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

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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.

Key words: Arabic, Hebrew, Israel, Palestinian, literature.

**Introduction**

When two peoples encounter each other as a result of proximity, trade, or occupation, a situation of linguistic influence arises. In the case under discussion, Hebrew and Arabic are languages that have come into contact with each other over the course of history. In situations where two language systems encounter and interact with each other, a mutual influence of language categories arises. According to Weinrich, languages in contact exhibit mixing in terms of vocabulary, phonetics, and syntax. This mixing usually occurs when a bilingual speaker employs words from the donor language in the recipient language or identifies a phoneme from the secondary system with a phoneme from the primary system, i.e. the native language (Weinrich, 1968, p. 14). According to Karttunen, when language contact occurs, in general the most immediate, significant, and intense influence is seen in vocabulary, more than in any other dimension of language. It seems that influence on phonology is the second most intense after vocabulary, whereas syntax is the most resistant area to influence. (Karttunen, 1977, p. 183).

Israeli Arabs exhibit a classic example of bilingualism, since they speak Hebrew in addition to their native Arabic. Ferguson divided Arabic into the high variety (classical) and the spoken language, i.e. the low variety, which is used in everyday life. The latter is exempt from the normative rules of the classical language, since one can find a relatively large number of foreign elements in spoken Arabic in contrast to literary Arabic, which tries to preserve normativity (Ferguson, 1959, p. 336). When cultures encounter each other in their various forms, language serves as the vehicle for this encounter, but the field of power usually expresses a linguistic superiority, which is likely related to the cultural dominance of one culture over another.

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 arbitrarily 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.

In this regard, it should be noted that the influence of Hebrew on Arabic in Israel is significant, and at its peak can be seen in attempts by Arab writers to produce *belles-lettres* in Hebrew, either by creating literary works in Hebrew or by translating them from Arabic into Hebrew. Arab authors deliberately weave Arabic words into these works, so as to convey the Arabic source culture and to mediate between the two languages—Hebrew and Arabic. There is a growing number of these authors: currently there are eleven such writers (Shakkour, 2013, pp. 1-17; Shakkour, 2014, pp. 169-195).

**Contact between languages**

Language is a dynamic essence that shapes and forms over time. Most of the world's languages have developed in stages. The spoken and written forms gradually change in all parts of a region where the population is united by language. The spoken form changes first, with the written form changing in the wake of shifts in the spoken form. However, written language is more conservative than spoken language. The languages of oral cultures that do not possess a written form or a writing system also exhibit gradual change. These cultures produce extensive literature in terms of poetry, folk tales, proverbs, and fables, and these literary genres differ from the colloquial language, even when no written language exists. In general, these forms are more conservative than spoken language, which evolves and shifts (Schwarzwald, 2015, p. 55).

Few spoken cultures exist in isolation without contact with other cultures. Contact with other cultures often occurs as a result of competition, war, or occupation, etc.—phenomena that result in heavy losses for one of the language cultures. Since the nineteenth century, scholars have sought to describe the linguistic characteristics of remote tribes in the Americas and elsewhere, in order to study their fundamental linguistic properties and describe the development of the world's languages. To date, data has been gathered on groups of language speakers in Australia, the Pacific Islands, and elsewhere (Weinrich, 1968, p. 14; Schwarzwald, 2015, p. 55).

Most of the world's languages are not isolates. War and occupations, trade links, cultural relations, and political ties between countries (including marriages between royal houses from various states), voluntary and forced migrations (e.g. deportations), and contact with neighbors who speak other languages give rise to considerable interlinguistic influence. These influences may be hidden or overt. Evidence of this is seen in the long history of the Middle East as well as of peoples in all parts of the world (Schwarzwald, 2015, p. 55).

The Hebrew language can hardly be said to have developed in isolation, and its history shows substantial developments in every strata of the language, most of which stem from contact with other languages. Examples include the influence of Aramaic, Greek and Latin discernible in early rabbinic literature. Medieval Hebrew was similarly shaped by contact with other languages (Schwarzwald, 2015, p. 56).

**The relationship of the Arab population in Israel to Hebrew**

Hebrew has a prominent place in the daily lives of Israeli Arabs, almost all of whom have mastered it at some level. Hebrew learning in schools and daily contact between Arabs and Jews have meant that Hebrew has become integral to the needs of Arab citizens, and thus the language has acquired status in Arab society. The study of Hebrew and acquisition of fluency in it provide Israeli Arabs with multiple means to access the Jewish majority group that controls the country and most of its social, economic, and educational resources. Language is the central mechanism for interpersonal communication, and it is via language that individuals communicate with the outside world and strengthen social frameworks and cultural consciousness (Mar'i, 2001, pp. 45-46). Thus, the use of Hebrew is an essential and important tool for Israeli Arabs, which makes their daily lives easier (Amara, 2002, pp. 86-101).

Although Hebrew is the second most important language among Israeli Arabs, crucial for contact with Jews in various spheres of life and as an agent for modernization, there remain sociolinguistic restrictions on language convergence, according to Ben Rafael (1994, p. 176):

The dual identity (Palestinian and Israeli) is reflected in the linguistic repertoire of Palestinians in Israel. The tension between the two identities—Israeli and Palestinian—limits the degree of convergence with Hebrew, the language of the dominant Jewish culture. In other words, Arabs adopt a strategy of

linguistic integration. On the one hand, by acquiring a high linguistic competence in Hebrew, Arabs attempt to connect to the wider social network shaped by the majority culture; on the other, they preserve their identity by maintaining their mother tongue.

According to Saban and Amara (2004), Arabs learn Hebrew as a second language within the formal education system. Students have a positive attitude to Hebrew, and do not perceive it as an ‘enemy’ language. Arabs respect and cherish Hebrew as an important language and seek to learn it to a high degree of proficiency. Arab students are prepared to learn Hebrew not only for communication with speakers of that language, but also in order to get to know the lives of the Jewish people and to take part in the life of the state. A significant proportion of students reported that they were happy to learn Hebrew from first grade, and that they opposed starting to study it at a later stage.

The idea that Hebrew is an imperialist language emerged from the perception that the new State founded in Palestine was transient, and that Arab armies would defeat it and change the political map. When Arabs in Israel realized that the State of Israel was an enduring fact, and that Hebrew was an integral part of the landscape, this perception waned (Mar'i, 2013, p. 73). It is worth noting that Israeli Arabs do not see Hebrew as a language of occupation, unlike Arabs in the West Bank and Gaza post-1967. Palestinian electronic media regard Hebrew as the language of the Zionist enemy, used to manage administrative affairs vis-à-vis the occupation, and they warn the population not to be swayed by it so as to avoid legitimizing the continuation of the occupation.

***‘Aravrit* – “Arabrew”**

A new, mixed, spoken language is emerging among Israeli Arabs themselves, in which Hebrew is a significant component. This speech is a mixture of three languages: literary Arabic, spoken Arabic, and Hebrew. The proportion of Hebrew words that are integrated into this spoken language is directly influenced by the speaker's level of integration into Israeli society. The speaker is the product of an intermediate language, which differs from classical Arabic and from any dialect of spoken Arabic in the Arab world. This language is a linguistic mish-mash that consists of spoken Arabic and Hebrew (Mar'i, 2013, p. 20).

This phenomenon is commonly known as linguistic interference. It arises as a result of the influence of one language on a second language in cases where there is a majority and minority or bilingualism. The greater the linguistic proximity of the source language to the target language, the stronger the linguistic interference that occurs. Linguistic interference is expressed in pronunciation, phonology, and in the syntactical structure and morphology of the two languages, but it is mostly dominant in the lexicon (Mar'I, 2013, p. 20).

**Israeli linguistic policy towards Arabic and Hebrew**

Snir (1990, pp. 248-253) offers a detailed analysis of the efforts by Israel's majority culture to dominate the Arab minority following the establishment of the State of Israel, an event that Palestinians refer to as the *Nakba* ("Catastrophe") and which was a traumatic event for Arabs in Israel. The Israeli establishment attempted to impose a system of re-education and re-culturalization aimed at distancing local Arabs from their Palestinian heritage and integrating them into the life of the State[[1]](#footnote-1), since it considered nationalist tendencies within the Israeli Arab community to be dangerous. Before he left Israel, the poet Mahmoud Darwish asserted that the premise of the Israeli establishment and the Israeli public was that every Arab was both suspect and guilty.

The Israeli establishment's strategy for achieving this goal was harsh and gave rise to a strong negative reaction from the Arab community. For example, Michael Assaf-- a Jewish Israeli Middle East expert who was also a key figure in the Arabist arm of the Israeli establishment in the 1950s, and editor-in-chief of establishment journals including the weekly حقيقة الأمر *(ḥaqīkat al-ʾamri*), the daily newspaper اليوم  *(al-yawm*) and the Arabic journal of the Teachers' Union صدى التّربية  *(ṣadā al-tarbiyah)--* suggested that Arab elementary schools should incorporate additional hours of Hebrew study at the expense of Arabic. As a result, Assaf became *persona non grata* within the Arab community (especially among the communists) and is often described as a disseminator of hatred, incitement, and bias against the Arab minority and as someone with a hostile attitude toward Arabs within and outside of Israel (Snir, 1990, pp. 248-253).

In contrast to Snir, who maintains that Israel's majority culture failed to dominate the minds of the Arab minority in Israel despite its best efforts and a strong desire to do so, Amir (1992, p. 41) believes that the majority culture failed in this regard because it did not try. If the majority culture wanted Arabs at all (by force of circumstance, not choice), at most it wanted them to lend a picturesque, Orientalist flavor to the country, to be hardworking, law-abiding subjects, and, wherever possible, to be passive players in party politics. Further, it clearly and openly preferred them to be Arabs who were "loyal to their nation and tradition, fighting perhaps for their rights" in the enlightened Israeli regime, but not to be Israelis with all that this status implied.

The efforts by the majority culture to achieve symmetry between political and cultural hegemony and to assimilate the minority culture have goaded the minority into intense national cultural activity that cannot compare to that of any other Palestinian community. This cultural debate is taking place under a somewhat equivocal reciprocity: the Arab-Palestinian minority had been the majority before Israel's establishment and can still maintain that it is the majority if the balance of Middle Eastern power is considered. On the other hand, the current Jewish majority is not only a minority in a region which is entirely Arab, but its collective consciousness remains permeated with the memory of having been a minority during most of its history, both in the Land of Israel and in the Diaspora. No wonder, then, that it continues to fall back on the characteristic patterns of a minority struggling for existence, or that it uses these patterns to mask its personality (Grossman, 1992, p. 19; Kial, 2006, pp. 15-16).

The Israeli administration's policy of weakening the status of the Arabic language continues to this day and is reflected by the Nation-State Law, passed by the Knesset on July 19, 2018. The Nation-State Law means that Israel is the nation-state of the Jewish people only. According to the principles of the Nation-State Law, the Arabic language is not considered an official language, but rather a language with special status. The Nation=State Law has sparked a bitter debate among Arab citizens of Israel, because it makes no mention of Israel as a democratic state that gives equality to all of its citizens, in addition to the demotion of the status of the Arabic language and the definition of Hebrew as the sole official language of the state.

In 2006, the Higher Monitoring Committee for Arab Citizens of Israel, along withthe National Committee for the Heads of Arab Local Authorities in Israel, published the document, “The Future Vision of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel," which they called a first attempt of its kind to define the role and status of the Arabs in Israel. The document is in fact a vision of eliminating Israel as the nation-state of the Jewish people, and calls for recognition of the Nakba, recognition of the Arab citizens of Israel as a national group, collective national rights for Arabs, and representation in the state’s symbols. The vast majority of Arab citizens of Israel think that the Nation-State Law completely undermines their official national position represented by the Higher Monitoring Committee. The status of the Arabic language in the Nation-State Law is a natural outcome of official policy over 70 years. Arab politicians in Israel are certain that the purpose of the Nation-State Law is to “strip” the Arabs of their identity, their language and their culture. Arab politicians in Israel wonder how the Israeli administration could ignore Arabic, the mother tongue of 20 percent of the citizens of the country. If one wants to make peace with one’s neighbors, one cannot ignore their language.

Minister of Education Naftali Bennett decided in 2015 to begin Hebrew language education in the Arab school system already in kindergarten­­, rather than in third grade as had been the norm before. He claimed that this decision grew out of a concern for the children’s future; the earlier that children from Arab communities master Hebrew, the easier will be their integration into the market, workforce, and society. Moreover, mastery of Hebrew is also necessary in order to succeed in institutions of higher education in Israel. However, both the Nation-State Law and Bennett’s decision to begin Hebrew language education in kindergarten in the Arab sector reinforce the assumption that the Israeli government is entirely satisfied by the penetration of Hebrew words into spoken Arabic and encourages this phenomenon, if surreptitiously. After all, anyone who supports the Nation-State Law will find no difficulty in also supporting the massive penetration of Hebrew words into spoken Arabic.

Hebrew is part of the Zionist project, and of Israel's self-perception as a Jewish state. The Zionist ideology aspired with all its might to realize the slogan "One People, One Language." After the Jews became the majority and the rulers in 1948, they called for the dominant, if not the exclusive, identity of Israel to be Jewish, and for the dominant language to be Hebrew. Even the languages of the Jewish Diaspora were suppressed, including Jewish Arabic languages (Mar'i, 2013, pp. 72-73).

Arabic is the mother tongue and the main national language of Israel's Arab citizens and serves as a written and spoken language for this population. Arabic is taught as a first language in all Arab schools in Israel from first through twelfth grades, and also in Arab teacher training colleges. However, Israeli government policy toward Arabic, which is formally afforded the same status as Hebrew, suggests that Arabic is not in fact perceived as a state language in the same way as Hebrew. The two-faced approach that the Israeli government takes to Arabic reflects how the state defines the boundaries of the Israeli collective (Shohamy, 1995).

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 author Shokeya Mansour strongly opposes the Nation-State Law and the demotion of the Arabic language. She views the Nation-State Law as an act of humiliation, and she expresses her resistance in her literary work precisely by incorporating Hebrew words into her Arabic. It is very likely that her intention in incorporating Hebrew words is unclear to some of her readers, because some readers will think it is a result of the influence of Hebrew on the Arabic language. (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. (Interview with Shokeya Mansour, 20 October, 2019). 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*][[2]](#footnote-2)… 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.]

**The Contribution of Hebrew Words in Mansour’s Works to Literary Education in Departments of Arabic Literature in Colleges**

Lecturers teaching Arabic literature at academic colleges are able to give attention to the use of the slogan “the Likud,” which reflects a cynical, grotesque, and even ironic usage whose purpose is to sow a toxic form of criticism directed against the acutely discriminatory reality experienced by Arab citizens of Israel and other minorities in the country. The Likud party, known for its extremist positions against the Arab minority, is positioned as a representative symbol.

Lecturers of Arabic literature at colleges are, furthermore, able to note the literary significance reflected in the refusal that meets the officiant from the Likud. This refusal indicates a deep crisis in the mutual relations between the Israeli establishment and the state’s Arab minority. The literary poetics concealed between the lines and reflected in the refusal of the Likud officiant hint at a tragic irony disguised as comedic irony, whose exclusive purpose is to ridicule and belittle the status quo of Israeli life. The Likud party, which represents the establishment, sticks its nose even into matters related to family, engagement, and marriage, which are taboo subjects in Arab tradition. The refusal of an officiant from the Likud merely escalates the situation, deepening a preexisting rift.

College lecturers in Arabic literature can emphasize the fact that the mythological figures of David Ben-Gurion, Golda Meir, and Moshe Dayan add a unique touch with respect to the chaos experienced by members of Israel’s minorities, explaining well the conflictual situation of Arab citizens of the state. Ben-Gurion, Meir, and Dayan are, after all, symbols of the state’s leadership during the period of military rule over Israel’s Arab population that lasted until the 1960s, and yet they are considered heroic figures in Hebrew literature and especially in prose reflecting the Zionist narrative. Pictures of these leaders in the corridors of Arab schools evoke thoughts of tragedy, reminding Arab citizens of the historical events associated with the establishment of the State of Israel, known among Arabs as the Nakba (Catastrophe). This penetrating critique bursts forth from these images, as if Mansour wishes to ask: What is the purpose of displaying such pictures, which brought catastrophe upon us? The establishment holds fast to its insistence upon hanging up these images, as an implicit or explicit statement about who is master of the land. The Jewish people’s euphoria was the tragedy of Arab citizens of Israel and of Palestinians.

The image of Moshe Dayan in an Arab school, his portrait smiling, serves to deepen the sense of crisis and tragedy. Dayan is considered a heroic figure in the Zionist narrative, and his smile thus reflects a tragic and dramatic irony. The derision of the figure of the school’s Arab principal is also a form of critique in the Palestinian narrative, since she follows the orders of the Israeli establishment, which demanded that she display the smiling portrait of Moshe Dayan. She manifests a direct continuation of colonialism, as if she were a “wolf in a sheep’s skin,” such that the critique includes her, as well.

College lecturers in Arabic literature can highlight the term *habibi*, typically used by Jews, stereotypically, against Arabs. This expression conveys a derisive irony, expressing alienation, and this reflects the relations between the Israeli establishment and the Arab citizens of the state.

Arab culture is perceived among Jews in Israel as inferior and premodern compared to Hebrew culture, unlike other cultures, such as Russian and Western European cultures, which are regarded as prestigious (Kochavi, 1992, pp. 270-271).

I have already noted that Arab citizens of Israel integrate Hebrew words into their daily speech. Lecturers teaching Arabic literature at teaching colleges in Israel are able to focus on the Hebrew words that Mansour integrates into her Arabic works, in order to strengthen Arab culture, by highlighting the linguistic richness of literary and spoken Arabic. The Arabic language is considered a very rich language in comparison to Hebrew, which has been influenced significantly by many foreign words taken from various other cultures. Arab lecturers teaching literature can emphasize the importance of holding fast to the Arabic language and its culture, denunciating the phenomenon of integrating Hebrew words into daily Arabic speech—a phenomenon that is constantly growing and which harms the Arabic language and its culture, while strengthening Hebrew language and culture at their expense.

It should be noted that approximately half of the Hebrew terms that Mansour integrates into her Arabic writing—such as the Likud party and the names of Jewish leaders such as Ben-Gurion, Meir, and Dayan—are connected to the institutions of the Jewish state and leaders known for their discriminatory policies toward Arab citizens. The Likud party is known for its extremist positions regarding the Arab population of Israel. Arab lecturers in Arabic literature can deal with the intentions that inform Mansour’s integration of these Hebrew words into her Arabic literary output: By incorporating the names of these leaders, Mansour transports the reader to the harsh reality that preceded the establishment of the State of Israel, in which Arabs were uprooted from their towns by force of arms. Moreover, by means of incorporating the names of these leaders, it is possible to transport the reader to the reality in which the majority culture in Israel attempted to attain dominance among members of the Arab minority subsequent to the establishment of the state, and the means that the Israeli establishment employed in order to achieve its aim.

Lecturers in Arabic literature can transport the reader to the harsh literary, cultural, and emotional realities evoked by these Hebrew words, precisely in order to strengthen attachment to Arabic language and culture, to highlight the importance of holding fast to one’s mother tongue and culture, and to caution of the growing dominance of Hebrew over Arabic, reflected primarily in the incorporation of Hebrew words into daily Arabic speech.

Incorporation of Hebrew words into Arabic literary works is likely to promote engagement by the Arab reader in decoding the literary text. The Arab reader must exert effort in order to identify the meaning of these Hebrew words, and this encourages him or her to play an integral role in deciphering the text. An Arab reader will exert effort, for example, in order to determine the identities of the Hebrew figures who appear in Arab literature, and what role they play in Jewish society.

**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.

This article offers a significant contribution to literary education within departments of Arabic literature in colleges in the State of Israel. Arab lecturers in Arabic literature at these colleges can give serious attention to the deep crisis in the mutual relationship between Arab citizens of Israel and the Israeli establishment. This crisis is reflected in a significant proportion of the foreign words that the author Shokeya Mansour incorporates into her Arabic writings, such as the images of David Ben-Gurion, Golda Meir, and Moshe Dayan, which evoke memories of the historical events surrounding the establishment of the State of Israel, known among Arab citizens as the Nakba (Catastrophe). Another example is the Zionist Likud party, which sticks its nose even into family matters within the Arab sector.

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1. The main argument advanced by policy shapers of the Hebrew studies curriculum was that Hebrew not only contributes to the financial development of the Arab minority, but also encourages its integration with the majority and reduces gaps between Israel's Arab and Jewish communities (Spolsky and Shohamy, 1999, p. 108). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. 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-2)