Reflections of Hebrew-Arabic contact in Israel on vocabulary: Hebrew words in the spoken language of Israeli Arabs

Abstract

This paper addresses how contact between Hebrew and Arabic in Israel is reflected in vocabulary, and the meaning of Hebrew words that have permeated the spoken language of Israeli Arabs (Muslims, Christians, and Druze). We examine the permeation of Hebrew into spoken Arabic and address the Israeli government's language policies regarding Hebrew. We found that the Israeli government is happy with the permeation of Hebrew words into spoken Arabic, since this phenomenon is consistent with its language policies and with its wishes. It is worth noting that, since the early days of the State of Israel, the Israeli government has taken various measures to Hebraize Arab individuals and to weaken the Arabic language among Israeli Arabs. Thus, it is not surprising that the government encourages this phenomenon and views it in a positive light.

במאמר זה התייחסנו להשתקפות המגע בין העברית לערבית במדינת ישראל בתחום אוצר המילים: הכוונה למילים עבריות שחדרו ללשון המדוברת של ערביי ישראל: מוסלמים, נוצרים ודרוזים. בדקנו כיצד חודרת העברית לערבית המדוברת, התייחסנו למדיניות הלשונית של הממשל הישראלי כלפי השפה העברית והראינו שהממשל הישראלי מרוצה מחדירת מילים עבריות ללשון הערבית המדוברת, שכן תופעה זו תואמת למדיניות הלשונית שלו ומתיישבת עם רצונו. ראוי לציין שכבר מימיה הראשונים של מדינת ישראל נקט הממשל אמצעים מגוונים לעברת את האדם הערבי ולהחליש את השפה הערבית בקרב ערביי ישראל, על כן אין פלא שהממשל מעודד את התופעה ומסתכל עליה באורח חיובי.

**Introduction**

When two peoples encounter each other as a result of proximity, trade, or occupation, a situation of linguistic influence arises. In this case, a reality has developed between Hebrew and Arabic, whereby these languages have come into contact with each other throughout history. In situations where two language systems encounter and interact with each other, a mutual influence of language categories arises. According to Weinrich (1968: 14) 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. According to Karttunen (1977: 183), when language contact occurs, in general the most immediate, significant, and intense influence is seen in vocabulary, out of all aspects of language. It seems that influence on phonology is the second most intense after vocabulary, whereas syntax is the most resistant area to influence.

Israeli Arabs exhibit a classic example of bilingualism, since they speak Hebrew in addition to their native Arabic. Ferguson (1959: 336) divided Arabic into the high variety (classical) and the spoken language, i.e. the low variety, which is used in everyday life and 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. 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. Below, we discuss the permeation of Hebrew words into spoken Arabic in Israel. This study argues that the Israeli government is content with the phenomenon of language mixing, and even encourages it, albeit covertly. Further, it is reasonable to assume that the phenomenon of language mixing will demonstrate that the influence of Hebrew on spoken Arabic occurs in vocabulary, since, as noted above, influence on vocabulary is the most significant. In addition, we argue that the Israeli government encourages this phenomenon, since it is in line with its language policies.

For the purposes of this study, we recorded 20 free, natural conversations within the Arab sector in Israel. The participants in the conversations comprised male and female adults, young people, and older people. Participants were selected at random and reflect a wide spectrum of the population in terms of educational level—elementary, high school, and higher education. Conversational topics were taken from everyday life, and included education, customs, tradition, sport, food and cooking, music, etc. From the recordings, we attempted to examine how Hebrew words had permeated spoken Arabic. Further, the study addressed the status of Hebrew among Arabs in Israel, the factors affecting Hebrew proficiency among Arabs in Israel, and the language policies of the Israeli government regarding Hebrew, in order to demonstrate that the phenomenon of Hebrew words permeating into spoken Arabic is in line with Israeli government policy, and that therefore the government is supportive of this.

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 literature in Hebrew. The intent is literary works written in Hebrew or mostly translated into Hebrew. The 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 writers: currently there are eleven such writers (Shakkour 2013: 1-17; Shakkour 2014: 169-195).

**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 has acquired status in Arab society. The study of Hebrew and fluency in it provides 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 awareness (Mar'i 2001: 45-46). Thus, the use of Hebrew is an essential and important tool for Israeli Arabs, which makes their daily lives easier (Amara 2002: 86-101).

Although Hebrew is the second most important language among Israeli Arabs in terms of 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: 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: 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 an enemy Zionist language that is used to manage administrative affairs vis-à-vis the occupation and warn the population not to be swayed by it so as to avoid legitimizing the continuation of the occupation.

**Factors affecting the degree of Hebrew proficiency among Arabs in Israel**

Contact between Arabs and Hebrew-speaking Jews occurs at various loci: government offices, workplaces, and leisure places such as restaurants etc. By virtue of this contact, many Hebrew words and even Hebrew sentences have permeated spoken Arabic and become commonplace among Arabs in Israel, e.g. "*beseder* [OK]," "*arutz* [channel]," "*mivtza* [sale]," "*kenyon* [mall],"*metzil* [lifeguard]" and many others. In any case, the use of Hebrew words and sentences by Arabs in Israel is not homogeneous but occurs at various levels. The phenomenon depends on several factors: gender, age, place of residence, frequency of contact, etc. The use of Hebrew words among Arab males is higher than among females, since Arab males are closer to Jewish society than Arab females, in particular in the workplace and government offices. Further, younger people are more fluent than older people. They are more exposed to Hebrew today, since they spend some of their time in Jewish leisure places and are exposed to Hebrew publications, in particular newspapers, which greatly helps their fluency in Hebrew and the use of Hebrew words in conversations in Arabic (Amara 2002: 87).

Geographic factors and place of residence also exert a large influence on Hebrew usage among Arabs in Israel. The closer an Arab citizen's place of residence is to the center of Jewish metropolitan areas, the more he or she is influenced by Hebrew. Arabs living in the "Triangle" and the Negev use Hebrew more than residents of the Galilee. In addition, in mixed cities and mixed neighborhoods, Hebrew usage by Arabs in day-to-day life is higher, since these communities have public institutions shared by both Arabs and Jews. Thus, there is daily contact between Arab and Jewish citizens, a situation that has helped advance Hebrew among Israeli Arabs and has even gained it respectable status.

Another factor influencing the use of Hebrew among Israeli Arabs is participation in employment outside of their towns or villages, in workplaces where employers, management, employees, and clients mostly speak Hebrew. The names of tools and instruments utilized in the workplace are in Hebrew, as are the instructions for their use. This situation has meant that Israeli Arabs have to learn Hebrew, which has thus become a dominant part of their lives; without it they would find it difficult to manage their lives. It should be noted that Hebrew is not a particularly difficult language and Arabs master it quickly, since many words are similar and shared between the two Semitic languages (Amara and Kabha 1996: 60-62; Mar'i 2002-2003: 133-136; Dana 2000: 165-170).

The age at which Arab students begin to learn Hebrew at schools: the earlier Arab students start to learn Hebrew, the younger they are when they master the language, and the easier it is for them to integrate faster into the economy, industry, and society. Former Israeli education minister Naftali Bennett announced that Arab sector schools would begin studying Hebrew in kindergarten in the 2015 school year:

The decision to bring forward the study of Hebrew in the Arab sector to kindergarten age stems from thinking about the children's future. It is our belief that the more fluent children from Arab society become in Hebrew, the better and easier their integration into the economy, industry, and society will be (from a speech by former education minister Naftali Bennett).

Studying in bilingual schools fosters Arab students' linguistic competence in Hebrew to a greater extent than among students who study in Arab schools, since they are taught from a young age by both Jewish and Arab teachers, and thus engage in intensive dialog with Jewish teachers.

**"Aravrit"**

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: 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: 20).

**Israeli linguistic policy towards Arabic and Hebrew**

Snir (1990: 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 *(ḥaqīkatu l-ʾamri*), the daily newspaper اليوم  *(Al-yawm*) and the Arabic journal of the Teachers' Union صدى التّربية  *(ṣadā t-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.

In contrast to Snir (1990: 248-253), 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: 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: 19; Kial 2006: 15-16).

Hebrew is part of the Zionist project, and of Israel's 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 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).

A comparison between the two languages of English and Arabic shows that both were determined in the guidelines set by David Ben Gurion's government, which announced in the second Knesset that Hebrew would be used as a state language, and that the Arab minority had a right to use its own language. When Jewish members of Knesset objected to their Arab counterparts speaking Hebrew, Ben Gurion intervened and stated unequivocally that Arab members of Knesset would speak Arabic (Knesset Plenary Records 2000).

It is important to emphasize that Israel is one of the few non-Muslim countries in the world that recognizes Arabic as an official language whose status is no less than that of Hebrew. However, on a practical level, Arabic is very far from fulfilling this policy. In other words, state decisionmakers have managed to transform the officialness of Arabic into a "virtual officialness." The status of Arabic is far lower than that of Hebrew, and in practice Arabic is inferior in status, resources, and opportunities. In many cases, there is a struggle for the survival of Arabic in the State, in the courts in general and in the High Court of Justice in particular (Mar'i 2013: 74-75).

**How does Hebrew permeate spoken Arabic?**

The domestic environment has introduced many words into Israeli Arabic that are used in everyday life. The Hebrew words prevalent in everyday Arabic encompass all areas of life: economics, society, education, politics, health, sport, food etc. It is worth noting that Hebrew is used as a central language when it comes to food, and in particular for products sold in food stores, so that for example in a local grocery store in an Arab town one can hear people purchasing *ugah* [cake], *niknikiot* [hot dog sausages], *pitah* [pitta bread], *lakhmaniyah* [bread rolls] and *kafeh* [coffee] etc. (Mar'i 2013: 27).

**How is Hebrew integrated into spoken Arabic?**

The linguistic merger "*d-damği l-laġawī*" in spoken Arabic refers to the adoption of Hebrew words and sometimes full sentences in spoken Arabic. This is a known phenomenon among Arabs in Israel and is evident in all aspects of life.

This study has found that the integration of Hebrew into fluent Arabic speech occurs in various ways: by integrating single Hebrew words or phrases into a main Arabic sentence; by both languages being active simultaneously and used as a mixture; or by switching from language to language.

***Integration of single Hebrew words or phrases into the main Arabic sentence***

The simplest and clearest way is to integrate single Hebrew words or phrases into the main Arabic sentence. The domestic environment has introduced many words into Israeli Arabic that are used in everyday life. The Hebrew words that are prevalent in everyday Arabic encompass all areas of life: economics, society, education, politics, health, sport, food etc.

Hebrew words and phrases are shown in bold in the following examples:

1. أنا رايح على **קופת חולים**

I'm going to the **health** **clinic**.

1. امبارح اشتريت بنطلون من ال**קניון**

Yesterday, I bought trousers at the **mall**.

1. ابني لازم يوخذ بكرا **זריקה** في الصحية

My son has to have a **shot** tomorrow at the family health clinic.

1. في **מבצע** كبير على الأواعي

There's a big **sale** on clothes

1. شو بشتغل أبوكِ؟ أبوي بشتغل **מנהל עבודה**

What does your father do? My father is a **foreman**.

1. هون ببيعوا **סופגניות** زاكية كثير

They sell really tasty **donuts** here.

1. **صفيت سيارتي بعيد لإنو فش محل بالחניון**

I parked my car far way, because there was no space in the **parking lot.**

1. **المصاريف زادت كثير عشان هيك لازم نعمل תוכנית הבראה**

Expenses have increased significantly, so we need to make a **recovery program.**

1. **. اليوم الמפמ"ר جاي على المدرسة**

Today, the **education ministry inspector** is coming to the school.

***Both languages active simultaneously and used as a mixture***

Both languages are active simultaneously— the speaker selects lexical elements from the two languages. That is, the speaker uses the two languages as a mixture. In the following examples the lexical elements taken from Hebrew are shown in bold:

1. . **اطلعت في الרכבת وأجا صاحبي وאסף אותי من الתחנה**

I traveled on the **train** and my friend came to **pick me up** from the **station**.

1. ابعثلي **הודעה** لما بتصل عل**הרצאה** في ال**מכללה**

Send me an **SMS** when you get to the **lecture** at the **college**

1. ال**מבצע** على الأواعي **משתלם** كثير

The clothing **sale** is really **worth it**.

1. هاي الجبنة **דלת שומן** فيها بس خمسه بالميه **שומן**

This cheese is **low fat**, it only has five percent **fat**.

1. فريق برشلونه مليان **כוכבים** وعندو **שחקנים** **תותחים**

The Barcelona team is full of **stars**, it has **killer players**.

1. أخذت **ציון גבוה** في **מועד ב** أعلى بكثير من **מועד** **א**

I got a **high grade** in the **re-sits,** much higher than in the **first exam**.

1. بدي أروح اليوم عند **סוכן נסיעות** عشان أشتري **כרטיס טיסה**

I want to go to the **travel agent** today to buy an **airline ticket.**

1. بدي أبلّش أدورعلى **שמלת כלה** لإنو **الחתונה** بعد شهرين

I want to start looking for a **bridal gown** because the **wedding** is in in a few months.

***Switching from language to language***

In this case, the speaker switches completely from one language to the other in the middle of an expression; in other words, he or she starts the sentence in one language and continues it in the other language. The switch between the two languages in this case is related to a complete transition to the other language. In the following examples, the lexical elements in Hebrew are shown in bold:

1. بدك اتغيبي عن التعليم جمعتين؟ **יש לי ברירה אחרת**?

You want to be absent from school for two weeks? **Do I have another choice?**

1. سافروا أهلك على إيطاليا؟ **הם כבר שבועיים באיטליה**.

Did your parents travel to Italy? **They've been in Italy for two weeks already.**

1. بدي أشتري سيارة جديدة بس **זה** **יקר** **מאוד**.

I want to buy a new car but **it's really expensive.**

1. كيف كان الامتحان؟ **ממש לא בסדר**

How was the exam? **Totally not O.K.**

1. ابني كان علي حم بالليل. **לקחתי אותו למוקד רפואי**

My son had a really high fever this evening. **I took him to the medical center.**

1. السيارة الجديدة حقها 130000 الف شيقل. **אני לא יכולה לעמוד במחיר הזה**

The new car costs 130,000 NIS. **I can't afford that price.**

**Attitudes of the Israeli authorities toward the penetration of Hebrew words into Arabic**

Even though the Israeli government does not overtly express its satisfaction with the permeation of Hebrew words into Arabic, it is not difficult to surmise that it is, in fact, content with this phenomenon, since it has been in line with its explicit language policies, since the founding of the State, to bolster Hebrew among Israeli Arabs at the expense of Arabic. It is clear that the Israeli government's policy has not changed since the State was founded, except that, in contrast to the early days of the State, when the policy was explicit and overt, current government policy is covert, and is apparent through the government's actions. For example, in official signage, the names of Hebrew cities are transliterated into Arabic, even though Arabic names for these cities already exist. A case in point is the city of Be'er Sheva, which is written as באר שבע (Be'er Sheva) in the Hebrew alphabet. On signage this city's Hebrew name is transliterated into Arabic as بِئِير شيفَع (*biʾīr* šīfa) alongside its original name in Arabic, بئر السبع (*biʾri s-sabiʿ*). Another example of a covert policy to reduce the value of Arabic is the Nationality Law, which seeks to anchor the Israel's Jewish identity, characteristics, and symbols, and which passed on its third reading in the Knesset on June 19, 2018. This law is controversial, since it anchors the constitutional value of Jewish identity but does not include—in contrast to the Israeli Declaration of Independence and to the constitutions of other nation states—any commitment to the values of equality, with all that these entail, alongside national values. In view of the Israeli government's overt policies at the time of the State of Israel's establishment, and to its current covert policies, it is very reasonable to assume that the Israeli government

**Summary and conclusions**

The findings of this study indicate a trend of mixed language, namely the incorporation of Hebrew words into spoken Arabic. This phenomenon is to be expected, since two languages cannot come into contact without exerting mutual influence, in particular in terms of vocabulary, which is the most vulnerable aspect. This study found that the incorporation of single words or phrases into an Arabic sentence was the most dominant area of influence, since 65% of the mixed speech took the form of incorporating single words or phrases into a sentence in Arabic. Speakers most likely use this form of mixed language because it the least "harmful" to the sentence structure of spoken Arabic. 25% of the mixed speech occurred when the two languages were active at the same time and were used in a mixture, and 10% of the mixed speech took the form of switching from one language to another. It seems that the speakers for the most part opt to use mixed speech in the form of incorporating single words or phrases into sentences in spoken Arabic, since this usage is the least "harmful" to the sentence structure of spoken Arabic.

According to this study's findings, mixed language use is more frequent among Druze and Bedouin citizens. These ethnic groups serve in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and in the standing army, and as a result their linguistic competence is the higher than the rest of the Arab community in Israel. This is reflected in their tendency to use mixed language more than the rest of the Arab community in Israel. Further, the modernization that has occurred in Arab villages as well as perceptions of gender equality have played a significant role in strengthening the phenomenon of mixed language use, since many girls now study outside Arab villages in Hebrew higher education institutions, and are thus exposed to Hebrew, which is the language of instruction in Hebrew academic institutions in Israel.

Attempts by the Israeli government to boost Hebrew among Israeli Arabs and to weaken Arabic began when the State of Israel was founded and continue to the present day. However, these efforts are now covert, as opposed to the explicit efforts that occurred during the period when Israel was founded. However, these efforts remain an integral part of the Israeli government's language policy. Given the government's overt policies at the time of Israel's establishment, and its current covert policies, it is a reasonable assumption that the Israeli government is very content with the penetration of Hebrew words into spoken Arabic, since this phenomenon is in line with its language policies, which were clearly reflected at the time of the establishment of the State of Israel, and which are still apparent today, even though they are covert.

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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 1999:108). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)