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Translators Talk about Themselves, Their Work and Their Profession: The Habitus of Translators of Russian Literature into Hebrew

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Résumé de l'article

Dans sa réflexion sur l'habitus des traducteurs à travers l'histoire, Simeoni met en relief la soumission et l'invisibilité découlant de la position d'infériorité de ces derniers et de leur tendance à assimiler et à intérioriser cette perception de leur activité. Dans la lignée de récentes remises en question de cette position, le présent article examine la façon dont les traducteurs de la littérature russe en hébreu, de 1970 à nos jours, représentent leur travail, eux-mêmes et leur profession, ainsi que la façon dont ils réfléchissent à leur propre habitus, à leur rôle dans le système de la traduction de la littérature russe et à leur pratique. À partir des théories de Bourdieu et d'Even Zohar, cet article explore l'image que projettent ces traducteurs et conclut que, loin de se présenter comme invisibles, passifs ou dénués de signe distinctif professionnel, ils affirment leur présence et valorisent leur travail. Si les modèles qu'ils adoptent sont variés, ces traducteurs partagent néanmoins un même répertoire et un même habitus, tant général que professionnel. Cet habitus constitue une condition d'entrée dans le champ de la traduction littéraire (et plus particulièrement dans le système de la traduction de la littérature russe) ainsi que pour s'y tailler une place. C'est ainsi que ces traducteurs acquièrent une position au sein de la culture, qu'ils accumulent différents types de capital et se façonnent une identité collective distincte. En outre, leur discours révèle la nature dynamique de leur système et contribue à déplacer ce dernier vers le centre du polysystème de la littérature traduite en hébreu.

Translators Talk about Themselves, Their Work and Their Profession: The Habitus of Translators of Russian Literature into Hebrew[1]

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Abstract
In his discussion of the habitus of translators throughout history, Simeoni highlights the submissiveness and invisibility associated with their inferior position and with their tendency to assimilate and internalize these views of their professional activities. In keeping with recent reappraisals of this position, the present paper examines the ways in which translators of Russian literature into Hebrew, from the 1970s to now, present themselves, their work and their profession—and reflect on their habitus, their conduct in the system of Russian literature translation, and their practice. From the theories of Bourdieu and of Even-Zohar, we explore these self-representations, and find that rather than presenting themselves as invisible, passive and professionally indistinct, these translators make a point of announcing their presence as well as of emphasizing their work. While they adopt different models, they nevertheless share a repertoire and both a social and a professional habitus—one that is a prerequisite for entering the field of literary translation, and particularly the subfield of literary translation of Russian literature, and for operating successfully in these arenas. It is in this way that they achieve status in the culture, accumulate capital and construct their (distinctive) group identity. In addition, the discourse of Russian literary translators points to the dynamic nature of their system and helps push it towards the center of the polysystem of Hebrew translated literature.

Keywords: translators' self-presentations, literary translation, habitus, repertoire, models

1. This article is based on the MA thesis of the first author (Voinova, 2010), with Miriam Shlesinger as the supervisor. It was originally submitted in 2011.

Résumé
Dans sa réflexion sur l'habitus des traducteurs à travers l'histoire, Simeoni met en relief la soumission et l'invisibilité découlant de la position d'infériorité de ces derniers et de leur tendance à assimiler et à intérioriser cette perception de leur activité. Dans la lignée de récentes remises en question de cette position, le présent article examine la façon dont les traducteurs de la littérature russe en hébreu, de 1970 à nos jours, représentent leur travail, eux-mêmes et leur profession, ainsi que la façon dont ils réfléchissent à leur propre habitus, à leur rôle dans le système de la traduction de la littérature russe et à leur pratique. À partir des théories de Bourdieu et d'Even Zohar, cet article explore l'image que projettent ces traducteurs et conclut que, loin de se présenter comme invisibles, passifs ou dénués de signe distinctif professionnel, ils affirment leur présence et valorisent leur travail. Si les modèles qu'ils adoptent sont variés, ces traducteurs partagent néanmoins un même répertoire et un même habitus, tant général que professionnel. Cet habitus constitue une condition d'entrée dans le champ de la traduction littéraire (et plus particulièrement dans le système de la traduction de la littérature russe) ainsi que pour s'y tailler une place. C'est ainsi que ces traducteurs acquièrent une position au sein de la culture, qu'ils accumulent différents types de capital et se façonnent une identité collective distincte. En outre, leur discours révèle la nature dynamique de leur système et contribue à déplacer ce dernier vers le centre du polysystème de la littérature traduite en hébreu.

Mots-clés : habitus, image des traducteurs, traduction littéraire, répertoire, capital symbolique

In the late 1990s, translation scholars started to pay attention to the relevance of Bourdieu's key concepts in order to understand the *persona* of the translator. In doing so, they were revisiting descriptive translation studies (DTS) paradigms (Toury, 1995): the Bourdieusian concepts came to be seen as complementing those of DTS (Simeoni, 1998; Tahir, 2001; Sela-Sheffy, 2005, 2008; Meylaerts, 2006, 2010), as offering more effective tools (Hermans, 1999; Inghilleri, 2005) or as providing an alternative approach (Gouanvic, 2005).

It was Daniel Simeoni (1998) who first proposed to include the concept of habitus in the theory of norms set forth by Toury and in the discussion of the process by which "a bilingual speaker becomes a translator" (Toury, 1995, pp. 241-258). As in the case of other agents, the activity of (literary) translators is guided by their habitus—the set of dispositions that are both structured and structuring, evolving on the basis of past experience and manifesting themselves in their practices (Bourdieu, 1990). After studying the

habitus of translators through Western history, Simeoni concluded that it had been marked by submissiveness, subservience and invisibility—inclinations that became the translators' second nature. While the value of Simeoni's contribution is beyond dispute, it presents universal findings that are not necessarily confirmed by the empirical studies (e.g., Tahir, 2001; Sela-Sheffy, 2005, 2006, 2008) that Bourdieu and Simeoni himself suggested be carried out. In her dialogue with Simeoni, Sela-Sheffy (2005) maintains that any discussion of a translator's habitus must take into account the particular field(s) in which this translator is operating at any given point in time and the status of the particular translator, both in the given field(s) and in relation to adjoining ones. For example, the discourse of literary translators in Israel since the 1980s (Sela-Sheffy, 2005, 2006, 2008) indicates that, far from being silent, translators strive to set themselves apart and to advance their own status as well as that of their (professional) field, and that they invest heavily in acquiring symbolic capital.

The present study examines how, since the 1970s, translators who translate Russian literature into Hebrew talk about themselves, their work and their profession. In other words, our study describes the habitus of those translators and the way they engage in their practice in the subfield of translated Russian literature. In keeping with the views of Sela-Sheffy, our study is based on the theories of Bourdieu and Even-Zohar.[2] By assigning a key role to the agent, Bourdieu's theory may be seen as complementing that of Even-Zohar, which was criticized for being overly concerned with texts and insufficiently sensitive to (human) agency (e.g., Hermans, 1999; Tahir, 2001; Jettmarová, 2005; Prunč, 2007).[3] Even-Zohar himself acknowledges the importance of the notion of habitus and positions it within his theoretical framework. He describes it as "a repertoire of models acquired and adopted (as well as adapted) by individuals and groups in a given milieu, and under the constraints of the prevailing system of relations dominating this milieu" (Even-Zohar, 1997, pp. 24-25). His views are in line with the Bourdieusian theory, which does not see models as universal either, nor as hereditary, but rather as

2. The concepts of Bourdieu and Even-Zohar are used in this study: e.g., *field* and *polysystem*. However, these concepts are not necessarily interchangeable, despite their partial overlapping.

3. Even-Zohar does in fact refer to agency (see for example 1990a).

dependent on the time and place and on the dispositions that evolve on the basis of past experience (Bourdieu, 1984a, p. 467, cited in Even-Zohar, 1997, p. 25).

These two concepts—habitus and models within a repertoire—complement each other (Sela-Sheffy, 1997; Tahir, 2001). The concept of habitus may account for people's tendency to occupy or to strive to occupy similar positions in the social space so as to arrive at similar choices from within the (limited) repertoire. It may also explain how cultural models help preserve social cohesion as well as social distinction (Sela-Sheffy, 1997).

The present study is based on the thematic analysis of paratexts[4] by eight leading translators of Russian literature into Hebrew who have played a key role in the history of literary translation in Israel since the 1970s: Nili Mirski, Rina Litvin, Aminadav Dykman, Peter Kriksunov, Dina Markon, Roee Chen, Ronen Sonis and Sivan Beskin.[5] A total of 73 epitexts—translators' statements made in interviews and discussions, published in printed and electronic media, as well as metatextual writings (such as treatises, articles)—and 20 peritexts—translators' forewords and afterwords, appended to their translations—were analysed in the context of our study.

1. Historical background

The extent to which literary translation constitutes a proper field in the Bourdieusian sense is subject to debate among translation scholars.[6] (Literary) translation, at least in Israel, is not well-defined, regulated and institutionalized. Although translators in Israel operate in a peripheral culture in which one would expect the translator to enjoy a high level of recognition (Even-Zohar, 1990b; Sela-Sheffy and Shlesinger, 2008), the status of (literary) translators into Hebrew does not indicate their centrality in the culture. Very few literary translators join the

4. In Genette (1997), the term *paratext* focuses on original rather than translated literature, and refers to added elements mediating between the book and its readers, including translations. Our study uses paratexts of translations on the assumption that the translation is a text with its own paratexts, which may differ from those that accompany the original, as suggested by translation scholars (Kovala, 1996; Tahir, 2001, 2002; Dimitriu, 2009). Our corpus includes texts published through 2008.

5. For basic information about these translators, see the Appendix.

6. Simeoni (1998, pp. 19-20) is well aware of the situation.

Israel Translators Association (ITA), whose role is to promote professionalization. Despite the existence of training programs, the lack of professional training is still the norm (Toury, 1998). To make ends meet, most translators engage in other work that is somehow related to translation (Katznelson, 2000). However, (literary) translation can fit the definition of a "field": there is an academic discipline that studies it; prizes exist that are directly related to it; it has its own history in a socio-cultural context, its own (professional) repertoires, and its own agents, who maintain dynamic and hierarchical relations among themselves. Since it does not necessarily meet the accepted criteria of a profession, it may be defined as a semi-professional field (Sela-Sheffy, 2005, Sela-Sheffy and Shlesinger, 2008). In semi-professional fields of practice which have a relatively small economic capital, the main efforts are invested in other forms of capital, especially symbolic capital, acquired in the self-representational discourse of practitioners.

For many years, literary translators in Israel have been speaking out in professional arenas, but it was not until the mid-1980s that their discourse extended to larger circles. Besides being present in peritexts (e.g., forewords, afterwords, notes and appendices), which attest to their translational work and personal background, literary translators are present in the media: they launch workshops, take part in public events and have their own blogs (which center on themselves and their activities). The discourse of Israeli literary translators has turned some of them into "stars" and allowed them to wage a campaign for better status and better conditions (Sela-Sheffy, 2005, 2006, 2008). These "stars" translate from a variety of languages and assume prominent positions in the cultural milieu; among them are a few of the leading translators of Russian literature into Hebrew, whose self-representations are at the core of our study.

In multilingual contexts, language may be viewed as "one of the major elements of sociocultural distinction" which generate "various sociolinguistic habituses in interaction with the individual's social position as well as individual and collective antecedents and experiences" (Meylaerts, 2006, p. 63). Indeed, when it comes to the status of the Russian(-related) system in Israel and, in particular, to the status of Russian literature in Israel in the polysystem of literature translated into Hebrew, it

appears that these statuses were instrumental in shaping the self-representation of the translators.

Until the 1950s, the Russian polysystem functioned as a legitimate source available to those working within the Hebrew polysystem (Even-Zohar, 1990c). It played a role in the formation of the new Hebrew culture, and Russian—later Soviet—literature enjoyed a high prestige and served as the primary source of models appropriated for literary translations into Hebrew. The high status of Russian language and literature in those years also lent personal and collective prestige to those who knew them well, among them translators (Toury, 1977, p. 234). In the 1950s, the (inter-)dependency relations between the Hebrew and the Russian polysystems was on the decline, and the affinity towards the West in general—and the United States in particular—grew. From the 1950s, the Anglo-American polysystem had a profound influence on the Hebrew polysystem, and this influence has been more pronounced since the 1970s (Weissbrod, 1989). The effects of the Russian polysystem has become peripheral: not many translations were published until the 1990s, and most of them were of canonical works. The large influx of immigrants from the Soviet Union in the 1970s did not reinstate the status of the Russian polysystem. Following the rise of Gorbachev to power, the gates of the Soviet Union opened, and another wave of Russian-speaking immigrants arrived in Israel in the 1990s. Over time, their distinct community—the third largest after the two indigenous ethnic groups (Jewish and Arab)—took shape, and the Russian language worked its way into many areas of life in Israel (Kotik-Friedgut, 2000). Even if the status of the Russian polysystem never again attained the heights it had enjoyed before the 1950s, it did not remain entirely peripheral. In fact, it gradually moved towards the center, as befits a system that is dynamic.

2. Translators talk about themselves, their work and their profession

Our analysis of paratexts by translators of Russian literature indicates that they speak out about themselves, their work and their profession—a finding which runs counter to the portrayal of translators (in the literature and in society itself) as invisible, passive and professionally indistinct. On the one hand, the veteran translators of Russian literature, situated at the center of the system

and including a few "stars" such as Mirski, Litvin and Dykman, started their translation work in the 1970s, won prestigious prizes, work with celebrated publishers and play an active role in shaping policy, occupying senior positions in academic institutions. These translators are identified with the establishment, which confers legitimacy and plays an active role in shaping culture. They have the power to introduce elements and models into the repertoire of the system, and they strive to preserve elements and models that they themselves have introduced. On the other hand, newcomers in the subfield of Russian-into-Hebrew literary translation, such as Markon, Kriksunov and especially Sonis, Beskin, Chen and some other young and less prominent translators (see Voinova, 2010), wage their own struggle for some measure of control, and may not only adopt existing elements and models but also rebel by introducing new ones into the existing repertoire (Bourdieu, 1984b; Even-Zohar, 1997).

Translators of Russian literature adopt a variety of models in their repertoires related to themselves, their work and their profession. However, the relations among the translators of Russian literature are homologous, so that their social trajectories may be seen as largely overlapping (Bourdieu, 1984b). They operate within the same field of literary translation and in the same subfield of translated Russian literature. They are also subject to the same conditions and constraints, thus they exhibit similar dispositions and similar practices. Prominent models in their repertoire(s) help constitute a collective identity (Even-Zohar, 1997); over time, a repertoire of "recommended" inclinations has evolved, along with a body of "intuitive knowledge" as to what one ought to do and say in order to gain recognition as a translator, especially as a successful one (Sela-Sheffy, 2005, p. 15)—all of which emerges in their self-representations, creating both a distinction and a collective identity within the (sub-)field.

3. Habitus

Simeoni was aware that the translators' habitus extends beyond professional practice (1998, p. 14 and pp. 18-19). Drawing a distinction between the "social" ("generalized") habitus and the "professional" ("specialized") habitus, he stressed that the connection between them cannot be taken for granted. Meylaerts' studies (2006, 2010) support this view: alongside the translators'

professional habitus are other habituses to consider, as every translator is subject to multiple processes of socialization. Sela-Sheffy's investigations (2005, 2006, 2008) also support the claim that to be a translator is to adopt a *persona* with a particular character, i.e., a "generalized" habitus that extends beyond the "specialized" one (*cf.* Even-Zohar, 1990a, pp. 34-35).

The role of the "generalized" habitus is all the more important in the case of a semi-professional field like translation (Meylaerts, 2006; Sela-Sheffy, 2008). It ensures the meaningful inclusion of prior experience, imprinted in every individual or group entity; therefore, it also ensures that the individual's practice exhibits a measure of consistency, order and cohesion over time. The translators' "relevant" background facilitates their entry into the field and their future success.

3.1 Childhood, home, family

The translators cited in this study make a point of referring to their childhood as a period that shaped their personality. As young children, they were exposed to large amounts of literature and art, and were given a sense of being different—a feeling that contributed to their sense of a distinct, sophisticated identity, unlike that of most "ordinary" people. While only Dykman was born into a family of translators, most of them stress the advantages of a family that had a marked interest in literature, languages, art and culture. Whenever they speak of their childhood, they apply this model of self-representation.

3.2 Immigration

Most of the key agents in the subfield of literary translation from Russia into Hebrew are immigrants, making the immigrant profile an intrinsic part of their repertoire. Three of the translators whose paratexts are included in our study (Mirsky, Sonis and Chen) were born in Israel. All of the others were born abroad and devote considerable attention to their experience as immigrants.

The main model in the repertoire of the self-representations of being an immigrant is that of immigration as a traumatic experience, one which shapes the individual and intensifies the sense of not-belonging. Rina Litvin, whose professional career extends over a longer number of years than the other immigrant translators in our study and who occupies a central position in

the field, adheres to the repertoire of the past, setting the tone for discourse about immigration. She puts forward a model that has become the most prominent in the translators' discourse: "I had to forego all of the external indications of who I was, to obliterate every trace of my identity" (Litvin, cited in Golan, 1988, p. 23).

> To this day, I carry with me the complexes of a new arrival. I think that anyone who has been an immigrant child knows what I mean. […] Perhaps it may hark back to the same problems that Shaul Tchernichovsky[7] experienced when he referred to himself as 'an outsider'. (Litvin, 1989, p. 25)

Following the two largest influxes of immigration from the Soviet Union to Israel—in the 1970s and the 1990s—, the model of immigration as a traumatic experience affecting the life of any future translator gained legitimacy. In appropriating it, translators were on solid ground. For example, Dina Markon describes her immigration to Israel using this model:

> The period of muteness—of stripping off every sign of the culture that I had come from, my habits, the warmth of my home and so many things that I had come to take for granted, as well as my mother tongue […] to the point where I found myself standing wordless in a strange and inscrutable and stupefying world. (Markon, 2007, p. 43)

Sivan Beskin, who arrived from Lithuania in the 1990s, also describes immigration as traumatic: "I was suffering. […] It was tough leaving my grandparents behind. […]. It was tough leaving my friends" (Beskin, cited in Verbin, 2006, n.p.).

The new agents started to propose elements based on the existing repertoire. For instance, Markon proposes the element of bilingualism—parallel lives in two languages and two cultures—as an integral part of immigration. She reaffirms her affiliation with a group of immigrants which moved to a different country in adolescence and now exists in a kind of "limbo" (Markon, 2007, p. 44). These elements of bilingualism have evolved into a model that blends into the main model of immigration as a difficult and alienating experience, and it has been appropriated in the discourse of the new translators who entered the field after the turn of the century (Voinova, 2010).

7. Renowned Russian-born Hebrew poet and translator, 1875–1943.

One of the most recent agents in the field is Roee Chen. His family came from Morocco, but he himself was born in Israel. And yet, he chose to adopt the model of representing immigration as a difficult experience, thereby joining the group of immigrant translators operating in the field. He speaks of his wish to be different by learning the Russian language, a wish that hails back to a "rebellion against 'Israeliness'" (Chen, cited in Lev-Ari, 2005, p. D1).

3.3 Russia and the Russian language

The status of Russian culture in general and of Russian literature in particular in the polysystem of literature translated into Hebrew has played a key role in the translators' self-representation along the diachronic axis. Even when this polysystem ceased serving as a primary source for the appropriation of models by the Hebrew polysystem, it continued to play an important role in the eyes of the agents, at least at the level of their discourse: It is not easy to shed a cultural tradition that has evolved over a period of many years (Weissbrod, 1989).

The heterogeneity of the subfield of literary translation from Russian into Hebrew entails different models related to the mastery of the Russian language. Immigrant translators tend to stress the fact that they were born into a Russian-speaking environment. Israeli-born translators adopt a different model, whereby one is raised into a language. Mirsky, for example, often speaks of her bond with Russian: "Grandma Chaya spoke nothing but Russian. […] I was very attached to her and we spoke Russian to each other from day one" (Mirsky, cited in Karpel, 2002, p. 42). Aminadav Dykman was also raised "in a house filled with Russian culture" (Koren, 2003, p. 26).

For seven of the eight translators, the Russian language was part of their home environment. It is their outstanding command of the language that sets these literary translators apart. Roee Chen is the only translator whose family history has no connection to the Russian language, and the difference between him and all the others provides the basis for a new discursive element: spending time with Russian-speaking immigrants as a source of knowledge. This element has the potential to be incorporated into the repertoire of the field, as it is based on existing elements and models which Chen has appropriated—Russian literature as

a source of knowledge and inspiration (e.g., "You might say that I was raised in the bosom of Russian literature" (Shirkina, 2008, p. 14)), the image of the immigrant whose identity is Russian (see 3.2), and an identity of a stranger, of one who is perceived as strange (see 3.5). This new element enables Chen to situate himself successfully in the subfield, in a position that is conducive to the acquisition of capital.

The connection to Russia also manifests itself in the desire to visit this country. Litvin, for example, says about her affiliation with the Russian system that "the Russian classics are the crux of my own internal crossroads" (Litvin, 2005, p. 129). Mirsky speaks of the emotional repercussions of her visit to Russia, exhibits expert knowledge of world literature generally and of Russian literature in particular, and displays a great deal of knowledge with regard to the Russian language (Mirsky, 1978). In this way, she glorifies the polysystem that serves as the source of her translations and acquires symbolic capital by reinforcing her affiliation with it.

Roee Chen had imagined Russia as a place with which he was already closely familiar from reading about it, and, like Mirsky, he was not disillusioned (Lev-Ari, 2005, p. D1). Chen adapts to the image that he constructs: he dons a top-hat and white gloves and sports a walking stick (Sakal, 2006, n.p.). Like Litvin—"[t]he cashier [in Russia] stared up at me and said: 'But you talk like one of us. Here, take one of our own tickets'" (2005, p. 55)—he behaves like a local: "I've been to Russia fivl rate, which is a hundred times lower than the tourist rate, to get into the Hermitage" (Chen, cited in Bahir, 2004, n.p.). Chen adopts most of the models of discourse devoted to the Russian polysystem and since he did not belong to it a priori, he goes even further, taking these models to new extremes—including the model that has gained legitimacy and centrality thanks to its adoption by two leading agents (Nili Mirsky and Rina Litvin), the romantic representation of Russia and the longing for Russia.

3.4 Hebrew, other languages and language acquisition

Hebrew, the target language of the literary translators under examination in the present study, plays a vital part in the personality of these translators, and some of them refer to it in the paratexts. Mirsky notes that it is her mother tongue,

notwithstanding her attachment to Russian (Melamed, 1989; Rachkovsky, 2008). To secure their own status in the field, those immigrant-translators who do not have Hebrew as a mother tongue make a point of stressing their firm ties with it. Some also refer to it as their "homeland" (e.g., Litvin, cited in Golan, 1988, p. 23; Snir, 1988, p. 19).

As was mentioned previously, notwithstanding its gradual move from the periphery, the system of literature translated from Russian cannot be seen as occupying a central status within the polysystem of literature translated into Hebrew. Most translators of Russian literature translate from other languages as well, and Russian is not the only source language in their acquisition of capital. In order to accumulate more symbolic capital, translators work multilingually, preferably with prestigious languages, chief among them English, which also plays a role in shaping the translators' habitus (Meylaerts, 2006).

The translators of Russian literature use two models of language acquisition. The first focuses on inborn talent and on the effortless acquisition of languages. Speaking about English, Russian and Chinese, Litvin says: "When I opened my mouth to speak, I knew Chinese […], Russian and a little bit later, some English" (Litvin, cited in Golan, 1988, p. 22). Mirsky refers to her own "learning" of Russian as follows: "I don't remember learning the language. I simply spoke it from an early age" (Mirsky, cited in Melamed, 1989, p. 32). The second model adopts what purports to be a more professional stance, whereby the acquisition of a language is a result of "hard labor," for example, according to Chen (Bahir, 2004, n.p.), or of studying on one's own, for example, according to Kriksunov, who studied Hebrew on his own "with tapes and books" (Borschevsky, n.d., n.p.).

3.5 Personality and lifestyle

The "generalized" habitus internalized by translators as part of their socialization shapes their worldview, their thinking and the manner in which they structure their lives and "personal" lifestyle. By the same token, the habitus is structured by all of these (Bourdieu, 1984a); its initial formation begins before the translators enter the professional field and continues to evolve over time in a bi-directional process.

Several models of personality and lifestyle co-exist among the translators of Russian literature into Hebrew; these translators exhibit colorful personalities with their own distinct histories, and their lifestyles are unconventional. The predominant model is that of being a strange outsider, as discussed extensively by Sela-Sheffy (e.g., 2008). The images of being strange and being an outsider are inter-related. The aspiration to be special, which is typical of groups of artists and intellectuals (see Bourdieu, 1985), is not a by-product of their personality but of their habitus as a means of distinction. Sela-Sheffy sees this model as drawing the translators closer to the agents in fields related to translation, such as art and literature, which they see as potential sources of symbolic capital (2008; also see 5.3). The "strange outsider" model is multifaceted. It ties in with several other models, among which are the representation of childhood as a period that shapes one's personality,[8] the representation of immigration as traumatic,[9] the model of being captivated by Europe in all its glory—which ties in, among other things, with the non-central status of the Russian system in the Hebrew polysystem.[10]

The "strange outsiderness" of the translators is manifested in their lifestyle as well. Mirsky, for example, presents herself as having the personality of a dreamer, utterly impractical, not caring about her appearance and having little patience for daily affairs (Karpel, 2002, p. 43). She describes her daily routine—the routine of artists—as disorganized. She works at night and she drinks (Rachkovsky, 2008, p. 13). The "strange outsider" model promoted by this central agent in the subfield is also adopted by other literary translators, who promote themselves as artists in their own right (Voinova, 2010; see 5.3).

The "generalized" habitus is re-structured by the "specialized" habitus, which the translators develop upon entering the field. Thus, for example, their leisure hours and areas of interest are

8. See, for example, Mirsky: "But I wanted to be like everyone else. I was already different—a redheaded bookworm" (Mirsky, cited in Kuperbaum, 2008, p. 21).

9. Litvin, for example, notes that she can never shake off the "new immigrant complex" (Karpel, 1994, p. 30).

10. "My ties to different aspects of Europe are rooted in its past […] and they have grown stronger with time. What really makes me mad is the need to apologize for this" (Mirsky, cited in Karpel, 2002, p. 44).

closely bound up with their professional lives. Some of them indicate that they also translate in their leisure time. All of them exhibit an interest in domains such as art and literature, and stress their love of reading, especially Russian classics, ever since early childhood.

4. The field

The field is a structured space in which positions manifest themselves and in which agents struggle for symbolic capital. This space has a history as well as objects, which are competed for, and interests that are not simply economic in nature (Bourdieu, 1984b). Literary translation may be seen as a field, albeit a semi-professional one (see section 1).

4.1 Getting started as a translator

Notwithstanding their early exposure to languages and literature, and notwithstanding their education, most translators of Russian literature stress that their entry into the profession happened quite by chance. Alternatively, after entering the field of literary translation, their self-representations indicate that this was bound to happen; i.e., their personal history could not but lead them in this direction. The "generalized" habitus of these translators, shaped before their actual entry into the field, underwent modification, subject to the evolving "professional" habitus and to the rules of the game in the field as well as the practice found within it. The two types of habitus are inseparable; they blend into one another in the process of structuring a coherent identity, and are structured in turn by this selfsame identity.

Mirsky adopts the by-chance model and it is thanks to her, apparently, that this model has gained legitimacy and has become an available part of the subfield. The model of being a translator from early childhood is adopted by Dykman, a veteran agent, who also holds a central position in the subfield: "When I read Pushkin as a child, I humored myself by trying to translate him" (Dykman, cited in Koren, 2003, p. 26). Bilingualism, alongside "a love of words" and "a love of literature," led Dina Markon to translate; she did not choose the profession, it chose her, and she describes it as "a destiny," "a professional fate," to which she has been "sentenced" (2007, p. 43). Ronen Sonis and Sivan Beskin, who base much of their discourse on the models advanced by

Dykman, take the "since-early-childhood" model even further. They purport to have been translators from the cradle—"I've been translating for as long as I can remember myself" (Sonis, cited in Sakal, 2007, n.p.)—or even earlier: "My mother remembers how she used to read those poems [by Tsvetaeva] over and over again when she was pregnant with me, the same poems that I translated, so it must have affected me when I was still in the womb" (Beskin, cited in Verbin, 2006, n.p.).

4.2 Education

According to Bourdieu (1986), academic education enables agents to acquire cultural capital, which may be converted into economic capital. One of the trademarks of any profession is the prerequisite of an educational and training system; then again, since the field of translation is semi-professional—i.e., one that, among other things, does not require professional training or certification—the acquisition of capital is not necessarily contingent on higher education in general nor on education in translation in particular, although most of the translators included in our study have at least a BA in literature or in a closely related discipline.

This situation may account for Mirsky's attitude: Notwithstanding her extensive academic background, she chooses to claim that her education has been "haphazard" (Paz, 1985, n.p.) and stresses that education and academic training are "boring" and do not suit her "impatient" character (Rachkovsky, 2008, p. 13). Some of the other translators adopt Mirsky's model, for instance Kriksunov: "I no longer see the point of theoretical musings as such. I wanted to feel the language directly, to taste it in its written form" (Kriksunov, cited in Borschevsky, n.d., n.p.). The main source of the translator' symbolic and cultural capital is the model of studying on one's own. The translational skills are acquired through experience.

Aminadav Dykman promotes a different model. As a professor who heads the Translation Program at the Hebrew University, Dykman produces the model of the well-educated translator, based on his own institutionalized cultural capital. Through this model and through his own central position in the field, he transmits his message to his students—one that encourages them to develop the professional habitus necessary for entering the field and for navigating successfully within it. He

informs them about the field itself and its history, and seeks to regard the graduates of his department as agents who accumulate economic capital, making use of the cultural capital that he imparts to them:

> I expect them to develop into a large, assertive and sophisticated pressure group, with each of them successfully developing his/her own taste and area of interest and taking the initiative of approaching publishers with new book proposals, thereby becoming far more than mere subcontractors. (Dykman, cited in Koren, 2003, p. 26)

4.3 Materials

The translators of Russian literature on whom our study revolves translate 19th- and 20th-century classics and canonical literature published by highly respected publishers. In some cases, this involves retranslations of works first translated before the 1950s. The symbolic capital attached to canonical works and to prestigious publishers remains high, and with it comes economic capital as well.[11] The veteran and most prominent agents in the field promote a model that other translators aspire to, due to the high symbolic capital attached to it: They focus on the translation of "great works of days past" (Mirsky, 1983, p. 24) and "cultural assets of the foremost cultural importance" (Litvin, cited in Karpel, 1994, p. 30).

Ever since the late 1960s, the system of translated canonical literature has begun adopting models that had belonged to the system of non-canonical literature (Weissbrod, 1989). Thanks mainly to the new translators, particularly recent ones who arrived from the former Soviet Union and entered the subfield of translated Russian literature in the 1990s, the Russian system has grown and has become more heterogeneous. Not all the translators confine themselves to canonical works published by mainstream publishers; some publish in journals or literary supplements and on the Internet. According to the model produced and promoted primarily by the new translators of Russian literature, symbolic capital may be acquired by translating non-canonical works as

11. Translators recognize this: "I only became a professional translator, I mean a translator *who makes a living from translation*, after doing *Crime and Punishment*" (Kriksunov, cited in Borschevsky, n.d., n.p.; our italics).

well. For example, Dina Markon speaks of the importance of translating modern and contemporary works:

> It is no less important to render into Hebrew modern Russian literary works—works written over the past twenty years, or even more recently and sometimes even locally, many of which are truly innovative and post-modern, par excellence, and exceptionally interesting literary experiments. (Markon, 2007, p. 44)

4.4 Peers

Despite all its problems, the field of literary translation is relatively autonomous, and may fit Bourdieu's description. It entails an inter-relationship between the subfields on different levels and hierarchical relations and power struggles for symbolic capital among the agents involved in each of them.

All the translators in our study mentioned their colleagues. Familiar with the history of the field while also playing a role in structuring it, the translators promote the autonomous state of the field as a source of symbolic capital and display their knowledge of the history of literary translation in Israel as well as a close familiarity with the individuals and repertoires which are the most prominent. They tend to acknowledge the traditions inherited from their predecessors as their point of departure (Bourdieu, 1984b) and to glorify the translators of the past. At the same time, they stress the fact that the repertoire has aged and been superseded by a new one which they themselves are proposing, in keeping with the changing norms of translation. This model makes it possible for them to succeed in the field.

Of particular interest is the subfield of literary translation from Russian along the synchronic axis—i.e., relations among the translators, whether well-established or more recent to the profession, all of whom are active at the same point in time. All of those whose paratexts are included in our corpus relate to two main models. The first is the popular model, which secures the central position of those who adopt it, stresses their exclusivity, retains the existing distribution of capital and blocks the entry of newcomers into the prestigious center. This model glorifies the translators of the past while belittling those of the present. For example, the well-established translator Mirsky speaks out against the newcomers, reiterating her own exclusivity and drawing a

clear distinction between herself and other agents working in the field, most of whom are "idle housewives or students who want to make a quick buck on the side" (Mirsky, cited in Rachkovsky, 2008, p. 13). The second model represents collegial support. It is adopted by translators who wish to pay tribute to those colleagues who operate primarily in other subfields of literary translation, or by new ones, who pay homage to well-known colleagues operating at the center of the subfield.

Dykman, and with him his disciple Sonis, use the capital derived from the academic field by defining themselves as "translation scholars" and analyzing their colleagues' work from this vantage point. Dykman accuses the translators who are active in the field of making do with trying "to amuse the reader or, in other cases, to spoon-feed him" (1996, p. D1). When it comes to the "professional" habitus, he takes a different view of those translators whom he trains at the university: they are allowed entry, because they are a different breed.

The new translators are mainly respectful of their senior colleagues. Sonis, for example, praises his teacher, Dykman, who taught him translation and helped him acquire the habitus needed for success in the field, placing him alongside the most celebrated, best-established agents of the past and defending him in the argument with Reznik, a new translator who adopts an unusual position: he takes issue with the traditional approach to the history of the field and with the central agents and their repertoire (Sonis, 2004, n.p.).

4.5 Livelihood and status

When talking about literary translation in Israel, most translators adopt common models: the situation is problematic and the capital literary translation provides is meager. Here again, the past is glorified when compared to the present, with respect both to the quality of translations and working conditions. Litvin, for example, highlights the affinity of the field of literary translation to the field of art and using its symbolic capital: "With all due respect to the original, we must bear in mind that literary translation is an act of sheer creativity in every sense, an art form" (Litvin, cited in Seidmann, 1988, p. 25).

While most of the translators speak of the situation in literary translation in general, Kriksunov refers specifically to the

subfield of translating Russian literature: "If you were to ask me about the situation of translation not from Russian but from other languages, I would say that there the situation is much better" (Kriksunov, cited in Solgannik, 2002, n.p.). This element in the repertoire has to do with the non-central position of the system of literature translated from Russian within the polysystem of literature translated into Hebrew, even though relations between the two have a long history—and a stable one, as Dykman sees it—unlike the relations of the Hebrew polysystem with other literary systems (Edelshtein, 2008, n.p.).

5. Practice

The habitus of the translators structures their practice and their perceptions of this practice both before and after they enter the field, and it is also structured by that practice as the "specialized" habitus develops. Consequently, translators adopt models that tie in with their role as agents in the field, with the role of practice. According to Sela-Sheffy's classification (primarily 2008), which we found useful for the purposes of this study, there are three types of self-image of literary translators: 1) the translator as a guardian of the domestic language and culture; 2) the translator as importer and innovator; 3) the translator as an artist in his own right. Some translators may adopt more than one model.

5.1 The translator as a guardian of the domestic language and culture

As is evident from the history of the polysystem of translated literature, when the Russian literary system and the system of translations from Russian enjoyed a central position (e.g., in the 1920s and 1930s), new authors made a point of using the Russian repertoire—original and translated—while also proclaiming the independence of the Hebrew repertoire (Even-Zohar, 1990c; Toury, 1992). The model of a guardian of the domestic language and culture, a torch-bearer, appropriated in the discourse of literary translators, is a vestige of this approach which advocates the defense of the Hebrew language and is typical of veteran literary translators (see Sela-Sheffy, 2008). Among the translators of Russian literature, it is not as popular as other models and is promoted primarily by Dykman, who has accrued extensive cultural and symbolic capital due to his central position in the

academic world, in publishing and in the area of language policy, and it is appropriated by his followers, e.g., Sonis, as well.

5.2 The translator as importer and innovator

Most of the translators of Russian literature cited in our study appropriate a model of the translator as ambassador of foreign cultures and innovator in the target system, with respect both to modernizing the Hebrew language and to enriching the systems of the Hebrew polysystems; e.g., by introducing Russian literature to the Hebrew reader. This model too has its roots in the history of the field: as the literary center shifted to pre-State Israel, translated literature came to occupy a central position in shaping original Hebrew culture in general and original Hebrew literature in particular. Translation helped fill the gaps and translators played a key role in the formation of the Hebrew polysystem (Even-Zohar, 1990b). This model is closely bound up with the norm of adequacy in translation (Toury, 1995), which began gaining sway in the 1970s (Weissbrod, 1989). All of the translators who appropriated the cultural ambassador model speak and write extensively of the need for adequate translations.

5.3 The translator as artist in his own right

The model of the translator as an artist in his own right promotes the translators in the field, assists them in their accumulation of symbolic capital and turns them into interesting figures in their own right. This model too has its roots in the history of the field: in the 1920s, during the early stages of the shift of activity to Eretz Yisrael, when translation was not perceived as competing with original writing but rather as a precondition for its very existence, the translator was generally perceived as a creative artist in his own right (Even-Zohar, 1975). Moreover, until the 1960s, the leading translators into Hebrew were indeed prominent writers in their own right. Nowadays, except for Mirsky, the translators of Russian literature whose discourse is included in our corpus write prose as well as poetry, and some of them refer explicitly to their desire to engage in creative writing.

Sela-Sheffy points out that the image of the translator as artist is manifested in the mystification of the rules of the profession and the construction of a mythological profile (Sela-Sheffy, 2006, 2008). Translators who do not perceive themselves

as artists (e.g., Mirsky) may also appropriate the artist model, albeit indirectly, when they adopt the model of exclusivity and the strange-outsider model, describing their non-conventional life-story and connecting their interests and lifestyle to the arts and literature (see 3.5).

Conclusion

The aim of the present study was to examine the discourse of the translators of Russian literature into Hebrew about themselves, their profession and their work, and to outline their habitus, their practice and their conduct in their subfield of literary translation. It appears that these translators have a vivid self-representational discourse, notwithstanding the widespread perception of translators as invisible and submissive, and notwithstanding the decline of the Russian system as a primary source from which the Hebrew polysystem has appropriated. The translators have adopted a variety of models in their repertoires, but despite the considerable differences among them, a shared repertoire (or shared repertoires) of translators of Russian literature into Hebrew may also be observed, along with a specific habitus (both "generalized" and "specialized"), which is needed in order to enter the field of literary translation in general and the subfield of literary translation from Russian in particular, to operate successfully, thus to acquire a status in the culture, and to accumulate capital. The struggles between the agents and their partnership in the interests related to the very existence of the field of literary translation play a role in advancing the autonomous status of the field. The discourse of those who translate Russian literature attests to the dynamics of the subfield in which they operate and, along with other factors, enhances its presence, moving it gradually from the periphery of the polysystem of translated literature towards the center, building on its former status.

Most of the studies devoted to translators which follow upon Simeoni's groundbreaking article (1998) have sought to expand on his original findings—sometimes providing added evidence, sometimes countering his premises, though without detracting from the significance of his contribution. Like most studies that apply Bourdieusian concepts to the DTS framework, the one presented here represents an attempt to respond to Simeoni's appeal for further empirical research. We have found that the

picture is not uniform; rather, the self-representations of the translators of Russian literature into Hebrew are heterogeneous and dynamic. As such, our study complements several others (Sela-Sheffy, 2005, 2006, 2008; Sela-Sheffy and Shlesinger, 2008). That being said, our corpus, which was confined exclusively to the self-representations of the translators of Russian literature into Hebrew in Israel, is the first of its kind. This linguistic distinction is significant in view of the role of Russian literature in the Hebrew polysystem through the years. While our study applies only to the sector under examination, we hope that it contributes to a broader understanding of the habitus of the translator in an ever-shifting cultural landscape.

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Appendix: Translators

Beskin, Sivan (born 1976, Vilnius) is an Israeli poet and translator from Russian. She immigrated to Israel in 1990. Since the 2000s, she has translated mainly poetry and published her translations, as well as her original poems, in literary journals and on the Internet.

Chen, Roee (born 1980, Tel-Aviv) is an Israeli writer and translator from Russian, French and English. Since the 2000s, he has translated Russian modern literature and drama (including Bunin and Chekhov) and worked with Gesher Theater, founded in 1991 by new immigrants from Russia.

Dykman, Aminadav, Prof. (born 1958, Warsaw) is an Israeli translator, literature and translation scholar, head of the Translation Program at the Hebrew University (Jerusalem) and a member of the Academy of the Hebrew language. He immigrated to Israel in 1960. Since the 1970s, he has translated mainly poetry from Russian, English, French and Latin.

Kriksunov, Peter (born 1954, Kiev) is an Israeli translator from Russian. He immigrated to Israel in 1976. Since the 1990s, he has translated mostly classics (including works by Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Bulgakov, Pasternak) for prominent publishers.

Litvin, Rina (1939, Hong Kong–2012, Tel-Aviv) was an Israeli writer, poet, literature scholar, translator and editor. She immigrated to Israel in 1949. From the 1970s, she translated mainly classics from Russian (e.g., Pushkin, Tsvetaeva), English (e.g., Faulkner, Wolf, Caroll) and Spanish (e.g., Lope de Vega, Lorca) for prominent publishers. She won prestigious prizes, including The Tchernichovsky Prize.

Markun, Dina (born 1959, Riga) is an Israeli translator mainly from Russian. She immigrated to Israel in 1973. Since the 1990s, she has translated Russian classic (Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Chehov), modern (Aitmatov, Ilf and Petrov) and contemporary (Kurkov) literature for various publishers.

Mirsky, Nili, Dr. (born 1943, Tel-Aviv) is an Israeli translator and editor. Since the 1970s, she has translated mainly Russian and German classics into Hebrew (including works by Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Turgenev, Bulgakov, Chekhov and T. Mann) for

prominent publishers. She has won prestigious prizes, including the coveted Israel Prize.

Sonis, Ronen (born 1972, Petah-Tikva) is an Israeli poet and translator from Russian, English and French, one of the founders of the literary journal *Ho!*. He has translated mostly poetry and has published his translations in various arenas, including literary journals and on the Internet.