



Rethinking French Translation Pedagogy in the Digital Age: Towards an Integrated Conceptual Framework (DIGITRANS) for Nigerian Universities

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Abstract. The digital transformation of higher education has profoundly reshaped pedagogical practices, particularly in the field of translation training where digital technologies now function both as professional tools and as collaborative learning environments. This article critically examines the current state of French translation pedagogy in Nigerian universities and proposes an integrated conceptual framework, the DIGITRANS model, designed to address persistent pedagogical and technological gaps. Drawing on social constructivism and theoretical frameworks of educational digital competence, the study develops a model structured around five interrelated dimensions: translational competence, digital competence, guided autonomy, collaboration, and cultural reflexivity. Through a conceptual analysis of the literature on translation pedagogy and educational technologies, the article highlights the need to move from a transmissive teaching model toward a more interactive, collaborative, and learner-centered approach. The proposed model demonstrates how the integration of Computer-Assisted Translation (CAT) tools, collaborative platforms, and authentic translation projects can enhance students' professional readiness. In the Nigerian context, the DIGITRANS framework offers both a theoretical and pedagogical response to challenges related to limited digital infrastructure, low technological literacy, and curriculum misalignment. The article concludes that adopting this model could contribute to modernizing translation training in African universities by aligning it with international standards while promoting inclusive, critical, and technologically integrated pedagogy.

Keywords: Translation pedagogy; Digital competence; Computer-assisted translation (CAT); Social constructivism; Nigerian universities

1. Introduction

Over the past decade, the digitalization of higher education has profoundly transformed pedagogical

practices worldwide, redefining modes of knowledge transmission, interactions between teachers and learners, and the tools employed within learning environments (UNESCO, 2021). Universities are now encouraged to systematically integrate digital technologies into the design, delivery, and assessment of learning in order to promote flexibility, accessibility, and pedagogical creativity (Redecker, 2017; Ferrari, 2013). In the field of translation, this transformation has led to the emergence of a collaborative and digital approach to translation pedagogy, grounded in the principles of social constructivism and emphasizing active learner participation, the co-construction of knowledge, and the critical use of technological tools within authentic learning contexts (Kiraly, 2000; Kiraly, 2016; Gambier, 2016).

This innovative approach encourages translation students to become reflective practitioners capable of engaging with technology while simultaneously developing their translational, intercultural, and methodological competences (Kelly, 2005; Austermühl, 2013). However, in the Nigerian context, translation pedagogy remains largely teacher-centered and oriented toward the transmission of knowledge rather than its active construction (Tonukari, Shuaibu, & Ighodaro, 2023; Adaje & Adekunle, 2025). This transmissive approach, inherited from colonial pedagogical traditions, marginalizes the interactive, digital, and critical dimensions of translation learning, thereby creating a gap between university training and the contemporary demands of the translation industry, where digital competence, virtual collaboration, and translator autonomy have become essential (Gambier & Ehrensberger-Dow, 2020; Marczak, 2018). Specific challenges within the Nigerian context include, among others, insufficient technological infrastructure, limited digital literacy among instructors, the absence of language policies that integrate technology into the humanities, and curricula that do not adequately reflect contemporary professional realities (Egbokhare, 2019; Adebayo &

Yusuf, 2021; Shuaibu & Mebitaghan, 2025). These constraints limit the capacity of translation programs to adequately prepare students for global dynamics and the demands of an increasingly digital translation market.

In response to this situation, the present study proposes a conceptual reflection on the need for a pedagogical paradigm shift in the teaching of French translation in Nigeria. It draws on the frameworks of social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978; Bruner, 1996) and digital competence in education (Redecker, 2017; Ferrari, 2013) to develop an integrated model: the DIGITRANS Framework, designed to rethink translator training in the digital era. This framework seeks to combine translation competence, mastery of digital tools, guided autonomy, collaboration, and cultural awareness in order to enhance pedagogical effectiveness and align Nigerian translator training with international standards in translation education.

The objective of this article is therefore two folds:

- to demonstrate how the thoughtful integration of digital technologies can promote active and collaborative learning in translation;
- to propose a conceptual framework capable of guiding the reform of French translation pedagogy in Nigerian universities.

Thus, this study constitutes a theoretical contribution to the modernization of translation training in Nigeria by highlighting the intersections between technology, pedagogy, and translation competence within a postcolonial and developmental perspective. Despite the growing interest in integrating digital technologies into translation training, few studies have proposed an integrated pedagogical framework specifically adapted to the realities of African universities, and particularly to the Nigerian context. Most existing research focuses either on the use of technological tools in professional translation practice or on constructivist pedagogical approaches in translator training, without systematically articulating the technological, pedagogical, and intercultural dimensions. Within this context, this article seeks to address this gap by proposing the DIGITRANS model, a conceptual framework that integrates translation competence, digital competence, guided autonomy, collaboration, and cultural reflexivity into a coherent approach to translation pedagogy in the digital age.

2. Methodological Approach

The analysis is based on a thematic synthesis of the scientific literature on translation pedagogy, educational technologies, and digital competence frameworks. Rather than empirically testing a specific pedagogical intervention, the objective is to develop an integrated theoretical framework capable of guiding the modernization of translator training in Nigerian universities. The analysis draws on major works in translation didactics and constructivist learning in order to identify the essential dimensions of translation pedagogy suited to the digital age. Based on this theoretical synthesis, the DIGITRANS model is conceptualized as a pedagogical framework that integrates translation competence, digital competence, guided autonomy, collaboration, and cultural reflexivity. This approach makes it possible to propose a conceptual foundation that can be empirically tested and validated in future research on translation teaching in African university contexts

3. Context and Challenges of Translation Pedagogy

Translation pedagogy, particularly in the field of French translation, has undergone a gradual transformation as a result of digital technologies and the evolving demands of the professional translation market (Kiraly, 2000; Marczak, 2018). Historically centered on the teacher, the traditional approach prioritizes the passive transmission of knowledge and the repetition of theoretical exercises, often at the expense of developing students' practical and reflective competences. In many African contexts, particularly in Nigeria, this model remains largely dominant despite the emergence of digital tools and collaborative platforms (Tonukari, Shuaibu, & Ighodaro, 2023). Students trained under such methods often experience difficulties effectively using computer-assisted translation (CAT) tools, collaborating in online environments, managing complex translation projects, and developing strategies suited to diverse professional contexts (Ikpai, Seaven, & Charles, 2024). Furthermore, this approach limits students' ability to develop guided and critical autonomy in their learning, to adapt to the demands of the global translation market, and to interact with dynamic digital environments.

These challenges are further compounded by structural and institutional factors, such as insufficient technological infrastructure, limited digital literacy among instructors, and the absence of curricula aligned with international standards. As a result, a significant gap persists between academic training and

contemporary professional realities. Within this context, the thoughtful integration of digital technologies and the adoption of collaborative and interactive pedagogical approaches appear to be essential strategies for modernizing translation teaching, strengthening students' translation competence, and responding to the needs of an ever-evolving professional translation market.

4. Social Constructivism and Collaborative Pedagogy

Social constructivism constitutes a fundamental theoretical framework for rethinking translation teaching, as it emphasizes active learning, the co-construction of knowledge, and the importance of social interactions in the development of cognitive and professional competences (Vygotsky, 1978; Bruner, 1996). Within this paradigm, the student is no longer viewed as a passive recipient of knowledge but rather as a reflective participant capable of actively contributing to the construction of their own learning as well as that of their peers. Kiraly (2000; 2016) applies these principles to translator education by proposing a collaborative pedagogy in which learners work in teams on authentic projects, use digital tools to solve complex translation problems, and develop adaptive competences that enable them to respond to diverse professional situations. This approach goes beyond the transmission of linguistic or technical knowledge; it also values critical reflexivity, continuous formative assessment, and guided autonomy, thereby strengthening students' professionalization and their ability to analyze, justify, and adjust their translation choices. Furthermore, the integration of digital technologies within this framework not only facilitates collaboration and access to resources but also fosters the development of essential digital competences for the global translation market, where translators must interact with hybrid environments, manage multilingual projects, and adapt their practice to contemporary computer-assisted translation tools (Korol, 2021; Marczak, 2018; Hellmich, 2021). Social constructivism therefore provides a robust theoretical foundation for designing translation training programs that are dynamic, collaborative, and aligned with current professional and technological demands.

5. Digital Competence in Translation Education

Educational digital competence is now widely recognized as an essential component of translator training programs, as it determines not only students' ability to effectively use digital tools but also their capacity to integrate these technologies critically and

thoughtfully into authentic translation practices (Redecker, 2017; Ferrari, 2013). This competence includes the technical mastery of collaborative platforms, computer-assisted translation (CAT) tools, and specialized online resources, as well as the ability to analyze, select, and employ these tools according to the specific needs of each translation project (Hellmich, 2021). In the Nigerian context, several studies indicate that the low level of digital literacy among instructors, combined with insufficient technological infrastructure and the lack of appropriate continuing professional development, significantly limits students' acquisition of these competences (Shuaibu & Mebitaghan, 2025; Ikpai, Seaven, & Charles, 2024). This situation creates a double challenge. On the one hand, it restricts students' ability to meet the growing demands of the global translation market, which increasingly values proficiency in hybrid digital environments and advanced CAT tools. On the other hand, it reduces the pedagogical effectiveness of university programs, which struggle to provide authentic, interactive learning activities that reflect contemporary professional realities. Consequently, the development of digital competence has become a central issue in modernizing translation training in Nigeria, enabling students to strengthen their autonomy, reflexivity, and capacity to collaborate within complex and technologically demanding translation contexts.

6. Contemporary Initiatives and Integrated Models

Recent pedagogical initiatives emphasize the integration of technology and pedagogy as a key strategy for strengthening both translation competence and learner engagement (Gambier & Ehrensberger-Dow, 2020; Austerlühl, 2013). Within this perspective, the DIGITRANS model proposes an integrated approach that brings together several complementary dimensions. It aims to develop mastery of translation strategies and techniques, knowledge of professional standards, and linguistic quality, while simultaneously encouraging the critical and reflective use of digital tools, collaborative platforms, and online resources. At the same time, the model promotes students' guided autonomy, allowing them to manage their learning while benefiting from structured support. It also emphasizes collaboration and interaction through group work and critical exchanges, thereby fostering the co-construction of knowledge. Finally, cultural awareness and reflexivity occupy a central place, as students are encouraged to adapt their translation choices to diverse linguistic and cultural contexts while developing the ability to critically analyze their own practices. This conceptual

framework directly addresses the challenges identified in Nigerian translator training by proposing an active, collaborative, and digitally oriented pedagogy designed to align training with international standards while remaining responsive to local needs. In doing so, it contributes to the training of competent and autonomous translators capable of operating within technologically complex professional environments (Marczak, 2018; Kornacki & Pietrzak, 2021; Korol, 2021).

7. Theoretical Framework and Conceptualization of the DIGITRANS Model

The term DIGITRANS refers to *Digital Integration in Translation Pedagogy*, a conceptual framework designed to articulate the technological, pedagogical, and professional dimensions of translator training in the digital age. The model proposes a systemic structuring of translation pedagogy around five interdependent dimensions aimed at fostering the simultaneous development of translational, digital, and reflective competences within collaborative learning environments.

The DIGITRANS model draws on social constructivism, an approach which posits that learning is a dynamic process of knowledge construction through interaction, collaboration, and critical reflection (Vygotsky, 1978; Bruner, 1996). From this perspective, knowledge is not transmitted in a top-down manner but rather co-constructed through meaningful social exchanges in which the learner becomes an active participant in their own cognitive development. Kiraly (2000; 2016) and Mebitaghan (2013) apply this philosophy to translation training by advocating a project-based pedagogy in which students, confronted with authentic translation situations, learn to negotiate meaning, solve complex problems, and collaborate with their peers within real technological environments.

The DIGITRANS model follows this tradition by placing collaboration, reflexivity, and autonomy at the center of the training process. It encourages students to use digital tools such as translation memories, collaborative platforms, and online corpora critically—not merely as technical aids, but also as cognitive mediation tools that facilitate the collective construction of translation knowledge. This constructivist framework thus bridges the gap between university training and the professional world while developing students' capacity to adapt to the evolving demands of contemporary translation, where technical competence, cooperation, and critical reflection are

increasingly inseparable. Digital competence in education constitutes a central component of the DIGITRANS model because it determines the ability of future translators to operate within a constantly evolving technological environment. It encompasses not only the technical mastery of computer-assisted translation (CAT) tools, collaborative platforms, and digital resources, but also the ability to evaluate their relevance and integrate them critically into real translation situations (Redecker, 2017; Ferrari, 2013; Hellmich, 2021). This competence goes beyond the mere use of technology; it involves critical digital literacy—that is, an understanding of the cognitive, ethical, and cultural implications associated with the use of digital tools in the translation process.

However, in the Nigerian context, several obstacles continue to hinder the acquisition of these skills. The lack of technological infrastructure, limited Internet access, insufficient digital training among instructors, and the absence of coherent institutional policies constitute major challenges (Adaje & Adegunle, 2025; Shuaibu & Mebitaghan, 2025). These constraints create a gap between the competences required in the international market and those actually developed within local programs. The DIGITRANS model addresses this issue by proposing an integrated approach to digital competence based on practical training, peer collaboration, and the progressive use of technological tools as catalysts for autonomy, creativity, and translational reflexivity. The DIGITRANS model therefore proposes an integrated approach that articulates several dimensions in a synergistic manner. Translation competence includes mastery of translation strategies and techniques, knowledge of professional norms, and linguistic quality. Digital competence promotes a reflective and critical use of digital tools in order to optimize both learning and translation production. Guided autonomy enables learners to manage their own learning while benefiting from structured supervision. Collaboration and interaction strengthen the co-construction of knowledge through group work and critical exchanges. Finally, cultural sensitivity and reflexivity encourage students to adapt their translation choices to diverse contexts and to critically analyze their decisions (Marczak, 2018; Kornacki & Pietrzak, 2021; Bourguignon, 2019; Chevrier, 2020).

Through the combination of these dimensions, the DIGITRANS model provides both a theoretical and practical framework for modernizing the pedagogy of French translation in Nigeria, aligning academic programs with international standards, and developing in students the translational, digital, and reflective competences required by the contemporary global

translation market (Gambier, 2016; Pym, 2014). The various components of the DIGITRANS model interact dynamically to support the development of learners' translation and digital competences. The

following figure illustrates the conceptual structure of the model and the relationships among its different dimensions.

Figure 1: Le modèle conceptuel DIGITRANS

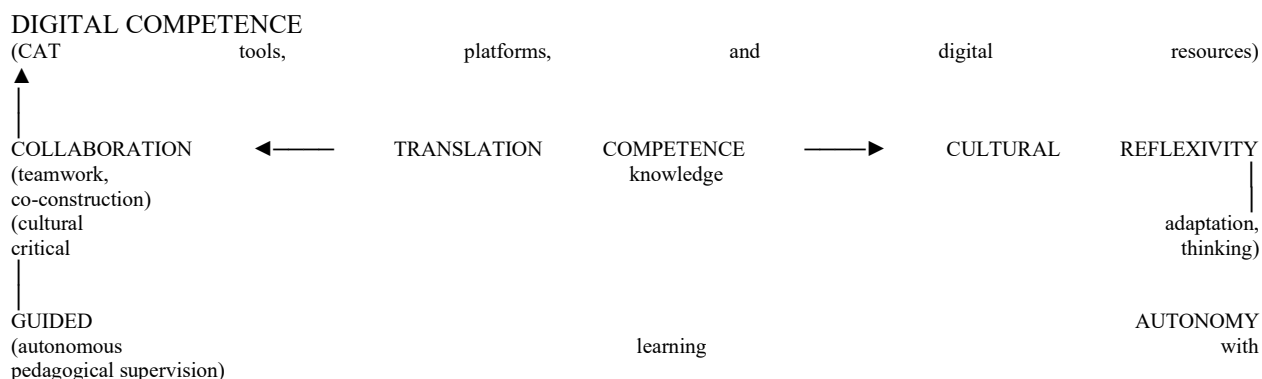


Figure 1: The DIGITRANS Conceptual Framework for Translation Pedagogy in the Digital Age

The model highlights the interdependence between five essential pedagogical dimensions. Translation competence constitutes the central core around which the other components of the pedagogical framework are organized. Digital competence enables learners to make use of contemporary translation technologies, while collaboration promotes the co-construction of knowledge and the development of collective professional skills. Guided autonomy ensures a balance between individual initiative and pedagogical supervision, and cultural reflexivity encourages students to critically analyze the linguistic and intercultural implications of translation practices.

7.1 Pedagogical Operationalization of the DIGITRANS Model

In order to make the DIGITRANS model applicable within university translation programs, it is important to illustrate how its different dimensions can be integrated into concrete pedagogical activities. In the context of French translation training, instructors can implement this model through collaborative translation projects that make use of digital tools and simulated professional situations. For example, students may be organized into teams tasked with translating an authentic text (such as a press article, an administrative document, or institutional content) using computer-assisted translation (CAT) tools such as translation memories or online collaborative platforms. Within this framework, the instructor plays the role of facilitator and guide, assisting learners in analyzing the source text, conducting terminological research, and justifying their translation choices.

Each dimension of the DIGITRANS model can then be mobilized in a complementary manner. Translation competence is developed through linguistic analysis and the production of high-quality translations. Digital competence is reinforced through the use of CAT tools, online corpora, and collaborative platforms. Guided autonomy is manifested when students make translation decisions while receiving pedagogical guidance. Collaboration is encouraged through group work and critical peer discussions. Finally, cultural reflexivity develops when students analyze the cultural and discursive implications of their translation choices.

Such activities help simulate real conditions of the translation market and bring university training closer to contemporary professional demands. In this way, the operationalization of the DIGITRANS model creates a bridge between theoretical conceptualization and pedagogical practice, thereby strengthening the relevance and effectiveness of translation training in Nigerian universities.

8. Pedagogical Implications and Recommendations

The adoption of the DIGITRANS model in Nigerian universities represents a strategic pathway for modernizing French translation training and overcoming persistent challenges associated with traditional teaching approaches. By systematically integrating digital technologies into curricula, this model encourages a shift from a transmissive, teacher-

centered pedagogy toward a participatory, collaborative, and reflective learning environment in which students become the principal actors in their own training (Gambier & Ehrensberger-Dow, 2020; Bourguignon, 2019). Through the use of computer-assisted translation (CAT) tools, collaborative platforms, and open digital resources, learners are engaged in authentic translation projects that simulate real professional market conditions. This process helps them develop intellectual and methodological autonomy, refine their analytical skills, and strengthen their critical awareness of both translational and technological choices. Furthermore, the collaborative dynamics fostered by the model stimulate peer interaction, encourage the co-construction of knowledge, and promote the emergence of a translation learning community grounded in shared reflection and formative assessment. In this sense, the DIGITRANS model goes beyond the simple digitization of existing practices; it promotes an epistemological transformation of translation pedagogy in Africa, aimed at training translators who are competent, autonomous, and adaptable to the demands of the contemporary digital world.

Secondly, the implementation of guided autonomy within the DIGITRANS framework serves as an essential lever for transforming the pedagogical relationship between instructors and learners. By structuring learning activities while allowing students a degree of initiative in planning and carrying out their tasks, instructors encourage the development of metacognitive skills and individual responsibility (Király, 2000; Chevrier, 2020). This approach enables learners to become active agents in their learning process, capable of adapting their translation strategies to diverse linguistic, cultural, and technological contexts. Moreover, the DIGITRANS model places strong emphasis on collaboration and interaction, which are expressed through group work, critical dialogue, and the co-construction of knowledge through shared projects. These dynamics promote not only the exchange of experiences and translation practices but also the strengthening of collective digital competence, which is essential for the professionalization of translators in the digital age (Marczak, 2018; Kornacki & Pietrzak, 2021). By combining structured supervision with freedom of action, guided autonomy creates a pedagogical balance that fosters critical reflection, translational innovation, and the development of learners capable of operating within multilingual and technologically complex environments.

Thirdly, the development of cultural sensitivity and reflexivity is crucial for training translators capable of

navigating multicultural and multilingual environments. Instructors can integrate case studies, intercultural translation projects, and critical reflection activities to enable students to evaluate their translation choices, justify their decisions, and adopt responsible professional practices (Pym, 2014; Hellmich, 2021). To ensure the success of this pedagogical transformation, several institutional measures are recommended. These include investing in digital infrastructure, training instructors in the effective use of technological tools and in the design of innovative pedagogical frameworks, and revising curricula to explicitly integrate digital and collaborative competences into learning objectives (Adaje & Adekunle, 2025; Shuaibu & Mebitaghan, 2025). The implementation of formative assessment strategies and authentic projects aligned with international standards will also contribute to improving learning effectiveness and preparing students for contemporary professional demands. The adoption of the DIGITRANS model in Nigerian universities represents a strategic response to the challenges of translation training. It enables the integration of technology, pedagogy, and translation competence while fostering student collaboration, autonomy, and reflexivity, thereby contributing to the professionalization and international competitiveness of future translators (Gambier, 2016; Austermühl, 2013; Bourguignon, 2019).

9. Limitations of the Study

This study presents certain limitations that must be acknowledged. First, the research adopts a conceptual approach based on the analysis of existing literature and does not rely on empirical validation of the proposed model. Consequently, the pedagogical effectiveness of the DIGITRANS framework remains to be tested in real teaching contexts. Furthermore, the analysis focuses primarily on the context of Nigerian universities, which may limit the immediate generalization of the model to other educational contexts without appropriate institutional and technological adaptations. Nevertheless, this conceptualization provides a theoretical foundation that may guide future empirical research aimed at evaluating the impact of the model on the development of students' translational and digital competences.

10. Conclusion and Research Perspectives

The transformation of French translation pedagogy in Nigeria through the DIGITRANS model highlights the need to rethink translator training in the digital age. The thoughtful integration of technology, combined with constructivist and collaborative approaches,

enables students to develop translational, digital, and reflective competences that are essential for meeting contemporary professional demands (Zhang, 2022; Kornacki & Pietrzak, 2021). The model also promotes guided autonomy, knowledge co-construction, and cultural sensitivity, thereby contributing to the professionalization of translators while aligning training with international standards (Tsai, 2023; Hellmich & Vinall, 2023). This conceptual reflection opens several avenues for empirical research. First, it would be valuable to test the effectiveness of the DIGITRANS model in different Nigerian university contexts in order to assess its impact on translation competence, mastery of digital tools, and learner engagement. Second, future studies could explore the cultural and pedagogical adaptation of the model to other languages and disciplines, taking into account local technological and institutional constraints (Yao, 2024). Finally, evaluating teacher training in the integration of digital tools and collaborative methods constitutes a crucial area of investigation to ensure the sustainability of this approach.

The DIGITRANS model therefore offers a robust theoretical and practical framework for modernizing French translation training in Nigeria. It demonstrates that the combination of technology, active pedagogy, and critical reflexivity can produce competent and adaptable translators capable of navigating complex and digitally mediated professional environments. This conceptualization thus represents a significant contribution to research in translation pedagogy and French studies while providing concrete directions for educational innovation within the African context. Nevertheless, this conceptual framework still requires empirical validation through experimental or quasi-experimental studies in order to assess its actual impact on the development of students' translational and digital competences.

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