

## **Abstract**

This study tests the extent to which non-Hebrew words are used in original Hebrew texts versus translated ones. The study is based on a variety of recent studies in translation indicating the existence of differences between original and translated texts (e.g. Baker, 1993). Based on that assumption, it sets out to examine whether the number of non-Hebrew words in an original Hebrew text is higher than that found in a translated Hebrew text. The objectives of this study are both quantitative and qualitative. The quantitative aspect makes it possible to find whether the proportion of non-Hebrew words is different, and the qualitative aspect helps qualify the ways in which non-Hebrew words are used in both original and translated Hebrew texts.

The definition of a non-Hebrew word for the purposes of this study is based on Nir (1993): a Hebrew word originating in a foreign language and functioning as a semantical equivalent of an existing Hebrew word. This definition makes it possible to explore the way translators deal with cases where both options, Hebrew and non-Hebrew words, are available.

Two methods have been used, in keeping with the objectives specified above. The quantitative one compares two Hebrew corpora (original and translated), each consisting of 75,000 words, comprising texts from the domains of economics, computers and socio-scientific periodicals (25,000 words of each). Based on a method that has gained currency in translation research (Baker 1993), the number of non-Hebrew words was counted for each subcorpus and then for each corpus as a whole.

The experimental part of this study, involving 16 translators, had both quantitative and qualitative dimensions. Sixteen translators rendered into Hebrew an English text

containing 26 words for which both a Hebrew and a non-Hebrew word was available. The aim of this experiment was to trace the translators' choices and to examine the alternatives they chose in order to avoid the use of a non-Hebrew word.

From the quantitative perspective, both methods support the hypothesis that original Hebrew texts present a larger amount of non-Hebrew words than translated texts. From the qualitative aspect, the experiment supports the hypothesis that Hebrew words are the preferred form in translation whenever this is possible. The translators were found to share a tendency to use Hebrew words even when these are not common ones, and even at the cost of having to devise an appropriate Hebrew word. In addition, when no Hebrew equivalent exists, the translator uses the non-Hebrew word along with a Hebrew explication.

Future directions recommended following this study include extending the corpora in terms of scope and disciplines; diachronically examining translated versus original Hebrew texts; conducting a survey among translators as to their preferences regarding the use of non-Hebrew words in Hebrew translation; exploring the policies of Israeli publishing houses regarding this issue; comparing the level of familiarity with Hebrew neologisms among professional versus unprofessional translators and the extent of using them; and ultimately, conducting a longitudinal or a subject-oriented study aimed at examining the ability of translators to promote the use of existing Hebrew terms or general words, in cases where non-Hebrew words are more commonly used instead.