

On the Arabic in Israel

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ABSTRACT

In this article an attempt is made to shed light on the unique status of the Arabic language, both spoken and written, in Israel; the first which is a certain modern dialect is the mother tongue of an Arab, whereas the second is the national language of Arabs. Arabic was de jure the second official language in the State of Israel until the 19th of July 2018, but de facto it has been always marginal. By 1948 Hebrew had become in fact the only official and dominant language in Israel. In the 1950s all the Jewish attempts to persuade the Arabs in Israel to write their literature in Hebrew, to learn only Hebrew or to write Arabic in Hebrew characters failed. In the summer of 2008 right-wing Jewish members of the Knesset also failed to strip Arabic of its status as an official language. Almost every aspect of life in Israel contributes to the Hebraisation and Israelisation of the Arabs in Israel. By law, learning Hebrew is compulsory in Arab Israeli public schools starting in the third grade and is obligatory on matriculation exams. The Arabic language has low prestige even among many Arabs by comparison to Hebrew and English. Arab youth in Israel view Hebrew as a symbol of high status and the key to modernization and progress. Subsequently, it is little wonder that Arabic is being invaded by Hebrew. In the State of Israel this Arabic has been called *ar-ibiyya* / *arbāniyya* / *irbiyya* or *arvrit, me-urvetet*, meaning Arabic mixed with Hebrew. The Hebrew language has infused Arabs' minds and hearts, not merely as a language, but also as a concept and an attitude.

This state of affairs could indicate the first steps to the extinction of spoken Arabic in Israel. The status of Arabic in Israel reflects the unique socio-political situation of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel and the lengthy Arab-Israeli conflict. If Israel desires to join the new Middle Eastern context, then it must first respect the Arabic language and its native speakers within its borders of 1967 and treat them as equal citizens. This ought to be the first step in the so-called the peace process between Israel and the Arab world.

ARABIC IN A NUTSHELL

Arabic is a Semitic language spoken in a profusion of dialects by approximately 400 million speakers. Furthermore, the language has further been arabicised across a vast area extending from the Arabian Gulf in the east to the Atlantic Ocean in the west in addition to being spoken by millions of people living in the diaspora. Arabic is one of the six official languages of the United Nations. It is the official¹ language in all Arab countries and a co-official language in Chad, Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Mali, Senegal, and Somalia as well as in the Organisation of the Islamic Conference and the African Union.²

From the second half of the eighth century until the end of the eleventh century, Arabic was the scientific language of mankind. Along with a great body of the world's science, literature and history are also preserved in this language. Arabic script is the fourth most widely used after

the Latin alphabet, Chinese characters, and Devanagari. Arabic letters are used in many other languages, such as Kurdish (Sorani & Luri), Malay, Pashto, Persian, Punjabi, Sindhi, and Urdu.

In Palestine Arabic was the dominant language beginning in the year 634 and continuing until 1948. In some periods, such as during the long Ottoman rule from 1519 to 1917, the language of government was Turkish, whereas spoken Arabic was the vernacular. At the same time several European languages, such as French, German, Greek, Italian and Russian, were used in Palestine for religious reasons, especially in large cities like Jerusalem, Haifa, Bethlehem, Nazareth.³

MODERN HEBREW

Hebrew, on the other hand, has been a literary and liturgical language for a little over seventeen centuries and was 'revived' as a spoken vernacular only towards the end of the nine-

1. See Pool, 1991.

2. See عبد الحي، ٢٠٠٥، ٤٣. As to the status of Arabic in Israel, see Kretzmer, 1990; <http://www.izs.org.il/?catid=438>.

3. See Ma-oz, 1968; Spolsky & Cooper, 1991.

teenth century in Palestine by a group of scholars and nationalists of whom Eliezer Ben-Yehuda (1858-1922) was the most famous. This emergence of a new vernacular on the basis of ancient written languages, Biblical Hebrew and Mishnaic Hebrew, was a unique phenomenon. It should be noted that Jews have spoken and written Arabic, so-called Judaeo-Arabic, for more than 1,200 years. Before the establishment of Israel most of the *Old Yishuv* and in particular the *Youth Guard (Hashomer Hatzair)* were conversant in Arabic. Palestinian Arabic and Israeli Hebrew have been in asymmetric contact for more than a century during which a state of conflict and tension prevailed between the two national communities.⁴ Today almost half of the population of the Jewish Nation-State know the language of Arabic.

By 1948 Hebrew was suddenly the main language of the overwhelming majority of the Jews in the newly established State of Israel. For the ultra-Orthodox Jews in Israel, Yiddish served them in speech as well as in writing. Since its establishment, Israel has been an ethnic nation-state in which a variety of languages is used, and the codes governing when a given language is to be used are very ordinary.⁵ In the declaration of Israel's independence 1948⁶ it is stated among other things that Israel "... will be based on the precepts of liberty, justice and peace taught by the Hebrew Prophets; will uphold the full social and political equality of all its citizens, without distinction of race, creed or sex; will guarantee full freedom of conscience, worship, education and culture ...".⁷

More than half of the Jews in the world- approximately 13 million - do not speak Hebrew. It is striking that Arabs (the Palestinians of 1948 and 1967 and the Syrians of the Golan in 1973) form a remarkable percentage of Hebrew speakers today. Several dozen of languages are spoken in Israel owing to the fact that Israel is the destination of Jewish immigrants from all over the world. Among the languages spoken by one hundred thousand speakers or more are the fol-

lowing: Modern Hebrew (6 million); Arabic (1.5 million); Russian (1 million); modern Judaeo Arabic-Moroccan, Tunisian and Algerian (more than 300,000); Romanian (200,000); Yiddish (200,000); Ladino (100,000); Polish (100,000); Iraqi Judaeo Arabic (100,000).⁸

The linguistic policy in the State of Israel is complex and expressed in more than one law.⁹ According to article no. 82 enacted in the year 1922 by the Privy Council of the British Mandate in Palestine, there were three official languages: English, Arabic and Hebrew, with English having legal priority.¹⁰ This priority and the status of English was cancelled in 1948, in article no. 15b. Arabic has a unique position in Israel: *de jure* it is the second official language, but *de facto* it is marginal.¹¹

HEBREW IS THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

However, in reality Modern Hebrew has been the only official language and the dominant language in Israel since 1948.¹² The common view in Israel holds that maintaining other languages weakens the national identity of the Jews, and thus there is a need to teach merely Hebrew and English in the schools. Nevertheless, in the summer of 2008 right-wing Jewish members of the Knesset failed to strip Arabic of its status as

8. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics_of_Israel.

9. Deutch, 2005; Lovatt, after 2006, pp. 6-8.

10. "All ordinances, official notices and official forms of the government and all official notices of local authorities and municipalities in areas to be prescribed by order of the High Commissioner, shall be published in English, Arabic and Hebrew. The three languages may be used in debates and discussions in the Legislative Council and subject to any regulations to be made from time to time, in the government offices and the law courts"; see Drayton, 1934: 2569; on Arabic education during the British mandate, see Yousuf, 1956; on Israeli methods see البازعي، ١٩٨٨.

11. See Kretzmer, 1990: 165-166, Amara, 2002, Amara 2002 (Hebrew), Fisherman & Fishman, 1975, Harel-Shalev, 2005, 2005 (Hebrew), May, 2001, Pinto, 2009, Saban & Amara, 2002, Shohamy & Donitsa-Schmidt, 1998, Tabory, 1981, Talmon, 1997, Bakshi, 2011: <http://izsvideo.org/papers/bakshi2011.pdf>; ١٩٧٣ سرية، ، ٢٠٠٣، القاضي، ١٩٩٧ حيدر، Rubinstein described the status of Arabic in Israel as "problematic", Rubinstein, 1980: 76. It is interesting to recall that in 1948 Israel did not cancel the position of Arabic as an official language as was done with English. Arabic, as some believe, is Israel's silent official language; see <http://reporting-on-israel.tumblr.com/post/4518491359/arabic-israels-silent-official-language-by-jon>; Yitzhaki, 2008: 8 seq; 10-9, 3 :1997, 2 ספולסקי,

12. Yitzhaki, 2008.

4. See Henkin-Roitfarb, 2011, 61.

5. See Spolsky & Shohamy 1999, Ben- Rafael, 1994.

6. The declaration was published in the Official Gazette, No. 1 of the 5th Iyar 5708 (14 May, 1948) and signed by David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first prime minister, along with 41 others, including Yitzhak Ben-Zvi, Zerach Wahrhaftig, Golda Myerson, Abraham Katznelson, Bekhor Shitreet, and Moshe Shertok.

7. See for instance: http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreign_policy/peace/guide/pages/declaration%20of%20establishment%20of%20state%20of%20israel.aspx.

an official language in Israel.¹³ In the 1950s all Jewish attempts to convince the Arabs in Israel to write their literature in Hebrew, to learn only Hebrew or to write Arabic in Hebrew characters failed.¹⁴

One of the most prominent characteristics of Israel's population is its great diversity. In addition to the main two national groups, Jews and Arabs, there are small ethnic religious groups such as the Circassians, the Samaritans, the Filipinos, and the German Beit El. Since 1948, the population of Israel has increased nearly tenfold. The number of Palestinian Arabs living in Israel¹⁵ is estimated at 1.5¹⁶ million (before the war of 1948, it was 1.2 million) out of approximately 8 million, the whole of Israel's population. The overwhelming majority of them identify themselves as Palestinian by nationality and Israeli by citizenship.¹⁷ Yet most of this indigenous minority would prefer to keep Israeli citizenship rather than become citizens of a future Palestinian state. Their economic and social position is desperate since the Israeli policy of Arab land confiscation hired workers in industry and agriculture owned by Jews.¹⁸ Furthermore, the very definition of Israel as a homeland for the Jewish people does not grant any advantage

to Arabic language and culture.¹⁹ From the viewpoint of an Arab Palestinian, Israel has conquered his land, his collective memory and his language. Language, in S. al-Husari's (1879-1968) opinion is "the spirit and life of the nation".²⁰

THE ARAB MINORITY IN ISRAEL

The Arabs in Israel live in three areas, the triangle in the centre of the country, the Galilee and Haifa districts in the north and the Negev in the south.²¹ The vast majority of these Arabs, 90 per cent, live in villages and the rest in a few towns and mixed cities. As a rule, the Arabs in Israel live separately in the mixed cities²² and a high percentage of Arab students prefer to attend Jewish schools in which Hebrew is the dominant language. Add to this are the Druze²³, Circasian and Bedouin soldiers who serve in the Israeli Defence Army (IDF) and use Hebrew, which they consider to be their first language in comparison to Arabic, in particular, written Arabic.²⁴ This situation has a clear influence on the families of these soldiers. It is true that Arabs in Israel and especially among the young generation are fluently bilingual (in the Palestinian Arabic dialect and in modern spoken Hebrew), and they conduct their affairs by local councils and municipalities. However, that rule is limited, and it is dependent on the Jewish central administration. Therefore, despite this local rule the Arabs write almost all of their correspondence in Hebrew. With regard to Muslim institutions everything is being carried out in literary Arabic. In Christian institutions foreign languages such as Greek or Latin are used in addition to literary Arabic. The majority of the Arab youngsters and adolescents in Israel are bilingual in Palestinian Arabic and Israeli Hebrew. Yet a great number of them are far from being native speakers of either Israeli Hebrew or literary Arabic. Palestinian Arabs have always been under foreign rule. Almost half of them, over 6 million, live outside historic Palestine. Linguistically, the Palestinian-Israeli section has three languages in addition to spoken Arabic, literary Arabic, He-

13. See Jeffay, 2008; <http://dugrinet.co.il/node/13029>. Moshe Arens described this proposal as 'foolish', see <http://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/1.1566405>; <http://cafe.themarker.com/post/2425607/>.

14. ٢٠٠٠، بشارة، ٢٠٠٦، أمارة، 664: 1968 אנציקלופדיה חינוכית. A clear tendency of using colloquial Arabic in Hebrew characters or even Hebrew language by Israeli Arabs on the internet deserves a separate investigation.

15. This national minority is not declared in basic Israeli laws. It has numerous euphemistic designations such as the Arabs of 1948, the Arabs on the inside, Arab citizens of Israel, Arab Israelis, Israeli Arabs, Palestinian Israelis, the Arab population in Israel, Palestinian citizens of Israel, the Arab sector. For further names see Shehadeh, 1997: 49 note 2.; www.hf-fak-uib.no/smi/paj; <http://www.smi.uib.no/paj/Shehadeh.html>, 25/9/1995. On this national minority and its future vision, see Bligh, 2003, Cohen, 1974, Eghbarieh, 1991, Israeli, 2008, Landau, 1993, Louer & King, 2006, Pleg & Selikter, 1989, Reiter, 2009, Reiter & Wigoder, 1992, Rekhes, 1993, Smooha, 1989, Smooha, 2005, White, 2011, חידר, 2005, רייטר, 1991 בנימין ומנצור, 2005, نخلة, 2008.

16. Their number after the establishment of Israel in May 1948 was 156, 000; see Pape, 2006.

17. See ٢٠٠٠، بشارة، 2000; Marcus, 2007. All Arabs who were inside the so-called Green Line on the 14th of July 1952 had Israeli citizenship; Jamal, 2009, pp. 29-38; Rouhana, 1997; Rubinstein, 2003.

18. See Oded, 1964, pp. 19-25.

19. "The state is Jewish, built by Jews for Jews". The Arabs in Israel are "outsiders"; see Peretz & Doron, 1997, p. 276, Lustick, 1980.

20. See: ص. ٢٥٢، ١٩٥٩ الحصري،

21. See, for instance, Ghanem, 2001; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab_citizen_of_Israel.

22. See Skaaraas, 2009; Kerlinger, 1984. Arabs in mixed cities know Hebrew better than literary Arabic; see עמ' 328: 1974 קופלוביץ, Monterescu et alia, 2007.

23. See Daghas, 1993; Abu-Rabia₁, 1996.

24. See Abu-Rabia₂, 1996, p. 7.

brew and English. In some private schools French can be added. As a rule, pupils of oriental background have the most negative attitude to Arabs, Arabic language and culture.²⁵

The Arab minority in Israel is only slightly reflected in the Hebrew media.²⁶ This minority is not recognised by Israel as a national minority, but as Muslims, Christians and Druze or simply, as non-Jews. It is not rare to find Arabs who take Hebrew names in order to facilitate their life and work in a Jewish environment.²⁷ Arab citizens of Israel make up 52 per cent of the population in the Northern district, and about 50 per cent of them live in 114 various localities throughout Israel.²⁸ Israeli Arabs account for 20 per cent of Israel's present population, and their proportion is on the rise. It is worth special mention that not a single new Arab settlement has been set up since the establishment of Israel.²⁹ The whole Arab population in Israel would be in a real danger of being transferred as the Israeli historian Benny Morris writes: "The Israeli Arabs are a time bomb. Their slide into complete Palestinisation has made them an emissary of the enemy that is among us. They are a potential fifth column. In both demographic and security terms they are liable to undermine the state. So that if Israel again finds itself in a situation of existential threat, as independence in 1948, it may be forced to act as it did then. If we are attacked by Egypt (after an Islamist revolution in Cairo) and by Syria, and chemical and biological missiles slam into our cities, and at the same time Israeli Palestinians attack us from behind, I can see an expulsion situation. It could happen. If the threat to Israel is existential, expulsion will be justified".³⁰ Tzipi Livni, the previous leader of the *Kadima Party*, declared that there is no place for Israeli Arabs since the establishment of Palestine.³¹ Avraham Burg, writes "...the modern Hebrew language employs word laundering to mask an arrogant, violent and even racist attitude toward the Arab enemy. In

everyday spoken Hebrew, the adjective Arab has a bad connotation. Israel's word laundering is among the most advanced in the world..."³² The term "demographic bomb" in reference to the Arabs of Israel was used by Benjamin Netanyahu in 2003.³³ Avigdor Lieberman is one of the foremost supporters of the transfer of Arabs, approximately half a million people, such as the populations of Tayybe, Umm al-Fahm, Bāqa al-Gharbiyya. Another half a million should declare their loyalty to Zionism; if they refuse to do so, they would be stripped of the right to vote.³⁴

ARABS LEARN HEBREW

By law learning Hebrew is compulsory in Arab Israeli public schools starting from the third grade³⁵ and is obligatory for matriculation exams, whereas only basic Arabic is taught in Jewish schools, usually from the seventh to the ninth grades. There are approximately 1,000 Jewish teachers of Arabic. Consequently, Arabic is not obligatory in the matriculation exams for

32. Burg, 2008, p. 61. The word אַרַבְיָנוּשׁ meaning a derogatory nickname for an Arab is a typical example of what Burg is driving at. This word is not confirmed in the comprehensive Hebrew-Hebrew dictionary by אבן , ריונטל, 1985 שושי, but it appears in p. 285, 2005.

33. See Gil, 2003, <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/pages/ShArt.jhtml?itemNo=373225>. Allusions to this 'demographic threat' can be found in the The Koenig Memorandum drafted in 1976. Its major objective was to reduce the number of Arabs in Galilee who form approximately half of the Arabs in Israel; <http://electronicintifada.net/content/defusing-israels-demographic-bomb/5503>.

34. Avineri, 2009, http://www.arabworldbooks.com/arab/avnery_racists_fordemocracy.htm.

35. See Bekerman, 2005, p. 6. In some schools Hebrew is begun as early as the second grade. This teaching is mainly conducted on the basis of literary Arabic and grounded in the dictionary. After four years of study the Arab child acquires 2,000-2,500 Hebrew words. On teaching Hebrew to the Arab sector see: 663-676 :1968 :אנציקלופדיה, It is worth mentioning that some years after the establishment of Israel, some Jews opposed the teaching of Hebrew to Arabs because they feared such knowledge would be used against the state's security or on the grounds that a holy language ought not be taught to *goyim*, that is, non-Jews. On the other hand, there were also Arabs who rejected having to learn Hebrew in Arab schools because of its possible negative influence on the Arabic language; *ibid.* p. 664. It should also be mentioned that Hebrew language teachers have to identify with the State of Israel and its values; *ibid.* p. 667; 6 :1997 :נספולסקי. On the Hebrew of the Arabs in Israel see, for example, Shehadeh, 1997, Kinberg & Talmon, 1994, דורון, 2002 אמארה, 1971. Teaching a foreign language at such an early age has negative influence on mastering the mother tongue, which in this case is Arabic.

25. Peres, 1971.

26. See First & Avraham, 2004; Jamal, 2009, pp. 39-60.

27. See ٢٠٠٥ کیوان.

28. Israel in figures 2008. http://www.cbs.gov.il/www/publications/isr_in_n08e.pdf; "The Arab Minority in Israel". Arab Human Rights Association. <http://www.arabhra.org/factsheets/factsheet0.htm>.

29. Majadele: "New Arab city will bolster our sense of belonging". *Haaretz* 12 February 2008. <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/953568.html>. The plan of such a construction remained on paper.

30. Shavit, 2004, Shusteff, 2002.

31. http://www.liveleak.com/view?i=3fd_1229052889, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7779087.stm

Jewish schools.³⁶ As a rule, after graduation almost all Israeli Jewish students of Arabic get good jobs in the foreign ministry or in the army Intelligence Corps, the IDF.³⁷ At the beginning of 2010 Dr. Orna Simhon, the Ministry of Education's director of the northern region of Israel, expressed her intention to have more Arabic taught in Jewish schools. Accordingly, in the academic year 2010-2011 fifth-grade Jewish pupils in 179 schools in the north of Israel studied Arabic for two hours per week. The idea of small numbers of Jews studying Arabic has largely been carried out with the idea of "know your enemy"³⁸ - a means of controlling and defeating the Arabs rather than to trying to know them better as colleagues or benefit from their culture and heritage or to coexist with mutual respect. Israeli Jewish pupils are poorly motivated to learn Arabic, and it is safe to say that such motivation is instrumental rather than integrative.³⁹ One can safely conclude that all attempts to teach Arabic in Israeli Jewish schools have been a long series of failures.⁴⁰

TEACHING ARABIC: HEBRAISATION AND ISRAELISATION

Arabic has been taught in Israel like any other foreign language -as a means of communication rather than as a means of expressing national identity.⁴¹ Almost every aspect of life in Israel contributes to the process of Hebraisation and

the Israelisation of the Arab national minority.⁴² Here, for example, is what an Israeli Jew says about learning Arabic: "It is a military asset to have a good command of arab (*sic*) language: Eli Cohen, our master spy, had a perfect knowledge of Arabic. Sephardis in Israel are growing old, and we need people to manage our intelligence. Let us be their 5th column." (Raphael, Netanya, 21 March 2007).⁴³ Eighty per cent of adult Jewish Israelis do not know Arabic at all, yet 16 per cent of them originate in Arab countries and their mother tongue was Arabic.⁴⁴ By contrast, less than 15 per cent of Arabs in Israel do not master Hebrew. "Arabic in Israel is imprisoned in a complicated reality".⁴⁵ Arabic, the dominant language in the Middle East, is being taught as a language of war, not as a tool for peace, and this attitude is not the result of a political or governmental position, but is mainly a reflection of the social and emotional situation.⁴⁶ It is clear that the Jewish Israeli ethnocentric society is intimidated by the very existence of Arabs and by the existence of their language and culture. Consequently, foreign language and culture, let alone a hostile one, threaten the self confidence of the collective community. Many reasons and pretexts are given by Jewish parents and their children as to why they do not learn Arabic. Among them—it is a difficult language; learning it comes at the expense of Jewish heritage; Arabic is not beautiful and moreover, it is of minor significance in our modern era; Arabic is the language of our enemies; Hebrew is the common language between Jews and Arabs; aspects of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict are described in different ways in Arabic and in Hebrew. Palestine, *al-Quds*, *al-Nakba* (disaster, 1948), *muqāwama* (resistance), *iḥtilāl* (occupation) in Arabic correspond to Israel, Yerushalaim, independence, terror, liberation, in Hebrew. The educational system in Israel is divided into two branches,

36. See: <http://hrw.org/reports/2001/israel2/JILPfinal.pdf>; Kraemer, 1990.

37. Cooper & Fishman, 1977, pp. 239-276; cf. *Haaretz* 30/11/2006, *Bamahane*, 6/7/1994.

38. See Halprin, 2006, pp. 481-489, ١٧-٢٢، ١٩٩٨ بلاك، :8-9. On the other hand, there were a few voices in support of the idea of teaching Arabic to Jews, such as the orientalist, Shlomo Dov Goitein (1900-1985), for several reasons. The study of Arabic is part of Zionism, part of the return to the Hebrew language and to the Semitic Orient, where Arabic is spoken. In addition he hoped that future Jewish generations would feel at home in the Middle East; see 13 : 1961 גוייטיק, Kraemer, 1990, pp. 59-60. A similar approach, namely, learning Hebrew in order to know the Zionist enemies being carried out in several schools in the Gaza Strip; See http://www.bbc.co.uk/arabic/middleeast/2013/02/130222_hebrew_gaza_school.shtml; <http://www.newstatesman.com/world-affairs/2013/02/hebrew-teaching-be-expanded-gaza-strip>

39. See Gardner & Lambert, 1972.

40. See 1992 ינואי, Kraemer, 1990, Brosh & Ben-Rafael, 1991. In the 1990s a unit named (שיום פעילות) = שיום פעילות (תורמת) for promoting the teaching of the Arabic language and culture was established by the Ministry of Education and IDF., See 2008 לוסטייגמן,

41. See Yitzhaki, 2008, pp. 94-148, Amara & Mar'i, 2002.

42. The Hebraisation of Arabic locations was explicitly acknowledged by David Ben-Gurion in 1948, see קדמן 2008 : 52 and compare what Moshe Dayyan said on this issue in *Haaretz* 4/4/1969; see: ١٩٩٢ عزاف. In this study mention is made of over 2,700 names of Arabic locations that have been replaced by Hebrew names; ٢٠٠٤، بشير، ٢٠٠٦، مرعي، ٢٠٠١، إبراهيم، ٢٠٠١ ديب. A few examples follow: وادي الحوارث، نهر العوجا، نهر

עמק חפר, ירקון, קישון became المقطع

43. Shehadeh, 2008.

44. 2006 טואן ודבי, 193

45. <http://cafe.themarker.com/post/1611334/>.

46. See article minor no. 11 of the law of general education.

Hebrew and Arabic, and the Druze have autonomy within the Arabic branch.⁴⁷

In the light of a poll conducted in 2010 by the Israeli Institute for Democracy it is clear that 50 per cent of the Jewish population is frightened and anxious on hearing Arabic spoken in public places. The public position of Arabic, the mother tongue of the heterogeneous Arab minority in Israel, is marginal. Arab speakers of Arabic are considered the enemy. Modern Hebrew in its revival also drew on Arabic, and its slang borrowed more than one thousand Arabic words⁴⁸.

The same holds true with regard to teaching Arabic in the United States after the attacks of the September 11, 2001. Great amounts of money are being spent in the United States to teach Americans how to acquire a good command of spoken Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). Unfortunately, this emphasis on practical knowledge, mainly on speaking the language, has not extended to a policy of hiring new professors of Arabic and Islamic studies. It is thus no surprise that one comes across professors with good reputations in their own countries, but whose active knowledge of Arabic (or Hebrew) is very poor. Yet such professors are often the only sources of information and knowledge about Arabic culture, literature and Islam.⁴⁹

PROPOSALS TO ABOLISH THE OFFICIAL STATUS OF ARABIC

Recently, a draft of a law intended to abolish the status of Arabic as a second official language in Israel was included on the Knesset agenda by Limor Livnat, a member of the Knesset and the minister of culture and sport, together with the Likkud party and a group of other members of the Knesset. "It cannot be, it is not appropriate or reasonable that the status of one language or another in the Land of Israel is identical to the status of the Hebrew language", said Livnat.

47. See Jiryis, 1969, p. 145; Nakhlih, 1977; أبو عصبية، ٢٠٠٦، 2007. Reality is described differently in Arabic and in Hebrew; for example: نكبة، القدس، نكسة، =مقاومة = עצמאות, ירושלים, מלחמת ששת הימים, טרור = Catastrophe = independence; Al-Quds = Yerushalaim = Jerusalem; Six Day War = relapse = the war of 1967; terror = resistance.

48. See Ben-Amotz & Ben-Yehuda, 1972, 1982; רוזנטל, 2005, Shehadeh, 2011, pp. 337-340.

49. See Shehadeh, 2007, Arabic in Finland in: <http://www.ahewar.org/eng/show.art.asp?aid=314>; <http://www.jamaliya.com/ShowPage.php?id=7456>.

She adds "Precisely in these times, when there are radical groups of Israeli Arabs trying to turn the State of Israel into a bi-national state, it is most urgent to put into law the unique status of the language of the Bible-the Hebrew language."⁵⁰

This goal of this proposal is to have Hebrew be Israel's only official language with English, Arabic and Russian as unofficial or secondary languages. This attempt by Livnat was preceded by others beginning as far back as 1952.⁵¹ A decade ago, a member of the Knesset, Michael Kleiner, made a similar attempt. The same attitude was also adopted by the so-called Israel Center for Democracy. This proposal, like many laws of discrimination against the national Arab minority in Israel⁵² reflects the main line of Zionist ideology, which claims that Israel is "Jewish" and therefore Arabic, the main token of Arab identity, dignity, and a mirror of culture, should not enjoy any official status.⁵³ Language is a kind of cultural behaviour and embodies a specific philosophy of life.

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST ARABIC AND ARABS

There is a systematic and official discrimination against the Arabs in Israel who live in estrangement, disappointment and alienation so that they will remain a marginal element of Israeli society, which is segmented.⁵⁴ Subsequently, terminating Arabic as an official language in Israel means, among other things, ignoring the existence of the native speakers of this national language who remained in their home land after the *Nakba* in 1948. The relationship of the Arabs in Israel to the State of Israel is, as a rule, fraught

50. See *Haaretz*, 19/5/2008.

51. See the Knesset publications, vol. 1 (1952), 2250; on later attempts see *Ma'ariv* 5/1/2005, 14.

52. See, for example, ١٩٨٧ غنادري, the Arab minority in Israel suffers from institutionalised discrimination. Some examples: The Law of Return (1950), the Law of Absentee Property (1950), the Law of the State's Property (1951), the Law of Citizenship (1952), the Status Law (1952), the Israel Lands Administration Law (1960), the Construction and Building Law (1965), the 2002 temporary law banning marriage between Arab Israelis and Palestinians of the Occupied Territories, the *Nakba* Law and loyalty oath of 2011, Raid Salah Law; [http://www.adalah.org/upfiles/Christian%20Aid%20Report%20December%202010%20FINAL\(1\).pdf](http://www.adalah.org/upfiles/Christian%20Aid%20Report%20December%202010%20FINAL(1).pdf); see also the Or Commission Report, p. 33, *Israel Studies*, vol. II, no. 2, pp. 25-53; http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Society_&_Culture/OrCommissionReport.html.

53. See, Pinto, 2007.

54. See, for instance, 1979 רוזנטל, 34, *Fist & Avraham*, 2004; Soen, 2003, pp. 309-438.

with tension, bitterness, and distrust. “My state is at war with my nation” is the sentiment expressed by an Arab public figure in Israel, which sums up the entire conflict.⁵⁵ It seems that the title *Present Absentees* (נוכחים נפקדים) given by David Grossman to one of his works is close to the real situation of the Arabs in Israel.⁵⁶ The state of alienation has led to tension between Jews and Arabs in Israel and to clashes such as the events of October 2010, as called by Arabs.⁵⁷ It is clear to anyone acquainted with the present situation in Israel that Arabic is widely marginalised and ignored by the authorities, an attitude reflected in official treatment, street signs⁵⁸, passports, names of streets and villages (which are often erroneous)⁵⁹ mass media, official correspondence, and electronic sites. Arabic, the language of the weak, is nonexistent outside the Arabic speaking community. It is not used in courts, governmental departments and public forums.⁶⁰ The directors of the Israeli Hebrew radio have a clear policy of avoiding any Arabic

55. Shamir, 2005, p. 7; consider the Land Day on 30 March 1976 and 1 October 2000 and the killing of 13 Arab citizens of Israel and the scores wounded by the Israeli police. In 1948 Arabs owned 2.5 million square dunam (dunam = 1000 m²) of land, whereas today the area is less than 770 thousand square dunam, cf. רוזנפלד, 1979 :29 ; Oded, 1964.

56. Grossman, 1993.

57. Arabs refer to those events as *هبة أكتوبر* = the October ignition. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/October_2000_events_%28Israel%29.

58. See Ben Shemesh, 2003, pp.194-204; Azaryahu & Kook 2002. It is worth pointing out that names of Jewish shops are mostly in American English without Hebrew; see: <http://www.hazofe.co.il/web/katava6.asp?Modul=24&id=22532&Word=&gilayon=1948&mador=>. This fashion of imitating American life is common in many societies. Very often the Arabic names of signs are erroneous such as *طريق خطر؛ مستشفى؛ منطقة يجوز* are erroneous such as *التدخين؛ وقف*; Ben-Meir et alia, 2007. The addition of Arabic to such signs in mixed cities that have 6-19% Arabs was a result of a Supreme Court's decision issued in 2002 by Judge Barak, see *בג"צ 99/4112*. There Barak wrote among other things: “Arabic is a language related to cultural, historical, and religious characteristics of the Arab minority in Israel”. Notice the absence of the phrase “a national language”.

59. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_passport. Passports and birth certificates, for instance, are written in Hebrew only. The municipality of Haifa was obliged by court verdict to add the names of its streets in Arabic. In May 2012 the *Histadrut*, the General Federation of Laborers in the Land of Israel, excluded Arabic from its election ballots.

60. See, for instance, Kymlicka, 1995, Barzilai, 2003, pp. 112-113. Hebrew is used even when the accused persons and the lawyers are Arabs; Adoni et alia, 2006.

words such as *Intifāda*.⁶¹ Yet Arabic words can be found on stamps, banknotes, identity cards and ballot slips, though Arabic figures are not found on stamps or banknotes. Arabic is heard in Israeli radio broadcasts until midnight and in television broadcasting for several hours a day⁶², and this manifestation of Arabic is influenced by Hebrew.⁶³ There are several Israeli governmental sites that do not have a single word in Arabic, including the Ministry of the Treasury, the Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Welfare and Social Services, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Religions, the Ministry of Communications, the Ministry of Agriculture and so on.⁶⁴ Arabic hardly exists in the Israeli public arena.

NO ARAB UNIVERSITY, TEACHING ABOUT ARABIC

There is not a single university in Israel in which Arab students can study the Arabic language, literature and culture in Arabic.⁶⁵ Arabic is taught by using Hebrew, by Jewish and Arab lecturers alike.⁶⁶ This teaching is best described as being about Arabic rather than being Arabic itself. There is no Arabic university in Israel despite the fact that demands for establishing such an institution go back to the early 1920s.⁶⁷ The lack of such a university compels thousands of Arab students to attend Jordanian universities.⁶⁸ The Hebrew university of Jerusalem, for instance, was established on 1 April 1925 when

61. See Shehadeh, 2011, p. 321.

62. See, for example, <http://www.vanleer.org.il/he/content/ריאיון-עם-שלמה-גנור-מנהל-הטלוויזיה-בערבית>

63. See Jamal, 2009, pp. 108-126;

64I still remember how my student loan application in the early 1970s was turned down by the bank's clerks at the Hebrew University because one of the guarantors, my father, had signed in Arabic.

65. *الأبحاث* ٣٥-٦٧ :٢٠١١

66. See, for instance, http://www.lprc.org.il/LPRC/images/PDF/heba_thesis.pdf, Hamarshy, 2008, إبراهيم ١٩٩٢، ١٩٩٣، Haifa University can be, to some extent, an exception in this respect. Some of the courses taught in the department are held in Arabic. Yet it has to be taken into consideration that “the capacity to speak Hebrew and write English is necessary for appointments and promotion even in university departments of Arabic”, Soen, 2006, p. 188; compare Hamarshy, 2008, pp. 14, 28, 42, 43, 47-48, 56, 62, 69, 89-94.

67. See *Haaretz* 15/1/2008: <http://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/1.1300743>, 20/12/2009. Sixty-six years have elapsed since the establishment of the State of Israel, and the number of its Arabs is approximately 1.5 million, yet still there is no Arab university.

68. See *Haaretz* 10/12/2009. It should be mentioned that almost half of the Arab students who apply to Israeli universities are not accepted, whereas in the Jewish sector only some 15 per cent are turned down.

the number of the Jewish population in Palestine was only 100,000. It is an open secret that the achievements of students are negatively affected by using a foreign language (as in this case Hebrew would be for Arab students). The disregard of Arabic as a national and living language by Israeli universities does not increase respect for it or for its speakers, either politically, socially or culturally. The major activity carried out in Arabic departments in Israeli universities is translation, and largely from Arabic into Hebrew, not vice versa. Some decades ago many students referred to Arabic departments as “departments of translation”. It is usual to find that most of the Jewish professors of Hebrew language and literature in Israel do not have any profound knowledge of Arabic, which is nevertheless one of the Semitic languages that can shed significant light on various aspects of Hebrew.

ARABIC LACKS PRESTIGE AMONG ITS SPEAKERS

No wonder that the level of Arab students in their national language is unsatisfactory and that Arabic has low prestige in comparison to Hebrew and English. A profound knowledge of Hebrew is a prerequisite for obtaining good jobs and for getting by in Israel.⁶⁹ Hebrew is considered a means of modernisation and is much easier to master than literary Arabic, which is not anyone’s mother tongue. Moreover, Hebrew serves as a window onto western culture for the Arabs in Israel. English on the other hand, is essential in any field of higher education. Consequently, most Arab youths feel inferior vis-à-vis the culture of others. This state of affairs leaves semi-literary Arabic, the so-called educated Arabic (*lughatu baina bain*), to secondary schools and colleges in the Arab sector and to preachers in mosques and churches.⁷⁰ Mention should also be made of the fact that only small numbers of Arab students in secondary schools take final exams at the four- or five-unit ma-

69. See: <http://www.haaretz.co.il/hasite/spages/1062490.html#top>.

70. 48 : 1993, לנגדא, 1977, أبو حنا, 2013 حبيب الله. Today there are four Arab institutions for higher education in Israel: The Academic Arab College of Education, Haifa; Al-Qasemi Academic College of Education, Baqa al-Gharbiyya; Beit Berl Academic Institute for Training Arab Teachers; and the College of Sakhnin for Teacher Education. Certain courses such as special education and academic writing are taught in Hebrew or even in English. See: <http://www.haaretz.co.il/opinions/1.1300743>.

trication level in Arabic. Most students are satisfied with three units only.

HEBREW INVADES THE ARAB SECTOR

As a rule, spoken Arabic is used at home and among Arabs in their villages and towns. It is not uncommon to find Arab families who use Hebrew at home; teachers of mathematics and physics in secondary schools often use Hebrew. The textbooks of such subjects are usually in Hebrew or poorly rendered from Hebrew into Arabic. Hebrew is often present in conversations held by Arab lawyers, technicians and medical doctors among themselves. Briefly listening to conversations on *Israel Voice* in Arabic or *Ashams Radio* (operating independently since 2003 in Nazareth, Galilee) suffices to demonstrate the extent to which Hebrew has invaded spoken Arabic. Almost all such Hebrew words and expressions have clear and known Arabic equivalents. A few examples are in order: אולם, אז מה, אזעקה, אחי, אישור, חופש, מונית, מכשיר, — ‘hall, so what, alarm, hey bro, confirmation, holiday, taxi, instrument, plan, goodbye, juice, elevator, contractor’.⁷¹ Such situations can be the first steps towards a possible extinction of Palestinian Arabic in Israel.⁷² “The foretelling of the extinction of spoken Arabic in Israel was predicted more than three decades ago.⁷³ The gap between ordinary linguistic borrowings among languages, which are a cultural and social necessity, and the Hebrew invasion into the spoken Arabic in Israel is large. I have noticed that when a person does not insert Hebrew words into a conversation while the conversation partner does, whenever the first person then gives an Arabic equivalent to a word, the latter gradually abandons the use

71. It is interesting to compare this situation with the phenomenon of the Hebrew loan words used by Jewish oriental communities, such as the Tunisians, see הנשקה, 2012. Sometimes Hebrew words are borrowed and used in Arabic speech, despite the fact that they depict a custom that does not exist in Arabic society. An example is the expression בתאבון, bon appétit, which is erroneously rendered by صحيتين, a word whose meaning is quite different; see 1979 שחאדה :60.

72. Some say Arabic is “healthy and thrilling”, see أمارة, 2010. ص. 40, 41 and compare what is said later, on 151-152; Shehadeh,

2012, www.qadita.net/2012/03/18/haseeb/; Taha, 2005, <http://www.aawsat.com/details.asp?section=19&article=313024&issueno=9731>. In some cases, such as בסדר, סתם, תהליך, עמותה — ok, just, process, association — it is sometimes difficult for many speakers to find suitable Arabic equivalents.

73. See *al-Hilāl*, March 1986, p. 177.

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of Hebrew loan words. This frequent phenomenon-inserting Hebrew words and expressions in Arabic conversation-reflects an ongoing trend among most speakers, a trend that broadens and deepens day after day. This manifestation of spoken Arabic flavoured with Hebrew elements is not fully understood by Arabs who do not know Hebrew or Jews who do not know Arabic. This means that Israeli Arabs using this hybrid language will not be fully understood by their brothers and sisters in Arab countries. This insertion of Hebrew words and calques into Arabic speech is considered by many Arabs to be a token of status and as being up-to-date and modern.

ARABIC IS THE LANGUAGE OF THE ENEMY

Generally speaking, Arabic in Israel is considered by the majority as the language of the undeveloped and hostile minority.⁷⁴ Most Israeli Jews consider Arabic merely as an inexhaustible source of Hebrew slang, a remarkable portion of which consists of curses.⁷⁵ A variety of Arabic based on local dialects is being formulated in electronic writings by young Arabs in Israel, sometimes using Latin characters and sometimes Hebrew characters. Using Hebrew to post comments on the internet is not rare, especially among the Druze. Needless to say, this variety represents a challenge to literary Arabic, *fushā* and to the unity and identity of Arabs. Language is nourished when it is used on all occasions and in all fields and purposes.

HEBREW INFLUENCE ON ARABIC

It is true that the influence of Hebrew on the Arabic language in Israel during the last 70 years has been great in all linguistic features, especially in using Hebrew words in conversations, semantics, calques, and structure. This sweeping impact has not yet penetrated Arabic morphology. This Arabic in the State of Israel has been called *ar. ibiyya/ arbāniyya/āirbiyya or aravit me. urvetet...* meaning the intermixture of Arabic

with Hebrew.⁷⁶ In many cases this register of spoken Arabic and also written Arabic by many Palestinian Israeli Arabs is ambiguous to any one who does not know Hebrew well. A hybrid, bilingual language is evolving among the Arabs in Israel. Here is one example: *راح ع القتيون واشترى* — *بيجديمات وعمل له التاجر هنا* he went to the mall, bought swimsuits, and the merchant gave him a discount.⁷⁷ Arabic words and sentences in the spirit of Hebrew are not rare. This linguistic phenomenon reminds us of written Hebrew in the Middle Ages, mainly in Tibbonian translation from Arabic in Andalusia. One example in spoken Arabic and another in written Arabic are as follows: *هادا مش مقبول عليّ* = 'this is not accepted by me', and this is a calque from Hebrew *לֹב* (title) meaning 'an academic diploma', such as a BA, MA, or PhD is a loan translation from Hebrew *תואר* and especially accompanied with

74. See especially the comments, 276 in all, in: <http://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-3551881,00>. HTML; Spolsky & Shohamy, 1999, p. 118; Suleiman, 2004, p. 214. Bear in mind that almost half of the Jewish population in Israel has some sort of Arabic culture.

75. See *Haaretz* 16/1/2008; Shehadeh, 2011, pp. 334-335; http://cafe.themarket.com/post/1611334/module/blog_post/plasma=true.

76 2006–2007 אוסצקי-לזר, <http://www.sarahozacky.com/ערברית/380>. The term was coined at the beginning of this century; see:

<http://www.atinternational.org/forums/showthread.php?t=2413>, Amara, 1986, Amara, 1995, Amara, 1999, Amara & Spolsky, 1986, Arraf, 2003, Kymlicka, 1995, מרעי, 2006, אמארה 2009, أبو جابر, 2002, مرعي, 2007, أمارة, 2013, Grossman, 2008, p. 533. Sometimes this Arabic is designated 'Ashkenazic Arabic'.

The Arab Cultural Association in Israel found in May 2011 a total of over 16,000 linguistic mistakes in Israeli Arabic-language school books:

<http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2011/05/30/151176.html>. This type of Hebraised Arabic still requires a comprehensive investigation into its morphology, syntax and lexicography.

The same holds true concerning al-arabliyya, Arabic under the impact of English, such as the Gulf Arabic; see al-Adāla electronic magazine, issue 30, November 2006. With regard to Arabic influenced by French there is the term al-Aransiyya.

77 The source of this sentence is not indicated, see: http://www.aawsat.com/details.asp?article=426722&issueno=10447#U6WQ_YUmwhk. Similar mixed language is found in 2013 מרעי.

“first, second, third”.⁷⁸ It should be noted that the expression *عل المحلّ* meaning ‘immediately’ is not, as some may believe, a calque from Hebrew *על המקום*, but just the opposite. This usage in Arabic goes back at least to the Middle Ages.⁷⁹

The number of Hebrew loan words in other languages is small, but the number found in Arabic in Israel is overwhelming. Many hundreds of Hebrew words have entered the Arabic dialects of the Arabs in Israel⁸⁰ such as: *בסדר* (okay), *מחשב* (computer), *רמזור* (spotlight), *מזגן* (air-conditioner), *סתם* (just), *מעניין* (interesting), *כדאי* (worthwhile), *מסר* (message). Seventy-seven per cent of the Hebrew loan words numbering over three thousand words are nouns,⁸¹ and belong to all aspects of life: food, sports, journalism, politics, construction, business, technology, econ-

omy, health, music, and education. The Hebrew influence on Arabic is exceptionally comprehensive and deep in both professional and technical aspects, and it is through Jewish products and their Hebrew names that these words enter Arab society.

This manifestation of Arabic under the impact of Hebrew is particularly utilised by Arabs in cities where groups mix, such as university students, lawyers, Bedouins, Circassians and Druze (the last two groups are subject to being drafted into the Israeli army). Some Israeli scholars of Arabic dialectology call this manifestation of spoken Arabic “Eretz Israel Arabic!”.⁸² In my opinion this term is political rather than linguistic, since it has had no impact on Arabic morphology. Hebrew loan words are used according to the rules of Arabic morphology. So we find the following examples: *محاسيم، كبلانيه، يشر، بنا* — *barriers, contractors, straighten, we want to insure the car, do not tease me’*.

POSITIVE ATTITUDES TOWARDS ARABIC

Most Israelis, especially those in the right wing, will say that Israel is “Jewish and democratic” and that it has a positive attitude towards Arabs and their national language. This attitude is reflected, they claim, by the Knesset approval of an *Arabic Language Academy* in Israel on 21 March 2007.⁸³ In 2009 the minister of science, culture and sports (an Arab, Ghālib Majādlah) appointed the Academy’s founding members and the government approved. However, the emergence of this academy goes back to the end of the year 2001. What can be expected from such an academy established by a state that does not recognise the national Arab existence in it.

Such an academy should be welcome provided it works independently and its main duty is to serve Arabic and mainly protect it from the sweeping wave of Hebraisation and Israelisation. It could help in improving the teaching of Arabic from the first grade onwards, in finding new words and expressions instead of the Hebrew

78. Cf. ٢١٥-٢١٤ الرفاعي، ص. This phenomenon of Hebrew loan translations (calques) is often reflected in educated and press Arabic and is rare in high literary works. Some of these calques are also found in spoken Arabic too. A list of examples follows: *الإسعاف الأولي، خطأ بشري، سلام الجليل، السلطة الفلسطينية، تسجلوا كيهود لكل شيء، عيد فرحة التوراة، التهديد الديموغرافي، شغل عرب، غرفة الطعام، رفع تلفون، عبر الامتحان، سكر صفقة، تجنيد أموال، كل الاحترام، تحرر من السجن، العمل الأسود، نصف الكأس الفارغة، اللقاء بأربع أعين، طهارة السلاح، ملأ فمه بالماء، حرب الأيام الستة، دفيئة، السياج الأمني، طنجرة ضغط، القبة الحديدية، يهودا والسامرة، حفل مفتوح، الذراع العسكرية، أصبع الجليل، الرصاص المصبوب، عامود السحاب، الأزواج الشابة، التغذية الراجعة، سكب حزمة من النور، ماذا مع، ابن بيت، حملة، نهاية الأسبوع، شكرًا، كل يوم تتين وخميس، ما تحطيش كلمات بتمي، رجل جمهور، بتغير مكان بتغير حظ، بكلمات أخرى، القطار الخفيف (first aid; human mistake; Peace of Galilee; Palestinian Authority; they were registered as Jews in everything; rejoicing of the Torah ; demographic threat ; Arabic work, pejorative; to give a call; to pass an exam; to have a deal; fund raising; well done; was released from prison; unskilled labour; the empty half of the glass; meeting face to face; battle morals; to keep silent; Six Day War; greenhouse; security wall; pressure cooker; iron dome; Judea and Samaria; wilderness; military wing (arm); the Galilee panhandle; in other words; Cast Lead; operation pillar (pillar of cloud); young couples; feedback; to spill light beam; what about; frequent visitor; campaign; weekend; thanks to; every Monday and Thursday (often); don’t put words in my mouth (don’t tell me what to say); public figure; every change is for the better; light rail’’. Another list of such calques is found at <http://www.ahewar.org/debat/show.art.asp?aid=346411>. It is obvious that some of these calques stem from English, such as ‘thank to...’, *شكرًا*.*

79. . See *فبرأت من الصداع على ٢١، ص. ١٩٦٥ ابن أبي أصيبعة*. *المكان* — she immediately recovered from a headache. Cf. Rosenthal, 2006, p. 279, who does not ascribe this usage to Arabic. However the modern Arabic usage can be a calque from Hebrew.

80. ٢٠٠٩، سويطي، ٢٠٠٩، كيال، ٢٠٠٥ شحادة، 80.

81. See Koplewitz, 1989, pp.181-195; Hāmid, 2009.

82. See: Levin, 1994, p. 1; cf. Henkin-Roitfarb, 2011, p. 61 note 1. On some features of this manifestation of Arabic see, for example, *٢٠١٠ أمارة، ص. ٨٦-٨٢*. Mention should be made of Hebrew loan words that appear in accordance with the Arabic morphological system.

83. See in Arabic, Hebrew and English: <http://www.arabicac.com/?mod=articles&ID=267>; on Al-Qasemi Arabic language Academy see: http://www.qsm.ac.il/ArbLanguage/eng/Conference_Metaphor.aspx. Once there were three such academies.

ones often used in Arabic conversation,⁸⁴ and in playing an active role in developing radio and television programmes. Finally, it would be useful in preparing modern textbooks and reducing the flood of linguistic errors in the Arabic press, particularly in the electronic press.

Israeli official policy towards the Arab minority is positively presented inside and outside Israel's borders. A few examples are in order: an Arab minister, an Arab ambassador, and Arab members of the Knesset who can speak Arabic⁸⁵; Arab professors at universities (although not at Hebrew University); it is possible to add Arabic letters on voting ballots (according to article 76b, 1969). No doubt such facts are positive, although they are few and have come too late. Nor do they resolve the main issue: Arabic should continue to be an official language in reality and not simply on paper.⁸⁶

BILINGUAL SOCIETIES

A good model for treating the languages of minorities can be found in Belgium, Canada and Switzerland. Some scholars such as Jacob Landau believe that Finland is the only country that has real equality between its two official languages, Finnish and Swedish.⁸⁷ The other dominant linguistic minority in Israel is the Jewish Russian immigrant minority; the status of Russian in Israel is better than that of Arabic. The Russian immigrants comprise one sixth of the entire population, and Russian is still their dominant language after more than fifteen years of living in Israel. Most of these Russians do not know Hebrew well; Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy, and Pushkin are their favourite authors. There is a reason to say that Hebrew failed to put the various identities of Israeli cultural components into one melting pot. Generally speaking, the three main cultures are western Hebrew culture, religious and secular; Hebrew and Arabic culture, religious and secular; and Russian culture, neither Hebrew nor Jewish.

84. Worth mentioning are the attempts of Faruq Mawasi in this respect, see: <http://www.ahewar.org/debat/show.art.asp?aid=396783>, ٢٠١٣ مواسي،

85. See *Panorama* 26/7/1996, p. 7. If they do so, then few if any of the Jewish members of the Knesset would understand them, because there is no simultaneous translation.

86. Pool, 1991, pp. 495-514.

87. See: <http://www.kas.de/israel/en/publications/22379/>. I would add that Swedish, the second official language in Finland and used by approximately six per cent of the population, is almost equal to Finnish. Finnish civil servants have to know Swedish as Dutch civil servants must know Flemish.

CONCLUSIONS

Mention should be made that the Arab youth in Israel look at Hebrew as a symbol of high status and as a key to modernism and progress. The decline of Arabic in Israel is a central cultural and national problem that requires help from the Israeli Ministry of Education, local Arabic councils and perhaps UNESCO. Some intellectual Arabs in Israel have called for the formation of a committee to defend the Arabic language.⁸⁸ Many believe that this issue should be raised on all possible occasions, and teachers of Arabic have to act with professionalism and patience and actively cooperate with local councils and parents of the students.

It is safe to say that the status of Arabic in Israel reflects the unique socio-political situation of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel and the lengthy Arab-Israeli conflict.⁸⁹ These Arabs have no collective national rights. Arabs and the Arabic language in Israel are like a ship in a stormy sea. Speech and language define the essence of mankind. The well-known national Palestinian poet, Mahmoud Darwish (1941-2008), wrote: "I am my language. I am what the words said".⁹⁰ The Hebrew language has been infusing Arabs' minds and hearts, not merely as a language, but also as a concept and attitude.

Arabic in the *Mashriq* and the Gulf States has been under the influence of English; in the *Maghrib* Arabic is under the influence of French, and the Arabic language in the State of Israel has been under the direct influence of Modern Hebrew since 1948. There is a retraction in the status of Arabic in its homeland,⁹¹ the Arab World, although some indications of progress have been observed internationally. In 1973 Arabic became an official language in the General Assembly of the United Nations. UNESCO has declared the 18th of December as an international day of Arabic. An international council for the Arabic language in collaboration with UNESCO has been established. Finally, an Arabic Language Academy was created on the internet in order to serve the needs of Arabic

88. See: <http://www.aljabha.org/index.asp?i=12726>.

89. See Landau, 1987; Koplewitz, 1992; Spolsky, 1994; Spolsky and Shohamy, 1999.

90. أنا ما لغتي. أنا ما قالت الكلمات . <http://www.albaptainprize.org/Encyclopedia/poet/1681.htm>. See Pinto, 2007, Suleiman, 2003, Suleiman, 2004 ، ١٩٩١ خوري ، 2005 شرييبروم-شبتيا ،

91. See for example: <http://digital.ahram.org.eg/articles.aspx?Serial=242097&eid=1145>.

besides the thirteen such academies in Arab countries.

If the present corrosion of spoken Palestinian Arabic in Israel continues for several decades, then this Arabic dialect might become endangered. The fate of literary Arabic is not as gloomy because there are numerous poets, writers and scholars who are willing and able to write eloquent and normative Arabic. The Israeli Arab press has been absorbing various Hebrew elements, such as borrowings and loan translations. Some of these elements serve to express irony and satire.⁹² If Israel desires to join the new Middle Eastern context, then first of all it must respect the Arabic language and its native speakers within its borders and treat them as equal citizens. Lack of a governmental Arab independent policy plays a major role in the depressing status of Arabic today.

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