



The effectiveness of Zalo in developing Vietnamese-English translation skills for English-majored students

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays, information technology in education is being widely used in Vietnam to improve the quality of teaching. This study aims to find out the impact of Zalo on learners' Vietnamese-English translation skills towards the use of Zalo. Participants were 88 English major students in their second year at Nam Can Tho University. This empirical study followed a two-group pretest and post-test design. Two instruments used to collect both quantitative and qualitative data were the questionnaire and Vietnamese-English translating tests. Results showed that there is a significant difference in students' translating performance between the two groups. After the experimental teaching process, the average value of the experimental group ($M=22.62$) was higher than the control group ($M=18.66$). Students in the experimental group outperformed the control group in translating tests. Through the process of changing from traditional teaching methods to applying new teaching methods with the Zalo application, many positive impacts on both students and lecturers are recorded.

TÓM TẮT

Ngày nay, ứng dụng Công nghệ thông tin (CNTT) trong giáo dục nhằm nâng cao chất lượng giảng dạy đã được áp dụng rộng rãi trong khắp cả nước. Nghiên cứu này kiểm chứng mức độ ảnh hưởng của Zalo đối với kỹ năng dịch Việt Anh. Có 88 sinh viên chuyên ngành Anh văn năm hai tại trường Đại học Nam Cần Thơ đã tham gia để tài. Nghiên cứu thực nghiệm được thiết kế theo hai nhóm và mô hình kiểm tra trước và sau tác động. Hai công cụ được sử dụng để thu thập số liệu định lượng và định tính là bảng câu hỏi và bài kiểm tra

địch Việt-Anh. Kết quả nghiên cứu cho thấy sự khác biệt đáng kể về khả năng dịch của sinh viên giữa hai nhóm. Sau quá trình dạy thực nghiệm, giá trị trung bình của nhóm thực nghiệm ($M=22.62$) cao hơn so với nhóm đối chứng ($M=18.66$). Sinh viên ở nhóm thực nghiệm có khả năng dịch tốt hơn so với sinh viên thuộc nhóm kiểm chứng. Qua quá trình thay đổi từ phương pháp giảng dạy truyền thống sang áp dụng phương pháp giảng dạy mới với ứng dụng Zalo, nhiều tác động tích cực đối với cả sinh viên và giảng viên được ghi nhận.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rationale

Using technology in teaching and learning brings great benefits, and today the Ministry of Education and Training places great emphasis on the use of new technology. This is because we are living in an era where the amount of information and knowledge is increasing exponentially, which is a result of the leapfrog progress of information and communication technology.

OTT (Over The Top) is a solution that provides content to users based on the Internet platform. The most widely applied field is providing television content via internet protocol (IPTV) and Video on Demand (VOD) to end users. Some popular OTT applications are Viber, Zalo, Messenger, Skype, Line, WeChat, ... In which Zalo is an OTT application that allows free messaging and calling via mobile internet connection. In addition, Zalo application is also known for many new and dynamic entertainment features such as: Games, stories, blogs, uploading photos, sharing beautiful moments with friends via social networks, ... Zalo is currently very popular with the Vietnamese community, especially young people. According to Quinn et al. (2009) [12], mobile learning (m-learning) brings many benefits to learners. With the

emergence and development of mobile devices with Internet access, mobile learning (m-learning) has emerged. Therefore, exploiting the learning potential through websites on mobile phones is a very suitable trend in current conditions.

During the process of teaching Writing to English Language majors at Nam Can Tho University, I noticed that students tend to translate from Vietnamese to English. However, they are limited in their translation ability. They tend to translate word by word without using the corresponding English structure for the Vietnamese meaning, which hinders the correct expression of the purpose and content they need to present and hinders the development of Writing skills. I also noticed that when the class is too crowded (about 60 students per class) and to improve the translation skills from Vietnamese to English when students learn Writing skills for many students in the class is almost impossible. Therefore, using Zalo to improve Vietnamese to English translation skills is one of the ways to partly solve the above difficulties.

1.2 Literature review

1.2.1 Definition of mobile phone

According to Lusekelo & Juma (2015) [11], mobile phone is a kind of wireless phone, no

matter where we are, we can always use it to communicate. The information flow of mobile phone mainly depends on the information network around it, each network has a base station that controls the information in the network, each base station is connected to the telephone exchange. When the mobile phone is not in the environment with the original information network, the directional antenna will notify the operator to change the telephone frequency, just like a relay race, it assigns the task of connecting the phone to the base station later. Thus, the mobile phone call has been made.

1.2.2 M-Learning

Is the abbreviation of the phrase “mobile learning” in English. There are two main views on cm-learning: (1) The first view approaches only the mobility of learning devices; (2) the second view approaches the mobility of learning devices and the mobility of learners. In the topic, cm-learning is considered from the second perspective. M-learning is a new form of teaching born for the development of technology. According to Ally (2009) [7], m-learning refers to learning, training in which the management, sharing of content and interaction are carried out through the use of mobile devices on the wireless network technology platform. The outstanding advantage of m-learning is that it allows the combination of real interaction with flexibility in learning, which allows lecturers to organize collaborative activities and learner-oriented learning conveniently, thereby helping students form self-study and independent learning.

(1) Features of m-learning:

According to Cui & Bull (2005) [10], due to the use of compact mobile devices with wireless

network connectivity, m-learning has the following basic characteristics:

Not limited by space and time

- Create a flexible, highly interactive learning environment

- Allows for individualized learning.

- Establish the roles of lecturers and students in a learner-centered direction.

Learning in an m-learning environment has the following characteristics:

- The difference between learning activities in m-learning and other learning activities is the learner's initiative.

- The learning process as well as the assessment of learning outcomes take place both inside and outside the classroom.

- Learning must originate from practical needs before new forms of learning when technology develops.

(2) Self-study in m-learning environment:

Kukulka-Hulme & Traxler, (2005) [5] believe that students when self-studying in an m-learning environment need to have some skills such as:

- Planning and time management skills

- Reading and following written instructions

- Questioning skills during self-study

- Self-assessment skills

- Some skills in using mobile phones

(3) Teaching in m-learning environment:

According to Kukulka-Hulme & Traxler, (2005) [5], lecturers teaching in the m-learning environment need to have the following skills:

- Teaching implementation skills

- Management skills

- Technology skills

1.2.3 Blended learning

“The combination of training media such as technology, activities, and types of events to create an optimal training program for a specific audience. There is a mutually supportive relationship between active learning methods and modern learning media. It is important that teachers know the golden rules when applying those methods and media, to optimize their teaching”, according to Garison et al. (2004) [6].

1.2.4 Electronic learning materials

Electronic learning materials are learning materials that are digitized according to a certain structure, format and scenario to serve teaching and learning. The digitized form can be text, slides, data tables, sounds, images, and interactive applications, ... and mixed documents including the above formats. Digitization here is understood as the use of digital technology devices to convert traditional document forms into digital form so that information can be processed, stored and transmitted through digital devices and on the network (According to the guidelines for building electronic lectures at Hanoi National University (2010) [1].

1.2.5 Translation

According to Newmark (1998) [8], translation is the replacement of the textual material of one language with the textual material of another language. A concept of translation mentioned by Kelly (2004) [4] “there can be no translation without a solid linguistic foundation” or as Newmark (1998) [8] said, “translation is first and foremost a linguistic operation”, so “linguistics must be the common denominator, the foundation of all translation operations”.

Translation characteristics:

According to Le (2009) [2], interpretation is a bridge that helps people who do not speak the

same language understand what others express. In other words, interpretation is to bring information expressed in one language (called the source language) to express in another language (called the target language). Thanks to interpretation, most people from different countries, speaking different languages can communicate and understand each other. In today's information society, interpretation plays an even more important role.

Translation writing practice process:

According to Nguyen (2016) [3], the process of practicing written translation includes 6 basic steps:

- Step 1: Read the article to be translated from beginning to end. Purpose: identify the idea of the article.

- Step 2: Identify difficult-to-translate words/word groups such as technical terms, idioms, etc. Nowadays, thanks to many specialized dictionaries and the internet, we can find out the meaning of these word groups more easily.

- Step 3: Identify sentence patterns. Purpose: practice analyzing sentences into their constituent parts to understand the exact meaning of the sentence.

- Step 4: Translate each sentence, each paragraph. The translation must be accurate and meaningful, with the correct style. Do not paraphrase. After this step, the reader must understand the exact meaning of each sentence.

- Step 5: Edit the following sentence to match the way Vietnamese people speak (English-Vietnamese translation) and British people (Vietnamese-English translation).

- Step 6: Comment on the translation: correct, incorrect, accurate, inaccurate, appropriate to the

context, inappropriate to the context, pure Vietnamese style - pure English style, etc.

In fact, translation is a process from capturing an idea to expressing that idea in another language. Moreover, the ultimate goal of translation is to help readers understand the original. The quality of the translation work has a direct impact on the quality of the translation.

Translation evaluation criteria:

According to Le (2009) [2], the criteria of translation are the measure of translation quality. A good translation is one that expresses the original text accurately and naturally. Fidelity and fluency used as criteria for evaluating a translation should be a unified whole, not two separate criteria in evaluating a translation. That is, a good translation must be faithful to the content and style of the original, and at the same time, it must read naturally and fluently. If the translation deviates from the original idea, no matter how polished the writing style is, it is useless; on the contrary, a rigid writing style, trying to be faithful to the original to the point of sounding silly when read, cannot be called a good translation. Therefore, a translation must achieve these two criteria.

Translation methods:

In order for the translation to achieve the criterion of faithfulness, the translator must always ask himself: how to translate, that is, which translation method must be chosen to accurately express the idea of the original. According to Le (2009) [2], there are three basic translation methods: Comparative translation method, Direct translation method and Method of translation.

Skills required of a translator:

Le (2006) [2] asserted that translation work requires translators to have many skills. First of all, the language proficiency (both the source language - English and the target language - Vietnamese) must be high. In addition, translators must also have a rich life experience and extensive knowledge. And one more thing, like any other profession, translators must have an open-minded attitude, constantly learning to improve and enhance their skills; work seriously and carefully, just a moment of carelessness will lead to mistakes, sometimes a little mistake can lead to a big mistake. A good translator must have knowledge in all aspects. This is a characteristic of translation work. Except for a few translators who only translate documents specialized in a certain profession, the majority of translators must come into contact with documents in many different fields such as politics, culture, economics, science and technology,...

The task of an interpreter:

Le (2009) [2] believes that interpretation is primarily a practical subject, with the task of fostering and improving students' practical interpretation skills. Interpretation skills are improved mainly through systematic and large-scale translation exercises, not through the transmission of empty theories. One more thing to add is that interpreting is also a practical subject, but it is not the same as other practical subjects such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Interpretation is built on the synthesis of four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Therefore, listening, speaking, reading, and writing can be implemented at each level of foreign language learning. At different stages, the difficulty level of these subjects is

different. However, at universities and colleges, interpreting is only for senior students.

Methods of teaching translation skills:

Newmark (1998) [8] suggests that there are three basic methods of teaching translation skills as follows:

Group-based learning, Oral presentation and Role playing.

Some principles when translating sentences from Vietnamese to English

Lecturers need to guide students to translate sentences from Vietnamese to English by performing the following steps:

-Step 1: Choose a basic sentence pattern.

-Step 2: Choose appropriate descriptive elements - modifiers (or functional structures)

-Step 3: Apply the law of contiguity or parallelism

* Proximity rule: The proximity rule states that when a descriptive element modifies an article, it must be placed near the word.

* Rule of parallelism: This rule stipulates that elements in a sentence that have the same grammatical function must be presented in similar structural forms. That similar structural form can be a single word or a phrase.

1.2.6 Definition of Zalo

According to Zalo.me , Zalo is a mobile technology product that mainly focuses on Vietnamese users. Zalo can operate on many different mobile operating system platforms such as: Android, IOS, Windows phone and Nokia Java (according to zaloapp.com).

Zalo's core features:

According to zalo.me, Zalo is the number one completely free messaging and calling application in Vietnam. With many criteria to meet the needs of connection and communication

with the community, Zalo application has been providing users with very useful features, optimizing the conversation to be more lively and interesting.

Static resources:

Roseberg (2001) [9] states that static resources are resources that users can read but cannot interact with the document, such as; text pages, a label, a Wen page, a link to another website, folders, uploaded files, text, images, these components are created using the resource module.

Interactive resources:

According to Roseberg (2001) [9], interactive resources are resources that users can interact with documents, build documents (answer questions, enter text, upload files, etc.). In addition to the communication function, Zalo application is also a quite interesting tool for improving foreign languages. In the chat room of the room, in the education and school category, users can easily come across a series of chat rooms in English, Japanese, Chinese, etc. These are the chat rooms created by Zalo so that users can improve foreign languages and share experiences about studying abroad and traveling in different countries with each other.

Advantages and disadvantages of Zalo:

a. Advantages of Zalo

According to zalomarketing.vn, Zalo has the following outstanding advantages:

- This is a messaging and calling application in a completely new way, it is shown in the function of sending extremely fast voice messages with a maximum message length of 5 minutes.

- This application was built by Vietnamese people so it is highly superior, the server is

located in Vietnam so it has extremely fast speed and is always stable on all telecommunication network infrastructures such as 2G, 3G, wifi,...

- The application is 100% free from downloading the application to the mobile device to using it, so users can earn a relatively large amount without having to pay for the carrier's service.

- Zalo is integrated with social networks, which creates a very convenient condition for users of this application in exchanging necessary contact information as well as having the most wonderful relaxing moments to dispel all troubles or fatigue after each day or each period of work or activity.

- This application does not save user messages on the server, but messages can only be saved on the user's mobile device, so this application can be considered a highly secure application, which will make users feel completely secure when exchanging information without worrying about their information being leaked to the outside.

- Zalo can operate on many different operating system platforms on mobile devices: Android, IOS, Windows phone and Nokia Java.

b. Disadvantages of Zalo

According to zalo.me, this is a mobile technology product that mainly focuses on Vietnamese users, so if users have relatives or friends going abroad, using this to contact them will not be very popular because they rarely use this.

1.3 Urgency of the topic

1.3.1 Development status of m-learning

According to Kukulska-hulme & Traxler, (2005) [5], learners can “reach beyond the walls of the classroom to interact with other learners, teachers or experts in the field to further enhance

their learning ability. Over the past ten years, m-learning has grown from a small research area to a major project in schools, offices, defense, cities and rural areas around the world. However, the m-learning community remains fragmented, with different perspectives within countries, differences between academics and technology, and between secondary schools, universities and other learning sectors. Current areas of development include: Testing, surveys, and work-in-time (JIT) learning; Location-based and contextual learning; Socialized learning on mobile networks; Educational games on mobile phones; Delivering m-learning to mobile phones using two methods: SMS and phone calls.

In Vietnam, m-learning has only recently received attention, so there is no infrastructure or research documents about m-learning in Vietnam. Recently, conferences and seminars on information technology and education have all mentioned the issue of e-learning, including m-learning, and the possibility of applying it to the training environment in Vietnam: Conference on improving the quality of training at Hanoi National University in 2000, Conference on University Education in 2001, the first international scientific conference on research, development and application of information and communication technology ICT/rda 2/2003, the second scientific conference on research on communication ICT/rda 9/2004, and the scientific conference "Research and implementation - learning" jointly organized by the Institute of Information Technology under Hanoi National University and the Faculty of Information Technology under Hanoi University of Science and Technology in early March 2005

(the first scientific conference on e-learning held in Vietnam).

1.3.2 Zalo application development situation

Launched in December 2012, Zalo was initially known as a mobile communication application with the ability to ensure stable and fast connections. According to new.zing.vn (2016), Zalo had its 50 millionth member in April 2016, Zalo continues to grow steadily and will reach 60 million users in September 2016. Of Zalo's 60 million users, about 32 million are regular users each month.

1.3.3 Effectiveness of the learning model combined with OTT applications

The application of m learning in learning is increasingly attracting people's attention due to its low cost and high mobility. In the world, m-learning has been and is being applied in learning in the following forms:

- Application with distance education
- Application with Podcasting
- Support for self-study

2. RESEARCH METHODS

2.1 Research design

This study was conducted to find out the impact of Zalo on Vietnamese - English translation skills of learners when using Zalo. To accomplish this, experimental research methods were used, including pre-test and post-test study designs with two randomly assigned groups. The independent group design was chosen to research the topic because it is suitable for experimental time and two different groups receiving different impacts operate independently. Both control and

experimental groups were given pre-impact and post-impact tests. After the experimental teaching process, the scores between the two tests will be compared to prove whether the applied experimental activity was effective or not.

2.2 Research question

This study aims to answer the question:

How do learners' Vietnamese-English translation skills improve when they are taught by the Zalo application as a teaching approach in Writing module 2?

2.3 Participants

88 second-year students majoring in English at Nam Can Tho University participated in the research, were randomly divided into two classes and selected one class as the experimental group and one class as the control group. They have a relatively uniform level of English proficiency and are similar in age and have learned sentence structure in the Writing module 1. In this Writing module 2, students apply theory to practice exercises from Vietnamese to English based on Paragraph Writing lessons including the categories Definition, Process Analysis, Description, and Opinion.

2.4 Data collection procedure

This project was conveyed at Nam Can Tho University and the experimental period was 20 weeks. The pre-test is conducted at the beginning of semester 2 and the post-test is conducted at the end of the semester in the 2022-2023 school year. The research process includes experimental teaching, measurement and data collection (see Table 1).

Table 1. Research process

Time	Research activities	Group
	Students' opinions survey	
The first week	The pre-test	The experimental group and the control group
The following weeks	The experimental teaching process	The experimental group
The last week	The post-test	The experimental group and the control group
	Interview	The experimental group

2.4.1 Before the experimental process

Design and consult with consultants on pre-impact surveys, pretest and post-tests, and post-impact interview questionnaires.

2.4.2 The experimental process

Using the Zalo application in teaching English structures for students to practice translating from Vietnamese to English and compare the results of the Vietnamese-English translation test with the control group to determine the effectiveness in developing students' Vietnamese-English translation skills.

2.4.3 After the experimental process

Taking the post-test results: On the first day of the final week, post-tests for both the control and experimental groups were conducted. The purpose of this test is to verify whether students' Vietnamese-English translation ability has increased after studying with the Zalo application.

Taking interview results about the effectiveness of using Zalo:

To measure students' attitudes about the effectiveness of Zalo, interviews were conducted to collect opinions of 9 students in the experimental group. In which, there are 03 students who have the highest test scores, 03 students who have average test scores and 03 students who have the lowest scores.

Each student was interviewed and answered the same 4 questions prepared in advance by the teacher. All of these questions are intended to measure students' attitudes when they learn with the Zalo application.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Result from the experimental teaching process

3.1.1 The pretest results of the two experimental and control groups

First and foremost, the Independent-Samples T Test calculation was used to verify whether the Vietnamese-English translation ability of students in both the control and experimental groups was equivalent before using Zalo to teach the experimental group. Additionally, the Paired-

Samples T-Test was used to continue to verify whether the Vietnamese-English translation ability of students in the experimental group was higher than that of students in the control group. Moreover, the researcher also tested the development of each group's Vietnamese-English

translation ability before and after the experimental teaching process.

To verify the difference between the average scores of the two control and experimental groups before impact, the Descriptive Statistics test is used. The analysis results are shown in Table 2 as follows:

Table 2. Statistics describe the average value of the two groups before the experimental teaching process.

	No.	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
The control group	44	12	21	16.95	2.780
The experimental group	44	10	21	16.70	2.425

Results from Table 2 show that the average value of the experimental group (M=16.70) is lower than the control group (M=16.95). The lowest average value of the two groups is different, the experimental group has a value of 10 while the control group only has a value of 12. There is no difference between the highest average value of the two groups (Mmax = 21). The standard deviation of the control group

(SD=2.780) is higher than that of the experimental group (SD=2.425).

3.1.2 The post-test results of the two experimental and control groups

To verify the difference in the mean value of the two groups after the impact, Descriptive Statistics test is first used. The results are shown in Table 3 as follows:

Table 3. Statistics describe the average value of the two groups after the experimental teaching process.

	No.	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
The control group	44	15	24	18.66	2.083
The experimental group	44	17	27	22.62	3.058

Results from Table 3 show that the mean values of the two groups increased, but the growth of the two groups was different. After the experimental teaching process, the average value of the experimental group (M=22.62) was higher than that of the control group (M=18.66). The lowest average value of the control group is 15

and the experimental group is 17. Similarly, there is not big difference between the highest average value of the two groups with the average value of the control group being 24 and the average value of the experimental group being 27. Standard deviation of the control group (SD=3.058).

Therefore, we can conclude that using the Zalo application has been fruitful.

3.2 Result from the interview

To survey the effectiveness of teachers' use of Zalo in teaching Vietnamese-English translation skills, interviews were conducted with 9 students in the experimental group after they completed the Vietnamese-English translation test. Each student was asked the same four questions about their attitudes toward using Zalo. The results of the interview are recorded as follows:

Eight students out of nine (88.9%) said that they like studying with Zalo to improve their Vietnamese-English translation skills in Writing classes. Before using Zalo, the students all replied that this was the first time they were learning with a teacher using this application. All of the students commented that they liked the comfortable learning atmosphere and that discussing the translation content with friends was fun. One student said that she has learned Writing skills with many different teachers and this is her favorite way to learn Writing because it integrates Vietnamese-English translation skills to help them write more accurately, better and more academically.

Seven out of nine interviewed students (77.8%) highly appreciated the role of Vietnamese-English translation on Zalo. They think they help them describe the characteristics of a translation and analyze sentence structure. More importantly, these exercises also help students compare and contrast translation methods and translation techniques corresponding to those sentence structures.

Five students (55.6%) like the collaborative learning environment when they study with Zalo. Students are shown to be creative, thoughtful,

always looking for new things, and willing to accept risks while translating. Furthermore, all group members must participate and take advantage of the time to complete the exercise because the teacher has limited the time for them. Therefore, the learning atmosphere becomes more urgent and lively.

Only 1 student (accounting for 11.1%) said that he felt uncomfortable when studying with electronic learning materials on Zalo. I agree that studying with Vietnamese-English translation exercises is useful for me, but I don't like it because I have to access the internet to use Zalo. Where I live there is no wifi and I have to go to a place with wifi to do my homework and send it to the lecturer.

Overall, the results from the interviews show us that the majority of students have a positive attitude when studying with the Zalo application.

3.3 Discussion

The current study aimed to examine the impact of Zalo on Vietnamese - English translation skills of learners when using Zalo. Research results of the project related to English translation skills of students in two control and experimental groups. To get the above results, the average value of two tests (01 before the impact and 01 after the impact) was calculated to check whether students have developed their Vietnamese-English translation skills or not. Research results show that students in both groups improved their Vietnamese-English translation skills. However, the translation skills of students in the control group were lower than those of students in the experimental group. After learning with the Zalo application, students in the experimental group improved their Vietnamese-English translation skills significantly. In

addition, students have a positive attitude towards Zalo.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Through the process of changing from traditional teaching methods to applying new teaching methods with the Zalo application, many positive impacts on both students and lecturers were recorded. For students, they must take a more proactive role in learning, so they show more interest and concentration in their learning process. Once students are proactive in learning, lecturers also feel excited and motivated to design lessons and learning activities more effectively. Research results have shown that using the Zalo application is effective in developing students' Vietnamese-English translation skills. In addition, the Zalo application increases students' interest in learning.

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