

مجلة علمية، شهرية، محكمة متعددة التخصصات، تُعنى بنشر الدراسات والأبحاث في مجالات العلوم الإنسانية، الاجتماعية، والاقتصادية

المدير المسؤول ورئيس التحرير: انس المستقل

العدد
الخامس

Fifth issue

5

العدد الخامس

سبتمبر / أيلول 2025

الرقم المعياري الدولي : 3085 - 5039 e-ISSN

رقم الصحافة : 1/2025 Press number

مجلة المقالات الدولية

العدد الخامس، سبتمبر / أيلول 2025

5039 - 3085 e-ISSN

كلمة العدد

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

يسعد هيئة تحرير مجلة المقالات الدولية أن تقدم للباحثين والمهتمين بين أيديهم هذا العدد الخامس، الذي يندرج ضمن الجهود الرامية إلى تعزيز البحث العلمي الرصين، وترسيخ مكانة المجلة كمصدر أكاديمي محكم يواكب التطورات العلمية والمعرفية في مختلف التخصصات.

وفي هذا الإطار، يسعدنا أن نعلن عن إدماج خدمة ORCID في جميع المقالات المنشورة ابتداءً من هذا العدد، بما يتيح للباحثين توثيق هوياتهم الأكاديمية بشكل أوضح، وضمان حضورهم الدولي ضمن شبكات البحث العلمي. إن هذه الخطوة تندرج ضمن رؤية المجلة الرامية إلى تعزيز معايير الجودة والشفافية، وربط الإنتاج العلمي لكتابها بآليات التعريف العالمية المعتمدة.

وإذ نقدّم هذا العدد بما يزر به من بحوث ودراسات متنوعة، فإننا نجدد التزامنا بخدمة المعرفة الأكاديمية، ودعم الباحثين في مساهمهم العلمي.

والله ولي التوفيق

رئيس التحرير



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الرقم المعياري الدولي: ISSN : 3085 - 5039 رقم الصحافة : 1 / 2025 Press number: العدد 5، شتبر / أيلول 2025

اللجان العلمية

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محمد بن عبد الله بفاس

محتويات العدد

3-18	تأثير الذكاء الاصطناعي على جودة البحث العلمي أنس المستقل وخديجة العاج
19-42	الذكاء الاصطناعي في القطاع العام: بين ضمان التحول الرقمي وحماية الحقوق الدستورية إبراهيم أيت وركان وحمزة الكندي
43-60	تأثير الذكاء الاصطناعي على اتخاذ القرار الإداري أميمة بوعديلي
61-80	آليات الديمقراطية التشاركية ودور الفاعل المدني في بلورة السياسات العمومية فهد كرطيط
81-104	قراءة تحليلية في اجتهادات القضاء الدستوري المغربي القاضي الدستوري قاضي انتخابات عادل كاسم
105-128	المسؤولية التأديبية للصحفي المهني الإلكتروني في ضوء القانون رقم 90.13 المتعلق بإحداث المجلس الوطني للصحافة إبتسام الشرقاوي
129-150	المنظومة المؤسسية للنهوض بالقانون الدولي الإنساني بالمغرب دراسة قانونية تحليلية سعيد همامون ومحمد نبو
151-174	مكانة البرلمان في دستور 2011 بين الدور الدستوري وممارسة الفاعل السياسي أسماء لمسردي
175-204	L'impact de la technocratie sur l'action diplomatique et l'élaboration des politiques économiques Etude comparative: Maroc - Tunisie – France Jamal FAOUZI
205-220	Former pour transformer : enjeux et pratiques de formation dans l'intégration de la Blockchain dans les organisations marocaines Ehiri NAAMA
221-241	Besieged Identities in the Aftermath of 9/11 :The Role of the Media in Demonizing and Humanizing Muslims Jamal AKABLI AndMohamed El MEJDKI
242-265	Decoding the Language Classroom: Navigating the Pros and Cons of Integrating Translation in Foreign Language Teaching, with a Focus on Arabic Hajar EL SAYD



Decoding the Language Classroom: Navigating the Pros and Cons of Integrating Translation in Foreign Language Teaching, with a Focus on Arabic

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Abstract:

For decades, translation has been overlooked in foreign language teaching and learning. This study investigates the benefits of integrating translation into Foreign Language Teaching (FLT), focusing on the perspectives of students and teachers at the American School of Tangier (AST). Specifically, it examines the role of translation in Arabic classes, its advantages, and the challenges educators may encounter. Data were collected through student questionnaires and teacher surveys. Results indicate broad agreement that translation, when applied carefully, can support language acquisition. The study highlights the importance of learner-centered, context-sensitive pedagogical practices in shaping effective FLT approaches.

Keywords :

Foreign Language Teaching (FLT); language learning; merits; student beliefs.

المستخلص:

لطالما تم تجاهل الترجمة كوسيلة للتواصل في مجال تعليم وتعلم اللغات الأجنبية. تسعى هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف مزايا إدماج الترجمة في تعليم اللغات الأجنبية (FLT)، من خلال الوقوف على تصورات كل من التلاميذ والمدرسين بالمدرسة الأمريكية بطنجة (AST). وقد تناول البحث دور الترجمة في حصص اللغة العربية، وما توفره من فوائد، إلى جانب التحديات التي قد يواجهها المدرسون عند اعتمادها. تم جمع المعطيات عبر استبيان للتلاميذ واستطلاع للمدرسين. وأظهرت النتائج إجماعاً على أن الترجمة، عند توظيفها بعناية، تعزز عملية تعلم اللغات، مؤكدة أهمية الممارسات البيداغوجية المتمحورة حول المتعلم والسياق.

الكلمات المفتاحية:

تعليم اللغات الأجنبية؛ تعلم اللغة؛ المزايا؛ معتقدات الطلاب.

Introduction

It has long been argued that translation, as a pedagogical practice, should be strictly avoided when it comes to language teaching/learning. In fact, a plethora of studies, conducted in the few past decades, on the role of translation in language learning warns against the detrimental effects translation may have on learners, which explains why teachers are resolutely instructed, and sometimes even admonished, not to resort to translation in the teaching process. However, for many scholars, translation is a vehicle in language learning; they argue that translation is a skill that learners use professionally when they reach higher language levels, not to mention, of course, that it helps achieve learning, one way or another.

The Council of Europe defines language learning as [a] process whereby language ability is gained as the result of a planned process, especially by formal study in an institutional setting" (139). Therefore, for many years, language scholars and experts in applied linguistics excluded translation, and forced it into a long exile, to reiterate Widdowson's words (160), without being able to provide any empirical justification or scientific evidence that translation has detrimental effects on the learners of a foreign language, which is why Carreres claims that "we still lack a strong empirical foundation on which to base our practice" (1).

In keeping with Carreres' statement, there have been recent attempts to summon translation back on the table, as voices to bring the issue to discussion are growing vocal. For instance, Duff, Stern, Widdowson, House, Cook, and Pym, among others, are all scholars that have shown deep concern for the use of translation in foreign language teaching, expecting, as such, "a change towards the pedagogical use of translation" (Stibbard 69). These scholars advocate the implementation of translation in foreign-language teaching, as they believe that reconsidering using translation in teaching does not necessarily mean abandoning the Grammar-Translation Method, but instead, this could be interpreted as an attempt to make translation one of the communicative and interactive activities of modern language teaching methods.

Larson believes that one of the most problematic issues in translation is “[...] how to find lexical equivalents for objects and events which are not known in the target culture” (163). Accordingly, bringing about the most appropriate equivalence is, after all, the underlying goal of any translator or teacher of language using translation in the teaching process. Nevertheless, finding equivalence is a complex process that requires a thorough knowledge of both the source and target cultures/languages, which explains why it is divided by Mona Baker, in her book *In Other Words: A Coursebook in Translation*, into different levels, namely equivalence at word level, equivalence above word level, grammatical equivalence, and textual equivalence.

As such, the integration of translation in foreign language teaching, particularly Arabic, stands at the crossroads of pedagogical debates. Thus, this research delves into the nuanced dynamics of translation role in the language classroom. It critically examines its potential benefits and challenges within the context of the American School of Tangier (AST). By exploring the perspectives of both educators and learners, the study aims to shed light on the practicality and efficacy of translation as a teaching tool. It questions long-held assumptions and seeks to understand how translation can enhance or impede the language acquisition process. This inquiry is timely and significant as it contributes to the ongoing discourse on effective language teaching methodologies and their impact on learners’ proficiency and cultural competence.

Literature Review

No one can deny that grasping cultural differences, along with their meanings and implications, is of utmost importance in the translation process. Therefore, translators must be aware of the different translation strategies and their applications so that they can communicate meaning appropriately, and this explains why, in most cases, they use strategies like equivalence to cover or describe cross-cultural gaps. For this reason, one may say, “translation is not seen as a problematic form of cross-cultural communication, perhaps because the professional translator already knows how to get along in the foreign culture”

(Robinson 183). Translators usually take note of cultural differences that exist, as they may influence and be significant when translating.

That language adds up to the making of the identity of each nation, which labels the relationship between any culture and its linguistic components as a relatively complex one. For instance, Chen Hongwei suggests that culture is viewed through language as the latter represents the former. He suggests that “language mirrors other parts of culture, supports them, spreads them and helps to develop others” (121). Claire J. Kramsch, on the other hand, puts forward that:

Language is a system of signs that is seen as having itself a cultural value. Speakers identify themselves and others through their use of language: they view their language as a symbol of their social identity. The prohibition of its use is often perceived by its speakers as a rejection of their social group and their culture. Thus we can say that language symbolizes cultural reality. (193)

Opposite to Hongwei’s and Kramsch’s views of the relationship between language and culture, Edward Sapir’s opinion of this relationship may be summed up as “no two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same reality” (69). As such, it is one’s culture that determines their language and that influences the way they interpret, interact with, and perceive different thoughts about the world (69).

In light of these diverse views on the relationship between language and culture, one may infer that translation from one language to another cannot be done adequately without a sufficient understanding of the two cultures involved. That is to say, one must not only know the language, but must also be familiar with the culture of those who speak it, to use Nida’s words (qtd in Delisle 132). On the other hand, Juliane House highlights the importance of both cultures in translation when she confirms that:

Translation is not only a linguistic act; it is also a cultural one, an act of communication across cultures. Translation always involves both language and culture simply because the two cannot really be separated. Language is culturally embedded: it both expresses and shapes cultural reality, and the meaning of linguistic items, be they words or larger segments of text, can only be understood when considered together with the cultural context in which these linguistic items are used. (11-12)

As such, one may say that, in the process of translation, it is not only the two languages that come into contact but also, and most importantly, the two cultures, which, in House's words, makes of translation a process of intercultural communication. Accordingly, we are required to master the target language and have a broad knowledge of the target culture as well.

In keeping with what has been mentioned by the scholars referred to earlier, one may suggest that cultural transfer is one of the key points of translation, and it is also one of its most complex parts. Of course, by cultural transfer one refers to the translator's awareness of both cultural differences and traditions. However, this is not to say that any incompetence at the level of language might be tolerated, as the translator's inability to use language appropriately and correctly must certainly affect the quality of translation and will consequently create confusion.

As such, in order for translators to perform exceptionally well at relaying the intended message, they should be aware of both cultural and linguistic differences, as what might be deemed an appropriate expression in one culture might be considered inappropriate in another. In other words, language should change to conform to the receptor culture, to use Nida's and Taber's words (199). However, one of the most nagging worries in cultural translation is that some words just have no equivalents in the target culture, as these words happen to have different interpretations.

With this in mind, it is indispensable to highlight that recent scholarship underscores the evolving role of translation in language education, highlighting its multifaceted benefits. Alenazi (318) found that “learners not only translate in academic contexts but also apply this technique in real-life situations,” suggesting that translation fosters continuous engagement with the target language and enhances learners’ comfort and competence in its use. This perspective is echoed by Alm and Watanabe, who observed that advanced language learners strategically use machine translation tools to support their reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills, while being aware of their limitations. They emphasize the importance of authentic communication, noting that learners found MTTs helpful, but also emphasized the importance of authentic communication in language learning.

The integration of technology in language education has further transformed pedagogical approaches. Xu et al. investigated the use of AI-generated feedback in translation revision, revealing that students invested considerable cognitive effort in the revision process, despite finding the feedback comprehensible. They noted that “students exhibited moderate affective satisfaction with the feedback model,” indicating a nuanced reception of AI tools in educational settings. Similarly, Rothwell et al. reported that translation-training programs have increasingly incorporated machine translation, post-editing, and quality evaluation, reflecting a responsiveness to technological advancements. Their survey highlighted that programmes seem to be consolidating their core offering around cloud-based software with cost-free academic access.

The concept of translanguaging has also gained prominence in multilingual education contexts. Cenoz and Gorter advocate for pedagogical translanguaging, defined as “the use of planned instruction strategies from the learners’ repertoire to develop language awareness and metalinguistic awareness.” This approach recognizes the dynamic interplay of languages in learners’ repertoires and promotes a more inclusive and effective language education framework.

Reasons to Incorporate Translation in Foreign Language Teaching

The resort to translation in the domain of foreign language teaching has always been a subject of arguments and a source of discomfort to many scholars worldwide. This practice has long been doomed, strongly, for absolutely no compelling reasons, which opens the door for inspection, and prompts researchers to investigate the issue so as to come up with a new way to look differently at the practice under discussion. To start with, Jeremy Harmer, Guy Cook, and Philip Kerr, among other scholars, believe that translation as a teaching practice used in the domain of foreign language teaching/learning is regarded as a constructive beneficial asset and a pedagogical means of instruction. However, many researchers in the domain, including Anthony Howatt, argue that, in order for translation to be beneficial and fruitful, instructors should consider implementing it in their teaching process differently from the way the old-fashioned Grammar Translation Method (GTM) was practiced. In this respect, Howatt states that:

The practice of translation has been condemned so strenuously for so long without any really convincing reasons that it is perhaps time the profession took another look at it. Was it really translation that the reformers objected to a hundred years ago, or, as Prendergast suggests, the way in which it was used? (161)

The fact that translation is a tool used by everyone and a practice seen and manifested everywhere in our quotidian lives makes it unsound to have it excluded from foreign language classrooms. In this regard, Alan Duff wonders if “outside the classroom [...] translation is going on, all the time [then] why not inside the classroom?” (6). To explain, rejecting translation solely because of the arguments built upon the assumptions developed by the Grammar Translation Method opponents is, as some researchers consider it, a fallacy. In fact, the call for eliminating translation from foreign language classes, where it may represent a constructive tool used for enhancing understanding, thus learning, would be a fault and a mistake we should better avoid.

The counterarguments on the use of translation in foreign language classrooms are based on realistic needs that scholars believe should be taken into account, and revolve around fundamental tenets related to the merits of its incorporation in the teaching/learning process, which is believed to have led many scholars to reconsider their attitude and their standpoint as regards the issue under study. To explain, the reasons why scholars think that translation is a practice that should be embraced and (re)activated in foreign language classes is closely related to many justifications, of which humanistic, cognitive, practical, technical, and political reasons are part and parcel.

Since the early 1970s, proponents of affective and humanistic approaches in the domain of foreign language teaching have asserted that learning happens when learners are comfortable, contented, and relaxed. In the light of the study at hand, studying a foreign language in a warm, supportive environment can mobilize learners' self-awareness, may refine their thinking, and can help them develop their linguistic skills. In this context, Richard Stibbard is one of the scholars to echo these views; he states that "[in foreign language classes,] the justification for the use of translation is also found in the role assigned to it in affective-humanistic approaches in TEFL, which emphasizes the need to reduce anxiety in the early stages of language learning by allowing some use of the mother tongue" (71). As such, on the one hand, learners may resort to L1 to facilitate their comprehension and to escape possible insecurities related to their limited language proficiency. On the other hand, teachers may consider using L1 to consolidate learners' knowledge of the foreign language, especially with vocabulary, sentence structure, and cultural aspects.

On the ground of what has been mentioned, it is incontestably true that having restraints in the classroom is more likely to critically impact the learning process, thus, the learning outcome. To explain, scholars perceive the extent to which L1 is being used in class as a major restriction that bothers the learners' apprenticeship journey. Jeremy Harmer is one of the proponents of the use of L1 in foreign language classes. He enunciates that "students (and their teachers) can use the L1 to keep the social atmosphere of the class in good repair" (133-134). In other words, in spite of the fact that the language encouraged for communication

within a language classroom is L2, this should not be imposed or taken as a law to abide by, for it is believed not to be helping learners with shy, and/or unconfident attitude in expressing themselves; hence, it will result in an uneasy climate in the classroom. On the other hand, teachers, as facilitators of learning, are invited to resort to translation whenever needed so as to help learners keep up with the materials presented to them and in order to avoid causing a tense atmosphere within the classroom.

The use of translation in foreign language learning/teaching contexts is not solely motivated by humanitarian concerns. Very frequently, teachers of foreign languages have stated that giving instruction and explaining concepts to learners using L2 (especially with beginning levels) is ineffective and goes, in most cases, in vain, because L2 does not find its way to the learners. Thereupon, many teachers resort to translation as a teaching technique, mostly to explain instructions, to clarify unfamiliar vocabulary, to deal with difficult idioms and expressions, and to teach grammatical rules.

For this reason, quite a few scholars, including Philip Kerr, Guy Cook, and Richard Stibbard, regard the use of L1 in foreign language classrooms as a strategy of saving time and avoiding interruptions in the lesson's pace. To start with, Kerr recommends that "teachers leave the jargon in L1 when using meta-language, [which he describes as] taking the shortcut" (32). That is to say, teachers may use translation whenever they see it as a time-saving technique. Cook, on the other hand, claims that "[m]any recent studies and materials have, with varying degrees of caution, been supportive of code switching" (46). Accordingly, he suggests that code switching may represent a beneficial technique in learning as far as the learners oscillate between L1 and L2. Stibbard agrees with Cook further supporting this concept of code switching use. Stibbard draws attention to the widespread use of code switching in Hong Kong's everyday life, the fact that makes it difficult to "exclude" it from foreign language schools. He affirms that "code-mixing and code-switching are such characteristics of the Hong Kong linguistic situation that to ignore it in the classroom would be foolish and try to ban it would be futile" (70).

Current foreign language pedagogies support the use of technology in classrooms to increase the opportunities for communicative practice. Nowadays, technology represents a tenet on which modern education is based. It has started to occupy a noticeable position in the teaching/learning processes in general and in foreign language classrooms in particular. More than ever, curriculums are designed in accordance with the recent technological tools. Nevertheless, among all the technological tools available for both teachers and learners, translation is perceived as an impediment. Many are the online websites that are used for translation; however, they are looked at as inaccurate sources of information; therefore, learners of foreign languages are often advised not to make use of them. Nevertheless, these dissuasions do not prevent foreign language learners from resorting to the provided sites whenever needed. Henceforth, instead of advising learners against the use of such technological tools, learners should be taught how to make use of the existing machine translation decently, for it is believed to be one of the tools learners will most probably need in the future, especially in their professional journey.

Politically-related reasons are among the reasons proponents of the use of translation in foreign language classes refer to when explaining their attitude. For instance, Kerr is one of the scholars that supports this trend. He points out to the supremacy of L1 speakers of English in the foreign language teaching domain. He also argues that the discourse of FLT is caused mostly by L1 speakers of English and their teaching background. To support his argument, he asserts that institutions tend to employ L1 speakers of English for commercial reasons as they believe that they will attract more learners if they offer the opportunity to be taught by an L1 speaker of English (a native speaker) (3). In this regard, he states that “many private schools sell themselves on their native speaker teachers” (4). By this, he implies that by having teachers that do not share the learners’ L1, schools claim that translation has no place in the teaching/learning process (marketing). Nevertheless, the fact that the world is constantly changing makes it different, resulting in a shift in this trend (of no translation use in language class), which has always represented the commonly valued way of teaching.

Furthermore, the move forward in a globalized world has contributed to the revolt of translation and promoted it as a needed technique. To explain, the medium of communication

in most contexts is English, and those who fail to communicate in English are more likely to demand translation services. With this in mind, translation is becoming a needed field in many social and political settings as well as in touristic and trade settings. In this regard, Stibbard states that “English is a lingua franca for travel and trade and many speakers of it will be called upon to translate to and from their mother tongue” (71). In keeping with this, it could be said that having experience in translation offered during foreign-language education would probably help future performance.

It has long been argued that foreign language learners frequently resort to translation to facilitate L2 learning regardless of the “warnings” of their teachers. As such, it could be said that it is not possible to encroach language learners’ minds in order to prevent any possible translation operation. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that, despite the fact that translation has always played several roles in various methods of foreign language teaching/learning, it is agreed upon that it represents a powerful tool that aids learners gain confidence in their journey of learning an L2. Put differently, learners find it easy to learn when they make connection between what is being learned and what they already know. For example, when learners learn something new, they use what they already know as a basis for building these new pieces of information. Nick Ellis demonstrates this with a comparison by noting that “the language calculator has no ‘clear’ button” (153). By this, he refers to the previously existing linguistic knowledge learners have (in their L1) and how the detachment from it, when learning an L2, is unachievable. He asserts that learners of an L2 are more likely to make use of their L1 sources by comparing what is being learned to what is already learned. For him, the significant repertoire learners of foreign languages bring in represents a building stone upon which learners compile the new knowledge (that of an L2), which constitutes the process he calls transferring knowledge. In this regard, Kerr agrees with Ellis and affirms that learners’ own language in the language classroom plays a significant role in learning the L2 and supports it with evidence from neurosciences and cognitive linguistics.

Arguments against Incorporating Translation in Foreign Language Teaching

Most of the reasons why using translation in teaching foreign languages is unasked for stem immediately from the way this activity is incorporated in Grammar Translation Method, where the main focus is chiefly on translating sentences and reading them aloud (Larson-Freeman and Anderson 61), the fact that results in students being unable to think in the target language, as priority is always given to the mother tongue, making them incapable of producing language. With this in mind, it is possible to say that the reaction against using Grammar Translation Method has developed into a rejection of any translation activity, which explains why, according to Alan Duff, "translation is ignored as a valid activity for language practice and improvement" (9). This neglect, adds Duff, is attributed to the fact that "over the centuries translation had gradually become fossilized" (9). As such, every time the issue of using translation in foreign language teaching is highlighted, researchers warn of its detrimental effects, which they mostly sum up in the fact that translation decreases learners' exposure to the target language and that the input these learners are exposed to in the classroom is not enough.

More arguments against incorporating translation in foreign language teaching emanate from the assumption that translation is restrictive, as, according to Angelas Carreres, "it is [an] exercise that has no place in a communicative methodology" (5). Therefore, translation activities, from her point of view, have no communicative value, which explains why most teachers of foreign languages, for example, feel the must to admonish their students for thinking in their mother language, as this may slow their production process and may also have a negative impact on the process of communication. In this regard, Guy Cooks declares,

Translation is often considered to be detrimental both to fluency in communication and to the learner's development of a new language. [...] The person who has learned through translation will forever be locked into this laborious process, and always be condemned to start production and finish comprehension in their own language, and

unable, to use a popular formulation, ‘to think in the language’ they have learned. (88)

Accordingly, one may say that translation “prevents students from thinking in the foreign language, to use Kirsten Malmkjaer’s words, which makes of the teaching/learning process both pointless and irrelevant” (Duff 3). Moreover, excessive use of translation may result in the learners’ knowledge of their mother language and that of the target language interfering with one another, which creates a serious problem at the level of finding appropriate equivalence since a fair number of words and expressions just happen to have no equivalent in the target language/culture.

More interestingly, Duff argues that incorporating translation in language teaching is believed to cover only two skills, namely, reading and writing (5), which stands in contrast to the integrated approach, where the four language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) must all be targeted, with each skill complementing the others. Therefore, many believe that translation is useless as it fails to account for those skills, and some even argue that it is time-wasting given that “it takes up valuable time which could be used to teach these four skills” (6), which is also confirmed by Duff in his statement that translation is “time-consuming and wasteful” (5).

Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative research design to explore the use of translation in foreign language teaching at the American School of Tangier. The methodology integrates both student questionnaires and teacher surveys to capture a comprehensive view of translation practices and perceptions in Arabic language classes.

Research Design and Data Collection

Data collection is expected to last three weeks (15 contact days with students). It is a phase wherein both students' and teachers' points of view will be examined. On the one hand, students will be given a questionnaire to fill out whereas teachers will be sent a survey to fill out and submit via email. Students are invited to fill out a questionnaire answering 14 questions, the type of which varies from closed ended questions to X point Likert scale. The questionnaires are distributed at the end of May (Spring 2021) to all school students taking Arabic classes regardless of the division they belong to. To explain, by the beginning of June 2021, students will have already been given a questionnaire by their homeroom teachers and will have also been asked to hand it back in two weeks time. After handing out the questionnaires, the homeroom teachers will bring the questionnaires to the Arabic department faculty room and put them in designated boxes differentiated according to grade level. The questionnaires will then be collected to extract data and check for missing questionnaires. After that, the questionnaires data will be inserted and tabulated in a descriptive and an inferential statistical tool, SPSS. Then, the results data will be studied so as to indicate any correlation between the use of translation in language classes and its impact on the learning outcome/experience. As for the survey, after students fill out the surveys and sending them back to me, information will be collected to indicate the possible challenges teachers of Arabic face when implementing translation in their classes.

Ethical Considerations

Participants were informed about the purpose and scope of the study, and participation was entirely voluntary. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and responses were anonymized to ensure confidentiality. The study was conducted in accordance with institutional ethical guidelines, ensuring compliance with best practices in educational research.

Research Instruments

The research instruments adopted in this study are two, namely, a questionnaire and a survey. The questionnaire consists of 20 questions/items that target students of Arabic at the American School of Tangier (divisions Included: elementary, middle, and upper). The questionnaire is designed to collect views and perceptions of the students as regards the implementation or the use of translation in their Arabic learning classes. The survey aims to explore and study the teachers' points of view as regards the challenges they face when using translation in the teaching process.

Implementation Procedures

At the end of May (Spring 2021), students were given questionnaires in which they express their opinions, perceptions, and thoughts as regards the implementation of translation in Arabic classes and the impact it has on their engagement in learning and on their performance. Students were given the questionnaires by their homeroom teachers to hand them back in two weeks time. After handing out questionnaires, the homeroom teachers will bring the questionnaires to the Arabic department faculty room and put them in designated boxes, differentiated according to grade level. We, then, will collect the extracted data and check for missing questionnaires. After that, the questionnaires will be inserted and tabulated in a descriptive and an inferential statistical tool, SPSS. Then, the results will be studied to indicate any correlation between the use of translation in foreign language classes and its merits on the learning of a foreign language.

The survey (the second instrument) will be sent via the institutional email to the 6 teachers of Arabic at the school at the beginning of June. Once received, the survey responses will be studied so as to categorize the possible issues teachers of Arabic might face when using translation in their Arabic classes.

Data Analysis

Data from the questionnaires and surveys were analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Descriptive statistics, such as means, medians, and standard deviations, were calculated to assess general trends. Additionally, inferential analyses, including correlation and chi-square tests, were conducted to identify significant relationships between translation use and language learning outcomes. The analysis also included a reliability check using Cronbach's alpha to assess the internal consistency of the questionnaire items, ensuring that the instruments used were both reliable and valid. The quantitative data were supplemented by qualitative insights from the open-ended survey responses, which were coded and thematically analyzed to identify recurring themes and patterns in teacher perspectives. This mixed-methods approach provided a more nuanced understanding of the data, aligning the statistical findings with the qualitative insights to form a comprehensive view of translation's impact in the classroom.

Data from the questionnaires and surveys were analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Descriptive statistics were calculated to assess general trends, while inferential analyses, including correlation and chi-square tests, were conducted to identify significant relationships between translation use and language learning outcomes. The findings were then interpreted to evaluate the impact of translation on language acquisition and to assess the alignment of these findings with existing pedagogical theories.

Results

This study's findings reveal a positive disposition among both learners and teachers towards the use of translation in Arabic language classes at The American School of Tangier. Despite some challenges, the overall perception is that translation contributes significantly to learning outcomes.

Summary of Findings

The analysis of the collected data revealed several significant trends and correlations. Descriptive statistics indicated that a majority of both students and teachers view translation as a valuable tool in language learning. However, the data also revealed some notable outliers. For instance, while most students expressed a positive attitude towards translation as a means of enhancing comprehension, a small subset reported that it hindered their ability to think directly in the target language. This contradiction suggests that the benefits of translation may vary depending on individual learning styles and proficiency levels.

Correlation analysis further supported this observation. A statistically significant positive correlation ($r = 0.63$, $p < 0.05$) was found between students' positive attitudes toward translation and their overall language proficiency. However, the data also revealed a weaker, non-significant correlation ($r = 0.21$, $p = 0.14$) between translation use and speaking confidence, indicating that while translation may aid in comprehension, it might not directly enhance oral fluency. This finding aligns with Duff's (2016) observation that translation is often more effective for reading and writing skills than for speaking.

Descriptive Statistics					
N		Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q17	30	3.00	5.00	4.0667	.63968
Q18	30	3.00	5.00	4.2000	.55086
Q19	30	3.00	5.00	4.1333	.57135
Q20	30	3.00	5.00	4.3000	.59596
Valid N (listwise)	30				

Table 1 - Statistics representing the correlation between translation and translation impact on learning.

Teachers' and Learners' Perspectives

The teachers' responses highlighted varying degrees of reliance on translation based on teaching context. High school teachers rarely used translation, while elementary school teachers often resorted to it, suggesting its higher utility at lower educational levels. This trend is depicted in Figure 1, illustrating the correlation between teaching context and the use of translation.

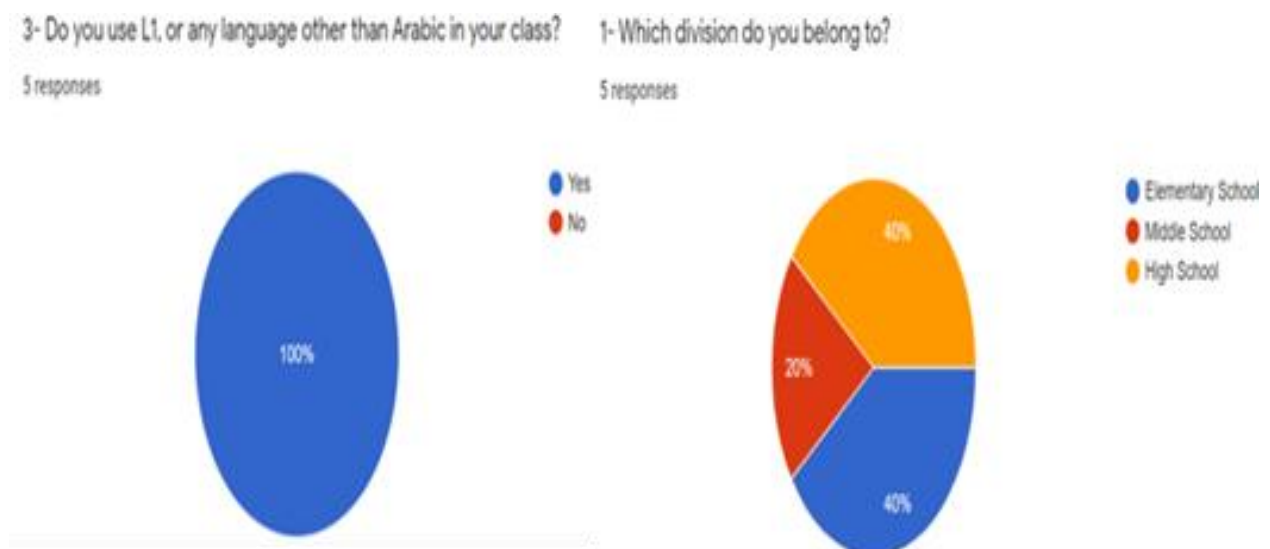


Fig. 1 – The correlation between teaching context and the use of translation.

Learners responded positively to the inclusion of translation in their classes. The statistical analysis, as detailed in Table 1, shows that a significant majority of students believed that translation positively impacted their performance and learning outcomes, with mean scores on questionnaire items indicating strong favourability towards translation practices.

Correlation between Teaching Context and Translation Use

The study found a correlation between teaching contexts and the use of translation. Elementary school teachers reported frequent use of translation, contrasted with the occasional use in middle school and rare use in high school, as shown in Figure 1. This pattern

suggests a diminishing reliance on translation as students advance in their language proficiency.

Discussion

The hypothesis embraced by this study favored the use and incorporation of translation in FLT. It states that “using translation in teaching a foreign language is not necessarily detrimental to language learning”. To test this hypothesis, the previously presented results are going to be used.

The hypothesis is based on the assumption that there are predominant negative attitudes towards the incorporation of translation in language teaching and learning. As previously mentioned, quite often, translation is associated with the GTM (Grammar-Translation Method). Most educators tend to forego implementing translation in their practices regardless of the merits it could have on the learning outcomes. In this regard, teachers’ and learners’ beliefs and perception towards the issue subject of this study are presumed to be indicative and of value. To explain, the predominant point of view of each element -teachers/learners- will have a bearing on their practices. That is to say, if a teacher stands against the use of translation, translation will not be part of his/her teaching practices; hence, his/her learners are more likely to develop a parallel dislike towards it. Therefore, it could be said that the teachers and the learners represent two elements/agents that are more likely to correlate.

Interpreting the Results

The research outcomes, as depicted in Table 1, indicate a positive perception of translation in language learning among both teachers and students at The American School of Tangier. This finding aligns with the hypothesis that translation, when used appropriately, can be a beneficial tool in foreign language teaching, particularly in Arabic. The data revealed a trend of translation being more prevalent in classes with lower and intermediate levels, indicating its role in assisting learners at these stages of language proficiency.

Teaching Context and Translation of Exam Questions

The practice of translating exam questions shows a strong correlation with the teaching context. As shown in Figure 2, translation of exams' questions predominantly occurs in elementary school (ES) and middle school (MS), but not in high school. This suggests that translation is considered more necessary at lower educational levels, supporting the idea that translation aids comprehension and learning in earlier stages of language acquisition.

15- Translating instructions on assessments papers helps guide the students and boost their self confidence

5 responses

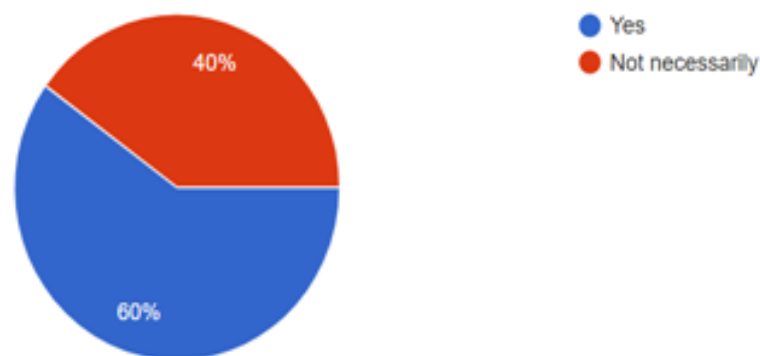


Fig. 2 – Teachers' beliefs as regards the impact of translating questions of assessment papers on learners' performance.

Teachers' Beliefs and Practices

A notable variance was observed in teachers' responses regarding the translation of instructions on assessment papers. While three out of five teachers believed that translating instructions aids learners' performance and boosts confidence, two teachers did not share this view, indicating a diversity of opinions on the effectiveness of translation in assessments. This

highlights the complexity of incorporating translation in foreign language teaching, where its effectiveness can be subjective and context-dependent.

Impact of Translation on Language Assessment

The use of translation in language assessment has been a topic of considerable debate. While many instructors advocate for conducting assessments entirely in the target language, others see value in translation for clarifying instructions or questions, especially in lower levels where learners are still developing language proficiency. This points to the need for a nuanced approach to translation in language assessments, balancing between ensuring comprehensive understanding with promoting target language use.

Conclusion

This study has explored the role of translation in Arabic language teaching, providing insights into both the benefits and limitations of this pedagogical approach. The findings indicate that translation can be a valuable tool for enhancing comprehension, reinforcing grammatical structures, and deepening cultural understanding. However, it also revealed significant variation in how different students perceive its effectiveness, highlighting the need for a more individualized approach in language teaching.

While the study captured a broad spectrum of teacher and student perspectives, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the relatively small sample size, drawn from a single institution, may limit the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the study relied primarily on self-reported data, which can introduce biases related to participant perceptions and recall accuracy. Future research could address these limitations by incorporating larger, more diverse samples and employing longitudinal designs to capture changes in attitudes over time.

Moreover, this study suggests several practical implications for language educators. Given the mixed impact of translation on different language skills, teachers should consider

integrating translation strategically, perhaps as a complement to more communicative, task-based approaches that prioritize speaking and listening skills. Furthermore, the observed correlation between translation and reading/writing proficiency indicates that translation exercises could be particularly beneficial at intermediate stages of language learning, where structural awareness is critical.

Finally, this research contributes to the broader discourse on language pedagogy by challenging the simplistic dichotomy of translation as either wholly beneficial or detrimental. It calls for a more context-sensitive approach, recognizing that the effectiveness of translation depends not only on the learner's proficiency but also on the specific linguistic skills being developed. Future studies should explore these dynamics in more detail, examining how translation interacts with emerging technologies and diverse cultural contexts to shape the modern language classroom.

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