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### RESEARCH ARTICLE

#### THE LINGUISTIC INTRUSION OF HEBREW AMONG ARAB CITIZENS IN ISRAEL

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#### Abstract

Following the establishment of the State of Israel, Israeli Jewish society influenced the country's Arab citizenry in several areas of life. This influence extended to the area of language. In particular, the spoken Arabic used by Arabs in Israel began to borrow elements of Hebrew regularly, especially in the case of vocabulary relating to everyday life. This paper explains the reasons for the marginalization of Arabic language within the current linguistic landscape and in school curricula, as well as the spreading of Jewish culture among Arab students and the undermining of Arabic's official status. It then discusses the intrusion of Hebrew among Arab citizens of Israel and explains the reasons Arab citizens are oriented towards Hebrew. These reasons include: military rule; the linguistic duality of the Arabic language; and the fact that public services are provided in Hebrew, which forces the Arab citizen to master Hebrew. This paper also identifies the means by which Hebrew intrudes into spoken Arabic. These means include: subjecting the structure of Hebrew vocabulary to Arabic; using Arabic letters to write Hebrew words directly; combining Arabic with Hebrew in certain idioms; applying grammatical rules and conjugations to the Hebrew language; using words with Arabic roots as if they originated in Hebrew; applying Hebrew grammar to Arabic; and altering the pronunciation of Hebrew words to conform with Arabic. This paper shows that borrowing from Hebrew has become a steadily growing trend in most aspects of life and among all ages and social echelons. This is due to Arab-Jewish encounters in all walks of life, which has led to linguistic exchange and synthesis on both sides. This study deploys a descriptive, analytical methodology along with applied models to provide samples of the intrusion of Hebrew into spoken Arabic among Arab citizens of Israel.

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#### Introduction:-

The year 1948 is considered a turning point for Arabs in this region. This is the year in which the State of Israel was established, causing major upheavals politically, socially, and linguistically:

1. On the political level, a new state emerged whose national identity, language, and religion differed from the rest of its neighbors in the region.

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2. On the social level, many members of the literati and the wealthy elite left their Arab villages and cities and families were broken.
3. On the linguistic level, Hebrew became the language of the Jewish majority, whereas Arabic was transformed into a minority language. Hebrew became a central language within the cultural-linguistic resources available for the Arab citizens of Israel. Its influence extended beyond various aspects of life to include matters of identity and culture. Arab citizens of Israel had to learn Hebrew as the official state language and not as a foreign language.

Aware of this new reality, the founders of the young Hebrew state put their heads together to devise a strategic plan that would ensure long-term control of the Arab minority methodically and consistently. This plan was centered on three main issues:

1. The first issue is resettlement, which aims at Israelification by merging the Arab minority into the state; in other words, detaching this minority as much as possible from the larger Arab nation to which they belong.
2. The second issue consists of the Judaization of space, as the Arab-Israeli conflict is not merely a question of who owns land. It is also a question of the symbolic value implied in the Judaization of space by changing its name, a process aimed at reinforcing the Jewish character of the state. This Judaization is seen in the following two areas:

Hebraizing the names of towns and sites: since the early days, Israel has intentionally planned to change the characteristics of space and to obliterate its Palestinian character by erasing Arabic names and replacing them with Hebrew ones. Names of cities, localities, historical sites, streets and squares were changed to Hebrew or foreign ones to endow space with a Judaic-Biblical character. In most cases, the original names of the Arabic places were altered to fit the Hebrew language. In his novel *The Pessoptimist*, Emile Habibi mentions names of Palestinian places that were ruined and erased: Hanatir Square is renamed "Paris Square," the plain of Ibn Amir becomes "Yizrael plain," and Ain Jalut takes the name "Ain Harod," a biblical name. Due to the fact that the *Pessoptimist* does not speak Hebrew, one of the ironies occurs in the novel when he believes that the name of Haifa has been changed to "State of Israel."

Changing the names of streets in mixed cities: in mixed cities, such as Haifa, Jaffa, Lod, and Ramle, there is a dispute over renaming streets and sites that hold cultural and historical significance for Arab citizens. The mayors in those towns, as everywhere else across the country, actively attempt to blur Arabic names within the public linguistic landscape, by means of modification and distortion. They regard these spaces as exclusively Jewish and wish to erase their memory from the Arab mind at any cost.

The third issue is centered on the linguistic side, as represented in elevating the status of Hebrew and marginalizing Arabic. As we examine these issues over seventy years after the establishment of the State of Israel, we find that the various efforts to ensure effacement have failed. But, on the other hand, the re-identification of space and the re-orientation of language have achieved a high level of success.

The linguistic issue appears in the conflict between Arabic and Hebrew both domestically and externally. According to the Palestinian Professor Yasir Suleiman, "the clash between Arabic and Hebrew is one of the least studied aspects of the Arab-Israeli conflict."

#### **The Arabic-Hebrew Conflict on the Domestic Level:**

Realistically, Hebrew has become the dominant language while Arabic has dwindled into a marginal one. Arabic does not enjoy the status of Hebrew and is not allotted equal resources or opportunities. For all practical purposes, as the researcher Sammy Smooha claims, Hebrew is the dominant language. Barzilai notes that government offices, including the Supreme Court, publish their reports only in Hebrew. Occasionally, the government has attempted to publish new laws in Arabic, but, even when this has happened, it has occurred several months after the time they were issued in Hebrew.

Most forms issued by governmental offices do not have Arabic versions. Postal stamps, coins and paper bills feature writing in Arabic and Hebrew, but only Hebrew and English are used in passports.

### The marginalization of Arabic appears in the following fields:

Aside from the names of cities and sites, the use of Arabic in the public sphere, whether in government offices or in public spaces, is almost non-existent. If used, Arabic only appears on warning signs such as the following: *זהירות/חذر* 'caution'; *זהירות, שדה מוקשים /الاحتراس من الألغام* 'warning—minefield'; *مخارج طوارئ /יציאת* 'emergency exit'; *אין חניה/מمنו עאלوقوف* 'no parking'; *הקנס גבוה/الغرامة عالية* 'large fine'; *העישון אסור/מمنو עאלדחול* 'no smoking'; and *שחייה אסורה/מمنو עאלסבחה* 'no swimming'.

The phrase 'linguistic landscape' refers to all uses of language in the public sphere, including road signs, names of districts, streets, buildings, sites, and institutions, as well as billboards and even personal business cards, which feature Hebrew and English. Some of these linguistic choices are made by public offices; some are made by local communities; and some are made by companies, corporations, and individuals. The linguistic landscape forms part of the special character of any town, location, or site where multiple linguistic communities reside.

There is no doubt that a visitor to any Arab town or village would notice the multi-lingual nature of its linguistic landscape and the dominant presence of Hebrew. The use of Hebrew is prominent in all Arab towns and varies from one town to another only in terms of how widely it is used. Although in many cases the readers are Arab citizens, Hebrew is still widely used. This is due to the symbolic significance it holds. First, the use of Hebrew is perceived as an effort to modernize Arab society. Second, referring to something in Hebrew elevates its status. Third, the use of Hebrew symbolizes Arab willingness to open a window into Israeli society.

1. The Ministry of Education uses school curricula to promote Hebrew. While Arab students can finish five units of Hebrew and earn more grades, most students finish only three units of Arabic and earn less grades.
2. Elevating the familiarity with Jewish culture, as the amount of Jewish heritage studied by Arab students (in Hebrew, History, and Civics classes) is twice what is learned by Jewish students in secular Hebrew schools.
3. Between the years 1952 and 2007, several attempts to end the official use of Arabic were made by Jewish members of the Knesset affiliated with right-wing political parties.
4. Maintaining the status of Arabic could only be assured in a court of law, which is unlike anywhere else in the world. The minority here must turn to the legal system to obtain the rights of a language recognized by the law as an official language.

### The Arabic-Hebrew Conflict on the International Level:

The presence of Hebrew is seen throughout the Arab world. There are academic institutions that offer Hebrew within specific disciplines and others that offer it as a general elective or as one of the Semitic languages. There are also Arab media outlets that seek help from Hebrew ones and broadcast their content in special programming. Al-Manar TV, which is run by Hezbollah, is one of the leading satellite channels in this field as it shows captions written directly in Hebrew letters.

Moreover, the conflict between Hebrew and Arabic is manifest in the words chosen to describe concepts. The Hebrew equivalents of resistance (*مقاومة*) and struggle (*جهاد*) are vandalism and terrorism; Judaisation is perceived as normalization and naturalization; the right of return is changed into the law of return, and so on. As noted by Amara and Mara' in their book *Language in Conflict*, "the constant warfare between Israel and the Arab countries, the daily exchange among Arab and Jewish citizens within the state, and the overwhelming presence of Israeli troops in the occupied territories have led to the emergence of a new, largely political terminology that is commonly used privately and publicly. This new terminology in both Arabic and Hebrew reveals the profound gap between the two conflicting sides as an outcome of the unstable conditions of the Middle East."

In the heat of the Arab-Israeli conflict, expressions that originated in Israeli media have made their way into Arabic media. These expressions were literally translated from Hebrew; that is, they are intrusions into contemporary Arabic. Such terms include:

**Physical Liquidation:** This expression refers to the assassination of Palestinian resistance fighters by Israeli forces. It became widely used during the first and second Palestinian Intifadas. Its Hebrew original is *היסול*.

**Red Lines:** For Israel, security is seen as a 'red line', which is *קואדום* in Hebrew

**Grapes of Wrath:** This refers to Israel's military campaign against Lebanon in 1996, known in Hebrew as *ענבי זעם*.

The Political Kitchen: This term was coined by Israel to describe a small forum of ministers who can make swift decisions, particularly related to national security. It is also known as the State Security Cabinet. The Hebrew name is מטבחון פוליטי. During the 2009 Gaza War, Arab satellite channels used the term cabinet "الكابينيت" (translated into Arabic as a miniature security forum, consisting of the prime-minister, the minister of defense, and the minister of foreign affairs).

Bank of Targets: This term appeared during the Palestinian Intifadas when the Israeli military was sending lists of strategic targets for attack on the ground or by air to the State Security Cabinet for approval. These targets were referred to as the bank of targets or the bank of objectives, בנק מטרות in Hebrew. This expression was used again during the Second Lebanon War, when media outlets began to inadvertently use it in their daily broadcasting due to the intensive targeting carried out by the Israeli air forces.

### The Effects of Hebrew on the Arab Citizens of Israel:

The Hebrew intrusion into Arabic is not new. Many Hebrew words made their way into Classical Arabic in olden times. The Jesuit Father Rafael Nakhla had the following to say about this pattern in his book *The Wonders of the Arabic Language*: "Out of their ingenuity and jealousy over their native tongue, the ancient Arabs introduced thousands of words that had no equivalents in their language. However, they fit these words into Arabic or semi-Arabic structures. Their skill in this area is truly marvelous. Would it occur to anyone, other than an expert, that the Arabic word 'ترعة' for canal or conduit is originally Aramaic; that the word for orchard 'بستان' is Persian; the word for tower 'برج' is Greek; the word for eloquent 'فصيح' is Hebrew; the word for bomb 'قنبلة' is Turkish; and dinar 'دينار' is Latin?"

In 1922, the British mandate recognized Hebrew as an official language in Palestine. Upon the establishment of the State of Israel, Hebrew became the main official language, which elevated its status for both Arabs and Jews.

Isolation from the rest of the Arab world and the imposition of military rule upon Arab citizens of Israel increased their attachment to Hebrew, which became vital for being employed by Jewish businesses or for obtaining permits, which were only issued in Hebrew.

There were other factors that also contributed to the spread of Hebrew. For example, the linguistic duality of spoken and formal Arabic (diglossia), the lack of mastery over formal Arabic, and the availability of postal, banking, medical, and social services only in Hebrew (or the fact that these services are provided by clerks who do not speak Arabic) forced Arab citizens to become proficient in Hebrew. In addition, pursuing academic degrees in Israeli institutions requires learners to speak advanced Hebrew.

Since Arab citizens interact daily with Israeli society, this sociocultural factor is a strong motivation for them to acquire Hebrew. Research indicates that Arabs have a negative view of themselves when compared to Jews and feel the need to prove their value to the majority. Mastering Hebrew is one effective way to establish this value.

A study conducted by Immanuel Koplewitz indicates that Arabs with academic degrees speak to Jews in Hebrew to show off their sociocultural status. Hebrew gives the speaker a sense of superiority in terms of knowledge and cultural progression.

### The Uses of Hebrew Intrusions:

Hebrew impacts Arabic, as evidenced in the use of vocabulary and terminology in the literary, scientific, philosophical, legislative, and academic fields. It is not possible to provide a comprehensive list of all the Hebrew terms that have seeped into the language. They are firmly planted in the mind of any Arab citizen who benefits from using them. The following table provides samples of some of the words commonly used in spoken Arabic:

Hebrew Word	Arabicized Version	Meaning	Hebrew Word	Arabicized Version	Meaning
דשא	ديشه	Grass	בסדר	بسيدير	Ok
מבצע	مفتساع	Campaign	הזמנה	هز ماناه	Invitation
תחנה	نحانه	Station	מרכזית	مركزيت	Central
מעלית	معالييت	Elevator	לחוצן	لاחותس	Stressed
השתלמות	هشتלמות	Continuing	כפול	كافول	Double



Jewish Israeli society has had a tremendous impact on the lives of Arab citizens in Israel in all areas, including the linguistic one. Spoken Arabic regularly borrows elements from Hebrew, particularly in the case of vocabulary relating to everyday life. In addition, the level of Hebrew the Arab citizens of Israel need to master is determined by their dynamic interaction with Jewish society. Hebrew has become a prerequisite for every Arab citizen in Israel because it is the dominant language in almost all public fields. It would be hard for any Arab citizen to manage living in Israel without speaking adequate Hebrew outside of his or her residence.

This study highlights the massive borrowing of various convenient elements of the Hebrew language and shows that most aspects of life are influenced by Jewish-Israeli culture. Language use mirrors this influence. Therefore, the intrusion of Hebrew is likely to expand beyond the limits of any specific echelon in Arabic society. Regardless of their age or class, all Arab citizens are participating in this process to varying degrees. This language use is one of the primary reasons for the decline of Arab citizenry. There is no doubt that the interaction between Arabs and Jews in all walks of life has increased the level of exchange and interchange in Hebrew and Arabic on both sides.