

**Female Translation Students' Knowledge and Use of Online Dictionaries and Terminology  
Data Banks: A Case Study****Nadia Sabbah**Department of English and Translation, College of Humanities, Prince Sultan University,  
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia**Reem Alsalem**Department of English Language and Translation, College of Languages and Translation,  
King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia**Abstract**

This study aims to determine whether translation students at an undergraduate translation program have sufficient awareness of the availability and usability of online vocabulary and terminology search tools that can be of valid assistance to a translator. The study surveyed 50 female translation students of the Translation Program at Prince Sultan University, Saudi Arabia. The survey consisted of questions about knowledge and use patterns and included texts for translating between English and Arabic. Results show that although the students know and use a variety of online resources, they still lack in awareness of some of the very useful ones, and a small minority of the students does not use monolingual dictionaries at all. Analysis of the students' translations of selected terms reveals that availability of excellent online resources is not enough to prevent mistranslations if the students cannot select the right equivalent. The study has implications for lexicographers about the dictionary features most frequently used by translators-to-be. It also provides pedagogical tips for translator trainers who should guide their students to making use of the full potential of online dictionaries and term banks in order to achieve better translation outcomes.

*Key words:* CAT tools, online dictionaries, term base, terminology data banks, translation

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## Introduction

For anyone working or studying within the field of translation, reference materials are of utmost importance. In the digital age, the expression “no man is an island” has never been more accurate. The communication of knowledge among individuals in the field is increasingly more complex and more important. Globalization manifests itself in world-wide open channels of communication at all levels. Language specialists and professionals are no exception when it comes to matters of knowledge transfer. Speed is the buzz word of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, to the extent that information needs to be relayed as quickly as possible whenever demanded from any spot on earth, and sometimes the cost would not be an issue if the case is very critical! Translation has never been of much demand as it is in our technology-dominated world. Translators are constantly searching for up-to-date resources to assist in the production of output that meets expectations (Hartly, 2009).

Both accessibility and the consistency of terminology usage can be essential for the concerned parties in the practice of translation. Since translation is considered by the majority of scholars as an interdisciplinary field, linguistics and lexicology play a paramount role in the discipline (Baker, 2011; Aziz, 2015).

Translation relies profoundly on the comprehension of the denotative as well as connotative meanings of the source text. The lexical items of the source text (SL) comprise phrases and clauses that need reading between the lines (Newmark, 1988). A translator will definitely need to go to great lengths and utilize all available resources to embark upon a satisfactory target text (TT). Surfing online, browsing a plethora of references can be very time-consuming and there might still be potential misinterpretation of sensitive culture bound language areas such as puns and metaphorical images.

The increase of Computer Assisted Translation (CAT) tools has been notable since their creation in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Machine Translation is never the only technological assistance developed for translators and language users. In the field of translation, in particular, quality is not a matter to be taken lightly. Most translators and translation students are in lack of sufficient knowledge when it comes to computerized tools that can assist in their work. Translator training is undoubtedly of great importance as to acknowledge the existing and updated tools online or even offline that can be of aid to translators. Many scholars stressed the importance of integrating CAT tools in translation pedagogy (Kenny, 2007; Depraetere, 2010; Garcia, 2010; Carl et al., 2014; Killman, 2018) in order to enable graduates to get jobs. Kenny argues that such integration also promotes research in a multiplicity of fields including "translation pedagogy, terminography, CAT tools evaluation, human-machine interaction, and text analysis and composition" (Kenny, 1999: 78). There are various CAT tools that translation trainers can consider essential to be included into translation course curriculum. Tools of localization, word processing, subtitling,

translation memories (MT), terminology management systems, and terminology data banks (TDB) are among the commonly known CAT tools (Odacioglu & Kokturk, 2015).

The main focus of translation training lies within helping learners to produce accurate and timely translations. Yet, mistranslation has been a common observation in some students' translation output. In order to provide effective training, it is key to find out the root of the problem, be it ignorance of the translation tools, misuse of such tools, or else.

This paper aims to investigate translation students' knowledge, attitude and use patterns of various kinds of online dictionaries (ODs) and terminology databases (TDBs). The paper will hopefully show how aware the students are of the available resources online that can help translator trainees make informed decisions during the translation process. The following section discusses the translation technologies available today, and provides an overview of the dictionaries and term bases to set the background against which students' knowledge is to be measured.

### **Background**

Time is a significant word here! Not all translators have the luxury of time and space when a project of translation presents itself. Corporate translation professionals, freelancers, as well as translation students might be walking on thin ice when a project or even just a small-scale document is in demand.

Many will prefer to take the shortcut and resort to quickly accessible resources that can serve for an urgent matter on hand. However, the paradox lies within the balance between the fast and the accurate! A poorly produced translation will definitely jeopardize the reliability of the person behind that output. A translator is often described as the unknown warrior working from backstage. Nevertheless, once there is an occurrence of mistranslation or misinterpretation, all fingers will be pointing to that individual. The question is then: how can a balance be achieved between quality and quantity of translation?

Professionally speaking, there are no quick solutions to a fine refined product in any industry. Valuable work must consume dedicated endeavor of extensive investigation and sincere labor until the last moment touch. Yet, a compromise has been concluded over a long span of time for translators consisting chiefly in the use of tools such as dictionaries. Value-based selection of dictionaries is a critical issue that researchers and translators should acknowledge. As Samuel Johnson, the creator of the *Dictionary of the English Language* in 1755 said, "Dictionaries are like watches: the worst is better than none, and the best cannot be expected to go quite true" (Johnson, 1994, p. 378).

Looking up a word out of context might not be ideal at all, but it can serve a purpose coupled with the translator's knowledge and familiarity with both the source language (SL) and the target one (TL). The dilemma of selecting a "decontextualized" literal equivalent will never cease to exist (Mahmoud, 2017), especially if certain factors contribute to that problem, among which are integrity and ethics on the part of the translator, as well as competence and expertise (Baker, 2011; Ghazala, 2008; Venuti, 1998). It is, therefore, only logical, for scholars and experts in the field to have the inclination to constantly research and provide solutions to address the issue

of translators' need for aid tools in their work specialty. The earlier format of an electronic dictionary was called machine-readable dictionary (MRD) that started to be seen in the mid 1960's, and stayed in favour until the 1990's (Granger, 2012). The advent of the computerized age has added a new dimension to the word "tools" as to include assistance beyond the paper printed materials. Electronic tools (also known as e-tools (McDonald, 2005)) are one click away from today's translators' fingertips. Such tools can be in the form of word processors, translation memory systems, word count tools and many more. The term CAT tools has gained popularity in the past few decades and received much dedicated research and massive attention. The focus of many such tools resides in the degree of how satisfactory the product is for the end users (Bowker, 2002; Lew, 2014).

Driven by globalized economic needs, it goes without saying that companies are competing to produce the optimal product for the pleasure and approval of a wide range of clients (Hartly, 2009). Hence, among the mostly demanded assistive tools for professionals or would-be-professionals in the field are the renowned online dictionaries (ODs) and terminology data bases (TDBs). The latter, whether mono-, bi- or multilingual, can be of great demand to translators and other language users for other purposes. The market has never been in more competition for the progress and enhancement of such tools as it is now to meet today's needs (Tulgar, 2017). Due to the heavy weight of volumes of some unabridged printed dictionary material, they fell out of favour for consumers. Hence, a digitized version of a dictionary is the better medium for users (Austermuhl, 2001; Lew, 2014; Zheng & Wang, 2016; Wu et al., 2016).

Electronic handheld dictionaries<sup>1</sup> are compatible with convenient portable sizes but they have the unequivocal disadvantage of being quickly outdated! Some of the offline electronic devices and CD software were phased out and did not survive the rapidly evolving world of constantly advancing languages, neologisms, technical jargons and more. In the context of the current study, the investigators have observed that the students of the translation discipline at PSU refrained from using English-Arabic electronic dictionaries in their assignments or examinations since 2012. The majority of students opted for downloaded versions on smart phones or the accessible ODs (Collins, 2016).

With that in mind, smart businesses sought rather practical and instant technological suggestions manifested in the often free online medium of dictionaries. Accessible ODs are getting more popular and "smarter" by the minute in our digital age. Apart from the commercial supply and demand, academia has a justifiable interest in thoroughly investigated term usage and all details a lexical entry entails: pronunciation, definition, contextual examples, equivalents and much more. ODs can also include pictures which facilitate comprehension for particularly visual users (Sanchez Rasmus, 2005; Schmied, 2009; Lew, 2013). TDBs and ODs fulfil a significant purpose for professionals. Term banks carry within them the huge amounts of work outcome of a number of lexicographers, terminologists, linguists, technicians, and translators. The word query in an OD offers more information; whereas, the structure of TDBs, most often, introduces the source lexical item and its equivalent (Imre, 2015). As mentioned earlier, a term within a context can offer a better aid in decision making of word selection. TDBs and ODs can meet the needs of contextual term queries.

A terminology bank is a term base that is made available on the internet or on a CD-ROM for the use of translators and other language users and learners (Palumbo, 2009; Allard, 2012). Not all TDBs are freely accessible on the internet, or at least not the full version of such enormous corpora. A TDB is a larger output that can include term bases (TBs). A *term base* is “an electronic collection of structured term entries in the form of individual or client-server databases of a relatively smaller size and with a more limited audience than a term bank” (Allard, 2012, p.16). Term banks can be bilingual or multilingual. Term entries typically provide information about term definitions, equivalents, usage, source, date, etc. TDBs can be freely accessed by the public, limited to certain users affiliated with an organization, or they can be a compromise of a freely available term base for all users but still with some restrictions. Clients who provide TDBs to translators for their personal projects can adjust them to translators’ needs in order to expedite their own work.

Online specialized dictionaries<sup>2</sup> are very commonly used and more frequently available to all in need of a term search mechanism. ODs benefit from the term banks that already exist and from all available computerized term bases. “These banks are the future tools for unification in terminology. They are expected to play an important role in the transfer of science, technology and professional skills” (Felber, 1982, p. 4). A number of specialized dictionaries online were created depending on existing TDBs. Such translation tools are to facilitate the job of a translator when consulting any sort of term data base.

The better the provision of terms within contexts or sentence examples, the better the value of the reference. Without textual knowledge there can be poor judgement in terms of word selection. Dire consequences can be expected when users lack competence and familiarity with term nuances and connotations. Comprehension of the source message is the first and foremost key of well conveyed meaning, and undoubtedly, terminology search tools can lead to inaccuracy if misused.

Many studies have been conducted to measure the use of ODs & TDBs. In fact, according to Muller-Spitzer et al. (2011), there are 250-300 studies on ODs. However, most of these studies depended on log files, which could be misleading because they did not focus on user needs and struggles or frustrations with ODs. In their study, the researchers collected data through two online surveys on the use of ODs. They asked more than 1000 participants to rate the features of reference books. The results showed that participants mentioned the classical features (reliability, clarity, up-to-date) highest, and rated unique features least such as suggestions for further browsing, multimedia, and adaptability. Results also show that although users appreciate innovative features, they may not rate them high because they are not used to them.

The authors differentiate between online terminological dictionaries and specialized translation dictionaries in terms of how helpful they are to translators. The former type is prepared by linguists and not sufficient. The latter type meets translators' need derived from both lexicography and technology. These are better for translating terms and phrases and provide information on collocations (Fuertes-Olivera & Nielsen, 2012).

There are not enough studies that tackle the adequacy of ODs & TDBs to learners of the translation discipline. This paper attempts to contribute to bridging this gap. It aims to investigate translation students' knowledge and perception, use patterns and satisfaction with ODs & TDBs.

## **Methodology**

### ***Participants***

This study aims at exploring translation students' knowledge about and pattern of using online dictionaries and term banks. The participants were 50 female undergraduate students who studied at the English and Translation Department, College of Humanities, Prince Sultan University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

The Translation Program begins with courses aiming at developing language skills and a variety of relevant abilities, and content courses that pave the way for later focus on translation theory and practice. The actual practical translation courses within the Department study plan are offered during the last two years (over a five-year-span). General and specialized courses include within their learning outcomes the skills for properly using dictionaries as tools for translation. Within a pedagogical frame, students are exposed to the dictionary-usage skills in all translation courses. Dictionaries can be of electronic, online and paper-based types.

The study plan offers one course that teaches about CAT tools, and consequently a variety of TDBs and ODs. The questionnaire was distributed to students at different levels of the study plan; most of them were juniors (58.4%) and seniors (31.2 %), and only (10.4 %) were sophomores.

### ***Procedure***

The questionnaire included two texts for translation. Both texts were in specialized subject areas. The English text was within the business domain (180-word count), while the Arabic text tackled a rather religious topic (113-word count). The questionnaire was distributed to students of different study levels: Seniors, i.e. at the fourth or fifth year out of a 5-year-study plan (31.2% of the participants); Juniors, i.e. at the third year of study (58.4%), and Sophomores, the second-year students of the study program (10.4%). Most of the participants were expected to have been exposed to a variety of subject matters and a considerable number of consulted dictionaries in their translation assignments. The participants also provided information about their obtained GPA. They had a mean average of 3.3 out of 4. The students had a minimum score of 2.3 and a maximum of 4.

The questionnaire was distributed over two academic years: 2016 and 2017. The fifty participants were asked about the frequency with which they used ODs and TDBs in general, reasons why they used them, and the degree of their satisfaction with them. The questionnaire introduced a list of web-based dictionaries and investigated the frequency with which the students used them, and their evaluation of how useful they were for translating. The tool also interrogated about which ODs and TDBs were most helpful, and about the features that the students thought made certain ODs and TDBs useful. Finally, in the questionnaire, the students were required to recommend some good TDBs and ODs for translators and translation students. The purpose of the

questionnaire is to elicit information on the students' usage and perceptions of the ODs and TDBs. The information will be presented in the form of frequency lists in the upcoming sections.

## Results

### *Questionnaire results*

All 50 students said that they had used ODs before. Responses indicate that (39.5 %) of the participants use online dictionaries always, while (43.8 %) use them frequently, and only (16.7 %) use them sometimes.

In response to another question about the type of online dictionaries they use, the majority of the students (75%) reported that they use both monolingual and bilingual dictionaries. Only (18.7%) use bilingual dictionaries alone, while only (6.3%) use monolingual dictionaries alone.

The next question investigated the reasons why students resort to online dictionaries. The results show that the top reasons selected were: "to check meaning", then "to translate from English to Arabic", then "to check for synonyms". Fewer students selected the reason "to translate from Arabic to English" or "to check spelling". Only two students used ODs to look for example sentences where a certain word is used.

**Table (1) *Frequencies of Reasons to Use ODs***

<b>reasons</b>	<b>frequency</b>	<b>percentage</b>
To check meaning	44	26.5%
To translate from English to Arabic	36	21.6%
To check for synonyms	33	19.9%
To translate Arabic to English	29	17.5%
To check spelling	21	12.7%
To look for examples since some online dictionaries offer sentences on each word	3	1.8%

As for the students' satisfaction with the quality of online dictionaries, the vast majority of the participants (77.1%) chose to say that they were "somehow satisfied depending on the type of text and dictionary type", while only (22.9%) reported that they were satisfied with a definite "yes". None of the students were completely unsatisfied.

**Table (2) *Frequency and Percentage of Satisfaction Using ODs***

<b>Dictionary use satisfaction</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	11	22.9%
Somehow satisfied depending on the type of text and dictionary type	37	77.1%
No	0	0%
Total	50	100.0%

The questionnaire included a question that lists 16 ODs and TDBs, and required the participants to respond by selecting the dictionaries that they prefer. Results show that the most preferred ODs are Almaany and Oxford Dictionary (English mono-dictionary), then Cambridge, Reverso, Glosbe, the Free Dictionary(English mono-dictionary), Alqamoos, and Word Reference. Most of the participants thought that ODs were useful for translating, while only (4.2%) said that they were only sometimes useful. A percentage of (37.5%) of the participants did not use any of the listed ODs.

**Table (3) Frequency and Percentage of Using Dictionaries Provided in the List:**

Using dictionaries listed	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	28	58.3%
few of them	2	4.2%
No	18	37.5%
Total	50	100.0%

In response to another question about which ODs they found to be helpful, even if not within the Questionnaire helpful list, (18.5%) of participants chose Almaany, and closely, another (18%) preferred Cambridge bilingual OD. A (14%) of participants favored Oxford mono-OD. The other dictionaries and TDBs were far behind on the "most useful" list, as shown in Table (4).

**Table (4) Frequency of OD & TDB Preference:**

Dictionary	Frequency	Percentage
Almaany	38	18.5%
Cambridge	36	18%
Oxford dictionary	28	14%
The free dictionary	17	8.50%
Reverso	14	7%
Your dictionary	14	7%
Word reference	13	6.50%
Alqamoos	11	5.50%
Glosbe	10	5%
Merriam-Webster's Dictionary	5	2.50%
Lexicool	3	1.50%
Onelook	3	1.50%
Ectaco	2	1%
Lexilogos	2	1%
Dictionary.com	2	1%
Kamusi	2	1%
Bab.la	1	0.50%

The participants were required to specify the features that made a certain dictionary most helpful for them. The number one feature was "providing several meanings of the entered word",

followed by "providing synonyms", then providing the "part of speech". Fewer students mentioned "Full definitions", "being multilingual", and "providing acronyms and idioms". Even fewer stated that they preferred dictionaries that were easy to use, organized, sophisticated, and provide etymology and pronunciation in both American and British English.

Participants were also asked to mention whether they would recommend the online dictionaries given in the list. Most of the students (33.8%) chose Almaany. Reverso ,Oxford and Glosbe had a preference of (13.2%), (11.8%) and (10.3%) respectively. Other dictionaries followed with significantly less preference. Their percentages of preference can be seen in table (5).

**Table (5) Recommended ODs from the List :**

Dictionary	Frequency	percentage
Almaany	23	33.8%
Reverso	9	13.2%
Oxford dictionary	8	11.8%
Glosbe	7	10.3%
Alqamoos	5	7.4%
Cambridge	3	4.4%
Merriam-Webster's Dictionary	3	4.4%
The free dictionary	2	2.9%
Word reference	2	2.9%
Lexicool	2	2.9%
Kamusi	2	2.9%
Ectaco	1	1.5%
Lexilogos	1	1.5%

Finally, the students were asked to suggest other resources for translators than those on the list. Some seem to have misunderstood the question and responded by suggesting titles that are already on the list. Others suggested new resources; specifically, dictionaries made by international organizations (2 participants), and hiring online assistants, Saudi Terminology Data Bank,<sup>2</sup> SDL Online Dictionary, Proz.com, and Cambridge (one participant each).

**Table (6) Frequency of Suggested Resources**

Suggested resources	Frequency	percentage
Merriam Webster's Dictionary	5	15.6%
Reverso Context	4	12.5%
Google translation	4	12.5%
Dictionary.com	4	12.5%
Oxford dictionary	3	9.4%
Al Maany	3	9.4%
PDF dictionaries and dictionaries made by international organizations	2	6.3%
hiring on-line assistants	1	3.1%

Saudi Terminology Data Bank	1	3.1%
SDL online dictionary	1	3.1%
Proz.com	1	3.1%
Cambridge, and Word Reference	1	3.1%
Bing translator	1	3.1%
Bassam Hajjaj Company for translation	1	3.1%

Evident from the table above, students showed lack of capability of differentiating between ODs and other sources of information on word meaning. Bing and Google online translators, for example, are definitely outside the category of TDBs and ODs, they are rather machine translation engines. By the same token, hiring on-line assistants and the company included lastly in the table of suggestions are far from what was required by the question.

The questionnaire included two texts for translation. The list of ODs and TDBs was supposedly a helpful one; however, students were given the option to resort to other ODs if found more convenient, on account of not being an MT. The time duration for the survey elements was two hours. Each participant was required to finish translation and answer survey questions in maximum time period of two hours. The main purpose of the translation part of the survey was to ensure that participants authentically utilized and consequently filled out the data about the 17 suggested TDBs and ODs<sup>3</sup>.

### *Translation Analysis*

Terms were selected at random to compare and therefore analyze the choices of equivalents that the participants made. From the English text, the terms “depression” and “recession” were chosen. From the Arabic text, that tackled a religious specialized field with a touch upon financial issues within Islamic banking, the terms “المرايحة”, which back translates into “resale for profit”, and the expression “الحمد لله رب العالمين”, which back translates into “Praise be to Allah, Lord of both Worlds”, were tested across the participants’ output. The latter Arabic lexical item was chosen as an expression; a cluster of words, rather than merely a single word, a feature common within Islamic terminology.

For the first lexical English term; “recession”, (68.75 %) of participants were able to arrive at the proper Arabic equivalent: “الركود: rokood”, while 2% used: “التراجع: taraju”, (2%) “انخفاض: enkhifad”, (2%) “كساد, Kasad”, which is the proper equivalent for “depression”. In back translation, the literal meaning for the Arabic terms respectively is: regression, decline, and depression, so the last Arabic provided equivalent should have been exclusive to “depression” not “recession”. Among all participants, few choices did not fit this context.

The second term of the English text tested was: “depression”. Participants who selected the better equivalent : كساد: kasad, were (37.5%). A mistranslation: اكتئاب: ikti’ab”, which can be an Arabic equivalent only if the source term appeared to describe a mental status of depression, amounted to (18.75%). Less improper word selections were; انهيار: inhiyar: (13.6%) which can denote a “collapse”, أزمة: azma, that properly means “crisis”: (2%) كسادة: kasadah”: (2%) which isn’t a meaningful Arabic word to begin with, and the equivalent, that should have been used for “recession” only, was ; rokood : (14.5 %).

The students were advised and instructed to consult a list of monolingual as well bilingual ODs and TDBs in the time of translating the survey texts. When inserted into a number of bilingual ODs, of Arabic and English language pair, like “Almaany” and “bab.la”, for instance, many word entries were offered. It would then be the role of the translator to examine the several entry suggestions. Using a monolingual dictionary can provide more accurate findings when the word usage is examined. Onelook dictionary, TheFreedictionary and Dictionary.com are excellent examples of English mono-ODs. Other Ods and TDBs like Glosbe and WordReference, for example, offered rather accurate equivalents based on word domain. Nevertheless, Glosbe dictionary suggested “تراجع” as the first choice for “recession”, while it can literally mean “regression”, and “كساد” “kasad” came third. The latter equivalent is the more appropriate for the context in question.

It could be worth mentioning that a word choice as the Arabic *ikti'ab* اكتئاب was seen as an output of an online MT rather than ODs or TDBs. The Arabic word equivalent can be used for “depression” only when it is not used as a term of an economic genre. ODs can offer all existing equivalents, yet recommended ODs are the ones that aid the student by providing the domain in which a term appears, a strategy used by many of the ODs and TDBs mentioned in this paper.

Concerning the Arabic chosen terms, the first lexical item to be examined was “المرابحة” Al-murabaha” which is a term used in Islamic banking systems. This term has no one-to-one target equivalent in English. Senior students of a translation program should have by that level gained the appropriate instruction as to which strategies to employ in such culture-bound terminology (Newmark, 1988; Dickens et al., 2002; Elewa, 2015; Daghighi & Hashemian, 2016). About (35 %) of the participants opted for the couplet strategy. Two of the participants used an English equivalent that consisted of one word, a matter that did not render accuracy; e.g. “arbitrage”, and (31.25%) used a variation of English only phrases with no transliterated forms: “profit”, “Islamic investment (Turning to Profit)”, “Islamic resale for profit” and “Islamic banking systems”, to name some. A mistranslation of (2%) was detected in a term choice of “usury” which can absolutely ruin the meaning. Four percent of the participants did not translate the concept at all.

An online dictionary like “Almaany”, which offers a variety of options within a certain language field, gave the English: “resale for profit”, which can explain the choice for some participants. In a dictionary like Glosbe that offers a bidirectional language of English and Arabic, plus services of redirecting to parallel texts within the TM and the TDB of the same website, options like: “cost-plus-fixed-fee contract” were offered. Such a lexical choice was made in one participant’s output (2 %).

Resorting to Arabic monolingual dictionaries can assist in better understanding the Arabic term. Online Arabic monolingual TDBs are provided within sites like: Alqamoos, Almojam Alarabi Aljami’, Lexilogos, Baheth) and some others suggested in this paper earlier. A student can grasp the Arabic concept and seek to look up the better appropriate English equivalent afterwards. A mistranslated lexical meaning could have consequently been avoided, i.e. the term “usury” which is far from being a proper term choice for the context.

When it comes to the final and last lexical expression selected for analysis, “alhamdulillah rab al’alameen : الحمد لله رب العالمين”, interesting results were obtained. A variation of phrasal equivalents were seen, and all related the source meaning with no harm done to the original message to be conveyed. The equivalent expression “Praise be to Allah the Lord of the worlds” was rendered by (20.8%). “Praise be to Allah, Lord of all creation” was used by (12.5%). One participant used a strategy of addition and used the equivalent: “Praise be to Allah, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds”. The addition was not needed in such a case for such a context. However, it did not result in any mistranslation. One student (2%) used a formal English expression as an equivalent that does not hold any religious implications, “greetings” was only used instead. Also, using a transliterated form of equivalence will not be fulfilling as well. Two students did not translate the full expression. One student (2%) used only a transliterated form of “Al-hamd allah, and two students (4.1%) used an English phrasal equivalent for a different Islamic expression; “In the Name of Allah ,Most Gracious, Most Merciful” that stands for “besmeAllah al-rahman alraheem”.

The second text was within the genre of Islamic context. Students should be repeatedly advised by their teachers not to resort to omitting lexical expressions on subjective basis. Omitting the whole introductory phrase of the source text here was unsolicited. There are many references to consult, contextual areas to examine and translation methodology of specialized texts to consider prior to taking a decision of omission.

“Reverso” online TDB offers equivalents in contexts, a matter that deems vital for a clearer scope on the word usage. Other ODs, as previously mentioned, also offer a variety of entry options along with some language areas in which the term usage can be noticed.

## Discussion

The translation process requires full comprehension of a source text in a certain language to be able to render the same meaning using the words and structures of the target language. Comprehension of the source text means that the translator understands at least the denotative meanings of all the words in the text. This is where dictionaries are most needed. Since there isn't one-to-one lexical or grammatical correspondence between the two languages involved, the translator needs information much more than the simple, one-word equivalents. Language teachers and translator trainers advise their students to use monolingual dictionaries as early as they have reached a level of language proficiency that allows them to understand the definitions of the dictionary. Monolingual dictionaries also provide information on pronunciation, grammatical category and behavior, and context.

Some bilingual dictionaries might not provide context, i.e. a sentence example in which the equivalent is used. Instead, they provide information on the domain of the lexical item. For instance, [bab.la](#) OD is a one-directional dictionary from English into other languages including Arabic. The source work entry involves UK pronunciation (text-to-speech) and part of speech. The Arabic equivalents are provided as single words. The string of equivalents is often called “translations” by most ODs and TDBs.

Alqamoos is a bidirectional English to Arabic OD. It depends on existing corpora from TDBs like UNTERM and ARABTERM, for technical terminology and undergoes constant

expansion and development. Alqamoos also provides an Arabic monolingual dictionary. The domains offered are various, among which are education, IT, social sciences to name a few. Most equivalents in Arabic are provided along with the usage domain, and Google definition of the word.

Glosbe is another excellent example of an OD built upon collaboration of users suggested translations, TDBs in different domains and other open sources. This huge multilingual endeavor is freely accessible and offers several services including adding a new suggested translation to the already existing equivalents. The Arabic equivalents are also given with the part of speech and the word gender. The English source word comes with the part of speech, pronunciation (text-to-speech) and is used within a context. Glosbe also provides parallel texts in which the required word appears, as part of Glosbe TM tool.

Translators need monolingual dictionaries as a first step to understand the meaning of the source text, but they also need bilingual dictionaries to provide them with possible equivalents to choose from based on their understanding. Dictionaries, in fact, are described by Newmark as "...the translator's single, first and most important aid, and a translator who does not consult one when in doubt is arrogant or ignorant or both" (Newmark 1998: 29). Most of the participants in this study (75%) reported that they used both monolingual and bilingual dictionaries, which means they have the awareness that monolingual dictionaries are necessary. However, some students (18.7%) said that they used only bilingual dictionaries. This can lead to change of meaning or incorrect word choice especially when the direction of translation is into the foreign language, which is English in this case.

The problem of avoidance of monolingual dictionaries is probably caused by the low proficiency level leading to the possibility of not understanding the entry's definition. In this case, the student has to look up another word from the definition resulting in a series of look-ups which can be both distracting and confusing for the student. Therefore, it is advisable that students of English or Translation are not referred to dictionaries that they could not handle. There are monolingual dictionaries made especially for learner levels such as *The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, *The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, and *Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners*. Such dictionaries use restricted defining vocabulary and provide information on usage, common errors, and pragmatics, in addition to visual demonstrations for some words.

Most of the well-known learner's dictionaries do not provide their service online, but they may come in a CD form, and have smartphone versions. There are, yet, some ODs claiming explicitly that they serve learners in particular. One such dictionary is *Open Dictionary of English*. There are other ODs such as *Wordnik* and *Wictionary* that do not explicitly address learners, yet their definitions and examples are written in common words.

ODs have the advantage of being accessed everywhere. They are quick, easy to use and updatable, and most of them are free of charge. Moreover, the new generation of translation students has grown up with technology in their hands. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that over (85.4%) of the participants resort to ODs "always" or "frequently". This indicates that the majority

of students in this particular institution may be dependent on such important resources and have made use of them to their full potential. The remaining participants (14.6 %) that selected “sometimes” need to be made more aware of the potential of such dictionaries. They need to be guided to the dictionaries that use simple definitions and provide examples.

The results also clearly show that Almaany OD is quite popular among the participants, which justifies paying it a closer look. Almaany is a multilingual dictionary that is known to the participants to have the advantage of being bi-directional for English and Arabic. The most valuable merit of this data base is that it provides equivalents in all different fields, it specifies the field, and it places the word in two- or three-word contexts to further help in determining the intended meaning. The dictionary is also comprehensive; it rarely gives a zero result as long as the word exists. It also provides the full range of source word derivatives, with the part of speech for each. Arabic words appear with the short vowels on the letters to ensure their correct reading, hence the selection of the correct equivalent. When the source word is Arabic, synonyms are provided instead of definitions to identify the intended meaning for each equivalent. In addition to all these merits, Almaany is fast, free, and easy to use. Such specifications have made Almaany the number one source for the participants in this study. They believe it is the most useful, and they recommend it to fellow translator trainees.

Next in line came Cambridge online bilingual dictionary. The participants' use preference, shown in table (4) above, ranks Cambridge next to Almaany. The online version appeared in 1999 and kept growing. The addition of semi-bilingual pairs, including English to Arabic, is considered somewhat a new addition. The Cambridge Learner Corpus provided this OD with necessary TDBs of 1.5 billion words. It offers more than 18,000 clear definitions in English with Arabic translations. The source English word entry includes the part of speech, pronunciation text-to-speech feature in UK and US English, a definition of the word as well as sentence examples, mainly from Wikipedia. The Arabic equivalent, or translation as so called by the OD, offers only the word with no extra data, unlike the case with the source word. It should also be noted that the dictionary failed to provide the Arabic equivalents of some randomly selected word, among which, for example, is “photosynthesis”. Knowledge of the users preferences of the dictionary specifications can hopefully guide lexicographers into making better dictionaries, translation students into finding the dictionaries that fulfill their needs, and practitioners, instructors and trainers into guiding their students to the best translation resources.

The dictionaries that the participants suggested show that students are aware of the existence of a variety of ODs. Of course, there are dictionaries not mentioned by the participants, but this only can mean that they are happy with the few that they know. These may not be the best dictionaries of all, but if they fulfill the students' needs, then why look for more? It is the duty of the translator trainers to alert the students to the existence of excellent resources and to encourage them to make the best use of them.

Worthy of mention is that in spite of the availability of all the ODs and term bases to the students at their fingertips, the results were not always ideal. The text translation results reveal that some participants had the problem of inability to select the appropriate equivalent. Word selection in translation is always restricted by a number of factors including basically the intended meaning

and collocation. The participants in this study came up with a variety of suggestions that were mostly accurate but did not collocate well. Had they been given a longer time to submit the translation, they may have produced more acceptable equivalence. Future research can consider this limitation when designing its methodology.

### **Pedagogical Implications**

The results have shown that the students check ODs basically to understand words, to find their equivalents so that they use them in translation, or to know synonyms of a word. Fewer students chose to say that they check ODs to know or to confirm the conceptual or linguistic context in which a word occurs. This is the main reason why a translator trainee may use a word that does not fit the context, producing, sometimes, awkward or unfaithful sentences.

This paper is concerned mainly with offering a wider scope knowledge to translation practitioners in general and translation students in particular about some valuable existing ODs and TDBs, knowledge that appears to be much needed after analyzing the survey outcomes. It was interesting to find out that (37.5%) of the participants answered with “No” when asked about the use of ODs and TDBs suggested in the list, which included common monolingual and bilingual, general and specialized ODs. When they were asked to suggest other resources, the replies revealed a clear lack of knowledge of what is a TDB/OD and what is an MT(Google Translate: 12.5%) or even a commercial office or website for translation in general. Another concern of the researchers is to tackle the best approaches of dictionary use within translation pedagogy.

PSU is one academic facility that is highly concerned with blended methods of instruction, i.e. electronic tools and online learning being involved in conventional classrooms. Courses involving written translation should provide their learners with the needed knowledge, strategies and skills in translation practice as to also be prepared for the job market. The translation program at PSU offers three core courses in translation, three in interpreting and two more in theories of translation and computer applications in translation. Students need to sharpen their skills in a somehow short measure of time. Translation skills are highly needed also in the last college requirement prior to graduation, a seven-month internship program that demands implementing the acquired skills of the field of specialization in on-site training. These skills include dictionary-use that can fortunately be improved through guided practice (Cubillo, 2001).

Analysis of the students' translation performance revealed instances of mistranslation that occurred in spite of availability and consultation of high quality ODs or TDBs. Such mistranslations resulted from the students' inability to select the correct equivalent from a range of possibilities and/or inability to evaluate the resulting target text. This indicates that students still lack some of the higher-level skills suggested by Bloom's taxonomy hierarchy (Bloom, 1994). Critical thinking, within the cognitive domain, comprises one of the most needed skill sets for making the proper decisions in selecting equivalents and thus avoiding mistranslations. On account of that, each translation course should allocate a reasonable portion of the syllabus to proper guided dictionary use. A number of ODs can be investigated with assigned texts in both languages i.e.

Arabic and English. Student-instructor feedback and learners' interaction on the subject can render desired outcomes.

Arabic-English bidirectional ODs are essential tools for the practice of translating. However, translation trainees, in general, should not turn blindly to bilingual dictionaries when assuming a task of translation. A two-way dictionary was suggested by Tarp (2004: 36) where he argues that having a dictionary of "two word lists, one bilingual and the other monolingual" is a "model for translation dictionary". He believes that such a type can address several translation problems, and it can be a contribution to lexicography. A one way bilingual dictionary can only be partially useful in the translation production, it might not serve the dictionary users to "identify the right lemmata" (ibid). Whether general or specialized, bi-ODs do not often include all needed "semantic possibilities of words used in context" (Roberts, 1992).

Developing OD skills is the focus of attention in the current research, therefore depending on the findings of the investigated surveys and the published literature on such a topic, the following suggestions can be effective:

- Students need to be aware of as much larger number as possible of updated ODs and TDBs, and most importantly they should be aware of their use, efficiency, suitability to context and accessibility.
- The need to consult a monolingual Arabic OD, e.g. Almaany Arabic-Arabic, and ALbaheth, is often overlooked, probably because students are native speakers of Arabic and may not be aware of the gaps in their knowledge of their own mother tongue.
- All translation trainees should obtain awareness of the significance of monolingual dictionary consultation prior to resorting to a bilingual one. Most bilingual ODs and TDBs lack the necessary contextual data that should aid in selecting the most appropriate equivalent (Stein, 1990; Nesi, 2002; Abu Al-Fadl, 2015).
- TDBs that are freely available online offer parallel texts (e.g. Reverso, Word Reference, Glosbe) that can be considered as the most recommended first step for searching the contextual usage of a lexical item before coming to a decision on an equivalent. Parallel corpora are useful tools to enhance the user's knowledge of equivalence between languages (Alkahtani, 2015; Sabtan, 2016; Alotaibi, 2017).
- There is an abundance of available and accessible ODs in the market today. Translation students, therefore, need to be better enlightened regarding bilingual ODs that offer sentence examples and domain of the required look-ups (e.g. Almaany, Glosbe, Cambridge).
- In the translation field in particular, trainers have a huge responsibility to direct their students to the best translation tools and their usage. This requires that trainers reinforce their knowledge by seeking relevant training and keeping updated with the latest developments in the field (Liu, 2014).
- Students should acknowledge the fact that a word equivalent in a certain domain might be different from that in an OD or a TDB, no matter how updated it is. This can be due to a multiplicity of social and cultural factors that might control the word usage. For instance,

Arabic term “dakhil” , دخل, can have a multiplicity of English equivalents with its query in Almaany OD, most anticipated of which is “income”. However, an institution in Saudi Arabia holding the title: الهيئة العامة للزكاة و الدخل can have the mistranslation of General Authority of Zakat and Income, when the correct English title officially used is : General Authority of Zakat and Tax<sup>4</sup>.

### Limitations:

It is often recommended for any translation practitioner, let alone students, to ponder the decision of equivalence after spending some time in analysing the source message. In the survey, the translation task was required to be completed within the same 2-hour period needed for answering questionnaire inquiries as well. In a more ideal situation, translation students should be given a longer period of time to fully investigate recommended TDBs and ODs along with enough time to contemplate the intended meanings of the ST and attempt translation afterwards. The authors of this paper acknowledge this limitation and its potential effect on the results.

Another limitation of the research is that the number of participants (50) hardly allows generalizability of the findings. In the academic institution where this survey was conducted, i.e. PSU, the average number of senior students in the translation discipline; the English and Translation Department, are 45 to 55 individuals per year. This explains the number of questionnaire participants which can be considered small compared with other studies investigating similar problems. However, the results still suggest that the investigators' observation regarding the ODs and TDBs awareness and use patterns among translation students may be true. There is undoubtedly a need for future large-scale studies to confirm the current research findings.

### Conclusion:

Translation trainees whether at certain certified translation programs or within some academic institutions will always resort to dictionary use in translation practice. Millennials in particular can hardly be convinced of using tools other than electronic or the commonly consulted ones via the World Wide Web. The question will continue to be which CAT tools are to be most practical and satisfactory for the task on hand? It was the purpose of this paper to investigate the students' use of current updated tools in the field of translation concerning Internet-based dictionaries and terminology data banks. In addition, the paper offered tips on utilizing the available free updated ODs to all end users especially students. The case study findings in this research can be considered a common case among beginner learners in the discipline of translation. Nevertheless, it would always be upon the shoulders of educators to offer and facilitate the knowledge acquisition and accordingly the implementation of the most recommended strategies for better learning outcomes.

### Notes

1. Al-Mawrid & Al-Atlas (Arabic-English).
2. Saudi Terminology Data Bank (BASM): <http://basml.kacst.edu.sa/> is still under processes of quality and improvement.

3. Questionnaire is attached to the research paper. For a larger number of ODS/TDBs, visit:  
<https://www.ats-group.net/dictionaries/dictionary-english-arabic2.html>
4. <https://www.gazt.gov.sa/en>

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## Appendix

### Questionnaire :

#### Data collection on: Features & Benefits of Online Data Banks for Translators:

#### Sample Texts:

- (1) **Economic recession** is a period of general economic decline and is typically accompanied by a drop in the stock market, an increase in unemployment, and a decline in the housing market. Generally, a recession is less severe than a depression.

#### **Factors that Cause Recessions**

**High interest rates** are a cause of recession because they limit liquidity, or the amount of money available to invest.

Another factor is increased inflation. **Inflation** refers to a general rise in the prices of goods and services over a period of time. As inflation increases, the percentage of goods and services that can be purchased with the same amount of money decreases.

**Reduced consumer confidence** is another factor that can cause a recession. If consumers believe the economy is bad, they are less likely to spend money.

**Reduced real wages**, another factor, refers to wages that have been adjusted for inflation. Falling real wages means that a worker's paycheck is not keeping up with inflation. The worker might be making the same amount of money, but his purchasing power has been reduced.

(2)

الحمد لله رب العالمين ، وأفضل الصلاة وأتم التسليم على سيدنا محمد وعلى آله وصحبه أجمعين ، ومن والاهم بإحسان إلى يوم الدين إذا كانت معرفة الضار من النافع وتحري الطبيبات من دون الخبائث يتطلب أفضل الوسائل والأساليب في مختلف مجالات الحياة ، فإن البحث عن هذه الوسائل والأساليب يعد من جوهر العبادة ، بل إنه لا يمكن تحقيق أولويات وأهداف الشريعة من دون أن يتم هذا البحث. ومن هذا المبدأ تعد دراسة البيع ومعه أحد أساليب الاستثمار الإسلامي ( المرابحة) وأثرها على تطور المصارف الإسلامية من حيث تعظيم المنفعة والفائدة على المصارف والمجتمع على حد سواء ، يعتبر أحد أهم عناصر النظام الإنمائي الإسلامي بشرط أن تقوم على أسس وضوابط الشريعة السمحة

Online Dictionaries & Terminology Data Banks suggested for this study:

1. <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/>
2. <https://en.glosbe.com/>
3. <http://www.wordreference.com/>
4. <http://www.lexicool.com/dictionary.asp?ID=XQ5GR415995>
5. <http://dictionary.reverso.net/>
6. <http://www.ectaco.com/English-Arabic-Dictionary/?refid=-1>
7. <http://kamusi.org/>
8. [http://www.lexilogos.com/english/arabic\\_dictionary](http://www.lexilogos.com/english/arabic_dictionary)
9. <http://en.bab.la/dictionary/english-arabic/>
10. <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/>
11. <http://www.alqamoos.org/>
12. <http://www.ats-group.net/dictionaries/dictionary-english-arabic.html>
13. <http://www.onelook.com/>
14. <http://oxforddictionary.so8848.com/>
15. <http://www.almaany.com/>
16. <http://www.yourdictionary.com/diction1.html>
17. <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english-arabic/>

The two texts can be translated with the assistance of the suggested list of dictionaries.

Kindly do not resort to "Google/translate".

Feedback needs to be provided on the extent of assistance the free online dictionaries offer users.

**A. General information:**

GPA: \_

Level:

Term:

**B. Free online dictionaries used in translating from Arabic into English and vice versa.**

❖ Please read each question and circle your choice.

1. Have you ever used an online dictionary before while translating? (if your answer is yes, kindly answer questions 2 & 3)
  - Yes
  - No
  - Sometimes
2. How often do you use online dictionaries?
  - Always
  - Frequently
  - Sometimes
  - Never
3. What type of online dictionaries do you normally use?
  - Monolingual
  - Bilingual
  - Both
4. Why do you use online dictionaries in translation? (You may choose more than one answer)
  - To check meaning
  - To check for synonyms
  - To check spelling
  - To translate from English to Arabic
  - To translate Arabic to English
  - Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_
5. Were you satisfied with the dictionary you used?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Somehow satisfied depending on the type of text and dictionary type
6. Have you ever used any of the online dictionaries listed above?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Few of them
7. What online dictionaries do you prefer to use? (You can choose more than one answer)

_____ Cambridge	_____ Glosbe	_____ Lexicool
_____ Reverso	_____ Ectaco	_____ Kamusi
_____ Lexilogos	_____ babla	_____ Alqamoos
_____ Onelook	_____ Almaany	_____ Cambridge
_____ Oxford dictionary	_____ The free dictionary	_____ Advanced Translation Services
_____ Your dictionary	_____ Word reference	_____ Others (please specify)

8. Do you think online dictionaries are useful while translating?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Sometimes
9. Do you think online dictionaries help you effectively in your translation?

**A.**

**B.No,because**

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1. Which of the data banks listed was most helpful?

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2. Why? Whose features were more helpful?
3. Are there any other suggestions for more beneficial resources?
4. What's the time duration for translating each text?
5. How many of the provided dictionaries in this paper would you recommend to others?  
For monolingual dictionaries:  
For bilingual:

Sincere thanks!  
2017