HEBREW LANGUAGE STATUS AND CORPUS PLANNING

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The initial problem faced by those few that sought to revernacularize Hebrew was a complex one in that daily conversational use of Hebrew could not occur unless traditional Jewish multilingualism could be overcome on the one hand, and unless the Hebrew language itself could be modernized and standardized on the other hand. The entire beginning of revernacularization of Hebrew was far from being planned by any public authorized body. It was rather on an individual and sporadic basis. Only later came attempts at organization of some fragmentary "planning", especially in the areas of pronunciation, spelling and lexicon, made by some semi-public bodies. With the official recognition of Hebrew on the part of the British Mandate authorities in 1922 as one of the official languages of Palestine, Hebrew's legal status was similarly fixed. Although Hebrew had to undergo many challenges in later years, nevertheless its status as the national language of Israel was never again in doubt.

Hebrew, language planning, language revival, Israel, corpus planning, status planning

The development of Modern Hebrew may be viewed as consisting of three periods, in each of which at least one language planning "goal" has been sought. The first of these periods is that of "Language Revival" 1890-1914 (Nahir, 1984), in which the revival of the Hebrew language in Palestine at the turn of the 20th century took place, and my discussion here will start with this period. Much of the study of the Revival has focused on the status of the language, because the unprecedented transformation of the status of Hebrew from a language of religion back to a vernacular and a national language has been rightly viewed as the product of status planning (Nahir, 1998). Much corpus planning, however, was also involved. Restoring the status of the language was only going to succeed if its speakers would have an adequate code, most of all a lexicon, to communicate with. Here I will discuss first the lexical codification work carried out in the Revival period, mostly by individuals, informally, even though a massive amount of lexical codification had been done previously by generations of writers in Hebrew, a language which never actually "died", but, following its demise two millennia ago, continued to be used as a "living written language". Despite these contributions, however, at the beginning of its revival the Hebrew lexicon was so gravely inadequate for modern life—lacking words for concepts such as "tomato", "a match", "serious", "polite", and "newspaper" – that some leaders questioned the capacity of the language to be restored.

I will define codification: "the work of a body or an individual who more or less knowledgeably, decides to give explicit, usually written, form to the [language] norm... chosen" (Haugen, 1983).

Macro-corpus planning; The Hebrew Language Committee

Eliezer Ben-Yehuda (1857-1922), who is the "father" of the revival movement, understood that the revival of Hebrew was not possible without adapting it to modern life. Therefore, in addition to his own work on the lexicon, he and some friends established in Jerusalem in 1890 the Hebrew Language Committee, whose major task, other than "extending the use of the Hebrew language and of spoken Hebrew among all sections of the people" (Rabin, 1973), would be to codify Hebrew in order to prepare it for its new function. A subcommittee was to search for existing words through Hebrew literature of all periods and to create new words where none existed.

In 1912, the Committee decided to become active in preparing its own critically

needed Hebrew terminologies. It first dealt with 120 terms in arithmetic, some proposed by teachers but mostly drawn from ancient literature. These were words for concepts such as "number", "digit", "addition", "subtraction", "multiplication", "division", "remainder", "sum", etc. The next terminology lists were in gymnastics, sowing, food, and plants. In gymnastics, for example, the published list included words for "right turn!", "left turn!", "forward!", "(stand) at ease!", etc., also currently in general use. Many more lists were soon published, dealing with terms for one subject at a time. Until 2011 the Committee (from 1953 "Academy") published some 125,000 terms in 230 Glossaries. The last glossary published in November 2010 is in general biology and includes 2730 terms such as "symbiosis", "mutation", "instinct", "biota", "hatchling", etc. (http://hebrew-academy.huji.ac.il/).

The Committee also assumed the task of resolving language queries from the public. A selection of letters sent to the Committee was recently published in the Hebrew Academy's Newsletter (Akadem, 7, 1995). Today the Academy involves the public in search for new terms. The last task was to propose terms for "compost". The Academy published more than a hundred proposals from the public received till end of February 2011 (http://hebrew-academy.huji.ac.il/).

The Committee had its critics too, who took exception to what they viewed as mass production of words, or "a word factory". Even Ahad Ha'am, the highly influential writer, thought that new words should only be created by writers and only as needed. The famed Shuy Agnon (later Nobel Laureate) called for more effort to draw words from existing sources, even though he, like other critics of word innovators, eventually used most of their innovations (Bar-Adon, 1977).

Micro-corpus planning and lexical codification

Most new word creation in the Revival, then, was the informal product of individuals, mostly in the process of solving communication problems in their work. Some were known literary figures or leaders, but countless lexical items were created by unidentified individuals, whose creation nevertheless has since become part of the Hebrew lexicon. We will discuss briefly some of the most prolific lexical innovators and the methods applied generally in the process of lexical codification.

Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, mentioned earlier, was the most prominent and prolific codifier of the new Hebrew lexicon. He compiled the first comprehensive Hebrew Dictionary, whose impact on the Revival, however, was rather limited since the first volume was only published in 1909, when the Revival was approximately five years from completion, and only half the Dictionary was completed by the end of the Revival. But Ben-Yehuda also made significant contributions to Hebrew codification by writing several school textbooks and translating literary works. In all of these he used the Hebrew words he had discovered or created for his newspapers and for his large Dictionary. His innovations which are still in use included words for, "omelet", "salami ", "jam", "fashion", "stockings", "gloves ", "fur", "cauliflower", "cactus", "telegram", "municipality", "front", "soldier", "invasion", "bomb", "maneuver", "exercise", "newspaper", "dictionary" etc.

Itamar Ben-Avi, Ben-Yehuda's oldest son, unlike his father, though, he restricted himself to coining words only as he needed them rather than as a scholarly activity. This may explain why, having met actual communicative needs, his innovations were accepted by users much more readily than were his father's.

H. N. Bialik, a highly acclaimed Poet Laureate, also created numerous words as he needed them for his work. According to some scholars (e.g., Sivan, 1980; Kutscher, 1982), Bialik had a unique ability to introduce new life into old, even ancient words, filling them with "vitality". He particularly favored combinations of older words, which he used abundantly in both his poetry and prose. We can recognize two types in his innovations:

new words and new combinations, blends, or compounds. His innovations which are in use included words for "import", "export", "car", "kitchen" etc.

Many others created new words – among them writers, journalists, educators, translators, publishers and editors – e.g., /naxat/, 'to land', /palaš/, 'to invade', by a leading journalist, /agvaniyya/, 'tomato', /xamtzan/, 'oxygen' by Y. M. Pines, Ben-Yehuda's friend and colleague, writer and teacher. A revered poet, Avraham Shlonsky, coined countless words as he needed them in translating foreign literary works into Hebrew. Israel's first Foreign Minister, Moshe Sharet, was considered to be the creator of the now established /darkon/, 'passport', /ašra/, 'visa', /etgar/, 'challenge', but he later admitted that he had "ordered" them from someone else. He did create several other words, though, e.g., /takrit/, 'incident', from /kara/, 'happen', and /šmar-taf/, 'baby-sitter', from /šamar/, 'watch', and /taf/, 'infants'. David Remez, the first Israeli Minister of Transportation, created the still used /monit/, 'taxi', from /mana/, 'to count'.

Methods of lexical codification in the Hebrew Revival

Some of the major methods used in lexical codification may now be summarized:

(1) Inserting new roots to existing patterns: the pattern /CaCaC/ for profession (e.g., /sappar/, 'barber'; /tabbax/, 'cook'); the pattern /CaCeCet/ for disease (e.g., /ademet/, 'rubella'; /nazelet/, 'a cold'); the pattern /maCCeC/ for tools (e.g., /masmer/, 'a nail'; /mavreg/, 'screwdriver'; /maxshev/, 'computer'.

(2) Adding suffixes or infixes to create words of different patterns from existing words. Some of the major ones are: **-on**/ (e.g., /ša'on/, 'a watch', from /ša'a/, 'an hour'; /iton/, 'newspaper', from /et/, 'time'; /yarxon/, 'a monthly', from /yerax/, 'month').

/**-an**/, for profession, occupation or having certain characteristics (e.g., /ta'asyan/, 'industrialist', from /ta'asiyya/, 'industry';

/yarkan/, greengrocer', from /yarak/, 'vegetables'.

/**-ay**/, for trade or having certain features (e.g., /xašmalay/, 'electrician', from /xašmal/, 'electricity'; /mexonay/, 'mechanic', from /mexona/, 'machine'.

/**-iyya**/ (borrowed from Arabic) (e.g., /sifriyya/, 'library', from /sefer/, 'book'; ; /'iriyya/, 'city hall, municipality', from /'ir/, 'city').

(3) Drawing words from old sources and assigning them new meanings /xashmal/, 'electricity'; /mexona/, 'machine'; /totax/, 'cannon') from Biblical Hebrew; /'itzumim/, 'sanction'; /tekes/, 'ceremony' from Mishnaic Hebrew

(4) Merging pairs of words into single words (e.g., /migdalor/, 'lighthouse', from /migdal/, 'tower', and /or/, 'light'; /madxom/, 'thermometer', from /mad/, 'measure', and /xom/, 'temperature').

(5) Adding Aramaic, European and Hebrew prefixes and suffixes (e.g., /tat-aluf/, 'brigadier general'; /xad-sitri/, 'one-way'; /micro-gal/, 'micro-wave'; /dugmanit-al/, 'super model').

(6) Loan-translation (e.g., /gibbuy/, 'backing'; /kissuy/, 'coverage'; /gan-yeladim/, 'kindergarten'; /'ittuy/, 'timing'; /yissum/, 'application'; /haslama/, 'escalation').

(7) Borrowing from European languages: from Yiddish (especially colloquialisms, /menadned/, 'nag'; /shprits/, 'spray'; /mashvits/, 'boast'; /kumzits/, 'sitting and singing around a bonfire'; /shnorer/, 'one who lives off others'), Russian (including suffixes, e.g., /-chik/ diminutive; /-nik/, 'one who belongs to a given group' and from Arabic (including colloquialisms, e.g., /adiv/, 'polite'; /nadir/, 'rare'; /mabsut/, 'happy', 'content'; /zift/, 'trash, no-good'; /kef/, 'fun') and Aramaic. Usually borrowed words went through a Hebraization process.

Status Planning

Establishing an official language in a multi-language state is a complex and

extremely important task. This decision is only the first stage, since implementation of the language policy is no less important that its formal declaration. Every new state must cope with the challenge of determining which language will be its official national language and the status of the languages of the minority groups. The language is recognized as a central symbol of the state's identity and functions as an extremely important cultural institution.

Consociational democracies define themselves as dual- or multi-lingual states. They grant the minority's language a respected official status. Among deeply divided states which have succeeded in establishing a democratic regime for more than fifty years, Canada, Belgium and Switzerland. In Israel, which was established as an ethnic state as the state of the Jews, one would be expect less compromise with minorities, and that languages other than Hebrew would not be made official languages of the state. Nevertheless, the Jewish leadership decided not to eliminate Arabic as an official language (Harel-Shalev, 2005).

When Britain captured Palestine from the Ottoman Empire in 1918 it found two national communities, one Arab and one Jewish. By that time Hebrew had become the principal language of public discourse among the Jewish population. When the Zionist Organization made in 1916-18 a census of the Jewish Population of Palestine, 34,000 people, 40% of the 85,000 who then made up Palestine's Jewry, stated that Hebrew was their main language (Rabin, 1973). There was of course no rival whatsoever to Arabic as the language of the Arab population.

The state of Israel has never enacted a statute which clearly established its official languages. Article 82 of the Palestine Order-in-council (1922) states that Palestine has three official languages: English, Arabic and Hebrew – and this action, as amended, remains valid even today. The main change to Article 82 was enacted by the Knesset in the Law and Government Ordinance (1948), which eliminates English as an official language, leaving two official languages: Arabic and Hebrew (Harel-Shalev, 2005).

In the Israeli Declaration of Independence from May 14, 1948 is a sole mention of language: "Israel … will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture (Declaration, 1948).

Attempts in the Knesset to make Hebrew the sole official language has failed up until the present day. However, Israeli law has not formulated a comprehensive normative dual-language regime. As a result, Arabic has a vastly inferior status to that of Hebrew. The superior position accorded to Hebrew is not by virtue of a statute or government regulation, but results from governmental policy.

While Hebrew and Arabic have the same status in law, Hebrew is clearly dominant as the language of day-to-day government activity. Whereas Hebrew and Arabic each symbolize a nationality, only Hebrew symbolizes the Jewish state. Although the official status of English is no longer protected by law, it continues in use for many government functions. For example, money currency, metal coins and postal stamps are printed in English as well as in Hebrew and Arabic. Till 1951 the Anglo Palestine Banknotes were in English and Hebrew on one side and in English and Arabic on other side. In 1951 Bank Leumi le-Israel issued a new series of banknotes almost identical to the old, except the color, the name of currency and the languages: one side Hebrew and the other English and Arabic (Bank of Israel, 2011).

When highway and street signs are bilingual, the second language is more likely to be English than Arabic. In a verdict done in 2002 the Supreme Court decided that the street signs in Israel must add the Arabic language to the Hebrew (HC 4112, 1999). When government publications, such as reports issued by the Central Statistical Office are bilingual, the second language is more likely to be English than Arabic. On the other hand, transactions of the Knesset, Israel's parliament, are published fully in Hebrew, but only the chapter headings are published in

English and Arabic. The Knesset Website is in Hebrew and some chapters are in English and Arabic equal and in Russian partial.

Thus with respect to the three types of official language in Israel, Hebrew is official in all three senses, Arabic is both a statutory and working official language, but not a symbolic official language, and English is a working official language only.

The languages status usage can be summed up as following:

Language	Hebrew	Arabic	English
King's order in Council (1922)	a	a	a
Declaration of Independence (1948)	a	c	c
Knesset Transactions (2011)	a	c	c
Banknotes of Bank of Israel (2011)	a	b	b
Central Statistic Office (2011)	a	c	b

a: official in 3 senses; b: statutory; c: working; d: none

The Israeli public life is dominantly in Hebrew; the nominal official status for Arabic is reflected in the use of the language in many public signs, but usually alongside similar use of unofficial English. The heavy migration of nearly a million and half new immigrants from the former Soviet Union in the 1990s has been reflected in much wider use of Russian both on the street and in signs (Spolsky, 2004).

Determining media of instruction for school systems is perhaps the status planning decision most frequently made, the one most commonly subject to strong political pressures, and the one most often considered by educationists and by students of language planning (see for example Fishman, 1976). The educational status planning of Hebrew was: the decision by nineteenth-century East European immigrants to use Hebrew as an all-purpose medium of instruction in the schools of new settlements in Palestine; the decision by a German-Jewish foundation in the second decade of the twentieth century to use German as the medium of instruction in its new technical institute in Palestine; and the boycott by the teachers and the students of the schools in Palestine to force the foundation to use Hebrew instead (Cooper, 1989).

With the exception of Arabic, one of the effects of the revival of Hebrew has been the endangerment of other languages. Jewish languages developed over the centuries in the Diaspora as well as non-Jewish languages brought by immigrants from various countries are slowly disappearing. It is in evidence then of the "success" of Hebrew revival that once revived, it functions effectively as a national language working towards the 'one nation, one language' favored in most nation states.

Nonetheless it would be oversimplified to consider Israel a strictly monolingual nation. First, language practices are obviously multilingual. Second, there is the role of Arabic, the language of the largest minority. Third, there is regular argument for linguistic as well cultural pluralism, encouraged by continuing immigration of speakers of other languages. Fourth, there is the growing presence of English as a global language, reinforced by the existence of a significant number of English-speaking immigrants and by the close relationship of Israel with English-speaking communities abroad.

Summary

The revivers of the Hebrew at the turn of the 20th century had two monumental tasks. One involved the corpus of the language and called for its codification to allow its potential speakers to communicate freely in a modern world. A number of codification areas were involved, including the choice and harmonization between the different phonological systems. Decisions also had to be made on the unification of spelling and related issues. But crucial as these issues were in the process, they could not compare with the task of filling the vast lexical gap that existed in Hebrew. Like the shift from several languages to Hebrew, this aspect of revernacularization of Hebrew was also achieved within 2.5 decades through the cumulative efforts of the "language planning agents" in the field – educators, writers, poets, translators, editors, etc. – as well as countless language-conscious individuals in and out of the technological occupations. This was carried out in various ways, retrieving old words and roots, creating new words from old

words and roots, loan-translations, combining existing words, blending, filling in pattern with root "fillers", borrowing words and roots, etc. All this arduous, seemingly endless campaign eventually paid off, and Hebrew is now a modern language, standardized and "normalized" in every respect. When the Revival was completed about 1914, the drive has shifted to ensure that it keeps up with new developments in the modern world. As in all other developed, "mature" languages, codification in pursuit of lexical modernization is an ongoing process.

The other task involved the status of the language and called for bringing about a shift in Palestine's Jewish community from the use of dominant Yiddish and some other languages to Hebrew. Within twenty five years of the start of the revival in the 1880s' Hebrew became the dominant official language of a modern state, vital in that it was passed on the children in the home, vernacularized in that it was used as the daily spoken language of all classes, standardized in what it had not just dictionaries and grammars and an academy but a school system ranging from kindergarten to postgraduate university levels, and modernized in what it could be used to talk about sport or physics or politics or any topic.

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