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Collocations in legal language in online monolingual English learners' dictionaries

Abstract

The thesis reports on a study into collocation in legal language in online monolingual English learners' dictionaries. It begins with a discussion of the concept of collocation, its role and importance in language comprehension and production. An overview of studies into collocational knowledge among language learners is offered, prominence being given to lexicography-oriented research. Subsequently, collocation is presented from the perspective of a specialised variety of a language. Primary focus is directed to legal discourse. In the discussion the issue of legal translation is given priority. Chapter One ends with a conclusion that collocation plays a major role in both legal English and legal Polish.

Chapter Two introduces the aims of the study, which concern dictionary treatment of collocations and assessing the influence of elements of microstructure and composition of collocations on their use and time of the completion of a collocation provision test. Chapter Two introduces research questions as well as detailed procedures of the selection of collocations and test design. As a final part, Chapter Two provides information on study participants.

Chapter Three presents the results of the study. First of all, an analysis of dictionary treatment of collocations is offered. In order to achieve the purpose of the analysis, each of the selected dictionaries is first presented separately. Subsequently, general conclusions are drawn, which mainly emphasise inconsistencies within dictionaries. Further, the chapter presents the results of the collocation provision test, which shows that the accuracy of use of legal collocations is significantly influenced by the interaction of access to collocation in a dictionary entry and collocation pattern. Moreover, the time needed to complete the collocation provision test is influenced by access. Hence, the results obtained demonstrate that access to collocations might be decisive in their use. The findings seem particularly thought-provoking in the context of technology use in education.