REINFORCING THE TEACHING OF TRANSLATION IN BENINESE SECONDARY SCHOOLS: A NEW CHALLENGE FOR EFL TEACHERS

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Abstract

This paper dealt with, after the scrutiny of advanced learners' translation skills, the necessity of reinforcing the teaching of translation skills as a potentially effective method of teaching/learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL)in Benin high schools. In fact, the Beninese EFL learners study English for almost about seven years (four years in the first cycle and three years in the second) before joining university. For the last three years, they are exposed to translation skills during evaluation. Unfortunately, the designed curriculum has nowhere mentioned the teaching/learning/evaluation of translation. This paper then examined, through a well-established methodology based on field research investigation and questionnaires, some translation excerpts by EFL learners and hypotheses that no translation techniques are taught by teachers before evaluation. It finally concludes that the poor grades the learners culled are due to the lack of practice with their teachers who, in turn, have received no professional training in the matter.

Key Words: translation, evaluation, techniques of translation, communicative performance, source language, target language.

Résumé

Ce papier traite, après examen des habiletés de traduction des apprenants du second cycle, étudie la nécessité de renforcer l'enseignement de la traduction comme une méthode potentiellement efficace d'enseignement/apprentissage de l'Anglais comme langue étrangère. En effet, au Bénin, les apprenants étudient l'Anglais pour presque sept ans (quatre ans au

premier cycle et trois ans au second cycle) avant leur admission à l'université. Pour les trois dernières années, ils sont exposés à la traduction pendant les évaluations. Malheureusement, le programme établi ne fait, en aucun cas, mention de l'enseignement/apprentissage/évaluation de la traduction. Nous essayons donc, à travers une méthodologie bien établie basée sur investigation et questionnaires d'examiner des essais de traduction par ces apprenants et posons l'hypothèse selon laquelle aucune technique de traduction n'est enseignée aux apprenants par les enseignants. Le travail finalement conclut que les mauvaises notes reçues par les apprenants sont dues au manque de pratique avec leurs professeurs qui, en retour, n'avaient reçu aucune formation professionnelle en la matière.

Mots clés : traduction, évaluation, techniques de traduction, performance communicative, langue du départ, langue d'arrivée.

Introduction

Language is dynamic and an important tool of communication. Due to the varieties of language spoken all over the world, businessmen, scientists, scholars, investigators or musicians do not always have a good knowledge of the languages used in a communicative event or interaction. The only practical solution in this case is to resort to translation when the language is not understood or spoken. Colonization makes it possible the expansion of languages throughout the world. Many African countries have inherited from these languages and some are imposed as languages of instruction in many schools. The status of the English language in schools in Benin has a legal basis, the guidance of which is offered by what is termed 'La Loi d'Orientation sur l'Education (loi nº2003-17du 11 Novembre 2003'. In this law, English is not a subject to be taught but serves as a medium of teaching, that is, other subjects can be taught in English. Unfortunately, due to the lack of application of this law, the English language is rather taught like Mathematics, Physics, History, Economy, etc. and is considered as a foreign language. From this perspective, the goals settled at the beginning cannot be/are not attained.

English is undoubtedly one of the most spoken languages in the world and without pretention, it is regarded as the passport for job opportunities. Due to its fast-expansive characteristic, its comprehensive vocabulary, syntactic organization and easy-to-pronounce words, English has become the language of diplomacy, business or development of cooperation. In this perspective, people resort to translation in case of partnership between English speaking and non-English speaking partners. Our objective in this paper is not driven by what happens when an expert in translation is committed to serve as the medium between different partners uncapable to understand one another. We are neither concerned with a comparative study from the source to the target language. We rather aim at investigating the performance of learners who are evaluated in translation three years before their entry in university and raise awareness on the necessity of reinforcing the teaching of translation in Beninese secondary schools.

In Benin secondary schools, the following instruction is often read on the English evaluation papers: "*Tu traiteras tous les items en anglais, à l'exception de la traduction*". This instruction implies that the evaluation is in English and that the learners have to translate from English to French (very often a sentence, a passage or a paragraph of the text). This instruction is also a proof that in Benin the curriculum is examination-oriented, paying little attention to the communicative aspects of the teaching of the English language. From the foregoing explanation, the following questions are worth asking: "who evaluates EFL learners' translation skills?" and "what are the objectives behind the evaluation of these translation skills?" The answers to these questions raise the problem of the tools used by the EFL teachers to evaluate their learners' translation skills (we will come back on it later). Moreover, the answers to these questions should give us the real place of translation in the teaching of English as an instrument

of communication. We base our hypothesis on the fact that the evaluation of the learners' translation skills is not as objective as it should be. This, most of the time, raises controversy among EFL teachers whenever duty calls them to appreciate learners' copies and many are unanimous on the fact that the teaching of translation should be reinforced through the planning of translation-based activities likely to help learners develop some productive skills.

In order to check the above-established hypothesis, we have decided to investigate the issue through the most known method of research viz. questionnaire of which a quantitative and qualitative analysis has been made. In addition to the analysis, the paper will disclose the theoretical framework that guides this research and will also provide a discussion/an interpretation of the results.

An Overview of the Theoretical Framework about Translation

Scholars draw a fine distinction between interpretation (oral or sign-language communication between users of different languages) and translation (a written text). From its etymological foundation, translation derives from the Latin *translatio*, which comes from *trans* meaning 'across' and *ferre* meaning 'to carry', 'to bring'. Thus, translating is the fact of 'carrying across', 'bringing across'. In order 'to carry across' or 'to bring across', learners should be able to understand over two languages. Though the way translation is academically taught does not lead to a professional end, learners need it to achieve academic excellence. Mbotake (2014, p. 4) in this vein, offers a clear explanation and assumes that "Lederer was one of the first scholars to distinguish between *traduction pédagogique, that is, the use of translation in foreign language teaching* and *pédagogie de la traduction, which refers to the training of professional translators*". Referring to the foregoing, we can assume that translation can be academically evaluated and professionally as well.

Translation on both sides is the communication of the meaning of a source-language (SL) text by means of an equivalent target-language (TL) text. Siregar (2018, p. 148) in this respect explained: "… the process of translation is a series of actions in an attempt to render any text from a certain language (source language) to another language (target language) to produce a translation. This process involves cognitive process and mastery of two languages as well as cultures". This assertion emphasizes the mastery of two languages which from a linguistic standpoint should not be possible to the neglect of grammar and vocabulary. Concerning the place of grammar in translation, Leech (1982, p. 3) believed that grammar refers to mechanisms corresponding to the work of language used in communicating. It implies that grammar is an important component to form a correct sentence in order to communicate appropriately. This is certainly what gives birth to one of the most popular methods of translation known as the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM).

Some researchers (Prator and Celce-Murcia in Fauziati, 2008: 12; Siregar, 2018:149) assume that "Grammar-Translation Method is a conventional learning method which focuses on L2 grammar and uses the mother tongue as the medium of instruction". According to Brown (1989) quoted in Siregar (2018, p.149), GTM has some characteristics summarized in the following points:

1- The unit of teaching is word, not a sentence. It means vocabulary is taught in the form of isolated words.

2- It considers grammar as a soul of language.

3- Grammatical rules of teaching of English are explained into mother tongue.

4- This method does not help in developing the learner's communicative competence.

5- English grammar is taught through rules, translation, definition and comparative study of mother tongue grammar.

6- Grammar is taught deductively.

7- The main function of language learning, communication, is ignored.

8- Reading and writing are the major focus.

The advantage this method offers is that students may acquire significant language aspects with the help of books without the teacher's guide. However, from a language acquisition or learning perspective, these characteristics do not lay emphasis on the communicative aspects, therefore ignoring some language features such as arbitrariness, creativity, displacement, spontaneous production of erroneous but rule-governed speech patterns, etc. This method makes of a learner a passive one,whereby the method of teaching is just informative preventing the learner from using his/her critical thinking. Kochhar (2013, p. 1) is then right when she asserted: "The child was treated as a pitcher into which the teacher poured *gallons of empirical facts*".

Due to GTM's considerable shortcomings, the field of translation has been revisited, renovated and new trends of methods laying emphasis on communicative performance have taken birth. Such methods translate into the vision of the followers of the Interpretive Model of Translation (IMT) developed in the 80s by Marianne Lederer and Danica Seleskovitch (2001) who see this model as a theory of meaning because "it explains the phenomenon of translation and reveals, through it, the essential aspects of the functioning of language".This model is also explained by Siregar (2018, p. 46) in terms of stages that include "understanding, deverbalization, and re-expression of the meaning of the text/speech with the precision that the translator must adapt to the knowledge of the target audience". In other words, the translator decodes in simpler or more accessible/comprehensive terms, words or expressions the message encoded in L1 for the speaker of an L2. It also implies that translation is meaning-oriented and the term meaning here depends on the context and circumstances. Since the language means what it does in its original context (Halliday, 1971), the translator then needs to consider the context in the course of translation so as to allow the source text to provide/carry the same meaning in the target language. The foregoing theoretical explanation is reinforced by Dancette (2001, p. 5) who asserted:

> En linguistique, la théorie sens-texte […] met en avant une sémantique de phrase qui intègre à la fois le lexique, les fonctions lexicales des mots et leur régime grammatical; elle s'occupe donc du fonctionnement des mots dans leur contexte discursif. C'est par cet aspect, la prise en considération du contexte, qu'elle permet de rendre compte de problèmes de la traduction. Le sens d'une phrase ou d'un texte est représenté par des structures sémantiques, syntaxiques et communicativo-rhétoriques.

> In linguistics, the theory meaning-text […] puts forth the semantic field of a sentence which integrates both lexical items, the lexical functions of words and their grammatical frequency; it then takes into account the functioning of the lexical items in their discursive context. It is through this aspect, the consideration of context that it allows to make an account of the problems of translation. The meaning of a sentence or text is represented by the semantic, syntactic and rhetorical structures. (My translation)

The linguistic terms that attract one's attention in this assertion are 'fonctions', 'fonctionnement des mots', 'structures sémantiques', which remind of the Functional Model (FM) in translation. Skopos theory put forward by Hans J. Vermeer (1978) is the core of the functionalist translation theory developed in Germany in the 1970s.The theory has been developed as an objection to the traditional way of translating which employs "equivalence" or "faithfulness" to the source text as the most authoritative criterion to judge whether the translation is successful or not (Du, 2012, p. 2190). Skopos is the Greek word for "aim" or "purpose". As asserted by Du (2012, p. 2190) "Skopos theory focuses, above all, on the purpose of the translation, which determines the translation methods and strategies that are to be employed in order to produce a functionally adequate result. Such a result is the TT, which Vermeer calls the translatum. Therefore, in Skopos theory, knowing why an ST is to be translated and what the function of the TT will be crucial for the translator" (sic). In other words, Skopos theory which explains the purpose of translation, is goal-oriented and more objective than any other methods used in translation.

In the light of these few theories about teaching translation we have unveiled, it can be noted that the way translation is academically taught in Beninese schools is without objective (the analysis of our investigation will offer more evidence about this assumption). In fact, by choosing to investigate how teachers assess their learners' translation skills, we aim at not only discovering how it can be a didactic and pedagogical tool in improving learners' communicative performance but also to see if it is relevant to their university training. At this level, we call upon docimology which requires that exam papers should assess/evaluate what has been taught but it seems here that there exists a great disparity between teaching and evaluation. We promised in our introductory words to come back on the questions related to the evaluation of EFL learners' translation skills to uncover the basis on which the translation evaluation can be done and if any of the pedagogical measurements is known to teachers.

According to Amini (2018, p. 2) "Translation studies suggest that the Trends of Quality Assessment can be broadly grouped into two categories: those based on error analysis and those based on a holistic approach, with some attempts to combine the two. That is, the common Trends of Quality Assessment methods which are applied in academic settings include holistic, analytic, and combined methods. In addition to these three approaches, the corpus-based methods have been introduced recently, and they have turned to be efficient as well". In order to offer a practical tool of analysis to EFL teachers, he has labelled the error analysis Method B, the holistic approach Method C and the combination of both methods Method D. Let's discover what the content of each method reveals. We have to acknowledge that elements of explanation of the different methods are taken from Amini (2018).

Method B also called Waddington's method (Waddington 1999) examined the penalty for each mistake according to the extent of its effect on the overall quality of the concerned translation. The corrector first has to decide whether each mistake is a translation mistake or just a language mistake; this is done by deciding whether or not the mistake affects the transfer of meaning from the source to the target text: if it does not, it is a language mistake (and is penalized with − 1 point), if it does, it is a translation mistake (and is penalized with − 2 points).

Method C presents a unitary scale which considers the translation competence as a whole, instead of dividing it into various sub-scales representing different sub-competences. The descriptors do not use terminology that would presuppose specialist knowledge (such as applied linguistics) on the part of the correctors. It includes only five main levels in an attempt to achieve maximum consistency

Method D is the combination of error analysis method B and holistic method C in a proportion of 70/30, that is, method B accounts for 70% of the total result and method C for the remaining 30%.

After this methodological framework, we now turn to the materials and the methods used during our investigation.

Materials and Methods

Fifty (50) secondary school learners of a private school located in the commune of Akpro-Missérété (Benin) participated in this investigation. All of them are in their final year of secondary school and their class is gender inclusive without any age limitation. The data for this paper were collected during the second term (January-March) evaluation of the school year 2018-2019. This means that these learners have already spent more than five months in the class. The investigation was mainly based on the translation of an evaluation paper whereby the learners were asked to translate a passage of the reading comprehension text from English to French. The content of this passage is as follows: ***"At that point, the man sitting next to Rosa Parks stood up and she shifted her leg in the seat and let him pass. As she moved to the window, she noticed out of the corner of the eye that the two women across the aisle had vacated their seats".*** Some translated versions produced by the learners of this passage (see some examples in the appendix) are boring – perhaps they have lost something in translation – with terrible misspelled French words, run-on sentences or sentence fragments, lack of coherence, tenses, etc. which inconvenience the evaluators in many ways. As language teachers trained in applied linguistics, the recurrent occurrence of this phenomenon cannot escape our attention. It is then time to raise awareness about it because if nothing is done, these poor translated versions will smash the efforts of other students who devote much time to succeed in this exercise.

Our investigation is based on the hypothesis according to which translation minimal skills are not taught to learners and due this fact, learners harvest bad marks in translation during evaluation. In order to check this hypothesis, we have designed two questionnaires: one to EFL learners and the other to EFL teachers. The objective of the questionnaire to EFL teachers is to collect from them information related to their teaching practices especially the one concerning translation. The methodology used to collect data consists in distributing the questionnaires to the participants and collecting them after a while. This strategy allows us to have proof-reliable evidence to our study. No interview has been granted to the participants. Likewise, we have carried no class observation.

Analysis of Data and Discussion

This section of the investigation deals with the analysis of the data collected and a discussion of them.

1. Presentation and Analysis of Data Collected from EFL Learners

This part of our paper presents a tabulated and statistical analysis of the data collected from EFL learners. This stage is followed by some analysis of the results. It is worth noting that the questionnaire addressed to these learners comprises eight (08) questions. Apart from the preliminary questions (the name of their School, their class, etc.), the main issues in the questionnaire are to find out how teachers deal with translation with them and how successful they are in this skill during evaluations. Our findings are presented in the tables below:

Table1: showing the teaching of translation techniques and the learners' performance in translation

Items	Frequency		Percentage	
	Yes	**No**		
Q- 4) Does your teacher teach you translation techniques?	04	46	08%	92%
Q- 6) Do you get good marks in translation?	05	45	10%	90%

The data presented in this table reveals that teachers rarely teach their learners translation techniques. This pedagogic gap is subsequent to the learners' poor achievements in this skill. Of course, pondering over this situation, it becomes clear that translation skill can no way contribute to the communicative performance of the learners. This is also due to other facts our investigation displayed and shown in the table below.

Table 2: showing how frequent teachers offer remediation on translation after an evaluation

	Always		Sometimes		Rarely		Never	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Q-5) … does your teacher provide remediation on translation?	01	02%	08	16%	39	78%	02	04%

One of the goals of any evaluation is to offer remediation so as to reinforce learners' ability in what has been evaluated and prepare them for another evaluation. But what is noticed here distances from this reality. The table above shows that teachers rarely offer remediation on translation after an evaluation. This leads to the bad grades learners culled in this skill during evaluation.

Question number 6 of our investigation sheet asks to know if they get good marks in translation. Almost all the participants (46/50= 92%) answered 'no'. The remaining (04/50 = 08%) answered 'yes'. Their best grade average varies between 6 or 8 out of 10. These statistical data are a proof that translation is not yet a prerogative for teachers not only in the way they pass knowledge to their learners but also in their management of the classroom activities. In this perspective, when we want to know what prevents them from being successful in translation, the answers learners provide are without ambiguity.

Table3: showing the reasons why learners do not translate well.

	Items	Frequency	Percentage
Q-8)….what prevents you from translating well?	We are not taught translation techniques	21	45.65%
	Translation is a difficult exercise	09	19.56%
	We do not understand…. the passage to be translated	16	34.78%

As shown in the above table, 21/46 of the learners who say they are successful/get good marks in translation attest through their answers that they are taught translation techniques whereas respectively 16/46 and 09/46 do not understand every word of the passage to be translated or

admit that translation is a difficult exercise. This is a proof that the way translation skill is dealt with by teacher is not in favour of achieving academic excellence.

2. Presentation and Analysis of Data Collected from EFL Teachers

This part of our investigation accounts for the analysis of data collected from EFL teachers. Our real motive behind the questionnaire to them is to uncover if they teach their learners how to translate, their knowledge of the translation techniques as theorized so far, how successful their learners are, etc. The results of our investigation are summarized (in the tables) below.

Answers to Question 4 of our investigation sheet are surprising. Actually, almost all the participants (23/25 = 92%) recognize they teach their learners how to translate. But the confusion starts when it comes to know the translation techniques, they teach their learners.

Table4: showing the translation techniques teachers teach and the cognitive bases they take into account to assess their learners' translation skill.

Questions	Answers
Q-7) What are the techniques of translation you teach them?	-sentence components and patterns -words meaning -sentences translation -context of the passage -meaning of prepositions, function, etc. -understanding the sentences meaning -grammatical rules
Q-8) What are the cognitive foundations you base yourself on to assess your learners' translation skill?	-level of the learners -human dimension -learners' experience -field of translation -understanding, documentation, judgment

The above table summarizes the different translation skills known to teachers we have investigated and the cognitive bases they take into account to evaluate this skill. When we consider the first question in this category, it can be assumed that the participants of our investigation have but a wrong knowledge of the translation skills. The same remark is made with the second question. If it is true that translation is a skill that contributes to the language acquisition and offers some job opportunities, then teachers should be trained in the translation techniques. To the question to know if their learners are successful in translation, the data presented in the table below are unfailing.

Table5: showing teachers' opinion on how successful their learners are in translation

	Yes		No	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Q-9) Are your learners successful in translation?	05	20%	20	80%

As shown in the above table, EFL teachers recognize that their learners are not successful in translation. The data show that at the micro-level, 1/5 has good grade in translation during

evaluations. The other 4/5 have bad grades. The reasons for the learners' failure in translation skill as revealed by our investigation are put in the table below:

Table6: showing EFL teachers' opinion on the reasons why EFL learners are not successful in translation

	Frequency	%
-Lessons on translation are difficult to plan	03	12%
-Teachers are hardly trained in translation techniques	06	24%
-Translation techniques are hardly taught by teachers	04	16%
-EFL learners find translation difficult	07	28%
-Learners most of the time have a language problem	05	20%
Total	**25**	**100%**

The results shown in this table attest to the fact that the way the curriculum is designed do not give EFL teachers ability to deal with translation like the other skills. While they are trained in how to teach reading/listening comprehension, writing, grammar, function, etc. 06/25 (24%) EFL teachers admit they are hardly trained in the field of translation whereas 04/25 hardly teach their learners the translation techniques. Another 05/25 (20%) recognize their learners have a problem of language, which gives rise to some mistakes noted in their translation production as summarized in the table below:

Table7: showing EFL learners' most common mistakes in translation

Q-12) What are your learners' most common mistakes in translation?	Frequency	%
-Grammatical	06	24%
-Lexical	05	20%
-Lack of coherence	06	24%
-No knowledge of the idiomatic use of the English language	08	32%
Total	**25**	**100%**

From an error analysis perspective, translation is an exercise which is not yet accessible to EFL learners. They have real problems not only to understand the lexical items but also to translate efficiently the verbs taking into account their tenses and other parameters. Stiegelbauer, Schwars & Husar (2016, p. 47) assumed "… the translator's role is to interpret the source text and translate it into a new version for a new target". This assertion is totally in opposition to what our investigation revealed. 06/25 (24%) EFL teachers recognize that learners miss lack coherence while translating from the source text. In addition, they have but little knowledge of the idiomatic expressions (08/25 = 32%) and the way to translate them.

Discussion of the Findings

This part of our research work deals with the discussion of our findings. In fact, many studies are applied by researchers to make a sound judgment or an assessment of the quality of translated texts. But a point needs to be made here. Our research is neither concerned with an error analysis nor Translation Quality Assessment. By carrying out this study, we aim at investigating the real place of translation in the Beninese academic curriculum and how it efficiently contributes to empowering learners with abilities such as language efficiency or a more practical use language in terms of speaking or writing.

In fact, secondary school education in Benin has gone through a tremendous reform for more than two decades. This reform has basically adopted a teaching/learning methodology based on

constructivism and the acquisition of a number of competencies related to both school subjects and everyday life situations. From the foregoing it is clear that there exists interdependence between the language and the competencies developed by the learners. The objective of teaching English in this context bridges to implement some activities related to the use of language taking into account the language competencies by integrating the context of the English language use. Concerning the context of the use of English, four contexts have been identified:

- Context of reception where learners develop oral, visual or written skills by listening to radio, music, the teacher or by watching a picture, film, etc.

- Context of production where learners produce audio, oral, visual or written messages by speaking to a friend, addressing an audience, conceiving some audiovisual supports like compact disks, posters, etc.

- Context of interaction which is an integration of the first two contexts for an effective use of English through games, dialogues, interactions, etc.

- Context of mediation where an individual plays the role of facilitator by assisting a less competent person access the message of another language through explanation, summary, interpretation, translation, etc.

As clear as it appears, translation, the field of our investigation belongs to the fourth context. For a successful teaching/learning/evaluation process, the teacher must seek to a total integration of these different contexts. In other words, no student is able to achieve a qualitative translation without being able to indulge in appropriate speaking activities or being able to produce coherent and cohesive writings or being able to interact efficiently with native speakers/speakers of other languages. Many teachers think and assume that the first handicap to teach translation in class is the lack of adequate materials without thinking of what they do themselves to change this paradigm especially when it comes to teaching in low resource areas. The results from our investigation show that $46/50 = 92\%$ of the participants viz. the students recognize they are not taught translation techniques and data collected from EFL teachers confirm and affirm this sad reality in schools in Benin. This assumption is in total opposition to the expectation of a curriculum which normally gives direction through the syllabus to the purpose/aim of a subject that is decided to be taught. This is a proof that the curriculum put at the teachers' disposal has to be renovated by including aspects like techniques of translation because Benin has made the option to adopt the LMD (License-Master-Doctorate) system where a zone has been thought and created on the university campus of Abomey-Calavi where among the many subjects taught there stands translation. In order then to allow students from the secondary schools have an easy access to the translation course rooms, EFL teachers must think of a qualitative teaching of translation not as a mere academic formality but as a profession-oriented subject.

The data collected from the EFL teachers show that they have little or vague knowledge of the techniques of translation. In fact, Table4 shows the translation techniques teachers assume they know. Compared with the techniques displayed in our theoretical part, there is a gap between the two. The possibility that the translation techniques are not known to the EFL teachers we have investigated establishes the truth that they are not trained in that matter. A subject that is taught without prior training cannot lead to a professional end. This for sure justifies the reason why the EFL learners are not successful in translation. Among the 21st challenges stand communication, with translation as a form of communication. In order to ensure survival of teaching in this fast-growing technological world, it is then important for teachers to keep

abreast of the convenient ways technology provides for an efficient communication, be it oral or written.

The foregoing discussion helps to address the issue of how EFL teachers evaluate qualitatively their students' translations. In fact, evaluation plays an important role because it not only provides evidence that teaching has taken place but also the objectives of the teaching have been reached. The reported data of our investigation both from the learners and the teachers show that the former is not successful in translation. This is certainly due to the way the learners' translation pieces are evaluated. The problem here is that the translation exercise is part and parcel of the exam paper because it has an item devoted to it in addition to the items on reading comprehension, vocabulary, structure and/or function. The accumulation of these brain-puzzling exercises crushes all the learner's initiative when they finally fall on translation. Consequently it (translation) then represents no challenge to the learners who mostly skip it and/or upset the evaluators with nonsense, contradiction and mistranslation. The proof is shown through the excerpts we have provided in the appendix. Our investigation does not fall within the theoretical framework of error analysis per se but the inquiry allows to uncover the objectives pursued by the curriculum designer by including it on the evaluation paper and see how it contributes to the accuracy or proficiency in terms of language learning. To the question (Q-8 on the questionnaire sheet to EFL teachers) to know which cognitive foundations teachers base themselves to assess their learners' translation, some pointed out human dimensions, students' level and experience. The question these answers raise is related to what can be expected from a learner whom a passage with technical or tricky words is given to. Of course, not much. This is certainly where stems the explanation to the learners' poor performance in translation. Some teachers may assume the lexical items related to the field are already pre-taught nonetheless the passage most of the time does not take into learners' cognitive capacity. Moreover, the idiomatic expressions used in the passage are not always understood by the learners. The procedures to cope with these expressions are not taught and the evaluator has no fundamental tool to gauge his/her learner's production. As contended by Elmgrab (2014:1) "The criteria for evaluating translation students' errors will contribute to the construction of systematic assessment processes. Instructors are required to seek a basis for informed judgment built upon both theoretical consideration and experimental criteria".

Good teaching not only requires the recognition of the student's nature but also the need and interest of every student. If the material for evaluation does not accord with the child's nature and does not take into account the child's need or interest, the child will but achieve little in it. What is noted with the teaching of translation is that it seems to be idiosyncratic or teacher-centered excluding the students' needs. The curriculum, we have said so far, must be redesigned and renovated because translation can never be taught the way skills like reading, writing, speaking or language components such as grammar, vocabulary, function are taught. Even the teaching of these skills or language components is of little support to translation. Our investigation reveals that the most common mistakes EFL teachers note in their learners' translation range from grammatical ones to no knowledge of the idiomatic use of the English language through lexical ones and lack of coherence. Likewise, the data collected from the EFL students reveal the same pedagogic deficiency. Remember that these data are obtained through administration of questionnaires to advanced level students. The consideration of these facts generates suspicion as to the quality of teaching methods/techniques used by the teachers in Benin to teach translation. The main objective of the Competency-Based Approach is to train and develop different skills in learners in an integrative way. But, there seems to be no correlation between the teaching of the language components and the translation skills which should offer resource to foster learners' ability of learning a foreign language.

Worthy of note at this point is that the status of English in schools in Benin also contributes to the poor performance of learners in English in general and translation, in particular. What is the pedagogical value of translation for science students who have a three-hour English lesson every week? In fact, these students are intensively overwhelmed with lessons in sciences and mathematics that have very little time for literature. This is the context in which they are asked to translate during evaluation some excerpts from English to French. Concerning art students, there is a tendency towards German and Spanish to the neglect of English in reaction to the bad marks they cull very often in the subject viz. English. The problem the foregoing discussion poses to EFL teachers is which teaching/learning strategies they should use in order to introduce more translation-based activities in the planning of their lesson. The implementation of these learning activities can help to improve their classroom practices and actively include not exclude learners in the construction of the different kinds of knowledge. In this respect, Mbeudeu (2017, p. 76) suggests: "……the use of translation should be highly monitored by the classroom teacher; it should be mostly used at beginners' level and gradually discarded as the learners progress to the end of the secondary school". In other words, this assertion advocates that learners get accustomed to translation at an early level and as they progress this becomes an easy practice to them. By doing this, learners will be able to gain a lot in terms of developing some skills like writing and reading.

Conclusion

The investigation into the translation excerpts by EFL learners during evaluation paper marking in the Beninese secondary schools has been the motive behind this study. Our remark came from the translation of the following passage: "***At that point, the man sitting next to Rosa Parks stood up and she shifted her leg in the seat and let him pass. As she moved to the window, she noticed out of the corner of the eye that the two women across the aisle had vacated their seats***" during an evaluation marking section. The translation passages produced by these EFL learners and the marks given to their production drew our attention raising a series of tremendous pedagogic troubles among which translation seems to be more and more neglected not only by EFL teachers who represent the learners' input but also by EFL learners whose output accounts for the nature of teaching they are given. The analysis of the questionnaire to EFL teachers and learners helps us to conclude the former are not trained in the techniques of translation and consequently the latter are the results of the way translation is taught them. In such way, this skill that should normally help the EFL learners develop other skills such as writing sinks into a deep negligence with unmotivated drills that are meaningless and not challenging to these learners. All in all, everything shows that translation is not at its best in the Beninese secondary schools. The reasons are not farfetched. Teachers in Benin are enormously trained in how to teach reading comprehension, writing, listening, function, vocabulary, etc. but not in teaching translation skills.

This study is not an investigation into errors noted in the learners' translation. Most of the translation methods revealed in the theoretical framework seem up to this level, unknown to EFL learners in Beninese secondary schools. Such reality obliges us to orient our investigation towards the necessity for reinforcing the teaching of translation in Beninese secondary schools. It is not then surprising to have come across a critical analysis of the educational system in the discussion. Translation should help to an accurate use of the language that's why a follow-up of this study will definitely look into the error analysis in view of fostering learners' abilities in language skills and arming teachers with designing translation based-activities for the benefit of their learners.

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Appendix

The passage given during the evaluation is the following one: "***At that point, the man sitting next to Rosa Parks stood up and she shifted her leg in the seat and let him pass. As she moved to the window, she noticed out of the corner of the eye that the two women across the aisle had vacated their seats***".

Here are some samples of the French version by the EFL learners our investigation has taken into account:

Sample 1: *Jusqu'au point où les gens comme Rosa Parks prendre leurs pieds et leurs ongles pour se passer par la fenêtre, ce n'est pas facile quand deux femmes en voulant sortir se crocher.

Sample 2: *Au point où Madame Rosa Parks est assise en train de regarder les vas et vient. A côté de la fenêtre, elle imaginait et regardait avec ses yeux deux hommes escrocs en train de la faire asseoir.

Sample 3: *Sur le point, l'homme assis suivant Rosa Parks se leva et elle resta assise pour bouger ses pieds en l'aidant à passer. Lorsqu'elle se dirigea vers la fenêtre, elle notifie du coin de l'œil les deux femmes traversant la aisle.

Sample 4: *A ce point l'homme à côté de Rosa Parks la dérangea. Rosa Parks s'est levée et a quitté. Elle rejoigne maintenant la fenêtre et elle a remarqué au dehors que deux femmes avaient vaqué leur seats.

Sample 5: *Dans le bus, les gens n'aiment pas Rosa Parks. Elle n'avait pas trouvé de place pour partir. Mais elle est restée à côté de la fenêtre du bus où elle regardait par la fenêtre en voyant du coin deux hommes qui se battent.

Sample 6: *De ce point, l'homme suivant Rosa Parks demande qu'elle se lève et de ranger ses jambes du siège et de le laisser passer. Comme elle est à côté des fenêtres, elle notifia de sortir car ses yeux ont vu que les deux femmes ont laissé leurs sièges.

Sample 7: *Une femme appelée Rosa Parks, tout fatiguée, était au point. Et elle était près de la porte, elle a vu des notices qui étaient collés à l'entrée. Ainsi deux hommes avaient également pris place en la regardant.

Sample 8: *A ce point, l'homme assis près de Rosa Parks se met debout pour la laisser passer. Avec son regard par la fenêtre, elle remarquait hors du bus avec les yeux que deux femmes ont cédé leurs sièges.

Sample 9: *A ce point, l'homme qui est assis près de Rosa Parks s'est levé et elle a mis ses pieds sur le passeport et le laisser partir. Lorsqu'elle a jeté un coup d'œil à travers la fenêtre, elle a vu que deux femmes qui entrèrent dans la pharmacie ont présenté leurs passeports.