

Abstract

Mark Twain's novel *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is characterized by the use of various dialects, posing a great challenge for the translators. The novel was translated into Hebrew ten times between 1926 and 2004:

- *Meoraot Finn: Sipur* – published in 1926, translated by P. Hilpern.
- *Meoraot Huckleberry Finn* – published in 1927, translated by Y. Karni.
- *Hickleberry Finn* – published in 1941, translated by P. Hilpern.
- *Huckleberry Finn* – published in 1949, translated by Avraham Birman.
- *Huckleberry Finn* – published in 1966, translated by A. Fishkin. As stated in the book, Fishkin's translation is based on Halperin's translation.
- *Harpatkaot Huckleberry Finn* - published in 1982, adapted by Shraga Gafni.
- *Harpatkaotav šel Huckleberry Finn* – published in 1987, translated by Aharon Amir.
- *Alilot Huckleberry Finn* – published in 1989, translated by Uriel Ofek.
- *Hockleberry Finn* – published in 2000, translated by Bina Ofek.
- *Harpatkaotav šel Huckleberry Finn – Hasefer Hamuar* – published in 2004, translated by Yaniv Farkash.

In my thesis I examined the ways in which the translators dealt with the different dialects. I also tried to find out whether the translators had acted according to the norms governing literary translation into Hebrew at the time of the translation. To achieve these aims, I selected eight segments representing the four main dialects in the book (the Missouri Negro Dialect, The backwoods South-Western Dialect, The Pike-County

dialect and four varieties of the Pike County dialect) and compared the translations of these segments with the source text and with each other.

Dialects are defined as a sub-standard language or as a specific variant of a language which has sub-divisions. The question of how translators deal with spoken language in general and with dialects in particular has been dealt with by researchers in Israel and in other countries. They include Toury (1977), Weissbrod (1989) and Ben-Shahar (1996) who examined translation of spoken language and Berezowski, Ives and Sanchez who explored literary dialects and their translation.

Dialects relate the speakers to specific ethnic, social and geographic groups. The difficulties in translating dialects lie in translators having to deal not only with the differences between the source language and the target language but also with the different connotations of the dialects in their context. Some scholars believe that dialects cannot be translated since part of their meaning and connotations is necessarily lost during the translation or sacrificed in favor of the target language and its connotations. Other scholars, however, claim that it is possible to translate dialects which appear in the source text in different ways, for example by choosing an equivalent dialect in the target language or, if an equivalent dialect is unavailable in the target language, using sub-standard language. Toury, Weissbrod and Ben-Shahar have dealt with spoken language but their findings can be applied to dialects as well. They claim that translators can ignore spoken language and convert it to standard and super-standard written language, they can use inventions based on either the target language or the source language and they can use a target language's dialect (if such exists).

Translation, like any other social activity, is governed by norms. Accordingly, the translators' selection of strategies is dictated by the norms prevalent in that period

within the target culture. At the beginning of the 20th century, literary translation into Hebrew was governed by a norm dictating acceptability (i.e. adapting the text to the target language and culture). This norm gradually weakened and in the 1980s the norm dictating adequacy (i.e. adapting the text to the norms of the source language and culture) was already dominant. The norm dictating either acceptability or adequacy is divided into more specific norms that apply to different textual levels. In the beginning of the 20th century, the stylistic norm which dominated literary translation into Hebrew dictated the use of elevated language rooted in the Bible and other canonized Jewish texts. Since the 1940s this norm gradually weakened. In the 1980s, the Biblical language that had characterized the earlier translations disappeared completely.

The strategies used by the translators to cope with the dialects in Twain's novel changed in accordance with these norms. The earlier translations correlated with the acceptability norm which was dominant in the time of the translation. The translators converted the dialects into a standard and super-standard language, according to the contemporary norm which dictated the use of elevated language. The later translations testify to the gradual weakening of the above mentioned language norm and to the increasing power of the adequacy norm. In the earlier translations, the translators coped with the dialects mainly by their use of the target lexicon and created a mixed, artificial language. In the translations that were published since the 1980s, the use of authentic spoken language and the reconstruction of the original characteristics of the dialects were apparent. Aharon Amir, Uriel Ofek and particularly Yaniv Farkash did not use just the lexicon but also took advantage of phonetics to translate the dialects.

The intended readers of the translations, excluding Yaniv Farkash's translation (published in 2004), were primarily children and teenagers. Due to its marginal position

in the culture, children's literature is strictly governed by the target norms. The shift from acceptability to adequacy and the gradual stylistic lowering of the language that took place in literary translation for adults were also apparent in the translation for children, but the process was slower because translations for children were supposed to enrich the language of the young readers. In addition, translation for children was subject to norms that were unique to that sub-system: first educational norms requiring the adaptation of the text to what was considered appropriate for children, and then readability norms requiring the creation of texts adapted to the level of children's understanding. In certain cases, the norms operating in children's literature collided with and even prevailed over the general norms governing literary translation into Hebrew. Aharon Amir, Uriel Ofek and Bina Ofek's translations illustrate it well. Their attempts to achieve readability overpowered the adequacy norm governing literary translation into Hebrew since the 1980s.

Farkash's translation which is intended for adults and is free from the constraints operating on children's literature shows that the adequacy norm which was dominant in the 1980s is still prevalent. It is an equivalent translation which comprises the most comprehensive representation of dialects compared to the other translations.