TRANSLATION IN LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING: FROM A SUB ROSA PRACTICE INTO A BEDROCK OF GLOBAL EDUCATION POLICY

Anwar Ben Moqadem[i],
Bani Koumachi
FLLA, Ibn Tofail, University,
Kenitra, Morocco

Abstract:

Ever since the Grammar Translation Method has been outlawed in mainstream language education policy, translation as a tool for language learning and teaching has been ostracized for a variety of reasons other than pedagogical. However, with the currently growing multilingualism and multiculturalism, there is an ideal opportunity to engage in true cultural dialog and democratic citizenship. The translation is justifiably an essential step in the process of global identity construction. Today, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages with its Companion Volume with New Descriptors for Mediation provides a blueprint for installing mediation as a proxy for translation in the learning and teaching of English as a foreign language. In this regard, mediation is conceived of as a set of translatorial skills that are highly required by today's world citizens in day-to-day life situations. Therefore, the foreign language classroom has to provide for the development of language learners as social agents whose mission is to establish and maintain communication across linguistic and cultural barriers. Within this perspective, this paper joins the initiative to close the conceptual, theoretical, and methodological divide between translation studies and foreign language learning and teaching methodologies. In doing so, it purports to reassess the validity of translation as a pedagogical activity in the foreign language classroom in light of the mediation descriptors provided by the Council of Europe in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFRL).

Keywords: translation, mediation, language policy, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFRL), foreign language learning and teaching

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[i]Correspondence: email anwar.benmoqadem@gmail.com

1. Introduction

Ever since the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) times until the current mediation days, the history of translation as a tool in foreign language teaching and learning has been marked by the constant ebb and flow of controversies. In the same way, the long-standing academic debate over the validity of translation in language education policies has swung between optimistic advocacy and suppressive scorn. Compelling arguments from both parties have been mutually adverse and exclusive. In that debate, the case against translation is built on arguments other than pedagogical. Therefore, it has endured unjust discrimination across educational policies and led to a low-tier life aspiring for a fair reconsideration of its true value as a tool in language teaching and learning practices. With new insights from the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFRL), especially the new descriptors for mediation (Piccardo et al., 2019) [1], translation as an activity in language learning has made a return in academic debate, but still not yet fully re-established in mainstream language learning practices. This article is a reopening of that case and a restatement that translation should not be castigated because of its connection to GTM. To that end, this is meant to give an overview of the history of translation in language teaching and learning from the days of the Grammar Translation Method to the modern days of mediation with a subtle criticism of the main arguments that lead to its ban in language education pedagogies.

2. Historical Overview

2.1 The Grammar Translation Method

The GTM set the general framework for language learning and teaching in Europe all through what Howatt & Smith (2014, p. 78) [2] call the Classical Period of language teaching in Europe (1750-1880). At that time, foreign language learners needed to read literary classics in Greek or Latin. As a result, the GTM course prioritized writing and grammar accuracy. In 1844, a German-French teacher, J. V. Meidinger, published a French coursebook (Meidinger, 1844) [3] wherein practice materials were provided. In particular, grammar rules were graded from easiest to more complex, and vocabulary was presented in wearisome bilingual lists to memorize. In more practical terms, the target language course was designed around a sequence of linguistics items, mostly parts of speech, and was introduced in arcane 'sample' sentences for the students to build their L1 sentences on a word-for-word basis.

According to Cook (2010, p. 10) [4], *"The key principle of this approach is that the translation exercises should contain only words and constructions which had already been encountered"*. Therefore, two abstractions can be made: (1) knowledge of the meaning of a word was then equated with knowledge of its translation equivalent in the first language, and (2) all that was required to learn the language was knowledge of grammar rules and ownership of a good dictionary.

Criticism of the GTM's tedious bilingual approach was raised by Comenius (Comenius, 1896) [5] who was in favor of considering the context in translation. In that way, Comenius meets Bacon (Tierney-Hynes, 2015, p. 13) [6] who says "[*words] were but the images of matter; and except they have a life of reason and invention, to fall in love with them is all one as to fall in love with a picture*". In the same vein, Webbe (1968) [7] criticized the literal bilingual translation and called for considering units of translation. After all, taking into account the principles that underly the GTM, we can say that it taught about languages and not how they could be used for genuine purposes in real-life situations. Therefore, GTM classes would only cause frustration for those students seeking opportunities to use the language in authentic situations. From this perspective, we can say that the criticism raised against GTM is to a fair extent justifiable.

2.2. The Reform Movement

In the year 1880, a group of phoneticians from different countries in Europe led the Reform Movement (RM) as a response to the dreary GTM. To them, the primary concern was to teach oral communication skills using authentic texts that contained targeted grammar and vocabulary. This method has come to be labeled later as the Natural Method. Leading figures of the RM, like Henry Sweet from England and Otto Jespersen from Sweden, did not completely discard translation from the language classroom. Sweet spoke of the potential help that translation can contribute to the language learning experience; he says (quoted in Laviosa, 2014, p. 9) [8] "*we translate the foreign words and phrases into our language simply because this is the most convenient and at the same time the most efficient guide to their meaning*". Therefore, to the pioneers of the RM, translation would still be used but in ways other than those of the GTM.

The principles that guided the RM were inspired by the nascent theories of phenetics in their focus on spoken language. In that way, they disapproved of the disconnected sentences of the GTM as they reflected no association between language and the real world. To the RM proponents, the bilingual sentences as practiced in GTM were responsible for the disturbing matter we now refer to as 'mother tongue transfer'. However, despite their criticism of translation in its association with that transfer, no one of the RM advocates suggested that it should be permanently debarred from language teaching. Jespersen (Jespersen, 1904, pp. 56-67) [9] alludes to the validity of translation in language classrooms when says, "*translation might still be a useful and indispensable means in the service of language instruction*". In more practical terms, translation was still a viable practice in the service of language instruction. According to Howatt, (Howatt & Smith, 2014) [10]"*the teacher was expected to speak the foreign language as the normal means of classroom communication, retaining the mother tongue only for the glossing of new words and explaining new grammar points*". In the same vein, Howatt (Howatt, 1984, p. 170) [11] records Klinghardt's 1880's experiment which revealed that, although RM language instruction valued oral communication skills, translation was still used to explain the meanings of unfamiliar lexical items and grammar structures.

In America, due to the expanding commercial activity, there was a greater enthusiasm to learn English for functional reasons. This led to the emergence of a new phenomenon known as private language schools. One of them was the Berlitz school which first appeared in 1882. It should be noted here that both the Natural Method in Europe and the Berlitz school in America developed simultaneously, but for quite different reasons being academic and pedagogical for one and purely commercial for the other. However, it is in the principles that shaped the Berlitz schools (primacy of speech and native-speaker teachers) that we trace, for the first time, a wholesale dismissal of translation in language teaching. A combination of the RM, which targeted secondary school students, and the Berlitz schools, which targeted paying clients, gave birth to what is known as the Direct Method.

2.3. The Direct Method (DM)

The didactic principles of the Direct method rested on two ideas. Firstly, it depended on the teacher's ability to teach vocabulary using real-world objects, mimes, posters, and context. Typical lessons were marked by a series of questions and answers as in Lambert Sauveur's book, Causeries avec Mes Élèves (Chats with the Little Ones) (Sauveur, 1891) [12], and in Berlitz's lesson exchanges *"Is the table brown?-Yes, it is… Is it black- No, it is not? Is the table black?- No. it is not, it is brown"* (Knapp et al., 2009, p. 476) [13]. The philosophy of the DM represented the idea that children have natural abilities to understand the natural world through their senses and through oral communication with their teachers. Within this "*life educates framework*" (Laviosa, 2014, p. 1) [14] the DM was founded on four fundamental ideas: (1) translation must not be used under any condition; (2) the primacy of oral practice; (3) grammar explanation were avoided or left till the end of the lesson; (4) use of question and answer technique.

Therefore, the monolingual approach of the DM was especially fit for the native speaker teachers. As a result, younger teachers from English-speaking countries invaded the world and taught English at places where they had no understanding of the local languages. Furthermore, English native theorists dominated foreign language teaching (Butzkamm, 2003, p. XV) [15]. West (West, 1960, p. 48) [16] suspects that the native speakers' ignorance of any local language was behind their ardent defense of the monolingual methodology; he says "*One cannot but suspect that this theory of rigid avoidance of the mother tongue may be in part motivated by the fact that the teacher of English does perhaps not know the learner's mother tongue*".

In turn, Palmer (1992, p. 137) [17] called for proportionate attention to different aspects of language and claimed that translation does not violate that principle of proportion. Otherwise, Puren (quoted in Butzkamm & Caldwell, 2009, p. 23) [18] testifies to a paradoxical belief in the when he says, "*We all cheat on this Direct method all the time, except when the inspector comes*". With Palmer's Oral Method and even Hornby's Situational approach (1950) [19], there came an appeal to accuracy as a feature of the GTM in building sentence patterns. However, both methodologies kept the emphasis on the primacy of spoken language which was cherished by the DM.

2.4. The Long Silence

If the DM outlawed translation from language education purely for utilitarian purposes, the silence towards translation in modern mainstream pedagogic debate raises legitimate questions. Reading through the history of translation in language teaching reveals that it has not been given enough attention to be considered either self-evident or insignificant, not even in comprehensive surveys of second language acquisition (Ellis, 2008) [20]. However, despite the historic shifts in language education from the bilingual approach of the GTM to the monolingual approach of the DM on the one side, and from the focus on form to the focus on meaning, we still notice persistent classroom practices associated with GTM but masked as communicative task-based activities. The deductive teaching modes in which the rules are formulated first and practiced later are examples of the GTM practices that have survived the outlawing of translation.

In the same way, contrastive analysis, which dominated language education in the 1960s and 1970s, put forward the difficulties implied in the language learning process. Accordingly, (Lado, 1957) [21] states that target language elements that are similar to the native language ones will be easier for the learner, and those that are different will be difficult. It is, therefore, the task of the teacher to compare the target language with the native language of the learners and provide for the underlying problems. It is clear, then, that the contrastive analysis approach doesn't recommend translation practice publicly, but implicitly refers to the native language of the learners.

Shifts in language education pedagogy brought about two approaches that focus on meaning. On the one hand, the Natural approach stipulates that the acquisition of language happens unconsciously through comprehensible input (Krashen, 1985) [22]; on the other hand, the Communicative Language Teaching approach (CLT) emphasizes communication without major attention to accuracy. Both approaches advocate for students' centeredness, but in doing so they both failed to consider the students' own language as an element of their identity.

Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) emphasizes the use of real-life communication drawn from corpora. However, (Widdowson, 1978) [23] remarks that what is authentic in real-life communication becomes artificial in the classroom. Accordingly, authenticity is not characteristic of language itself but of the communicative act that uses the language. In that logic, the task loses its distinctive feature in favor of the exercise. According to (Ellis & Ellis, 2003) [24], tasks are meaning-focused whereas exercises are form-focused, and both are used to learn a language. Therefore, Ellis admits the validity of the old-fashioned focus on form, yet nowhere in TBLT do we find a clear call for the use of translation.

An even more interesting attitude to consider is that of Widdowson in his book Teaching Language as Communication (Widdowson, 1978) [25]. Therein, he calls for the use of the learners' first language in what he calls "*an integrated approach*" (144). Further, Widdowson makes a case for translation stating that "*What we are aiming to is to make the learner conceive of the foreign language in the same way he conceives of his own language and to use it in the same way as a communicative activity. This being so, it would seem reasonable to*

draw on the learner's knowledge of how his own language is used to communicate. That is to say, it would seem reasonable to make use of translation" (159). Another interesting stance comes from Howatt (Howatt, 1984, p. 11) [26] who questions whether it is translation that the reformers objected to or the way it was used.

In turn, Stern, in his Issues and Options in Language Teaching (Stern & Allen, 1992) [27], refers to two modes of language teaching: cross-lingual and intralingual. He claims that despite their differences, both modes should be seen as two points in a continuum. In other words, if the objective is to develop communicative skills, the intralingual mode should be used; but if the purpose of language teaching is mediation, then the cross-lingual mode is the option to take (Stern & Allen, 1992, p. 301) [28]. Another voice in favor of translation is that of Clair Kramsch who maintains that translation practice leads to a better understanding of culture. In her Context and Culture in Language Teaching (Kramsch, 1993:148) [29], we can read, "*a way of highlighting the discourse value of the author's choice is to compare it with its translation in another language*". It should be noted that neither Stern nor Kramsch is a native speaker of English, but in their defense of bilingual language teaching, we can look into their experience as language learners themselves.

2.5. The Revival of Translation in Language Teaching

After being rejected in the 19th century and ignored in the 20th century, the first half of the 21st century was marked by the rise of bilingualization as a result of a growing relevance of learners' first language to the learning of other languages. Numerous factors, such as the old dichotomies of native vs foreign language and form vs meaning in linguistics (Kramsch, 1993) [30], and non-verbal modes of communication that filled the void between languages (Kress et al., 2001[31]; Norris, 2004) [32] stimulated the push towards the acknowledgment of the learners' innate language. Similarly, in applied linguistics, attitudes started to change; for instance, Wei & Cook (2009, p. 2) [33] state "*Bilingualism is no more intrinsically a problem to be solved than is monolingualism*". In brief, questions were asked as to what had previously been taken indisputably.

It seems only self-evident that in an era when bilingual language teaching is publicly advocated, translation should be a legitimate classroom practice. However, no outspoken advocacy of translation was chronicled. As Cook (2010, p. 37) [34] comments, it was unexpected to witness calls for bilingual language teaching that kept translation "*at arm's length*". From a more technical perspective, it was absurd to visualize a bilingual language class without incidental use of translation, at least in the learners' minds. That is the same approach that has given translation its status as the unspoken factor that has continued to impact language learners' lives daily.

In the academic context, there was a turn in which applied linguists looked at languages as the main focus of inquiry from sociocultural and ethnographic perspectives. That resulted in the study of language taking a new ecological approach which, according to Kramsch (quoted in Cook, 2010) [35], sees language "*as a historically contingent phenomenon negotiated between interactants in daily conversations and daily interactions and*

includes consideration of language and power, language and history and the way people position themselves vis-à-vis history through language". From that perspective, language was recognized as complex, diverse, and indeterminate. We now talk of 'Englishes' rather than English (Quirk et al., 1985) [36] and the recognition of non-native English as a lingua franca (Jenkins, 2000) [37].

As clear as it is now, and despite all the shifts that have marked the history of language teaching methodologies, the status and place of translation in language teaching did not enjoy public advocacy. The following section will provide arguments for translation as a viable activity in the language classroom.

3. Arguments for Reinstalling Translation in Language Teaching

3.1 Translation and Vocabulary Building

A substantial amount of today's classroom activities is influenced by the 'unquestionable' monolingualism as founded by Krashen's Monitor Hypothesis and inspired by Chomsky's model of L1 acquisition. The underlying idea is that learners of a second/foreign language follow the same natural sequence of L1 acquisition. Therefore, only exposure to comprehensible input is conducive to acquiring a new language without any conscious learning. However, empirical studies (Dong et al., 2005) [38] have shown that for learners of a second or foreign language, L1 and L2 vocabulary is stored in the same cortical area in the sense that L1 meanings are conveyed comprehensively to L2 forms. It is, therefore, safe to assume that an inherent word-for-word translation process is inevitable as it takes place whether teachers want it or not and whether they consider it useless or not. In other words, L2 lexical units with meanings activate their L1 partners in the mental lexicon of L2 learners. If we think this to be the process at work, it would be best to make use of translation instead of forbidding it since total immersion, as the proclaimed goal of the communicative approach, cannot be attained.

Likewise, translation helps learners avoid errors in the choice and use of vocabulary. At some point in the learning journey, learners will develop quite a considerable number of vocabulary items and then some problems arise. The first one is that, at a given stage, learners will reach a certain degree of command of L2 that they become reluctant to learn any new vocabulary. The second is that learners may develop enormous but only superfluous knowledge of vocabulary. Both problems cause imprecise or wrong use of vocabulary. Therefore, translation activities can remedy those problems by forcing learners to search for particular words that they may not know. Also, translation helps to integrate the new words into the existing knowledge of vocabulary items. Hence, the use of translation in L2 teaching enhances vocabulary-building opportunities (Prince, 1996 [39]; Saricoban, 2012 [40]), even among advanced learners with enough circumlocution skills.

3.2 Translation as a Means of Communication

One of the time-honored arguments against the use of translation as an effective tool in language teaching is its 'presumed' inability to impose itself as a communicative activity. In fact, we have to admit that the objection to translation as a communicative activity has gained undoubted validity in situations where it is used in a slavish way and with an exclusive focus on grammar and vocabulary, as it was practiced in the days of the GTM. It is actually in situations where translation is discussed as a product that we can talk about communicative translation. It is to those genuine discussions about more appropriate linguistic forms and meanings that we are referring to in this context; those moments when the proposal of more than one translation equivalent to a linguistic or cultural item in the ST generates extensive discussions and overlaps in turn-taking among students and teachers. In addition, translation provides opportunities for the learners to think comparatively about the subtle differences between languages, and argue for or against a given linguistic or cultural equivalent. Considering those moments alone, we can say that translation in the language classroom can be a first-hand communicative activity provided it is used to that effect.

All in all, translation should not, in any way, be understood as mere use of the learners' knowledge of other languages in the language classroom. Communicative translation should be perceived as a purposeful and well-designed activity whose aim is to provide practice of the target language and ultimately develop the target language skills.

3.3 Translation as Cross-linguistic and Cross-cultural Communication

Intercultural communication is communication between members of different groups with different codes of behavior, speaking included. Failure of communication in this sense is due to misunderstanding between representatives of one culture and those of another. Thus, intercultural communication is successful through functional equivalence and intercultural understanding. That being said, translation has always existed as cross-linguistic and cross-cultural communication. In other words, translation serves as a bridge between the speaker (representant of culture A) and the hearer (representant of culture B). The ideal function of the bridge here is to seal the cultural and linguistic rupture in the intercultural communication situation. In this sense, Ehrlich's "*dilated speech situation*" (1984, p. 12) [41] is relevant in this context of linguistic mediation implying that the speaker in culture A is aware that their text will be transmitted and so they make the necessary adaptations. According to Juliane House (2016) [42], translation is also best fitted for intercultural communication because of its ability to trigger reflection upon the creation of functional equivalence.

'One does not translate languages but cultures' is an example of the epitomes that came up with the social and cultural shift in translation studies that marked the end of the 20th century. Similar to other branches of humanities and social sciences, translation studies embarked on fashionable socio-politically oriented trends (Robinson, 1997 [43]; Venuti, 2018 [44]). Another perception of culture in translation is that provided by the

socio-linguistically and contextually oriented views of Prague, the British Contextualism, and systemic-Functional Grammar schools. These schools share the idea that understanding linguistic items/concepts is only fully possible within the cultural context where they happen. Therefore, in the language classroom context related translation activities can provide opportunities to discuss and understand cross-linguistic and cross-cultural elements of the languages involved.

Today, monolingual language teaching cannot provide world citizens with the linguistic and cultural abilities that allow them to move and establish multilateral and complex connections around the globe. With the pressing need to communicate across linguistic and cultural borders, a new chapter in the history of translation is being written – a chapter about the unquestioned multilingualism in the language teaching pedagogy. In other words, it is time to affirm plurilingual communicative competence of the learners in their multilingual classes that recognize the validity of translation activities in the language classroom through what Gonzalez-Davies (2020) [45] calls the 'Integrating Plurilingual Approach' (IPA).

Within the IPA framework for language learning and teaching, there is a difference between multilingualism and plurilingualism. In the realm of language pedagogy, the former denotes the coexistence of different languages and cultures in the same learning context, though in separate compartments, whereas the latter implies that language learning is facilitated by the implementation of other languages and establishing connections between them. In addition, the IPA acknowledges that previous language experiences foster brain connectivity. Therefore, the classroom becomes a *"translingual environment"* (Anderson & Macleroy, 2017, p. 8) [46] that gives way to a plurilingual approach to language learning and teaching and opens a huge bulk of pedagogic possibilities for the investment of prior linguistic and cultural assets in the development of mediation abilities.

In response to the interference hypothesis put forward by the Direct Method as an argument to ban the use of translation in language teaching, the IPA principles refer predominantly to Cummins' (1991) [47] interdependence hypothesis and the common underlying proficiency model. Accordingly, what seems to be different languages conceal properties (syntactical, lexical, morphological) that highlight a common metacognitive knowledge that sets connections between languages. The same idea is reproduced in the 2001 version of the CEFRL and maintained in the 2018 Companion Volume (Piccardo et al., 2019, p. 9) [48] where we can read, *"Plurilinguals have a single, inter-related, repertoire that they combine with their general competences and various strategies in order to accomplish tasks"*. In the same vein, Cummins (2008, p. 65) [49] posits that *"...translation has a role to play within a broadly defined communicative approach as a means of enabling students to [...] communicate in powerful and authentic ways with multiple audiences both in L1 and L2"*. What Cummins alludes to is not difficult to perceive: translation is a way to shift between languages, and in being so, it provides opportunities for communication across linguistic borders.

Cummins' work on Basic Interactive Communication Skills (BICS) and Conversational Advanced Linguistic Procedures (CALP) (2017) [50] is influential in understanding how and when the acquired knowledge in one language fosters the learning of another. In the same way, the Human Connectome Project and related work on language Connectome (2009) claim that learning a new language brings physical changes to the structure of the brain by creating new perceptions and connecting them to already established perceptions related to previously acquired languages. Similarly, the IPA focuses on the learners' agency through translinguistic conceptualization whereby they connect concepts in different languages (Corcoll López & González-Davies, 2016) [51]. That connection implies the use of verbal, non-verbal and multilingual texts through meaningful plurilingual tasks.

With the incessant increase in cultural dialogs, interest in translation in the foreign language classroom has been triggered especially by those who seek to combine different aspects of linguistic and cultural communication. Puren (2002, p. 10) [52] develops a new language class conception and says, *"..toute classe de langue constitue en tant que telle un certain cadre co-actionnel-co-culturel, puisque l'enseignant et les apprenants ont à y réaliser une action conjointe d'enseignement/apprentissage d'une langue-culture qu'ils ne pourront mener à bien ensemble que sur la base d'un minimum de conceptions communes"*. Those shared conceptions, according to Puren, make way for different forms of translation as outlined in the CEFR under the concept of mediation where translation activities can be interlinguistic as in the case of translation and interpreting, or intralinguistic as in the case of summarizing, synthesis and paraphrasing. Puren (1995) [53] also posits that translation is especially helpful to the learners who find it difficult to comprehend target language input. Therefore, he questions the paradox between monolingual methodologies in language education that stress the centrality of the learner and the necessity to respond to his/ her learning strategies, on the one side, and the continuous ban of those trends of any resort to L1 as an immediate strategy of the learner, on the other.

4. Translation as Mediation in the CEFR

In an ever-globalized world, the need to develop communication competencies across languages and cultures has triggered interest in investigating means that would allow people to exchange information successfully and effectively. In the CEFR, some of those means are mediation skills and translation literacy. As documented in recent studies and experiments (Laviosa & González Davies, 2020 [54]; Stathopoulou, 2015 [55]), there has been a shift from monolingualism towards plurilingualism where mediation skills have become indispensable to promote intercultural and plurilingual competencies.

Because it is a characteristic of plurilingual global citizens, mediation is considered a high-stake competence in the EU where some member countries consider it as an ability that is tested in important school leaving exams. Greece, for instance, is the first country that has embraced the assessment of mediation. The reason for that is expressed by Maria

Stathopoulou who says, *"Greek people face a new reality with the influx of economic migrants, and it is very common for a Greek user of the English language to assume the role of an interlingual mediator in his/her everyday interactions - e.g., to explain, to advise and to assist- and relay messages from a Greek source text into English either orally or in writing"* (2015, p. 52) [56].

Mediation tasks in the written test in the Greek KPG (The Greek State Certificate for Foreign Language Proficiency) requires the candidates to:

1) decide as to what information to choose as relevant to be relayed;
2) decide how to relay that information appropriately to meet the linguistic and environmental requirements of the new situation.

To do that, the candidates need to adopt the usual procedures:

1) read the source text carefully and link its content to prior knowledge in the area;
2) decide what information to relay;
3) check for cohesion and coherence;
4) choose the suitable diction, register, and structures to use depending on the text type and the intended audience.

In brief, written mediation tasks are quite challenging as they require the learners to align their receptive skills in one language with their productive skills in another. This implies the activation of their linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, and their language awareness to avoid miscommunication of information or communication breakdowns. It also implies the importance of translation activities in the classroom to prepare the learners excel in classroom examinations similar to the KPG and in the world at large.

Successful mediation in real-life situations implies the deployment of multiple competencies: linguistic competence (receptive and productive), intercultural competence, and interpersonal competence (gestures, distance, pauses). Unlike professional translation which aims to provide an exact copy of the source text in the target language, the focus in cross-language mediation is on providing the main information in the source text using the target language. In this way, it involves other skills such as condensation and explicitation. According to Stathopoulou (2015, p. 61) [57], mediation suggests *"the use of target language in particular social contexts in ways that are based on certain social needs"*. That is to say, translation tasks should respect the same principle that governs all language learning and teaching aims: addressing the learners' needs. In practical terms, mediation tasks should be designed after the needs and objectives have been identified and articulated; otherwise, the translation task would be of no use (Bohle, 2012, p. 46) [58].

In the 2020 version of the CEFR, it is necessary for the language learner/user, as a social agent, whose aim is to mediate between two parties, to develop enough empathy to understand the emotions and the viewpoints of the parties he/she mediates for. In addition, the mediator should develop social and cultural awareness that is necessary to overcome breakdowns in communication and cooperation, especially in cross-linguistic, cross-cultural, and cross-modal situations. This also requires a sufficient degree of plurilinguistic and pluricultural competence. Therefore, in mediation, we can discern

different types that only apparently seem to be distinct, but in fact, they are often related and particularly come together in mediating any text, concept, or communicative act. Worth noting here is that linguistic mediation in the CEFR has come to be synonymous with translation, and so, in perfect harmony with the intent of this review, the term translation naturally give way to that of mediation remaining paragraphs.

In mediating a text the focus is on *"passing on to another person the content of a text to which they do not have access, often because of linguistic, cultural, semantic or technical barriers"* (Piccardo et al., 2019, p. 91) [59]. This type of cross-linguistic mediation is the first one that was outlined in the descriptors of the 2001 CEFR version. Later, the scope has been widened to include mediation for oneself as in note-taking. Mediating a text can happen between different languages or different varieties of the same language.

Mediating a text can be implemented in different activities:

1) *Relaying specific information*: the focus of the language learner/user is not to extract ideas or identify key arguments in a source text; rather, it is on identifying relevant information and relaying it to a recipient in the target language. Instances of specific information can be times, dates, and prices from an announcement. They can also be directions. Specific information can also be extracted from larger texts such as articles and reports.

2) *Explaining data*: this implies the transformation of information from figures and charts into verbal texts in the target language. The language learner/user will typically describe graphs containing information on familiar topics, identify and present changes in trends in the graphs, comment on the graphs or charts, or interpret data conveyed in the graph.

3) *Processing a text*: this scale implies understanding and transfer of information from one text into another in a condensed form but focusing on the main ideas in the source text. Accordingly, the language learner/user will typically be involved in summarizing the main ideas in a text, collecting such ideas from different sources, and communicating the purposes and standpoint of the original text.

4) *Translating a written text*: translating a written text into speech or sign is commonplace and usually occurs with e-mails, notices, letters, or any other form of informal communication tools. In this case, the translation does not necessarily need to be complete or accurate, but it has to render the essential information, sometimes with emphasis on the nuances that can be embedded in the source text.

The written translation of a written text represents the formal type of translation that requires advanced translation competence and good mastery of linguistic features. However, written translation as conceived in the CEFR is far from the written translation that professional translators produce. The idea in the CEFR is for the language learner/user to call on their modest language competence to render the underlying message in the source text. Without necessarily reproducing the style or the tone or the original text as professional translators do. Written translation in the CEFR is expected to be comprehensible with an accepted influence of the source text in terms of structure and lexis. At low proficiency levels, written translation needs to target simple texts about

familiar topics. But as language proficiency increases, the language learner/user is expected to render accurate translations of complex source texts.

3) *Note-taking*: this scale is intended to develop the ability to capture key information and record notes in a coherent sequence be it in meetings, lectures, or talks on familiar and less familiar topics.

4) *Creative texts*: this scale taps into the ability to react to creative texts in whatever form they may be – scripted texts, films, theater, or any other multimodal work of imagination usually in the language learning context. According to CEFR-CV (Europarat, 2020, p. 106) [60], the learners' reaction to creative texts can be in four ways:

   a) *Engagement*: being attracted by some elements in the text – style, character, content, or characteristic, and personally reacting to that;

   b) *Interpretation*: assigning meaning to symbolic aspects of the creative text;

   c) Analyzing certain aspects of the creative text (language, character);

   d) Critically evaluate the creative text in terms of structure, technique, significance, and perspective of the artist.

Another mediating activity is that of mediating a concept. According to the CEFR-CV (Europarat, 2020, p. 90) [61] *"mediating a concept refers to the process for facilitating access to knowledge and concepts for others particularly if they are unable to access this directly on their own"*. This type of mediation is a common practice among parents, mentors, teachers and trainers, students, and colleagues in the workplace. Mediating concepts often implies conceptual exchange.

In any educational setting, language is often used to voice thinking and co-construct meaning. Within this perspective, mediation has an important role to play in facilitating access to knowledge through language. That role is materialized through collaboration (among colleagues, students, and co-workers) and facilitation (trainers and teachers). Mediating access to knowledge and concepts entails collaboration in a group or leading group work (Europarat, 2020, p. 108) [62], especially in multilingual and multicultural contexts. Therefore, the ultimate objective of developing knowledge cannot be attained without the formation of positive relationships between parties as an essential condition that favors the facilitation of collaborative interaction and its management. In actual classroom practice, mediating concepts can be from the teacher or the learners. The best-case scenario is when the two types complete each other. In addition, mediation can be spontaneous as is the case between two learners, one of them immediately responding to the other's need, but it can also be planned if it is provoked by the teacher who asks one learner to mediate content to another. Whether spontaneous or planned, both types of mediation can typically complement each other in the FL classroom.

The third type is mediating communication which *"aims to facilitate understanding and shape successful communication between users/learners who may have individual, sociocultural, sociolinguistic, or intellectual differences in standpoints"* (Europarat, 2020, p. 90)[63]. This type often seeks to establish positive and dynamic relationships between parties with similar communicative outcomes in most cases. It also stresses the social

agency that underlies the CEFR ever since the 2001 version. Mediating communication is assuming the role of an intermediary between the different parties in the act of communication. In the CEFR we can read *" In mediating activities, the language-user is not concerned to express his/her meanings, but simply to act as an intermediary between interlocutors who are unable to understand each other directly – normally (but not exclusively) speakers of different languages"* (Europarat, 2011, p. 87) [64]. Mediation here goes beyond the language aspects as it is not the only cause of misunderstanding. Familiarity with the topic or area of communication and the ability to soothe the tensions that may arise between different perspectives are examples of potential non-linguistic factors that necessitate the existence of a third party that mediates communication.

The ability to provide a shared space for interlocutors from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, and to ease the challenges posed by 'otherness' (Europarat, 2020, p. 114) [65] constitute the main focus of the mediator toward communication and collaboration. This type of mediation activity may happen in formal or informal settings as well as in delicate situations and disagreements. The growing diversity of communicative situations and settings suggests the use of viable mediation schemes. In other words, the mediator's plurilingual and pluricultural competence is not enough; some strategies relevant to successful communication should be observed to clarify viewpoints and facilitate mutual understanding. In this regard, the mediator may need to anchor what is being at stake to previous knowledge, adapt language by adjusting delivery mode or terminology, break down complicated information by simplifying presentation and process or simplify an entire text. The latter can be attained, for instance, by expanding the input text by including examples, details, and explanatory comments (Europarat, 2020, p. 121) [66]. In other contexts, the mediator will have to go the other way around; that is, they may need to streamline a text by reducing it to its essential message discarding all the examples, repetitions, and digressions, and excluding any source input with no added informational value.

As a type of translation, mediation has always existed, at least in the heads of language learners. In this regard, Piccardo (Piccardo, 2012, p. 292) [67], one of the authors of the CEFR, affirms that, *"il n'y a pas qu'une médiation sociale interpersonnelle, mais aussi une médiation intrapersonnelle, où l'apprenant/utilisateur vise à donner du sens au texte (écrit ou oral) auquel il est confronté. Cette activité est, elle aussi, sociale car elle met en relation un scripteur avec un lecteur, un locuteur avec un auditeur"*. In other words, In foreign language learning, there are two levels of mediation: mediating for self and mediating for others (Liddicoat, 2016) [68]. Mediating for others denotes the common way of facilitating communication between different interlocutors. As for mediating for self, Liddicoat (2016, p. 358) [69] claims *"Mediation for self is a form of participation in both cultures that presupposes the ability to interpret culturally contextualized language and to reflect critically on such interpretations. This privileged reading involves recognizing and interpreting the culturally constructed nature of the meaning of the source text"*. After all, in today's merging societies, mediation competence is a quality sought by educators, social workers, and public service providers; all of them may need to mediate for themselves or others. That is the

basis on which mediation has been introduced in the CEFR next to reception, production, and interaction.

5. Conclusion

In brief, one can only praise translation for its ability to resurrect itself again as an inclusive solution to global identity conflicts at this time of history when the need to establish and maintain cross-cultural understanding and democratic citizenship among language learners surpasses the alienating monolingual native-speaker's competence. It is in the capacity of translation to adapt to the needs of different language learners in different places and different periods in history that we find the strongest argument that it should be the bedrock of any language education policy and any curriculum design that seeks to cater to the world citizens living in ever more fluid societies where monolingualism and monoculturalism are more of historical myths than modern-day realities.

Conflict of Interest Statement
The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

About the Author(s)
Bani Koumachi is a Professor at the Department of English Studies, School of Languages, Humanities and Arts, Ibn Tofail University, Kenitra, Morocco. Among his interests are Teaching Methods, Teacher Eductaion, Educational Technology, Secondary Education, Language Education, Special Education, and Cultural Studies.
Anwar Benmoqadem is an English Teacher at the CPGE (Classes Préparatoires Aux Grandes Écoles) in Marrakesh, Morocco. He is interested in Language Education, Special Education, English for Specific Purposes, and Curriculum Development.

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