

Philology

On Fiction Created in the Vernacular

Apollon Silagadze* and Nino Ejibadze**

* Academy Member, Institute of Oriental Studies, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Tbilisi

** Institute of Oriental Studies, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Tbilisi

ABSTRACT. Dialectal fiction implies literature created in a dialect and not in the literary language (naturally, also not folkloric texts, recorded by specialists). In the article the issue is analyzed on the basis of Arabic, namely, Egyptian literature. This phenomenon is interesting in general – not only from the viewpoint of literary theory but linguistics as well. The point is that creation and establishment of fiction in the dialect causes/will cause fundamental changes in the sociolinguistic picture and literary area. In case of Egypt the dialect is no longer only a means of oral communication; it becomes the language of literature/literary language, i.e. a means of creation of literary heritage. As regards the literary aspect, there exists Egyptian Arabic literature proper, which is no longer a fragment of common Arabic literature as it uses not the Common Arabic language but its own Egyptian Arabic. In this language literature is not and will not be created in other Arabic countries. The above-mentioned means that in the Egyptian society renewal of the criteria of its own identity occurs. In particular, it is possible to discuss definition of the ethnic identity by means of creation of its own literature based on the use of its own language. At the same time a higher level of the hierarchy in identity – the common Arabic national identity – is preserved by means of the existence of literature in the Common Arabic language.

© 2016 Bull. Georg. Natl. Acad. Sci.

Key words: Arabic, Egyptian, dialect, vernacular, fiction, sociolinguistics

1. Dialectal fiction implies literature created in a dialect and not in the literary language (naturally, also not folkloric texts, recorded by specialists). In the article the issue is analyzed on the basis of Arabic, namely, Egyptian literature. This phenomenon is interesting in general – not only from the viewpoint of literary theory but linguistics as well. The point is that creation and establishment of fiction in the dialect causes/will cause fundamental changes in the sociolinguistic picture and literary area.

First of all, the circumstance should be taken into

account that Arabic literature, which develops in more than 20 countries is, in fact, common Arabic literature, because it is based on one and the same literary language everywhere.

This picture changes fundamentally after the middle of the last century, when the fiction created in the dialect became an independent and significant phenomenon in Egypt (this phenomenon affected other Arabic countries to a lesser extent). Generally, Arabic fiction created in the vernacular (dialectal fiction) has quite long history, but it still has to be regarded as

relatively new phenomenon, if we take into consideration functional aspect, namely, its role in the literary process and its significance for literature.

Usually, Arabic dialectal literature is discussed in two parts: 15th-18th centuries and from the 19th century up to the present day [1: 597-604]. The majority of the surviving texts are created in the Egyptian dialect, and some of them in Syriac, etc.

The author of the chronologically first surviving dialectal text is Ibn Sūdūn (15th c.) – well-known writer and poet, who wrote in both Literary Arabic and the Egyptian dialect.

2. The widespread periodization (I. 15th-18thcc., II. from the 19th c.) should be revised.

Bearing in mind the criterion discussed above, another variant of classification is possible. Taking into account the role and significance of this phenomenon in the literary process, two periods can be identified.

Old: dialectal Arabic literature of the period before the 20th c.

New: dialectal Arabic literature since the mid-20thc. to nowadays.

These two periods have their characteristics. The specificity of the first period is defined by the following features:

a) Their insignificance from the viewpoint of their volume and role.

b) Genre restriction (entertaining works, containing satire and humour, and the like).

c) In most cases – the auxiliary niche intended for them: certain insertions in the texts created in Literary Arabic, mostly, in dialogues, which served the purpose of achieving a certain degree of reality and artistic expressiveness of the stories to be rendered.

Finally, on the basis of the works written in the dialect, which belong to this period, an independent/autonomous fact of literature was not created; actually we can discuss one specific case of literary process, the characteristic features of which are already listed above.

New period begins from the mid-20thc. (as was

noted, the modern dialectal literature is, in fact, the phenomenon mostly realized in Egypt and characteristic of Egyptian literature). The specificity of the new period is determined by the following features:

a) Overcoming the state of the role of auxiliary literature – texts of modern Egyptian dialectal fiction are texts entirely created in the dialect.

b) Full removal of genre restriction: from the second half of the 20th c. fiction created in the dialect covers the entire formal, genre, etc. area – prose, poetry, drama...

c) Full adoption of the results of modernization of Arabic literature. The renewal process (*ḥarakat at-tajdīd/ ḥarakat at-taḥarrur*), as noted, took place in the literature created in Literary Arabic – within the common process of Arabic cultural and literary upsurge (*an-nahḍa*). This process was defined by two significant events for the new Arabic world: 1) new ideas introduced in public life in the 19th c. and especially in the 20th c. and new prospects development; 2) Europeanization of culture in the correct sense of this expression, when complex synthesis with traditional Arab values is implied, which ultimately gives rise to new art and new literature and represents complex and long-term development [see 2: 09].

Dialectal fiction, which did not represent an independent literary fact, naturally could not have implemented this process. Dialectal fiction did not take part in it at all; it adopted the results of the process at a later period.

d) Great number of texts created in the Egyptian dialect.

Ultimately: dialectal fiction, on the one hand, has a great, and on the other one, autonomous place and role in the Egyptian reality; to be more precise, the following wording is also possible: creation and establishment of Egyptian literature proper, i.e. literature written in the Egyptian dialect.

3. Modern Egyptian dialectal literature emerged at the beginning of the 20th c., when on the one hand, compositions were created, in which passages written in the dialect were inserted, and on the other one,

works written entirely in the dialect were of the specific character, as they represented plays, whereas dramaturgy is a branch of literature which is in itself oriented on the spoken language/dialect. Therefore, this period can be regarded as a certain transitional stage (for example, Maḥmūd Taymūr wrote his plays in doublets: as literary and dialectal versions [3], the literary variant can be regarded as a certain tribute to the tradition, as the dialectal version is more natural for characters' speech during the stage performance).

The new stage – expansion of the area and full coverage of fiction – is a later phenomenon, the chronology of which can be started from the 1940s and can be related to the first novel created in the Egyptian dialect “*Qantara who denied God*” [4] (the first publication was a limited edition, it was published for the second time in 2012; Georgian translation by N. Ejibadze published in 2010). This is the literary text by well-known physicist and public figure Muṣṭafā Muṣarrafa, a friend of A. Einstein. In this case the object of our present interest is the author's introduction to the novel, in which it is stressed that the dialect was chosen consciously as the language of the text: “I considered it necessary to write this novel in its native language i.e. dialect” (*ra'aytu 'an 'aktuba hādihī l-qīṣṣata biluḡatihā l-'aṣliyyati 'ay bi-l-luḡati l-'āmmiyyati*). It is significant here that the author refers to the dialect as a “language” and considers it as the native language of the Egyptians.

At present Egyptian dialectal literature is finally formed and established phenomenon containing numerous specimens.

4. Before formulating generalized theses, let us touch upon one more specific aspect of the issue, namely, graphic expression of dialectal texts. Naturally, the Arabic graphic system is used, whereas oral reproduction of the texts is offered as in the dialect. In this case we are dealing with the phenomenon called by us heterography (when one and the same graphic texts can be deciphered differently – as a literary or a dialectal text).

At the same time, a certain tendency of approximation of the graphics with the orthoepic/oral variant is observable. In particular, certain specific cases are reflected graphically, when some sounds are recorded as they are heard, and not as is in the classical graphic variant.

Interestingly, in some cases – for certain fragments of the text – the Latin graphic system is used. These are instances when some words should be emphasized due to the fact that it is, for example, a Europeanism (not of that type when a word is already finally adapted and established in Arabic, but when we are dealing with neologisms), or when we are dealing with code-switching, or in this way the title is emphasized; see, e.g. the collection by ‘Umar Ṭāhir [5].

In case of using the Latin graphics for certain fragments of the Arabic text sometimes some consonants which find no correspondence in Latin are rendered by means of numerals. This method originates from SMS and email messages [6:118-129].

5. As regards generalized theses, first of all, it should be noted that the process is completed in the Egyptian literary (and linguistic) area. For the entire Arabic world it is possible to postulate only by the analogy certain future dynamics. In all cases, from the positions of the Egyptian reality the process causes/will cause certain changes, on the one hand, in the sociolinguistic, and on the other one, in the literary picture, to which transformation of some fundamental concepts of linguistics and literary criticism is/will be related.

The fact that concepts “literary language” and “dialect” undergo certain transformation, as was demonstrated above in the expression of Muṣṭafā Muṣarrafa, is perceived by the Arabs (Egyptians) themselves.

What specific changes are or may be caused by the above-mentioned process?

Sociolinguistic Aspect

a) A fundamental novelty, which is already a fact, is that in case of Egypt the dialect is no longer only a

means of oral communication. After establishment of literature in the Egyptian dialect the conditions are created for realization of the Egyptian dialect with the full function: 1. It is in fact the only means of oral communication – spoken language; 2. at the same time, it becomes the language of literature/literary language, i.e. a means of creation of literary heritage.

b) Existence of literature in the Egyptian dialect means that this dialect is recorded in a literary way, which in its turn means that it undergoes standardization. This is one more real indicator that gradually it moves to the category of language, assumes the form of a standard language. In particular: what was repeatedly referred to above as the Egyptian dialect is (/will be) a regional/Egyptian standard language, in fact based on the Cairo speech. Represented in this form, it – as Common Egyptian – opposes all other living spoken dialects of Egypt. The following opposition seems real:

Language (< Egyptian speech of Cairo) : dialects (speech of different regions of Egypt).

c) All this indicates that expansion of the Egyptian (common Egyptian) dialect is observable – full expansion of its functions, which naturally means the changes of functions of other elements involved in the sociolinguistic picture. The common Arabic (including Egyptian) sociolinguistic picture was characterized above: the literary language and dialects (22 countries plus regional vernaculars inside the dialects). On the side of the literary language we have two languages – Classical Arabic (fuṣḥā) and Modern Literary Arabic/Modern Standard Arabic. Function of the first one is limited – it is only a written language. In speech it is completely replaced by Standard Arabic which has the full function; at the same time, its communication/spoken function is extremely limited (formal conversations, etc.) due to the intensified role of the dialects. Finally: Standard Arabic is the literary language for the entire Arabic world, which can be used for certain communication with the entire Arabic world, but a language for usual, natural communication for each country/region is the local, native dialect.

As noted above, at present, there are all conditions for introduction of certain corrections in this picture, in case of Egypt. In particular, the basis for this is the circumstance that the Egyptian dialect as the language of literature too becomes fully-functional (which causes re-distribution of sociolinguistic relations), whereas Modern literary Arabic (again in case of Egypt) no longer is the only written language (as regards Classical Arabic, evidently, it can be said that there is a tendency for its function to become even more restricted).

Literary Aspect

Fiction created in Egypt was one of the constituents/fragments of the common Arabic literary area and it was considered on the same level as literature of any other Arabic country, as it was based on the same literary language as literature of any other Arabic country (in other words, the only differentiating feature of Egyptian literature was its localization – it was created in Egypt). Today, after the establishment of Egyptian dialectal literature, the situation is changing: there exists Egyptian Arabic literature proper as well, which is no longer a fragment of common Arabic literature as it uses not the Common Arabic language but its own, Egyptian Arabic. In this language literature is not and will not be created in other Arabic countries.

At the same time, the present-day literary picture of Egypt contains two constituents, which is manifested in the parallel existence of literature created in Literary Arabic and Egyptian Arabic (hence, there are two ways of further development: preservation of the two-constituent picture or unification in favour of literature created in Egyptian Arabic).

Two ways of literary development can also be imagined for other Arabic countries making up the common literary area at present, based on the Common Arabic language: preservation of this situation, or implementation of the Egyptian variant (in the first case, Egypt can remain as the only example).

In all cases, it is a fact that dialectal Arabic fiction exists, which offers new themes for literary criticism analysis, in particular, related with the definition of

literary specificity of dialectal and non-dialectal (created in Literary Arabic/Common Arabic) literatures.

6. The phenomenon considered in this chapter allows offering one more conclusion. Namely: if we can see that in Egypt literature is created already in the own literary language, it can also be noticed that in the Egyptian society renewal of the criteria of its own identity occurs. In particular, it is possible to discuss definition of the ethnic identity by means of creation of its own literature based on the use of its own language. In this case, demarcation from the non-Egyptian Arabs occurs, whose literature is created in another language (Common Literary Arabic).

At the same time, if we take into account the Egyptian and, in general, Arabic specificity, certain hierarchy is observable in self-identification. In this hierarchy, common Arabic national self-identification should be regarded as a higher level.

Here we find a very interesting linguistic and literary fact, which is directly related to the Arabic (Egyptian) specificity of determination of one's own identity. This is a phenomenon referred to above: the literary picture in the Egyptian area is two-constituent – with parallel/simultaneous functioning and development of literature in the Common Arabic language and literature in the dialect. This means that a higher level of the hierarchy – the common Arabic national identity – is preserved, namely, it is preserved by means of the existence of literature in the Common Arabic language.

In conclusion, it can be noted that in determination of the national identity in the Arabic reality two factors are important – linguistic and literary. These two factors – linguistic and literary – are significant in general too. The role of the first factor is recognized for a long time. Obviously, the thesis can also be formulated that the second factor, fiction, is also significant.

ფილოლოგია

დიალექტზე შექმნილი მხატვრული ლიტერატურის შესახებ

ა. სილაგაძე* და ნ. ეჯიბაძე**

* აკადემიის წევრი, ფანე ჯავახიშვილის სახ. თბილისის სახელმწიფო უნივერსიტეტი, აღმოსავლეთმცოდნეობის სასწავლო-სამეცნიერო ინსტიტუტი, თბილისი

** ფანე ჯავახიშვილის სახ. თბილისის სახელმწიფო უნივერსიტეტი, აღმოსავლეთმცოდნეობის სასწავლო-სამეცნიერო ინსტიტუტი, თბილისი

დიალექტურ მხატვრულ ლიტერატურაში იგულისხმება დიალექტზე და არა სალიტერატურო ენაზე შექმნილი ლიტერატურა (ბუნებრივია, აგრეთვე — არა ფოლკლორული ტექსტები, ჩაწერილი სპეციალისტთა მიერ). სტატიაში საკითხი გაანალიზებულია არაბული, კერძოდ ეგვიპტური, ლიტერატურის მასალაზე. ამავე დროს, მოცემული მოვლენა საინტერესოა ზოგადადაც — არა მხოლოდ ლიტერატურათმცოდნეობის, არამედ ლინგვისტიკის პოზიციებიდან. საქმე ისაა, რომ

მხატვრული ლიტერატურის დიალექტზე შექმნა და დამკვიდრება იწვევს/გამოიწვევს პრინციპულ ცვლილებებს სოციოლინგვისტურ სურათსა და ლიტერატურულ სფეროში. კერძოდ, ეგვიპტის სინამდვილის ანალიზი შემდეგი დასკვნების გაკეთების საშუალებას იძლევა.

სოციოლინგვისტურ ასპექტში. პრინციპული ხასიათის სიახლეა ის, რომ დიალექტი აღარ არის მხოლოდ ზეპირი კომუნიკაციის საშუალება, — იქმნება იმის პირობები, რომ ეგვიპტური დიალექტი (საერთო დიალექტი, დამყარებული კაიროს მეტყველებაზე) სრულ ფუნქციას იძენს: იგი ხდება აგრეთვე ლიტერატურის ენა/სალიტერატურო ენა (ლიტერატურული პროდუქციის შექმნის საშუალება).

ლიტერატურათმცოდნეობით ასპექტში. ეგვიპტეში შექმნილი მხატვრული ლიტერატურა იყო საერთოარაბული ლიტერატურული სფეროს ერთ-ერთი შემადგენელი/ფრაგმენტი, რომელიც იმავე სიბრტყეზე განიხილებოდა, რომელზეც ნებისმიერი სხვა არაბული ქვეყნის ლიტერატურა, რადგანაც იმავე სალიტერატურო ენას ეყრდნობოდა, რომელსაც ნებისმიერი სხვა არაბული ქვეყნის ლიტერატურა. დღეს არსებობს საკუთრივ ეგვიპტური არაბული ლიტერატურაც, რომელიც აღარ არის საერთოარაბული ლიტერატურის ფრაგმენტი, რადგანაც სარგებლობს არა საერთოარაბული სალიტერატურო ენით, არამედ საკუთარი, ეგვიპტური, არაბულით; ამ ენაზე სხვაგან, სხვა არაბულ ქვეყნებში, ლიტერატურა არ იქმნება და არ შეიქმნება.

კიდევ ერთი დასკვნა. შეიძლება იმის თქმა, რომ ეგვიპტის საზოგადოებაში ხდება საკუთარი იდენტობის კრიტიკიუმა განახლება. კონკრეტულად, როგორც ჩანს, შეიძლება ლაპარაკი ეთნიკური იდენტობის განსაზღვრაზე საკუთარი ენის გამოყენებაზე აგებული საკუთარი ლიტერატურის შექმნით.

ამავე დროს, თუ გავითვალისწინებთ ეგვიპტურ და ზოგადად არაბულ სპეციფიკას, როგორც ჩანს, ლაპარაკი შეიძლება გარკვეულ იერარქიაზე თვითიდენტიფიკაციაში. ამ იერარქიაში უფრო მაღალი დონის საფეხურად უნდა ჩაითვალოს ეროვნული საერთოარაბული თვითიდენტიფიკაცია. ეს თვითიდენტიფიკაცია ეგვიპტის სინამდვილეში შენარჩუნებულია იმით, რომ (დიალექტზე შექმნილი ლიტერატურის გვერდით) შენარჩუნებულია ლიტერატურა საერთოარაბულ სალიტერატურო ენაზე.

REFERENCES:

1. Davies H. (2006) Dialect Literature. In: Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics, Brill, v. I: 597-604.
2. Silagadze A. (1988) Development Process of New Arabic Literature and Arabic Literary Studies (in Georgian and Russian). In: Silagadze A., Jawdat Ibrahim, Modern Arabic Literary Studies and Criticism (Chrestomathy), Tbilisi.
3. Maḥmūd Taymūr (n.d.) Abū šūša wal-mawkibu wa qīšaṣun ulḥrā, al-Qāhira (in Arabic).
4. Muṣṭafā Mušarrafa (1991) Qanṭara l-leḏī kafar, al-Qāhira (in Arabic).
5. 'Umar Ṭāhīr (2005) Ṣaklaha bāzīt, al-Qāhira (in Arabic).
6. Ejjbadze N. (2012) Some Lexical and Phraseological Aspects of Egyptian Arabic Speech, Tbilisi (in Georgian).

Received June, 2016