

The representation of spoken Hebrew in Eretz-Israeli fiction films from the 1930s

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ABSTRACT This article examines whether the dialogue in the first two full-length Hebrew narrative films reflects spoken Hebrew of the time. The first part examines phenomena that, according to written testimonies in grammar books and prescriptivist writings, were typical of spoken Hebrew during the British Mandate period. It shows that these phenomena were not represented in the films from the 1930s, whereas in later films there is a significant rise in their frequency. The second part examines phenomena that are not typical of spoken speech today but are represented in the dialogue of the films from the 1930s. In later films they become very rare or vanish altogether. An analysis of the findings shows that the film-makers did not regard it as the function of cinematic dialogue to authentically reflect spoken speech, but rather adopted the normative approach to Hebrew, which strongly preferred high-register Hebrew over authentic usage.

THE FIRST HEBREW-SPEAKING fiction films were produced in the 1930s. They provide some of the earliest examples of recorded Hebrew dialogue. This article seeks to determine to what extent the dialogue in these films faithfully reflects the living spoken language that was evolving in the Yishuv¹ at the time, and whether there is a difference in this sense between a silent film and a talking film produced during this period.

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1. The term 'Yishuv' refers to the Jewish settlements founded in the Land of Israel by the Zionist movement before the founding of the State of Israel.

Hebrew cinema emerged at a time when living spoken Hebrew was already a fact, so in theory nothing prevented it from being represented in film. However, in this period the colloquial language was accorded little prestige, and therefore no effort was made to reflect it authentically in works of art and culture. In literature, for example, the standard approach dictated the use of high-register, formal language. But, unlike books and the captions in silent films, which represent speech in writing, talking films contain actual spoken dialogue, which makes it possible to convey the rhythm, volume, accent and cadence of speech,² and might, therefore, be expected to be closer to spontaneous speech than written dialogue in novels.

Only three full-length Hebrew films were produced in the Yishuv before the founding of the State of Israel in 1948. This article examines the representation of spoken language in two of them: the silent film *Oded ha-Noded* ('Wandering Oded'), and the talking film *Tsabar* ('Sabra'), both released in 1932. *Oded ha-Noded*, based on a story by Zvi Lieberman and directed by Chaim Halachmi, is considered the first Hebrew fictional film. *Tsabar*, directed by Alexander Ford, is considered the first talking film, although it too was shot as a silent film and then dubbed with a soundtrack recorded in Poland.³ Several years later, in 1938, the film *Me'al ha-Horavot* ('Over the Ruins') was released, directed by Alfred Wolf and Nathan Axelrod. However, since the plot of this movie mostly takes place during the Great Rebellion in the first century, and its dialogue is not meant to represent Modern Hebrew (MH), it will not be discussed in this article. In later years the Arab Uprising and World War II brought film-making in the Yishuv to a standstill, so no other Hebrew movies were made until after the establishment of the state.⁴

Oded ha-Noded tells of a boy who goes on a trip with his classmates but loses the group and finds himself alone. When the others notice his absence, they separate and begin searching for him, and one of the group members, a tourist who joined the children on their trip, is captured by Bedouins, who

2. Y. Ne'eman, 'The Question of Language and Israeli Cinema', *Zmanim* 39–40 (1991), p. 126 (in Hebrew).

3. N. Gross and Y. Gross *The Hebrew Film: The History of Cinema in Israel* (in Hebrew; Jerusalem: n.pub., 1991), p. 116.

4. On the years of crisis, see M. Zimmermann, *Cinema Milestones: The History of Israeli Cinema in 1896–1948* (in Hebrew; Tel Aviv: Dyonon, 2001), pp. 195–205. In the 1950s only four Hebrew fictional films were made; Hebrew cinema blossomed only in the 1960s. See M. Bar-Ziv Levy, 'The Cinematic Representation of Hebrew Speech (1932–1988)' (in Hebrew; Ph.D. dissertation, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2017), sect. 2.3 and references therein.

suspect him of stealing a goat. The Bedouins imprison the tourist in a tent, unaware that Oded is watching them from a distance. Oded's friends fly a kite to mark their location and Oded sees it and rejoins them. At this point, the group is also joined by the teacher and a guard. After Oded tells them the tourist has been kidnapped, the guard goes to the Bedouin camp to free him. The Bedouins receive the guard politely and accept his explanation as to the tourist's presence near their camp, but when they come to release the man from the tent they discover he has managed to escape. Oded and the others return to their village, where Oded is received with great joy. The screenplay was written by director Haim Halahmi, who was born in eastern Europe and emigrated to the Land of Israel in 1925. The film's creators and main actors were not native Hebrew speakers, but they lived in the Yishuv for some years before making the film and knew Hebrew well.

Tsabar tells of a group of Jewish pilgrims who experience great suffering and hardship trying to build a settlement in a desolate part of the country. Their Arab neighbours do not accept their presence. A shortage of water and the malice of the Arab sheik lead to a quarrel that culminates in a violent attack on the Jewish settlers. Eventually, the quarrel is settled after the Jewish women dig a well and find water in abundance. Whereas the Jews are presented in the film as rational and proactive, the Arabs are presented as primitive and passive. Olga Ford wrote the script, and Mary Sukhovolsky wrote the dialogue. The actors were mostly from 'Habima' Hebrew theatre. They emigrated to the Yishuv from eastern Europe several years before the film was made. They were not native Hebrew speakers, but they mastered the Hebrew language. The film's director himself did not live in Israel and did not know Hebrew. The film was dubbed in Warsaw by Yiddish theatre actors. The British Mandate authorities censored parts of the film as anti-Arab propaganda,⁵ and in the countries around the world where it was screened it provoked intense criticism. Ten years after it was first released, a censored version was produced by Jacob Davidson and screened under the title *Halutsim* ('Pioneers').

For this study, I used digitized copies of the two movies created by film director Jacob Gross eighty years after their original release. The repaired and digitized copy of *Oded ha-Noded* was created by Gross using original

5. M. Zimmermann, 'Israeli Films Learn to Speak', *Cinematheque* 41 (1988), pp. 14–18 (in Hebrew).

reels provided by Chaim Halachmi's son. As for *Tsabar*, Gross reconstructed it from several incomplete copies found in archives around the world.

Part I of this article deals with the question of whether the living spoken Hebrew of the 1930s is reflected in the dialogue in the films from that period. Part II deals with phenomena in the films that are today typical of written (rather than spoken) Hebrew, but whose prevalence in spoken Hebrew of the 1930s cannot be ascertained, due to lack of evidence. These are phenomena that are in a historical process of exclusion seen in the films of the 1950s and onwards. Most of the phenomena discussed in both parts were very scantily represented in the films, but since the two films together have only 575 words of dialogue, the mere presence of these phenomena is significant.

Part I: The representation of phenomena attested to be characteristic of spoken Hebrew during the British Mandate period

As indicated, this part of the article examines whether the films from the 1930s contain examples of linguistic phenomena that, according to testimonies, were common in spoken Hebrew of the Mandate period. To determine which phenomena were typical of colloquial Hebrew in that period, I rely on written testimonies by grammarians, some of them prescriptivists, many of which are quoted in Reshef.⁶ These phenomena are not necessarily innovations of MH. Most can be found in earlier layers of Hebrew but were less frequent or were used differently. I focus on phenomena that, according to the grammarians, were common in the 1930s and are also part of the grammar of spoken Hebrew today. For each phenomenon, I will present the evidence for its prevalence in the Hebrew speech of the Mandatory period, and then examine its representation in the films from the 1930s. I will also address its representation in later films.

6. Y. Reshef, 'How Was Hebrew Spoken? The Linguistic Characteristics of Spoken Hebrew during Its First Decades', in *The Language Machine as a Language Teacher: Here We Speak Hebrew* (ed. Sh. Yisrael; in Hebrew; Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press, 2012), pp. 188–211.

Present participle negated with lo

In contemporary spoken Hebrew, participle forms are generally negated with *lo* rather than with prescribed *'en* – for example, הוא לא רוצה 'he does not want' rather than הוא אינו רוצה – and there is ample evidence this was the case from a very early stage of MH⁷ and had some roots in pre-modern eastern European forms of written Hebrew.⁸

In Biblical and Rabbinic Hebrew (RH), participles are generally negated with *'en*, but negation with *lo* is found as well, although more commonly in the latter than in the former.⁹ Since the rules governing the negation of participles with *lo* in Classical Hebrew are complex,¹⁰ prescriptivist MH grammarians did not attempt to inculcate this 'correct' usage of the construction. Instead, from the advent of MH, they waged a stubborn war against all uses of *lo* to negate the participle.¹¹ Two explanations have been proposed for the shift to the use of *lo* in this environment. First, the simplicity of the construction, given that *lo*, unlike *'en*, is not marked for agreement and its position in the sentence is fixed.¹² The second explanation is that, due to the influence of foreign languages, the participle in MH is perceived as a purely verbal form, and as such is negated with *lo*, just like other verbs.¹³

The films *Oded ha-Noded* and *Tsabar* contain no instances of participles negated with *lo*. Each includes one example of a participle negated with *'en*. In both cases the word used is *'eneni*, the Biblical form of *'en* in the first-person singular:¹⁴

7. *Ibid.*, p. 199.

8. L. Kahn, *A Grammar of the Eastern European Hasidic Hebrew Tale* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), p. 332–3.

9. See e.g. A. Bendavid, *Biblical Hebrew and Mishnaic Hebrew* (in Hebrew; Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1971), p. 770–72.

10. D. Joujuk, R. Silman and N.H. Torczyner (Tur-Sinai), 'Should *lo* Be Used to Negate Present-tense Clauses?', *Lěšonenu* 10 (1938/9) (in Hebrew); Bendavid, *Biblical Hebrew and Mishnaic Hebrew*, pp. 770–72.

11. H. Rabin, 'Studies in Modern Literary Hebrew', *Lěšonenu* 22 (1957/8), p. 254 (in Hebrew).

12. Joujuk et al., 'Should *lo* Be Used', pp. 198, 207.

13. H. Blanc, 'The Growth of Israeli Hebrew', *Middle Eastern Affairs* 5:2 (1954), p. 389; O. Schwartzwald, 'Trends in Contemporary Hebrew', in *The Hebrew Language in the Era of Globalization*, ed. N. Nevo and E. Olshtain (in Hebrew; Jerusalem: The Hebrew University Magnes Press, 2007), p. 67.

14. As opposed to Rabbinic Hebrew איני. The inflectional paradigm of the negative element אין 'is not' changed significantly between BH and RH. H. Cohen, 'The Conjugation of *eyn* in Tanaic Hebrew', *Teuda* 6 (1987/8), p. 37 (in Hebrew); Y. Breuer, 'Negation of the Participle in the Hebrew of the Talmud: *eyn* vs *eyno*', *Masorot* 9–10–11 (1996/7) (in Hebrew); M.Z. Segal, *A Grammar of Mishnaic Hebrew* (in Hebrew; Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1935/6), p. 160.

1. אינני מפחד, וכי תינוק אני?
'I am not afraid. What am I, a baby?' (*Oded ha-Noded*)
2. עובדים אנו עבודה קשה, גועים אנו. חפץ אני ללעוג, אינני אהה...
'We work hard, we are starving. I wish to mock, I am not aaaah...'
(*Tsabar*)¹⁵

We see, then, that negation of the participle with *lo*, which was evidently the unmarked option in spoken Hebrew of the time, is not represented in the films from the 1930s. In films from the 1950s this construction begins to appear, alongside participles negated with *'en*, and from the 1960s onward participles are negated almost exclusively with *lo*.¹⁶

Independent subject pronoun before past/future verb

An independent pronoun before past and future verbs – such as *אני אכתוב* 'I will write', as opposed to just *אכתוב* lit. 'will write', or *אני כתבתי* 'I wrote' as opposed to *כתבתי* lit. 'wrote' – is not a characteristic of Classical Hebrew. According to prescriptivist Hebrew grammarians it is 'superfluous' or 'extra-positional', because the verb in these sentences incorporates an obligatory morpheme denoting the subject, whereas the independent pronoun can be omitted without affecting the grammaticality of the sentence. Hence, prescriptivist grammarians contend that the verb-incorporated morpheme is the subject, whereas an independent pronoun, if present, is an optional element that should only be included for purposes of contrast or emphasis. However, their observations indicate that the use of these pronouns in unmarked contexts was already common in spoken Hebrew of the British Mandate period. Yitzhak Avineri wrote in 1929: 'The pronouns are *always* added unnecessarily in past and future tense ... even in instances that involve no emphasis.'¹⁷ This too was perceived as resulting from the influence of foreign languages.¹⁸ This phenomenon is also found quite frequently in

15. Because the sentence trails off after the negator, it is impossible to confirm whether a participle was actually intended here. Though the existence of participles in the preceding clauses may imply that an additional participle was intended following the negator, this is not necessarily the case – it could have been a noun.

16. Bar-Ziv Levy, 'The Cinematic Representation', sect. 6.3.3.2.2.

17. Y. Avineri, 'The Ways of the Hebrew Tongue', *Lěšonenu* 2: pp. 197–219, 287–306, 396–411, quoted in Reshef, 'How Was Hebrew Spoken?', p. 199. My emphasis.

18. Blanc, 'The Growth of Israeli Hebrew', p. 389.

Hassidic tales.¹⁹ Observations from the Mandate period mention no differences between past and future tense or between first, second and third person, but data from contemporary spoken Hebrew clearly show that the frequency of the independent pronouns depends on the parameters of tense and person. According to a study by Smadar Cohen, based on a corpus of spoken Hebrew from the early 2000s, 70 per cent of past and future clauses contain no independent subject pronoun. However, when person is taken into account some sharp differences emerge. Clauses in the first person show a clear distinction between past and future: future-tense clauses generally contain an independent subject pronoun, whereas past-tense clauses do not.²⁰

The films *Oded ha-Noded* and *Tsabar* contain no instances of independent subject pronouns in unmarked contexts. In past and future contexts, independent subject pronouns occur only for the purpose of emphasis. The former film includes two such examples, and the latter includes one:

1. גם אני אחזור ואמשיך את החיפושים, אבל תחילה אביא את הילדים הביתה.
'I too will return and continue the search, but first let me take the children home.' (*Oded ha-Noded*)
2. שמעון, רוץ לאהלי הبدوים! התייר בודאי שם ואני אשאר כאן עם הילדים.
'Shimon, run to the Bedouins' camp! The tourist is probably there, and I will stay here with the children.' (*Oded ha-Noded*)
3. אנן, הנשים, נמלא את מקומכם.
'We women will take your place.' (*Tsabar*)

When no emphasis occurs, the independent pronoun is absent:

4. ילדים, נחננו דיינו ועתה נמשיך את דרכנו!
'Children, [we] have rested enough and now [we] shall be on our way!' (*Oded ha-Noded*)
5. אמנם צדקת.
'[You] were right.' (*Tsabar*)

19. Kahn, *A Grammar*, pp. 60–61.

20. S. Cohen, 'Person Markers in Verbal Prosodic Units in Colloquial Hebrew – Initial Findings', in *Studying Spoken Hebrew*, ed. E. Gonen, *Teuda* 27 (2015/16), pp. 324–9 (in Hebrew).

6. עד מתי נחפור לנו קברים בידינו?
 'How much longer *will* [we] dig our graves with our own hands?'
 (*Tsabar*)

Like the negation of participles with *lo*, independent subject pronouns are a phenomenon that evidently abounded in spoken Hebrew of the Mandate period, yet it is not represented in the films from the 1930s. In films from the 1950s onward, the pronoun *'ni* gradually begins to appear before first-person future-tense verbs.²¹

Definite-head construct

In contemporary spoken Hebrew, the definite prefix is frequently appended to the head of a construct – for example, הַבֵּית סֵפֶר – rather than to the annex – בֵּית הַסֵּפֶר 'the school' – as prescribed by the rules of formal Hebrew.²² This phenomenon was common even before the revival of Hebrew as a spoken language,²³ and observations by grammarians indicate that it was already common in the colloquial Hebrew of the Mandate period.²⁴

The films *Oded ha-Noded* and *Tsabar* include only one definite construct each, both instances conforming to the standard rule, with the definite prefix joined to the annex rather than the head:

1. שמעון, רץ לאהלי הבדוים!
 'Shimon, run to *the Bedouins' camp!*' (*Oded ha-Noded*)
2. כאן מחול המוות.
 'Here is *the dance of death.*' (*Tsabar*)

Definite-head constructs, then, are not represented in the films of the 1930s although they were common in the spoken language. A corpus of ten films

21. Bar-Ziv Levy, 'The Cinematic Representation', sect. 6.2.2.1.

22. See e.g. E. Borochofsky Bar-Aba, *Spoken Hebrew: On Its Study, Its Syntax and Its Modes of Expression* (in Hebrew; Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 2010), p. 92.

23. For example, in Arabicized Hebrew (M. Goshen-Gottstein, *Syntax and Vocabulary of Mediaeval Hebrew, as Influenced by Arabic* [in Hebrew; Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute, 2006, pp. 89–90]), in the responsa literature (Z. Betzer, *Chapters in the History of the Hebrew Language*, Section 2: *Medieval Hebrew*, Unit 7: *Rabbinic Medieval Hebrew* [in Hebrew; Tel Aviv: Open University, 2001, p. 91]) and in Hasidic tales (Kahn, *A Grammar*, pp. 60–61).

24. Y. Reshef, *Hebrew in the Mandate Period* (in Hebrew; Jerusalem: Academy of the Hebrew Language, 2016), p. 341.

from the 1950s and 1960s also contains no instances of this construction, but later films, from the 1970s and 1980s, exhibit quite a few instances of it.²⁵

Analytic genitive and accusative constructions

Spoken and written MH differ considerably in the frequency of synthetic versus analytic constructions. Whereas the written language contains many instances of the former, spoken Hebrew prefers the latter. Moreover, in both written and spoken Hebrew there has been a gradual shift from synthetic to analytic constructions.²⁶ I will elaborate here on three analytic constructions: the ‘analytic construct’, phrases with independent object pronouns, and phrases with independent possessive pronouns. All three are frowned upon by prescriptivist grammarians, but they are ubiquitous in colloquial MH.

Analytic construct The synthetic construct (involving two nouns without a preposition between them) – for example, *סידימלתה ינחבמ* ‘student exams’ – occurs in all layers of Hebrew, including MH. The ‘analytic construct’, in which the two nouns are connected with the possessive preposition *šel* – for example, *לש סינחבמה* ‘the exams of the students’ – is typical of RH²⁷ and is also found in pre-modern written Hebrew.²⁸ The ‘analytic construct’ is attested in early spoken Hebrew.²⁹

In *Oded ha-Noded* and *Tsabar* there are no instances of the ‘analytic construct’ but only of the synthetic construct, three of them in the former film and six in the latter. For example:

1. שמעון, רוץ לאהלי הבדוים!
‘Shimon, run to *the Bedouins’ camp!*’ (*Oded ha-Noded*)
2. אנו גוועים מצמא ואת חפצה בחיי הוללות?
‘We are dying of thirst, yet you wish for *a life of pleasure?*’ (*Tsabar*)

25. Bar-Ziv Levy, ‘The Cinematic Representation’, sect. 6.3.1.4.

26. See e.g. R. Nir, *Introduction to Linguistics* (in Hebrew; Tel Aviv: Open University, 1989), p. 34.

27. On the use of constructions with *šel* in RH, see e.g. H. Rosen, *Good Hebrew* (in Hebrew; Jerusalem: Kiryat Sepher, 1966), p. 132; R. Halevy, ‘Functional Changes of *šel* Phrases in Contemporary Hebrew’ *Lěšonenu* 63 A–B (2001), p. 61 (in Hebrew).

28. Kahn, *A Grammar*, pp. 268–9.

29. Reshef, ‘How Was Hebrew Spoken?’, p. 200.

The ‘analytic construct’ is another phenomenon that is attested in spoken Hebrew of the Mandate period but is not represented in the films of the time.

Independent object pronoun In contemporary Hebrew, the dependent object pronoun – for example, הִתְבַּהֵּא as opposed to הִתְבַּהֵּא יְתוֹא ‘I loved her’ – hardly ever occurs in the spoken register, and is becoming increasingly rare in the formal register as well.³⁰ In BH and RH, pronominal objects are generally suffixed to the verb, while independent pronouns appear only in marked contexts.³¹ In Hasidic Hebrew, independent pronouns are slightly more frequent than dependent pronouns.³² Evidence from the early 1930s indicates that, even then, the dependent object was rarely used in speech.³³ This fact can be given both a language-internal explanation and a language-external one. From an internal perspective, it can be argued that the analytic construction exists in the Hebrew sources and that the tendency to favour it over the synthetic construction is part of MH’s general preference for analytic forms. The addition of dependent pronouns sometimes requires a modification of the verbal base, while the use of independent pronouns does not require this and is therefore simpler. The language-external explanation involves the influence of languages that were in contact with MH.³⁴

The films from the 1930s show a clear preference for the dependent object pronoun. In *Oded ha-Noded* seven of the eight pronominal objects are dependent pronouns, most of them appearing in the speech of the adult Jewish characters, such as:

1. אֵלֶּךְ גַּם אֲנִי לְחַפְּשׁוֹ
‘I too will go seek-him’ (*Oded ha-Noded*)

30. See e.g. O. Schwarzwald, ‘A Selection of Morphological Phenomena in a Corpus of Spoken Hebrew’, in *Studying Spoken Hebrew*, ed. E. Gonen, *Teuda* 27 (2015/16), p. 260 (in Hebrew).

31. P. Joüon and T. Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2008), p. 158 §61a; H. Cohen, ‘The Use of the Dependent Object Pronoun versus the Use of *et*+pronoun (*ot-*) in Mishnaic Hebrew’, *Lěšonenu* 47 (1982/3), p. 209 (in Hebrew); M. Azar, *The Syntax of Mishnaic Hebrew* (in Hebrew; Jerusalem: Academy of the Hebrew Language/University of Haifa, 1995), p. 65.

32. Kahn, *A Grammar*, p. 122.

33. Reshef, ‘How Was Hebrew Spoken?’, p. 199 and references therein.

34. O. Schwarzwald, *Chapters in the History of the Hebrew Language*, Units 9–10: *Contemporary Hebrew* (in Hebrew; Tel Aviv: Open University, 1994), p. 120.

One instance occurs in a line spoken by a boy:

2. בדווים התנפלו על התייר וחטפוהו
 'Bedouins attacked the tourist and *kidnapped-him*' (*Oded ha-Noded*)

The film includes only one instance of the independent pronominal object, uttered by an adult Bedouin:

3. לכי מצאי אותם חיש-מהר, ולא!
 'Go *find them* right away, or else!'

The use of the independent pronoun in the speech of the Bedouin character might have been intentional, to signify 'otherness'. *Tsabar* includes one pronominal object, which is a dependent pronoun:

4. לא תחמדני, יקירי?
 'Do you not *want-me*, my darling?'

We see that independent object pronouns, which evidently abounded in the Hebrew speech of the time, are not represented in the films produced in this period. In films from the 1950s independent object pronouns become dominant, but dependent ones continue to be used as well; in films from the 1960s, dependent pronouns disappear almost completely.³⁵

Independent possessive pronoun Spoken MH favours independent possessive pronouns over dependent ones (for instance, *ילש רפסה* 'my book' as opposed to *ירפס*), although in certain circumstances dependent pronouns are the default.³⁶ In Biblical Hebrew (BH), only dependent possessive pronouns are attested. They continue to be dominant in RH, although independent possessive pronouns exist as well.³⁷ In Hasidic Hebrew dependent and independent pronouns are used with similar frequency.³⁸ The preference for the independent pronouns in the spoken language dates back at least to the Mandate period; there is evidence that the dependent possessive pronouns were rarely used in the speech of the time.³⁹ There were even those who proposed to abolish the dependent forms altogether and leave only the

35. Bar-Ziv Levy, 'The Cinematic Representation', sect. 6.3.1.8.

36. U. Ornan, *The Simple Sentence* (in Hebrew; Jerusalem: Inbal, 1979); K. Dubnov, 'Nominal Dependent and Independent Possessive in Spoken Hebrew', *Balshanut Ivrit* 47 (2009/10) (in Hebrew).

37. M.Z. Segal, *A Grammar of Mishnaic Hebrew* (in Hebrew; Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1936), p. 48.

38. Kahn, *A Grammar*, p. 272.

39. Reshef, 'How Was Hebrew Spoken?', p. 200.

independent ones,⁴⁰ but others took the opposite view, calling to fight the decline of the dependent forms.⁴¹

In *Oded ha-Noded* and *Tsabar* dependent possessive pronouns are dominant, accounting for 20 out of 22 occurrences. For example:

1. ילדים, נחנו דיינו ועתה נמשיך את דרכנו
'Children, we have rested enough and now [we] shall be on *our-way*!'
(*Oded ha-Noded*)
2. עד מתי נחפור קברים בידינו? כבר קצה נפשי, עד מתי נסבול? כוחי תש.
'How much longer will [we] dig our graves with *our-hands*? I am sick of it [lit. *my-soul* has ended], how much longer must we suffer? *My-strength* is gone.' (*Tsabar*)

Independent possessive pronouns appear only twice, once in each film:

3. חברה, מה תאמרו על התייר ה'דייקן' שלנו? בכל זאת אחר.
'Guys, how do you like *our* "punctual" tourist? He's late anyway.'
(*Oded ha-Noded*)
4. המרק שלך בוודאי מלוח הוא כי הזיעה מטפטפת לתוכו בקילוח.
'Your soup is probably salty because sweat is pouring into it.'

In *Oded ha-Noded* the independent pronoun is uttered by a child and is used to express contempt. This conforms to Ornan's observation that independent pronouns are obligatory in certain marked contexts, one of them being ironic speech.⁴² This line in the movie is part of the cliquish humour of the native Eretz Israelis at the expense of non-natives⁴³ and is meant to favourably contrast the native boy with the ridiculous figure of the tourist.⁴⁴

Both films, then, display only a handful of independent possessive pronouns, although these were common in the speech of the Mandate period. Instead, they use the dependent forms that were dominant in written Hebrew. In later films, independent possessive pronouns become increasingly common

40. J. Klausner, 'Ancient Hebrew and Modern Hebrew', *Lěšonénu* 2 (1929), p. 18 (in Hebrew).

41. Y. Avineri, *The Conquests of Hebrew in Our Generation* (in Hebrew; Merhavia: Sifriyat Poalim, 1946), p. 162.

42. Ornan, *The Simple Sentence*, p. 70.

43. O. Almog, *The Sabra: A Profile* (in Hebrew; Tel-Aviv: Am Oved, 1997), p. 184.

44. A.L. Feldstein, *Pioneer, Toil, Camera: Cinema in Service of the Zionist Ideology* (in Hebrew; Tel-Aviv: Am Oved, 2009), p. 80.

at the expense of the dependent ones, although the latter continued to feature in the dialogue of Israeli films as late as the 1980s.⁴⁵

Polar question without interrogative particle

In contemporary spoken Hebrew, polar questions are usually formed without an overt interrogative particle and are similar in their syntactic structure to an indicative sentence. Only the rising final intonation marks them as having interrogative force; for example, *את גרה בירושלים?* '[Do] you live in Jerusalem?'.⁴⁶ The Hebrew sources feature polar questions of this sort alongside questions introduced by an interrogative particle.⁴⁷ In BH the interrogative element *ha-* generally introduces polar questions. The interrogative particle *ha'im* appears in the Bible only twice, and its function as a simple interrogative marker is doubtful.⁴⁸ In RH *ha'im* is absent⁴⁹ while the interrogative *ha-* is rare;⁵⁰ the particle *weki* introduces positive questions that expect a negative answer, and *klum* introduces negative questions that expect a positive answer.⁵¹ The particle *ha'im* became established as a polar marker in Medieval Hebrew and is also common in Hasidic tales.⁵²

It seems that during the Mandate period polar questions were frequently formed without an interrogative particle, as evident from the following passage in Avineri (1930): 'The interrogative *ha-* has been completely discarded. Almost nobody ever says, *התבוא אלי?* ['will you come to me?'], *הקראת את הספר?* ['Have you read the book?']. We express questions by changing the intonation alone, saying: *תבוא אלי? קראת את הספר?*, etc.'⁵³

45. Bar-ziv Levy, 'The Cinematic Representation', sect. 6.3.1.2.

46. Falling final intonation is unmarked in the language, and characterizes both indicative utterances and *wh*-interrogatives. S. Cohen, 'Questions in Spontaneous Spoken Hebrew' (in Hebrew), *Hebrew Linguistics* 62–63 (2009), pp. 35–47.

47. E. Kautzsch and A.E. Cowley, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2010), p. 473; Segal, *A Grammar of Mishnaic Hebrew*, p. 188.

48. Kautzsch and Cowley, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, p. 473.

49. M. Bar-Asher, 'Genuine and Perceived Fragments and Genuine and Perceived Imitations of Biblical Hebrew in Modern Hebrew', *Lěšonenu* 78 (2015/16), p. 432 (in Hebrew).

50. Sh. Sharvit, *History of the Hebrew Language, The Classical Section, Unit 3: Talmudic Hebrew* (in Hebrew; Tel Aviv: Open University of Israel, 2004) p. 70. In the Mishnah the particle *ha-* characterizes negative questions more than positive ones (Segal, *A Grammar of Mishnaic Hebrew*, pp. 189–90).

51. Segal, *A Grammar of Mishnaic Hebrew*, pp. 189–90.

52. Kahn, *A Grammar*, pp. 294–5, 312–13.

53. Avineri, 'The Ways of the Hebrew Tongue', p. 202.

Oded ha-Noded has three polar questions, all of them introduced by an interrogative element: two with *ha-* and one with *weki*. In *Tsabar* only three out of nine polar questions are introduced by an interrogative element, two by *weki* and one by *ha'im*:

1. האין סכנה בטיול זה?
'Is there no danger in this outing?' (*Oded ha-Noded*)
2. וכי לא תשמח כלל על בואי?
'Are you not glad I came?' (*Tsabar*)
3. האם תסכים שכל טיפש יזלזל בכבודי?
'Will you allow any fool to dishonour me?' (*Tsabar*)

The six other polar questions in *Tsabar* appear without an interrogative marker. For example:

4. רצונך כי כולנו נצא מדעתנו?
'Is it your wish that all of us should lose our minds?' (*Tsabar*)

The occurrence of the bare polar questions in *Tsabar* but not in *Oded ha-Noded* may stem from the fact that the latter is a talking movie, which can use intonation to convey interrogative force, whereas the silent film *Oded ha-Noded* cannot.

In this domain, then, there is a slight difference between the two movies from the 1930s. Both movies feature polar questions introduced by an interrogative particle, which are typical of written Hebrew. However, the silent film *Oded ha-Noded* includes no bare polar questions, although these were common in the speech of the time, whereas the talking film *Tsabar* includes six such questions. In films from the 1950s the proportion of bare polar questions rises, and in films from the 1970s and 1980s they appear almost exclusively.⁵⁴

Future-form verb expressing imperative force

In contemporary spoken Hebrew, the future form of the verb (*yiqtol*) is often used instead of the imperative form (*qtol*); for example, תשמעו 'listen!' lit. 'you will listen' instead of שמעו.⁵⁵ This feature has its roots in pre-modern

54. Bar-Ziv Levy, 'The Cinematic Representation', sect. 6.3.2.1.6.

55. Schwarzwald, *Chapters in the History of the Hebrew Language*, p. 86.

Rabbinic Hebrew texts.⁵⁶ Testimonies from the 1930s indicate that this phenomenon was already very common at that time in spoken Hebrew.⁵⁷

Oded ha-Noded includes 15 utterances with imperative force, all of them taking the 'correct' imperative form. For example:

1. יהודה, רץ ללכפר הסמוך, השג סוס, מהר להודיע בבית!
'Yehuda, *run* to the next village, *get* a horse, *hurry* and tell [them] at home!'

One of these imperatives also features the particle נא 'please', marking the utterance as a request), which in the Mandate period was already considered literary and old fashioned:⁵⁸

2. זכור-נא, אנו יוצאים בשש בדיוק.
'Please *remember*, we leave at six on the dot.'

In *Tsabar*, out of eight utterances with imperative force, seven appear in the imperative form. For example:

3. הביאו לו מים!
'Bring him water.'

Only one appears in the future form:

4. תקראו לו.
'Call [lit. you will call] him.'

Although the use of the future form in place of the imperative was already common during the Mandate period, the films from the 1930s barely reflect it but instead use the standard forms typical of written Hebrew. Films from the 1950s make more use of the future forms, especially in *hif'il*, *hitpa'el* and *nif'al*.⁵⁹

56. C. Ariel, 'Why Did the Future Form of the Verb Displace the Imperative Form in the Informal Register of Modern Hebrew', in E. Doron, M. Rappaport Hovav, Y. Reshef and M. Taube (eds), *Linguistic Contact, Continuity and Change in the Genesis of Modern Hebrew* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2019).

57. Reshef, 'How Was Hebrew Spoken?', p. 196.

58. Reshef, *Hebrew in the Mandate Period*, pp. 196–7.

59. Bar-Ziv Levy, 'The Cinematic Representation', sect. 6.2.2.1.

Summary of Part I

Part I presented eight linguistic phenomena that, according to observations by linguists and prescriptivist grammarians, were typical of spoken Hebrew of the Mandate period, and had roots in pre-modern written texts.⁶⁰ These phenomena are absent or only scantily represented in the films of the 1930s. Comparing the silent film *Oded ha-Noded* and the talking film *Tsabar*, one might expect the latter to include more instances of these colloquial phenomena, but this is not the case. Four of these phenomena – participles negated by *lo*, ‘extra-positional’ pronouns, definite-head constructs and ‘analytic constructs’ – are completely absent from both films. Two phenomena are found only in *Tsabar*: bare polar questions and the use of future forms to express imperative force. One phenomenon – independent object pronouns – is found only in *Oded ha-Noded* and another – independent possessive pronouns – is found in both films. A comparison of the two films shows that, even though *Oded ha-Noded* is a silent film, in which dialogue is presented using written captions, whereas *Tsabar* is a talking (albeit dubbed) film, the latter does not present a significantly higher incidence of the colloquial phenomena.⁶¹ The language of the films from the 1930s, then, closely corresponds to the standard written language.

Six of these phenomena were also examined in films from the 1950s and later, which were found to display a significant increase in their occurrence. Three phenomena become dominant to the complete exclusion of the alternative, namely: participles negated with *lo*, independent object pronouns and bare polar questions. Three other phenomena – definite-head constructs, independent possessive pronouns and future verbs with imperative force – become far more common than in the films from the 1930s, although the alternatives, typical of written Hebrew, are still found as well.

60. For more colloquial phenomena which were rooted in pre-revival linguistic habits, see Y. Reshef, ‘From Written to Spoken Usage: The Contribution of Pre-revival Linguistic Habits to the Formation of the colloquial register of Modern Hebrew’, in Doron et al. (eds), *Linguistic Contact*.

61. A comparison of the dialogue in the film *Oded ha-Noded* with the dialogue in the book upon which it is based reveals that the movie is no more abundant than the book in morphological and syntactic phenomena typical of spoken Hebrew (M. Bar-Ziv Levy, ‘The Cinematic Representation of Hebrew Speech in the 1930s’, *Language Studies* 16 [2015], pp. 55–88 [in Hebrew]).

Part II: Phenomena in the process of exclusion from films' dialogue from the 1950s onward

This part of the article examines phenomena that are typical of contemporary written (rather than spoken) Hebrew. The prevalence of these phenomena in spoken Hebrew of the Mandate period is difficult to assess due to lack of evidence. Prescriptivist grammarians did not relate to these phenomena since both the more formal and the less formal alternatives are 'correct'. The formal phenomena gradually vanished from the dialogue of films produced in the 1950s–1980s.⁶² The vanishing of these phenomena could possibly indicate that they belonged to the formal register even during the Mandate period.

Yiqtol form expressing present time

Yiqtol forms expressing present time are found in BH.⁶³ In MH such forms are encountered mostly in literary language.⁶⁴ In speech they are confined to certain fixed formal expressions, such as *מה תרצה לשתות?* 'Would you like to drink?' (lit. 'what will you want to drink?'), *תוכל לעזור לי?* 'Could you help me?' (lit. 'will you be able to help me?').⁶⁵

In *Oded ha-Noded* and *Tsabar* there are seven instances of *yiqtol* questions referring to the present, one in the former film and six in the latter. For example:

- I. *וכי לא תשמח כלל על בואי?*
'Are you not glad I came?' (lit. 'Will you not be glad at my arrival?')
(*Tsabar*)

In all seven cases the question is in the second person and is rhetorical; the asker neither expects nor receives an answer. Films from the 1950s and 1960s

62. Bar-Ziv Levy, 'The Cinematic Representation', ch. 6.

63. B.K. Waltke and M.P. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), pp. 504–6.

64. Y. Reshef, *The Early Hebrew Folksong* (in Hebrew; Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 2004), p. 149; Bendavid, *Biblical Hebrew and Mishnaic Hebrew*, p. 259.

65. Sh. Yizreel, 'Here We Speak Hebrew: "Here" and not "There" – What the Record Kit Shows about the Spoken Hebrew in Mandatory Eretz Israel', in Yizreel (ed.), *Here We Speak Hebrew* (in Hebrew; Tel-Aviv: The Haim Ruben Tel Aviv University Press, 2012), p. 271. In the Bible such questions are not limited to the second person. See J. Joosten, *The Verbal System of Biblical Hebrew: A New Synthesis Elaborated on the Basis of Classical Prose* (Jerusalem: Simor, 2012), pp. 278–9.

exhibit only a handful of *yiqtol* forms referring to the present, most of them in questions, and films from the 1970s and 1980s contain no such forms at all.⁶⁶ This formal phenomenon, then, is attested in films from the 1930s but gradually disappears in later films.

Predicate–subject word order

The unmarked word order in BH is predicate–subject, although subject–predicate order is also encountered in many constructions. MH (both spoken and written) retains the Biblical predicate–subject word order as the unmarked option in certain cases; for example, in impersonal constructions (אסור לעשן) ‘no smoking’, lit. ‘forbidden to smoke’) and sentences of existence and possession (יש כלב בחצר) ‘there-is a dog in the yard’). Sentences introducing a new referent into the domain of discourse also tend to exhibit predicate–subject word order.⁶⁷

In written MH, sentences beginning with a fronted object or with an adverbial often display predicate–subject word order as well.⁶⁸ According to the formal rules of standard Hebrew, the predicate should be fronted only when it is a verb in the past or future tense, but not when it is in the present tense (i.e. a participle),⁶⁹ although the rules taught to Israeli schoolchildren often omit this nuance.⁷⁰ However, the unmarked word order in most types of MH sentence is subject–predicate, presumably due to the influence of European languages.⁷¹

In *Oded ha-Noded* and *Tsabar*, most of the past-tense and future-tense sentences feature subjects that are incorporated in the verb. However, in both films, when the subject is independent, such sentences usually display a subject–predicate word order:

66. Bar-Ziv Levy, ‘The Cinematic Representation’, sect. 6.2.1.2.

67. Y. Maschler, ‘Constructions in Time: On Subject–Predicate Word Orders in Spoken Hebrew Narrative Discourse’, in *Festschrift for Ilan Eldar* (ed. M. Bar-Asher and I. Meir; in Hebrew; Jerusalem: Carmel, 2014), pp. 568, 577, 579.

68. Blanc, ‘The Growth of Israeli Hebrew’, p. 389; Schwarzwald, *Chapters in the History of the Hebrew Language*, p. 118.

69. See e.g. Bendavid, *Biblical Hebrew and Mishnaic Hebrew*, but see also Avineri, *The Hand of the Tongue* (in Hebrew; Tel-Aviv: Izreel, 1964), p. 417.

70. Rabin, ‘Studies in Modern Literary Hebrew’, p. 254.

71. Schwarzwald, *Chapters in the History of the Hebrew Language*, p. 119.

1. איש זר חטף את העז
'A stranger grabbed the goat' (*Oded ha-Noded*)
2. הוא רוצה להגיד ש... הוא מצא מים מאחורי הבאר.
'He wants to say that ... he found water behind the well' (*Tsabar*)

Past-tense and future-tense sentences with predicate–subject order occur only once in *Oded ha-Noded* and twice in *Tsabar*:

3. אלך גם אני לחפשו.
'I too will go seek him' (lit. 'Will go also I to seek him') (*Tsabar*)
4. מצא שוטה מטרה ללעגו.
'A fool has found a target for his scorn' (lit. 'has found a fool a target...')
5. לעולם לא יפרח המדבר.
'The desert will never bloom' (lit. 'never will bloom the desert')

In example 3 the word order indicates emphasis, while in example 5 it follows an adverbial. These reasons could explain the deviation from the more common subject–predicate order found elsewhere in the films.

As for sentences in the present tense, there is a difference between the two films. In *Oded ha-Noded* the subject–predicate order is more common, occurring in three out of five cases, whereas in *Tsabar* this is the less common order, occurring only in one out of six cases:

1. אולם זכור-נא, אנו יוצאים בשש בדיוק.
'But remember, we leave at six on the dot.' (*Oded ha-Noded*)
2. כשאנו כבר קרובים למצוא מים כיצד תעיזו לנטוש את העבודה?
'When we are already close to finding water, how dare you abandon the job?' (*Tsabar*)

Predicate–subject order also occurs in nominal sentences whose subject is a first-person or second-person pronoun, twice in *Oded ha-Noded* and five times in *Tsabar*. For example:

3. דייקן אני מטבעי.
'I am punctual by nature' (lit. 'Punctual [am] I by nature') (*Oded ha-Noded*)
4. מתייאש אתה?
'Are you giving up?' (lit. 'Giving up are you?') (*Tsabar*)

This resembles the situation in RH, which likewise favours predicate–subject order in sentences where the predicate is a participle and the subject a pronoun in the first or second person.⁷²

To conclude, the films from the 1930s display many cases of predicate–subject word order, especially in nominal sentences and in present-tense verbal sentences. In the films from the 1950s, predicate–subject order is much less common.⁷³

Noun + bare proximal demonstrative

MH uses the proximal demonstrative as a modifier in two main constructions, both of which place the demonstrative after the noun. The constructions are similar in meaning and are both semantically definite, but in one of them the noun and the demonstrative are both formally definite (i.e. marked with the definite prefix: *הַאִישׁ הַזֶּה* ‘this man’, lit. ‘the-man the-this’), while in the other neither the noun nor the demonstrative features a definite prefix: *אִישׁ זֶה* ‘this man’, lit. ‘man this’).

BH uses the formally definite construction,⁷⁴ whereas the construction with the bare proximal demonstrative occurs in the Bible only once.⁷⁵ Conversely, in RH the latter construction is dominant.⁷⁶ In Hasidic Hebrew the definite construction is used more frequently.⁷⁷ In MH both constructions are used, but the one with the bare proximal demonstrative is largely confined to writing.⁷⁸

The films from the 1930s featured both constructions, one in each film:

72. Sh. Sharvit, *Chapters in the Grammar of the Hebrew Language* (in Hebrew; Tel-Aviv: The Open University, 2004), p. 64.

73. Bar-Ziv Levy, ‘The Cinematic Representation’, sect. 6.3.2.1.5.

74. Joūon and Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, p. 500 §143h.

75. The construction occurs in Psalms 80:16: *גִּפֶן זֹאת* ‘this vine’. More frequent in the Bible are constructions like *זֶה דְּבַרֵּנוּ* ‘this statement of ours’, in which the noun is suffixed with a possessive pronoun – i.e. marked as definite but not by means of the definite prefix – whereas the demonstrative is bare. M.Z. Kaddari, *Syntax and Semantics in Post-Biblical Hebrew: Diachronic Studies of the Hebrew Language* (in Hebrew; Jerusalem: Bar Ilan University Press, 1991), p. 215.

76. Kaddari, *Syntax and Semantics in Post-Biblical Hebrew*, p. 214; Azar, *The Syntax of Mishnaic Hebrew*, p. 211. RH also features the alternative construction with a definite noun and definite demonstrative. Azar, *The Syntax of Mishnaic Hebrew*, p. 214.

77. Kahn, *A Grammar*, p. 91.

78. Reshef, *The Early Hebrew Folksong*, pp. 164–7 and references therein.

1. ואת אשר התחילו – עליכם להמשיך: להחיות את השממה הזאת ולהפרותה!
'And what they [your forefathers] started, you must continue: making *this desolation* [lit. the-desolation the-this] bloom and be fruitful' (*Oded ha-Noded*)
2. גם כרגע זה תחשוב על העבודה?
'Even at *this moment* [lit. moment this] you think about work?' (*Tsabar*)

In films from the 1950s and early 1960s the construction with the definite prefix is dominant, although the alternative construction, with a bare noun and demonstrative, still appears. In later films the latter construction disappears almost completely.⁷⁹ We again see that the films from the 1930s feature the construction that is typical of written Hebrew and that gradually fades from later films.

Participle suffixed with first-person pronoun referring to the subject

In MH several participles suffixed with a first-person pronoun are in use: for example, תמהני 'I wonder', חוששני 'I fear', זוכרני 'I remember'. This pattern is originated in RH.⁸⁰ In MH these forms are typical of formal and even archaic register, and limited to cognition verbs.⁸¹ According to the Even-Shoshan dictionary, MH coined additional forms of this sort, such as דומני and כמדומני 'I think, I believe'.

The films from the 1930s feature only one instance of such a form:

1. בוא הנה, הבט. מהי השיירה? דומני שאלינו.
'Come here, look. What is that caravan? *I-think* it's coming towards us.' (*Tsabar*)

The entire corpus of films from the 1950s onwards yields only two more participles of this sort.⁸²

We see represented in the films from the 1930s, then, another phenomenon which is confined to formal register today and gradually vanished from the dialogue of later films.

79. Bar-Ziv Levy, 'The Cinematic Representation', sect. 6.3.1.1.

80. N. Berggreen, 'The Participle with Person Pronouns', *Lěšónenu* 4 (1932), pp. 173–7 (in Hebrew).

81. M. Ariel, 'Three Grammaticalization Paths for the Development of Person Verbal Agreement in Hebrew', in Jean-Pierre Koenig (ed.), *Discourse and Cognition: Bridging the Gap* (Stanford CA: CSLI Publications, 1998), pp. 93–111.

82. Bar-Ziv Levy, 'The Cinematic Representation', sect. 6.3.1.9.

The subordinator 'ašer

In BH the dominant subordinator is 'ašer, whereas in RH it is superseded by še-, which appears in BH only rarely.⁸³ MH has three main subordinators: 'ašer, še- and ha-; the first two appear in all syntactic environments, whereas ha- is confined to positive subject relative clauses in which the predicate is a participle. The subordinator še- is dominant to the spoken language, whereas 'ašer and ha- are largely confined to the written language. Even in writing the frequency of 'ašer has declined significantly since the revival period.

Our 1930s' films include one relative clause featuring 'ašer and one featuring še-, neither of them preceding a participle:

1. ועכשיו ראו הנה ההרים השוממים אשר לנגד עיניכם.
'Now look at the desolate mountains *that* you see before you' (*Oded ha-Noded*)
2. חולם חלומות שכמותך.
'You dreamer of dreams' (lit. 'dreamer of dreams *that* is like you') (*Tsabar*)

Oded ha-Noded includes two more instances of 'ašer, one in a free relative clause⁸⁴ and another in a temporal clause:

3. ואת אשר התחילו – עליכם להמשיך ...
'And what they [your fathers] started [lit. and *that* which they started], you must continue...' (*Oded ha-Noded*)
4. עוד לפני שנים מעטות היה המקום שומם ועזוב עד אשר באו אבותיכם
ובעבודתם ובמרצם החייהו והפכוהו למקור חיים ועבודה...
'Until a few years ago the place was desolate and abandoned, until [lit. until *that*] your fathers came and with their toil and diligence revived it and turned it into a source of life and labour...' (*Oded ha-Noded*)

In later films še- becomes the dominant subordinator. Films from the 1950s occasionally feature relative clauses with 'ašer, but in later films it disappears

83. J. Blau, *The Phonology and Morphology of Biblical Hebrew* (in Hebrew; Jerusalem: Academy of the Hebrew Language, 2009/10) p. 167; Azar, *The Syntax of Mishnaic Hebrew*, p. 214.

84. On the changes in the MH use of 'ašer and še- in free relative clauses, see M. Bar-Ziv Levy and V. Agranovsky, 'The Evolution of the Structure of Free Relative Clauses in Modern Hebrew: Internal Development and Contact Language Influence', *Journal of Jewish Languages* 3, special issue: *Language Contact and the Development of Modern Hebrew* (2015).

completely. As for free relative clauses and temporal clauses with 'ašer, they do not occur at all in the dialogue of films from the 1950s and onwards, although other types of narrative in the films, such as speeches, do contain a handful of examples.⁸⁵ We see, then, that the relativizer 'ašer, which is typical of written contemporary Hebrew, appears in films from the 1930s but disappears from the dialogue of later films.

The subordinator ki in content clauses

In written contemporary Hebrew, complement clauses are often introduced by the subordinator *ki*, which originates in BH, whereas the spoken language prefers the complementizer *še-*, which originates in RH.⁸⁶

The two films from the 1930s each feature one instance of a complement clause beginning with *ki*:

1. בי נשבעתי, כי לא אשוב הביתה עד אם מצאתי את הילד!
'I swear *that* I will not return home until I find the boy!' (*Oded ha-Noded*)
2. רצונך כי כולנו נצא מדעתנו?
'Is it your wish *that* all of us should lose our minds?' (*Tsabar*)

There are also three instances of complement clauses beginning with *še-*, all of them in *Tsabar*.

3. בוא הנה, הבט. מהי השיירה? דומני שאלינו.
'Come here, look. What is that caravan? I-think *that* it's coming towards us.' (*Tsabar*)
4. וכי תפקק שהתרבות תוכל להפריח אף את השממה?
'Do you doubt *that* culture can make even the desert bloom?' (*Tsabar*)
5. הוא רוצה להגיד ש... הוא מצא מים מאחורי הבאר.
'He wants to say *that* ... he found water behind the well.' (*Tsabar*)

In later films *še-* becomes the dominant complementizer; films from the 1950s exhibit few instances of complement clauses introduced by *ki*, and films

85. Bar-Ziv Levy, 'The Cinematic Representation', sects 6.3.2.2.1.1 and 6.3.2.2.1.3.

86. Reshef, *The Early Hebrew Folksong*, p. 191. T. Zewi, 'Content Clauses in Hebrew', *Lěšonenu* 70 (2008), pp. 627–57 (in Hebrew).

from the 1960s and onwards exhibit none at all.⁸⁷ We see once again that the films from the 1930s display a phenomenon typical of written contemporary Hebrew, which disappears in later films.

'al + infinitive to express personal obligation

Another construction that is typical of the formal register in MH is 'al lit. 'on' + subject + infinitive to express personal necessity/obligation; for example, עלי ללכת 'I must go', lit. 'on me to go'. In spoken MH, personal obligation/necessity is generally expressed using the construction subject + *šarik* 'have to' + infinitive; for example, אני צריך ללכת 'I have to go'. The pattern with 'al is found in the Bible as well as in RH.⁸⁸ The patterns with *šarik* are first attested in RH.⁸⁹

The films from the 1930s use only the 'al + infinitive construction, which appears twice, both times in *Oded ha-Noded*:

1. ... ואת אשר התחילו – עליכם להמשיך
'And what they started *you must* [lit. *on you to*] continue ...' (*Oded ha-Noded*)
2. עלינו למצוא את עודד ויהי מה!
'*We must* [lit. *on us to*] find Oded at any cost!' (*Oded ha-Noded*)

Later films mostly use the subject + *šarik* + infinitive construction to express necessity/obligation; the 'al + infinitive construction still makes an occasional appearance in films from the 1950s and early 1960s, but in later films it is absent.⁹⁰ The films from the 1930s again display a construction typical of written Hebrew that is not used in films made in later periods.

Inflected infinitive without le-

In spoken MH, infinitives generally take the *liqtol* form, whereas the written language employs additional forms, especially in temporal adverbial clauses, such as *ילדה בהיותי לבקר בבית הכנסת* 'as a child [lit. *in my being a child*]

87. Bar-Ziv Levy, 'The Cinematic Representation', sect. 6.3.2.2.3.

88. Segal, *A Grammar of Mishnaic Hebrew*, p. 137; Azar, *The Syntax of Mishnaic Hebrew*, p. 92; Sh. Sharvit, *Studies in Mishnaic Hebrew* (in Hebrew; Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1997/8), p. 254.

89. *šarik* can also be replaced by its stronger alternatives *hayav* and *mukrah* 'absolutely must'.

90. Bar-Ziv Levy, 'The Cinematic Representation', sect. 6.3.3.1.2.

I used to visit the synagogue'.⁹¹ BH has two infinitive forms, the infinitive absolute (e.g. שָׁמֹר) and the infinitive construct (e.g. שָׁמֵר). The infinitive absolute does not take prefixes or suffixes, whereas the infinitive construct can appear either in its bare form or prefixed with a preposition (e.g. שָׁמֹר, במשמור, בשמור, כשמור). It can also be inflected (לשמרו 'to keep it') and appear as the head of a construct (וּכְרָאוֹת שָׂאוֹל, 'and when Saul saw', lit. 'and at Saul's seeing', 1 Samuel 17:54) or as the annex in a construct (בַּיּוֹם אֲכַלְדָּךְ 'the day you eat', lit. 'in the day of your eating', Genesis 2:17). The infinitive construct frequently follows the prepositions *be-* 'in' or *ke-* 'as' as a minimal clause, usually a temporal one. RH retained only the infinitive construct prefixed with *le-*.⁹² In MH, infinitive constructs without *le-* generally introduce temporal adverbial clauses. The infinitive construct is always prefixed with a preposition and followed by the performer of the action, represented by a noun or a dependent pronoun.⁹³

The films from the 1930s include one instance of an infinitive construct suffixed with a dependent pronoun without *le-*:

2. וְכִי לֹא תִשְׂמַח כָּלֵל עַל בּוֹאִי?
'Are you not glad I came [lit. on my arrival]?' (*Tsabar*)

The films from the 1950s yielded a handful of infinitive constructs without *le-*: a single instance in dialogue and several more in non-dialogue (for example, in a formal school play).⁹⁴

Here too we find in the films from the 1930s a phenomenon which disappears from later cinematic dialogues and in contemporary Hebrew is limited to formal register.

Summary of Part II

In the second part of this article I presented linguistic phenomena that are rarely found in contemporary spoken Hebrew, but whose prevalence in spoken Hebrew of the Mandate period is difficult to assess due to lack of

91. L. Glinert, *The Grammar of Modern Hebrew* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 316.

92. Segal, *A Grammar of Mishnaic Hebrew*, p. 135; J. Blau, *The Phonology and Morphology of Biblical Hebrew*, pp. 193–6.

93. Glinert, *The Grammar of Modern Hebrew*, p. 316; Reshef, *Early Modern Hebrew Folksongs*, p. 144.

94. Bar-Ziv Levy, 'The Cinematic Representation', sects 6.2.1.5 and 6.3.2.2.3.

evidence. Two of these phenomena were represented in *Oded ha-Noded* but not in *Tsabar*: 'al + infinitive to convey necessity/obligation, and relative clauses introduced by 'ašer. Conversely, three of the phenomena appeared in *Tsabar* but not in *Oded ha-Noded*: noun + bare proximal demonstrative, participles suffixed with a subject pronoun, and inflected infinitives without le-. Three phenomena appeared in both films: content clauses introduced by ki, yiqtol forms denoting the present tense, and predicate–subject word order in present-tense sentences. The last two phenomena are more prevalent in *Tsabar* than in *Oded ha-Noded*.

All the phenomena discussed in this part also appear in films from the 1950s, but very infrequently, and they disappear completely or almost completely from later films. A comparison between the talking film *Tsabar* and the silent film *Oded ha-Noded* reveals no significant difference between them in terms of the prevalence of these phenomena that were in the process of gradual exclusion from the language of films.

There is no evidence that the phenomena discussed in this section did not belong to spoken Hebrew during the Mandate period. However, these phenomena are suspected as being highly registered features even then. There are a few reasons to assume this: (1) in the Mandate period stratification already existed and, in many ways, resembled contemporary stratification;⁹⁵ (2) these phenomena were ejected from later films; (3) in contemporary Hebrew these phenomena are limited to formal register.

Discussion and conclusions

This article has examined the dialogue in two films from the 1930s, to determine whether it reflects spoken Hebrew of the time. It also has compared the dialogue in the two films, which were the first Hebrew silent film and the first Hebrew talking film, both produced in 1932. In addition it has compared the dialogue in these films with the dialogue of later films in terms of the representation of phenomena that were in process of exclusion from spoken language.

The first part examined phenomena that, according to testimonies in grammar books and prescriptivist writings, were characteristic of colloquial

95. Reshef, *Hebrew in the Mandate Period*.

Hebrew during the Mandate period. It showed that these phenomena were not represented at all in the films from the 1930s, whereas in films from the 1950s and onwards there is a significant rise in their frequency. The second part examined phenomena that are not typical of spoken language today but are represented in the dialogue of the films from the 1930s. These are phenomena whose prevalence in spoken Hebrew of the Mandate period cannot be judged from testimonies from that time. All of them are also found in films from the 1950s, but their frequency decreases and in later films they become very rare or vanish completely.

A comparison between the silent film *Oded ha-Noded* and the talking film *Tsabar*, both from the 1930s, showed that, contra to expectation, the dialogue in the talking film does not seem to correspond more closely to spoken Hebrew of the time. The two films do not differ in their representation of phenomena known to be typical of spoken Hebrew at the time, or in their representation of phenomena typical of written Hebrew, which gradually disappeared from later films.

An analysis of the findings shows that the language used in the films from the 1930s is similar to the language used in other cultural works of the period;⁹⁶ it is high-register Hebrew that, rather than reflecting the spontaneous speech of the time, aspires to conform to linguistic patterns that were thought to be ideal. As this study indicates, Eretz-Israeli film-makers of the period did not regard it as the function of cinematic dialogue to authentically reflect spoken speech. Several reasons for this might be suggested.

First, it seems that cinema was perceived as a cultural product that – like literature and theatre – merits ‘refined’ rather than colloquial language. The fact that speaking films were a new invention at the time and their production still involved considerable technical difficulty only heightened their perception as productions requiring formal speech.

Second, Hebrew at the time was still new as a spoken language, so dialogue in Zionist films had the important pedagogical function of presenting

96. I. Even-Zohar, ‘The Growth and Establishment of a Local and Native Hebrew Culture in Israel, 1948–1982’, *Cathedra* 16 (1980), pp. 165–206 (in Hebrew); R. Ben-Shahar, *Language in Hebrew Drama* (in Hebrew; Tel Aviv: Hakkibutz Hameuchad and Porter Institute for Poetics and Semiotics, Tel Aviv University, 1996); Y. Reshef, ‘Folksongs, Popular Songs and Spoken Hebrew: The Integration of Colloquial Language into Popular Music during the Yishuv and Early Statehood Periods’, *Lěšonenu* 70 (2008), pp. 513–32 (in Hebrew); O. Almog, ‘Electronic Singles of Subversity’, in *Farewell to ‘Sruḥik’: Changing Values among the Israeli Elite* (ed. O. Almog; in Hebrew; Haifa: Zmora Bitan and Haifa University Press, 2004).

the desirable forms of speech. It is a case of mutual feedback: the register underscores the importance of the message, and the importance of the message dictates the register. In other words, the use of formal language signalled to the audience the importance of the content, and the importance of the content motivated the use of formal speech.

Third, since the directors of the films *Oded ha-Noded* and *Tsabar* were not themselves native speakers of Hebrew, they may have been oblivious to the stilted character of the dialogue.

Finally, we may assume that even if the film-makers of the 1930s wished to represent the authentic spoken Hebrew of their day rather than the linguistic ideal – and thereby challenge prevailing perceptions regarding colloquial language – Hebrew cinema in the 1930s was not yet sufficiently established to be a vehicle of such a subversive approach. During this period, local cinema was subject to censorship and suffered from economic dependence that led to interference in the content of films, which may have indirectly affected the character of the dialogue, among other aspects. The mere production of a Hebrew film was a big innovation, and it is unlikely that film-makers had either the necessary awareness or the motivation to be innovative in the representation of speech, which is only a small part of cinema's expressive capacity.