

Towards a Bilingual Binational Translation Method: *The Amputated Tongue* Collection of Short Stories as a Sample

Dr. Rawiya Burbara

Oranim College for Education-Haifa

✉ E-mail: rawyaburbara@yahoo.com

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ABSTRACT

Translators and writers are divided into two main groups regarding the method of translation that should be adopted in translating texts. One group believes that the translator should be true to the translated text, while the other group believes that the translator has the right to recreate the text into a more beautiful one. This study deals with this issue from these two points of view and tries to answer the following questions: Why do we translate? What should we translate? How do we translate? The study relies on an innovative translation method developed by the Board of Maktoub Project for Translation that belongs to Van Leer Institute in Jerusalem to answer these questions. A group of about one hundred Arab and Jewish translators translated Arabic literature texts into Hebrew in an internationally new method, which is neither individual nor collective. It is a bilingual binational method. The translators consist of pairs of a Jewish or/and Arab translator, an Arab/or Jewish literary editor, and a linguistic editor, believing that translation is a text and culture, heritage, and traditions of a people or nation. This dual method gave the translated text its right of accuracy after it had been translated by one translator who can make mistakes due to his ignorance of the writer's culture. The study's conclusion confirms that bilingual binational translation is more fruitful and more accurate because it is based on dialogue, bilingual, and binational cultural knowledge.

1. Introduction

1.1 Approaches to Translation

The few lines of poetry on the cover page of the book *Athar al-Farasha*, by the Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish (2008),¹ distinguish between the 'narcissus' and the 'sunflower' in a metaphorical way. Here is the original text in Arabic:

وُجْهَةٌ نَظْرٍ

*

الفارق بين النرجس وعباد الشمس هو
الفرق بين وجهتي نظر: الأول ينظر إلى
صورته في الماء، ويقول: لا أنا إلا
أنا. والثاني ينظر إلى الشمس ويقول:
ما أنا إلا ما أعيد.
وفي الليل، يضيق الفارق ويتسع
التأويل!

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¹Darwish, Mahmoud (2008). *Athar al-Farasha*. Dar Riyadh al-Rayes: Lebanon. Translated from Arabic by Fady Joudah and published as: Joudah, Fady (2006). *The Butterfly's Burden*, Copper Canyon Press. English-Arabic Bilingual Edition

Viewpoint

The difference between narcissus
and sunflower
is a point of view: the first
stares at his image in the water
and says, there is no I, but I
and the second looks
at the sun and says I am
What I worship.
And at night, the difference shrinks
And interpretation widens.
(Translated from Arabic by Fady Joudah).

"What distinguishes between a narcissus from a sunflower is what distinguishes between two viewpoints". The narcissus looks at its reflection in the water and says: "There is no I but I!". The sunflower looks at the sun and says: "I am what I worship"! At night the difference shrinks, and interpretation widens".

This is similar to the ongoing discourse on the translation dilemma, in which translators are divided in their opinions. One group treats the original text as sacred and says, "There is no I but I", and does not change anything in the text. However, the second group see the translation process as a re-creation, or a betrayal of the original text, and the text, like the sunflower, worships not only the translator but the writer of the translated texts, too. A lot of tension arises between the two groups regarding the rights in the text. One translator insists on staying true to the text while the other adopts Yevgeny Yevtushenko, who likens the translation process to a beautiful woman. He said translation is like a woman. If it is beautiful, it is not faithful. If it is faithful, it is most certainly not beautiful."²

This study discusses these issues by answering three questions related to a translation project of a collection of Palestinian short stories from Arabic into Hebrew, in which many writers and translators took part. The questions are:

- Why do we translate?
- What should we translate?
- How should we translate?

1.2 Translation and Cultures

Translation constitutes the thread that links cultures and societies and strengthens the texture of the human culture. This bridge connects different and distant peoples and brings them closer. Interaction between cultures and civilizations leans on translation, which is an urgent human necessity rather than an intellectual luxury. Translation has cultural effectiveness that contributes to the formulation of the human consciousness and the multiplicity of peoples' cultural and intellectual heritage and strengthens the means of understanding the world of the Other and absorption of his progress and knowledge. The observer of the cultural development and scientific progress of humanity finds that translation is a phenomenon that precedes every human achievement of any nation, after which the nation continues to advance together in its cultural growth.

Developing Countries that work seriously to catch up with the train of progress are interested in translating the secrets of technology, industries and sciences into their languages so that they become available to their children in a language that they are used to and through which they can advance later to the stage of thinking and development, and achieve progress and precedence to other peoples.

The modern world put in the face of the developing countries a serious challenge and possibility to choose between life through the adoption of constant scientific development or death among the rubble and wreckage of humanity. Only translation can alone build bridges through which humanity can achieve goals.

² See: [Yevgeny Yevtushenko's quote on: https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/yevgeny_yevtushenko_39130](https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/yevgeny_yevtushenko_39130)

Besides, translation has provided interpretations and human significance to human communication in the course of thousands of years. It is not easy to pass knowledge from one culture to another one, and this can be possible only if one person of one culture knows the language of a person from the other culture, and the best tool to that is translation. The significant role of translation stems from knowledge of the differences and the dialogue between cultures, which aspires to strengthen the communication and understanding of the culture in the frame of cooperation that is established on mutual respect, trust and sensitivity.

Translation also plays a role in the enrichment of the language, its development, and in turning it into a relevant tool because the new fields that translation entered obligate it to look for new templates, new terms, new suitable words, terms and expressions. All these developments enrich the language and develop it.

We find that in history, translation has played a very important role in passing information and cultural exposure between peoples, spreading principles of religion and introducing artistic and literary products. Besides, translation has helped create interaction between classical cultures such as the Babylonian culture, the Assyrian culture, the Phoenician culture, the ancient Egyptian culture, and the Greek culture. This study focuses on the significance of Arabic-Hebrew cultural translation in Israel in the contemporary period.

2. The State of Arabic among Jews in Israel

2.1 Jews Who Speak Arabic

Before we deal with the questions that this study introduces, it is worth giving an image about Arabic knowledge by Jews in Israel, who constitute the majority of the population, their ability to read Arabic texts, and the state of Translation of Arabic texts into Hebrew³. It should be pointed out here that the Arabs in Israel, whose mother tongue is Arabic, constitute 20 % of the population.

2.2. Arabic-Hebrew Translation

- According to the data of the National Library in Jerusalem, only 0.4% of the Jews in Israel, who are under 70 years old, can read texts in Arabic⁴, while 50% of the Jewish citizens in Israel in the first years of the Establishment of the State were able to read texts in Arabic.
- According to the National Library in Jerusalem data in 2018, only 1.3% of the whole translated Literature into Hebrew was translated from Arabic. Quantitatively, Arabic Translation into Hebrew comes after Translation from English, which is 60%, followed by French, which is 5%, which is by German, which is 4%. Even Translation from Swedish exceeded Arabic and reached 1.5%⁵. According to a rough estimate, only 2% of the translated texts from Arabic into Hebrew receive any kind of response from critics⁶.

From the Translation Index that Hanna Amit-Kochavi prepared⁷, we learn that 90% of the works were translated by Jewish translators. Palestinians translated only 10% of the translators.

- The majority of the translated Arabic Literature, which is 26%, comes from Egypt, 21% from Lebanon, and 17% from Syria. In 1967-1974, the scope of translation decreased dramatically, but after 1975, there was a huge spike, and the rhythm rose to three items a year⁸.
- Out of the 5,600 items of the Translation Index, about 2,000 are passages and fragments of a translation of texts by Palestinian writers, which were popular in the literary and cultural supplements of daily newspapers and literary journals or magazines. A third of them were written by Palestinians who live outside Israel⁹.

Since the population of Arabic speakers in Israel constitutes about 20% of the whole population in Israel, Arab and Jewish scholars, writers, educators, and translators started feeling that it is high time that the two peoples, who have been living together over a

³ Shenhav-Shahrabany, Yehouda, Mendel, Yonatan and Burbara, Rawiya (2019). *Amputated Tongue: On the Potential for Change in a Political Act of Translation*. *Journal of Levantine Studies* .

⁴ Shenhav-Shahrabany, Yehouda; Dallahseh, Mysaloon; Avnimelekh, Rami; Mizrahi, Nissim; and Mendel, Yonatan (2015). "Yediat Aravit Bekerev Yehudim Bi Yisrael/ Knowledge of Arabic among Jews in Israel", *Maktoob and the Translation Forum*. Van Leer Institute, and the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Tel Aviv University.

⁵ See: Book Website (5.6.2018). On: <http://readbooks.co.il/books050618/>

⁶ Amit, Hanna-Kochavi (2002). "To Know and Be Acquainted with Our Neighbor From This Side, Too: On the Translations of Arabic Literature into Hebrew (1868-2002)". *Hamizrah Hahasah/ The New East*, p. 209-227.

⁷ The Index includes the translations from Arabic into Hebrew, which have been made since the 19th century up till today. See the Index on *Maktoob Series Website*: <http://maktoobbooks.com/search-the-index/>.

⁸ Shenhav-Shahrabany, Yehouda; Mendel, Yonatan; Burbara, Rawiya (2019). "Amputated Tongue: On the Potential for Change in a Political Act of Translation". *Journal of Levantine Studies*, on: <https://www.almaany.com/ar/dict/arar/%D8%B1%D8%AF%D9%91%D8%AF/>

⁹ Amit-Kochavi, Hanna (2002). *Foreigners and Enemies or Participants of the Same Way? On Translations from the Palestinian Literature into Hebrew, Jama'ah. Y.*, p. 39-68.

century, started making attempts to know each other better culturally. Besides, the peace agreements between Israel and the Arab countries, and the peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, encouraged both Jewish and Palestinian men of letters to start getting closer to each other and realized that the appropriate way to do that is through Translation of each other's Literature.

3. Why Do People Translate?

There are several reasons for translation in two significant fields: science literature. The purpose of scientific translation is to advance various universal fields such as; medicine and other sciences. The reasons for literary translation are varied, and they include the following:

3.1 First Reason: Know Your Enemy¹⁰

The purpose of translation is to transfer the intellectual or ideological legacy of a certain people or nation to know how to deal with that people or nation in an attempt to beat them. This type of translation serves the security forces, government, and subordinate institutes. This reason is strong in the field of Translation Arabic- Hebrew among political and security authorities.

Here is a concrete incident that illustrates this reason. When Professor Shenhav Shahrabani, a well-known Arabic-Hebrew translator, was heard speaking Arabic, he was thought to be a 'security agent' who belongs to the Israeli Security Service. He says: "During my attempt to blur the difference between my Iraqi Arabic, my parents' Arabic, and the Palestinian Arabic, I stopped talking when I heard a casual conversation behind me by some Arabs at the grocery":

- Who is that man?
- They say he is a professor at Tel Aviv University.
- Are you sure? Maybe he is from the Shin Bet (Security Service)?
- I don't think so; they do not recruit someone of his age to the Shin Bet (Security Service).

On that day, I stopped talking in the Palestinian dialect. I changed my linguistic strategy, and instead of "passing" as a 'Palestinian', I decided to stress the "difference" and show it in my speech"¹¹.

It is possible to learn from this incident, among other things, that the language serves as a 'tool to spy' and a way to know the 'enemy'¹².

Another incident is a historical one. When Prophet Mohammad started spreading the religion of Islam, he asked Abu Zeid al-Ansari¹³ to learn some languages. He asked him to learn 'Hebrew' and said: "Learn the Book of the Jews because I will not entrust my book into their hands". He did what the Prophet asked him to do, and after half a month, Abu Zeid had already known their language. Abu Zeid wrote to the Jews in the Prophet's name, and when they wrote back to the Prophet, Abu Zeid read what the Jews wrote to the Prophet.

We find another reference to the above reason in the contemporary period, which was made by the novelist Ibrahim Nassrallah, writer of *Time of White Horses*. He said: "They kill and translate us according to their orientation, which is based on 'killing the victim' first, and then, they investigate and inquire him because this type of translation is like bringing the murdered ones to the investigation room to squeeze their confessions."¹⁴

¹⁰ Streichman, Nancy, and Karmerski, Gal (2020). A Man to Man. Arabic Studies from the Point of View of High School Students in Israel. From the *Research Report: Arabs, Jews, Arabic, Mendel and Others*, Van Leer, p. 34.

¹¹ Shahrabani, Shenhav Yehouda (2020). *Working in Translation- From the Individual Revolution to Bilingual Binational Translation*. Van Leer Institute, and Hakibutz Hame'uhad/ the United Kibbutz, p. 102.

¹² Mendel Yonatan (2020), for example, investigated the evolution and development of Arabic as a subject of teaching and learning at Jewish schools in 1935-1985, and the construction of the field of Arabic studies in the Jewish society. From the institutional perspective during the investigated period, the alliance between the Ministry of Education and the Prime Minister's Office gradually strengthened with the intelligence systems in Israel. This alliance led to securitization of Arabic and turned its perception from a 'language of the enemy' into one of the 'natural' justifications for learning Arabic at Jewish schools in Palestine and later in Israel.

¹³ Abu Zeid al-Ansari is an Iraqi linguist, who lived in the eighth century A.D.

¹⁴ Quoted in Kayyal, Mahmoud. (2002). Bridges to the Other. *Jama'ah, Y.*, p. 144-145.

3.2 The Second Reason: Know the Other

The second reason for translation is related to the translation of cultural legacy and heritage of the 'Other'. The purpose is to know the other's culture, customs, beliefs, and lifestyle to discover the world of the 'other' and start containing them.

The craft of translation is a creative work in itself and demands from those who deal with it a lot more than controlling the language. Among other things, this craft demands flexibility of thought, improvisation ability, knowledge of the local culture, and even political vigilance. Translation in itself is a political action through which decisive decisions are made, which are likely to make judgments and draw the tense boundaries of the world of language.

4. Significance of Translation

Here are some quotations and important comments that justify and clarify the importance of Translation of Literature and the legacy of the other.

- a. Writer, poet and translator Nabil Tannous says: "When we communicate through thought and literature, we have ways that bridge the gap that has been opened up between us by a long-time of historical conflict"¹⁵.
- b. Writer A. B. Yehushua (1933-2017) says in *The Liberated Bride* (p.500): "We have no hope to understand the Arabs rationally, and therefore, we have no choice but to go back and delve into their poetry"¹⁶.
- c. Poet Hayim Nahman Biyalik (1873 –1934) says: You have nothing in the world that can bring closer and integrate the culture of the human soul into one universal division as excellent translation, "for language and culture are the faithful door to the soul of the nations of the world; yes, they are the door of the world."¹⁷
- d. Orientalist and translator of the Holy Koran into Hebrew, Yosef Revlin (1889-1971) says: "Knowledge of Arabic poetry is important in our life, we the Jews, whose influence is well-known in our classical literature, especially in the Spanish (Andalusian) period, which is considered one of the most prosperous periods in our literature." (From his Translation of the poetry of the pre-Islamic poet Antara bin Shadad)¹⁸.
- e. Palestinian writer, Salman Natour (1949-2016), says: "Literature is the Black Box of every people. It is a must to be acquainted with the Literature of the other people through translation"¹⁹.
- f. Syrian poet, Adonis (b. 1930 -), says: "Unlike the argument of al-Jahiz (776-869 AD), translation is another creation, and it is actually an inescapable cultural work. Man is not good at understanding himself except to the extent that he understands the other. Therefore, translation of the other is an ideal way to self-understanding. Besides, the development of relationships between peoples in quantity and quality proves that the Other is not anymore one side of the dialogue or interaction, and alternatively, a veto, as he turns into one of the elements of self-formation. A culture that is self-satisfied and gives up translation can be described as a half-dead culture"²⁰.
- g. The Italian novelist *Elena Ferrante (2018)* says: "I prefer the linguistic nationality as a starting point for a dialogue, as an effort to cross over the lines, to look beyond the borders, beyond all borders, and first and foremost, borders of gender. Therefore, my only heroes are the translator, males and females. I love translators, especially when they are enthusiastic readers and suggest translations. Thanks to them, the Italian language travels worldwide and enriches it. With the numerous languages that it has, the world crosses the Italian nationality and changes it. The translators carry nationalities into other nationalities, and they are the first who cope with remote types of feelings and even their own mistakes witness to positive efforts. The translation is our salvation; it rescues us from the well in which we happened to be born."²¹

¹⁵ Tannous, Nabil (2021). *Between Arabic and Hebrew. Issues in Translation*. Baqa al-Gharbiya: The Academy of the Arabic Language, p. 11-12.

¹⁶ Yehushua, A.B. (2004). *The Liberated Bride*. Mariner Books; First edition, p. 500.

¹⁷ Avneri, Samuel (2011). Bialik in Odessa: From "The Revised Room" to "Moriah". On: <https://www.haaretz.co.il/misc/1.757774>.

¹⁸ Rivlin, Yosef (2004). *Ben Yehouda Project*. See "Introduction" by Yosef Rivlin on: https://benYehouda.org/rivlin_yy/antar.html

¹⁹ Salman Natour said these words at the Conference of "The Sociology and Politics of Translation" that was held on the occasion of translation of his book *Memory Talked to me and Took off: The Life and Death of a Grooved-Face Sheikh*, which was published in 2015 by Badil-Center in Bethlehem, and was translated by Prof. Yehouda Shenhav Shahrabani.

²⁰ al-Jahiz says in his book *al-Hayawan* that the virtue of poetry is exclusive to the Arabs, and those who speak Arabic. "Poetry is untranslatable, and its translation is not allowed. When it is translated, its order is cut and its rhythm is cancelled, and the beauty of its meter goes, and its 'wonder' falls and becomes like 'prose'. See: al-Jahiz (1996). *al-Hayawan*: vol. 1-, p. 74-75.

However, in his lecture on the 9/11/2018, at the British Library in London on the occasion of the celebration of the 3rd Banipal Prize for Translation, Adonis enthusiastically emphasized the significance of translation in modern age, and repeated his view that it will remain the main factor in bringing peoples together, and without it, wide and deep differences will remain between peoples, despite all the developments that the technological developments introduce. For the whole lecture, see: <https://alarab.co.uk/>.

²¹ Ferrante, Elana (2018). *Occasional Inventions*. The New Library, p. 20.

- h. The contemporary Algerian writer and thinker Amin al-Zawi (b. 1956), who writes in Arabic and French, says in one of his lectures that "Translation of novels, plays a main role in the establishment of international relationships, mutual acquaintance, and exchange between cultures"²².

In his article about the Translation of the 'Hebrew Literature', al-Zawi says: "Peace between peoples requires strong bridges, and the strongest one is the 'transparent humanistic literature', being the deep history of the personal and collective sentiments, excavations in the psychology of the individuals, who constitute the groups, which in turn, establish their homelands—reading of Literature, whether prose or poetry, is the element that leads to acquaintance with the friend and the enemy, and the distinction between this and that"²³.

In general, every material, whether a text or a document that adds to the language something that does not exist in it, enriches it artistically, linguistically, scientifically, and humanly. The influence of translation on the language is not limited to thought and culture only; it also includes the language and everything that can add to the horizons of the target language knowledge from different fields via the translated work (the source language) of the Other.

Translation also enriches languages in their cultural design, whether that design is connected to Man's worries about his existence, or connected to his life problems, or the world attitudes towards its objects, or its ways or views about religion, or the individual, to the other, and the language and its expression.

5. What Should We Translate?

The translation covers all fields of knowledge: education, Literature, science, sociology, law, politics, communication, etc.,... Translators in each field choose their procedure and methodology, and they vary in their linguistic proficiency in the source language and the target language. Consequently, the quality of their translation also varies.

Since the world has become a small village, Man's required skills that enable him to survive, live, and work in the 21st century are nearly similar all over the world, and they are skills that formulate the image of the adult person towards the 2030s. As a result, there is a huge need for translations in all areas – general pedagogy, digital pedagogy, pedagogical flexibility, creative literacy, digital literacy, linguistic literacy, scientific and mathematical literacy, literacy of thinking, global literacy, and management of educational systems, and other areas.

5.1 Pedagogical Translation

Here are samples that illustrate the process of "pedagogical translation". In the Ministry of Education, we make sure to translate in all areas such as:

5.1.1 OECD Documents

We translate every document from every successful country. We learn about their success, focusing on documents of international subjects that are common to the educational systems in the world. We look for the relevant materials by translators and researchers from various countries and formulate a new rationale that is adapted to our reality.

5.1.2 Translation of the Ministry Circulars

In the Arab Sector at the Ministry of Education, we make sure to translate every policy document, every circular from the General-Manager, presentations, slips of payment fees for parents and for teachers, etc... for various reasons. It deserves mentioning here that we reach everyone without language obstacles.

5.1.3 Translation of New Pedagogical Terms

As a result of innovations and developments in the pedagogical world, new terms and concepts have entered the educational dictionary. Each time we find new terms, we face the following question: How should we translate the term? Should we translate it or just borrow it as it is pronounced in its source? For example, the term "pedagogy", whose origin is in classical Greek. The Hebrew language borrowed the Greek term in its pronunciation (pedagogia/ פדגוגיה), and we wonder: Should we find out an equivalent to it in Arabic? Or should we use the universal foreign Greek term?

In order to make a decision on this issue, we had to examine the translations of terms that are adopted in the Arab countries because it is impossible to disconnect ourselves from the Arab culture and language around us and create new terms that are specific to the Arab minority in Israel. Suppose we decide to do so, and the teacher asks his students to read an article that is

²² al-Zawi, Amin (2013). A Lecture that he presented in Germany about "Translation and Politics" on 15/03/ and it was published in *al-Sha'b Newspaper*. See on:

https://www.djazairss.com/echchaab/24413?__cf_chl_managed_tk__=pmd_YawUVAX.ixw9DTuajasZI5TZQ8YuFXbOKXUOVf4a4Jw-F

²³ For more information, see: al-Zawi, Amin (on: June 6, 2019). Why do the Arabs Fear Translation of the Israeli Literature into their language? On Website: *Antologia*, on: <https://alantologia.com/blogs/18674/>

written by a researcher from the Arab countries, where he uses a different translation for the same term. In that case, our students will not understand that the two translations refer to the same foreign term.

The question that arises here, in this case, is this: How can we make a follow-up of translations in the Arab countries, where there is no unified "Dictionary of Education Terms" for all the Arab countries? Is Google Translate a reliable source? Should we read articles from the Arab world and look for their translations? Is this a solution? The way that we found to be the most practical and most applicable is to look up the word in English and, through English, look for the equivalent Translation into Arabic in the Arab world.

However, we were often confused when dividing a large document among three translators. Being the coordinating Inspector for Arabic Teaching in the Arab Sector, I had to go over the translated materials at the end of the translation process. Sometimes, I found three versions of translation for the same term. For example, the term ("מרחב") (merhav) was translated into three equivalent words. The *first* translator translated it into "fada' / فضاء / space); the *second* translator translated it into "masaha/مساحة/area"; the *third* translator translated it into (hayyiz/ حيز/field/ area/domain). Our decision was to choose the *third* translation.

Another term that confused us was "Meaningful Learning" למידה משמעותית. Several suggestions were introduced. We sought help from the Arab world translations and found three translations: al-Ta'allum Kamil al-Ma'na/التعلم كامل المعنى; al-Ta'allum al-Mutakamil al-Ma'na/التعلم المتكامل المعنى; and al-Ta'allum dhu al-Ma'na/التعلم ذو المعنى. Because all the articles that deal with 'pedagogy' in the Arab world use the *third term*, we chose it to be used in our documents.

To solve this problem of choosing the best word for a partial semi-translation, we use the annual diary that is published by the Academy of the Hebrew Language, where each page has got an Arabic word with its Hebrew and English Translations.

To unify the expressions and terms among all the translators that work or will work with us in the future, we decided to compile our glossary or mini-dictionary. Thus, we asked each inspector to send us the terms that they use in his subject. We are still at the beginning of the process, beginning the second year of the compilation.

5.2 Literary Translation

As mentioned before, the Palestinian writer Salman Natour said that Literature is the Black Box of every people, and if you want to know a certain people, study the people's Literature through a mirror that reflects the people's history, their social customs, politics, geography, traditions, language and cultural features.

6. How Should We Translate?

Several writers and translators have expressed their points of view regarding the manner or plans of translation, and through their views, we can find out the reasons for **uncertainty in translation**:

- a) The Iraqi poet Ahmad al-Safi al-Najafi (897 – 27 June 1977) said about his Translation of the *Quatrains* of the Persian poet, Omar al-Khayyam (1048 –1131 AD): "I am true to my translation and to my poems, as I did not insert anything of my thoughts into my translation."²⁴
- b) In Mahmoud Darwish's words, we can hear the automatic association and coupling between language and nationality: "I am my language, I am what the words said: فكنت لنبرها جسداً! كن جسدي! أنا ما قالت الكلمات: أنا لغتي, أنا ما لغتي, أنا ما لغتي, أنا ما لغتي." "Be my body! An I became a body to their rhythm".²⁵

If language is one's 'identity', then it is one's nationality; it is the main thing, and the body is born just to express the poet's words, and then, we can see the significance of every word that the artist, the poet, the writer chooses to use.

The question that arises here is: Does the translator have the right to replace an original word in the source work with another word of his creation? How can the translator decide which word to choose as a synonymous word and assure the reader that he did not betray the source text? Some critics look at such a translation process as a process of betrayal.

This reminds us of the above-mentioned saying attributed to Yevgeny Yevtushenko that Translation resembles the woman. If she is beautiful, she is not faithful, and if she is faithful, she is not beautiful.

Between *faithfulness* and *beauty*, the text is likely to get lost. It is also possible to consider the *translated text* as a *new creation*, but translation represents the Other. Is the translator allowed to represent the Other as he likes?

Translation of Western Literature into Hebrew is an operation of representing the Other. Each translation work is indeed an operation of representation, but translation in the Palestinian-Jewish intercultural context is conducted in asymmetrical conditions

²⁴ al-Khayyam, Omar (1912). *Quatrain of Omar al-Khayyam*: Introduction. Translated by al-Najafi, Ahmad al-Safi. Dar Takwin.

²⁵ Darwish, Mahmoud (1994) *Qafiya min Ajl al-Mu'allaqat*. From al-Diwan. Dar al-'Awdah.

due to the theological and colonial relationships that exist between Hebrew and Arabic. Asymmetrical relationships play a decisive role in fields that the French philosopher Jean-Paul Ricoeur (2006) calls "untranslatable", namely, semantic gaps that make it difficult to move between two languages

The Arab sociologist, philosopher, and historian Ibn Khaldoun (1332-1406 AD) deal with the power of the mechanisms of language and the dramatic political significance that results from the contact between two languages in one country. He says: "The defeated always like to emulate the defeater". The question that arises here is this: In our case, as Palestinians, is there an impact of the language of the defeater, Hebrew, on the language of the defeated, Arabic? Does the language have a "power of sovereignty"?

7. Maktoob Project as a New Method of Translation

7.1 Establishment of the Project

Maktoob Project is a project that was initiated in 2018 by a group of Jewish and Palestinian Arab writers and translators, who are interested in creating common cooperation that aims to create understanding and communication between the Palestinians and the Israelis that are based on the mutual acquaintance of Literature and mutual cultural heritage that is based on equality and friendly dialogue rather than on rivalry or hostility or prejudice that results from preconceived ideas. The medium for that project is 'translation', and the sponsor of the project is Van Leer Institute in Jerusalem. The project was completed in 2020 and includes 74 translated stories by Palestinian writers.

Being the editor of this largest collection of translated Palestinian stories into Hebrew since the establishment of the State of Israel, called *Amputated Tongue*²⁶, I can witness that the editors of the Maktoob series and the group of translators at Van Leer Institute created a new method of translation that proved throughout the translation process that the right way of translation is a collective bilingual binational common translation.

7.2. Procedure of the Translation

The procedure of translation moved in the following path. Two people worked in pairs on translating each story; one was Jewish, and the other was an Arab. The pairs can also be a Jewish translator and an Arab editor; an Arab editor and a Jewish translator, besides the chief literary editor and the linguistic editor. Each text underwent a back-and-forth process between the writer, the translator, the editor, the collection editor, the literary editor, and the linguistic editor.

The product of this process changed from time to time till it received its final format. Following the publication of the book, *Amputated Tongue*, a group of readers called "A Listening Ear" was set up, which consisted of Jewish and Arab readers, who meet twice a month and read one story in the two languages. The source language of the texts is Arabic, and the target language of Translation is Hebrew. The group hosts the writer of the story mostly, if possible, the translator and conducts a discussion on the work. In several meetings, the following question arose: Why is the translation not true to the source?

In most cases, there was agreement that says: The translator was right, and it was really impossible to translate the Arabic word into a Hebrew word in a faithful way to the Arabic source. Sometimes, they agreed that the translator deemed it correct to change the word, or he chose an unsuitable word, or chose a word that does not express the correct or true emotions of the writer. Sometimes, they found that the translation is more beautiful than the source. At other times, they were unable to judge and waived the reader's right to judge, which is truer.

In my opinion, this collective common bilingual binational Translation method starts a new school of translation in the world of translation, which is quite far from the individual school and the traditional collective school. Maktoob School changes not only the "written" thing or "the pre-destined" thing in the world of translation, but also starts a change of the common destiny of peoples into a reality in which one understands the Other and connects with him through a common dialogue, the dialogue that translates another reality, which was not known to the two sides, a dialogue that creates common textual sovereignty.²⁷

In addition, this Translation method is based on pragmatic thinking, according to which Translation (as well as Literature) is not an independent aesthetic craft whose aim is itself, and which provides satisfaction to itself only, but is an activity that takes place in reality. Translation as an activity dismantles the borders between Literature and daily life and emphasizes the executive nature of Literature. Besides improving the quality of the translation, this process enables to create of a dialogue in the world and a bidirectional movement between languages that cross national borders.

²⁶ Barbara, Rawiya (2019). *Amputated Tongue*. Maktoob: Van Leer Institute and Yedi'ut Aharonot.

²⁷ For information about Maktoob translations, and the innovation in the method of Collective Translation, see: Shenhav-Shahrabani, Yehouda (2019). "The New-Classical Bias in Translation", *JLS – Journal of Levantine Studies* 9 (1), Summer, pp. 5-18.

In this process, the buffer zone between languages disappears, and there is no longer a split between Jews who deal exclusively with Hebrew and Arabs who deal exclusively with Arabic. The direct or indirect dialogues with the creators allow the translation team to suggest a change in literary edits and stop sticking to archaic word-for-word translation models, which is generally true to the source text. In the triad's translation model, loyalty to the source is replaced by a common truth among the translation staff, who are having a dialogue with the source (of course, if this is possible and the writer is still alive). The translation addresses the source on the source and about the source.

Although the method of translation of a text is not necessarily pragmatic, it is fraught with practical and economic difficulties, and it relies on the foundations of pragmatism, according to which, translation is not only a textual achievement but also an action in the world. The translation is not just the action itself but a part of a multidirectional dialogue. It is not only a textual meeting that exists in the field of hermeneutics and Literature, but also a sociological mechanism of interactivity that is based on meeting between people. The translation is transformed from a substitute of the source to the meta-text placed next to the text (whose job is to explain, elucidate, and comment). It, in turn, transforms into a social text based on movement with the language itself²⁸.

8. Implications and Conclusions

It deserves mentioning that it is impossible to summarize and draw conclusions from an ongoing experiment that started a short time ago and is still going on at the translators' forum from Van Leer Institute in Jerusalem. The forum includes 100 translators, researchers of Literature, and Jewish and Arab writers. However, to fathom the depths of the experiment and understand it, it is recommended that we discuss the difference that has taken place in the translation process and the experiment of translating the collection of *Amputated Tongue*²⁹.

Instead of drawing final conclusions, I would like to introduce different samples from my experience of editing the collection, from the experience of the group of "A Listening Ear", and from my observation of the translations of different translators. I establish my implications and conclusions in the light of the following reflections:

1) To translate means to create a dialogue between peoples, which entails knowledge of the social codes of the Other:

To translate literary types such as novels, short stories, poems, and plays requires expertise in understanding social codes of the source society of the literary work, knowledge of the main thing and the subordinate thing, understanding the symbols of a certain society and decoding them, knowing their hierarchy, and being acquainted with the cultural traditions and customs of the source society. Here is an illustration of these requirements and the uncertainty of translation that took place during the Translation of Tawfiq Fayyad's story "Umm al-Kher", which was translated into Hebrew by Dr. Yonathan Mendel.

During the process of Translation, Mendel came across the following sentence in Arabic: (وأنت الأفعى على الفدانين) and the snake killed/destroyed the two bulls). Google Translate literal translation is: "The snake *came onto* the two bulls". But the idiomatic meaning of the expression in Arabic (أتى على) is "killed/ destroyed", and the real meaning is "The snake destroyed..... the two "bulls" or "cows" (feddanayn) that pull the plough behind them and till the land. The term "feddan" was also expanded to refer to "an area of land" that the two *bulls* or *cows* can plough in one day³⁰.

Being the editor of the text, I had to consult the writer of the story, Tawfiq Fayyadh, who clarified the mentioned opaqueness of the idiomatic expression in the Palestinian colloquial dialect. The conclusion implies that it is essential for the translator to know well the nuances of the language in its specific-cultural meanings and the codes of the culture of the society of the source text.

2) To translate means to be true to the legacy and heritage of the society of the source work and the intertextual texts in it:

Another sample of the uncertainty of translation took place in the three versions of Translation of Samih al-Qassem's poem منتصب and Idan mekh ranslation; the second by Sassoun Sot/ "I Walk with a Back Held Straight!" Nabil Tannous made the first ³¹ القائمة Barir, and the third by Nadav Frankovitch. Our examination revealed the following changes in the order of the words in the opening lines of the poem:

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ In Classical Arabic, the word "feddan" means 'a yoke of oxen': implying the area of ground that could be tilled by them in a certain time. (See: Ibn Manzur, Muhammad (2010) *Lisan al-Arab*. Dar Sader Publishing; Mukhtar, Ahmad (2008). *Mu'jam al-Lugha al-Arabiya al-Mu'assera*. Alam al-Kutub; Anis, Ibrahim et al (2004). *al-Mu'jam al-Wasit*. Published by the Academy of the Arabic Language. Cairo. Maktabat al-Shuruq al-Dawliya. For more information about "feddan" in Palestine, see: "What is a feddan?". www.sizes.com. Retrieved 2018-09-27, and Abufarha, Nasser (February 15, 2008). *Land Ownership in Palestine-Israel*. on: www.1worldcommunication.org/landownership.htm

³¹ al-Qassem, Samih (2012). *Selected Poems*. al-Aswar Publishing. Akko, p. 69.

- **Samih Al-Qassem's Words:**

منتصب القامة أمشي
مرفوع الهامة أمشي

"I walk with my back held straight; I walk with my head held high".

Here are the three Arabic-Hebrew Translations:

a) Nabil Tannous:

זקוף קוסה אָני צועד

מורם ראש אָני צועד

b) Soumekh, Somekh and Barir, Idan

זקוף קוסה אָני צועד

אָני צועד בראש מורם

c) Nadav Frankovitch:

זקוף גו אפסע

אשא את ראשי ואפסע

As we notice, Tannous translated the line literally according to the word order of the line in Arabic. He is aware that in the Arab villages, the demonstrators march in the streets on the occasions of political events, and poetry is so popular in the Arab world.

The emphasis in the original Arabic source is on *منتصب القامة* /with my back held straight/קוסה/זקוף, which emphasizes the speaker's pride in his continuous walking and resisting the authorities *ראש מורם* /with my head held high. The stress is on the "manner of walking".

However, Somekh and Barir chose to emphasize the speaker's "action" and started with (I walk/אָני צועד). Soumekh and Barir felt that the action is more significant than the "manner" (How) of the action.

Nadav Frankovitch decided to use the Hebrew equivalent ("אפסע"/ I step) instead of "walk", though the word ("אפסע"/step) does not indicate the continuous walking that the word "אָני צועד" indicates.

Similarly, the translation of the **third and fourth lines** introduces another sample of uncertainty:

- **Samih al-Qassem's Words:**

في كفي قصفة زيتون
وعلى كتفي نعشي

"I hold an olive branch in my palm, and on my shoulders, I carry my coffin".

Here are the three translations into Hebrew:

a) Nabil Tannous

ענף זית בכף ידי
ועל כתפי ארון קבורתי

b) Soumekh, Somekh, and Barir, Idan³²

בכף ידי עלה של זית
ועל כתפי ארון קבורה

c) Nadav Frankovitch

בידי ענף קטן של זית
ועל כתפי ארון קבורתי

³² Somekh, Sassoun and Barir, Idan (2020). *The Face of Liberty*. Keshav Publication, p. 56.

In his translation of the third and fourth lines, Tannous seems to be more true to the source than Somekh and Barir as he preserves the historical and religious symbol of the "piece of the olive branch", which represents the human heritage in the story of Noah and the dove that returned to Noah with a piece of an olive tree in its peak as a sign of the end of the Flood, which became a symbol of peace.

The poet intended to say "an olive tree branch", but he did not use the standard Arabic classical word "branch/ ghosn/عصن" and instead, he used the colloquial specific-culture words "qusfat/ piece/ חלק מהענף".

Tannous changed the order of the source Arabic line, which started with (بِحرفي / in my palm) and started the line with (عصن الزيتون/ an olive-tree branch) because he feels that the "symbol" is more important. Besides, I think that Tannous probably wanted to keep to the rhyme in Hebrew. Both words (יד) and (אֶרְוֹנִי) are rhyming words (the ee-sound), which adds a musical effect to the couplet.

Somekh and Barir started with (בכף ידי / in my palm), and Nadav started with (בידי ענף / in my hand) (instead of palm).

As we see, there is an identical translation here, and the question that arises is: Is there really certainty in translation? Can we judge between two translations when one keeps to the hidden culture behind the original words while the second stresses the artistic or linguistic elements? Probably, this is the vague and intangible line that separates a text and its translation.

3) To translate means to understand the situation or occasion

The issue of uncertainty always exists not only in poetry but also in prose translation, especially when the translator is ignorant of the situation or occasion or ignores it, intentionally or unintentionally. This is what happened in the translation of the story **Intizar/ המתנה / Waiting**, which is written by the Palestinian writer Majid Abu Gosh³³.

It is a story about Rashida, a teacher sitting outside the camp in the shade of a tree waiting for her son, who went out with a group of Palestinian fighters to Palestine forty years ago, and he has not returned yet. She is holding a bundle of food in her hand, staring southward with her blind eyes, and waiting for her son Abdallah to return.

The story is about a mother who lost her son in the war but refused to accept this bitter fact. Forty years have passed, and she is still waiting. The writer chose the Title *Intizar/ המתנה / انتظار* intentionally because it is equivalent to "waiting" in Arabic, and reflects the main theme of the story. The translator Yitzhak Shenibuim chose "hamtana/ המתנה", but then he sent me the translation in a corrected version with the Title (ציפיה), which means (expectation; anticipation, hope, aspiration).

In 2018, I worked at the journal "*Ho!*" passages from the Arab world, and added to -, and edited some short stories and prose³⁴ them Majid Abo Gosh's story with the Title (ציפיה) (expectation; anticipation, hope, aspiration)³⁵. The opening sentence in the story was *אין כוח ואין עוזז אלא באללה* (*There is no power and no strength except with Allah*).

In the course of editing, Ms Hanan Sa'di, the editor of the translations changed the title (ציפיה) / (expectation) into (המתנה), arguing that with (ציפיה), the reader loses the feeling of "the suffering of waiting".

Besides, the literary editor changed the first sentence of the story "There is no power and no strength except with Allah/ لا حول ولا قوة إلا بالله", which recurs in the story as a motif, and made it the Title of the story. In her opinion, this sentence expresses suffering, bitterness, waiting, expectation and aspiration.

The question that arises here also is: Who is right? Which Title is more suitable? Is the more suitable Title more faithful to reality? Is it really possible to feel the 'suffering' through translation? Or is translation really "a kiss נשיקה through a handkerchief"? as Bialik described it, or נשיכה (a bite) as Yeuda Shenhav described it, or should we agree with Yvgeny Yevtushenko, who compared true-translation to an ugly woman, while untrue translation is like a beautiful woman?

Actually, the issue of uncertainty has always existed in translation, and probably this is the beauty of our project and dialogue, Maktoob! When Hanan Sa'di and I handed the book *Amputated Tongue* to the writer Abu Ghosh at a meeting of "A Listening Ear" group, he was told that the Title was changed, and he said: "May God forgive you for changing the title!" This implies that he was not satisfied with the change because the new Title does not reflect the situation and the occasion of the story's events.

³³ Majid Abu Ghosh was born in the village of 'Amwas in 1959. Today, he lives in Jerusalem. He published collections of poetry, children's stories, and two novels: *Honey of the Queens* (2015) and *Sara Hamdan* (2016). His last collection of poetry *The Queens' Love* was published in 2017.

³⁴ Manor, Dori (Ed.) (2018). *Ho 16: A Journal of Literature*. March, p. 63-117.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 83.

4) The translation is not only a literal translation but a translation of feelings.

Unlike the previous examples, the Translation of Said Naffa's story "עץ המשמש הדמשקאי שלנו" / Our Damascene Apricot Tree³⁶ required direct interference of the writer, who asked to participate in the Translation of the Introduction to his story because he wanted that the Arab feeling during the Naksa/ The 1967 War and the Arab consciousness to be obvious³⁷

Here is a short description of the translation process and the changes that occurred following the discourse and dialogue between the translator, Brurya Horovits and Said Naffa, and the interference of the translation editor, the text editor, the literary editor, and the linguistic editor.

When we translated the above-mentioned by the Palestinian writer Said Naffa' and returned the translated text to him to read it, he said that the Introduction lacked the "feeling" of the Arab individual after the 1967 War.

We asked him: how can we translate feelings, especially the feelings of the Arab person?

To answer our question, he asked to retranslate the Introduction to the story by himself and write his "feelings". We agreed and gave "the Arab writer" the right to translate the Introduction of his story into Hebrew. Then, we had a dialogue with him, but the real dialogue was between his Translation into Hebrew and the translation of the Jewish translator into Hebrew. The debate between him and her continued until they reached a version on which they both agreed. In my opinion, this example proves the uncertainty in translation and the superiority of the binational and bilingual project and the method of the new collective method of Maktoob.

5). To translate means to look for the accurate word

The issue of 'uncertainty' in translation can also be found in the translation of two texts; the first is a prose-text, and the second is a poetry-text:

- a) The **First text** is Afif Shlewet's short story: ³⁸ *Kahana min Thalj/ كهنة من ثلج Priests of Snow*. Nabil Tannous and Vered Kesar translated the story.

Uncertainty appears in the translation of the first word in the **Title**, "Kahana". The question that is asked here concerns the translation of the word: "Kahana":

Is the accurate Translation into Hebrew " כוהנים משלג " or " כוהנים " ? "כמרים עשויים שלג" is generally used for Jewish religious people. "כמרים" is used for Christian religious men.

Vered Kesar translated the **Title** as: "כוהנים משלג" / *Priests of Snow*, and

Nabil Tannous translated it as "כמרים עשויים שלג" / *Priests who Are Made of Snow*.

The nickname "cohen/ כהן" refers to the highest status in Judaism and is used for the person who works at the Temple.

The nickname priest/ כומר/ Kahin/ كاهن is a cleric who is charged with performing religious ceremonies, and sometimes serves as the spiritual leader of the community. The term is generally used for "Christian priests" but can also refer to religious clerics in other religions.

- b) The Second Text is another example of uncertainty in the Translation of Mahmoud Darwish's poem "أنا يوسف يا أبي" / **אני יוסף, אבי** / **I am Yosef, My Father!**"

The **Title** was translated by three translators into three different ways:

- **Nabil Tannous** translated it as: **אני יוסף, אבי**
- **Reuven Snir** translated it as: **אני יוסף, הו אבי**
- **Orna Aqqad**³⁹ translated it as **הריני יוסף**

The difference between the three translations appears in the **Title** and continues into the whole poem. Tannous and Snir started with a 'true to source' text translation. The stress is on (**אני יוסף** / I am Joseph/ Yosef, Dad/Father), while Aqqad started **כשרוח**

³⁶ *Amputated Tongue*, p. 333.

³⁷ al-Naksah- deterioration of the condition of the patient. The Arabs use this term to refer to 1967 War.

³⁸ Shlewit Afif was born in Shafa Amr in 1962. He is a playwright, a player and a short-story writer. He got his M.A. degree in Comparative Literature from the University of Haifa. At present, he is the manager of al-Ufuq (Horizon) Organization for Culture and Arts in Haifa.

³⁹ See: <https://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-4355889,00.html>

"קלילה נשבה" (When a light breeze blew). In the middle of the poem, the three translators use different synonyms to translate the same Arabic word in the following lines:

وهم أوصدوا باب بيتك دوني
وهم طردوني من الحقل

They closed your door in my face
They drove me out of the field

a) **Nabil Tannous**

"הם סגרו את דלת ביתך בפני. הם גרשו אותי מהשדה."⁴⁰

b) **Ruven Snir**

"סגרו בפני את שער ביתך. גרשוני מן השדה"

c) **Orna Aqqad**

"נעלו את דלת ביתך בלעדי. סלקו אותי מהשדה"

- The word (נעלו/סגרו) **closed/ shut** is translated into (أوصدو) which are synonyms.
- The words (שער/דלת) **door/gate** which semi-synonymous.
- The word (גרשוני/גרשוני) **in my face/ in front of me** is translated into (גרשוני) which are semi-synonymous.
- The word (גרשוני/גרשוני) **drove me away/threw me out/kicked me out** is translated into (סלקו אותי, גרשוני, גרשו אותי), which are synonyms.

As we see, there is no certainty in translation, and we cannot decide which is more accurate than the other, but we can say that one or two translators are 'true to the original source text', and one is less true.

6. To translate means to maintain cadence and meaning

Here are two sample translations from Mahmoud Darwish's poem/

"On This Earth" / על פני האדמה הזאת / على هذه الأرض"

- Tannous's translation of **title** "على هذه الأرض" is:

על פני האדמה הזאת

- Snir's⁴¹ Translation of the **Title** is: **על האדמה הזאת**

Another interesting example of uncertainty appears in the translation of the first passage of the poem, which says:

على هذه الأرض ما يستحق الحياة: تردد إبريل، رائحة الخبز
في الفجر، آراء امرأة في الرجال، كتابات أسخيلوس، أول
الحب، عشب على حجر، أمهات تقفن على خيط ناي، وخوف
الغزاة من الذكريات

Translation of the passage into English:

"We have on this earth what makes life worth living: April's **hesitation/cyclicity**, the aroma of bread at dawn, a woman's point of view about men, the works of Aeschylus, the beginning of love, grass on a stone, mothers living on flute's sigh and the invaders' fear of memories".

Let's compare the translations of the first passage into Hebrew by Nabil Tannous and Reuven Snir:

The **bold** words above show the differences between the two translations. While Tannous translates the word (تردد) into **(מחזוריות)** (cyclicity), Snir translates it into **(הססנות)** (hesitation). Both meanings exist in the dictionary, but the hidden meaning is 'in the heart of the poet'! It seems that each translator adopted the meaning that impressed the heart and mind of the translator!

Between the two translations, the poet and the reader, who knows the two languages, there is a dialogue that revives the poem, refreshes its significant meaning and wakes up the desire to guess the intention of the Other.

⁴⁰ For more information about the translation of أبي as (אב) (Dad/ Father), and أبت as (אבא), See: Tannous, Nabil (2020) *Between Arabic and Hebrew*, p. 53.

⁴¹ Snir, R., Mahmoud Darwish, *Fifty Years of Poetry*, p. 224.

Given the above implications and conclusions, we can sum up the discussion and say that uncertainty in translation does not only revive the Literature of the Other but opens the Black Box wider for the reader.

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