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Teaching Translation in Benin Secondary Schools: The Necessity to Reinforce the Training of EFL Teachers

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Abstract

In Benin, English is taught as a Foreign Language (EFL) within a predominantly Francophone educational system, where translation remains a central yet under-structured pedagogical practice in secondary schools. Despite its frequent use as a classroom strategy, translation is often reduced to a mechanical application of the Grammar-Translation Method, reflecting limited professional preparation in translation pedagogy among EFL teachers. This situation raises concerns about the effectiveness of translation as a tool for developing communicative competence, intercultural awareness, and advanced linguistic proficiency. This study investigates the teaching of translation in Beninese secondary schools and argues for the necessity of reinforcing the professional training of EFL teachers. It aims to examine current classroom practices, identify gaps in teacher preparation, and assess how these limitations affect students' language acquisition outcomes. Adopting a mixed-methods approach, the research will combine classroom observations, teacher interviews, curriculum analysis, and learner performance assessment to provide an in-depth understanding of translation pedagogy in context. The study is grounded in contemporary translation theory, communicative language teaching principles, and contrastive linguistics. It seeks to propose a structured framework for integrating translation into EFL instruction through targeted teacher training programs, curriculum reform, and continuous professional development initiatives. By highlighting the pedagogical, linguistic, and institutional dimensions of translation teaching, this research contributes to the broader discourse on foreign language education reform in Benin and similar multilingual African contexts. Ultimately, the study argues that reinforcing EFL teacher training in translation pedagogy is not merely an academic concern but a strategic educational imperative for improving English proficiency and fostering greater participation in global academic and professional spheres.

Keywords : Translation, teaching, reinforcement, communicative language.

Résumé

Au Bénin, l'anglais est enseigné comme langue étrangère (EFL) dans un système éducatif principalement francophone, où la traduction demeure une pratique pédagogique importante, mais insuffisamment structurée dans les établissements secondaires. Malgré son utilisation fréquente comme stratégie d'enseignement, la traduction est souvent réduite à une application mécanique de la méthode grammaire-traduction, ce qui reflète une préparation professionnelle limitée des enseignants d'EFL à la pédagogie de la traduction. Cette situation soulève des préoccupations quant à l'efficacité de la traduction en tant qu'outil permettant de développer la compétence communicative, la conscience interculturelle et une maîtrise linguistique avancée. Cette étude examine l'enseignement de la traduction dans les établissements secondaires béninois et met en évidence la nécessité de renforcer la formation professionnelle des enseignants d'EFL. Elle vise à analyser les pratiques actuelles en classe, à identifier les insuffisances dans la formation des enseignants et à évaluer les effets de ces limites sur les résultats de l'apprentissage linguistique des élèves. Adoptant une approche méthodologique mixte, la recherche combine des observations de classe, des entretiens avec les enseignants, une analyse des programmes scolaires et une évaluation des performances des apprenants afin de fournir une compréhension approfondie de la pédagogie de la traduction dans son contexte. L'étude s'appuie sur les théories contemporaines de la traduction, les principes de l'enseignement communicatif des langues et la linguistique contrastive. Elle vise à proposer un cadre structuré pour intégrer la traduction dans l'enseignement de l'EFL à travers des programmes ciblés de formation des enseignants, une réforme des programmes d'études et des initiatives de développement professionnel continu. En mettant en évidence les dimensions pédagogiques, linguistiques et institutionnelles de l'enseignement de la traduction, cette recherche contribue au débat plus large sur la réforme de l'enseignement des langues étrangères au Bénin et dans des contextes africains multilingues similaires. En définitive, elle soutient que le renforcement de la formation des enseignants d'EFL en pédagogie de la traduction ne constitue pas seulement une préoccupation académique, mais également une nécessité éducative stratégique pour améliorer la maîtrise de l'anglais et favoriser une plus grande participation des apprenants aux espaces universitaires et professionnels internationaux.

Mots clés : traduction, enseignement, renforcement, langage communicationnel

INTRODUCTION

In Benin, English is taught as a Foreign Language (EFL) within a predominantly Francophone educational system. As globalization continues to reshape economic, academic, and diplomatic exchanges, English proficiency has become increasingly essential for students seeking regional and international opportunities. Within this context, translation occupies a significant place in English language teaching at the secondary school level. It is frequently used as a pedagogical tool to facilitate comprehension, clarify grammatical structures, and bridge linguistic gaps between French - the official language of instruction - and English.

Despite its widespread use, translation in Beninese secondary schools remains largely under-theorized and pedagogically underdeveloped. In many classrooms, it is practiced in a mechanical manner, often confined to word-for-word equivalence and isolated sentence transformation. Such practices are commonly associated with the traditional Grammar-Translation Method, which, although historically influential, does not fully address contemporary communicative and intercultural dimensions of language learning. This situation raises critical questions about the adequacy of teacher preparation in translation pedagogy and its impact on students' linguistic competence.

EFL teachers in Benin generally receive training focused on language proficiency and general teaching methodology. However, specialized instruction in translation theory, contrastive linguistics, and translation pedagogy is often limited or absent. As a result, teachers may lack the methodological tools necessary to transform translation into a dynamic and cognitively enriching activity that fosters communicative competence rather than mere linguistic substitution. This gap in professional training can affect the quality of classroom instruction and, consequently, learners' mastery of English.

Given the multilingual reality of Benin - where French coexists with numerous national languages - translation is not merely an academic exercise but a practical and sociolinguistic necessity. Therefore, rethinking its place in EFL teaching requires a critical examination of teacher education programs and continuous professional development frameworks. Strengthening teacher training in translation pedagogy could enhance instructional effectiveness, promote deeper linguistic awareness, and support national educational objectives aimed at improving English proficiency.

This study seeks to investigate the teaching of translation in Beninese secondary schools and to demonstrate the necessity of reinforcing the training of EFL teachers. It explores current classroom practices, identifies institutional and pedagogical constraints, and proposes strategic reforms designed to improve both teacher competence and learner outcomes. By situating translation within contemporary language teaching paradigms, this research aims to contribute to educational reform discussions in Benin and in comparable multilingual contexts

1. IDENTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

1.1 Problem Statement

In Benin, English is taught as a Foreign Language (EFL) within a predominantly

Francophone educational system where French serves as the principal medium of instruction. In this context, translation naturally emerges as a fundamental pedagogical tool for mediating meaning between English and French. At the secondary school level, translation is widely practiced in classrooms to explain vocabulary, clarify grammatical structures, and assess comprehension. However, despite its central role, the teaching of translation remains largely informal, unstructured, and insufficiently grounded in contemporary translation theory and pedagogy.

One of the major concerns is that many EFL teachers have not received specialized training in translation studies or translation pedagogy during their professional preparation. Teacher education programs often emphasize general language proficiency and broad teaching methodologies, while neglecting systematic instruction in contrastive linguistics, translation strategies, error analysis, and communicative approaches to translation. As a result, translation activities in classrooms are frequently reduced to literal, word-for-word exercises that prioritize grammatical accuracy over meaning, context, and communicative effectiveness.

This situation generates several pedagogical challenges. First, students may develop a fragmented understanding of English structures, relying heavily on direct equivalence rather than contextual interpretation. Second, the overreliance on mechanical translation practices may hinder the development of communicative competence, critical thinking skills, and intercultural awareness. Third, inconsistencies in teachers' approaches to translation create disparities in instructional quality across schools.

Furthermore, in a multilingual society such as Benin - where French coexists with numerous national languages - the ability to navigate between languages is both an educational and socio-professional necessity.

Yet, without adequate teacher preparation, translation cannot fully serve as a strategic tool for fostering advanced bilingual competence. The absence of structured pedagogical guidelines and continuous professional development programs further exacerbates the problem.

Therefore, the core problem addressed in this study is the mismatch between the central role of translation in EFL classrooms and the insufficient professional training of teachers responsible for implementing it. This gap raises a critical question: how can translation be effectively integrated into English language teaching in Beninese secondary schools without reinforcing and modernizing the training of EFL teachers?

Addressing this problem is essential not only for improving classroom practices but also for enhancing students' overall English proficiency and supporting national educational goals in an increasingly globalized world.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to examine the teaching of translation in secondary schools in Benin and to determine how reinforcing the professional training of EFL teachers can enhance translation pedagogy and improve students' English language proficiency.

To achieve the general objective, the study seeks to:

- Analyze current translation teaching practices in Beninese secondary school EFL classrooms.
- Assess the level of professional training EFL teachers have received in translation theory, translation strategies, and translation pedagogy.
- Identify the pedagogical and institutional challenges teachers face when teaching translation.

- Examine the relationship between teacher training and student performance in translation and overall communicative competence.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of existing teacher education programs in preparing EFL teachers for translation instruction.
- Design a structured framework or model for reinforcing teacher training in translation pedagogy suitable for the Beninese educational context.
- Propose practical recommendations for curriculum reform and continuous professional development aimed at improving translation teaching in secondary schools.

1.3 Research Questions and Hypotheses

To reach the objectives of the present research work, some research questions have been formulated:

- What are the current practices of translation teaching in Beninese secondary school EFL classrooms?
- To what extent are EFL teachers professionally trained in translation theory and translation pedagogy?
- What challenges do teachers encounter when teaching translation?
- How does the level of teacher training in translation pedagogy affect students' linguistic performance and communicative competence?
- What training framework or professional development model can effectively enhance translation teaching in Beninese secondary schools?

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is significant both academically and practically as it seeks to improve the teaching of translation in secondary

school English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms in Benin. The findings are expected to contribute to several stakeholders within the educational system.

First, the study will be beneficial to EFL teachers. By identifying the challenges they face in teaching translation and the gaps in their professional preparation, the research will provide insights into more effective pedagogical strategies. Strengthening teachers' methodological knowledge and translation competence may enable them to use translation more effectively as a learning tool rather than merely as a mechanical exercise.

Second, the study will benefit students in secondary schools. Improved teaching practices in translation can enhance learners' understanding of English structures, vocabulary, and meaning. Consequently, students may develop better linguistic competence and greater confidence in both written and oral communication in English.

Third, the study will be useful to teacher training institutions and curriculum designers. By highlighting the limitations of current training programs, the research may encourage the integration of more comprehensive translation pedagogy into pre-service and in-service teacher training. This may lead to the development of more relevant training modules that respond to the real needs of EFL teachers.

Fourth, the research will provide valuable information for educational policymakers and administrators in Benin. The findings may support educational reforms aimed at improving English language teaching in secondary schools. Reinforcing teacher training programs could contribute to raising the overall quality of English instruction within the national education system.

Finally, this study will contribute to the academic field of language education and translation studies by expanding the body of research on translation pedagogy in African EFL

contexts. It may also serve as a reference for future researchers interested in translation teaching, teacher professional development, and language education in similar multilingual environments.

Overall, the study seeks to demonstrate that strengthening the training of EFL teachers is a crucial step toward improving the effectiveness of translation teaching and enhancing students' proficiency in English in Benin's secondary schools.

1.5 Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study focuses on the teaching of translation in secondary school English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom in Benin. The research specifically examines how translation is used as a pedagogical tool in English language teaching and evaluates the extent to which EFL teachers are adequately trained to implement translation activities effectively.

The study targets secondary school teachers of English and their students, with particular attention to classroom practices, teaching strategies, and teachers' professional training. It also analyzes relevant educational documents such as curricula, textbooks, and teacher training programs in order to understand how translation is integrated into the teaching and learning process.

Geographically, the study is limited to a selected number of secondary schools in Benin, chosen as representative samples of the national education system. Methodologically, the research employs questionnaires, interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis to collect both qualitative and quantitative data related to translation teaching practices and teacher training.

The study mainly investigates the relationship between translation pedagogy and teacher preparation, with the aim of identifying gaps in current training programs and

proposing strategies to reinforce the professional development of EFL teachers.

Despite its importance, this study may face several limitations. First, the research is limited to a specific number of schools and participants, which may restrict the generalization of the findings to all secondary schools in Benin. However, efforts will be made to select a representative sample to ensure the reliability of the results.

Second, time and resource constraints may limit the extent of classroom observations and field investigations. Conducting extensive observations across many schools may not be feasible within the timeframe of the study.

Third, the study relies partly on self-reported data from teachers and students through questionnaires and interviews. Such data may sometimes be influenced by personal perceptions or biases.

Finally, the research focuses mainly on translation teaching and teacher training, without examining in depth other factors that may influence students' English proficiency, such as school infrastructure, class size, or learners' socio-economic background.

Despite these limitations, the study is expected to provide valuable insights into translation teaching practices and the need to reinforce the training of EFL teachers in Benin secondary schools.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Literature Review

The literature relevant to this study falls into three closely related strands: translation as a pedagogical resource in foreign-language education, translation teaching in the Beninese context, and professional development of EFL teachers in Benin. Bringing these strands together is important because the effectiveness of classroom translation depends not only on the value of translation itself, but also on teachers'

knowledge of translation principles, task design, and language-teaching methodology.

2.1.1 Translation as a Pedagogical Resource in EFL Teaching

For many years, translation was strongly associated with the Grammar-Translation Method, an approach centred on grammatical rules, vocabulary memorisation, reading, writing, and translation between the first and target languages (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Although the method has been criticised for providing insufficient opportunities for spontaneous oral interaction, translation itself should not be equated with the method. Contemporary scholarship has reconsidered translation as a potentially valuable pedagogical resource when it is purposeful, limited, and integrated with communicative learning objectives (Cook, 2010; Munday, 2016).

Duff (1989) presents translation as a classroom activity through which learners can compare languages, examine meaning, and develop greater sensitivity to form and use. Cook (2010) similarly argues that translation is a natural part of language learning and should not be excluded merely because it was historically associated with Grammar-Translation. From a translation-studies perspective, Newmark (1988) and Baker (2018) emphasise the importance of meaning, context, equivalence, and the relationship between linguistic form and communicative purpose. These perspectives support a shift from sentence-by-sentence substitution towards activities that require learners to interpret, reformulate, justify choices, and attend to context and audience.

The pedagogical value of translation is also compatible with communicative and task-based approaches. Communicative Language Teaching emphasises meaningful language use and the development of learners' ability to communicate in realistic situations (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011; Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Translation can therefore be

incorporated into communicative tasks—for example, translating short authentic messages, comparing alternative renderings, mediating information for another person, or discussing why a particular expression is more appropriate in a given context. In this way, translation becomes a means of promoting language awareness and mediation rather than an end in itself.

Recent research also points to the relevance of multilingual pedagogies. Huang and Chalmers (2023), in their systematic review of pedagogical translanguaging, show that strategic use of learners' linguistic resources can support comprehension and participation in EFL classrooms. This perspective is particularly relevant to Francophone Benin, where English is learned in an educational environment in which French and numerous national languages coexist. The issue, therefore, is not whether learners' first language should be eliminated, but how teachers can manage cross-linguistic resources without allowing them to replace meaningful target-language use.

2.1.2 Research on Translation Teaching in Benin

The Beninese literature provides direct evidence for the relevance of the present research problem. Mèhouénou, Dossoumou, and Loko (2020) have specifically investigated the teaching of translation in Beninese secondary schools. Their study found that learners' translation performance was problematic and argued that translation skills were not sufficiently taught before they were assessed. They linked poor performance to inadequate practice and the lack of professional preparation for teachers in translation. Their conclusion is particularly important for the present study because it establishes a local research precedent for viewing translation teaching and teacher preparation as interconnected issues.

Moustapha Babalola and Kodjo Sonou (2023) likewise have examined the principles

and techniques of translation practice in language education in Benin. Their study, conducted with students in teacher education, reported that learners performed better when they understood translation principles and practical procedures. The authors stress the need for explicit teaching of translation principles and techniques rather than assuming that knowledge of two languages automatically guarantees translation competence. This finding reinforces the argument that translation activities require pedagogical planning and that teachers need specific knowledge to teach them effectively.

Moustapha Babalola (2024) further highlights the importance of meaning and cultural mediation in translation in the Beninese context. Her work on journalistic translation in national-language broadcasting adopts the theory of sense as a guiding perspective and demonstrates that translation involves more than replacing words across languages. Although the study is not situated directly in secondary-school EFL classrooms, it is relevant to the present research because it foregrounds meaning, culture, and communicative purpose—dimensions that should also inform pedagogical translation.

Taken together, these Beninese studies suggest that translation should be treated as a structured competence involving linguistic knowledge, contextual interpretation, procedural knowledge, and cultural awareness. They also reveal a need for more research specifically examining what secondary-school EFL teachers know about translation pedagogy, how they actually use translation in classroom interaction, and what forms of professional development can address identified gaps.

2.1.3 EFL Teacher Professional Development in Benin

The second body of literature concerns teacher preparation and continuing professional development. Agbayahoun (2016) reports that Beninese EFL teachers often participate in

professional-development activities, but many such activities follow top-down, one-shot workshop models and provide limited opportunities for reflection, classroom inquiry, peer observation, mentoring, or teacher networking. This finding is directly relevant to the present study because translation pedagogy cannot be strengthened through occasional theoretical exposure alone; teachers need sustained opportunities to practise, reflect on, and refine translation-based classroom activities.

Iwikotan, Dohou, and Egounleti (2025) similarly found that professional development is critical to EFL teachers' performance in Benin, while heavy workloads, inadequate materials, limited equipment, and lack of training constrain teachers' professional growth. Their study therefore supports the need for context-sensitive and continuous professional-development mechanisms. More recently, Dossou (2026) found that EFL teachers in Benin viewed professional development as an ongoing process capable of improving teaching quality, while workload and resource constraints remained significant barriers. These findings reinforce the present study's emphasis on sustained rather than occasional training.

Research on classroom practice also points to the importance of teacher competence. Egounléti (2020), in a study of secondary schools in Littoral, Benin, identified weaknesses in teachers' approaches to error correction and argued for adequate teacher training. Hounnou (2024) likewise examined the professional profile of English teachers in Beninese secondary schools and emphasised the relationship between teacher characteristics, classroom performance, and learner outcomes. Although these studies do not focus specifically on translation, they strengthen the broader proposition that improving EFL teaching requires attention to teachers' professional knowledge, classroom practices, and continuing development.

2.1.4 Research Gap

The reviewed literature reveals three main gaps. First, international research has increasingly reconsidered translation as a legitimate pedagogical resource, but the Beninese secondary-school context remains comparatively under-researched. Second, existing Beninese studies have examined translation skills and translation principles, but fewer studies have systematically connected classroom translation practices with the professional preparation of secondary-school EFL teachers. Third, research on teacher professional development in Benin identifies general training needs, yet it provides limited evidence on the specific knowledge and competencies required for teaching translation.

The present study addresses these gaps by examining translation practices, teachers' training, perceived challenges, and students' perceptions in selected Beninese secondary schools. Its contribution lies in connecting translation pedagogy with EFL teacher professional development and in proposing a context-sensitive framework for strengthening teachers' capacity to use translation as a complementary, communicative, and competency-oriented classroom resource.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The present study is anchored in an integrated theoretical framework combining contemporary translation theory, Communicative Language Teaching, the Competency-Based Approach, contrastive perspectives, and teacher professional development. The combination is justified by the nature of the research problem: translation teaching involves linguistic transfer and meaning construction, while effective classroom implementation requires communicative and pedagogical competence on the part of teachers.

2.2.1 Translation Theory and Meaning-Based Translation

Translation theory traditionally addressed equivalence between source and target texts. Contemporary approaches, however, recognise that successful translation involves meaning, context, purpose, audience, and culture (Baker, 2018; Munday, 2016; Toury, 2012). Functionalist perspectives are particularly useful for this study because they encourage teachers to ask what a translation is intended to achieve rather than treating lexical equivalence as the only criterion of correctness. In classroom practice, this means that learners should be encouraged to interpret messages and select appropriate target-language expressions rather than merely substitute individual words.

2.2.2 Contrastive Linguistics and Cross-Linguistic Awareness

Because Beninese learners generally encounter English through a predominantly Francophone educational environment, comparison between English and French can be pedagogically useful. Contrastive work enables learners to notice differences in syntax, vocabulary, collocation, discourse organisation, and pragmatic meaning. However, contrastive comparison should not encourage mechanical one-to-one equivalence. Instead, it should help learners understand where direct transfer is possible, where it is misleading, and what strategies are needed to reformulate meaning in the target language.

2.2.3 Grammar-Translation and Its Contemporary Reinterpretation

The Grammar-Translation Method remains relevant to this study because it helps explain why translation is still frequently used for grammar explanation, vocabulary learning, reading comprehension, and examination preparation. Nevertheless, the present study does not advocate a return to an exclusively grammar-centred model. Rather, it distinguishes translation as a pedagogical resource from Grammar-Translation as a

comprehensive teaching method. This distinction allows translation to be retained while reducing its mechanical use.

2.2.4 Communicative Language Teaching

Communicative Language Teaching provides a second major theoretical anchor. It views language primarily as a resource for meaningful interaction and prioritises learners' ability to use language appropriately in context (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Within this framework, translation can support communication when learners translate for a purpose, mediate information, compare meanings, negotiate choices, or use translated material as a springboard for speaking and writing. The present study therefore expects effective translation pedagogy to complement, rather than replace, communicative activities.

2.2.5 Competency-Based Approach

The Competency-Based Approach (CBA) is also relevant to the Beninese educational context. It focuses on learners' capacity to mobilise knowledge, skills, and attitudes to solve meaningful problems. Applied to translation, this means that learners should be able to understand a source message, identify the communicative situation, select appropriate strategies, produce an intelligible target message, and justify or revise their choices. Translation activities should consequently be designed as meaningful tasks rather than as isolated tests of grammatical knowledge.

2.2.6 Teacher Professional Development Theory

Teacher professional development theory provides the framework for analysing the training dimension of the study. Effective professional learning involves more than acquiring information during short workshops; it includes reflection, experimentation, feedback, collaboration, and sustained engagement with classroom practice. The Beninese studies reviewed above indicate that professional-development opportunities may be

constrained by top-down models, workload, limited resources, and insufficient institutional support (Agbayahoun, 2016; Iwikotan et al., 2025). In the present study, teacher training is therefore conceptualised as a continuous process through which teachers develop both knowledge of translation and the pedagogical ability to transform that knowledge into effective classroom practice.

2.2.7 Conceptual Relationship among the Theoretical Components

The framework assumes a relationship among four core elements: teacher preparation, translation pedagogy, classroom implementation, and learner outcomes. Adequate professional preparation is expected to improve teachers' knowledge of translation principles and strategies. This knowledge should influence the design and implementation of translation tasks. Well-designed tasks, when integrated with communicative and competency-based activities, are expected to promote vocabulary development, grammatical awareness, reading comprehension, writing, meaning negotiation, and intercultural awareness without unnecessarily reducing opportunities for oral communication. The framework therefore positions teacher training as an enabling condition for transforming translation from a predominantly mechanical practice into a purposeful pedagogical tool.

Overall, the literature and theoretical perspectives converge on the proposition that translation can make a positive contribution to EFL learning when it is meaning-oriented, context-sensitive, communicatively integrated, and supported by competent teachers. This proposition provides the analytical lens through

which the present study interprets teachers' practices, students' perceptions, training gaps, and the recommendations proposed for secondary-school EFL education in Benin.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section describes the procedures and methods used to conduct the study on the teaching of translation and the necessity to reinforce the training of EFL teachers in secondary schools in Benin. It outlines the research design, population of the study, sampling techniques, instruments for data collection, methods of data collection, data analysis procedures, and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a mixed-methods research design, combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The quantitative approach allows the researcher to collect measurable data through questionnaires in order to identify patterns in teachers' practices and students' perceptions. The qualitative approach, through interviews and classroom observations, provides deeper insights into how translation is taught and how teachers apply their pedagogical knowledge in real classroom situations. The combination of these two approaches helps to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

3.2 Sample Population

The study is conducted in some selected secondary schools in Benin where English is taught as a foreign language: **CEG Adjohoun, CEG1 Sakété, CEG Sèmè-Podji and CEG Koutongbé**. These schools are chosen to represent different educational environments within the national secondary education system.

Table 1: The Target Population

Selected Schools	Location	Sampled Teachers	Target Students
CEG1 SAKETE	Sakété	08	96
CEG ADJOHOUN	Adjohoun	07	104
CEG SEME-PODJI	Sèmè-Podji	07	92
CEG KOUTONGBE	Porto-Novo	08	108
TOTAL	/	30	400

The target population consists of 30 EFL teachers and 400 students distributed across the four selected secondary schools, as shown in Table 1. For the questionnaire-based analysis reported in the Results section, the study uses responses from 30 teachers and 100 students. School administrators or pedagogical supervisors may also be consulted where necessary.

3.3 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

A purposive and random sampling technique is used to select participants. Purposive sampling helps identify English teachers who regularly use translation in their classrooms, while random sampling is used to select students from the selected schools. This sampling strategy ensures that the participants provide relevant and reliable information for the study.

3.4 Instruments for Data Collection

Several instruments are used to gather data for the study:

Questionnaires: administered to teachers and students to collect quantitative data on translation practices and perceptions.

Semi-structured interviews: conducted with teachers to obtain detailed information about their training, teaching experiences, and challenges in teaching translation.

Classroom observations: used to examine how translation activities are implemented during English lessons.

Document analysis: involving the review of English curricula, textbooks, and teacher training materials to understand how translation is integrated into the educational system.

3.5 Methods of Data Collection

Data are collected through field visits to selected secondary schools. Questionnaires are distributed to participants, interviews are conducted with teachers, and classroom observations are carried out during English lessons. Educational documents such as curricula and textbooks are also examined.

3.6 Methods of Data Analysis

The collected data are analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative techniques. Quantitative data obtained from questionnaires are analyzed using descriptive statistics such as percentages, frequencies, and tables. Qualitative data from interviews and observations are analyzed through thematic analysis, allowing the researcher to identify key patterns and themes related to translation teaching and teacher training.

4. PRESENTATION OF THE RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSIS

This section presents and analyzes the data collected from teachers and students in selected secondary schools in Benin. The analysis focuses on the current practices of teaching translation, the level of training received by EFL teachers, and the perceptions of students regarding translation activities in

English classes. The data obtained from questionnaires, interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis are organized and interpreted in relation to the research questions of the study.

4.1 Teachers' Responses

This section presents and analyzes the data collected from thirty (30) EFL teachers through a questionnaire investigating the use of translation as a teaching strategy in EFL classrooms. The results are presented using

tables, frequencies, percentages, and interpretations.

4.1.1 Current Practices in Teaching Translation

The results indicate that translation is commonly used by EFL teachers. The majority of teachers (36.7%) reported that they sometimes use translation, while 26.7% use it often. Only 6.7% never use translation, suggesting that translation remains a relevant pedagogical strategy in EFL classrooms.

Table 2: Frequency of Using Translation as a Teaching Strategy

Practices in Teaching Translation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Never	2	6.7%
Rarely	5	16.7%
Sometimes	11	36.7%
Often	8	26.7%
Always	4	13.2%
Total	30	100%

4.1.2 Purpose of Using Translation

The findings reveal that vocabulary explanation (73.3%) is the most common reason teachers use translation. This suggests that

teachers rely on translation to facilitate understanding of new lexical items. Additionally, text comprehension (66.7%) and grammar explanation (60%) are also major pedagogical purposes.

Table 3: Purpose of Using Translation

Purpose	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Vocabulary explanation	22	73.3%
Grammar explanation	18	60%
Text comprehension	20	66.7%
Exam preparation	16	53.3%
Other purposes	3	10%
Total	30	100%

4.1.3 Level at which Translation is Used

Most teachers (46.7%) use translation at the sentence level, while fewer teachers apply it at the paragraph or full-text level. This indicates

that translation is mostly used for micro-level language clarification rather than extensive translation activities.

Table 4 : Level at which Translation is Used

Level the translation is used	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sentence	14	46.7%
Paragraph	9	30%
Full text	7	23.3%
Total	30	100%

4.1.4 Integration of Translation with other Teaching Methods

The data show that 40% of teachers integrate translation with communicative

activities, suggesting an effort to combine traditional and communicative teaching approaches.

Table 5 : Integration of Translation with other Teaching Methods

Response Type	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Integrated with communicative activities	12	40%
Used during grammar teaching	10	33.3%
Used for reading comprehension	6	20%
Rarely integrated	2	6.7%
Total	30	100%

4.1.5 Teachers' Training on Translation as a Teaching Method

A large majority of teachers (70%) reported not having received formal training in

using translation as a teaching strategy. This indicates a significant gap in teacher training programs.

Table 6: Teachers' Training on Translation as a Teaching Method

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	9	30%
No	21	70%
Total	30	100%

4.1.6 Type of Training Received (Among the 9 teachers who received training)

Training opportunities are limited and varied, with workshops and pre-service training representing the most common forms.

Table 7 : Type of Training Received (Among the 9 teachers who received training)

Type of Training	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Pre-service training	3	33.3%
In-service training	2	22.2%
Workshops	3	33.3%
Seminars	1	11.1%
Total	30	100%

4.1.7 Teachers' Confidence in Using Translation

Table 8: Teachers' Confidence in Using Translation

Level of Confidence	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Not confident	4	13.3%
Slightly confident	8	26.7%
Confident	12	40%
Very confident	6	20%
Total	30	100%

Most teachers (60%) feel confident or very confident using translation. However, the presence of teachers with low confidence levels suggests the need for additional training.

4.1.8 Challenges in Using Translation

Table 9: Challenges in Using Translation

Challenge	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Limited resources	14	46.7%
Large class sizes	18	60%
Lack of training	20	66.7%
Time constraints	15	50%
Total	30	100%

The most significant challenge identified is lack of training (66.7%), followed by large class sizes (60%) and time constraints (50%). These factors may hinder the effective implementation of translation activities.

4.1.9 Training Needed to Improve Translation Teaching

Most teachers (66.7%) expressed the need for methodological training on how to integrate translation effectively into language teaching.

Table 10: Training needed to Improve Translation Teaching

Type of Support	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Professional workshops	17	56.7%
Methodology training	20	66.7%
Teaching materials	13	43.3%
Curriculum support	9	30%

4.2 Students' Responses

This section presents the analysis of the questionnaire administered to one hundred (100) EFL students. The purpose of the questionnaire was to investigate students' perceptions of translation activities in English classes. The results are presented according to the different questions of the questionnaire.

4.2.1 Frequency of Translation Use in English Lessons

Table 11: Frequency of Translation Use in English Lessons

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Never	10	10%
Rarely	18	18%
Sometimes	32	32%
Often	25	25%
Always	15	15%
Total	100	100%

The results show that translation is frequently used in English classes. The majority of students (32%) indicated that their teachers sometimes use translation, while 25% stated that translation is often used. In addition, 15% reported that translation is always used. However, 28% of the students (10% + 18%) stated that translation is rarely or never used. This indicates that the use of translation varies depending on the teacher or teaching context.

Overall, the findings suggest that translation remains a common pedagogical practice in EFL classrooms.

4.2.2 Students' Perception of the Usefulness of Translation

Table 12: Students' Perception of the Usefulness of Translation

Students' Perception	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Not useful	8	8%
Slightly useful	22	22%
Useful	40	40%
Very useful	30	30%
Total	100	100%

The majority of students perceive translation as a helpful learning tool. In fact, 70% of the respondents (40% + 30%) consider translation useful or very useful for understanding English. Only 8% of students believe that translation is not useful, while 22% consider it slightly useful. These results indicate that translation plays an important role in facilitating comprehension and learning, particularly for learners who may struggle with vocabulary and grammar.

4.2.3 Skills Improved through Translation Activities

Table 14: Skills Improved through Translation Activities

Students' Perception	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Vocabulary	72	72%
Grammar	65	65%
Reading comprehension	60	60%
Writing	45	45%
Speaking	30	30%
Total	100	100%

The findings reveal that translation is particularly useful for improving vocabulary, as indicated by 72% of the students. Grammar also appears to benefit significantly from translation

activities (65%). Additionally, 60% of students reported that translation helps improve reading comprehension, while 45% believe it helps develop writing skills. However, only 30% of the students indicated that translation improves speaking skills. This suggests that translation activities are perceived as more beneficial for receptive and analytical language skills than for oral communication.

4.2.4 Does Translation Limit Students' Opportunity to Speak English?

Table 15: Impacts of translation on Students' speaking ability

Students' Perception	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	35	35%
No	40	40%
Sometimes	25	25%
Total	100	100%

The results show divided opinions among students. While 40% believe that translation does not limit their opportunity to speak English, 35% think that it does. Furthermore, 25% of the respondents believe that translation sometimes limits speaking opportunities. These findings suggest that while translation can facilitate understanding, it may also reduce opportunities for oral practice if overused.

4.2.5 Students' Preference for Translation Compared to other Activities

Table 16: Students' Preference for Translation Compared to other Activities

Students' Perception	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	38	38%
No	34	34%
Sometimes	28	28%
Total	100	100%

The results indicate that 38% of students prefer translation activities, while 34% prefer other communicative activities such as discussions or role-plays. The remaining 28%

expressed a neutral position, suggesting that they appreciate both types of activities. This indicates that students value a balanced teaching approach combining translation and communicative methods.

4.2.6 Suggestions for Improving Translation Activities

Table 17: Suggestions for Improving Translation Activities

Students' Perception	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Use more interesting texts	40	40%
Combine translation with speaking activities	35	35%
Use group translation exercises	15	15%
Use digital tools or technology	10	10%
Total	100	100%

The most common suggestion (40%) was to use more engaging and interesting texts in translation exercises. In addition, 35% of students recommended combining translation activities with speaking exercises, which would help improve oral communication skills. Some students also suggested group translation activities (15%) and the use of technology or digital resources (10%) to make translation tasks more interactive.

4.3 Discussion of Findings

This section discusses the major findings of the study in relation to the research questions, the theoretical framework, and previous studies on translation teaching and teacher training. The aim is to interpret the results and highlight their implications for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching in secondary schools in Benin. The findings of this study can be compared with several previous studies that have examined the

role of translation in the teaching and learning of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). This comparison helps situate the results of the present study within the broader academic discussion on translation in language education.

4.3.1 The Use of Translation in EFL Classrooms

The results of this study indicate that translation is regularly used by EFL teachers, although it is not always the dominant teaching method. Most teachers reported using translation sometimes or often to support language learning. These findings are consistent with the work of Guy Cook, who argues that translation remains a natural and unavoidable component of language learning. According to Cook, translation can serve as an effective pedagogical tool that helps learners understand the relationship between their first language and the target language.

Similarly, Alan Duff emphasized that translation is a useful classroom activity that can promote language awareness and improve learners' understanding of linguistic structures. The present study confirms this perspective, as both teachers and students acknowledged the usefulness of translation in English lessons.

4.3.2 The Pedagogical Value of Translation

The results of the students' questionnaire revealed that the majority of learners consider translation useful or very useful for understanding English. Teachers also reported using translation primarily to explain vocabulary, grammar, and text meaning.

These findings are in line with the views of Peter Newmark, who highlighted the importance of translation in improving learners' understanding of vocabulary and language structures. According to Newmark, translation can help students develop greater linguistic precision and analytical skills. Likewise, Mona Baker emphasized that translation allows learners to explore equivalence and meaning between languages, which can deepen their understanding of linguistic and cultural

differences. Thus, the present study supports previous research suggesting that translation can function as a valuable pedagogical resource in language learning.

4.3.3 Translation and Language Skills Development

Another important finding of this study is that translation activities mainly contribute to the development of vocabulary, grammar, and reading comprehension, while their impact on speaking skills appears to be more limited.

This result corresponds with earlier studies which suggest that translation tends to support receptive and analytical skills more strongly than communicative skills. For instance, Duff argued that translation activities encourage students to analyze language structures carefully, which helps improve their accuracy and linguistic awareness.

However, communicative language teaching theorists have often criticized excessive reliance on translation, arguing that it may limit opportunities for oral communication practice. The mixed opinions expressed by students in the present study reflect this debate.

4.3.4 Challenges in Using Translation

The teachers involved in this study identified several challenges related to the use of translation in EFL classrooms, particularly lack of training, large class sizes, and limited resources. These findings correspond with previous research indicating that teachers often lack specific pedagogical training in translation teaching methods. As a result, translation is sometimes used informally rather than as a structured instructional activity. Scholars in language pedagogy have also noted that institutional constraints such as large classrooms and limited instructional time can make it difficult to implement varied teaching strategies, including well-designed translation exercises.

4.3.5 The Need for Integrating Translation with Communicative Approaches

One of the most important conclusions emerging from this study is that translation should be combined with communicative teaching methods rather than used in isolation. This finding supports the position of several contemporary scholars who advocate a balanced approach to language teaching. Instead of rejecting translation completely, these researchers suggest that it should be integrated with communicative activities in order to support both linguistic accuracy and communicative competence. The students' suggestions in the present study - such as combining translation with speaking activities and interactive exercises - reflect this modern pedagogical perspective.

Overall, the findings of this study largely confirm the conclusions of previous research, which recognize translation as a useful but complementary pedagogical tool in language teaching. While translation can effectively support vocabulary learning, grammar explanation, and comprehension, it should be carefully integrated with communicative activities to ensure a balanced and effective language learning environment.

5. SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and discussion of this study, several suggestions and recommendations are proposed to improve the teaching of translation in secondary school English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom in Benin and to reinforce the training of EFL teachers.

5.1 Strengthening Pre-Service Teacher Training

Teacher training institutions should integrate translation pedagogy into pre-service EFL programs. Courses should cover modern translation theories, practical classroom

applications, and methods for combining translation with communicative activities.

Student-teachers should have opportunities for practical classroom teaching, including designing and implementing translation tasks that promote both comprehension and communicative competence.

5.2 Enhancing In-Service Professional Development

Existing EFL teachers should be offered regular in-service training workshops and seminars focused on translation strategies and modern teaching methodologies.

Training programs should provide teachers with hands-on experience and resources for designing translation activities that go beyond literal translation and encourage critical thinking, problem-solving, and cross-cultural awareness.

5.3 Promoting Balanced Translation Practices

Teachers should be encouraged to balance the use of translation with communicative activities, ensuring that students can apply the target language in meaningful contexts.

Translation exercises should focus not only on grammatical accuracy but also on meaning negotiation, vocabulary enrichment, and cultural understanding.

5.4 Improving Teaching Resources and Classroom Environment

Schools should be equipped with adequate teaching materials, including bilingual dictionaries, graded texts, and multimedia resources that facilitate translation-based learning. Class sizes should be managed to allow more interactive teaching, enabling teachers to provide individualized support during translation activities.

5.5 Curriculum and Policy Recommendations

The Ministry of Education and curriculum developers should review and update secondary school English curricula to integrate translation as a communicative and analytical tool rather than merely a test-based exercise. Policies should emphasize continuous professional development for EFL teachers, making it a requirement for career progression and improvement of classroom practices. Implementing these recommendations would ensure that translation becomes a dynamic and effective pedagogical tool in EFL classrooms rather than a purely traditional exercise. By reinforcing teacher training and modernizing classroom practices, secondary school students in Benin can achieve improved English language proficiency, both in comprehension and communication.

6. CONCLUSION

This study examined the teaching of translation in secondary school English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms in Benin, focusing on the need to reinforce the training of EFL teachers. The findings indicate that translation remains a widely used instructional technique. Teachers frequently employ it to explain vocabulary, clarify grammatical structures, and facilitate students' comprehension of texts. However, its use is often limited to sentence-level exercises and emphasizes grammatical accuracy rather than communicative competence.

The study also revealed that many teachers, although academically qualified in English, have received limited formal training in translation pedagogy. As a result, translation practices in the classroom often rely on personal experience and traditional methods rather than structured, modern teaching strategies. From the students' perspective, translation is seen as a useful tool for understanding difficult words and expressions and for connecting English to French. Nevertheless, excessive reliance on translation may restrict opportunities for oral

practice and reduce students' ability to use English independently.

Several challenges affect the effective teaching of translation, including large class sizes, limited teaching resources, insufficient professional development opportunities, and time constraints within the curriculum. These factors hinder teachers from implementing innovative translation activities that could foster broader language competence. The study therefore demonstrates that the effectiveness of translation as a pedagogical tool depends largely on teachers' professional competence. Strengthening both pre-service and in-service training is essential to equip teachers with modern translation strategies aligned with communicative and competency-based approaches.

By enhancing teacher training, modernizing classroom practices, and balancing the use of translation with communicative activities, it is possible to significantly improve students' English proficiency in Beninese secondary schools. This study contributes to the advancement of EFL education in multilingual and Francophone contexts, showing that translation can become a dynamic, learner-centered pedagogical tool fully integrated into modern teaching practices rather than merely a traditional exercise.

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APPENDIX

Questionnaire to EFL Teachers

1. Age: _____
2. Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female
3. Highest qualification: ☐ Bachelor ☐ Master ☐ Other: _____
4. Years of teaching experience: ☐ 0-5 ☐ 6-10 ☐ 11-15 ☐ 16+

5. Subjects taught: _____
6. How often do you use translation as a teaching strategy?
☐ Never ☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always
7. For what purpose do you mainly use translation? (Tick all that apply)
☐ Vocabulary explanation
☐ Grammar explanation
☐ Comprehension of texts
☐ Exam preparation
☐ Other: _____
8. At what level do you usually use translation?
☐ Sentence ☐ Paragraph ☐ Full Text
9. How do you integrate translation with other teaching methods?
10. Have you received formal training on using translation as a teaching method?
☐ Yes ☐ No
11. If yes, what type of training?
☐ Pre-service ☐ In-service ☐ Workshop ☐ Seminar ☐ Other: _____
12. Do you feel confident using translation to improve students' language skills?
☐ Not confident ☐ Slightly confident ☐ Confident ☐ Very confident
13. What challenges do you face when using translation in your classroom? (Tick all that apply)
☐ Limited resources ☐ Large class sizes ☐ Lack of training ☐ Time constraints ☐ Other: _____
14. What type of training or support would help you teach translation more effectively?

Questionnaire to Students

1. Age: _____
 2. Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female
 3. Grade level: _____
 4. Number of years learning English: _____
- Section B: Students' Experience with Translation
5. How often does your teacher use translation in English lessons?
☐ Never ☐ Rarely ☐ Sometimes ☐ Often ☐ Always
 6. In your opinion, how useful is translation for understanding English?
☐ Not useful ☐ Slightly useful ☐ Useful ☐ Very useful
 7. Which skills do translation activities help you improve? (Tick all that apply)
☐ Vocabulary ☐ Grammar ☐ Reading comprehension ☐ Writing ☐ Speaking
 8. Do you feel that translation limits your opportunity to speak in English?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Sometimes
 9. Do you prefer translation as a learning method compared to other activities (like discussions or role-plays)?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Sometimes
 10. How can translation activities be improved in your English class?