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1. Introduction

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1.1 Hebrew and the question of language continuity

This volume discusses empirical and theoretical issues having to do with the emergence of Modern Hebrew (MH) and with phenomena in other languages which shed light on the special case of Hebrew.

The emergence of MH is an unprecedented phenomenon in that it is the only documented case of a language which had no native speakers for over a millennium and subsequently became the native language of an entire society (see the historical overview in 1.3 below). Despite the fact that Hebrew ceased to be a spoken language in the 3rd century CE, the language continued to be used, not only as a sacred liturgical language used in rote, but as a written language which produced new texts over the ages in both religious and secular matters.

Today MH is the native language of the majority of speakers in Israel and is estimated to have over 9 million speakers around the world. It is developing as any other language in a multi-cultural setting and is thus not inherently different from any other spoken language. However, the history of the language over the ages is unique in many respects. The research reported in this volume probes issues which can further our understanding of the nature of Hebrew over the ages and the relation of MH to the Hebrew of earlier stages.

In the literature on MH, there is a lively debate regarding the question of whether MH should be seen as a case of continuity with Classical Hebrew of its various stages, or whether MH should be seen as a case of discontinuity. Proponents of the discontinuity approach liken the situation of Hebrew to that of other documented cases of what have been taken to be discontinuity, namely that of creoles and mixed languages (see below section 1.4), which have been argued not to be direct descendants of any one specific language. The idea that MH is creole-like in nature probably stems from the fact that, like in the case of creoles, the first generation of revived Hebrew speakers consisted of native speakers of a variety of other languages and all spoke Hebrew as a second language. As a consequence, proponents of discontinuity view the resulting language not just as Hebrew with some contact-induced change, but rather as a new language.

Proponents of continuity, on the other hand, point out to the fact that, as mentioned, Hebrew continued to be used productively over the ages. In this sense, then, MH is the product of an unbroken chain of transmission. This is most probably one of the central factors accounting for the remarkable success of the revival of Hebrew, when it reverted back from being a written language to a spoken language at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries, and subsequently changed its status as a language with only L2 speakers to a language with native speakers. While the development of the language both in its written phases and at the crucial phase of its re-transformation into a spoken language was influenced by contact with the L1 languages of its users, proponents of continuity view these developments as normal cases of contact-induced change.

But the development of Hebrew at the time of its revival and its relation to Hebrew of previous stages and to the variety of contact languages has so far not been studied within the framework of the professional literature on contact-induced change, and conversely, in the extensive literature on contact-induced change, the case of Hebrew receives little, if any mention. To give an example, there is no case-study of Hebrew in the *Blackwell Handbook of Language Contact* (Hickey 2010). One purpose of the present volume is to bring the case of Hebrew to the attention of language-contact scholars, while bringing the insights of the literature on language contact to help shed light on the case of Hebrew.

Returning to the debate on (dis)continuity in the emergence of MH, in order to decide between the two views, it is first necessary to clarify what the criteria are for determining continuity, since there can be different ways of judging continuity. Once the criteria are explicated, we can pinpoint exactly how Hebrew is similar to and at the same time crucially different from other cases of purported discontinuity.

There are two major criteria for determining continuity – the mode of transmission, and systematic correspondences in grammatical systems. We follow Thomason and Kaufman (1988), Van Coetsem (2000) and many others, in suggesting that mode of transmission is a crucial factor in determining the nature of continuity and the resulting grammar of the language. While mode of transmission is in certain ways a sociological phenomenon, it apparently has far-reaching linguistic consequences as we shall see. In the next section, we provide a framework for talking about continuity, based on transmission and resulting grammatical structure. This will lay the foundation for discussing the question of continuity in the case of Hebrew.

1.2 A framework for analyzing language transmission

Questions of (dis)continuity arose in historical linguistics in the context of establishing genetic relationships between languages at different points in time. Several known types of discontinuity have been identified and studied over the years, in particular **creoles** (Bickerton 1981; Lefebvre 1998; Lumsden 1999; DeGraff 2003; Mufwene 2008; Aboh 2015), **mixed languages** such as Michif (Bakker 1997), Cappadocian (Janse 1998), Middle English (Emonds and Faarlund 2014), Brazilian Portuguese (Avelar and Galves 2014), Light Walpiri (O'Shannessy 2012), and **emergent sign languages** such as Nicaraguan Sign Language (Kegl et al. 1999), and Al-Sayyid Bedouin Sign Language (Meir et al. 2010). In this last case, the emergent language begins a new genetic line hence there is obviously no continuity.

How can we tell if the language of a particular group of speakers at a particular time is genetically related to the language of a different group of speakers at a previous time? We follow Thomason and Kaufman (1988), who themselves follow Boas (1917), in determining that we have a case of genetic relationship if there are systematic correspondences between all linguistic subsystems of the two languages – syntax, vocabulary, morphology, and phonology. The differences in the features of a language at two points of time can come about endogenously or by contact. There is a consensus in the literature that there is no fundamental difference between endogenous change and contact-induced change. Endogenous change typically results from some kind of internal pressure (analogical levelling as a result of some imbalance in the system, or phonological changes such as co-articulation or assimilation as a result of articulatory pressure). But change, once introduced by individuals in a community, still has to be propagated and adopted by the entire community. As pointed out by Mufwene (2001), DeGraff (2003), and stressed

recently by Aboh (2015, this volume), contact-induced change is just one type of change which occurs in the natural course of development in any language in a multi-cultural context. In any context, a child learning a language will have to form a grammar in the face of variation in her linguistic environment. Whatever allows a child to do this for variation resulting from endogenous change introduced in the environment, will allow the child to do this for contact-induced change. In this regard, most languages, even those which have undergone extensive contact-induced change, are seen as continuations of specific languages for which systematic correspondences can be found. It is only in extreme cases where such a systematic correspondence cannot be established. And given the centrality of transmission in establishing genetic relationship, it comes as no surprise that it is precisely where there is a severe breach of transmission, or transmission is effected whole sale in a way which deviates from normal transmission, that we might not be able to establish systematic correspondences, to the extent that it is not possible to establish a genetic line for a given language.

As many have pointed out (Meillet 1904, 1929; Andersen 1973; Thomason and Kaufman 1988; van Coetsem 2000), the very nature of language transmission from generation to generation, which requires children to reconstruct a grammar based on linguistic environment, involves some kind of discontinuity. However, as Thomason and Kaufman (1988) stress, when transmission is normal, i.e., it involves children learning a language as an L1 from an environment consisting predominantly of L1 speakers of the transmitted language (though not necessarily exclusively L1 speakers) through generations and peers, change will be gradual and exhibit regular internally motivated change. This kind of change will result in systematic correspondence in all linguistic subsystems.

This is to be contrasted with “imperfect transmission”, when a whole population acquires a new language within possibly as little as a single lifetime, therefore necessarily other than by parental or peer-group enculturation. In such a case the linguistic system which results may have massive interference from the original language of the group, as is the case for “abrupt creoles” (Thomason and Kaufman 1988: 147-166). In particular, if transmission is abruptly interrupted, there should be a lack of correspondence among the subsystems of the language, most probably between the lexicon as a whole and the grammar as a whole – and as a result it would be impossible to show that the lexicon and the grammar derive from the same source.

When we look at the issue of (dis)continuity in light of these two criteria – chain and type of transmission on the one hand, and systematic correspondences in all subsystems on the other, we may find cases where the resulting evaluation of continuity goes against intuitive, or culturally significant notions of continuity. Take the case of Katharevousa, discussed briefly in Joseph (this volume). In the 19th century, after the establishment of the modern Greek nation state, with a desire to provide this state with a national language which would, moreover, signal the connection of the modern republic to its ancient Greek roots, Katharevousa was established as the form of Greek in official use. This is a conservative form of the language, conceived in the late 18th century as a compromise between Ancient Greek and Demotic Greek. One difference between Katharevousa and Demotic Greek which Joseph discusses is the lack of infinitives in the latter as opposed to certain uses of the infinitive in the former. The use of the infinitive makes Katharevousa appear closer to Ancient Greek, which had a wide-spread use of the infinitive, than Demotic Greek, which lacks infinitives, like all modern dialects of Greek. However, Katharevousa is

not an instance of a naturally transmitted language, and so despite this and other easily identifiable features it shares with Ancient Greek, it cannot really be seen as a case of continuity with Ancient Greek. Demotic Greek, on the other hand, is the result of natural transmission, and despite its lacking certain prominent and easily identifiable features of Ancient Greek, can be considered a direct descendant of Ancient Greek. It is interesting that Katharevousa never became rooted (after being taught for decades in schools in Greece and used in writing) and is not used any more.

In order to look at the case of Hebrew in light of this discussion of continuity in language, we first provide a brief synopsis of the history of Hebrew (for detailed descriptions see Kutscher 1982; Sáenz-Badillos 1993; Rabin 2000).

1.3 The history of Hebrew

Since it ceased to be a spoken language in the 3rd century CE, Hebrew consisted of a large body of writings containing a core of scripture, liturgical and traditional legal works, and an extensive range of scholarly and literary works. Mundane texts such as private and business letters, community archives, inscriptions on tombstones etc. were often written in Hebrew as well. It is significant that this corpus kept growing, a testimony to the fact that Hebrew never ceased to be a functional language through the ages, though mostly in the written medium. An immense volume of new works was created in Hebrew over the centuries, featuring not only constant lexical expansion, but also stylistic and syntactic changes. In section 1.5 we discuss the ramifications of this unique status of Hebrew. In this section, we introduce the received classification of the strata of the written Hebrew corpus throughout history.

The oldest layer of written texts of Hebrew emerged when it was still a spoken language. **Biblical Hebrew** is the language of the Old Testament originating in the first millennium BCE. Biblical Hebrew (BH) emerged as a distinct variety within the Canaanite group of dialects (the Northwestern branch of the Semitic Languages) following the settlement of the Israelites in the land of Canaan in the early Iron Age (from the 12th century BCE). Though different historical strata of BH are discernible (Hornkohl 2013), these distinctions are irrelevant as far as the emergence of Modern Hebrew is concerned, since the traditional attitude towards the Biblical canon viewed it as a monolithic representation of the original classical language. The Bible is also the only classical text passed down in a uniform version. As a sacred text, painstaking efforts were made to preserve it intact during transmission, and most Jewish communities adopted the authoritative Tiberian Masoretic¹ tradition of the Biblical text (completed in the 10th century CE), which provides detailed information about correct spelling, stress and intonational boundaries, and provides diacritics for the vowels missing in the original consonantal spelling (Golinets 2013). The Tiberian tradition of Biblical Hebrew was the basis for the Hebrew grammatical tradition as well as for prescriptive notions of correct language use.

The end of the golden age of BH is marked by the conquest of Jerusalem by the Babylonian Empire and the destruction of the First Temple in the 6th century BCE (Hurvitz 2013). This led to the decline of Hebrew as a vernacular, a process which extended over several centuries. From then on, processes of language shift gradually diminished the bounds of Hebrew as a daily spoken language. Among the last known written corpora produced by Hebrew speakers are the Dead Sea Scrolls, texts written before the destruction of the site in the year 68 CE during the First Jewish Revolt

¹*Masora* is the Hebrew word for transmission.

(Fassberg 2013), and the Bar Kokhba documents, texts written by Jewish refugees as late as the Bar Kokhba revolt (132-135 CE) (Mor 2013).

The next layer of Hebrew is **Mishnaic Hebrew**, the language of the first post-Biblical legal codex of Judaism - the Mishna - codified in the 3rd century CE, as well as related texts of legal, ethical and exegetical nature. These texts were composed during the previous two centuries, when Hebrew was still a vernacular. The customary periodization used by Hebraists classifies Mishnaic Hebrew as part of **Rabbinic Hebrew**, consisting of texts composed until the codification of the Babylonian Talmud, the legal basis of orthodox Jewish life, in late 5th century CE (Breuer 2013). This classification is based on the contents of the texts, as well as their close linguistic affinity that clearly distinguishes them from Biblical Hebrew (Bar-Asher 1999).

The category of Rabbinic Hebrew, then, is based on the type of texts it comprises, but the earlier stage of Rabbinic Hebrew, Mishnaic Hebrew, reflects the language which was still spoken at least to a certain extent. Though the influence of Aramaic is recognizable already in Mishnaic Hebrew, the Talmud – the next and largest Jewish legal codex – was created by people whose native language was Aramaic (Breuer 2013). And in fact, the Talmud presents a combination of Hebrew and Aramaic, as the sayings of the different Rabbis (sages) were quoted in the original language in which they were formulated. Rabbinic Hebrew differs from Biblical Hebrew in morphology, syntax and lexicon. As opposed to the Biblical texts, none of the Rabbinic texts is known in a uniform, authoritative version, and manuscripts and reading traditions greatly diverge. While written Hebrew of subsequent generations is based largely on Rabbinic Hebrew rather than on Biblical Hebrew, the latter was perceived by the Jewish population over the ages as exemplary, whereas Rabbinic Hebrew was regarded as an inferior variety of Hebrew, reflecting the deteriorating knowledge of Hebrew in a speech community in a process of language shift, primarily to Aramaic, but also to Greek and Latin. Consequently, the linguistic properties of Rabbinic Hebrew were not studied until the 20th century, and many of its original features were lost in transmission, since the morphological deviations from the familiar Biblical grammar were perceived as errors, and were often corrected to fit the Biblical models by scribes, printers and grammarians (Blau 1978). Yet present day prescriptivists now consider both these ancient stages of Hebrew equally acceptable as models of correct Hebrew, and view them together as **Classical Hebrew**.

The following periods saw the spread of Jewish centers further and further away from their original provenance in Palestine, and as Hebrew served for the composition of different types of works by writers operating in different places and times, who spoke and were in contact with an array of different languages and who lived under diverse political and cultural circumstances, the enormous corpus of **Medieval Hebrew** is extremely varied (Sáenz-Badillos 2013). Literary works consisted almost exclusively of poetry. Prose writing was much more diverse than poetry and focused primarily on religious matters (e.g. exegesis and commentaries, codices of Jewish law, responsa,² moral books, mysticism), but also more general issues such as science, philosophy or grammar. In addition to non-belletristic prose, Hebrew was used for more mundane

² The responsa literature is a genre consisting of written questions and answers concerning the appropriate application of Jewish law to ever-changing sociological conditions. This literature continues to grow even today. In ultra-orthodox circles, this literature is written in a style closer to Late Rabbinic Hebrew, while in other circles, MH is the language of present-day responsa.

tasks, such as the writing of administrative documents relating to the life of the communities or various private purposes.

Within this great variety, two main groups of texts should be pointed out. One consisted of translations of the important body of works originally written in Arabic by Jewish scholars in Spain under Muslim rule. It contains many calques on Arabic due to the verbatim method of translation devised by translators (Maman 2013). The other was the **Late Rabbinic** corpus developed by Jews living in European lands under Christian rule.

The second half of the 18th century witnessed the emergence of two new corpora created by European Jewish writers: **Maskilic Hebrew** comprises secular modern publications in Hebrew by enlightened Jewish writers in Central and Eastern Europe,³ influenced by emancipation (Kahn 2013a), while **Hasidic Hebrew** comprises inter alia collections of tales about the spiritual leaders of the Hasidic movement, which offered a popular type of Jewish religious life based on mysticism (Kahn 2013b).⁴ These two corpora differ dramatically in character. Hasidic Hebrew emerged within traditional Jewish life, and in many respects may be regarded as an offshoot of Late Rabbinic Hebrew, aimed at providing a Hebrew equivalent for narratives in Yiddish, the spoken language in which the tales about the Rabbis were originally transmitted as popular oral narrative (Glinert 2006). The grammar of Hasidic Hebrew reflects a combination of Biblical, Rabbinic and Medieval elements, coupled with contact phenomena originating in Yiddish as well as internal developments that are unique to this peculiar Hebrew stratum, and may reflect, at least to a certain extent, its origins in oral narrative (Kahn 2015). Maskilic Hebrew, by contrast, influenced by the neo-classical trends of the time, reflected the aspiration of reinstating Biblical Hebrew for literary production in Hebrew. Towards the end of the 19th century, under the growing influence of literary realism of the period's European literature, the Biblical ideal started to collapse, and in the late 1880, a new literary style, based on the combination of linguistic material from all historical strata of Hebrew, was introduced by the writer Sholem Yankev Abramovich, known more popularly as Mendele Moykher-Sforim (1835-1917). This new style – which was soon adopted by others and spread to all written genres within Maskilic Hebrew – laid the foundations for written Modern Hebrew (Kutscher 1982; Rabin 1999).

The transformation of Hebrew into a modern means of literary production coincided with the budding of national ideas in Jewish circles in Eastern Europe. Under the influence of European nationalist ideology, which regarded the vernacular as a necessary component of national identity (cf. the case of Katharevousa in 1.2 above and Joseph, this volume), the idea of speech revival took root, and from the 1880s on, efforts were made in Palestine to form a Hebrew speaking community, mainly through the school system (Rabin 1999; Morag 1993; Harshav 1993). In the decades preceding World War I, following the foundation of kindergartens in which children acquired Hebrew at a tender age, as well as the arrival of groups of ideologically motivated young Jewish immigrants from Europe, Hebrew-speaking social cells started to form in Palestine (Reshef 2013a; forthcoming). From that point on, the spread of Hebrew as a spoken language was quick, and the British authorities, who ruled in Palestine under the League of Nations Mandate following World War I, recognized Hebrew as an official language as early as 1922. As a consequence,

³ *Maskil* 'erudite' is the term used to refer to writers of the Enlightenment movement.

⁴ *Hasid* 'pious' is the term referring to disciples of the mystic religious movement.

Hebrew became not only what Harshav (1993) named ‘a frame language of society’, but also the language for all administrative purposes in the Jewish population of Palestine.

This dramatic sociolinguistic and political change marks a watershed in the development of Modern Hebrew. The formation of a social basis for the oral use of Hebrew and the expansion in its functions triggered accelerated processes of standardization that resulted in significant changes in the linguistic system within a very short time span (Reshef and Helman 2009; Reshef 2015). Consequently, the language used between the 1880s and the 1920s, a period termed here **Early Modern Hebrew (EMH)** (also termed **Revival Hebrew**) had unique features that distinguished it both from previous strata and present day MH (Reshef 2016). During that phase Hebrew still served in restricted domains, and the great bulk of its users, both in speech and writing, were native speakers of other languages. Adult speakers acquired their knowledge of Hebrew in their original homelands, mostly in Eastern Europe, and members of the original Jewish communities of Palestine spoke the languages of their lands of origins, mainly Yiddish, Ladino and Arabic, but also an array of languages of smaller communities, such as Hungarian, Rumanian, Bukhari or Georgian. Adult EMH usage was highly varied, reflecting differences between speakers and writers in the level of proficiency in Hebrew, their familiarity with the Hebrew classical texts, and the contact with other languages. Therefore, the relatively few children attending Hebrew-speaking educational frameworks in late 19th century and early 20th century were exposed to highly variable linguistic input (Reshef, forthcoming). By the 1930s, however, owing to the growing effect of standardization and the rise of the growing cadre of graduates of the Hebrew education as a significant social force, the basic structure of the contemporary linguistic system, **Modern Hebrew (MH)**, had already taken shape (Reshef 2015). The language continued to change under the influence of many factors, perhaps faster than other spoken languages, but what remains unique in MH is the continued influence of the historical strata, as they remained a major reference point in education, culture and language ideology (Mor 2017).

The successful revival of Hebrew is fully consistent with the factors listed by Fishman (1991) and Crystal (2000) as facilitating the revitalization of endangered languages, such as the literacy of their speakers in their language, their increased prestige within the dominant community, their legitimacy in the eyes of the authorities, and a strong presence within the educational system. The foundation of the state of Israel in 1948 further enhanced all these factors.

1.4. Previous approaches to the emergence of Modern Hebrew

Scholars of Hebrew traditionally referred to the emergence of Modern Hebrew as ‘revival’, reflecting the belief that Modern Hebrew was formed in a simple process, involving the reinstating of the oral dimension lost in antiquity. Since Modern Hebrew was regarded as a direct continuation of Classical Hebrew – Biblical and Rabbinic Hebrew – a highly prescriptive attitude prevailed in the field, and features of speech and writing that did not conform to the inherited models were perceived as errors needing correction (Mor, forthcoming). This view was first challenged in the 1950s by linguists who claimed that MH is an independent linguistic system which needed to be analyzed synchronically rather than in light of its relationship with the classical rules (Kuzar 2001; Reshef 2013b).

The simplistic perception of contemporary language as a direct descendent of the classical language, first and foremost its Biblical phase, still predominates in the attitude of the general public towards linguistic issues. It reflects a culturally-determined notion of continuity. Leaders of the movement to restore Hebrew as a spoken language were acutely aware of the fact that the classical language needed to be adapted to its function as a spoken language in modern times. For this purpose, they established the Language Committee, which became the main language planning body of the pre-state period. This set off the modern trend of language planning activity, which was prescriptivist in nature (Mor, forthcoming). The rulings of the Language Committee consisted of a complex, not necessarily coherent set of prescriptive demands (Gonen, this volume). While all language planners model their ruling primarily on the Hebrew sources, there is no consensus in actual implementation, and different decisions rely to different degrees on the inherited inventory of forms (Ben-Asher, 1969). Although in 1913 the Language Committee reached an explicit decision about the relative roles of the two classical linguistic strata, Biblical Hebrew and Rabbinic Hebrew, in shaping modern prescriptive grammar, their own rulings diverged from these decisions in their reliance on the various historical strata of Hebrew. In recent years the Academy of the Hebrew Language (the direct descendant of the Language Committee) initiated a codification of its official prescriptive rulings. This, however, is an ongoing project, and it covers only some aspects of grammar, as the Academy deliberately refrains from treating questions of syntax, since they are regarded as a question of style rather than of grammar.

In the 1950s, the influential work of Israeli linguists Haiim Rosén (1956, 1957) and Haim Blanc (1954, 1957, 1968) brought the synchronic view of language to academic circles and established the recognition of MH as a newly developed distinct linguistic entity, which they termed 'Israeli Hebrew'. They promoted the idea that Israeli Hebrew is structurally different from any prior historical stage of Hebrew and is not modeled on the inherited grammar, but is based on a new set of rules that have to be discovered through recognized processes of linguistic analysis. These suggestions triggered heated debates with scholars of Hebrew (Kuzar 2001), since they challenged the assumption of continuity – both linguistic and cultural – on which the well-rooted notion of 'revival' was based. While Rosén and Blanc acknowledged the role of the inherited linguistic material as a basic building block of the modern linguistic system, they stressed that it was not the only source of contemporary language, but was integrated in a more complex system, consisting of two other likewise fundamental components: contact phenomena on the one hand, and structural innovations reflecting natural linguistic forces operating in any living language on the other hand (Blanc 1954; Rosén 1956).

A preliminary attempt to address the essence of the linguistic processes underlying the formation of Modern Hebrew is found in Blanc's suggestion that koineization processes were involved (Blanc 1968), but this direction was not systematically developed in subsequent studies. Attempts were made to suggest alternatives to the term 'revival', based on the recognition that Hebrew was never a 'dead' language, but formed part of a diglottic situation in traditional Jewish life. None of these suggestions (e.g. 'full return to Hebrew' (Morag 1993), 'transformation of Hebrew into an all-encompassing language' (Ornan 1984) or 'revitalization/revernacularization' (Spolsky 1995)) has gained supremacy in the field. However, the important point is not one of terminology but rather of essence: we would like to

understand the unique case of the process of the emergence of MH in light of other cases which share certain features with the case of Hebrew. Taking a synchronic view of the language does not entail that there is no continuity. Since all languages change over time and can be analyzed synchronically, we need to look at the nature of the transmission and the resulting linguistic structures in order to determine whether or not we have a case of continuity.

Indeed, there were additional suggestions to explain the formation of MH as resulting from linguistic processes known from other cases of language genesis. MH was claimed at some point to be a case of creolization (Izreel 1986, 2001, 2003; Wexler 1990; Horvath & Wexler 1997), where Hebrew is the relexifier of a Yiddish substrate (following the view of creolization of Holm 1988, Lefebvre 1998). According to this view, the syntax of MH is basically that of Yiddish. But empirical study has shown no evidence for the creolization view nor for its “mixed-language” version in Zuckermann (2006) (Goldenberg 1996; Blau 2002; Laufer 2008; Zeldes 2013, the articles in Doron 2016). Hence this view was largely rejected by the research community.

The present volume is an outcome of the growing interest in recent years in promoting the methodical, scientifically informed study of this unique process in order to better understand its linguistic facets.

1.5. (Dis)continuity in Hebrew

We suggest that it is helpful to look at Hebrew in the context introduced in section 1.2 above. For the purposes of discussion we must distinguish between

- (i) Hebrew throughout the ages, when it was not spoken, either natively or non-natively;
- (ii) Emergent Modern Hebrew of the first generation of speakers, mostly non-native;
- (iii) First generation of native Modern Hebrew speakers.

1.5.1. Hebrew throughout the ages

As pointed out by Joseph (this volume), there is a real sense in which Hebrew throughout that ages is to be seen as a case of continuity, since it involves an “unbroken chain of transmission”. In light of the discussion above we can point out the unique aspects of this unbroken chain of transmission and ask what consequences these had for the nature of the language itself.

By the criteria we mentioned above, the transmission over the ages, while continuous, had two special features. First, *all* learners were L2 learners and there were no L1 speakers at all. Second, the primary linguistic basis for acquisition was a corpus of texts. These features are known from situations of diglossia (Ferguson 1959, Fishman 1967), where they characterize a language used by the community for written purposes only rather than for ordinary conversation – we will call such a language *w-language* (*written-language*).

Thus beginning at an early point of its history, Hebrew was only transmitted as a *w-language*. We stress that *w-language* here is different from normal written language, which is an idealized representation of spoken language. Since Hebrew was a written

language which had no speakers it did not represent a spoken language. Nonetheless, it was a language which was productively used and its users (though not speakers) continually produced new texts of various styles and genres.

We might ask what the consequences of this very unusual situation were. In particular, we can ask what features which Hebrew showed as a w-language are common to those of spoken languages. In many ways, Hebrew as a w-language exhibits essential features of spoken languages. First, we can see that written Hebrew developed many distinct dialects. In fact, when speaking of continuity, there were a number of unbroken chains, since with the dispersion of the Jewish population, different chains of transmission were established, as is partly evident from the overview in section 1.3. Each resulted in a distinct variety of Hebrew. Second, Hebrew as a w-language underwent changes similar to those of spoken languages. As mentioned, spoken languages undergo both endogenous change and contact-induced change. The studies in this volume and in Doron (2016) indicate that Hebrew as a w-language underwent both kinds of change, though in many cases it is difficult to determine whether the change was endogenous or contact-induced.⁵ One pervasive type of endogenous change is analogical leveling, which is shown to have occurred in Hebrew when it was still a w-language (Doron 2018; Ariel, this volume).

Finally, as with spoken language, the written language Hebrew had register differentiation. Reshef (this volume) illustrates in detail how many of the features associated with colloquial Hebrew today dated from EMH and more importantly, from non-belletristic literature from periods immediately preceding the EMH, when Hebrew was still just a w-language. That is, written Hebrew distinguished between formal and colloquial registers. Once again, it is worth stressing that the colloquial written Hebrew is not a reflection of a colloquial register of spoken Hebrew, since the latter did not exist.

But there are also ways in which Hebrew as a w-language was quite different from languages transmitted by speakers. The most striking and theoretically significant characteristic of the development of all the strata reviewed here is that they were not based each solely on its immediately previous stratum, but rather on all previous ones (Rosenzweig 1925; Ben-Hayyim 1953). All strata were directly available to users due to the centrality of texts written in all periods in Jewish culture. This makes the transmission of Hebrew unique: English may have a mixture of layers, but at any given point in time, the syntax of English developed from a time preceding and adjacent to it. In the course of the development of Hebrew, however, people drew their grammar and lexicon directly from various strata, at certain times unconsciously, at others due to a deliberate preference of a specific historical stratum over others. This seems to be a direct consequence of the nature of Hebrew as existing in the written medium. For example, writers of Late Rabbinic Hebrew mostly used the grammar of Rabbinic Hebrew, but they would embed Biblical Hebrew structures in their Rabbinic sentences. We bring an example from Kahn (2018), which is the study of a 1653 Hebrew text *Yeven Meşula*, relating the 1648–1649 massacre of 20,000 Jews by Ukrainian and Cossack peasants. The sentence opens with a typical Biblical temporal adjunct, *wa-yəhi* together with an infinitive (INF) prefixed by a temporal preposition – a construction which had become obsolete in Rabbinic Hebrew. The

⁵ This is usually the case when looking at changes which took place in the past as Thomason and Kaufman (1988) stress.

main clause consists of Rabbinic PERF verbs (whereas in Biblical Hebrew, *wa-yəhi* temporal constructions modify IMPERF verbs):

wa-yəhi *ki-šmoaʕ* *haš-šorer* *ħmilniški* *yimaħ* *šam-o*
and-was.3MS as-hear.INF the-enemy Chmielnicki be.blotted.JUSS.3MS name-his

ʕaša *taħbula wə-šalaħ* *səp̄arim ʔel haś-śar* *haš-šaba*
make.PERF.3MS plot and-send.PERF.3MS letters to the-commander (of) the-army

‘and when the enemy Chmielnicki – may his name be blotted out – heard, he concocted a plot, and sent letters to the army commander’ (ibid. 168)

Furthermore, while Hebrew as a w-language showed both contact-induced and endogenous changes such as analogical levelling, there may be certain changes unique to spoken languages. These changes, discussed further in the next section, are changes prompted by pressure from the interfaces - pragmatic and phonetic. These kinds of change, though common, are less likely to show up in the history of a language if it is written.

A change of this sort is what has been called *Subjectification* (Traugott 1995, Traugott and Dasher 2002), where temporal or modal expressions are reinterpreted as stating something about the speaker’s attitude or perspective on the proposition expressed. An example of this phenomenon is discussed in Tsirkin-Sadan’s article (this volume), which shows that the adverbial *ʕadayin* (corresponding to *still* in English) extended its meaning to a concessive only once the language became spoken. A well-known case of subjectification is the rise of epistemic modals discussed in Traugott (1989). In light of this, one can perhaps explain why the Hebrew modal *carix* ‘need’, which was used exclusively as a root modal throughout the history of the language (Doron 2018), first developed an epistemic use only once Hebrew became spoken (Rubinstein 2012: 163-164).

Another change of this kind is variant selection based on the social valuation of variants (prestige/ group identity) – speakers want to lay claim to particular social status or group membership by virtue of employing a variant with particular identity qualities, Labov 1966. An example appears in Doron’s article in this volume, again from the period when the language started being spoken.

Finally, we mention two other features which appear to be a function of the rhetorical use of spoken language. The first is the ‘Maxim of Extravagance’ – Haspelmath’s (1999) label for Keller’s (1994) maxim “Talk in such a way that you are noticed”, whereby people use an expression in an innovative sense, in an imaginative and vivid way, so as to be noticed. A MH example is the participle *hores* ‘devastating.MS’, which has recently started being used as a vivid way to express ‘terrific’ (pronounced *ores* in speech, with ellision of the initial *h*), also found in informal writing on the web:

ʕugat *ʔoreʔo horeset* *šel rut* *ʔoliver*
cake.FS (of) Oreo devastating.FS of Ruth Oliver
a terrific Oreo cake of Ruth Oliver’s^W

The second is Dahl’s (2001) ‘rhetorical devaluation’, the reverse of extravagance: semantic bleaching as a result of overuse. An example from MH Hebrew may be the use of *la-mavet* ‘to death’ as a negatively flavored intensifier, besides its normal use as a literally understood result phrase.

li-tħon *ʔet ze* *la-mavet* *be-siħot* *bilti nigmarot*

to-grind ACC this to-death in-conversations.FP NEG ending.FP
to "chew" it to death in unending conversations^W

We should point out, finally, that the transmitters of Hebrew over the ages, though they were transmitting a w-language, must have had a mental grammar representing their knowledge of this language. In fact, while this is speculative, we would like to suggest that the method of language learning, even though it was a second language for all, was similar to that of learning language in a natural setting. That is, studies in the traditional *Heder* (the school room where boys were taught Jewish studies) began at an extremely early age and there was no explicit instruction of Hebrew – there were no Hebrew classes. The students delved directly into the texts, often translating them by rote into their vernacular (Yiddish or other Jewish languages) – and slowly internalized a grammar representing their knowledge of the w-language. But since producers of written Hebrew mixed aspects of various strata of the language, as we have seen, it is likely that their mentally represented grammars were not fully internally consistent. This situation was corrected when Hebrew became spoken and learned as an L1.

1.5.2 Emergent Modern Hebrew of the first generation of speakers

While the transition of Hebrew from being a w-language to a spoken language is probably unprecedented, in order to understand the process and the subsequent development of the language as a spoken language, we want to look at factors which this process shares with other cases of unusual continuity. Since the transition involved a case of an entire population shifting from their native L1s to an L2, this situation shares many properties with what is often called language shift. In such a situation, when a group of speakers switches *en masse* to a target language by learning it as a second language (L2), these speakers often fail to perfectly master it, and this results in language change (Thomason and Kaufman 1988; Kroch 2001; Meisel 2011; see also Pereltsvaig, this volume). If the development of MH resulted from language shift, we might say that the first speakers of Emergent Modern Hebrew (EMH), adults for whom Hebrew was a second language, transferred the properties of the syntactic structures of their native languages (the contact languages) into their L2 Hebrew. While studies have shown that there was contact-induced change when Hebrew was a w-language this process was probably magnified when the language became spoken and used in a wider range of situations. The next generation, which is the first generation of first-language (L1) speakers of MH, underwent a process of deficient learning based solely on linguistic input produced by L2 speakers, whose knowledge is imperfect and may contain inconsistencies and disruptions. The result of this deficient learning was that the L1 speakers of Hebrew reset the values of syntactic features that they had received from the previous generation. L1 speakers acquire language at an early age, when they still have access to the cognitive mechanism which enables resetting syntactic properties of the language (Yang 2002, Pintzuk 2008).

We might ask how similar the case of Hebrew is to other known cases of language shift. At the time of the shift to spoken Hebrew, there was a population speaking a variety of substrates (the various languages spoken by the members of the Jewish community in Palestine at the time of the shift) that shifted to Hebrew. But Hebrew was an extremely unusual case of a superstrate, for reasons we have discussed above. It is the only case known where the superstrate consists of a corpus of written texts; this superstrate had no native speakers at all, only speakers who were part of a

population with knowledge based solely on written texts. As a consequence of this it is the only documented case of a superstrate which consists entirely of L2 speakers. The nature of this situation brought researchers like Wexler (1990) to say that the first speakers of EMH continued speaking their native substrate, the only language at their disposal, and simply relexified it from the written Hebrew texts. This is based on an assumption that the knowledge people acquire from written texts is not grammatical knowledge beyond lexical knowledge. However, as should be clear from the previous sections, this is was not the situation in the case of Hebrew. Moreover, as opposed to other documented cases of language shift, the substrate and superstrate were languages of the very same social group, and the shifters came with some kind of knowledge of the superstrate. That is, we do not have a case here of speakers of one group being enculturated into another – but rather speakers of one society consciously deciding to shift into a language many of whom had knowledge of – some of them quite intimate knowledge.⁶

Before moving on, we point out that current literature does not assume that in most cases the result of a language shift is a language with the syntax of the substrate and the lexicon of the superstrate. This is also claimed not to be the case with creoles, which arguably do not usually arise from the shift of one monolithic population to speaking the language of another. Current analyses of creoles assume that the superstrate does not only contribute the lexical items, but that both substrate and superstrate contribute aspects of syntax. According to the hybrid grammar theory (Aboh 2015, this volume), linguistic contact is characterized by the development of hybrid syntax based both on the superstrate and substrate languages. The emergent language displays syntactic and semantic properties that combine those of the substrate and superstrate languages in non-trivial ways. The question that arises in this context is what features can be retained in the process of language creation and why? The answer put forth by the hybrid grammar theory is that features most likely to be selected are those associated with interfaces. As a consequence, for instance, the complementizer system and the determiner system represent a potentially vulnerable domain. This is explained by noting that certain domains of the speakers' linguistic faculty (e.g., the syntax–discourse interface) are more sensitive (or vulnerable) to language contact effects than others (Aboh 2015: 193). On the other hand, aspects of core syntax might be immune, or less sensitive, to language transfer, accounting for the SVO word order found in creoles and also in MH (a consequence of the unmarked merging order of verbs merging first with their complement, and next with the specifier, in an order determined according to Sportiche 1988 and Kayne 1994), and for the universal word order within the modal/auxiliary system (according to the fixed universal functional hierarchy of Cinque 1999).

The findings of the relevant articles in the present volume provide preliminary confirmation of the hybrid grammar theory, while indicating that MH should indeed be viewed as a stage of Hebrew not only in its lexicon but in its syntax as well.⁷ The articles of Rubinstein and Ariel show that the modal system of MH is based on

⁶ This was not the case for women, who were mostly not given Jewish education (Parush 2004).

⁷ Also in terms of phonology, MH represents features of ancient Hebrew. Modern Hebrew as spoken today is a development of the so-called Sephardic reading tradition of the Bible transmitted in certain communities over the ages beginning with the last spoken dialects in Palestine of the 3rd century (Khan 2013: 43-63, 2017). These features do not correspond any longer to the original phonology encoded in the written Masoretic diacritics of Medieval Tiberias, but they do belong to a continuously transmitted phonological system – transmitted in the reading of holy texts.

previous historical stages of Hebrew. They speculate that the system changed during EMH, in Ariel's case possibly because of the influence of Yiddish, in Rubinstein's case possibly by the influence of Russian. This is accordance with Aboh's view that within interfaces (modality and complementizers are part of the syntax-discourse interface), there is transfer from the contact languages. The article by Rappaport Hovav shows this for argument structure (part of the syntax-semantics interface). Accordingly, the interface domain seems to allow contact influence, while core domains do not, e.g. word-order within IP. It is not clear whether Pereltsvaig's article on the changes which took place in Eastern Yiddish shows similar sensitivity to interface, but this is possible: she talks of changes under Slavic contact that influenced the complementizer portion of the syntactic tree.

1.5.3 Hebrew of the first generation of native Modern Hebrew speakers

The first generation of native acquirers of MH was confronted with a situation with which any learner of any language is faced in acquisition: conflicting evidence in the primary linguistic environment. Aboh argues in his article that this is the situation in many perhaps most modern multicultural societies in the case of normal language transmission.

Contrary to the tradition in linguistics that has singled out creoles as the archetype of language creation based on contact, Aboh argues that each instance of acquisition involves language contact of some sort, viz., contact of different idiolects. According to this position, there is no qualitative difference between a child learning her language in a multilingual environment and a child raised in a monolingual environment. In both situations, children learn to master multiple linguistic subsystems that are in contact and may 'cross-breed' to produce new variants, which may subsequently serve as inputs for new learners. This view is construed within the understanding that language learning is always imperfect. This view explains why languages constantly change: language change is a perpetual phenomenon contingent on learning.

EMH, the language to which the first native MH speakers were exposed to, is not exceptional in its inconsistency, though the degree of inconsistency was probably extreme. But what is at first blush surprising is the fast standardization of MH (Reshef and Helman 2009, Reshef 2015). By the 1930, MH is reported to have standardized, which is very fast, taking into account that the first purported native speaker was born in Jerusalem in 1882 into a community where people who still spoke the languages of the ancestral homelands from which they had immigrated centuries before. The Hebrew press had only started in Palestine in 1863 (more than a hundred years after Hebrew newspapers started appearing in Europe), and the first school teaching in Hebrew was only instituted in 1864. Early Modern Hebrew started developing in 1881, with the first wave of immigrants from Eastern Europe. These few intensely ideologically motivated immigrants were few in number in relation to the larger Jewish community. As mentioned in section 1.3, the first social cells speaking Hebrew only started to form during the first decade of the 20th century. Yet, 30 years later, MH was already standardized. How did this happen? Most previous studies attribute it to the educational system, and to the setting of Classical Hebrew as a model for speech.

This question is probably best answered by appeal to social factors. Meir and Sandler (this volume) show that this is a natural process in new languages: they start out with a great variation, and then quickly standardize. The reasons they uncover seem relevant to MH as well, for example, the linguistic heterogeneity of the speakers. O'Shannessy (this volume) also speaks of related issues – she shows that in closely knit groups which maintain strong ties, though there is resistance to change, once change is accepted by one of the members, it spreads very quickly. She also shows that in linguistically heterogeneous situations where, for whatever reason, the dialect of children is distinct from that of their parents, if the children spend a lot of time with their peers, they contribute to the standardization of the language in accordance to their own dialect, with disregard to the parents' dialect. Similar conditions held in the new Jewish community in Palestine: socially it was closely knit, and linguistically it was heterogeneous. Children looked down and often felt superior to their immigrant parents and their foreign culture; they saw themselves as more authentic to the land, *sabras* 'prickly pears'. Children were prone to spend most of their time in the company of their peers, with close guidance of older peers who were their youth-movement mentors. These mentors were their role models and the children tried to emulate their language, a very particular dialect of MH, rather than that of their parents. As time went on, more and more of the peers were native speakers of Hebrew. This resulted in a dramatic language change in a short time, since the children did not try to be faithful to their parents' speech, on the contrary, they regularized and reanalyzed the input creating new structures, and since their social networks did not change, they remained in their speech style as they grew up.

The papers by Rappaport Hovav and by Tsirkin Sadan suggest that certain of the changes in MH may have come under the influence of English. Though English was one of the official languages of Palestine until the 1940's, there seems to be little evidence of the influence of English until the late 1960's (Reshef 2008). These papers indeed include discussion of recent changes.

1.6. Conclusion

What emerges from this overview is that the development of Modern Hebrew can be seen as an unusual case of continuity. We have a case of unbroken transmission of a language which was used productively over the ages. In many ways, Hebrew, as a w-language, showed properties of a mentally represented language. This unbroken chain of transmission resulted in systematic correspondences between Classical Hebrew and Modern Hebrew in all components of the language. On the other hand, the mode of transmission was highly unusual, as transmission was in the written mode and was effected only by non-native speakers. One consequence of this unnatural mode of transmission was the mixing of elements from different strata at all times. This probably brought a greater degree of inconsistency in the input than is usual. Modern Hebrew developed from Classical Hebrew in a very unusual confluence of circumstances, making this phenomenon *sui generis*. However, the emergence of Modern Hebrew has features common with other cases of continuous transmission, and it is our hope that this volume will help further our understanding of this unique phenomenon.

1.7. Summary of papers in the volume

1.7.1 Contact, continuity and change in the emergence of Modern Hebrew

1.7.1.1 Syntactic evolution in the history of Hebrew

Taube's article discusses the semantic functions of Prepositional Phrases headed by *ecel* 'at' in various constructions throughout the history of Hebrew, from Biblical to Modern Hebrew. *ecel* in BH had a strictly locative use. It began appearing in possessive-existential constructions in Medieval Hebrew in Arabic-speaking countries under the influence of possessive constructions in Arabic with *ʕinda* 'at', and later in Eastern Europe under the influence of similar constructions in Yiddish with *bay* 'at' and of equivalent Slavic constructions with *u* 'at'. This development resulted in a contrast between the constructions with *ecel* and constructions with the preposition *le-* 'to' – the strategy inherited from Classical Hebrew for denoting possession. The possessive constructions with *ecel* were still in use in Emergent Modern Hebrew, but have now disappeared. In Modern Hebrew the preposition *ecel* is relegated to other functions, such as pertentive (or experiencer) function, also resulting from contact-induced functional expansion involving the same contact languages. The paper surveys the functions of *ecel* in Modern Hebrew beyond the existential constructions and examines the question of why the contact-induced construction with *ecel* did not survive as the dominant construction for denoting possession.

Rubinstein discusses the semantic and syntactic development of existential/possessive modals throughout the history of Hebrew. Unlike what seems to hold cross-linguistically, i.e. that possessive modal constructions express deontic necessity, in Hebrew these constructions historically express possibility in addition to deontic necessity. When expressing possibility, their modal flavor cannot be deontic, but must be circumstantial or dynamic, conveying ability or opportunity. This unusual semantics can be traced back to Classical Hebrew, and prevailed through EMH. Yet a dramatic change developed in EMH. First, the possessive modal construction evolved into an existential modal construction by gradually losing the dative phrase expressing the possessor. Concomitantly, the circumstantial/dynamic possibility interpretation was lost, and the emerging existential modal came to strictly express deontic necessity (because of the lack of possessor, the modality it expresses is impersonal). Rubinstein attributes the morpho-syntactic aspect of this change to contact with Russian, which does not have dative possessors. Yet the semantic aspect of the change can be explained language-internally. The possibility interpretation was rooted in the inherited possessive construction with the dative argument. Once the dative argument was lost, the construction could only retain one of its inherited interpretations – deontic necessity, the one which corresponded to the interpretation of the Russian existential construction. Thus the morphosyntax is said to have changed under the influence of Russian, but the meaning is inherited from the original Hebrew semantics of the construction.

Tsirkin-Sadan's paper traces the development of the Hebrew adverb *ʕadayin* 'still' which originated in Rabbinic Hebrew, after being borrowed from Aramaic. In Rabbinic Hebrew the adverb was strictly aspectual, and this is how it was originally incorporated into Modern Hebrew. Yet a change took place in the syntax and semantics of the adverb in the late 1960s, when it was grammaticalized as a conjunction with concessive meaning. This grammaticalization may be seen as a language-internal development, since the direction of change, namely, from aspectual to concessive, is the direction of semantic change attested in various unrelated languages. However, as its timing coincides with the rise in the influence of English

on Hebrew, English contact may be seen as the external trigger for this process, in view of the fact that English *still* has both readings. The paper proposes the following process: The aspectual adverb conveys that the event time stretches from the reference point back to a salient event in the discourse and its run time. Since the continuation of the event is stated and focused, it becomes frequently associated with the implicature that the alternative, the negation of the event/proposition is denied. It is in this sense that *šadayin* is focus-sensitive and frequently co-occurs with the conjunction *šaval* ‘but’ which carries the implicature that the sentences it conjoins are in contrast. Eventually, the semantic load of *šaval* was redistributed in such a way that *šadayin* came to be identified with the contrast. Once this happened, reanalysis took place and *šadayin* had a new meaning in Hebrew: it came to be used as a pure concessive independently of any other contrast expression in the sentence.

Ariel’s paper addresses a phenomenon in colloquial Modern Hebrew: the use of the future form of the verb rather than the imperative form to convey the variety of speech acts collectively referred to as commands. The use of the future to express commands is common in languages and in fact existed in Biblical Hebrew as well. However, while both Biblical Hebrew and Modern Hebrew use the imperative and the future to express commands, the distribution of the forms in these two stages is shown to be dramatically different. In Modern Hebrew there is an almost blanket use of the future form in the colloquial register and a blanket use of the imperative in the formal registers. In Biblical Hebrew, the use of the different forms was syntactically determined. This suggests that the phenomenon in Modern Hebrew does not have its roots in Biblical Hebrew. Further historical survey indicates that it is a relatively new development, dating to Rabbinic Hebrew of the 18th and 19th centuries. This then is another instance of aspects of colloquial Hebrew with sources in non-belletristic writings of Hebrew in the period preceding EMH. The factors which are argued to have influenced this change are paradigm levelling, an endogenous change, and a grammaticalization process of insubordination, which is speculated to have developed under the influence of contact with Yiddish.

1.7.1.2 The foundations of Modern Hebrew on previous stages of Hebrew

Rappaport Hovav discusses a change in the typological profile of Hebrew in terms of lexicalization patterns. These patterns concern the way in which the conceptual components of event descriptions of motion or change are distributed across morpho-syntactic categories when they include a specification of manner in the same nuclear clause. V-framed languages require the verb to express the motion or change, and manner, if expressed, must be expressed otherwise. S-framed languages in addition allow the verb to express the manner and the result to be expressed by a satellite such as a prepositional phrase, as when manner of motion verbs appear with directional complements. V-framed languages typically do not have an articulated distinction between locative and directional phrases, while S-framed languages do. In addition, S-framed languages have an argument-structure augmenting process, lacking in V-framed languages. This process allows directional and result phrases to be added to verbs which do not select them and also allow directional and result phrases to be predicated of non-subcategorized objects. BH is shown to have properties of V-framed languages, while MH shows properties of S-framed languages. The article shows that the Hebrew first developed a locative/directional distinction, allowing manner verbs of a variety of sorts to appear with directional phrases. More recently, constructions with non-subcategorized objects have begun to appear. The article

shows that these constructions developed from reanalyses of Classical Hebrew collocations.

Reshef presents a hitherto unrecognized facet of continuity in the formation of Modern Hebrew, as she shows that some of the most typical characteristics of present-day colloquial register do not stem from structural innovations in spoken language, but originate in pre-existing linguistic habits inherited from linguistic stages when Hebrew was only written. Based on an examination of a vast corpus of non-bellevistic texts produced by Jewish writers in the period immediately preceding speech revival, the paper challenges the accepted assumption that colloquial language is necessarily triggered within the speech modality. Instead, the existence of a series of non-classical features in productive written language just before speech revival and throughout its initial phase indicates the transfer of non-classical features of various types from written to spoken usage. As these phenomena were an integral part of the use of Hebrew among first-generation L2 speakers, they integrated in the speech of native-born children, who were exposed to them in their adult environment. However, as these children were simultaneously exposed to the classical models in various types of culturally-significant language production (e.g. nursery rhymes, children's literature, formal school instruction etc.), they interpreted these features as bearing a colloquial flavor. The colloquial register of Modern Hebrew therefore did not form solely due to the transformation of Hebrew into a vernacular, but was at least partly based on processes of register differentiation between inherited, preexisting linguistic features originally formed in writing. While the phenomena presented originate in various strata in the history of Hebrew, they were part of productive language at the eve of speech revival and throughout its initial phase.

Gonen addresses the types of processes underlying differences between Classical Hebrew (and the prescriptive demands based on it) and spoken Modern Hebrew (MH). Based on data extracted from a recently-discovered corpus of historical recordings documenting the speech habits of speakers of Early Modern Hebrew, a distinction is made between deviation of MH from Classical Hebrew due to processes of ordinary transmission – in which differences between different linguistic stages necessarily reflect a process of change – and deviations of MH from the classical language which were already apparent among Early Modern Hebrew speakers. The latter process reflects contact with the L1's of these speakers, viewed as *disparity* relative to Classical Hebrew. Differences between disparity and change are illustrated with various lexical, phonological and morphological examples found in the recordings. In addition to clear cases of change vs. disparity, the concluding section of the paper discusses the possibility of coexistence of disparity and change in the same grammatical category. In the case of vowel reduction, various combinations of the two processes are attested, as in some cases the recordings conform to the classical models where present-day speech tends to deviate from them, while in others the recordings include deviating forms that are no longer used today. The paper therefore concludes that determining the scope of linguistic change in MH may not be done without a detailed examination of early recordings reflecting the starting point of modern spoken usage.

Doron's paper assesses the influence on Modern Hebrew of the two stages of Hebrew which had been spoken in antiquity: Biblical Hebrew and Rabbinic Hebrew in its early, Mishnaic, phase. Contra the received view among scholars of Hebrew, Doron's findings indicate that Modern Hebrew has in many respects readopted the syntax of Biblical Hebrew, the earlier of the two ancient stages, rather than being a

development of the subsequent Rabbinic stage. The paper discusses particular constructions whose Biblical syntax had historically been replaced by Rabbinic syntax, yet were reinstated in Modern Hebrew. These include clausal constructions (e.g. conditional and unconditional clauses; clausal complements of aspectual and modal auxiliaries; gerundive clauses), alongside variation in the distribution of sub-clausal elements (null subject pronouns; the pronominal copula; pronominal doubling; interrogative determiners; constituent negation; progressive and habitual structures). The Rabbinic component in the syntax of Modern Hebrew seems to be limited to values and exponents drawn from Rabbinic Hebrew for the functional categories originating in Biblical Hebrew or in languages with which Hebrew had been in contact during its history. The paper attributes the centrality of Biblical syntax in Modern Hebrew (and for that matter its morphology and lexicon too) to sociolinguistic factors: the first Modern Hebrew speakers favoured the secular literature of the Enlightenment, which was heavily modeled on the Bible and less so on traditional religious Rabbinic corpora.

1.7.2. General issues of contact, continuity and change

Joseph's article poses the question *Can there be language continuity in language contact?* and answers it in the positive after examining several cases of language contact in the Balkans. Joseph argues that contact-induced change is no more unusual or “inorganic” than any sort of language change, and that it does not affect the basic continuity that language transmission across generations ensures. Language continuity depends on an unbroken line of transmission, which may be preserved not only in cases of system-internal changes, but also in changes induced by language contact, even in creoles and mixed languages. The paper examines grammatical properties of Judezmo (Judeo-Spanish spoken by Jewish communities in the Balkans before World War II) and argues that though it has many characteristics of Balkan languages, it reflects direct lineal descent from 15th century Spanish. The paper also examines grammatical properties of the Constantinople Judeo-Greek dialect of the 16th century, which has many archaic Greek properties, while the rest of Greek varieties of the time are innovative due to contact. Here too, the paper argues that the conservative variety and the innovative variety are in the same direct line of descent from previous stages of Greek. The third case examined in the article is that of the diglossia in 19th century Greece between Demotic and Katharevousa. Demotic evolved continuously from Classical Greek, through Koiné, Byzantine, and Medieval Greek, in contrast to the artificially archaic Katharevousa. Accordingly, Demotic but not Katharevousa reflects natural linguistic continuity, even if the latter actually preserved more grammatical characteristics of Classical Greek.

Aboh's paper argues that language acquisition always happens in a situation of contact comparable to creole contexts, in which learners are faced with heterogeneous inputs and recombine competing linguistic features into new linguistic items. That is, the development of any community language necessarily involves a situation of contact between individuals (and sometimes between populations with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds) in which language learners restructure the inputs they are exposed to. In creole societies as well as in modern urban societies, learners are engaged in the same cognitive process during acquisition: recombination of linguistic features. This basic cognitive process allows learners to select relevant linguistic features from a heterogeneous input which they recombine into new linguistic elements. Because recombination operates on heterogeneous inputs, it yields hybrid grammars. The article discusses constraints on recombination, in

particular the immunity to recombination of the Tense, Aspect, and Mood (TAM) system. Cross-linguistically, temporal, modal, and aspectual expressions follow a rigid semantic hierarchy. Hence creole languages will show the same general pattern found in their source languages as well as in typological studies, despite structural variation. For instance, the article shows that Saramaccan and its source languages, Gbe and English, all obey Cinque's universal hierarchy, despite the structural variation between them: Saramaccan is similar to Gbe and different from English in allowing co-occurrence of several TAM expressions. On the other hand, the complementizer domain (CP) seems to be subject to more structural variations typologically, and hence one finds in the CP domain of Saramaccan new morphosyntactic patterns that are not found in the input languages.

O'Shannessy discusses a number of documented cases where children are the agents of contact-induced change. Often contact-induced change is analysed long after the fact of change leaving researchers to speculate about the sociolinguistic factors which facilitate the introduction and diffusion of the change; therefore the documentation of current cases are of immense value. Adult second language learning is often taken to be a major source of contact-induced changes. In contrast, the present article demonstrates a variety of cases where it can be shown that in multilingual contexts the contact-induced change began with innovations by children who persisted in the innovative structures thereby bringing about language change. The particular case study reported is that of Light Walpiri, where young multilingual children conventionalized code-switching patterns of adults and moreover introduced innovations in the core verb structure of their language. The question posed in the article is what social factors bring children to play a leading role in language change. The common features identified are children interacting with each other for substantial amounts of time in communities with dense, multiplex networks with some sense of boundedness, a social motivation to share interactional styles with their peers, and probably to demarcate these peer groups from other groups. In such settings regularization and reanalysis of the input by children is likely to spread among the children's peer groups, and remain in their speech as they grow up.

Meir and Sandler's paper discusses the roles played in language genesis by the opposing forces of conventionalization on the one hand and variation on the other hand, based on a comparison between two young sign language, Israeli Sign Language (ISL) and Al-Sayyid Bedouin Sign Language (ABSL). Using data from a series of studies of these two languages, the authors challenge the assumption that languages initially form as homogeneous systems, and variation is created over time due to expansion and stratification. Conversely, their detailed analysis of various lexical and structural phenomena indicates that the earlier stages in the formation of a new language are characterized by great variation, while conventionalization occurs over time. Furthermore, through the discussion of various linguistic features (such as lexical variation, strategies of compounding, phonological features such as hand shape or height) they show that the pace of conventionalization is not uniform across various linguistic domains or in different languages. A comparison of the sociolinguistic circumstances of the two languages indicates that characteristics of the speech community (such as size, level of homogeneity, or diversity in usage domains) may enhance or hinder conventionalization. Small, socially close-knit communities tolerate a great measure of variation, as efficient communication is assured based on a common background and shared knowledge. By contrast, in large, diversified communities the pressures for conventionalization are stronger, and the employment

of the language in formal settings (e.g. education or the media) works to the same effect. These claims are supported by detailed empirical evidence from the two sign languages under investigation.

Pereltsvaig examines the socio-linguistic situation and mechanisms that led to diachronic changes in the syntax of Eastern Yiddish, such as the extension of Verb-Second to embedded clauses (in earlier stages of the language, Verb-Second was limited to main clauses only). Previous work has suggested, based on the timing of the development, that this emergence of embedded Verb-Second in Yiddish was due to contact with Slavic languages. However, it is not clear from this work how Slavic languages, which lack Verb-Second in either main or embedded clauses, could have produced such an impact on Yiddish. Pereltsvaig shows that the surface appearance of embedded Verb-Second actually reduces to the setting of several other parameters. When Yiddish first came to Poland-Lithuania, it had two of these parameters set differently from the relevant Slavic languages, but it eventually aligned with the Slavic parameter settings. Hence, it is plausible that Slavic languages indeed induced these changes. Such syntactic changes are indicative of language shift, where adults for whom Yiddish was a second language transferred the properties of the syntactic structures of their native Slavic languages into their L2 Yiddish. The challenge is to identify these adult learners, who then passed on their “Slavicized dialect” to their children. Pereltsvaig proposes that the people who introduced the relevant Slavic grammatical patterns to Yiddish were Slavic-speaking women who converted to Judaism. Due to social structure and family traditions, women were in a better position to influence the developing grammars of generations of children acquiring Yiddish as their L1.

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