

Instructing or Recruiting? Language and Style in 1920s and 1930s Tel Aviv Municipal Posters

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People walking along the central streets of Tel Aviv in 1928, might have encountered the following municipal poster hung on the city's notice boards:*

Schools and kindergartens will commence on Thursday, Yod Alef Heshvan, 25.X.28.

Parents who have not yet registered their children are requested to hurry and register them in the Municipality's offices, lest they will lose their place.¹

The text's matter-of-fact style was quite typical of municipal posters from Mandatory Tel Aviv. Yet not *all* municipal posters shared this dry, neutral style. Occasionally posters seem to have aimed at a much more emotional "rapport" with their readers:

To the joy of us all, pilgrims' convoys from all the corners of the Diaspora arrive and enter this land each and every day.

It is our duty to regard the visitants with fitting hospitality and to provide for their accommodation.

According to our reports, vacancies in the hotels do not suffice.

We therefore appeal to all the citizens of the city with the request to put rooms at the guests' disposal in exchange for payment, and to immediately report it to the Tel Aviv Municipality, room no. 37.

Citizens of the city! Let our guests feel that they dwell among their brethren.²

* We would like to thank the anonymous readers of the text for their fruitful comments, which helped us to clarify some of our ideas in the current paper, and raised interesting issues for further research.

¹ Municipal poster from October 25, 1928 – the Posters Collection at the Manuscript Department of the National Library in Jerusalem (hereafter: PC), V2128/1. This and all the texts analyzed hereafter were written in Hebrew. Our translations attempt to reflect the original's style. Examples of the Hebrew originals are provided in appendix A and B for the benefit of readers familiar with Hebrew.

² Municipal poster from March 10, 1933 – PC, V2128/4.

Tourism was important for Tel Aviv's economy, but unlike registering pupils in local schools, providing lodging for visitors for a fee was not an obvious act. The text attempted to *convince* its readers to behave in a certain way, in this case an unusual and probably an inconvenient one. Accordingly, in addition to the logical argumentation raised in order to induce readers to act in the desired manner, the poster's style aimed at evoking in them an emotional reaction. It was evidently geared at creating a sense of involvement, unlike the former text's orientation towards a sense of detachment.³ The former text's style will be termed here "instructing", while the latter text's style will be termed "recruiting".

The recruiting style presented no real innovation in the evolution of Hebrew. Rather, it stood out as a direct descendent of ways of expression that were customary in the rhetoric of activists of the Jewish national movement since its inception.⁴ The instructing style, on the other hand, was a new phenomenon. Its overall character had no recognizable *direct* models in previous linguistic layers,⁵ but rather reflected the rapidly evolving standard register of Modern Hebrew. Its presence in municipal posters from the 1920s should be attributed to the transformation of Hebrew into a daily means of communication in Palestine and to the new administrative roles which it had to fulfill in the emerging linguistic community.⁶ The aim of this paper is to explore this phenomenon

³ On the notions of involvement vs. detachment see Wallace L. Chafe, "Integration and Involvement in Speaking, Writing and Oral Literature", *Spoken and Written Language: Exploring Orality and Literacy*, ed. Deborah Tannen (Norwood, 1982), 35–53.

⁴ Compare, for instance, text by Eliezer Ben-Yehuda from 1879, in: *Sefer ha-'Aliya ha-Rishona*, ed. Mordechai Eliav (Jerusalem, 1981), 15 [text no. 1], or text by Yosef Vitkin from 1906, in: *Ha-'Aliya ha-Sheniya: Mekorot*, ed. Yehoshua Kaniel (Jerusalem, 1997), 7–13 [text no. 6].

⁵ As the instructing style shared some functional similarities with certain traditional Hebrew styles, primarily Halakhic style, it is plausible to predict that future research will unveil certain linguistic and structural similarities between them. Some research about the possible contribution of Halakhic literature to the emergence of Modern Hebrew was conducted by Lewis Glinert, see e.g. "Hebrew-Yiddish diglossia: type and stereotype – Implications of the language of Ganzfried's *Kitsur*", *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 67 (1987): 39–55; Idem., "Ha-Milon ha-Histori be-'Aspaklarya Hevratit: le-Nituah Otsar ha-Milim shel 'Kitsur Shulhan Aruh'", *Bikoret u-Farshanut*, 25 (1989): 77–88; Idem., "Language choice and the Halakhic speech act", *The Influence of Language on Culture and Thought*, ed. Robert L. Cooper and Bernard Spolsky (Berlin, 1991), 157–182.

⁶ As municipal posters also included the publication of municipal by-laws, written in a legal style, it is worthwhile noting that the texts exemplified and discussed in this section were written in a distinctive *administrative* style. For a discussion of the separateness of these two styles see Anat Helman and Yael Reshef, "'Kol ha-'Ir ha-'Ivrit le-Toshaveha': Moda'ot 'Ironiyot be-Tel Aviv ha-Mandatorit'", *Israel: Studies in Zionism and the State of Israel, History, Society, Culture*, 11 (2007): 64–70.

from two different disciplinary backgrounds and lenses: that of linguistic analysis and that of cultural history. This double perspective seems to enable new insights, unavailable to a single scholar working within the bounds of a specific discipline.

The revolutionary use of Hebrew within the Jewish national movement as well as the sociolinguistic facets of this national project have been amply covered by former research.⁷ Our current study ventures into a field that is rarely treated, namely the linguistic process of creating Modern Hebrew as it was consolidated in practice, in daily application. Many of the linguistic facts regarding the ways in which Hebrew was actually used in the speech community throughout its emergence – both orally and in writing – are unknown. Our examination of texts from Mandate era Tel Aviv aims to contribute to filling this gap.⁸ On the historical level, the study portrays how municipal posters played an integral part in the Municipality's attempts to establish a relationship with its residents – both as a partner and as an authority.

Based on a detailed examination of more than 130 municipal posters published in Tel Aviv in 1926–1939, and stored today at the Manuscript Department of the National Library in Jerusalem, our research explores the linguistic makeup of the Tel Aviv Municipality public communication with its citizens within its historical and cultural context. The posters' essential advantage as primary sources lies in their mundane nature: as they were one of the main means used in the practical administering of the city, they preserve firsthand flavors of daily life and linguistic practices from Tel Aviv in the 1920s and 1930s. Our examination of each poster's historical context indicates that the choice between the instructing and the recruiting styles was not coincidental,

⁷ See the short survey and bibliographic references provided in the first paragraphs of the next section. For other aspects of the process see e.g. Ron Kuzar, *Hebrew and Zionism: A Discourse Analytic Cultural Study* (Berlin and New York, 2001); Shlomo Izreel, "Le-Tahalikhei Hithavutah Shel ha-'Ivrit ha-Meduberet be-Yisrael", *Te'uda*, 18 (2002): 217–23; Rachel Elboym-Dror, *Ha-Hinukh ha-'Ivri be-'Erets Yisrael*, 2 volumes, (Jerusalem, 1986, 1990).

⁸ For other studies of the period's written language see Yael Reshef, "'Bi-Teshuiva le-Mikhtavo mi-Yom...': Tsurat ha-Kavod bi-Leshonam Shel Dovrei ha-'Ivrit be-Tel Aviv bi-Tekufat ha-Mandat", *Te'uda*, 18 (2002): 299–327; "Li-Demutah Shel ha-'Ivrit ha-Hadasha be-Reshitah: 'Iyun bi-Tefutsatam Shel Mivnei ha-Semikhut ba-Tikhtovet ha-Misradit", *Mehkarim be-Lashon*, 10 (2006): 171–200. For a discussion of the period's spoken language see Idem, "Direct Speech in Non-Literary Texts: A Possible Source of Information on the Character of Early Spoken Modern Hebrew?", *Hebrew Studies*, XLVI (2005): 169–196. A comprehensive discussion of the topic by the same author is in print (the book, edited by Shlomo Izreel, is temporarily entitled *Mekhonat ha-Dibur Betor More Safot: Po Medabrim 'Ivrit*).

but correlated with posters' aims, content material and circumstances of publication.

In another article, we examine the variety of nuanced styles in municipal posters,⁹ but here we delve deeper into linguistic analysis while focusing on the two most demarcated and contrasting styles found in Tel Aviv municipal posters: the instructing and recruiting styles.

The concept of style, while intuitive and commonsensical, is at the same time elusive. Various approaches exist concerning the definition of style and the methods and domains of its study.¹⁰ Our analysis will be based on the rather general agreement that stylistic differentiation between texts (or groups of texts) is created by a consistent, iterative appearance of certain linguistic features, which the analyst aims to unveil. While stylistic analysis is unable fully to account for the exact way in which linguistic structure interacts with context and with addressees' expectations,¹¹ some formalization of reader's intuitions concerning the meanings and effects produced in texts can be achieved by the systematic and principled attention to recurring linguistic patterns.¹² In the following pages we suggest such an analysis of the two main styles used in municipal posters.

Hebrew Municipal Posters in "The First Hebrew City"

In the 1920s and 1930s, the use of Hebrew as a daily means of communication was a recent phenomenon. While in traditional Jewish communities Hebrew was a central component of religion and high culture, most spheres of life were conducted in local Jewish dialects.¹³ The idea of transforming Hebrew into a spoken language appeared only in the last quarter of the 19th century, as part of the rise of national ideas among Jews.¹⁴ Nevertheless, for more than twenty years the efforts to implement this idea in the *Yishuv*, as the Jewish society of Palestine was

⁹ Helman and Reshef, "Kol ha-'Ir ha-'Ivrit": 61–89.

¹⁰ For surveys of the topic, accompanied by extensive bibliographic references, see Mick Short, "Style: Definitions", *The Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics*, ed. R. E. Asher (Oxford, 1994), vol. 8, 4375–4378; D. Birch, "Stylistics", *idem.*, 4383–4378; Jenny Cheshire, "Register and Style", *International Encyclopedia of Linguistics*, ed. William Bright (New York and Oxford, 1992), vol. 3, 324–327; Ronald Carter, "Applied Stylistics", *idem.*, vol. 4, 80–81.

¹¹ Short, "Style: Definitions", 4376.

¹² Carter, "Applied Stylistics", 80.

¹³ See Lewis Glinert (ed.), *Hebrew in Ashkenaz* (Oxford, 1993).

¹⁴ Haim Rabin, "Me Hayta Tehiyat ha-Lashon ha-'Ivrit", in: *idem*, *Hikrei Lashon* (Jerusalem, 1999), 365–366.

called, had very limited success. In the first years of the 20th century, the use of Hebrew in speech was still confined to school children and to a very small number of zealots.¹⁵ Since 1903, following the arrival of a new wave of immigrants into Palestine and further consolidation of the Hebrew school system, however, the situation drastically changed. By the eve of World War I, Hebrew turned into the spoken language among ever-expanding social circles.¹⁶ In spite of the continued presence of other languages, the role of Hebrew was steadily increasing in the *Yishuv's* daily life, and it gradually turned into a constitutive element in the Jewish settlers' self-image.¹⁷ This change was officially recognized in 1922 by the authorities of the British Mandate, who granted Hebrew the status of one among the three official languages of the country, alongside English and Arabic.¹⁸

Despite this formal recognition, the position of Hebrew as a daily means of communication was far from being secure. The Jewish population remained multilingual,¹⁹ and the language itself was felt to be weak and lacking. As Hebrew was hitherto used only in limited spheres, many things that could be written or said in other languages had no suitable parallels in Hebrew. In order to be able to fulfill all the communicational needs of a modern society, the newly-revived language had to expand and go through vast processes of standardization.²⁰ Its diffusion among the population was periodically impaired by constant waves of immigration,²¹ and its use was not evenly distributed throughout the *Yishuv*, but rather concentrated in certain social circles and geographic locations. The largest of these locations was the city of Tel Aviv.²²

¹⁵ Benjamin Harshav, *Language in Time of Revolution* (Berkeley-Los Angeles-London, 1993), 104–109.

¹⁶ *Op. cit.*, 110–111, 133–146; Michael Grinzweig, “Ha-Lashon ha-’Ivrit bi-Tekufat ha-’Aliya ha-Sheniya”, *Ha-’Aliya ha-Sheniya: Mehkarim*, ed. Israel Bartal (Jerusalem, 1998), 406–418.

¹⁷ Uzzi Ornan, “Siyumo Shel Tahalikh Tehiyat ha-Lashon”, *Mehkarim be-Lashon*, 1 (1985): 261–272.

¹⁸ For useful surveys of the emergence of Modern Hebrew see Harshav, *Language*, 81–176; Rabin, *Me Hayta*; Shelomo Morag, “The Emergence of Modern Hebrew: Some Sociolinguistic Perspectives”, *Hebrew in Ashkenaz*, ed. Lewis Glinert (Oxford, 1993), 208–221.

¹⁹ See, for instance, Yael Chaver, *What Must Be Forgotten: The Survival of Yiddish in Zionist Palestine* (Syracuse NY, 2004).

²⁰ Shelomo Morag, “Planned and Unplanned Development in Modern Hebrew”, *Lingua*, 8 (1959): 247–263.

²¹ Roberto Bachi, “A Statistical Analysis of the Revival of Hebrew in Israel”, *Scripta Hierosolymitana*, III (1956): 179–247.

²² Harshav, *Language*, 133–152.

Tel Aviv was founded during the Ottoman era as a Jewish “garden suburb”. A group of families started building the suburb in 1909, intending to replace the overcrowded living conditions in the Jewish neighborhoods of predominantly Arab Jaffa with a modern and spacious environment. After World War I, under the rule of the British Mandate, the small suburb turned into an urban centre, gradually forsaking its “garden city” characteristics. It absorbed about forty percent of all Jewish immigrants to Palestine, and expanded from 3600 inhabitants in 1921 to about 40,000 by the end of the 1920s, and to 160,000 inhabitants by the end of the 1930s.²³

In 1921, the British government granted Tel Aviv autonomous municipal status. Tel Aviv’s municipal policy was drawn out by an elected Jewish Municipality in local by-laws and annual budgets, and enforced by a municipal police force and a municipal court.²⁴ The all-Jewish city gradually became not just the demographic, economic and financial centre of the *Yishuv*; it also gained all the essential attributes of an urban cultural centre.²⁵ It was nicknamed “The First Hebrew City” and its artists, educators and activists were dedicated to the Zionist mission of molding a new local national culture conducted in the Hebrew language.²⁶ Tel Aviv Municipality regarded the Hebrew language as a pivotal means for assuring the city’s national character. It named Tel Aviv streets after Jewish figures and other Hebrew entities, tried to enforce the use of Hebrew as the only language to be written and spoken within the city’s public sphere, and communicated with its local Jewish populace in Hebrew.²⁷

²³ See Arie Yodfat, *Shishim Shenot Hitpathutah Shel Tel Aviv* (Tel Aviv, 1969), 15–43; Michael Roman, ‘Ma’avaro Shel ha-Merkaz ha-Demografi ve-ha-Kalkali mi-Yerushalayim le-Tel Aviv’, *Yerushalaim ba-Toda’ah u-va-Asiyah ha-Tsionit*, ed. Hagit Lavsky (Jerusalem, 1989), 222; Yaacov Shavit and Gideon Biger, *Ha-Historya Shel Tel Aviv: Mi-Shekhunot le-’Ir, 1909–1936* (Tel Aviv, 2001).

²⁴ David Smilansky, “Iriyat Tel Aviv le-Khol Mahlekoteha”, *Sefer Tel Aviv*, ed. Alter Droyanov, (Tel Aviv, 1936), 436–458; also see Gideon Biger, *An Empire in the Holy Land: Historical Geography of the British Administration in Palestine – 1917–1929* (Jerusalem, 1994), 199.

²⁵ As defined by Diana Crane, *The Production of Culture: Media and the Urban Arts* (Newbury-Park CA, 1992), 112. On the centrality of Tel Aviv as an urban center see Joachim Schlor, *Tel Aviv: From Dream to City* (London, 1999); Maoz Azaryahu, *Tel Aviv ha-’Ir ha-’Amitit* (Beer Sheva, 2005); Barbara E. Mann, *A Place in History: Modernism, Tel Aviv, and the Creation of Jewish Urban Space* (Stanford CA, 2006).

²⁶ See Zohar Shavit (ed.), *Beniyatah Shel Tarbut ’Ivrit be-’Eretz-Yisrael* (Jerusalem, 1999), 3.

²⁷ See Anat Helman, *Or ve-Yam Hikifuha* (Haifa, 2007), 48; Idem, “‘Even the Dogs in the Streets Bark in Hebrew’: National Ideology and Everyday Culture in Tel Aviv”, *Jewish Quarterly Review*, XCII/3–4 (2002): 370–373.

Tel Aviv was the only urban settlement in the *Yishuv* in which Hebrew was the main and formal public language since its earliest stage. In Jerusalem, Hebrew started to be used in official documents, alongside Arabic, only as late as 1919–1920,²⁸ and in the mixed Arab-Jewish city of Haifa, Hebrew was used as the formal language within the Jewish neighborhoods only.²⁹ Whereas members of small, homogeneous, collective agricultural settlements were often quite strict about the use of Hebrew alone,³⁰ in older, larger and more heterogeneous agricultural settlements, some of which were going through a process of urbanization, the transition from Yiddish and other languages to Hebrew was more gradual.³¹ No studies exist to date regarding the use of language in Tel Aviv as compared with other localities in the *Yishuv*.³² Yet, due to its unique municipal status and its prominence as the *Yishuv*'s urban economic and cultural center, an examination of the linguistic practices in Tel Aviv itself – primarily on the public level – is fundamental for any attempt to decipher the transformation of Hebrew into a modern means of communication.

The use of Hebrew as a public language in Tel Aviv was conducted both on a private-personal level, through correspondence between residents and various municipal departments, and on a public-general level, via three main channels: a municipal bulletin; municipal notices and responses published in the local Hebrew press; and public posters, hung on municipal boards throughout the city.³³ Whereas bulletins and newspapers had to be purchased by the residents, municipal posters

²⁸ Nathan Efratti, *Mi-Leshon Yehidim li-Leshon Uma: Ha-Dibur ha-'Ivri ba-Shanim Tarmav-Tarpav (1881–1922)*, (Jerusalem, 2004), 203–205.

²⁹ For example see posters issued by Hadar ha-Carmel Committee in the early 1930s – Haifa Municipal Archive, 15/117.

³⁰ For example see Anat Helman, “Was There Anything Particularly Jewish about ‘The First Hebrew City?’”, *The Art of Being Jewish in Modern Times*, eds. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett and Jonathan Karp (Philadelphia, 2008), 123–124.

³¹ For example in Petah Tikvah, founded as early as 1878 but later overshadowed by neighboring Tel Aviv, the Hebrew employed in administrative documents seems to have been more traditional than the one used by the Tel Aviv Municipality: see, for instance, municipal posters from early 1930s Petah Tikvah – Petah Tikvah Municipal Archive, 31–3a/z”kh. On Petah Tikvah’s culture see Anat Helman, “Place-Image and Memorial Day in 1920s and 1930s Petah Tikvah”, *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies*, 5/1 (2006): 73–94.

³² The poet Avraham Shlonsky provides an impressionistic characterization of the Hebrew speech of Tel Aviv youths as more modern, though less correct, than the speech of youths in Haifa and Jerusalem – see essay from 1942, reprinted in Avraham Shlonsky, *Yalkut Eshel* (Tel Aviv, 1960), 214.

³³ For instance *Yedi'ot Tel Aviv, Tarpa* (1921); *Doar ha-Yom*, 6 June, 1924; municipal notices from August and September 1929 – Tel Aviv – Jaffa Municipal Historical Archive (hereafter: TAA), 4/145a.

were available to all who roamed the streets and accessible to all who could read Hebrew. As Tel Aviv residents were exposed daily to these posters' language and familiar with their styles,³⁴ they are an ideal starting point for our exploration of language use in Mandate era Tel Aviv.

The Municipality issued and published dozens of posters every year, transmitting municipal by-laws and regulations, emergency orders, instructions and prohibitions, announcements and calls. Municipal posters covered practical issues from a wide array of local fields, such as sanitation, Sabbath observance, business hours, beggary, education, taxation, cultural events, transport, VIP's visits and funerals, health, food prices, public gardening, noise, water and electricity supply, security, holidays, charity, licenses, and the use of Hebrew.³⁵ The Municipality made use of typographic devices and variations (see appendix A and B), yet unlike many commercial and national posters, which were published during the same years and included graphic ornaments and figurative illustrations, the municipal posters included no illustrations.³⁶ Municipal formal publications were influenced by individuals like the municipal secretary, Yehuda Nadivi, and the journalist Aharon Zeev Ben-Yishai, and at least one poster in our corpus indicates the stylistic involvement of Mayor Meir Dizengoff;³⁷ yet this study does not deal with the process of the posters' composition, printing and distribution,³⁸ but rather with the complete products as they appeared on the city's notice boards, accumulating into a recognizable corpus.

There were, of course, many precedents of public posters used by Jewish communities in the Diaspora, as well as in Jerusalem and other localities in *Eretz Yisrael*. These previous posters, however, were aimed at religious communities and issued by bodies of limited dom-

³⁴ For visual depictions of people crowding around the city's notice boards, see for instance from the mid-1920s – Lavon Institute Archive, picture no.33734; film footage from 1928 in Georg Engel's 1937 'Hatikvah' – Steven Spielberg Jewish Film Archive, VT DA 050; photograph by R. Wisentein from the mid 1930s in A. Machner (ed.), *Temunot Eretz-Yisrael: Tel Aviv* (Tel Aviv, 1937), 23.

³⁵ Municipal posters from 1926–1931 – TAA, 4/2829; municipal posters from 1932–1937 – TAA, 4/2830.

³⁶ On the use of graphics and illustrations in JNF propaganda, for instance, see Yoram Bar-Gal, *Propaganda and Zionist Education: The JNF, 1924–1947* (Rochester, 2003). Also see Batya Donner, "Toldot ha-Grafika ha-Shimushit", in Z. Shavit (ed.), *Beniyatah Shel Tarbut 'Ivrit*, 535–555. And see n. 78 on the rare exception to the rule of undecorated municipal posters.

³⁷ Municipal poster from May 22, 1934 – PC, V2128/4. And see Helman and Reshef, "'Kol ha-'Ir ha-'Ivrit": 83.

³⁸ Documents describing these processes in 1926–1939 are stored in TAA, 4/1315, 4/1316, 4/1320.

ination.³⁹ Tel Aviv was the first Hebrew city to win a wide municipal autonomy and its new range of authorities and activities shaped new practical needs. Hence, the Hebrew in Tel Aviv municipal posters reflected the development of appropriate linguistic means to meet new fields of enterprise, and their innovative styles addressed modern spheres of jurisdiction.

As indicated by the two examples quoted above, the style of municipal posters read in Tel Aviv streets in the 1920s and 1930s could alternate between the “instructing” and the “recruiting”. One of the main findings of our research is that the instructing style was the default option in most municipal posters (about 85 percent of the posters in our corpus), certainly whenever their content applied to *compulsory* issues, which clearly lay within the Municipality’s authority. The occurrence of the rarer recruiting style, on the other hand, was restricted to cases in which posters aimed at an *optional* or *voluntary* activity. In such matters, posters alternated between the instructing and the recruiting styles, according to each poster’s particular circumstances and goals. While subtle stylistic variations between posters were affected by each poster’s specific circumstances,⁴⁰ this study concentrates on the two cardinal opposing styles and their main characteristics. In order to trace and define the main linguistic means employed to create such distinguishable Hebrew styles, we chose to focus on posters from two clearly distinct fields – the obligatory field of municipal taxes and the voluntary field of public events.

Instructing Style in Posters on Taxes

Most urban services were paid for by local users in the form of municipal taxes. As modern cities grew in size, the concept of urban government was gradually changed and expanded: city dwellers expected their municipalities to provide public health, safety, educational services, water, street lighting, and public transport. Growing demands meant increasing expenses, and thus entailed increasing taxation. Fiscal policies not only indicate which urban services were promised and supplied

³⁹ On the distinct language of posters used to date in ultra-orthodox communities in Israel see Tsipora Shapira, “Leshon ha-Pashkvilim”, *Pashkvilim: Moda’ot Kir u-Khrazot Polmus ba-Rehov ha-Haredi*, ed. Genya Dolev (Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, 2005), 42–47; Menachem Friedman, “Pashkvilim u-Mod’ot Kir ba-Hevra ha-Haredit”, *Pashkvilim*, 8–37; Hadassa Kantor and Malka Muchnik, “Shimushei Lashon Yihudiyim be-Mod’ot ha-Edot ha-Harediyot”, *Mehkerei Morashtenu*, II–III (2004): 239–249.

⁴⁰ See Helman and Reshef, “Kol ha’ir ha’ivrit”.

by municipal governments, but they also reflect the citizens' expectations regarding such services and their willingness to pay for them.⁴¹

Tel Aviv Municipality's legal right to collect local taxes and payments for supplied urban services was formally granted by the British Mandate government in 1921.⁴² Various urban taxes composed the greater share of the Municipality's annual revenues. In 1923, the Municipality founded a department for tax collection, and three years later a special department for collecting tax-debts was established as well. Prominent municipal revenues were based on house rates, education and hospital taxes, trade and building licenses, payments for water, etc. Taxation principles and rates changed a couple of times throughout the years, and since participation in municipal elections depended on a certain tax census, the issue had direct political as well as economic implications.⁴³ Municipal annual budgets, detailing urban taxation, and all municipal by-laws, had to be approved and validated by the British district government. Only then did urban taxes become legally compulsory. The Municipality was authorized to demand these payments from the public, and to that end it issued posters that provided information and directions.

These posters were written as a rule in the instructing style, and were often – though not always – published in a bilingual Hebrew-English version. The businesslike tone characterizing them was undoubtedly influenced by the British legal and administrative registers, but they were not necessarily a direct replica of the foreign ways of expression in the employment of specific lexical, grammatical and syntactic devices.⁴⁴ Similarly, they may have shared some functions and linguistic features with the Halakhic style, yet the religious and traditional context of the former differed significantly from the secular and modern context of the latter, creating crucial stylistic dissimilarities. The relationship between the Hebrew texts and their English parallels, as well as the possible influences of the Halakhic literature, both deserve a separate examination.⁴⁵ Here we will concentrate on the municipal posters' texts in order to pinpoint the main linguistic devices that granted them the desired stylistic effect.⁴⁶

⁴¹ See Leonard P. Curry, *The Corporate City* (Westport CN, 1997), 33, 84–85.

⁴² *Yedi'ot Tel Aviv*, vol.2, Av Tarpa, (1921): 7–8. Local taxes were collected earlier by Tel Aviv neighborhoods as well.

⁴³ Smilansky, *'Iriyat Tel Aviv*, 452–453. *Yedi'ot 'Iriyat Tel Aviv*, *Sefer ha-Shanah Tartsaz* (1937): 14–16.

⁴⁴ See, for example, municipal poster from June 20, 1930 – PC, V2128/3.

⁴⁵ Compare n. 5 above.

⁴⁶ Due to the scarcity of research on the period's non-literary linguistic varieties of Hebrew, it is hard to determine the extent to which the features found in our corpus were shared by other corpora. At this stage it is possible to note the striking similarity

These linguistic devices were especially conspicuous in short texts, which included, due to their conciseness, only the core features of the instructing style. The following poster provides such an example:

In connection with the end of the fiscal year 1931, all taxpayers who have not yet produced the Municipality with their current taxes due by 31 December 1931 are requested to hurry and pay their entire dues *within 14 days from today*.⁴⁷

Our analysis of the corpus reveals that the matter-of-fact tone of the instructing style was produced by two different sets of linguistic means. One set regarded participants' roles, i. e. the positioning of the Municipality vis-à-vis its citizens in a manner that emphasized the Municipality's authority to collect taxes while minimizing the active role it played in the process. The other set of linguistic means was aimed at achieving precision and clarity. Those citizens who regularly read the municipal posters knew exactly which taxes they had to pay, when, on what basis of calculation, and which governing body was responsible for it. Such an inclination towards precision of expression was by no means self-evident in the linguistic and literary climate of the period, which was characterized by a marked tendency to prefer lofty, ornamental style over precision of expression.⁴⁸

A. Participants' roles

In the process of tax collection, the Municipality and the citizens stand in two opposing poles: one gives instructions and collects the money, the other has to comply and pay. Language may be used to stress this division of labor, or alternatively to tone down the latent conflict inherent in it. The instructing style clearly preferred the latter option. It achieved this effect through two interconnected features: the use of the passive voice, and the mode of reference to the participating parties. Rather than blatantly state that "we", i. e. the Municipality, demand something from "you", i. e. the citizens, the passive voice "are requested" was used.

between the instructing style used in municipal posters and language use in other administrative texts produced by the Tel Aviv Municipality (compare the studies mentioned in n. 8, and note in particular n. 54). Further research is needed in order to determine the relationship between our findings and the styles used in other administrative contexts and locations, in advertisement, in journalistic texts, etc.

⁴⁷ Municipal poster from December 2, 1931– PC, V2128/3.

⁴⁸ See e. g. the discussion in Itamar Even Zohar, "Ma Bishla Gitel u-Ma Akhal Tshitshikov: le-Ma'amad ha-Denotatsya bi-Leshon ha-Sifrut ha-'Ivrit ba-Dorot ha-'Aharonim", *Ha-Sifrut*, 23 (1976): 1–6.

Such a formulation prevented the need to specify the requesting entity, and elegantly toned down the potential conflict between citizens and Municipality. Likewise, the taxpayers were referred to with the neutral “they”, rather than by the direct and more intimate “you”.

As participants’ roles were blurred and minimized, the action itself came into focus: most weight was granted to the fact that a certain action was being performed, while who exactly was involved in its performance seems negligible.⁴⁹ This effect of the passive voice is particularly obvious in the following poster:

The Tel Aviv Municipality hereby notifies the public, that an addition to Article 5 (1) of Tel Aviv Municipality’s 1921 Order has been published in the Official Gazette no. 238 dated 1.7.29, validated by an ordinance from the government official in charge according to the 1921 Local Councils’ Order, as follows:

The Municipal Council may levy a tax on every admission ticket into public entertainment sites, payable by the person under which management and according to which instructions the entertainment is being performed, according to the following rates:

a. A rate of 2 mils⁵⁰ off each ticket the value of which does not exceed 20 mils.

b. A rate of 5 mils off each ticket the value of which exceeds 20 mils and is not higher than 100 mils.

c. A rate of 10% of the price of a ticket exceeding 100 mils and no higher than 250 mils.

d. A rate of 15% of the price of a ticket the price of which is 250 mils and higher.

Provided that the Council will be entitled to grant a discount of 50% of the above mentioned rates in cases of admission tickets to public entertainments, the revenue of which is dedicated to religious or charitable purposes.⁵¹

A sentence such as “a tax [...], payable by the person under which management and according to which instructions the entertainment is being performed”, focuses on the actions – an entertainment is being conducted and a tax is being paid, while marginalizing the direct involvement of the entities performing these actions.⁵²

This shift of focus from participants to actions turned the passive voice into one of the core features of the instructing style. It was a

⁴⁹ On this attribute of the passive see Anna Siewierska, *The Passive: A Comparative Linguistic Analysis* (London, 1984).

⁵⁰ There were 1000 mils in one Palestine Pound.

⁵¹ Municipal poster from July 7, 1929 – PC, V2128/1. The Hebrew original of this poster is provided in Appendix A.

⁵² Chafe, *Integration*, 45; also compare Dana Taube, “Ifyun Hitkavnut be-Vinyenei ha-Savil ha-Shonim ba-Ivrit Bat Yamenu”, *Massorot*, IX–X–XI (1997): 43–60.

central device in creating the neutral, matter-of-fact tone that characterizes this style. Compared to the rare use of the passive voice in classical Hebrew,⁵³ its frequent use in the instructing style was a conspicuous sign of modernity and novelty.

Neutralization of participants' roles was achieved through a variety of other linguistic devices as well, one of them being the preference of the detached third person singular over the more intimate first and second persons. An example of this practice appears in the last poster quoted: "The Tel Aviv Municipality hereby notifies the public". By using "Tel Aviv Municipality", rather than "we", the Municipality's direct responsibility for the actions mentioned in the poster was apparently reduced. Likewise, instead of being aimed directly at "you", our citizens, the poster addressed an abstract third person singular entity, "the public". This usage, just like the passive, achieved a neutralizing effect by moderating the actual roles of the parties involved. It consistently dominated posters written in the instructing style in our corpus. While reference to the Municipality in the first person plural is occasionally found in the corpus (i. e. "we hereby notify"), the third person singular (i. e. "The Municipality hereby notifies") is much more frequent. In the same vein, reference to the target audience through the second person "you" is altogether absent in posters written in the instructing style.⁵⁴

The active role played by the Municipality was downgraded in the instructing style also by the overall organization of the text. The opening sentences of such posters often provided a detailed specification of the legal source of authority, such as the British official mentioned at the beginning of the entertainment tax poster. Other posters likewise mentioned different central and district government officials or former municipal rules.⁵⁵ The justification for the demand to pay may also be provided by a laconic reference to circumstances: the 1931 tax poster quoted above mentioned the end of the fiscal year; other posters mentioned events such as a recent decision or a change of rates.⁵⁶ The justification was often preceded by a conjunction, such as "in connection

⁵³ Compare Abba Bendavid, "Le-Takanat Leshon ha-'Itonim", *Leshonenu la-'Am*, 16 (1965): 137.

⁵⁴ A similar distribution of grammatical persons was found in administrative letters, another manifestation of the instructing style as used by the Tel Aviv Municipality, see Yael Reshef, "Hemshekiyut Mul Shinuy be-Hitgabshuta Shel ha-'Ivrit ha-Beinonit: Iyun be-Matsava Shel Ma'arekhet ha-Po'al be-Reshit Tekufat ha-Mandat", *Matayim va-Hamishim Shenot 'Ivrit Hadasha*, ed. Haim Cohen (Jerusalem, 2009): 143–176.

⁵⁵ For example municipal posters from April 26, 1926 – PC, V2128/1; from March 30, 1929 – PC, V2128/2; from April 22, 1930 – PC, V2128/3.

⁵⁶ For example municipal posters from December 2, 1931 – PC, V2128/3; from September 27, 1934 – PC, V2128/4.

with”, “according to”, “following”, which clarified its explanatory role. This form of textual organization ostensibly minimized the volitional dimension of the Municipality’s activities: It supposedly acted because it was forced to do so, either by the British authorities or by circumstances. The underlying message was that instructions given in the posters were inevitable, leaving no room for protests, appeals or incomppliance.

B. Achieving precision and clarity

Precision and clarity, another core feature of the instructing style, were obtained through a variety of means. The essential information was presented in a comprehensive, systematic and logical way, which excluded the possibility for ambiguity or misunderstanding. The choice of words was precise, terminology was extensively used, and legal definitions were occasionally included.⁵⁷ Numbers such as dates, sums, rates, locations, and opening hours were pedantically specified, often superfluously: “Municipal kindergartens *open tomorrow*, Thursday, Kaf-Zayin Tishrei Tarzag, 27.10.1932”,⁵⁸ stated a municipal poster, providing four different indications for the intended date, leaving no room for any mistake whatsoever.

To facilitate the processing of complex information, separate numbered articles, often following a uniform pattern as in the entertainment tax poster, were often used for breaking large chunks of information into smaller units.⁵⁹ The different parts of the text were logically arranged, and the relationship between them was explicitly specified through connecting particles, such as “therefore”, “as a consequence”, “the following”, etc. In the entertainment tax poster, for instance, the reservation which follows articles a-d is linguistically connected to the sentence preceding them through the particle “provided”: “The Municipal Council may levy a tax on every admission ticket [...] according to the following rates [...] [p]rovided that the Council will be entitled to grant a discount” etc. The uniform formulation of articles a-d that specify the rates, combined with the explicit continuity that the connecting particles create between the sentence preceding them and the sentence

⁵⁷ For example municipal posters from summer 1929 – PC, V2128/2; from September 27, 1934 – PC, V2128/4.

⁵⁸ Municipal poster from October 26, 1932 – PC, V2128/3. Emphasise in the original text.

following them, stress the interdependence of the various parts of the text and transforms it into a single, coherent unit.

It is noteworthy that the most direct means of expression available in the language for communicating demands and requests, i. e. the imperative,⁶⁰ was not used in the instructing style. Like other requisitive strategies, the effect of the imperative varies, reflecting contextual factors such as participants' rights and obligations, the goal of the request, social power and distance.⁶¹ Thus, the imperative may be appropriate in certain situations of uneven power relations, for instance when used by a policemen or a military commander, or when addressing a child or a servant; but when used for example between a boss and a subordinate it may be considered impolite, even humiliating, as it stresses the inferior position of the weaker participant in the hierarchy. Many situations therefore encourage the use of mitigating techniques, and grant priority to less direct, more polite request strategies.⁶² The abstention from the use of the imperative is inherent to the instructing style, as it plays a significant role in conveying the detached tone characteristic of modern government.

In the instructing style, requests and demands were systematically expressed in explicit, yet less direct ways than the imperative. The most common technique was the use of performative verbs, i. e. verbs that explicitly indicate the communicative force of the utterance, such as "all taxpayers are *requested*". The effect of such formulations was twofold: They created an appearance of non-coerciveness, and therefore of politeness, and at the same time they contributed to the clarity of the message, as they overtly stated that an act of requesting was being performed.⁶³ Citizens did not need to ponder over the Municipality's intentions; they were plainly told what these intentions were. The use of this strategy was not restricted to requests; performative verbs were systematically employed in the instructing style for other verbal acts as well, such as announcing, demanding, warning etc.,⁶⁴ e. g. "The Tel Aviv Municipality hereby *notifies* the public" in the entertainment tax poster.

⁵⁹ For example municipal posters from April 26, 1926 – PC, V2128/1; from July 17, 1929 – PC, V2128/2; from August 1934 – PC, V2128/4.

⁶⁰ See Shoshana Blum-Kulka "Indirectness or Politeness in Requests: Same or Different?", *Journal of Pragmatics*, 11 (1987): 144.

⁶¹ Shoshana Blum-Kulka and Juliane House, "Cross-Cultural and Situational Variation in Requesting Behavior", *Cross-Cultural Pragmatics: Requests and Apologies*, eds. Shoshana Blum-Kulka et. al. (Norwood, 1989), 131.

⁶² Jacob Mey, *Pragmatics*, 2nd edition (Malden Mass. and Oxford 2001), 80–81.

⁶³ Compare Blum-Kulka, *Indirectness*, 144.

⁶⁴ For a survey of this strategy see Mey, *Pragmatics*, 106–109.

These were some of the most essential features of the instructing style, which dominated most posters that dealt with the city's day-to-day administering, at least from the mid 1920s on. This style was characterized by stylistic uniformity based on the consistent, iterative use of these features. The implementation of a fixed set of linguistic means enabled the maintenance of the desired matter-of-fact, detached tone throughout the texts.

There were, however, aspects of the city's life that were based on citizens' goodwill rather than on binding regulations, and therefore called for voluntary participation and civic initiative. On such occasions, people had to be *persuaded* to identify with the Municipality's goals in order to contribute to their accomplishment, and therefore the business-like tone of the instructing style was hardly suitable. In such cases, a completely different set of linguistic devices was often used, as will be shown in the following section.

Recruiting Style in Posters on Public Events

Whereas the majority of the posters in our corpus are written in the instructing style, 15 percent of the posters deviate from this style and its typical characteristics in various shades and manners. These posters deal with issues that were not strictly within the Municipality's legal authority, such as the dress code on the beach or the use of Hebrew in the public sphere, or with controversial, non-consensual issues, such as local school tax, accommodation, strikes and protests. Another field of activity, which was sometimes presented in municipal posters in a non-instructing style, was the voluntary civil participation in urban events such as stately public funerals, the Maccabiah (an international Jewish sport event), or the Purim celebrations.

Unlike municipal taxes, the payment of which was obligatory, taking part in urban public events was entirely voluntary. Yet, in spite of their volitional nature, public events in the 1920s and 1930s were not merely a matter of personal hedonistic gratification. Since most Jews who immigrated to Palestine were non-orthodox, traditional Judaism could not fully serve to integrate, legitimate and mobilize *Yishuv* society; a new civil religion was created, transforming and reinterpreting traditional symbols according to national circumstances and needs.⁶⁵ Various pub-

⁶⁵ See Charles S. Liebman and Eliezer Don-Yehiya, *Civil Religion in Israel* (Berkeley, 1983), 14–21, 28–30.

lic ceremonies played a prominent role in this emerging civil religion and assisted in forging a new and unifying national identity.⁶⁶

Within the comprehensive Zionist frame, different towns and settlements founded and performed particular local events.⁶⁷ Tel Aviv, the *Yishuv's* cultural centre, was reputed for its particularly high frequency of celebrations, festivals, parades, and exhibitions.⁶⁸ Urban public events were perceived and presented as culturally significant and economically valuable, both for Tel Aviv itself and for the entire *Yishuv*.⁶⁹ Indeed, the events symbolically reflected and enhanced local urban identity alongside political national issues and general Zionist ideals.⁷⁰ Thus, while participation in such events was optional, a sense of collective national and civic *obligation* was strongly cultivated as a major motivation for individual participants.⁷¹ In the absence of a formal sovereign state apparatus, *Yishuv* society relied heavily both on voluntary cooperation and on culture as a unifying force.⁷²

In order to urge Tel Aviv residents to take active part in these optional events, their organizer or patron, the Tel Aviv Municipality, tried to transmit through its posters a persuasive call. It had neither bidding by-laws regarding such actions nor means of enforcing them, and therefore attempted to stimulate the readers, to remind them of the event's importance and of their national and civic responsibility. If readers were to be inspired into voluntary action, the laconic instructing style might not be convincing enough. Hence the Municipality occasionally used a

⁶⁶ On the social significance of public rituals see Sally F. Moore and Barbara G. Meyerhoff, "Secular Ritual: Forms and Meanings", *Secular Ritual*, eds. S. F. Moore and B. G. Meyerhoff (Assen, 1977), 3–4, 24; Victor Turner, *The Anthropology of Performance* (New York, 1986); Don Handelman, *Models and Mirrors: Towards an Anthropology of Public Events* (Cambridge, 1990). On the Zionist case see Yael Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition* (Chicago and London, 1995); Yaacov Shavit and Shoshana Sitton, *Staging and Stagers in Modern Jewish Palestine: The Creation of Festival Lore in a New Culture, 1882–1948* (Detroit, 2004).

⁶⁷ See Shavit and Sitton, *Staging*, 84–123.

⁶⁸ For instance *Ha-Po'el ha-Tsa'ir*, April 24, 1929, 26–27; *Ha'Oleh*, 1/3, summer 1935, 3–4. Also see Nili Arye-Sapir, *Itzuvam Shel Tarbut ve-Hinukh 'Ironiyim* (Tel Aviv, 2006).

⁶⁹ For instance *Ha-Yishuv*, June 25, 1925, 11; Mayor's speech, May 14, 1933 – TAA, 4/3220.

⁷⁰ For example Hector Bolitho, *Beside Galilee: A Diary in Palestine* (London, 1933), 102–103; Aharon Zeev Ben-Yishai, *Tel Aviv: 'Ir va-'Em be-Yisrael* (Jerusalem, 1936), 9.

⁷¹ For example letter from summer 1922 – TAA, 2/39a; Correspondence from 1935 – TAA, 4/3222.

⁷² See Moshe Lissak, *Ha-'Elitot Shel ha-Yishuv ha-Yehudi be-'Eretz Yisrael bi-Tekufat ha-Mandat* (Tel Aviv, 1981), 17; Nurit Govrin, "Be-Shivhei ha-Genre", *Divrei ha-Kongres ha-'Olami ha-'Asiri le-Made'ei ha-Yahadut*, vol.3 (1985): 263–264.

very different style – goading, dramatic, and emotionally-laden. One of the occasions in which such a style was used was the annual celebration of Purim.

The following poster is a typical example of the Municipality's attempt to engage the public's help as Purim was approaching:

To the citizens of Tel Aviv!

The Purim celebrations and Tel Aviv's Carnival have won a reputation in all countries. This year, too, masses of travelers from all the corners of the Land and tourists from abroad will flock into our city during the holidays, to see it in its day of festivity and partake in the popular celebration.

The city and its dwellers bear the duty of receiving the guests suitably, and in this respect how great is the value of the city's appearance. How great the importance of its decoration.

The organizing committee of the Purim celebrations and carnival turns to all the institutions, offices, homeowners and the rest of the city residents, demanding they decorate the buildings, offices, shops, Kiosks etc., and thus help to endow the city with the festive appearance as befits the Purim celebrations, which have already become a tradition.

Those who excel in decorating their homes, offices, shops, shop-windows etc. will be given valuable prizes, the list of which will be published in due course.

Be prepared in advance!

Decorate with plants, flowers, carpets, artistic posters, various embellishments, paper serpentines, satirical and humorous slogans, electricity etc.

Our national flag is mandatory.

In the Committee's office, no.3 Nahalat Binyamin Street, you can receive guidance, advice and assistance from artists free of charge between 5–8 each evening, besides Shabbat eves and Saturday nights.

House-owners – decorate your homes!

Institutions and offices' owners – decorate your offices!

Storehouses, shops and Kiosks owners – decorate your storehouses and arrange for orderly and decorated shop-windows.

Lodgers, decorate your balconies and windows!

Each one shall decorate his own corner and thus the whole city will be decorated.

Decorate, decorate and be decorated for the days of pilgrimage to our young city and it shall look immersed in colors, plants and flowers, within a sea of electric splendor.

The prizes for those excelling in decorating the houses, offices etc. and the organization of shop-windows will be rewarded ceremoniously, after the decorations will be viewed by the judges in nocturnal electric lights and in midday sunshine.⁷³

⁷³ Municipal poster from February 1929 – PC, V2128/1. The Hebrew original of this poster is provided in Appendix B.

The Purim carnival was an urban custom that stemmed from grassroots levels, then gradually and increasingly institutionalized. Since the earliest days of Tel Aviv, various local schools and labor unions celebrated Purim, an ancient though loosely defined Jewish holiday, by separate parades in the morning and balls in the evening.⁷⁴ Since the mid-1920s, the Jewish National Fund (JNF) coordinated the events into one unified parade, and by the end of the decade Purim celebrations had already become a local “tradition”, attracting thousands of Zionist tourists from other *Yishuv* settlements and from abroad. Scores of citizens petitioned the Municipality to ensure the celebrations’ continuity, because in addition to their important economic value for the city, they were also “very good for morale”.⁷⁵ In the late 1920s the Municipality took over the organization of the event and founded a special “Celebration Committee”. The committee, peopled by writers, artists and activists, planned and ran all future Purim parades in Tel Aviv. An economically profitable endeavor, both the Tel Aviv Municipality and its residents were interested in the celebrations’ success.⁷⁶

Municipal posters regarding Purim activities appeared on Tel Aviv’s notice boards amongst numerous, mostly larger posters that advertised approaching Purim costume and dancing balls. Unlike the Municipality’s undecorated black-and-white posters, those promoting commercial balls were more colorful and often illustrated.⁷⁷ This meant, on the one hand, that the municipal poster had to compete with visually and textually attractive “neighbors”; on the other hand, the accumulative effect of many colorful posters, describing forthcoming parties in superlative terms, created a general “build-up” as Purim was nearing, an anticipating and excited mood that might have incidentally helped the Municipality achieve its goal of mobilizing people.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ For detailed descriptions of Purim in Tel Aviv see Batya Carmiel, *Tel Aviv be-Tahposet va-Kheter* (Tel Aviv, 1999); Nili Ariei-Sapir, “Karnaval be-Tel Aviv”, *Mehkeret Yerushalayim be-Folklor Yehudi*, 22 (2003): 99–121; Hizki Shoham, *Hagigot Purim be-Tel Aviv, 1908–1936* (PhD dissertation, Bar Ilan University, 2006).

⁷⁵ A letter from 1928 – TAA, 4/3203.

⁷⁶ Correspondence from 1924 – TAA, 2/76a; *Hahed*, 2/4, spring 1927, 10; letter from 1928 – TAA, 4/3927; letters from 1928 – TAA, 4/3203; correspondence from 1929 and protocol from 1930 – TAA, 4/3218.

⁷⁷ Posters from February-March 1929 – PC, V1969.

⁷⁸ Examples of stimulating preparations in “Ideal Travel Talk: Palestine 1934”, Spielberg Film Archive, VT DA139b; *Davar*, January 29, 1928; *Hazit ha-Am*, March 18, 1932; *Kalno’a*, March 21, 1932, 3–5. In the mid 1930s the Municipality too issued some large, colourful, illustrated posters announcing the forthcoming carnival – PC, V1969.

The fully-quoted poster concerns the preparations towards the urban parade, Purim's main event. The parade was conducted during daytime along Tel Aviv's main streets. Unlike the dancing balls held at night, the parade was free of charge and open to all. The city's center and the parade's route in particular were to be decorated in a jolly and humorous spirit.⁷⁹ While the celebrations committee was in charge of decorating the main stage and arranging colorful lighting in the main street, the decoration of buildings was left entirely in the hands of their owners and residents. Thus, in order to goad people into taking the trouble (energy, time and money) of decorating their homes and businesses, the poster clearly aimed at creating an enthusiastic frame of mind and persuading readers that a properly decorated city was an important goal.

The Municipality therefore did not instruct its citizens, as it did in tax posters, but rather tried to interact with them in various ways in order to convince them to cooperate. This was done partly through the poster's content. The text mentions practical aid (free advice) and material incentives (prizes for the best decorated buildings), but it also harps upon the residents' civic and national obligations. The Purim carnival had already become a local tradition⁸⁰ and had won a reputation throughout the Zionist world, so Tel Aviv residents were supposedly duty-bound to assure its continued success. Welcoming the holiday guests, explained the poster, includes beautifying the city, and the national facet was hinted at by the short cry to hang the national flag. As Tel Aviv residents knew well, the Purim parade explicitly celebrated Zionist ideology in its annual chosen theme and in its visual and literal details.⁸¹ Since autonomous Tel Aviv, "the First Hebrew City", was considered a test of Jewish self-rule and a Zionist showcase, its achievements and representational impressions, especially during its main annual event, were regarded as nationally significant as well as locally beneficial.⁸²

While all these considerations were raised as incentives for action, they were not the only means of persuasion employed in the text. No less important was its style. In sharp contrast with the tax posters, this

⁷⁹ Film footage from 1928 Purim in *Ha-Ish ve-Iro*, Spielberg Film Archive, VT DA095; "Moledet" newsreels, Jerusalem Cinematheque, V-70/71.

⁸⁰ On invented traditions' supposed "traditionalism" see Moore and Meyerhoff, *Secular Ritual*, 3, 7-8; Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: The Invention of Tradition", in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm (Cambridge, 1989), 1-2.

⁸¹ Photographs from Purim, 1928, 1929 - in Batia Carmiel, *Korbman: Tsalam Tel Avivi Aher, 1919-1936* (Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, 2004), 198-200; Idem, *Tel Aviv*, 246-249.

⁸² For instance Vladimir Jabotinsky, "The meaning of Tel Aviv", *Palestine and Near East Economic Magazine*, VI (1929): 110a. Also see Anat Helman, "Two Urban Celebrations in Jewish Palestine", *Journal of Urban History*, 32/3 (2006): 382-390.

text conveyed a strong sense of involvement: the citizens were urged to do the best they can to achieve a common goal, shared by them and the Municipality alike.⁸³ This was achieved not only by *what* the poster related, but also by *how* it conveyed it. Hence, the text was dominated by a completely different set of linguistic means from those associated with the instructing style.

A conspicuous sign of involvement was the ways of address to the participants, i. e. the Municipality and the residents.⁸⁴ One sentence only features the third person, familiar from the instructing style: “*The organizing committee* [...] turns to all [...] demanding they decorate the buildings”. This isolated sentence, though, does not determine the overall tone of the poster, as the text surrounding it is dominated by the much more intimate “we” and “you”. The citizens are referred to by the second person plural, which underlines the active role they have to play and their responsibility for action: “In the Committee’s office [...] *you* can receive guidance, advice and assistance”. As opposed to the instructing style, most actions residents were instructed to take are introduced by the imperative: “be prepared!”, “decorate, decorate and be decorated”. Vocative constructions, such as “*House-owners* – decorate your homes!” or “*Lodgers*, decorate your balconies and windows!” specifically indicated the relevant addressees, and further reinforced the sense of involvement and participation. A further means of highlighting the common interest was the inclusive use of the first person plural “we”, referring in this poster to both the Municipality and its citizens: the city is “our city”, and the flag is “our national flag”.

While the inclusive “we” was only sporadically used in the recruiting style in our corpus, the imperative and the vocative were unmistakably its most prevalent markers.⁸⁵ They *always* appeared in municipal posters that conveyed involvement; they *never* appeared in the instructing style. Based on their distribution and functions in other written manifestations of Hebrew during the Mandate period,⁸⁶ their inclusion in a municipal poster was an unambiguous cue that its purpose was to recruit, to persuade the target audience to perform a voluntary action.

⁸³ On the notion of involvement and the linguistic means associated with it see Chafe, *Integration*.

⁸⁴ On grammatical person as a sign of involvement see Chafe, *Integration*, 46.

⁸⁵ Compare their presentation as the purest implementation of the Conative function in Jakobson’s well-known model – Roman Jakobson, “Concluding Statement: Linguistics and Poetics”, *Style in Language*, ed. T. Sebeok (Cambridge Mass., 1960), 355.

⁸⁶ Compare their absence from administrative correspondence (Reshef, *Hemshekhuyut*) with their frequent occurrence in the ideology-laden folksong – Yael Reshef,

Other linguistic devices appeared in the recruiting style less systematically than the imperative and the vocative. As opposed to the uniformity of the instructing style, the recruiting style was more varied and was based on an open-ended list of linguistic and rhetorical devices, creating varying levels of emotional involvement throughout the text. Any content or language ploy that could incite the desired response in the target audience was liable to be utilized. Sources as varied as the literary language, traditional Jewish texts or political rhetoric all contributed to the inventory of stylistically-marked linguistic features, employed in various combinations to achieve the desired goading, persuasive effect. Apart from the imperative and the vocative, no single feature was essential to this style or exclusive to it; what characterized it most was an aggregated variety of emotionally-laden stylistic devices, often associated with previous linguistic layers or with the literary and solemn registers of the language. These devices often carried traditional and historical connotations, and could therefore contribute to the sense of involvement sought after in the recruiting style. Consequently, the recruiting style tended to be more ornate and elevated than the instructing style, and was linguistically geared towards classical rather than modern linguistic features.

Thus, for example, the Purim poster is dotted with fixed expressions originating in traditional Hebrew sources. The fame of the Purim carnival was described by the Midrashic expression *yats'u lo monitin* (literally: his coins [=repute] came out,⁸⁷ Genesis Rabba 39), the free advice offered to the citizens was presented through the tautological Biblical expression *hinam eyn kasef* (literally: gratis, free of charge, Exodus 21, 11). Such expressions were akin to the period's florid varieties of Hebrew, which tended to rely heavily on fixed expressions from traditional sources. As noted before, the Zionist enterprise of consolidating a new civil religion was often achieved by borrowing elements from Jewish religion and tradition, and infusing them with new, national, meanings.⁸⁸ Thus, by decorating the Purim poster with traditional expressions, evoking religious associations, the new form of Purim could be "sanctified" as an important national ritual. The instructing style, with its new linguistic devices and its impersonality, could promote matters relating to Tel Aviv's operation as a modern city, like any other modern

Ha-Zemer ha-'Ivri be-Reshito: Perek be-Toldot ha-Ivrit ha-Hadasha (Jerusalem 2004), 139–141, 151, 152.

⁸⁷ On the origin and meaning of the expression see e. g. Gad B. Sarfatti, *Ha-'Ivrit bi-Re'i ha-Semantika* (Jerusalem, 2001), 223.

⁸⁸ Liebman and Don-Yehiya, *Civil Religion*, 1–24.

city. The traditional familiar devices of the recruiting style, on the other hand, might have been used to advance specifically and uniquely *Hebrew* facets of Tel Aviv, as an all-Jewish city: its language, its education, and its civil religion.

The stylistic effect, associated with references to traditional Hebrew sources, was matched by the vast distribution of elevated and emotionally-laden vocabulary, such as *flock*, *duty*, *value*, *importance*, *tradition*, *valuable*, *endow with festive appearance*, *midday sunshine* etc. As opposed to the precision of the instructing style, frequent hyperboles were included, such as “won a reputation in all countries”, “a sea of electric splendor”, and the predicted flood of “masses of travelers from all the corners of the Land”.

The overall texts' organization also distinguished the recruiting from the instructing style, as it tended to be much less structured and logical. Texts featuring this style were often composed of isolated statements, loosely connected by the overall topic of the poster rather than by structured linguistic or logical connections with what followed or preceded them.⁸⁹ Thus, for example, the topic of prizes was not treated comprehensively in two consecutive statements, but rather mentioned once in the middle of the text, then again towards its end. Likewise, the repeated call to decorate the town was scattered throughout the text among other pieces of information. Explanatory passages, information, demands and slogans followed each other quite randomly in a fragmented, dramatic manner.

In a similar way, repetitions filled a completely different role from the one they held in the instructing style. Rather than contributing to clarity and precision through the segmentation of complex information into smaller units, in the recruiting style the effect of repetitions was mainly rhetorical: they restated and stressed what has already been stated before. Thus, the repeated, uniform call to homeowners, shopkeepers, lodgers etc. to decorate their “territory” did not add new information, but reinforced the general call to grant Tel Aviv the most festive look possible. Likewise, a statement such as “how great is the value of the city's appearance. How great the importance of its decoration” did not include two units of information, but rather reduplicated the same content in different words.

Explanatory opening passages also operated in the instructing and the recruiting styles in completely different ways. As opposed to the laconic, logically-connected justification typical of the instructing style,

⁸⁹ For examples see municipal poster from February 8, 1928 – PC, V2128/2; from March 1933 – PC, V2128/4.

posters featuring the recruiting style tended to begin with long and detailed explanatory passages. Unlike the use of connectives such as “in connection with” in the instructing style, in the recruiting style such passages usually included no explicit marking of their explanatory role. Rather, the explanatory function of the background information they include became clear only further on in the text, as in the Purim decoration poster.

Explanatory opening paragraphs, alongside other markers of the recruiting style, provided clear cues for the nature of the text. An assemblage of emotionally-laden linguistic features systematically indicated that either some level of voluntarism was expected from the readers, or that the topic of the poster involved some exception or deviation from the Municipality’s regular sphere of authority.⁹⁰ In some cases, especially when the recruiting style was used in attempts to persuade the residents to change common customs (for instance, the wearing of revealing swimming-suits on Tel Aviv’s sea shore), or to refrain from existing patterns of behavior (for example, the performance of violent acts during political demonstrations) – all its linguistic devices were in vain and the Municipality’s calls were largely ignored. Yet, in other cases, such as the Municipality’s attempts to mobilize Tel Aviv residents into voluntary action on Purim and other urban projects, the recruiting style seems to have been more effective and did bare cooperative fruit.⁹¹

Back to the linguistic level, while stylistic choices need not necessarily affect texts’ *contents*, they usually affect their *meaning* – i. e. their connotations and significance, both culturally and politically.⁹² In this context, our examination of municipal posters reveals not only the emergence of a new administrative register in Hebrew, but also a novel, yet clear and intelligible, distinction between various linguistic styles and their application. Thus, readers could usually anticipate from the first glance if the municipal poster they were about to read was expected to include dry information and orders, or to address their emotions and goodwill.⁹³ The corpus examined therefore clearly indicates that at least from the 1920s on, the stabilization of stylistic differentiation in Modern Hebrew was already apparent.

⁹⁰ See Helman and Reshef, “‘Kol ha’ir ha’ivrit’”, 71–88.

⁹¹ *Op.cit.*, 84. Also see Helman, *Or veyam*, 101.

⁹² See Short, “Style: Definitions”, 4377.

⁹³ For a theoretical discussion of the connection between texts’ styles and readers’ expectations see Deborah Tannen (ed.), *Framing in Discourse* (New-York and Oxford, 1993).

Conclusion

Municipal posters are regarded as helpful historical sources due to their rich informative value, yet we suggest that a *linguistic* analysis of these posters can contribute a new dimension to the understanding of Tel Aviv's cultural history. Tel Aviv was truly "The First Hebrew City" in that it was the first modern municipal entity operating in Hebrew. Though Hebrew was not the only language used in this immigrant city, it was the dominant and main public language from its inception. As indicated by the corpus of municipal posters, Hebrew was used by the Tel Aviv Municipality not only for transmitting information, but also for evoking certain moods through stylistic variations. The various communicative needs of the Municipality in accomplishing its tasks encouraged the development of varied styles and diverse linguistic devices. The centrality of Hebrew in administering Tel Aviv's daily life thus contributed to the evolution of Hebrew into a modern, versatile language.

The distribution of the instructing and the recruiting styles in the examined corpus indicates that by the late 1920s, register differentiation in Modern Hebrew was already developed enough to enable – not just professional writers, but also ordinary language users such as clerks and administrative workers – to employ the language effectively and skillfully, and to alternate between distinguishable styles according to their specific needs. Alongside the linguistic diversity expected in an immigrant society, processes of standardization were clearly under way, gradually molding the ancient language into a modern vehicle of communication.

In an article on Hebrew folklore, Adam Rubin describes the dual quality that the Hebrew language held for its revivers. Zionist advocates of Hebrew hoped to transform the "sacred tongue" into a day-to-day, spoken language suitable for the prosaic conditions of modern life in the Jewish homeland. Yet even while seeking to modernize Hebrew, the poet H. N. Bialik and other Zionist writers were attracted to the language because it transcended the concrete here and now of Jewish life in exile, epitomized by Yiddish, and somehow seemed to connect them to eternity.⁹⁴ Interestingly, our corpus of Tel Aviv municipal posters appears to cover both these contradictory qualities of Modern Hebrew: the instructing style expresses the new mundane practicality of the language, whereas the recruiting style transcends the everyday and retains a tint of Hebrew's old sacredness, transferred from its traditional religious use and applied to elevate a novel national experience.

⁹⁴ See Adam Rubin, "Hebrew Folklore and the Problem of Exile", *Modern Judaism*, 25/1 (2005): 66.

Appendix A: Municipal poster from 7 July 1929 – PC, V2128/1.⁹⁵

מודעה עירונית מס' 15

עירית תל-אביב מוסרת בזה הודעה לקהל, כי בעתון הרשמי מספר 238 מיום 1.7.29 נתפרסמה, בתוקף צו מאת הפקיד המנהל את עניני הממשלה בא"י על פי פקודת המועצות המקומיות 1921, הוספה לסעיף 5 (1) של פקודת עירית תל-אביב 1921, לאמר:

המועצה רשאית להטיל מס על כל כרטיס כניסה למקום שעשוע צבורי, המשתלם על ידי האיש אשר תחת הנהלתו ולפי הוראותיו מסתדר השעשוע, לפי השעורים דלקמן:

- א. בשעור של 2 מא"י מכל כרטיס אשר ערכו לא יעלה על 20 מא"י.
- ב. בשעור של 5 מא"י מכל כרטיס אשר ערכו הוא יותר מ-20 מא"י ולא יותר מ-100 מא"י.
- ג. בשעור של 10% ממחיר הכרטיס העולה על 100 מא"י ואינו עולה על 250 מא"י.
- ד. בשעור של 15% ממחיר הכרטיס שמחירו הוא מ-250 מא"י [! ומעלה,

בתנאי, שהמועצה תהיה רשאית לתת הנחה של 50% מהשעורים הנ"ל בנוגע לכרטיסי כניסה לשעשועים צבוריים, אשר הכנסתם מקדשת לצרכי דת או חסד.

עירית תל-אביב

כ"ט סיון פ"ט 7.7.29

⁹⁵ The texts in Appendix A and B maintain the basic typographical characters of the original posters.

Appendix B: Municipal poster from February 1929 – PC, V2128/1.

הועדה לסדור הקרנבל וחגיגות פורים בתל-אביב שנת תרפ"ט על יד
הועד הארצי של הק"הק.
בחסותה של עירית תל-אביב

לתושבי תל-אביב!

חגיגות פורים והקרנבל התל-אביבי יצאו להם מוגיטין בכל הארצות. המוני טיילים
מכל קצוות הארץ ותיירים מחו"ל ינהרו גם השנה לימי החג לעירנו, בכדי לראותה
ביום מועד ולהשתתף בחג העממי.
על העיר ותושביה מוטלת החובה לקבל כראוי את האורחים, ומה רב במובן זה
הערך למראה העיר. מה רבה החשיבות לקשוחה.
הועדה המסדרת את חגיגות פורים והקרנבל, פונה לכל המוסדות,
המשרדים, בעלי הבתים ויתר תושבי העיר בדרישה לקשט את הבתים,
המשרדים, החנויות, הקיוסקים וכ"ו ובזה יעזרו לתת לעיר את צורתה
החגיגית והראויה לחגיגות פורים שהיו למסרת.
למצטיינים בקשוח בתיהם, משרדיהם, חנויותיהם, חלונות
הראוה וכ"ו, ינתנו פרסים יקרי ערך, שרשימתם תפורסם בזמנה

הכוננו בעוד מועד.

קשטו בירק, פרחים, שטיחים, פלקטים אמנותיים, תפאורות שונות,
סרפנטין, סיסמאות של בקרת והתול, חשמל וכ"ו.

דגלנו הלאומי חובה.

במשרד הועדה, רח' נחלת בנימין 3, תוכלו לקבל הדרכה עצה ועזרה מאת
אמנים, חנם אין כסף. בשעות 5-8 בכל ערב, מלבד לילי שבתות ומוצ"ש.

בעלי הבתים-קשטו את בתים!

בעלי המוסדות והמשרדים-קשטו את משרדיכם!

בעלי מחסנים, חנויות וקיוסקים-קשטו את מחסניכם והעמידו חלונות ראוה מסודרים
ומקושטים

דירים, קשטו את גוזזטראותיכם וחלונותיכם!

יקשט כל אחד את פנתו ובזה תקושט העיר. קשטו, קשטו והתקשטו לימי עליה
לרגל לעירנו הצעירה ותראה טבולה בצבעים, ירק ופרחים, בים של זהר חשמלי.

הפרסים למצטיינים בקשוח הבתים, המשרדים וכ"ו וסדרו חלונות הראוה יחולקו חגיגית
באור ליום ט"ו אדר ב', אחרי שהקשוחים יראו לפני השופטים, לאור החשמל בלילה והחמה
בצהרי היום.