

# The Effect of Pedagogical Translation on Advancing EFL Students' Creative Writing at the Tertiary Level

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## Abstract

This research investigated the impact of using translation as a pedagogical approach on advancing EFL students' creative writing. Previous studies analysing the effectiveness of translation as a learning tool indicated that creative writing can be optimized amongst EFL students. However, studies of this nature are infrequent. The transfer of their findings is subject to dispute, which is the reason this study joins the ongoing debate on the role of pedagogical translation in fostering both students' foreign language learning alongside the improvement of their creative writing skills. The study also explored EFL students' perceptions regarding the viability of such method in the enhancement of their creative writing. The present research reports on a quasi-experimental intervention which was carried out at Ibn Zohr University. Semester one participants (N=210) were randomly allocated to two groups; one experimental and one control group. The experimental group was taught by exposing students to various nonfiction literary texts, followed by tasks requiring them to translate these texts from Arabic into English. Conversely, the control group was traditionally instructed in the same course without the use of literary translation. Instead, they were introduced to a variety of creative writing activities using English exclusively. Methodologically, both quantitative and qualitative data analyses were employed. Improvements pertaining to participants' composition, demonstrated through personal narratives, were assessed employing two widely-adopted rubrics. The results indicated an improvement in both groups' creative writing performance, but the experimental group showed comparatively more considerable progress. The difference between students' scores -in both groups- was statistically significant.

**Keywords:** Creative Writing, Creative Language Qualities, Literary Translation, Pedagogical Translation.

## 1. Introduction

Research within the realm of creative writing (CW) has been extensively conducted worldwide from diverse perspectives by versatile scholars (Carter, 2004; Dawson, 2005; Mills, 2006; Morley, 2007, Earnshaw, 2007; May, 2007; MacNally, 2010; Spiro, 2014; Loffredo and Porteghella, 2014; Burroway, 2015; Maley, 2018). However, reviewing the literature indicates that CW has recently been approached from a pointed perspective, specifically translation-based one. Morley (2007) and Loffredo and Perteghella (2014), in particular, underscored the value of using translation as a pedagogical approach to enhance students' second/foreign language learning and foster their CW skills, more significantly.

Therefore, the present study joins the ongoing development of the debate centered around the efficacy of pedagogical translation (PT) in developing students' second and foreign language proficiency with particular focus on CW which is not thoroughly explored compared to the writing skill. Despite its controversial nature, translation in foreign language teaching has lately been brought back from exile and discussed by a myriad of pioneers of foreign language teaching and learning (notably, Duff, 1989; Malmakjear, 1998; Ross, 2000; Gonzalez-Davies 2004; Liao, 2006; Machida, 2008; Cook, 2010; Leonardi, 2010; Dagliené, 2012; Kerr, 2014; Laviosa & Gonzalez, 2020). These prominent figures stressed the significance of translation in its linkage with second or foreign language acquisition, in general, and individual language skills, in particular. However, it is interesting

to note that the use of PT in EFL setting has long sparked heated discussion, particularly concerning its validity and feasibility in the teaching learning environment. In this respect, two divergent views are identified. The first group of scholars, discredited the use of PT in the teaching learning setting, while the second group hailed its revival as a viable approach.

Considering the views pertaining to the utilization of PT in optimizing EFL students' CW, as put forward by Morley (2007) and Loffredo and Perteghella (2014) in particular, the major scope of this study is, then, to determine whether the hypothesized merits of PT in its relationship with CW can be impactful, useful and applicable, especially within Moroccan EFL classes at the tertiary level. To reach this objective, the study will examine whether bilingually-taught CW classes will outperform classes instructed monolingually or vice versa. Accordingly, the present research will attempt to inquire into the impact of PT on students' CW by testing two hypotheses. These are:

- $H_0$ : Students who study creative writing by means of pedagogical translation and students who are exposed to monolingually-based creative writing activities equally score on creative writing test.
- $H_A$ : Students who study creative writing by means of pedagogical translation and students who are exposed to monolingually-based creative writing activities score differently on creative writing test.

To test the stated hypotheses, the ensuing questions have been posed:

- To what extent can Pedagogical Translation help university EFL students improve their creative writing?
- What are the students' perceptions in relation to the employment of pedagogical translation in optimizing their creative writing?

## **2. Objectives of the Study**

The central objective of the current research is to investigate the positive aspects of utilizing translation as a pedagogical approach in developing English major students' creative writing at the tertiary level. With this in mind, the present study endeavours to bring up the following research objectives:

1. To examine the impact of pedagogical translation on EFL students' creative writing.
2. To explore EFL students' perceptions with respect to the use of pedagogical translation in developing their creative writing ability.

## **3. Literature Review**

This section will dwell on, albeit briefly, the concepts of creativity and CW as being the focal point deliberated upon in the current study. Much emphasis will be placed on the notion of CW in its relationship with PT with the aim of establishing a connection between translation and CW from a pedagogical standpoint.

### **4. Creative Writing**

Creative writing is intimately linked with creativity. It will be helpful to start with the notion of creativity and directly associate it with what it exactly means in the context of CW. To begin with, creativity is the "ability to come up with ideas or artefacts that are new, surprising and valuable" (Boden, 2004, p. 1). To say it another way, creativity denotes the ability to create original ideas or artefacts of immeasurable value (Boden, 2005).

At the core of creativity resides the ability to create and produce, and at the core of writing resides the ability to write. Accordingly, CW can be characterised as possessing the ability to write by creating compositions or valuable written works, which are marked by novelty and originality.

An extensive survey of the literature indicates that CW essentially refers to an academic discipline whereby students compose written productions in one of the literary genres. These works are recognized as creative (Dawson, 2005). In the same vein, CW has been described as "having the power to create an imaginative, original literary production or composition and can be applied to a very broad spectrum of writing genres" (Ramet, 2007, p. xi). Similarly, Kroll (2013) conceptualized CW as "the study of writing (including poetry, fiction, drama and creative non-fiction) and its contexts through creative production and reflection on process" (p. 249). In their co-authored dictionary, Richards and Schmidt (2002) described CW as "types of writing such as fiction, drama and poetry that reflect the writer's originality, imagination, feelings and which do not describe factual events" (p. 143). Pursuant to Dawson (2005), CW is characterized "as a practice, the operation of individual thought derived from first-hand experience of nature and life" (p. 34). Such viewpoint stresses the fundamental significance of originality and self-expression. This manifests in students articulating their ideas and feelings, in an imaginative and unique style, on paper while undertaking a specific writing task. In the same line, Hyland (2009) ascertained that the primary goal behind teaching CW is "to focus on students' self-expression...through process techniques

of drafting and rewriting and submitting their original work for peer critique" (P. 229). Finally yet importantly, Harper (2015) described CW as "the action of writing creatively, informed by the human imagination and the creative and critical understanding of the creative writer, influenced by personal history and by culture" (p. 1).

Altogether, CW involves transcending the ordinary and opening up to originality by having or developing the ability to self-express ideas and produce unprecedented work of good value. Such production or material outputs are derived from experience, nature and imagination, and assessed by experts and educators on the basis of widely-accepted qualities of creative language.

Creative language can be evaluated based on four major qualities, without which, CW is doomed to lose its sparkle and charm. These qualities or 'elements of craft', also specified in Muzaffari's analytical rubrics used for assessing students' CW performance, boil down to image, voice, characterization and story (Burroway, 2015; Mills, 2006). Each of these qualities is briefly dealt with.

**A- Image** is defined as "a word or series of words that evoke one or more of our senses" (Burroway, 2015, p. 17). It is generally accepted that what makes writing vivid is the use of 'sense impressions'. That is, writing in words that evoke the senses as opposed to flat writing, which bristles with abstractions, generalizations, and judgements (Burroway, 2015). According to Borroway, creating images can be achieved by means of two ways: concrete significant details and literary tropes.

**B- Voice**, in CW, is recognized by diction. That is to say, the choice of words and words arrangement (syntax) combined together, "just as tone and pitch and timbre make up a particular voice" (Borroway, 2015, p. 48). A voice has the capacity to be "formal or informal; serious or light-hearted; positive or negative; persuasive or argumentative; comical or depressed; witty or straightforward; objective or subjective" (Literary Terms, 2015).

**C- Characterization** is the process by which the writer or student writer presents a character to the reader. Characterization is revealed through two distinct ways: (a) Direct characterization wherein the writer conveys to the reader the nature of the character's personality through the use of a descriptive portrayal, and (b) indirect Characterization wherein the writer provides the readers with certain clues allowing them to

"interpret and draw conclusions about the characters" (Borroway, 2015, p. 95).

**D- Story**, as viewed by Baldick (2001), denotes "any narrative or tale recounting a series of events" (p. 244). He also defined it as "the full sequence of events as we assume them to have occurred in their likely order, duration, and frequency" (p. 244). Borroway (2015) looked at story structure in terms of (1) 'Journey', (2) 'Power Struggle', and (3) 'Connection and Disconnection'. A story is a journey (1) of running into an uncharted realm. When worlds (generations, genders, cultures 'hoods) confront one another, clash is doomed to take place in multiple dimensions. When conflict arises, character or characters are viewed to be governed by connection and disconnection. Change constructs the story when the character (writer) or characters are being challenged. Hence, characters exhibit a deeper understanding of a particular fact, and gain insights into life at numerous levels.

Overall, students, when being introduced to and well instructed about these elements of craft, they can incorporate them in their final material outputs and produce surprising and valuable artefacts. Besides, these qualities of CW are purported to facilitate teachers' evaluation task with respect to assessing students' written works.

### **5. Creative Writing and Translation-Related Research Worldwide**

The relationship between creative writing and translation is a topic that has been continually discussed by few scholars, namely Morley (2007), and Lofferredo and Perteghella (2014). The present study grew out of a broad spectrum of scholars' research in the realm of CW, broadly speaking, and its relationship with translation and language learning, in particular. In his book entitled 'The Cambridge Introduction to Creative Writing', Morley (2007), held the view that translation, pedagogically speaking, plays a crucial role in deepening students' knowledge base about the second or foreign language (SL/FL) and honing their writing skills. He affirmed that this practice is prevalent in writers' circles and should be taken into account while teaching CW to students. In this regard, he stated that student writers or "writers use translation as a means to collect ideas and borrow verbal energy from other writers, and to pay homage to writers in other languages whom they admire" (Morley, 2007, p. 72). At the heart of imitating established writers' artistic productions, the student-writer, as it is the case in the present paper, can potentially produce, by means of

translation, a new version (inspired from the original one), play “variations upon it or use it to create starting points for a wholly independent piece of work” (Morley, 2007, p. 73). It has been evidenced, from Morley’s perspective, that serious writers are open to imitation and allow themselves to be influenced by ancient and highly respected writers provided they have a determined ambition to be creative writers. Accordingly, in addressing student writers with respect to the idea discussed above, he urged them to improve their writing skills by stating that “imitation and influence are not anxieties, they are your early allies. Be open to influence and ready even to steal from other writers” (Morley, 2007, p. 91).

The primary goal behind such practice is to provide students with a writing exercise whereby they can translate, imitate and write, and eventually claim ownership with respect to their end products (Morley, 2007). That is, writing their personal pieces of writing. For a creative writer or student-writer to be more creative and overcome writer’s block, translation is described as “a type of literary super-oxygen, reviving as it does the dead from the cells of their words” (Morley, 2007, p. 74). To achieve this goal, it is a widely held view that writers or student-writers begin with what they possess with regard to their natural language which is used for composing a particular written material output and, then, imitate their best-loved authors. Since imitation is deemed to be a literary tradition amongst writers, most of them “move out of the shadow of their forerunner, and in that moving have imitated the lead-writer’s behaviour” (Morley, 2007, p. 114). In Muldoon’s words, the literary tradition of imitation, after being practiced for a while, make creative writers and student-writers come to realize that “they have found new weather” (cited in Morley, 2007, p. 114). By the phrase ‘new weather’, the author implied that students can develop and find their own writing style, which is notably marked by distinct usage of specific sentence structure, syntax, and voice. These features presumably enable students to produce written works that can be recognizable by means of a general tone or mood.

Loffredo and Perteghella (2014) approached translation, pedagogically speaking, as an essentially creative practice in the teaching learning environment. They claimed that literary translation “can become a valuable and empowering strategy in L2 writing pedagogies” (p. 57). It has been widely reported that if students are exposed to the creative side of translation

in a rather structured way, they become able to develop a deep understanding of the language itself. In their words, “by engaging with both the expressive aspect of creativity and the structured communicative process of translation, L2 learners develop a unique relationship and knowledge of language itself” (Loffredo and Perteghella, 2014, p. 57). Leading two translation workshops in which they focused on the connection between the individual learner and the act of acquiring a FL in a creative fashion, participants were introduced to literary language and were asked to reflect on the practice of literary translation (LT) with no pressure with respect to their end product. Moreover, by means of ‘creative’ LT, students were encouraged to adopt an exploratory approach while being engaged with two language concurrently (Loffredo and Perteghella, 2014).

Results showed that students became “creative and explorative with both L1 and L2 language texts, which ultimately enhanced their confidence with L2” (Loffredo and Perteghella, 2014, p. 57). The authors’ primary concern, in conducting their research, was to examine “how translation can be re-thought as a form of ‘creative writing’...and how the translational process can become a place in which a learner can creatively interact with both L1 and L2” (Loffredo and Perteghella, 2014, p. 58). After leading the two aforementioned workshops of literary creative translation, they arrived at the conclusion that through testing the effectiveness of both languages by dint of translation, a learner was able not only to recognize the value of L1 and L2, but also to grow more at ease with formulating and working with new meanings in the SL (Loffredo and Perteghella, 2014).

In light of this, Loffredo and Perteghella suggested that LT is not “just a useful tool in L2, but it is an activity where creativity occurs and therefore where new meanings, also at intercultural level, are created as a result of dialogic engagement between languages” (Loffredo and Perteghella, 2014, p. 60). Their proposal of a creative translation workshop was meant to facilitate L2 learning and enrich its users based on the idea that translation as an activity “which fosters creativity, not only with regards to a problem-solving process, or to an engagement with the constraints of the source text, but also, and most significantly, with an interrogation and subsequent reconfiguration of the reading and writing experience” (Loffredo & Perteghella, 2014, p. 67). This creative practice is adopted and strongly advocated in the current research

by employing literary writing and PT in the teaching learning setting.

On the whole, considering the studies and reflections put forward above, it can be inferred, based on scholars' viewpoints and research results, that translation, in general, and LT, in particular, is recognized as a useful tool not only in enhancing students' FL learning, but also in developing their CW skills. The arguments and results brought forward by the above mentioned researchers boil down to the very idea that PT, in its relationship with CW and language learning, is impactful and transformative in multiple ways.

#### **6. Pedagogical Translation.**

Pedagogical translation refers to the utilization of translation with the intention of fulfilling pedagogical goals, and it is deemed as an effective tool in teaching and learning foreign languages (Leonardi, 2010). During the process of poring over the literature, it came to light that the concept under discussion has been defined and employed, either literally or using different terms, by a vast horizon of theorists, linguists, teachers and language practitioners. Delisle, Lee-Janke and Cormier (1999) characterized PT as "a mode of translation practiced as an exercise for the purpose of learning a foreign language" (p. 167). Such exercises aim at enhancing students' lexical repertoire and play a facilitative role in promoting a clear understanding of syntactic structures (Delisle, Lee-Janke and Cormier, 1999).

More recently, Laviosa (2014) introduced a new term referring to the same concept under examination. That is, 'pedagogic translation' which is "understood as a translation-based approach to FL pedagogy" (cited in Lucía Pintado Gutiérrez, 2018, pp.4-5).

Given the aforementioned definitions, PT can be described as a mode of translation used in the classroom as a teaching aid to improve students' FL proficiency at the lexical, textual, cultural, semantic, pragmatic and syntactic level. Accordingly, a basic question presents itself, frequently raised by several scholars, should translation, as a pedagogical approach, be employed or discarded from the teaching learning circles?

Continuing to the ongoing heated debate regarding the use of translation in EFL contexts, a number of linguists and theorists succinctly summarized the main reasons behind the fierce opposition against the issue under attention. Malmkjaer (1998) listed the major objections to PT: 1-translation is autonomous and completely

diverges from the four language skills, 2-Translation is time-consuming, 3-translation is not natural, 4-translation misguides and preclude students from processing a given information in the non-native language, 5- Translation is not a reliable assessment measurement of language skills, 6-Translation is strictly suitable for training translators. 7-translation brings about interference.

The negative views outlined above are faced with a paucity of counterarguments supporting translation as an integrating activity in EFL contexts. Bilingual approaches strongly believed that translation is an inherent and cognitive enterprise that is inevitable when learning a foreign language (Leonardi, 2011). It has even been referred to as the "fifth" language skill by some language experts (Newmark 1991; Stibbard 1998; Ross 2000; and Pym and Malmkjaer et al., 2012). Since "translation happens everywhere, all the time, so why not in the classroom" (Duff, 1989, p. 6). This widely held view of translation among its proponents gave rise to a vast horizon of counterarguments as a reaction to the fierce criticisms directed at translation. Schaffner (1998 cited in Inga Dagilie) asserted that translation could basically enhance FL learning in these aspects: 1- To elevate verbal agility, 2- To expand students' lexicon in the second/foreign language, 3-To refine their style, 4-To augment their comprehension of the functionality of languages, 5-To reinforce second/foreign language structures for effective use. The preponderance of these views arguably resonate across a broad spectrum of linguists and researchers' studies (e.g. Godayol, 1998; Folse, 2004; Liao, 2006; Petrocchi, 2006; Machida, 2008; Dagliené, 2012; Buhisan et al., 2024).

Among the contemporary researchers who maintain a strongly conviction in the significance of utilizing translation in FL settings is Leonardi (2010). According to her, translation can be utilized in multiple ways. It can be used as (a) critical reading tool, (b) grammatical analysis and explanation, (c) Enlarging the lexicon and facilitating its assimilation, (d) mediating culture and building up intercultural competence, (e) communication (via both spoken and written modalities).

In light of these voices raised to encourage the use of translation, as a pedagogical approach, in EFL context, there appears that there are a number of reasons why PT should deserve considerable space in the teaching learning circle, and be fully explored and implemented in SL/FL classrooms

#### **7. Methodology**

To systematically engage in the study, a comprehensive methodology was specifically designed to assess the impact of PT on advancing students' CW. Section 3 delineates the methodology employed in the current study, detailing the comparative analysis of students' written productions (personal narratives), the examination of the role of monolingual versus bilingual instruction, and the data-gathering procedure.

### **8. Study Design**

The central aim of the present study is to provide valuable insight into the manner in which EFL students' CW skills may be fostered by PT using nonfiction literary texts as a means of experimenting with this particular approach. Given its exploratory nature, the present study adopted a mixed-methods design. This necessitated approaching the research problem from both a quantitative and qualitative vantage point. The type of mixed methods design utilized in this paper is called explanatory sequential design. It is of considerable importance to note that the present research falls within the scope of quasi-experimental research. Since the present study aims to explore a new area of research that is neither investigated nor implemented at the tertiary level in the Moroccan context, opting for a quasi-experimental design is conceivably "a good way of evaluating new initiatives and programmes in education" (Muijs, 2004, p. 30).

### **9. Context of the Study**

At Ibn Zohr University, Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences in Agadir-Morocco, the researcher of the present study carried out his intervention. The duration of the course was ten weeks, with a two-hour commitment every week. In this CW course, semester one students majoring in English language (the experimental group) were exposed to a wide variety of nonfiction literary texts written by prominent Moroccan authors. These texts were translated by students from Arabic into English. Students were also taught the major qualities upon which creative language is objectively evaluated. These qualities essentially amount to image (literary tropes such as metonymy, synecdoche, litotes, metaphor, simile, hyperbole, personification, alliteration, euphemism, oxymoron and the like), voice, characterization and story. Unlike the experimental group, the control group were traditionally instructed in the same way on the same course without the use of LT. Instead, they were introduced to a wide range of CW activities adopted from Morley (2007) using only the English language. The rationale behind exposing students to LT can be

attributed to the fact that "linguistic creativity seems to fully emerge in literary texts" (Loffredo and Perteghella, 2014, p. 60). Both groups were taught by the researcher himself. Nevertheless, they were assessed by two raters (interjudge) to avoid any potential bias and ensure validity and reliability of the research design.

### **10. Population and Sampling**

In this research, a convenience sampling method was utilized. The population of this study was comprised of two first semester English classes during the academic year 2021/2022. 210 students volunteered to take part in this experiment. There were 120 female and 90 male students who were equally and randomly organised into two separate groups (control and experimental). Their ages varied from 17 to 23, with a mean of 20 years old. To guarantee that the two groups in question are similar at the level of the English language competency and avoid any threats to validity and reliability, a proficiency English language test (CEFR) was assigned to the participants of this study. They sat for the test online and the results of the English level test were automatically emailed to me via the utilized website. In this test, students completed an English level test at [www.examenglish.com/leveltest](http://www.examenglish.com/leveltest), which assessed participants' command of English vocabulary and Grammar.

### **11. The Research Instruments**

The data collection in the present study was undertaken by virtue of two research instruments; a questionnaire and writing tests. Of the many types of scales, the Likert scale questionnaire was used in the present study. The questionnaire items were constructed by the researcher based on reviewing the literature of both PT and CW. As per the types of questions, closed-ended and open-ended questions were designed in the form of Likert-scales to obtain both quantitative and qualitative data. With regards to the writing test, students were presented with three topics to choose from in the pre-intervention stage and three topics in the post-intervention stage. To ensure the validity of the writing task, the topics were mainly adapted from Bryn Donovan's book entitled '5000 Writing Prompts: A Master List of Plots, Ideas, Creative Exercises and More'.

As per grading students' **personal narratives**, the grading-scale of the test was between Zero and 20 points. Two combined analytic rubrics were used. The first analytic rubric was designed by Mitchell Scott (1996) where assessors judged students' performance on the writing test based on four major criteria (10

points). These are Grammar, Expression, organization of ideas and global impression. The second rubric by Mozaaffari (2013) judged students' CW based on four components of creative language (10 points), which are image, voice, characterization and story.

To weigh students' achievement in CW, each image or indicator of voice conveyed in participants' written work was worth 0.25. Full mark (2.5) means that the participant wrote ten images or more in total. Concerning characterization, 1.5 point was awarded for direct revealing of character through one or more of the methods of presenting a character to the reader (character as image, character as voice, character as thought or character as action) and 1 point for indirect characterization, which involves "telling". The use of narrative (story) equals full mark (2.5)

## 12. Course Description

The course was carried out on the basis of three sequential phases, namely, the pre-intervention, during the intervention and the post-intervention phase. The first week covered the pre-testing phase. The last week was dedicated to post-testing which also engaged students in completing the presented questionnaires. Between these two weeks, the intervention took place. During this time, students performed a wide range of translation tasks and CW activities.

On the whole, the course was facilitated by giving equal consideration to theory and practice. As to the theoretical part of the course, the teacher-researcher gave a plethora of presentations on the four components of creative language as previously explained. The presentations also touched on translation strategies that took into account the challenges posed by LT for students. These are Venuti's (1995) Foreignization and Domestication strategies. From a pedagogical perspective, transparency and fluency were crucial in this course due to their pivotal role in reducing the foreignness of the ST while also enhancing the familiarity and recognizability of the text (Munday, 2008). This goes in line with Nida's (1969) 'Formal Equivalence' whose main goal is to reproduce the ST into the TT in a manner that imparts an essence of naturalness.

Concerning the practical part of the course, students were presented with excerpts from nonfiction novels which were written by Moroccan and western writers. For the control group, the selected excerpts were utilized as a framework for executing a broad spectrum of CW activities. Four western writers' work were curated. These are: Earnest Hemingway (A Moveable

Feast), John Berger (About Looking), James Baldwin (Go Tell it on the Mountain) and Mark Twain (The Autobiography of Mark Twain). As per the treatment group, the chosen excerpts were translated by students, as a homework assignment, and discussed in the class. Accordingly, four Moroccan authors' work were selected.

- Mohamed Achaari: *Al Qowsu wa Alfarasha (The Arch and the Butterfly)*. Winner of the 2011 [Arabic Booker Prize](#)
- Laila Abou Zeid: *Year of the Elephant*
- Tahar Ben Jelloun: *When my Mothers' Memory Falters* (the Prix Goncourt and the International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award).
- Ben sallem Hemich: *Haada Alandalusi*.

It is interesting to note that the underlying rationale behind opting for nonfiction works is attributable to the fact that the path which is usually followed by people who desire to learn to write is nonfiction. (Zinsser, 2006).

## 13. Data Analysis

As the study adopted a mixed-methods design, both quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques were utilized. For the quantitative data collected to answer the initial research question, descriptive statistics were first reported using the mean and the standard deviation of students' CW scores. Thereafter, independent samples t-tests were conducted to compare students' scores in the pre-test and post-test. As for the qualitative data, thematic analysis was employed to address the second research question. Students' responses across all items of the questionnaire were classified into three major themes: a- Students' beliefs on CW, b- The merits of literary translation in higher education, c- The impact of literary translation on CW. As a final point, it must be noted that the aforementioned statistics were generated using SPSS version 25.

## 14. Results

Prior to the research intervention, both the experimental and control groups were tested in CW. The mean score of the control group (see table 1) registered at 11.59 and the standard deviation was 1.39. The mean score of the experimental group (see table 2) amounted to 11.51 with a standard deviation of 1.37.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of performance of the control group in the pretest

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pretest scores	100	9.00	15.00	11.59	1.39
Valid N (listwise)	100				

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of performance of the experimental group in the pre-test

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pretest scores	100	9.50	14.50	11.51	1.37
Valid N (listwise)	100				

After a period of nine weeks, the two groups were tested again. Both groups demonstrated a noticeable improvement in CW. The mean score of the control group (see table 3) in the post-test was 12.94 With a SD of 1.20, while the mean score of the experimental group (see table 4) was 14.08 with a standard deviation of 1.25.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of the Post-test Scores of the Control Group

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Posttest scores	100	10.50	16.00	12.94	1.20
Valid N (listwise)	100				

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of the Post-test Scores of the Experimental Group

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Posttest scores	100	12.00	16.50	14.08	1.25
Valid N (listwise)	100				

In the post-test, the experimental group demonstrated noticeable increase in the scores of the CW test. As shown in Table 4, the mean score shifted from 11.51 (SD<sub>pretest</sub> =1.37) in the pretest to 14.08 in the posttest (SD<sub>posttest</sub> =1.25). The minimum and maximum scores also increased from 9.50 and 14.50 to 12.00 and 16.50, respectively. This indicates that significant progress was observed in the experimental group with regards to CW performance.

As for the control group, the post-test scores shown in table 3 indicate that a moderate degree of progress was achieved in CW after receiving monolingual instruction within the CW course. In the post-test, the mean score of the control group was 12.94 with a standard deviation of 1.20, showing again little variability among the students.

To glean valuable insights from the second research instrument, the distributed questionnaires provided a holistic view of how respondents perceived the effect of PT on their CW. The majority of respondents

expressed positive views in this respect. The results revealed that more than 92% of respondents reported that translating literary texts, for language acquisition purposes, help students to optimize their creative thinking along with the writing skill, to familiarize themselves with a variety of writing styles which can be employed in writing tasks, and develop imagination which is deemed to be a source of creating appealing images and relevant descriptions.

### 15. Discussion

The primary objective of this section is to discuss and interpret the results of the present study. The initial discussion will probe into interpreting the findings pertaining to the first research question which focuses its attention on the impact of PT on students' CW. Thereafter, more emphasis will be placed on the interpretation of the results concerning the second research question which relates to the perceptions of students with regard to the use of translation as a pedagogical approach in bolstering their CW.

#### Question One

A closer look and careful study of the data elicited from the participants involved in the current research revealed that PT had a significant positive impact on students' creative written outputs compared to the conventional method of teaching CW monolingually. Statistical analysis, both descriptively and inferentially, of the mean scores achieved by the experimental and control groups (see Tables 3&4) demonstrated that the experimental group exhibited superior performance over the control one despite the fact that both groups experienced, not in the same degree, a noticeable increase in their writing performance. Thus, we can safely reject the null hypothesis stating that students who study CW by virtue of PT and students who are exposed to monolingually-based CW activities equally score on CW test.

To further explain, interpreting the results, qualitatively, in light of the elicited data via students' written outputs confirmed that remarkable progress occurred in relation to students' performance in CW based on the four qualities of creative language (image, voice, characterization, and story). Needless to say, the frequencies of the qualities of creative language obtained by the experimental group incontestably outnumbered the ones achieved by the control group (see Tables 5 & 6 below).

Table 5. Post-test Frequencies of Qualities of Creative Language of the Experimental Group

Posttest	N	Image	Voice	Characterization	Story
Valid N	100	560	435	130	100

Table 6. Post-test Frequencies of Qualities of Creative Language of the Control Group

Posttest	N	Image	Voice	Characterization	Story
Valid N	100	520	401	125	100

To describe in more detail, in the pre-intervention stage, the frequencies of creative language criteria indicated that both groups displayed indistinguishable level of writing performance. Conversely, in the post-intervention stage, both the experimental and the control groups experienced, with varying degrees, an increase in their writing performance, which is evidenced by an exponential surge at the level of the frequencies of the qualities of creative language. Despite their significant progress, the experimental group displayed more numerous instances of creativity, which was perceptibly demonstrated in tables 5 & 6 presented above.

During the process of scrutinizing the participants' work, it became apparent that the experimental group outmatched the control group in reference to three main areas of creativity. These were image, voice and characterization. Consequently, the aforementioned criteria of creative language had a significant impact on the quality of the story. To illustrate, a number of examples, drawn from participants' written work, can be succinctly provided in this respect.

To begin, image was presented in two distinct ways (a-concrete significant details and b-literary tropes). The first method can be demonstrated as follows: a- "the smell of soil and the sound of dry leaves filling up my senses" (image depicting something that can be smelled and heard), b- "spring breeze started brushing hair out of my face" (image that can be seen), c- "an unusual humming sound vibrated in the air" (image that can be heard).

The second method was conveyed through literary tropes, namely personification, simile, metaphor, and hyperbole, which were predominantly employed by the participants. One instance of personification is presented as follows: "mountains were waving their colourful hands to me".

The second literary trope was simile. The latter can be demonstrated as follows: a- "the rest of the pool was as clear as the cellophane".

Concerning metaphor, a representation of this can be put forward as follows: a- "the sky was darker than the darkest thing ever".

Moreover, the fourth figure of speech pertains to hyperbole. An illustration of this can be observed in the ensuing sentence: a- "if looks could kill I would be dead now".

The second quality of CW is voice. The best portrayal of voice can be demonstrated in the ensuing example: a- "the rustling of the fields synchronized with the singing birds to compose spring's melody". It is worth mentioning that voice in this example was empowered by the alliterative words (*synchronized/singing/spring*). An in-depth examination of participants' pieces of writing, revealed that two methods were used in presenting characters to the reader. These are indirect characterization and direct characterization. An example of indirect characterization can be illustrated as follows: "I see a woman in her thirties". The second way of presenting characters was direct characterization. Three methods were identified. A-Character as thought (e.g. "he was talking to himself about the trials and tribulations of work") is a way to present characters through what the character thinks about before bringing change. B-character as action (e.g. "I glimpsed my mother preparing breakfast") is a way to present characters through what the character does as an action. C-character as image (e.g., "the whole family, dark-skinned, was fascinated by the beauty and charm of the city") is a way to present characters through vivid clues, such as the way he/she laughs, dresses, eats, moves or what the tone of his/her voice is or what the texture of his/her skin is and the like.

The fourth criterion of creative language is story. During the course of poring over participants' written work, it was brought to the forefront of attention that the vast majority of them were able to explicitly narrate their stories. It is vital to note that participants' narrative improved and was essentially empowered by the quality of language manifested in the use of imagery in a rather expressive and vivid manner.

From here, it can be inferred that the outstanding performance in CW can be attributed to PT wherein a chorus of literary nonfiction excerpts were utilized and translated into English compared to monolingual method of teaching CW. In line with what has been stated in the literature both in the conceptual theory and empirical studies, translation as a pedagogical approach, hence, presumably inspired imitation

(Morley, 2007), and fostered students' confidence with regard to the TL (Loffredo and Perteghella, 2014). These clearly observed gains manifested themselves in the achieved scores and the quality of the pieces of CW carried out by the participants in the experimental group, more importantly, in the post-treatment phase. The results derived from the present study unquestionably tie well with the studies referenced above. To begin, Loffredo and Perteghella (2014) found out that students, after benefiting from literary translation-based workshop, developed creativity and exploration skills in both the SL and the TL, which ultimately enhanced their confidence in writing. The researchers arrived at the conclusion that translation, pedagogically, was an experiential, transformative, explorative CW practice. Therefore, the first-hand experience with the complex process of translating and writing various texts allow the participants to experience, explore and transform into a better creative translator and writer (Loffredo and Porteghella, 2014). Overall, these findings were in accordance with the results reported in the present study. Students' confidence and exploration skills as propounded by Loffredo and Perteghella (2014) were manifested in students' outstanding talent for linguistic expression. They discernibly created attention-grabbing imagery, accurate collocations, and versatile themes which were evidenced by the mounting quality of their personal narratives. Exploration skills can also be explained in students' endeavour to find the appropriate equivalent, employing one of the LT strategies mentioned previously. They apparently engaged, consciously or unconsciously, in a contrastive analysis process (Robert Lado, 1957) which must have resulted in deepening participants' knowledge about the SL and the TL.

Along the same line, Morely (2007) posited that translation is an efficient tool through which students can potentially expand their knowledge base about the SL or FL, hone their writing skills and adeptly emulate the work of other writers. When comparing our results to what was stated in the literature, it must be pointed out that through the prism of imitation and influence as set forth by Morley (2007), students' personal narratives demonstrated multitudinous instances of detailed descriptions of places, things, and people inspired from some of the writers studied (such as Leila Abouzeid, Bensalem Hemich, Mohammed Achaari) whose artistic work were analysed and translated into English during the intervention stage. An instance of

this can be briefly exemplified as follows: (Place description: *The lonely street was on the verge of being raised to the sky* (imitating Taher Ben Jelloun)/ Things description: *The sky was darker than the darkest thing ever* (imitating Leila Abouzeid)/ people description: *They took my mother's kindness for weakness* (imitating Taher Ben Jelloun). Besides, imitation and influence were apparent in the manner whereby verbal energy was borrowed (creating specific images and voice) and ideas were collected by participants from certain writers included in the current study.

#### **Question Two**

The second research question raised in the present study concerned itself with examining students' perceptions of the use of translation as a pedagogical approach in enhancing their CW. The quantitative and qualitative data elicited through students' questionnaires highlighted that the vast majority of EFL respondents (97%) demonstrated firm belief in the impact of translation as a pedagogical approach on bolstering students' CW. However, a few respondents indicated that the relationship between PT and CW is questionable and disputable. In this regard, the degree of uncertainty or disagreement reached 2.5% at its most.

The data elicited from the respondents indicated that most of the respondents affirmed that the more students translate the better their CW becomes. They also stated that both the student-translator and the creative writer have one thing in common which is being keen on making their texts colourful and graceful. This viewpoint clearly justifies the respondents' inclination regarding the inextricable relationship between PT and CW. To end with, CW was reported to make writing easier, help students in their would be endeavour to write their research papers and overcome the writer's block, which students grapple with especially during exam day.

Furthermore, agreement and disagreement ratios displayed in the respondents' answers distinctly demonstrated that they also expressed awareness of some of the features characterizing CW that need to be taken into account while learning how to write creatively such as imagery, style, imitating and emulating existing models, and the use of strong descriptive verbs instead of weak verbs (average 92%). Additionally, the respondents' answers to the presented statements regarding the role of LT, being the medium through which the experiment was conducted, in enhancing students' CW were highly

positive (average 97%). The largest portion of the respondents quantitatively reported that LT can conceivably enlarge students' lexical repertoire, develop their cultural and linguistic awareness and hone exploration and observation skills. Qualitatively speaking, the respondents, except three of them, reported that LT can be inspirational which is a notion deeply-seated in the literature as propounded by Morley (2007) and Margaret Rogers (2016). Other respondents stated that LT exposes students to a plethora of figures of speech, enriching vocabulary and cultural aspects of the language due to the wealth of Arab literature.

It must be noted that these findings resonated with the ideas put forward by Morley (2007) who strongly advocated the importance of imitation and influence in creating totally independent pieces of CW as discussed previously. Morley (2007) recommended the use of translation in the teaching learning environment encouraging student writers to move from imitation, as a translation exercise, to originality by drawing on works of other prominent writers. Such viewpoint received significant approval by the respondents (average 94%).

Moreover, The use of imagery and the display of a distinctive style, which received higher agreement ratios (average 85%), find plausible explanation in light of the results set forth by Lofferdo and Perteghela (2014). Participants' confidence with the target language was clearly manifested in the use of both imagery (literary tropes and sense-provoking diction) and in the construction of attention-grabbing and readable style which were awarded higher scores in the post-intervention CW test. Not only did participants' scores indicate the utility of PT in its relationship with CW, but their responses via questionnaires did as well. These research instruments explicitly implied accordance, synchrony and conformity of both forms of the data considering the positive views obtained from the respondents' questionnaires.

#### **16. Conclusion**

Altogether, it is self-evident that the results obtained from the present study find plausible explanation in light of the findings of previous studies and the predicated theory that approached CW from PT perspective. The outstanding performance of the experimental group in this study can be interpreted as a good indicator of the effectiveness of PT, through the medium of nonfiction literary translation, in optimizing students' CW. Nevertheless, despite the achieved gains

deeply seated in both the conceptual theory and the present study, a number of empirical studies favoured the monolingual method of teaching foreign languages and discarded the bilingual-based instruction in the educational setting. These studies explicitly undermined its utility and usefulness, which makes the issue of using translation as a pedagogical approach in the educational setting unsettled, more debatable and researchable.

In view of the results of the study, a series of recommendations for further research can be put forward. Although this study explored the impact of PT on enhancing students' CW, it would be worthwhile to apply the same study in a different locale on other language skills, such as writing, speaking, and reading. It would also be more interesting to investigate the effect of PT on high school students' foreign language learning in general.

Lastly, the present study explored nonfiction literary texts as the fundamental framework of investigating the effect of PT on students' CW. Thus, exploring other writing genres such as fiction is necessary to validate or refute the results of the current empirically-based study.

#### **17. Recommendations**

In view of the results of the study, a series of recommendations for further research can be put forward. First, it would be beneficial to incorporate creative writing as part of the translation courses in university foreign-language curricula. Second, at the sample size level, it would be more beneficial to incorporate a larger sample, in future studies with the aim of obtaining more generalizable findings. Three or more universities across Morocco or elsewhere can be involved in the experiment. Furthermore, the current study might be replicated with students belonging to other instructional levels and can also be conducted with the support of Aid professors. Adding to this, a switch-over-design can be operated to allow researchers compare the merits of PT by virtue of switching the experimental group and the control group within a particular time frame. Having done this, the researcher can weigh off and compare the gains of the employed method or variable more profoundly. Furthermore, it would be worthwhile to apply the same study in a different locale on other language skills, such as writing, speaking, and reading.

#### **18. Limitations**

The present study has relatively a small number of limitations. To begin with, the sample size involved in

the study at hand may not be representative of all Moroccan English major university students. Other students belonging to different public universities in Morocco could have been included in the study for the purposes of obtaining larger sample and more robust results. The second limitation has to do with administering the CW test being a crucial instrument in determining participants' writing performance. Test stability-test and retest- was not implemented in the present study. That is, the research participants were not presented with the same test at two different times with the aim of comparing the consistency of scores over a considerable period of time. Moreover, the present study is limited to one specific genre of CW, namely nonfiction. Other genres could have been included in the experiment, such as fiction in an effort to open up the sphere of creativity for the participants to a larger extent

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