

## THE IMPACT OF TRANSLATION USE ON EFL AND FFL LEARNING FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF GRADE11 OMANI STUDENTS: A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY

*AlGhaliya AlKindi<sup>1</sup>, Ismail Sheikh Ahmad<sup>2</sup>, Abdul Gabbar Al-Sharafi<sup>3</sup> & Faizah Idrus<sup>4</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>*Research Scholar, Ph.D. Student, Department of Languages & Literacy, Kulliyah of Education, International Islamic University, Malaysia*

<sup>2</sup>*Professor in Language Education, Department of Languages & Literacy, Kulliyah of Education, International Islamic University, Malaysia*

<sup>3</sup>*Assistant Professor in Linguistics & Translation, Department of English & Literature, Sultan Qaboos University, Oman*

<sup>4</sup>*Associate Professor, Department of Languages & Literacy, Kulliyah of Education, International Islamic University, Malaysia*

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Foreign language learners spontaneously employ translation as a tool to support their learning. Omani EFL and FFL learners are no exception. A number of local empirical studies have investigated the use of translation in Core English in Oman. However, this is the first study to examine translation use in Elective EFL and FFL classrooms. This study explores how translation facilitates foreign language learning from the perspective of Grade11 students in Muscat government schools. Using the qualitative approach, the researchers adopt the one-to-one interview as a data collection tool and the theme generation model for data analysis. The key finding of the study corroborates the effectiveness of translation as a learning tool in boosting the comprehension of L2 and L3 and expanding their vocabulary reservoir. This study reveals that foreign language learners use translation regardless of their language level and prefer electronic translation resources more than the conventional ones. In addition, this study makes a number of practical recommendations and further research suggestions on the use of translation as a resourceful pedagogical tool.*

**KEYWORDS:** *EFL, FFL, Learning Tool, Theme Generation Model, Translation*

### **INTRODUCTION**

In an ever-globalizing world, learning foreign languages is an emerging necessity (Al-Mahrooqi, 2012). Translating the Omani government educational reform vision, the Ministry of Education (MoE) represented in the Directorate General of Curriculum Development (DGCD) has launched the piloting programme of teaching and learning French and German alongside English as elective courses of foreign languages for Grade11 (G11) students at Post Basic Education (PBE). The textbooks accommodate communicative teaching methodologies for maximum learning effect. Translation, however, though not explicitly mentioned in the teacher's guide, naturally occurs as a '*persistent feature of FL learning*' (Leonardi,

2011) and students continue to implement it with varied degrees of exploitation and effect; *'more or less frequently according to their preferred learning styles'* (Macaro, 2005: 168).

Cook (2010: 3) confirms that translation takes place in many foreign language contexts *'even in the most hard-line monolingual classrooms, teachers who have been trained and contracted to teach without translation nevertheless occasionally resort to it when all else fails'*. Though often tagged as a *'taboo'* (Kelleher, 2012), translation unofficially continues to be present in many foreign language classrooms not only by the students, but also by their teachers.

In an attempt to tackle the long neglected issue of translation use in foreign language learning in Oman as anywhere else (Al-Ma'ani & Al-Kindi, 2017), which by no means should be (Hanáková & Metruk, 2017), this study investigates the extent to which the utilization of translation is of a recognized potential in the learning of English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) and French-as-a-foreign language (FFL) as elective subjects, from the perspective of the students.

### **Foreign Language Learning as an Elective Subject in Oman**

#### **English**

As a continuation of the Basic Education System (BES) enacted in 1998, the MoE represented in the GDCD has introduced to G11 students the English elective subject for school year 2007/2008 side by side the English core subject. This comes as an integral start of the new Post Basic Education System (PBES) which consists of G11 and G12 only and lasts for two school years. Each of the two subjects consists of a workbook and a course book. In a thematic layout, the core subject focuses on the four language skills; listening, reading, speaking and writing in addition to grammar and vocabulary. The content of the in-house core course book (**Engage with English**) is designed to consolidate the language work introduced over the past ten years of basic education. The EFL elective course book (**English Insights2**), on the other hand, is designed by the National Geographic Learning and culturally developed for Omani students by the English Curriculum Department (ECD) at the MoE. It is schemed to contain advanced language materials with an integrated focus on the four skills along with grammar and vocabulary, as in the core.

#### **French and German**

Emphasizing Oman's educational philosophy, the MoE continued to offer elective language subjects in order to 1) diversify the learning subjects, 2) expand in the teaching of foreign languages and 3) provide better higher education learning opportunities for the students, or 4) enable students to get appropriate job opportunities after obtaining the general diploma certificate (GDCD, 2016). Hence, two more elective subjects in German and French as foreign languages were introduced in the school years 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 respectively to be piloted in four boys and four girls PBE schools divided by half among two educational governorates; the capital Muscat and Batinah South. This makes Oman the first Gulf country to introduce German as a foreign language (World Gulf, 2012). As the scope of this study, nevertheless, the researchers explore French only as the third language in addition to English as the second language.

The FFL Textbook (**Pourauoipas**), published by the French publishing house Maison des langues, was selected and culturally adapted by the MoE and the Omani French Center; Centre Franco-Omanais (CFO). The learning is also supported with a good collection of useful extra curricula resources in order to enhance the students speaking skill, in particular. The French textbook addresses the four language skills in addition to grammar and vocabulary. Once the

students finish the two-year programme of FFL (**Pourauoipas A1/1 (G11), A1/2 (G12)**), a certificate of completion is issued which the students can include in their Curriculum Vitae (CV) to compete in the job market (GDCCD, 2016).

Generally, the mission of the foreign languages project is to equip G11 students with the necessary linguistic '*multicompetences*'; knowing more than one language in the same mind as defined by Cook (2011). Eventually, this leads to openness to other civilizations, cultures and '*plurilingual world*' (González Davies, 2012: 95). Since its commencement, the project is closely monitored by curriculum specialists at the MoE through field visits and analysis of students' performance, without any further expansion yet.

### **Translation in Foreign Language Learning**

As a natural learning process (Harmer, 2007), many learners refer to translation to make their foreign language learning experience less challenging and more rewarding at the same time. A choice that is mainly based on the usefulness of translation (Widdowson, 1990). Translation has played a vital role in the context of foreign language learning throughout time, particularly when exploited in a '*judicious*' (Leonardi, 2012: 119), '*balanced*' (Hanáková, & Metruk, 2017: 210), '*informed and conscious*' (González Davies, 2012: 86) way. Machida (2011) elaborates that when any person hears a language that is not known, (s)he naturally refers to the act of translation to establish comprehension. Having a similar voice, House (2009: 59) describes translation use in learning contexts as '*a reasonable proposal*' where learners relate the encountered language to what they already are familiar with; the mother tongue language. Cook (2011), reinstates translation not only as a tool but also as a fundamental component of the learning process which explains students' use of translation as a helpful learning tool that makes the unclear clear.

From a pedagogical standpoint, researchers (see, Kelleher, 2012; Leonardi, 2012; Karimian & Talebinejad, 2013; Boshrahadi, 2013; Kerr, 2015; Hanáková & Metruk, 2017) point out that translation has always played a '*controversial role*' in language education. It has been '*largely ignored*' (Petillo: 2012) and perceived according to Fernandez-Guerra (2014: 154) as '*an inadequate reminder of old teaching methodologies*'. This could be, for example, attributed to the failure in understanding the '*potential principles underlying the translation theories*' as Boshrahadi (2014: 381) explains. In fact, it is not until recent times that translation has been re-evaluated and reconsidered in foreign language learning by relating it to one's own language as González Davies (2012) and Hall & Cook (2012) further clarify.

From the learners' perspective, recourse to translation is necessary to know a word's meaning or whisper to a classmate seeking for reassurance of their translation or even translate inside their mind where no one can know what is going on and so stop them (Widdowson, 2003). Similarly, '*Since students translate in their heads anyway, it makes sense to use this translation process in an active way*', Harmer (2007: 39) argues. Following

Macaro's (2005 :172) '*Optimal Use Position*', the quantity of L1 (mother tongue) use by the students is principled based on the target language pedagogy when '*code switching*' is of negative influence on the foreign language acquisition.

Recognizably, many recent research-based studies (see, Almohaimed & Almurshed, 2018; Ostovar-Namaghi & Norouzi, 2015; Fernandez-Guerra, 2014; Boshrahadi, 2013; Leonardi, 2012; Cook, 2010) reached similar conclusions about the usefulness of translation as a supportive aid to foreign language learning despite the unsubstantiated counter-arguments, which are '*all based on a limited view of translation*' and no concluding reasons for its total exclusion as an '*outlaw*' (Vermes, 2010).

Discussing why use translation, Popovic (2001: 1) describes 'if a strong case for translation in the language classroom is to be made, at least three things ought to be demonstrated: that criticisms against it are not valid, that learners need it, and that it promotes their learning'. In this way, the practice of translation directs the learners' attention to the nuances of the linguistic and extra linguistic aspects of the two languages on one hand and how to achieve the communicative purpose on the semantic, function and pragmatic levels on the other, Fernandez-Guerra (2014).

Supporting the usefulness of translation, House (2009), lists more merits of translation use such as facilitating communication, acquainting foreign language learners with the target language literary works and disseminating information. Further, House (2009) highlights the pedagogical functionality of translation as a means of teaching and learning a foreign language. People tend to relate to what they are familiar with and know already which in this context is their mother tongue language, she justifies. Translation also, as in Leonardi (2010), improves the learners' high thinking order skills such as analysis and problem solving while dealing with the two languages. While Duff (1989: 6) simply points out that 'translation happens everywhere, all the time, so why not in the classroom?', Harmer (2007: 39) argues for the best use of mother tongue language for its 'potential value' as a resource that it is 'foolish to deny its existence'.

Since translation entails the use of the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing, translation can be considered as the fifth skill, a skill that is radically different, Malmkjær (1998, 2010). According to Leonardi (2009), by all means it is a skill that includes the four language skills and that is dependent on them, more or less. In fact, it can be regarded as an effective skill that can enhance communication and bridge gaps, according to Ross (2000). Emphasising the role of translation in foreign language learning as a fifth skill, Ayachia (2018: 195) condemns the 'illegitimate' claims against it and describes the recent literature in favour of translation as 'prolific'.

From a local empirical perspective, a few Omani researchers (see, Al-Alawi, 2008; Al-Hadhrami, 2008; Al-Jadidi, 2009; Al-Shidhani, 2009; Al-Ma'ani & Al-Kindi, 2017; Al-Abri, 2018) investigated translation use in core EFL classrooms (G1-12) from the perspectives of the learners, the teachers or both. These studies confirm the effectiveness of translation in enhancing the foreign language learning if used judiciously. Even more, these studies call for further research not only to trace its usefulness but also to nail it as an effective pedagogical practice beyond controversial or extreme orthodoxies.

Being an inevitable practice, it is of an vital priority to perceive translation from a neutral perspective to make sure that its fruits as an effective pedagogical tool are reaped. Thus, the significance of this study lies in shedding more light on how translation as a learning tool can be of an effective impact in enhancing foreign language learning from the perspective of Omani G11 students. The results of the study, on one hand, may feed into the pilot project and work as a practical reference for well-informed future decisions as far as the use of translation is concerned, on the other. From this angle, the findings provide innovative insights to the concerned curriculum officers, supervisors and teachers on how translation can be utilized properly in the service of the foreign language pedagogy. Most importantly, this study stands out as the first research work outside Curriculum Department that examines the efficiency of translation use in EFL and FFL as elective subjects in the PBE system in Oman.

## METHODOLOGY

Following the qualitative approach as a method and the face-to-face interview as a tool, the phenomenon of translation use in foreign language classroom was explored qualitatively from the perspective of a purposeful sample of informants through three major questions:

- How is translation employed as a learning tool in learning English as a second language and French as a third language?
- In what way does translation support students' academic achievement (linguistic competency)?
- How can translation be integrated as a learning tool in the foreign language learning pedagogy?

## **PROCEDURE**

### **Setting**

This study took place in two PBE government Schools (X & Y) within the educational governorate of Muscat, Oman. The schools were selected purposively because they have been piloting French as a foreign language since 2013 and have already been teaching English elective since 2007 as elective subjects for two grade levels, namely G11 and G12. In this context, the study examined the actual impact of translation use as an EFL and a FFL tool from the perspective of G11 students. For the advantage of this qualitative study, the gender factor has been considered. One male PBE school and one female PBE within Muscat educational governorate have been selected. In these two schools, the French elective subject is learnt in two classes side by side the English elective which is taught in all PBE schools across the Sultanate.

### **Selection of Participants**

A sample of G11 students (6 males & 6 females) were interviewed from the two French classes, upon which the saturation point was reached. The nominated students for the interview were randomly selected by the Senior English Language Teacher (SET) in each school on behalf of the researchers. However, it was very essential to set a criterion in the selection of the nominated informants. For example, the students 1) use translation as a learning tool in foreign language learning and 2) study both English and French languages as elective subjects. In two following days, the main researcher conducted one-to-one interviews which took about 35 to 40 minutes per interview. As the interviews went very smoothly, the interviewees were very open to the researcher's questions and follow-up queries. The informants shared their learning experiences, practices and future expectations on the research topic which generated thick and comprehensive data.

By the time of the implementation of the study, the second semester of the school year, the students have completed one semester long since they started studying the two elective subjects. Knowing that students study the elective subjects only by G11 as per the schooling programme of PBES, it is evident that there is a big gap in the students' linguistic competency between the two foreign languages; English and French. This is attributed to the long exposure to English which students start learning from G1, in comparison to French. However, and since the core focus of this study is to highlight the effectiveness of translation use in foreign language learning, the amount of exposure to the language is of no direct influence. From a bilingualism perspective and based on the fact that translation is a daily activity for many bilinguals (Mohamed, 2016), translation use in foreign language learning has a start point, yet it has no end. Furthermore, Al-Abri (2018) confirms that the school year has no significant impact on the attitudes of the students towards translation use.

### **Instrument**

Knowing the main objective, to investigate the impact of translation use in foreign language learning from the perspective of G11 students, the research focused on three areas: translation use, translation impact and translation as pedagogical

status. These areas were translated into three research questions which were broken down to sub-questions. As an instrument for the data collection, one-on-one interview form was designed in order to explore the research area thoroughly to saturation. The instrument is basically a semi-structured descriptive interview consisting of three main parts of 12 questions in total pertaining to the research questions. Within the designed interview protocol form (see Appendix A) a small briefing on translation types, as in Jakobson (1959), is included in order to make sure that all relevant questions are clear to the informants.

### Reliability

An **Inter-rater Reliability** check on thematic coding was done. A sample of coded themes was selected at random across the research and interview questions and then submitted to two specialists to judge the reliability of the generated themes by the intra-raters; the researchers. Both inter-raters are academicians and experts in the field of EFL education; in addition, one of them is an expert in translation studies field as well. The purpose of the inter-rater reliability check is to make sure that the researchers are just to the collected data and that the generated themes truly reflect the informants exact words. Both raters confirmed the high quality of thematic coding with an average of 100% agreement; as per Miles and Huberman's (1994) formula:

$$\text{Reliability} = \frac{\text{number of agreements}}{\text{total number of agreements plus disagreement}}$$

Using the *Theme Generation Model*, the qualitative results are presented below according to the appearance of the interview questions that emerged from the three main research questions, as per the Interview Protocol. In the following section of the discussion of the findings, the *italicized* themes indicate that they have higher frequency of occurrence which holds more significance to the research as a whole. The informants' reflective responses reveal much about their level of awareness on the investigated topic; translation use in specific and foreign language learning in general. Remarkably, the discussion of the generated themes highlights practical implications and projects the young informants' analytical and critical thinking.

## DATA ANALYSIS

Based on the school administration and the informants consent, the interviews were audio-recorded using SONY Stereo IC Recorder (ICD- PX470). For smooth and genuine verbatim transcription, the researchers employed the **Express Scribe Transcription Software**. Then, **Thematic Analysis (TA)** was done systematically to generate the main themes based on the **Coding and Theme-generation Model**. As part of the analytical procedure, the researchers used a number of templates for fundamental flow of themes such as the Transcribing Template, Coding Template for Generating Main Ideas, Coding Template for Generating Themes, Summary of the Generated Themes Template and the Inter-Rater Reliability Coding Template as explained by Sheikh (2017: 33-50).

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

### Translation as a Learning Tool in EFL & FFL

#### Reasons for Translation Use

In their accounts, all informants came to a consensus about the effectiveness of translation use. As the number one reason for translation use, *Vocabulary Expansion* takes place through 1) finding the meaning of new or difficult words, 2) looking for synonyms or alternatives and 3) adding more useful vocabulary to their list. This indicates that the informants'

use of translation is limited to word-for-word translation which fulfils the learning needs of the informants at this stage. The communicative approach, encourages the use of dictionary to help the learners to know the correct meaning not only of the words but also the abbreviations, acronyms, compounds, among others (Alford:1999).

### **Translation: School vs Home**

The informants, further, showed almost perfect agreement with respect to translation use at home except for one informant who uses translation at school in addition. This indicates the significance of translation use as an individual learning tool particularly at home while, for example, preparing for lessons, doing homework and checking out the meaning of new and/or difficult words at their own pace. Another justification for translation use at home is linked to the fact that lesson time is limited (45 minutes) and consequently it is rather challenging for many students to use dictionary between the tasks comfortably. This is especially with the shortage of dictionaries in the class and the absence of the teacher's systematic guidance, as it is often the case. As a resolution, the students either rely on each other to translate for one another or ask the teacher to explain whatever is difficult to be understood through paraphrasing (**Intralingual Translation**) or translate it in Arabic (**Interlingual Translation**). The informants were briefed prior the interview on the three main translation types as categorised by Jakobson (1959: 233) and they managed to relate them to their actual practice of translation:

- **Intralingual Translation:** 'Rewording', an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs of the same language'
- **Interlingual Translation:** Translation or 'Translation proper', an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language.
- **Intersemiotic Translation:** Transmutation, 'an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of non-verbal sign systems'.

### **Translation Types**

The gender factor variation with regards to *Varied Use of Translation Types* and *Interlingual Translation Use* points out that female informants' employ alternately the three types of translation; **Intralingual Translation, Interlingual Translation and Intersemiotic Translation**. By contrast, the male informants employ only **Interlingual Translation**. For example, the informants explained that they use intralingual translation to translate the instructions or the meaning of new vocabularies to each other using the same language through paraphrasing. Also, they utilize interlingual translation through the medium of another language; English into Arabic and French into English or Arabic. Further, they translate isolated words using signs or pictures, which is easier and more effective to visual learners. As a whole, this indicates that the learning strategies used by the female students are more comprehensive and varied than those used by the males.

### **Language of Translation**

As the interlingual translation is alternatively implemented in verbal as well as in written modes, all informants tend to jot down the English words in English and their meanings in Arabic. As for French, they tend to write the words in French and their meanings in English and Arabic conveniently. Accordingly, this allows them to enhance their overall understanding and enables them to put learnt words in sentences in English easily and correctly. They also practise oral translation when they work in pairs, groups or whole class discussion whenever necessary.

### Translation use: L2 vs L3

Using More Translation in FFL as L3 makes much sense due to the fact that they started learning the third language; French, only for almost four months by the time of the research study which is relatively a short period of time in comparison with the English language which they have been learning since G1. As noted, all informants highlighted reasonable justifications, for instance 1) learning French for the first time in their school education, 2) having limited vocabulary and 3) employing translation to enhance comprehension. Remarkably, the informants asserted that translation use has no link whatsoever with the achievement or grade level of the learners as it is implemented by all the learners irrespectively. On another note, the informants clarified that they even use translation in elective English more than core English due to the advanced and challenging level of the English content. The informants themselves are a living proof and a case in point. Regardless of their outstanding performance in EFL and FFL, they value translation use as an effective tool. Echoing Cook's (2011) conclusion, the informants even recommend it to their classmates as a helpful tool to improve their English proficiency and make their learning less challenging.

### Translation Role in Enhancing Academic Achievement (Linguistic Competency)

#### Academic Achievement and Translation

As reported by their teachers; the informants achieved outstanding performance in both elective subjects 90-95% in average. Interestingly, the informants believe that translation use plays a significant role in enhancing their linguistic proficiency through *Vocabulary expansion*, *Pronunciation* and *Dictionary Use*. As clarified, the use of soft/hard dictionaries helps them to expand their vocabulary and know the equivalent meaning of new and/or difficult words along with its audio pronunciation. It is remarked that this echoes the previously mentioned themes though relevant to different IQs revolving around the reasons behind using translation. This connotes the impact of these themes with relevance to translation use in addition to the informants' learning needs. This relates to the findings reached on the usefulness of translation use in facilitating the learning process, for example, by Al-Buraiki (2008) and Al-Abri (2018: 16); '*using Arabic helps students to better understanding of new concepts, new words and grammar in addition to increasing their students' comfort and achievement*'. It also emphasizes the role of translation in 'communicating the meaning and content', Nation (2003:1).

#### Recommending Translation

Speaking out of personal experience, a positive agreement is established among the informants on the effectiveness of translation use in foreign language. That is why they share their useful practices with their classmates, friends and family members, particularly those who face learning challenges. The informants believe that translation is a resourceful tool that is not bound to an age or language level. In other words, translation exists prominently as long as one is learning the foreign language.

### Integrating Translation in Foreign Language Pedagogy

#### Effectiveness of Translation

As of vibrant prominence the present informants' responses on how they perceive translation as a learning tool yields the gist of the informants' opinion on the research topic as a whole, *Helpful Translation Tool* and *Effectiveness of Translation Use at Home*. The second theme relates to the one of the themes earlier; *Translation Use at Home*. All



informants agreed on the effectiveness of translation in principle, except for one who thought that translation use is more effective as a learning tool at home only. This latter informant explained that learning through translation at home is more flexible, according to one's best convenience. This reveals the preferred and the systematic learning style adopted by this informant; e.g. to be well prepared for the lesson in advance. However, this justification does not contradict at all with the perspective of the other informants of translation as a general learning practice. According to them, the effectiveness of translation is much recognized in 1) learning the new words, 2) understanding the targeted material and 3) carrying out the assigned tasks. This also matches with the conclusion reached by Hanakova & Metruk, (2017: 215) towards the effectiveness of translation '*in vocabulary, explaining grammar, instructions, organisation purposes, and checking understanding*'.

### **The Teacher's Role**

From the informants' perspective, the foreign language teacher is expected to play a vital role concerning *Dictionary Use* as well as acting the role of *the Translator*. Again, the informants here emphasized the importance of dictionary use during the class and at the same time reflect the informants' learning needs of getting the teachers to 1) allow dictionary use, 2) provide translation resources and 3) act as a translator whenever necessary. According to the informants, the teacher can play the role of the translator in translating the things students might not and/or have difficulty to understand which serves the purpose and saves both time and effort. This concurs with the findings of Al-Abri (2018) where students favour being taught by Arabic-speaking teachers as it makes them feel more confident and makes their learning process more efficient and smooth. This also coincides with the students' perspective, in Clancy's (2018) study, that they prefer their foreign language teacher to be fluent in their L1 in order to ease communication, smooth comprehension and to maintain the level of learning motivation.

### **Translation's Level: Word-Level vs Beyond**

Half of the informants thought that translation in language learning should stick to word level as the learners should go under maximum exposure to the target language. The other half, putting the overall learning context into consideration, thought that it should go beyond that to make the unclear clear. Though the word level translation is useful as evident but text-level translation is crucial for higher level translation skills and for cross-cultural training, particularly for those bilingual learners who are interested in linguistics and Translanguaging. As a matter of fact, having opposite opinions is not surprising as it is also the position of many practitioners who similarly are in wide disparity whether to use or not to use translation as reported by researchers (see, Al-Ma'ani & Al-Kindi, 2017; Al-Abri, 2018; Almohaimeed & Almurshed, 2018).

### **FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS**

Realizing the prominence of translation, the informants made a number of recommendations and suggestions for further effective practice of translation as a learning tool revolving around; **Translation Mechanics Awareness, Translation Software Use** and **Dictionary Skills**. Some informants expressed their strong desire to know more about manual translation skills and techniques on all levels; words, sentences and paragraphs. They believed that translation enhances the linguistic proficiency in terms of using the learnt vocabulary, grammatical structures or phrases in daily conversations (speaking), as well as in reading and writing activities. Not only this, they also pointed out that translation plays a vital role

in their real life situations in which they feel proud of being helpful to others as interpreters. One informant, on an individual level, voiced his future wish to be a translator for all the known benefits to oneself and others. On a school level, the informants wished to be introduced to helpful translation software and applications, get systematic dictionary use training and raise the awareness of all students towards the effectiveness of translation as a helpful learning tool and to provide them with the most up-to-date technology. These recommendations, in line with (Odacioglu & Kokturk, 2015), should target the teachers too, as the informants stressed. Being non-native speakers of English and like their students, some teachers make minor mistakes in spelling or pronouncing certain words. The students being well-prepared, they sometimes correct their teachers who very often feel offended, as a few informants reported. This explains why the students wish for their teachers to be included in the training and raise their awareness towards this aspect; learning as a two-way process.

Though translation can be a common practice by learners with high language proficiency, being aware of the translation mechanics is expected to take the language learning process to another higher level where practice is supported with proper knowledge. As for **Translation Software Use**, the informants involved in this study already utilize advanced computer/laptop technology, employ on/offline dictionaries in mobile phones, use translation websites such as Google Translate or use electronic dictionary devices as Atlas, for example. Though Google Translation is described as '*a great invention*' by one female informant, all informants including her are aware that it is not highly recommended as a reliable resource as it represents mechanical translation after all. Knowing this leads us to **Dictionary Skills** which students need to learn. This includes the varied available types of dictionaries; paper dictionaries, digital dictionaries, on/offline dictionaries, specialized dictionaries and monolingual or bilingual dictionaries, etc.

In this sense, translating skills will be of great help to all students in knowing what to translate, how to translate and which translator tool to use; manual translation where contextual proficiency and equivalence is addressed. Learning becomes more effective and less challenging particularly when equipped with proper knowledge and skills. The informants believe that translation skill is a privilege all students should be equipped with and use to its fullest potential. For solid foundation, it is a skill to be learnt from an early grade level and take with them to higher grades. Eventually, the teacher's guidance, '*... should help the learners to become competent users of bilingual dictionaries, not only hunting word-for-word equivalents, but able to exploit the wealth of the information available (grammar, idioms, etc., as well as vocabulary)*', Alford (1999: 248-249) further explains.

A relationship between the generated themes could be established as a storyline as follows:

**Translation** (in EFL & FFL)

is

**Tool** (helpful, effective, useful, resourceful, etc.)

used in

**School**

and

**Home** (more effectiveness)

provides

***Translation Resources***

serves

***More Translation Use in FFL as L3***

leads to

***Vocabulary Expansion***

requires

***Varied Use of Translation Types***

entails

***Dictionary Use***

develops

***Dictionary Skills***

includes

***Digital Dictionary Use***

improves

***Pronunciation*** (fluency)

needs

***Teacher's support*** (Translator, monitor, facilitator and so on)

requires

***Translation Software Use***

relates with

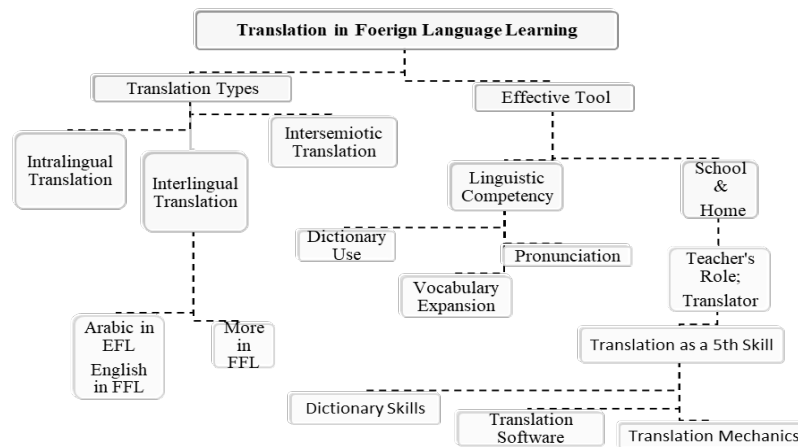
***Translation Mechanics Awareness***

results in

***Effective use of translation as a learning tool***

**Implications for Educational Practice**

As reflected in the above discussion, the effectiveness of translation use in foreign language learning in Oman's context is evident as the illustration of the Interconnectedness of Themes displays below:



**Figure 1: Interconnectedness of Themes.**

For future research and effective pedagogical practices of EFL and FFL in light of translation use, the following recommendations inspired by the discussion of the findings of the present study are raised to be considered by the respective authorities in Oman; foreign language methodologists, supervisors and translation specialists, among others, in terms of English Language education policy, academia and pedagogy research and actual classroom practices:

- Acknowledging the effectiveness of translation and incorporating it in foreign language pedagogy in a judicious way. This can be achieved, for example, through 1) raising the awareness of foreign language practitioners towards the effectiveness of translation use as an evidence-based pedagogical practice, 2) carrying out large scale/longitudinal studies using triangulation research method to explore the perspectives of other concerned parties on translation use as a pedagogical tool in the Omani curricula, such as the students of lower and/or middle grade levels, the teachers, the supervisors and curriculum officers (see, e.g. Kumari & Bairy, 2012; Al-Ma'ani & Al-Kindi, 2017; Al-Abri, 2018).
- Considering translation as a fifth skill (Malmkjær, 1998, 2010; Leonardi, 2009), where it can be taught to students as part of the foreign language curriculum or as an elective subject for those who are more interested. In this sense, translation works as a useful tool in real life situations where globalization is manifested. Learning translating skills is expected to be of an added value on the long run to the learning process in/outside the school. This could be achieved through, for instance, 1) integrating translation in curricular or extra-curricular school activities, e.g. written translation as well as oral translation; interpretation, 2) employing the 21<sup>st</sup> century Information Technology in translation field (Odacıoğlu & Kocutürk, 2015) through introducing the digital native learners to the different types of dictionaries and/or computer-assisted translation (CAT) tools, 3) teaching dictionary skills to help students look up the words monolingual or bilingual dictionaries and choose the most appropriate contextual meaning, for example.
- Drawing EFL and FFL teachers' attention to the inevitable use of translation (Cook, 2010) in their classrooms and emphasizing their role as supporters, facilitators, monitors as well as skilful translators. This could be realised

through 1) providing the teachers with adequate pre-service training and 2) in-service coaching on the effective utilization of translation in foreign language pedagogy. Also through recognizing the teachers' identity without making any judgments related to the use of L1 in their classrooms (Trent, 2013). In principle, the relevant authorities in the MoE and the teacher preparing programmes, should not hold '*a rigidly negative attitude towards the use of L1 to foster L2 as it plays a supportive role in facilitating learning*', as Kumari & Bainy (2012: 55) accentuate.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study has demonstrated translation use as an effective learning tool from the perspective of G11 students. An effectiveness that is recognized more when translation is used at home more than school as the findings of this study show. The findings pinpoint a number of suggestions pertaining to translation practice in foreign language pedagogy for further consideration. This research study opens new horizons for future research opportunities of other dimensions. Since this study investigated the perspectives of the students, it would be vital to replicate the same research design on a larger scale, from the perspective of other concerned parties in foreign languages pedagogy; English, French and/or German. On one hand, the findings are hoped to be of a significant value to the improvement of the teaching and supervision methods and of an added benefit to the overall learning process. On the other hand, it would be even better if the issue of translation is investigated by all relevant parties as one researching team including the learners, teachers, supervisors and translators in order to feed into this field of interest; Translation and Foreign Language Learning and Teaching.

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**APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

**Research Topic: Translation Use in Foreign Languages Learning (English- French)**

<b>School: Venue: Date:</b>	
<b>Pre-interview</b>	
Please introduce the research topic to the interviewee. Please explain the three types of translation as follows: 1- <b>Intralingual Translation:</b> translation using the same language (rewording or paraphrasing) 2- <b>Interlingual Translation:</b> translation between two languages (e.g. English- Arabic or French- English or Arabic) 3- <b>Intersemiotic Translation:</b> translation of the verbal sign (e.g. words) to non-verbal sign (e.g. sign language, pictures, emoji, etc.)	
<b>Interview Questions</b>	
<b>Lead in</b>	Welcome the student and reintroduce the research topic. Get the student to introduce in brief (him/herself) e.g. identify the class, the elective subjects, etc.
<b>Part One RQ1</b>	1. Why do you use translation? 2. When do you use translation? Where? 2. Which translation type do you use for English Elective / French Elective? (as explained earlier) 3. Which language do you use for translation for English Elective / French Elective? 4. Do you use translation more in learning English or French? Why?
<b>Part Two RQ2</b>	1. What is your academic achievement in the two foreign languages electives per letter grade? 2. In what way translation can enhance your performance level? 3. Would you recommend other students to use translation as a learning tool? Why? 4. In your opinion, is there a certain age group or language level where translation can be used?
<b>Part Three RQ3</b>	1. In general, what do you think of translation use as a learning tool? 2. In your opinion, what is the role of the teacher in the use of translation in the classroom? 3. Should translation stick to word level or go beyond that? Why? e.g. translating instructions, new grammar rules, etc. 4. What are your suggestions for translation use in the foreign language learning process?
<b>Interview Closure</b>	
This is the end of the interview. Your contribution is highly appreciated. Thank you and wishing you all the best in your studies. Take care.	



