<Article>

Framing cultural images:
Japanese translators and their translations of Hebrew children's literature
（文化イメージを形づくる―ヘブライ児童文学の邦訳と翻訳者たち―）

Elena Baibikov

（バイビコフ・エレナ）

Abstract

This article aims to show how critical analysis of the textual and extra-textual sources allows to trace the dynamics of maintaining and (trans)formation of cultural representations and images in translation. I proceed from the assumption that the import of Hebrew children's literature into Japanese can be studied as a channel of manipulating existing cultural representations and introducing alternative ones. Here, the focus is on the nascent cultural relations between Israel and Japan—two highly modernized but relatively marginal and remote cultures[1]. I believe the course taken by agents of a Hebrew Israeli culture within Japanese culture, whose relations to outsiders have always been complex, can help decipher mechanisms of intercultural rejection and acceptance (of cultural representations, images and even repertoires) far beyond the particular cases involved.

> The frame belongs then to the space of the observer rather than of the illusory, three-dimensional world disclosed within and behind. It is a finding and focusing device placed between the observer and the image. But the frame may enter also into the shaping of that image...
>
> Meyer Schapiro (Schapiro 1985:212)

1. Introduction

As national literature constitutes a prominent and inseparable part of national culture[2], the field of translated literature is designed to serve a typical arena for conducting an *imagological* study on cultural images and representations being (re)produced and maintained through translated texts. The discursive praxis of translating, I believe, serves as an important source through which intercultural power balance, cultural subjectivity and imagination are revealed.

It seems that translation of children's literature appears to be one of the promising areas of imagological interest[3], for children's literature conveys the very basis of stereotyped/stereotyping information about natural and social world as it perceived in a given culture. It aims to "shape the minds" of

its age-specific addressees (e.g. Shavit, 1986, 2009). Thus, in every given stage of the process of translating (from the very beginning: when selecting original text and choosing translation strategy) translators of children's literature engage in an elaborate game of (trans)forming cultural images by the means of—and in accordance with the needs of—target language and culture.

The question of text selection is very crucial here, and as previous research shows the structure of imported text corpora is strongly influenced by the pre-existing (in target culture) image of the source culture and literature (Seifert, 2005, 2007). This rather systematic interaction between images and translation takes place, as the researcher states, on two additional levels: "the level of translation (the role played by individual translators and their image-bound interpretations of the text) and the level of reception (including marketing, reviews, awards and so on)" (Seifert, 2007: 222). In her work Martina Seifert focused primarily on the levels of selection and reception. In what follows I would like to explore what happens on the so-called 'translation level' where translators act as cultural agents, who ensure the passage of ideas and practices from one group to another (Even Zohar, 2005). Thus, placed in this perspective, translators are likely to have the status of professional mediators of culture goods, representations and images (e.g. Pym, 2004).

2. Historical contextualization

In *Imagology: History and method* Joep Leersen (Leersen, 2007) lists different categories of necessary contextualization for imagological study. In the introductory section I briefly touched upon a pragmatic contextualization of my research and here I would like to contextualize it historically.

Official relations between Israel and Japan began in 1952, when Japan recognized Israel as an independent state. Since then, as it is stated on Japan Ministry of Foreign Affair's website (MOFA website 2013) , "exchanges have deepened and broadened not only in the political and economic arenas but also in areas such as cultural and intellectual exchange..." In the field of literature, however, it took about 40 years until the "cultural and intellectual exchange" mentioned above became comparatively visible.

The relations between the two countries have been strained from the very beginning. In Israel the image of Japan as one of the allies of Nazi Germany during the WWII was rather unattractive, Japan in its turn refrained from developing strong relations with Israel since it was heavily dependent on Middle East oil from Arab countries (Katz, 2007). By early 1960's, however, some people in Japan became fascinated with Kibbutz ideology. In 1963 Japan Kibbutz association was founded and in just a few years grew to 30,000 members. The groups of volunteers from Japan began to arrive to Israel as early as from 1964 (Kapner & Levine, 2000)[4]. But the general Japanese public was unaware of the existence of Israel until 1967, until the Six-Day War (also known as Third Arab-Israeli War or *an-Naksah* in Arabic). The war created unfavourable public opinion towards Israel in Japan. Furthermore, the Japanese Red Army – a militant leftist group, that was founded in 1971 in Lebanon where it cooperated closely with Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) – planned and committed a terrorist attack in Lod Airport in Israel in 1972 (JNPA website 2013). Later, in October 1973 the Fourth Arab-Israeli war began and Japan felt heavy diplomatic and political pressures from both Arab countries and USA. Against the background of world economic crisis these pressures resulted in escalation of anti-Israeli sentiment in Japan that reached a fever pitch in 1982 with the beginning of Israel-Lebanon war. By the late 1980s, relations between two countries

began to gradually improve. According to Japanese MOFA's site (MOFA website 2013) in 1992 first Japan Cultural Festival was implemented in Israel and 1993 is designated as the initial year of intellectual exchange programs.

The improving and growing cultural relations between Israel and Japan in recent years are reflected, inter alia, in the increase in published translations, the direct as well as the 'second-hand' ones. According to UNESCO *Index Translationum*, from 1979 to 1991 there was no single direct translation from Hebrew into Japanese published as a book[5]– the four volumes translated during this period were in fact translations from languages other than Hebrew. For the following period from 1992 to 2008 there are 73 direct translations (about 75% from the total of 96 titles including biblical translations and translation of Talmud). Children's literature constitutes about 60% of the first-hand translated fiction corpus: 20 out of 32 titles.

It will be interesting to compare these figures with the data on all translated children's literature in Japan. For example in 1999, translations of children's literature counted for 28% of all translated literature and in 2004 it stood for 42% (Honyaku Shuppan Report 2005). Thus, in the case of Israeli-Hebrew literature the percentage is much higher. To understand why children's literature makes up a remarkably large part of the whole corpus of Israeli-Hebrew literature translated into Japanese and how this fact is related to the (trans)formation and circulation of cultural images and representations we should examine more carefully two main points:

1) the general condition in the field of literary translation in post-war Japan

2) the mediating role played by translators.

3. Shifts in national discourse and its impact on a literary translation

Following WWII a slow process of replacement of the 'main actors' in the field began: scholars and writers who were once the driving force behind the translation projects were gradually replaced by professional translators and publishers (Miyata, 2000). This process was accompanied by an additional development, namely the change in attitudes of Japanese translators towards 'faithfulness' and readability of translations. In other words, noticeable changes of translation norms occurred in Japan. It occurred during 1970s – the years of fast economic growth and further strengthened the independence of Japan as a state. According to Yuri Furuno (Furuno, 2002) in the early period, translators "had been more concerned with fidelity and literal translation", however "from 1970s onward they became more concerned with comforting the Japanese cultural and linguistic norms". This move from a rather 'foreignizing' approach to the 'domesticating' one was, of course, related to such factors as Japan's growing cultural confidence, the rapidly developing publishing industry and commoditization of literary translations that by the end of 1970s had become popular amongst a broader audience.

Noboru Miyata (Miyata, 2000) in his autobiographical monograph "The ways of postwar translations—When translators were gods" describes an additional process of change that finally brought American literature to be placed in the very center of the translated literature system in Japan[6]. It is very symptomatic for the period of late 1970s-early 1980s when the national discourse was maintained within the paradigm of 'internationalization', according to which Japan has been assigned a leading role in the international context, so people could feel secure enough to develop ideas and theories in the vein of 'self-orientalism' (Iwabuchi, 2005). The economical prosperity of Japan at that time was a very important factor

which helped to keep a clear-cut distinction between 'us' and 'them'. It made possible the claim of 'Japanese cultural uniqueness'.

On the other hand following the burst of the 'bubble economy' in early 1990's, there emerged a new social paradigm of 'globalization' and 'multinationalism' in Japan and by the late 1990's-early 2000's gained wide popularity. Falling deeper and deeper into crisis, Japan could not be perceived as 'unique' anymore—it turned to be just "another nation" among many other nations participating in one global system. National discourse was, then, re-shaped, the clear-cut distinctions between 'us' and 'them' no longer existed, and that is precisely why these distinctions must be revealed and explained by the comparison between 'Japanese' and the multicultural 'Other' (Iwabuchi, 2005).

The publishing industry was affected by the new paradigm. In the early 1990's many new literary series were established for introducing foreign literature from previously unfamiliar 'peripheral' cultures. Israeli-Hebrew literature finally found a suitable niche: most of the translations from Hebrew—children's literature as well as fiction for adults—appeared in these series, such as "World literature" and "Foreign literature" by the SAERA publishing house who specializes in children's literature, "Literary adventures" by Kokushokanko-kai publishers, "New world literature" by Iwasaki publishers and others.

The existence of this center/periphery dichotomy (with American literature in the center and small ethnic literatures in periphery) within the translated children's literature system created in the course of time a situation where central positions in the system were occupied by projects with a high commercial potential and designed mostly as a source of entertainment. Such projects were initiated by publishers themselves and the main factor influencing the decision to undertake these projects was the proven commercial success of the author or his/her works (as in case for example of German writer Michael Ende or British best- and longseller "Harry Potter").

The periphery, then provides a challenge and a place for individual initiative of translators. In most cases translators of children's literature in Japan select the original texts by themselves[7], following some very general guidelines of the publishers regarding the topical area of the translations. Here, I would like to introduce briefly the Japanese translators of Israeli-Hebrew children's literature. I believe that their personal profiles and life stories are highly relevant to their role as cultural agents who manipulate cultural images through the literary text.

4. Japanese translators of Hebrew literature

4.1 Translators' profile

Translation of Israeli-Hebrew literature into Japanese began about 20 years ago and still is done by the 'first generation' of translators. The number of Japanese translators who specialize in Modern Hebrew is very limited. According to the reports of translators themselves and the data collected through the analysis of comparatively large corpus of published translations, there are seven active professionals in the field[8]. Unfortunately, for a long time there were no new names in the field. The youngest of the translators is in his mid-forties. The group is rather heterogeneous in terms of professional occupation: there are two university professors, two Hebrew language teachers, a freelance translator, a literary editor and a café owner included in the group. They have varied academic backgrounds, religious beliefs and political views, but all of them have experienced living in Israel for comparatively long period of time (at least for one

year). In addition all of them consider translation to be a very important cultural and social activity and regard it as a very promising channel of cultural influence in the public sphere.

For my current research, I have chosen to focus on two translators who are most active in the field of children's literature. Natsuu Motai—prior to focusing most of her efforts into translation—worked many years as an editor in a children's book publishing company. In 1998 she received the Israeli prize for translation. Noriko Higuchi – is a former nursery teacher and is now a café owner. She lives in a small village near Mount Fuji. Noriko raised a son, who did his graduate work in the city of Beer Sheva and 5 years later successfully defended his Ph.D dissertation on the Ethiopian community in Israel. Both of these translators encountered Israeli-Hebrew culture for the first time many years ago while participating in the volunteer project of Kibbutz movement in 1960s. Together with translating Israeli-Hebrew literature, they also act as promoters of Israeli culture by giving lectures, writing essays and even by serving Israeli food (as in the case of Noriko Higuchi).

As previously noted, Israeli-Hebrew literature ranks on the very periphery of the Japanese publishing markets. Therefore, it is mainly the entrepreneurial initiative of the translators themselves to assure that the translation enterprise continues.They select original texts for translation and negotiate with publishers personally to persuade them to pursue specific translation projects.

4.2 Translators' reasoning behind the selection of an original text

During my interviews, the respondents repeatedly mentioned that Israel is too small, too remote and too unfamiliar for Japanese people to share common cultural stereotypes with Israelis. The general image of Israel in Japan is rather negative. Ordinary Japanese people usually have no knowledge of Israeli culture, literature and history. Their main source of information about Israel is news headlines (whether on TV or in newspapers), where Israel is, traditionally, seen through its political hardship and everlasting ethnical conflicts, which is, obviously, only one of many possible representations of Israel in mediascape.

For translators it is very important to provide their readership with a representation alternative to that found in the public discourse. They see translation as a cultural and educational activity through which they can mediate general information about everyday (or what they sometimes refer as 'normal') life of Israelis. This approach to translation points to specific principles in text selection, which appears to be highly important in this context (to know that the options at translators' disposal are limited: they are not composing a new text, but representing the existing one – as a cultural and textual entity – by means of the target language). What is needed here, are texts in Modern Hebrew (not literary, but rather the vernacular), clearly informing the unfamiliar reader about the complex reality of secular contemporary Israel. With regards to the background of both translators, it appears that children's literature best serves the translators goals.

5. Sources

The interviews with translators showed that in the case of Israeli-Hebrew children's literature the topical area of translations is confined to a limited number of topics: such as the Holocaust, the Israeli-Arab conflict and social problems within the Israeli society[9]. Here, I will examine two books from the third category, which, I believe, is more relevant to the   goals of present research, which deals with Israeli

society *per se* and unlike the two other categories does not focus on the various aspects of victimization (Jewish people as victims: Holocaust/Inquisition category; or Israelis as victimizers: Jewish/Arab conflict).

The first story is "Letters to a special child" by Galila Ron-Feder Amit[10], that was published in 1999 and was the first book of the third category (i.e. social problems within Israeli society)[11]. The second story is "To myself" by the same author; the book was published in 2006 and is seemingly the last book of the third category. Seven years is not a long period of time and yet it allows examining the sources in somewhat diachronic perspective.

To achieve a better understanding of specific cultural images and representations aimed to create an alternative image of Israelis and mediated through translation, I will analyze the translations on the three following levels:

1) Content (plot, structure)

2) Illustrations (visual solutions)

3) Translation (examples of specific linguistic solutions)

5.1 "Letters to a special child"

"'Letters to a special child' is a touching correspondence between two children – a healthy, normal girl and a disabled boy with cerebral palsy. It begins when the teacher gives her students a unique assignment, to correspond with children who are different. Noa writes the first letter to 'a child I do not know' and tells him about herself. The second letter is written by Dudi who tells Noa about his special world, his disability, the treatment he gets, and about his brother who is a normal child. The book ends with an epilogue describing the successful meeting of the two children. Noa tells her mother how important her relationship with Dudi is…" (IHTL database).

5.1.1 Structure

I believe that the story serves the translator's purpose almost ideally—it works as a specific channel to introduce 'normal' Israeli life through Noa's letters. Noa is a normally functioning student in the fifth-grade; in her letters she describes all her daily experiences to Dudi who is disabled: from swimming class and play with friends to visiting a bank together with her parents. The very structure of the selected original text gives an additional clue to the translator's guiding principle that could be conceived as "not too strange, not too familiar." It is generally easier to understand something previously unknown compared to the background of something well-known. To create ideal conditions for mediating the alternative cultural images, the translator should 'frame' these images with a certain 'frame of reference' that will serve, in the words of Meyer Schapiro, as "a finding and focusing device placed between the observer and the image". The cultural images introduced through the translated text are like framed pictures, presented to a reader's observation. Frame is what makes an image work and the translator serves as a frame-maker. Here, the structural peculiarities of the story serve on a macro level as a 'frame of reference' for the Japanese reader, as the art of letter-writing appears to be an integral part of traditional Japanese culture (see e.g. Rüttermann, 2006).

Based on Umberto Eco's argument (Eco, 1986:199) we might call it a 'common frame'—"data-structures for representing stereotyped situations" that locates "unfamiliar" elements. Here the "unfamiliar" element is a communication with a disabled person and it is a very problematic communication case in the context of Japanese culture[12]. And why it is problematic? Japanese culture is widely referred to as "Culture of *Aimai*" or "Ambiguous culture" (see e.g. Oe, 1994; Davis and Ikeno, 2002; Berglund, 2004 and many others). The principle of *Aimai* (Equivocation) is often discussed as one of the basic principles of interpersonal communication in Japanese society. As Davis and Ikeno state "to express oneself ambiguously and indirectly is expected in Japanese society" (Davis and Ikeno, 2004:9).

Of course, equivocation is not something specifically Japanese. A cross-cultural study in situational theory of equivocation by Miyamoto-Tanaka and Bell shows that in certain, especially conflict situations it happens to be quite common communication strategy in other languages as well (Miyamoto-Tanaka and Bell, 1996). And yet, their interesting findings on the difference in equivocation between conflict and nonconflict conditions (this difference was 1.5 greater for Americans subjects than for Japanese subjects) might still imply some culture-based peculiarities of the role equivocation plays in communication process (Tanaka and Bell, 1996:282).

To 'clarify' "aimai" language, communication counterparts should employ various non-verbal forms of communication and that is why, after all, "Japanese people are sensitive to what is not expressed verbally" (Berglund, 2004:94). However it is obvious that a handicapped or disabled person is not capable to fully and masterly implement the non-verbal skills of interpersonal communication. Thus, a person with a disability inevitably fails to create a non-verbal context which is so crucial for successful interpersonal communication. Moreover, in some cases disability can cause a person to be incapable of communicating verbally as well. As a result, a communication with a disabled person is *a priori* perceived as unsuccessful and unfavorable. Which is especially true in the case of teenagers—children at the age of 12-13[13]—who, being on the verge of developing into young adults, aim at perfection in everything, including communication skills. Seeing from the perspective of interpersonal communication the 'Letters for a special child' represents an alternative view on communication with the disabled and questions the existing self-image of Japanese culture as "*aimai* culture".

The book does not depict the ideal picture of untroubled communication[14]. For Noa, the fifth-grader, it's not easy to communicate with her 'special' pen-pal. In the beginning she worries about hurting Dudi's feelings by writing to him as though he was normative. She tries to apply a degree of self-censorship while writing to Dudi, but then she realizes that it only complicates the situation. She, then, writes to Dudi very frankly:

> After reading your letter a couple of times I went to ask for advice from Aliza the
> teacher. I told her that I am afraid to hurt your feelings and then I asked her whether
> she thinks I should write you kind of "pitiful" letters or maybe I should ignore
> completely the fact of you being different and special. Aliza the teacher advised me to
> write you as if you were a normal child, because if I won't do so you will stop writing
> me by yourself. "There is no child in this world who wants people to pity him all the

time". That's what she told me. I agree with her.[15] ("Michtavim leYeled aher", 1988:33)

During interviews the translators defined 'frankness', 'openness' and 'straightforwardness' as the most prominent and attractive characteristics of Israelis[16]. This part of the letter is the manifestation of the girl's 'true voice' and "frankly" is the key word here. The strongly articulated sincerity of the girl in the story is set against Japanese *aimai* way of communicating, in that it not only questions the image of reader's 'cultural self', but also shapes the positive image of 'the other'. The 'positiveness' of the image is supported and reinforced by the story's happy ending (in terms of interpersonal communication) and by the fact that behavioral norms in Japan are gradually changing ("as Japan moving, inexorably it seems, towards transparency and single standards, similar to those found in American society" (Berglund, 2004)

5.1.2 Illustrations

The question of similarity takes us back to the principle of "not to strange, not to familiar". As previously mentioned, the epistolary structure of the book is a 'frame of reference' for Japanese readership. Another frame of reference is provided through the visual solutions, namely illustrations.

The importance of the illustrations in translated literature is revealed by the fact that most translations of children's literature from Hebrew to Japanese are published with new illustrations (produced by Japanese illustrators) and not with the original ones. The reasons may be aesthetics, but it also implies that the 'self-image' and the visual 'self-representation(s)' existing in source culture do not serve the translators' goals as cultural agents[17] and that is why they must be modified.

In his illustrative "frame of reference" Yuki Ando, the illustrator of "Mochiron henji wo mattemasu" (a Japanese translation of "Letters to a special child"), creates a "feeling of similarity" as opposed to emphasizing the cultural difference. The similarity does not apply to traits of Japanese culture, but aims toward a general notion of the 'western foreigner' (who, although being a stranger, is obviously more familiar to Japanese people than a completely unknown Israeli.)

For example, a view of the room where the disabled boy, Dudi, lying ill in his bed (see Pic. 1)[18] includes wooden floor, a cultural 'marker' of Western (European)[19]. While common Israeli home floors are made of stone tiles. In comparison, the illustration by Gili Avidor from original Hebrew publication shows another floor pattern which will be easily recognized as stone tiles by Israeli readers (see Pic. 2)[20]
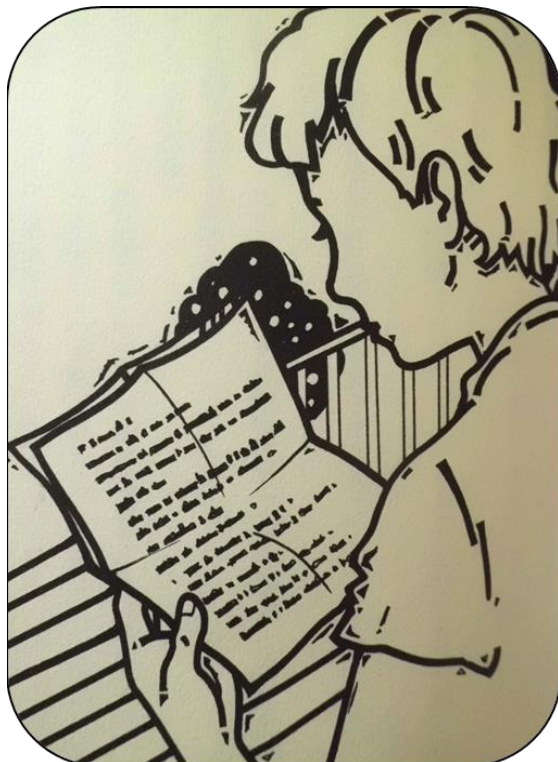
Through the illustrations one may learn not only about particular room interior but in a broader sense, about the world of objects and also about basic (yet culture- specific) everyday activities, such as reading and writing.

Pic. 1 ©Yuki Ando

Pic. 2 ©Gili Avidor

Pic. 3 ©Yuki Ando

On the illustration featuring Noa reading Dudi's letter (see Pic. 3)[21], the letter as written in Hebrew should be written from right-to-left. However, when observing the image more closely, one might note that it is written from left-to-right, as in English, German, Russian and many other—culturally 'familiar' for Japanese readership—languages. Thus, the illustration of an Israeli child reading a letter, creates a cultural image conforming to a 'normal', 'familiar' foreigner.

5.1.3 Translation

"Fidelity to the original text" is perceived as a virtue by all translators whom I interviewed. However, "the "fidelity' might be exercised only to a limited extent, since there are a linguistic norms that I have to obey to" (a non-published interview with Natsuu Motai, 2009). Often, the changes that target text undergoes due to 'linguistic' discrepancies between the source and the target languages are masterly fitted to the translator's intentions and aspirations as a 'cultural advocate'. Here are two examples.

In her first letter, Noa describes to Dudi a very popular game among Israeli teenagers widely known as "Emet o hova" ("Truth or Dare"). During the game, the players are given a choice between answering a question truthfully or performing a "dare" (usually kissing a player of the opposite sex), both tasks are determined by the other players. The player must decide whether to reveal her secret (if she chooses Truth) or to submit to the Dare which can be sometimes embarrassing. "Secrets Sharing" in this game plays a very important role in the development of the social and communicative skills in children and youth (e.g. Katriel, 1991:191). In the Japanese translation, the game appears under the name of "Truth or Lie". The modification of the game's name might be explained as a linguistic need to create a stable construction with symmetric dichotomy (such as in "Sukikirai" (Love and Hate) or "Uraomote" (Back side and front side) games, but, this change is meant to highlight the concept of 'truth' and a 'truthful' expression of one's feelings, which is perceived by the translator as one of the main communicative characteristics shared by Israelis.

Another example is the translation of the story's title. The title in Hebrew "Michtavim leYeled aher" (lit. "Letters to a different child") was omitted and replaced with the new Japanese title "Mochiron henji wo mattemasu" (lit. "Sure, I am waiting for your answer"). The omission and the following replacement allows the translator to avoid a linguistic riddle of translating the Hebrew word "aher" that has a wide range of meanings (including "another, different, special, varying, the other) as at the same time it shifts the focus to the communicational aspects of the story. Letters are not only written, they are also read, appreciated and answered.

5.2 "To Myself"

 "After his parents abandoned him, teenager Zion was raised by his grandmother in a poor neighborhood. He started to hang out with young delinquents. Now he's been placed in foster-care with the Sharoni family—he tells his story. At first, Zion behaved badly. The Sharoni's middle-class lifestyle was strange and he sneered at their studious and musical son, Nir. Slowly he grew to like and admire their cultivated life. A visit home set him back and his old friends made fun of him. Finally, he ran away and met Batya, a free spirit who offered him comfort and friendship." (IHTL database)

5.2.1 Structure

The annotation above, although adequately summarizing the story's plot-line, completely ignores the structural aspect of the text that was written in the form of a diary. Here again, the structure of the story appears as a "familiar" element for Japanese reader, this time as being far reminiscent of Japanese literary tradition "Nikki Bungaku"[22]. There is no evidence for the strict structural or poetic similarities between the Hebrew story under investigation (namely 'To Myself') and Japanese literary diaries yet, I believe, the form of a diary provides eligible 'frame of reference' to introduce "new" socio-cultural characteristics: ethnical diversity (as opposed to Japan's 'ethnical homogenity'[23]) and social inequality (as opposed to a view of Japan as a 'land of happy middle class'[24]).

Originally, "El Atsmi" ("To Myself") was published in 1976, twelve years earlier than "Letters to special child". In Japan they appear in opposite order. The main reason being that as a story "El Atsmi" is less universal and more 'Israeli': the number of characters both main and secondary is much larger which implies "excessive" usage of foreign names; the geographical scope of the book is also significantly wider (in "Letters to a special child" a plot develops in Jerusalem only, while in "El Atsmi" multiple geographical locations within and outside Israel are mentioned, such as Beit Shean, Haifa, Acres, Morocco). In the mid-1990's, the Japanese book market was still not ready for such a book on minority and culturally peripheral Israeli-Hebrew society.

The translation of "To Myself" was published in 2006, when the social paradigms of 'globalisation' and 'multinationalism' that emerged in the wake of 21st century in Japan, had already established themselves. In this context, the story "To Myself" introduced the image of ethnically heterogeneous Israeli society and prompted a revision of the self-image of a highly homogeneous society, existing among the Japanese.

5.2.2 Illustrations

Compared to the visual solutions found in Japanese translation of "Letters to special child", the illustrations by Masako Saito, still reveal a degree of conformity in representing Israel as a 'familiar' foreigner (see Pic. 4) [25]. They are much more culturally charged, featuring typical Israeli landscapes and cityscapes with palm trees and even Hebrew letters (without any translation being provided) (see Pic. 5 & 6)[26]. The illustrator makes a reasonable effort to expose Japanese readership to alternative cultural surroundings.

Pic. 4 ©Masako Saito

5.2.3 Translation

The newly emerged reality shaped by two social paradigms mentioned in previous *sections was likely to affect not only the text selection process, but also the textual level of* translation. A comparison between the Japanese translation of the story and literary imports into other languages (such as English and French) shows that the Japanese translator created a much more cross-cultural translation, trying to faithfully follow the original plot, keeping in the text the original geographical locations and the personal names of the characters[27] . She retains in the text some of the linguistic features that are not exclusive to the Japanese language. For example, she follows the Israeli name order (the surname appears after the name) and not the Japanese name order (the surname appears before the name) ("Boku-ni yoroshiku", 2006:10). However the 'not too strange, not too familiar' translation principle remains relevant.

Pic. 5 ©Masako Saito

Pic. 6 ©Masako Saito

In the source, the Hebrew text features the hero, an Israeli Jewish boy who was brought to Israel from Morocco at the age of 6 months and it explains the origin of his name in the following manner:

I was given the name "Zion" because "Zion" is another name for the Land of Israel. My grandfather missed the Land of Israel very-very much, he didn't stop talking about it and about us going to live there. ("El Atsmi", 1976:13)

The translator leaves the name of the hero (Zion) in the text as it is with its reference to the *Tanakh* (The Old Testament) transcribing it biblically ("shion", as it appears in the Japanese translation of the Old Testament) and not phonetically ("tsion", as it sounds in Hebrew). However, she omits the explanation on the name's origin from the target Japanese text: this logic of 'naming' is too strange and confusing for the Japanese reader, unfamiliar with Jewish history, tradition and religion.

Another interesting and significant (in imagological perspective) transformation of the text exhibited by the translator, is a replacement or omission of the parts of the text where Arabic characters or Arab language are introduced. The Arab house helper Masuda ("El Atsmi", 1976:15) transformed into—*à la française*—Anette , and the advice of Zion's good friend as it appears on page 26 "… and if their sissy boy will say the words you don't understand, you curse him in Arabic! " ("El Atsmi", 1976: 26) is completely omitted.

The translator, Noriko Higuchi, deliberately omits the textual "markers" of Israeli-Arab conflict from her translation because it is not the representation of Israel she is looking for as a translator. The frame of her translation was designed to shape another image. "Through the medium called literature—she wrote

12

in her blog in April 2008—I want to introduce feelings and thoughts of Israelis, their daily lives—all these things that can't be seen because they are shadowed by endless Israeli-Palestinian conflict.… I will continue the effort of digging out the fine and healthy Israeli stories, translating and publishing them or, at least putting them on the internet. That is my intention."[28]

6. Conclusion

Translator Natsuu Motai in one of her interviews speaks of translations as "windows" through which one might see "unfamiliar and intriguing views" as shown to him by the translator, who first looked through the same window[29]. A window is also a kind of frame that provides a certain perspective – a 'translator's perspective'. I agree with Radegundis Stolze (Stolze, 2004:43) who sees translation as "an open process towards an optimal solution" and therefore understands it not in the context of a relationship between texts, but in terms of translator's perspective.

Through a critical analysis of the textual and extra-textual sources I sought to trace the dynamics of formation, maintenance and/or transformation of cultural representations and images (both of the self and the other) introduced via Japanese translation of Israeli-Hebrew literature. However, the images and representation are not introduced by themselves—there are people who work to introduce them.

Translators act as importers of culture, cultural experiences and repertoires (at least they perceive themselves as people 'with mission and vision') and through their translations they aim to create an alternative set of representations and images, sometimes opposite and sometimes complimentary to the prevailing public discourse on a target culture in a source culture (in this specific case on Israel in Japan). The translations serve translators' end in their entirety: on the structural, textual and visual levels and as a corpus of goal-relevant texts.

About author: Dr. Elena Baibikov is a literary translator from Japanese into Russian for the past several years specializing mostly in children's literature (among her translations "Usagi no me" by Kenjiro Haitani, "Hiroshima no pika" by Toshi Maruki etc.) and an independent scholar in the multidisciplinary field of Translation Studies.
....

Endnotes

1. The observation of emerging cultural relations at their very initial stages is of utmost importance and indispensable from the point of view of imagological research in order to understand what agencies are involved with creating new and transforming old images and discourses in a target culture. Additionally, the specific case of Israel and Japan allows to investigate the cross-cultural traffic not from a 'central culture' to a 'peripheral' one (as for example in Aronoff 2000, Kaufmann & Patterson 2005 and many others), but

rather between two relatively marginal cultures.

2. Literature also plays a formative role for when it comes to social subjectivity. "Culture means the domain of social subjectivity <…> Literature played a key part in shaping this social subjectivity" (Eagleton 2000)

3. For more detailed account on growing impact of imagology in the field of children's literature see O' Sullivan 2011.

4. This interesting development is highly crucial for this research, since three out of seven active translators of Israeli-Hebrew literature in Japan arrived to Israel for the first time with these groups in 1960s. I will discuss it later in what follows.

5. However, there are number of direct translations that were published before 1986 in different collections and periodicals. See for example Japanese translations of Agnon's stories by Takamitsu Muraoka that appeared in 15th volume of "Nobel Prize-winners Collection" (Noberu sho bungaku zenshu 1971: 227-391).

6. On the position of translated literature within literary polysystem see Even Zohar 1990.

7. One of the translators I interviewed noted that only four out of 23 published translations that she performed were selected by publisher in advance.

8. I met and held interviews with all seven of translators, active in the field. It must be said, though, that the translators have different level of expertise. Some produced only a single translation; others completed and published more than dozen translations.

9. All translated titles fall in one of these three categories with exceptions made only for such worldly celebrated authors as Amos Oz, Uri Orlev and Alona Frankel. (Uri Orlev received "Hans Christian Andersen Award for his contributions to children's literature" in 1996; Frankel several times was a shortlisted nominee of the same award.)

10. Galila Ron Feder Amit (1949-) - Israeli writer. For the period of seven years she was foster-mother to 10 children from broken homes, and she recorded her experiences in a fictional series that was broadcast on radio and adapted for the stage and TV. The film, To Myself, won First Prize at the Frankfurt Children`s Film Festival. (ITHL Authors database)

11. Chronologically it was the fourth book for children translated from Hebrew into Japanese. "Nadia" - the first translated book (published in 1992) dealt with Israeli-Arab conflict. Next two stories (a non-fictional and a fictional one) described the experience of children through Holocaust.

12. For more detailed account on legal and social aspects of disabled peoples' life in Japan see Wiess, 2010.

13. As to ability to equivocate, according to Bavelas, Black, Chovil & Mullett developmental studies suggest that children up to the age of 12 or 13 can handle conflict situation through equivocation, but only in the familiar situations. Generalized scripts that allow for equivocation in novel conflict situations emerge sometime thereafter (Bavelas et al., 1990)

14. Some readers praises the book exactly for this, see e.g. the review of the book on Jardin Soleil Reading Website (see Online Sources section).

15. Unless otherwise indicated, translations are mine.

16. The examination of the readers' reflections and reviews (i.e. a reception level by Martina Seifert's classification) published on Amazon.co.jp website and in personal blogs shows that the readers also accept this point of view and praise Dudi and Noa for being "frank" and "explaining their feelings and views clearly" (see e.g. Jardin Soleil reading Website and Amazon.co.jp Reviews in Online Sources section).

17. Although the translators are not those who produce the illustrations, however (according to the interviews) they are actively engaged in the process as cultural experts, consultants and critics.

18. A fragment of Yuki Ando's illustration from "Mochiron henji wo mattemasu" (1999: 51).

19. Japanese traditional flooring is made of straw mats called "tatami". However in 'westernized' contemporary Japan the material that is most widely used to cover a floor is wood-like linoleum or laminate tiles.

20. A fragment of Gili Avidor's illustration from "Michtavim leYeled aher", (1988: 35)

21. A fragment of Yuki Ando's illustration from "Mochiron henji wo mattemasu", (1999: 127).

22. For more detailed account on the tradition of Japanese literary diaries see Miller, 1987

23. For discussion on Japanese cultural and ethnic homogeneity see Burgess, 2010

24. In early 1990's Kenichi Ohmae noted that "more than 90% of the people (in Japan) consider themselves middle class and reasonably happy about their life." (Ohmae, 1991)

25. A fragment of Masako Saito's illustration from "Boku-ni yoroshiku" (2006:3)

26. A fragment of Masako Saito's illustration from "Boku-ni yoroshiku", (2006: frontispiece; 2006:88).

27. For example in French translation the name of the hero was changed from Zion (culturally highly charged Jewish name) into Yoav. Instead of living in peripheral Beit Shean (as Zion from the original story does) Yoav lives in Jerusalem. English translation (or rather an adaptation?) is even more radical—the story happens with a boy called Mike and takes place in Boston.

28. See Higuchi Noriko, blog, 2008.

29. An interview was published in November issue of monthly webzine "Gekkan Jidou Bungaku Honyaku" (Children's Literature in Translation) in 2000. See Motai Natsuu, interview, 2000.

Originals and Translations

Ron-Feder Amit, Galila. (1976). *El atsmi [To Myself]*. Herzeliya: Milo

Ron-Feder Amit, Galila. (1988). *Michtavim leYeled aher[Letters to a special child]*. Jerusalem: Dagan

Ron-Feder Amit, Galila. (1999). *Mohchiron henji wo mattemasu[Letters to a special child]*. Motai Natsuu (trans.) Tokyo: Iwasaki shoten

Ron-Feder Amit, Galila. (2006). *Boku-ni yoroshiku[To Myself]*. Higushi Noriko (trans.) Tokyo: SAERA

References

Aronoff, Myron. (2000). "The 'Americanization' of Israeli Politics: Political and Cultural Change." *Israel Studies*. *5*(1), 92-127.

Bavelas, J.B., Black, A., Chovil, N., & Mullettt, J. (1990). *Equivocal communication*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage

Berglung , Jeff. (2004). "Japan – Its people, its language, its culture". *Annual report of faculty of human & cultural studies*. 52-101.

Burgess, Chris. (2010). "The 'illusion' of homogeneous Japan and national character: Discourse as a tool to transcend the 'myth' vs. 'reality' binary". *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus*, available online at http://japanfocus.org/-Chris-Burgess/3310 (accessed on 21.05.2013)

Davis, Roger. & Ikeno, Osamu. (2002). *The Japanese mind: understanding contemporary Japanese culture*. Tokyo: Tuttle Publishing.

Eagleton, Terry. (2000). *The idea of culture*. Oxford-Melbourne-Berlin: Blackwell Publishers

Eco, Umberto. (1986). "*Casablanca*: Cult Movies and Intertextual Collage." *Travels in Hyper Reality.* William Weaver (trans.) 197-211. New York: Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich.

Even-Zohar, Itamar. (2005). "Laws of cultural interference." In Even-Zohar Itamar 2005. *Papers in Culture Research*. Tel Aviv: Porter Chair of Semiotics [Electronic Book, available online at http://www.even-

zohar.com] (accessed on 21.05.2013)

Even-Zohar, Itamar (1990). "The Position of translated literature within the literary polysystem." *Poetics Today*, 11(1), 45-51.

Furuno, Yuri. (2002). "Japanese Translation in the 1970s: a Transitional Period" *Japanese Studies*. 22 (3). 319-326.

Hassell, R (1985). *Haragei: Speaking from the gut* in *Black Belt* Magazine, January 1985 edition.

Honyaku Shuppan Repoto. (2005). *Shuppan Geppou* . 47(7), 4-11.

Iwabuchi, Koichi. (2005). "Multinationalizing the multicultural: The commodification of 'ordinary foreign residents' in a Japanese TV talk show". *Japanese Studies*. 25(2). 103-118(16).

Kapner, D.A. & Levine, S. (2000). "The Jews of Japan". *Jerusalem letter*. Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs: online edition. Available online at http://www.jcpa.org/jl/jl425.htm (accessed on 21.05.2013)

Katriel, Tamar. (1991). *Communal webs: communication and culture in contemporary Israel*. New York: State University of New York Press.

Katz, John. (2007). *Israeli-Japanese Relations 1948-1963*. Tel Aviv: Saar.

Kaufman, Jason & Orlando Patterson. (2005). "Cross-National Cultural Diffusion: The Global Spread of Cricket." *American Sociological Review* 70(1), 82-110.

Leerssen, Joep. (2007). "Imagology: History and Method" in Beller, Manfred, and Joep Leerssen (eds.), *Imagology: the cultural construction and literary representation of national characters. A critical survey*, 17-32, Amsterdam: Rodopi.

Miller, Marilyn Jeanne. (1987). "Nikki bungaku: Literary diaries: Their tradition and their influence on modern Japanese fiction". *World Literature Today,* 61(2), 207-210.

Miyamoto-Tanaka, K. and Bell, R. A. (1996). "Equivocation in America and Japan: A Cross-National Comparison of the Effects of Situational Conflict and Status", *Communication Research* 23 (6), 261-296.

Miyata, Noboru. (2000). *Sengo honyaku fuunroku: Honyakusha ga Kamigami data jidai*. Tokyo: Hon no Zasshi sha

Noberu sho Bungaku Zenshu 15. [Nobel Prize-winners Collection] (1971). Tokyo: Shufu no Tomo sha.

Oe, Kenzaburo. (1994). "Nobel Lecture: Japan, The ambiguous, and myself." Available online at http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1994/oe-lecture.html (accessed on 21.05.2013)

Ohmae, Kenichi. (1991). *The borderless world: Power and strategy in the interlinked economy* . New York: Harper Perennial.

O'Sullivan, Emer. (2011). "Imagology meets children's literature". *International research in children's literature* 4(1), 1-14.

Pym, Anthony. (2004). "On the Social and the Cultural in Translation Studies." (draft, online publication) available at http://www.tinet.org/~apym/on-line/research_methods/sociocultural.pdf (accessed on 21.05.2013)

Rüttermann, Markus. (2006) "'So That We Can Study Letter-Writing': The Concept of Epistolary Etiquette in Premodern Japan". *Japan Review. Journal of the International Research Center for Japanese Studies* 18. 57-128.

Schapiro, Meyer. (1985). "On some problems in the semiotics of visual art: Field and vehicle in image-signs." " In Innis, R. E. (ed.). *Semiotics: An Introductory Anthology*, 206-225. Bloomington: Indiana Press University.

Seifert, Martina. (2005) "The image trap: The translation of English-Canadian children's literature into German. In O'Sullivan, E., Reynolds, K. and R. Romoeren (eds.). *Children's literature global and local: Social and aesthetic perspectives*. 227-239, Oslo: Novus Press.

Seifert, Martina. (2007). "Selecting Canadiana for the Young: The German Translation of English Canadian Children's Literature." In Luise von Flotow and Reingard M. Nischik (eds.). *Translating Canada*, 219–42. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press.

Shavit, Zohar. (1986). *Poetics of children's literature*, Athens and London : The University of Georgia Press,

Shavit, Zohar. (2009). "Hebrew children's literature". *Modern Hebrew Literature*, 5, Israel at 60: Retrospective & Renewal, 29-35.

Stolze, Radegundis. (2004). 'Creating, Presence in Translation' in G. Hansen, K. Malmkjaer and D. Gile (eds.). *Claims, Changes and Challenges in Translation Studies*. 39-50. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Wiess, Thomas. (2010). "Disability in Japan" *Disabled World.com Health and Disability News* available at http://www.disabled-world.com/news/asia/japan/japan.php (accessed on 21.05.2013)

Online Sources (accessed on 11.08.2013)

Amazon.co.jp Reviews http://www.amazon.co.jp/product-reviews/426504171X

Higuchi Noriko, blog, 2008 http://www.asahi-net.or.jp/~QI6K-YSKW/norikolib9.html

Index Translationum, UNESCO http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL_ID=7810&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

ITHL (Institute for the translation of Hebrew literature)

Galila ron Feder Amit: http://www.ithl.org.il/page_14555

"Letters to a special child" http://www.ithl.org.il/book_info.asp?id=670

"To myself" http://www.ithl.org.il/page_14557

Jardin Soleil Reading Website relieur.net/livre/etranger/ron_feder_amit.php

JNPA (Japan National Police Agency) website, Archives section, Movements of the Japanese Red Army and the "Yodo-go" Group: http://www.npa.go.jp/archive/keibi/syouten/syouten271/english/0301.html

MOFA website, Regional Affairs Section, Middle East: Japan-Israel Relations: http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/middle_e/israel/data.html#basic

Motai Natsuu, interview, 2000 www.yamaneko.org/bookdb/int/nmotai.htm