

## **THE SOCIOLINGUISTIC AND PRAGMATIC FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE ARABS IN ISRAEL TO SPEAK HEBREW**

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**ABSTRACT:** *In 1948, after the Jews became the sovereign majority in the state, they wanted the dominant if not the exclusive identity of this state to be Jewish, and that Hebrew would be the predominant language. Even though Arabic would be considered as an official language of the State of Israel, it has not acquired this status in the final count. The Jewish majority does not speak Arabic and does not know its culture (Shohamy & Donitsa-Schmidt, 1998; Kraemer, 1990). In effect, Hebrew is the language of the state, and as Smootha claims, the dominant language in Israel is Hebrew (Smootha, 1996: 282). The declared policy of the state is to strengthen the Hebrew language, and this conception is not exclusively for the Jews, both the veterans and the newcomers, but also applies to the Arab citizens of the state. The Arab public is not detached from the linguistic environment in the country. Contact with Hebrew speakers, mass media communication, especially the press, radio and television, are an inseparable part of the daily cultural and linguistic culture among the Arabs (Jammal, 2006). Hebrew has become, in the course of time, an integral part of the linguistic repertoire of the Arabs in Israel. The aim of this article is to determine the pragmatic and sociolinguistic facts that influence Arabs to speak Hebrew and to master it well. We shall deal with the degree of influence of Jewish culture and values on the Arabs in the educational system and outside it which has caused Arab youth to live in a divided world between Arab culture and Jewish culture. We shall relate to the creation of a mixed language that is detrimental to the use of Arabic as a mother tongue and to the reactions against this phenomenon.*

**KEYWORDS: The Sociolinguistic, Pragmatic Factors, Arabs, Israel , Hebrew**

### **THE LINGUISTIC BACKGROUND IN ISRAEL: THE PRESENT SITUATION**

The Arab inhabitants of the country have undergone many political upheavals and have sometimes been subjected to the domination of foreign peoples who rule them, which has had an influence on both languages, Hebrew and Arabic, and on their status. The linguistic aspect from the sixteenth century may be divided into three main periods:

#### **The First Period: 1517-1917**

This period was very long, and lasted for 400 years. It began in 1517 when the country was conquered by Sultan Selim I, and ended in 1917 when the British conquered it. During this long period the dominant language of the population was Arabic. As a spoken and written language, Arabic dominance was due to its existence as a literary language and to the religious leaders who upheld its literary excellence in traditional education. These religious leaders were engaged mainly in the acquisition of the Arabic language and the study of Islamic religious teachings through the literary language and kept apart as much as possible

from the spoken language because it undermined the status of classical Arabic (Mari, 2008: 34).

The education system during the Ottoman period was conducted in the Turkish language, that is to say, the Turkish language was used as the official teaching language, and Arabic had the status of a second language. At a certain stage there was an opportunity for change: "In 1903 the Ottoman Government agreed to far-reaching changes in the study programs for Arab schools, including the teaching of Arabic in elementary schools, on condition that Turkish will be the second language in these schools" (Al-Haj, 1996: 31). However, just when they began to carry out this program, the First World War broke out and everything was held up.

### **The Second Period: 1917-1947**

The British conquered Palestine in 1917 and imposed military rule upon it. In 1920 the military government was replaced by the British Mandate granted by the League of Nations. The Mandate Government continued to rule until the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. During the Mandatory period, three languages were officially recognized according to the following order: English – the language of communication and correspondence with the government; Arabic – to serve the Arab population; Hebrew – to serve the Jewish population. This arrangement was approved in 1922 by written decree of the Royal Council, No. 82.

This was the first time since the year 200 BCE that Hebrew received the status of an official language. As part of the process of implanting the Hebrew language in the country during the establishment of the state, and everyone who immigrated to the country was required to forgo his mother tongue, to speak the language, and was encouraged to change his personal or family name to a Hebrew name that had some connection with Judaism, the famous poets and heroes of the Bible, rabbis, warriors, and outstanding characters in the Zionist Movement (Stahl, 1994).

It should be noted that the matter was in fact applied at first to the decision-makers themselves, those who held senior positions, in order to serve as a model and example for the other veteran and new citizens, and they Hebraized their names. For instance, David Green changed his name to David Ben-Gurion, Golda Myerson became Golda Meir, Shimon Perski is known as Shimon Peres, and Aubrey Eban is Abba Eban. Even the poet, Yehuda Amichai, was born in Germany in 1924 with the name Ludwig Pfeuffer. This phenomenon has now ceased to be the common practice in Israel and new immigrants today retain their own names and are not prepared to give them up.

### **The Third Period: 1948 to the Present Day**

Over the course of time the Hebrew language underwent drastic upheavals and changes due to the social and cultural situation in which the Jews were involved in various countries around the world. The realization of the Zionist idea to establish a state in the Land of Israel served as a spur to strengthen the status of Hebrew which was regarded by the decision-makers as a national symbol which they wished to bestow upon the people living in that country. Hebrew became, within a relatively short time, the national language and the unifying factor for both newcomers and veterans. Hebrew is the first official and

dominant language in Israel, while Arabic, although defined as an official language, is a marginal one and is not in use in Jewish society.

Shohamy (1996) and Shohamy and Spolsky (2003) claim that the univocal ideology of the Zionist Movement that upheld the dominance of Hebrew has led to the declining value of the Arabic language. This situation created an asymmetrical equation in Israel, in which Hebrew began to flourish rapidly while Arabic gradually became weaker.

In addition to its contact with Hebrew, the Arabic language also came into contact with English, and to a lesser degree with French. Every contact between two or more societies eventually leads to the borrowing of words from each other proportionately. That is to say, the weaker society is more influenced by the stronger one, but in course of time even the stronger society begins to borrow words from the other society. As for the influence of the English language, this began during the Mandate period in which English was the first official language in the country. Quite naturally, the Arab clerks who served as intermediaries between the government officials and the local population were influenced by the English language, and they transferred this consciously or unconsciously to others. After the establishment of the state, Hebrew serves as the vehicle for borrowing foreign words by Arabic speakers. Many words such as dynamic, dramatic, clinic, clinical, technological, biological, seminar, boutique, didactic, demographic, ethnic, etc. were introduced into Arabic through the Hebrew language (Mari, 2008: 47).

### **Knowledge of Hebrew in the Arab Sector**

The need to know Hebrew was prescribed firstly by the general perception of the Arab minority living in close proximity to the Jewish majority which regarded its language as a national asset of the highest degree. The Arab minority could not exist on its own strength and was very dependent upon the Jewish society for government and public services, the economy, the labor market, and so on; it therefore used Hebrew as an important tool for the integration of Arabs into the life of the state. In addition, it was natural that in an encounter between speakers of different languages that the language of the majority would be the first one to be used between them.

In the new reality that was created in the country after the establishment of the state, contacts between Arabs and Jews accelerated, and the Arabs began to adopt Hebrew words. At the same time, lexical expressions from Arabic began to enter into Hebrew slang (Avishur, 2003; Abu-Bakr, 2012; Mari, 2013). Most of the Arabs in Israel are bi-lingual, with a command of spoken Arabic and of Hebrew. They have adapted themselves to the culture of the majority and are involved in Israeli culture. Their knowledge of Hebrew is not uniform, and differences exist in the character and degree of usage according to the individual speaker and the subject under discussion. The knowledge can be classified in the following categories:

1. Age: Youngsters have a higher linguistic proficiency in Hebrew than adults.
2. Gender: Proficiency is usually higher among men than among women due to the influence of the linguistic environment in work places and access to language usage.
3. Geographical location: In the spatial sense, two principles determine the dominance of spoken Hebrew. The first is that the closer the Arab settlements are to the metropolitan center, the greater is the use of Hebrew. The second is that the further north we go the use

of Hebrew is gradually lessened. Therefore the use of Hebrew is very evident in the south, in the Negev settlements, since during the years 1948-1967 the Negev was distant and detached from the Arabs in the country, and the daily give and take was done to a great extent with the Jewish community. This caused Hebrew to become embedded in the individual lexicon of each person. Besides the Negev, there is the Arab triangle in the north which is surrounded by Jewish settlements. In the Galilee, the influence of Hebrew is lower because more than half the population is Arab, and there is territorial continuity among the Arab settlements themselves.

4. **Military service:** The youngsters serving in the army are more in command of Hebrew than the others both during the period of service and afterwards. This is true mainly with regard to the Druze (Abu-Rabia, 1996) and the Bedouins who come into close contact with Hebrew speakers.

5. **Mixed residence:** Language proficiency in Hebrew is higher in cities with a mixed population such as Jaffa, Haifa, Lod, Ramla, Upper Nazareth, and Akko (Acre) than in other settlements because of the daily and intensive contacts with Hebrew-speaking neighbors. In effect, the state of Arabic in mixed cities is disturbing because of the decisive influence of Hebrew on the Arab inhabitants.

Hebrew is the first language in the country, and in the course of time additional legislations were made to strengthen the status of Hebrew. For example, in receiving citizenship (since 1952), the mandatory obligation for lawyers to know Hebrew (since 1966), the use of Hebrew is a condition for those engaging in the medical profession (since 2010). At the same time, there were many attempts by the Knesset (Israel Parliament) to nullify the status of Arabic. This situation turned Arabic into a marginal language which mainly served its speakers in the geographical space in which they lived.

### **Factors that Influence Hebrew Speech**

The motives that induce Arabs to speak Hebrew lie are centered in linguistic, cultural and socio-economic aspects as follows:

1. **The historical aspect:** The isolation of the Arab inhabitants in the country from Arab world during the period of military rule, weakened the linguistic and cultural connection with the native speakers around them. At the same time, and without choice, the connection with Hebrew speakers was strengthened and gradually intensified as time passed.

2. **Diglossia in the Arabic language:** The Arab child speaks the language from the time he was born, and in his early years learns the written language (Amara & Mari, 1999; 2002). Hebrew, which is more accessible in the Arab world, fills in for the Arabic speaker the lexical expressions that are missing in the written language, and serves as a go-between for the two linguistic levels. With the help of Hebrew, the Arabic speaker can communicate with his surroundings in a bi-lingual language or even in a tri-lingual one, if we consider Arabic as two separate languages, the spoken and the written ones.

3. **Pragmatic motives:** Hebrew is the hegemonic language in the state, and all the contacts with public and governmental institutions are carried out in Hebrew. The Arabs, as citizens with rights and obligations, are interested in becoming integrated with life in the state in all its spheres: employment, politics, education, communication, and so on. Lack of knowledge of the Hebrew language deprives Arabs of their rights to become part of the cultural mosaic of the country.

4. **Provision of services:** The personnel that provides services to the population are mostly Hebrew speakers, which requires direct communication with the speaker without the help of a translator. In addition to this, computerized connections with institutions are

in the Hebrew language, even those that provide services within Arab settlements, such as the health system, the local authority, banks, post offices, government offices, etc. In the local councils and the cities, all bureaucratic matters are conducted in Hebrew despite the fact that the clerks and the residents receiving the services are Arabic speakers.

5. Work in the Jewish marketplace: Arab society was basically an agrarian society in which the entire family worked on the land which was its main source of livelihood. But the war in 1948 and the expropriation of lands reduced the physical space of the Arabs to a great extent. Besides this, Israeli governments have neglected economic development in the Arab settlements. As a result of this policy, work places in the Arab sector were limited, and most of the Arabs were forced to work in the Jewish marketplace (Haidar, 2005), which necessitated a good knowledge of Hebrew. The worker employed in business firms, garages, agriculture, etc. catches Hebrew words during the day and uses them when he returns home to his family or friends.

6. Israeli modernization: The State of Israel conducts a modern style of life similar to Western countries in the field of education, economics, technological developments, and so on. Hebrew serves as a leverage for introducing modernization into the Arab Palestinian society and allows them to attain higher standards of living. The Arabs regard Hebrew as a tool for acquiring social and economic mobility comparable to that of the Jews in Israel. The Israeli way of life is deeply embedded in the consciousness of the Arab citizen, and as Sasson Somekh says regarding this:<sup>1</sup>

7.

Whatever is invented, such as a new electrical appliance, and every legal and bureaucratic process in Israel – Arab speakers quickly adopt its Hebrew name. An Arab speaker will not go home in order to invent a special name of his own ... generally the Hebrew or foreign word which is used in Israel is transferred to Arabic. For example, ‘frigidaire’, a foreign word implanted into Arabic, and also the word ‘puncture’. Although this word was derived from the English, in that language it does not mean a flat tire, but simply a hole. In Hebrew it received the meaning of ‘a flat tire’ and also ‘an unexpected hitch’, from which it passed as it was into Arabic.

Young Arabs are interested in enjoying the cultural life style in the country, and in view of this fact, these Arabs have become bi-cultural (both a traditional and a progressive society) and bi-lingual (Arabic-Hebrew).

8. Improvement of self-image: Research has shown that Arabs have a negative self-image in comparison with that of Jews (Hoffman, 1977; Abu-Saad. 1999). This aspect is more prominent among many Arab academics, and they therefore take pride in the presence of Jews for their mastery of Hebrew. Young Arabs speak fluent Hebrew and find it easier to speak in Hebrew than to speak and write in literary Arabic.

9. The linguistic aspect: The easy accessibility of the Hebrew word distracts the mind of Arab speakers from using the alternative lexical term in Arabic. There are some Hebrew words such as “havaya” (experience), “empatia” (empathy), “halichon” (walker), and others for which the exact term for them in Arabic is unknown, and therefore they are mentioned in Hebrew since they are understood by both speaker and hearer.

10. Common Semitic origins for Hebrew and Arabic: The considerable resemblance in the vocabulary, syntax and grammar of the two languages constitutes an incentive to use the Hebrew language (Dana, 2000).

<sup>1</sup> Ynet, *Yediot Aharonot*, 22.12.2007.

In addition to all these, there are personal motives for knowing the Hebrew language, which the writer Said Kashu'a has well described in the following words:<sup>2</sup>

I learnt your language at the expense of my mother tongue in order to address you in the language that I thought you would understand. So I do not want anyone who has not mastered the language to address me in slow and clumsy Arabic. I am at work and am not standing at one of the roadblocks. And perhaps I learnt Hebrew for this moment in which I use the most fluent Hebrew to shout at a worker who tried to degrade my value and remind me of my place ... And regarding the issue of language, I wrote: Language is for me solely as an instrument for writing stories. Hebrew is for me a bridge between cultures.

### **Hebrew as a Second Language**

A second language differs from a foreign language by its intensive use in daily life because of the frequent contact with the first language, the target language. Exposure to Hebrew occurs within two frameworks:

a. The informal framework: Contact with the Jewish population in public institutions, in government offices, in workplaces, in the market, in the shopping mall, and so on. One should add that exposure to Hebrew words has also increased through the media, both written and electronic.

b. The formal framework: Arabs began learning Hebrew immediately after the establishment of the state from Grade 3 (beginning with the 2013 school year from Grade 1 by order of the Minister of Education, Naftali Bennett), up to Grade 12. Hebrew accompanies the Arab learner throughout his life. In school they absorb Hebrew words from their textbooks and internalize them. In high school the textbooks in technology, science and mathematics are in Hebrew, and the teachers prefer to teach the material directly in Hebrew. Later on, young Arabs are even more exposed to the language in their academic studies (Amara & Mari, 2002).

Hebrew is learnt in the education system as a second language and not as a foreign language, as for example, English or French in community schools. What even increases the motivation to acquire Hebrew as a second language is the etymological resemblance between the two languages. There are many words that are similar or are derived from the same source between the Arabic mother language and the Hebrew second language. This generates strong support to master Hebrew in a short time. Yet this very resemblance also causes irregularities in the Hebrew language when spoken by the learner, as various studies have noted (Shahada, 1998; Basal, 2007).

### **Mastery of Hebrew among Arabs in Israel**

The importance of learning languages is expressed by the strengthening of contacts among people, nations and cultures. The mastery of Hebrew among the Arab population is gradually increasing with time, and there is a feeling that most of the Arabs know Hebrew at various levels. From a survey conducted by the Central Bureau of Statistics in December 2003 it appears that only 13% of adult Arabs in Israel do not know any Hebrew as against 79% of adult Jews who admit that they do not know Arabic at all (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2004). And from the survey conducted by Avi Degani in 2012 it appears that 65%-75% of the Arabs in Israel have a good command of Hebrew as a second language, but 30%-35% admit that their mastery of the language is "not good – very bad".<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> *Ha'aretz*, 5.9.2012.

<sup>3</sup> See the link: <http://www.inn.co.il/News/News.aspx / 238727>

At the beginning of their first year of university studies, Arab students find it difficult to be in command of Hebrew, besides their difficulties in their social and cultural adaptation. They do not participate in active discussions in the classroom and are shy to ask questions for fear of being derided. But towards the end of the year their command of Hebrew improves significantly, and of English as well, while their command of their mother tongue, Arabic, remains the same as it was and even decreases. This is what arises from the research conducted by Marwan Abu-Ghazala (2009: 6) who sums up the issue by saying that:

As the findings of the research show, this situation leads to negative attitudes among Arab students towards the Arabic language, and may possibly cause, in the long run, the devaluation, decline and erosion of the language amongst them. The linguistic rights of the Arabs which is granted to them in the elementary and high schools to study in their mother tongue is denied them in the framework of higher studies, and they have to cope with the new linguistic reality which does not give consideration to their linguistic rights, to the official status of their language, and degrades its value. As the research proves, there are far-reaching implications for this situation.

After the well-educated young people have gained a good command of Hebrew, they apply for work in state institutions or in government companies through a desire, on one hand, to become integrated into the life of the state, and on the other hand to obtain a respectable position that will correspond to their intellectual abilities. Others turn towards employment in teaching, and they then face a new reality in having to teach in their mother tongue, in Arabic. Teachers who are beginning to cope with this new reality require a considerable amount of time to adapt themselves to it. They intersperse many words in Hebrew in their speech, find it difficult to summarize the study material in written Arabic, and as a result they have to invest enormous efforts in the teaching process.

### **Teaching Hebrew Serves as a Spur for Knowing Jewish Culture**

Arabs learn Hebrew in the framework of mandatory studies. An Arab pupil cannot receive a bagrut (graduation) certificate without learning Hebrew. The study of Hebrew is not conducted only through the channels of language study but is carried out in depth during all the stages of education (elementary, intermediate, and high school) with stress on the cultural aspect of the Jewish world throughout its generations (Spolsky, Shohamy & Mari, 1996).

For example, the study program for teaching Hebrew to Arabs at the high school level (approved by the Minister of Education and Culture in March 1975, and published in the "Special Director Circular No. 1, 1977) emphasized that the starting point in conducting Hebrew language studies for the pupils should be based on the knowledge of Hebrew culture in all its generations, beginning with the biblical period and down to modern times, through the study of Hebrew literature.

According to the program, Arab pupils must learn Hebrew literature, Hebrew poetry, and the Bible as part of their studies of the Hebrew language. They are also obliged to be tested on those subjects in the bagrut examinations. Besides acquiring a knowledge of the Hebrew language and literary aesthetics, the study program also includes ideological, social and civil aims, such as "knowledge of the principles of the cultural legacy of the Jewish

people” and “consideration of social and cultural sensitivities”. There is no doubt that the knowledge of the culture is an integral part of the process of acquiring the language and gaining a command over it.

However, in the Israeli world, the policy makers are not satisfied with this, but require the Arab pupils to study Hebrew language and literature more extensively than Jewish pupils. According to an internal report of the Department for Study Programs in the Ministry of Education,<sup>4</sup> the Arab pupil studies Hebrew language and literature for 7-8 hours a week, in comparison with 3 hours a week in the Jewish sector. The relative ratio of these studies in the study program of an Arab school is 21/9% as compared with 8.8% in the secular Jewish sector, 8.1% in the religious Jewish sector, and 7.9% in the ultra-orthodox sector. Hebrew language and literature are mandatory subjects for both Jews and Arabs.

The writers of this report, Yuval Dror and Yaakov Liberman of the Institute for the Study of Kibbutz Education in Oranim College, lay stress on the fact that an Arab child begins to learn Hebrew from Grade 3 for 3-4 hours a week. According to them, in order to cover these hours, the Arab headmasters reduce the hours for the study of English, art, and the social hour. By contrast, in the various Jewish sectors, only a handful of high school pupils study Arabic and Islam as a mandatory subject for the bagrut examinations.

Arab pupils are not opposed to learning about Jewish culture, but the problem is with material that is of Zionist leanings. It should be noted that such material has been gradually reduced in the new programs. In any case, the deepening of Jewish culture studies is meant to achieve a long-term aim, and not merely for the requirements of bagrut studies. That is to say, for the integration of Arab adults into the life of the state, and to strengthen their Israelization.

The internalization of Hebrew culture and the life style that is customary in Jewish society has become an integral part of the way of life Arab society. The Arabs even engage in Jewish cultural activities which have become an accepted norm in their lives. For example, Arabs celebrate Jewish holidays because of the recess from work in the Jewish sector. Moreover, there are some who enjoy Jewish holidays more than their own holidays because they be at ease without being engaged in holiday preparations.

On the absorption of Hebrew culture among Arab pupils, the poet Haim Hefer has well described this in his ironic poem “Mahmud Studied for Five Years”:<sup>5</sup>

For eight years Mahmud studied in his village school  
He studied well and earnestly, a model for all the rest  
In Grade 1 he sang the songs of Hannuka  
In Grade 3 he drew a picture of Herzl with a beard  
In Grade 4 he learnt about the expulsion from Spain and the diaspora  
And every Friday he dropped a penny into the blue box.

The Jews now say “Mahmud is quite “hamud” (charming)  
The Arabs say that “Mahmud is not Mahmud”

<sup>4</sup> Free Study Period, July 1997, No. 26, p. 5.

<sup>5</sup> The poem was written for the exhibition “Arab Proverbs” displayed in the Hamam Theatre in 1961. See the link: <http://www.ynet.co.il/home/0,7340,L-1722-9752-> [retrieved 13/12/2002].



He is now in a state of crisis, neither here nor there  
And as in the book of Feuerberg, asks himself “Whither”.

The poem faithfully reflects the situation in which these Arab pupils in Israel have been caught. It points to the identity crisis among Arab students in the Israeli education system. Their intensive exposure to Jewish culture comes at the expense of Arab culture and their Palestinian identity. On this issue, Marzuk al-Halabi asserts:

As a general rule, the Jewish city – as a center of linguistic, cultural and political power – has become a source of predominant influence on the Arab individual and community. At the same time, there is a recognizable weakening of the Arab power center, whether Palestinian or Arab, on the Arab community in Israel in view of the general weakness of such centers. The Arab city – as the field for the creation of culture, language and identity – does not exist in Israel. Therefore it will be imported within a few decades from the Arab regions outside the borders of the state. But this importation has narrowed down and even stopped because of the break up of Arab nationalism. This crisis leads the Arab community in the state to re-examine its relations with the Jewish city. According to the signs in the area, the trend is towards the normalization of relations, since experience determines consciousness, and in this case, the language.

Sometimes there is a contradiction between the two cultures. Israel is a Western-type country, and Arabs perceive Jews as enlightened people and wish to come closer to them in order to become more Western. Young Arabs enjoy the leisure culture of young Jews, which are sometimes contrary to Arab tradition, especially among those who usually conduct a traditional way of life.

In effect, an Arab pupil is lost between the two cultures, Jewish and Arab, and lives in a divided world that accompanies him throughout his life. At the regional level this perception reflects the situation of the Arab minority in the country. He lives between two tense and conflicted worlds. On one hand, the Arab world treats these Arabs as Jews (the Jewish Arabs) who have adopted Israeli culture and the Hebrew language. On the other hand, the Jewish public regards the Arabs as a threat to the existence of the state (Barda, 2002), and they are subject to the influence of affiliation and dual loyalty (Reiter, 2005). In this complicated situation “we are neither here nor there”, as the poet says above.

### **Attitudes Towards the Hebrew Language**

As said before, the Arabs in Israel are dependent on the Jewish majority. This dependency increases the contact between the two populations and Hebrew serves as the language of communication with the establishment and the surrounding Jewish environment. Therefore Hebrew fulfils a central role in internal communications for the Arabs in Israel (Badir, 1990). The education system in Israel prepares Arab pupils to gain mastery over the Hebrew language and they relate to it cordially, as shown in the various studies that will be presented below.

The attitude of the learner towards the language and its speakers has a strong influence on the acquisition of a second or foreign language, and even increases the motivation to command it at a high level. All the studies that have dealt with examining the attitude of Arab pupils to the Hebrew language have shown a fairly positive disposition towards it.

This is in total contradiction of the attitude of Jewish pupils and their parents who perceived the Arab as an enemy and as a primitive and inferior person (Brosh, 1996). This is due to the negative image of the Arabic language and its speakers held by the Israel public in general. Such a perception leads to poor motivation to learn Arabic. We thus find that there is a constant decrease in the number of pupils who choose to learn the language in the upper classes of high schools (Shlomo, 2006). Some parents take their children out of the classes for studying Arabic, as for example the father of a pupil in the center of the country who claimed in front of the national supervisor for Arabic studies in Jewish schools, that: "I do not want my son to be an assistant for Arafat" (Nir, 2001).

Badir (1990) found that the positive attitudes shown by Arab pupils towards Hebrew contributes to the success in the study of this subject. Shohamy and Donitsa-Schmidt (1998), also noted that Arab pupils had positive disposition towards the study of the Hebrew language, which derives from their instrumental motivation for learning the language.

From the research work of Amara and Mari (2002) it appears that Arab pupils expressed a desire to learn the language, there was no opposition to studying it, and they did not regard it as the language of the enemy. Even when they were asked whether the study of Hebrew should begin later on and not in Grade 3, all of them wanted to learn it at the earlier stage. There is no doubt that the positive attitude towards the target language leads to higher achievements in it. This claim is reflected in the research conducted by Athili (2004: 342) who notes that because of the instrumental value of Hebrew, there is a positive connection between the attitude of the examinees towards the Hebrew language and their achievements in reading comprehension and grammar.

In another research by Abu-‘Asaba, Jiyusi and Sabar Ben-Yehoshua (2011), it seems that the positive attitude of the Arabs towards Hebrew has not changed. They assert in their article (Abu-‘Asaba, Jiyusi & Sabar Ben-Yehoshua, 2011: 30) that:

All the Arab pupils who participated in the research recognized the importance of the Hebrew language for them. They believed that a good knowledge of it was a basic necessity and an important means for becoming integrated with the state and for conducting their lives. They all thought that the Hebrew language should be studied in the schools. These finds are in accord with the findings of previous researchers, according to which the Arabs in Israel acquire the knowledge of the Hebrew language for instrumental purposes. Indeed, although most of the pupils sit for their bagrut examinations in Hebrew at the 3-unit level, yet a high percentage of them sit for them at the 5-unit level and achieve higher grades for them than for their own mother tongue, Arabic (Amara & Mari, 2002). It should be noted that in January 2002, MK Zehava Gal-On of Meretz submitted a question in the Knesset regarding the achievements of Arab pupils in Hebrew, and it was found that their success in the bagrut examinations for Hebrew language was on the ascendant (Goldman, 2002).

All the above-mentioned research was carried out independently by researchers in high schools and colleges. On the other hand, the most recent and up-dated research which was conducted by the Ministry of Education (2015) in elementary schools clearly indicated that

there were positive attitudes towards the Hebrew language already in the early stages of studying this subject.

### **The Mixed Language – Innovative Speech**

Hebrew has penetrated rapidly and without control into spoken Arabic among Arab speakers in Israel. For 68 years, a relatively short time in the history of languages, Hebrew has mixed into Arabic and has become an integral part of the linguistic repertoire of the Arab population in the country. The use of Hebrew is conducted in two ways:

- a. Direct speech in Hebrew when meeting Hebrew speakers. This is natural in a society composed of a majority and a minority. A minority member of a society communicates with a majority member in his language, the language of the majority.
- b. Integration of Hebrew words with spoken Arabic used by Arabic speakers in their daily conversation. The mixed language serves as communication between Arabic speakers in the public sphere and also in the home. Hebrew has usurped the position of literary Arabic and has become a kind of mediator between it and spoken Arabic. Public, communication and artistic spheres that were once perceived as the exclusive possession of the literary language have suffered a significant Hebrew influence.

The integration of Hebrew was done spontaneously, since the Hebrew word had become more accessible. Many words such as ‘beseder’ (okay), ‘deshe’ (lawn), ‘ma’alit’ (elevator), ‘yofi’ (lovely), ‘metzuyan’ (excellent), ‘tov’ (good / okay), ‘nehmad’ (nice), ‘nehedar’ (marvellous), ‘kupat holim’ (medical clinic), ‘bituah leumi’ (national insurance), ‘michlala’ (college), ‘mahala kasha’ (serious illness), etc. have entered into spoken Arabic. The Hebrew words are well integrated into spoken Arabic, and nearly every sentence in Arabic contains a word or a phrase in Hebrew. Children growing up today in Israel speak the new kind of Arabic, and do not always know the original Arabic word. It should be noted that the linguistic *mélange* is expanding and has found its way into the local printed Arabic press (Hamad, 2009), as well as the local Palestinian literature (Khial, 2010).

The integration is not only done by the transfer (relocation) of the single word, but is reflected in the sentence structure, in the syntax, in the morphology, and in the semantics. For example, ‘darkon’ (passport) in the plural form becomes in the mixed Arabic ‘darcunat’, and the plural form of two ‘manot’ (food serving) becomes ‘manaten’. When the road is jammed they say ‘bakakat al-tarik’ using the Hebrew word ‘pkak’ (traffic jam), and so a new verb is born into Arabic.

Nir (1993) asserts that the borrowing of words from one language to another necessitates adaptation of word formation to the target language. The change in formation involves phonological, morphological, syntactical and semantic changes, to which we should also add the sociolinguistic aspect. In this connection, Judith Rosenhaus (2008 :58) notes that: The influence of one language on another is expressed not only by the borrowing of vocabulary but also by the expansion of the phonological system of the borrower’s language and by certain changes in its grammatical system. However, each language, Hebrew and Arabic, retains its special characteristics.

In fact, we are talking about a new language that has integrated Hebrew words, expressions and terms into itself. I researched this language in depth in my book *Walla Beseder* (Mari, 2013a) with its broad mechanism of expressions through presenting many examples

commonly used in public institutions and in daily life, in the newspapers, Internet, and the highly charged Israeli political lexicon. I called this language “Arvarit” (Arabrew) and in Arabic “al-Arabriya” which is in fact a Creole (pidgin) language. I noted that it is understood only by Arab speakers in Israel, and that those living in Arab countries find it hard to understand us when we visit them.

The creation of a mixed language is not only an isolated linguistic process. It has political, historical, cultural and sociolinguistic contexts. It instructs us considerably about the charged encounter between two peoples in the State of Israel. The Arab population in the state regard the Arabic language as the symbol of its identity and an integral part of its survival in its homeland. Language is a kind of insurance certificate, a guarantee that strengthens the social and national ties within the community and preserves the existence of the Arabs as a minority within the State of Israel. The use of Hebrew at such a high level of frequency, on one hand, and the linguistic *mélange* on the other hand, have an influence on the Arabic language and on distancing the younger generation from speaking this language. We therefore see that during the past decade there has been serious consideration among the Arab population regarding the matter of the Arabic language. The call from various organizations to speak the correct written language is gradually becoming intensified, both at the personal and at the public level. Interest in Arabic is created through research, press reports, and special conferences on the Arabic language, lectures on Arabic in schools, and also the interest taken by educational and cultural associations to promote the language (Mari, 2013a).

## CONCLUSION

Although both Hebrew and Arabic are official languages of the State of Israel, in actual fact, Hebrew is the language of the state, of the state laws and regulations legislated in it, and even administrative, government and public matters are conducted in this language. Arab speakers live within the Hebrew language and meet with Israelis speaking Hebrew in every place and sphere of life. Quite naturally, and usually without intention, Hebrew began to influence the language of the Arabs, who need to use it in their daily lives, in public institutions, in government offices, in academic institutions, in hospitals, in workplaces, in the marketplace, in the shopping malls, etc. Exposure to Hebrew words also increased through the written and electronic media.

The Arabs in Israel mastered Hebrew speech, reading and writing, and adopted more and more words and expressions from that language. Today, combination of Hebrew and Arabic words is not only a common practice among Arab intellectuals but is also widely done among Arabic speakers at various levels. The more intensive the contact with the Jewish community, the greater is the command over Hebrew and its ever increasing use.

An important sociolinguistic-cognitive process is occurring within the Arab population and is expressed by the fact that thought processes are beginning to change. This is because command of the Hebrew language is not a mechanical matter. Arabs in Israel are beginning to think in Hebrew and are thus entering into the Jewish world of concepts and culture. Adoption of the Hebrew language is an entry permit into this world, and in effect an Israelization of the Arabs is occurring through adoption of the language.

The heightened effort to strengthen the Arabic language was not created in a vacuum but comes in the wake of the growing dominance of the mixed language. This language is actually a new language that can be listed in the family of Creole languages, and is gradually strengthening at the expense of the Arabic language. The strengthening of Arabic does not mean being opposed to speaking Hebrew. On the contrary, the idea is to speak Arabic correctly, to have a command of Hebrew and to speak it when coming into contact with the Jewish society, but within the Arab society to speak standard Arabic without a mixture of Hebrew.

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