

# Creative writing in teaching literary translation

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**Abstract:** the present paper aims to shed light on how to orient the module of writing as taught to translation students towards creativity and autonomy of thinking. Literary translators need to foster their writing ability and grow aware of their role as rewriters and shrewd reproducers of literary essence. Thus, writing should not be inculcated to them as just a linguistic exercise whereby grammaticality is given much credit at the expense of ingenuity of ideas and originality of thinking. Some activities liable to help in this direction are suggested and discussed.

**Key words:** writing, literary translation, creativity, rewriting.

## الكتابة الإبداعية في تعليمية الترجمة الأدبية

**ملخص:** يهدف هذا المقال إلى تسليط الضوء على الكيفية التي نوجه بها مقياس التحرير (التعبير الكتابي)، الذي نلقنه لطلبة الترجمة، نحو الإبداع واستقلالية الفكر. يحتاج مترجمو الأدب إلى صقل قدرتهم الكتابية واستيعاب دورهم في إعادة الكتابة وقدرتهم على الخلق والإبداع في نقل ماهية الأدب. وبالتالي لا يجب أن نركز في تلقيننا لمقياس التحرير على المقدرة اللغوية للطلبة التي نفرط من خلالها بالاهتمام بسلامة اللفظ والتركيب على حساب براعة الفكرة وأصالة التفكير. ونطرح فيما يلي مجموعة من النشاطات الكتابية للنقاش ونقترحها كأسس نعتمد عليها في صقل مواهب الطلبة الكتابية.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** الكتابة، الترجمة الأدبية، الإبداعية، إعادة الكتابة.

## Introduction

Literary translation students are often introduced to many modules liable to develop their literary competence, such as literary criticism, literary readings and analyses, genre analysis, literary theories and literary movements. All these theoretical components contribute to raise students' awareness of literary writing but cannot help raise students' capacity towards actively participating in the literary production. To write in a literary way,

they need to foster their writing ability in a more creative way. Thus, how can a teacher create an appropriate environment for students to let go their creativity and exploit their full capacities? In a syllabus oriented towards self-learning and autonomy (normally the essence of the LMD system), we need-as teachers-help students understand their roles in the learning process and encourage them systematically and gradually to reach the academic objectives. Among the things we need to rethink about, especially when the syllabus is centered on literary translation, is the way the teaching of writing is carried out and the way it is evaluated throughout. Students' writing competence need to be improved not only linguistically but also and more importantly creatively to help them direct this competence towards literary productions and raise their awareness about their roles as literary translators and effective rewriters. The ideas we are discussing in this paper are mainly directed towards students preparing their Master degrees in literary translation; that is to way, students who have already sustained a sound background competence in writing. Moreover, although the discussion is focused on writing in English, the ideas apply to writing in any other language involved in the linguistic combination adopted in the syllabus.

### **1- What literature is and what importance it has**

What is literature and what distinguishes it from other kinds of productions? What criteria to take into account to tell whether a given text is literary or not? To answer these questions, it is interesting to introduce Meyer's prototypical definition (1997) based on a set of checking criteria. A piece of literature, for him, is seen to be any verbal production marked by a careful use of language and which is read aesthetically –its main purpose being not to give information- and which show evidence of the author's intention to lead the reader towards open interpretation and hidden implicatures. Thus, readers tend to enjoy reading and rereading a piece of literature not for the information it unfolds but for the aesthetic effect it produces and the experience of open interpretation it gives. The hidden implicatures and the aesthetic

effects the literary text is supposed to yield are not necessarily the result of a sophisticated use of language.

On a more contextual level, literature is seen to be tightly linked to culture as asserted by Delisle (2014 a: 37), “la perspective culturelle est intimement lié à la littérature, même si la culture ne se réduit pas à la littérature.” Culture is defined by anthropologists as being concerned with historical products that encompass ideas, habits, and values (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1960 in Delisle, 2014 a). Literature is, then, the sum of written and oral productions of a given nation that translates its culture, way of thinking and behaving, beliefs and visions, philosophy of life and attitudes towards issues of any nature. As we do not live alone in this universe, we need to get in contact with other people who happen to share this planet with us. To lead a successful communication with them, we need to know about them as they need to know about us. Literature is the channel by excellence through which this communication and understanding can be achieved. The best definition of translation we all tend to accept without objection is the one which brings intercultural communication to the fore. Literature is that mysterious entity that describes the essence of the other and shows the best of us. Despite the pessimistic critics and comments thrown on the face of modern literary works, no one can deny the human creative role played by creative literature in overcoming social problems facing man in modern society and resulting from the complexity of modern civilization (“literature humanism”, 1974: 196). In the same vein, the author of “Literature humanism”, as translated by Yasser El-Fahd in the journal of Foreign Literatures, would even advocate literature as a source of salvation for scientific and technological problems stressing the fact that man can but only pay great tribute to modern literature which looks inside deep civilisational conflicts in his time, including those conflicts resulting from scientific and technological development, expresses emotions and human ideas and search for a new life amidst the turmoil of conflicts taking place in modern society” (ibid: 197). Literary works were often seen to be a source of inspiration for many

scientists like Dostoyevsky's novels which served a basis for Freud psychoanalysis studies (Mindess, 1967). In sum, literature is a source of knowledge available to all people without distinction and without which no cultural life would be possible for any nation. As culture is very important in acquiring a foreign language, a translator needs to know about this culture of the language he attempts to master. Literature is by far the best means he may rely on to gain a sound cultural background. The more the translator immerses in the foreign language's literature the firmer the cultural background he would sustain.

## **2- Main pedagogical objectives for teaching literary translation**

When deciding to teach literary translation, we need to justify our choice for ourselves as teachers and for the learners. According to Goethe, a nation's literature needs to extend beyond its limits and to not stay isolated from the influence of other literatures in order to survive and flourish, and the same thing applies for language. Any literature and any language need to try other means of expressions, other horizons, other sources of appraisal and these are possible through translation. Authors get to know and forge their writing skill and creativity from each other and from the contact they have through translations (Huang, 2104).

In the developing countries, scientific translation is often believed to be more urgent than literary translation as it is essential for the advancement and development of a nation. No one denies the importance of scientific translation, but also no one can accept this ordering of priority without raising logical objections. The fictional division between scientific and humanities field of study as established in the educational systems of developing countries proves to be fallacious and to have deviated from its original aim. There is no obvious distinction between science and art being both a source of knowledge. While a scientist seeks to understand the outer world, the artist looks at its inner with much insight. The former is relying on his eyes and mind to discover the truth and the latter on his heart and soul to penetrate inside the human nature and uncover the mystery about it.

Since we are talking about didactics, we need to sensitize students about this fallacy and urge them to feel the importance of the literary translation in which they wish to embark. Reading of some influential literary works and discussing their merits in class can help achieve this aim. Yet, it is important to formulate clear objectives or learning outcomes when attempting to teach literary translation. For instance the following is a summation of competences and skills as suggested by Elaine Showalter (Washbourne, 2013) to be taught in teaching literature as craft:

1- How to recognize subtle and complex differences in language use (especially that literality has little to do with the complexity of language)

2- How to read figurative language and distinguish between literal and metaphorical meaning (to help perceive the author's implicatures and engage in a successful hermeneutic motion).

3- How to seek out further knowledge about the literary work, its authors, its content, or its interpretation (to help affirm one's hypothetical interpretations).

4- How to detect the cultural assumptions underlying writings from a different time or society, and in the process, to become aware of one's own cultural assumptions.

5- How to relate apparently disparate works to one another and to synthesize ideas that connect them into a tradition or a literary period.

6- How to use literary models as cultural references, either to communicate with others or to clarify one's own ideas.

7- How to think creatively about problems by using literature as a broadening of one's own experience and practical knowledge.

8- How to read closely, with attention to detailed use of diction, syntax, metaphor and style, not only in high literary works, but in decoding the stream of language to which everyone in modern society is exposed.

9- How to create literary texts of one's own, whether imaginative or critical.

10- How to think creatively within and beyond literary studies, making some connections between the literary work and one's own life.

11- How to work and learn with others, taking literature as a focus for discussion and analysis.

12- How to defend a critical judgment against the informed opinions of others.

Some of these competences seem to be hard to achieve, but they help remind the teacher that we are not dealing solely with the linguistic dimension of literary translation. Very few outcomes stated above related to language usage as such.

### **3- The function(s) of a literary translator**

Only a simpleton can think of a literary translator as someone transferring words from one language to another caring only about their denotational meaning and struggling between equivalents. A literary translator is someone directly immersed in the cultural life of his society and by this token he may be required to fulfill other roles besides translation per se. For instance, he may prepare reviews or comments of literary works recently released or published to make them known for the public. He may be engaged in preparing pastiches for a public magazine. He may be required to adapt adult literature to children or adapt and shorten some literary works for pedagogical reasons for instance (like it is the case for the shortened version of novels dedicated to learners of English at all levels-from beginners to advanced). In this respect, we may be inclined to talk about his role as a rewriter whereby he needs to possess the appropriate skills to retextualize the source texts in the target language and pay attention to the aesthetic aspect and literariness of these texts. When we consider the role of the translator as a rewriter, we understand better the attitude he has to adopt in writing and how much creative writing is deemed important in this case. For instance, in translating children literature, the translator has to think of his audience and adapt the message to his target reader. Translators of children literature can be called upon to translate picture story books, easy readers, chapter books, young adult novels, crossover titles<sup>1</sup>, and even texts

for young learners of English, each carries its own challenges (Chantal, 2016). If the translator is not endowed with the appropriate skill, he cannot fulfill his mission with dexterity. Thus, we can raise students' awareness about these new dimensions and give them examples of challenging tasks they might be confronted to.

#### **4- How is writing actually taught to translation students?**

Writing taught to translation students does not differ in essence from a typical writing class in a language department. Writing is considered a language skill to be developed for its own sake far from any consideration to the specific requirements of translation. One can even dare assert that there is no specific writing programme addressed to translation students' needs.

In what follows is a brief discussion of what actually happens in a writing class in the department of translation-University of Constantine 1 with a special emphasis on the Master syllabus designed for literary translation since 2012. As far as this Master programme in literary translation is concerned, writing is not taught as a separate module but as a subcomponent of the language module. A module named PSL (perfectionnement linguistique de la langue), or as may be translated in English "language improvement", is taught for two semesters in each of the languages involved, that is Arabic, English and French. The module is meant overall to further students' competence in the four skills, especially in the active skills: writing and speaking. When it comes to writing, students are required to better their performance and produce grammatically flawless pieces of writing in a clear coherent way. In parallel to this, their grammatical knowledge is enforced through a battery of exercises treating areas of special difficulties for students and introducing more complex sentence structures to push learners to a more advanced level. As the name of the module indicates, the linguistic competence per se is the area much targeted by this programme<sup>2</sup>. No wonder, teachers are seen to evaluate students' production in terms of accuracy and grammaticality. However, students' linguistic competence is a legitimate requirement but not that pressing need in such a

specialized programme. Actually, students would continue foster their linguistic competence even when they quit the university and the core competence they acquired during their graduation should sustain their autonomy and desire for betterment. What they need more, at this level, especially that they are specializing in literary translation, is to grow aware of their role as writers or rewriters and as true cultural transmitters and not simple decoders.

As for graduate translation students preparing their bachelor degree<sup>3</sup>, they are actually taught a separate writing module besides the language module (PSL as above). The objective of the writing module is more general aiming to develop students' ability in understanding how a piece of writing is prepared, organized, revised and edited. They are taught this module for three years, and the content is much detailed and variegated. They start with the paragraph and its different parts before they learn how to write different types of essay. They also learn to deal with different contextual writings like emails, reports, research proposals, academic letters, summaries and book reviews when reaching their final year. Obviously, there is more room here to tackle non-linguistic aspects of writing and to focus on more practical issues.

Students continue not to care about what they actually write and to worry instead about language accuracy. When asked to revise their work, they automatically gives their full attention to mistakes caring less about ideas themselves and how logically they are presented and organized. On a previous writing class, I asked second year students to write an introduction to an essay dealing with some interesting sights in one's country to invite people to see. The student produced an introductory paragraph – she read to the class- that was flawless showing craftsmanship and no authoring aptitude. The paragraph runs something like this:

*People like to travel and visit new places and all countries have some interesting sights to visit. If you want to discover new places come to my country which has some interesting places you will like.*

The problem with this introduction is that it is not inviting and the strategy adopted by the student to persuade the reader is

reckless and inconsiderate. The student obviously lacks a sense of audience and is not thinking of any purpose in her writing except of accuracy. It is clear that the student thinks that all she has to do is watch up her grammar.

### **5- The literary translator's writing competence**

A literary translator's most important skill is writing. Writing, probably, is a more important skill than reading in its pure linguistic meaning. It is the skill that confronts the translator to the reader and makes him responsible for any flaw in style or clarity. Marcel Proust's experience with his translation of Ruskin from English into French testifies the supremacy of writing over reading in translation. Waldinger (2009: 23) asserts that "[s]uperficially, Proust's mastery of English was very weak. However, in depth, he mastered his subject (though not the tool) completely, even gaining trust for expertise in such specialized matters as recent biography." As a translation method, he received help from his mother to read the English text and prepare a translation sketch that was revised by him first then by his friend's cousin before he polished the last version himself at a later stage. Sami El-Deroubi, the Syrian translator famous for his Arabic translation of Russian literature is another vivid example of the prevalence of the writing skill over the reading skill in literary translation. El-Deroubi made use of a French translation and had no direct access to the Russian original although his translations are acknowledged to be good by the Russians themselves. All the merit goes to El-Deroubi especially for making the Russian literary works known for the Arab reader and no one would fail to notice this merit and the high standard of production he achieved in his translations. In other words, the success of translation depends largely on the quality of its writing. While writing, a literary translator's main task is how to overcome the barrier of language and not how to translate the linguistic item. In Marianne Lederer's words: "la langue étrangère est un obstacle à surmonter plutôt qu'un objet à traduire. » (qtd in Delisle 2014, a). This is the aspect we need to focus on when teaching writing especially for future literary translators that obviously need to have already a mastery of the languages

involved. A translator need to learn how to avoid literalism in order to: 1) get nearer to meaning, 2) meet the linguistic requirement of the TL, 3) give due attention to the genre and function of the text, 4) render the literariness of the literary text.

### **6- The linguistic vs. the creative dimension of a writing competence for a literary translator**

When teaching writing for students specializing in literary translation we need to differentiate between linguistic and creative writing. The former is interested in accuracy and grammaticality and the clarity of the surface message. This type of writing takes translation to mean decoding a message in one language and encoding it in another. Creative writing, however, gives or should give special attention to ideas and the ability to express oneself freely and enthusiastically. It encourages students to let their ideas flow naturally and enhances their philosophical thinking in raising questions of their interest and debating different topics and issues they may be interested in. It is through creative writing that students may finally realize the importance of literature and grow aware of the importance of their role as literary translators and what they need to reach a high standard of competence in this field. It is also an indirect urge for them to read more and more and to be updated with any literary production in their society.

The following table gives an overview of the main difference between linguistic and creative writing:

<b>Writing as a linguistic activity</b>	<b>Writing as a creative activity</b>
Grammar and correctness is more important than the ideas and the quality of thinking behind	Generating personal and original ideas is more important than grammar and mistakes.
Avoidance strategy is used by students to hide their incompetence or insufficiency of competence to tackle some linguistic issues.	Students' cognitive overload is freed to give room for higher-order (metacognitive) processes to take place.

It is strenuous and monotonous an activity.	It is fun and more motivating.
The teacher is needed for correction and guidance.	The teacher is needed for encouragement and positive feedback.
It is used at an earlier stage of learning a language.	It is used at a more advanced stage.
Students at the end are supposed to hone their mastery of the language in the written mode.	Students at the end are supposed to gain autonomy and be creative.
Evaluation is atomic, focusing on different aspects of language use (grammar, spelling, cohesion, coherence)	Evaluation is holistic focusing mainly on the originality of production.
Academic-oriented (the aim is to reach a mastery of the language)	Mainly vocational-oriented (the aim is the build the ability to cope with the job requirement (the different functions a literary translator is liable to fulfill)

### **Differences between writing as a linguistic skill and writing as a creative skill**

Although there is an inconvenience as regards evaluation which seems to escape docimological considerations, teaching creative writing remains possible especially if organized in workshops.

Obviously, teachers of writing need to distinguish between authoring and crafting skills especially in their assessment of students' productions as to help them set specific criteria for marking. In this respect Hedge suggests the following grid:

What skills do good writers demonstrate?	Criteria for marking
<b>Authoring</b>	
1- Having something to say (a sense of purpose) 2- Being aware of the reader (a sense of audience) 3- Developing the ideas (a sense of creation)	Content/Length Appropriateness  Organisation
<b>Crafting</b>	
4- Organising the content clearly and in a logical manner 5- Manipulating the script 6- Using the conventions, e.g. spelling layout 7- Getting the grammar right 8- Developing sentence structure 9- Linking ideas in a variety of ways 10- Having a range of vocabulary	Organisation  Handwriting Accuracy Accuracy/Complexity Complexity Complexity Complexity/Range Range

**Hedge's distinction between authoring and corresponding criteria for marking (Hedge, 2000: 328)**

Teachers need, overall, to set criteria of evaluation “which relate to what we know of successful writers and writings.” (Hedge, 2000: 326)

**To illustrate the importance of distinguishing between linguistic and creative dimensions of writing, here is an example of challenging activity requiring creativity:**

Translators, especially when rewriting a work with a purpose in mind, need to act creatively and rely on their own ingenuity and not on that of the original writer. Chantal (2016:129) gives an example of a challenging task a translator may be confronted to when dealing with sarcastic/humorous language. In translating a German literary text into English, an instance of wordplay appears to be the central issue around which the textual effect is construed. Rico, a character in the story, meeting new words he has never

seen before, has recourse to the dictionary which gives only their literal meaning. The funniest part in the story is the puzzlement he expresses when trying this literal meaning in context. For example, in the selected extract below he is faced with the homograph “rabatt” which denotes both a name of a plant and the equivalent meaning of “discount”. Here is a literal English translation of the German passage, followed by a creative translation in English.

An English literal translation of the German passage: Two neighbours were shouting at each other in a talk show, because one of them had peed over the other’s garden fence, while drunk and subsequently his neighbor’s border plants (rabate) had died.

Looking up the word in the dictionary, Rico reads: Discount (rabatt): when you buy something and you get a little voucher for it. Lots of shopping trips later it’s a big voucher and you can buy yourself something great with it.

“No idea why somebody would pee on a discount (rabatt) or why people would leave it lying around in the garden.” expressed Rico.

The following version is more appropriate with a better chosen wordplay:

A worked out translation from German into English: Two neighbours were shouting at each other in a talk show, because one of them had peed over the other’s garden fence and his neighbor’s squash plant had died.

Looking up the word in the dictionary, Rico reads: Squash: juice in a bottle that you mix in water to make a drink. “No idea why anybody would pee on a bottle of a squash or why you would plant one in the garden.” expressed Rich.

In this example, the translator needs to take responsibility of relaying the same ideational meaning intended by the original writer, and for this he needs to have forged authoring skill reposing on autonomy of thinking and creativity.

#### **7- How to develop students’ authorial/creative writing?**

What is expected from a literary translator as a rewriter is innovation as expressed by Bassnett and Lefevere in their introduction to Genzler’s Contemporary translation studies

(2001:2): “la réécriture est susceptible d’introduire de nouveaux concepts, de nouveaux genres, de nouveaux procédés, si bien que l’histoire de la traduction est également l’histoire de l’innovation littéraire, et du pouvoir qu’a une culture d’en façonner une autre.” This is way more focus need to be put on generating ideas, and imitating others to learn from them.

### **7- 1- Reconsidering prewriting activities:**

Prewriting as a fundamental stage in learning to write is often seen to be neglected by teachers and not given much importance although it is the stage at which students grow aware of the importance of ideas to sustain readability of their writing at a later stage. Writing is not an exercise of filling the paper with futile and nonsense ideas; it is an activity that stimulates thinking and curiosity and when given due account can incites students’ desire for reading and research. Thus, the process view of writing sees writing “as thinking, as discovery, [as] the result of employing strategies to manage the composing process [...] involving a number of activities: setting goals, generating ideas, organizing information, selecting appropriate language, making a draft, reading and reviewing it, then revising and editing.” (Hedge, 2000: 302). To generate ideas, students should be encouraged to adopt some pre-writing activities (Smalle et al, 2000) liable to raise the creative aptitude much needed for the literary translator:

a) **Brainstorming:** a brainstorm is a sudden insight or connection. This process helps associate ideas and stimulates thinking. To launch the process, we only need to start with a word or phrase and let our thoughts go in whatever direction they want within a set of time without trying to be logical. The ideas generated can be then grouped together to yield a topic or thread of thought to be developed. This process is often if not always introduced to language learners in their module of writing expression, without insisting on dwelling a long time on it, thinking probably it is a waste of time and may be considered not to be a priority in syllabus essentially destined for language learners where grammaticality and accuracy seems to be of prime importance.

b) **Freewriting:** it is writing without stopping or raising one's pen from the paper and without thinking or grammar and other mistakes. The subject here is forcing its brain to generate ideas without censoring any insights or thoughts. There is no need to go back and revise what one has jotted down. Once the time set for the activity has elapsed, the subject revises his writing and tries to find interesting ideas and associations to exploit.

c) **Clustering:** this is equal to making a mind map which is "a strategy for note-taking before writing; in other words scribbling down ideas about the topic and developing those ideas as the mind makes associations (Hedge, 2000: 310). It is like making a visual map of one's ideas avoiding a linear thinking and forcing one to be more creative. To start with, a subject needs to jot down a topic in the center of the page and draw arrows leading to different ideas associated with this topic. He then continues to map ideas together until he feels satisfied. When finished, he would examine his production to find out new associations which deserve more attention.

The purpose of these activities is to help students break the ice with writing and forget about their linguistic skill. They aim to discourage them from having recourse to the avoidance strategy whereby students avoid using expressions they are not yet able to produce without apparent mistakes, and so tend to fabricate thoughtless expressions with the ultimate goal to hide their linguistic incompetence.

To link these activities with literary translation, we may suggest for students a theme or character from a literary work they know (from either English or Arabic) and ask them to generate ideas about them. They can be invited as well to generate their proper ideas for original work of fiction and act as if they were to suggest new topics to be handled by original authors. If a teacher is careful to provide students with the appropriate praise and reward deserved for their efforts, little by little the students would feel more pleasure undertaking this kind of activities. In parallel, they may be encouraged and urged to read works of literature for inspiration.

A more interactive and productive activity, yet at a more advanced level would be the use of pastiche activities. So what are these pastiche activities? And how can they raise students' creativity?

### **7-2- Pastiche as an exercise of imitation and manipulation:**

A pastiche in literature is an imitation of an original. It is sometimes confused with a parody, but a parody is meant to mock or ridicule the style of a given work, whereas a pastiche is not meant for that. A pastiche mimics the content and mannerism of another written work in a way that shows an appreciation and reverence of the author or of his work.

Here is an example of a pastiche in (qtd in literary devices):

This a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife. However little known the feelings or views of such a man may be on his first entering a neighbourhood, this truth is so well fixed in the minds of the surrounding families, that he is considered as the rightful property of someone or other of their daughters.

“My dear Mr. Bennet,” said his lady to him one day, “have you heard that Netherfield Park is let at last?” (*Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen)

It is a truth universally acknowledged that a zombie in possession of brains must be in want of more brains. Never was this truth more plain than during the recent attacks at Netherfield Park, in which a household of eighteen was slaughtered and consumed by a horde of the living dead.

“My dear Mr. Bennet,” said his lady to him one day, “have you heard that Netherfield Park is occupied again?” (*Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* by Seth Grahame-Smith)

There many other things we may change in a pastiche besides language form:

The plot: we can change the plot outline from a tragedy to a comedy or vice versa.

The setting: if the action takes place in a big city we can change it to the countryside with all other changes that logically

ensue. We can also change the action time from present to past or vice versa.

The characters: characters may also be changed from males to females and from villain to heroes, etc.

The point of view: the story can be retold by another character or the scene may be changed by adding senses other than sight and hearing.

The dialogue: the dialogue may also be changed by choosing another level of language formality and make a character belong to a different region or social class.

These changes force the students to think of what they are writing and to innovate. Brinkman (2010:160), despite the arguments raised by proponents of critical pedagogy against creative pedagogy, explains the merits imitations and manipulations of literary texts can have in raising literary students' creativity and that he has tried himself in his classes:

There are, however, definite steps that can be taken to improve the situation. One of those steps I am advocating is for literary instructors to employ creative imitations and manipulations- common procedures in creative writing pedagogy and once preferred method of instruction in literary studies as well, but for several decades now a rare occurrence in the critical classroom [...]. Students must consider what marks a given author's style. They must slow down and think about the specifics of the text before they began to abstract from it. In short, they must closely read the poem, story or play if they hope to make something like it. And in making something like it they reinforce their reading.

### **8- The literary translator's reading competence**

Although it was stressed before that importance of writing exceeds that of reading in literary translation, it remains essential to stress the importance of reading in developing the translation abilities of students overall and in raising their awareness at many levels. Thus, a literary translator cannot think of translating a work unless he has read a lot in any language he masters. The constant contact with literary works creates a fond attachment to reading and to the pleasure it yields. It also instills knowledge of literality.

Besides original works of literature, they need to read and gain familiarity with translations to discover and assess the hardships translators experience when endeavoring such an activity, spotting their original effort and miraculous shots. Sensing the originality of a given work of literature and thus of art is an act of translation itself. El-Douroubi (1981) distinguishes two phases of artistic production: growing aware of the originality of the artistic aspect in a given entity and thus gaining a sort of vision or insight into this thing, then expressing this originality in words, colours, tunes, etc. We may be artists in perception but fail to produce as we may be endowed with a full genius and be able to transfer this perception into an original form. A sound artistic/literary ability requires, thus, a solid background in both reading and writing

In this respect, the Canadian translator, Betty Bednarski, considers translation as an act of reading itself “traduire, comme lire, c’est poser sur l’oeuvre un regard de découvreur, à la fois chercheur et faiseur de sens” (qtd by Delisle, 2014 a). The kind of reading we mean for the translator to develop is tightly linked with translation itself. A translator needs to retrace back the original author’s steps and tactics to rebuild the literariness of the work.

### **Conclusion**

Once a syllabus on literary translation is established and approved to be adopted in teaching (as was the case of the master of literary translation adopted in the department of translation at the university of Constantine for six successive years since 2012), we can but confront the problem and try best to counter the view that literary translation is a matter of talent escaping any attempt to learnability. We can help students with more practical techniques to face their destiny. A literary talent needs time and patience to develop, but the academic setting can offer at least a suitable environment for this talent to set its foot and be cultivated with self-confidence and workable tactics. Learning today is required to be more constructive and centered on the learners themselves who become the source of their own learning, and launching the type of activities we discussed above is probably what we need to introduce to help them hone their own competences and creative aptitudes.

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1 Crossover literature blurs the borderline between adult literature and children literature. Books may cross from adult to child or from child to adult or they may appeal to both audience like Harry Potter books, Lord of the ring, Twilights, as well as middle-eastern tales and fables.

2 Master literary translation programme was devised by the teachers of the department first in 2012-2013 before it was accredited by the ministry of higher education to be adopted for three consecutive years. It was then renewed for three more years in 2015.

3 A new type of bachelor degree is adopted in the department of translation-University Constantine 1 since the academic year 2017-2018. This is a new type of bachelor degree because after three years of graduation, students are admitted automatically in Master.