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RESEARCH ARTICLE

LANGUAGES IN CONTACT: THE INFLUENCE OF ARABIC ON MODERN ISRAELI HEBREW SLANG.

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Abstract

Ongoing contact between the Arabic and Hebrew languages in the Land of Israel has engendered interesting linguistic phenomena in diverse fields. Prominent among these is the penetration of words of Arabic origin into Modern Hebrew slang. Lexical borrowing and penetration from one language to another have existed since ancient times. However, the complex reality in Israel, particularly the phenomenon of bilingualism, has contributed to the enrichment of the Hebrew vocabulary, on all levels, with words drawn from Arabic. The use of slang words of Arabic origin is not the exclusive preserve of any specific population, but can be found among all Hebrew speakers, in both the written and spoken languages, in the media and on social networks. Most slang words of Arabic origin undergo changes in the semantic sphere, and some are employed in a metaphoric sense. These words are declined according to Hebrew rules, but their declension for gender, number, the construct case, and definiteness is usually irregular. The use of slang words meets linguistic functions required by speakers: they contribute to broadening forms of word formation and allow the derivation of new values, the borrowing of expressions, extensions of meaning, and so forth. Regular morphology, alien sounds, borrowed consonants, an unusual social structure, and arbitrary patterns of definiteness are just some of the more prominent characteristics of slang words of Arabic origin in Modern Hebrew. Slang changes according to fashion, is influenced by its surroundings, and can be found in diverse forms in the language of politicians and statespeople, correspondents and interviewees, and all members of the language community.

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Introduction:-

Discussion of Hebrew slang, specifically slang of Arabic origin, has been significantly enriched since Israel's establishment by the growing use of slang among Jews of Arabic origin. Linguistic scholars tend to define the concept of "slang" as a collection of strange words – vulgar language that creeps into standard language, impairing the articulacy of the language and its clarity of expression (Yannai, 1990). Conversely, others argue that slang is the birthplace of new words, changing constantly, and constituting evidence of a natural language or a type of language current among people who are young in age or in spirit. The use of slang constitutes a deliberate deviation from institutionalized and standard language, and accordingly represents a voluntary and deliberate register (Nir, 1999).

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Slang can be seen as a sociolinguistic mechanism that enables speakers to depart from social formality and make utterances that are not otherwise allowed by social norms (Rosenthal, 2008). Sapan defines slang as words and expressions on the margins of the spoken language that are considered improper and unworthy of inclusion in decent or formal speech (Sapan, 1974). Nir notes that slang is not characterized solely by the use of substandard forms; indeed, it is sometimes accompanied by a certain sense of intellectual superiority, not only in lexical terms but particularly in various aspects of grammar (Nir, 2003). Muchnik (2001) defines slang explicitly as substandard language used in unofficial situations by diverse groups of speakers, including young people, students, soldiers, professionals, the elderly, and so forth. However, she adds that recently slang has noticeably expanded into the remaining sectors of the population.

Hebrew slang has enjoyed particular attention in the Israeli consciousness thanks to the vigorous work of Dan Ben-Amotz and Netiva Ben-Yehuda, who undertook a historical enterprise that enjoyed surprising success (Ben-Amotz & Ben-Yehuda, 1972). This process is not unusual in the history of languages and is a natural phenomenon. Today, cub reporters make extensive use of common slang, a practice that has become a norm of journalistic writing and is also accepted by younger editors (Rosenblum, 1992).

Hebrew-speaking Israeli society uses slang expressions extensively; this is illustrated by the growing use of slang by many politicians for social purposes. Over the past decade, slang has penetrated the language of media, advertising, and even literature (Rosenthal, 2008). No external body can determine which slang word will be adopted and which will be rejected. The speakers are exclusively responsible for determining the fate of migrant and new words. Very few slang words become part of the standard language, but many of them show resilience in their slang function—words drawn from Arabic particularly so.

Initially, slang words were collated in separate dictionaries, such as Ben-Amotz & Ben-Yehuda (1972); Ahasaf, Radar et al. (1993), Rubik & Rosenthal (2005), and EetaYisraeli (2005). Later, slang words were admitted to the Even Shoshan dictionary (2004 edition), which included numerous slang terms. Some of these slang dictionaries preserve forgotten words, many of which are no longer in use, while at the same time new words have penetrated the language from every possible direction and field. This highlights one of the features of spoken Hebrew as a language that often reflects the social changes experienced by the Jewish people, particularly in the Land of Israel. Thus Hebrew dictionaries also reflect sociolinguistic changes.

Israeli slang:

One of the key questions raised by study of Israeli slang is why words such as telephone, fax, and television, that entered Hebrew from English, have been accepted in Hebrew as standard words in the language, whereas words that entered from Arabic, such as *deh̄ilak*, *saḥ̄bi*, and *maskhara*, were repelled to the margins of the language (Muchnik, 2004; Haramati, 2000). Israeli Hebrew slang has been influenced mainly by English, Yiddish, and Arabic. Initially, Yiddish was the most influential language, but today it has been surpassed by Arabic, due to the protracted contact between the two languages in the Israeli domain.¹ Since the 1990s, there has been a noticeable increase in slang of Arabic origin, which is present in impressive proportions in the group of emotional words, greetings, exclamations, and curses (Dana, 2008).² The encounter between the Israelis and the Arabs who lived in the country had a profound influence on slang, leading to the adoption of words such as *deh̄ilak*, *inshallah*, *ṣaḥ̄tein*, *mabṣuṭ*, *aḥ̄la*, *ahbal*, *majnun*, *fadiḥa*, *kasah̄*, and *freḥa*. A significant portion of the Hebrew slang vocabulary has its origins in colloquial Arabic (Netzer, 2007; Marai, 2008).³ It is difficult to find a Hebrew speaker who does not use greetings of Arabic

¹ Sapan's study (1963) found borrowings at a level of 40 percent from Yiddish, 39 percent from Arabic, and very small percentages from European languages such as English, Russian, and French. An updated study might yield different results due to the significant changes in Israeli society over recent decades. Rosenthal (2005) claims that 35 percent of the slang vocabulary can be attributed to Arabic, 31 percent to English, and only 21 percent to Yiddish. It would seem that the dwindling of the generation connected to Yiddish has led to a reduction in the use of slang from Yiddish in favor of the contact with the Arab population.

² Dana lists diverse curses that have passed from Arabic to Hebrew, with phonological changes and even metathesis.

³ Netzer (2007) categorizes slang according to its sources, discussing the Arabic source. Marai provides an impressive review of the forms of integration of Arabic in Israeli slang, arguing that to date the Arabic source has been mentioned only in footnotes that cannot paint the full picture.

origin, despite the fact that expressions of politeness constitute a social value in every civilization, and although every culture has a different definition as to what is considered polite. Hebrew has also been influenced by slang of English origin; in particular, many English words were absorbed during the British Mandate period. Words and phrases such as “fifty-fifty” and “trem” (i.e. “tramp,” meaning “hitchhike”) remain from this period. During the 1970s, Hebrew was influenced by words borrowed from English through the field of rock and pop music, while in the 1990s new technology served as the vehicle of penetration (Fischerman, 2004; Koren, 2010-2011). Another source that has enriched slang vocabulary in Israeli Hebrew is military slang. The military creates ideal opportunities for the emergence of slang, since it constitutes a closed framework of young people who undergo an intensive and challenging experience—one that is shared by most speakers of Modern Hebrew. Some of the words, expressions, acronyms, and verbs created from words that emerged in the military setting have since become part of general Israeli slang—these include *leshaptzer* (“to improve, touch up”) and *jobnik* (a soldier or worker who performs an undemanding and safe function) (Almog, 1993; Eldar, 1994; Granot, 1993; Sapan, 1966). Since the 1980s, there has been a sharp fall in the influence of military slang and a rise in subtle and elusive slang drawn from the language of young people. Another factor that has contributed to slang vocabulary is the technological revolution and the emergence of social networks. Most of the words from this field are taken from English, and this source functions as a type of media “highway” (Rosenthal, 2008, 2013; Marai, 2013).

Characteristics of slang use:-

Studies show that the use of slang is usually spontaneous and is often shaped by the specific situation in which the conversation takes place or by its purpose. Motives such as amusement, entertainment, or adapting the discourse to the addressee increase the use of slang. The following are some key characteristics:

- Linguistic and cultural reasons and political or geopolitical changes (Marai, 2015).⁴ Slang plays an important role in shaping the humor of different societies and cultures. The use of a slang term often has an amusing effect.
- In the context of Jewish settlement in the Land of Israel, slang played a unique function against the background of the use of other languages brought by Jewish immigrants from Arab and European countries. Slang helped bypass the prevailing position at the time that foreign elements ought not be included in the Hebrew language (Rosenthal, 2007). Despite this position, words from Arabic, Russian, Yiddish, and English penetrated into Hebrew during different periods, under the influence of extralinguistic factors (Muchnik, 1994; Schwartzwald, 1998).⁵
- Slang provides words and expressions that are absent in the intermediate and elevated language. In some cases, it even provides speakers with alternatives for words and expressions that exist in the standard language but are not used, for various reasons.
- Slang is the main tool used to facilitate discussion of taboo topics such as racism and violence, as illustrated in the slang words *zapta* and *box* (both of which mean “a blow”) (Rosenthal, 2007; Netzer, 2007). Slang can be regarded as a sociolinguistic mechanism that enables speakers to break norms without threatening social values (Ben Yehuda, 1984). The younger generation is often seen as the main conduit through which slang creeps into spoken Hebrew, though in recent years a tendency to use slang has also become increasingly apparent among media workers, politicians, and other social strata.
- Speakers feel a need to create a stronger impact on the listener than is possible using the standard and routine word. This phenomenon is reflected in the replacement of the usual expression with a more forceful or vigorous one. Examples of such pairs include *tov* (“good”) and *kabir* (“wicked”); *barur* (“obvious”) and *ashkara* (“totally”); or *meluchlach* (“dirty”) and *ma’afan* (“grotty.”) Others see this phenomenon as an example of the principle of economy in speech: the natural tendency to alleviate the physical and psychological effort involved in speech encourages the emergence of truncated forms or acronyms (Sapan, 1963).

⁴ Marai explains that the linguistic reasons are that Hebrew and Arabic are sister Semitic languages, while the cultural reasons are that Arabic served as a mother tongue and traditional language for many members of the Mizrahi Jewish communities. Political changes refer to the nature of the contact with the Arab population in Israel.

⁵ Muchnik notes that Ben Yehuda showed a tolerant attitude and positive discrimination in favor of the adoption of words of Arabic origin, in contrast to the European languages. She identifies two key periods in terms of Arabic influence: the pre-state period, which was dominated by wars with the Arabs, and the period following independence, which was marked by coexistence between Arabs and Jews who arrived from the Arab countries.

- The absence of words for everyday use; the emergence of closed societies in Israel; rebellion and protest and accepted rules of courtesy and conduct, ideology and language; and a longing for rough and down-to-earth speech are all key reasons for the use of slang (Shalev, 1962).
- Ostrovsky (2006) remarks that speech characterized by the use of slang expressions reflects the Israeli ethos. Accordingly, the characteristic violence of this society is manifested in slang, as for example in the use of the word *kasakh* (“kick ass.”) Similarly, the use of the term *khafif* (“half-ass”) reflects a culture of superficiality, an attempt to impress others, and hedonism, and even implies a sense of dissatisfaction with a given situation.
- Sometimes speakers deliberately aim to be incomprehensible to an alien or hostile environment. An example of this is the jargon used by thieves, prisoners, and criminals, and this explains the use of slang among these groups. The use of slang may also be perceived as an act of social identification by speakers from higher social circles with other parts of the people. It is hardly surprising that many speakers view slang as a sub-language that characterized lower-class sections of the population – but one only needs to watch television to realize that this is a mistaken view.

Arab vocabulary in Israeli slang:-

Slang words of Arabic origin that have penetrated Modern Hebrew are today used by speakers from all sections of society. They have penetrated the language through media such as television, radio, newspapers, and the internet. These words are used by speakers from diverse backgrounds and classes and are no longer the exclusive preserve of any particular section of the population. The following list presents the main slang words of Arabic origin used by Jewish speakers, divided according to word classes:⁶

D.1. Slang words from Arabic used in Hebrew as nouns: *intifada* (literally “uprising,”⁷ *bassa* (“too bad,”) *basta* (“market stall,”) *jura* (“drain,” “big mouth”), *jama’a* (“gang,”) *dakhkot* (“laughs,” “pranks,”) *dawin* (“an attempt to impress,”) *zubur* (“hazing,”) *khalita* (“blanching”) *khamisa* (“charm against the evil eye,”) *khafila* (“rave,”) *kharta* (“crap”) *khirba* (“dump,” “hovel,”) *keyf* (“fun,”) *mukhtar* (“big boss,”) *musayra* (“politeness,”) *mangal* (“barbeque,”) *maskhara* (“wheeling-and-dealing,”) *nagla* (“round,”) *sababa* (“cool,”) *sulkha* (“make-up,” “ending feud,”) *fadikha* (“bad,” “shame,”) *fanan* (“laid back,”) *fashla* (“cock-up,” “error,”) *shakhta* (“toke” [on a cigarette or joint].)

D.2. Slang words from Arabic used in Hebrew as adjectives: *abadai* (“tough [guy],”) *agbar* (“great [guy],”) *ahbal* (“bird-brain,”) *akbar* (“greatest,”) *asli* (“100%,”) *buma* (“owl”) *baladi* (“original,” “country-style,”) *darwish* (“sumple”) *wakhad* (“helluva,”) *zabala* (“crap,”) *zift* (“garbage,”) *khabub* (“mate,”) *khara* (“shitty,”) *khatyar* (“old,” “over-the-hill,”) *mabsut* (“happy,”) *majnun* (“crazy,”) *mal’un* (“cursed,” “damn,”) *mastul* (“wasted,” “high,”) *ma’afen* (“grotty,”) *nakhs* (“bad,” “luckless,”) *sakhbaki* (“[over]-friendly,”) *ars* (“pimp,” “hood,”) *frekha* (“bimbo,”) *kakhba* (“whore,”) *sharmuta* (“slut,”) *ta’aban* (“beat,” “tired,”) *khafif* (“half-assed,”) *rasmi* (“above-board.”)

D.3. Slang words from Arabic used in Hebrew as verbs:⁸ *uskut* (“shut it,”) *hitkharfen* (“went crazy,”) *histakhbek* (“was a buddy with,”) *shuf/shufuni* (“look [at me,]”) *tezamber* (“you screw over,”) *tislam* (“way to go,”) *tfadal* (“go ahead,”) *kise’akh* (“beat the crap out of,”) *khifeff* (“did something in a half-ass way.”)

D.4. Slang words from Arabic used in Hebrew and not included in the other categories. These words include exclamations, curses, greetings, statements of amazement, requests, and other expressions: *abu Ali* (“strongman,”) *akhulmanyuk* (“sonofabitch” [in positive sense,]) *in’al* (“curse,” [often accompanied by “your father,” “your God,” etc.,]) *inshallah* (“God willing,”) *eshhada* (“whassat,”) *ashkara* (“totally,”) *bekhyet* (“for the life/sake of” [often accompanied by “your God,” “your father,” etc.,]) *dugri* (“on the real,”) *dekhil* (“for the sake of” [often accompanied by “your God,” etc.,]) *dirbalak* (“mind out,”) *walla* (“really,”) *khalas* (“enough,” “cut the crap,”) *ya Allah* (“Oh my God!”) *yawilli* (“my lord,”) *yazalameh* (“you guy,”) *ya haram* (“too bad,”) *ya salaam* (“no way,”) *yaeini* (“my dear,”) *ya-balash* (“for nothing,”) *ya-khabibi* (“my man,”) *yarabak* (“[for the sake of] your God,”) *ya’anu* (“like,” “kind of,”)

⁶ The items in the following lists are transliterated according to the usual pronunciation by Jewish speakers of Modern Hebrew (see also section E below).

⁷ In the figurative sense of the term, referring to mess or disorder.

⁸ Verbs derived from nouns will be presented separately below. This paragraph lists borrowed verbs.

kus (“pussy,” often accompanied by “your mother’s,” “your sister’s,” etc.) *mabruk* (“way to go,”) *sakhtein* (“good for you,”) *ma’alesh* (“no sweat,”) *min ayuni* (“I really mean it,”) *min Allah* (“from God,” “fate,”) *salamtak* (“thanks,”) *ahalanwasahalan* (“welcome,”) *akhushilling* (“wicked,” “amazing,”) *eyzehbatikh* (“what a bummer,”) *ilifaatmaat* (“water under the bridge,”) *al khamdulillah* (“thank God,”) *Allahuakbar* (“God is great,”) *Allah yustur* (“God forbid,”) *anaaref* (“what do I know,”) *hada min Allah* (“it’s from God,”) *zubi* (“my dick,” “no way,”) *yomasal – yom basal* (“one day up and the next day down,”) *yomnakhs* (“a shitty day,”) *ala kefak* (“fun,” “cool,”) *ala rasi* (“on my head” = “I promise,”) *shufuniyanas* (“look at me, guys,”) *tamam* (“okay,”) *akhla* (“great,”) *ala fadi* (“for no reason,” “pointless,”) *aleyhum* (“picking on someone.”)

Characteristics of the slang words in Hebrew discourse:-

1. Words that undergo phonological and phonetic changes: Some slang words of Arabic origin underwent phonetic or phonological changes following their absorption in Hebrew discourse in order to adapt to Hebrew pronunciation. By way of example:

- ض (d) > ד (d): The Hebrew plural form *dakhkot* (“laughs,” “pranks”) is taken from the Arabic singular form *ḍaḥka*, which begins with the Arabic consonant ض (d). This phoneme is absent in Hebrew, and accordingly it was replaced by d. The same applies to قیضای (*qabaday*), which in Hebrew becomes *abaday*.
- ظ (z) > ד (d): The Hebrew *fadikha* (“bad,” “shame”) reflects the Arabic فظیحة *faziḥa*. The same change is seen in تفضال *tefaḥal* > *tfadal* (“go ahead”), علفاظی *ala fazi* > *ala fadi* (“pointless”), and انتفاضا > *intifada* (fig. “mess.”)
- ق (q) > گ (g): The Arabic *naqla* was absorbed in Hebrew in the form *nagla* (“round,”) reflecting the pronunciation of ق as g in some Arabic dialects. This change is not universal. *Kahba* (whore), for example, uses g, which is closer to the original Arabic q.
- ص (s) > א (s): عرص *arṣin* Arabic could have been absorbed as *artz*, but in fact appears as *ars* (“pimp,” “hood.”) Similarly: *ašli* > *asli*, *şulḥa* > *sulkha*, *şababa* > *sababa*, and *ba’aşa* > *bassa*.
- غ (gh) > ג (g): دغری *dughri* > *dugri* (“on the real.”)
- خ (kh) > כ (k) (usually pronounced kh): *maskhara* (“wheeling-and-dealing,”) *kharta* (“baloney,”) *khara* (“shit,”) *frekhat* (“bimbo,”) *khetyar* (“old,”) *manfukh* (“show-off,”) *khafif* (“half-ass,”) *hitkharfen* (“go ape-shit.”)
- ذ (dh) > ד (d): *eshhadha* > *eshhada* (“whassat.”)

Use of borrowed consonants or sounds that do not exist in Hebrew and that preserve the Arabic pronunciation:-

Words such as *jama’a* (“gang,”) *jura* (“drain,”) *majnun* (“crazy”) and the relate *janana* (“crazed state,”) and *ajbar* (“tough guy”) all maintain the “j” sound from Arabic, which does not exist in standard Hebrew. This is one of the most notable phenomena of slang words.

Absence of grammatical declension:-

Most functional words, greetings, and exclamations of Arabic origin used in Hebrew do not have a plural form or other declensions. For example, words such as *aleyhum*, *sakhtein*, *rasmi*, *dugri*, *wallah*, *khalas*, *mabruk*, and others do not have a plural form and cannot take the possessive suffixes. Thus the absorption of these words in Hebrew is evidently incomplete and, to an extent, arbitrary. Many nouns do not decline for possession as do “regular” Hebrew nouns. For example, the Arabic *fashla* (“cock-up,” “error”) can be declined for possession of any person, number, and gender by use of the usual enclitic pronouns. Arabic speakers can say *fashli* (“my error,”) *fashleh* (“his error,”) and so forth. In Hebrew, it is not possible to use the analogous forms: instead of **fashlato* (“his error,”) for example, Hebrew speakers use the construction with the separate possessive pronouns: *fashlasheli* (“my error.”) Similarly, “*fashlashelo*” is used for “his error.” The same applies to nouns such as *fadikha*, *khafila*, *sulkha*, *basta*, and *khashish* (grass).

Non-use of the definite article:-

Slang words used in Hebrew as adjectives do not take the definite article. The word *akhlais* used as an adjective in Hebrew, for example in phrases such as *akhlaokhel* (“great food.”) Regular Hebrew adjectives can take the definite article, but *akhla* does not do so. The same applies to *akbar*, *agbar*, and other slang words of Arabic origin. These words express quantity or degree and would be expect to serve as functional words, but in fact their quality is

⁹ The three Arabic consonants ص, ض, and ظ amalgamated in Hebrew in the consonant ז. Here, however, the “d” sound, which is phonetically more similar to the consonant ض, has instead been used.

adjective. When the adjective appears before the noun, as in *akhlaokhel*, the definite article is not used, while when it follows the noun, as in Hebrew, the article may be used.

Use of the dominant gender form:-

Slang words used as adjectives usually appear in the dominant gender form, without agreement for the less common gender. For example, words such as *asli*, *baladi*, *majnun*, *ta'aban*, *mastul*, *mabsut*, and others usually appear in the masculine, although it is also possible to use the feminine forms – *aslit*, *baladit*, *majnuna*, and so forth.

Creating new words using Hebrew lexical patterns:-

abstract nouns are derived from adjectives borrowed from Arabic using the standard Hebrew suffix *-iyut*. For example, *dugriyut* (“straight-upness,” “honesty”) is formed from *dugri*, and similar forms include *khafifnikiyut*, *asliyut*, *arsiyut*, *baladiyut*, and so forth. Similarly, adjectives are derived from nouns by adding the Hebrew suffix *-i*, creating such words as *keyfi*, *arabushi* (“Arab” as an adjective,) *frekhit*, *khafifniki*, and *ahbali*. New nouns can be created using the suffix *-iya*, such as *khumusiya* (“humus joint”) or *sakhbakiya* (from *sakhbak*, meaning “relaxed and friendly atmosphere.”)

Preference for the singular:-

While the original Arab words are used freely in singular or plural, the tendency in Hebrew is to prefer the singular. *Maskharais* much more common than *maskharot*; Hebrew speakers refer to a *sulkhabut* rarely to *sulkhot*; and the same is true of such slang nouns as *zubur*, *sababa*, *ma'aruf* (“favor,”) *keyf*, *khashish*, *jama'a*, *bassa*, and others.

Changes in semantic field:-

Some slang words show changes in their semantic field and meaning by comparison to the Arabic original:

- The word *akhlain* Arabic means “most beautiful” or “sweetest.” In Hebrew, it is used to mean “best” or “excellent” in all instances.
- In Arabic, *shahtameans* “line,” “small stripe,” and also “itch.” In Hebrew, a process of lexical reduction has led to the use of *shakhtato* refer solely to a “toke” on a cigarette; today, the word is used mainly in the context of the use of soft drugs.
- The Arabic word *dawawinis* used to refer to a collection of art works, and by extension came to refer to frivolous things. The Hebrew form *dawinim* refers to vacuous behavior intended to attract attention.
- In Arabic, *jama'arefers* to any group of people – friends, family, and so forth. In Hebrew, the term is used mainly in a delinquent context. The process here is one of lexical reduction and metaphorical adaptation.
- *Jura* in Arabic refers to a pothole in a road, a ditch, or a pool for collecting sewage. In Hebrew, it is often used to refer to a “big mouth” – someone who talks nonsense or is excessively fond of cursing.
- In Arabic, the word *shakbaki*, from *shakib* (“friend,”) means a “friend” in a positive sense. In Hebrew, *sakhbaki* usually refers to someone who acts informally when the occasion demands formality. Thus the sense has been inverted from the positive to the negative.
- The Arabic *freha* comes from *farah*, meaning a chick or gosling. The Hebrew *frekha* has come to be used to refer to a young woman who behaves in a “common” or undignified way – a metaphorical extension.

Preservation of the Arabic meaning:-

It emerges that many words of Arabic origin are used in Hebrew slang in an identical sense to the Arabic. These words have penetrated Hebrew without difficulty and are widely used without any significant change in their form or meaning. This pattern is particularly common in the case of expressions, proverbs, explanations, and supplications. The words involved convey diverse connotations and accordingly are used extensively. Examples include *ahlanwasahlan*, *nakhs*, various curses, *mastul*, *mabsut*, *ashkara*, *yomasalwayom basal*, *alayhum*, *shufuniyanas*, *ala fadi*, *majnun*, *inshallah*, *anaaref*, *sulkha*, and many others.

Changes in word class:-

Some of the slang words are used in Hebrew in a different word class to the Arabic original. This is possible since, in many cases, the meaning of the word changes, thereby requiring or facilitating a change in word class. In most cases, these words are still used in the original word class in certain contexts. For example, in a Hebrew sentence such as *hudiberelavdugri* (“he spoke to him straight-up,”) *dugri* functions as an adverb. However, in a sentence such as *dugri, magi'alahemlehafsid* (“straight-up, they deserve to lose,”) it is used as an exclamation or parenthesis. Similar usages can be seen with such words as *rasmia* and *ashkara*. The words *sharmuta*, *kahba*, and *freha* are nouns

in Arabic but in Hebrew are used both as nouns and adjectives. *Ahla*, *akbar*, and *ajbar* are superlative adjectival forms in Arabic, whereas in Hebrew they are usually used in a simple adjectival context.

Words and expressions used in a fixed form similar to the Arabic:-

The duplicated verbal form *shufshuff* (“look look”) is used in Arabic to express surprise, and serves the same function in Hebrew. This category also includes many of the expressions and proverbs, such as: *ala fadi*, *shufuniyanas*, *illifaatmaat*, *min ayuni*, as well as interjections beginning with the vocative particle *ya*, such as *ya Allah*, *yarabak*. The forms *uskut*, *tfadal*, and *tislamare* used solely in the second person.

Portmanteau and compound word formation:-

These forms are particularly common in the case of exclamations with strong emotional connotations of compassion, mercy, anger, surprise, excitement, and so forth, as well as in curses. In most cases these forms are used in a similar form to the Arabic original, without significant changes in form or content:¹⁰

- *Ya* particle + base (slang): Used in direct speech, particularly among friends. *Ya + zalama*, *ya + sakhbi*, *ya + khabibi*, *ya + balash*, *ya + kharam*, *ya + willi*, *ya + salaam*, *ya + eini*.
- *In'al* (“cursed”) + base from Arabic: used to form curses: *in'alabuk*, *imak*, *ukhtak*, *dinak* (“damn your father/mother/sister/religion,”) etc.
- *Bekhyet* (“for the life of”) + base from Arabic: used to form requests, such as *bekhyetabuk*, *rabak*, *dinak* (“for the life of your father/God/religion.”)
- Preposition *ala* (“on”) + base from Arabic: used to form expressions of surprise, exclamations, etc., such as *ala eini*, *rasi*, *fadi*, *abuy*, *dinak* (“by my eye / my head/ nothing / my father / your religion.”)

Pronunciation of consonants contrary to standard Hebrew in order to preserve the original form of the word:-

According to standard Hebrew rules, the consonant pairs b/v, p/f, and k/kh are allophones; the voiced consonant in each pair is required at the beginning of a word and in certain other contexts, while elsewhere the unvoiced consonant is used. Despite this, the form *fishel* (“he screwed up”) is used rather than **pishel*, and *lekayeff* (“to have fun”) and not **lekhayef*, thereby preserving the sound of the original Arabic. Similarly, *lehikhafeff* (“to do something half-ass”) is used, rather than **lehikafefas* required by standard Hebrew grammar; *lekase'akh* (“to beat the crap out of”) and not **lekhase'akh*; *fanan* and not **panan*; *fadikhar* rather than **padikha*; *frekha* and not **prekha*, and so forth. This phenomenon is common in the use of slang in general, and particularly in the case of slang words of foreign origin.

Fixed stress not shifting in declension:-

Slang words of Arabic origin maintain their stress even when the word is declined. For example, the plural of *'fashlais* *'fashlot* – the stress remains on the first syllable, despite the fact that the feminine plural suffix *-otis* always stressed in standard Hebrew. The same principle is reflected in the plural forms *'dakhkot*, *mab'sutim*, *'ahbalim*, *'frekhot*, *shar'mutot* and many other words. Arabic slang words here follow the pattern seen in slang words of foreign origin in general.

Unusual syllable structure:-

Slang words create unusual patterns in stress and syllables. Multisyllabic words ending in a vowel have penultimate stress:¹¹ *in-ti-'fa-da*, *shar-'mu-ta*, *fa-'di-kha*, *'sul-kha*, *'ju-ra*, *'ba-ssa*, and many others. These words maintain the stress of the original Arabic, along with other components of its structure. This helps a speaker who is unable to identify the unusual stress of the word. This pattern leads to some forms that have antepenultimate stress, contrary to the rules of standard Hebrew, such as: *mu-'sa-ye-ra*. Some multisyllabic words have final stress, such as *akhulman'yuk*, whereas in standard Hebrew penultimate stress is more common. Similarly, masculine plural nouns often have penultimate stress, contrary to the norm in Hebrew: *da'winim*, *mab'sutim*, *'ahbalim*, etc.

¹⁰ This is generally the case in formulas of politeness (Avidor, 2000).

¹¹ This pattern may suggest that Arabic words have preserved the stress of their proto-Semitic ancestors. During the third stage of the development of stress in Hebrew, when most words had penultimate stress, final vowels were dropped, thereby creating a final stress pattern, with the exception of words ending in open syllables and long vowels, which maintained their penultimate stress within the verb system. A similar pattern can be seen in the words examined here. For more detailed discussion, see: Blau, 1970.

Regular morphology:-

Feminine forms ending in *-a*: *sharmuta*, *frekha*, *basta*, *fashla*, *fadikha*, *maskhara*, *nagla*. All these words have penultimate stress, as in Arabic, despite the fact that the feminine suffix in Hebrew is usually stressed. Similarly, adjectival forms ending in *-ido* do not have final stress, again contrary to the Hebrew norm: *'asli*, *'baladi*, *'sakhbaki*.

“Orphan” words without related terms in Hebrew:-

The noun *mukhtar* (“big boss,”) borrowed from Arabic, has no related words used in Hebrew. The native Hebrew word *mukhtar* (“crowned”) has an extensive family of connected words: *keter* (“crown,”) *hakhtara* (“enthronement,”) *hikhtir* (“he enthroned,”) *koteret* (“title.”) The borrowed word *fashla* has no relatives in Hebrew, while a native word such as *pesila* (“disqualification”) has many related terms.

Multiple root letters:-

many slang words have a larger number of root letters than is common in Hebrew. Examples include *dawinim*, *sharmuta*, and *intifada*. Although this phenomenon is encountered in Hebrew, it is rare, and usually the product of the secondary production of verbs from nouns.

Derivation of Hebrew verbs from slang words of Arabic origin:-

Many verbs in Hebrew slang were formed from slang words that penetrated Hebrew from Arabic and were later absorbed in the Hebrew verb system. The formation of verbs from nouns and adjectives is more common than the direct borrowing of verbs, which is a separate subject:

- The word *bassawas* used to form the verbal form *hitba'ess* and associated conjugations, meaning “to be bummed off.”
- The noun *khartawas* used to form the verb *khirtet*, meaning “to lie” or “to hoodwink.”
- From *khafif* comes the verb *khifef*– “to do something half-ass.”
- From *kasakh* comes the verb *lekase'akh* – “to beat the crap out of.”
- From *mastul* comes *hitmastel*– “to get wasted/stoned.”
- The noun *mangal* was used to form the verb *mingel*– “to barbeque.”
- From *fashla* comes the verb *fishel*– “to screw up.”

Conclusion:-

This study highlights the absorption of slang words of Arabic origin in all areas of Hebrew speech. However, a clear quantitative distinction can be seen between the different word classes. The borrowing of nouns and adjectives is extremely common. Words denoting both concrete and abstract entities are adapted from Hebrew for use in spoken and written Hebrew in all registers. By contrast, the penetration of Arabic verbs and adverbs into Hebrew slang is extremely limited and examples are few. Most of the verbs used in Hebrew slang were formed by derivation from nouns using the standard Hebrew patterns, though the noun in question is of Arabic origin. This pattern underscores the closed character of the verb system, which does not usually allow changes, whereas the Hebrew noun system is rich and open to change. Numerous expressions used for exclamation, greeting, and requests have also found their way into Hebrew and are popular among speakers. This group shows a high level of borrowing alongside frequent usage. Slang words that have penetrated Hebrew have adopted Hebrew rules and attempt to behave like “natives,” although in many cases this is difficult due to the significant differences between the two languages in morphology, phonetics, phonology, and semantics. The diverse characteristics of slang words of Arabic origin show that alongside full integration in the colloquial register, the resilience of a word depends on various factors and does not predict the extent to which the word will be absorbed in the standard language. These factors include the ability of the word to survive on an ongoing basis in the media and a morphological and phonetic structure facilitating the application of Hebrew grammatical words without restrictions, particularly for frequent use in written and official Hebrew (examples include *rasmia* and *sulkha*). Many words may be used by numerous speakers in the spoken register only, over an extensive period. Moreover, it is difficult to predict the extent to which a particular word will be absorbed in Hebrew slang. Nevertheless, such absorption clearly depends on the timing of its use in the media; the extent of exposure of speakers; and the diverse connotations for which it is employed. The successful combination of these factors may increase the likelihood that a word will be absorbed.

The scope of this study did not permit a broader investigation of the attitudes of native Jewish speakers toward the use of slang, on the one hand, and toward the status of words in language, on the other. It will be informative to

undertake a comprehensive examination of these attitudes and usages, and such an examination will indeed be forthcoming.

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