

TRANSLATOR EDUCATION WITH UNIVERSITY EXTRA MURAL PROJECTS: LITERARY TRANSLATION PRACTICE

A FORMAÇÃO DE TRADUTORES NA EXTENSÃO UNIVERSITÁRIA: A PRÁTICA DA TRADUÇÃO LITERÁRIA



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Abstract: The extra mural project “Translator education: literary translation practice” (FORTRALIT) started in 2017 at the State University of Rio de Janeiro (UERJ). It aims at promoting the practice of literary translation through two main actions: the translation of reports written by professional (literary) translators whose subject matter should be their own professional practice, and the (re)translation of literary texts. The article intends to describe the FORTRALIT Project and to briefly expose some of the activities developed in the scope of the Project. In addition, it intends to detail a task carried out in the scope of the Portuguese/English language pair by students of the Language/Literature course, and to report the views of one of the trainees. The pedagogical basis of the FORTRALIT project encompasses discussions about the training of translators as well as researchers’ views on retranslation and its use for teaching literary translation. FORTRALIT favours the teaching of translation as advocated by Hurtado Albir (2005, 2020), in other words, based on the development of (sub)translation skills and on the focus on tasks. In the context of FORTRALIT, the task of (re)translation (a “reading exercise”, “stealth retranslation” or “retranslation proper”) was chosen in these first years of activity. The task seems useful as one offering both a reflection on the “incompleteness” inherent in the translation process - by comparing various translations, for example - and a practical translation exercise followed by reflection and discussion based on a comparison with models that would be “canonical”. The results point to an acceptable retranslation, one that is possible among others. We highlight, based on the completion of the task and the comments of the trainees, the use of this instrument as an important one for the teaching of translation. Not only can it promote interaction between partners who work (or have worked) in the fulfillment of the same task, but it can also serve as an instrument to promote retrospective reflection on a task which has already been carried out.

Key words: Training. Literature. Retranslation. Translation didactics.

Resumo: O projeto de extensão “Formação de Tradutores: Prática da Tradução Literária” (FORTRALIT) teve início em 2017 na Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (UERJ), buscando contemplar a experiência da tradução literária via duas ações principais: a tradução e/ou versão de relatos escritos por tradutores (literários) profissionais cujo tema deve ser a própria prática, e a retradução de textos literários. O artigo pretende apresentar o projeto FORTRALIT, expor brevemente algumas das atividades desenvolvidas no âmbito do projeto em geral, detalhar uma tarefa conduzida no âmbito do par linguístico português/inglês, por estagiários alunos do curso de



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Letras, habilitação Inglês/Literaturas e apresentar a visão de uma das estagiárias desta habilitação. A base pedagógica do projeto FORTRALIT engloba discussões acerca da formação de tradutores e tradutoras bem como a visão do projeto sobre a retradução e sobre seu uso para o ensino da tradução literária. O projeto foi concebido para seguir a didática da tradução tal como preconizada por Hurtado Albir (2005, 2020), isto é, partindo do desenvolvimento de subcompetências tradutórias dos aprendizes, tendo por base o enfoque por tarefas. No âmbito do FORTRALIT foi escolhida, nesses primeiros anos de atividade, a tarefa da retradução (exercício de leitura, velada ou propriamente dita) como o instrumento capaz de oferecer ao mesmo tempo uma reflexão sobre a “incompletude” inerente ao processo tradutório - ao se comparar várias traduções, por exemplo – e um exercício prático de tradução seguido de reflexão e discussão a partir da comparação com modelos que seriam “canônicos”. Os resultados apontam para a visão de uma retradução relevante, possível entre as tantas outras possíveis. Destacamos, a partir da realização da tarefa e dos comentários dos estagiários, o uso deste instrumento como importante aliado para o ensino de tradução, já que não só pode promover a interação entre parceiros que trabalham (trabalharam) na execução de uma mesma tarefa, como também pode servir como instrumento promotor da reflexão retrospectiva acerca de uma tarefa já executada.

Palavras-chave: Educação e treinamento. Literatura. Retradução. Didática da tradução. Tarefa.

2 The extra mural project “Translator education: literary translation practice” (FORTRALIT) started in 2017 at the Rio de Janeiro State University (UERJ). It aims to promote the practice of literary translation through two main actions: the translation of reports written by professional (literary) translators whose subject matter should be their own professional practice, and the retranslation of literary texts. We would like to explain from the very start that for the purposes of this extra mural project, literature is seen in a more comprehensive way, since it includes, “alongside poems, novels, short stories and dramatic works, the immense domain of narrative written for public or personal use, essays, and reflections”, texts that expand our universe, and prompt us to “see other ways to conceive and organize it” (Todorov, 2007, p. 17).

The issue that motivates us is the concern, regarding the scientist’s role as disseminator of knowledge that helps build some practices in ordinary life that seem to contribute to discrediting the translator’s craft or the complexity that is involved in the activity of translation, in general, and literary translation, in particular, in the minds of the less advanced population. The project relies on the participation of students of the Languages and Literatures Course (English/Literatures, Portuguese/French, Portuguese/Italian, Portuguese/German, Portuguese/Spanish qualifications), under the supervision of professors from each one of the qualifications.

This article intends to describe the FORTRALIT project, to briefly expose some of the activities developed within the scope of project, to detail a task conducted within the Portuguese/English language pair, done by trainees of the Languages and Literatures course, English/Literature qualification, and to present an account written by of one of the trainees of this qualification. The article is organized in five sections, besides this introduction, arranged

as follows: the first section describes the project, presents the reasons for its creation considering not only the environment of the Institute of Languages and Literatures of UERJ, but also of the city of Rio de Janeiro, in particular. In the same section, we also introduce the general and specific objectives of FORTRALIT. The second section introduces its pedagogical basis, which involves discussions about translator education as well as the participants' view of retranslation and its use for the teaching of literary translation. The third section presents a retranslation task carried out within the scope of the project by the English trainees. The fourth section presents an account written by one of the FORTRALIT project trainees, in which she reports her impressions about the first retranslation task. In the fifth section, we present our final considerations, recovering the discussions generated throughout the text and indicating the future perspectives of the project.

The FORTRALIT Extra Mural Project: Brief Description, Justification and Objectives

The FORTRALIT extra mural project brings together seven professors and a PhD student of the Institute of Languages and Literatures (ILE) of UERJ, several (occasional) volunteers and five trainees, who are also scholarship holdersⁱ, and attend Portuguese/French, Portuguese/German, Portuguese/Spanish, English/and respective Literatures qualifications at ILE, in addition to one professor of Languages and Literatures of Universidade Federal Fluminense (UFF). The trainees who want to become scholarship holders are selected every two years by each one of the professors. The criteria for selection are established by the professors and are based on the specificities of the tasks to be performed within the scope of FORTRALIT. In general, the professors also consider the performance of the trainees in the curriculum disciplines, namely: Portuguese, French, German, Spanish and English languages and cultures. Finally, an interview is conducted so that those students interested in the project can reveal their main reasons of interest.

It is important to clarify that the selection of the trainees will only happen after the granting of EIC (Internal Additional Training) scholarships is approved by CETREINA, the Training and Scholarship Department of PR1 (Pro-Rectorate for Undergraduate Affairs), or by DEPEXT (Community Affairs Department of the Pro-Rectorate for Community Affairs and Culture). During the duration of the EIC scholarship, s/he will perform “supervised tasks aimed at additional training”ⁱⁱⁱ. The Community Affairs scholarship is also intended to “deepen participation in university life; encourage the development of University strategic programs

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and projects; indirectly stimulate the improvement of undergraduate education, through the multiplier effect of activating a group of students together with the faculty and the student body; stimulate the stay of the student in the University, reducing drop-out rate”ⁱⁱⁱ. Given the relevance of translation in all times and in today’s (pandemic) world, in particular, we believe that FORTRALIT offers many opportunities that add to the student’s academic life, since the Institute of Languages and Literatures does not offer the Translation course. In addition, the project proves strategic for UERJ in that it helps students’ education, develops critical awareness, stimulates the interaction among students, teachers, and authors of various types of texts.

The objectives at stake in this project express its involvement with two realities faced by the professors involved with it and both are related to the position of these professors, as agents of the area of knowledge in which they act, in the face of what they recognize as society’s interests, needs and/or benefits. One of these realities concerns the “inside” population (more advanced students) that the project welcomes, referring to students that are familiar with the areas of languages, literatures and translation, who have already studied or are studying Languages and Literatures at UERJ or other universities, located in Rio de Janeiro and surroundings, which do not offer courses in Literary Translation. At UERJ, for example, the number of students interested in literary translation is significant. We learned that because they come to us to share their interest in literary translation, in particular, and to look for information about the opportunities for developing the skills to do this activity.

Antunes and Pessoa (2018) edited a publication that offers an excellent overview of the activities and projects related to translation carried out at ILE/UERJ. Among them, many focus on literary translation; e.g. Antunes (2018) analyzes the role of Latin American self-translators in disseminating their own works in English-speaking countries; Arêas (2018) describes the work of translating and updating Italian literary texts from the 12th to the 18th centuries; Braga (2018) describes the work of translating classical Greek at UERJ; Moura and Bolacio (2018) describe the project of translation of the German Legends of the Brothers Grimm with the active participation of the undergraduates of the Portuguese/German qualification and Valente (2018) discusses the reception of the translation of Afro-Diachorical literature in the United States, France and Brazil.

Therefore, it should be noted that although there is no translator education course at UERJ, traditionally famous for its excellent teacher education courses, there is a wide range of

activities carried out by researchers that deal with both translation theory and practice. Many students thus find in these projects a field of theoretical-practical learning in the subject of translation.

The other reality that we face concerns the so called “outside” population, or less advanced in the field of Languages and Literatures, those interested in other fields of knowledge: the possibility of knowing the particularities of this subject and the very social and instructional value of these details. We refer to those individuals who devote themselves to the activity of translation in an independent way, who may benefit from an opportunity of more direct contact with the academic community and of practical experience of the systematicity proper to the way they habitually develop and operate their activities, that is, with rigorous resource to theoretical and methodological parameters.

As general objectives, the FORTRALIT extra mural project aims at the democratization of the access to literary translation courses, whose offer is today strongly limited to private institutions in the city of Rio de Janeiro, in particular; and, the popularization of the teaching and practice of literary translation, facilitating the access of students who are familiar with the courses of Languages and Literatures, of UERJ or other universities, individuals less “advanced” in the field of Languages and Literatures and individuals who devote themselves to the activity of translation independently. Among its more specific objectives are: the dissemination among the target audience, already immersed or less advanced in the discussions proper to the theoretical-methodological universe of the Courses of Languages and Literatures, or of other Courses in the field of Humanities, of specialized discourses about literary translation and the demands involved in it, in order to promote engagement with these discourses; contribute so that individuals who are interested in pursuing their education in the area of literary translation may have opportunities to experience the particularities of this area and to broaden their understanding of the various aspects involved in this type of translation; and, finally, to contribute so that those who devote themselves to translation independently can have resources that help them have a more systematic and informed practice of literary translation.

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The FORTRALIT Extra Mural Project: The Pedagogical Basis

The teaching/didactics of translation is an extremely important topic for FORTRALIT and is inextricably intertwined with the notion of translation competence (henceforth TC) seen as “a specialist knowledge, integrated by a set of knowledge and skills that singularizes the translator and differentiates him/her from other bilingual and non-translator speakers” (Hurtado Albir, 2005, p. 19). Since the work of Schäffner and Adab (2000), *Developing translation competence*, TC has been discussed more systematically by researchers in the field of translation. However, as Gonçalves (2015, p. 115) states, “(...) there are still few [initiatives] that have promoted a more direct and substantial dialogue with the didactics of translation”.

One of the great exponents of the discussion on TC is undoubtedly Amparo Hurtado Albir, principal researcher of the Procés d'Adquisició de la Competència Traductora i Avaluació group (PACTE) of the Autonomous University of Barcelona, who has greatly contributed to the dissemination of the discussion on this subject in Brazil. In her article “*A aquisição da competência tradutória: aspectos teóricos e didáticos*”, Hurtado Albir (2005) had described, in a very detailed way, besides psychophysiological components, the five necessary sub-competences necessary for a trainee-translator. They are still present in her article of 2020 (Albir et al., 2020):

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1. Bilingual sub-competence.
2. Extralinguistic sub-competence.
3. Sub-competence of knowledge about translation.
4. Instrumental sub-competence.
5. Strategic sub-competence.
- 6.

Gonçalves (2015, pp. 118-121) presents the sub-competences necessary for the acquisition of TC based on Gonçalves and Machado's work (2006), which was even more detailed. His work includes 10 sub-components for the TC:

1. Pragmatic / strategic capacity.
2. Linguistic / metalinguistic ability in the working languages.
3. Sociolinguistic/ stylistic/ textual/ discursive ability in the working languages.
4. Ability in the cultures of the working languages.
 - 4.a) Ability in general culture.

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5. Thematic capacity.
 - 5.a) Terminological knowledge.
 6. Theoretical and meta-theoretical knowledge about translation.
 7. Ability to use technologies applied to translation.
 7. a) Research skills.
 8. Socio-interactive / professional skills.
 9. Psychophysiological factors.
 - 9.a) Emotional/subjective factors.
 10. Knowledge / skills not directly related.

However, in her article published in 2020, Hurtado Albir again describes the five sub-competences defined in 2005 by the PACTE group, but introduces the six specific skills to be developed in translator training courses:

1. Methodological and strategic competence.
2. Contrastive competences.
3. Extralinguistic competences.
4. Professional skills.
5. Instrumental skills.
6. Textual skills.

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Although the five or six sub-competences described by Hurtado Albir (2020) are fewer than the 10 sub-components identified by Gonçalves (2015), we believe that the two models are comparable. In addition, they generally cover the same elements that both researchers consider essential for the training of a translation professional.

Gonçalves's work (2015) aimed to analyze the curricula of translation courses or of courses that in some way aimed to train translators in Brazil starting from the capacities, skills, factors and knowledge that he presented. Gonçalves did not analyze undergraduate courses or other degree in Languages and Literatures that did not offer theoretical or practical translation disciplines, even though their descriptions show that college graduates would be qualified to translate. Here we will not go through the analysis Gonçalves presented. However, we do believe it deserves all our recognition.

However, since FORTRALIT is registered and implemented at a university (UERJ) that does not offer a degree in translation, but only two translation electives^{iv}, we find it interesting to investigate the extent to which this project can collaborate to foster the acquisition of the sub-components described by Gonçalves (2015) and the skills portrayed by Hurtado Albir (2020), both for UERJ undergraduates and the interested audience made up of those who do not study or work at UERJ, since FORTRALIT is an extra mural project.

In our opinion, the task suggested within the scope of the Project, which will be reported later in this article, contributes to the development - if not of all, then at least in part - of the aforementioned abilities, skills, knowledge, and competences since it suggests reading and theoretical discussion on the translation that precedes and follows translation practice through translation tasks. This is an attempt to offer room for theoretical reflection as well as translation practice, although we are aware that we cannot cover all the skills that a training course would in fact offer.

To foster the desired sub-competences, we believe that the task-based approach, derived from foreign language teaching didactics and advocated by Hurtado Albir (2005, 2020), is the methodology to be followed and is, therefore, the basis of the work done by the participants of the FORTRALIT project, as defined below:

(...) taking up the characteristics of the task according to Zanón (1990), we define the translation task as a unit of work, representative of translation practice, intentionally aimed at learning to translate and designed with a specific objective, structure and a work sequence. (Hurtado Albir, 2005, p. 263)

The type of task that is at the heart of the project is retranslation, which will be detailed below.

Retranslation and Its Use as a Task for the Teaching of Translation

Our proposal is inspired in the argument presented by André Lefevere in his “Translation and Comparative Literature: The Search for the Centre” (1991). In the article, Lefevere points out that “[older] and/or different translations of one and the same text can be very illuminating” (1991, p. 130). In fact, we believe that retranslation, taken as “the act of translating a work that has previously been translated into the same language or the result of

such an act, i.e. the retranslated text itself” (Gürçaglar, 2009, p. 236), is also an “exponent of the historical relativity of translation” (Desmidt, 2009, p. 670). In other words, we can assume that retranslations generally represent the demands of the socio-historical-cultural contexts for which they are intended.

When approaching literary translation, Antoine Berman (1990, p. 1) points to incompleteness as a characteristic of translation and introduces retranslation as a possible attempt at its conclusion. For Berman, and his so-called retranslation hypothesis, the first translations tend to domesticate the text, approaching the target audience. Subsequent translations, on the other hand, go the opposite way, and foreignize the translated text, approaching the original text, its form and style (Gürçaglar, 2009, p. 234). In other words, we can also affirm that the first translations seek the acceptance of the reading public for which they are intended and, therefore, pursue familiarity with that public, naturalizing the translated text. Once accepted by this reader, established in the foreign literary market, retranslations can make their way back, striving for intimacy with the original, distancing themselves from the target audience. However, “a number of case studies have challenged the earlier hypothesis by demonstrating that the first translations are not always domesticating, and neither are all subsequent ones progressively more foreignizing” (Koskinen & Paloposki, 2003, p. 22).

Our suggestion is also based on the one presented by Jonathan Evans in his “Translation as a Critical Practice: Using Retranslation when Teaching Translation” (2014, pp. 199-209). In the article, Evans explains his suggestion for teaching translation in which he integrates theory and practice through the use of retranslations. First, however, he points out the marginal position that the concept occupies within Translation Studies. The researcher mentions the few articles on the issue, the focus on the areas of literature and theater, and the rare forays into the field of philosophy, scientific articles and institutional documents (Evans, 2014, p. 200). Evans also describes the uncommon use of retranslation tasks in the translation teaching/learning process in the main manuals and reference books used for translator training published between 1992 and 2012. As an example, we can mention *Traduzir com autonomia: estratégias para o tradutor em formação* (2000), a widely used material in the Brazilian translation teaching context. There are no activities, among the many in the volume, that suggest retranslation as a strategy. However, the task of retranslation can be employed, since the book brings the key to exercises, including translated texts.

Evans describes three retranslation exercises he used for (literary) translator training. The first exercise is, as the author himself states, “a reading exercise” (Evans, 2014, p. 204) in which students read and then comment on two (or more) different translations of the same source text. The teacher’s goal in this case is to make students evaluate the translations and thus develop their understanding of the translation process. In addition, students also “practice describing and analysing translations using relevant metalanguage” (Evans, 2014, p. 204), since the students should read, compare the texts, find the differences between the translations, and discuss their possible causes. The discussion is also the key to the correlation between theory and practice and its depth will depend on the learners’ level, the time available for the activity and it may even lead to research on the period when the retranslations were written, or on the translators, possible prefaces, postfaces and/or published interviews. In other words, comparative (textual) analysis can become a historical and sociological analysis (Evans, 2014, p. 205).

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The second activity is called “stealth retranslation” (Evans, 2014, p. 205), because first the students do not know that they will be asked to translate a text that has been translated and published previously. They are simply presented with a text for translation. Once the task is completed, students should compare their own translations with those of their classmates, note down the different solutions and, while discussing the solutions found, they may improve their understanding of the text read and translated. It is not new that “giving peer feedback can help increase students’ own competence” (Biggs & Tang, 2011, p. 147). As we have discussed previously in research on written feedback in essays by learners of English as a foreign language, “reflecting on what is done seems to be the most efficient technique for learning” (Antunes, 1994, p. 208). By providing feedback while discussing translation solutions, in a way, learners recreate the translation process, remembering, justifying, and explaining their own choices to their peers, thus increasing their specific skills and their TC while developing critical awareness of their own practice. It is also important to point out, once again, that the teaching of translation should “focus on the translation process” (Hurtado Albir, 2015, p. 258), as Jean Delisle (1980) had already argued. We emphasize that providing feedback in pairs or small groups can be a very productive strategy if we want to keep the focus on the process of learning. We also emphasize that, in case the activity is carried out in class, it is the translation teacher’s role to act as a facilitator by carefully monitoring the activity, encouraging the participation of learners, acting as a mediator, without acting as the only possible owner of the

correct answer or, in other words, the truth. Once the process is finished, students will be ready to contrast the result of their work with the published translation. Evans states that after all the collaborative discussion and analysis process, “they are less likely to accept the published translation as the definitive version. They can treat it as just one of several possible solutions” (Evans, 2014, p. 205). And they can treat their own translation as another possibility.

Evans highlights two potential difficulties of this type of activity: the possible short period of time available for comparative analysis between the texts translated by the students and then between the translation and the original; and, the “second possible difficulty may appear if students do not feel they can criticize a published text” (Evans, 2014, p. 205). To deal with these, Evans suggests that students produce the translations as homework or that comments be posted on a website or in a virtual learning environment (Evans, 2014, p. 205). As for the authority of the published translation, it is expected that the presentation of the published translation after the students have already translated and carefully analyzed their work will show that they are also able to produce relevant solutions (Evans, 2014, p. 205).

The third type of activity is called “retranslation proper” (Evans, 2014, p. 205), since the students now receive a text, and they are asked to produce a different version from the one they received. Evans considers this activity authentic, since it is “something that translators often need to do, especially in literary translation” (Bellos, 2011, p. 307). The difference between the activity suggested by Evans and professional practice is in the comments that the students should make. Such comments should address the differences between the translation learners produced and the published translation. It is quite relevant that Evans suggests the use of essays that can serve as a reference for the observations students should produce. Among the suggested essays are those by Marilyn Booth (2008), Cristina Marinetti and Margaret Rose (2013) and Clive Scott (2006). Evans turns the activity of commenting into a critical dialogue between students, professionals, and translation researchers. In addition, Evans (2014, p. 207) also suggests that the retranslation activity itself become projects in which the learners themselves look for the text they wish to retranslate and comment on.

FORTRALIT: A Stealth Retranslation Task

Since it started in 2017, events and activities have been held so that the stated objectives of FORTRALIT could be achieved. Thus, the project periodically offered the event “Conversations with Literary Translation Professionals”, which included the participation of researchers, literary translation professionals, and participants of the “inside” (“more advanced”) and “outside” (“less advanced”) communities in the field of Languages and Literatures.

In addition to the events, volunteers and scholarship holders carry out the task of retranslation of literary texts more frequently. The first text selected for the “stealth retranslation” (Evans, 2014, p. 205) was *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007) / *A Cidade do Sol* (2007) by the Afghan writer Khaled Hosseini, translated into Portuguese by Maria Helena Rouanet. The students were supposed to translate the first chapter of the book without having read or analysed the chapter already translated into Portuguese.

It is important to point out that since the first meetings we had been able to observe that it was necessary, in the first place, to deconstruct practices and convictions that “discredit the translator’s craft” and translation itself. In our meetings we observed how the learners, students of the English/Literatures qualification, expressed the preference for the original version of the books, written in English. The translated novel, according to the trainees of the project presented here, is usually chosen for reading if, and only if, they cannot afford the original, because these (imported) originals are too expensive. Their statements highlighted the almost total lack of confidence, so to speak, in translation as a possibility of access to novels and poems or, in other words, to meaning. The access could only be achieved if these novels and poems were read in the English language, in particular, even if these students were there, showing, in principle, interest in literary translation training. We highlight, then, the relevance of the FORTRALIT project for the “inside” community: the activity proved thus relevant because it generated, in the first meetings, the debate about the importance of the role of translation for the circulation of literature. Based on the results of this activity, I suggested the reading of the article entitled “The circulation of Brazilian literature in the United States: the case of the Brazilian literature series in translation by Tagus Press” (2018, p. 513-528), which discusses the case of the university publishing house that published titles of Brazilian literature selected by a professor at a university in Rio, known in the international university community. It is interesting and surprising to see the role of American university publishers in the diffusion of Brazilian literature and the almost total lack of knowledge that Brazilian students of

English/Literatures at the UERJ Institute of Languages and Literatures, campus Maracanã, have of this role.

In addition, the activity generated debate about the pedagogy of literature and, especially, the use of translated texts in the classroom. There is “a general tendency, in both teaching and publications, to elide the status of translated texts as translated, to treat them as texts originally written in the translating language” (Venuti, 1998, p. 89), one of the translation scandals, discussed by Lawrence Venuti. Although several years have passed since the publication of Venuti’s text, we still notice in these students, literary translation trainees, the lack of critical awareness about the need for different pedagogical treatment of the original text and the translated text. These are surprising discoveries, in a certain way, given the interest shown, even before the beginning of the implementation of the project, in the task of literary translation.

Considering the task of “stealth retranslation” (Evans, 2014, p. 205), some significant aspects have been observed. Students worked individually at home and, before the first face-to-face meeting, each one sent their translation by email to the teacher who analysed each one of them. In addition, the trainees exchanged their translation work by email and their impressions and comments on their partner’s translations. Detailed feedback, however, was given in class after the volunteers and the scholarship holder exchanged their impressions about their translation strategies and choices. The process of comparison between the translations yielded observations manually recorded by the trainees’ supervisor. For practical reasons, in this article we will focus on one example that provided them the opportunity for the development of extralinguistic sub-competence, sub-competence of knowledge about translation and instrumental sub-competence (Hurtado Albir, 2020, p. 380). We believe that our choice demonstrates, for example, that it is necessary for trainees interested in literary translation, who attend the English/Literature qualification, to build a more accurate perception of what it means “to know the meaning of a word” and “to know how to translate a word”. Let’s look at the example in italics: “the hand-painted *finches* and chrysanthemums” (Hosseini, 2007, p. 3, emphasis added). One of the trainees chose “tentilhões” to replace the term “finches”. The argument for the option “tentilhões” is the meaning in the dictionary and the preference for fidelity to the original text. Some familiarity with the traditional theoretical discourse of translation studies seemed evident here, i.e., some knowledge about translation. None of the trainees showed, on the other hand, any concern with co-text^v, since the language

of the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* uses terms regarded as “foreign” to English, but natural to the original language spoken by the characters. To fill the text of *A Cidade do Sol* with other unusual terms in the Portuguese language - such as “têtilhões” - would not seem an adequate strategy, as it could cause the presence of too many unfamiliar cultural references. That was the right occasion for the beginning of the discussion about the sub-competence of knowledge about translation, extralinguistic sub-competence and instrumental sub-competence, since one cannot discuss the propositional meaning of the term alone, or “the result of the relationship between the word/enunciation and what it refers to or describes in a real or imaginary world, conceived by the speakers of the particular language that belongs to that word/enunciation” (Alves et al., 2000, p. 89), but it is also necessary, especially, to analyse the appropriateness of its use given the co-text of the novel. In other words, it is necessary to develop the sub-competence of knowledge about literary translation. In addition, it leads to the development of instrumental sub-competence, because it was essential to discuss the sources of reference, such as different dictionaries, for example.

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The comparison with the text translated by the professional translator caused some surprise, from the point of view of the professor who supervises the English language project, since the many differences between the retranslations produced by the trainees and the translation produced by the professional did not seem to cause discouragement. It would have seemed natural that beginners in the craft of translating a literary text would be discouraged to realize that the product of their work cannot be considered good. However, the trainees were not frustrated. On the contrary.

From the initial discussions among the trainees, we can conclude that the fact that the novel is intended for a mass readership and belongs to a circle of literature seen as more popular may have contributed to the trainees not feeling affected by the “power” of the original. Such belonging may also have contributed to the construction of an opinion about more popular translations, which may be produced more quickly, and without the demands of a high-quality translation at first. In fact, the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* was released in 2007 in the United States, and its translation into Portuguese, *A Cidade do Sol*, was released in that same year. Again, we see the need for a project that fights the perception that discredits, “the craft of the translator or the complexity that is involved in translation activity in general in the less advanced population’s minds” (see the second paragraph). It is important to point out, however, that Maria Helena Rouanet is an experienced translator who had already translated, for

example, *The Kite Runner / O Caçador de Pipas*, by the same author (Khaled Hosseini). Finally, the trainees' opinion seems to confirm what Evans states about the stealth retranslation task: after comparing their own translations, discussing the translation process, and checking the possible options, it is clear that they are also able to produce feasible translations (Evans, 2014, p. 205).

FORTRALIT: Brief Account of the English/Literatures Qualification Trainee

I am a scholarship-holder of the FORTRALIT extra mural project, but it seems relevant to portray, albeit briefly, some of the experiences lived by all the trainees (myself, the only English/Languages and Literatures scholarship holder, and the volunteers) of the project, from their own points of view. As the activities suggested by the Project supervisor aim at theoretical and practical knowledge, it was important that one of the first activities involved the reading of a chapter written by the North American professional literary translator Gregory Rabassa. The activity aimed to stimulate the process of consciousness raising of all the effort involved in literary translation and the deconstruction of the idea that the translated text is of less value. The chapter is part of the book *If This Be Treason: Translation and Its Dyscontents* (2005) and describes the experience of the author/translator in translating some of Jorge Amado's works.

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We read the chapter in order to have an initial contact with a professional literary translator's account, but mainly with his translation process, with the investigations carried out by the professional translator, his research and his challenges when translating into English works that bring linguistic complexities and very regional cultural references. After the first activity, a meeting was held with the supervisor to talk about our impressions of Rabassa's account.

When the first task was assigned, the translation of the first chapter of the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007), *A Cidade do Sol* (2007) in the Brazilian translation, the task was received with certain relief, because perhaps if the supervisor had assigned the translation of a work traditionally seen as canonical right from the start, it could cause some kind of block or inhibition on the part of trainees. There seems to be a weight, along with responsibility, in translating acclaimed works, whose authors are considered canonical in a literary system.

As for the suggested novel, everyone was familiar with it, but not necessarily with the plot. In fact, the plot aroused certain curiosity. As we mentioned before, only the translation of the first chapter was requested, and the translation task was carried out individually. In addition

to sending the completed task to the supervisor, we were instructed to share our translations with some colleague. The pairs were asked to read each other's translations and make comments on translation solutions before the official meeting with the supervisor.

To my surprise, the mistakes were not frequent, and it can be said that sharing the translation with another trainee was very fruitful. The opportunity to have our own text read and commented upon by a colleague provided an understanding of the several translation possibilities for the same text. That meant a deconstruction to us, since there is no single translation. When the meeting with the supervisor took place so as to give us feedback in the light of the official translation, the comments were not received with alarm. After everyone had commented on each other's texts and analysed that of the official translator, we observed that no possible option should be discarded, even if we are only beginners in the field of literary translation.

Another point must be commented upon. Besides realizing the complexity of the translation process, and the need for research that is essential for a translator, the trainees also saw that the analysis of the translation without any knowledge of the process leads to controversial opinions based on guesses. In other words, the trainees and volunteers were able to see how difficult and tiring the process of translation can be and before reaching a "final product" several stages need to be overcome. We also observed that there are several aspects, linguistic and/or cultural, that must be taken into consideration. In other words, translation is not a matter of simply transposing a source text into a target text. Such understanding has helped us add a lot of value to the profession in particular.

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By Way of Conclusion

In this article we aimed to describe the FORTRALIT extra mural project, carried out at the Institute of Languages and Literatures by several professor-researchers with the aim of offering undergraduates - and the audience in general UERJ - room for theoretical reflection and literary translation practice. We assumed there is a demand, both in the Languages and Literatures courses and in other courses, for training in translation in Rio de Janeiro.

The project aimed to follow the didactics of translation as advocated by Hurtado Albir (2005, 2020), i.e., starting from the promotion/development of students' translation skills, based on the focus on tasks. In the context of FORTRALIT, the task of retranslation (reading exercise, stealth retranslation or retranslation itself (Evans, 2014) was chosen in these first

years as the instrument capable of offering both a reflection on the “incompleteness” inherent in the translation process - by comparing several translations, for example - and a practical translation exercise followed by reflection and discussion based on the comparison with models that would be considered “canonical”.

In this article, we present a task that makes use of a more popular literary text and therefore, in our view, seems less intimidating, so to speak, for the trainee who had never had the experience of doing literary translation and who, on the other hand, had had several experiences of reading originals in the English language which, as we mentioned, he learned to prefer, for several reasons, including financial ones. The result was the opinion of a relevant retranslation, possible among many others. Based on the completion of the task and on the trainees’ comments, we highlight the use of this instrument as an important ally for teaching translation, since not only can it promote interaction between partners who work (or have worked) in the completion of the same task, but it can also serve as an instrument that can provoke retrospective reflection on a task already fulfilled.

The next steps of the FORTRALIT project include the retranslation of chapters of a modern English writer’s work. This writer plays a major role in the English literature of modernism. We will therefore deal with a literary text considered a classic, although we do not aim to work with one of the most critically acclaimed texts. The analysis of the retranslations of these chapters by three different translators is already happening. A fourth retranslation will be the task of the trainees.

We believe we have been able to offer students and those interested in translation who have participated in the activities a significant boost to develop their translation skills with a view to their future literary translation careers.

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ⁱ The FORTRALIT extra mural project has four scholarship holders, one is a student from the Portuguese/French qualification, one from Portuguese/German qualification, one from Portuguese/Spanish qualification and one from the English/Literatures qualification. In addition, the project has a scholarship holder who acts as a reviewer. The reviewer can be classified (informally) at level B2 in English and is a student of ILE in the Portuguese/French qualification.

ⁱⁱ Information on EIC scholarships obtained from the CETREINA website: <http://www.cetreina.uerj.br/site/sobre.php>. Access on 23/08/2020.

ⁱⁱⁱ Information on Community Affairs scholarships is available on the DEPEXT website: http://www.sr3.uerj.br/depext/arquivos/aeda_programas/aeda_00271999_27091999.pdf. Access on 24/08/2020.

^{iv} Translation electives offered to the Bachelor of Languages and Literatures: Introduction to Translation Studies 1 and Introduction to Translation Studies 2.

^v Co-text is regarded here as “those texts that occur together with or prior to a text and that influence the meaning of a text. The notion of co-text suggests that in order to understand a text, assumptions are made about preceding texts that provide a context for understanding the text.” (RICHARDS & SCHMIDT, 2010, p. 140)