

Sustainable Society 2020: Reconciliation Motives in the Israeli Hebrew

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The curriculum for Hebrew literature in the Arab sector (Arabic Junior high schools) was approved by the Minister of Education and Culture in 2008. Along with declared aims connected to the discipline itself, such as the usefulness of the Hebrew language and the beauty of its literature, the curriculum also includes specific ideological social and civic aims. These include acquiring knowledge about the cultural traditions of the Jewish people as well as developing consideration for their social and cultural sensitivities. The three anthologies based upon the very curriculum were published in 2009.

The supposition of this research maintains that the literary curriculum does have the ability to achieve these social aims. The aim of the research was to examine how the corpus of Hebrew literature in the curriculum reflects the relationship between Arabs and Jews in Israel, as individuals and as representatives of different cultures and traditions especially concerning the issues of conflict and reconciliation.

The findings, based upon combined qualitative content analysis tools, revealed that only a small part (12%) of the literary works in the three anthologies indeed dealt with matters of conflict and reconciliation. Most of those literary works avoid direct implications to the Arab-Israeli coexistence.

Teaching Hebrew Language & Literature in the Arab Sector English was the language of instruction in Arab high schools during the period of the British Mandate in most subjects (in some subjects it was Arabic). During this period, the Arabs did not learn Hebrew at all. Already during Israel's War of Liberation in 1948, the provisional Jewish government decided to impose a military government on the Galilee, the "Triangle", the Negev, and the cities Ramla, Lod, Jaffa, Acco and Migdal, which were inhabited by a decisive majority of Arabs. The legal framework of this Israeli action was based on adopting and integrating the emergency defense regulations of the British Mandatory Government of 1945 within the legal system of the new state. This military framework imposed on Israel's Arab population special laws, regulations and procedures.

As a consequence, beginning with 1948 until the gradual cessation of the enforcement of these laws and regulations in 1966, the Military Government was the primary Israeli institution that interacted with Israel's Arab minority, which during this period numbered 12% of the population of the country.

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The Military Government was a unit within the Israeli army attached to the Central Command, but whose day-to-day activities were subordinate to all three Army Commands: North, Central and South. Despite the name 'Military Government', it was clear that its central mission was civilian: special administration of Israel's Arab minority. This administration was presented as security supervision over a hostile population which was also defined as a fifth column that might join with external enemies of the state. It manifested itself in many ways including limiting freedom of movement, freedom of assembly, and freedom of activity in general as well as supervision over education. In accordance with this supervision, the first inspectors of teaching Hebrew to Arabs, during this period, were Jews.

The teaching of Hebrew to Arab citizens began immediately after the establishment of the State. This was a compulsory subject in every Arab-speaking elementary school (from fourth grade and up) as well as in high schools, for 4 -5 hours a week, and needless to say, in teacher seminaries. The teaching of Hebrew in the Arab sector was not easily received either by the Jews or by the Arabs, and was accompanied by many disputes in the newspapers of the time. Over time, two opposing approaches to this issue developed, as demonstrated by Shohamy&Spolsky.

Opponents were against the teaching of Hebrew to Arabs for political and religious reasons while supporters supported it for the following reasons: practical reasons-integrating the Arabs in the life of the country and ideological reasons-strengthening their loyalty to the laws and institutions of the country. Both of these reasons, practical and ideological, had clear and immediate implications for the molding of the identity of pupils in Israel's Arab sector.

Between 1948 and 1958, three different study plans were written for Arab elementary schools. In every one of these, the teaching of Hebrew was designed to achieve three major goals: as a key to study the Hebrew nation and its culture; as a means for unmediated written and oral communication with the Jewish sector; and as an instrument to cultivate Israeli citizenship. Examining these three aims shows that they focused on becoming acquainted with the Jewish people and its culture. In 1959, a study plan for elementary schools was published. The aims mentioned above served as its basis, although wider aims were added such as bridging the divide and bring the two peoples closer together.

In addition it contained discussions about general didactic issues. In comparison, the teaching of Hebrew in the high schools remained devoid of any study plan. At the beginning of the 1960s, the Ministry of Education published a study plan for the teaching of Hebrew in Arab high schools. Its title was Study Plan for the Teaching of Hebrew and Hebrew Literature in Arabic High Schools in grades 9-12.

Content analysis is defined as a methodology in which a series of procedures is performed on the text with the intent to formulate a diagnosis of and significant generalizations from the text [12]. The integrated content analysis methodology combines qualitative and quantitative techniques. In other words, the systematic production of valid deductions from within the given text, based

Short Communication

upon the understanding and interpretation of the researcher (naturalistic generalization). At the same time, this would include the recognition of prominent elements that repeat themselves within the text itself. This method requires a detailed framework of criteria in order to classify statements and ideas into indisputable and independent categories. In order to balance out the weaknesses of the qualitative method, we have relied on a great many detailed quotations from the textbooks in order to preserve the maximum amount of accuracy when presenting the content.