Unbroken English: Translating the Illusion of Fluency in Contemporary Hebrew Fiction

Several recent Israeli novels feature English-speakers in Israeli settings and, conversely, Hebrew-speakers making their ways—in broken English—outside of Israel. Their speech is represented in Hebrew, trusting readers to accept an age-old convention. What challenges does a translator face in carrying this convention into her translations? We will consider various approaches and the complications they present.

Jessica Cohen is a freelance translator born in England, raised in Israel, and living in Denver. She translates contemporary Israeli prose, poetry, and other creative work. Her translations include David Grossman’s critically acclaimed novel To The End of the Land, and works by major Israeli writers including Etgar Keret, Rutu Modan, Dorit Rabinyan, Nir Baram, and director Ari Folman.

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Slocum Room, Lilly Library

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