

EdUHK Corpus-based ELT Lesson Design Competition 2025

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Lesson Topic/Title:

Vocabulary Accuracy in Chinese-to-English Translation of Political Texts

Title of the course where your lesson fits:

Translation for Specific Purposes

Please provide additional information of the course in a couple of sentences (e.g., the purpose and focus of the course):

The course aims to help students master the basic linguistic features of bilingual texts for different purposes, such as science, news, tourism, business, politics, and culture, and apply them to their Chinese-to-English or English-to-Chinese translation of these texts. This lesson focuses on vocabulary accuracy in Chinese-to-English political text translation and aims to arouse students' awareness of vocabulary accuracy in translation for political purposes.

Target students:

Undergraduate translation and interpreting students in the mainland of China (Year 3)

Corpus/corpora used:

For lesson design: COCA + CorpusMate + Specialized parallel corpora

(generating worksheet blank fillings)

For class demonstration: COCA (searching for collocations);

SKELL (finding similar words through a more vivid word cloud in its Similar Word function, which cannot be provided in COCA);

Specialized parallel corpora of key political terms (searching for Chinese-to-English translations for political purposes).

AI tool(s) used:

Doubao (generating a picture for the lesson plan);

DeepSeek (generating translation for critical analysis)

Lesson duration (suggested duration: 30 - 90 mins):

90 mins

Learning objectives:

By the end of the lesson, the students will be able to

1. Establish vocabulary accuracy awareness in political text translation by delving into different aspects of the words “spiritual” and “civilization” with the use of corpora.
2. Develop critical judgement of the vocabulary accuracy of the translation produced by computer-aided translation (CAT) tools, such as Google Translate, or generated by AI tools, such as DeepSeek, with the use of corpora.
3. Determine the final translation by understanding the accurate meaning of the source text, searching for the accurate use of the target text, and checking with the parallel corpora and the specific context.

Lesson Plan

| Time | Key stages | Procedures | Purposes | Interaction mode | Teaching resources/materials |
|---------|---|--|---|---|--|
| 5 mins | Stage 1: Testing students' knowledge and arousing students' awareness | <p>1. Asking students to think about which word is appropriate in formal written diplomatic communication. (“sorry or apologize”)</p> <p>2. Checking the answer in COCA by teacher demonstration (Search — Chart—words per million). [Pictures 1.2 & 1.3]</p> <p>3. Concluding that “sorry” is more frequently used in spoken contexts than “apologize”. Therefore, “apologize” is appropriate in a formal written political context.</p> | <p>1. To test students' knowledge of the correct register in a formal political context.</p> <p>2. To arouse students' awareness that every aspect of vocabulary matters in political text translation.</p> | <p>Teacher asks and students answer;</p> <p>Teacher demonstration and explanation</p> | Picture 1.1 Generated by Doubao (see Appendix) |
| 40 mins | Stage 2: Teacher-guided hands-on English corpus search with students | <p>1. Emphasizing the importance of vocabulary accuracy in political translation, but the accuracy mostly can't be achieved by intuition. Therefore, a corpus search with objective data is crucial.</p> <p>2. Asking students to translate</p> | <p>1. To demonstrate to students a more difficult example to delve deeper into the nuanced meaning and collocation of “spiritual” with the use of COCA.</p> | <p>Teacher demonstration;</p> <p>Students exploration individually and in pairs;</p> <p>Students group discussion</p> | Worksheet 1. Blank filling: nouns after “spiritual”; |

| | | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|--|--|
| | | <p>“精神文明” in Google Translate and DeepSeek to see what they get. They may get the answer “spiritual civilization”. [Pictures 2.1A & 2.1B]</p> <p>3. Demonstrating to students how to check whether “spiritual civilization” is an accurate English collocation by searching “spiritual” in COCA. [Pictures 2.2]</p> <p>4. Guiding students to analyze the language data in COCA and summarize what nouns follow “spiritual” and in what context the word is often used by completing Worksheet 1.</p> <p>5. Asking students to search by themselves for the collocation of “civilization” in COCA and present what they find in pairs by completing Worksheet 2. [Pictures 2.3]</p> <p>6. Asking students to discuss in groups whether “spiritual civilization” is an appropriate translation and present their discussion in the class.</p> | <p>2. To guide students to have hands-on experience in searching the collocation of “civilization” in COCA and summarize what they find.</p> <p>3. To guide students to check the acceptance of the machine translation or AI-generated translation with a corpus tool.</p> | | <p>Worksheet</p> <p>2. Blank filling: adjectives before “civilization” (see Appendix)</p> |
|--|--|---|---|--|--|

| | | | | | |
|---------|--|--|---|--|--|
| | | <p>7. Concluding that the collocation is very rarely used in English and may not be accepted by English target readers.</p> <p>8. Guiding students to explore the Similar Words function in SKELL to find out the similar words of “spiritual” and keep them in mind for further explorations. [Pictures 2.4]</p> | | | |
| 25 mins | <p>Stage 3: Further hands-on parallel corpus search and inductive discovery</p> | <p>1. Introducing to students two specialized parallel corpora for political purposes and demonstrating how to use them. [Pictures 3.1]</p> <p>2. Asking students to explore the corpora by searching for the translations of “精神文明” and present in groups of three or four their inductive discoveries by completing Worksheet 3.</p> <p>3. Checking answers to Worksheet 3. Guiding students to summarize that “精神文明” could be translated into “cultural progress,” “ethical values,” “cultural and ethical progress,” “intellectual and</p> | <p>1. To demonstrate the specialized parallel corpora to help students find the correct English translations of “精神文明”.</p> <p>2. To develop students’ critical thinking when analyzing the translations in the specialized corpora.</p> <p>3. To develop students’ context awareness in translation.</p> | <p>Teacher demonstration;</p> <p>Students group exploration, discussion and presentation</p> | <p>Worksheet 3. Blank filling. Please choose the most accurate translation(s) for the underlined phrases.</p> |

| | | | | | |
|----|-------------------------------------|---|--|--|--|
| | | cultural progress,” and “etiquette and ethical standards”, but a specific context needs to be considered in deciding the final translation. | | | |
| 20 | Stage 4: Output exercises | <p>1. Asking students to work in pairs to complete Worksheet 4. Reminding students to search different corpora for cross-checking and complementing. Checking the answer and demonstrating to students where necessary. [Pictures 4.1, 4.2, 4.3 & 4.4]</p> <p>2. Summarizing the lesson:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vocabulary accuracy in political translation can be achieved by searching for both English corpora and specialized parallel corpora. Context needs to be considered in deciding the final translation. | To practice students’ corpus searching skills and critical thinking while selecting the accurate vocabulary for a key phrase in political translation, e.g., “反对腐败”. | Students’ pair work; Teacher summary; | Worksheet 4 . Choose the best translation |

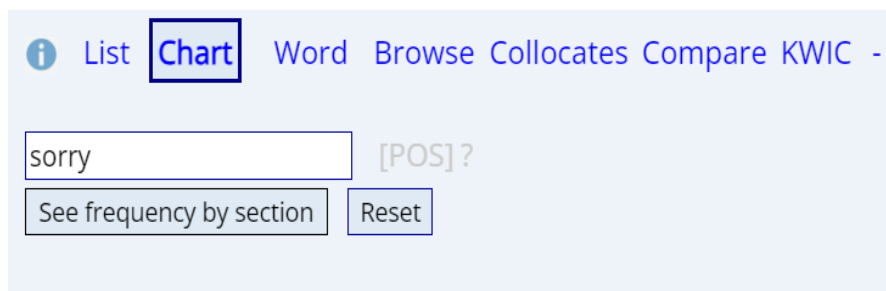
Appendix

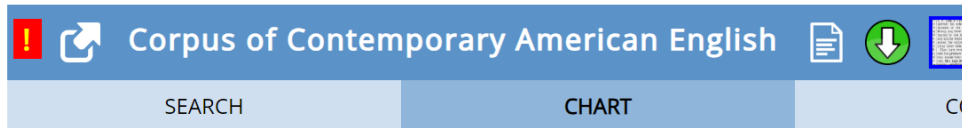
Stage 1:

Picture 1.1 Apology in a diplomatic communication generated by Doubao



Pictures 1.2 Screenshots of the COCA search for “sorry”





CLICK TO SEE CONTEXT (CLICK COLUMN HEADER FOR SECTIONS)

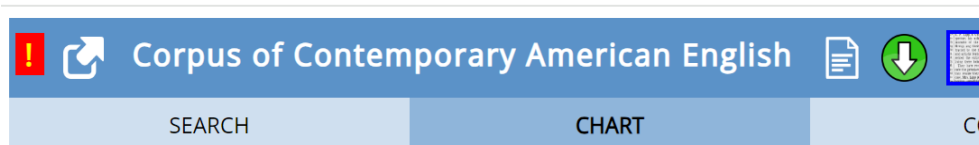
| SECTION | ALL | BLOG | WEB | TV/M | SPOK | FIC | MAG | NEWS | ACAD |
|------------------------------|--------|--------|-------|----------|--------|--------|-------|-------|-------|
| FREQ | 237445 | 16211 | 12321 | 155516 | 17263 | 29049 | 3536 | 2970 | 579 |
| WORDS (M) | 993 | 128.6 | 124.3 | 128.1 | 126.1 | 118.3 | 126.1 | 121.7 | 119.8 |
| PER MIL | 239.11 | 126.04 | 99.16 | 1,214.26 | 136.86 | 245.51 | 28.04 | 24.40 | 4.83 |
| SEE ALL SUB-SECTIONS AT ONCE | | | | | | | | | |

Pictures 1.3 Screenshots of the COCA search for “apologize”



[List](#)
[Chart](#)
[Word](#)
[Browse](#)
[Collocates](#)
[Compare](#)
[KWIC](#)

[POS]?

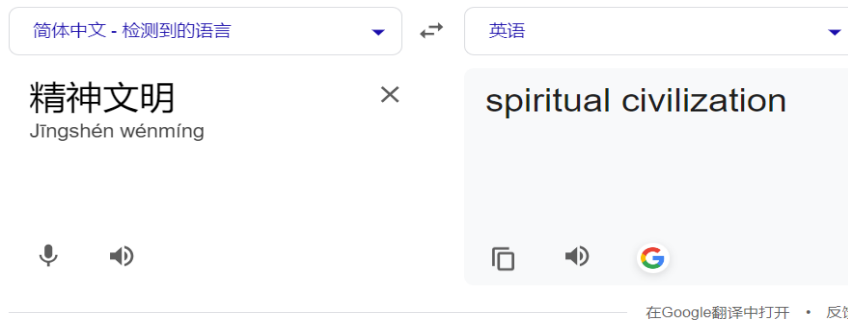


CLICK TO SEE CONTEXT (CLICK COLUMN HEADER FOR SECTIONS)

| SECTION | ALL | BLOG | WEB | TV/M | SPOK | FIC | MAG | NEWS | ACAD |
|------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| FREQ | 17573 | 2303 | 1800 | 6493 | 2693 | 2177 | 891 | 969 | 247 |
| WORDS (M) | 993 | 128.6 | 124.3 | 128.1 | 126.1 | 118.3 | 126.1 | 121.7 | 119.8 |
| PER MIL | 17.70 | 17.91 | 14.49 | 50.70 | 21.35 | 18.40 | 7.07 | 7.96 | 2.06 |
| SEE ALL SUB-SECTIONS AT ONCE | | | | | | | | | |

Stage 2.

Picture 2.1A The English translation of “精神文明” in Google Translate



Picture 2.1B The English translation of “精神文明” in DeepSeek

“精神文明”翻译为英文的常见对应翻译为 **“spiritual civilization”**。以下是具体说明：

1. 直译: Spiritual Civilization

- **适用场景:** 政府文件、政治文献、中国特色理论相关的正式语境。
- **例句:**
 - 原文: 建设社会主义精神文明。
 - 翻译: Building socialist spiritual civilization.
- **注意:** 这是中国官方语境的标准译法, 国际学术界在讨论中国问题时也可能沿用。

2. 意译 (根据具体语境灵活调整)

- 如果强调精神文明的**文化和道德内涵**, 可译为:
 - **Cultural and Ethical Progress** (文化与道德进步)
 - **Moral and Intellectual Development** (道德与思想发展)
- **适用场景:** 非正式文本、向不熟悉中国政治术语的外国读者解释时。
- **例句:**

3. 学术或哲学语境

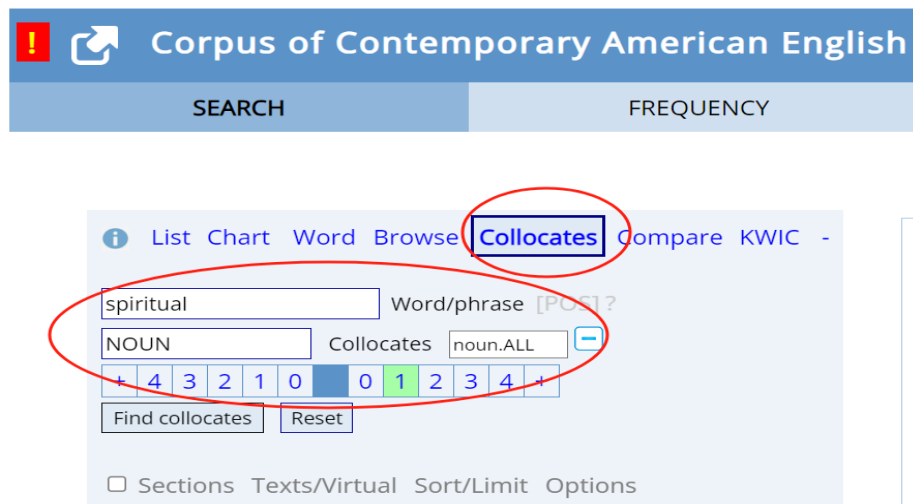
- 若从哲学角度讨论“精神文明”与“物质文明”的对立, 可保留直译并补充解释:
 - **Spiritual Civilization** (as opposed to material civilization)
- **例句:**
 - 原文: 物质文明与精神文明的协调发展。
 - 翻译: Coordinated development of material and spiritual civilization.

4. 避免误译

- 西方文化中的 “spiritual” 可能带有宗教色彩, 但中文的 “精神文明” 更偏向**文化、道德、价值观**的层面, 因此需根据上下文判断是否需要额外解释。

总结: 优先使用 **spiritual civilization**, 若需要清晰易懂, 可结合语境选择意译。

Pictures 2.2 Screenshots of the COCA search for “spiritual”



Corpus of Contemporary American English

SEARCH FREQUENCY CONTEXT HELP

ON CLICK

| HELP | RE-USE WORDS | FREQ |
|------|--------------|------|
| 1 | LIFE | 960 |
| 2 | LEADER | 634 |
| 3 | GROWTH | 383 |
| 4 | EXPERIENCE | 375 |
| 5 | JOURNEY | 359 |
| 6 | PRACTICE | 294 |
| 7 | BELIEFS | 268 |
| 8 | POWER | 249 |
| 9 | LEADERS | 237 |
| 10 | PATH | 222 |
| 11 | NEEDS | 210 |
| 12 | WORLD | 207 |
| 13 | DEVELOPMENT | 201 |
| 14 | DIRECTION | 194 |
| 15 | AWAKENING | 191 |
| 16 | EXERCISES | 185 |
| 17 | VALUES | 184 |

Corpus of Contemporary American English

SEARCH WORD CONTEXT HELP

1. lacking material body or form or substance 2. like or being a phantom 3. concerned with sacred matters or religion or the church

D M O C G E

SYNONYMS (▶ CONCEPT) NEW: DEFIN +SPEC +GENL

mystical | mystical, otherworldly, psychic, spiritual, transcendent, unworldly | **religious** | heavenly, holy, religious, sacred, saintly, spiritual

TOPICS (more)

scripture, worship, theological, spirituality, salvation, divine, faithful, prayer, religious, church, faith, healing, religion, biblical, christian, congregation, christian, testament, gospel, spirit

COLLOCATES (more)

NOUN leader, experience, practice, journey, growth, belief, value, need

VERB undergo, cultivate, foster, nurture, symbolize, embody, attain, awaken

ADJ physical, religious, emotional, moral, cultural, mental, psychological, deep

ADV deeply, purely, profoundly, within, fundamentally, intensely, ie, eg

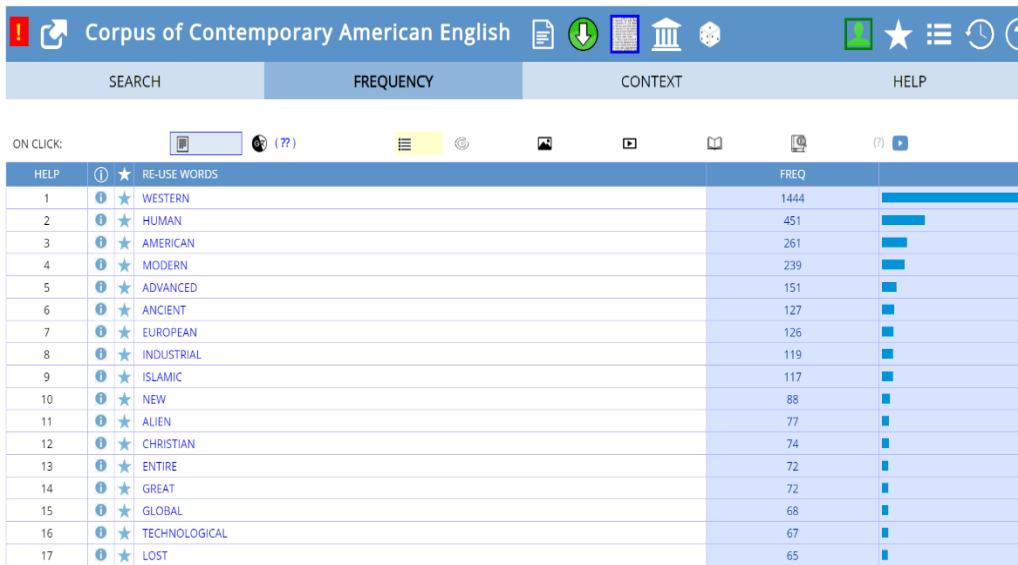
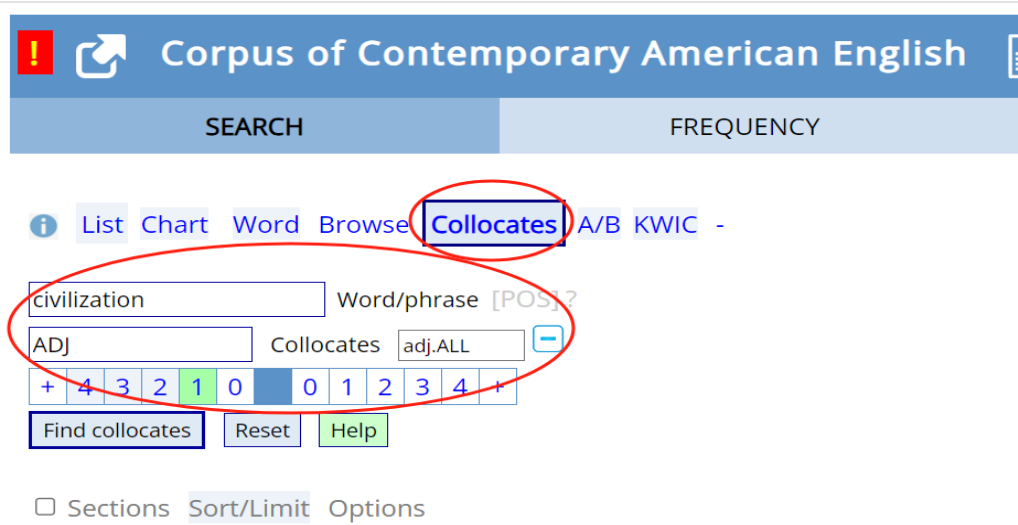
RELATED WORDS

spirit, spirituality, spiritually, spirited, spirit, spiritualism, spiritualist, Spiritualist, spiritualize

Context of this term

- en** christianity →
- fr** religion →
- en** christianity →
- en** historical →
- fr** musique →

Pictures 2.3 Screenshots of the COCA search for “civilization”



Picture 2.4 Screenshots of the Similar Words function in SKELL to find out the similar words of “spiritual”



Worksheet 1. Blank filling: nouns after “spiritual”

1. Before she died the Congress made her spiritual _____ of the Nation.
2. He was the spiritual _____ of the group: a kind of teacher and guide.
3. Now, together the myriad cultures of the world make up a web of spiritual _____ and cultural life that envelops the planet.
4. Peace of soul is a sign of a strong spiritual _____.
5. This is a superior book about human spiritual _____ and approach to contentment. How do I grow?

Answers: 1. Leader; 2. leader; 3. life; 4. life; 5. growth;

Worksheet 2. Blank filling: adjectives before “civilization”

1. That means that they don't place the same value on land ownership as _____ civilization does.
2. It is important in understanding the origin and development of _____ civilization.
3. The dream of fending off old age is as old as _____ civilization.
4. One of the most well-known _____ civilizations to fall was the city of Troy.
5. We are the only _____ civilization in the solar system

Answers: 1. western; 2. western; 3. human; 4. ancient; 5. advanced;

Stage 3

Pictures 3.1 Screenshots of the specialized parallel corpora

<http://term.catl.org.cn/default.jsp>



| 中文术语 | 语种 | 外文术语 |
|---------------------------|----|--|
| 习近平在中非合作论坛北京峰会开幕式上的主旨讲... | 英文 | Joining Hands to Advance Modernization and Build a Community with a Sha... |
| 物质文明和精神文明协调发展 | 英 | to ensure that cultural-ethical and material development progress together |
| 社会主义精神文明 | 英 | socialist culture and ethics; socialist spiritual civilization |
| 社会主义精神文明论 | 英 | theory of socialist cultural and ethical progress |
| 精神文明 | 英 | cultural progress; cultural and ethical progress; intellectual and cultural progr... |

<http://210.72.20.108/special/class3/list.jsp?key=>



| 中文术语 | 语种 | 外文术语 |
|------|----|-------------------------------|
| 精神文明 | 英 | cultural and ethical progress |
| 精神文明 | 法 | la civilisation spirituelle |
| 精神文明 | 俄 | духовная цивилизация |
| 精神文明 | 德 | die geistige Zivilisation |
| 精神文明 | 西 | la civilización espiritual |

精神文明 【英】 cultural and ethical progress

译文来源

习近平谈治国理政：英文/习近平著；英文翻译组译。--北京：外文出版社，2014：171

例句

1. 同时，只有物质文明建设和精神文明建设都搞好，国家物质力量和精神力量都增强，全国各族人民物质生活和精神生活都改善，中国特色社会主义事业才能顺利向前推进。——《习近平谈治国理政》，2014：153

1. Moreover, to enhance the cause of Chinese socialism we must promote material, cultural and ethical progress, strengthen the nation materially, culturally and ethically, and improve the material, cultural and ethical lives of the people of all ethnic groups.—Quoted from XI JINPING The Governance of China, 2014:171

Worksheet 3. Blank filling. Please choose the most accurate translation(s) for the underlined phrases. You can choose more than one answer. Pay attention to the context and collocation.

(1) 更好满足人民群众精神文明需求。

We will better meet the _____ needs of our people.

(2) 中华优秀传统文化广泛弘扬，群众精神文明创建活动扎实开展。

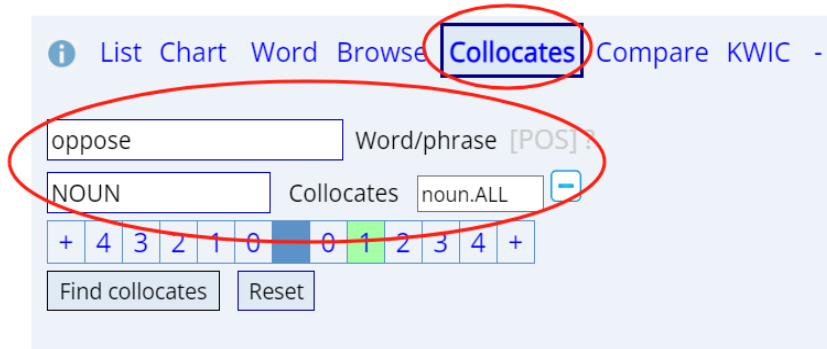
Fine traditional Chinese culture is alive among the public. Initiatives to improve public _____ have proved successful.

- A. cultural progress
- B. ethical values
- C. intellectual and cultural
- D. cultural and ethical progress
- E. intellectual and cultural progress
- F. etiquette and ethical standards
- G. spiritual civilization
- H. intellectual and cultural engagement

Answers: (1) C; (2) F H

Stage 4

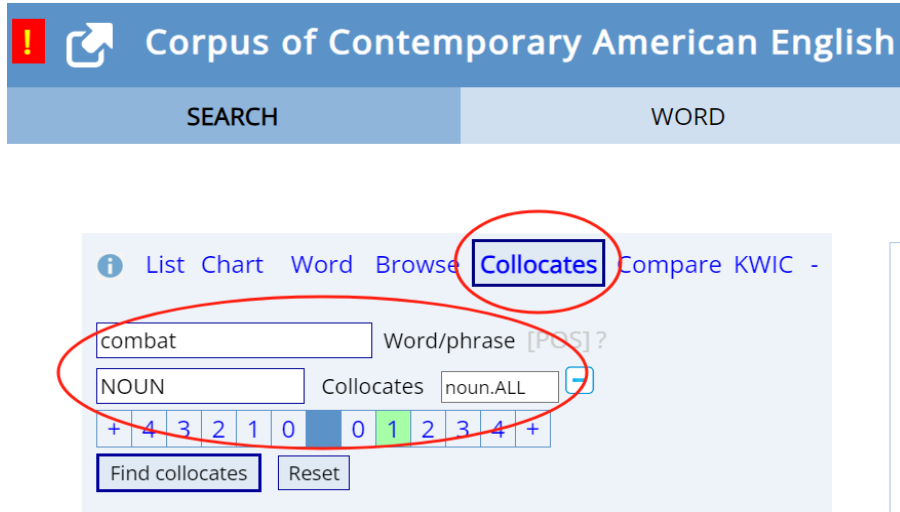
Pictures 4.1 Screenshots of the COCA search for “oppose”



This screenshot shows the 'FREQUENCY' tab of the COCA search results for 'oppose'. It displays a table of collocates with their respective frequencies and horizontal bar charts. The table is sorted by frequency in descending order.

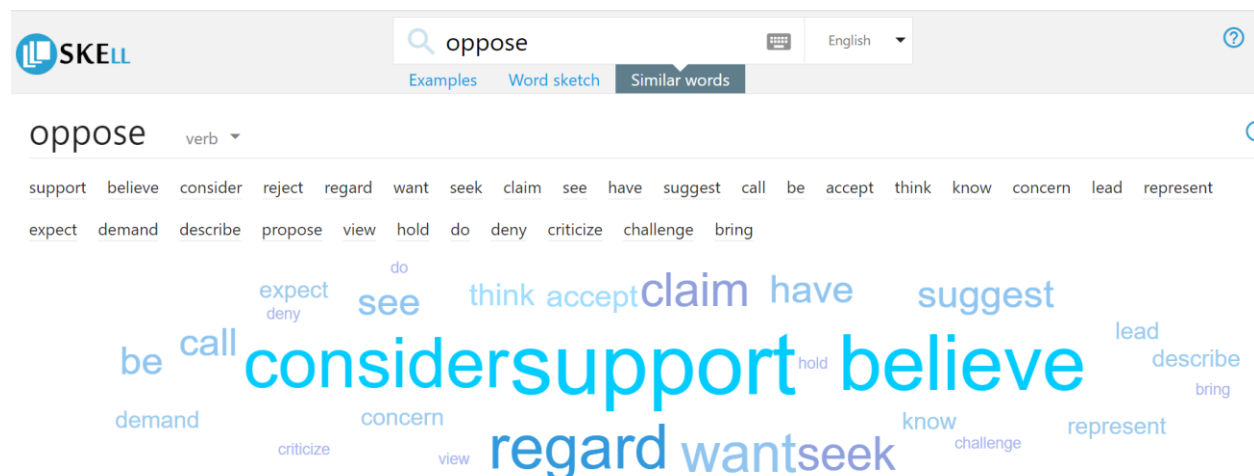
| RANK | COLLOCATE | FREQ |
|------|-------------|------|
| 1 | ABORTION | 193 |
| 2 | PRESIDENT | 44 |
| 3 | GOVERNMENT | 31 |
| 4 | EFFORTS | 27 |
| 5 | LEGISLATION | 26 |
| 6 | TAX | 24 |
| 7 | WAR | 24 |
| 8 | MR | 23 |
| 9 | TRUMP | 22 |
| 10 | CANDIDATES | 20 |
| 11 | MARRIAGE | 20 |
| 12 | WOMEN | 17 |
| 13 | GUN | 16 |
| 14 | VIOLENCE | 16 |
| 15 | CAPITAL | 15 |
| 16 | DRONE | 15 |

Pictures 4.2 Screenshots of the COCA search for “combat”



| RANK | COLLOCATE | FREQ |
|------|------------|------|
| 1 | TROOPS | 549 |
| 2 | OPERATIONS | 398 |
| 3 | ZONE | 395 |
| 4 | BOOTS | 281 |
| 5 | MISSIONS | 260 |
| 6 | VETERANS | 249 |
| 7 | UNITS | 240 |
| 8 | FORCES | 220 |
| 9 | VETERAN | 206 |
| 10 | EXPERIENCE | 200 |
| 11 | AIRCRAFT | 193 |
| 12 | TEAM | 193 |
| 13 | TERRORISM | 175 |
| 14 | TRAINING | 154 |
| 15 | MISSION | 150 |
| 16 | SUPPORT | 139 |

Picture 4.3 Screenshots of the Similar Words function in SKELL to find out the similar words of “oppose”



Picture 4.4 Screenshots of the Similar Words function in SKELL to find out the similar words of “combat”



Worksheet 4. Please choose the best translation.

“在整个改革开放过程中都要反对腐败。” Which translation is more accurate?

- A. During the entire process of reform and opening up, we must persistently oppose corruption.
- B. During the entire process of reform and opening up, we must persistently combat corruption.

Answer: B [The SKELL word cloud can help students see that “combat” is more forceful than “oppose”.]

Note:

Use of the teaching plan for commercial purposes is not allowed.

If you refer to the teaching plan for teaching or academic purposes, please use the following citation:

Chen, Xia. (2025). Vocabulary Accuracy in Chinese-to-English Translation of Political Texts.
EdUHK Corpus-based ELT Lesson Design Competition 2025. [access web link]