ích để rèn luyện kĩ năng dịch, đặc biệt là đối với sinh viên chuyên ngành tiếng Anh. Bên cạnh đó, các vấn đề nảy sinh trong quá trình dịch mà sinh viên gặp phải khi sử dụng Ozdic cũng được bàn thảo, từ đó đưa ra những đề xuất khả thi nhằm nâng cao hiệu quả sử dụng Ozdic trong việc học tiếng nói chung và trong rèn luyện kỹ năng dịch thuật nói riêng.

Từ khóa: Ozdic; từ điển thành ngữ tiếng Anh trực tuyến; công cụ trực tuyến; dịch thuật; sinh viên tiếng Anh.