**Hebrew words in the Arabic literary works of the author Shokeya Mansour: Influence of the Hebrew language or portent of the Hebrification of Arabic?**

**Abstract**

This article deals with the incorporation of Hebrew words in the Arabic literary writing of the author Shokeya Mansour. We have attempted to answer the question: Does Mansour’s integration of Hebrew words into her literary writing reflect the influence of the Hebrew language upon her as a bilingual person, or does it serve another purpose? The study posits that Mansour does not incorporate Hebrew words into her literary work due to the influence of Hebrew upon her, since Mansour is known for her devotion to the Arabic language, her dedication to the Palestinian people - most of whom live under Israeli occupation - and her strong opposition to the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories. In addition, the article addresses the contact points between languages, Israeli government policy toward Hebrew and Arabic, the status of Hebrew among Arab citizens of Israel, and the motivations that lead members of an occupied nation to adopt the language of the occupier.

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In what follows, we will address the incorporation of Hebrew words in the literary works of the Arab writer, Shokeya Mansour. Like many Arab citizens of Israel who are proficient in Hebrew - to varying degrees - as a second language, Mansour is bilingual. Mansour was born in Nazareth, has worked in the field of journalism, and writes regular columns for several newspapers. She writes stories and poetry, as well as articles on political and social topics. Mansour resides in the Tira, a city in the area known as the ‘Triangle,’ a concentration of Arab towns in Israel. She was not selected artbitrarily for this study: Mansour is known for her devotion to the Arabic language, and for her strong opposition to the process of ‘Hebrification’ of Arabic in the State of Israel, especially in the spoken dialect. This study presumes, in light of what is known about Mansour, that her incorporation of Hebrew words in her writing does not reflect the influence of Hebrew upon her, nor is it an arbitrary occurance; rather, Mansour’s integration of Hebrew words is conscious, reflecting her ideological orientation toward the Arabic language, as well as her policies with respect to language.

The set of texts selected for this study are two collections of stories: *Ma’adhūn min al-Līkūd* (‘An officiant from the Likud’), published in 2019 by Alwasat Today (Ramallah); and *Sarīr* *Yūsuf Haykal* (‘The bed of Yousef Heykel’), published in 2013 by the Palestinian Foundation for Publishing and Distribution (Ramallah). The quantity of Hebrew words contained in Mansour’s literary works is relatively limited. This reinforces the hypothesis that her usage of such words is not the product of unconscious influence upon her, but in fact is intended precisely to strengthen the Arabic language and to further innoculate it against the influence of Hebrew. It is, after all, reasonable to assume that if Mansour was unconsciously influenced by Hebrew, the presence of Hebrew words in her literary writings would be much greater.

**Motivations for Adopting the Language of the Occupier**

Like other nations that have lived under occupation, the Palestinian people suffer under the occupation of the Israeli regime. Nations living under occupation often tend to mimic the language of their occupiers. Mansour believes that language is the first entry point on the road to assimilation with the occupying nation. Assimilation of this kind drastically harms the dignity and patriotism of the occupied people. The fullest culmination of this influence can be seen when fidelity to the mother tongue is weakened in favor of attraction to the language of the occupier. Mansour believes that many factors are involved in the adoption of the occupier’s language by an occupied people: Occupied people may feel that the adoption of the occupier’s language is empowering, in contrast to their mother tongue which is associated with weakness, defeatism, and frustration. Moreover, according to Mansour, adoption of the occupier’s language may stem from a desire among members of the occupied people to please their occupiers, thus improving their reputation and lifting themselves up to the ‘level’ of the occupier.

**Incorporation of Hebrew Words in the Literary Works of Shokeya Mansour as an Expression of Protest against the Domination of Hebrew over Arabic**

By way of her use of Hebrew words, Mansour expresses her opposition to Israeli government policies that have aimed, since the establishment of the state, to Hebraize the Arabic language. Mansour is well aware of the powerful influence of Hebrew on Arabic usage, and she therefore warns Arab citizens of Israel against the dominance of Hebrew, beseeching them to maintain the purity of the Arabic language and to raise awareness of the policies of the Israeli government as it attempts to Hebraize Arabic. Mansour does not integrate Hebrew words into her literary writing due to the language’s influence upon her. She is a figure known for her devotion to the Arabic language and her dedication to the Palestinian people - most of which lives under Israeli occupation - and her strong opposition to the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories. (Interview with Shokeya Mansour - 20 October, 2019) The incorporation of Hebrew works in Mansour’s literary writings is instructive of the authenticity of these works, as well as the assimilation of the Palestinian heroes who appear in her stories, in the context of day-to-day life in Israel. Moreover, the use of Hebrew words demonstrates the enormous influence of the Hebrew language upon them - so much so that they speak in Hebrew in a regular, comfortable fashion, a phenomenon to which Mansour is vociferously opposed. In order to demonstrate the strong degree of assimilation of the Palestinian people with the occupying Jewish people, Mansour draws attention, in a number of her literary works, to leaders of the Jewish state, such as David Ben-Gurion and Moshe Dayan. Images of these leaders were displayed in classrooms in Arab schools, indicating the depth of assimilation of the occupied Palestinian people among the occupying Jewish people, to the point that these leaders became ‘true’ figureheads, ingrained in school syllabi by the Israeli Ministry of Education, which forced them upon Palestinian students. Mansour is well aware of the foreignness of these Hebrew words within her literary works, and for this reason they typically appear within quotation marks. Below are several examples of the incorporation of Hebrew words in the Arabic literary writings of Shokeya Mansour. The Arabic sentences are translated into English with Hebrew words indicated in bold:

1. Grandma thought they were **antiquities** (*‘atiqot*), and that they had to keep them as a keepsake from Grandpa. (*Ma’adhūn min al-Līkūd* , 36)

[وكان رأي الجدة أنها "**عتيكوت**" أثريات قديمة عليهم الاحتفاظ بها تذكارًا بها من الجد.]

1. An officiant from the **Likud** (*Ma’adhūn min al-Līkūd* , 9)

[مأذون من ا**لليكود.**]

1. I still refuse the... from the **Likud**. (*Ma’adhūn min al-Līkūd*, 15)

[ما زلت رافضة مأذون **الليكود.**]

1. Above the blackboard located in the middle of the classroom appear faces affixing their gaze upon us, and the teacher emphasizes that these were the leaders who build the state: “**David Ben-Gurion**, **Golda Meir**, **Moshe Dayan**.” (*Ma’adhūn min al-Līkūd* , 19-20)

[فوق اللوح الأسود الّذي يتوسط جدار الصّف، تظهر وجوه تنظر إلينا بحدة، والمعلمة تؤكد أن هؤلاء من قاموا ببناء الدولة: (**بن** **غوريون**، **غولدا** **مئير**، **موشي** **ديان**).]

1. It was not only in our class that they hung up pictures; they did so in all of the classrooms. As for the principal’s office - there, the pictures were larger, their facial expressions more transparent, and the image of **Moshe Dayan** featured a mocking smile breaking out on his lips, as if he was making fun of the principal. (*Ma’adhūn min al-Līkūd* , 19-20)

[ليس فقط في صفّنا توضع الصور، بل في جميع الصّفوف، أمّا في غرفة المديرة، فالصّور أكبر، والملامح أوضح، وصورة **موشي** **ديان** تتميّز بابتسامه ساخرة تشقّ شفتيه، كأنّه يستهزئ بالمديرة؟]

1. After some time, the doctor appeared and said: “**Ms.** [*giveret*]Nasrallah...” I looked around... Apart from myself I found noone. (*Sarīr* *Yūsuf Haykal*, 120)

[بعد فتره أطلّ الطّبيب ونادى: "جبيرت" (سيدة) نصر الله ..." نظرت حولي ... لم أجد إلا أنا.]

1. **My dear** [*khabibi*][[1]](#footnote-1)… You do not know about furniture – this is the bed of Yusuf Haykal… Yusuf Haykal… Yusuf Haykal… Do you not know him? He was the mayor of Jaffa. (*Sarīr* *Yūsuf Haykal*, 153)

**[**يا **خبيبي** ... أنت لا تعرف بالأثاث، هذا سرير يوسف هيكل ... يوسف هيكل ... يوسف هيكل ... ما بتعرفوا؟ اللي كان رئيس بلدية يافا.**]**

1. I attempted to persuade the official that she (Suar) was just a young girl and was not proficient in Hebrew, but the official insisted on asking her: “**do you have a weapon?** [*yesh lakh nesheq?*]” Suar did not know what the word *nesheq* (weapon) meant. (*Sarīr* *Yūsuf Haykal*, 160)

[حاولتُ إفهام الموظفة أنَها (سوار) طفلة صغيره ولا تعرف اللغة العبرية جيدا، لكن أصرّت أن تسألها: "**يش** **لخ** **نيشك**؟" لم تعرف سوار معنى كلمة "**نيشك**".]

1. The official didn’t pay any heed to what I said, and insisted on asking about the ‘**weapon** [*nesheq*].’ Here she [Suar] fell into the ‘**weapon**’ trap. (*Sarīr* *Yūsuf Haykal*, 160)

[لم تهتم الموظفة لكلامي بل أصرت أن تسأل عن ال"**نيشك**". ها هي (سوار) تقع الأن في مصيدة ال"**نيشك**".]

1. Brother… **Uzi** is willing to pay in cash. (*Sarīr* *Yūsuf Haykal*, 61)

[خيا،... مستعد **عوزي** يدفع المصاري كاش.]

**Conclusion**

The very sparse usage of Hebrew words by Shokeya Mansour in her literary works testifies decisively to the fact that, when she does employ them, this usage does not stem from the influence of Hebrew upon her. Rather, it is motivated by her desire to protest the domination of the Hebrew language over Arabic among Palestinians, a phenomenon that harms the patriotism, dignity, and pride of the Palestinian nation.

After the 1948 war, Israel’s leaders found themselves with an Arab minority population that remained entrenched in its homeland. Some of them related to this minority as a historic danger, sparing no effort in order to expel them. Others planned to Hebraize the land and its people, and they indeed succeeded in replacing the names of regions, springs, and rivers, as well as some villages and cities, with Hebrew names. For example, they changed the name of the city of ‘Akka (known in English as Acre) to the Hebrew Akko, and that of Yaffa (Jaffa) to Yaffo. They did not, however, succeed in Hebraizing the land or the Arab people residing on it. In the early stages of Israeli rule over this Arab minority, the thought was entertained of teaching only in the Hebrew language at Arab schools, in order to Hebraize the Arab minority, but this initiative failed. Another proposal was for Arab poets and writers in Israel to write in Hebrew - this attempt also failed. Shokeya Mansour is well aware of the Israeli government’s policies, which aim to strengthen the status of Hebrew and weaken that of Arabic. She is aware that the Israeli regime finds satisfaction in the phenomenon of Palestinians incorporating Hebrew words in their day-to-day spoken language - so much so that this occurs as part of their daily routine. This phenomenon, after all, coheres with the linguistic policy of the Israeli regime since its inception. In light of this, one should see the incorporation of Hebrew words in the literary writings of Shokeya Mansour as a cry from the depths, expressing deep pain and protesting this phenomenon, which serves only the interests of the Israeli government and further advances its linguistic policy.

1. The word *habībi*, ‘my dear,’ is Arabic but is frequently used in Hebrew slang, and the spelling in this passage in Mansour’s writing indicates Hebrew pronunciation. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)