

DE GRUYTER  
MOUTON

*Philipp Striedl*

# MODERN HEBREW IN ISRAEL

REPRESENTATIONS OF LINGUISTIC VARIATION  
AND STANDARD

APPLICATIONS OF  
COGNITIVE LINGUISTICS

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Philipp Striedl

**Modern Hebrew in Israel**

# **Applications of Cognitive Linguistics**



Edited by

Gitte Kristiansen

Francisco J. Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez

## **Volume 57**

Philipp Striedl

# **Modern Hebrew in Israel**

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Representations of Linguistic Variation and Standard

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To all participants of this study



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# List of abbreviations

ADJ	Adjective derivational suffix
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
DK	Declarative knowledge
F	Feminine
GERT	Social group elicitation and rating task
GTM	Grounded Theory Methodology
HS	Hebrew speakers
IB	Israeli-born
ICM	Idealized cognitive model
L1	First language
L2	Second language
LA	Language attitude
M	Masculine
MCD	Membership categorization device
MH	Modern Hebrew
NP	Noun phrase
PD	Production data
PVL	Perceptive Variationist Linguistics
RQ	Research question
SH	Spoken Hebrew



## Stylistic Conventions

With the use of Hebrew in this book, I tried to reach a compromise which is suitable for readers with and without fluency in Hebrew. Longer citations and are displayed in Hebrew orthography alongside their English translation. Short text in Hebrew is included in the text body as transliteration in *italics* and followed by a translation in simple quotation marks. I adhered to the American Library Association (ALA-LC) standard<sup>1</sup> for transliteration. However, I oriented myself towards spoken Hebrew instead of the full literary standard.

In the bibliography, references to books and articles which are written in Hebrew are marked with a note “in Hebrew.” References are displayed in Latin script, except for the title of the work, which is rendered in its Hebrew original along with its English translation. Whenever the cited works include a translation of their title, I adhered to this translation. If no translation of the title was available, I included my own translation in the bibliography.

All participants who took part in the study are referred to with a unique siglum. These sigla take forms like “r36f311” and are composed from the participants’ socio-demographic data (see 4.2.2.4). Quotations from participants are numbered in brackets and quoted with the siglum of the main participant and the time code in the recording when the quotation starts, in bold script, e.g. **(1) i53f211 (26:48)**.

Transcription conventions for the interview data are described in 4.3. For the translation of interview transcripts, I tried to preserve the original structure of the utterances rather than to produce stylistically sound English text. Ungrammatical translations hint to ungrammatical or peculiar structures in the original Hebrew transcript. Punctuation was added to the transcripts to facilitate their understanding and to preserve the dynamic of the original speech from the recording: commas indicate that the participant paused briefly or reformulated. Full stops are inserted where the informants paused longer and started to express a new thought. Parts of the interview that were omitted are signaled by “[...]”

*Italics* are used in the text for all cited linguistic forms, but not for technical terms and common loanwords. Single quotation marks are used when referring to underlying concepts of word forms, translations and for quotes within quotes. Thereby, the artificial nature of these notions and their potential ambiguity is highlighted: for example, ‘dialect’ can be found in popular, as well as in scientific use, with different meanings – even between different research traditions within variationist linguistics. Double quotation marks are used for quotes in the text. Small capital letters are used to set off metaphorical mappings such as LANGUAGE AS A BOND.

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<sup>1</sup> See: <https://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpso/romanization/hebrew.pdf>



# 1 Preface

This study is about Hebrew speakers' categorizations of linguistic variation in Modern Hebrew – the language which is spoken today by most Israelis as their first language (L1). It is an investigation into prominent conceptualizations of social groups of Hebrew speakers and the notions of 'standard' and, in contrast, 'non-standard Hebrew' in Israel.

My interest in the topic has been developing gradually since I started to learn Hebrew in a so-called *ulpan* in a *kibbutz* in Israel, about four years before I started working on this thesis. *Ulpan* designates a pedagogical framework for the instruction of Hebrew. *Kibbutzim* were founded by Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe in the early 20th century as rural settlements, which were organized strictly adhering to communal principles.<sup>1</sup> Although most *kibbutzim* have by now diverged from the ideals of their founders, the 'kibbutz' survives as a symbolic space, which is representative of the Israeli pioneer ethos, among other concepts (Lefkowitz 2004: 87). Until recently, many *kibbutzim* maintained programs which combined full days of *ulpan* language courses altering with days of work for students who lived in the *kibbutz* for about half a year, usually.<sup>2</sup> The *ulpan* method is aimed primarily at Jewish immigrants, but many programs can be accessed by mere language students as well and are designed to yield fast results by the means of partial immersion. The learning materials for the *ulpan* typically revolve around topics which are regarded as relevant for the immigrants' acculturation, such as the history of Israel, its culture and Judaism.

I studied in the *kibbutz Ramat Yohanan* 'Yohanan heights' which is located on a hill next to the small town of *Kiryat Ata* in the metropolitan region of Haifa. From the top of the hill, one can gaze across Haifa Bay at the city's panorama against the backdrop of Mount Carmel. The *ulpan* facilities, including housing, class rooms and social rooms for more than fifty students, were located at the margins of the settlement, next to a gated entrance from the only road which leads to the *kibbutz* and ends at a round-about at its center. Besides occasional encounters with the students, the permanent residents of the *kibbutz* mostly kept to themselves and followed their daily routines. Although the *kibbutz* was not far from the next town, it was almost entirely disconnected from public transportation and without a car or a taxi, it took some forty minutes to reach the center of the town by foot. The town's

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1 The suffixation of *-im* forms the plural with most masculine and some feminine nouns in Hebrew.

2 The program at the *kibbutz* where I studied was suspended in the meantime and the *ulpan* facilities have been used for the accommodation of 'lone soldiers' – immigrants without relatives in the country who serve in the Israeli army.

center comprised a few shops, a tiny mall and from there, one could take buses to Haifa and to further directions.

In the course of the ulpan kibbutz program, I began to feel isolated from ‘true Israeli society’ because I was interacting mainly with other students. With slightly growing proficiency in Hebrew, I was looking for possibilities to practice my skills. Every time I left the kibbutz and tried to navigate Israeli society by myself, I came across situations I had not been prepared for in the environment of the ulpan. These experiences reinforced the perceived gap between the kibbutz and ‘true Israeli society.’ Deciphering meaning in certain situations was difficult for me for two reasons: Firstly, I was lacking basic linguistic knowledge of Hebrew – especially in the domain of pragmatics, and secondly, I was lacking knowledge about the social diversity in Israel. Consequently, I often failed to accommodate my speech to different communicative situations – in the terms of speech accommodation theory (Giles et al. 1987).

A lot of the vocabulary which Hebrew speakers were using outside the kibbutz in day-to-day routines was unfamiliar to me. When I asked about these expressions, the speakers usually pointed out that they belonged to a kind of “slang” and tried to explain their meaning in other words or another language. Many people would switch immediately to English or Russian when they heard my *‘ivrit shel ha-’ulpan* ‘ulpan Hebrew’ – an expression which was used by several participants in interviews for this study. They switched to English or Russian which are among the most spoken L1 (after Hebrew and Arabic) in Israel because of my European appearance. Only later, I could understand that ‘ulpan Hebrew’ is characterized by the strict adherence to certain linguistic norms which are commonly ignored by most Hebrew speakers and the use of certain lexemes which can be perceived as archaic or too formal for everyday conversation. To keep my interlocutors from switching away from Hebrew, I had to learn to use these ‘slang’ expressions. I realized that the variety of Hebrew I had been learning was as remote from the ‘real Hebrew’ as the kibbutz was from ‘true Israeli society’ – or that the normative correct Hebrew was a mere idealistic concept – just like the ‘kibbutz of the founding fathers.’

As I learned more about Hebrew ‘slang’ and tried to apply it appropriately, I also learned more about different groups of Hebrew speakers who allegedly differ in their use of ‘slang’ expressions and different kind of ‘slangs’ – Kristiansen (2008: 61) refers to these pre-scientific notions as “linguistic stereotypes.” For example, I could relate more and more to the way that characters in Israeli TV series were portrayed, with differing linguistic features like special vocabulary and accents. The learning process which I underwent is subsumed by Kristiansen:

[S]peakers gradually acquire receptive (and to a minor extent also active) competence of a wide range of different speech styles. This knowledge, which is experientially grounded [...]

goes hand in hand with the ability to relate speech styles to the corresponding social groups. Accents, in short, are socially diagnostic. (Kristiansen 2008: 58)

At a later point, already during my MA studies in linguistics, my interest was sparked by something which was described to me by Hebrew speakers as “armyslang.” I started investigating this phenomenon from a linguistic perspective, which eventually led to my first publication about Hebrew with the title *Zahalit – how Israeli soldiers speak* (Striedl 2019). When I was looking for further research about linguistic variation in Hebrew, I was surprised that the available material was very scarce. These observations marked the onset of my own research project.

As a language learner, I would have liked to have had access to more information about pragmatics, especially different contexts of use and linguistic variation in Hebrew. This information needs to be contextualized with a poignant introduction to Israeli society and its different social groups, which is needed to understand day-to-day encounters as well as broader contexts like political developments. I hope that this study will be helpful for language learners and readers who are interested in the interplay of linguistic and social categorization in Israel. Besides offering an introduction to linguistic variation in Hebrew, this study grew to extend its scope over domains which are not particular to Israel and Hebrew. These domains include cognitive linguistics, the sociology of knowledge and research methodology for the investigation of linguistic variation and speakers’ declarative knowledge about language.

## 1.1 Hypotheses and research questions

Here, I present my hypotheses at the beginning of the study which yielded the main research questions (RQs) and the methods I chose to answer them. Detailed accounts of the the existing research on the topic and the adopted methodology for this study will be given in Chapters 2, 3.2.2 and 4. In accordance with Grounded Theory Methodology (GTM), I developed my RQs in the course of subsequent stages of fieldwork, data collection and analysis.

My main hypothesis at the beginning of the study was that there is considerable linguistic variation in spoken Hebrew (SH) which can partly be explained by the diversity of Israeli society. At the same time, I was aware that the traditional terminology of variationist linguistics, with a focus on the regional dimension, is not fit for the linguistic space of Hebrew speakers (HSs) in Israel because of Israel’s recent history and today’s make-up of Israeli society, which will be reviewed in Chapter 3. Since the beginning of this study, the overarching RQ was:

**RQ0** How can linguistic variation in MH be ordered?

The hypothesis about the existence of variation in MH is based on my own experiences as Hebrew student in Israel and on scholarly opinions, such as the one expressed by Myhill:

Like any language, Modern Hebrew shows variation in usage, between different styles and between different usages. Because the language has not been spoken as a living language for very long, the dialectal situation is not typical. For one thing, clearly differentiated regional dialects of Hebrew have not been identified, and no one, including trained linguists, can identify where people come from on the basis of their language usages, although it seems reasonable to suppose that such differences may be developing. (Myhill 2004: 196)

The above wording is somewhat contradictory: On the one hand, the existence of “regional dialects” and the possibility to determine “where people come from” are categorically ruled out. On the other hand, Myhill (2004: 196–197) concedes that “such differences may be developing” before he goes on to name “social class distinctions,” which have traditionally been described as the cause for a binary division of Hebrew into an “Oriental dialect” and a “General dialect.”<sup>3</sup> One has to take into account that socioeconomic differences often play out regionally – in a way that the regional and the social dimensions are rather interdependent than clearly separable. Regarding Israel’s demography, the interplay between regional and social factors is considerable: there are settlements with a high concentration of certain social groups as well as more heterogeneous settlements (see 3.1.5). So, if it is possible to recognize “class distinctions”, as Myhill (2004: 197) suggests, why should it be impossible to infer information about HSS’ places of residence?

Contemporary opinions on variation in MH, like the above quotation by Myhill (2004: 196), often lack a sound foundation in linguistic theory and therefore fail to go beyond the surface. Scholarly voices that attest MH “a remarkably wide range of spoken and written language varieties” have been scarce and gradually multiplied after I began working on the topic (Henkin 2020: 61). On these grounds, I wanted to question the possibility of categorizing HSS on the basis of their language use, systematically: it is my aim to review the HSS’ linguistic space from the standpoint of a cultural outsider and to strive for an adequate theoretical basis for its description. It will be argued in 2.1.3 that a theoretical grounding in perceptive variationist linguistics (PVL) is best suited for this endeavour. Instead of imposing scientific

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<sup>3</sup> In this term, “Oriental” does not refer to a somehow geographically determined Eastern region, but the the speakers’ (family’s) origin in an imaginary Oriental space which lies typically somewhere East of Europe (see 3.2.2). In the last decades, ‘Oriental dialect,’ has been replaced by the notion ‘Mizrahi Hebrew’ in the scholarly literature (cf. Henshke 2015, Henshke 2017 and Henkin 2020).

categories on linguistic data from corpora – hence referred to as ‘production data’ (PD), this approach aims to contextualize PD with the speaker’s own ‘declarative knowledge’ (DK) about linguistic variation to enable a comprehensive understanding of the meaning of linguistic variation. Therefore, the central questions for this study focus on the HSs’ DK about linguistic variation in MH:

**RQ1** Which main categories are applied by HSs to classify linguistic variation in MH and how are they defined?

**RQ2** Which social groups are distinguishable on basis of their language use, according to HSs and how are these groups characterized?

**RQ3** Which linguistic phenomena do HSs link to the categories (of RQ1 and RQ2) and why?

The aim of this study is to investigate categories which have been used so far for the description of linguistic variation in MH: therefore it is a terminological work. RQ1 departs from concepts, which have been introduced above, like ‘slang,’ ‘ulpan Hebrew,’ ‘standard Hebrew’ and leads to the more specific question RQ2 which asks about group-specific variation in MH. Commonly used categories tackled by RQ1 and RQ2 will be compared with the existing research on linguistic variation in Israel, which will be reviewed in 3.2.2. Thereby, notions like ‘Oriental dialect’ (see above) can be reassessed critically in the tradition of post-structuralist theories as exemplified by Said (1978) in his monograph *Orientalism*, which originated in the very context of this study. Said, who was born in Jerusalem and spent most of his academic career in the United States, questions hierarchic relations between ‘East’ and ‘West.’ By its nature, this study will be concerned with hierarchic relations between Europe (the researcher’s physical and mental home), Israel (the geographic focus of this study) and the Middle East (the cultural and geographic environment of Israel). RQ3 asks about specific linguistic variants in MH and how they are commonly categorized by HSs – in contrast to RQ1 and RQ2, this question also asks about PD.

Some barely controllable variables have to be handled for the investigation of linguistic variation and its meaning because the interplay of various notions like ‘social identity’ and ‘language attitude’ (LA) are at the heart of this complex topic. From a general perspective, Barron & Schneider (2009: 426) highlight five social factors which can have an impact on language use: “region, social class, ethnicity, gender, and age (less stable – and less studied – factors such as education and religion may be considered in addition).” In respect to ‘social class,’ they add that this concept may be handled more adequately by “[d]istinguishing between education on the one hand and present job, profession or position on the other hand” (Schneider & Barron 2008: 17).

This study set out as an investigation of the relevance of these and additional factors and their impact on linguistic variation in MH in Israel. It is often assumed that class consciousness is weak in Israel, in comparison to other countries. Instead,

ethnic divisions have received much scholarly attention (Ben-Rafael & Sharot 1991: 136). This has to be taken into account if one wants to investigate social categories in Israel, in general and from a linguistic perspective. I expected that ‘ethnicity’ might have less of a measurable impact on production data as is commonly expected. Instead, I wanted to explore additional factors like LA and social identity which are formed on the basis of notions like political opinions, religious and ethnic concepts. I expected that identification with and participation in religious groups would weigh heavily in Israel – to an extent that it can outweigh ethnic or socioeconomic factors. I also expected that military service and involvement with the Israeli army can have an impact on linguistic variation – this factor is also considered by Izre’el et al. (2001) in their layout for the design of a corpus of spoken Hebrew.

Measuring such diverse notions is methodologically challenging. Therefore, the chosen methodological approach and its evaluation will take a prominent place in this study. From the onset, it was clear that qualitative interviews with HSs, questionnaires and fieldwork in Israel will form the empirical basis for the study. Therefore, I started investigating with exploratory interviews by asking HSs questions like: “Can you know from where people come, judging only from their language?”<sup>4</sup> The following is a typical non-scholarly answer taken from one of my earliest recorded interviews, dating from August 2018:

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<sup>4</sup> Hebrew original: אפשר לדעת לפי דעתך מאיפה באים אנשים רק לפי השפה?

**(1) i53f2l1 (26:48)**

*Yes and no, because it depends, for example – I will explain this to you. Let's say people, you can see people who are educated, who are smarter, who studied more [...] and there are people, let's say, less... they lived in neighborhoods which are more, the studies are less important, so maybe the language is a bit more superficial, lower, a lot more slang, a lot. Not regular slang like sababa and that, maybe, for example we say: ahh, that's an 'ars. 'Ars, that's someone who isn't that kind of. [...] Like you see it on the clothes and that also in the language, sometimes a little more swearwords or something more, often they are from Tveria, for example, which place is like that, but not only. I just don't know a lot of people from all sorts of places – but, I believe that in Lod, Lod, too, is a place which is difficult.*

זה כן ולא כי זה תלוי, למשל אני אסביר לך. נניח אנשים, אפשר לראות אנשים שהם משכילים שהם אנשים חכמים יותר שהם למדו יותר [...] ויש אנשים שנניח פחות, הם גרו בשכונות שהם יותר, פחות הלימודים פחות חשובים וזה. אז הם אולי השפה קצת יותר רדודה יותר נמוכה, יותר, הרבה סלנג, הרבה. לא סלנג רגיל כמו סבבה וזה. יכול להיות אתה, למשל אנחנו אומרים אהה זה ערס. ערס זה מישור שלא כל כך [...] כמו שרואים את זה על הלבוש ועל הזה, גם בשפה קצת יותר, לפעמים יותר קצת קלילות או יותר משהו. הרבה פעמים יש מטבריה למשל, אבל לא רק. אני פשוט לא מכירה הרבה אנשים מכל מיני מקומות. אבל אני מאמינה שגם בלוד, לוד יש גם כן מקום שהוא קשה.

The unclear structure of the answer, which is due to i53f2l1's constant attempts to reword, suggests that it was not an easy question for her. This is underlined by her relativizing introductory statement, “yes and no, because it depends.” Before tackling the question about regional variation, she elaborates on the concept of ‘education’ as a factor for linguistic variation: less estimation of studies and consequentially less exposure to formal education can lead to lower and more superficial language use, accompanied by the frequent use of slang and swearwords. For her explanation of ‘education’ as a factor for variation, she introduces the concept of “slang”, “regular slang” and the stereotype of the ‘ars, which can be analyzed in the light of RQ1 and RQ2. Only after mentioning these linguistic and social stereotypes, she locates them in the Israeli geography by mentioning the city *Tveria*, which is located on the shores of lake *Kinneret*, and *Lod*, which lies in the outskirts of Tel Aviv and has gained some international attention due to violent riots in early 2021. She characterizes both places as *kashe* ‘difficult.’

In respect to RQ3, the statement includes one lexical variant – *sababa* ‘wonderful,’ which was categorized by i53f2l1 as “regular slang.” Thus, the early interviews did not just yield evidence that my participants claimed to be able to categorize HSS somehow on based on their language use, but the interviews included multiple notions which can be analyzed systematically and gave rise to further hypothesis

and RQs. Because the early interviews contained many evaluative statements, the subsequent RQs focus on LA and normative aspects:

**RQ4** How are categories from RQ1 and RQ2 applied by the speakers rated in terms of ‘prestige’ and ‘correctness of Hebrew?’

**RQ5** Which kind of a linguistic standard do HSs have in mind and how were these ideas shaped?

**RQ6** Which kind of different LAs do HSs express?

**RQ7** How are these LAs reflected in their reported language practice?

These RQs were the basis for a questionnaire which was used in guided interviews to complement the data of the open interviews. On the basis of RQ1, RQ2 and RQ4, I devised a method for the systematic elicitation of groups of Hebrew speakers and their rating. This method will be referred to as ‘group elicitation and rating task’ (GERT).

There are two more interrelated RQs which can only be touched upon in this study:

**RQ8** To what extent are representations of social categories influenced by linguistic variation?

**RQ9** To what extent is linguistic variation influenced by representations of social categories?

This field of research is connected to far reaching topics which cannot be treated in this study. It is assumed that knowledge about speakers’ attitudes towards certain groups of speakers and their evaluation of variants can help to understand processes of standardization and language change (Anders et al. 2010: XIV and Krefeld 2010: 155). In this study, I will not attempt to predict trends of linguistic change in MH, but, I hope that my analysis will be helpful for future research with this aim. To determine, for example, which variants are commonly perceived as an ‘error’ and which normative ‘erroneous’ variants are not perceived as such, perception experiments have to be carried out. The same applies for the determination of HSs’ ability to identify HSs in respect to their sociodemographic characteristics based on actual PD. The categories which are used in these experiments need to fit the participants’ own categories to yield valuable results. Therefore, an analysis of the participants’ categories is required for the design of such experiments (Krefeld & Pustka 2010: 16). For this purpose, the results from the present study are valuable.

The theoretical aim of this study is twofold: to enhance variationist linguistic theory and sociological theory. The following analysis includes a discussion of the cognitive and social mechanisms for categorization in general, and for linguistic variation in particular, as well as a methodological discussion about the study of linguistic variation and speakers’ DK. As an investigation of the HSs’ notions of sociolinguistic variation, this study is necessarily concerned with the dynamics of Israeli society: it is an investigation into the subjective meaning of linguistic and

social concepts that participants expressed in the interviews, which were carried out for this study. This approach will hopefully help to get a better grasp of HSSs' commonly used social and linguistic categories and how they are used for their construction of reality – in Berger & Luckmann's (1967) words – at the specific point and time of this study. It is therefore a synchronic, empirical approach.

## 1.2 Structure of the book

This book contains five major parts. In the following chapter, I build the theoretical basis borrowing from different research traditions and revisit the most relevant literature for the research objectives. Chapter 3 is a brief guide to Israeli society and its history. I introduce social groups that are assumed to constitute Israeli society. In Chapter 3.2.2, I reassess how their use of Hebrew is described in the existing literature. In Chapter 4, I describe in detail how I subsequently designed and applied the methods for collecting data.

In Chapter 5, I start by displaying the analyzed data in its most condensed form in Table 5.4.3: the categories that participants used most frequently to describe distinguishable groups of HSSs in an elicitation task (GERT). I treat these as core categories which are contextualized with participants' utterances from the interview corpus. Using illustrative data, I discuss theoretical implications and propose a typology of the participants' representations for each core category (see Chapter 6). In Chapter 7, I reassess the applied methodology and summarize the main findings of the study.

For the sake of transparency, I appended a short biographical account about myself in Appendix A which helps to contextualize my perspective as researcher.

## 2 Methodology

This study is innovative because it explicitly combines theoretic approaches which are applied on empirical data that was gathered in Israel. The main theoretic principles adhered to in this study belong to the areas of sociology, linguistics and cognitive science. Key notions which will be used in this study stem from the sociology of knowledge, as it is outlined in the works of Berger & Luckmann (1967) and Luhmann (1993), and perceptive variationist linguistics which is advocated for by Krefeld & Pustka (2010) and Purschke (2011). It will be argued from the perspective of cognitive linguistics that language is dependent on principles of categorization which have been discussed by Rosch (1978), Lakoff (1987), Langacker (2008) and Schmid (2020).

Although all these approaches are concerned with processes of categorization, they have – to the best of my knowledge – not been combined and reassessed in the light of an empirical study, so far. I argue that these theories can be used to build on each other to enrich all kinds of studies in the domain of sociolinguistics which has often been criticized as lacking a common theoretical foundation. Coupland (1998: 110) asserts against this criticism that all researchers in the field of sociolinguistics are “already theoretically engaged.” However, I argue that the discipline would benefit from lying out and discussing its theoretical frameworks more explicitly in research reports, instead of assuming a more or less common theoretical basis. Due to the limited space for scientific articles and the focus on publishable results, it is not surprising that methodological discussions rarely find a place in research papers.

Another reason for the vagueness of the research area lies in its history and the term ‘sociolinguistics’ itself. The original American research paradigm was propagated in the form of usage-based, descriptive studies of linguistic variation, against the backdrop of the research tradition of theoretical linguistics or generative grammar (Sinner 2014: 11). Therefore, the stress on the social component in the denominator of the research area is understandable, from a historical perspective. Under these premises, sociolinguistics has come to harbor a multitude of subdisciplines, so diverse as language acquisition, second language learning, the study of language policy and language attitudes, linguistic forensics, variationist linguistics and dialectology, which by themselves include many subdisciplines.

This study is literally sociolinguistic because it investigates processes of categorization at the intersection of the social and the linguistic domain. At the same time, it is a study about human cognition and its social ramifications – the stronghold of cognitive linguistics – the second major paradigm in linguistics for the usage-based study of language. Since we view language as a social phenomenon which can only be studied based on its usage, it feels tautological to hint to this fact with terms like ‘sociolinguistics’ – any usage-based study of language has to deal with the

social dimension.<sup>1</sup> This definition excludes research which is strictly concerned with normative structures of a certain language, on a theoretical level – which Schulze describes as “meaningless noise.”

It is claimed that language is only language if it is perceived/processed by someone equipped with a linguistic knowledge system. Else, what we describe as language data is nothing but ‘meaningless noise’. [...] language takes only place in terms of language practices. The reality of language practice is the sole source for obtaining language data as well as the most relevant factor for accessing linguistic knowledge. (Schulze 2012: 1–2)

In the following, the term ‘usage event’ will be used to designate instances of language use, in Schmid’s (2020: 15) understanding of the term.

This study adheres to a non-objectivist outlook on language which is expressed concisely by Schulze:

[L]anguage [can] be defined as a system of articulatory expression of cognitive states that is learned in its symbolization processes and socialized through imitation: It is a collective knowledge system that has been passed down. It is the expression of perceptions in experience, whose effectiveness is constructed as communication.<sup>2</sup> (Schulze 2010: 37, my translation)

Wherever it may be helpful for the argument, the social constitution of this knowledge will be reassessed with principles from the sociology of knowledge.

PVL, the main framework behind this study will be introduced in detail after a contextualization within dialectology and variationist linguistics. For the application of these theories in the research domain, the flexible and exploratory framework of grounded theory methodology which was originally presented in Glaser & Strauss (1967) was used in this study. I argue that empirical linguistic research can benefit from the systematic application of this research paradigm from the context of qualitative sociology.

It is not my aim to give an extensive overview about the research which has been carried out in the field of sociolinguistics and variationist linguistics, so far. An

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<sup>1</sup> Latour (2005: 5) criticizes the notion of ‘social,’ as in “social dimension,” altogether and redefines sociology as the study of associations, which is in line with our understanding of sociolinguistic research: “Whereas sociologists (or socio-economists, socio-linguists, social psychologists, etc.) take social aggregates as the given that could shed some light on residual aspects of economics, linguistics, psychology, management, and so on, these other scholars, on the contrary, consider social aggregates as what should be explained by the specific associations provided by economics, linguistics, psychology, law, management, etc.”

<sup>2</sup> German original: Sprache [kann] definiert werden als ein in seinen Symbolisierungsverfahren gelerntes, über Imitation vergesellschaftetes – also kollektives, tradiertes und als Wissen gespeichertes, artikulatorisches Ausdruckssystem kognitiver Zustände – ergo Ausdruck von Wahrnehmungen in Erfahrung, dessen Wirksamkeit als Kommunikation konstruiert wird.

excellent overview is provided by Sinner (2014), Bokelmann (2020) and by Eckert (2012), with a focus on the American tradition. In the following, the most relevant theories and studies which served as a model for the present study will be reviewed.

## 2.1 Research on linguistic variation

The concept of ‘linguistic variation’ has been at the core of several research traditions within linguistics. Its theoretical basis goes back to structuralist linguistics and Saussure’s concept of language as an abstract signifying system, with the linguistic sign as a symbolic pairing of form and meaning at its heart (Bokelmann 2020: 14). According to Bülow (2017: 36), Saussure’s structuralist conception of language was already influenced by early system-theoretic thinking. The linguistic sign can only function within a system, in relation and in contrast to other signs (Bülow 2017: 38). Originally, structuralist linguists who saw it as their task to describe languages systematically were struggling with the fact that languages are not monolithic constructs, but subject to change – both from a diachronic and a synchronic perspective (cf. Bokelmann 2020: 21–22). Therefore, Saussure introduced the distinction of “*langue*,” the system to be studied by the structuralists, and “*parole*,” the actual language in its usage, which should not have a place in linguistics:

The activity of the speaker should be studied in a number of disciplines which have no place in linguistics except through their relation to language. (Saussure 1959: 18)

Thus, all deviations from the ideal linguistic system (*langue*) in language usage (*parole*) could be treated as variation and practically ignored because it was defined as irrelevant to the description of *langue*. The concept of the ‘allophone’ served to integrate phonetic variability within structuralist theory: systematically differing phonetic realizations can still be grasped as a single phoneme.

In MH, /ʔ/ – represented by the letter *ʔyn* – can be realized as [ʔ] and as pharyngealized [ʕ] without changing the lexical meaning of a lexeme that contains /ʔ/. From a structuralist perspective, [ʔ] and [ʕ] can be described as allophones of /ʔ/. This case of linguistic variation and its social meaning is the subject of Gafter’s (2014) dissertation, which will be reviewed in the context of research on linguistic variation in MH in Israel (see 3.2.2).

What is commonly meant by ‘linguistic variation’ will be illustrated with another example. From a synchronic perspective, two speakers of the same language can express the same concept with different linguistic means. One case of variation in Hebrew is narrated in the Book of Judges:

The Gileadites held the fords of the Jordan against the Ephraimites. And when any fugitive from Ephraim said, 'Let me cross,' the men of Gilead would ask him, 'Are you an Ephraimite?'; if he said 'No,' they would say to him, 'Then say shibboleth;' but he would say 'sibboleth,' not being able to pronounce it correctly. Thereupon they would seize him and slay him by the fords of the Jordan. Forty-two thousand Ephraimites fell at that time. (Judges 12, 5-6)<sup>3</sup>

One of the main interests of research on linguistic variation is about its meaning. This notorious instance of linguistic variation is described in the Bible as being socially conditioned: belonging to one social group, the Ephraimites, conditions the pronunciation of <w> in *shibolet* 'ear of grain' as [s]. In variationist linguistics terminology *shibolet* and *sibolet* are 'variants' which belong to a 'linguistic variable.'<sup>4</sup> It is unknown if the Ephraimites pronounced /sh/ systematically as [s] or if *sibolet* was a single lexical variant. It is narrated that they could not say *shibolet* and that they could hence be identified as Ephraimites – even though they were denying their true identity. The Gileadites used a form of forensic linguistics.

There are areas of research on historic variables within linguistics. Historical linguistics, diachronic dialectology and diachronic variationist linguistics could investigate further into the historical variant *sibolet*. Today, this variable is no longer present in MH: the utterance of *sibolet* would probably point to an expressive language disorder of the speaker. Usually, there is just one possible realization, which is *shibolet*.

Besides meaning, another question drives research on linguistic variation, especially historical linguistics: how and why are certain variants propagated or disappear? Researchers try to uncover the dynamics and causes of linguistic change. Often, the reasons for diachronic linguistic change will remain buried, together with the speakers of the historic variants who can no longer be questioned, like the Ephraimites. Based on the context of the biblical narrative, one could argue that the dominant social group, the Gileadites, imposed their way of speaking by virtually eradicating all speakers of the variant *sibolet*.

Systematic phonetic variation – phonological variation – usually is a structural characteristic of 'accents' or 'dialects.' Had the Ephraimites consequently pronounced every <w> as [s], it would seem sensible to speak of an Ephraimite 'accent.' If they had consequently varied in their language production from neighboring people in a considerable number of linguistic variables on the phonetic, the lexical and even the morphosyntactic level, one would be inclined to speak of an Ephraimite 'dialect.' Instead of 'dialect,' one could have used the notions of 'sociolect' or 'ethnolect' if their

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<sup>3</sup> Quoted from <https://www.sefaria.org/>

<sup>4</sup> According to Chambers & Trudgill (1998: 13) *shibboleth* is a loan word in several languages and means "test word" or "a distinguishing trait." Thus, it stands metonymically for indexical variants.

activities were not restricted to a certain geographic region because of a nomadic life style, for example. Had the Ephraimites managed to acquire considerable political and cultural power – especially by the means of sustainable literary products, one would certainly have heard of an ‘Ancient Ephraimite language.’

As Kristiansen points out, the integration of linguistic variation into a theoretical linguistic framework is challenging and contradictory approaches are co-existing:

It might be argued that what is at work are two different levels of granularity: socially indexical phonetic variants [such as the Ephraimites’ *sibolet*] pertain to the level of lectal varieties (and hence to dialectology), phonetic variation in general to phonology – but that type of clear-cut division into structural levels is not in consonance with the basic tenets of Cognitive Linguistics, which prefers to consider meaningfulness in terms of constructions and assemblies across structural levels. (Kristiansen 2008: 72)

The approaches to linguistic variation which are most relevant for this study and their outlook on the meaning of variation, as well as their key concepts will be reviewed in the next sections.

### 2.1.1 Dialectology

As a European linguist I am most familiar with dialectologist approaches to linguistic variation, referred to as “dialect geography” by Chambers & Trudgill (1998: 13), which aim to represent linguistic data in conjunction with geographic data in the form of maps or linguistic atlases.

Early dialectology developed in 19th century Germany under the influence of the so-called neogrammarians (Chambers & Trudgill 1998: 14). A short review of their research program is due because they were the first linguists to leave the office and to study language based on its usage. The original aim of the early German dialectologists was to gather empirical evidence for their theory of *Lautwandel* ‘sound change.’ With works such as *Prinzipien der Sprachgeschichte* (Paul 2010 [1880]) they were striving not just to describe, but to explain *Sprachentwicklung* ‘the development of language’ (Jungen & Lohnstein 2007: 179). The neogrammarians’ dialectology was inspired by an estimation for the vernacular language which had not received scholarly attention (Jungen & Lohnstein 2007: 177–178). It is likely that their positive outlook on the vernacular was inspired by romanticist ideas of their time – such as the quest for truth in nature and accordingly for the true language among the people. It was also at the beginning of the 19th century when scholars set out as wanderers and collected popular tales (*Volksmärchen*) from elderly rural speakers. These tales, like Runge’s *Van den Fischer und siine Fru* contained vernacular traits in

their edition by Grimm & Grimm (1812).<sup>5</sup> However, the neogrammarians advocated a strictly scientific position, against all metaphysicist and biologist theories of their contemporaries (Jungen & Lohnstein 2007: 179–180). Remarkably, they resorted to the young discipline of psychology to explain inconsistencies in their theories about sound change (Jungen & Lohnstein 2007: 180). Chronologically, the short-lived neogrammarian tradition was followed by structuralism and with Ferdinand de Saussure, who became the iconic structuralist, the focus of linguistic research shifted back from *parole* to *langue*, for at least half a century. Saussure had studied in Leipzig under the neogrammarians Leskien, Osthoff and Brugmann (Jungen & Lohnstein 2007: 184).

The methods which were used in dialectologist projects developed in the course of a century, but essentially all adhere to the same concept: in their work with participants, dialectologists have been aiming to elicit ‘natural speech.’ The choice of participants was determined by the assumption that “nonmobile, older, rural male” (NORM) participants (Chambers & Trudgill 1998: 29) would “use the most conservative variety of a language” (Schneider & Barron 2008: 16). This focus on the prototypical NORM participant was criticized by Chambers & Trudgill (1998: 29) as well as by others (Bisang 2008: 15 and Schneider & Barron 2008: 16): it has been used in many studies irrespective of varying circumstantial factors, such as “culture” and “socioeconomic climate.” For the data collection which can take place as interviews or written surveys, questionnaires have been used to allow for comparable data (Chambers & Trudgill 1998: 21–22). It has been a huge challenge to analyze the wealth of data and to represent it concisely (Chambers & Trudgill 1998: 16). Often, they have been focusing on the phonetic domain because it was best observable. Based on the earliest maps by Georg Wenker, which date from 1881, many linguistic atlases were published (Chambers & Trudgill 1998: 16–20).

To the best of my knowledge, a similar research project has never been completed for Hebrew in Israel. At the same time, there is a considerable research tradition on Arabic dialects in Israel and the West Bank with at least one recently published linguistic atlas (see Behnstedt & Kleinberger 2019). In contrast, linguistic research on MH has been preoccupied primarily with *langue*, while usage-based studies have been somewhat neglected. The reasons for this theoretical orientation are partly ideological and will be discussed together with recent empirical studies which have been shifting the focus to usage in 3.2.2.

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<sup>5</sup> The introduction contains this citation to convey their conviction: “Man sollte die Weisheit der Völker, bei denen man lebt, in ihrer mannichfaltigen Gestalt, selbst in Liedern, quas ad ignem aniculae narrant puellis, aufspüren und in Umlauf bringen. (Histor. Critik I. 245.)” (Grimm & Grimm 1812: XXIII)

Finding myself in a pioneer position at the beginning of my research, it did not seem reasonable to stick to the methods which have been used in traditional dialectology, for two reasons: firstly, a dissertation is not the right format to undertake a large scale dialectologist project in an under researched area because it does not allow for sufficient financial, timely and human resources. Secondly – and more importantly – Israel does not seem to qualify as a promising field for dialectologist research (except for research on Arabic) because of the particular history of MH which is seen by many as a ‘revived language.’ As lined out above (see 1.1), I was convinced that there have to be more crucial variables than the mere changing of a geographic position, when it comes to determine the nature of linguistic variation in MH in Israel. A focus on participants with the NORM characteristics would not have served to capture the fine grained differences in the use of MH I had in mind.

### 2.1.2 Studies on sociolinguistic variation

As outlined above, sociolinguistics comprises many linguistic subdisciplines, today. It originated as the investigation of sociolinguistic variation – more precisely – of socially marked variants. From a bulk of research, which is subsumed by Eckert (2012: 3) under the term “first wave of variation studies,” it is well known that the interplay of the regional and the social dimension can have linguistic effects. In the introduction of his paper, entitled *Phonological Correlates of Social Stratification*, Labov positions his research program in contrast to the structuralist tradition:

AS WE approach the study of language in its social context, it seems that by the very same steps we enter the study of small differences in language behavior. For many years, the structural analysis of sound systems has enjoyed, and profited by, a kind of bold abstraction from such differences. Small differences within a system have been explained away as “free variation” or “social variants,” and we have concentrated on the abstract organization of constant features. But to understand the dynamics of such systems, the mechanism of their evolution, and their role in community life, it is useful to reverse this attitude. (Labov 1964: 164)

Labov’s motivation can be compared with the neogrammarians’ aim: to study language based on its usage and thereby gather empirical evidence for the description and the explanation of linguistic change. The methods used for the collection of data are also based on the “dialectological tradition” (Labov 1984: 28). What is remarkable about studies on sociolinguistic variation is the subsequent narrowing of the research focus from the dialectologists’ domain of ‘regionality’ to notions of ‘social classes,’ ‘gender,’ ‘age,’ ‘ethnicity’ and to complex constructs such as ‘identities’ and ‘styles.’ Therefore, the researched population is treated as ‘social groups’ or ‘net-

works' in approaches which are informed by ethnography and qualitative sociology. Kristiansen summarizes Labov's approach as follows:

Labov's model, often referred to as the 'attention paid to speech' model, investigates how speech styles vary according to situation. Assuming that speakers adjust their speech to contextual factors whenever they are aware of these, attention can be viewed as a determining factor which links linguistic variants to social variables. Labov aimed at eliciting 'real' unmonitored speech by drawing the speaker's attention away from situational factors. (Kristiansen 2008: 73)

With the term 'observer's paradox,' Labov expressed his sensitivity towards the artificiality of situations when one's speech is observed for linguistic analysis (Figuroa 1994: 90–91). One of his key methods is the 'sociolinguistic interview' which is aimed to yield recordings of up to two hours of speech by eliciting "narratives of personal experience, where community norms and styles of personal interaction are most plainly revealed, and where style is regularly shifted towards the vernacular" (Labov 1984: 32).

### 2.1.2.1 Variants as markers of macro-sociological categories

According to Eckert (2012: 2), first wave studies were large scale surveys which "laid a solid foundation for the study of variation by establishing broad correlations between linguistic variables and the macro-sociological categories of socioeconomic class, sex class, ethnicity and age." The participants' age was considered to be a promising factor for the study of linguistic change, based on the conviction that speakers tend to conserve their own linguistic system over time (Eckert 2012: 5).

In his New York City study, Labov (2006 [1966]: 41) argues for a correlation between variation in the post vocalic realization of /r/ and the social stratification of New York City speakers. For the study, salespeople in three socially distinct New York department stores were surveyed. The study's hypothesis is based on the notion of the "socio-economic class" (Labov 2006 [1966]: 130). Milroy & Milroy (1996: 52) and Coupland (1998: 114) assert that Labov draws on the work of Parsons (1991 [1951]) and his concept of "stratificational social class." Parsons also uses the concept of 'prestige' for his theory of social stratification:

This ranking system in terms of esteem is what we may call the system of stratification of the society. [...] many elements of the "style of life" come to have significance, among other things, as symbols of prestige in the system of stratification. (Parsons 1991 [1951]: 89)

In first wave studies, 'prestige' has been regarded as a quality of certain variants – linguistic symbols of prestige – because they are associated with prestigious speakers (Eckert 2012: 3). Schmid defines 'prestige' as follows:

Both in general and with regard to language, prestige is a positive inter-individual social evaluation. Prestige is connected with influence; lack of prestige is associated with deference and can therefore become stigmatized. Importantly, the behaviour of those who have status and prestige is likely to be imitated by those who do not and especially by social aspirers located somewhere in the middle of social hierarchies and looking upwards for role models. [...] Speakers are more likely to adopt utterance types and their variants from prestigious groups and speakers than from those who lack prestige and are stigmatized. (Schmid 2020: 114)

Labov documented the imitation of prestigious speakers in his New York City study: the surveyed salespeople adapted their realization of /r/ to the realization of prestigious customers. Thereby, he refuted the relativistic Bernstein hypothesis which argues for the social determination of language use by the over-simplistic juxtaposition of low social status with a restricted code (Sinner 2014: 12). With the description of the linguistic variable /r/, in post vocalic position, as being closely tied to the “socio-economic differentiation” of the society, Labov (2006 [1966]: 41) suggests a somehow conventionalized view on hierarchic relations within this differentiation (Eckert 2012: 3). In other words, a meaningful linguistic imitation of prestigious speakers is dependent on a common awareness of the socio-economic differences. Moreover, speakers need to agree on a hierarchy which relates these differences to the notion of ‘prestige’ and they need to agree on the symbolic relation of this hierarchy with patterns of linguistic variation. Since notions of ‘prestige’ seem to be conventionalized as related to patterns of linguistic variation, these notions can be explored to gain insights about linguistic variation. This line of reasoning is the basis for the elicitation task GERT which was used in this study (see 4.2.6).

Eckert points out that Labov’s estimation of the vernacular was politically motivated:

Sociolinguists will agree that the political economy is fundamental to variation, and it is important to recall that Labov’s focus on social class was a significant political-academic move (as was his later focus on race). But the abstracted socioeconomic hierarchy provides only a general roadmap to the sites of linguistic production. (Eckert 2012: 6)

Consequently, the sociolinguistic researchers’ interest in ‘social class’ as a macro-social variable causing linguistic variation was diverted to other domains. In the second wave studies, the focus was further narrowed on particular groups of speakers who were studied in detail, with ethnographic methods, to get a more holistic understanding of the causes for variation. Eckert (2012: 7) classifies the ethnographic study of a community of fishermen on the island Martha’s Vineyard (Labov 1963) as a second wave study – although it preceded the New York City study. Second wave studies, such as the seminal study of social networks in Belfast by Milroy (1980),

are characterized by Eckert (2012: 11) as focusing on “configurations rather than categories.”

Both first and second wave studies treated variants as markers of (local) identity which are directly connected to their users who were treated as social groups or networks (Sinner 2014: 15). The notion ‘social group’ has been criticized as potentially vague (Sinner 2014: 143). Neuland & Schlobinski (2017: IX) argue that the notion is most often used implicitly in sociolinguistics, without defining its scope. Moreover, it would be misleading to conceptualize social groups and varieties as static entities (Neuland & Schlobinski 2017: XI). However, the advantage of this notion is its universal use which is not restricted to linguistics: it designates a social entity which ranges in size between individuals and nations. While ‘nation’ is a very abstract concept, ‘social group’ is closer to the participants’ *Lebenswelt* and can therefore be used as a stimulus for elicitation, in tasks or interviews. Despite its conceptual vagueness, the notion can be used for investigations into the speaker’s own systems of categorization – instead of applying a priori categories, such as ‘social class.’

Inherent in all of these studies of sociolinguistic variation is the theoretical distinction between ‘standard’ and ‘non-standard’ variants.

The term standard has been used to refer to speech that lacks clear regional and/or socially stigmatized features – the variety legitimized by, and required for meaningful participation in, institutions of education and economic and political power. This is the variety typical of the educated upper middle class. The assumption from the start has been that language varieties carry the social status of their speakers, making the class stratification of language a continuum of linguistic prestige. (Eckert 2012: 3)

Although studies on sociolinguistic variation could investigate only a few variables, in certain contexts and moments, their underlying goal was to find out more about how these variables relate to each other in dynamic linguistic systems. The conception that several ‘language varieties’ – at least, more than one – are available in every speech community is a premise of the research paradigm. Theories about the organization of the linguistic system, based on varietal subsystems, and the classification of varieties are the subject of ‘Varietätenlinguistik’ (see 2.1.3).

### 2.1.2.2 Language and the social construction of meaning

First and second wave studies on sociolinguistic variation backed the hypothesis that language can have a constitutive function for social groups: it can be used to construct groups and to demonstrate belonging (Sinner 2014: 147). This is the basis for the third wave of variation studies which asks about the meaning of certain variants for their speakers. Eckert (2012: 14) describes third wave studies as the products of a shift from the “study of structure to the study of practice.” In comparison to

the first and second wave studies, the focus is further narrowed on the individual speaker who is now attributed with agency. The speakers' use of linguistic variation to construct personal and social styles – 'roles' in Berger & Luckmann's (1967) terms (see 2.1.2.3) – is at the heart of third wave studies.

Several basic assumptions, which are more or less tacitly expressed in these studies, can be traced back to sociological research paradigms, such as the sociology of knowledge and qualitative sociology (cf. Bülow 2017: 87). These paradigms, which are attributed to constructivism, gained momentum in the second half of the twentieth century, foremost in the USA. Charmaz, who contributed to the development of GTM, elaborates on the understanding of 'meaning,' in the research paradigm of symbolic interactionism:

People confer meanings on things – whether these things are objects, events or people. Meanings do not inhere in things as individuals ordinarily assume. Nor are meanings singular and shared by all. Instead, meanings are multiple and situated in specific contexts. What you do with something arises from what it means to you – and these meanings have consequences. (Charmaz 2004: 58)

The "things" that are investigated by third wave studies are primarily linguistic variants and the categories which the speakers associate with them. According to constructivist principles, it is necessary to inquire into the speakers' own systems of categorization for any analysis of meaning. Therefore, it is central for third wave studies to yield insights into the interdependent processes of categorization of social groups and of linguistic variation – a research goal of this study which is framed by RQ8 and RQ9.

Context sensitivity and the subjectivity of 'meaning' are a methodological challenge. While the methods of third wave studies are essentially the same which have been used in the second wave (ethnographic fieldwork and interviews), data analysis is guided by principles which stem from qualitative sociology. Among third wave studies, there is no consensus about the application of these principles. Different frameworks are used and combined – at times without a transparent methodological basis. Besides GTM, other approaches have been systematized in qualitative sociology, such as the highly structured qualitative content analysis by Mayring (2015) and Kuckartz (2016).

The following is no attempt to explain the function of language in the social construction of meaning – several monographs are devoted to this complex topic (e.g. Eckert 2018 and Harder 2010). Instead, these processes will be reassessed in the light of three approaches, which are most relevant for this study: Berger & Luckmann (1967) is a seminal work in the sociology of knowledge which has been ground-laying for social constructivism, Schmid (2020) is an encompassing theory about *The Dynamics of the Linguistic System* which is based on cognitive linguistics within a

system-theoretic framework and Levon (2010) will be reviewed as an example for a third wave study, in 2.1.2.4.

Berger & Luckmann define the research area of the sociology of knowledge by posing the “central question for sociological theory:”

How is it possible that subjective meanings become objective facticities? [...] an adequate understanding of the ‘reality sui generis’ of society requires an inquiry into the manner in which this reality is constructed. This inquiry, we maintain, is the task of the sociology of knowledge. (Berger & Luckmann 1967: 30)

When transferring this agenda to the research on linguistic variation, the “objective facticities” which have to be analyzed refer to linguistic variants, like the Ephraimites’ *sibbolet*, and the variationist’s task becomes the inquiry into the manner in which the semantic relations between variants and concepts, such as ‘Ephraimites,’ are constructed. Conventionalized associations with variants are referred to as “metapragmatic stereotypes” by Agha (2006: 148) who analyses these conventionalization processes as “enregisterment.”

The central premise of the sociology of knowledge is the treatment of “objective facticities” as social constructions. This may look like a contradiction in itself because it does not fit the common understanding of objectivity as completely independent of the social domain. Nevertheless, it resonates with our “non-objectivist” understanding of language as a socially created system of knowledge (Schulze 2012: 1; see above 2). In fact, Berger & Luckmann’s “central question for sociological theory” touches upon the groundwork of linguistic theory: to get an adequate understanding of language, the processes of construction that are underlying Saussure’s linguistic sign have to be investigated. Third wave studies are driven by a similar question: How is it possible that subjective meanings become linguistic signs?

Leaping one step ahead of this fundamental question, Berger & Luckmann emphasize the important function of language in the construction of reality:

The language used in everyday life continuously provides me with the necessary objectifications and posits the order within which these make sense and within which everyday life has meaning for me.[...] In this manner language marks the co-ordinates of my life in society and fills that life with meaningful objects. (Berger & Luckmann 1967: 22)

Furthermore, they regard language not only as crucial for conveying meaning in social interaction – e.g. to demonstrate belonging to social groups – but also for constructing one’s own identity.

It can [...] be said, that language makes ‘more real’ my subjectivity not only to my conversation partner but also to myself. [...] This very important characteristic of language is well caught

in the saying that men must talk about themselves until they know themselves. (Berger & Luckmann 1967: 38)

The above statement is reminiscent of Goffman's (1956) conception of social interaction as acts of performance to present oneself. This treatment of language as a means of performance is inherent in third wave studies, which revolve around the notion of 'identity' – whereas the first wave studies were primarily concerned with the notion of 'social class'. Schmid even affirms the importance of 'identity' as a force within the linguistic system, from a general perspective:

Identity is an important force acting directly on usage and indirectly on the social and cognitive processes that lead to the sedimentation of linguistic structures. (Schmid 2020: 40)

The basic difference of first and second wave studies, in contrast to the third wave, is that variants are no longer understood as subconscious and involuntary expressions of a speaker's social identity (i.e. as markers of identity) which is determined by several factors, such as membership in a particular social group (Sinner 2014: 15 and Buchholtz & Hall 2004: 382). Resorting to the terms of Berger & Luckmann, linguistic variants have to be studied in conjunction with their underlying "subjective meaning" and not just as "objective facticities" which are determined by objective extra-linguistic variables such as 'social class,' 'age' and 'sex.'

These extra-linguistic variables which were looked upon as independent from the speakers' agency can no longer be treated as causal triggers for linguistic variation. Instead, the categories have to be investigated that are used by the speakers themselves, in processes of meaning construction. It is assumed that the function of linguistic variation can only be understood in relation to these processes. Thus, introducing speakers' agency into the variationist framework brings on an updated concept of linguistic variation, its meaning and its usage.

[L]anguage should be understood as providing a pool of resources – semiotic tools that individuals can make use of in the variable performance of identities. Particular ways of talking are not essential components of individuals, but are, instead, social/ideological artifacts that people can take up and put down as the need or desire arises. Yet these sociolinguistic tools are not always ready for the taking. Rather their socially licit use tends to be strictly policed by dominant norms of a given society. The central focus of research in this paradigm, then, is to examine how individuals negotiate these ideological imperatives, using the social resources available to them to create the identity performances they desire. (Levon 2010: 65)

In this line of argumentation, Schmid elaborates further on the meaning of "utterance types," which are understood as variants in our context (see 2.1.4.1 for a terminological discussion):

we should avoid thinking about conventionalized utterance types as ready-made, off-the-peg tools to be grabbed and exploited in a customary manner for reaching equally unshakable communicative aims. Instead, they should be regarded as co-semiotic potentialities competing for dominance in a multidimensional probability space. [...] It lies in the very nature of utterance types as parts of this abstract system that they do not occupy a specific and fixed location in the probability space. Instead, they keep reconfiguring the terrain they can cover in a way which is at the same time extremely flexible and constrained by their usage history. The processes that distil conventions from usage histories and keep adapting them are usualization and diffusion. (Schmid 2020: 92)

While Levon focuses on normative aspects as acting forces during the processes of negotiation, Schmid's focus lies on the "dynamics of the linguistic system" and the functionality of its processes, which he frames as "usualization" and "diffusion." For a better understanding of these processes, they will be reassessed from a sociological perspective. Therefore, Luhmann's (1993) contextualization of the sociology of knowledge within a system theoretic framework is helpful because it brings together the notions of language as a system of knowledge and its social constitution. Luhmann presupposes the existence of alternative possibilities as a premise for all meaningful social action:

Our starting point is that all human experience and action takes place in a meaningful way and is itself only accessible through meaning. This means that the object of the intention and realization of the current execution is only given in the form of a reference to other possibilities.<sup>6</sup> (Luhmann 1993: 17, my translation)

This premise is taken up by Schmid (2020: 92) as a "multidimensional probability space." In theories of linguistic variation, this probability space is understood as composition of linguistic variables and their possible realizations as variants. The system-theoretic conception of language relates the realization of linguistic variants to all other possible realizations within a linguistic variable. Luhmann elaborates further on the conditions of purposeful interaction:

Every meaning contains a kind of guarantee of connectivity for further experience and action and a guarantee of recurrence, of a return to itself after passing through other meanings. Meaning therefore presents what is real interspersed with other possibilities and thus places behavior under pressure of selection because only one or the other eventuality of this pre-

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<sup>6</sup> German original: Unser Ausgangspunkt ist, daß alles menschliche Erleben und Handeln sinnförmig abläuft und sich selbst nur sinnförmig zugänglich ist. Das heißt, daß das, was jeweils Gegenstand der Intention und Realisationskern des aktuellen Vollzugs ist, nur in der Form der Verweisung auf andere Möglichkeiten gegeben ist.

sented surplus of possibilities can be currently realized, thematically intended, action-wise comprehended.<sup>7</sup> (Luhmann 1993: 17–18, my translation)

In a usage event, the speaker who has access to a pool of linguistic variants has to select exactly one variant for each variable. In addition to this structurally determined *Selektionsdruck*, social pressure weighs on the speaker's choice – as Levon (2010: 65) pointed out in reference to the “dominant norms of a given society.” Luhmann (1993: 48) defines the process of selection as determined by additional factors which “transform the mere appearance of variation into a semantic career.”<sup>8</sup> Hence, the speakers' agency is partly determined by interpersonal processes, which result in ‘linguistic norms’ through processes of “usualization” (Schmid 2020: 5, 40, 98).

### 2.1.2.3 Institutionalization and linguistic norms

Schmid's definition of usualization as a process that produces linguistic norms, is based on Berger & Luckmann's (1967) notion of ‘institutionalization’ (Schmid 2020: 111). Bülow (2017: 50) points out that Wittgenstein already compared linguistic rules to men made institutions, in his *Philosophische Untersuchungen*. Saussure (1916: 33) also used this analogy, in his statement: “la langue est une institution sociale.” However, his understanding of ‘institution’ is more static than the one adhered to by the frameworks which are reviewed here.

Berger & Luckmann (1967: 70) presuppose that “all human activity is subject to habitualization.” With a focus on its function, Berger & Luckmann (1967: 71) describe the process of “habitualization” as a “psychological gain” because it implies the narrowing of choices for the benefit of cognitive economy. Luhmann similarly defines the process of “Stabilisation” as the systematization of knowledge which enables its passing on through learning and can lead to semantic tradition:

In the area of semantic tradition, this function is fulfilled by systematizing and dogmatizing knowledge. The resulting forms and types are reduced to more abstract rules that can be learned and passed on in a simplified form and can organize larger numbers of cases. Institutio

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7 German original: Jeder Sinn enthält damit eine Art Anschließbarkeitsgarantie für weiteres Erleben und Handeln und eine Garantie für Rekurrenz, für Rückkehr zu ihm selbst nach Durchlaufen anderer Sinngehalte. Aller Sinn [18] präsentiert deshalb Wirkliches durchsetzt mit anderen Möglichkeiten und setzt das Verhalten damit unter Selektionsdruck, weil von diesem appräsentierten Möglichkeit-süberschuß nur die eine oder die andere Eventualität aktuell realisiert, thematisch intendiert, handlungsmäßig nachvollzogen werden kann.

8 My translation from the German original.

is a Roman term: It designates the connection between semantic order and doctrine.<sup>9</sup> (Luhmann 1993: 50, my translation)

Berger & Luckmann describe the individual process of habitualization as the basis for institutionalization:

Institutionalization occurs whenever there is a reciprocal typification of habitualized actions by types of actors. Put differently, any such typification is an institution. [...] The typifications of habitualized actions that constitute institutions are always shared ones. [...] The institution posits that actions of type X will be preformed by actors of type X. (Berger & Luckmann 1967: 72)

In our context, knowledge about linguistic variation can be understood as an institution which posits that people of type X speak in manner X – or, more precisely, with the variants X, Y and Z.

Referring to our biblical example, there must have existed an institution among the Gileadites which posited, among other things, that *sibolet* is a typical variant that will be uttered by actors of the type ‘Ephraimite.’ Actually, it is not known if the terms ‘Gileadites’ and ‘Ephraimites’ were used by the groups themselves (as endonyms), or if they were used by others (as exonyms) and possibly introduced in retrospective for narrative purposes. Therefore, the institution among the Gileadites might have posited the basic distinction between ‘us’ and ‘them’ and the relation between ‘them’ and *sibolet*.

It is important to point out that an institution is independent of the truth of its typified relations between actions and actors. That is to say, despite the existence of the described institution among the Gileadites, the majority of the Ephraimites might have used the variant *shibolet*. Or the speakers who actually used *sibolet* might not have self-identified as Ephraimites. The relation between linguistic knowledge and linguistic production will be elaborated in 2.1.4.1.

Berger & Luckmann attribute language with an institutionalizing function which serves the speakers to create order:

[L]anguage objectifies the world, transforming the *panta rhei* of experience into a cohesive order. In the establishment of this order language *realizes* a world, in the double sense of apprehending and producing it. Conversation is the actualizing of this realizing efficacy of language in the face-to-face situations of individual existence. (Berger & Luckmann 1967: 173)

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<sup>9</sup> German original: Im Bereich semantischer Tradition wird diese Funktion durch Systematisierung und Dogmatisierung des Wissens erfüllt. Die anfallenden Formen und Typen werden auf abstraktere Regeln gebracht, die vereinfacht gelernt und tradiert werden und größere Fallmengen ordnen können. Institutio ist der dafür zuständige römische Begriff. Er bezeichnet den Zusammenhang von semantischer Ordnung und Lehre.

Again, the Gileadites made use of the concept ‘Ephraimites’ to order their social environment into ‘us’ and ‘them.’ It is claimed that the ordering function of language is only effective through endless processes of ‘conversation’ because by its nature, the created order is futile. In conversation, institutions are acted out and experienced through the performance of ‘roles’ (as described by Goffman 1956). Berger & Luckmann define ‘roles’ as “types of actors” which are prior to institutionalization – like ‘Ephraimite,’ in our example:

By playing roles, the individual participates in a social world. By internalizing these roles, the same world becomes subjectively real to him. In the common stock of knowledge there are standards of role performance that are accessible to all members of a society, or at least to those who are potential performers of the roles in question. (Berger & Luckmann 1967: 91)

These “standards of role performance” enable the judgment of performances as compliant or non-compliant with role standards (Berger & Luckmann 1967: 92). Thus, a Gileadite who uttered the non-standard variant *sibolet* might have been judged as non-compliant with his role and even be subjected to punishment by his fellows.

Taken back to the linguistic perspective on conversation, a certain degree of semantic stability can be reached by the repetition of patterns – ‘usualization’ in Schmid’s (2020) terms. From a holistic perspective on the linguistic system, linguistic norms are expressions of the speakers’ preference of certain variants over others, in certain situations, and can indicate the probability of their selection. In variationist theory, linguistic norms are understood as marking the distinction between standard and non-standard variants. The implicit norms which shape the representations of this standard among the speakers are commonly explicated through further processes of negotiation which revolve around the notion of ‘correctness’ of language (Schmid 2020: 98). Concepts such as *Hochdeutsch* (as ‘normative correct German’) and ‘*ivrit tiḵnit*, ‘correct Hebrew,’ are products of these negotiations.

Bourdieu highlights the role of social power when describing these negotiations in pedagogic institutions:

It follows that the legitimate language is a semi-artificial language which has to be sustained by a permanent effort of correction, a task which falls both to institutions specially designed for this purpose and to individual speakers. (Bourdieu 1991: 60)

According to Bourdieu (1991: 61) it is paradoxical that pedagogic institutions are teaching rules for the practical act of speaking which grammarians have extracted retrospectively from the writings of professionals for their works of the codification of the language. Because of the artificial nature of this process of codification, knowledge of these normative rules can only be acquired in specific contexts. In this line

of thought, the institutionalized confinement of this knowledge to a certain group of people is one reason for its association with prestige:

[T]he correct, i.e. corrected, expression owes the essential part of its social properties to the fact that it can be produced only by speakers possessing practical mastery of scholarly rules, explicitly constituted by a process of codification and expressly inculcated through pedagogic work. (Bourdieu 1991: 61)

In summary, Berger & Luckmann describe the relation between roles and institutions:

Looked at from the perspective of the institutional order, the roles appear as institutional representations and mediations of the institutionally objectivated aggregates of knowledge. Looked at from the perspective of the several roles, each role carries with it a socially defined appendage of knowledge. [...] society exists only as individuals are conscious of it [...] the institutional order is real only in so far as it is realized in performed roles and that, on the other hand, roles are representative of an institutional order that defines their character (including their appendages of knowledge) and from which they derive their objective sense. (Berger & Luckmann 1967: 96)

As Schmid points out:

Not only institutionalized social roles but also socially constructed categories such as gender, ethnicity, or age are established, perpetuated, and modified in this way. (Schmid 2020: 112)

Importantly, this has implications for the treatment of all of these categories in third wave studies. The analysis of any institutional is essentially an analysis of the members' knowledge (Berger & Luckmann 1967: 82). Based on these observations, 'meaning' is understood as constructed by speakers in specific contexts in relation with 'roles' which are representing 'institutions.' 'Identity' is understood as manifestations of meaning, as it is bestowed by individuals upon their own life and their relations to others which are apprehended by the performance of roles and in relation to institutions. Typified identities can in turn be apprehended as roles. Our working definition resonates with this somewhat technical definition:

[I]dentity: an outcome of cultural semiotics that is accomplished through the production of contextually relevant sociopolitical relations of similarity and difference, authenticity and inauthenticity, and legitimacy and illegitimacy [...] (Buchholtz & Hall 2004: 382)

In general, there is an abundance of forces which can affect institutionalization (Luhmann 1993: 48). With a focus on the linguistic system, Schmid (2020: 111) presents a systematic overview of the "forces affecting conventionalization" of utterance types. The multitude of these factors and the complexity of these concepts makes their investigation a huge methodological challenge (Kehrein et al. 2010: 377–378).

Having laid out the theoretic foundation for third wave studies on linguistic variation, one exemplary study shall serve to illustrate how these complex concepts can be explored.

#### 2.1.2.4 Linguistic variants and categories of sexuality in Israel

Levon's (2010) study about language use in lesbian and gay communities in Israel presupposes that meaning is "a property of both already existing social structures and individual constructions of identity" and consequently, that its construction is a process of negotiation (Levon 2010: 9). Levon (2010: 164) argues against the sole relevancy of the factor 'sexuality' for the description of "sexual subjectivities of Israeli gays and lesbians, or the linguistic practices through which those subjectivities can be socially realized." He does so by analyzing the use of morphological gender in plural forms, among other structures. His analysis is based on a corpus of spoken Hebrew which he compiled with recordings of his own sociolinguistic interviews. He treats the Hebrew masculine and feminine plural pronouns *hem* and *hen* as variants and argues for the masculine pronoun as the standard form for reference to multiple people, regardless of their sex (Levon 2010: 145).

In normative Hebrew grammar, reference to groups of women requires the feminine pronoun *hen* and the feminine plural morpheme *-ot*, whereas the presence of one man in the group would trigger the use of the masculine pronoun *hem* and the corresponding morpheme *-im*. For example, a group of teachers can be referred to by *morot* 'teachers.F' and *morim* 'teachers.M' (cf. French *enseignants* vs. *enseignantes*).

In Levon's sample of self-identifying homosexual participants, the women who affiliated with radical political activist groups were more likely to use masculine morphology, compared to the women who did not.

[T]he women on the whole use a greater proportion of gender-specific morphology than the men do, and frequently in interviews I observed the women consciously self-correct from a generic masculine form to a (feminine) gender specific one. I would argue then that the systematic use of masculine morphology among the Radical women when speaking about out-group referents is likely something more than a distributional fluke, and instead a pattern that could carry strategic, or even political, significance. (Levon 2010: 151)

Even though there is a distributional difference in the use of gender-specific morphology between men and women, neither the category 'sex' nor the category 'sexuality' are sufficient for an adequate explanation of the participants' language use. Levon argues that politically active lesbians – "Radical women" in his terms – made use of gender-specific morphology to express their political convictions:

When referring to women with whom they affiliate or identify, the Radical women use feminine gender morphology to a significantly greater extent than when referring to women they deem to be ‘out-group’ (in which case they tend to use generic masculine forms). (Levon 2010: 164)

Based on his fieldwork observations and the analysis of several linguistic variables (variation in mean pitch besides variation in the use of gender-specific morphology), he concludes:

I argue that it is the conjunction of sexual political and, at times, gender identifications that determine how speakers imagine and linguistically constitute their sexualities. The identification that seems to influence speakers’ use of language the most is affiliation with a political institution (in a technical, sociological sense)[.] (Levon 2010: 164)

Furthermore, he indirectly criticizes the premises of first and second wave studies by claiming that investigations of “normal categories of sexuality, class, ethnicity, etc.” are inadequate to “depict the ways in which ‘identity’ is experienced by people in their daily lives” (Levon 2010: 166).

### 2.1.2.5 Summary

We have seen how studies on linguistic variation have been developing over more than five decades. This development is characterized by the narrowing the focus from concepts like ‘social class’ to individually performed processes of identity construction. Complex concepts such as ‘gender’ and ‘ethnicity,’ which are not easily operationalizable, have been found to be relevant for the study of linguistic variation. Consequently, the outlook on the function of linguistic variation has changed from the notion of variants as indexical markers of social categories to expressions of processes of identity construction which can only be deciphered contextually and considering the speakers’ agency.

From this theoretically updated perspective, any analytic category which is applied by researchers to the researched population has to be questioned explicitly and needs to be accounted for in the research design. Barron & Schneider propose an altogether different treatment of macro-sociological factors for linguistic variation, based on the equal treatment of 5 – 7 factors, which implies downgrading ‘regionality’ to a social construct:

Regarding region, we can, by analogy [to gender and ethnicity], say that we are not interested in geographical facts, but in regional affiliations and identities as they manifest themselves in language use [...] (Barron & Schneider 2009: 427)

In the outline of their framework ‘variational pragmatics,’ they advocate for a focus on “one macro-social factor at a time,” until a better understanding of the interplay

of the factors can be reached (Schneider & Barron 2008: 19). While it is clear that the complexity of the interplaying factors is a methodological challenge, it seems counter-intuitive to recede to an isolated treatment of these factors – especially of ‘regionality’ – as they suggest. More promising is an approach which focuses on the analysis of the speakers’ institutions, like the different activist groups in Levon’s (2010) study. As Berger & Luckmann emphasize, any institutional order has to be studied via the knowledge of its members:

The analysis of roles is of particular importance to the sociology of knowledge because it reveals the mediations between the macroscopic universes of meaning objectivated in a society and the ways by which these universes are subjectively real to individuals. (Berger & Luckmann 1967: 96)

Projected on third wave studies, it is an analysis of ‘in-vivo codes’ (in GTM terminology), just as “jocks” and “burn-outs:” the categories which are used by Eckert (1989) in her study on the social structure of students in a Michigan high-school. Because of the irreducible complexity of the interdependent concepts, a sound foundation in sociological theory and the explication of theoretic premises is inevitable for any qualitative study of linguistic variation.

### 2.1.3 *Varietätenlinguistik*

Chambers & Trudgill (1998: 20) argue that dialectology was revitalized in the late twentieth century, due to new technological possibilities for the handling of large amounts of data and due to the theoretical input which was generated by studies on sociolinguistic variation. European dialectologists were looking for ways to include other factors besides ‘regionality’ in their framework, which led to a shift to research on ‘language varieties’ – *Varietäten* in German. Still, most approaches within this research paradigm have been foregrounding regional differences because *Varietätenlinguistik* is essentially based on dialectology (Sinner 2014: 24 and Chambers & Trudgill 1998: 21). Just as Labovian studies on sociolinguistic variation, *Varietätenlinguistik* aimed to legitimize the empirical status of the vernacular language and promoted a usage-based study of linguistic variation. For a better distinction between the two research paradigms, the German term *Varietätenlinguistik* will be used here. Studies on sociolinguistic variation in the Labovian tradition – referred to as *Variationslinguistik* by Krefeld (2015b: 22), have been focusing on linguistic variants and the conditions of their usage (see above 2.1.2.1). *Varietätenlinguistik* operates on a more abstract level with the aim to describe clusters of variants as ‘varieties’ (Krefeld 2015a: 394).

This research paradigm can be traced back to Flydal and Coseriu, who in turn built on Saussure's structuralist theory (Krefeld 2018: 1, Bokelmann 2020: 27 and Sinner 2014: 64). Coseriu (1973: 38–39) established the distinction between 'diatopic' (based on regional factors), 'diastratic' (based on socio-cultural stratification) and 'diaphasic' (based on different styles or registers) differences within a language. This terminology has been influential in philology and especially in Germany based Romanistics (Sinner 2014: 63, 68). Koch (2003: 105) adapted this terminology and added a fourth 'diamesic' dimension which relates to differences between communicative proximity and distance. These differences are understood as the prototypical opposition of spoken and written language. In Koch's model, diastratic is intended to refer both to variation between social layers (vertically) and between social groups (horizontally) (Koch 2003: 103).

This terminology was intended for the explanation of systematic relations between popular notions such as '(standard) language,' 'dialects' and 'sociolects.' Ammon (1987: 317) defines languages as "sets of varieties" and varieties as "elements of languages," whereas "standard varieties and dialects (= dialectal varieties) [...] are various types of such elements (varieties)."

Central to this approach is the equal treatment of language varieties in respect to their functionality: Srhir (2016: 23) argues that all varieties equally serve the communicative and social needs of their speakers. This concept of language varieties is comparable to Luhmann's notion of autopoietic systems: varieties are seen as autonomous systems within the linguistic system. Although Luhmann himself does not treat language as a system on its own, but as "structure or medium" (Bülow 2017: 91–92),<sup>10</sup>

In *Varietätenlinguistik*, top-down classifications have been applied by researchers on the basis of the co-occurring variants, mainly based on phonetic and lexical phenomena (cf. Krefeld 2015b: 2). Recordings of participants' speech along specific variables, in certain regions or within certain social groups, were used to analyze linguistic variants, with the aim to "discover" varieties (cf. Sinner 2014: 69).

Krefeld argues that this approach has two fundamental weaknesses: the first problem is the conceptualization of diatopic, diastratic and diaphasic varieties as equal entities. At least in Europe, diatopic variation is the most evident form of co-variation between linguistic and extra-linguistic variables – in this case 'regionality' (Krefeld & Pustka 2010: 18). Therefore, classifications of diatopic varieties – the subject of dialectology – can be seen as unproblematic in a European context (Krefeld 2015a: 396). Whereas regionally defined dialects are understood as prototypical varieties because of their complete functional autonomy, the conceptualization of sociolects

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<sup>10</sup> My translation from the German original.

as complete and functionally autonomous systems is questionable (Krefeld 2015a: 394). It is not surprising that an asymmetric conceptual treatment of the notions ‘variety’ and ‘standard’ or ‘dialect’ is perpetuated by some researchers.

[Language] is thus schematic for its instances, and ‘speaking a language’ invariably implies speaking a given variety of that language. However, there is still a widespread tendency to apply a model according to which the standard variety equals the language that it forms part of, and that model is not only at work in folk perception, but also in many branches of linguistics. The impression that we are working at the level of langue [...] when standard varieties form the basis of our analysis, but at the level of parole when the object of study is a nonstandard variety, is obviously misleading, if both of them are just that: varieties of the same language. (Kristiansen 2008: 58)

If, in a European context, dialects are understood as ideal types of varieties, how are ideas of an ideal variety shaped in societies where the factor ‘regionality’ is not believed to affect language use in the way it does in Europe? If the use of MH in Israel is not conditioned by regional differences, which factors determine the ideal type of a Hebrew variety?

In the previous section (2.1.2.5), I argued that treating factors like ‘regionality’ as absolute categories cannot adequately explain linguistic variation. Consequently, the conceptualization of diatopic, diastratic and diaphasic variation as neatly distinguishable entities is inadequate as well. Instead, these factors need to be analyzed in conjunction with the speakers’ processes of identity construction. This leads us to Krefeld’s second point of critique about the traditional focus of *Varietätenlinguistik* on production data (PD). He formulates an updated agenda for the framework, which resonates with third wave variationist theory:

In linguistics, procedural knowledge is still very much foregrounded because relevant data is mostly and in many cases exclusively obtained from utterances, i.e. from speech production. However, declarative knowledge is extremely important for capturing variation: In a certain sense, *Variations-* and *Varietätenlinguistik* essentially elevate the speakers’ procedural and declarative knowledge to the linguist’s epistemological level.<sup>11</sup> (Krefeld 2015a: 398, my translation)

As Berruto (1987: 264) noted, any definition of a ‘language variety’ which is based on structural criteria, like the systematic co-occurrence of several variants, remains

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<sup>11</sup> German original: In der Sprachwissenschaft steht das prozedurale Wissen immer noch stark im Vordergrund, denn die relevanten Daten werden meistens und in vielen Fällen ausschließlich aus Äußerungen, d.h. aus der Sprachproduktion gewonnen. Das deklarative Wissen ist jedoch äußerst wichtig für die Erfassung der Variation: In gewisser Hinsicht sind Variations- und Varietätenlinguistik im Kern nichts anderes als die Hebung des prozeduralen und deklarativen Sprecherwissens auf die epistemologische Ebene des Sprachwissenschaftlers.

unsatisfactory. Therefore it has been argued, that a definition of ‘variety’ taking into account the speaker’s knowledge is more sensible (cf. Sinner 2014: 20). Krefeld (2018: 2) specifies that it is outright wrong if linguists classify utterances as being marked in a certain way and thus belonging to a certain variety because this type of information cannot be extracted from PD alone. To derive meaningful classifications, the speakers’ ‘declarative knowledge’ (DK) about linguistic variation has to be taken into account (Krefeld 2019: 28). Furthermore, PD and DK have to be analyzed in conjunction with *Perzeptionsdaten* ‘perceptual data’ which leads to a methodological realignment of the research paradigm under the new label *Perzeptive Varietätenlinguistik* (Krefeld & Pustka 2010).

#### 2.1.4 *Perzeptive Varietätenlinguistik* (PVL)

*Perzeptive Varietätenlinguistik* (PVL) brings the speakers back into the picture, by relating their representations of variation with their perception of variants.<sup>12</sup> The speaker himself is regarded as the primary agent who causes variation:

The locus of variation is not an abstract point in a matrix of formal parameters, but a speaker in his historical concretion: with his repertoire of varieties (of more or less languages), with the communicative routines that regulate his use of available varieties in the networks of his communication partners, and with the repercussions of these routines on his own repertoire.<sup>13</sup> (Krefeld 2015a: 401, my translation)

While *Varietätenlinguistik* builds on structuralism, just as the first and second wave studies on sociolinguistic variation, PVL is conceptually close to the third wave of variationist studies, with its post-structuralist perspective on the individual speakers and their construction of meaning.

In their model, which is the basis for PVL, Krefeld & Pustka (Forthcoming) elaborate on the relation between the speakers’ knowledge and behavior (see Fig. 2.2). They argue for a clear conceptual distinction between representation and perception of linguistic phenomena: While perception is confined to a real usage event, representation are part of the speakers’ knowledge about language. Representations can

<sup>12</sup> An English translation of PVL is not yet established. I suggest to translate the original German term as ‘Perceptual Variationist Linguistics.’

<sup>13</sup> German original: Der Ort der Variation ist kein abstrakter Punkt in einer Matrix formaler Parameter, sondern ein Sprecher in seiner historischen Konkretion: mit seinem Repertoire an Varietäten (von mehr oder weniger Sprachen), mit den kommunikativen Routinen, die den Gebrauch der ihm verfügbaren Varietäten in den Netzwerken seiner Kommunikationspartner regeln, und mit den Rückwirkungen dieser Routinen auf sein eigenes Repertoire.

be elicited independently, without the context of actual language usage and without any perceptual basis. According to Krefeld & Pustka (2010: 14), PVL is a sub-discipline of perceptual dialectology or folk linguistics as popularized by Niedzielski & Preston (2003). Like third wave studies (see 2.1.2.2), perceptual dialectology is situated within the theoretic context of the sociology of knowledge.

The sociology of knowledge [doesn't seek] new apriorisms or hypothetical-deductive systems for deriving and testing all knowledge, but metatheories in a quite different sense: namely downstream theories that explain how knowledge that discriminates with respect to objects (and in this sense claims to be true ) arises and is maintained in social contexts.<sup>14</sup> (Luhmann 1993: 61, my translation)

In analogy to Luhmann's above definition, perceptual dialectology and PVL are linguistic meta-theories to study knowledge about language and linguistic variation, its emergence and its fostering through conversation. The discriminating aspect about this knowledge (in Luhmann's words) is related to the cultivation of linguistic norms which define 'correct language' (see also 2.1.2.3). Luhmann (1993: 61) claims that these "metatheories can be empirically operationalized," which is the aim of PVL.<sup>15</sup>

In the context of PVL, this means that perception and representation have to be treated separately and that representations alone cannot be understood as a proof for the existence of varieties or their meaning. In the next section, theoretic premises from PVL for the organization of linguistic knowledge will be revised and terminologically defined for further use.

#### 2.1.4.1 The Organization of knowledge about language and linguistic variation

From our understanding of linguistic variation (see 2.1.2.2) follows that a purely structuralist outlook on linguistic knowledge, as a symbolic pairing of form and function, is too simplistic. Schmid provides a more encompassing perspective on the linguistic sign by defining 'utterance types' as follows:

[U]tterance types do not just consist of pairings of form and meanings and vice versa, but include information about communicative goals (What are the participants trying to achieve?), the diverse usage activities (What are they actually doing?), and in which contexts the usage

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<sup>14</sup> German original: Die Wissenssoziologie [sucht] nicht neue Apriorismen oder hypothetisch-deduktive Systeme zu Ableitung und Überprüfung allen Wissens, sondern Metatheorien in einem ganz anderen Sinne; nämlich nachgeschaltete Theorien, die erklären, wie Wissen, das in bezug auf Gegenstände diskriminiert (und in diesem Sinne wahr zu sein beansprucht) in sozialen Kontexten entsteht und gepflegt wird[.]

<sup>15</sup> My translation from the German original.

event is taking place (Who is speaking to whom in what physical and social situation?). [...] [C]onventionalized utterance types can hence be regarded as condensed records of their own usage history. [...] Without this information, linguistic conventions and linguistic knowledge would remain crude and lack the subtlety they have with native speakers, as opposed to speech typical of someone who begins to learn a foreign language. (Schmid 2020: 16)

The type of information beyond form and meaning that speakers associate with utterance types is the missing piece of the puzzle which I was looking for as a Hebrew learner (cf. 1). This study is an investigation about this type of knowledge by the means of the analysis of HSS' representations of linguistic variation.

According to Krefeld (2015a: 397-398), the speakers' knowledge about language is of procedural and of declarative nature: procedural knowledge is a premise for the ability to speak and to use certain variants, while declarative knowledge (DK) contains representations which are associated with the variants. In Schmid's (2020: 27) cognitively oriented terminology, the equivalent of procedural knowledge, are "conventionalized utterance types" and he terms "their mental representations as entrenched patterns of associations." In the following, Krefeld's terminology will be used because this study is situated within a variationist framework.

The speakers' DK is understood to contain information about the markedness of linguistic forms (Krefeld & Pustka 2010: 12). In general, 'markedness' is a concept which is used to describe "certain types of asymmetries within categories" (Lakoff 1987: 59). For example, a linguistic form can be marked as a regional variant and, depending on the context, it can be judged as 'incorrect.' The so-profiled representation of a linguistic form is a premise for its perception as being "marked in a certain way," when the linguistic form is encountered in an actual usage event. Without the representation of the form as marked, it will be perceived as inconspicuous (Krefeld 2015a: 398). As has been stressed in 2.1.2.2, markedness is not an inherent quality of a linguistic form, but dependent on the context of its usage and the agency of the speaker.

This general distinction of marked and unmarked linguistic forms is the basis for the distinction of 'standard' and 'non-standard variants' which lies at the heart of variationist linguistics. It is the premise for linguistic indexicality (Silverstein 2003): the symbolic link between a variant and a concept – such as the indexical relation between *sibolet* and the Ephraimites (see 2.1 above). PVL defines 'standard,' in contrast to the 'normative correct language,' as the unmarked (for its speakers) variety of a language

It should be noted that for the vast majority of those who use it as a matter of course, so to speak by default, the standard actually provides the neutral background against which other

variants and varieties stand out as salient and in this respect should be considered as marked.<sup>16</sup> (Krefeld 2011: 104, my translation)

This understanding is based on the psychological model of “figure/ground segregation” (Ungerer & Schmid 2006: 163; see 2.1.4.3): All variation can only be perceived in relation to a neutral background or ‘linguistic standard.’ In contrast, ‘non-standard varieties’ can be modeled as being perceived by the speakers as a complex pattern – a *Gestalt*, of co-occurring marked variants (Krefeld 2015b: 23). Typically, marked varieties are associated with marked identities (Buchholtz & Hall 2004: 372–373). Based on this definition, our notion of linguistic norms differs from explicitly fixed grammatical rules and extends to the domain of pragmatics i.e. “how language is used to communicate” (Levinson 2024: 1). Discourses about flexible conventions which affect language use in circumstantially changing usage events are the research object of metapragmatics (Silverstein 2003: 196 and Spitzmüller 2019).

From the perspective of the language learner, it is easy to see that procedural knowledge of how to use a certain variant is ultimately dependent on DK. Language learners who have mastered grammatical rules and textbooks, but have missed out on the actual usage of the language, are essentially lacking DK. Their lack of participation in the speakers’ stock of knowledge can cause difficulties in social interaction.

Participation in the social stock of knowledge thus permits the ‘location’ of individuals in society and the ‘handling’ of them in the appropriate manner. This is not possible for who does not participate in this knowledge, such as a foreigner [...] (Berger & Luckmann 1967: 56)

In 2.1.4.4 the “location” and the “handling” of speakers during a usage event will be reassessed theoretically. The next section is a short excursion about the necessity to integrate different perspectives on the research subject for a sound PVL methodology and metapragmatic research. Then, the scope of the term ‘representation’ will be reassessed in 2.1.4.3 for a theoretic perspective on the organization of knowledge about language and linguistic variation.

#### 2.1.4.2 A question of perspective

A general distinction of possible perspectives on the research subject is helpful for its adequate treatment. Therefore, Krefeld & Pustka (2010: 23) reassess the relations

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<sup>16</sup> German original: Festzuhalten ist [...], dass der Standard für die große Masse derjenigen, die sich seiner mit schlichter Selbstverständlichkeit, sozusagen *by default*, ständig bedienen tatsächlich den neutralen Hintergrund liefert, vor dem sich andere Varianten und Varietäten als salient hervorheben und insofern als markiert zu betrachten sind.

of four epistemic dimensions which are defined by a twofold distinction between an ‘emic’ and an ‘etic’ perspective and between an expert (e.g. a linguist) and a lay (e.g. a speaker) perspective. The distinction of ‘emic’ and ‘etic’ was introduced by Pike (2015 [1967]) and expresses the opposition of categories which can either be structurally defined from within the system (of a specific language), just as *phonemic* categories, or independently from the system, just as *phonetic* categories. PVL upholds that valid insights into the nature and the dynamics of linguistic variation can only be reached in the light of the speakers’ representations and perceptions thereof. Therefore, any of the four perspectives, on its own, is insufficient for the aim of PVL.

An expert-etic perspective can lead to the postulation of varieties while ignoring the speakers’ perceptions. A fully speaker-emic perspective leads to an unscientific treatment of representations as facts. In this context, it is easily ignored that linguists are speakers of languages and therefore, subject to the emic perspective, as well. Their expert status does not change the nature of the representations about their spoken language – they are representations all the same. Often the collection of DK is not well explicated because the researcher is part of or at least very close to the researched population (and subject to a lay-emic perspective): it is supposed, not only, that her or his representations of social and linguistic behavior is shared by the researched population – but, that her or his interpretation of its meaning is shared by the readers as well. In research on MH varieties, this shortcoming of explication and contextualization of the researchers’ background is widespread. Most researchers in this field are L1 Hebrew speakers and tend to present their individual representations as common sense – without empirical basis from other Hebrew speakers. This lack of explication of the researchers’ hypothesis can render research incommensurable for cross-cultural comparisons and typological aims.

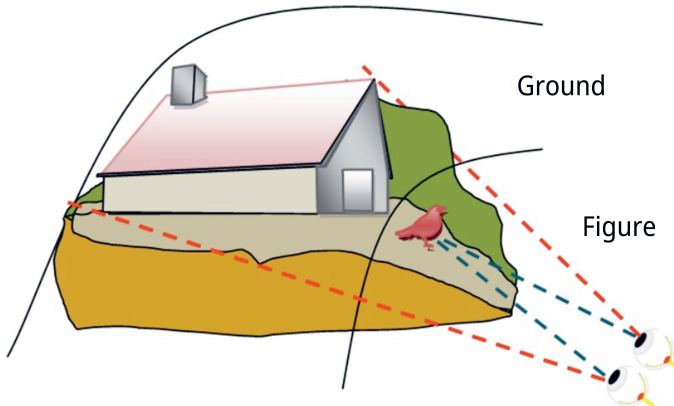
From this respect, it can be beneficial for the study to occupy an outsider position as researcher which forces oneself to a more conscious approach to the researched population, with less implicit knowledge at hand. In consequence, readers who are unfamiliar to the context of the research can be involved more easily. However, there is no ideal solution to this theoretic problem of perspectives. As will be argued in 2.2.1, a conscious approach to the field, openness and a detailed explication of the research methodology can improve the overall quality of research.

### 2.1.4.3 Perception, representation and concepts

The term ‘representation’ has a long history in philosophy and has become a central concept in cognitive science, although its usage remains somewhat ambiguous (Sinha 2007: 1280). Berger & Luckmann (1967: 223) use representation in “the Durkheimian usage, but in broader scope”, primarily in describing the “representation of an institution in and by roles” as “the representation *par excellence*” (Berger & Luckmann

1967: 93). Krefeld & Pustka (2010: 11) base their notion of representation on its usage for the organization of knowledge in psychology, in social science (in reference to Durkheim and Bourdieu) and to structuralist linguistics with its idealized notions of phonological, syntactic and semantic representations – what they term linguistic representations “in the narrow sense” (Krefeld & Pustka Forthcoming).

In cognitive linguistics, linguistic structure is studied to gain insights into cognitive processes. Linguistic structure is understood as being “motivated by conceptual representation and communicative function” (Sinha 2007: 1280). Because humans can only perceive the world through bodily structures, ‘embodiment’ is a key principle affecting the processes of human categorization. For example, events are typically perceived as made up of structured and wholesome entities (*gestalt*) with typified relations. Figure 2.1 is a simple schema of the perceptual process of a spatial relation.



**Fig. 2.1:** Perception of a spatial relation (reproduced from Schulze 2015)

Evans (2010: 21–22) describes the process of perception as the transformation of external sensory information, such as light, into a “perceptual object.” Thus, the situation in Figure 2.1 is at first organized into a smaller and a bigger perceptual object which are indicated by the blue and the red dashed lines. The smaller and potentially moveable perceptual object is usually referred to as ‘figure,’ whereas the bigger and typically static perceptual object is referred to as ‘ground’ (Talmy 2000: 184, Ungerer & Schmid 2006: 164). These perceptual objects are then bestowed with meaning by the application of the concepts ‘bird’ and ‘house.’ Evans distinguishes ‘perceptual objects,’ which she terms “percepts,” and ‘concepts’ as follows:

Percepts are typically available to conscious experience. That is, they are the product of on-line processing, resulting from a stimulus array perceived in the ‘here-and-now’. A consequence of this is that they consist of specific information relating to the specific stimulus array that they are derived from. Thus, they are episodic in nature. Concepts, on the other hand, represent schematisations, formed by abstracting away points of differences in order to produce representations which generalise over points of similarity. [...] concepts are representations in the sense of re-presentations. That is, they are stored in memory and can be activated during off-line processing. That is, they can be recalled in the absence of the percept(s) which may have given rise to them. (Evans 2010: 21–22)

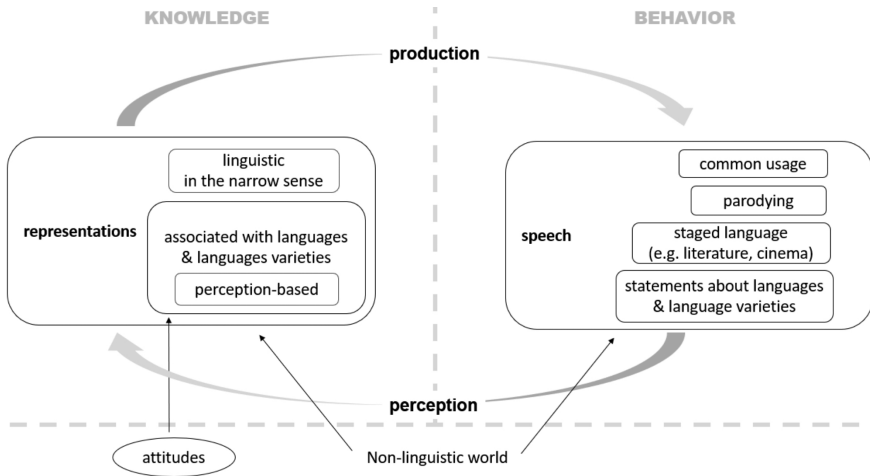
The relation between the processes of representation and perception is again described in a more general definition:

[R]epresentations represent something. We ordinarily think of both our representational mental states, such as beliefs and desires, and external representational artifacts, such as maps and words, as being about some object, property, or state of affairs. [...] Second, while this phenomenon of aboutness or intentional directedness seems to involve a kind of relation, if so, it must be a very special kind of relation, in which the distal relatum – the intentional object of the representation – needn’t actually exist. To put it less tendentiously, it seems central to our conception of representations that they can misrepresent. Finally, we ordinarily think of the content of a representation as being somehow relevant to the causal role that the representation plays. (Morgan 2014: 218)

It is important to note that perceptual objects cannot be identical with any form of representation – even though they may function as the experiential basis for the representation. The relation between the processes of representation and perception is intricate because they are interdependent only to some degree – their relation is not necessarily causal (Matsumoto-Gray 2009: 114). Having just touched upon this complex philosophical topic which is subsumed under the label ‘relativism,’ it should have become clear that the conflation of perception and representation is problematic.

While Kehrein et al. (2010: 380–381) distinguish between “Perzeption” and “Projektion” in their model of conceptualization, they also use “Representation” for both processes interchangeably. What they term as “Perzeption” is the formation of a representation based on an actual experience and “Projektion” is understood as the complementary process of applying a representation onto an experience. This distinction is important because it highlights the possibility of misrepresentation by projecting an inadequate concept onto a perceptual object. Misrepresentations of linguistic variation can lead speakers to the wrong classification of production data which can be witnessed during perception experiments (Kehrein et al. 2010: 378–379). For the purpose of PVL, Krefeld & Pustka (Forthcoming) stress that “we have to distinguish between representations which are based on perception and

those which are based on other experiences in the non-linguistic world, so-called ‘pseudo-linguistic knowledge’ or ‘linguistic myths’.”



**Fig. 2.2:** Speaker’s knowledge and behavior (reproduced from Krefeld & Pustka Forthcoming)

Krefeld & Pustka’s (Forthcoming) model which is reproduced in Fig. 2.2 is an updated version of their earlier model (see Krefeld & Pustka 2010: 12). It displays the intricate relations between speech, its representations and the processes of perception and production, along the dimensions of behavior and knowledge. Basically, Krefeld & Pustka (Forthcoming) posit with the model that not only linguistic phenomena are represented as linguistic categories like ‘phonemes’ – which is referred to by “linguistic in the narrow sense” – but that languages and language varieties are equally represented in the speakers’ DK. The model illustrates that the formation of representations about linguistic variation is potentially influenced by the perception of a usage event. Additionally, extra-linguistic factors influence the process of representation and therefore, the speakers’ statements about language and linguistic variation. Kehrein et al. render a vivid description of the speakers’ DK and its dependence on extra-linguistic factors:

This knowledge is to be understood as part of an individual’s linguistic and world knowledge and thus as a complex mental structure that is influenced by all aspects of everyday life experiences (travel, communication, media, prejudices , etc.), both linguistic and non-linguistic. Consequently, this mental structure cannot be derived from linguistic phenomena alone, but is constituted individually from the totality of possible experiential content – it defines the frame-

work for (linguistic) interaction in the form of individually constructed everyday categories (=concepts).<sup>17</sup> (Kehrein et al. 2010: 352, my translation)

In fact, representations of linguistic variation can be formed and applied independently of any perceptual basis (Krefeld & Pustka 2010: 12 and Kehrein et al. 2010: 378–379). In this context, it may be helpful to reassess Berger & Luckmann’s definition of reification for a better understanding of the processes causing “pseudo-linguistic knowledge” or the misrepresentation of linguistic phenomena:

[R]eification is the apprehension of the products of human activity as if they were something other than human products – such as facts of nature, results of cosmic laws, or manifestations of divine will. Reification implies that man is capable of forgetting his own authorship of the human world, and, further, that the dialectic between man, the producer, and his products is lost to consciousness. [...] reification can be described as an extreme step in the process of objectivation, whereby the objectivated world loses its comprehensibility as a human enterprise and becomes fixated as a non-human, non-humanizable, inert facticity. (Berger & Luckmann 1967: 106)

I argued that concepts such as ‘correct Hebrew’ can be understood as institutions in Berger & Luckmann’s (1967) terms (see 2.1.2.3). Because institutions and roles can be reified, concepts such as ‘Oriental dialect of Hebrew’ can also be apprehended as facticity – regardless of any perceptual basis. As for any normative standard of a language, it is probably impossible to find a sound perceptual basis for the concept ‘correct Hebrew’ because there is hardly any HS who consequently adheres to all normative rules which define ‘correct Hebrew’ – therefore it is a reified concept. Interestingly, Berger & Luckmann (1967: 108–109) use ‘Jewishness’ as an example for reification. In our context, the conceptualization of Hebrew as a ‘Jewish language’ takes this reification one step further.

Again, these aspects are summarized under the notion ‘linguistic stereotype’

Humans have receptive competence of lectal varieties, but the images formed are not necessarily accurate, at least from the perspective of experts such as linguists. It is in this sense that I use the term “linguistic stereotype”; an instance of folk perception with respect to the distinctive features of a speech variety. Linguistic stereotypes, rather than representing exaggerated and distorted images, constitute useful cognitive reference point constructions which allow

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17 German original: Dieses Wissen ist als Teil des Sprach- und Weltwissens eines Individuums und demnach als komplexe mentale Struktur zu verstehen, die von allen – sprachlichen wie nichtsprachlichen – Aspekten des alltäglichen (Er-)Lebens beeinflusst wird (Reisen, Kommunikation, Medien, Vorurteile etc.) Insofern ist diese mentale Struktur nicht allein aus sprachlichen Phänomenen ableitbar, sondern konstituiert sich aus der Gesamtheit der möglichen Erfahrungsinhalte individuell und definiert in Form von individuell konstruierten Alltagskategorien (=Konzepten) den Rahmen für (sprachliche) Interaktion.

us not only to categorize our linguistic environment but also to categorize and characterize our social environment. As I have previously argued (Kristiansen 2003), linguistic stereotypes metonymically evoke the social stereotypes associated with the group in question. Accents are thus not only regionally and socially diagnostic; they also serve to characterize speakers in very significant ways. (Kristiansen 2008: 61)

Rather than just highlighting the artificial nature of linguistic stereotypes, the importance of these representations for the speakers' processes of categorization is expressed in the second part of the citation. Agha (2006: 148) similarly defines "metapragmatic stereotypes" as "culture-internal models of utterance indexicality associated with speech variants." The study of these types of knowledge as the representations of speakers who act as research participants is central to PVL (Krefeld 2019: 28).

As Kristiansen (2008: 53) points out, "from a Cognitive Linguistics perspective, the link between lexical and social categories is a complex and intriguing affair." This topic is addressed in this study by RQ8 and RQ9. I will try to approach these questions by identifying and analyzing the most commonly used categories of this type from the participants' statements. Based on the theoretic discussion so far, I argue that these categories are shaped according to general principles of natural categorization, as they are studied in cognitive linguistics.

To determine the content of these categories, it is necessary to study what is termed "attitudes" in Krefeld & Pustka's (Forthcoming) model – this research goal is addressed by RQ6. I will assume that frequently expressed LAs hint at common representations. LAs can be grasped as integral components in the construction of meaning and the social function of language. For example, the metaphorical concept LANGUAGE AS A BOND can be used to serve these processes when defining Hebrew as a 'Jewish language' (cf. Berthele 2008: 309). In the following, LAs are understood as constructed in relation to concepts which have been reviewed, so far: institutions, roles and representations of linguistic variation. Just as the markedness of a linguistic variant is sensitive to the context and subject to diachronic change, LAs are not fixed categories which can be linked inseparably to a participant, once they have been expressed. For instance, participants expressed different and at times contradicting attitudes towards 'slang' or other linguistic concepts during interviews for this study, in the course of less than one hour.

#### **2.1.4.4 Categorizing usage events**

From a structuralist perspective, language varieties are understood as equally functional for the exchange of information. However, linguistic variation is far more than redundant structure: each variant is associated with extra-linguistic parameters that fulfill different pragmatic functions (Bokelmann 2020: 38, Krefeld 2019: 27). Language

is used to order the environment and to make sense of it through categorization. Thus, speakers use language to convey meaning to their own actions by performing their identity and demonstrating their belonging to groups (see 2.1.2.2). Because acts of identity construction are essentially related to in-group and out-group differences and performed through accommodation during usage events, the classification of other speakers is an important part of these processes (Kristiansen 2008: 73–74). There are not just categories that are inherently used in each language to bestow order and meaning. At the same time, linguistic phenomena and their speakers are subject to further categorization.

When we meet people for the first time, engage in the maintenance of social relationships or the negotiation of social roles and positions, the so-called ideational, message-bearing or referential function of language is secondary with respect to the so-called social, phatic or interpersonal function. Language is not just a tool for ideational communication. It is also an important vehicle for social communication. It enables us to identify and characterize unknown individuals, convey and preserve our own relative position on a given hierarchical scale and define ourselves as in-group or out-group members of relevant social categorizations. (Kristiansen 2008: 70)

This process of classification of other speakers during a usage event which was reassessed above with Berger & Luckmann's (1967: 42) terms as the "location" of speakers "in society" is also described by R36f3l1's statement:

**(2) R36f3l1 (15:30)**

*There is this automatic thought to divide people somehow. Let's say I'm in Jerusalem – so I speak with someone and I think instantly whether he is Jew or Arab. Then, I hear his accent – I understand that he is Arab.*

יש כזאת מחשבה אוטומטית לחלק אנשים איכשהו. נגיד אני בירושלים אז אני מדברת עם מישהו ואני ישר חושבת אם הוא יהודי או ערבי. ואני שומעת המבטא שלו, אני מבינה שהוא ערבי.

R36f3l1 describes her thought pattern as "automatic." It can be inferred that it would be hard for her to stop these thoughts of how to "divide people." This involuntary and at the same time necessary aspect about the categorization of people along stereotypes is also described by Nassehi:

We can hardly move around in our everyday lives without stereotyping ideas of order. To infer role expectations from partial aspects of people's behaviour, we must bear in mind typologies and taxonomies that make us capable of acting at all. We can assess what the other will do and what we might expect from that person only if we are in a position to draw on social structures in the form of types. (Nassehi 2024: 33–34)

The type of “lectal categorization,” in Kristiansen’s (2008: 73) terminology, that r36f3l1 explains is the classification of someone in Jerusalem as “Arab” on the basis of his “accent” – it can be inferred that she operates with a category ‘Arabs.’ Kristiansen renders a general theoretic account of this type of categorization processes, using cognitive linguistics terminology:

We assume that Hearer categorizes the speech pattern of Speaker and evokes an entrenched, metonymic schema concerning the speech style in question and the social categorization that effected it. The central images of both lectal and social categorizations operate as cognitive reference point-constructions. Such categories are presumably naturally organised around clusters of elements in the visual or auditory modalities which are distinctive enough to establish perceptual contrast with neighbouring categories. Lectal categorization thus seems to involve a conceptualizer who correlates a token (stretch of unidentified speech) with a number of idealized speech models (linguistic stereotypes). (Kristiansen 2008: 73)

This type of social and linguistic categorization processes can also be grasped in terms of Harvey Sacks’ “membership categorization device” (MCD):

A Membership Categorization Device is composed of two parts – first, one or more collection(s) of categories, and, second, some rules of application. [...] The categories of person (or member [of the society] in Sacks’ parlance) which figure in interaction and in social life more generally are not a simple, single aggregate of categories, but are organized into collections of categories. A collection is a set of categories that ‘go together’ – for example, [male/female]; [Buddhist/Catholic/Jew/Muslim/Protestant . . .] (Schegloff 2007: 467)

R36f3l1’s statement does not include any information about other categories, besides ‘Arabs,’ which she might use. Therefore, we can only infer that she disposes of a collection of categories which contains at least [in-group/Arab].

Schegloff characterizes the categories of a MCD as

the store house and the filing system for the common-sense knowledge that ordinary people – that means ALL people in their capacity as ordinary people – have about what people are like, how they behave, etc. (Schegloff 2007: 469)

He goes on to define some common properties of the MCD categories, such as “category-bound activities” that “are kinds of activities or actions or forms of conduct taken by the common-sense or vernacular culture to be specially characteristic of a category’s members” (Schegloff 2007: 470). In r36f3l1’s example (2), having an “accent” can be interpreted as a category-bound activity belonging to her category ‘Arabs.’ In Sacks’s (1972: 35) original paper, the example which he uses as a category-bound activity of ‘babies’ is ‘crying.’

From a cognitive scientific perspective, it may well be that MCD categories come close to what is discussed in the literature as ‘basic level categories’ (see

Murphy 2002 for an overview). Basic level categories (BLC) are defined by their association with prototypical activities, among other properties (Schmid 1996: 292). The MCD categories are abstract concepts and cannot be measured with scientific means – unlike colors which can be defined by the wave length of light. Even though most research revolving around the concept of BLCs has been carried out with measurable objects, there is no reason why a general definition should not apply to the categorization of linguistic variation, as well:

Basicness in categorization has to do with matters of human psychology: ease of perception, memory, learning, naming and use. Basicness of level has no objective status external to human beings. (Lakoff 1987: 38)

During a usage event which takes place as face-to-face encounter, an individual's visual appearance and his way of speaking are probably the most easily perceivable characteristics. Accents certainly qualify as actions which are typically learned together with category names for their speakers. Stereotypical accents are used, for example, in movies to portray characters as belonging to certain categories. This aspect is taken up in Krefeld & Pustka's (Forthcoming) model as "parodying" (see Fig. 2.2). When perceiving linguistic variation, for example, in the form of someone who speaks Hebrew with an 'accent,' it is very likely that the perceiver adopts his behavior accordingly (Kristiansen 2008: 73–74): Many people switch to a simplified language variety or another language, when they perceive a 'foreign accent' (see also the account of my own experience in 1). These acts of accommodation can be understood as prototypical (re)actions which are associated with categories for linguistic variation. "[B]asicness of naming and use," in Lakoff's (1987: 38) terms, is expressed in Sack's "economy rule" with which he defines MCD categories:

It holds that a single category term from any MCD can in principle do adequate reference. More can be used; as for example in a reference to a '45-year-old Russian ballerina'; but, in principle, one term can do adequate reference. (Schegloff 2007: 471)

In confirmation of Kristiansen's (2008: 73) assertion (see above) further characteristics of natural categories, as they are described by Rosch (1978) seem to apply. I will assume that representations of linguistic variation and the speakers are structured according to principles which have been established in cognitive linguistics. This argument is elaborated with empirical data in 5 and especially in 5.3.

Another aspect about natural categories that can be illustrated with r36f3l1's statement is their dependence on cultural context:

It should be noted that the issues in categorization with which we are primarily concerned have to do with explaining the categories found in a culture and coded by the language of that

culture at a particular point in time. When we speak of the formation of categories, we mean their formation in the culture. (Rosch 1978: 28)

By referring to the the circumstances where she might use the described process of categorization, “Let’s say I’m in Jerusalem,” r36f3l1 hints to the fact that she uses other collections of categories in other circumstances – for example, in Tel Aviv. Moreover, it seems safe to say that r36f3l1’s category ‘Arabs’ is different from the category ‘Arabs’ which is used by a Berber in Morocco.

To categorize a stimulus means to consider it for purposes [...] It is to the organism’s advantage not to differentiate one stimulus from others when that differentiation is irrelevant to the purposes at hand. (Rosch 1978: 28–29)

Based on Rosch’s (1978: 28–29) above cited principle of “cognitive economy,” it is sensible to expect that the number of categories which are conventionally applied by a speech community to categorize linguistic variation is finite and that there has to be some congruity of these categories due to speakers’ similar communicative goals. Schegloff (2007: 475) points out that it is intriguing why certain of the many possible categories are used and ultimately, stresses the importance of investigating the categories, as they are used by the speakers themselves:

The issue is, after all, not whether we can or should make a category out of it, but whether they – the parties to the conversation – do so, and, if they do, what that sounds or looks like. And this, of course, should be sought in data, in an effort to get at what the parties to the talk are doing by talking the way they are. (Schegloff 2007: 477)

This study takes up this research objective by investigating HSs’ representations of linguistic variation and social groups.

## 2.2 The benefits of Grounded Theory Methodology for this study

The empirical investigation of linguistic variation is methodologically challenging because of the theoretical implications that have been discussed so far. How can interpersonal processes for the construction of meaning that are crucial for the analysis of linguistic variation be studied?

Berger & Luckmann (1967: 173) describe the fleeting nature of human experience by referring to Heraclitus’ aphorism *panta rhei* ‘everything flows’ (see 2.1.2.3). In Israel, the metaphor of *lizrom* ‘to flow’ is used to refer to a flexible and relaxed mindset: because little else can be done in unknown or fast-changing circumstances, the most practicable solution is to go with the flow. The expression *litsnoah ve-lizrom*

‘parachute and flow’ refers somewhat jokingly to a flexible strategy in response to unknown conditions where one finds oneself after parachuting into enemy territory. This metaphor expresses the conviction that flexibility is a key element for reaching one’s goals and for surviving.

In the context of research methodology, a flexible and open mindset of the researcher is viewed as a prerequisite for successful fieldwork and – in general, for any kind of qualitative research. Although a flexible research design is certainly advantageous in an under researched area, some kind of systematization is needed to reach valuable results. Grounded Theory Methodology (GTM) is the systematization of a principally flexible research paradigm. GTM originated in the context of American qualitative sociology, in a climate of academic protest which is also reflected in Labovian variationist studies. The principles of the research paradigm were first published by Glaser & Strauss (1967) who each subsequently developed and propagated their own accentuations of the methodology. GTM is a hermeneutic approach for the sociological analysis of artifacts and processes of symbolization:

Theoretical concepts and models are developed on the basis of empirical data from everyday contexts, starting from a preliminary problematization perspective, and are constantly and recursively linked back to the experiential level. The corresponding theory of a social section of the world or of a problem is ‘grounded.’<sup>18</sup> (Breuer 2010: 39, my translation)

According to Charmaz who worked together with Glaser and Strauss and ultimately propagated her version of ‘constructivist grounded theory,’

Grounded theory demystifies the conduct of qualitative inquiry. Rather than applying a preconceived theoretical framework, your ideas about the data guide how you construct the theoretical analysis. (Charmaz 2004: 54)

GTM is a heterogeneous framework – there are various interpretations by different researchers with a differing degree of detail about its methods. Before discussing the principles of GTM and its benefits for this study, the theoretic foundation of the framework within qualitative sociology is reviewed.

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<sup>18</sup> German original: Auf der Basis von Erfahrungsdaten aus alltagsweltlichen Kontexten werden – von einer vorläufigen Problematisierungsperspektive ausgehend – theoretische Konzepte und Modellierungen entwickelt und dabei fortwährend rekursiv an die Erfahrungsebene zurückgebunden. Die entsprechende Theorie eines sozialen Weltausschnitts bzw. eines Problemthemas wird ‘gegenstandsgegründet’ herausgearbeitet (‘grounded’).

### 2.2.1 Principles of qualitative sociology

A fundamental principle in qualitative research is appreciating subjective realities and, conversely, rejecting the belief in an objective truth. Every individual perceives the world differently and good research constitutes a comprehensive and complex picture stemming from different perspectives, which will never be free of contradictions.<sup>19</sup> (Dunkelberg 2005: 249, my translation)

The above citation expresses the aim of qualitative research to explore the research area from multiple perspectives. For the qualitatively oriented framework of PVL, the importance of the methodological integration of different perspectives was illustrated in 2.1.4.2. Therefore, a multi-faceted analysis which is potentially contradictory can increase the overall quality of the research by enabling a more enhanced understanding.

Because the concept of scientific objectivity is principally rejected, the researcher's independent analytic position is equally called into question. The role of the researcher is seen as influenced by the constant and paradoxical changing of perspectives between participation in and distancing oneself from the area of research (Bohnsack & Nohl 2001: 32). Thus, the research process is understood ideally as a fruitful interaction between the researcher and the researched population. Instead of testing a preconceived hypothesis on the population within a standardized and inflexible framework, qualitative research promotes co-operation with the participants who are termed *Forschungspartner* 'partners in research' by Breuer (2010: 40) and with other researchers. Subjectivity is no longer perceived as a threat to scientific integrity – as long as it is handled consciously and openly – because it simply cannot be ruled out by any means (Dunkelberg 2005: 250). There is no way to reach universally and objectively valid conclusions by the means of qualitative research:

Knowledge in Social Science is understood as fundamentally partial and location-bound – it cannot claim general validity, but is limited in its informative value and inevitably linked to the perspective of the researchers.<sup>20</sup> (von Unger 2014b: 22, my translation)

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<sup>19</sup> German original: Ein grundlegendes Prinzip in der qualitativen Forschung ist die Wertschätzung von subjektiven Wirklichkeiten bzw. umgekehrt die Ablehnung des Glaubens an eine objektive Wahrheit. Jedes Individuum nimmt die Welt anders wahr und gute Forschung konstituiert ein umfassendes und komplexes Bild aus verschiedenen Perspektiven, das aber nie widerspruchsfrei sein wird.

<sup>20</sup> German original: Sozialwissenschaftliche Erkenntnis wird als grundsätzlich partial und standortgebunden verstanden – sie kann keine allgemeine Gültigkeit beanspruchen, sondern ist in ihrer Aussagekraft begrenzt und unausweichlich mit der Perspektive der Forschenden verknüpft.

Every qualitative analysis is situated within the specific contexts of its time, its place, researcher(s) and participants. The thorough explication of these contexts and the different perspectives which are inherent in the particular study is regarded as a central requirement for valuable qualitative research:

Reflexivity regarding the researchers' subjectivity, their positioning in the research field and their influence on the research process is considered a quality feature in qualitative Social Science.<sup>21</sup> (von Unger 2014b: 23, my translation)

Based on these premises, the scientific output of GTM-based research is provisional:

[T]he published word is not the final one, but only a pause in the never-ending process of generating theory. (Glaser & Strauss 1967: 40)

It is easy for anyone who does not share these theoretic premises to dismiss qualitative social science as merely anecdotal. Nassehi argues against this undue criticism by stressing the core aim of the research paradigm, which is the systematic analysis of supra-individual patterns:

Strictly speaking, qualitative social research is also a method of pattern recognition that concerns itself with the development of order; that is, with a reconstructible process of ruling out other possibilities. Those who believe that qualitative social research is research that makes the subject speak or that gets closer to reality because the data for research are 'natural' and close to everyday life are simply doing bad sociology, as this kind of research is also about supra-individual patterns and about the methodically controllable recombination of meaning. (Nassehi 2024: 36)

This study adheres to a qualitative research paradigm to recognize supra-individual patterns in participants' statements about linguistic variation in MH, with the aim of analyzing typical representations.

### 2.2.2 Principles of GTM

Three principles are key to GTM: data-based generation of the hypothesis, a post-structuralist outlook on meaning which leads to a methodological integration of different perspectives on the research area and systematic methodological recursivity. Although the first (usage-basedness) and the second principles are also central to third wave variationist studies and to PVL, GTM has rarely been used as a method-

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<sup>21</sup> German original: (Selbst-) Reflexivität im Hinblick auf die Subjektivität der Forschenden, ihre Positionierung im Forschungsfeld und ihren Einfluss auf den Forschungsprozess gilt in der qualitativen Sozialforschung als Qualitätsmerkmal.

ological basis in linguistic research. Hadley who authored one of the few works on the application of GTM in linguistics, laments this fact:

In contrast to the spread of grounded theory in other fields of the applied social sciences, within applied linguistics, it has experienced marginalization and mistrust. (Hadley 2017: 4)

On the one hand, it has been argued that the assumption of ready-made categories poses an obstacle for sensible research in the domain of meaning (see 2.1.3). On the other hand, it is clear that no researcher can rid himself completely of theoretical assumptions before approaching the research area and some research experience is needed for any successful GTM study (Hadley 2017: 87). How can a balance between hypothesizing, which is the trigger for any research project, and the questioning of popular categories and their meaning be achieved?

In this respect, GTM can be valuable for contemporary variationist studies because the problematic assumption of a priori categories is handled explicitly. This notion is expressed as the avoidance of “forcing data” – in Glaser’s words – and summarized by Charmaz:

[F]orcing data includes: applying extant theories to the data; assuming the significance of demographic variables (such as age, sex, race, marital status and occupation; also called face-sheet variables) before beginning the study; and imposing evidentiary rules (a priori prescriptions about what stands as sufficient evidence) on the data. (Charmaz 2004: 62)

The relevance of this methodological principle for variationist studies which too often focused on “face-sheet variables” and especially for PVL is evident.

GTM stresses the use of methodological recursivity as a self-correcting process (Hadley 2017: 143): by the means of constant comparisons, it encourages the researcher to reflect his own position in the research process and to critically assess existing theories. Open exploration of the research area precedes a more focused investigation which leads to theory generation and in turn to further investigation, until theoretical saturation is reached. Different stages of research and theory generation are not only building on each other, but the constant comparison of data from different research stages sheds new light on existing data and its analysis. Decisions for the subsequent data collection are guided by recursive comparisons (Strübing 2008: 26 and Breuer 2010: 58). In GTM terminology this process of selective data collection is called ‘theoretic sampling.’ Essentially, there is no clear conceptual separation between data collection and analysis in GTM. Ideally, each piece of data needs to be analyzed, before moving on to the next event of data collection. Thereby, the criteria for the collection of data change as research proceeds. According to Hadley (2017: 41), “open sampling” should be followed by “relational and variational

sampling” and finally by “discriminate sampling”. Charmaz describes the function of theoretical sampling for the data analysis as follows:

Through theoretical sampling you can elaborate the meaning of your categories, discover variation within them and define gaps between categories. Theoretical sampling relies on comparative methods for discovering these gaps and finding ways to fill them. (Charmaz 2004: 78)

There are many possible methods which can be used for data collection in GTM. Commonly, qualitative methods are used, such as participant observation, the collection of media and print products for the purpose of communication analysis and interviews with experts and lay participants. More standardized methods and experiments can be used in advanced research stages. Therefore, quantitatively analyzable questionnaires, (perception) experiments and elicitation tasks, such as drawing mental maps or GERT, which is used in this study, can all be integrated in a GTM framework. Krefeld & Pustka’s (Forthcoming) suggestion to use a triangulation of exploratory and more structured “hypothesis-testing elicitation methods” for the purpose of empirical studies on linguistic variation can therefore be achieved organically with GTM.

In qualitative research paradigms, ‘coding’ is used to designate interpretative analytic techniques (Strübing 2008: 19). In this sense, coding comprises rephrasing and summarizing textual data to explicate inherent concepts. In subsequent coding processes, these concepts are related to a larger amount of data and defined as analytic codes, if they are found to be appropriate for the specific context and type of data and relevant for the research questions. In GTM, there is no unique way of coding: because this interpretative technique is sensitive to the context and the type of data and is determined by the researcher’s theoretic and personal dispositions, the coding process cannot be defined precisely and universally. Therefore, methodological works on GTM, such as Corbin & Strauss (2015), Hadley (2017) and Charmaz (2004), tend to explain coding in an illustrative fashion by the use of exemplary analyses. Although the approach qualitative content analysis, as described by Mayring (2015) and Kuckartz (2016), diverges from GTM in several aspects, both works were useful for this study because of their elaborate and detailed definition of qualitative analytic methods.

Generally, coding is understood in GTM as subsequent comparative processes which can be subdivided in “open” or “early,” “axial” and “selective coding” (Strübing 2008: 20). Hadley describes the purpose of early coding:

Coding at this stage serves not only to provide an accessible starting point for those new to the methodology of grounded theory but also simple, descriptive summaries of observable

behavior and actions will be important for progressively building your theory. (Hadley 2017: 88)

An example for early coding in this study is the tentative formulation of categories on the basis of i53f2l1's statement (see 1). A more detailed account of the analytic processes which were used for coding the GERT corpus is given in 5.4. As a starting point for the analysis in this study, it was helpful to summarize the context and the Hebrew content of the interview events in English, in the form of case summaries, following Kuckartz's (2016: 58) method.

As can be seen from the examples which are provided by Charmaz (2004: 67), summarizing is an essential part of coding. Shortening and thus paraphrasing the content of interviews helps to get an overview and sets off interpretative processes which lead to the definition of analytic codes. At an early stage of analysis, it can be especially useful to look out for codes that have been brought up by the participants themselves. These are termed "in-vivo codes" in reference to "unique words or phrases used by [106] the informants[...] to encapsulate some important issue" (Hadley 2017: 105–106). Because of their authenticity which derives directly from the participants' formulations, they tend to persist throughout the analysis and can play an important role for theoretic reasoning.

'Axial coding' is characterized as a comparatively oriented way of analyzing data from a more encompassing perspective, with the aim to model relations between data and theoretic concepts (Strübing 2008: 20). The next higher level of analysis is reached through 'selective coding,' which is described as a readjustment of the analytical perspective:

After selective coding, the analysis should be more consistent with regard to the research question than after axial coding.<sup>22</sup> (Strübing 2008: 22, my translation)

In GTM, the principle of recursivity which is implemented through constant comparisons is also present in the writing process. Before arriving at the final text, a systematic collection of memos is used to externalize one's thoughts during analysis. Birks et al. explain the term 'memo' as an acronym which refers to its functions:

Mapping research activities; Extracting meaning from the data; Maintaining momentum; Opening communication [...] (Birks et al. 2008: 70)

Memos are not necessarily connected closely to the data, unlike codes, but can contain all sorts of methodological, analytic and theoretic reasoning (Hadley 2017: 107).

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<sup>22</sup> German original: Am Ende des selektiven Kodierens sollte aber die Analyse im Hinblick auf die Forschungsfrage ein höheres Maß an Konsistenz aufweisen als nach dem axialen Kodieren.

Memoing can be understood as a systematic method for entering into a discourse with the data and with oneself. By relating earlier and later memos to each other and in turn coding them – as the data itself, they can be used ideally for the conceptualization of a research paper. Writing memos can function as a trick to start the writing process early and without undue reservation because memos need not be orderly, stylistically elaborate or grammatically correct. They should just conserve the researchers' thoughts and associations at a certain point during analysis. Therefore, memos should at least contain a date, a topic and some text or a sketch.

In summary, GTM is a methodological attempt to explore RQs through the systematic integration of different perspectives on the data. In the context of this study, the overall RQ can be tackled by asking about the HSs' linguistic representations of themselves and their in-groups, in contrast to their representations of other groups. Once more, another perspective is added by the researcher who has to relate the insider and outsider perspectives by abstracting theoretic thoughts from the data. Ideally, these analytic processes of comparison and contextualization can lead to a "thick theorization" of the research area (Hadley 2017: 37). The overall aim of a GTM study is not to postulate an absolute and complete new theory, but to take in the reader as co-analyst, to propose interpretations and enable the "emergence" of theoretic thought in Glaser & Strauss's (1967) words (cf. Breuer 2010: 40). Hadley (2017: 11) points out that the style of writing used in GTM usually diverges from the typical academic style of the research domain. This less formal and more inviting style aims at creating an atmosphere of openness and enabling a more comprehensive understanding of the methodology and the research context.

The principles of GTM will be taken up again throughout Chapters 4 and 5, where I illustrate and discuss its possible application with several examples from this study.

## 2.3 Summary: Towards a Cognitive Variationist theory

The theoretic review encompassed works reaching from Ferdinand Saussure to Harvey Sacks and pursued the shifting focus from structure to speaker, leading to a usage-based study of meaning that is exemplified by third wave studies on linguistic variation.

On the basis of PVL, the argument has been made that any adequate study of linguistic variation needs to investigate the speakers' processes of social and linguistic categorization. To be able to determine the premises and the methods for detailed variationist studies, such as perception experiments, it is necessary to consider the institutions of the speech community and the speakers' common representations about their language and society. It has been argued that qualitative sociologist methodology and especially GTM are valuable resources for linguistic studies with

this aim. In GTM terminology, the researcher should look for ‘in-vivo codes’ and try to approximate the meaning of these categories, as they are constructed by the speakers.

Since processes of categorization are in the heartland of cognitive science, principles from cognitive linguistics such as prototypicality, markedness and basicness of level have much to offer for their study. Rosch’s experiments on categorization were mainly carried out with concrete objects, but there is no objection against the validity of the principles for abstract objects (Schmid 2007: 125). In fact, units of a day, which are abstract concepts, were also studied as categories (Rosch 1978: 44). If concepts from our research context, such as ‘dialect’ and ‘Mizrahim,’ are socially constructed as “real” (cf. Berger & Luckmann 1967), the principles should be applicable, too.

This argument has already been made by Geeraerts (2008: 39) and Kristiansen (2008) who advocate for a paradigm of “Cognitive Sociolinguistics” and Krefeld & Pustka (Forthcoming) who suggest *A cognitive approach to language varieties* for the aims of PVL. Kristiansen (2008: 64) argues for the general treatment of “what in everyday terminology is referred to as language, accent, dialect, style and social group” as “concepts; categorizations and schemas on different levels of abstractions that relate to one another in the sense that they form part of a larger frame, or Cognitive Cultural Model.”

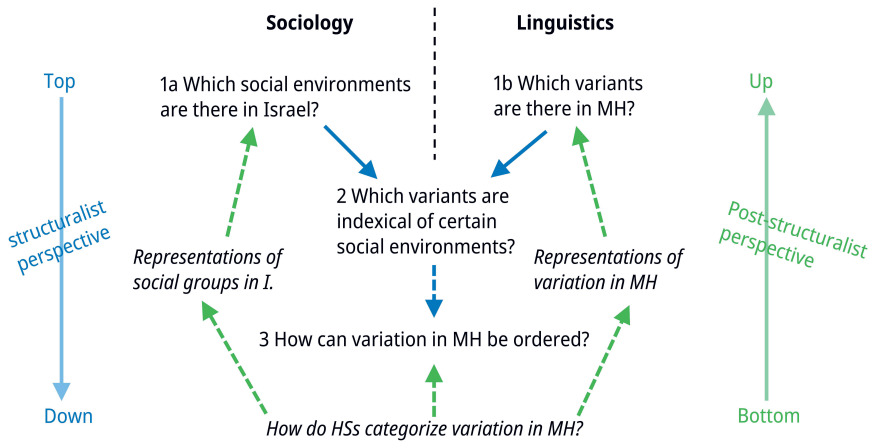
This post-structuralist perspective on the popular notions ‘language,’ ‘accent,’ ‘dialect’ and ‘social group’ may seem counter-intuitive because they are conventionalized to such a degree – also (or especially) among linguists. However, differences in the treatment of these and related categories are well-known: in Israel, ‘dialect’ doesn’t have the same importance in everyday life as in Europe and in the USA; the notion ‘dialect’ is used by non-expert speakers and linguists with another meaning than in European contexts (Sinner 2014: 16). In European studies about linguistic variation, the concept ‘regionality’ is much more prominent than in the USA and in Israel (in respect to Hebrew): Variationist studies tend to highlight the concept of regional varieties because they are most readily observable in a European context. How can these differing notions be integrated in a general theory about linguistic variation? Or should we give up on all the traditional notions?

It has been stressed that, at least, the speakers’ understanding of these notions – better still, their own notions of systematic linguistic variation – need to be studied to gain valuable insights about their meaning and the dynamics of the system. Still, much work needs to be done to foster a theoretic framework which can fruitfully combine cognitive, sociological and linguistic strands of research. Since the most important common denominator of the research areas is their usage-based approach, much empirical research is needed – this should be understood as a call for a fourth wave of variationist studies (using Eckert’s terms). This fourth wave could be profiled

as the study of speakers' representations of variation, which explicitly relates these concepts to cognitive science and the sociology of knowledge.

Ultimately, this approach can lead to a typological comparison of common (prototypical) concepts of linguistic variation in different speech communities, such as Levinson & Wilkins's (2006) collection of "grammars of space." In a global perspective, 'regionality' is not likely to be the universal defining variable for concepts of linguistic variation, as will be argued in the following analysis. Additional variables are at work which account for different LAs and language use among the speakers. These variables can be explored experimentally with context sensitive methods, such as GERT.

This study is an attempt to apply this theoretic approach with empirical data. The realignment of the research questions for this study along a post-structuralist perspective is illustrated in Fig. 2.3. Instead of departing from established sociological and linguistic categories, the entry point for this study are HSSs' own processes of categorization. I argue that this approach is more promising and organic than a purely structuralist perspective because social and linguistic categorization are intertwined processes. To get a better understanding of the institutions which are



**Fig. 2.3:** Juxtaposition: theoretic perspectives on sociolinguistic variation

likely to affect HSSs' representations and their language use, major historical and social developments in Israel will be reviewed in the next chapter.

### 3 The make-up of Israeli society

The modern state of Israel was founded in 1948: On May 14th David Ben-Gurion proclaimed the state's declaration of independence from the British Mandate and was soon elected as its first prime minister. The iconic statesman performed the declaration in Hebrew, although it was not his native language. In fact, most of the new citizens of Israel were not native speakers of Hebrew. Ben-Gurion was born 1886 as David Grün in Plonsk, a small town north-west of Warsaw, then forming part of the Russian empire. He grew up with Yiddish, learned Russian and probably Polish to some extent (Shapira 2015: 17). Ben-Gurion studied in religious schools until his Bar-Mitzva where he was exposed to traditional religious texts in Hebrew. His parents were early supporters of the Zionist movement, read progressive journals in Hebrew and his father is known to have written letters in archaic Hebrew (Shapira 2015: 15).

At the end of the 19th century, the new Hebrew literature was well received among Jewish intellectuals and some Zionist organizations had adapted Hebrew for their publications. Yet, it was very uncommon to come across spoken Hebrew – even among educated Zionists (Shapira 2015: 16–17 and Walters et al. 2023: 279). Many even opposed the use of Hebrew openly and advocated the use of Yiddish. They argued that Yiddish, which was the mother tongue of most European Jews, was the language most beneficial for the goals of political Zionism (Myhill 2004: 71). This debate was carried out for several decades in continental Europe as well as in the Jewish settlements in Ottoman Palestine and culminated in the so-called *milḥemet ha-safot* ‘war of the languages’ (Spolsky 1997: 139 and Sivan 1984).

Having some passive command of the language from his early childhood, the adolescent Ben-Gurion decided to speak only Hebrew with two friends. The boys’ decision, which was followed by the foundation of a Zionist youth organization in their hometown, is portrayed by Shapira as being symbolic of their ardor for the growing political and cultural movement. After his emigration to Ottoman Palestine in 1906, Ben-Gurion quickly took up his political activity and allegedly held his first speech in Hebrew as a statement against *Yiddishists*. Most of the attendants of the meeting apparently neither understood Hebrew nor Yiddish and some even left in consequence. Although the audience probably would have preferred to be addressed in Russian, they elected Ben-Gurion to his first political function in his new homeland (Shapira 2015: 28).

What follows is an introduction to Israel as the research field of this study. Demographic and cultural developments will be reviewed in order to enable a preliminary understanding of the social structure of Israel's population. The introduction will revolve around the thread of language which was picked up by Ben Gurion's example.

Especially, the development of MH and its institutionalization as Israel's national language will be described. Special attention will be devoted to prevalent cultural concepts such as 'Zionism' and 'Israeliness' – to name just two – as they are discussed in the scholarly literature. The concepts that are introduced in the following will be discussed in the context of participants' utterances in Chapter 6.

### 3.1 Israel's population, languages and cultures

According to Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), the country's population numbered 9.291 million people at the end of 2020. The CBS referred to 6.87 million as "Jews," almost 1.96 million as "Arabs" and 456,000 as "others" (CBS 2020e). This adds up to roughly three quarters of the population being Jews, more than a fifth Arabs and less than 5 percent others. A footnote in the publication states that the category "others" includes "non-Arab Christians and persons not classified by religion in the Population Register" (CBS 2020e).

As can be seen from the CBS data, it is common to apply several religious and ethnic categories to Israel's population. The characteristics of these and further categories will be outlined in detail in 3.1.3. To underline their artificial nature, these categories will be written in single quotation marks in the text.

One key aim of this study is to analyze in how far these commonly used categories are determined linguistically. An asymmetry in this regard is already apparent: the category 'Arabs' is commonly understood as 'speakers of Arabic as native language,' while it is clear that the equivalent 'speakers of Hebrew as native language' applies only to a part of the population which is categorized as 'Jews'. This assumption is reflected in the CBS' 2011 survey about the "Mastery of the Hebrew Language and Usage of Languages" (CBS 2013). The publication provides data about the *sfat 'em* 'mother tongue' of Israelis who were aged over 20 in 2011. While specific data about the mother tongues of "Jews" and "natives of the USSR" is presented, the authors seem to assume tacitly that "Arabs" speak Arabic as mother tongue because no information about their mother tongue is included.

In this study the notion 'native language' designates the first language that a speaker acquired in early childhood – the terms 'native language' and 'first language' (L1) will be used interchangeably. In special cases of simultaneous infant bilingualism, one speaker can have more than one L1. As it is common in second language learning theory, 'second language' (L2) will be used broadly to refer to "any languages learned later than in earliest childhood," regardless of the context and time of acquisition, language use and degree of mastery (Rosamond et al. 2013 [1998]: 1).

Though it is not clear from the CBS' publication, it seems that the data about "mother tongues" is based on participants' self-declaration in a questionnaire – it is

only stated that the data on language competence was obtained by the participants' self-estimation. This method can yield insightful data for large samples. Generally, one should bear in mind that L1 is by definition a variable which cannot be objectively measured. Therefore, it is sensible to work with participants' self-declarations, instead of ascribing a value – especially since the notion of 'native language' has been used excessively to mark groups of people in terms of ethnicity which can have negative consequences for them.

Having discussed the nature of the available data about L1s in Israel, it will be summarized as it is originally presented: the summary of the CBS data in Table 3.1 shows that, in 2011, slightly less than half of Israel's population aged over 20 were speakers of Hebrew as L1. The category "Others" includes all other languages which

**Tab. 3.1:** L1s spoken by Israelis aged over 20 in 2011 (CBS 2013: 2)

Speakers' Percentage	L1
Hebrew	49.0
Arabic	18.0
Russian	15.0
Others	10.4
English	2.0
French	2.0
Yiddish	2.0
Spanish	1.6

were named as L1: the text refers to Romanian, *maroḳa'it* 'Moroccan' and Amharic without indicating any numbers.

Among 'Jews,' the percentage of Hebrew as L1 is considerably higher, at 61%. Unsurprisingly, the percentage of Yiddish (2.6%) is also a bit higher, while the percentages of Russian (14%) and Arabic (3%) are lower, compared to the total percentages. No information is provided whether 'Moroccan' is subsumed under Arabic as L1 among the 'Jews' or if it is treated on its own.

From this data it can be seen that Israel's population today is multilingual. The linguistic diversity is also present in Israel's linguistic landscape, as can be seen from the three photos in Fig. 3.1 which I took during fieldwork. There are four different scripts (Arabic, Cyrillic, Hebrew and Latin) and at least 5 different languages on these signs: On the top left corner, there is a graffito in Aramaic; the regular street signs, in the middle, contain Hebrew, Arabic and English and the Cyrillic script on the green signs are indications in a Circassian language which I found in a Circassian village in Northern Israel.



Fig. 3.1: Multilingual signs in Israel

Linguistic heterogeneity, especially among the Jews, is caused by the fact that Israel's population was shaped to a large extent by subsequent waves of immigration (Schwarzwald 2001: 2). However, historically the region had already been multilingual. Spolsky & Shohamy describe the linguistic situation at the end of the nineteenth century:

The language of government, restricted in the main in its use to soldiers and officials, was Turkish. Peasants and town-dwellers spoke local dialects of Arabic. Classical Arabic was the written language of the educated elite. Sephardic Jews spoke Arabic, too, but inside the Community their language was Judezmo, a Jewish language based on Spanish, with a written form called Ladino [...] French was important culturally and politically, and German was supported by an explicit government language diffusion policy (Wahl 1996). Most of the masses of Ashkenazic Jews who started to arrive from Eastern Europe in the second half of the Century spoke Yiddish but brought with them [97] coteritorial vernaculars like Russian, Polish, and Hungarian. In contact situations like Jerusalem, bilingualism developed and changed rapidly. (Spolsky & Shohamy 1999: 96–97)

Colasunnono (2013) characterizes Israeli society as multilingual and adds that more varieties tend to be accepted which are not linked to a national Israeli identity, even though she characterizes the language policy as monolingual. Myhill (2004: 184) describes the governmental language policy towards Jewish immigrants as

comparatively generous with an “ideological trend towards some maintenance of immigrant languages and away from *rak ivrit* (‘only Hebrew’)” since the 1970s. Accordingly, this trend was reinforced by the arrival of “large numbers of immigrants from the ex-Soviet Union with little or no background in Hebrew” (Myhill 2004: 184). According to the CBS (2013: 4), more than 3.7 million people who were aged at least 20 indicated that they speak a L2: 40% of them reported to mix languages in conversation. This ratio is considerably higher among ‘Arabs’ with 63%, compared to the ratio among ‘Jews’ (35%). Among ‘Arabs’ 98% speak Arabic and 4% Hebrew at home. Apparently, these statements are not meant exclusively – that is to say that some speak both languages at home. Even 99% reported speaking Arabic with their friends: 67% reported speaking only in Arabic in these situations and 32% speak Hebrew (too). Even if not every Israeli Arab is a fluent speaker of Hebrew, for almost every Israeli Arab Hebrew has become their L2 either by choice or by necessity. Hence, it is important to systematically include this large group of speakers in sociolinguistic studies about MH.

In the group of “foreign-born Jews,” 47% reported to mix languages with an increased ratio of 65% among the younger generation aged between 20–44. 88% of the immigrants who were born in the former Soviet Union speak Russian at home and 48% (also) speak Hebrew at home. At work 93% of them speak Hebrew and 57% speak (also) Russian. There is a positive correlation between a higher income from occupation and a good command of Hebrew (based on self-estimation) among ‘Arabs’ and immigrants who arrived after 1990 (CBS 2013: 5).

In respect to possible language variation in Hebrew, Schwarzwald (2007: 76) asserts that the influence on Hebrew of Ethiopian and Russian *‘olim* is not yet measurable, whereas Spanish has gained some prestige, due to the popularity of *telenovelas*. Schwarzwald (2007: 73) upholds that only educated HSs are exposed to other languages – mainly English and to a lesser extent French and German – while most HSs, including college students, are not able to use foreign languages.

Arabic has lost its legal status as co-official language in 2018. It is used by Israeli Arabs as L1 and in a parallel educational system (Myhill 2004: 193). It is also taught as L2 in Jewish schools, but usually not mastered by native HSs. A brief summary of the history and the politics of immigration in Israel, as well as about the juridical definition of the category ‘Jews’ will be given in the next section.

### 3.1.1 Zionism, the Jewish State and the Law of Return

Since its foundation in 1948, the State of Israel has been encouraging Jews to immigrate by granting them citizenship after a short period of time. During the process of their so-called *kliṭa* ‘absorption’ they can receive assistance for housing, Hebrew

courses and financial aid. Thus, every year, thousands of *'olim hadashim* 'new immigrants' make their way to Israel. In 2020, 20,000 *'olim* arrived in Israel – which is a small number compared to the 34,000 *'olim* who arrived in 2019. The reason for the decrease is explained by “the outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic and the closing of Israel's borders to air travel.” In 2020, most of the *'olim* came from “Russia (38.1%), Ukraine (15.1%), France (11.0%) and the US (10.7%)” (CBS 2020e). As the verbatim translation of the singular form *'oleh* 'ascendant' suggests, *'olim* are ideally met with respect for their decision to support the nation-building of the Jewish state by means of their physical presence in Israel.

The ideological concept of 'Zionism' is the reason for Israel's welcoming immigration policy towards Jews. Zionism developed in 19th century Europe, where Jews were struggling to preserve their collective identity against the threat of emerging nationalisms. Taub renders the programmatic thesis of Zionism which is in turn based on a nationalistic ideology:

Jews will be able to become sovereign over their own fate without giving up their Jewish identity, if they perceive their own identity in national terms and create their own democratic nation-state. (Taub 2014: 41)

While the Zionists' dream of a nation-state came true with the foundation of modern Israel, Zionism in its many facets is still present today. In the kibbutz where I learned Hebrew, I overheard Israelis using *tsiyonut* 'Zionism' as a positive attribute just as 'courage' or 'good work-ethics' to commend, typically, *'olim* and *hayalim bodedim* 'lone soldiers'.<sup>1</sup> As a late consequence of the Zionist conception of Israel as 'Jewish state,' the state was defined as such by law in 2018.<sup>2</sup>

Since the late 1970s, critical responses to Zionism have been growing in Israel: 'Post-Zionism' emerged along solidifying social inequalities which are at least partly the outcome of the ideologically motivated policy that was implemented by Ben-Gurion's ruling *Mapai* party (see 3.1.3). The *mifleget po'alei 'erets yisrael* 'Workers' Party of the Land of Israel' was devoted to a socialist strand of Zionism. Baruch Kimmerling, one of the most prominent Post-Zionist voices, contextualized Zionism and the political history of Israel in the light of Constructivism and Post-Colonial theory:

Zionism, the national movement that motivated and was formed by Jewish immigration and settlement, was sophisticated enough to distance itself from traditional global colonialism, the historical matrix from which it developed. Zionism emphasized the uniqueness of the so-called

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1 *'Olim* without relatives in the country who serve in the Israeli army.

2 The legal text can be accessed here: <https://www.justice.gov.il/StateIdentity/ProposedBasicLaws/Pages/NationalState.aspx>

Jewish problem – anti-Semitism, persecution and, later, the Holocaust – and offered itself as the sole realistic and moral solution. Thus, the Jewish immigration movement was able to successfully present itself as a return to Zion, the correction of a cosmic injustice. (Kimmerling 2008: 181)

The legal basis for immigration as *'olim* is the “law of return” which grants all “Jews” the right to immigrate to Israel.<sup>3</sup> The law that was passed by the *Knesset* (the Israeli parliament) on July 5th, 1950, begins as follows:

*Every Jew has the right to come to this country as an oleh* כל יהודי זכאי לעלות ארצה  
(Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1950)

Only in 1970, the second amendment to the law was added, which defines who is eligible for immigration as *'oleh*:

The rights of a Jew under this Law and the rights of an *oleh* [...] are also vested in a child and a grandchild of a Jew, the spouse of a Jew, the spouse of a child of a Jew and the spouse of a grandchild of a Jew, except for a person who has been a Jew and has voluntarily changed his religion.

‘Jew’ is defined as follows:

‘Jew’ means a person who was born of a Jewish mother or has become converted to Judaism and who is not a member of another religion.

From this legal definition follows that everyone who is eligible to immigration to Israel as *'oleh* but was not born to a Jewish mother is not considered as a Jew – unless he has converted to Judaism. These legal grounds lead to a contradictory situation.

[I]t is entirely possible and not at all uncommon for someone to be entitled to emigrate to Israel and automatically become an Israeli citizen on the basis of having one Jewish grandparent but, upon receiving an Israeli identity card, be listed on it as something other than Jewish, because the Jewish grandparent is not the mother’s mother. Thus, Israeli citizenship has no inherent relationship to Jewish identity. (Myhill 2004: 194)

Although the Israeli Identity Cards no longer contain information of this kind, this definition still has practical consequences for many immigrants, especially from the former USSR, who are not considered as Jewish by Israeli law. As civil marriage is not an option in Israel, many Israelis who cannot (because of their status) or do not

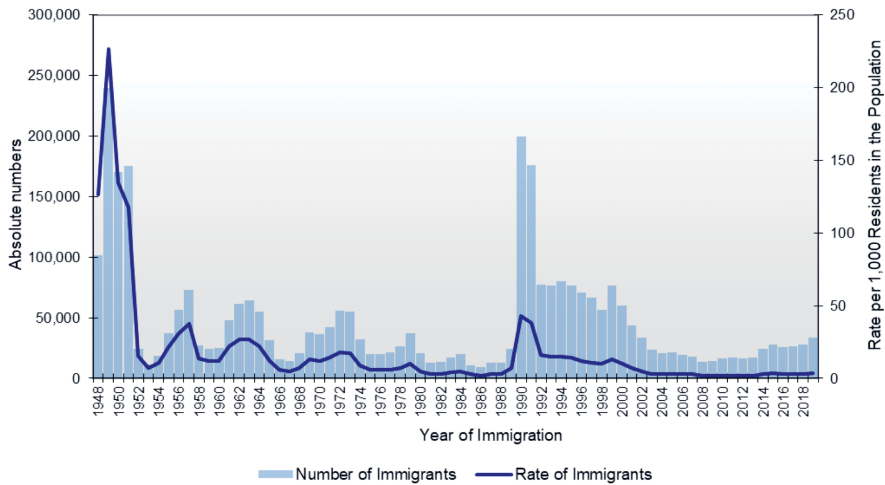
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<sup>3</sup> The Hebrew original can be accessed via [https://www.knesset.gov.il/laws/special/heb/chok\\_hashvut.htm](https://www.knesset.gov.il/laws/special/heb/chok_hashvut.htm)

want to marry by the means of a religious ceremony have to take a detour: marriages in a different country can be legally registered in Israel, thus allowing indirectly for marriages of Israeli citizens with persons of a different religious status than their own. On these grounds, Kimmerling (2008: 182–183) criticizes the “constitutional mixture of religion and nationality” in Israel which “allows the rabbinical courts to monopolize personal status laws” because it constitutes “basic inequality between men and women, as well between religious and secular Jews.” He asserts that this leads to “severe limitations” for “women, secular citizens, and citizens who identify themselves as Jews but are not classified as Jews according the Orthodox interpretation” (Kimmerling 2008: 186).

### 3.1.2 Immigration to Israel

As can be seen in Fig. 3.2, most of the 3.3 million immigrants who came to Israel after the foundation of the state in 1948 arrived in the mass immigration setting in the first years of statehood and after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, in 1989 – 44.3% came after 1990 (CBS 2020b). The number of immigrants from the former Soviet Union



**Fig. 3.2:** Immigration to Israel, reproduced from CBS (2020b)

is estimated around one million, but Epstein (2016: 80) points out that it is actually much lower because “100,000 people passed away and another 100,000 – 150,000 people left Israel and settled in other countries or returned to Russia or Ukraine.” A

second distinctive group of *'olim* are Ethiopian Jews who arrived mostly in the years 1984–85 and 1991 and are estimated to number about 130,000, today (Panagiotidis 2020: 122, Weingrod 2016: 282).

Before 1948, Jewish immigrants came mostly from (Eastern) Europe, like Ben Gurion. In contrary to the established religious Jewish population of mostly Middle Eastern origin – *ha-yishuv ha-yashan* ‘the old community’ – the new immigrants which are referred to as the “New *yishuv*” have commonly been described as secular Zionist pioneers (Weingrod 2016: 283). Against this common conception, Panagiotidis (2020: 120) points out that there were many regular immigrants among them who were looking for a better future and that some even moved on to the USA.

After the early waves of immigration, the Israeli pioneer ethos was established and “the European-origin Ashkenazim were the central dominant majority group” Weingrod (2016: 283). Lefkowitz paints a vivid picture of this ethos:

Maintaining the notion of a classless society is predicated in part on the image of the kibbutz, a prominent symbol of communal, socialist life. Two important mythologies of Israeli society derive their power from the kibbutz image: *kibush ha-avoda*, ‘the conquest of labor,’ and *kibutz galuyot*, ‘ingathering of exiles.’ The latter phrase refers to the return of Jews from all corners of the globe to Israel, a place where few of them had ever been, and where all of them would be remade both as Jews and as Israelis. The Ulpan experience, in which doctor, merchant, and peasant alike learned the new language, Hebrew, was a central acculturating influence. Kibbutzim are known to this day as centers of Ulpan-style language teaching[...] The idea of the conquest of labor held that Jewish/Israeli redemption lay in a return to the land, to manual labor, and especially to a farming way of life. This ideology purported to treat all immigrants equally, despite enormous disparities in their wealth, skills, and education. Doctors as well as beggars remade their lives as farmers and manual laborers, abandoning class differentiation. The kibbutz was the center of manual labor and agricultural production in the early years of the Israeli state. (Lefkowitz 2004: 87)

The mass-immigration after the establishment of the state was supposed to be absorbed into the collective of the New Yishuv, as the originally Biblical expression *kibbutz galuyot* ‘ingathering of the Exiles,’ which was adopted as a motto by the Zionists, indicates.

In the first years of statehood, the Jewish population grew exponentially and its composition changed rapidly. According to the CBS’ (2020a) data, slightly more than 700,000 Jews were living in Israel at the eve of 1948, of which 54.8% were born in Europe or America and 35.4% were already born in Israel. Almost 24 years later, in 1972, the Jewish population had almost tripled in size and amounted to nearly 2.7 million, of which 27.9% were born in Europe or America, 11.8% in Asia, 13.0% in Africa and 47.3% in Israel. The CBS’ (2020a) data determines the population’s “origin” by the fathers’ countries of birth. Accordingly, 44.2% were of European or American origin, 24.4% from Asia, 23.0% from Africa and 8.4% from Israel, in 1972. This means,

that the ratio of Jews with Asian or African origin had surpassed the ratio of the Jews with European or American origin, in 1972. In 1995, the ratios shift back in the direction of the European or American origin, which is probably caused by the classification of the immigrants from the former Soviet Union under this category – no such information is included in the data, though. In parallel to the increase of the native Israelis, the percentage of L1 HSs is increasing among younger age cohorts: from only 18% in the cohort aged older than 64 in 2011, to 44%, in the cohort between 45 and 64 and up to 60% in the youngest cohort from 20 to 44 years (CBS 2013: 2).

Two remarks about the categorization which is used in the CBS' (2020a) data are due: Firstly, the categories 'Europe/America', 'Asia/Africa' and 'Israel' hint at a twofold distinction, primarily between 'native' and 'non-native' and then, between 'West' and 'East' among the 'non-natives. Secondly, the choice of the father's country of birth as an indicator for 'origin' hints at a conceptual preference for patrilinear genealogies. From a scientific standpoint, it is not sensible to determine the offspring of mixed marriages either through the father's or the mother's origin. Therefore, the CBS' choice of representation indicates that they did not want to give up the notion of 'origin,' completely – although it cannot be represented accurately for subsequent generations. Interestingly, no further distinction than 'native' or 'non-native' was made in the 1948 data. This distinction is first included in the data from 1962, but the numbers for 'Asia' and 'Africa' are represented as one category, as is always the case for 'Europe/America'. Only in 1972, when the ratios shifted, the distinction is made between 'Asia' and 'Africa'. Consequently, no comparison of the categories belonging to the notions 'West' and 'East' can be made at first sight, from 1972 onward. Although it is not expressed outwardly, the categories which are used in the data for the representation of the populations' 'origin' hint to the major distinctive categories among 'Jews' – *'ashkenazim* from 'European/American' origin and *mizrahim* from 'Asian/African' origin (Weingrod 2016: 282).

### 3.1.3 Of *Ashkenazim*, *Mizrahim*, Arabs and others

Following Wiese (2017: 344–345) and Goldscheider (2015: 24), notions of 'ethnicity' in this study are treated as socially constructed categories which are fluid in their meanings. Under this premise, the notions of 'Mizrahi,' 'Ashkenazi' and further categories will be reassessed in the following. A contextual analysis of these categories with participants' statements will follow in Chapter 6.

The noun and modifier *'ashkenazi* was derived from the Biblical person *'Ashkenaz* and used originally in the Middle Ages to refer to Jews of a specific region in Germany. The noun and modifier *mizrahi* which literally translates to 'Eastern(er)' is derived from *mizrah* 'East.' For convenience, I will use these terms in the following

in their simple form as *Mizrahi* and *Ashkenazi* and as *Mizrahim*, *Ashkenazim* in the plural. Behar argues that the sense of a *Mizrahi* collectivity can be traced back to 1911, in the context of ideological differences between the old *yishuv* and the European Zionists:

[T]here existed in the pre-1948 modern Middle East, and remains chiefly inside Israel/Palestine today, a distinct sociocultural collectivity consisting of Eastern (non-Ashkenazi) Jews. Before or after 1948, this collectivity never assimilated its distinctive identity to either Ashkenazi Zionists or non-Jewish-Arabs. (Behar 2017: 313)

Commonly, the usage of the term *Mizrahi* is described as reappropriation by “leftist non-Ashkenazi activists” in a climate of social protest in the late 20th century (Shohat 1999: 13, Shemer 2013: 50). Chetrit describes the semantic change of the term *Sefardi* and the conventionalization of the term *Mizrahi*:

The term *Edot haMizrah* replaced the self-definition *Sephardi*, dating back to the old *yishuv* [...] The term *Sephardi* originates from the prayer and Halachic traditions that evolved from the golden age of Judaism in Spain, which is accepted as the religious authority among the Jews of North Africa, the Middle East, the Mediterranean, and the Balkans. The new self-coined term, *Mizrahim*, heard since the early 1980s together with the appearance of a new *Mizrahi* political discourse, is mainly a social-political term, based to a lesser degree on ethnic origins. The starting point for those calling themselves *Mizrahim* is a view of Israeli society in terms of economic and cultural oppression of non-Europeans by Europeans in general, and of *Mizrahim* by *Ashkenazim* in particular. (Chetrit 2009: 18)

A slightly different interpretation is suggested by Mizrahi & Herzog:

The majority of *Mizrahim* do not define themselves as belonging to a distinct ethnic group. [...] Some self-designate as ‘Sephardi’ (a Jew expelled from Renaissance Spain), a term that has softer and more positive connotations, and refers to Jewish cultural and historical traditions. The term ‘Mizrahi’ is more recent and associated with establishment of the State. It is more stigmatizing and political in nature, and is primarily used to designate Jews born in Arab countries. (Mizrahi & Herzog 2012: 423)

In fact, the authors imply that *Mizrahim* constitute a social group, by stating that most of them do not use the term – but that the term is used as an exonym by out-groups. However, they do not explain how membership in the category ‘*Mizrahim*’ can be determined.

It is helpful to think of the conventionalization process of the term *Mizrahi* as “reification” – in Berger & Luckmann’s 1967 terminology (see 2.1.4.3). Györi (2013: 152) points out that “[t]he emergence of new meanings and expressions in the course of semantic change is not simply a process of creating a label for a cultural category but creating the category itself.” In this line of argumentation, Shohat (1999: 13) states

that “the Mizrahim as an ‘imagined community’ are a Zionist invention” and refers to the pressure of cultural assimilation which was exerted on Arab Jewish *‘olim*: in the 1950s the political implication of the Zionist motto *mizug ha-galuyot* ‘fusion of the exiles’ led to the partial erasure of identities and heritage languages, due to the imposition of the hegemonic culture (Weingrod 2016: 284).

Lefkowitz (2004: 15) hints at a conceptual irregularity by describing the usage of *‘eda* ‘ethnic group’ as restricted to *Mizrahim*: “Moroccan Jews and Yemeni Jews are considered *edot*, but parallel groups of Ashkenazi Jews, such as German Jews and Polish Jews, are not.” Why were non-European Jews marked as ethnic groups, in contrast to the “unmarked norm of ‘Ashkenaziness’ or Euro-Israeli ‘Sabraness,’ defined simply as Israeli” (Shohat 1999: 13)?

Chetrit (2009: 39) argues with the concept of ‘social class’ that the systematically deprived immigrants from diverse backgrounds unified themselves under the category ‘Mizrahi.’ Weingrod (2016: 283) and Goldscheider (2015: 91) relate ethnic consciousness in Israel to different factors like the governmental housing policy and deliberate choices of the immigrants which resulted in clustered settlements of families from the same origin who maintained their distinct identities to some degree. Goldscheider (2015: 163) describes educational gaps between children of different immigrant groups as “the result of an Israeli-generated stratification system, reinforced by a complex combination of people and institutions – schools, teachers, family, and neighbors.”

The ethnic groups designated ‘Asian/Africans’ and ‘European/Americans’ are Israeli ethnic constructions, based on the ethnic origins of groups but reflecting the contexts of Israeli society. [...] One part of the explanation for the growing similarity in the educational level attained by the diverse ethnic-origin subgroups within the Asian/African group relates to their treatment in educational and related institutions. These diverse groups were often lumped together by the European-dominated systems as if they were an undifferentiated and a socioeconomically deprived segment. (Goldscheider 2015: 163)

Ben-Rafael portrays the group of Israelis with Asian/African origin as divided into a middle-class group that has assimilated to the dominant culture and the traditional

underprivileged Mizrahi communities that remain relatively distant from the dominant culture, however, the atmosphere of respect for tradition continues to encourage some young people to choose [...] to study at the *yeshiva* (religious academy) in order to enter a rabbinic career. (Ben-Rafael 2013: 99)

The traditionally oriented religious group, the *masoratiyim* ‘traditionalists,’ is addressed as electorate by the political party *shas* which was founded in 1984 by the widely popular and controversial former Sephardi Chief Rabbi, Ovadia Yosef, who

was born in Baghdad. Shohat describes the politicization of the *Mizrahi* cause with some satisfaction:

[T]he delegitimization of Middle Eastern culture has boomeranged in the face of Euro-Israel: out of the massive encounter that has taken place between Jews from such widely separated regions as the Maghreb and Yemen emerged a new overarching umbrella identity, what came to be called 'the Mizrahim.' (Shohat 1999: 13)

Several opposing political parties tried to mobilize voters by evoking a collective *Mizrahi* identity in their campaigns for the 2015 elections:

The newly formed Joint List, a coalition of Israel's Arab parties, claimed to represent the struggle of all underprivileged groups within Israel: Palestinians, Mizrahim, Ethiopians, Russians and the poor. The liberal Meretz party called for 'Equality for all – Arabs, Mizrahi and the LGBTQ community.' Naftali Bennet, head of the nationalist Jewish Home party, offered former football star Eli Ohana (of Moroccan origin) a prominent position within the party's Knesset list. Racing towards the lion's share of the Mizrahi electorate, Shas released adverts a week before the elections, declaring: 'Mizrahim, vote for Mizrahim.' This Mizrahi moment didn't end with the election of a right-wing coalition government. Miri Regev, a former Israeli Army spokesperson and Likud parliamentarian, became culture and sports minister. As well as railing against leftists and demanding that artists be 'loyal' to the state, she lambasted what she described as an Ashkenazi elite and a 'cultural junta', and vowed to address the disproportionate distribution of resources to Ashkenazi-oriented culture. (Madar 2017)

From this account, inferences about the relations between *Mizrahim*, other social groups and minorities can be made: all these groups together are conceptualized in opposition to the *Ashkenazim*. These dynamics have led some to diagnose a cultural and political trend in favor of the *Mizrahim* (see Averbukh 2017). It seems that the Israeli-Zionist narrative had to gain stability over the last 60 years before other cultural elements could be allowed in the story of what constitutes 'Israeliness': now, it appears that Zionist nationalism was always natural in Israel and that everything else has been added later; while the opposite is actually true. Shohat relates the *Mizrahi/Ashkenazi* controversy to a larger context:

Fearing engulfment by the East, the Euro-Israeli establishment attempted to repress the 'Middle Easternness' of Mizrahim as part of an effort to Westernize the Israeli nation and to mark clear borders of identity between Jews as Westerners and Arabs as Easterners. Arab Jews were urged to see Judaism and Zionism as synonyms, and Jewishness and Arabness as antonyms. Thus Arab Jews were prodded to choose between anti-Zionist Arabness and a pro-Zionist Jewishness. This conceptualization of East versus West has important implications in this age of the 'peace process,' since it sidesteps the fact that the majority of the population within Israel is from the Middle East – Palestinian citizens of Israel as well as Mizrahim. (Shohat 1999: 8)

Lefkowitz (2004) uses a diagram that is reproduced in Fig. 3.3 to draw a similar picture of the complex relations between social categories. He claims that “[d]ominant Israeli discourse simultaneously dichotomizes (exaggerates) Arab/Jewish difference while it erases (minimizes) Jewish/Jewish difference” (Lefkowitz 2004: 98). The choice of

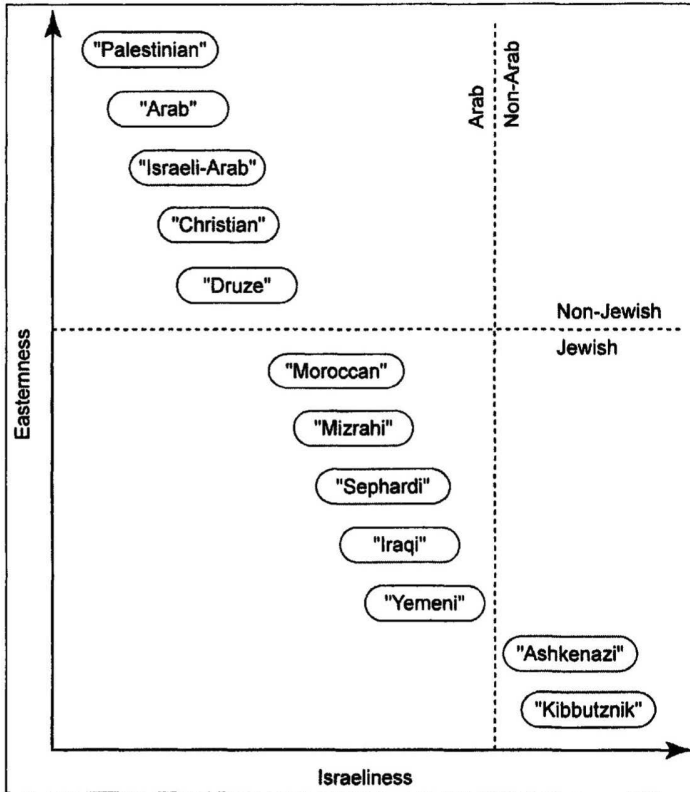


Fig. 3.3: The space of Israeli Identity (reproduced from Lefkowitz 2004: 89)

“easterness” as a variable for the discussion of Israeli identity is based on Said’s (1978) notion of ‘orientalism:’

Maximal Israeliness corresponds to the mythological attributes of the New Jew, as imagined by Zionist literature and as nostalgically recalled by modern Israeli discourse. Easternness, on the other hand, is the Israeli instantiation of alterity, of otherness; it is the opposite of Israeliness. (Lefkowitz 2004: 89–90)

Lefkowitz' diagram reflects his outsider perspective as foreign researcher. It is based on his fieldwork experience in Israel and qualitative interviews, although he does not provide quotations from the interviews in conjunction with the diagram. From the discussion it has become clear that the categories are best understood as prototypical – conforming to Lefkowitz' (2004: 89) intention who remarks in a footnote that “the analysis suggested by figure 3.1 is intended to be representative, rather than exhaustive.” While there are families of Moroccan and diverse other origins who live in kibbutsim, the prototypical *kibbutsnik* is *Ashkenazi*.

It is debatable if the categories which are used in the diagram were the most relevant categories at the time of the study. Nonetheless, the figure is illustrative of various important aspects about social categorization in Israel and the construction of an Israeli identity. Twenty years have passed since Lefkowitz' (2004) publication and significant political and cultural changes occurred in Israel. For example, the Israeli government no longer supports the highly symbolic *ulpan* language courses for *'olim* in kibbutsim, many of which have long abandoned their collectivist organization in favor of privatization. Has the 'kibbutz' been replaced by another concept on the scale of 'israeliness' and is there really a trend towards cultural and political 'mizrahization'? In which respect have the social categories undergone semantic change? Similar social categories which were elicited with GERT will be analyzed in this study and it will be argued in 5.4.3 that the GERT method allows for judgments about the relevancy of the categories for the participants. So far, it seems sensible to say that Israeli society has become more pluralistic with its growing size (Burstein-Feldman et al. 2010).

Another aspect that has not been discussed is how the concept 'Arab' enters the picture. In Fig. 3.3, it is represented as primary category that comprises several sub-categories which can be related to religious, political, cultural and linguistic notions. Native Arabic speaking Israelis identify with different religious and political categories (Mahla 2020: 201). In contrast, native Hebrew speaking Arabs most likely identify and are categorized as 'Jews,' 'Israeli' and as 'Mizrahi' – until 2005 the entry *le'om* 'nation' was used on Israeli Identity Cards to categorize each citizen in terms of ethnic-national categories such as 'Jew' and 'Arab' (Lefkowitz 2004: 15).

As indicated above, Israel's CBS differentiates between 'Jews,' 'Arabs' and 'others' and refers to these categories as “Population Groups.” In the CBS' recent publications, 'Jews' and 'others' are frequently conflated, in contrast to 'Arabs.' Interestingly, a footnote in CBS (2020c) reveals that “[u]ntil 1995, before publication of the Census results 'Arabs' also included 'others.’” Apparently, a major change in the official categorization of the population took place in 1995: since then, 'Arabs' have been treated as a category of their own, whereas they were conflated earlier with all others in opposition to the category 'Jews.' In 1995, the ratio of *'olim* from the former Soviet Union among Israel's population increased and among them, many are categorized

as 'others' and not as 'Jews' (see 3.1.1). Most likely this is the reason for the CBS' change of representation because it would contradict the Zionist narrative to conflate 'olim with 'Arabs.'

On the basis of this observation, Hall's description of common social categorization processes can be related to the Israeli context.

The world is first divided, symbolically, into good-bad, us-them, attractive-disgusting, civilized-uncivilized, the West-the Rest. All the other, many differences between and within these two halves are collapsed, simplified – i.e. stereotyped. By this strategy, the Rest becomes defined as everything that the West is not – its mirror image. It is represented as absolutely, essentially, different, other: the Other. This Other is then itself split into two 'camps': friendly-hostile, Arawak-Carib, innocent-depraved, noble-ignoble. (Hall 1992: 216)

Obviously, these processes of conceptual separation are totally artificial – despite their cultural significance. There are manifold relations between the concepts 'Arab' and 'Jewish' and there have always been trends which were not just aimed at peaceful coexistence but at true cultural exchange in Israel.

Early Zionists were to a large extent indifferent to the Arab population of Ottoman Palestine. Theodor Herzl tried to include them in his vision of a Zionist state. In his utopian novel *Alt-Neuland*, he describes Jewish-Arab relations as mutually beneficial (Herzl 1902). The children of 'olim who were born or raised in Palestine during the British Mandate developed cultural models which embraced the local Arabic culture as a symbol of authentication (see Hofmann 2011 and Almog 2000).

In summary, it is safe to say that the dismantlement of ethnic-national categories is challenging. Cultural, historical and political aspects have been reviewed for the context of Israel, but the meaning of the categories and their utility for the categorizers remains ambiguous. Their meaning can at best be approximated, if they are understood as prototypical and relational (dependent on the context and the discourse participants). For example, Myhill describes that self-identifying Jews and Arabs expressed categorically different opinions about the definition of 'ethnicity' and 'religion' in sociolinguistic classes at the University of Haifa where he was teaching:

The Jews categorically agree that language is completely irrelevant to one's identity as a Jew. Those who identify themselves as Arabs have been categorical in their assertion that to be an Arab means to speak Arabic (except, as I will discuss later, in the case of Arabic-speaking Jews). Jews express skepticism that Christians and Muslims can be the same 'people', while Arabs express skepticism that non-Hebrew-speakers are really 'Jews' in the same sense. (Myhill 2004: 180)

Today, ethnic categorization among Jews in Israel is intricate as Goldscheider highlights:

[B]oundaries defining and delimiting ethnic origins have become fuzzy. Who is in and who is out of the group has become variable over time, depending in part on how affiliation and group identification are defined, even among major ethnic categories. (Goldscheider 2015: 22)

Over time, the educational level of the population has improved and differences have become more leveled – older people in general tend to have a lower level of formal education (Goldscheider 2015: 12). At the same time, intermarriage has become more common and ‘ethnicity’ seems to have lost its significance for the choice of partners (Weingrod 2016: 290–291).

From a cultural perspective, core concepts of the Zionist ideology have almost vanished from day-to-day life in Israel. As a cultural outsider, street names were the most obvious reminders me of the deceased ideologues and their ideas. For many Israelis too, *kibbutz galuyot* ‘ingathering of the exiles’ is likely to be associated foremost with the traffic news: traffic jams at a highway junction in South Tel Aviv which carries this name and connects to the *kibbutz galuyot* street are announced on the radio almost every day. The street with the symbolic name leads from the *Ayalon* highway through traditionally low-class mixed neighborhoods to the ancient Arabic port city of Jaffa which has been swallowed by the outskirts of Tel Aviv. The traffic jams on the *kibbutz galuyot* street can be taken up as metaphor for the bumpy integration processes in Israeli society which led to the emergence of a cultural mosaic:

[D]ifferences between the so-called ‘first’ (descendants of Jews who arrived from Eastern and Central Europe before World War II and the Holocaust), ‘second’ (Jews who arrived predominately from Arab and Muslim counties during the first ten years of the Israeli statehood and their descendants), and ‘third’ (Israeli Arabs) Israel are more striking than in the socioeconomic and political fields. It seems that in the recent years, socioeconomic and political integration of relatively new immigrants from the English-, French-, Spanish-, and Russian-speaking countries into the ‘first’ Israel has indeed moved forward, but these groups of the Israeli population are still disengaged from its culture. All these groups are influenced by cultures of their own countries of origin. (Epstein 2016: 83)

### 3.1.4 Religious categorization in the Israeli context

Although Judaism may be considered the most important historical focus of Jewish unity, in Israeli society it reinforces ethnic heterogeneity among Jewish groups of origin. Religion is associated with ethnic divisions at two levels; at the level of the individual *edah*, especially among Middle Easterners, and at the level of the more general distinction between Ashkenazim and *edot ha'Mizrach* or Sephardim. (Ben-Rafael & Sharot 1991: 84)

As the introductory citation indicates, categorization along the notion ‘religion’ is also an intricate matter and will only be reviewed briefly, here – with a focus on the

most prominent religious group in Israel – the *Haredim*. Among the Israeli Arabs, there are 1,617,100 Moslems, 144,200 Druze and 135,900 Arab Christians (CBS 2020d).

**Tab. 3.2:** Religious affiliation in Israel according to PewResearchCenter (2016)

	Category	Ratio in %
Jewish	Hiloni	40
	Masorti	23
	Dati (Religious)	10
	Haredi (Ultra-Orthodox)	8
	Total	81
Non-Jewish	Muslim	14
	Druze	2
	Christian	2
	Other / no religion	1
	Total	19

Together, the non-Jewish population amounts to 19% as can be seen in Table 3.2. However, being 'Jewish' does not necessarily mean being religious, as a20f2l2's statement reveals:

**(3) a20f2l2 (3:48)**

*I'm Jewish by blood but not by religion*

אני יהודיה בדם אבל לא בדת

This is the answer she gave when she was filling out the sociodemographic questionnaire during the interview and came to the entry "your religion." She was implying that she immigrated to Israel as *'ola* where she was completing her military service at the time of the interview. It can be inferred that she didn't base her decision to make *'aliya* on religious grounds. This common attitude toward religion is termed as *hiloni* 'secular' and is shared by 40% of the population, according to PewResearchCenter (2016).

Israeli Jews of Middle Eastern origins, the so-called Mizrahim, report that they are much more religious and observant than those of Western origins, the Ashkenazim. A large majority of the nonreligious Jews are Ashkenazim, and the ultra-Orthodox sector is also largely Ashkenazi. Most Mizrahim define themselves as 'traditional' [...] few are nonreligious or anti-religious (Goldscheider et al. 2004: 130–131)

The *masoratiyim* 'traditionalists' amount to 23% and another 8% self-identify as *Haredi* which is the Israeli term for the group referred to as "ultra-orthodox" in

English and in German literature. The Hebrew term *Haredi* “means ‘fearful’ with the reference being to fear of the Almighty” (Baumel 2006: 1). It began to spread as designation for a social group in the late 18th century as a conservative response to calls for religious reforms for Judaism (Brown 2017: 12). As Brown (2017: 12–13) points out, it was not always used in opposition to the Religious Zionism but included the group of *datim le’umim* ‘national religious’ until the establishment of the Israeli State. Accordingly, they differentiated themselves into two completely separate groups who no longer intermarried, dress and speak differently, ceased to co-habitate and established their own educational and religious institutions. The ‘National Religious’ usually self-identify with the plain term *dati* ‘religious’ in polls. This category comprises the group which is commonly referred to as ‘settlers’ in English.

Brown (2017: 7) states that although the *Haredim* are perceived as “one large black bloc” (my translation), there are innumerable differences both on a collective level of different social groups as well as on an individual level. With the description as “large black bloc” he refers to the traditional garment for *Haredi* men, which consists of black shoes, black trousers, a black coat or suit a black *kipa* and hat – as well as (black) beards. The category ‘Haredim’ is commonly differentiated into *Hasidim*, *Liṭaim* ‘Lithuanians’ and *Sefardim* (Brown 2017: 9). In particular, the terms *Hasidim* and to a lesser extent *Liṭaim* contain a large number of sects which have been developing under the authority of different Rabbis. The different *Haredi* groups also differ in their outlook on language and their language use: Some speak mostly Yiddish, while the majority speaks MH – further distinctions in different dialects of Yiddish and different kinds of Hebrew can be made (Sender 2019: 7 and Sender 2022). Dynamics between different *Haredi* groups are still at work: for example, the so-called *peleg ha-yerushalmi* ‘the Jerusalem Faction’ have been drifting apart from the main group of *Liṭaim*. They have founded their own synagogues, schools and educational institutions in recent years and are supposed to marry only among members of this subgroup (Sender 2019: 8). In general, *Liṭaim* use *Loshn Koydesh* – their term for the Hebrew of the Holy Scriptures – Yiddish (older generations actively and the younger passively) and MH. In contrast, the *peleg ha-yerushalmi* tends to return to Yiddish and therefore restricts the use of Hebrew as a tool to separate the groups even further (Sender 2019: 8).

All the different subgroups make it hard to render a common definition of ‘Haredi.’ According to Brown (2017: 11), one can recognize a *Haredi* Jew today based on his dress: a white buttoned shirt under a black suit and a black *kipa*. Additionally a *Haredi* sees himself obliged to the traditional Jewish laws (the *Halakha*) and the Rabbis. Their exact number is hard to determine: “[t]wo statistical estimates in 2006, for example, yielded two different figures of 444,000 and 700,000” (Assouline 2017: 15–16).

Although they constitute a minor percentage of the population, their visibility in society is considerable. This is partly due to the images which are transmitted on TV and in newspapers: newsworthy events for the secular public in Israel about the *Haredim* are most often huge gatherings of *Haredi* men in the streets of Jerusalem and in other major cities for religious ceremonies like burials, holidays, speeches of renowned Rabbis or mass protests against government policy – especially the drafting of members of their community (cf. Friedman 2002).

Their position in Israeli society is ambiguous: On the one hand, they are identified as the living symbol of the renaissance of the Jewish religion and culture which is probably unique in Jewish history; on the other hand, they have been the most severe critics of Zionism, the modern State of Israel and modern, secular conceptions of society (Brown 2017: 13, Friedman 2016: 233).

Brown (2017: 14) argues that the concept of a “society-of-scholars,” a term coined by Menachem Friedman, came to be the strongest characteristic of the *Haredi* society in Israel. From the 1960s, these structures developed until they came to full bloom in the 1980s and “up to today the average *Haredi* man learns Torah almost to the age of forty – and sometimes even longer. He earns a small scholarship from the *koylel* and the family’s income depends mostly on his wife” (Brown 2017: 15, my translation). The Israeli state subsidizes this lifestyle with the financing of religious and educational institutes as well as the payment of fees for the national insurance system (*biṭuah le’umi*) (Brown 2017: 15).

Friedman argues for a circular causality of the society-of-scholars and the exemption of *Haredim* from military service:

[Y]eshiva boys and avrechim at the kollelim did not serve in the army as long as Torah was their craft; that is, as long as they did not engage in another form of work while studying at a yeshiva or kollel. (Friedman 2016: 241)

Exclusively studying *Torah*, the Holy Scripture, was by itself a way to avoid being drafted. Because serving in the army was not an option for many religious boys, a massive increase of longtime students required the expansion of the religious institutions such as *yeshivot* and *kollelim* which led to the establishment of the society-of-scholars.<sup>4</sup> The establishment of a parallel education system for *Haredim* caused fundamental differences between the social groups:

As the Haredi society-of-scholars grew, the gap in higher education between Haredi and non-Haredi society widened concomitantly. The fundamental Haredi worldview categorically rules out general and professional education. (Friedman 2016: 241)

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<sup>4</sup> “There are separate yeshivas for adolescents students (13–18 yrs), unmarried adult male students (yeshiva gedola), and married male students (kolels).” (Schwarz 2014: 135)

*Haredi* boys are the only group in Israel which is completely autonomous from the public education system. Beginning at age 13 they only study *Torah* in *yeshivot* without the subjects Mathematics, English, Science and without formal education in writing (Tsemach & Zohar 2021). In Lithuanian *yeshivot*, *Haredi* men study religious texts, mainly the Babylonian Talmud, which consists of *Mishna* and *Gemara*:

The Mishna is a very concise text edited at the 3rd century (CE) in the Land of Israel to turn the oral law into a written source, at the time the religious leadership understood the perils of the Exile for Jewish culture. The Gemara was written by the religious leadership in the Babylonian Exile to explain the Mishna. It shows strong features of orality: It mainly includes protocols of discussions around the Mishna among Sages between the 3rd and the 5th century. The discussions include questions, clarifications, agreements, concessions, challenges, refutations and even humorous almost out of topic interjections that characterize informal conversations. (Schwarz 2014: 132)

Among *Haredim*, intermarriage in-between sects is common and the clear affiliation to a certain sect can even be optional, as a68m3l1 who identified as *Haredi* pointed out during the interview. I also noted the internationality of the *Haredi* families I came in contact with during fieldwork. More than half of them were mixed Israeli-foreign marriages. Baumel made a similar observation:

In each of the families I observed, one parent had been born in Israel or brought there as an infant, while the other parent had moved to Israel as a teenager or even later. [...] The non-Israeli background of one member of each family is an expression of the suprageographical nature of *Haredi* life, common to Hassidim, Mitnagdim [the Lithuanians], and as we will see in a later chapter, the Sefardi *Haredi* elite. (Baumel 2006: 90)

The characteristics of the ‘*Haredim*,’ the religious category in Israel which appeared most prominently in the interviews for this study, have been reviewed. While they do not constitute a homogeneous group, they are perceived as cultural and political counterweight to mainstream, secular Israeli Jews:

There is increasing anti-religious feeling among the majority of the secular Israeli Jewish public. Religious and secular Jews are separated residentially and institutionally, and extreme geographical concentration characterizes the ultra Orthodox. (Goldscheider et al. 2004: 129)

Almog (2000: 32–33) even claims that the *Haredi* culture was the basis for the “secular religion Zionism” which became the cornerstone of the Israeli culture in the twentieth century. Friedman hints at the shared socio-economic reality of many *Haredim*:

[T]he flourishing of the society-of-scholars has exerted a heavy toll, on both Israeli society and on the *Haredim*. The high fertility rate (an average of 7.7 children per family), the lack of general and professional education, and the very late entry into the job-market created an impoverished society. (Friedman 2016: 242)

From a linguistic point of view, *Haredim* can be quite distinct from other HSs through the influence of the separate educational system and the use of Yiddish which is cultivated as L1 in a few sects – although the majority is likely to use MH in most day-to-day contexts (Ben-Rafael 2002: 73 and Sender 2024).

### 3.1.5 Human geography

Israel is densely populated, especially in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and the Center Districts – Fig. 3.4 shows a map of Israel's administrative districts. In contrast, the Northern and the territorial large Southern District are less densely populated (CBS 2020g). Over 90% of Israel's population lives in urban agglomerations (Goldscheider 2015: 84). Israel's two major cities, Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, are commonly characterized as cultural poles (see Alfasi & Fenster 2005). Conservative Jerusalem is built around the Old City with its religious sites in the Judean hills and houses Israel's main political institutions. Some 60 kilometers downhill at the shores of the Mediterranean lies progressive and modern Tel Aviv which was only founded in 1909, with its Bauhaus architecture and its sleek skyscrapers. Both cities have an international and mixed population, while the Arab inhabitants of both cities have been living in the traditionally Arab parts of the cities, East Jerusalem and Jaffa, respectively.

Residential segregation has been a stable feature in Israel, as Myhill describes:

In Israel, Jews, Muslims, Christians and Druze live almost completely segregated from each other – that is one village will be Jewish, a neighboring village Muslim, the next Druze, etc. (Myhill 2004: 189)

In this respect, the map which was published by CBS (2020h) is very illustrative because it shows clearly separated regional clusters of “Jews and others,” “Muslims,” “Druze” and “Arab Christians” by representing them with different colors: there are mostly clusters of the same color and even in urban environments, different neighborhoods tend to share the same color. CBS (2020f) presents an overview of the absolute numbers of the Arab population and their ratio in all regions of Israel: the majority of the Arab population lives in villages in the Northern District and in the region *mizrah ha-sharon* in the Center District, in East Jerusalem and in the Southern District. In most regions of the Northern District, the majority of the population is Arab – in some regions even over 90%. In the two central regions of the Southern District in the Negev desert (*be'er sheva* and *har ha-negev ha-tsfohi*), the ratio between Arabs and non-Arabs is approximately even.

Israel's demography is not only separated along religious and linguistic lines, but there have also been “Israeli created” divisions “between Jews of Western and Middle Eastern origin” which resulted in the “overlap of social class and regional

residential clusters” (Goldscheider et al. 2004: 130). While Goldscheider et al. (2004: 130) already predicted that “these ethnic divisions” might last at least to the third generation of immigrants, he reaffirmed that “residential segregation” has been persistent in certain places:

Local institutions serve as further bases for ethnic continuity. These include ethnic family networks, economic networks that are ethnically based, and some local institutions – synagogues, community centers, political interests, health clinics, and leisure-time and cultural activities (sports and music, for example) – that are concentrated among particular [249] ethnic groups. (Goldscheider 2015: 248–249)

Typically, these social cleavages among the Jewish population are associated with the cultural-geographic notions ‘center’ and ‘periphery.’ While the culturally and socio-economically powerful elite tend to populate the ‘center,’ ‘periphery’ refers to rural areas and so-called ‘*ayarot pituah*’ ‘development towns,’ whose inhabitants have less access to the cultural and economic market. In the last decades of the twentieth century, 18.5% of the Jewish population lived in development towns, in conditions which Goldscheider describes as follows:

The steady growth in the number of Jews living in development towns reflects a considerably higher fertility rate, balanced by continuous net out-migration from many of these towns. A significantly higher proportion of those in development towns than in other areas of the country define themselves as religious. The population in development towns has been and continues to be disadvantaged socioeconomically. The third generation growing up in them are largely the children and grandchildren of Asian and African immigrants, less educated, in lower-ranked occupations, and with lower incomes and fewer resources than the Jewish population as a whole or than their ethnic cousins in more-central urban places. [...] Selective out-migration of the more ambitious and successful young adults searching for better educational and occupational opportunities in the larger metropolitan areas left the residual ethnic population in development towns in an even more disadvantaged socioeconomic position, with even higher levels of ethnic occupational concentration. (Goldscheider 2015: 104)

Whereas most of the cultural, economic and political power is concentrated in urban areas in contemporary Israel, rural kibbutsim have been exceptional in this respect. The few hundred kibbutsim which are spread all over Israel’s geographic space are relatively small and tight-knit communities with a collective organization – traditional kibbutsim do not allow for private property. The ‘kibbutz’ is a highly symbolic place for the Israeli national ethos which has only lost some of its significance over the last decades:

These communal settlements have been of major interest in the study of the evolution of Israeli society, and the image of the kibbutz community – small, simple, and egalitarian – has been among the most engaging conjured up by Israeli society. (Goldscheider 2015: 96)

In 2012, 3% of the Jewish population still lived in a kibbutz, while the number of Israelis who were born to *kibbutznik* parents or lived in a kibbutz, for some amount of time, remains considerably higher (Goldscheider 2015: 99).

Israel is a small and densely populated country. In general, the infrastructure is developed and even remote locations can be reached by public transportation. It takes about three hours by train to go more than 200 kilometers from Nahariya, the coastal town at the Lebanese border in the North, to Beer Sheva, the “capital of the Negev.” Especially the Jewish population can be characterized as very mobile because of the obligatory military service: every day thousands of soldiers commute to innumerable remote military bases which are spread across the country. Marriage patterns, studies and work are further reasons why many Israelis move out of their hometowns (Goldscheider 2015: 70, 92).

Altogether it can be inferred that, at least among the Jewish population, there is a weak sense of regional belonging to a specific town. However, there are socially meaningful geographic differences which are also reflected in electoral preferences, for example: proportionally more residents of development towns, like Dimona and Bet She’an vote for the conservative *likud* party. In kibbutsim, the Labor party receives more votes than elsewhere and at some polling stations, virtually all votes go to the ultra-orthodox parties “United Torah Judaism” and *Shas* which hints at strong *Haredi* communities in cities like Bet Shemesh, Modi’in ‘Ilit and Bnei Brak (Weinglass 2019).

### 3.2 Modern Hebrew

Commonly, the glottonym *‘ivrit* which translates as plain ‘Hebrew’ is used by its speakers and by non-Hebrew speakers to refer to the language which is spoken and written in Israel today. In its usage in Hebrew, the term *‘ivrit* is not restricted to the language of today, but can also refer to earlier and potentially all varieties of Hebrew. For further distinctions, modifiers are used together with *‘ivrit*, as in *‘ivrit tanakhit* for ‘Biblical Hebrew’ or *‘ivrit meduberet* ‘colloquial Hebrew.’

In this study, I will use the term ‘Modern Hebrew’ (MH) to refer to the bulk of Hebrew language varieties which are spoken today. The modifier ‘modern’ hints at a conceptual distinction between ‘Ancient’ or ‘Biblical’ Hebrew which ceased to be used as a spoken language around 200 C.E. and the language that was used by the young Ben-Gurion and his contemporaries – the Hebrew of the modern era

(Colasuonno 2013).<sup>5</sup> It has been argued that MH resembles a Slavic language and that it has borrowed “a huge German vocabulary.” However, Bolozky (2016: 225) asserts “that it is still Hebrew and still essentially Semitic.” MH is based on Ancient Hebrew, but it is not its organic continuation.

In contrast, the Hebrew which is spoken in Israel and elsewhere around the world today is the natural continuation of MH which was shaped by several generations of native speakers. Even though it is argued by Izre’el (2003) with the use of the term “Israeli Hebrew” that the spoken and written contemporary Hebrew differs considerably from the earlier stratum of MH, no further terminological distinction will be made in this study.

### 3.2.1 The institutionalization of MH as Israel’s national language

The dissemination of Hebrew in the 20th century and its shaping as a modern language are inseparably linked to the ideologies of Political and Cultural Zionism (Chowers 2017, Shavit 2017 and Bolozky 2016). The politicization of this process is one of the reasons for the scholarly debates which have been accompanying it, as Colasuonno notes:

The revitalization of ‘ivrit has been one of the most widely debated questions among Israeli scholars since the second half of last century. (Colasuonno 2013)

Izre’el (2003) points out that some scholars still argue for the unique role of Eliezer Ben-Yehuda in the revival of Modern Hebrew and thereby reinforce his common image as a near mythological figure, which is debatable. The common image of Ben-Yehuda is described as follows:

Ben-Yehuda is said to have begun the revival of Hebrew by insisting on speaking only Hebrew to his son, who, therefore, became the first native speaker of Hebrew in two millenia or so, and to have singlehandedly written a dictionary of Hebrew which effectively transformed it into a real modern language. (Myhill 2004: 78)

Besides Ben-Yehuda, there were other prominent figures who actively shaped MH and institutionalized the *va’ad ha-lashon ha-‘ivrit* ‘Hebrew Language Committee,’ in 1905 in Jerusalem, which became the governmental body *ha-’akademiya la-lashon ha-‘ivrit* ‘The Academy of the Hebrew Language,’ (hereinafter, the “Hebrew Academy”) in 1953 (Gadish 2013: 7–8). The national and cultural importance of MH was further

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<sup>5</sup> Bolozky (2016: 224) determines the linguistic end point of Classical Hebrew in “135 C.E., when the Jews were exiled following the Bar-Kokhba revolt.”

stressed in 1918 through the establishment of the “Hebrew University of Jerusalem [...], an institution that embodied the school of cultural Zionism” (Chowers 2017: 359). In the same year, the British Mandate was proclaimed and Hebrew was established as “an official language alongside Arabic and English” (Spolsky & Shohamy 1999: 98). Preceding this decision, the Hebrew Language Committee was apparently involved in the persuasion of the British government – in Spolsky & Shohamy’s (1999: 98) words (Gadish 2013: 9).

Besides these official aims to disseminate MH, Matras & Schiff (2005: 146) stress the role of MH as *lingua franca* “during the peak immigration periods” and compare it to a process of “creolization” (as suggested by Izre’el 2003) because “a young generation of speakers adopted Hebrew as their primary language having no parental model, nor an obvious peer-group model.”

The first generation of native Israelis who were born between 1930 and 1960, the so-called *sabras* ‘prickly pear,’ are portrayed as having played a crucial role in the shaping of Modern Hebrew (Gafter & Mor 2023: 307). In his seminal sociological typology of the *sabra*, Almog gives the following definition:

They numbered no more than a few hundred and comprised the counselors and commanders who were what sociologists call the ‘generational nucleus.’ They were the leading group that served as a behavioral model for the entire generation. (Almog 2000: 3)

Despite their relatively small number, it is believed that they set the pace in the process of nation building and have become the role model for ‘Israeliness.’

These *sabras* adopted behavior and linguistic traits that visibly differentiated them from the rest of the population. Their lives were marked by frequent excursions around the country, enrolment in the youth movement and military service. Furthermore, these young people spoke a Hebrew without any type of diasporic accent, in a tone that was purposely nonchalant, abrupt, direct and laconic. They played with Hebrew so as to show off the fact that it was their true original language. This direct language, known as *dugri* (‘straightforward’ in Arabic) emphasized its rootedness in the Middle East by borrowing liberally from Arabic, and expressed a scorn for the wordiness, formalism and subtleties that the *sabra* ascribed to diasporic Jews. (Ben-Rafael 2013: 97)

Bourdieu’s description of linguistic creativity is reminiscent of the *sabras*’ playing with Hebrew:

The person who is sure of his cultural identity can play with the rules of the cultural game[...] (Bourdieu 1991: 125)

With the negligence of the explicit linguistic norms which were fixed in a scholarly environment, the generation that succeeded Ben-Yehuda expressed their social power and underlined their cultural influence which resulted in their own implicit

linguistic norms. Mor (2020: 122) characterizes these two main strands of normative activity as “institutional (planned) and native (unplanned)” and asserts their prevalence in the public discourse in Israel until today.

However, this is not the place to delve further into the historical process that shaped contemporary MH, which is summarized at length by Myhill (2004: 73–97) after this introductory statement:

[T]he revival of Hebrew is, as far as we know, an event unique in human history. There has never before or since been a case of what I am referring to as a ‘revival’, a natural language which was previously spoken by native speakers, then ceased to have native speakers, and then came again to have an entire community of speakers – in fact an entire nation of native speakers. (Myhill 2004: 74)

The common stress on the uniqueness of the revival of MH says more about the ideological importance that is bestowed on MH than about the process itself. Hebrew’s unique importance for the building of a ‘Jewish nation’ was already advocated for by Aḥad Ha’am, one of the founding-fathers of cultural Zionism.

Given the Jews’ dispersal throughout the diaspora, language is the main factor that preserved their shared identity. As he put it: ‘we barely have any remnant; only our language itself still shows signs of life’ (Aḥad Ha’am 1947, 113). (Chowers 2017: 362)

Bokelmann’s description of the integrative potential of a common language helps to understand the important role of MH in the consolidation of the Israeli state:

The integrative or separating function explains the extraordinary importance of a common language, e.g. for the emergence of new political entities – when new states emerge or political borders shift. In these contexts, the shared standard language functions as a common marker of shared identity for a heterogeneous and not necessarily historically connected totality of citizens. This is particularly meaningful if the political space encompasses several cultural areas.<sup>6</sup> (Bokelmann 2020: 86, my translation)

Berger & Luckmann (1967: 173) equally stress the importance of a common language for the fostering of communities from a constructivist perspective. Accordingly, the maintenance of reality through ongoing processes of identity construction is depen-

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<sup>6</sup> German original: Die integrative bzw. separierende Funktion erklärt, warum eine gemeinsame Sprache zum Beispiel im Zuge der Entstehung neuer politischer Entitäten von derart großer Bedeutung ist; beispielsweise bei der Entstehung neuer Staaten oder der Verschiebung politischer Grenzen. Hier bietet die geteilte Standardsprache der heterogenen und historisch nicht unbedingt verbundenen Gesamtheit der Bürger einen gemeinsamen Marker geteilter Identität. Dies ist in denjenigen Fällen, in denen der politische Raum mehrere Kulturräume umfasst, von besonderer Bedeutung.

dent on the maintenance of a common language. Therefore, this common language is defined by conceptual distinctions between ‘my/our language’ and ‘your/her/his/their language’ – on the most basic level. These distinctions are expressed in the speakers’ DK as linguistic norms (see 2.1.4.3). With the expansion of the size of the “imagined communities” – in Anderson’s (1983) words – these linguistic notions of belonging get abstracted into notions of ‘dialects’ and ‘national languages’ which serve to demarcate the communities’ identity, in contrast to others. Taking up the example from above, the *sabras*’ conventionalization of their own linguistic norms in MH served them to define their own sub-group within the recently established community of HSs. According to Bokelmann (2020: 86–87), speakers commonly associate their standard language with their cultural tradition and conceptualize the language itself as a cultural achievement. HSs often express this attitude by referring to Hebrew as the language of the *meḳorot* ‘the (written) religious sources’ and by characterizing the dissemination of MH as a ‘miracle,’ as will be discussed in 6.2.3. Bolozky hints at the symbolic value of MH for the Israeli society which has been persistent until today:

[O]wing to the central role Hebrew played in building national identity, any deviation from the normative standards of formal literary Hebrew affects the nation, its culture, and its prestige. (Bolozky 2016: 224)

The cultural emphasis on the normative standards of MH is institutionalized in the educational system in Israel which teaches the subject of *lashon* ‘language’ in addition to *sifrut* ‘literature’ for Hebrew as L1, until the end of highschool.

One further example shall serve to illustrate the relatively prominent position – judging from my German perspective – of this topic in the discourse in Israel. When I picked up a student newspaper in the Hebrew University during the first fieldwork stage, I was surprised to find a two page article at a prominent place in the journal which reported on the controversy surrounding whether it should be allowed to conduct study programs in English. Questioning the status of MH as the main language of education in the Hebrew University – one of the outstanding national symbols of modern Israel – still seems to be taken up as a sacrilege by some, as the sub-title of the article illustrates:

*The Academy of the Hebrew Language cried out loud and also inside the university itself resistance has arisen ('The founding fathers are watching in shame and turn over in their graves') In contrast, the administration of the Hebrew University explains that this is the only way to play on an international court. A seemingly small decision to transfer certain study programs to English wakes up a discussion that has been in a coma for many years.* (Motskin & Avital 2019: 6)

האקדמיה ללשון העברית זעקה וגם בתוך האוניברסיטה עצמה התעוררה התנגדות ('האבות המייסדים חוזים בבושה ומתהפכים בקברם'). מנגד, הנהלת האוניברסיטה העברית מסבירה שזו הדרך היחידה לשחק במגרש הבין-לאומי. החלטה קטנה לכאורה, להעביר תוכניות לימוד מסוימות לשפה האנגלית, העירה ויכוח שהיה בתרדמת במשך שנים רבות.

### 3.2.2 Studies on Linguistic Variation in Israel

A century of Hebrew speech has passed, and the scholarly world has lost a unique opportunity to record the emergence of a language as a full-fledged communicative system. Hebrew is still undergoing rapid change because of massive waves of immigration and swift changes in Israeli society. (Izre'el et al. 2001: 172)

In the preparatory phase for this study, I consulted with Israeli linguists who confirmed my impression that the field of Sociolinguistics on MH in Israel is far from well-researched. Among others, I met the authors of the introductory citation, Shlomo Izre'el and Benjamin Hary who had devised a project for a large corpus of spoken Hebrew (SH) which was only partially completed.<sup>7</sup> Burstein-Feldman et al. (2010: 232–233) equally assert that “Israeli sociolinguistics cries for more intensive study of the country’s major social cleavages, between Arabs and Jews, Ashkenazim and Sefardim, young and old, and between elites and the disenfranchised.” Also Cola-suonno (2013) describes Sociolinguistics of Ancient and Modern Hebrew as a “field of pioneering research.” While there is a considerable amount of research on Hebrew, in general, one can get the impression that the usage-based study of MH has been somehow overlooked:

The field of Israeli Hebrew linguistics has been developing in the shadow of a strong prescriptivist tradition in institutions such as the Hebrew Language Academy, the mainstream public media, the school system and the enormous establishment entrusted with teaching Hebrew as a foreign language. This attitude is also self-imposed by academic circles and Hebrew language departments. For many years, the academic study of Hebrew was seen in Israel as synonymous

<sup>7</sup> See the homepage of the project: <http://cosih.com/english/>

with educational measures aimed at safeguarding ‘correct’ pronunciation, grammar and style. (Matras & Schiff 2005: 147)

As has been argued above, Israel is a “standard language culture” – following Milroy’s (2012: 577) definition – in that “there is a general consciousness of a standard” and that “there has been considerable influence of the standard ideology on their [the linguists] underlying assumptions.” In this respect, Kalev (2004: 6) argues that there is “a diglossic split between formal literary Hebrew and colloquial Hebrew,” which has been ignored by many researchers who instead focused “almost exclusively on an artificial literary register that doesn’t necessarily reflect native speakers’ intuitions.”

As outlined in 1.1, the scholarly consensus has been implying that there are neither clearly distinguishable dialects, nor other varieties in MH. Over the last years, this consensus has been questioned and more empirical studies on sociolinguistic variation in MH have been published. Schiff (2005: 42–67) gives a detailed account of the research that has been carried out on variation in SH up to the year of the work’s publication and Henkin (2020), Berrebi (2021) and Walters et al. (2023) contain more recent literature reviews. The first studies on SH, from the 1960s, focused on phonetic variation, comparing speakers from Middle Eastern and North African origin with speakers from European origin. The terminology that was used to describe two varieties of SH – ‘General Israeli Hebrew’ and ‘Oriental Israeli Hebrew’ – reflects the political discourse at the time when Jewish Israeli society was conceptualized as being divided along the ethnic categories of *Ashkenazim* and the marked category *‘edot ha-mizrah* (Schwarzwald 2013). A second trend in the usage-based studies is the investigation of HSs’ deviation from the normative standard along selected variables such as inflectional morphology or gender and number agreement, with the aim to describe language change (e.g. Schwarzwald 1981 and Ravid 1995).

In recent accounts, scholars point out that there are group specific differences in MH (cf. Henkin 2020). Schwarzwald (2007: 80) asserts that the huge difference between religious and secular HSs creates different types of Hebrew. Furthermore, she claims that the difference between *Mizrahim* and others is still felt, in spite of inter-ethnic marriages and trends of the melting pot which were at work in Israel. Accordingly, it manifests itself foremost in phonological phenomena, while morphology and syntax have not been researched Schwarzwald (2007: 80). Schiff’s (2005) corpus-based description of variation in SH did not yield systematic variation between speakers from different origins, although this topic was not central to the study. There are a few milieu studies, such as Levon’s (2010) *Language and the Politics of Sexuality: Lesbians and Gays in Israel* which was reviewed above (see 2.1.2.4) and Bentolila’s (1983) sociophonological description of *Hebrew as spoken in a rural settlement of Moroccan Jews in the Negev*.

To the best of my knowledge, there is no monograph about sociolinguistic variation in MH from a general perspective. The terminology for variation in MH is sketchy and most of the research is not usage-based. Matras & Schiff (2005: 151) argue for a stylistic continuum along the levels of “Formal (Normative) Israeli Hebrew, Educated Israeli Hebrew, General Colloquial Israeli Hebrew and Working Class Vernacular Israeli Hebrew.” Although they list characteristic variants for each level, they arrive at this classification without perceptual data. There are studies indicating that socially upward-moving Israelis tend to depharyngealize their style of speech, but the opposite can also be witnessed, for example, among the most sophisticated scholars of Hebrew (Gaftar 2019: 231).

Gaftar’s (2014) comparative study of HSs from a tendentially homogeneous community of Yemenite origin in Rosh ha-Ayn and HSs from Yemenite, Moroccan and different origins from a more heterogeneous environment in Tel Aviv showed that Rosh ha-Ayn speakers cultivated their pharyngealized realization of /ʕ/, the letter *ʕyn*, as [ʕ], whereas the other speakers realized the letter as [ʔ]. Gaftar (2014: 190) investigates some other phonological variables and uses sociolinguistic interviews to determine that the “meanings associated with the pharyngeals cannot be understood as simply meaning ‘Mizrahi,’ nor can they be resolved along an axis of standardness.” Instead he argues that

these variables construct an identity of the most authentic speaker of Hebrew – and the most authentic speaker is authentic in more ways than just speech. This persona matches other social practices of the Rosh Ha’ayin Yemenites, who [...] are invested in a distinct identity that is linked to days long gone. (Gaftar 2014: 181)

With their experimental study on the perception of Hebrew Pharyngeals, Berrebi et al. (2022) demonstrate that Hebrew speakers are well equipped to acoustically distinguish voiceless pharyngeals and uvular fricatives. At the same time, they report that most speakers refrain from actively producing socially marked pharyngeals which hints at ongoing sound change. Berrebi & Peperkamp’s 2024 experimental study provides evidence that rhythm of speech is an important factor for participants to distinguish HSs along the categories ‘Ashkenazi’ and ‘Mizrahi.’

In a more general context, Henshke (2015: 163–164) argues “that a sociolect has emerged in Israel, one that is characteristic of the speech of residents of the geographic and social periphery and which clearly shows the influence [164] of the Judeo-Arabic linguistic substrate of those speakers.” Henshke’s claim to describe a whole sociolect can be contested on the basis that she lists mostly lexical variants, but does not compare variants with a control group, or perceptual data.

Henshke’s (2017) title *Israeli, Jewish, Mizrahi or Traditional? On the nature of the Hebrew of Israel’s periphery* suggests that there are several factors which compli-

cate a theoretical concept of a somehow uniform sociolect of “Israel’s periphery.” While the influence of an Arabic substrate on the linguistic phenomena which Henshke describes is considerable, her claim for a sociolect needs to be substantiated with further data which reveal insights into HSS’ perceptions and their representations of these phenomena. Henshke (2017: 137) suggests “to refer to this sociolect as Traditional-Mizrachi Hebrew, which occupies an intermediate place between ‘Jewish Hebrew’ and ‘Israeli Hebrew’” and thereby introduces a religiously determined perspective of research on MH, in contrast to ‘Israeli Hebrew’ which is associated with secularism.<sup>8</sup>

In general, there is not much linguistic research on religious HSs. Although *Haredim* are the most prominent religious group in Israel and the field is well studied by other disciplines, it has barely been researched from a linguistic perspective: most linguistic studies about the *Haredi* society in Israel such as Assouline (2017) focused on Yiddish and on code-switching to Hebrew by Yiddish speakers (Sender 2019: 6–7). There are some lexical collections of *Haredi* Hebrew terms such as Rosenthal (2007b) which are rather anecdotal than extensive.

The ethnographic work by Baumel (2006) is a comparative description of four *Haredi* sects. Besides the preliminary investigation of the language practice in four different families who associate with *Habad*, *Liṭaim* (in the study referred to as *mitnagdim*), *Gur* (*Gerrer*) and *Sefardim*, the study gives an overview about linguistic, historical and cultural aspects, and more detailed accounts on the educational institutions and the sects’ newspapers. Baumel provides a brief summary on language variation among *Haredim*

Tradition and history begin to play an important role, and in Israel, all of the sects that I have targeted use Ivrit [MH] as their basic language, but they vary in their attitude to that language, and even in the forms of Ivrit which they use. As for other languages – sacred, quasisacred, Jewish vernacular, and foreign – each sect adheres to a different policy influenced by its historical background [43] and contemporary praxis as presented here in brief. Even in issues of gendered language – the languages, or even the type of Ivrit used among Haredi women, or by Haredi men when speaking to Haredi women – there is variation among the groups. (Baumel 2006: 42–43)

Sender (2019, 2022) analyses a corpus of SH from within the *peleg ha-yerushalmi* – a Lithouanian-*Haredi* sect who resist the draft. She investigates mostly phonetic traits, to which she refers as *hagaya ‘ashkenazit ba-ivrit ha-ḥaredit* ‘Ashkenazi pronunciation in *Haredi* Hebrew,’ and pragmatic aspects. As common variants in the corpus she lists loans from *Yiddish*, and non-normative gender agreement between nouns, adjectives

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<sup>8</sup> I also consulted with Yehudit Henshke and Roey Gafter and am thankful to them for sharing their inspiring and insightful thoughts on the topic.

tives and numerals which are not investigated because they are widely attested in SH (Sender 2019: 9–10). Sender’s dissertational work, *Hebrew Spoken by Haredi Litaim (Litvish-Yeshivish) in Israel – a Socio-linguistic Description* (Sender In preparation), takes on a general perspective on a under-researched topic, while Sender (Forthcoming) assesses the function of interspersed Yiddish in Hebrew spoken by *Haredim*. Some socio-historical causes for distinct lexical, phonetic and morpho-syntactic phenomena that are attested in the Hebrew speech of *Haredim* are suggested by Sender (2024).

Immigrants from the former Soviet Union and their descendants are a major social group in Israel who have been receiving some scholarly attention. In her dissertation *Language attitudes and social identity: a study on Russian-speaking immigrant communities in Israel and Germany* Lucchetti (2023: 222) sketches the research field of “Russian in the diaspora” and discusses contact phenomena that are notable in the Hebrew spoken by this group in Israel.

Another marginal area of sociolinguistic research in Israel is the military context. Izre’el et al. (2001: 191) attribute an “enormous impact on Israeli Hebrew” to the army.

Special attention is due to the language of the military. Obligatory military service in Israel is three years for men and twenty-one months for women. Men serve further time in the reserve forces, sometime until the age of 49. Many more people serve in the military or in other security forces on a professional basis. Since Israel is a land of immigration par excellence, military service has always served as a melting pot for Israeli society. Moreover, due to its extreme significance for Israeli society, the military is known to have had an enormous impact on Israeli Hebrew. This is mostly observable in the lexicon and phraseology, but definitely goes far beyond these areas. (Izre’el et al. 2001: 191)

According to Rosenthal (2020: 13), the Israeli “armylect” which he terms *tsahalit* is a central component in the everyday language of many Israelis – also in contexts outside the army.<sup>9</sup> Citations in *tsahalit* and references to *tsahalit* can be found in books, movies, TV series and homepages (Rosenthal 2020: 13). Besides his monograph on *Speaking tsahalit* (Rosenthal 2020), Rosenthal (2014) investigates *The reflection of the military hierarchy in the language of the Israeli army*. To describe the different contexts of usage for *tsahalit*, I have suggested a functional continuum which ranges from professional language restricted to specific military units to everyday contexts and slang (Striedl 2019).

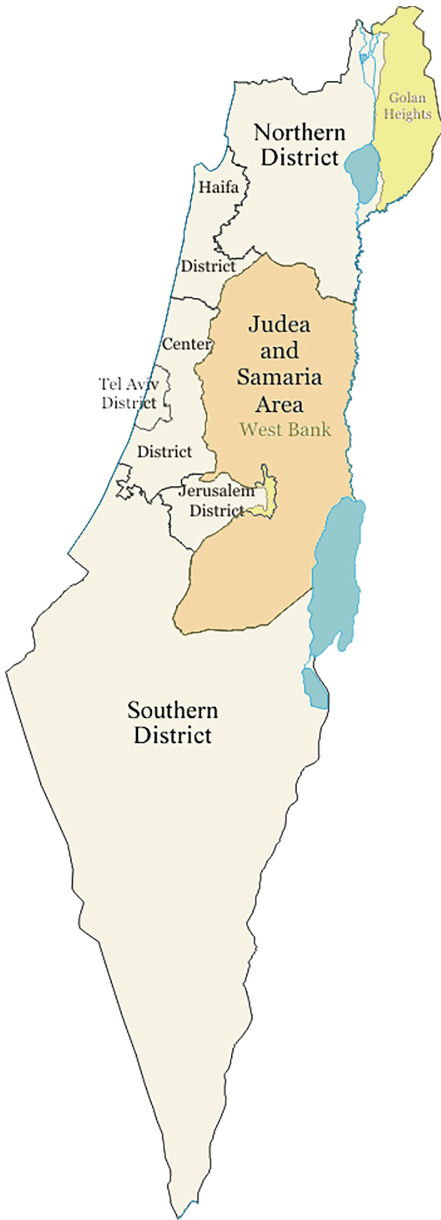
Linguistic and other research literature have often propagated an over-simplistic rendition of the linguistic reality in Hebrew in Israel, due to the lack of thorough research in many sociolinguistic domains. The Israeli linguists whom I consulted

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<sup>9</sup> The term is derived from the Hebrew acronym for the Israeli Defense Forces, *tsahal*.

for this study lamented the current state of neglect of their research area and were very welcoming. Researchers with an outsider perspective can help to complement studies which were conducted from within the linguistic system – this should be encouraging for anyone who is envisaging a research project in this domain. As has been argued in general, in 2.1.4, research with a focus on the speakers' perception and their representation of linguistic variation is needed to get a better understanding of any linguistic system. The findings of this study can be used as a basis for the further investigation in this direction.

While various areas invite usage-based research on MH, in my opinion, the most intriguing and promising fields of research for variationist studies in Israel are the military and the religious sectors of the society. It has to be noted that both areas are not easily accessible. However, this does not completely rule out the possibility for usage-based research, from my experience.



**Fig. 3.4:** Israel districts by Ynhockey (retrieved from [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Israel\\_districts.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Israel_districts.png) on February 4, 2025), Public Domain

## 4 Data collection

Unfortunately, much of the ethnographic contributions of sociolinguistic fieldwork is not often published. As Feagin (2002: 36) points out, 'the more successful the fieldwork, the less noticeable it is in the final analysis'. Information about how sociolinguistic fieldwork is conducted is more properly found in its legends, the stuff of late-night gatherings in the conference hotel bars and other informal settings. (Tagliamonte 2006: 35)

The data collection was designed and carried out exclusively for this study. To enhance a proper understanding of the quality of the obtained data, I will revise the process leading to the data collection and the collection itself. The following presentation of the underlying theoretical assumptions and the applied methods will follow a chronological order, along the early conception of the methods, their adjustment in the course of the first fieldwork stage and the subsequent development of new methods for the second fieldwork stage. This account is paired with a methodological evaluation and a general discussion that exceeds the scope of this study. The following topics will be addressed:

- Initial approach: What can be done in an unknown field to yield information about sociolinguistic variation?
- Sample design: Which parameters should be looked at more closely? Which participants should be looked for?
- Practical and ethical considerations: What should one have in mind when designing a research project with similar objectives?
- Question of perspective: How can different perspectives on the research area be included?
- Saturation: At which point can the data collection and fieldwork be stopped?

I hope that the detailed account of my approach may prove helpful and encouraging for researchers who are looking to realize their study with an open and flexible research design.

### 4.1 Approaching the field and research topic

[T]he ethnographic approach puts the sociolinguist in touch with the cultural context of the speech community so that the linguistic reflections of that community can be interpreted and explained. Further, knowledge of the cultural context can also provide lucid indications of what is important to analyse [...] (Tagliamonte 2006: 20)

In the above citation, two key aspects of the ethnographic approach are expressed: On the one hand, contextual information is gathered to enable a more complete

understanding of the data. On the other hand, the area of research is explored in an open and flexible manner, which can affect the way data is chosen and gathered – the sample generation – and can generate new hypothesis and theories. As exemplified by GTM, theoretical reasoning, the collection of data and the verification of hypothesis are understood as interdependent and iterative, rather than linear processes, in qualitative research paradigms.

For the sample generation this means that instead of adhering strictly to statistical models for the data collection – data mining – the researcher is allowed to use his natural capacity to look left and right of the targeted data. Thereby, new perspectives and aspects can be included in the study, which may even be more valuable for the research goals than standardized and easily analyzable data. Kulkarni-Joshi states the need to use ethnographic methods for sample generation in sociolinguistic research, with a focus on identity construction:

Ethnographic methods need to be used to identify smaller groups within the larger population which are indeed culturally and linguistically homogeneous. Only after conclusions regarding sociolinguistic behaviour for each such group are drawn, can generalizations regarding the larger population become possible. This approach should take us closer to an understanding of the heterogeneous nature of identity. (Kulkarni-Joshi 2013: 87)

This line of reasoning suggests a positive effect on the overall quality of the research methodology through the right application of ethnographic methods. It is argued that representativeness of a sample and the possibility for generalizations can only be reached through an ethnographic micro-perspective on social groups.

The exploratory approach for this study, based on two periods of fieldwork in Israel, was chosen originally because no adequate corpus of SH was available (see 3.2.2). I knew very little about what could be meaningful variables in MH. My hypotheses were based partly on my own experience and to a larger extent on the scarce research which was available. I hoped to enhance my knowledge about variation in MH by doing fieldwork. The exploratory approach to the field, which is characteristic for GTM, was termed as “nosing around” in the context of the Chicago School of Sociology, where it was popularized (Breuer 2010: 62).

During my fieldwork stays in Israel, I shopped at local food markets, trained in a boxing gym, went to concerts, the cinema, shopping malls, football matches, lectures, restaurants, museums, universities, libraries, visited sights and celebrated religious holidays with friends and their families. Many of these activities are not particularly relevant for my research questions per se, but the observation of the HSS’ behavior in different contexts helped me to shape my thoughts. Most of the time I spent in Israel, I could not help relating my daily experiences to my research goals.

Some of the encounters with participants developed into friendships that helped me to gain a deeper understanding of their lives. In contrast, with some participants I

shared only very few similarities and my role as a cultural outsider became apparent. Different perspectives and personal relations to the participants and the contexts of the research are a natural component of the ethnographic method. Both insider and outsider perspectives can bring about valuable aspects for the research. Because the relation between the researcher and the participants is more personal and less controllable than in experimental settings, certain general ethical requirements need to be followed – these will be discussed in 4.1.2.

My choice of methods for the first stage of fieldwork was guided by the Labovian notion of ‘natural speech’ and its idealized elicitation through narratives (see 2.1.2). Therefore, I experimented with open interviews and a picture story as stimulus for standardized elicitation. I tried to collect, detect and describe meaningful variables by sampling my participants along diverse socio-demographic criteria. The open interviews yielded some promising results just as i53f2l1’s (26:48) statement (1) that was cited above. In contrast, the task of recounting a picture story turned out as frustrating experience for the participants which threatened to ruin the dynamic of the entire interview. Some participants expressed their unease because the task reminded them of psychological tests which were run on them during their army service. Others probably felt disturbed by the childish nature of this task. Consequently, I decided early on to discard the picture story and focus on open interviews.

I planned my research to include a “member check” to test hypotheses with members of the field – a method which is systematically used in GTM (Strübing 2008: 88). Constant conversations with Hebrew speakers about my research, which were not restricted to my recordings alone, were an essential component of each fieldwork stage. In the early phase of this study, I set out to ask my Israeli friends and soon every Hebrew speaker I met about their opinion on linguistic variation in Hebrew. I asked if they could give me any examples for variants or typical ways of speaking – *signonei ha-dibur* – which can be found in Israel.

Instead of providing insights on systematic variation, the open interviews led to more questions about the nature of possible variables and the appropriateness of socio-demographic categories that I had in mind. In the following, I decided to focus on individual HSs and their mental representations of sociolinguistic variation. Instead of mapping variants and varieties, which seemed to be the logical thing to do in the light of the research literature, I came to investigate social institutions in Israel by asking Hebrew speakers about their representations of linguistic variation. This realigned approach is in line with the theoretic principles of PVL and GTM because it focuses on the speakers’ representations without too many prior assumptions about specific variants or varieties, on the one hand, and particular social groups, on the other hand.

In the following, the sample design for this study (4.1.1), the strategies which were applied for the recruitment of participants (4.2.2.2) and the composition of the sample (4.2.2.3) will be reviewed.

#### 4.1.1 Principles for sample generation

Sankoff summarizes the requirements for a good sociolinguistic corpus as follows:

[T]he most useful sociolinguistic corpora are those which provide data on many linguistic problem areas, most of which need not have been envisaged in any detail at the time the recordings were collected. Thus we wish our sampling scheme to result in data appropriate for a wide variety of research topics. [...] we often prefer to regard as an empirical problem the determination of the social dimensions along which linguistic change and variation proceeds. In this case the appropriate strategy is to ensure that as much as possible of the existing linguistic diversity in the community is represented in the sample. (Sankoff 2005: 1001)

Tagliamonte equally stresses the importance of representing some kind of diversity in the corpus:

Despite a movement away from imposing traditional demographic classifications, it is still necessary to maintain some level of representativeness of the community, whatever that community is defined to be. (Tagliamonte 2006: 27)

As a “minimum requirement for any sample” Sankoff lists the variables

age, sex and (some operationalization of) social class or educational level, or both, and perhaps of ethnicity and rural versus urban origin. (Sankoff 2005: 1001)

Bisang (2008: 16) points out that in the light of phenomena such as industrialization and migration “social factors” like “age, social class, education and gender” should be considered, if one tries to “cover the whole range of linguistic variety within a geographical location unless its population is very stable and conservative.” Although I dropped the idea of collecting a well-structured sociolinguistic corpus, I still wanted to diversify my sample along the variables which are discussed in the literature. For the reasons outlined in 1.1 it is not reasonable to sample HSs in Israel along the NORM-characteristics which were typically used in dialectologist research (see 2.1.1). Instead, additional demographic variables should be considered, as Izre’el et al. suggest in their outline for the design of “The Corpus of Spoken Israeli Hebrew:”

differences in place of birth, native/non-native status [in respect to Hebrew as L1], ethnicity, place of residence, type of settlement (urban, rural, kibbutz, etc.), age, sex, socioeconomic status,

profession, occupation, military service, religious affiliation, whether one has spent time out of Israel, and language(s) spoken at home. (Izre'el et al. 2001: 180)

Taking into account the strong impact of migration on the Israeli population, they argue for the systematic inclusion of non-native HSs and of Israeli Arabs:

Many prominent Israeli figures, like the Nobel Literature prize laureate, S. J. Agnon, or the Nobel Peace prize laureate, former prime minister Shimon Peres, have not been native speakers of Hebrew, yet as dominant figures in the cultural and political life of Israel, their influence on the linguistic behavior is potentially high. Furthermore, the society is constantly being augmented by a huge influx of immigrants, resulting in a highly variable linguistic structure that should be recorded. Moreover, Arab citizens of Israel are increasingly demanding their fair share of the 'Israeli pie,' using Hebrew as a vehicle for their cause. (Izre'el et al. 2001: 175)

The summary of participants' socio-demographic data in 4.2.2.3 shows that all variables referred to by Izre'el et al. (2001: 180) are represented in the sample. For the variable 'education,' which is not easily measurable (see 4.2.1), Izre'el et al. (2001: 182) distinguish between three categories: "1 People who have not graduated from high school 2 High school graduates 3 College or university graduates." I tried to recruit participants from all three categories, though I knew about the difficulties I would have to recruit participants from category 1. For the classification of my participants with a siglum, I introduced a fourth category "PhD or higher" to distinguish further among numerous participants who were university students or graduates.

Although Israelis with different origins are included in the sample, I will not use 'ethnicity' as predetermined variable in this study and no prior distinction between "Ashkenazi and non-Ashkenazi" participants, as Izre'el et al. (2001: 181) suggest, is made. Also, I did not differentiate systematically on the basis of "socioeconomic status." According to GTM principles, it is important to consciously work around these and similar apriori categories. I had to consider commonly assumed categories for the purpose of creating a reasonably differentiated sample, while staying conscious of their potentially pre-scientific nature.

Sampling strategies for this study resulted from a combination of "purposeful sampling" and "practical sampling," as described by Corbin & Strauss (2015: 154). Like many researchers, I had limited access to persons or sites and it was necessary to collect all the data in a relatively short period of time and in a flexible way. The sample was not designed to represent fixed ratios of the above variables. Instead, I followed principles of a recursive research design for sampling. At first, I aimed to get a diverse sample through the exploration of the sociodemographic variables and later, I tried to fill in some gaps and focused on certain aspects which seemed to merit further investigation. For example, I included more Israeli Arabs in the sample than I had initially planned because I felt that the analysis would benefit

from an additional perspective. To this extent, my sampling strategy is conform with Charmaz's (2004: 78) GTM approach, who advises that theoretical sampling should not be used unconditionally right from the beginning because it "may bring premature closure to your analysis."

The argument has been made that the unconditional sampling along predetermined sociodemographic variables (such as NORM) is no longer the method of choice – irrespective of the resources which are available for a research project. Theoretic developments in dialectology and in variationist linguistics call for more context sensitive strategies which stem from qualitative sociology. A sensible research design should not overemphasize the significance of the variables which are used for its sample design: questionable premises about these variables can be counter-effective and compromise the representativity of a sample.

In other words, participants might not be good representatives of the variables according to which they were selected. During my research, I was often surprised by an unexpected aspect about a participant which came up during the interview or appeared on the sociodemographic questionnaire. For example, I was surprised to find out that a70f3l1's family origin is Yemenite because from several telephone conversations which preceded the interview I had the impression that she personified typical *Ashkenazi* characteristics. Judging from the interview experiences, most participants turned out to be somehow untypical for their sociodemographic data. This reinforces the premises of third wave variationist studies (see 2.1.2.2): most variables which are represented in the data do not allow for predictions about complex correlations.

In respect to the saturation of the sample size, there seems to be a consensus among researchers who have worked with GTM that a number of about 40 interviews is sufficient for most studies – regardless of the topic (Hadley 2017: 130). For sociolinguistic purposes, Sankoff (2005: 1000) equally asserts that "for qualitative distinctions, sample sizes of a few dozen, rather than a few hundred, suffice." To determine the endpoint of the data collection, qualitative considerations and the researcher's own judgment are more decisive than any quantitative criteria. Hadley describes how it can feel to reach saturation

Essentially, if you come to a place in your research where you find that you are spending large amounts of time to find interesting yet incidental details, it is probable that you have gone as far as you can with your study, and what you have will be sufficient for developing a working grounded theory. (Hadley 2017: 130)

That was what I perceived when I tried to talk to participants from minority groups in Israel, such as Ethiopian Jews, Druze and other groups who sparked my general interest, but were not likely to add substantially different aspects to the analysis.

In retrospect, I could have also settled with about 25 to 30 interviews from the first fieldwork stage instead of 36. Towards the end of each fieldwork stage, it appeared as if I only came across summaries of what has already been said by other participants.

#### 4.1.2 Ethical considerations

As von Unger (2014b: 22) points out, examples about the practical treatment of ethical questions in sociological research are scarce and needed. There seems to be a general consensus about basic principles for ethically responsible research in qualitative sociology that can be extended to adjacent fields of research, ethnography and sociolinguistics. The three monographs on research ethics for qualitative (social) research from Hammersley & Traianou (2012), Farrimond (2013) and von Unger et al. (2014) all treat the principles of “autonomy,” “informed consent,” “privacy” (in connection with “confidentiality” and “anonymity”) and the “assessment of possible harm” as the “Hot Topics” of ethical research (Farrimond 2013: 109).

While all agree on these general principles which will be reassessed in the following, they also stress the fact that these principles are not to be understood as binding laws: in principle no guidelines can be worked out in advance that fit all purposes. This is due to one of the premises of “applied ethics,” as von Unger argues:

There is no supreme, universally valid ethical principle [...]. There is merely a set of middle-order principles that are valid at first glance – i.e. they are only binding as long as they do not conflict with others.<sup>1</sup> (von Unger 2014b: 18, my translation)

Consequently, each researcher has the responsibility to interpret these principles for his research and continuously reassess his methods accordingly when working in the field. Of course, legal frameworks such as the DSGVO in Germany prescribe principles for the treatment of participants and their data, but remain less definite than might be expected. Hammersley & Traianou (2012: 136) express a critical stance towards “moralism” and summarize the challenge of balancing powers in the field as follows:

It is also essential to remember that in the social situations in which researchers carry out qualitative studies they will usually have very limited power and resources, yet they must nevertheless try to produce conclusions that reach a relatively high threshold in terms of likely validity, and that make a worthwhile contribution to collective knowledge. While some

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<sup>1</sup> Original German: Es gibt kein übergeordnetes, allgemein gültiges ethisches Prinzip [...]. Es gibt lediglich eine Reihe von Prinzipien mittlerer Ordnung, die „prima facie“ gültig sind; d. h. sie sind nur verpflichtend, solange sie nicht mit anderen kollidieren.

commentators have suggested that researchers have great power in relation to those they study, and that they should empower participants in order to balance this, we have argued that researchers need to be able to exercise power if they are to pursue research effectively; and also, for that matter, to live up to their responsibilities in terms of extrinsic values. At the same time, we have insisted that the ethical issues qualitative research raises in terms of extrinsic values are, generally speaking, much less serious than in the case of both medical research and investigative journalism, and are close to what is common most of the time in everyday life. (Hammersley & Traianou 2012: 144)

On these grounds, Tagliamonte's (2006: 33) four "main ethical guidelines for collecting informal interviews" for the purpose of variationist linguistics can be reassessed critically: "[c]onsent for audio-recording" is generally needed before starting the recording and recordings without consent are only legitimate in very special situations. "[G]uaranteed anonymity" is practically an unreachable ideal because as long as some context about the work with participants is included, it cannot be ruled out that someone will be able to recognize participants. Based on this remark, some argue against the principle of anonymity altogether and in the oral history domain it is common practice to disclose the participants' identity for the sake of scientific integrity (Farrimond 2013: 131). In linguistics, treating participants anonymously has almost become common practice – especially where the participants are supposed to make judgements about linguistic phenomena and hence about other people. "[V]oluntary participation" is expressed in the principle of autonomy and informed consent: as a matter of principle, participants cannot be forced to participate in research. Involuntary participation would also compromise the nature of the obtained data as unnatural or forced. To make a choice whether they want to participate, participants need to know about the research in the first place. The possibility of guaranteeing "access to researcher and research findings" is somewhat dependent on the environment of the study. Generally, it should be easy to give participants access to online publications. However, people without access to the internet or without the necessary reading skills (in the language of the publication) need to be informed in a different way. The only certain way to guarantee access to the research findings would be to revisit every participant and hand out hard copies of the research findings, which is hardly practicable. Because I established contact with participants by email, telephone or social networks, all my participants were able to contact me through the same channels. When the contact was established personally without prior texting or phoning, or was arranged by a third party, I left my contact details with the participants. Often, we exchanged contact details out of courtesy at the end of the interview. After the last fieldwork stage, no participant had contacted me again about the study.

The common-sense principles which were outlined above can best be treated jointly: participants' autonomy depends on their informed consent and their privacy

can be safeguarded by confidentiality and anonymity. It has been argued so far that these principles are not strictly defined and need to be reassessed carefully in different fieldwork situations (cf. Hammersley & Traianou 2012: 144).

#### 4.1.2.1 Autonomy and respect

To establish a respectful relation with the participants, I tried to arrange meetings in a location where they would feel at ease and adapted to their schedule (see 4.2.2.1). Most participants did not receive any compensation for their participation. When we met in a cafe or a restaurant, I offered to pay the bill. Some happily accepted the offer and others refused or even insisted on paying for both of us. Gestures of mutual respect can be very rewarding for the participants and I would advise approaching them in terms of fellow human beings instead of mere “informants,” as is common in day-to-day contexts. On many occasions, participants went out of their way to be able to meet me and even postponed or cancelled their following appointments in the course of the interview. Autonomy is very important as a basis for respect because participants have expectations and their own goals when entering the interview situation. Not respecting these dynamics would lead to an unsatisfying experience for the participants and the researcher as well. Respectful treatment requires constantly assessing the benefits for the study against possible harm which can be caused.

It may not be obvious, but the benefits for the participants from mere interviews, without any financial compensation, can be manifold (Farrimond 2013: 149). Especially during open interviews when I let the participants choose topics more or less freely, I felt that most participants were pleased merely because I listened to them. As Davis (1995: 443) points out somewhat dramatically, “the catharsis provided by attentive listening on the part of the researcher is often the most appreciated service rendered.” It seems to me that most participants enjoyed the interview situation which allowed them to talk freely and to take on the role of an expert or to act like an ambassador for their community.

Nonetheless it is important to be aware of possible psychological or emotional harm which may be caused by the interview:

This might include distress, upset, annoyance, emotional dependence on researcher, misunderstanding the nature of the relationship, provoking negative memories/flashbacks/mental health issues or any other negative aspect of psychological interaction. (Farrimond 2013: 144)

Sometimes I sensed that a particular question may have irritated a participant because his attitude grew more reserved. Nevertheless, no extreme situations occurred where I had to stop the interview. These moments of unease cannot be avoided completely and sometimes it is even necessary for the researcher to ask uncomfortable questions, as von Unger (2014a: 223) points out. Usually, I could regain the

participants' confidence by reformulating the question in a more sensitive way or by switching to another topic. It can also help to clarify the research aims, in reaction to suspicion expressed by the participants. These momentary situations of lacking trust hint at the fact that participants are more vulnerable than they might have thought when they entered the interview – some boasted that they do not care about their anonymity because they “have nothing to hide.” As a cultural outsider it seemed to me that there is a tendency in Israel to express one's opinion publicly and confidently, without too many constraints. This attitude, which is referred to as *dugri* ‘direct,’ was often characterized as authentic. However, it is likely that participants would alter this attitude in an international environment because it may be perceived as too direct or insensitive to other worldviews. In this context, Goebel (2005: 947) hints at the researchers' responsibility to counteract cultural relativism. In this study, I am trying to shed light on the participants' representations, instead of applying widespread stereotypes to the participants and thereby reproducing them uncritically.

The respectful treatment of “vulnerable groups” can require additional attention (Farrimond 2013: 164–165). I observed that people who are associated with minority groups were more reluctant to participate in my study: they did not react to impersonal calls for participation and were more hesitant, in general, or at least I felt that it was harder to build trust with them. In this study, these groups include Ethiopian Jews, immigrants, ex-*Haredim*, Druze, inhabitants of the periphery and potentially all socioeconomic weak groups, but, also *kibbutzniks*. Because children and school kids are commonly considered vulnerable groups, there are legal restrictions for their recruitment in most societies. During my research, I was told by members of some well-studied groups, including Druze, Ethiopian Jews and the very kibbutz where I lived, that they have had negative experiences with insensitive researchers. Therefore, it is understandable that members of these groups do not want to participate in similar research projects or at least retain a skeptical attitude. Nonetheless, it is important to include these groups in future research – out of respect for them and their opinion.

In the context of variationist linguistics, it is a challenge to study socially stigmatized variants without deceiving the participants about the purpose of the study. Participants are easily irritated by a researcher who explicitly asks to study their speech because it is stigmatized. Usually, people do not like being studied as mere representatives of a vulnerable group.

#### 4.1.2.2 Informed consent

The aim of informed consent is to allow the participant or group to make an ‘autonomous’ decision (i.e. an independent one), with enough relevant information, enough understanding (i.e. the capacity to consent) and no pressure to participate. (Farrimond 2013: 109)

With the goal of reaching an informed consent with my participants, I used a consent form, which is presented in 4.2.1. It is important that forms of this kind are “understandable to ordinary people who do not have specialist scientific knowledge” (Farrimond 2013: 110). To inform about my research goals, I included the working title of my dissertation on the form. In fact, the full disclosure of the research goals may be impractical at an explorative stage where the researcher himself is not yet aware of the exact topic and the scope of his study (Hammersley & Traianou 2012: 94). In practice, I could explain and justify my approach directly with the participants and shared this information already during the recruitment process, when possible.

Generally, consent needs to be reached about the recording of the data, its storage and its use “for research purposes”, which is subject to interpretation, as Hammersley & Traianou (2012: 90) remark. I included this information on the consent form and additionally, I explained that I needed to record the interviews and asked directly for participants’ permission. On rare occasions, participants did not want to be recorded or only consented at a later point in the interview when they appeared to have gained trust. If the recordings are essential to the study, this can be problematic and it should be made clear, as early as possible, that the interviews are not useful for the study without the recording. All the same, participants who do not want to be recorded may share insightful information and other contacts. Most of the time the recording of the interview was accepted as inevitable because it cannot be expected that the researcher would remember the whole content just by making notes.

Sometimes I did not hand out the consent form right away, but rather at the end of the interview. I felt with some participants that asking them for a signature immediately after the first encounter would complicate the situation, as Farrimond points out:

It can establish a culture of ‘mistrust’ between researcher and researched by making the agreement seem ‘legal’ and not a matter of mutual understanding. (Farrimond 2013: 112)

Farrimond (2013: 112) hints at “cultural differences” in the Middle East where “asking for signatures can be perceived as strange at best, and distrustful at worst.” In my experience, this observation does not apply to Israel. With very few exceptions, participants were neither surprised nor reluctant to fill out and sign my form of consent. A68m3l1 remarked that he is used to filling out forms because of the excessive bureaucracy in Israel. Gaining consent should not be misunderstood as “passing the responsibility for making ethical judgements about privacy from researchers to other people” (Hammersley & Traianou 2012: 114). Even though participants consented in principle, they may have forgotten that they were being recorded and their comments can include sensitive information which has to be retained or anonymized (Hammersley & Traianou 2012: 116).

#### 4.1.2.3 Privacy, confidentiality and anonymity

Privacy is the extent to which you can control how much access others have to your private life, thoughts and feelings. (Farrimond 2013: 126)

Confidentiality means not sharing the data after collection beyond agreed limits. Anonymity is a way of ensuring confidentiality, as the data is stored in an unidentifiable form. Confidentiality covers not only data protection and storage, but also how you, as the researcher, share the data in other ways, such as in conversation. (Farrimond 2013: 133)

Regarding the anonymization of the data, von Unger (2014b: 25) asserts that it has to be decided if it is generally reasonable to treat all participants anonymously and how such a treatment can be successfully achieved. There are good arguments for the citation of the participants with their full names, such as their authorship of the data, the impossibility to guarantee absolute anonymity and the principle of scientific integrity through the disclosure of all facts (Hammersley & Traianou 2012: 129).

Nonetheless, the counterarguments are given more emphasis by Hammersley & Traianou and they stress the particular nature of qualitative research, in opposition to common practices of lawyers or journalists:

The aim is not to speak on behalf of, to give voice to, or even to portray the lives of particular people, but rather to answer research questions. Moreover, all data are co-constructed, and developed into evidence by researchers. Even in the case of data from interviews or documents these are not simply the personal expressions of informants. Finally, those who ask to be named will not always recognise the dangers involved. (Hammersley & Traianou 2012: 130)

For Hadley's notion of scientific integrity, the disclosure of the participants identity is not a criterion:

For grounded theorists, accuracy of reporting means being faithful to what was reported by participants, being fair to the multiple perspectives portrayed, and insuring that the theory is a plausible explanation for what is taking place in the research domain. (Hadley 2017: 68)

Farrimond (2013: 130) also states that “[a]nonymity has become a ‘default’ practice within research ethics, promoted within ethical codes and underpinned by legislation.” Originally, I wanted to enable participants to appear with their full names in the text. I included the option against anonymity in the consent form to leave participants a choice on how they want to appear. At that time, I did not know which information would be analyzed and cited nor in which direction the research would develop. If all the interviews were purely about linguistic topics, I would not have any concerns about disclosing participants’ identities. I do not have the impression that the interviews contained sensitive information which the speakers would not convey voluntarily in day-to-day conversations. However, the nature of the recordings is

different because they are not as futile as casual talk. In this respect, von Unger (2014b: 27) points out that participants tend to forget about ongoing research and may be surprised negatively by the publication.

In fact, I noticed that most interviews unfolded in a casual way which does not suggest that participants altered their attitude because they were being recorded. Although the bulk of information which the participants provided is not going to pose any risk to them, there is still the chance that some statements could shine a bad light on them: judgmental statements were elicited during the interviews and especially during GERT. During the interviews, participants occasionally voiced concerns about being perceived as racist because of their judgments of accents in connection with social groups or stereotypes. I feel obliged not to link these statements to their person in a way which could be held against them at any point in the future. I cannot know the exact margins of what it means to be politically correct in Israel and it is impossible to estimate how this matter is going to be seen in the near future.

As the nature of this study is sociolinguistic, questions about social identity and attitudes towards religion, the military, the state, family members and politics have been discussed that are labeled as “sensitive data,” which must not be traceable to a real person, by German law:

Die Verarbeitung personenbezogener Daten, aus denen die rassische und ethnische Herkunft, politische Meinungen, religiöse oder weltanschauliche Überzeugungen oder die Gewerkschaftszugehörigkeit hervorgehen, sowie die Verarbeitung von genetischen Daten, biometrischen Daten zur eindeutigen Identifizierung einer natürlichen Person, Gesundheitsdaten oder Daten zum Sexualleben oder der sexuellen Orientierung einer natürlichen Person ist untersagt. (Art. 9 DSGVO 1)

The so prescribed universal treatment of data as “sensitive” is debatable. For example, some participants presented their religious affiliation as a key component of their identity: it was important to them to talk about their conception of religiosity in the interview. In these cases, it is questionable if this information should constitute sensitive information *per se*.

Besides the treatment of the so defined ‘sensitive data,’ I had the impression that participants expressed their views on societal topics with me, as a cultural outsider, more freely or differently than they might have usually, with fellow Israelis. To publish their statements in a wider context can violate the safe space which they seemingly constructed during the interview situation, even though they had opted for disclosure initially. I do not know the participants to such a degree as to be able to judge what type of information could be considered as unpleasant or as a violation of their privacy. The participants, in turn, could not know exactly how their statements were going to be presented, published and interpreted. Even though they knew it would be published as a dissertation, they were probably not familiar with

the holistic style of argumentation in qualitative research: personal information is contextualized with their statements about “facts.” Some participants expressed that they were not familiar with the Hebrew term *anonimi* which appeared on the consent form and I cannot be sure that my explanation was understood.

Therefore, I decided to treat all participants equally in the text and only refer to them with a siglum, without disclosing their identity. I am convinced that in this way, the participants’ privacy can be respected and at the same time they will still be able to recognize their voices in the text and assure their correct citation. Outsiders will not be able to identify the participants, easily – at least, it will be hard to prove their identity on the basis of the information contained in the study. However, Israel is a small country where social bonds are strong, which makes it impossible to grant complete anonymity to any participant. The option on the consent form provided me with information on who wanted to be treated as anonymous and I made sure to treat these participants’ data more cautiously. Because I cannot know how participants are going to think about their statements in the future, or how a wider dissemination of their statements in the internet might affect them, this degree of anonymization is preferable. Farrimond asserts that

[i]t also affords them some protection from harms they may not have [129] anticipated when initially consenting (e.g. if they had expected their names to only appear in a few academic journals and later this research is disseminated widely online). (Farrimond 2013: 128–129)

Researchers have the obligation to store the data safely which can at best be achieved by its anonymization (Farrimond 2013: 130). The use of unequivocal sigla assures that every citation is still traceable in the corpus of the original data which is published as online resource (see Striedl 2023).

## 4.2 Methods for the collection of data

Table 4.1 is an overview of the methods which I used for data collection. In the middle column, the number of participants for each method is listed. In the right column, the duration of all 57 recorded interviews are displayed, grouped by methods and fieldwork stages.

With the exception of three pilot interviews, all open interviews were conducted during the first fieldwork stage in Israel between January and April 2019. I tested the method with three recordings in summer 2018. I recorded the first pilot interview in Germany and two more during a short stay in Israel. The open interviews consist of 29 recordings with 31 different participants, including pilot interviews. Expert interviews were conducted in both fieldwork stages: six in the first and two in the

**Tab. 4.1:** Methods, number of participants (n) and duration of recordings (1st stage + 2nd stage)

Methods	n	Duration in hh:mm:ss
1 Open interviews	31	21:47:04
2 Expert interviews	7 (6+1)	06:27:39 (05:38:54 + 00:48:45)
3 Guided interviews	21	12:00:30
4 GERT		
Total	59	40:15:13 (27:25:58 + 12:49:15)

second. One expert interview with a Hebrew language teacher recorded in the second stage was combined with methods 3 and 4 and is included in the summary of these methods in the table.

Almost all guided interviews were conducted in combination with GERT and recorded during the second fieldwork stage, between December 2019 and February 2020. Only the first recording with these methods was conducted as a pilot interview with an Israeli exchange student in Germany, shortly before embarking on the second fieldwork stage. All pilot interviews are included in the main corpora because there is no reason to treat them differently from an analytic perspective. From the very beginning of the data collection, I asked participants to fill out a socio-demographic questionnaire and a written consent form. The different methods will be explained and evaluated in detail, in the order of their application.

#### 4.2.1 Consent form and socio-demographic questionnaire

Before conducting the first pilot interviews, I devised a form which was filled out by almost every participant who was interviewed for the study. Only five expert interviews were conducted without filling out the form. The function of this form was twofold: On the one hand, it was designed to facilitate the process of reaching an informed consent (see 4.1.2.2) with the participants about their participation in the study and on the other hand, to collect the participants' socio-demographic data which was considered as necessary to answer the research questions. Five experts were not asked to fill out the form because their status as participant was different. They were selected as experts because of their socio-demographic characteristics which were already known to me and their consent was reached during the communication which preceded the interviews. Not only was filling out the form obsolete in their case, but it felt inappropriate to ask them to do so because it was inconsistent with their expert status.

The form which can be found in Appendix B is in Hebrew, except for the working title of the PhD project in English. In the following, the content of the form will be presented in English. The form was designed to fit entirely on one side of an A4 sheet for practical reasons. In challenging fieldwork situations, an excess of paperwork can cause unnecessary confusion for the participants and the researcher. The risk of getting lost in one's own paperwork during the interview and the fear of losing anything is worth considering. Possibilities to stock or to reproduce the needed forms in the field should also be considered.

In terms of content, the form is organized in three sections: Under the title "Consent form," the readers are informed that they consent to participate in the academic research project with the title "Linguistic Variation, Varieties and Standard in Modern Hebrew: A Sociolinguistic Survey." They are also informed that the conversation is going to be recorded and can be published as scholarly literature and it may be used by other researchers. Then, they are asked to choose whether to stay anonymous or to appear and be cited by their name. The two options are printed on the form and can be chosen by checking a box.

When I designed the form, I had not yet decided on the way of citing the participants in the text. I did not know how the nature of the data and the participants' behavior during the interviews was going to develop and I liked the idea of letting participants have a say in the treatment of their data. After the completion of the interviews and a thorough consideration of the inherent risks and benefits, I decided against the disclosure of any of the participants' names (see also 4.1.2.3). Although the option against anonymity was dismissed, the design of the form was beneficial for the research because it helped to record participants' reactions to the topic: a majority of 36 participants opted against anonymity, in contrast to 18 who opted in favor, and 7 who did not make a choice. Some participants discussed their options with me and thus helped me to make a responsible decision.

The second section is entitled "sociolinguistic data" and contains 18 open fields with indications of the type of data to be filled in, followed by blank spaces, and two fields with multiple choice answers. The third section at the bottom of the page consists of indications and blank spaces for the registration of the participants' signature, the location and the date of the interview.

The 20 fields were selected to address the most relevant factors which may influence linguistic variation in Hebrew in Israel according to my hypotheses (see 1.1) and the principles which were discussed in 4.1.1. At the same time, these factors served as guiding principles for the sample generation as described in 4.2.2: the initial goal was to recruit participants who differed from each other in respect to their sociolinguistic data, as it appears on the form. All the demographic factors outlined by Izre'el et al. (2001: 180) are addressed directly, except for "socioeconomic status" (the factors were cited in 4.1.1). For the sake of discretion, I decided against the collection

of data about the participants' financial situation. The participants' socio-economic status can be determined contextually with data about their education, occupation and place of residence. To guarantee the adequacy of the form, I reviewed existing questionnaires which were used by researchers in Israel for similar purposes for the design and the exact wording of the questionnaire.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, I asked my pilot participants to check the draft of the form for incomprehensible or inappropriate questions and implemented their minor corrections in the final version.

The open fields numbered from 1 to 4 inquire about participants' names, their age and sex (the blank space was intended to leave more options for non-binary distinctions). Participants' names were used as a form of address during the interview and intended for their citation which was finally ruled out.

Some fields on the form are specific to the Israeli context: Because of the recent immigration of many Israelis, two fields are intended for "5. country of birth" and "6: year of migration (Aliyah)." As discussed by Gafter (2014: 27–28), direct questions about 'ethnicity' can be insensitive, but it is quite usual on official forms in Israel to inquire about one's parents' places of birth. Consequently, the next fields are intended for "7. father's country of birth" and "8. mother's country of birth." Compared to European contexts, many Israelis express their religious affiliation self-confidentially on a daily basis, with their choice of clothes or food (*kosher*), for example. Therefore, this domain was considered as unproblematic and could be tackled with the fields "9. your religion," intended for entries of the type "Jewish" or "Christian" and "15. How do you define your level of religiosity? Choose one of the options:" which was intended for the registration of the participants' degree of religiosity. The six options are based on the religious distinctions which are commonly applied to Judaism in Israel (see 3.1.4): "*haredi*," "religious," "traditional," "not religious," "secular" and "other." Though not all options fit for other religious groups, the participants were left with enough relevant options or could resort to the residual category "other."

Because of the supposed social and linguistic significance of the military in Israel, field "16. Have you served in the army?" asks to choose between the options "yes" and "no" to determine the participants' familiarity with army contexts. Some participants were sensitive towards this topic. Those who were not in the army can feel the need to justify themselves by explaining medical or ideological reasons for their exemption, as a reaction to the social pressure which evolves around this topic in Israel. Usually, their unease passed and did not pose a problem for the continuation of the interview. I tried to react understandingly and as a cultural outsider I was less likely to be seen as someone who would exert this kind of social pressure anyway.

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<sup>2</sup> Especially helpful was the questionnaire for CoSIH which is accessible online: [http://cosih.com/CoSIH\\_files/questionnaires/C1\\_questionnaire.pdf](http://cosih.com/CoSIH_files/questionnaires/C1_questionnaire.pdf) (Accessed: 2024-09-08)

To gather information about the participants' profession, question 17 asks "What is your main occupation?"

Fields 11 to 14 inquire about variables, which belong to the domain of classical dialectology: "11. current place of residence," "12. Since when have you been living there?" "13. earlier place of residence" and "14. place of residence during childhood." They are meant to collect geographic data about the participants' places of residence in a diachronic perspective to determine the participants' mobility.

To determine participants' 'level of education,' they were asked: "10. How many years of education have you completed (including academic studies)?" According to Schneider (2016: 15,17), this type of question is a valid and widespread instrument for the measurement of educational data in surveys, though the calculation of the total duration "can be very cognitively demanding," which can lead to measurement errors. In the Israeli context, this type of question is preferable over a potentially more precise question about the highest educational degree because there are differences in educational systems within Israel and in the countries of origin of the participants which impede a direct comparison.

Finally, linguistic variables about language command of Hebrew, other languages and their usage are queried with the fields: "18. At what age did you begin speaking Hebrew?" "19. Which is your main spoken language, currently?" and "20. Do you know other languages, besides Hebrew? If yes, which are those?"

Besides a few variables, such as 'age' and geographic indications, most fields are to some degree dependent on the participants' interpretation, their thoroughness in calculation and memorizing, and rely on their honesty.<sup>3</sup> In general, the participants had no difficulties filling out the form and did so willingly. The only field which was sometimes challenging for them was question 10 about the years of formal education because of the reasons mentioned above. A summary of the data which was collected with the questionnaire will be presented in 4.2.2.3.

#### 4.2.2 Access to the field and sample composition

Three years before embarking on this PhD project, in Spring 2018, I had spent more than five months in Israel during an *ulpan kibbutz* Hebrew course. Prior to this first extended period, I had spent ten days of vacation in Israel in 2013, which was my first stay in the Middle East. After the completion of the *ulpan* language course, I was

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<sup>3</sup> Against this assumption, which may be obvious for European minds, some participants did not know their exact age because their date of birth was not recorded. Furthermore, geographic indications, such as toponyms (places of birth) and borders, may change or move in the course of time.

almost fluent in Hebrew, both in speaking and writing and I was familiar with many practical aspects about living in Israel and how to get along. I was able to follow conversations and if I had missed something, I could ask for explanations. I had acquired active competence to a somewhat lesser extent and was able to talk fluently with basic terms about common day-to-day topics. For some time, I was planning to pursue a Master's degree in Israel on the history and culture of the Middle East, but I dropped this plan after the completion of the *ulpan* course. By inquiring about different programs which were offered at Israel's major universities I gained some experience with more elaborate conversations in Hebrew about academic topics, with students and university staff. This basis of experience enabled me to access scholarly literature in Hebrew and to contact participants via email or social media. At the beginning of my research I was confident enough to converse freely with the participants and to conduct interviews in Hebrew. Naturally, my language skills and my confidence as a researcher in an interview situation further improved in the field. Luckily, I also had a small network of Israeli friends whom I could ask for advice and for practical help for the organization of my study.

I started to explore interesting sites and aspects for this study with a preparatory stage consisting of two short stays in Israel, in spring and in summer 2018. As a kick-off, I had arranged meetings with eight linguists from all five major Israeli universities with linguistic faculties. I asked them about existing research and promising topics in Israeli sociolinguistics and – more generally – about scientific practice in linguistics in Israel. These talks were very challenging, as they drastically revealed to myself my outsider-position as a European researcher and my lack of knowledge. At the same time, they were very inspiring on a personal level because of the overall friendly and encouraging atmosphere. From a theoretical perspective, the meetings certainly helped to shape my research goals.

Only in retrospect did I understand these early meetings as expert interviews and I regret not having recorded more material right from the beginning. Despite having brought my recording device to most meetings, I just took some notes. Most of these talks already contained relevant statements which could have been analyzed later. Even if not used for an analysis, a recording in addition to notes can always be helpful for the documentation of the research progress. I refrained from recording these talks on the basis of two poor reasons: firstly, I was inexperienced and too shy to ask if I could record the interviews. Now, I am certain that my interlocutors would have happily agreed if I had asked. Secondly, I did not regard these talks as a proper part of the study, yet. In general, I would advise anyone to start gathering data and recording speech as early as possible. Regardless of the type of data and its quality, there is still a benefit from practicing the methods for the collection of data and its recording. Besides the consultations with colleagues, I traveled and met with friends in different parts of the country and I started to experiment with

different interview methods which led to the recording of three pilot interviews. The theoretical basis for the design of the sample of participants was outlined above (see 2.2.2 and 4.1.1). The applied recruitment strategies and the detailed make-up of the sample is presented in the next sections.

#### 4.2.2.1 Research locations

During the first fieldwork stage, between January and April 2019, I lived for five weeks each in Tel Aviv and in Jerusalem, and three weeks in Haifa. Due to the flexible research design, I did not want to book my accommodation a long time in advance. When I traveled to Israel for the first extended period for this study, I wanted to stay in different cities and parts of the country to get an idea of different living conditions and geographic notions. I would have liked to have stayed in smaller towns and rural areas as well, but, outside the cities and the tourist hot-spots there were hardly any available options. In general, living space in Israel – especially short term rental – is extremely expensive. I chose to rent rooms in shared apartments with Israeli flat mates for financial and for practical reasons. Naturally, most shared flats can be found in the bigger cities with a university. This fact and the overall higher availability of options are the reasons for which I stayed in Israel's three major cities for almost the entire time of fieldwork.

I considered the search for accommodation and the interaction with Israeli flatmates as a part of the fieldwork experience. On several occasions, I could arrange interviews or establish new contacts with the help of my temporary flatmates or people I had met originally when I was looking for a room. Altogether, I stayed at eight different locations during the first stage – for up to three weeks in one place, including three shorter stays at friends' homes. During the second fieldwork stage, between December 2019 and February 2020, I had some more difficulties finding accommodations and stayed again five weeks in Haifa and four weeks in Tel Aviv. To compensate for the city-centeredness of my living places, I took trips to several more remote locations and explored the extended surroundings of my living places. I either arranged to meet participants on the trips or I tried to recruit participants spontaneously – with more or less success.

Most of the time, the interview locations were close to the participants' living or work space. Principally, I asked the participants to pick a location and was happy to go to them. This was intended as a gesture to save them some time and to show interest for their environment and, at the same time, I could explore new places and get to know the participants' contexts. Occasionally, participants also went out of their way and came to me – especially when they were living in remote places that I could not reach easily.

Most interviews were recorded in cafes, in an office or a quiet place at the participants' work space and occasionally at the participant's or my home. Contrary to a common dislike of cafes as research locations in the literature (see Hadley 2017: 100), I found them to be the best suited interview locations for the purpose of my study: cafes are safe public places and neutral terrain for both the participant and the researcher. Most of the time, cafes can easily be found on smart phone applications and they are commonly known in the neighborhood. Although the atmosphere is less personal than in someone's home, most people feel comfortable in cafes. On contrary, visiting a stranger's home can be intimidating – both for the guest and the host – which will have notable effects on the atmosphere of the interview. Working places are less private than homes and information about the participants' job is revealed naturally. Most participants feel secure and confident in their working environment and may even display a sense of pride when explaining their job. The atmosphere at a working place can be formal and time may be very limited, due to the participants' work obligations.

Typical background noise in cafes like music, air conditioning and chatter can be disturbing during the interview and affect the quality of the recording. This problem can sometimes be avoided by choosing a quiet place. From my experience, it was hard to find very quiet places anywhere during fieldwork. As long as the study does not require the absolute absence of background noise, which can only be found in a laboratory, this slight disturbance can be dealt with and minimized with some recording experience. There are only very few sequences in my recordings which are not understandable due to noise interference. The quality of the recordings, which I made with a Zoom H1 recording device, are surprisingly good – even when recording in very noisy environments.

All in all, I completed 55 recordings across all administrative districts of Israel (see Fig. 3.4 for a map of Israel's districts) and two pilot interviews in Munich, as can be seen in Table 4.2.

**Tab. 4.2:** Locations of and number of recordings

District or City	Recordings
Center	6
Haifa (municipality and district)	10
Jerusalem (municipality and district)	19
North	5
South	4
Tel Aviv (municipality and district)	11
Munich	2

It can be seen that most interviews were recorded in Israel's three major cities. Because many people live and work in cities, the chances for the (spontaneous) recruitment of participants are more favorable than in rural settings. Intellectuals and white collar workers who are more likely to take part in research projects tend to live in cities. Due to the limited time and resources for this research project, the geographical space in Israel could not entirely be explored in the fashion of a dialectologist survey. However, I managed to get an impression of most regions and major cities in Israel and to include some regional diversity in the sample.

Judging from my experience, I argue that research projects with a focus on certain neighborhoods and rural villages can best be realized with a local contact person who can help to establish contacts and to organize living arrangements for the researcher and additional needs, such as interview locations and transportation.

#### 4.2.2.2 Recruitment strategies

My strategies for the recruitment of participants are typical for variationist studies.

[A] balance between random sampling and the social network approach via judgement sampling is undoubtedly the most [28] common fieldwork technique. Whereas random survey methods ensure representativeness of the sample, a social network approach goes a long way towards mitigating the observer's paradox and reaching the right people. (Tagliamonte 2006: 27–28)

My main hypotheses about the significance of socio-demographic characteristics which led me to select certain locations and social groups were already presented. In accordance with the principles of theoretical sampling (see 2.2.2), I did not have a detailed sample design in mind. My fieldwork approach complies with the following description:

Unlike statistical sampling, theoretical sampling cannot be planned before embarking on a study. The specific sampling decisions evolve during the research process. Of course, prior to beginning the investigation, a researcher can reason that events are likely to be found at certain sites and within certain populations. (Corbin & Strauss 2015: 157)

I used the same strategies to access the field and to recruit participants in both stages of fieldwork: spontaneous exploration of my environment leading to participant observation, recruitment of participants with the help of already existing contacts – the “friend of a friend” method – unspecific and group-specific recruitment via social media.

A few weeks before I traveled to Israel for the first fieldwork stage, I asked colleagues and friends whether they could help me to recruit participants and establish contacts in Israel. For this purpose I wrote a call for participation in Hebrew:

I am a linguistics student from the University of Munich in Germany and I am doing research on sociolinguistic variation in Israel. To obtain language data, I want to record conversations with Israelis from different social groups at several locations. The conversations will have a duration between half an hour and an hour. I am interested to find out about your opinions on the topic and to speak about your experiences. I will be in Israel from the end of January until April to carry out my work. Please write me if you are going to be able to participate in my research project. Any help will be appreciated.<sup>4</sup>

They sent out my call to their contacts (mostly friends) and forwarded me the answers. This way, I received about ten phone numbers and email addresses from possible participants who I contacted to determine locations and time frames for a meeting. Whenever my explorations did not lead to the recruitment of new participants or when I wanted to take a new direction, I resorted to this small pool of contacts.

However, the very first Hs I interviewed in the first fieldwork stage were recruited through a different source. Shortly before starting my fieldwork, I met the researcher Yossi David at my home university when he gave a lecture about *Haredi* media in Israel. As an insider, he reposted my call on social media groups of ex-religious Israelis. In my call, I declared that I was interested in differences between the Hebrew of secular and religious speakers. To my surprise, many group members were interested in speaking with a foreign researcher about this specific topic. Through this channel, I received about as many new contacts as I had so far. I recorded five interviews with participants from this group and received further contacts which led to three more interviews – two of them with self-identifying *Haredim*. These contacts were especially valuable because I thought it impossible for me to reach *Haredim*. These unlikely encounters with (ex-) *Haredim* opened exciting new strands of research I could not have thought of beforehand – some of the most intriguing and personally enriching conversations originated from this pool of ex-religious participants.

Another source for my early interviews were my Israeli roommates and their friends. These contacts provided three recorded interviews and many unrecorded conversations during shared activities which were part of the fieldwork experience.

When I felt that I needed new contacts for the arrangement of additional interviews, I started to publish calls on social networks. The use of social networks is extremely widespread in Israel. According to an article from the Times of Israel (Staff 2019),

<sup>4</sup> Original Hebrew: אני סטודנט בחוג בבלשנות באוניברסיטת מינכן בגרמניה ואני חוקר בדוקטורט שלי את הווירואציות הסוציולוגיות בישראל. כדי לקבל נתונים לשוניים אני רוצה להקליט שיחות עם ישראלים מקבוצות חברתיות שונות בכמה מקומות. כל שיחה תקח משך בין חצי שעה ושעה. אני מעוניין לגלות את דעתכם על הסוגיה ולדבר על חיתכם. אהיה בארץ מסוף ינואר עד סוף אפריל כדי לבצע את עבודתי. אם אתם תוכלו להשתתף במחקר שלי תכתבו לי בבקשה! כל עזרה תתקבל בברכה.

Israelis are the world leaders in social media use, with 77 percent of adults using social platforms, and rank second in smartphone ownership[...]. Younger, better educated and higher income Israelis were more likely to use outlets such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, and women more likely than men.

Recruitment through social networks should not be understood as ‘random sampling’ in terms of representativeness because only certain types of participants tend to respond – introverted participants are very unlikely to react. The more widespread (active) use of social networks among the young and educated was also reflected in the reactions to my calls. In general, the rate of respondents – even in very large groups – was quite low. Most calls which I published in specific Facebook groups for certain towns or neighborhoods did not yield any reactions. Nonetheless, the participants who were recruited through social networks are a valuable addition to the sample because they are not connected to my already existing networks and therefore brought up some new aspects.

The following is a call that I published in Hebrew in a local group of Haifa on the social network *couchsurfing*, which is aimed at connecting travelers with locals for shared activities and free accommodation at locals’ homes:

Hello everybody, I am a student from Germany and I am doing research on spoken Hebrew for my PhD thesis. I am looking to record conversations with Israelis from different social groups. I want to speak with Russian speakers, with Ethiopian Jews, with Arabs, with Mizrahim and Ashkenazim. I am going to be in Haifa until the 18th of April and we could meet in a cafe, for example. I will be happy if you could find some time to participate. Half an hour will already be enough. Write me here or on facebook.

With this inclusive wording, I tried to reach specific social groups mentioned in the text – with more or less success. I found out that the recruitment of specific social groups only via social media is unlikely to yield good results. Instead, a more personal approach, such as the ‘friend of a friend’ method, is required for gaining access to most specific social groups. Described by Tagliamonte (2006: 21) as a “component of the social network approach” a ‘friend of a friend’ can help to open doors:

These are people with a status that is neither that of an insider nor that of outsider, but something of both. With a ‘friend of a friend’ you do not go into a situation cold. You have some ‘in’ into the situation. Naming yourself a ‘friend’ means that you have an entry into the relationships of the network you have attached yourself to. [...] Using the ‘friend of a friend’ approach also means that the researcher becomes enmeshed in exchange and obligation relationships as well. In other words, the fieldworker becomes part of the community – an observer who is also a participant. (Tagliamonte 2006: 22)

Slight social pressure through the initiative of a friend can be a good reason to participate in the research for some participants who would otherwise not have

considered doing so. J38m3l2 stated that he would not have had the slightest interest in my research if a friend had not asked him to participate. After the interview, he in turn provided me further contacts which led to one more interview with s35m3l2 who again stated that it was both duty and pleasure to participate in the research because of his friend's request. This sort of chain reaction opened surprising and insightful strands of research which I neither thought of pursuing, nor would I have been able to do, without the help of others.

During the second fieldwork stage, I tried to fill in some blanks in my sample by reaching out to more specific groups, including self-identifying religious and national religious Israelis, Israeli Arabs, the population of the kibbutz where I had studied in the *ulpan* course and the population of remote 'development towns' such as Dimona, Netivot, Yeruham and Bet She'an. For the recruitment of most participants, I resorted to contacts I had already established. With more confidence to approach new contacts, I was successful in recruiting some participants spontaneously. Both for the kibbutz and the development towns, I published calls in local Facebook groups. My success was very limited in both cases, but I was lucky that an Israeli researcher from Yeruham answered my call and acted as contact person during my visit in the town.

It is not surprising that people from these environments were less eager to participate in my research. Both development towns and kibbutzim have been subject to many studies which in some cases shed an unfavorable light on the research population. I came to learn only later that the very kibbutz where I had studied was the subject of a notorious study which failed to respect the anonymity of the participants and led to public controversy. In general, access as an outsider to groups with a small amount of social power (in the case of development towns) requires some extra effort and thought on how to attract the interest of the group's members in compliance with fieldwork ethics. On many occasions, my role as a cultural outsider was beneficial for my research interests in Israel. Levon also describes this surprising effect:

[I]nterestingly, while wary of other Israelis observing them, most people I encountered in Israel were used to the idea of foreigners taking an interest [...] (Levon 2010: 74)

Further relevant aspects for the recruitment of participants are described by Hadley:

[T]o find yourself with a small pool of participants who, either through friendship, social status, or worldview, share strong affinities with you [...] can skew your grounded theory, since your work might lack adequate levels of constant comparison. To avoid this, persuasion, rapport building, and image management will be necessary skills for gaining, maintaining, and expanding access both to people and places after getting your foot in the door. Even when you

have done this though, be prepared for a wide range of variability in the quality of availability to participants. (Hadley 2017: 79)

In my fieldwork approach, spontaneous exploration, participant observation, the recruitment of participants and the recording of interviews are interdependent processes which follow on each other or potentially unfold simultaneously. Because of the limited time for my fieldwork, I was eager to constantly recruit new participants and to arrange interviews. The recruitment and the arrangement of meetings was as time consuming as the recording of the interviews itself. To stay on track, I needed to send and reply to innumerable messages to contacts and to make phone calls, all the time. Some meetings never materialized and successful arrangements had to be organized carefully, especially if I had arranged several meetings on the same day.

During my fieldwork stages of less than three months each, I experienced recruitment and interviewing in waves: either all planned interviews were canceled on the same day and I was not able to make any new arrangements for several days, or everything happened at once and I could arrange a number of new interviews, while rushing from one location to the next for consecutive days. It can be challenging to cope with the pressure of limited time for fieldwork and the requirement to stay flexible and open for new possibilities. Because interviewing can be very exhausting, some time during fieldwork has to be spared for recreation – mentally and physically. In reality, I found it very hard to find some time during fieldwork for data analysis and conscious theoretical reasoning, as GTM requires. Surely, every fieldwork experience is subconsciously processed and can have effects on subsequent sampling decisions and the theoretical development of the study. Because of the wave-like experience of recruiting, I had to consider after every wave which individuals I would like to recruit next to enrich the sample. Theoretical sampling proved itself as a natural and sensible process within my fieldwork approach.

With this approach I succeeded in including at least one participant from the social groups I had envisaged as relevant for the study. While I tried to include a variety of Hebrew speakers, the sample of participants is not representative of Israeli society as a whole – in the sense that it does not represent different social groups proportionally. Marginal societal groups are arguably over-represented. This can be understood as a reaction to the concern of recruiting too many participants who are similar to myself. Instead of collecting only slightly differing interviews with similar – but easily reachable participants – I hoped to get more informative and differentiated interviews by going out of my way.

### 4.2.2.3 Participants' socio-demographic data

Analysing participants' socio-demographic data reveals that most of the characteristics of the Israeli population that were discussed in 3.1 are included in the sample. The ratios of most characteristics, such as the percentage of Israeli Arabs among the participants, are even close to the overall ratios. With a total size of 59 participants, the sample cannot be representative of any population or group in a statistical sense. However, the sample is differentiated enough to include various aspects of Israeli society. In accordance with Sankoff's understanding of representativeness, we have the "possibility of making inferences about the population based on the sample" (Sankoff 2005: 1000). For a detailed qualitative analysis, the amount of collected data is certainly sufficient. An increased amount of data would necessarily lead to a more superficial analysis (Dunkelberg 2005: 250). Essentially the same conclusions can be drawn in respect to the sub-sample for GERT.

All in all, I recorded 58 interviews with 59 different participants. Two requirements had to be fulfilled by all participants: At the time of the interview the participants' main residence had to be in Israel on a permanent basis. Only two participants were living outside of Israel for a limited period of several months, but their home was in Israel. The second requirement was the participants' sufficient command of Hebrew to be able to conduct the interview in Hebrew as well as to read and fill out the consent form and the socio-demographic questionnaire with minimal help of the interviewer, if needed. Participants' data which collected primarily with this questionnaire (for a detailed description see 4.2.1) will be summarized in the following. Because the sample design has consequences for the validity of the method, a detailed account of the data of the participants who completed GERT in combination with the guided interviews is provided. For convenience, the sample for the guided interviews and GERT is referred to only by "GERT" because the methods were always combined.

For the registration of the participants' sex, a blank space following the Hebrew word *min* 'sex' was included in the questionnaire. By the use of the blank space I intended to leave the participants more options than the binary gender distinction. All participants indicated either *nekeva* 'female' or *zakhar* 'male' or referred to either one of the categories by the indication of their first letter – as is customary in Israel. Overall, the sample was perfectly balanced in this respect with 30 women and 29 men. The samples for the different methods are slightly uneven: I recorded 18 women and 20 men as participants for the open and expert interviews, whereas 12 women and 9 men for GERT (see Fig. 4.1).

All but eight participants indicated their age at the moment of the interview in years. The missing data was estimated by assigning the participants who had not indicated their age to an age cohort. Most of the participants (62.7%) were aged between 20 and 39 years. For the age cohorts "40 to 49," "50 to 59" and "60 to 69,"

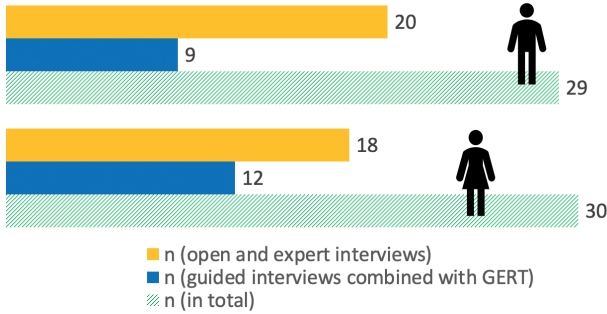


Fig. 4.1: Number of participants for each sex

six participants could be interviewed for each decade (see Fig. 4.2). The youngest participant was aged 17 and the oldest participant who indicated her age was 82 years old. The applied recruitment strategies proved to be impractical for reaching

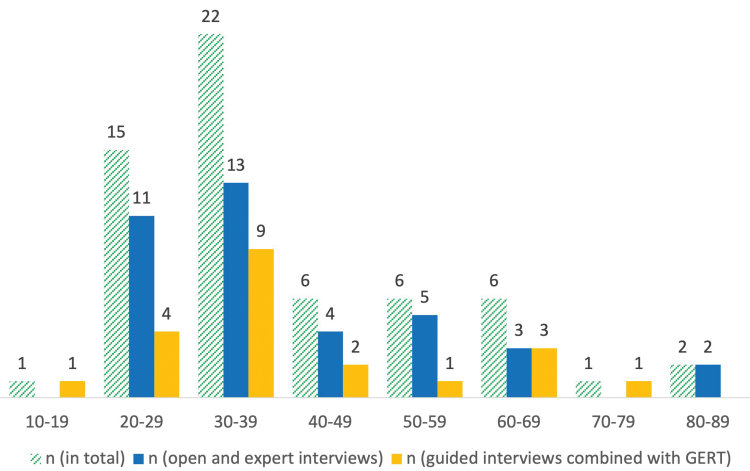


Fig. 4.2: Number of participants per age cohort

participants under the age of 20. Because of ethical considerations, children and school kids cannot be recruited in the same way as adults, as outlined in 4.1.2. Furthermore, the majority of Israel's population aged between 18 and 20 are serving in the army, which leaves them with very limited resources for leisure time. Soldiers

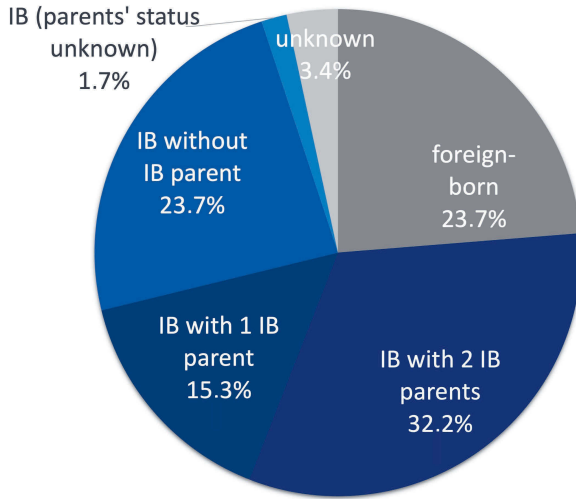
are said to experience physical and psychological exhaustion and therefore are not likely to take up voluntary tasks such as the participation in research projects during their army service.<sup>5</sup> Studies with a focus on pupils or soldiers as participants need to apply more adequate recruitment strategies and strive for an official cooperation with educational or military institutions.

A majority of 32 participants (54.2%) indicated that they had served (or were serving in one case) in the Israeli army – compared to 23 participants (39.0%) who indicated that they had not and four who did not specify. The ratio for GERT is similar: 11 participants (52.4%) indicated that they had served, compared to nine (42.9%) who indicated that they had not served and one did not indicate. The participants' involvement with the military institutions in Israel is considerable – bearing in mind that a number of participants such as the Arabic population and adult immigrants were exempt from military service.

Participants' families stem from all kinds of countries. Based on the data, it does not seem reasonable to lump together participants with different LIs from countries of origin such as South Africa, Argentina and Poland as 'Ashkenazi,' for example. The fact that already 47.5% of the participants were born at least to one Israeli-born parent is another reason to question the relevance of the notions 'Ashkenazi' and 'Mizrahi' for the participants' construction of identity. Therefore, and because of the pre-scientific nature of ethnic categories such as 'Mizrahi' and 'Ashkenazi' (for a discussion of the terms see 3.1.3), no summary along these lines is made. I did not ask participants to characterize themselves in terms of 'ethnicity' during the data collection. Instead, information about the participants' and their parents' country of birth was collected with the questionnaire. A majority of 43 participants were born in Israel, in comparison to 14 participants who were born abroad and two participants who did not indicate their country of birth (see Fig. 4.3). In this context, 'Israel' is interpreted geographically as the territory which was considered as belonging to the state of Israel at the time of the study – regardless of the historical situation at the participants' birth. The term "Israeli-born" is used with the same geographical intention. In the sample for GERT, the ratio is almost identical: 15 (71.4%) were born in Israel and six (28.6%) were born abroad. Among 14 participants who were born outside of Israel, four marked Ethiopia as their country of birth, three Ukraine, two South Africa and one each Argentina, Germany, Kazakhstan, Morocco and Russia. One participant's history of migration is singular because she was born to Arab Israeli parents who had been living abroad, but they returned to Israel together in her childhood. The other 13 participants who were born abroad immigrated as *'olim* or

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<sup>5</sup> When I published a call to recruit participants which was aimed specifically at soldiers in one of Tel Aviv's largest and most active Facebook group, nobody reacted.



**Fig. 4.3:** Percentages of Israeli-born (IB) participants with or without IB parents

were brought by their parents who immigrated as *'olim*. Among them, the majority of seven participants were aged under twenty at the moment of their (parents') migration to Israel and five were even younger than ten years. Four participants immigrated to Israel in their twenties and only two were in their forties. All in all, 19 Israeli-born participants (seven for GERT) were born to two Israeli-born parents (32.2% in general and 33.3% for GERT) and can be termed as 'second generation Israelis.' Another nine (two for GERT) were born to one Israeli and one foreign-born parent (15.3% in general and 9.5% for GERT). The remaining 14 Israeli-born (six for GERT) participants were born to two foreign-born parents (23.7% in general and 28.6% for GERT) – those can be termed as 'first generation Israelis.' One Israeli-born participant did not indicate his parents' country of birth.

The Israeli-born participants' 37 foreign-born parents stem from the following countries: five from the USA, four from Poland, three each from Ukraine and Yemen, two each from Ethiopia, Argentina, Morocco, Persia, Tunisia and Romania. The remaining were born in South Africa, Chile, Hungary, Iran, Azerbaijan, Italy (in a camp for displaced persons), Russia, Moldova, Slovakia and Iraq.<sup>6</sup> Figure 4.4 is a word cloud of these countries of origin – more frequently mentioned entries appear

<sup>6</sup> The participants' entries on the questionnaire were translated and not edited further. Some participants used historic geographic designations such as "Persia," while others used the contemporary designation "Iran." In this case, it is likely, but not certain, that both were referring to the same geographic territory.

relatively larger. This illustration demonstrates the diversity of origin of just the 23 Israeli-born participants. Their parents' twenty countries of origin are located all around the globe – except for the Australian continent – with a higher concentration in Europe and the America.



**Fig. 4.4:** IB participants' parents' origin

A majority of 61.0% indicated Hebrew as their L1, 13.6% Arabic, 8.5% Russian, 6.8% English and 5.0% Amharic (see Table 4.3). If not further specified, participants re-

**Tab. 4.3:** Number of participants per L1 (in total and for GERT)

L1	n (in total)	n (GERT)
Hebrew	36	10
Arabic	8	6 + 1 Moroccan Arabic
Russian	5	2
English	4	1
Amharic	3	0
Sidama	1	0
Spanish	1	1
Yiddish	1	0

ferred with “Arabic” to a variety of the Palestinian Arabic dialect as L1 or to Modern Standard Arabic which is taught in schools and as a second language (L2). Among the participants were seven speakers of Palestinian Arabic and one speaker of a Moroccan Arabic variety who migrated to Israel in her childhood together with her

parents as *'olim*. Sidama is a language belonging to the Cushitic family which is spoken in Ethiopia.

Participants were asked to list their L2s in a blank space on the questionnaire. According to this information, there were no participants who were strictly monolingual. Almost every native HS listed English as L2 – only one wrote French instead and two did not provide any information. Among the native HSs, 18 listed other L2s, in addition to English. The following languages were listed more than once: Arabic (including Moroccan Arabic), French, German, Russian, Spanish and Yiddish. In accordance with the criteria for the participants' selection, every participant with a different language than Hebrew as L1 had learned Hebrew as L2. Among the participants with Arabic and Russian as L1, English was slightly less prominent as L2, in addition to Hebrew: five of the native Arabic speakers indicated English as L2 and two of the native Russian speakers. All native speakers of an Ethiopian language listed English as L2. Some of the participants with Hebrew as L2 listed other languages than English as L2.

On the questionnaire, there was one field to determine the participants' "main spoken language today." Most participants indicated their L1 in this field. All of the native Hebrew speakers indicated Hebrew as their main spoken language and two of them indicated English in addition. Among the participants with a different language than Hebrew as L1, there is some deviation from their L1: two native Arabic speakers, three native Russian speakers and three native English speakers indicated Hebrew as their main spoken language (one of the English speakers listed Hebrew and English). All the speakers of the other L1s which are listed in Table 4.3 indicated Hebrew as their main spoken language. Four Amharic speakers (as L1 and L2) indicated Amharic along with Hebrew as their main spoken languages. Taking this data at face value, it means that ten participants had completely switched from their L1 to Hebrew and that seven participants were using two main spoken languages – one in addition to their L1. There was no evidence for a complete switch to any other language besides Hebrew. Although there is evidence in the sample for some degree of linguistic diversity, it does not match the participants' diverse family origins which were reviewed above. Among native HSs, there seems to be almost no continuity in the use of heritage languages – the (grand-)parents L1s – with a slight exception of English, Amharic and Russian. English is very prominent as L2 among all participants. The minor role of heritage languages among immigrant families and the consequent switch to Hebrew, more than one generation ago, can be explained by Israel's monolingual language policy (see 3.1). Arabic speakers indicated Arabic as their main spoken language – two of them along with Hebrew. They are the only group who continue to use another L1 than Hebrew as their main and only spoken language.

For each district, at least one participant was interviewed, with most participants living in the Haifa and Jerusalem districts (see Table 4.4 and Fig. 3.4 for a map of Israel's districts). Among the 43 Israeli-born participants, 21 (48.8%) indicated on the

**Tab. 4.4:** Participants' living places per district in Israel

District in Israel	Living place of n
Center	6
Haifa (municipality and district)	17
Jerusalem (municipality and district)	18
Judea and Samaria (West Bank)	1
North	5
South	5
Tel Aviv (municipality and district)	6
Unknown	1

questionnaire that they were living at the same place at the time of the interview where they had been living during their childhood. This is to say that they had either stayed in their hometown throughout their whole life or that they left and returned at some point. The ratio of almost half of the Israeli-born participants who were living in their hometown appears high – considering that the Israeli population is often characterized as extremely mobile. Among seven native speakers of Palestinian Arabic who are included in the population of the Israeli-born participants, the ratio is even higher. Only one of them was living outside her hometown in Israel at the time of the interview because she had moved to her husband's hometown. Another participant was born and grew up abroad, but returned with her family to her father's hometown. All the remaining five speakers of Palestinian Arabic were living in their hometown at the time of the interview.

The same constraints which were lined out above in respect to 'ethnicity' apply to the categorization of participants' 'religiosity.' Participants were asked about their 'religious affiliation' and were given six options for the indication of the 'degree of religiosity' on the questionnaire (see Table 4.5) Five participants did not specify their religious affiliation: two of them argued that it would be contradictory to indicate a religion, while they opted for "not religious."

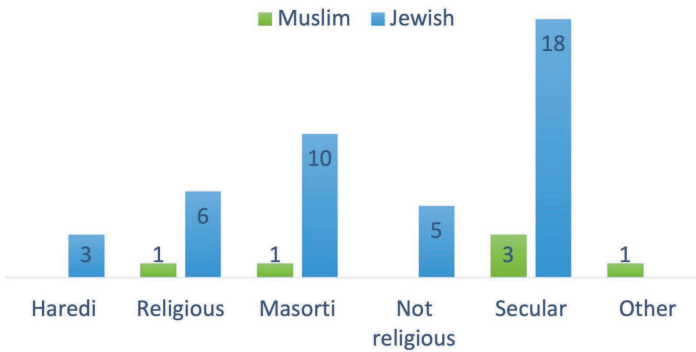
Not included are the Christian participant who opted for "secular," the Druze participant who opted for "religious" and four Jewish participants who did not make a choice or wrote down another designation.<sup>7</sup> In summary, a slight majority of 31

<sup>7</sup> Their own wordings are: *ħaredia le-she'avar*, *ħiloni masortī*, *tarbuti zehut*.

**Tab. 4.5:** Number of participants per religious affiliation (in total and for GERT)

Religion	n (in total)	n (GERT)
Christian	1	0
Druze	1	1
Jewish	46	13
Muslim	6	5
unknown	5	2

(52.5 %) participants categorized themselves with a low or no degree of religiosity, including the options “not religious,” “secular” and the three participants’ own wordings. In contrast, 23 (39.0 %) participants attributed themselves a high degree of religiosity, including the options “*Haredi*,” “religious” and “*masorti*” (see Fig. 4.5). In the sample for GERT, there are 13 participants who identified as “Jewish,” with

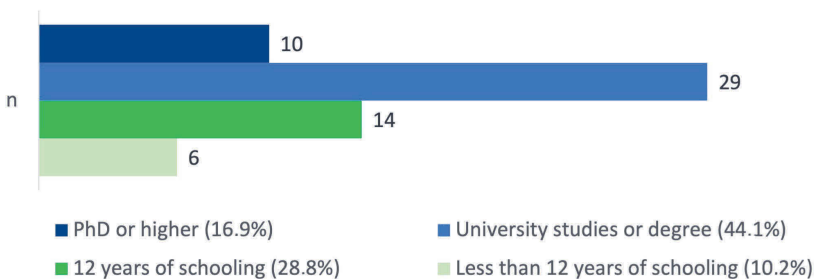
**Fig. 4.5:** Number of participants per ‘level of religiosity’

the following choices: one “*Haredi*,” three “religious,” three “*masorti*,” two “not religious” and four “secular.” Of the five participants who identified as “Muslim,” two opted for “secular” and one each for “religious,” “*masorti*” and “other.” Another two participants with unknown affiliation opted for “not religious” and “secular” and the Druze participant opted for “religious.” In summary, the GERT sample is balanced with ten participants on both sides of the religious spectrum (high degree against low degree of religiosity) and one who chose the option “other.”

Participants who self-identify as “religious” and “very religious” are harder to reach with the applied recruitment strategies, as outlined above (4.2.2.2). However, some degree of heterogeneity in the sample, both in terms of the participants’ indicated religious affiliation and their degree of religiosity, could be achieved.

The number of years of exposure to formal education is not a precise criteria to allow for direct comparisons between the participants. As mentioned in 4.2.1, participants had some difficulties counting the years they had spent in a formal education setting and it was not entirely clear which institutions should be included in the counting. From a general perspective, the focus on formal education is misleading. On the one hand, older participants might not have received much formal education – but have been learning their whole life. Younger participants, on the other hand, might not have had enough time to obtain degrees, which does not mean that they are uneducated. Additionally, the quality of different educational systems are hardly comparable, even though the indicator “years of education” is appealing because of its intuitive comparability across time and space (Schneider 2016: 18). It also needs to be taken into account that some of the participants were educated in other countries than Israel, due to their migration history. Besides, several parallel educational frameworks with considerable differences are in existence in Israel. These institutions developed along ethnic and religious concepts and vary in their application of pedagogical methods, contents and even the language of instruction – Hebrew, Arabic, Yiddish, English, Russian and French are among the most common. Therefore, it is reasonable to assess the notion ‘level of education’ individually for each participant and within a larger context of additional information from the interviews such as the participant’s occupation or religious identification.

Information about participants’ level of education was queried with the entry on the questionnaire “how many years of studies have you completed (including academic studies)?” Some participants indicated their highest degree next to the blank space on the questionnaire besides the number of years or mentioned it during the interview. Based on this information, the participants were grouped into four categories (see Fig. 4.6). The lowest category “less than 12 years of schooling” refers



**Fig. 4.6:** Participants’ level of education

to all participants without a high school diploma. There are no participants without any formal education – all completed secondary school at least. Usually, it takes 12 years of schooling before obtaining a high school diploma in Israel. All participants who were enrolled in university or college studies at the moment of the interview and those with a university or college degree are subsumed under the category “university studies or degree.” The category “PhD or higher” contains all participants who had at least obtained a doctoral degree, which is referred to as *to’ar shlishi* ‘third degree’ in Hebrew. Considering only the sample for GERT, the ratio of the category “university studies or degree” was higher, with 13 participants (61.9%). Another four participants (19.0%) belonged to the category “12 years of schooling” and two participants each (9.5%) belonged to the highest and the lowest category.

#### 4.2.2.4 Speaking sigla for the designation of the participants

I use speaking *sigla* (*siglum* in the singular) to designate the participants anonymously and unambiguously. Every siglum has five components (see Fig. 4.7). The first letter

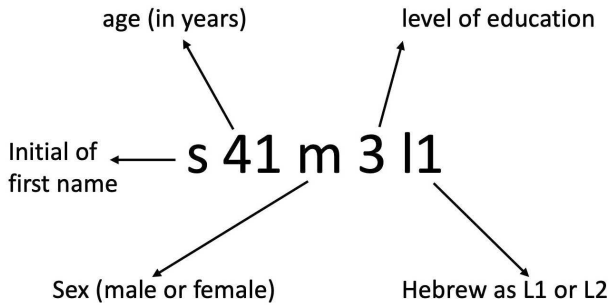


Fig. 4.7: Components of the siglum

is either the initial of the participant’s first name or a random letter, if the participant had opted for anonymity. The four variables following the initial letter are codes of the participants’ selected socio-demographic characteristics. Every participant is designated by just one siglum – no identical sigla were composed for different participants. The number after the initial letter refers to the participant’s age (in years) at the moment of the interview. In case a participant did not indicate his exact age on the questionnaire, it was estimated by decades and indicated by a cipher for the decade followed by “+.” For example, “5+” stands for the estimation ‘over fifty.’ The second variable refers to the participants’ sex and takes either the values “f”

for ‘female’ or “m” for ‘male.’<sup>8</sup> The third variable refers to the participant’s level of education with numerical values from 1 to 4, following the categorization which is outlined in Fig. 4.6: “1” stands for ‘less than 12 years of schooling,’ “2” for ‘12 years of schooling,’ “3” for ‘university studies or degree’ and “4” stands for ‘PhD or higher.’ The final variable takes the values of either “11” or “12” and indicates whether the participant learned Hebrew as his or her first language (L1) or as a second language (L2). For example, “s41m311” designates a male participant who was aged 41 years at the moment of the interview, with exposure to university studies or a degree and Hebrew as his first language.

### 4.2.3 Open interviews

For narrative is in almost everything we see and everything we do – we render all experience into story. (Yorke 2013: 214)

In general, it is hard for people to answer to complex questions without telling stories (cf. Kahneman 2011: 159) – constructing meaning – in Berger & Luckmann’s 1967 terms. Qualitative research tries to profit from this natural human capacity by elevating the participants’ stories to data which can provide additional perspectives and insights into the meaning of the researched categories. The method of exploratory interviews is described by Hadley (2017: 99–101) as variable and subject to personal style – there is no consensus on a uniform interviewing technique in GTM. The general idea of open interviews is to give the participants space for their own choice of topics and to treat them as partners in research, rather than mere informants (see 2.2.1). Breuer summarizes the aim of the method as follows:

Forschungsbezogen geht es darum, den Untersuchungspartner zum ausführlichen Erzählen über die fokussierte Thematik, zum Darstellen seiner Sichtweisen, seiner Problemdeutungen, seiner Handlungserfahrungen, seiner Lebensgeschichte etc. zu bewegen und ihn als Zuhörer mit Anteilnehmendem Interesse zu begleiten und seine Präsentations- und Explikationsbemühungen zu unterstützen. (Breuer 2010: 64)

In GTM, interviewing is used to create further hypothesis and to narrow the focus of the research subsequently, as it is exemplified by Senior’s account of her fieldwork with teachers:

The insights provided by each teacher generate additional questions in the researcher’s mind: questions that the next teacher can be invited to answer. This kind of questioning, which

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<sup>8</sup> No participant indicated a value other than ‘female’ or ‘male’ in the blank space on the questionnaire.

grounded theorists call ‘theoretical sampling’, enables the researcher to identify and explore the significance of additional phenomena that they may not have considered important prior to conducting the study. These phenomena may be central to an understanding of the totality of the experience. By asking subsequent teachers to elaborate on insights and observations provided by previous teachers, a composite picture of what all teachers are collectively saying is gradually developed. The validity of the findings is also enhanced, since the researcher can check whether the insights provided by one teacher are unique, or shared by others. (Senior 2006: 21)

In Chapter 1, I illustrated how I derived additional hypothesis from the analysis of an early interview and singled out aspects which I tried to investigate in following interviews. To this end, I conducted open interviews during my first fieldwork stage. The procedure of my interviews was everything but uniform, although I had devised a modular guideline with topics I wanted to address. Before I started interviewing, I had prepared myself to conduct “sociolinguistic interviews” in the style of Labov (1984: 32) which is described by Tagliamonte (2006: 37–49). Therefore, my guideline (see Appendix C) includes several modules that I adapted from Tagliamonte’s interview schedule which was in turn adapted from Labov.<sup>9</sup> I included additional modules such as “Standard Hebrew” for which I adapted Questions 5 and 6 about “model speakers” from Purschke (2011: 166–169).

In principle, my interviewing technique was similar to Levon’s (2010: 88–89) description: I used several thematic modules to elicit narratives and tried to create an atmosphere of casual conversation with an emphasis on the participants’ initiative. From the beginning, I used the guideline only as orientation. Usually, I introduced myself at the beginning of the interview and allowed for some time to settle, to explain the recording device, the consent form and the questionnaire. Often, my participants took the initiative right from the start and talked about my research area, based on the information I had given them in the recruitment process.

The recordings of the 29 open interviews have a duration between 15 minutes and two hours and 15 minutes – the average length of the recordings is about 45 minutes. I conducted four interviews with two participants at the same time. In two interviews, one of the participants acted as a contact person and in the other two, the participants came together to the interview. Towards the end of the interviews, I included a debriefing just as Farrimond (2013: 117) explains: I gave the participants time to ask questions and thanked them for the participation. In the early interviews, I asked more questions about the participants’ experience of the interview to make sure the questions were appropriate and that the participants felt at ease. Occasionally,

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<sup>9</sup> The interview schedule can be accessed online: [https://www.cambridge.org/pk/files/5213/6689/9619/2846\\_APPENDIX\\_B.pdf](https://www.cambridge.org/pk/files/5213/6689/9619/2846_APPENDIX_B.pdf)

participants wanted to exchange contact details, mostly out of courtesy or to plan future activities and provided me with contact information of other participants.

Many aspects about the organization of interviews have been outlined so far. Nonetheless, the unfolding of each interview depends on many factors – some of which are not controllable. For example, the researcher’s and participants’ mood determine the dynamics of the event. During interviews, much sensitivity towards these interpersonal nuances is required to make the situation agreeable for the participants and fruitful for research. Listening attentively to someone who speaks in a foreign language for about one hour, while keeping the research goals in mind, can be incredibly exhausting – I got used to bringing snacks to be able to refuel right after the interview.

All in all, I was surprised how smoothly most interviews evolved without much initiative on my part. Apparently, most participants enjoyed taking on the expert role and being listened to, as y28f3l1 stated. This effect can result in astounding data: I was puzzled how participants brought up exactly the topics I was interested in, completely on their own. As long as the participants were talking about aspects which I had envisaged with the guideline or related topics, I only interrupted them to clarify. When the conversation had lost momentum, I posed a thematically related question from the guideline or asked spontaneously about something which had caught my attention. Sometimes, if I had noted an aspect about the participants’ socio-demographic data which they had provided on the questionnaire, I inquired further in this direction. The only modules from the guideline which I tried to include in every interview were the ones about “local language” and “standard Hebrew.”

After the first research stage, I had conducted interviews with 38 speakers and thus collected more than 27 hours of recordings. Some conversations with the participants started some time before I was able to record them or even continued naturally after I had already stopped recording and switched to another topic in the meantime. For a period of three months, I spoke about my research on a daily basis with many different people more or less consciously. The topic of my research just came up naturally when someone asked me what I was doing in Israel. On many occasions people got intrigued and started to develop their thoughts on the topic without me being able to record the conversation because of the spontaneity of the situation. I tried my best to remember these conversations and made some notes, when I was able to do so. With more and more conversations, I had gained experience regarding which questions from the guideline usually sparked the participants’ interest and were likely to yield insightful narratives. To be able to compare the participants’ statements, I posed these questions to several participants. I adapted other questions the way Charmaz describes:

If you attend to respondents' language, you can adapt your questions to fit their experiences. Then you can learn about their meanings rather than make assumptions about what they mean. (Charmaz 2004: 65)

At the end of the first fieldwork stage, I had become weary of having similar conversations again and again. My goal was to lead the participants to the places of interest and to clarify my own thoughts which came up during the interviews. However, I noticed that I interrupted the participants more often in comparison to the early recordings. I felt that at some point it did not make sense for me to carry on with the same type of interviews because it seemed that I had heard and recorded very similar statements before. This feeling set in shortly before the time for my first fieldwork stage was up and I returned home.

Only some months after I had made the recordings, I was able to compare my first and last interviews: it is remarkable how the conversations developed in a specific direction. During the first interviews, I was not sure what I was going to ask and tried to let the conversation flow, whereas I conducted the interviews more confidently towards the end, when I knew how to ask the 'right questions.' Of course, I was only able in retrospective to judge which questions were the right ones for my research goals: questions which brought the participants to elaborate on various aspects about the research area, in a personal and associative manner. It seems now that these questions crystallized in the course of the interviews. My experiences from the open interviews resonates in Charmaz' description:

A researcher has topics to pursue; research participants have goals, thoughts, feelings and actions. Your research questions and mode of inquiry shape your subsequent data and analysis. Thus, you must become self-aware about why and how you gather data. You learn to sense when you are gathering rich, useful data that do not undermine or demean your respondent(s). Respondents' stories may tumble out or the major process in which people are engaged may jump out at you. Sometimes, however, respondents may not be so forthcoming and major processes may not be so obvious. Even if they are, it may take more work to discover the subtlety and complexity of respondents' intentions and actions. The researcher may have entered the implicit world of meaning, in which participants' spoken words can only allude to significance, but not articulate it. (Charmaz 2004: 64)

When I noticed how focused my late interviews had become, I got the impression that a theory was emerging in the course of the many conversations, just as it is described by GTM writings.

#### 4.2.4 Expert interviews

As I described in 4.2.2, it was natural to include this method in the study, even though I did not conceive of the early consultations with Israeli colleagues as expert interviews at that time. In their definition for this study, some expert interviews do not differ significantly from open interviews, besides the status of the participant as an expert on a particular social group or a particular topic. In some instances, participants just revealed themselves as experts in the course of the interview and I had to react spontaneously if I had not been able to prepare special questions and wanted to find out more. When I had been informed about the participant's expertise, I just asked additional questions about this field during the interview or I prepared specific questions which treated only the expert's field.

Many aspects which were detailed above for the open interviews equally apply for the expert interviews. Usually, the roles of the participants were determined more clearly in the expert interviews: participants were confident in their position as an expert and were willing to share their knowledge with me. Therefore, the topics of the interview were predetermined. For several interviews, I contacted the experts specifically and informed them about the purpose and the goals of the interview. My aim was to get more information about the field of expertise or a particular group of people and to get more sources or ideas for further research in this direction.

Besides sharing useful information, experts can add an additional perspective on the research area. Davis reflects on the benefits of the outsider perspective of the researcher and how local researchers should be consulted in order to ensure the study's quality:

Researchers who are from the culture or social situation studied (insiders) can guard against bias based on ethnocentric views. On the other hand, because insiders often have a hard time getting outside everyday practices to see what is unique and patterned about those practices, researchers from another culture or social experience (outsiders) can often more readily identify cultural patterns. Thus, by working together, insider and outsider researchers can build on each other's strengths in helping to ensure a credible and dependable study. (Davis 1995: 437)

Hadley (2017: 34) points out that consultations with insider experts and experts in general should be handled carefully because they “may simply try to debunk the emerging grounded theory either by pointing out peripheral issues only hinted at within the data or by attempting to foist their own ‘pet theory’ on the theorist's tentative interpretations.” Generally, grounded theorists advise to write down their ideas, instead of “talking too much” about them with colleagues (Hadley 2017: 34). During the preparatory phase, I sometimes felt intimidated when I consulted with linguists in Israel about my ideas. Nonetheless, these consultations were important to

determine research gaps and to carve out space for my own study. In retrospective, I would advise recording these consultations to be able to come back to them at a later point and to treat them as expert interviews. Moreover, it is important – especially in early research stages – to remain confident about one’s own methodological capacity and to assess advice critically: sometimes well-meant advice may not be helpful because it simply expresses a different or more traditional scientific methodology.

#### 4.2.5 Guided interviews

Towards the end of the first fieldwork stage, the interviews were becoming more and more uniform: in the course of almost forty recorded interviews, I came to ask similar questions in a similar sequence. I automatically tried to double-check certain statements from the interviews with different participants. This process of focusing on some core topics during the interviews and asking very similar questions gradually developed in a natural manner, as I described above (4.2.3). This standardization of my interviewing technique became obvious when I listened to some of the last interviews from the first fieldwork stage. For the analysis of these interviews, I coded all similar questions with the same codes. Thus, I already had the basis for a condensed questionnaire which I wanted to use in the second fieldwork stage. After having compiled these condensed questions, I compared them with my initial RQs and added or modified a few questions to tackle them more precisely.

The final questionnaire, which is included in Appendix D, includes the three modules “language attitude,” “language practice” and “local/group varieties.” At first, I explored different aspects about ‘standard Hebrew’ and subsequently of ‘non-standard Hebrew.’ Thereby, it was obvious for the participants that the interview is going to center on language related topics. In contrary to some of the open interviews, there was no confusion about the nature of the interview and the aims of my study. The next questions are a bit more personal, while still focusing on these notions and the participants’ attitude. Q4 and Q5 inquire about model speakers. Then, the domain of language policy is brought up with Q6. Q8 asks about deviations from the ‘standard’ and ‘mistakes’ from the participants’ perspective. Starting with Q11, attention shifts to different aspects of ‘non-standard Hebrew.’ Q14 finally asks about group specific styles in Hebrew and about the associated characteristics. The last questions function as a transition to GERT, when the participant is asked to rate groups of speakers systematically by marking them on a diagram – this method will be explained in the next section.

To test the method, I started with one pilot interview with an Israeli acquaintance in Munich before I set out for the second research stage in Israel. Because I was

satisfied with this first interview, I only made minor corrections on the questionnaire and decided to include the pilot interview in the regular corpus.

During the second fieldwork stage, I usually proceeded along the questionnaire. Occasionally, I changed the order of the questions if the participant already had mentioned some topics from subsequent questions. At the end, I tried to ask all the missing questions. Sometimes, I did not ask a question when it did not seem appropriate. For example, I skipped Q3 about the participant's children in cases where I did not know about the family situation and it seemed too private to ask. I tried to ask Q1-8 and Q11 and Q14 consequently in every interview.

Due to the fixed structure and the narrowed focus of the guided interviews, there was less space for the participants' initiative than in open interviews – the roles of researcher and participant were more profiled. Because the participants knew that I was using a list with a limited number of questions, they did not want to spend too much time with one question after having answered and waited for me to pose the next question. In general, they still took enough time to elaborate their thoughts and in any case, they were able to diverge from the original question if they wanted to. In contrast to open interviews, the guided interviews were completed in relatively short time. Some short interviews yielded concise answers and I found out that more time does not necessarily improve the quality of the interview.

The more structured the interviews are, the clearer is the line of analysis. Certain questions yielded very structured and even polar answers. They can be understood as tackling a certain variable: for example, Q2 and Q3 can be understood to measure the amount of importance a participant attaches to 'correct Hebrew.' This type of questions could also be used in a quantitative research design, using ratings on a Likert scale. Thereby, one could inquire about complex correlations within a large sample of participants, for example, with the evaluation of PD in perception experiments.

According to GTM, it is assumed that judgments about the relevance and the appropriateness of the RQs can be deduced from the participants' behavior. Interviews without much interference by the researcher are thought of as authentic. From my experience, I seemed to come across important categories which are used by the participants themselves when they practically conducted the interview by themselves. During the second fieldwork stage, some participants almost anticipated all of my questions once I had posed the first one – the interview with l6+f4l1 is one of several examples. Flow in the interview probably means that the participant is interested in the topic and that 'common ground knowledge' about the researched categories has been established between the researcher and the participant, which is likely to hint at shared understandings between more participants.

## 4.2.6 Social Group Elicitation and Rating Task

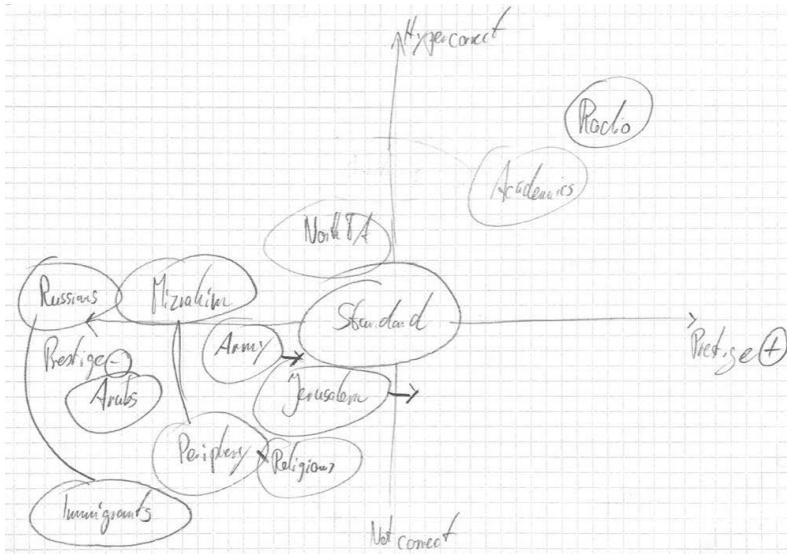
In the next sections a method that was developed particularly for the aim of this study for the elicitation and rating of groups of HSs will be presented. During the task, the participants are asked to name distinguishable groups of HSs and to fill them into a two-axis diagram by rating them along the variables ‘correctness of Hebrew’ and ‘social status.’ This method will be referred to in the following with the acronym GERT, which stands for ‘social Group Elicitation and Rating Task.’ First, the theoretical background, the conception of the method and the hypothesis which can be tested with it will be laid out. Then follows a description of the practical application of the task, the participants’ reactions and a general evaluation of the method.

### 4.2.6.1 Theoretical basis

GERT was developed as a method for the second fieldwork stage of this study with the aim of yielding more condensed and readily quantifiable data to complement the interview data I had already collected. My practical experiences from the first fieldwork stage as well as the content of the interviews which I had analyzed in the meantime were the basis for the conception of GERT. During the analysis of the interviews after the first fieldwork stage, I came up with some sketches to summarize the participants’ statements about different groups of HSs and what they associated with these groups. One of these sketches, dating from September 2019, can be seen in Figure 4.8. With this sketch, I tried to visualize a system of linguistic variation in MH in reference to the factors ‘prestige’ and ‘correctness of Hebrew.’ I wanted to express how these notions are perceived in Israeli society at large, judging from my fieldwork impressions. These impressions were revived during the interview analysis when I was listening to the recordings. Some of my hypothesis from that time will be revised.

The sketch contains twelve notions of groups of HSs such as “Mizrahim,” geographic notions, for example, “Jerusalem” or linguistic styles such as “Standard” and “Radio.” The entry “Standard” is located on the diagram at the intersection of the axes and marks a neutral point of reference for both variables. Thereby, I was referring to Krefeld’s (2011: 104) notion of a neutral background which is conventionalized in a speech community and against which all marked linguistic variants are contrasted.

It can be seen from the sketch that I did not expect a direct correlation of the two factors which are expressed with the axis. For example, participants stated that typical residents of North Tel Aviv can be recognized because of their snobbish style of speech. Even though participants characterized this group as speaking in accordance to the normative standard most of the time, their linguistic style and stereotypical



**Fig. 4.8:** Early sketch: ‘prestige’ and ‘correctness of Hebrew.’

appearance was described as unfavorable. Therefore, I put the entry “North TA” a bit higher than “Standard,” but in terms of ‘prestige’ lower than “Standard.” It seemed that a HS who adheres to the normative linguistic rules cannot be sure of being perceived as more prestigious than speakers who do not adhere strictly to these rules.

When I came up with the sketch, I was thinking about the dynamics of language change and what I perceived as a surprisingly high degree of deviation from the normative correct Hebrew to which I had been exposed in language courses (see 1). Based on Labov’s (2001: 502) description of linguistic change, I expected that more prestigious linguistic variants would be more likely to replace less prestigious variants. The sketch shows that I expected that “army Hebrew” would be rated by participants as a prestigious way of speaking. Consequently, I considered that linguistic variants from “army Hebrew” would “diffuse” – in Schmid’s (2020: 93) terminology – in the speech community and replace other forms.

The form of my sketch was inspired by Gafter’s (2014) use of diagrams in his investigation of linguistic variation in MH in relation to notions of ethnicity and authenticity. Gafter (2014: 181) expands Lefkowitz’ (2004: 89) model *The space of Israeli Identity* which was discussed earlier in 3.1.3, by adding the variable “authenticity” and conflating the original variables “Easternness” and “Israeliness” together. Neither Lefkowitz nor Gafter made use of diagrams for data collection during their ethnographic fieldwork.

There are existing models from Perceptual Dialectology for the elicitation of representations about linguistic variation, for example, ‘mental maps.’ In their empirical methodological study about mental maps with pupils in Germany, Lameli et al. (2008: 57) explain that they explicitly refrained from the use of the term ‘dialect’ when instructing the pupils on how to complete the task. Their intention was to elicit any possible concept of language and not just geographically determined concepts – therefore, they used the term *Sprachräume* ‘language spaces’ in the instruction. Still they got only geographically determined references as results: seven of the eight most prominent categories which were used by the pupils are geographically determined references. They contain four names of German *Bundesländer*, two names of cities and one reference to the cardinal direction ‘north.’ The only exception, which is not primarily determined by a geographic reference, is the term *Hochdeutsch* ‘High German’, which commonly denotes ‘Standard German.’ Historically and from a dialectologist perspective, the term *Hochdeutsch* also denotes regional varieties of German.

The use of maps as templates is likely to trigger geographically determined answers and the use of the term *Sprachräume* ‘language spaces’ is likely to be interpreted as reference to geographical spaces – especially in combination with the maps which were used for the task. Therefore, I ruled out the use of maps for elicitation in Israel where the factor of geography is not considered as significant for variation in MH. Instead, I decided to use the factors which were addressed by the participants during the interviews to design a context sensitive method of elicitation which is suited for Israel.

#### 4.2.6.2 Design and aims of the method

During the first collection of data, it was sometimes difficult to get the participants to reflect in an orderly manner about different social groups in Israel and their ways of speaking. At some point during the interviews, I asked the participants about social groups in Israel and their corresponding styles of speech. Therefore, I used a similar wording as the one which was later fixed in the questionnaire for the guided interviews of the second collection of data as question 14:

##### Q14

<i>Are there people or social groups who speak with a certain style of speech? Can you distinguish them because of their speech?</i>	יש אנשים או קבוצות חברתיות שיש להם איזה סגנון דיבור מסוים שלהם? אפשר לזהות אותם רק לפי הדיבור?
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Usually, the participants elaborated a bit on one social group which came to their mind before they digressed from the question and moved on to other issues they

wanted to talk about. I thought of GERT as a slightly playful stimulus to get the participants to talk more about their representations of social groups in Israel and their ways of speaking Hebrew. It was designed as a method to bring the participants to dwell for some minutes on Q14 and to think out loud which social groups are meaningful to them and how they would order them on the graph. By giving them a task with pen and paper, I wanted to disturb the hierarchy of the interview situation and provide more space for the participants to brainstorm. While the task was recorded as a part of the interview, I hoped that their attention would be continually diverted from the recording device and the formal nature of the interview situation. Because I accompanied them during the task, I could continuously ask the participants about their way of completing the task, investigate about their choices and assist them with further explanations of the task, if necessary. Later, I was able to analyze the recordings of the participants' statements during the task as additional data, in conjunction with the completed templates.

A simple design of the task with pen and paper was adopted because I wanted to be able to conduct the task during the interview, anywhere I met with my participants. I decided against a digital implication of the task because I did not want the participants to get distracted by a potentially unfamiliar device, a software and further instructions on how to use it. Most people are likely to have been exposed to similar tasks with pen and paper many times in school – in geometry class or whenever they were asked to construct diagrams. Therefore, a task which requires the participants to fill out an empty template of a diagram by using a pen should feel familiar to most people and encourage them to start with the task right away, without the need for much explanation. Hage & Harary (1983: 9) point out that “[i]t is easy to understand a social or cognitive structure as a graph open to inspection and amenable to manipulation for the elucidation of its structural properties” and that graphs are an apt method for ethnographic studies because “they have a certain naturalness and inevitability in the representation of complex structures.” Within a GTM approach, a task such as GERT can be included in the research design to function just as “repertory grids” as described by Hadley:

[R]esearch participants essentially provide, through their elicited constructs, coded data. The interviews that follow help to unpack those codes. (Hadley 2017: 99)

GERT was supposed to yield basic categories which HSs use to differentiate social groups and ways of speaking in Israel. I also expected insights into the concepts which are commonly used for these categorization processes. Because of the quantifiable nature of the data that can be elicited with GERT, I expected that I could roughly determine the relevancy of the categories on the basis of their frequency. The rating of the elicited categories and their comparison during the task was intended as a

stimulus to set off natural processes of categorization and to get the participants to talk about these processes.

I chose the variables according to which the categories should be rated on the basis of my fieldwork experience. During the open interviews, the notions of hierarchies between social and especially, ethnic groups, stereotypes and racism often came up. For example, h37f2l1 spoke about the relevancy of hierarchies between *Mizrahim*, *Ashkenazim* and other sub-groups. From her standpoint as someone who opted against a religious way of life, she compared the relevancy of these categories within *Haredi* society, where she grew up, and secular society in Israel, of which she sees herself being part of.

**(4) h37f2l1 (29:12)**

*Despite that racism is less severe in the secular society – still they categorize. Guys from Mizrahi families are guys who will have a harder fitting into society, in key positions or ...* למרות שבחברה החילונית הגזענות פחות קשה עדיין מקטלגים. חבר'ה ממשפחות מזרחיות הם חבר'ה שיהיה להם יותר קשה להשתלב בתוך החברה בתפקידי מפתח  
...א

Weingrod describes this recurrent topic in the Israeli discourse as follows:

[I]n the then mass immigration setting, incomes were determined more by ethnic membership than by length of time spent in the country. These striking inequality figures lead to a lengthy series of demographic studies tracing the “ethnic gap” (*par ha'adati*, in Hebrew) between Ashkenazim and Mizrahim. Indeed, the gnawing question of ethnic social stratification became a major public issue, and measuring, comparing and explaining ethnic inequality continues to be an Israeli preoccupation. (Weingrod 2016: 284)

H37f2l1 criticized this practice of categorization as racist and stressed that these categories should no longer be relevant for her children who are third generation Israelis. Then she described this topic of categorization as being part of conversations with her friends. Towards the end of her statement she digressed from her general description of the topic with its impact on the Israeli society and expressed personal points of view: she conceded that there are meaningful differences between Israelis with different family origin and even related these differences to language practice.

**(5) h37f2l1 (37:22)**

*There are debates about who is higher in the hierarchy, from the point of view of Ashkenazi race theory: who is considered more. Although the Sfaradim, also among them there is, let's say my Ashkenazi girlfriends don't know which ethnicity I am – they know that I am Mizrahit. They don't know if I am Iraqi or Moroccan, for them it's all the same. Among the Mizrahim there is a total separation between Iraqis, Moroccans, Persians, Yemenites and French-Moroccans. It is very different, there is a common language. It's like to know, let's say you meet a German, but he comes from the same city, where you grew up, there is a common language.*

יש ויכוחים מי יותר בהיררכיה, מבחינת תורת הגזע האשכנזית, מי יותר נחשב. לעומת הספרדים שגם אצלם יש בפנים, נגיד החברות האשכנזיות שלי לא יודעות איזה עדה אני. הם ידעו שאני מזרחית. הם לא יודעות אם אני עיראקית מרוקאית, זה בשבילם אותו דבר. אצל המזרחים יש מאוד הפרדה מוחלטת בין עיראקים למרוקאים לפרסים לתימנים לצפרוקאים. זה נורא משתנה יש שפה משותפת. זה כמו להכיר, נגיד אתה פוגש גרמני, אבל שמגיע מאותו עיר שאתה גדלת בה, אז יש איזה שפה משותפת.

Based on these and similar statements from the open interviews, I decided to use this topic of hierarchization as a stimulus in GERT, by using the notion of 'prestige' as one axis-variable of the diagram. The significance of 'prestige' for variationist studies has already been discussed in 2.1.2.1 and is summarized again by Milroy:

It is clear that speaker/listeners attribute greater or lesser prestige to different varieties of language and, indeed, to different languages, and descriptive linguists have, almost routinely, used the idea of prestige in their attempted explanations for linguistic changes. (Milroy 2012: 572)

In respect to linguistic dynamics, Schmid (2016: 550) describes 'prestige' as one of "the social forces acting on the conventionalization process." Schneider & Barron highlight a different aspect which is closely related to prestige, in their list of "micro-social factors" which are significant for linguistic variation:

Power, which is also referred to as '(relative) social status,' concerns the relationship between interactants in terms of dominance. Interactants may be equal or unequal. (Schneider & Barron 2008: 18)

Milroy hints to the relations between "prestige," "socio-economic class" and "standard" language:

Variation in the speech community has been interpreted on a scale of prestige, which derives from the socio-economic class of speakers, but this scale is frequently interpreted as though it were identical to a scale of 'standard' to 'non-standard.' (Milroy 2012: 576)

In GERT, the relation between ‘prestige’ and the representation of linguistic norms is used for the general exploration of HSs’ representations of variation. I chose these two concepts as additional stimuli to spark the participants’ imagination about different groups of HSs when they are asked Q14. Thereby, I do not posit that these concepts are the most significant variables for variation in MH. Other concepts such as ‘age’ could have been chosen as well for an elicitation task. However, I hoped that the two variables which are used in GERT are conceptually vague enough to yield categories from different domains, including ‘age,’ ‘region,’ ‘origin,’ ‘religion’ and others.

In my initial sketch, the axes of the diagram were reversed and I was not entirely sure how to name the axis in Hebrew. I translated ‘prestige’ into Hebrew as *yokra*. During the pilot-interview, I discussed the design of the task with the participant who had just completed GERT for the first time. N31f311 expressed that she had some problems with the term *yokra* and that she felt that the term *ma’amad*, which is used for ‘(social) status’ in a more sociological understanding, just as in Schneider & Barron’s (2008: 18) above citation, would suit my purposes better. She argued that participants will categorize people during GERT more readily in relation to *ma’amad* because it makes them think they are asked about social facts rather than their own opinion, thus being able to take a neutral standpoint.

#### (6) n31f311 (46:32)

*It seems to me that when you say to someone* נראה לי שכשאתה אומר לבן אדם איך  
*‘how society thinks’ – then he relaxes. He is not* החברה חושבת אז הוא משתחרר, הוא לא  
*afraid to put, to classify people into categories.* מפחד לשים, לקטלג אנשים בקטגוריות.

Thereby she expressed that the outward categorization of people can be problematic. Bourdieu (1991: 121) refers to this aspect with the original meaning of the Greek term “*katagorein*, meaning originally, to accuse publicly.”

#### 4.2.6.3 Using GERT

At the beginning of the guided interviews, I told my participants that I was going to ask them about fifteen questions and then move on to a pencil and paper task, which I would explain to them in detail later on. Usually, I switched from the interview to the task when I asked Q14: “Are there people or social groups who speak with a certain style of speech? Can you distinguish them because of their speech?” At that moment, I handed the participants an empty template, which was printed on an A4 sized sheet with the sociodemographic questionnaire and the consent form on the back. Figure 4.9 shows the empty template. The template contains a graph consisting of a longer horizontal axis and a shorter vertical axis spanning over the

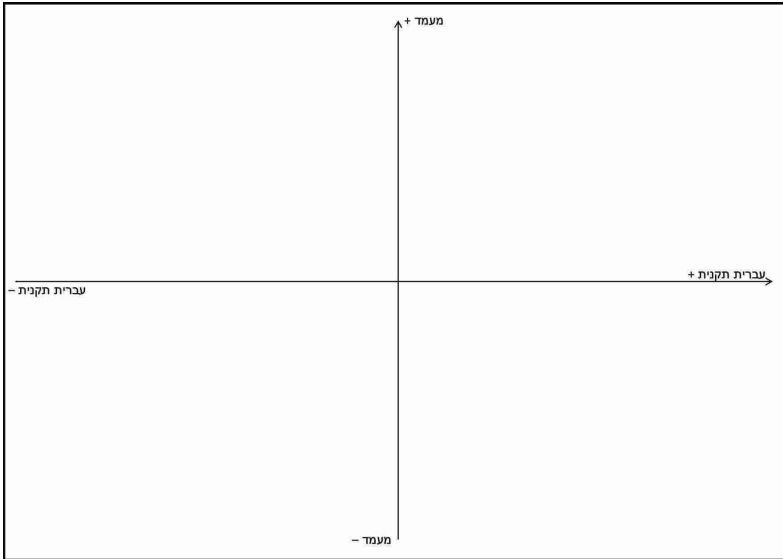


Fig. 4.9: Empty GERT template

sheet and crossing at its center. An arrow pointing to the right delimits the right end of the horizontal axis alongside the indication + עברית תקינה *ivrit tiknit* + for ‘correct Hebrew +’ above it and on its opposite end – עברית תקינה for ‘correct Hebrew –.’ The vertical axis is delimited at its top by an arrow pointing upwards alongside the indication + מעמד *ma’mad* for ‘(social) status +’ and at its bottom end by – מעמד for ‘(social) status –.’

The task consists of two stages. At first, I tried to elicit several groups of HSs by asking Q14. Usually, I explained the template right after I had asked the question and most of the time, the participants had already answered the question by mentioning one or two groups of HSs. On some occasions, the participants had already talked about different groups of HSs earlier in the interview on their own initiative. At the second stage of the task, I asked the participants to fill in the template with all the groups they had mentioned by allocating the group’s ability to speak correct Hebrew on the horizontal axis and its social status on the vertical axis.

I asked the participants to use a pencil and gave them an eraser so that they could adjust their entries if they wanted to. I also gave them a blue pen and asked them to make use of it for all entries that they didn’t come up with by themselves, but were mentioned by me earlier in the recording or for which I asked for specifically. Thus, I wanted to mark the entries which I had potentially induced right away to be able to exclude them from the analysis later on.



their work, while others declared that they were done after a short while and were reluctant to add anything, even if I encouraged them to do so.

If a participant hesitated at the beginning of stage two, I explained the template again. Therefore I said, for example, “Right on top means: Speaking correct Hebrew and possessing a high social status” and asked if he could find at least one example for each of the four segments of the graph. If participants paused after filling in a few entries, I asked them for more and reminded them occasionally of groups they had already mentioned earlier, but had not filled in yet. At the end of the task, I asked most of the participants to locate me and themselves on the template as well. In some situations, I used this question to draw the participant’s attention back to the task.

Besides the basic indications of “positive” or “negative” with + and – included in the axes’ designations, there were no other numerical values printed on the axes. I did not want to ask of the participants to rate their impressions with absolute numbers because I assumed that it was sensible to rate the notions of ‘correct Hebrew’ and ‘social status’ in terms of ‘more’ or ‘less correct’ and ‘higher’ or ‘lower status.’ However, a statement of the type “group X speaks Hebrew correctly to a degree 8 out of 10” seems odd and conceptually too abstract.

When it comes to comparing different entries on the template, I instructed the participants to think of the distance between two entries as carrying meaning. Thus, a position further to the right and further up on the template is intended to stand for ‘more correct Hebrew’ and ‘higher status’ compared to entries, which are located to its left and beneath.

Because of the design of the template, it was not possible for the participants to locate all the entries so precisely on the template that the distance between two entries can be measured exactly and compared to other distances on the same template or even with the distances between entries on other participants’ templates. Due to the limited space on the template and because I wanted to elicit intuitive statements, I encouraged the participants to allow for some degree of vagueness in their completion of the task.

Consequently, the location of the entries on the template have to be interpreted as ordinally scaled. This means that the entries on each template can be ranked according to their position on the horizontal and on the vertical axis and the resulting ranks for each individual participant can be compared to some degree. In contrast, it would not make sense to measure distances between two entries on the same template precisely and use the resulting values for comparisons. Nor would it be sensible to compare the entries’ absolute positions – for example, 1.2 cm left of the status axis – in between different participants. The task was not designed to allow for comparisons of this sort.

The position of each entry, in respect to the four different sections of the template, can be extracted in a straightforward manner. Occasionally, participants posited

entries very close to or on the axes of the graph, thus indicating a neutral rating of the entry. Still, most entries are positioned clearly in only one of the four sections of the graph. Because of the printed designations on the axes with plus and minus signs and my explanations in the fashion of “Right on top means: Speaking correct Hebrew and possessing a high social status,” I argue that the location of an entry can be interpreted as indicating the participants’ tendency to rate the entry ‘positively,’ ‘negatively’ or in some cases ‘neutrally.’ The methods, which were devised for the interpretation of the GERT templates, will be presented in 5.4 and 5.5.

#### 4.2.6.4 Evaluation of the method

Participants displayed different attitudes towards GERT. Principally, all reacted positively to the task and I had the impression that all participants understood the requirements of the task and none dismissed the task completely. Some spent more than thirty minutes with the task and apparently enjoyed it, while others were very quick to complete it and probably just wanted to get it done. The basic form of the template and the way of filling it out with pencil and pen worked fine. The participants were able to compare their entries spatially on the template, even though no absolute numbers were indicated on the axes and the available space was limited. Because I wanted the participants to complete the task intuitively and without thinking too much about the details of the graphical representation, I encouraged them to allow for some degree of vagueness.

Apparently, most participants understood the intended meaning of the axes intuitively and only some asked for additional explications. While the concept ‘correct Hebrew’ was not questioned, some asked if they should treat ‘social status’ from a societal perspective or from their own point of view. Most of them conceded that the perspectives are interdependent and inseparable, as n31f3l1 put it:

#### (7) n31f3l1 (46:06)

*It seems to me that it doesn't matter because as soon as you ask someone to classify it – clearly it is how he sees it. It's how he imagines how the society sees it [...] like, either way it's subjective.*

נראה לי שזה לא משנה כי כאילו, כי ברגע שאתה מבקש מבן אדם אחד לדרג את זה, ברור שזה איך שהוא רואה את זה. זה איך שהוא מדמיין שהחברה רואה [...] כאילו בכל אופן זה סובייקטיבי.

From the way the participants completed the task, I deduce that the concepts ‘social status’ and ‘correct Hebrew’ are relevant for HSs: most of the participants handled these concepts confidently for their rating of groups of HSs. Although it may be

unusual to talk directly about these concepts, they are likely to refer to them somehow in natural contexts as well.

Ultimately, it can neither be controlled nor determined precisely how the task is understood by each participant. For example, it is likely that the participants substitute a question which is connected to the task with another question, thus following Kahneman's (2011: 97) principle of "substitution" of a complicated question with an easier one. Participants may have rated whether they like a certain social group, instead of their social status or their tendency to speak correct Hebrew.

What I consider innovative about the method is the combination of the semi-directed interview situation with a task in which participants are encouraged to take a more active part and use pen and paper alongside their explanations. Of course, more participants could be reached with a digital implementation of the task which can be distributed in large numbers and filled out remotely. For my purpose, it was crucial to get to know the participants to be able to contextualize their statements. GERT was not designed as a research tool for the generation of quantitatively usable data. My focus was on the qualitative interpretation of the participants' statements, for which I used GERT as a trigger.

Because I let the participants use pencil and paper for the task, the analysis of the filled-out sheets had to be carried out one by one, as described in 5.4. This meticulous way of analyzing each sheet individually is time consuming and therefore the number of participants which can be included in the analysis is naturally limited. The mere summary of the twenty-one sheets my participants had completed took more than a week's time. There are limits to the sample size due to the method of data collection as well because it is time-consuming to sit down with each participant individually. The quality of the interviews and the obtained data is dependent on the ability of the interviewer to spark the participants' interest in the task and to show interest in their statements. Therefore, not too many standardized interviews should be carried out in a short time-span. I felt that two guided interviews with GERT per day, with approximately three days of interviews per week, was a good measure. Several researchers working independently can reach a bigger sample size – but in this case different ways of conducting the interviews have to be accounted for which may lead to a more complex overall research design.

In comparison to the use of mental maps, GERT is a stimulus which is more likely to yield a broader spectrum of categories from different conceptual domains. By the use of the concepts 'correct Hebrew' and 'social status' as stimuli, different interdependent factors such as wealth and education are highlighted in relation to common attitudes towards social groups. As explained above, in 4.2.6.2, GERT was specifically designed for the context of Israel. For other contexts and different research objectives, different variables may be more appropriate.

In general, a more quantitatively oriented approach could use a similar task within a highly standardized set-up: for example, an online resource can be used to reach as many participants as possible.

### 4.3 Organization of the data collection into corpora

The data collection for this study consists of three main corpora. The socio-demographic data of the participants which was collected with the help of a questionnaire was transferred from the filled out questionnaires into a spreadsheet and was summarized in 4.2.2.3.

The recordings of the interviews are separated into two sub-corpora: open interviews together with expert interviews and the guided interviews which were conducted in combination with GERT. For the analysis of the interviews, I entered the most important metadata of the recordings and the progress of the analysis in a spreadsheet and wrote a case summary for every interview. For the transcription and the coding of the recordings, I used the open source software ELAN.<sup>10</sup> While I mostly coded and summarized the open and the expert interviews and only transcribed them selectively, all guided interviews were fully transcribed and coded. Based on the reflections which are outlined by Izre'el (2005), I decided to stick to an “intelligent verbatim” transcription style oriented to the standard Hebrew orthography (Hadley 2017: 81).

During the analysis, it was necessary to translate from the original Hebrew data into English codes. The coding with the software made it easy to listen to the original recordings while editing the codes. Therefore, I could compare the analytic decisions and the translations at any time with the original recordings to avoid losing track of the data. ELAN contains multiple options for the export of transcripts, for example, into a txt-file, which opens possibilities for further analysis and representation of the data.

The third corpus consists of the filled out GERT templates which were analyzed with the help of a spreadsheet, as will be explained in detail in 5.4. This data will be referred to as “GERT corpus.”

All recordings, interview transcripts and the GERT corpus are published as Striedl (2023). Recordings contain diverse narrative contexts with up to three participants, and the sample of participants is socio-demographically rich. The data is accessible upon request and can be reused for various research purposes.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://archive.mpi.nl/tla/elan>

## 4.4 Summary and evaluation of the methods

My approach to the data collection and the development of my research methods was described chronologically and in the context of the theoretic premises. The research design evolved in accordance with the principles of GTM: during subsequent stays in the field, I could develop my research questions, adapt the methods and narrow the scope of the research objective. The flexible, qualitative approach that was chosen for the exploration of a so far understudied area not only turned out to be practicable in the scope of a PhD project, but it yielded large corpora of valuable data which can be studied for various purposes, beyond the research goals of this study.

Ethnographic fieldwork can be rewarding and challenging, at the same time. For the contextualization of the collected data and as an example for researchers who plan to undertake a similar research project, the application of my methods in the field were described and evaluated in detail. Besides purely scientific considerations, organizational aspects about fieldwork in Israel and in general were discussed. While fieldwork is potentially a good way to generate authentic and relevant data, this method has natural restrictions. Any approach that is centered on conversational data is likely to neglect the less eloquent, or to oversee the silent members of the researched population. Even if these members can be reached during fieldwork, it is contradictory to expect them to produce articulate and easily analyzable statements. In other words, some participants probably were used to a less verbal style of communication than what is expected for the collection of recorded speech. Even though I did not experience a communication barrier with these participants, it was more difficult to formulate interpretations of their statements. For example, t37m3l2 used very few words and incomplete sentences, which he repeated. It seems that words were not as important for him to get his message across. At times he even spoke in a higher register, but sometimes he just stopped in the middle of the sentence when he felt that he had made his point and I had indeed understood. For the analysis, it is a challenge to give silent types of participants enough consideration and to convey their messages eloquently in the text.



Besides this initial observation, there was nothing that caught my attention right away when I was looking for emerging patterns in the templates. All original tokens from all GERT templates are visualized as word cloud in Fig. 5.1. The visualization is weighted: more frequently mentioned tokens appear in a relatively larger font. The aim of the following analysis is to make sense of this word cloud. To get a more encompassing and orderly perspective on the data, I transferred the information from all templates into a spreadsheet: The resulting GERT corpus is my primary data source for the following analysis. In the following sections, I will use the data of two participants as an example to explain the general analytic processes. I selected participants m69f4l2 and s41m3l1 because I found them to represent two different strategies of categorization. Most participants completed GERT in a very similar fashion to either one of these participants. The data of the other nineteen participants will be analyzed in conjunction and will only occasionally be discussed individually where a contextualization of the data is needed.

There are two possible approaches to analyze the GERT corpus: a qualitatively oriented analysis of categories, semantic domains and conceptual levels and a quantitative analysis of the number of entries, average values and the summary of these values in diagrams. Both approaches build on each other: the qualitative approach is the basis for defining and understanding quantifiable data (Mayring 2015: 20–22). In GTM, qualitative methods precede any quantitative analysis because they determine the research questions, the categories for the investigation and are used recursively to explain quantifiable data. Some form of quantitative analysis is needed for any generalization – it is important to show that similar patterns are recurrent in the data (cf. Mayring 2015: 53 and Nassehi 2019: 16). The results of the quantitative analysis need to be seen in the light of the original research questions and interpreted accordingly. I argue that some careful statements about the prominence of certain categories in the speakers' representation of linguistic variation can be deduced by counting and comparing participants' categories.

In the next sections, preliminary methodological thoughts for the analysis will be laid out before a detailed account of the GERT corpus will be given in 5.4. 5.4.3 provides an overview of participants' most frequently used terms. Participants' ratings of the terms are analyzed in 5.5.

## 5.1 Hermeneutic considerations for analysis

Taking a closer look at s41m3l1's template (see 4.10) will give us an idea which different types of categories participants used for the task and how they can be translated, interpreted and summarized. It will be discussed that these analytic processes are not forcibly linear and that their outcomes are more ambiguous than it may seem.

More evidently than for the interpretation and the summary of the data, the process of translation requires an analysis of linguistic structure. In MH – just as in other Semitic languages – there is not necessarily a structural difference between nouns and adjectives. *Maskil* functions both as head and as modifier of a noun phrase (NP): it can potentially be translated as ‘educated person’ and as ‘educated.’ In the context of GERT, s41m3l1’s entry *maskilim*, which contains the masculine plural ending *-im*, is probably meant as ‘educated persons’ because it stands alone on the template, which makes its use as a modifier seem unlikely.

To determine the meaning of the entry for s41m3l1, in the context of its use during GERT, *maskilim* can further be analyzed as metonymy, which is “one of the basic characteristics of cognition” (Lakoff 1987: 77). By using the expression *maskilim* when referring to a group of people, one of their many characteristics is singled out and used to categorize them as one group – those with a high level of education. Lakoff generally describes metonymy as follows:

It is extremely common for people to take one well-understood or easy-to-perceive aspect of something and use it to stand either for the thing as a whole or for some other aspect or part of it. (Lakoff 1987: 77)

The metonymic process of categorization which is documented as s41m3l1’s performance during GERT depends on further premises which can be understood as belonging to an idealized cognitive model (ICM), in Lakoff’s (1987) words. An ICM of ‘education’ can be modeled tentatively with these premises:

(1) people can set themselves off from each other by the internalization of knowledge.<sup>1</sup> (2) Formal education, which is institutionalized as schools and universities, serves the systematic transmission of knowledge.

It will be assumed that this or a similar ICM determines the structure of categories such as *maskilim* ‘educated people.’ According to (2), it is likely that people who were exposed to more formal education than others have successfully internalized more knowledge which, based on (1), sets them apart from the others as ‘educated people.’

Is that what s41m3l1 meant? When thinking deeply about ‘education’ it turns out that it is a very vague concept: to what extent are religious, moral, scientific and more practical aspects of knowledge – such as speaking according to linguistic norms – included in the concept and how are these aspects handled to determine if a person is ‘educated?’ The above quotation posits that metonomies function on the basis

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<sup>1</sup> This concept is expressed in the Talmudic verse: *אינו דומה שונה פרקו מאה פעמים לשונה פרקו מאה ואחד* ‘one who reviews his studies one hundred times is not comparable to one who reviews his studies one hundred and one times.’ (Chagigah 9b; cited with translation from [www.sefaria.org](http://www.sefaria.org))

of “well-understood or easy-to-perceive aspect[s].” Does this mean that a person’s ‘level of education’ is easily perceivable for s41m3l1 – and if so, on what basis? In fact, because he used this concept during GERT, which asks participants to name categories for the distinction of HSs, s41m3l1 argues that his everyday understanding of ‘education’ enables him to categorize people based on their speech.

By definition, ICMs do not forcibly “fit one’s understanding of the world” (Lakoff 1987: 70). Someone who was exposed to many years of formal education does not necessarily fit the category ‘educated people:’ the educational institution he frequented may not have qualified as ‘good school’ or he may have displayed a very passive attitude during his school years.

Still we can apply the concept with some degree of accuracy to situations where the background conditions don’t quite mesh with our knowledge. And the worse the fit between the background conditions of the ICM and our knowledge, the less appropriate it is for us to apply the concept. The result is a gradience – a simple kind of prototype effect. (Lakoff 1987: 71)

This means that, regardless of the appropriateness of its underlying ICM, the concept ‘education’ can still be used in every-day contexts. Its prototypical structure makes it operational for every-day contexts of categorization.

Insights into what is meant by the participants with ‘educated,’ for example, can be gained by analyzing interview data recorded during GERT. However, the perceptual basis for the participants’ categorization – that is to say, what exactly makes a HS sound educated – can only be determined by perception experiments (see 2.1.4), which are not part of this study. For analyzing the GERT corpus I assume that most of the participants’ entries can be summarized under a semantic domain. Thereby, participants’ most used concepts for categorization during GERT will be singled out. The entry *maskilim* ‘educated people’ can be labeled as belonging to the semantic domain ‘education.’ Using a single semantic domain to label the loanword *gikim* ‘geeks,’ which is another entry that was used by s41m3l1, is more complicated. It is used in MH, as well as in its source language English, to refer to people who are characterized by their enthusiasm for fantasy novels, role play games, and the like.

M69f4l2’s entry *aḳadema’im* ‘academics’ can also be understood from at least two different conceptual perspectives: in terms of ‘education,’ as everybody who was exposed to some degree of university education or as indicating an ‘occupation’ and thus referring to everybody who is currently employed in academia as scientific staff. The two concepts are overlapping, but not identical, because not everybody with university education is currently employed as scientific staff. To clarify the exact meaning of *aḳadema’im*, as intended by m69f4l2, I should have asked her which of the two concepts she was primarily referring to. Without this information, I had to

make an analytic choice and interpreted it as belonging to the semantic domain of ‘education’.

As Kuckartz (2016: 19) points out, these kind of interpretations happen subconsciously during a regular conversation and problems surface only when misinterpretations and subsequent misunderstandings become obvious. The lengthy discussion about inter-subjective differences in the interpretation of meaning did not yet include the important aspect of intercultural comparability of concepts: the similarity of concepts cannot be assumed categorically for different cultural contexts. With these reflections, I want to point out that my way of analysis is by no means definite or the only correct one. It can at best be an appropriate interpretation because there is no methodology to guarantee a correct interpretation (Kuckartz 2016: 20).

Necessary interpretations have consequences for the following analysis. I could have chosen ‘occupation’ as the corresponding semantic domain for *aḳadema’im* and consequently this domain would have received a more prominent position in the quantitative comparison of the participants’ mentions of certain categories. It has to be kept in mind that the semantic domains ‘education’ and ‘occupation’ are conceptually related and that both were used frequently by HSs for their categorization during GERT, as will be shown in the quantitative analysis in Section 5.4.3. To conclude this hermeneutical excursion, it is noteworthy that a careful statement such as the one in the preceding sentence does not pose any methodological problems – even when considering the underlying possibility of misinterpretations.

## 5.2 Determining the relevance of categories

This study aims to shed light on conventions about the categorization of HSs and variation in MH. For the following analysis, it is assumed that the recurrent use of a category during GERT by several participants increases its likelihood to be relevant for the categorization of HSs and variation in MH, at large. This hypothesis is based on the cognitive principle of ‘conventionalization,’ as outlined by Schmid who defines ‘convention’ as

a mutually known regularity of behaviour which the members of a community conform to because they mutually expect each other to conform to it. (Schmid 2020: 88)

He understands ‘conventionalization’ as subject to the cooperating and “partly complementary” processes of ‘usualization’ and ‘diffusion’ which he defines as follows, in the context of utterance types:

The process of diffusion affects the numbers of speakers and sizes and structures of communities which partake in a cotext-dependent and context-dependent convention. It makes utterance

types more or less conventional in the sense that more or fewer speakers or groups of speakers conform to a convention in a larger or smaller number of cotexts and contexts. (Schmid 2020: 93)

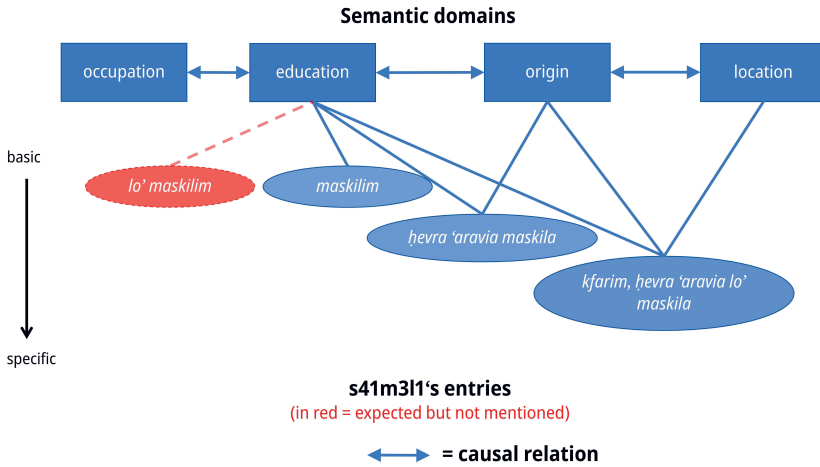
Based on a conceptual transfer of this notion of diffusion to the context of GERT, the recurrent use of a category by several participants is understood to hint at its higher degree of conventionalization in relation to categories which were used by fewer participants or not at all. Before the entries from the GERT corpus can be related systematically to concepts, more thoughts about their conceptual structure and the implications for this classification are due.

### 5.3 The nature of categories and levels of categorization

A brief look into the data reveals that participants behaved inconsistently in their use of categories and varied frequently in their degree of specification. Instead of mentioning multiple categories from the same semantic domain with a similar degree of specificity, participants used several semantically remote categories which may also differ in their degree of specificity. After mentioning *maskilim* ‘educated people,’ s41m3l1 did not proceed within the same semantic domain ‘education’ by indicating the opposite category on the same conceptual level *lo’ maskilim* ‘uneducated people.’ Instead, he went on to conceptually mixed and more specific categories such as *hevra ‘aravia maskila* ‘educated Arab society’ and its opposite *kfarim, hevra ‘aravia lo’ maskila* ‘villages, uneducated Arab society.’ The analyst may be puzzled by the nature of s41m3l1’s categorization; however inconsistencies are known to be a natural and characteristic component of human categorization.

There is in fact some evidence that natural conceptual hierarchies are fairly messy and not organized in a particularly consistent manner. [...] Furthermore, conceptual hierarchies do not even seem to be stable: there is evidence from attribute-listing experiments that categories may move from the subordinate to the basic level when they gain in cultural importance [...] Words such as (motor)car or (air)plane, for instance, which started out as subordinates in the field of vehicles, have since clearly acquired basic-level status. (Schmid 2007: 126)

Figure 5.2 shows some of s41m3l1’s original entries, depicted as blue ellipses, and shall serve to illustrate their syncretic nature. The entry *kfarim, hevra ‘aravia lo’ maskila* ‘villages, uneducated Arab society’ includes references to the designated group’s geographical location, their ethnic origin and their level of education. It can be linked to at least three semantic domains on a higher conceptual level, which are depicted in blue rectangles.



**Fig. 5.2:** S41m3l1's entries and their possible classification

The semantic domains themselves are not clearly separable, but semantically related (indicated by a blue double arrow). By their juxtaposition s41m3l1 expressed a correlation between the category 'uneducated Arab society' and the category 'villages.' While 'villages' can be understood as referring to geographical locations, 'being Arab' is not only determined by someone's current place of residence – which can be an Arab village. An additional semantic domain of 'origin' will be used in the analysis which can be understood as family descent, from a historical perspective: the place of residence of past generations is determining someone's origin. In Israel, there is also a correlation between educational aspects, 'origin' and 'location' because Arabs usually attend Arab schools. The most obvious relation extends between 'education' and 'occupation' because people's occupational choices are often determined by educational criteria. The syncretic character of many entries makes it hard to classify them under a single semantic domain. To get a better understanding of participants' categorization processes documented with GERT, it is helpful to reassess the entries with Rosch's definition of 'category:'

[C]ategories tend to become defined in terms of prototypes or prototypical instances that contain the attributes most representative of items inside and least representative of items outside the category [...] By category is meant a number of objects that are considered equivalent. Categories are generally designated by names (e.g., dog, animal) [...] (Rosch 1978: 30)

Schmid further elaborates on the potentially syncretic nature of natural categories:

If the logical principle of class inclusion is declared invalid – at least for natural conceptual hierarchies – as a determinant of category status at the vertical level, this has consequences on the horizontal level as well: categories at the same level of categorization need not always be mutually exclusive. (Schmid 2007: 127)

This understanding of ‘category’ is substantiated by the characteristics of the participants’ categories which have been analyzed, so far. From a general perspective, Kristiansen (2008: 72) argues for the prototypical nature of categories such as “[a]ccents, dialects and social stereotypes,” of which most GERT entries are instances. Krefeld & Pustka also apply the notion of prototypicality to varieties:

[V]arieties are located in the minds of the speakers, in that they are characterized by a prototype structure, as all other semantic concepts from our everyday life are. These cognitive concepts are not only expressed in language use but language use combined with para- and non-linguistic factors, co-construct situations and identities. (Krefeld & Pustka Forthcoming)

The organization of categories along prototypes implies that category membership can at best be approximated, but not determined definitely. Therefore, alternative analytical possibilities need to be accounted for, but should not pose a methodological obstacle.

In the above quotation from Schmid (2007: 127), the notion of different conceptual levels is taken up, which is seen as further characteristic inherent to categorization processes (Rosch 1978: 30). This aspect is reflected in S41m3l1’s original entries by their differing degree of specificity which is visualized in Fig. 5.2 with a black arrow on the left margin. S41m3l1’s entries contain categories which belong to several conceptual levels: among the entries are basic categories such as *maskilim* which can comprise entries that refer to more specific categories, just as *hevra* ‘aravia *maskila* ‘educated Arab society.’ The category *kfarim*, *hevra* ‘aravia lo’ *maskila* ‘villages, uneducated Arab society’ is even more specific because it refers to certain villages and highlights two of their inhabitants’ characteristics: ‘being Arab’ and ‘being uneducated.’ In comparison, *maskilim* ‘educated people’ is less specific and comprises a lot more people.

Because the original entries belong to different conceptual levels, it is problematic to compare them directly: they have to be brought to a similar conceptual level before the next analytical step. Following Rosch’s (1978: 30) notion of a ‘basic level of categorization,’ it will be assumed that conventionalized categories – the categories which I was trying to elicit with GERT, are close to a basic level, which makes this level a good point of departure for further comparisons. Harder describes the relevance of this basic level for the study of representations:

The basic level is thus a fairly solid new point of departure for understanding the kind of mental representations that real people construct: down-to-earth, no more precise than required for everyday life, capable of accommodating a broad spectrum of different cases, associated with practical as well as conceptual skills. In short, they reflect both properties of conceptualization as a human skill and properties of its basis in experience. Basic level concepts are shaped by an economy factor: they end up at a level of generalization and specificity that balance out costs and benefits of cognitive efforts. In relation to human experience, they also reflect the patterns of co-occurrence in the phenomena that constitute the input to conceptualization [...] (Harder 2010: 20)

RQ1 and RQ2, which ask about HSs' mental representations of linguistic variation and social groups, can be tackled by analyzing a basic level of categorization in these respects. A method to determine a basic level for further classification of the GERT corpus will be developed in 5.4.1 and 5.4.2.

Reflecting on the reasons for the conceptual inconsistency of s41m3l1's entries, one can argue with Rosch's (1978: 28) second principle of categorization which asserts that categories are dependent on the "perceived world structure:"

What attributes *will* be perceived given the ability to perceive them is undoubtedly determined by many factors having to do with the functional needs of the knower interacting with the physical and social environment. One influence on how attributes will be defined by humans is clearly the category system already existent in the culture at a given time. (Rosch 1978: 29)

The importance of language in this respect has been discussed above with Berger & Luckmann's (1967: 22) argument that "language marks the co-ordinates of my life in society and fills that life with meaningful objects." One can easily see that the list of s41m3l1's entries (see Fig. 5.3) contains several culturally determined concepts, such as 'Haredim' which are only meaningful in the context of Israel. Regardless of the relation of the underlying concepts to actual events or experiences, the existence of conventionalized lexical items such as *haredim*, *ashkenazim* and *mizrahim* increases the likelihood that these terms, instead of others which may be more appropriate, are used in categorization processes.

Various other aspects which are hard to determine exactly are likely to influence s41m3l1's choice of words during GERT. Perhaps he did not want to use the plain term for 'uneducated people' because he conceded to conventions of political correctness. Maybe he avoided the term 'uneducated' because he thinks of himself as someone who occupies a privileged position as an academic and does not want to look down on less educated people. It is probable that the more specific entry 'villages, uneducated Arab society' let him feel more at ease because the problematic notion 'uneducated' is embedded within other attributes and it is not his own society but Arab society which may enable him to judge with a sort of detached attitude.

S41m3l1's choice of words is also influenced by the way he constructs his identity in relation to certain social groups of which he believes himself to be a member – or an outsider. He was the only participant who mentioned *gikim* 'geeks' because he self-identifies as a member of this group. The entry *gikim* can be found on his template (see Fig. 4.10) in the upper right segment in an ellipse, right next to the point where the participant located himself with an X and the entry 'ani 'I.' The third entry in this segment above the ellipse and right next to his self-referral is *maskilim* 'educated' – another category which he chose to describe himself.

From these observations and the theoretic discussion in 2.1.2.2, it can be seen that participants did not produce their entries during GERT following a strict taxonomy, but according to how they want to convey their own identity in relation to their social and cultural environment.

## 5.4 Summary and explication of the data

To create a spreadsheet for the analysis of the GERT data, I transferred the information from the templates and added columns for translations, summaries and meta data which allow for the reorganization of the data. The different methods of summarizing and structuring the data obtained with GERT are the basis for their comparison and their quantitative analysis laid out in 5.4.3 and 5.5.

### 5.4.1 Defining units and types of data

As starting point, I collected all the data from all the completed GERT templates and transferred them into the first column of the spreadsheet in Hebrew orthography with their original spelling. In the following, I am going to render the original entries in the text in the form of a transliteration. For this transfer process, I worked with one template at a time and started by scanning the right segment on top from its upper right corner to its bottom left corner before proceeding counterclockwise to the next segment. Because the information on the templates appears in its majority as easily distinguishable entries (see Fig. 4.10), it felt intuitively appropriate to choose these entries as the basic unit for analysis. I transferred every entry into a separate row in the first column of the spreadsheet. In a separate column, I entered the corresponding participant's siglum.

In cases of doubt regarding how to segment information from the template into units, I applied three criteria for their distinction: spatial, semantic and procedural. The most obvious criteria is the spatial distribution of information on the template. Single tokens which are spatially separated from each other qualify as

entries. Additionally, participants sometimes encircled their entries, so they can easily be distinguished as units. However, if two or more tokens are close, it has to be decided if they belong to a single or to several entries. In this case, I applied semantic criteria to decide whether the second token is more likely to be an attribution belonging to the preceding one or an entry on its own behalf. For example, it is straightforward that s41m3l1 referred to '(female) social workers' with the two tokens *o'vdot sotsia'liot* because *o'vdot sotsia'liot*, which is a loan translation from English, constitutes a lexical item in Hebrew as well in English (Rosenthal 2009: 676). *Sotsia'l-i-ot* 'social-ADJ-F.P' does not qualify as a separate unit. During the analysis, I tried to recapitulate how the participant had filled out the template in my presence. Therefore, I listened to the recordings of the task. For example, I asked myself if the participant wrote down the tokens in close succession or with a pause in between them and whether he talked about them in conjunction or on their own terms. I am subsuming these aspects as procedural criteria. Listening to the recordings of the task also helped me to decipher responses when I had difficulties reading the handwriting or didn't remember what a participant possibly wanted to indicate. For the later analysis it was an advantage that I had reviewed every template on the day of its completion and made notes on the template, which can be seen in Fig. 4.10, whenever I felt an explication was needed. I will keep on using the term "entry" to refer to the now defined basic units for analysis. Not all entries are categories because entries can contain several categories or refer to specific places or persons. Therefore, I will not use these notions interchangeably.

Among all 190 entries that I transferred from the templates, three different types of entries can be defined according to formal and semantic criteria. An overview of these types, their qualities and the number of entries for each type is given in Table 5.1. Type A contains all 89 single token entries, except single token entries referring

**Tab. 5.1:** Types of entries according to formal and semantic criteria

Types	Tokens	Sem. criteria	n	Ratio in %	Recurrent entries
A	1	Lexical items without modifier	89	47	60
	2	Compound lexical items without modifier	17	9	6
B	≥ 2	Phrases including modifiers and/or clauses	65	34	2
C	≤ 3	References to specific persons and places in Israel	19	10	2

to a specific person or a place in Israel – those belong to type C – and 17 two token entries which are lexical items such as the above mentioned *o'vdot sotsia'liot*. All entries of type A, which account for 56% of the entirety, have in common that they

cannot easily be paraphrased in MH with a structurally more basic non-composite or a shorter wording.<sup>2</sup> In accordance with Coates' (2006: 371) definition, they can be described as common nouns which are used by the participants for semantic reference to a class – in our context a group of people – rather than for onymic reference to a specific entity, such as a specific person. In terms of construction grammar, all entries of type A are constructions because “their form or meaning is not strictly predictable from the properties of their component parts or from other constructions” (Goldberg 1995: 4). From this definition follows that type A entries cannot contain modifiers of any kind. These defining properties of type A characterize the terms which were used most frequently by the participants to refer to distinguishable groups of HSs.

Among the 106 entries of type A, there are 66 entries which appear more than once in the data. Minor orthographic differences, such as alternative and wrong spellings of a term which already appeared in the corpus as well as terms preceded by the definite article are included in this classification. The majority of recurrent entries appears in the corpus with identical orthography and more than twice: there are three terms which appear twice, six terms appear each three times, four terms appear four times and each one term appears five, six, seven and eight times. The number of appearances of each term equally indicates the number of different participants who used the term during GERT. While more than half (62%) of type A entries were used by at least two participants, only one entry of type B and one entry of type C appeared twice. The recurrent entries will be analyzed in detail in 5.4.3.

All 65 multi-token entries which are defined as type B contain between two to twelve tokens. By definition, they are structurally and semantically more complex than type A entries. For example, the type B entry *migzar 'aravi* ‘Arab sector’ is a two token composition which can be used to refer to the same concept as the type A entry *'aravim* ‘Arabs.’ The term *migzar 'aravi* is used in Israel to refer to the Arab population in a more sophisticated way than using the plain term *'aravim* – it has a specific pragmatic component which is not present in the plain term. Some type B entries like the above example can potentially be paraphrased with a more basic wording. Many other entries which include modifiers and clauses refer to a semantically specified concept which already appeared as a type A entry in a more basic form. The NP *hevra 'aravia maskila* ‘educated Arab society’ is essentially a semantic specification of the concept expressed by *'aravim* ‘Arabs.’ Its head *hevra 'aravia* ‘Arab society’ is a similarly elaborate term for ‘Arabs,’ just as the one discussed above. The dependent adjectival modifier *maskil-a* ‘educated-F.S’ functions as a semantic specifier which modifies the NP to refer only to the educated subgroup

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2 All the ratios here and in the table are rounded half to even.

among Israel's Arab population. Their inherent complexity reduces the likelihood of type B entries being used by different participants. In fact, the only type B entry that appears twice is *'olim mi-'etiopia* 'immigrants from Ethiopia' – a concept which was referred to by most participants with the basic term *'etiopim* 'Ethiopians.' Type B entries account for slightly more than a third (34%) of all the entries. This indicates that participants preferred type A entries (56%) for their classification, which are by definition more basic in form and meaning.

Type C entries are semantically defined as “onymic” references to specific persons or places, following Coates (2006: 371). They contain 14 references to a person and 5 references to a place in Israel. The 19 type C entries consist of one to three tokens. Entries referring to persons are seven proper names of different Israeli celebrities, five self references to the participants realized as a pronoun or the participant's name and two references to the interviewer by his name (the only recurrent term of type C). Only five entries refer to the geographical space in Israel: three toponyms (*Tel Aviv*, *Krayot*, *Daliat al-Karmel*) and two demonyms, which are geographical characterizations of people just as the entries *toshvei Yeruḥam* 'residents of Yeruḥam' and *toshvei Hertseliya* 'residents of Hertseliya.' Demonyms and toponyms can in our context be used as categorical terms for groups of HSs. Referring to a specific person can be interpreted as referring to the person's main characteristics, thereby enabling comparisons and generalizations. Nonetheless, type C entries should not be interpreted as a categories, per se. Because of their specific type of reference, they will be preserved in their original form in the next analytical step, which combines the translation of the entries to English and the bundling of semantically similar entries from different participants.

#### 5.4.2 Translation and simplification of entries

It was necessary to translate the entries to English to make the analysis accessible for non-Hebrew speakers. At the same time, I wanted to find out which kind of entries were used most frequently by the participants. To this end, I had to bundle entries which refer to the same or to a very similar concept. I was aware that I could not be sure how exactly two concepts match which were referred to by different participants using similar terms – even if they had used identical wordings (see 5.1). However, summarizing elicited data is used in psycholinguistic studies as analytical method (see Lavan 2023 who used a comparable method for classifying how participants categorized faces and voices). Every translation involves some kind of interpretation. It was impossible to preserve the exact meaning of the entries in their translation and a verbatim translation of all entries would have obscured the analysis. Consequently, I decided to combine translation and bundling of the entries within a single analytic

step. This process was neither straightforward nor linear: I have been revising the data over and over for a period of several months and discussed my analytic decisions with colleagues. Sometimes, I introduced changes only to fall back on the prior solution because I was not convinced. My analytic decisions will be explained in the following.

The technique of *Zusammenfassung* ‘summary’ is defined by Mayring (2015: 67) as reducing data, while preserving their essential content which leads to the creation of a manageable corpus that reflects the original data. The guidelines set by Mayring (2015: 71–72) were helpful for the bundling of similar entries – except that I did not yet want to bring all the data to the same conceptual level at this early stage of the analysis. Instead, I oriented my choices towards an intermediate conceptual level, to which most of the entries seemed to conform. When it seemed more appropriate, I preserved different conceptual levels from the original data. For example, the entries *studentim* ‘students’ and *profesorim* ‘professors’ are not on one level with m69f4l2’s entry *aḳadema’im* ‘academics.’ Instead of bundling all three entries under the more comprising term *academics*, I chose to keep *students* and *professors* as separate entries. This way, the participants’ classificatory strategies are still reflected to a high extent in the edited data. All terms resulting from this process will be referred to as “simplification” (of the original entry) and were added to the spreadsheet as column, next to the entries.

Type C entries were transliterated from Hebrew to Latin script, but not further summarized. According to semantic and formal criteria which were defined above, all other entries can either be described as basic (type A) or as complex (type B). Type A entries account for the majority and more than half of these entries occur several times in the corpus. Obviously, these recurrent terms are relevant for several participants. Based on their characteristics, it seems natural to think of type A entries as prototypical and belonging to a basic level of categorization (see 5.3).

Because I wanted to preserve the major characteristics of the data, I selected already existing type A entries as simplifications for semantically similar entries. If no similar entry was available, I chose new terms as simplification which matched the type A criteria. Generally, I preferred single-token terms as simplifications over multi-token terms. While most entries of type A didn’t have to be paraphrased for their bundling, type B entries usually needed to be simplified for the sake of comparability. Some entries of type B were not simplified because there was no similar concept among all entries. I started with easily translatable basic terms such as *’aravim* ‘Arabs.’ At the same time, the process of bundling similar entries began: Some type A entries were paraphrased in English, instead of translating them directly, because there was a semantically similar entry among them which was more representative for the summary. For example, *’universiṭa* ‘university’ was paraphrased as “academics” on the basis of the entry *’aḳadema’im* because it is a

similar but more comprising term to describe people who possess some degree of university education – the concept to which the participant most likely referred with *'universiṭa* (see 5.1 for a discussion of the term *'aḳadema'im*).

Subsequently, the resulting simplifications served as paraphrases for semantically similar but structurally more complex entries. For example, I paraphrased the two entries *ba'alei ḥaskala 'universiṭa'it* ‘those with academic education’ and *'anshei ḥaskala 'universiṭa'it* ‘people with university education’ which were mentioned by different participants as “academics.” For illustration, a detail of the spreadsheet at this stage of the analysis is shown in Fig. 5.3. If simplifying an entry implied omit-

Original Entry	speakers's sigla	Simplification	Specification
אקדמאים	m69f4l2	academics	
דתים לאומים	m69f4l2	National Religious	
חרדים	m69f4l4	Haredim	
צפונים	m69f4l5	Tel Aviv	North
חברה ערביה משכילה	s41m3l1	Arabs	educated
כפרים, חברה ערביה לא משכילה	s41m3l1	Arabs	low education, villages
צבא	s41m3l1	army	
צבא קבע	s41m3l1	army	fixed job
עולים מאתיופיה	s41m3l1	Ethiopians	Olim
גיקים	s41m3l1	geeks	
חרדים	s41m3l1	Haredim	
מהגרים שהם משכילים	s41m3l1	immigrants	educated
עולים	s41m3l1	immigrants	
משכילים	s41m3l1	intellectuals	
אני	s41m3l1	selfreference	
עובדות סוציאליות	s41m3l1	social workers (female)	
מורות	s41m3l1	teachers	F
פועלים	s41m3l1	workers (blue collar)	

Fig. 5.3: Summarized and translated GERT data from m69f4l2 and s41m3l1

ting semantic components, I preserved this information on the spreadsheet in a separate column under the title “specification.” For example, s41m3l1 referred twice to ‘army’, thus differentiating between plain *tsav'a* ‘army’ by which he meant ‘conscripted soldiers and reservists’ and *tsav'a kev'a* ‘standing army’ referring to ‘soldiers working for the army on a fixed basis’ – as he explained during the interview. Both entries were simplified to “army” and *tsav'a kev'a* got transferred as “fixed job” in the specification column.

Some cases were more tricky than the ones just mentioned. I decided to use “Russians” rather than “immigrants” as simplification for a30f3l2’s entry *'olim ḥadashim mi-brit ha-mo'atsot*, which translates to ‘(new) immigrants from the Soviet Union.’ This choice may seem illogical because the term ‘Russians’ usually denotes a nationality which once belonged to the Soviet Union, but does not comprise other

nationalities, such as Kazakhs, which were part of the Soviet Union, too. This analytic decision makes sense if we consider the context of the interview with a30f3l2 and the participants' biography.

At the time of the interview in January 2020, the Soviet Union had been dissolved for almost thirty years. The participant used the term *'olim hadashim* as head of the NP, which translates verbatim to 'new ascendants,' but is conventionalized as a lexical item, denoting immigration to Israel based on the "Law of Return."<sup>3</sup> Usually, *'olim hadashim* is used to refer to immigrants who started the immigration process recently, whereas *'olim vatikim* 'senior immigrants' denotes immigrants who completed the process and have been living in Israel for years. In fact, a30f3l2 distinguished between new and senior immigrants during GERT by the use of *'olim l'o hadashim* 'not new immigrants' in opposition to *'olim hadashim*. What a30f3l2 meant most likely are immigrants from former Soviet countries such as Ukraine, Kazakhstan and the like who arrived in Israel recently and after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. I argue that the seven participants who used the term *rusim* 'Russians' during GERT referred not only to Russians who were born in the state of Russia, but to descendants of countries which once belonged to the Soviet Union. They used the term *rusim* to refer to this group of people on the basis of their main distinguishable feature – speaking Russian. This argument will be elaborated in Section 6.5 where the core category *rusim* 'Russians' is contextualized with interview data.

A30f3l2 had personal reasons to choose a different wording, when referring to the same concept as the other participants who used the term *rusim*. She identified as belonging to this social group, as she clarified during the interview: she migrated to Israel from a former Soviet country with her parents as a child in the 1990s. Instead of adhering to the common practice of referring to all descendants from countries of the former Soviet Union as *rusim*, she used a geographically more precise wording. Her choice of words can be interpreted as an expression of personal affectedness by the politically sensitive topic. In analogy to the alternative Hebrew terms which denote the Arab population (cf. 5.4.1), there is also a pragmatic component to the use of alternative terms for *rusim* which can be perceived as blunt. Although historically imprecise, a30f3l2's entry is more encompassing than *rusim* when referring to the concept of immigrants from post-Soviet states.

Some participants produced composite entries which contain more than one category, such as h21f3l2's *druzim 'aravim tsafon* 'Arab Druze North' and a20f2l2's *'olim 'afrik'aim be-klali* 'African Olim in general.' I had to decide whether to simplify these entries as 'Arabs' or as 'Druze' and in the second case as 'Africans' or as 'immigrants.'

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<sup>3</sup> This law includes the term in its masculine singular form *'oleh* and states that "[e]very Jew has the right to come to this country as an *oleh*" (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1950).

Based on “the general cognitive principle that special cases take precedence over general cases,” Lakoff (1987: 74) suggests “that in conflicts between modifiers and heads, the modifiers win out” for the interpretation of “complex concepts.” In this respect, *druzim* ‘*aravim tsafon* is an untypical construction because ‘*aravim* ‘Arabs’ is the modifier, although *druzim* ‘Druze’ is a more specific concept – usually Druze are categorized as ‘Arabs’ in Israel (see 3.1.4). In this case, I simplified as ‘Druze’ and in the second case as ‘Africans’ because it is the more specific category to which a20f2l2 most likely referred.

I used four main strategies for translation and simplification of the original entries. They are summarized in Table 5.2 using the examples which were explained above. Some type B entries were also translated directly when there was no similar

**Tab. 5.2:** Main strategies for translation and simplification

	Technique	Condition of use	Example
1	Transliteration	only type C	ירון לונדון → ‘Yaron London’
2	Direct translation	primarily type A	‘ <i>aravim</i> → ‘Arabs’
3	Simplified translation	type A, type B	<i>migzar</i> ‘ <i>aravi</i> ; <i>druzim</i> ‘ <i>aravim tsafon</i> → ‘Arabs’
4	Paraphrastic translation	type A	<i>universiṭa</i> → ‘academics’

and more basic concept in the corpus. The degree of interpretation that is involved in simplification increases from technique 1 to 4. While a transliteration is a direct transfer, a paraphrastic translation involves theoretical assumptions which allow to think of *universiṭa* in terms of ‘academics,’ for example.

### 5.4.3 Recurrent categories

GERT was designed as a tool to systematically elicit categories that HSs use to represent variation in MH. The hypothesis was introduced above that the relevancy of these categories can be tested with the quantitative analysis of their independent mentions (see 5.2). In the context of their elicitation of a corpus of swearwords, with a total number of 56 participants, Vallery & Lemmens argue that

if a word is given spontaneously by two speakers as a swear word, it is probable that it is conventionally considered as a swear word by at least some proportion of the population. On the contrary, if a word is given by only one out of 56 respondents, then there is a much higher probability that no one else (or an insignificant amount of people) considers it to be a swear word. (Vallery & Lemmens 2021: 92)

The same argument can be made about the general relevance of the categories which were elicited with GERT. In fact, the smaller sample size for GERT, with 21 participants, reinforces the likelihood that a category which was mentioned independently by two or more participants is relevant for the research population. A greater number of independent mentions of a category further increases its relevancy.

Therefore, I decided to focus only on the entries for which I found an identical or a semantically very similar entry from another participant in the GERT corpus. In other words, I am using the simplifications of the original entries for the bundling of semantically similar entries and the comparison of the number of their mentions and I will focus only on simplifications that are at least linked to two different participants. Furthermore, I did not want to include multiple occurrences of a simplification from just one participant. As can be seen in Fig. 5.3, s41m3l1 referred to ‘army’ with two different entries. I shaded these multiple occurrences from the same participant in red in the spreadsheet and counted them just once. All 21 foreign-induced entries which were written with the blue pen (see 4.2.6.3) are shaded in blue on the spreadsheet, too. These entries also need to be excluded from the present analysis to be able to argue in terms of relevancy. Further details about the entries which were so far discarded will be discussed separately in 5.4.4. These contain 46 different terms for which no semantically similar term could be found in the process of translation and simplification – they are discarded as single mentions. Because the single mentions were given by just one of the 21 participants, it is unlikely that they are commonly used by HSs for the categorization of variation in MH or for groups of speakers. Two participants referred to me (the interviewer) with an entry during GERT. However, these entries are not proper single mentions and they will be excluded from the analysis as well because they do not qualify as a relevant category. After excluding all irrelevant entries, 106 simplifications are left which will be treated in the following as categories because they were used by multiple participants to refer to groups of people. Table 5.4.3 contains a summary of these simplifications yielding 25 semantically different categories. The left column shows the number of mentions by different participants for each category, whereas the categories are displayed to the right, separated by semicolons.

A semantic interpretation of these recurrent categories reveals that the three concepts ‘origin,’ ‘education’ and ‘religion’ were most prominent for the participants’ categorization during GERT. Based on the differing frequency with which these concepts were used, there seems to be a conceptual hierarchy. ‘Origin’ is the most frequently used concept: almost all of the eight categories which were mentioned by at least six participants are based on the concept ‘origin;’ only the categories ‘Haredim’ and ‘academics’ which were mentioned by seven and by six participants relate to the concepts ‘religion’ and ‘education,’ which seem to be secondary concepts. The categories ‘intellectuals’ and ‘uneducated,’ which were each used by four

**Tab. 5.3:** Recurrent categories during GERT

Mentions	Simplifications (separated by semicolon)
10	Arabs; Russians
8	Ethiopians
7	Ashkenazim; Haredim; immigrants
6	academics; Mizrahim
4	intellectuals; uneducated; Moroccans; teachers
3	Druze; politicians; television and radio hosts
2	army; Arsim; Kibbutsniks; lawyers; Moshavniks; national religious; seculars; settlers; workers (blue collar); Yemenites
106	recurrent categories in total

participants, also belong to the concept ‘education.’ Among the rest of the recurrent categories, which were mentioned by four participants or less, are several which refer to ‘religion,’ such as ‘Druze,’ ‘national religious’ and ‘seculars.’ The categories ‘Moroccans’ and ‘Yemenites’ can also be grasped in terms of ‘origin,’ while some other categories such as ‘kibbutsniks’ and ‘settlers’ are not as easily comprehensible. They potentially refer at least to geographic, religious and socioeconomic aspects because they can best be understood as describing a way of life.

When comparing these categories to the variables which are generally considered for sociolinguistic studies (see 4.1.1), it seems astounding that most of the variables do not even appear. From Barron & Schneider’s (2009: 426) list, the variables “region,” “gender” and “age” are completely absent in the recurrent categories. Only “ethnicity” if understood as ‘origin’ was frequently referred to besides the optional factors from the list “education and religion.” The category ‘workers (blue collar)’ is the only clear reference to the remaining variable from the list “social class” and was mentioned by just two participants.

My hypothesis that ‘region’ and ‘social class’ might be less significant factors in Israel than elsewhere – at least in speakers’ representations – is substantiated by the analysis so far. It is surprising that no geographic place was referred to more than once in GERT. Jerusalem, which was mentioned as having a few shibboleths during the interviews, was not mentioned at all. The relative prominence of ‘religion’ justifies the inclusion and the prioritization of this variable for the analysis. Even though I also expected ‘origin’ to play a major role for HSSs’ representations of linguistic variation, its total prominence over other concepts is astounding. Perhaps, GERT is less apt for the elicitation of categories along the variables ‘age’ and ‘gender.’ Despite the fact that only one entry in total referred to ‘age,’ the aspect was addressed more often in the interviews. Also the variable ‘gender’ was addressed in conjunction

with special contexts such as differences between male and female L2 speakers and especially differences between male and female religious HSs.

The meaning and the cognitive nature of the most prominent categories will be further analyzed in contextualization with interview data and participants' ratings during GERT in Chapter 6.

#### 5.4.4 Foreign-induced entries and single mentions

This is a short account of the data that has so far been excluded from the analysis: foreign-induced entries and single mentions. As explained in 5.4.3, I marked 21 entries as foreign-induced. This means that I mentioned these terms prior to the participant during GERT. Foreign-induced entries occurred with seven different participants – a third of the sample size. Among the 21 foreign-induced entries, there are seven which refer to the army. These entries stem from four different participants, two of which referred to the army with multiple entries. The second most frequent category among the suggestions with three mentions from different participants is 'Haredim.' The rest consists of each two mentions by different participants of the categories 'kibbutzniks,' 'Druze' and 'Tel Aviv' and one mention each of the categories 'national religious,' 'politicians,' 'religious' (referred to twice by the same participant) and the entry "Christians in Nazareth."

There are two obvious explanations for the occurrence of these suggestions: the most frequent foreign-induced entries occurred with the categories 'army' and 'Haredim' – two topics which I found particularly interesting and was determined to investigate further. Certainly, I was disposed to bring up these topics if the participants did not mention them by themselves. The same explanation applies to the other categories to a lesser degree. I mentioned some of the remaining categories because they were somehow close to the participant or the interview situation. Sometimes I mentioned an example of a social group to explain what I expected of the participants during GERT. To this end, I tried to find examples which were familiar to the participants.

The second type of discarded entries are single mentions. One example for a single mention is the term *gikim* 'geeks' which was discussed above (see 5.1). There are six more single mentions for which no similar concept could be found as simplification. At 46, the amount of single mentions is considerably high, which is partly due to 14 entries which refer to real persons. Five of them are self-referrals to the participants, just as the one from s41m3l1 which was also discussed above. Twice the participants also marked my (the interviewer's) position on the template which does not qualify as a proper single mention, but surely does not qualify as a meaningful recurrent category, either.

Among the single mentions are the entries *bnei no'ar tsa'irim* 'teenagers, youths,' which was the only entry that primarily refers to the concept 'age,' and the only proper mention of *yehudim datim* 'religious Jews.' I would have expected to get these notions more often in GERT, especially because the participants referred to 'age' during the interviews as a variable for variation in MH. Almost all the other single mentions belong to the semantic domains 'occupation' with 11 entries and 'origin' with seven entries. These are also the semantic domains which were most often referred to during GERT. All of these entries will again be included in the following analysis of the participants' ratings.

## 5.5 Ratings of 'status' and 'correct Hebrew'

To analyze participants' ratings, I indicated on the spreadsheet where the participant had placed the entry on the template relative to the printed axes. I used two separate columns next to the entries for their position in relation to the axis "correct Hebrew" and to the axis "social status." As indicated in 4.2.6.3, the task was not designed to elicit precisely quantifiable comparisons between different entries. Originally, I just indicated the entries' positions as being on the positive or the negative half of the axis or very close to the middle: the value "1" corresponded to a position on the positive half of the axis, "-1" to a position on the negative half and "0" to a position right on or very close to the other axis in the middle of the template.

After consulting with colleagues, I decided that a finer grained method for the analysis was possible because I had instructed the participants to think of the space in each segment as carrying meaning for the comparison of their entries. An illustration of the scale with five distinct values applied on s41m3l1's template can be seen in Fig. 5.4. In practice, I marked the values in red on a transparent foil which I put on top of the templates to determine the values of each entry in relation to the scale. I decided to use the scale with the values "-2, -1, 0, 1, 2" because I could determine clear spacial distinctions along these values on most templates, as can be seen in Fig. 5.4 – but a finer distinction was not deducible in most cases. For example, s41m3l1's entry *חברה ערבית משכילה* (*hevra 'aravia maskila* 'educated Arab society'), which is indicated by a blue arrow in Fig. 5.4, received the values "1" and "0" because it is located in the middle of the 'correct Hebrew' axis and closely to the value "1" on the 'social status' axis.

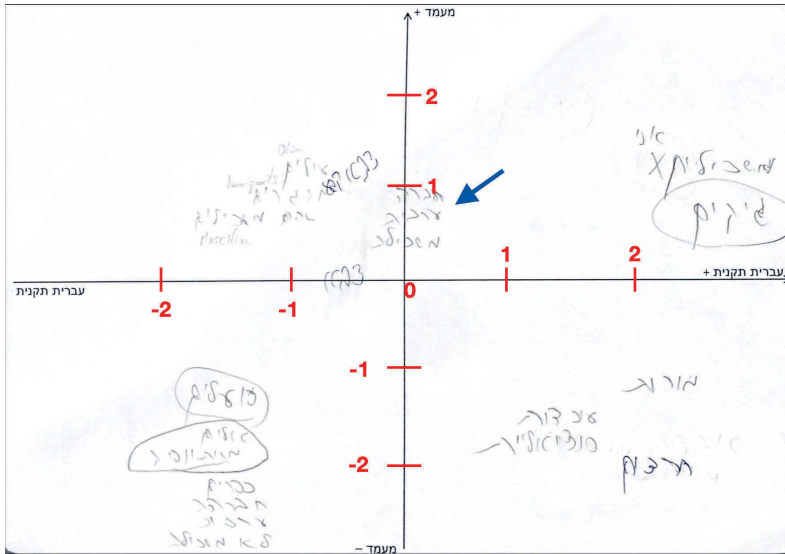


Fig. 5.4: Scale for analyzing ratings

### 5.5.1 Classification of the entries and summary of the ratings

After I had assigned values to all entries, I started to look for patterns in the data. Except for the recurrent categories which were defined in 5.4.3, it was hard to detect any correlations between semantic categories of the entries and their ratings. I further classified every entry, based on semantic criteria in conjunction with the ratings, to establish more general categories for their summary. Because I wanted to arrive at categories on a higher conceptual level than most of the entries' simplifications, this process of bundling depended on more theoretical premises than the process of simplification. At first, I bundled semantically similar entries into categories which could be understood as potentially distinguishable on the basis of common linguistic characteristics, in the context of Q14. According to my conception, the new categories which were created with this process should be on a basic level of categorization, in that they were organized around prototypes with typical socio-demographic and linguistic characteristics.

For example, the new category 'Arabs' contains not only the 15 simplifications "Arabs," but six simplifications "Druze," two simplifications "Christians" and the entries "Daliyat al-Karmel" and "Circassians." I bundled these entries because I assumed that the participants' representations of these categories are shaped as having an 'Arabic accent' when they speak Hebrew. Thus, the common characteristic of this category is the use of Arabic. From the context of the recordings, it was clear

that “Christians” referred to ‘Arab Christians’ and hence native Arabic speakers. Usually, Druze are native Arabic speakers, too, and the entry “Daliyat al-Karmel” was interpreted as referring to Druze because it designates a town near Haifa which is known for its mostly Druze population. For this analytical step, I tried to classify every entry to get the largest possible quantity for comparisons. Naturally, not all entries fit equally well into the new categories and I redid the classification several times until I felt that I could move on with the analysis. “Circassians” refers to a minority group who do not speak Arabic as L1, but for religious purposes because they are Muslims. It is the category which fits least into the category ‘Arabs’, but I could not find any semantically similar entries with which to form a separate category.

The classification resulted in 13 categories which are listed in Table 5.4. While eight of the categories are named after existing simplifications and, in fact, the participants’ own words (in-vivo codes), some categories need further explanation. The largest category ‘educated,’ with 33 entries from 14 different participants, contains the recurrent categories ‘academics,’ ‘intellectuals’ and ‘teachers,’ skilled professions such as “lawyers,” “high-tech people,” “physicians” and “social workers (female).” Also s41m3l1’s entry “geeks” from the above discussion was classified under ‘educated’ because it has similar rating values as the other entries and was described as semantically close to these by s41m3l1 (see 5.3).

‘Jewish elite’ is a default category and refers to well established ways of life in Israel which were expressed by the entries *yalidei ha-arets* ‘native Israelis’ and *‘olim l’o hadashim* ‘not new (established) immigrants’. The category includes the simplifications “kibbutniks,” “*moshavniks*” and the geographic references to “Tel Aviv” and “Herzliya residents.” Religious aspects are also contained, with “national religious” and “secular.” Less central to the category ‘Jewish elite’ are “Americans” and “French:” these potentially well-established immigrant groups are defined as belonging to the elite because of financial and ideological aspects, but are likely to be represented with different accents in Hebrew. ‘New immigrants’ refers to Jewish immigrants who arrived in Israel within the last five years – in the sense of the term *‘olim hadashim* (see 5.4.2). ‘Periphery’ refers to notions of geographical and social marginalization which typically intersect in Israel, as discussed in Chapter 3 and especially in 3.1.5. It contains “Africans,” “development towns,” “*krayot*” (an agglomeration close to Haifa) “low socio-economic status,” “prisoners,” “settlers” and “(blue collar) workers.” The entry “*arsim*” is central to this category because it refers to the stereotype of a non-*Ashkenazi* young working-class man who lives outside of the modern urban centers (Mizrachi & Herzog 2012: 428). ‘Public figures’ is based on the Hebrew notion of *‘ish tsibori* which is defined by Schwarzwald (2007: 75) to contain, among others, members of the Knesset, artists, journalists and radio and TV broadcasters. Interestingly, Schwarzwald (2007: 75) characterizes this group

by their common aim of getting close to the people which leads them to lower their register instead of “elevating the nation to the high language.”<sup>4</sup>

For each of these categories, I calculated means for ‘correct Hebrew’ and ‘social status.’ As can be seen in Table 5.4, the categories can contain multiple simplifications from the same participant: nine entries which were classified under ‘army’ were produced by just six participants. Therefore, I had to calculate an average value for all the simplifications from the same participant which were classified together before calculating the overall average for the category. For example, I calculated means out of s41m3l1’s two entries *tzava’* and *tzava’ keva’*, which were both simplified as “army” (see 5.4.2), before I calculated the mean from all participants for the category ‘army.’ Thereby, I made sure that the data of each participant was weighted equally for the calculation of the category means (see Table 5.4). These categories and their ratings

**Tab. 5.4:** Categories after classification with number of entries, different participants’ referrals, mean ratings for Correct Hebrew and Status

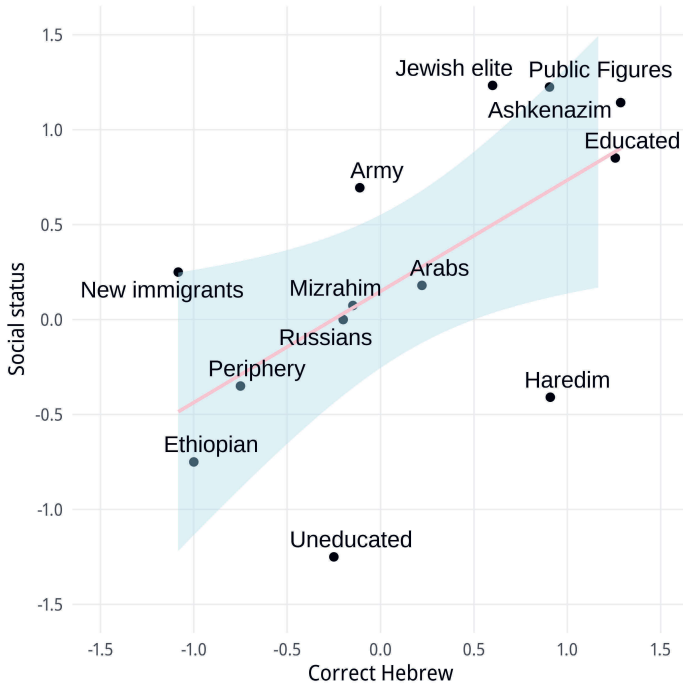
Category	Entries	Participants	CH (m)	Status (m)
Arabs	25	10	0.22	0.18
Army	9	6	-0.11	0.69
Ashkenazim	7	7	1.29	1.14
Educated	33	14	1.26	0.88
Ethiopians	9	8	-1.00	-0.75
Haredim	13	11	0.73	-0.41
Jewish elite	24	15	0.60	1.23
Mizrahim	14	9	-0.15	0.07
New immigrants	8	6	-1.08	0.25
Periphery	13	10	-0.75	-0.35
Public figures	21	9	0.90	1.22
Russians	10	10	-0.20	0.00
Uneducated	4	4	-0.25	-1.25

will be contextualized and discussed together with the participants’ statements from the interviews in Chapter 6.

<sup>4</sup> My translation from the original: מתוך רצון להתקרב לעם, הדיבור משתופף אליו במקום להעלות את העם. אל הלשון הגבוהה, במקום לטפח לשון תרבות ולשמש דוגמה.

### 5.5.2 Comparing categories and rating variables

I plotted means of the categories from Table 5.4 to visually compare how they were rated (see Fig. 5.5). To test the hypothesis that participants represented groups of HSs who speak correctly as having a high social status, I fitted a simple linear regression model on the mean ratings.<sup>5</sup> I modeled the variable ‘correct Hebrew’ as predictor of ‘social status.’ The output of the simple linear regression model indicates that mean



**Fig. 5.5:** Mean values for GERT categories with fitted linear regression model (red line) and 95% confidence interval (blue shading)

ratings for ‘correct Hebrew’ explained 36.8% of the variation in mean ratings for ‘social status’ [ $F(1,11) = 6.41, p = .028$ ]. The low p-value suggests that mean ratings for ‘correct Hebrew’ are likely to affect mean ratings for ‘social status.’ The rising slope of the model, illustrated as red line, indicates that the model predicts increasing

<sup>5</sup> I used R Statistical Software v4.3.2 (R Core Team 2023) for all analyses, and ggplot2 from the tidyverse package (Wickham et al. 2019) for creating plots.

mean ratings for ‘social status’ together with increasing mean ratings for ‘correct Hebrew.’ However, the categories outside of the shaded area somewhat contradict the predicted positive linear relation between the variables: For example, ‘Haredim’ is below the shaded area and thus outside of the confidence interval because the model would have predicted higher mean ‘social status’ based on the mean for ‘correct Hebrew.’ In the following discussion, heatmaps will be used to compare individual ratings for each category and to assess inasmuch participants diverged in their ratings – information that is obscured by aggregating means.

## 5.6 Typical GERT participants

The small sample size of 21 participants who completed GERT does not allow for detailed comparisons of sub-samples along socio-demographic variables. Therefore, a data-based analysis of possible patterns in the GERT corpus is more reasonable than departing from the participants’ characteristics. As noted above, there seem to be two main strategies for the completion of GERT: a minimalist approach which can be illustrated with m69f4l2’s data and a more extensive and differentiated approach just as the one represented by s41m3l1 (see Fig. 5.3). It needs to be noted that participants might have understood the task differently and used different strategies for this reason – but this does not rule out the prevalence of two different strategies. On the contrary, a certain interpretation of the task may again hint at a participant’s preference for a certain strategy.

The 21 participants who completed GERT produced 190 entries in total. On average, each participant came up with nine entries. Just one participant did not mention more than two entries, whereas the most productive participant came up with 26 entries. Interestingly, these values coincide almost exactly with the data which is presented in Lameli et al. (2008: 62) for their elicitation of “Sprachraumkonzepte” with the help of maps of Germany. Their 169 participants also produced 8.5 entries, on average, with the extremes of just two as the minimal number of entries per participant and 26 as the maximal number. These numbers strengthen the hypothesis that the number of categories used for the categorization of linguistic variation is naturally limited due to the principle of “cognitive economy” (Rosch 1978: 28–29; see 2.1.4.4). The number of categories which participants use during elicitation tasks such as GERT and mental maps seems to vary typically between four and 20.

Comparing the quantity of their entries, GERT participants can be bundled into two groups: ten participants produced seven or fewer entries and 11 participants produced between nine and 26 entries. I will refer to the group that mentioned fewer entries as ‘minimalist group’ and to the other as the ‘productive group.’ Minimalists produced only 4.3 entries on average – five of them produced exactly four entries.

Because it can be assumed that participants tried to produce exactly one entry for each of the four segments of the GERT template, it is noteworthy that only one participant completed the template in this manner. Due to the definition of the minimalist group, it can be expected that they also based their categorization on fewer conceptual domains than the productive group. Although they used only a few categories, they did not all use the same or similar ones. They also used different conceptual domains: three minimalists referred mostly to the domain of ‘origin,’ while the others referred mostly to ‘education’ and ‘occupation’ and to other concepts. Overall, their entries can be described as less specific. The difference in the degree of specification which is characteristic for the two groups, to which m69f4l2 and s41m3l1 belong, can be seen in Fig. 5.3.

All productive participants made use of the concept ‘origin,’ in addition to other concepts, which is not surprising because it is the most prominent concept among the recurrent categories (see 5.4.3). While it can be seen from s41m3l1’s entries that he differentiated the categories ‘Arabs,’ ‘army’ and ‘immigrants’ on a finer level, it is hard to make general judgments about the degree of specificity of a category. For example, it does not seem reasonable to claim that “social workers (female)” is a more specific category than *kfarim, hevra ‘aravia lo’ maskila* ‘villages, uneducated Arab society.’

It could be assumed that the minimalists can be characterized as thinking only in terms of black and white oppositions, whereas the productive group could be characterized as bean counters. Thereby, two cognitive strategies are juxtaposed: an economic, but potentially over-simplistic approach against a more precise, but cognitively costly approach which can in turn lead to ambiguous categorizations. Ultimately, these strategies are not substantiated by the GERT data – but, it would be interesting to adapt GERT methodologically to be able to investigate further into this topic.

In summary, both minimalist and productive participants used several conceptual domains at the same time and behaved inconsistently in their use of categories, as noted in 5.3. Both groups used entries which reflect the participants’ personal inclinations or constraints towards the use of certain categories. For example, c36f3l1 who only produced the categories ‘intellectuals’ and ‘uneducated’ voiced concerns about political correctness – that is to say, she did not want to categorize along the concept ‘origin.’ The only distinguishable characteristic about the groups’ entries is that the minimalists used less specific entries which is not surprising since they produced much fewer entries, overall. For example, m69f4l2’s categories can be described as more basic and seem to be on a similar conceptual level, although these properties are hard to determine absolutely.

## 6 Discussing core categories

For the conceptualization of GERT, I hypothesized that there are institutions in Israeli society which are associated with different concepts of typical language use, such as speaking ‘correct Hebrew.’ The variables ‘correct Hebrew’ and ‘social status’ were implied from the findings of the open interviews, during the first fieldwork stage. Both variables have to be unpacked again and need to be interpreted in the light of the participants’ statements.

With GERT, some common categories that HSs use to categorize different ways of speaking Hebrew could be singled out and were further classified in 2.1.4.4. These 13 notions will be treated as the core categories for the following discussion – thereby, RQ1<sup>1</sup> and RQ2<sup>2</sup> have been partially answered. The meaning of the core categories depends on personal preferences for certain social groups over others and the participants’ own identification with the groups in question, as well as their personal everyday experiences with the groups. As expressed in the “mutual knowledge paradox,” no certainty can be reached about the content and the congruity of shared knowledge (Lanwer & Coussios 2017: 142–143). This implication is also expressed in Geeraerts’ statement in respect to the potentially heterogeneous distribution of associations in a speech community:

[P]rototype-theoretical research should abandon the naive idea of a completely homogeneous linguistic community. The distribution of the different elements of a prototypically organized category over the members of a speech community is likely to be heterogeneous. (Geeraerts 2008: 33)

On these premises, the GERT data will be contextualized with the participants’ statements and the theoretical assumptions for this study to tackle the second part of RQ1 and RQ2, which ask about the characteristics of these core categories. RQ3<sup>3</sup>, RQ6<sup>4</sup> and RQ7<sup>5</sup> will be guiding the discussion. Inferences about RQ5<sup>6</sup> will be made on the basis of the GERT data and the guided interviews in Section 6.2.

What the GERT data cannot provide are conclusions about actual speech behavior and the social status of the people which can be classified with the core categories.

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1 RQ1 Which main categories are applied by HSs to classify linguistic variation in MH and how are they defined?

2 RQ2 Which social groups are distinguishable on basis of their language use, according to HSs and how are these groups characterized?

3 RQ3 Which linguistic phenomena do HSs link to the categories (of RQ1 and RQ2) and why?

4 RQ6 Which kind of different LAs do HSs express?

5 RQ7 How are these LAs reflected in their reported language practice?

6 RQ5 Which kind of a linguistic standard do HSs have in mind and how were these ideas shaped?

The data reflects participants' opinions and can provide insights into their representations of speech behavior and other associations of certain groups which are framed with these categories. Potentially, the data is contradictory: diverging opinions about certain categories can be observed in the heatmaps. If the shape of a heatmap is more uniform, with one clear center, it may be a hint that the represented category is conventionalized with stereotypical ratings among the participants.

The rating component of GERT was directly aimed to answer RQ4<sup>7</sup> and to gain insights about a possible order of linguistic variation in MH – the overarching research question of this study, RQ0<sup>8</sup>. A preliminary order is suggested with the summary of the participants' ratings in Fig. 5.5. This illustration of the summarized GERT data and the heatmaps for each category which were introduced in 5.5.2 pose an entry to the analysis.

The category with the lowest mean rating for 'social status,' the 'uneducated,' did not receive the worst average rating for 'correct Hebrew' (see Table 5.4). This spot is occupied by 'new immigrants' which received a favorable mean rating for 'social status' – only five categories were rated better. The categories with the highest ratings are 'Jewish elite,' 'public figures,' 'Ashkenazim' and 'educated.' While 'Ashkenazim' were rated best in terms of 'correct Hebrew' and very similar as 'educated,' the category with the highest mean rating for 'social status,' 'Jewish elite,' occupies only the fifth place of 'correct Hebrew.' From these observations follows that the participants did not necessarily associate 'correct Hebrew' with the highest 'social status' – the category 'army,' which ranks fifth in terms of 'social status,' was even rated slightly negative for 'correct Hebrew.' 'Mizrahim' and 'Russians' have very similar mean ratings for both variables. Both were rated closely to the neutral values 0/0. They are also close to 'Arabs' which was rated even more favorably in both respects. 'Haredim' sticks out as the only category that was rated positively for 'correct Hebrew' and negatively for 'social status' – status-wise this category ranges very close to 'periphery.' Potentially all the core categories appear as socially and linguistically marked, if 0/0 is interpreted as indicating an unmarked point of reference. The core categories which are closest to 0/0 are 'Mizrahim,' 'Russians,' 'Arabs' and 'army.' Does this mean that they are the default categories? In the following, this surprising implication will be further studied with the heatmaps for each category.

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7 RQ4 How are categories from RQ1 and RQ2 applied by the speakers rated in terms of 'prestige' and 'correctness of Hebrew'?

8 RQ0 How can linguistic variation in MH be ordered?

Before delving into the individual discussion of each core category and their relations to each other, the next section will briefly address RQ8<sup>9</sup> and RQ9<sup>10</sup> which ask about the causality behind linguistic and social categorization.

## 6.1 Thoughts on formation and use of the categories

To get an idea how the participants talked about these categories, a20f2l2's answer to Q14 will be reviewed, which is very illustrative because she listed five of the thirteen core categories ad hoc. A20f2l2 had made 'aliyah from South Africa and had learned Hebrew in several *ulpan* courses before she took up her obligatory army service which she was serving at the time of the interview. At the point of the interview when she gave this answer, I had not yet introduced GERT – therefore the answer could not have been influenced by the template with the variables.

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9 RQ8 To what extent are representations of social categories influenced by linguistic variation?

10 RQ9 To what extent is linguistic variation influenced by representations of social categories?

**(8) a20f2l2 (32:08)**

*yes there are there are these like... I'm not exactly sure if they are Iraqis or Moroccans or this, but like Mizrahim. They speak a bit differently and if they have a very strong accent and it's a bit Arabic or something. Then I know, like OK, wallah. And some people really Ashkenazi, they also have a little something. Like, I heard how one of the commanders in the course speaks and I asked someone, what kind of accent is that and they said, he's just very Ashkenazi. And Russians, too. Of course I can say who is Russian, generally by the accent and French and people from the US, in general. Or if they are good with accent, but not much and who else? There are like the religious, Haredim and so. I am watching a series, it is called Shtisel [...] yes, it's like they have something different, they speak a little, and they have a lot [...] they have a lot of Yiddish and that, too. so, I can hear, like. And the Ethiopians have something, so, there are many groups.*

כן יש, יש אאת ה-, כאילו, אני לא בטוחה בדיוק אם הם עיראקים או מרוקאים או זה, אבל מזרחים כאילו. הם מדברים קצת שונה ואם יש להם מבטא ממש חזקה וזה קצת ערבי או משהו. אז אני יודעת או קיי ואללה. כאילו ולכמה אנשים כאילו ממש אשכנזים. יש להם קצת משהו גם. כאילו שמעתי איך אחד מהמפקדים בקורס מדבר ושאלתי למישהו איזה מבטא זה כאילו ואמרו סתם הוא ממש אשכנזי כאילו. וגם הרוסים. ברור אני יכולה להגיד מי רוסי בכללי מהמבטא וצרפתים ואנשים מארצות הברית בכללי. או אם הם טוב במבטא אבל לא הרבה ומי עוד? יש את ה, כאילו הדתיים חרדים וזה. אני רואה סדרה, קוראים את זה שטיסל [...] כן אז כאילו יש להם משהו אחר הם מדברים כאילו קצת משהו וגם יש להם הרבה [...] יש להם הרבה יידיש וזה גם. אז אני יכולה כאילו לשמוע. ולאיתופים יש להם משהו, אז יש הרבה קבוצות.

Despite being a L1 English speaker, a20f2l2 used the specific categories that were available in MH for the Israeli context of social and linguistic categorization. This observation, which is by itself not surprising, resonates in the following quotation:

The reality of everyday life appears already objectified, that is, constituted by an order of objects that have been designated as objects before my appearance on the scene. The language used in everyday life continuously provides me with the necessary objectifications and posits the order within which these make sense and within which everyday life has meaning for me. (Berger & Luckmann 1967: 35–36)

At first, she referred hesitatingly to the subcategories of “Iraqis or Moroccans,” before she bundled them under the specifically Israeli category ‘Mizrahim’ (see 3.1.3). She explained that a “very strong accent” which reminds her of something like Arabic is enough for her to arrive at this classification. It seems that the category ‘Mizrahim’ is convenient because her inability to name the precise origin (Iraq or Morocco) no longer matters as both categories can be subsumed under a single term.

As Sacks (1989: 280–281) points out, “two-class sets” are especially effective and widespread for categorization processes. Therefore, her next step to refer to ‘Ashkenazim’ can be understood as mentioning the opposite category of ‘Mizrahim,’ in what is apparently a commonly used “two-class set” in the Israeli context. It can be deduced that she adopted both categories for her own categorization through a learning process because she recounts that she had to ask Israelis, in her army course, what kind of “accent” her commander had. Thus, she related her personal experience of someone’s speech behavior to other native speakers’ DK. Not all the categories she mentioned are based on her own experiences: she declared that she had not had encounters with *Haredim* and explains that her representations are based on the TV series *Shtisel* which depicts this social environment. Without knowing the stereotypical depiction of *Haredi* characters in *Shtisel* or the explanation of others about *Ashkenazim*, she would not be able to apply these categories the way she does.

From a20f2l2’s GERT template, it can be seen that she marked herself and me (the interviewer) – both L2 Hebrew speakers and therefore similar – with the entry “we,” directly on the neutral 0/0 position of the diagram. This indicates that she related to all the other categories which are spread across the template as marked in relation to herself – the unmarked point of reference. A20f2l2 characterized all the categories as being marked linguistically either by “accents” or by the use of “Yiddish” or vaguely as *yesh la-hem mashehu* ‘they have something.’ As has been argued with Kristiansen (2008: 61) in 2.1.4.4, representations of typical speech behavior, “linguistic stereotypes,” are associated with “social stereotypes.” Following Geeraerts’s definition, a20f2l2’s categories and consequently all the core categories can be described as stereotypes because they are learned and therefore part of the collective knowledge:

*[S]tereotypes are prototypes seen from a social angle. Prototypes are primarily psychological notions with an individual status. Stereotypes, on the other hand, are social entities; they indicate what the adult citizen is supposed to know about the referents of the categories he uses, given the principle of the division of linguistic labor. Stereotypes involve the social, prototypes the psychological organization of knowledge, but to the extent that they coincide, prototypes/stereotypes constitute a link between the psychological and the social organization of semantic knowledge. (Geeraerts 2008: 27)*

Generally, it is hard to describe linguistic phenomena with words, as can be seen from a20f2l2’s statement – probably, representations of the speech behavior which she associates with the mentioned categories are better profiled non-verbally. Some participants did not restrict themselves to mentioning categories, but tried to imitate corresponding speech patterns. For example, a30f3l2 (12:17) imitated a Spanish accent in MH, when she explained that she likes the way native Spanish speakers from

South America speak MH. Kristiansen describes this ability to recall and reproduce “lectal schemata:”

[A]s Hearer does not limit himself to an imitation of speech produced in the speech situation in situ, it strengthens the argument that humans possess receptive and active competence of speech styles which are stored in our long-term memory. We seem to be able to draw upon knowledge about relatively entrenched lectal schemata and their relationship to social categories [80] or social situations in order to bring about an effect on Hearer. (Kristiansen 2008: 79–80)

Participants who were really into GERT probably tried to simulate the categorization processes they go through subconsciously. There are several instances when participants seemingly switched to the speech pattern they were thinking of. For example, a20f2l2’s use of *wallah* in the above citation can be interpreted as an imitation of a *Mizrahi* speech pattern – the category she was describing as characterized by a “strong accent and it’s a bit Arabic or something.” *Wallah* is an Arabic expression for swearing on ‘*allah*’ which is used in colloquial MH and can be translated as ‘indeed’ in the context of a20f2l2’s statement. Similarly, s41m3l1 seems to have switched to a lower register during GERT when he thought of examples for “not correct Hebrew and low status.” As an example for a typical *Mizrahi* worker, he thought of an ex-colleague and when he resumed the task, he said *ma ‘od holekh po* ‘what else is going on here’ – which is a more casual wording, compared to his preceding utterances.

**(9) s41m3l1 (34:37)**

<p><i>Not correct Hebrew and low status, I would say what’s called the working class. [...] So, there was the warehouse keeper of Mizrahi-Persian origin. To my knowledge he stopped going to school in the 9th, 10th grade. A warehouse keeper, let’s call it workers. His language was not kind of something. What else is going on, here?</i></p>	<p>עברית לא תקנית מעמד נמוך, הייתה אומר מה שנקרא מעמד הפרועלים [...] היה שם את המחסנאי ממוצא מזרחי פרסי. לדעתי סיים ללכת לבית ספר בכיתה ט' כיתה י'. מחסנאי, נקראה לזה פועלים. השפה שלו לא היתה כזאת משהו. מה עוד הולך פה?</p>
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These imitations of speech patterns may be the outcome of cognitive processes such as mirror neuronal activity: when evoking the representation of a typical *Mizrahi* worker, s41m3l1 tried to recall a speech pattern through silent imitation and when he spoke again in the interview, he was still in his role, which is indicated by his different choice of words.

S41m3l1’s statement reveals more about the prototypical structure of his representation of his GERT entry *po’alim* ‘workers.’ Although s41m3l1’s primary association for a social group with “not correct Hebrew and low status” may be defined as peo-

ple who work physically, in contrast to white-collar workers, there are additional associations, such as a low level of education and *Mizrahi* origin which come up immediately: instead of defining the group of *po'alim* only in respect to the common characteristics of their jobs, s41m3l1 introduced additional distinctions. Rosch describes this way of categorization as the

tendency once a contrast exists to define attributes for contrasting categories so that the categories will be maximally distinctive. In either case, it is a fact that both representativeness within a category and distinctiveness from contrast categories are correlated with prototypicality in real categories. (Rosch 1978: 37)

Stereotypes also function on the premise of maximal distinctiveness from other categories, as Tajfel points out:

They introduce simplicity and order where there is complexity and nearly random variation. They can help to cope only if fuzzy differences between groups are transmuted into clear ones, or new differences created where none exist. (Tajfel 1969: 82)

Categorical differences can be created with the transfer of “speech facts” to groups through

iconization (in which linguistic facts are related to nonlinguistic characteristics of a group [...]) and may lead to recursivity (in which even small differences between groups, such as minor linguistic ones, may be projected outwards to define wider oppositions between groups), and erasure (in which similarities between groups or the nonsalient features of a stereotyped group's behavior are ignored) [...] (Preston 2010: 2)

With these processes, stereotypical attributes are conventionalized for social groups. In retrospect, it is hard hard to determine if a social group was at first defined on the basis of its typical speech patterns or on its non-linguistic characteristics. In fact, it has been illustrated with the participants' quotations that they defined their categories according to several prototypical attributes. It is sensible to understand these categories as complex constructions whose components do not have the same meaning if they are looked at in isolation:

Adopting a frame-oriented approach, we may say that a linguistic stereotype leads us efficiently, directly and rapidly to the corresponding social stereotype with all its value-laden components because a source-in-target producer-product or cause-effect metonymic schema is at work: the speech pattern associated with a particular group leads hearer to the wider frame of the social group itself, to the social stereotype associated with it (psychological attributes included) and all the encyclopaedic knowledge hearer has about the group in question. (Kristiansen 2008: 67)

It is safe to say that linguistic stereotypes play an important role for the categorization of social groups in general. As I tried to illustrate with participants' imitations of typical linguistic patterns, the mirroring of typical speech patterns can be thought of as motor activities which are known to occupy an important role in basic level categorization (see 2.1.4.4). It may even seem that certain social groups are defined primarily through their linguistic behavior which is perceived as otherness, as Wiese (2017: 331) argues. Speakers of a certain language variety are not represented just on the basis of typical linguistic characteristics, but with all kinds of stereotypical attributes. Social groups such as 'Russians' and 'Mizrahim' can be defined primarily on the basis of their linguistic behavior or their origin, for example. Then, further attributes such as cultural preferences, typical (non-linguistic) behavior, places of living, level of education, choices of employment and mean income can become defining attributes.

For example, by the erasure of linguistic and other differences between 'Iraqis' and 'Moroccans' the category 'Mizrahim' is fostered, while recursivity leads to the representational overemphasis of small differences in comparison to the reference group – the 'Ashkenazim.' Consequentially, 'Mizrahim' are represented with a linguistic stereotype which sets them apart from the 'linguistic standard,' as can be seen from a20f2l2's quotation above. Through these processes, it can become irrelevant to the structure of the categories 'Ashkenazim' and 'Mizrahim' if and to what degree HSs of Polish and Moroccan origin – even in subsequent generations – actually differ in their use of Hebrew.

From this discussion, it follows that RQ8 and RQ9 cannot be answered generally because they are misleading: by asking separately about the impact of deeply interrelated processes of social and linguistic categorization, it is implied that they can be studied in isolation – which is hardly practicable. A better question would be: Which linguistic variants are represented as indexical for categories of speakers and on what linguistic basis are the categories actually applied? While the second part of the question can only be determined with perception experiments, some linguistic variants that participants associated with the core categories will be reviewed in the following.

The next sections are about participants' notions of 'correct Hebrew,' 'standard Hebrew' and 'slang,' before the discussion will move on to participants' representations of group-specific variation in MH.

## 6.2 Notions of correct Hebrew, standard Hebrew and slang

Based on participants' statements from the first fieldwork stage, such as i53f2l1's (26:48) quotation (1), I supposed that HSs make a basic distinction between marked

linguistic variants in MH on a higher and lower level: ‘correct Hebrew’ and ‘slang.’ To explore participants’ notions of a ‘linguistic standard’ in MH, I asked about the terms *‘ivrit tiḵnit* and *‘ivrit ṣṭandarṭit* with Q1 during the guided interviews:

### Q1

What is *‘ivrit tiḵnit* and *‘ivrit ṣṭandarṭit* for you? What’s the difference?      מה זה בשבילך עברית סטנדרטית ומה זה עברית תקנית? מה ההבדל?

*‘Ivrit tiḵnit* can be translated as ‘normative correct Hebrew’ – *tiḵnit* is a derivation of the noun *teḵen* which means ‘standard’ or ‘norm.’ *‘Ivrit ṣṭandarṭit* contains the loanword *ṣṭandarṭit* which must have been taken originally from a European language. Both terms can be translated as ‘standard Hebrew.’ However, I noted during the open interviews that most participants used *‘ivrit tiḵnit* for ‘normative correct Hebrew,’ while they used *‘ivrit ṣṭandarṭit* for (their) everyday speech. With Q1 I tried to inquire about Hs’ representations of a normative standard and its relation to the everyday SH as well as their reported language use.

The participants’ answers confirmed my hypothesis that they commonly used *‘ivrit tiḵnit* to refer to ‘normative correct Hebrew,’ in contrast to *‘ivrit ṣṭandarṭit* – the unmarked standard. Therefore, the terms will be translated as ‘correct Hebrew’ and ‘standard Hebrew’ in the following. It will be shown that there are some deviations from this tendency in the participants’ answers. Foremost participants aged older than 50 claimed to make no distinction between correct and standard Hebrew, while most younger participants pointed out that correct Hebrew is rarely spoken, in contrast to standard Hebrew which tends to digress into ‘slang.’ It will be argued in 6.2.3 that these different attitudes between younger and older speakers can be explained with the different historical contexts at the time of the participants’ youth and the official language policy at that time. To get an impression how the younger participants used the different notions, some typical answers will be reviewed.

N31f3l1 rephrased Q1 by replacing *‘ivrit ṣṭandarṭit* with *‘ivrit regila* ‘regular Hebrew:’

**(10) n31f3l1 (1:10)**

*Regular Hebrew is Hebrew that one speaks with friends on the street. Often, one doesn't pay attention to small things like two.M, two.F tables or things like that – slang. Words in English that come in, like. And correct Hebrew is Hebrew that I write in academic texts that I try, let's say, when one gives a lecture, then one speaks correct Hebrew and then one pays attention to correctness and not to use necessarily foreign words, more Hebrew words.*

**PS** *And what is standard Hebrew?*

**n31f3l1** *That's the slang, like the street, that was the first thing – yes, the regular*

עברית רגילה זה עברית שמדברים עם חברים ברחוב. הרבה פעמים לא שמים לב לדברים קטנים כמו שני, שתי שולחנות או דברים כאלה, סלנג. מילים באנגלית שנכנסות, כאילו. ועברית תקנית זה עברית שאני כותבת איתה את העבודות באקדמיה, שאני מנסה שנגיד נותנים הרצאה אז מדברים בעברית תקנית ואז שמים לב יותר לדיוק ולא להשתמש בהכרח במילים לועזיות, יותר במילים עבריות.

ומה זה עברית סטנדרטית?

זה הסלנג, כאילו הרחוב. זה היה הדבר הראשון, כן הרגילה.

N31f3l1 gave an example for 'slang' with the normative incorrect phrase *shtei shulhanot* 'two.F tables.M' which lacks gender agreement between noun and modifier. S41m3l1 answered in a similar fashion by describing standard Hebrew as containing *slang*, which he described in terms of Arabic loans (*wallah* and *yallah*) and expressions such as *havlaz* which he associates with the context of the army. These and further linguistic characterizations of the different categories of Hebrew will be reviewed in the next section (6.2.1).

**(11) s41m3l1 (0:26)**

*Standard Hebrew has slang in Arabic like wallah and yallah and there is a bit of what you said about the army – havlaz and all that. Correct Hebrew, and I am saying this also as a literature teacher, correct Hebrew is in my eyes first of all correct Hebrew, which is a very rare thing – even I don't and I am a trained literature teacher. The correct Hebrew is a little its something that disappeared almost. I think that this is connected to the restricted language of the internet – I can speak about what it is not, I need to say what it is. Correct Hebrew is Hebrew of beautiful literature.*

עברית סטנדרטית יש לה סלנג בערבית כמו ואללה ויאללה ויש בה קצת מה שאמרת על הצבא, חבל'ז וכל זה. עברית תקינה ואני אגיד את זה גם כמורה לספרות, עברית תקינה היא בעיניי קודם כל עברית תקינה שזה דבר מאוד נדיר, אפילו אני לא ואני מורה לספרות בהכשרה. העברית התקינה היא קצת, זה משהו שקצת נעלם, אני חושב שזה קשור לשפה המצומצמת של האינטרנט. אני יכול לדבר על מה זה לא, צריך להגיד מה זה כן, עברית תקינה זה עברית של ספרות יפה.

Even though both n31f3l1 and s41m3l1 completed a university degree, they did not claim to speak correct Hebrew – except on rare occasions. C36f3l1 rephrased Q1 into “Like, what’s the difference between spoken Hebrew and literary Hebrew?”<sup>11</sup> Similarly, n31f3l1 and s41m3l1 argued that correct Hebrew is primarily used in written form – in academic works and in literature. Somewhat in contradiction to their statements, all three participants stated that it is very important for them to speak correct Hebrew, just as the majority of the 21 participants who completed the guided interviews (see 6.2.3).

In contrast, a68m3l1 claimed that there is no difference between the two terms in Hebrew and he also pointed out that he tries to speak correct Hebrew, which is very important to him.

**(12) a68m3l1 (0:20)**

*There is no difference. In Hebrew its the same –* אין הבדל. בעברית זה אותו דבר,  
*standard is taken* סטנדרט זה תקן.

However, when he filled out the GERT template, he conceded that only very few people speak *ivrit mamash tiḵnit* ‘truly correct Hebrew’ – he quantified them with about 10% of the HSs, while 80% speak standard Hebrew and another 10%, the *asirim* ‘criminals’, speak *safa mezoemet* ‘filthy language.’ Furthermore, he pointed out that, although it may seem counter intuitive, there is no linear correlation between the GERT variables: he rated his entry “elite” highest in terms of status, but neutral on the correct Hebrew axis. Just as a68m3l1’s entry “elite,” the core category ‘Jewish elite’ was rated less favorably for correct Hebrew than for status and is an outlier from the linear regression model applied on the mean ratings (see Fig. 5.5). With his entry “intellectuals” he defined the speakers of the most correct Hebrew as cultural elite who do not necessarily possess high status, in contrast to his entry “elite” which is to be understood in terms of political and economic power. He described the linguistic distance between the “intellectuals” and the majority, including the “elite,” as huge.

11 The Hebrew original: מה ההבדל בין עברית מדוברת לעברית ספרותית כאילו ?

**(13) a68m311 (12:20)**

*And there is a group of intellectuals – maybe I put them here – who are maybe just a very small group that speaks very correct Hebrew. A very small group in quantity and it doesn't belong to status – actually – it belongs more to the cultural level: writers, artists, poets would speak a higher language and the distance is enormous.*

ויש קבוצה של אינטלקטואלים אולי, אני שם אותם פה, שהם אולי רק קבוצה קטנה מאוד שמדברת עברית ממש תקינה. קבוצה קטנה מאוד בכמות שלה ולא שייך למעמד דווקא. זה שייך יותר לרמה התרבותית. סופרים, אומנים, משוררים ידברו שפה יותר גבוהה והמרחק הוא עצום.

R36f311's statement can also be understood as an explanation for the categories that lie outside of the blue shaded confidence interval in Fig. 5.5. She argues that for social groups with a high social status, such as physicians, or for the educated, such as teachers, speaking correct Hebrew is not necessarily characteristic.

**(14) r36f311 (16:30)**

*I also can't say, let's say, that physicians are a social group that speaks high Hebrew. Its, like, high status, but the requirement to speak correct Hebrew is not so, its not so significant that someone who is a physician or a [university] lecturer speaks correct Hebrew. Even lecturers have sometimes like, incorrect Hebrew [...] Even teachers don't always speak correct Hebrew – that's the matter.*

גם אני לא יכולה לומר נגיד שהרופאים זה אוכלוסיה שמדברת עברית גבוהה. כאילו זה מעמד גבוה, אבל כאילו הדרישה לדבר עברית נכונה היא לא כל כך, היא לא כל כך משמעותית כדי שמישהו הוא רופא או מרצה ידבר עברית נכונה. אפילו מרצים לפעמים יש להם, כאילו עברית לא נכונה [...] אפילו מורים לא תמיד מדברים עברית תקינה זה העניין.

Just as a68m311, a70f311, a retired high school teacher for *lashon* ('Hebrew) language,' equally claimed to make no personal distinction between standard and correct Hebrew and emphasized her continuous effort to speak correctly: to express this conscious effort of speaking correctly, she used the verb *makpida* 'to be strict, to insist.' participants often used this verb specifically for the context of 'speaking correctly (according to the normative rules).' At the same time, she conceded that there are major differences between correct Hebrew and the language that her pupils are using. She described that they have difficulties to express themselves in correct Hebrew and even to understand a "higher" Hebrew.

**(15) a70f311 (11:12)**

*Correct Hebrew is the Hebrew which has the rules that we stick to the rules. It has a broad vocabulary, many synonyms. Yes, I think that I speak, my standard Hebrew is correct Hebrew. I am very strict and in school, in conversations with people I stick to the rules a lot, yes.*

**PS**

*So for you it's the same?*

**a70f311**

*Slang is far from me. I don't like to hear slang and I also take a stance in class when he speaks slang I say, 'no, no – try to think how to say that in Hebrew,' in correct Hebrew – that's hard for them. But, sometimes when I speak in class, I intentionally speak a bit higher. Then, they say 'what that's Hebrew what you are speaking or is it another language?' So, yes, but I really try to introduce them to the language, to the beauty of the language.*

עברית תקנית זו העברית שיש בה את הכללים שאנחנו שומרים את הכללים שיש בה אוצר מילים רחב, הרבה מילים נרדפות. כן אני חושבת שאני מדברת, העברית הסטנדרטית שלי זה העברית התקנית. אני מאוד מקפידה ומאוד בבית הספר, בשיחה עם אנשים אני מאוד שומרת על הכללים כן

אז בשבילך זה אותו דבר?

סלנג זה רחוק ממני, אני לא אוהבת לשמוע סלנג ואני גם מאוד עומדת זה על כך בכיתה. כשהוא מדבר סלנג אני אומרת, לא לא תנסה לחשוב איך אומרים את זה בעברית, בעברית נכונה. זה קשה להם אבל לפעמים כשאני מדברת אני בכוונה בכיתה מדברת קצת יותר גבוה. אז אומרים לי, מה זה בעברית שאת מדברת או זה שפה אחרת? אז כן אבל אני מאוד מנסה להחדיר להם את השפה, את היופי של השפה.

In summary, all participants conceded that there are distinctions between standard and correct Hebrew. It can be helpful to think of these distinctions in the form of a continuum with prototypical categories such as 'ivrit tiknit' and 'slang' on its poles and the unmarked 'standard Hebrew' in between, as Fig. 6.1 illustrates. This conception draws on Krefeld's (2011: 104) notion of a 'linguistic standard' as neutral background (see 2.1.4.1).

Projecting these findings onto GERT, the zero point on the correct Hebrew axis can be interpreted to stand for the concept 'standard Hebrew.' In consequence, the core categories which are closer to this point can be interpreted to be closer to the linguistic standard. Besides the terms which were discussed so far, the participants expressed their representations of differences on the continuum with several other terms, which are included in Fig. 6.1: all of these terms can be interpreted as marked categories, in contrast to 'standard Hebrew.'

The participants' choice of words for these categories reveals the evaluative component which is inherent to the representations. The metaphorical framing of differences in Hebrew with the spatial concepts 'high' and 'low' points to potentially positive associations with terms that are represented as located above the standard

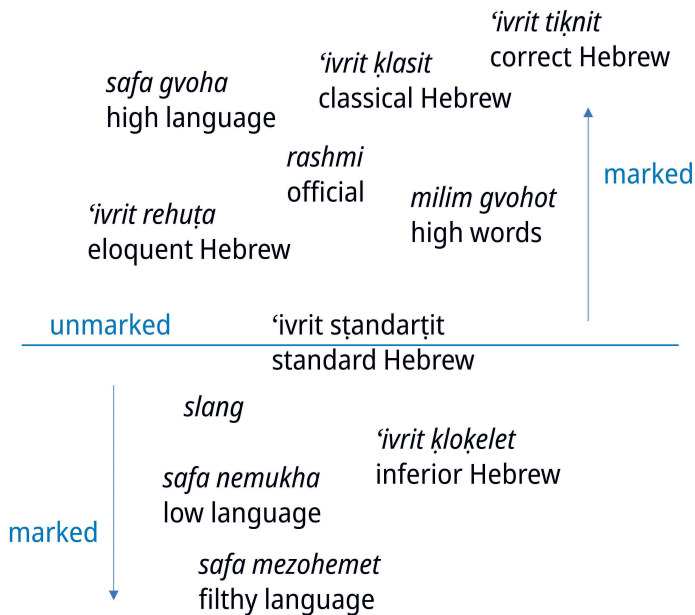


Fig. 6.1: Representation of variation from the standard as continuum

and negative associations with the terms below. Lakoff & Johnson (1980: 16) list several examples for orientational metaphors, such as GOOD IS UP; BAD IS DOWN, HIGH STATUS IS UP; LOW STATUS IS DOWN and VIRTUE IS UP; DEPRAVITY IS DOWN and point out that there is “an overall external systematicity among the various spatialization metaphors, which defines coherence among them.” Most core categories were rated with similar values for status and correct Hebrew which can be read as a confirmation of the common, cross-linguistic metaphorical representation of CORRECT LANGUAGE IS HIGH which is commonly associated with ‘high status’ and a ‘high level of education.’ However, there are at least five core categories which clearly deviate from the correlation between ‘high status’ and ‘correct Hebrew.’ Furthermore, some of the common associations such as ‘high status’ with ‘high level of education’ can be doubted on the basis of the GERT data and the participants’ statements, for the Israeli context. These exceptions are going to be discussed in the light of common language attitudes in 6.2.3.

In the next section, participants’ linguistic characterization of ‘correct Hebrew’ which is based on explicit norms will be summarized as well as the implicit norms which were mentioned as characteristic for ‘standard Hebrew’ and ‘slang.’

### 6.2.1 Indexical variants

In the above discussion of participants' statements (15, 10 and 11) a70f3l1 characterized 'correct Hebrew' as defined by *klalim* 'rules', while n31f3l1 and s41m3l1 described 'standard Hebrew' as containing "foreign" and "slang" words which are originally English or Arabic or stem from army contexts. H26m2l1 also refers to certain explicit norms which are characteristic for 'standard Hebrew' and – at the same time – mark a deviation from 'correct Hebrew.' Just as n31f3l1 (10) and most other participants, he classified mismatches in gender agreement as common *ta'uyot* 'mistakes:'

#### (16) h26m2l1 (3:39)

*I'm not just speaking about male and female or singular and plural – but generally. And standard Hebrew – good question – standard Hebrew is Hebrew that everybody speaks, like, fluently with the mistakes and all that [...] Just like that, the word beautiful is a a standard word. Adequate is a correct word, did you get it? That's like words which are higher. If you go to people who made three or four degrees and they speak Hebrew it's... You'll see that their language is higher. They won't speak with you like me. What's up bro, do you get it? But that's not really a definition – that's what I think.*

אני לא מדבר רק על זכר נקבה או יחיד ורבים אלא בכללי ועברית סטנדרטית, שאלה טובה עברית סטנדרטית זה עברית שכולם מדברים כאילו בשותף עם הטעויות ועם כל ה [...] סתם המילה "יפה" זה מילה סטנדרטית. הולם זה מילה תקינה, הבנת. זה כאילו מילים שהם יותר גבוהות. אם תלך לאנשים שהם עשו שלושה ארבע תארים והם מדברים עברית, זה אתה תראה שהשפה שלהם יותר גבוהה. לא ידברו איתך כמוני כאילו, מה קורה אחי, אתה מבין. זה אבן. זה לא באמת הגדרה זה מה שאני חושב.

H26m2l1 also pointed out that there are lexical differences by citing the lexemes *yafe* 'beautiful' as example for 'standard' and *holem* 'adequate' for 'correct Hebrew.' Furthermore, he argued that people who completed several university degrees speak a "higher" language and thus posited a causal relation between "high Hebrew" and a high level of education. In a similar manner, a20f2l2 who is a Hebrew learner mentioned lexical differences as main distinctive characteristics:

#### (17) a20f2l2 (12:30)

*I know that for every Hebrew word there is another word which is in high language and I usually do not know these words [...] and many words in higher Hebrew are based on English words like logistika and linguistika.*

אני יודעת שלכל מילה בעברית יש עוד מילה שזה בשפה הגבוהה ואני בכללי לא מכירה את המילים האלה [...] והרבה מילים בעברית יותר גבוהה הם מבוסס על מילים באנגלית, כאילו לוגיסטיקה ולינגוויסטיקה.

She expressed her conviction that many words “in higher Hebrew” are English loans. However, the examples she cited for these words (*logistika*, *linguistika*) are not typically English because they were borrowed into English from other European languages – her representation of these words as English is probably caused because her L1 is English. As mentioned earlier, most participants described “foreign words” as characteristic for ‘standard Hebrew’ and ‘slang.’ Rosenthal (2007a: 183) even criticizes the extensive use of English loans in academic environments because he sees it as a threat against the cultivation of a sound academic style in MH. N31f3l1 (10) similarly described how she tries to use Hebrew words – and less foreign words – when speaking in a higher register, for example, during a lecture. According to the participants’ statements, common representations of ‘correct Hebrew’ in the lexical domain are shaped by the preference for genuinely Hebrew lexemes, rather than loanwords. Additionally, certain lexemes which are typically used in writing are represented as correct Hebrew synonyms for everyday Hebrew lexemes.

Because the representation of deviations from the explicit linguistic norms as *ta’uyot* ‘mistakes’ is central to participants’ distinctions between ‘standard’ and ‘correct Hebrew,’ I inquired about these “mistakes” with Q8 in the guided interviews:

#### Q8

*Are there mistakes in Hebrew which annoy you? האם יש טעויות בעברית שמפריעות לך?*

The most frequently mentioned “mistakes” during all the interviews and in the answers to Q8 are phenomena of gender mismatch between nouns and modifiers and most typically between nouns and numerals, such as n31f3l1’s example *shtei shulhanot* ‘two.F tables.M’ in (10) illustrates. In MH, just as in Modern Standard Arabic, there are at least two forms for each numeral – a masculine and a feminine form. Besides this distinction, there are additional explicit norms for nominal constructions with numerals. For example, the masculine noun *shulhan* ‘table.M’ is suffixed with the prototypical female ending *-ot* for pluralization, while the morphological gender of the construction is masculine and requires the masculine numeral *shnei* ‘two.M.’

Several participants mentioned the *shuk* ‘market’ as a typical place where these “mistakes” are very common – y28f3l1 (26:31) even used the term *ivrit shel ha-shuk* ‘market Hebrew.’<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Manelis-Avni’s (1995) ethnographic study *The Carmel Market and “dugri” style* contains a short linguistic characterisation of *sfat ha-shuk* ‘market language.’

**(18) y28f3l1 (26:37)**

*Let's say, at the market it's interesting. There's a thing in Jerusalem which makes me crazy [...] when counting things. Let's say, they don't say ten thousand ('asarat 'alafim), they say 'eser 'elef, eight thousand (shmone 'elef), six meter (shesh meṭer) instead of six meters (shisha meṭrim). Did you hear that? It's terrifying to me, it's like something that's so out of order and let's say that's very – it's indicative of a very low register. [...] it's really like an awful mistake.*

נגיד בשוק מעניין, יש קטע בירושלים שאני מתה מזה [...] של ספירה של דברים. נגיד הם לא אומרים עשרת אלפים, אומרים עשר אלף, שמונה אלף, שש מטר במקום שישה מטרים. שמעת את זה פעם? זה מחריד בעיניי, זה כאילו משהו שזה כל כך מקולקל וזה נגיד זה מאוד, זה מראה משלב שפה מאוד נמוך. [...] זה ממש טעות כאילו נוראי.

According to these statements, phenomena of gender mismatch – especially in constructions with numerals – can be understood as prototypical ‘incorrect’ variants. Since measuring and counting are the prototypical activities which are verbalized at the market, it is not surprising that the market is described as the prototypical place for incorrect language use. It will be shown that phenomena of gender mismatch were described by most participants as extremely widespread and that they even admitted producing constructions with mismatching gender agreement themselves.

Another domain of common “mistakes” that participants mentioned is verbal morphology. L6+f4l1 (4:11) asserted that people say *mekirim* ‘they know’ instead of *makirim* and *mavinim* ‘they understand’ instead of *mevinim*. One of the reasons for variation in the patterns of these frequently used verbs is the Hebrew orthography which does not represent the varying vocals: both forms read <mkirim> (מכירים) or <mvinim> (מבינים). Another reason are processes of paradigmatic leveling through analogy (Zadok & Bat-El 2015). N31f3l1 listed further examples for variation from the normative correct verbal patterns in response to Q8:

**(19) n31f3l1 (9:22)**

*To say I sleep (yoshenet) or I yoshen that's most annoying [...] But, also I go (yelekh), like instead of I elekh, that's annoying [...] My father says yoshenet, everybody says it.*

להגיד אני יושנת או אני יושן, זה הכי מעצבן [...] אבל גם אני ילך כאילו במקום אני אלך, זה מעצבן [...] אבא שלי אומר יושנת כולם אומרים את זה.

The analysis of all of n31f3l1's ten realizations of the verb *lehakir* ‘to know’ during the interview revealed that she realized the female singular form *makira* three times as *mekira* and twice she produced an elliptic form such as *mkira* where the initial vocal is hardly recognizable. In contrast, she realized the masculine singular form *makir* five times in agreement with the explicit norm.

In respect to these phenomena, Schwarzwald (2007: 72) asserts that “the educated speaker senses that the form *niḳeiti* [instead of *niḳiti* ‘I cleaned’] is a sub-standard form, which is actually characteristic of socioeconomic weak strata.” While the participants’ statements confirm that HSs express some sensitivity toward these phenomena, I would not claim that they are actually used primarily by the socioeconomically weak. Participants judged these forms as “incorrect,” but – at the same time – conceded that their use is widespread. Usually, they did not characterize the “incorrect” forms as indexical for any particular social group.

The third domain that participants referred to are phonological differences in the realization of certain consonants. A30f3l2’s following statement contains an almost linguistic definition of ‘standard Hebrew’ which supports the analysis in 6.2. In contrast to most other participants, she referred to the phonological merger of the graphemes <ח> and <כ> as /χ/ as characteristic for spoken Hebrew, while <ח> should be pronounced as /h/, according to the explicit norms:

**(20) a30f3l2 (0:40)**

*Standard is spoken it’s, standard is what society determines like at the same moment, at the same moment, maybe at the same period. And correct Hebrew is Hebrew that’s defined. Like, let’s say, there are certain letters like het and khaf. When I speak it’s the same – but, according to correct[ness], like, the khaf is supposed to be khaf and het is supposed to be het. It’s like these are two different letters, but in spoken [Hebrew] they are said identically.*

סטנדרטית זה מדוברת. זה סטנדרט, זה מה החברה קובעת כאילו באותו רגע, אותו רגע, אולי אותה תקופה ועברית תקינה זה עברית שהיא מוגדרת כאילו. נגיד יש אותיות מסוימות כמו ח' ו-כ' כשאני אומרת את זה זה אותו דבר. אבל לפי תקינה כאילו ה-כ' אמור להיות כ' ו-ח' אמור להיות ח'. כאילו זה שתי אותיות שונות אבל במדוברת אומרים את זה אותו דבר.

In the phonetic domain, HSs’ language use deviates considerably from the explicit norms which were modeled to imitate Biblical Hebrew:

In Israel, however, there have been no oppressive structures to enforce the pharyngeals and their position as standard is mostly lip service: children do not get corrected at school nor do people get negatively evaluated at job interviews or other settings for not using them – if anything, it is pharyngealizing that might be the target of such judgments. Nevertheless, the pharyngeals are consensually the older form that is truly connected to Biblical Hebrew, which in the prevailing ideologies is the real Hebrew. (Gaftar 2014: 176–177)

R36f3l1 recounted her conscious appropriation of normative incorrect forms as a reaction to the negative evaluation of her speech when she was a child. As an example, she elaborated that she used to say *be-khos* ‘in a glass’ with the normative correct

phonetic adaptation of <כ> to its environment, while it is common to realize *kos* ‘glass’ with /k/ – irrespective of its environment – as in *be-kos*. Furthermore, r36f3l1 described standard Hebrew as containing many *milim l’o nekhonot* ‘incorrect words.’ She also described it as dynamic, due to ongoing processes of conventionalization. At first, linguistic forms are considered as “mistakes,” before they get accepted. She described ‘correct Hebrew’ as being defined by the norms which the Hebrew Academy approves. Interestingly, she conceded that these explicit norms also tend to change:

**(21) r36f3l1 (0:34)**

*Let’s say in my family, it was very important to correct our Hebrew and let’s say, I read many books and my grandma spoke Hebrew really really well and high. Let’s say, I used to say that I want to drink chocolate in a glass (be-khos) and I was sure that everyone speaks like that [...] So, I spoke in a high language and I was sure that’s normal and slowly I understood that it’s not advisable to speak like that because people laughed at me. So, I started to listen to how other people speak and I started to speak like them. So, it seems that in the standard language there are all kinds of like incorrect words [...] like most people speak in the beginning it is considered a mistake and in the end it changes to in the end it gets accepted, yes.*

**PS** *And what is correct?*

**r36f3l1** *That’s what’s defined as correct Hebrew. It’s what seems to me, what the academy approves, but it changes all the time, too.*

נגיד במשפחה שלי היה מאוד חשוב לתקן את העברית שלנו ונגיד קראתי הרבה ספרים וסבתא שלי היתה מדברת עברית ממש ממש טובה וגבוהה. נגיד אני הייתי אומרת שאני רוצה לשות שוקו בכוס והייתי בטוחה שככה כולם מדברים [...] אז כאילו דיברתי בשפה גבוהה והייתי בטוחה שזה נורמלי ואז לאט לאט הבנתי שלא כדאי לדבר ככה כי יצחקו עלי. אז כאילו התחלתי להקשיב איך אנשים אחרים מדברים ולהתחיל לדבר כמוהם. אז נראה לי שהשפה הסטנדרטית יש בו כל מיני כאילו, כל מיני מילים לא נכונות [...] כן, איך שרוב האנשים מדברים ובהתחלה זה נחשב לטעות ובסוף זה הופך להיות, זה בסוף ל— מתקבל כן ומה זה תקנית? זה מה שמוגדר כעברית נכונה. זה מה שנראה לי מה שהאקדמיה מאשרת אבל זה גם משתנה כל הזמן.

The summary of the participants’ statements revealed that they referred to a few typical indexical lexemes, in addition to common types of “mistakes” for their distinction between ‘standard’ and ‘correct Hebrew.’ Interestingly, participants’ linguistic descriptions refer solely to grammatical domains which were codified by the Hebrew Academy: basic rules of pronunciation that extend to the domains of verbal and nominal morphology and terminology. Most likely, this convergence between HSS’ representations of ‘correctness’ and the core areas of the normative activities of the

Hebrew Academy is not arbitrary. Therefore, some of the activities of the Hebrew Academy will be reviewed in the next section.

### 6.2.2 Explicit norms for MH and the Hebrew Academy

According to the participants' statements, representations of 'correct Hebrew' are defined by explicit norms, in contrast to 'standard Hebrew' which corresponds to conventionalized everyday language use. Gafter & Mor use a similar two-class to categorize MH into two standard varieties. Whereas, the "*conventional norm* emerged from native linguistic practices," the "*prescriptive norm* is an institutional standard [...] based on faithfulness to forms attested in classical strata" (Gafter & Mor 2023: 304). Bokelmann describes the process of codification – the selection of 'correct variants' through authorized experts – as equivalent with the speech communities' loss of control over these normative decisions:

Per definition, a linguistic standard is created only when variants are defined as part of the canon and thus becomes a tool of political power that lies in the hands of state-authorized institutions or expert groups. As a result, the language community itself is deprived of normative access to the standard language, although their observed use of language is the basis for codification.<sup>13</sup> (Bokelmann 2020: 82, my translation)

The cultural significance of the codification of MH in Israel and the considerable public interest in grammar related topics was illustrated in 3.2.1. Arguably, the Hebrew Academy is the most influential institution for the codification of MH and the dissemination of explicit norms.<sup>14</sup> However, their authority is challenged by HSs who successfully adhere to their conventionalized language use and confidently display control over what they consider as 'standard' and 'correct Hebrew.'

During an expert interview for this study, Ronit Gadish, head of the scientific branch of the Hebrew Academy, defined its role as follows: on the one hand, the Academy needs to act as a conservative force on the language and, on the other hand, they also need to innovate – mostly in the domain of the lexicon, due to trends of globalization and technological progress. She also talked about general public discourse about the ownership of the Hebrew language and asked rhetorically:

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<sup>13</sup> German original: Standardsprachlichkeit entsteht qua definitione erst dadurch, dass Varianten als Teil des Kanons festgelegt werden, und wird so zu einem Werkzeug politischer Macht, das in den Händen staatlich autorisierter Institutionen oder Expertengruppen liegt. Dadurch wird der Sprachgemeinschaft selbst der normative Zugriff auf die Standardsprachlichkeit entzogen, obwohl der dort zu beobachtende Sprachgebrauch der Ausgangspunkt der Kodifizierung ist.

<sup>14</sup> Officially: *ha-'akademiya la-lashon ha-'ivrit* 'The Academy of the Hebrew Language'

**(22) Expert interview Gadish (13:37)**

Who is the master in the house of the language – מי בעל הבית של השפה, האקדמיה או האנשים שמדברים את השפה?  
 the Academy or the people who speak the language?

The normative power of the Academy is limited to some extent because HSs carry out their own terminological work and can decide if they adhere to the norms of the Academy or their own. Therefore, the Academy decided that it also wants to support and advise about linguistic innovations which did not originate within the Academy. In this respect, Gadish explained that the members of the Academy took a strategic decision to build contact with a wider public – especially with the age cohort from 20 to 40. Besides their official publications and their extensive homepage, the Hebrew Academy has a very active Facebook page where they publish advice about linguistic norms on a daily basis.<sup>15</sup>

The normative activities of the Hebrew Academy have been targeting primarily phonology and the lexicon, while they have not issued a complete grammar of MH up to date (Izre'el 2020: 38). Gadish confirmed that, in fact, these are the only domains that were codified by the academy to some extent and that they do not want to interfere consciously in the domains of syntax and style – unless they are asked for advice. Accordingly, one of the domains which was more or less codified by the Hebrew Academy is verbal morphology.<sup>16</sup>

Fig. 6.2 is an illustration which was published on the Facebook page of the Academy on October 20th, 2021, to address the domain of verbal morphology. The illustration depicts a chat conversation on a smartphone: one person asks, 'ara 'are you.F awake?' The second person answers, *yoshenet*, the normative incorrect form for 'I.F am sleeping' which was discussed above in the context of n31f3l1's statement (19). The following text reads: 'Tinder guy left the conversation.' *Guy* is a common Hebrew name which can be interpreted as a word play with the English *guy*. The picture tells a story: a "guy" who the owner of the smart phone met on the dating application *tinder* has left the conversation because of her use of the normative incorrect form *yoshenet* which is regarded as low status variant (Gaftor & Mor 2023: 308). The text from the Facebook post which accompanies the picture reads:

<sup>15</sup> See: <https://hebrew-academy.org.il>

<sup>16</sup> In the original interview (6:40): אנחנו השתדלנו לעבור על הפועל פחות או יותר



Fig. 6.2: Graphic from the original Facebook post reproduced with permission of the Hebrew Academy

Yashen and not 'yoshen' yeshena and not 'yoshenet' *Do you know friends who find all kinds of reasons to cancel matches on dating sites? We are here, to guarantee that it will not happen because of mistakes in Hebrew: [...] Tag the friends who 'yoshenim' and signal them gently that it's time to wake up...*

ישן ולא "יושן" ישנה ולא "יושנת"  
מכירים חברות וחברים שמוצאים סיבות  
שונות ומשונות לפסול התאמות באתרי  
היכריות? אנחנו כאן, כדי להבטיח שזה  
לא יהיה בגלל טעויות בעברית: [...] תייגו  
את החברים שתמיד "יושנים" ותרמזו  
להם בעדינות שהגיע הזמן להתעורר...

The joking tone of the post which is typical for the activities of the Hebrew Academy on Facebook seems to have caught the attention of many users: on November 1st, less than 10 days after the release of the post, there were more than 1500 reactions, 410 comments and 167 shares. At that time, the Facebook page of the Hebrew Academy had almost 331,000 subscribers. The only comparable Facebook page – of which I am aware of – from the Italian language academy, *Accademia della Crusca*, had about 448,000 subscribers at the same time – although there are considerably more Italian speakers than HSs. These numbers indicate that the activities of the Hebrew Academy on Facebook to get in contact with a wider public have been rather successful.

To get an idea of its impact, I asked 20 participants during the guided interviews what they think about the Hebrew Academy. Just six participants did not know the Academy – all of them were L2 HSs. None of the five Arabic L1 speakers that I asked knew the Hebrew Academy. Among the 14 participants who knew the Hebrew Academy, eight participants claimed to be indifferent to or annoyed by its activities. The other six participants asserted that they liked the work of the Academy or/and that it is an important institution.

With the exception of m69f4l2, all the participants who were indifferent/annoyed were aged between 26 and 41 (h26m2l1, a30f3l2, d30m3l1, c36f3l1, t37m3l2,

i38m3l1, s41m3l1). Among all eight participants were three L2 HSs. A30f3l2's and i38m3l1's answers to my question about the Academy are illustrative for this group: while both participants claimed to care about speaking correctly and to consult the Hebrew Academy for this matter, they were unsatisfied with some pieces of advice. Both criticized that the explicit norms of the Hebrew Academy tend to contradict conventionalized language use.

**(23) a30f3l2 (15:10)**

*Those on Facebook who write, we decided this and that. Yallah, it's annoying. No, there are things that, they mention words which are, that's important to say like that – but, sometimes, let's say, lately I came across an example. An example with hei and with 'alef – so they said that the example with 'alef is not correct and it was correct for years. And to change something after years that I write and it looks well and it's correct and suddenly it is no longer correct – that's annoying. It's like, go with the majority.*

אלה בפייסבוק שרושמים החלטנו זהה ככה וככה. יאללה מעצבן. לא יש דברים שהם מזכירים את המילים שהם, שחשוב שיגידו ככה. אבל לפעמים נגיד לאחרונה נתקלתי בדוגמה, דוגמה עם ה' ודוגמה עם א'. אז הם אמרו שדוגמה עם אלף זה לא נכון וזה שנים היה נכון ושנים לשנות משהו שאני כותבת וזה נראה טוב וזה נכון ופתאום זה לא נכון זה מעצבן אותי. כאילו תלכו לפי הרוב.

In conclusion, a30f3l2 stressed her conviction that the explicit norms should be representative of the conventions that the majority of HSs are already using. I38m3l1 also expressed his conviction that language use is potentially fluid and that some degree of variation is legitimate, while he criticized the Hebrew Academy as being anachronistic. Just as a30f3l2, he used an example about orthographic conventions, whether one should write certain words, such as *metsuyan* 'excellent' with one letter *yod* or with double *yod*.

**(24) i38m3l1 (10:37)**

*I keep updated about the explanations that they put forward and often they still try to set strict rules on things which are terribly fluid and that. Things that got already accepted in the language and they are still 20 years in the past and try to tell us, no, that's not right. About... I just read something they published about when you need to add one yod to a word and when two – metsuyan or that. Yes, it happened and just like, OK, so I am going to write like they wrote because it's important to me. But, on the other hand, I say they are completely out of date. It's nonsense if it is already fixed that you write it with two yod. Then, or with one, so say, two forms are acceptable and that's it.*

אני מתעדכן כן בהנחיות שהם מוצאים והרבה פעמים מנסים לקבוע עדיין כללים קשיחים לדברים שהם נורא פלוידי ונורא זה, דברים שכבר התקבלו בשפה והם עדיין עשרים שנה אחורה ומנסים להגיד לנו, לא זה לא נכון. של סתם, קראתי עכשיו משהו שהם פירסמו על מתי צריך להוסיף ' אחת במילה ומתי שתיים. מצוין או זה. כן וזה קרה ופשוט כאילו בסדר. אז אני אכתוב כמו שהם כתבו כי חשוב לי זה. אבל מצד שני אני אומר מיושנים לחלוטין. זה שטויות אם כבר התקבע שכותבים את זה עם שתי יודים. או או באחת אז תגידו שתי צורות מקובלות וזהו.

This utterance can also be understood in terms of a30f3l2's statement in that the explicit norms should be representative of the conventionalized language use.

Among the six participants who judged the work of the Hebrew Academy favorably are four participants who were aged over 50 (f5+f1l1, l6+f4l1, a68m3l1 and a70f3l1) and two younger women (n31f3l1 and r36f3l1). Several of them conceded that many of the explicit norms are not taken up by most HSs, just as a70f3l1's and f5+f1l1's statements reveal.

**(25) f5+f1l1 (5:42)**

*They are doing a great job. Although, sometimes, they make up words that are hard to get used to. But, that's their job.*

הם עושים עבודה מצוינת למרות שלפעמים הם ממציאים מילים שקשה להתרגל אליהם. אבל זה העבודה שלהם.

A70f3l1 answered that she is very fond of the Hebrew Academy, before she described her impression of the public opinion about the topic:

**(26) a70f311 (51:04)**

*They don't know what's the Academy, even if they say that they know. If you ask teachers, not of language, teachers in general, they will say that the Academy is very remote from the people. Like it's not close, everything they produce, they compose words there, invent words – it's remote from the people, they don't. Also people don't like, they don't like it, they stick with what they know. But, for example, language teachers they always want to update. That's to say, the motivation to know comes from them. For example, I really like to visit their homepage and to see the new words – but, no, that's just because it's my discipline that I like. But, the public, the Israeli public, no...*

הם לא מכירים מה זה אקדמיה. גם אם הם יגידו לך מי שמכיר אם, תשאל מורות מורים, לא ללשון, מורים כלליים אז הם יגידו שהאקדמיה מאוד רחוקה מהעם. כאלו זה לא קרוב כל מה שהם יוצרים מחברים מילים שם ממצויאים מילים. זה רחוק מהאנשים, אנשים לא גם זה אנשים לא אוהבים לא, אוהבים את הזהו נשאים במה שהם יודעים. אבל למשל מורים ללשון הם כל הזמן רוצים להתחדש וכן. זאת אומרת המוטיבציה באה מהם לדעת. אני למשל מאוד אוהבת להיכנס לאתר שלהם ולראות את המילים החדשות, אבל לא אז משום שזה התחום שלי שאני אוהבת, אבל הציבור הציבור הישראלי לא.

A70f311 lamented HSs' lacking interest in their language (see quotation 15). Several other – especially older – participants who claimed to care a lot about correct language use expressed a similar, critical attitude. This aspect will be elaborated in contrast to other common attitudes in the next section.

In summary, the younger participants were less receptive to the normative activities of the Hebrew Academy, while most of the L2 HSs apparently did not know them, at all. Mostly younger women from educated families, just as n31fr11, r36f311 and y28f311 (from the open interviews) expressed their positive attitudes towards the Academy. With the exception of m69f412, the older participants typically stressed the importance of the Hebrew Academy. The majority of the 20 participants who were asked about the Hebrew Academy was aware of its normative activities – most even elaborated their answer, listed lexemes which the Academy issued and commented on their use and their quality. The participants' general awareness of the Academy and their characterization of 'correct Hebrew' along the explicit norms which are propagated by the Academy hint at its impact on HSs' representations of variation in MH. While most participants criticized some explicit norms and even rejected them, their representations still draw on these norms – whether they were consistent with or in contrast to them.

It is well known to the participants and Hebrew linguists alike that conventionalized language use in everyday contexts digresses considerably from the explicit norms. Like Izre'el (2020: 40,42), Schwarzwald asserts that several normative incorrect phenomena in MH can be found in Biblical sources, too:

**(Schwarzwald 2007: 66)**

*Phenomena like gender and number agreement, the use of 'et as direct object, the construct state, the double construct state and others continue the practice from the past.* תופעות כגון התאם מין ומספר, הצבת 'את' כמושא ישיר, מבני סמיכות, סמיכות כפולה ועוד, ממשיכות את הנהוג מן העבר.

These and other phenomena of variation from the explicit norms have been subject to linguistic studies – some were listed in 3.2.2. Apparently, variation has been a constant feature of Hebrew – even in the written Biblical sources which are the model for codification. Schwarzwald's following assertion seems to contradict her earlier description of the linguistic reality in Israel:

Hebrew norms which were strictly observed in the first decades of the revival of Hebrew are observed no longer in the educational system nor in other formal environments [...]. Younger speakers provide the strongest impetus for this change. The lack of gender agreement between the nouns and numerals is one example of this change [...]. The rules of the prefixed particles do not follow the norms of Biblical Hebrew. (Schwarzwald 2013)

Here, she concedes that language change is going on – but, at the same time, she affirms that non-normative speech behavior is characteristic for speakers originating from socioeconomically weak environments which were linked to the population's ethnic origin in the past:

[S]ocioeconomic status has been associated with ethnic population, i.e., oriental-low versus Ashkenazi-middle/high [...] syntactic and lexical phenomena do not differentiate LC [lower class] from MC [middle class] usage systematically, though no recent research into these phenomena has been carried out. Still, the differences between LC and MC Hebrew can still be traced, though they are no longer necessarily connected to ethnic origin [...] (Schwarzwald 2013)

The various examples for variation from the explicit norms in language use – even from iconic Hebrew speakers such as Amos Oz, as Izre'el (2020: 52) illustrates – invalidates Matras & Schiff's (2005: 151) postulation of a stylistic continuum on the basis of educational or occupational characteristics (see 3.2.2). In contrast to Schwarzwald, Izre'el (2020: 25) takes a clear stance against linguistic prescriptivism which is also directed against the normative activities of the Hebrew Academy.

While Israeli linguists as Gadish, Schwarzwald and Izre'el may disagree in their evaluation of variation from the explicit norms, they all assert that HSs commonly express linguistic uncertainty. Izre'el (2020: 24) diagnoses a “linguistic inferiority complex among speakers of Hebrew,” while Schwarzwald (2007: 70) argues that HSs today live with a feeling of inferiority based on the feeling that their Hebrew is not exemplary for what the grammarians would accept as good language because the

norms for correct Hebrew did not change at the same pace as Hebrew has changed. Gadish put it as follows:

**(27) Expert interview Gadish (21:37)**

*The Israelis think that they don't speak correctly. It's like they were educated that they speak with mistakes. So, there is also this kind of desire – they always discuss: one says this, the other says that and they discuss and then they ask us who is right. So they live all the time with scruples that their language isn't OK.*

הישראלים חושבים שמדברים לא נכון. הם כאילו מתחנכים על זה שמדברים בשגיאות. אז יש גם איזה מין רצון, הם תמיד מתווכחים אחד אומר ככה אחד אומר ככה והם מתווכחים ואז הם שואלים אותנו מי צודק ואז הם כל הזמן חיים בנקיפות מצפון שהם לא בסדר עם השפה.

However, my participants did not voice similar concerns. On the contrary, the younger participants challenged the authority of the normative institutions confidently and justified their own linguistic conventions. This is in line with Gafter & Mor's (2023: 308) observation that for many “the conventional norm [has become] a more suitable emblem of national identity.” They argue that this is partly due to a shift in Israeli society “from a socialist collectivist spirit to a more individualistic-capitalistic one and from a nationalistic centralism to multiculturalism” (Gafter & Mor 2023: 308, see also 6.2.3.2). Most older participants stressed the importance of the institutionalized normative activity of the Hebrew Academy and lamented the common neglect of the explicit norms – especially by younger HSs. While almost all participants stressed their personal ambition to speak correctly, they equally asserted that they were frequently using normative incorrect forms. Apparently, the participants were not puzzled by this contradiction – at least, they did not express any distress or uncertainty about their own language use. Commonly, they judged their language use as exemplary or as adequate. These findings indicate that younger HSs orient themselves consciously towards the conventionalized language use which may contradict the explicit norms that were said to define ‘correct Hebrew.’ In this respect r36f3l1's statement about her conscious appropriation of incorrect forms is illustrative (see 21). The evaluative aspects about different notions of MH that were just discussed will be summarized as common attitudes in the next section.

### 6.2.3 Common attitudes

Whereas it is quite abstract and not very intuitive to think of LANGUAGE in terms of a SOCIAL PRACTICE (as sociolinguists generally do), it is much more common to focus on potential outcomes of the linguistic practice, e.g. its power to create communities (LANGUAGE IS A BOND) or to open up new OPPORTUNITIES (LANGUAGE IS A TOOL/KEY). (Berthele 2008: 303)

The two metaphorical mappings of LANGUAGE IS A BOND and LANGUAGE IS A TOOL/KEY can be traced in most participants' evaluative statements about MH or other languages. It was argued in 2.1.4.3 that LAs are understood as constructed in relation to institutions, roles and representations of linguistic variation. The following analysis of the participants' statements reveals that there are several metaphorical mappings of 'language' which are semantically related and are typically used in combination to construct LAs. Besides the two main mappings which are described by Berthele (2008: 303), there are three additional mappings which were used by several participants for the context of Hebrew: HEBREW IS HOLY, HEBREW IS A CULTURAL TREASURE and MH IS A MIRACLE.

These mappings are semantically close to the main mappings – but, they are based on specifically Israeli concepts. For example, MH IS A MIRACLE draws on a Zionist narrative: during nation building of the Israeli state, MH was conceived as political tool to establish a cultural and ideological bond between the heterogeneous people which were brought together by the endeavor of *kibbutz galuyot* 'ingathering of the Exiles' (cf. Gafter & Mor 2023: 304, 3.1.1 and 3.1.2). In this context, the 'revitalization of Hebrew' is used to underline the historical uniqueness of this process which leads to the conceptualization of MH IS A MIRACLE (see 3.2.1). In the following, three typical perspectives on MH which are not mutually exclusive will be reviewed: utilitarian, liberal and conservative.

### 6.2.3.1 The utilitarian perspective

When I asked Q2 during the guided interviews, "How important is it for you to speak correct Hebrew?" all participants stressed the importance of a good command of Hebrew.<sup>17</sup> It seems that they valued the potential outcomes of a good language competence. Only two participants restricted their answers somewhat: r36f3l1 argued that it does not always suit the communicative needs to "speak correctly" and a45m2l2, with L1 Arabic, answered that he does not need to speak correct Hebrew anymore because his (working) environment is essentially Arabic. Most L2 HSs highlighted the utilitarian perspective LANGUAGE IS A TOOL in the guided interviews. The Israeli Arab participants described MH as a means to increase one's participatory and economic possibilities in society. Therefore, a sense of belonging to the Hebrew-speaking society is only secondary and bonding with the Jewish population was not described as desirable outcome. The Israeli Arab participants' perspective will be elaborated in 6.6.2.

When I asked the participants whether it was important for them that their children speak correct Hebrew (Q3), they unanimously stressed the necessity of a

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<sup>17</sup> Q2 in Hebrew: כמה זה חשוב לך לדבר בעברית תקינה? ?

good command of Hebrew, regardless of their L1.<sup>18</sup> For his answer, i38m3l1 used the mapping of LANGUAGE IS A BUSINESS CARD and described an appropriate language use as crucial for conveying a good first impression:

**(28) i38m3l1 (7:09)**

<p><i>Very important, very important. I think that you have several business cards when you come into the world. One of them is how you speak, how you sound and when you make mistakes like those that are annoying – when people hear that, they will take you less seriously from the beginning, less... Well, you put yourself in a problematic starting position, in the world.</i></p>	<p>מאוד חשוב, מאוד חשוב. אני חושב שיש לך כמה כרטיסי ביקור כשאתה בא לעולם. אחד מהם זה איך שאתה מדבר איך שאתה נשמע וכשאתה עושה שגיאות כאלה שצורמות, כשאנשים שומעים מראש יקחו אותך פחות ברצינות פחות טוב. את שם אתה עצמך בנקודת התחלה בעייתית בעולם.</p>
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In response to Q3, r36f3l1 expressed her desire that her children should read Hebrew literature to acquire a broad lexicon which they can use in written texts:

**(29) r36f3l1 (5:45)**

<p><i>Yes, especially I'd like them to read many books, so that they'll have this rich vocabulary. Even if they don't always speak like that, so they'll still have the ability – let's say – at least to write with a rich vocabulary. Because, it's just like that, for speaking it is sometimes really inappropriate.</i></p>	<p>כן, בעיקר אולי הייתי רוצה שנגיד שיקראו הרבה ספרים. שיהיה להם את האוצר מילים העשיר הזה, שגם אם לא מדברים בו כל הזמן אז שיהיה להם את היכולת נגיד לפחות לכתוב עם אוצר מילים עשיר כי, אין מה לעשות, בדיבור לפעמים זה באמת לא מתאים.</p>
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It can be inferred that in her representation of 'correct Hebrew,' its use is typically restricted to written texts and literature – a common characterization, as was argued in 6.2.1. 'Correct Hebrew' was often characterized as unreachable ideal, in contrast to spoken and 'standard Hebrew' which was characterized as containing 'slang' and 'mistakes.' I38m3l1 explained the characteristics of spoken Hebrew through the influence of the Israeli culture and stressed that it is "problematic" by nature:

<sup>18</sup> Q3 in Hebrew: ? ידברו בעברית תקינה?

**(30) i38m3l1 (4:51)**

*So, it's like that, spoken Hebrew is Hebrew with lots of slang – lots of. It was influenced a lot by our culture – the Israeli culture. [...] Hebrew in general is a very problematic language. There are the difficulties which exist in other languages – but, for example, human qualities are given to objects. Every object is either male or female, including numbers. One needs to adapt the number – something not very... In English they already fixed that, in English there is also 'it.' We don't have it, so... First of all, one needs to know that and also many Israelis become mixed up [...] Spoken Hebrew is slangish Hebrew, Hebrew with lots of mistakes.*

אז ככה, עברית מדוברת היא עברית שכוללת המון סלנג, המון. מושפעת גם המון מהתרבות שלנו, מהתרבות הישראלית. [...] עברית בכלל היא שפה מאוד בעייתית. יש את הבעייתיות שיש בעוד שפות אבל למשל היא נתנה תכונות אנושיות להפצאים. כל חפץ הוא או זכר או נקבה כולל מספרים. צריך להתאים את המספר, משהו לא כל כך. באנגלית כבר תיקנו את זה, באנגלית יש גם את it. אצלנו אין. אז קודם כל צריך לדעת את זה וגם הרבה ישראלים מתבלבלים בזה [...] עברית מדוברת היא עברית סלנגית, עברית עם המון שגיאות.

In this statement, Schwarzwald's (2007: 76) assertion that HSs are not proud of their language and doubt its usefulness can be traced. I38m3l1 (9:33), stressed the function of LANGUAGE AS A TOOL for communication and even said that he would prefer if the whole world spoke the same language for the sake of better communication. Theoretically, he would be happy to switch to any other language because he does not think that Hebrew is special or better than other languages.<sup>19</sup> Despite his emphasis on the utilitarian perspective on language, i38m3l1 also conceded that cultural habits and identities, such as 'Israeliness,' are expressed in the HSs' language use and the linguistic structure of MH. S20m2l1 described this attitude as *'ivrit ze zehut* 'Hebrew is identity' (see 36).

**6.2.3.2 The liberal perspective**

Many participants displayed a high acceptance of 'mistakes' and a preference for 'standard Hebrew' and 'slang' in most contexts over 'correct Hebrew.' They explained that some degree of linguistic flexibility is more authentic and preferable than strictly adhering to explicit linguistic norms – this perspective was expressed as negative attitude towards the Hebrew Academy (see 6.2.2). S41m3l1 talked about the function of language to construct identities and expressed his positive attitude towards 'mistakes,' which can be understood as expressing personality:

<sup>19</sup> In Original: חושב ששפה היא כלי היא התכלית שלה היא תקשורת. חושב שהשפה העברית היא לא איזה שפה. מאוד מיוחדת או מאוד איחורית.

**(31) s41m3l1 (2:03)**

*OK, people may make mistakes. I don't, if someone makes mistakes, I don't correct him. I also make mistakes – but that's OK. There is something to language which is very, not... that is probably more impulsive. And if someone makes a mistake and the mistake is a part of someone, then it's OK.*

בסדר, אפשר שאנשים יטעו. אני לא, אם מישהו טועה אני לא מתקן. גם אני טועה אבל זה בסדר. יש משהו בשפה שהוא גם מאוד לא שאולי יותר אימפולסיבי ואם בן אדם עושה טעות והטעות הזאת זה חלק ממישהו אז בסדר.

The participants' positive evaluation of 'standard Hebrew' and the high acceptance of normative incorrect forms was typically paired with a negative attitude towards 'ivrit tikhnit 'correct Hebrew,' just as Schwarzwald (2007: 75) claims:

**Schwarzwald (2007: 75)**

*Thus, today the language of those who insist on speaking correctly is regarded as an arrogant, exaggerated, outdated and impractical language. Indeed, the same things could be rendered in a simpler way, without thinking too much about what is said. 'So what, are you a teacher?' This is a common question from someone who hears someone speaking high, correct Hebrew and 'he speaks Shabbat Hebrew' is a curse word.*

כך מתייחסים היום אל לשונם של המקפידים בלשונם כלשון יהירה, מיותרת, לא עכשווית, לא עניינית, שהרי אפשר להביע אותם דברים בצורה פשוטה יותר, מבלי לחשוב יותר מדי על מה שנאמר. 'מה את מורה?' היא שאלה שכיחה של השומע עברית תקנית גבוהה מפי מאן דהו, ו'הוא מדבר עברית של שבת' הוא ביטוי גנאי.

Indeed, i38m3l1 asserted that speaking 'ivrit tikhnit with his fellow kibbutzniks would be perceived as "pretentious:"

**(32) i38m3l1 (11:38)**

*When you live here with the people, one of the problems with speaking correct Hebrew is that you sound pretentious.*

כשאתה חי פה עם אנשים אחת הבעיות של לדבר עברית תקנית זה שאתה נשמע מתנשא.

Bokelmann (2020: 89) hints at this typical evaluative aspect about any normative linguistic standard, which can be perceived as exaggerated and inappropriate for situations of informal communication. In the light of this general assertion, it is interesting that many participants described the use of 'ivrit tikhnit as totally inappropriate for spoken communication and not just for informal contexts. This overall negative evaluation of 'ivrit tikhnit and 'teachers' Hebrew' is also reflected in the GERT ratings of the category 'educated.' Fig. 6.3 shows the corresponding heatmap with three

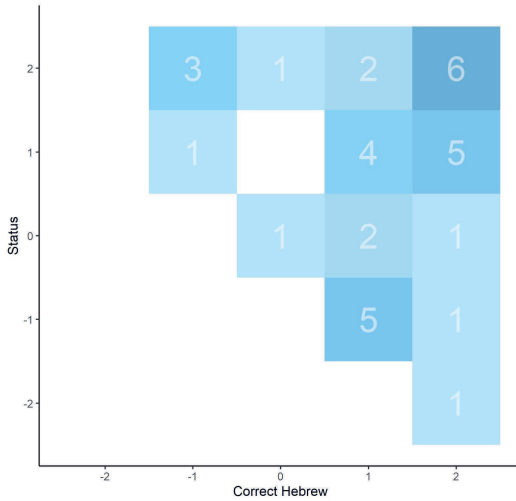


Fig. 6.3: Heatmap: participants' ratings for 'educated'

centers of similar ratings in a darker shade of blue. The accumulation of ratings in the upper right corner hints at a strong association of 'education' with 'high status' and 'correct Hebrew.' The five ratings in the lower right corner with the values 1/–1 belong to the entries "students," "teachers" (twice), "social workers" and "high-tech people." For "teachers," there are two more entries with the values 1/0. All these entries were rated relatively low for status, despite the corresponding groups' high level of education and their positive rating for correct Hebrew. In this context, several participants explained that teachers do not receive the social acknowledgment that they would deserve in Israeli society. The center of ratings on the upper left corner with the values –1/2 contains the entries "physicists," "mathematicians" and "lazy intellectuals."<sup>20</sup> On the one hand, it can be inferred that the negative attitude towards the style of Hebrew which is typical for teachers and other educated groups has a negative effect on their status ratings. On the other hand, speaking 'correct Hebrew' is not necessary for the positive rating of groups such as mathematicians who seem to derive their status from their (non-linguistic) expertise.

The participants' positive attitude towards 'standard Hebrew' correlates with their estimation of informality, flexibility and, in general, a practical attitude – concepts that are associated with 'Israeliness' and referred to with the metaphorical notion of *litsnoah ve-lizrom* 'parachute and flow' (see 2.2). The common characterization of Israel as "start-up nation" can also be seen in this context: for example, Senor

<sup>20</sup> In original: עצלנים. רוח אינטלקטואלים. רוח.

& Singer (2011) explain Israel's economic success through the pioneer ethos which is institutionalized in the Israeli army and entails tolerance towards mistakes and a preference for practical over aesthetic. Aspects it would be interesting to explore common representations of 'Israeliness' – a concept which was not systematically investigated in this study.

The topic of social constraints in Israeli society was brought up by many participants in connection with the obligatory military service, religious and family values, marital conventions and laws, inter-group and inter-ethnic relations and the contrast of 'center' and 'periphery.' These social constraints are described metaphorically as "concrete boxes" and "the iron cage of ethnicity" in sociological accounts such as Motzafi-Haller (2018) and Aharon (2010). To cope with these restrictions on a daily basis, participants again advocated the strategies of flexibility and informality. The notion of *lizrom* 'to flow, to improvise' can also be extended to language use where 'slang' can circumnavigate hierarchies and establish informal relations and group-solidarity (Eble 1996: 18). For example, m44m4l1 (18:18) asserted that Israeli Jewish intellectuals use Arabic expressions in spoken Hebrew to show their liberal political affiliation and a positive attitude towards the Arab society – this aspect is also addressed by Lefkowitz (2004: 26).

Following Auer's (2017: 373–374) definition, the participants' description of 'standard Hebrew' shares the characteristics of a "neo-standard," whereas 'correct Hebrew' can be understood as "traditional standard:"

The prestige of the neo-standard [...] is based on values such as modernity, informality, personalization and innovation. It follows that the traditional standard – by being constructed as the ideological counterpart of the new one – becomes associated with the opposite: tradition, formality, depersonalisation, conservatism. Depending on how these features are estimated in a society, this can be tantamount to a devalorization of the traditional standard and hence to destandardization.

### 6.2.3.3 The conservative perspective

Older and – especially – religious participants often displayed a less favorable attitude toward 'standard Hebrew' and 'slang.' Typical attitudes among religious HSs will be reviewed in 6.7.2. A positive evaluation of *ivrit tiknit* was typically expressed in conjunction with a positive attitude towards concepts such as tradition, religiosity, nationalism and conservatism.

In her interview f5+f1l1 (0:11) expressed both attitudinal aspects: while emphasizing the conservative perspective, she conceded that 'standard Hebrew' is often preferable for practical reasons. As an example, she used the expression *ledaber be-gova ha-'eynayim* 'to speak on eye-level' to describe respectful communication, for example, with elderly people who do not speak 'correct Hebrew' and can better

understand ‘standard Hebrew.’ As she was born in Morocco and came to Israel at a very young age with her parents, the elderly people she referred to are most likely non-native HSs from her family or neighborhood. However, in response to Q2, she stressed the national and cultural importance of ‘correct Hebrew:’

**(33) f5+f11 (1:32)**

*It is very important. I am Israeli, that's the official language of the state of Israel and correct language that's the literary language that's the language, on the highest level.*

מאוד חשוב, אני ישראלית זאת השפה הרשמית של מדינת ישראל ושפה תקנית זה השפה הספרותית זה השפה הרמה הגבוהה ביותר.

In response to Q6 – “Is Hebrew important for the State of Israel?” – she argued that Hebrew is the language of the *mikr'a* ‘the Holy Scripture’ and the Jewish people which endows it with historical importance:<sup>21</sup>

**(34) f5+f11 (4:46)**

*That's our official language and the language of the Holy Scripture – it has the utmost importance. I think that we as unique Jewish people, Hebrew has accompanied us for thousands of years. They renew it every time, there are like Eliezer Ben-Yehuda who renew and all the people, the professors, too [...] Because, after all, new things are produced. But, it's also important because of historical reasons to protect our Hebrew.*

זאת השפה הרשמית שלנו ושפה מקראית שלנו, שזה יש לזה חשיבות מעל ומעבר. אני חושבת שאנחנו כעם יהודי איהודי, העברית היא מלווה אותנו אלפי שנים. מחדשים אותה כל פעם, יש כמו אליעזר בן יהודה שמחדשים וכל האנשים הפרופסורים גם [...] כי בסך הכל נוצרים מאוד דברים חדשים. אז אבל זה חשוב גם מבחינה היסטורית לשמור על העברית שלנו.

By stressing the uniqueness of the Hebrew language and its genuine speakers – the Jewish people – she resorts to the metaphors HEBREW IS HOLY and HEBREW IS A CULTURAL TREASURE which belong to the metaphorical mapping LANGUAGE IS A BOND. She also stresses the importance of protecting Hebrew and mentioned her estimation of the Hebrew Academy (see 25).

In my first expert interview, the historian Fania Oz-Salzberger used the metaphor MH IS A MIRACLE and stressed the uniqueness of its ‘revitalization’ – to which she referred to as “language revolution:”

<sup>21</sup> Q6 in Hebrew: האם העברית חשובה למדינת ישראל?

**(35) Fania Oz-Salzberger (0:27)**

*In my lectures, I speak a lot about MH, which is sort of a miracle – a linguistic and secular miracle. [...] No other language revolution succeeded to the extent that Hebrew succeeded – not Esperanto, not Catalan, Welsh nor Breton.*

אני מדברת הרבה בהרצאות שלי על העברית המודרנית שהיא סוג של נס, נס לינגוויסטי ונס חילוני. [...] אף מהפכה אחרת של שפה לא הצליחה, לא אספרנטו, לא קטלן וולשית ברטונית בצורה שמהפכה העברית הצליחה.

She described the propagation of MH as “secular miracle” which was enabled by a historically unique human initiative. Thereby she clearly separated the metaphor MH IS A MIRACLE from the religious framing HEBREW IS HOLY. It can be seen that MH IS A BOND can be used without its originally religious intention. In 3.2.1 the importance of MH for the ideology of cultural Zionism, as advocated for by Aḥad Ha’am, was reviewed. Among the participants, the conceptualization of MH IS A MIRACLE and as the “only thing that’s left” of the Zionist vision was prominent, although most participants distanced themselves from political Zionism. However, secular, Zionist and religious perspectives can get conflated, as f5+f11’s statement (34) revealed.

S20m211 assessed the current political state in Israel critically and referred to Hebrew as the only thing that’s left of the vision of the Israeli state and the Hebrew culture. Thereby, he equally stressed the uniqueness of MH and the Israeli identity, which crucially depends on MH:

**(36) s20m211 (30:48)**

*Hebrew is identity. It’s a matter of identity in Israel. I will tell you more than that. It’s sad to hear – but, recently, I hear people saying that what’s left of Israel is Hebrew, do you understand? Because when the scenery changes through... you try to hold on to what’s left and language is something, in the end, good to hold on to – especially because it’s a minority language and a language that no other population really speaks. So, yes, there are many in Israel who say that Hebrew is what’s left. What’s left of the Hebrew culture is Hebrew, do you understand? Because, let’s say, there are those who’ll say what’s left of Tel Aviv, the first Hebrew city, is Hebrew.*

עברית זה זהות. זה עניין של זהות בארץ. אני אגיד לך יותר מזה, זה עצוב לשמוע אבל אני שומע לאחרונה אנשים שאומרים שכאילו מה שנשאר מהארץ זה עברית, אתה מביין. כי כשהנוף משתנה בידך זה, אתה מנסה להיאחז במה שנשאר ושפה משהו בסך הכל טוב להיאחז בו במיוחד שזה שפה מינורית ושפה שאין עוד אוכלוסיה ממש דוברת אותה. אז כן יש הרבה שאומרים בארץ שמה שנשאר זה העברית. מהתרבות העברית מה שנשאר זה העברית, אתה מביין. כי נגיד, יש כאלה שיגידו מה שנשאר מתל אביב העיר העברית הראשונה זה העברית.

This statement can be understood as a nostalgic perspective on Israeli history: he introduced his statement with the assertion that “it’s sad to hear” and described Tel Aviv, the symbol of secular Zionism just as the whole country, as having lost its unique Hebrew character – except for the Hebrew language. Several aspects from the participants’ statements are summarized in Berthele’s (2008: 309) assertion that the “language is a bond metaphor is an important part of the ICM [idealized cognitive model] of the nation-state” in that

[l]anguage is one of the central cultural aspects shared within a nation-state, thus a prototypical nation-state has got its own exclusive official language. It is important to note that this is a prescriptive and ideological claim, since there are probably no examples of a nation which is entirely monolingual. (Berthele 2008: 309)

The nostalgic perspective that is often expressed together with the LANGUAGE IS A BOND metaphor is described as typical manifestation of a “purist ideology” on language, which is based on an idealized past:

According to the purist ideology, language is in constant decay due to mixing, careless use, and other ‘external’ influences. Language used to be ‘pure’ and ‘good’ in earlier times and maybe still is pure (in the case of dialects) in remote, isolated communities (cf. Berthele 2001c), a folk belief which plays an important role in the romantic mystification of primitive cultures. [...] The most important entailments are that one common language needs to function as a crucial bond in society, that it is easy to learn a language in an immersion setting, and that a language has to be pure, perfect, and perfectly mastered by its speakers. These cognitive patterns and mappings all fit in well with the ICM of the nation-state. (Berthele 2008: 311)

Due to the Zionists’ nationalist ideology which has been shaping Modern Israel, it is not surprising that HSs relate to the “purist ideology.” As manifestations thereof, Rosenthal (2007a: 179–180) summarizes five common fears about the state of MH: foreign influence is perceived as a threat; linguistic mistakes become norms; Hebrew is decaying and losing its nuances; knowledge about the Jewish sources and earlier varieties of Hebrew is getting lost and the status of Hebrew in the diaspora is in decline.

Several participants confirmed this outlook, typically in conjunction with the metaphor LANGUAGE IS A BOND. F5+f111 (1:58) voiced concerns about slang and the influence of pop culture on her children’s Hebrew in response to Q3. I53f211 also criticized the common neglect of MH among the younger generations and displayed a nostalgic attitude:

**(37) i53f2l1 (29:10)**

*There are people who are more, speakers of the eloquent and beautiful language. But today, I think that with the generations they maintain the eloquent language less, it's more slangish and more simple. Because, like I said to you, SMSs, abbreviations which exist, because of these things the language is changing, it becomes more popular, more simple. It's less of a literary language. In my eyes, it is important to read more books to return to the source, to understand where it comes from, the things.*

יש את ה-, אנשים שהם יותר דוברי השפה הרהוטה והיפה אבל היום אני חושבת שעם הדורות פחות שומרים על שפה רהוטה. היא יותר סלנגית יותר פשוטה יותר, בגלל אמרתי לך סמסים קיצורים שיש, בגלל הדברים האלה השפה משתנה, הופכת להיות יותר עממית יותר פשוטה. היא פחות שפה ספרותית ובעיניי חשוב יותר לקרוא ספרים כדי לחזור למקור להבין מאיפה זה בא הדברים.

This negative attitude towards the younger generations' language use is also expressed by Schwarzwald (2007: 72–73) who asserts that in the 1950s, every Israeli child, religious or not, learned the complete Biblical story and also in secular high schools, the Talmud was studied in preparation for the final exam. Accordingly, a change took place in the 1960s, when students only learned selected parts of the Biblical story and repetition fell from grace as pedagogical method. Therefore, knowledge of the Hebrew sources diminished over the generations because of the processes of immigration and secularization in Israeli society. She concludes that, today, people over forty have a larger vocabulary from the Hebrew sources than the younger generations and religious HSs have a bigger vocabulary from the Hebrew sources than their peers who grow up mostly with spoken Hebrew.

A70f3l1 addressed the religious perspective when I asked whether she noticed any linguistic differences between religious and secular pupils in the school where she was teaching:

**(38) a70f311 (24:09)**

*There is a difference between religious and secular pupils. The religious have a richer language because they learn the Hebrew sources, that's Mishna and Gemara and Tanakh and Torah so they know, in my opinion I think – I don't know what research says, but they have a richer language definitely, yes for example the seculars have a hard time to access, to read the Tanakh, to explain because it is, either way, a very high language. But, the religious because they – all the time, Tanakh... With us in the secular (school) they learn twice or three times a week. The religious – all day he has access, you know but, yes, there is a difference, yes.*

יש הבדל בין ילדים דתיים לילדים חילוניים. הדתיים יש להם שפה יותר עשירה כי הם לומדים את המקורות של העברית, זה משנה וגמרא ותנ"ך ותורה. אז הם מכירים את ה-, יש לדעתי, אני חושבת, לא יודעת מה המחקר אומר אבל יש להם שפה יותר עשירה בוודאי, כן כן. למשל לחילוניים מאוד קשה לגשת ל לקרוא בתנ"ך, להסביר, כי זה שפה, בכל אופן שפה גבוהה מאוד. אבל הדתיים משום שהם כל הזמן, תנ"ך אצלנו בחילוני לומדים פעמיים שלוש פעמים בשבוע. אצל הדתי הוא כל היום הוא נגיש למקורות. אתה מביין. אבל כן, יש הבדל כן.

A70f311 self-identified as religious and also displayed a quasi-religious attitude towards MH itself. She recounted that she devotes herself to the study of Hebrew, on Shabbat – just as a prayer-like activity:

**(39) a70f311 (13:05)**

*I love the Hebrew language. In my home, it's to sit down – on Shabbat, I especially devote myself, I read a lot of things from the Academy. I like to enrich the language [...] it's my pleasure.*

אני אוהבת את השפה העברית. אצלי זה לשבת, שבת אני במיוחד מקדישה אני המון קוראת דברים של האקדמיה, אני אוהבת להעשיר את השפה [...] שלי זה הענוג.

The nostalgic perspective resurfaced frequently when I asked the participants about model speakers of MH. Younger participants who had not displayed a conservative attitude also mentioned foremost senior public figures as model speakers for “the most correct Hebrew” and the Hebrew they liked the most. They mentioned singers and public figures who all were born in Israel between 1938 and 1951: Arik Einstein, Yoni Rechter, Gidi Gov, Meir Ariel, Yaacov Ahimeir, Amos Oz, Avshalom Kor, Yaron London and the politicians Reuven Rivlin and Benjamin Netanyahu, then president and prime minister. In this context, g27m3l2 described his preference for “Hebrew from the past:”

**(40) z27m3l2 (24:11)**

*First of all I can hint at a singer, writer, poet – Yoni Rechter – who also when you hear him being interviewed and first of all, also his songs are written in sorts of a Hebrew from the past, a Hebrew that started to develop with the foundation of the state, up to the eighties, maybe even the nineties. [...] So, their Hebrew always sounds very correct to me, very... Also the Hebrew that they speak with each other because in all the – not the formal. That's really how one should speak. I can hint also to Gidi Gov or to many other singers from this time, politicians, there are many, you know. [...] I'd tend to educate in this way. At least, my children as the following generation, I'd like them to speak like that or that they know at least that one speaks like that.*

קודם כל אני יכול להצביע על זמר כותב משורר יוני רכטר. שמבחינת גם שאתה שומע אותו מתראיין וקודם כל השירים שלו גם כתובים באיזושהי עברית של פעם. עברית שהתחילה להתפתח עם קום המדינה עד שנות השמונים אולי אפילו תשעים [...] אז העברית שלהם תמיד נשמעת לי מאוד נכונה מאוד, גם העברית שהם מדברים בינם לבין עצמם, כי בכל – לא הרשמית, ככה באמת צריך לדבר. יכול להצביע גם על גידי גוב או על די הרבה זמרים מאותה התקופה, פוליטיקאים יש הרבה אתה יודע. [...] הייתי שואף לחנך לככה. לפחות את הילדים שלי את הדור המשך, הייתי רוצה שידברו ככה או לפחות שידעו שמדברים ככה.

Besides these public figures they mentioned family members, their teachers and certain academics, just as n31f3l1 who also stated that she liked “the Hebrew of the old generation:”

**(41) n31f3l1 (6:20)**

*The first thing that comes to my mind is some professor, already emeritus. But, he symbolizes something – he speaks the Hebrew of the old generation. It simply sounds old and I like that. [...] Actually, the Hebrew of the elderly who speak correctly – that's beautiful.*

הדבר הראשון שעולה לי בראש זה איזושהו פרופסור, כבר אמריטוס. אבל הוא מסמל משהו, הוא מדבר עברית של הדור הישן. זה פשוט נשמע ישן ואני אוהבת את זה [...] דווקא העברית של המבוגרים שמדברים נכון זה יפה.

Associations of these common attitudes with the core categories will be discussed in the next sections.

## 6.3 Ashkenazim and the Jewish elite

In 3.1.3, the binary distinction between the concepts ‘Ashkenazim’ and ‘Mizrahim’ that is conventionalized in Israeli society was reviewed. These categories were

described as a “two-class set” which is typically used for the categorization of HSs – this basic distinction seems to be entrenched in HSs’ minds (see 6.1). Even when the participants criticized this way of classification, they still referred to the categories and the associated stereotypes – basically contradicting themselves (see h37f2l1’s statement 5). In a similar manner, y35f4l1 stated that she rejected this discourse, while she conceded that she cannot help using the same categories:

**(42) y35f4l1 (27:57)**

*It’s like most of the leadership in Israel is*

*Ashkenazi. However, I don’t accept this discourse anymore, about Ashkenaziness and Mizrahiness, which takes place in the society where I’m in, until today. So, it’s like, I can say: OK, there is no such thing as the color green, even though I am living in the middle of the forest.*

רוב ההנהגה בישראל היא הנהגה אשכנזית כאילו. אף על פי שאני כבר לא מקבלת את השיח הזה של האשכנזיות ומזרחיות שקיים בחברה שאני נמצאת בה עד היום. אז כאילו אני יכולה להגיד אוקיי, אין כזה צבע ירוק אפילו שאני חייה באמצע יער.

This critical attitude towards the categories ‘Ashkenazim’ and ‘Mizrahim’ is reflected in the participants’ behavior during GERT. Some participants consciously avoided using these categories for the task, despite the fact that they had referred to them during the interview. Just one of seven participants who produced an entry *Ashkenazim* and another participant among the six who produced an entry *Mizrahim* were L1 HSs. Either the other eight GERT participants with L1 Hebrew avoided the categories or they were not relevant for them – which is unlikely since most referred to them in one way or another. Typically, participants who did not produce these categories during GERT tried to downplay their significance somehow, when they were using them – just as s41m3l1’s statement illustrates:

**(43) s41m3l1 (23:40)**

*There is – what’s called educated Ashkenazim and popular Mizrahim. But that’s not absolute, OK? Let’s say, a good friend of mine who lives in North Tel Aviv, she is a caricature of an educated Ashkenazia.*

יש מה שנקרא אשכנזים משכילים ומזרחים עממיים. אבל זה לא אבסולוטי, כן. נניח חברה טובה שלי שגרה בצפון תל אביב, היא קריקטורה לאשכנזיה משכילה.

Israeli-born participants with Hebrew as L1 were more skeptical about the use of these categories. This attitude can be understood because they are personally more affected by this categorization than immigrants or Arabs for whom these categories do not apply. Categorizing and being categorized openly as ‘Ashkenazi’ or ‘Mizrahi’ is regarded as taboo. Nonetheless, the participants’ statements reveal that these

categories are still meaningful for the construction of identities in Israel, also in relation to oneself. Sacks describes the general relevance of the categories as follows:

[N]ot only non-members, but members of a category take it that the actions of that category can be assessed. It's not merely that [276] a non-Catholic could hold this up and say, 'See? Catholics don't take care of their own,' but that a Catholic will say, about their own group, the same thing. The generic importance of such a phenomenon is that it's not just one category's view of another, but that knowledge is standardized across the categories. (Sacks 1989: 275–276)

For the Israeli context, the category 'Ashkenazim' has been described as an unmarked default category in sociological accounts such as Shohat (1999: 13) and Lefkowitz (2004: 83) (see also 3.1.3). Shemer describes the equation of 'Israeliness' with *Ashkenazi* characteristics in the domain of the cinema and beyond:

[I]n Rami Kimchi's (2008) work on Mizrahi/Ashkenazi representations in the ethnic film comedies of the 1960s and 1970s (known as 'Bourekas'), the main argument is that Israeliness never existed within the films or without; rather, it was the Ashkenazi Yiddish culture masqueraded as a new Israeli *habitus*. It is not surprising therefore that, unlike 'Mizrahi,' 'Ashkenazi' renders the unmarked (normative) Israeliness. This is most conspicuous when we consider that the *sabra*, despite the term's supposed reference to any native Israeli, is depicted in literature and the performing arts as a young, light-skinned male of Ashkenazi, not Mizrahi, descent. (Shemer 2013: 23)

It is hard to assert if a semantic change occurred – the representations of these categories in the Israeli public would deserve an entire research project. Comparing GERT ratings in Fig. 5.5, one can infer that 'Ashkenazim' is a positively marked category, if 0/0 marks the unmarked point of reference. It was rated highest in terms of 'correct Hebrew' and third in 'status,' just behind 'Jewish elite' and 'public figures.' As explanation for the rating (1/0) of his entry *Ashkenazim* h26m2l1 argued:

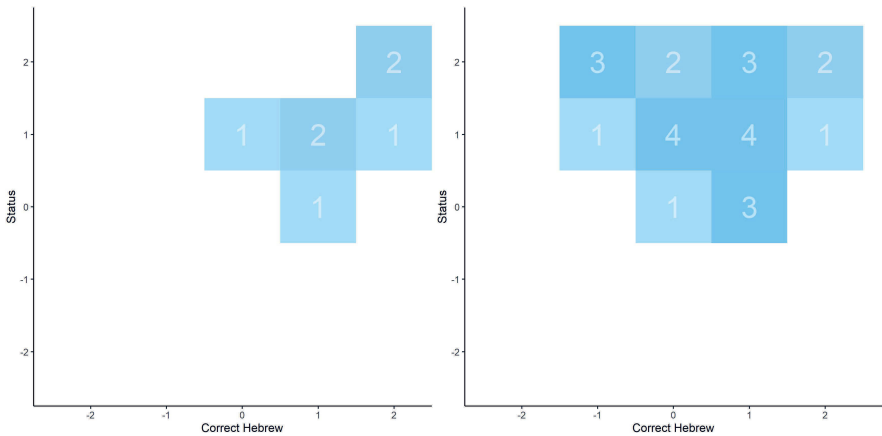
**(44) h26m2l1 (27:25)**

*Ashkenazim are here. It's just like that, they always speak with a higher language. I don't say that I like this, but usually, they have a higher status, higher language*

אשכנזים פה. אין מה לעשות, הם תמיד מדברים בשפה יותר גבוהה. אני לא אומר שאני אוהב את זה אבל הם במעמד בדרך כלל יותר גבוה, שפה יותר גבוהה.

His entry is located slightly positive in comparison to 0/0, where he said he would locate himself. H26m2l1 did not identify himself in terms of 'ethnicity.' He indicated that both his parents were Israeli-born and identified as *dati le'umi* 'national-religious,' an entry that he gave his highest ratings. Apparently, the prototypical HS who speaks 'standard Hebrew' with 'mistakes' is no longer associated with 'Ashkenazim' who are represented as speaking more correctly. Neither is this way of speaking necessarily

evaluated positively, as h26m2l1's statement that he does not like people who speak a really high language reveals.



**Fig. 6.4:** Heatmaps: participants' ratings of 'Ashkenazim' (left) and 'Jewish elite' (right)

Comparing heatmaps in Fig. 6.4 reveals that the ratings for 'Ashkenazim' and 'Jewish elite' partially overlap for the entries which were rated slightly positive for 'correct Hebrew.' 'Jewish elite' has two centers of ratings: the overlapping entries and another center which was rated slightly negative for 'correct Hebrew,' while all entries were rated between 0 and 2 for 'status,' just as for 'Ashkenazim.' 'Ashkenazim' is a uniform category, whereas 'Jewish elite' contains several simplifications of different concepts (see 5.5.1 for the definition of the category). The three entries "Americans," "Tel Aviv" and "youths" make up for the left center at  $-1/2$  and "elite," "Kibbutsniks" and "Moshavniks" were rated higher for 'status' than for 'correct Hebrew,' too. In 6.2, I described that the elite were not forcibly represented as speaking correctly. This fits Luhmann's characterization of the social elite, according to which their status allows them to deviate from rules – such as linguistic norms:

One of the characteristics of the confidence of an upper class is that it can occasionally disregard the rules by which it is constituted.<sup>22</sup> (Luhmann 1993: 74, my translation)

Positive ratings for 'status' were one criteria for the classification of entries as 'Jewish elite.' Looking again at entries, such as established immigrants (French and Ameri-

<sup>22</sup> German original: Es gehört mit zu den Merkmalen der Souveränität einer Oberschicht, daß sie die Regeln, mit denen sie sich konstituiert, gelegentlich auch außer Acht lassen kann[.]

cans), native Israelis and all entries which primarily refer to Jews – except *Haredim* which are a non-elitist group on their own – it becomes obvious that being *Ashkenazi* is not a necessary condition for possessing ‘social status.’

D30m3l1 asserted that he can recognize fellow *Ashkenazim* by their accent, while he said that “mistakes” are not indexical for any social group.

**(45) d30m3l1 (29:28)**

*In general, I can recognize if someone is Jewish Ashkenazi – like me. [...] So the accent, yes – the accent is the first thing. In respect to linguistic mistakes, I don't recognize mistakes that are connected to certain populations.*

בדרך כלל אני יכול לזהות אם מישהו אשכנזי יהודי כמוני. [...] אז מבטא, כן מבטא זה דבר ראשון. מבחינת טעויות בשפה, אני לא מזהה טעויות שקשורות לאוכלוסיות מסוימות.

D30m3l1, who grew up in a kibbutz, described how he changed his attitude towards different “levels” of Hebrew: as a child, he judged the Hebrew from the surrounding villages as poorer – but, he changed his attitude.

**(46) d30m3l1 (0:32)**

*I grew up in a kibbutz. So, in the kibbutz they like to speak older Hebrew – sort of from the 70s – which they think of as more correct. But, you know, in the cities surrounding the kibbutz, there are different levels that, let's say, when I grew up I rather judged them as Hebrew on an inferior level. Now, I think differently. Again, it's really depending from where you are, where you grow up and from the population that surrounds you, too. [...] I think that correct Hebrew is no longer something that applies.*

אני גדלתי בקיבוץ. אז בקיבוץ הם אוהבים לדבר עברית ישנה יותר משנות השבעים כזה יותר, שהם חושבים שיותר תקינה. אבל אתה יודע, בערים מסביב לקיבוץ אז ככה רמות שונות שנגיד כשאני גדלתי אני יותר שפטתי אותם כעברית ברמה ירודה יותר. עכשיו אני חושב אחרת. שוב זה באמת תלוי מאיפה אתה, איפה אתה גודל ובאוקלוסייה ססביך גם. [...] אני חושב שעברית תקינה זאת כבר לא משהו שתופס.

Goldscheider's following citation indicates that the ‘kibbutz’ was an influential institution in Israel. Therefore, the GERT entries “kibbutzniks” were classified under ‘Jewish elite,’ although this concept is commonly associated with ‘Ashkenaziness,’ too (see 3.1.3).

[T]he kibbutz influenced Israeli society far beyond its small size, as it was influenced by the state. A disproportionate number of kibbutz members have been active in party and national politics, becoming political and ideological leaders of Israel, prominent in the Knesset, and over-represented as officers in the Israeli armed services. Kibbutz ideals include the quintessential symbols of national Zionist values. (Goldscheider 2015: 98)

Once, the 'kibbutz' was a symbol of a new, native Israeli way of life – today, it is associated with an exclusive 'old elite' and a type of 'old Hebrew.' The participants who lived in a kibbutz described it as a place where life is moving slower and which is detached from the rest of society.<sup>23</sup> I38m3l1 used the critical wording:

**(47) i38m3l1 (22:38)**

*Here, the people don't care – we're living in La La* אנשים פה לא אכפת להם, אנחנו חיים  
*Land, here.* פה בלאלאלנד.

Several participants argued for a unique style of Hebrew – *kibbutznikit*. I38m3l1 (3:17) described it as slangish, shortened and kind of poetic. He explained its peculiarities with the special social context of the kibbutz: the Polish origin of its founders, the history of its inhabitants, the tight-knit community and the communal organization of life. There are concepts, which are typically restricted to the kibbutz and which require a specific term: *'Agalul* refers to a mobile playpen with wheels which can be brought to a work place in the kibbutz, for example. The lexeme is composed of *lul* 'playpen' and *'agala* 'cart.' I38m3l1 asserted that their language can seem strange or insulting because they use lexemes such as *zkenim* 'oldsters' to refer to their parents and *heder* 'room' to refer to their house. Furthermore, he characterized the Hebrew style of *moshavniks* as similar, while he asserted that he can discern HSs based on these styles. Lists of kibbutz lexemes can be found, for example in Rosenthal (2007b), Neumann (2010) and in Almog's (1993) ethnolinguistic study about youth culture in the kibbutz.

Matras & Schiff describe phonological variants which used to be characteristic of certain kibbutzim:

Such an exception can be found among the kibbutzim of the western Galilee, which were founded in the 1930s by small groups of immigrants, largely from Poland, as well as in other kibbutzim belonging to the Ha Shomer Ha-Tzair movement, whose population kept itself apart socially during a period up to the late 1950s and beyond, viewing itself as a kind of self-sufficient community of the settler elite. Here, the first generation of native speakers, those born in the 1930s, preserve the /ey/-diphthong that was characteristic of their parents' substrate pronunciation of historical /e/ in stressed syllables in forms like *séyfer* 'book' [...] (Matras & Schiff 2005: 161)

This diphthongization is characteristic for the so-called *Ashkenazi* reading tradition of the Torah. Today, this *hagaya 'ashkenazit* 'Ashkenazi pronunciation' is almost

<sup>23</sup> D30m3l1, i38m3l1 and u3+m2l1 grew up in a kibbutz and except for d30m3l1 they were living there at the time of the interview.

exclusively associated with L1 Yiddish speakers and the *Haredi* environment (Sender 2019; see 6.7.1).

A second type of entries which was classified as ‘Jewish elite’ refers to Tel Aviv and specifically to North Tel Aviv (the entries *tsfonim* and *tsfonbonim*) and the adjacent town Herzliya. S41m3l1 (43) referred to North Tel Aviv as the home of his friend, the “educated Ashkenazia.” This conceptualization is related to the two-class set ‘periphery,’ which will be reviewed in the next section, and ‘center’ which is symbolized by (North) Tel Aviv. *Tsfonbonim*, which is a parody of *tsfonim* ‘Northerners,’ is a stereotype about snobbish, upper-class Tel Avivians – the counter-parts of the ‘*arsim*’ (see 6.4.2). N31f3l1 who grew up in Tel Aviv described the associated linguistic stereotype as follows:

**(48) n31f3l1 (16:34)**

When I was a child, there was a thing to say      כשהייתי קטנה אז היה קטע של במקום  
*tsadi instead of tav [...] it was like a Tel Avivian*      ת' להגיד צ' [...] זה היה מין סטראוטיפ  
*stereotype.*      תל אביבי כזה.

In general, the typical language use of ‘Ashkenazim’ was characterized with the terms ‘correct,’ ‘high,’ ‘educated’ and ‘old Hebrew.’ The attitudes which accompanied these characterizations conform to the typical attitudes towards ‘correct Hebrew’ which were analyzed in 6.2.3: Speaking ‘high Hebrew’ is not necessarily favorable and can be perceived as snobbish, unauthentic or exaggerated, while ‘old Hebrew’ is a nostalgic ideal. The conscious performance of ‘Ashkenaziness’ was described by the participants with the verb *misht’aknez* ‘to make oneself *Ashkenazi*’ by which they also referred to processes of linguistic adaptation. This process was evaluated negatively as becoming unauthentic (see also Shaked 2016). Besides the occasional references to *tsfonit*, the participants did not bring up any variants which could be described as ‘Ashkenazi style of Hebrew.’

## 6.4 *Mizrahim* and the periphery

Just as ‘Ashkenazim’ were associated with a high level of education, wealth, secularism and political power, the category ‘Mizrahim’ was typically associated with the opposite attributes. Also the categories ‘center,’ with (North) Tel Aviv as a symbol for modern, secular Israeliness, and ‘periphery,’ which refers prototypically to so-called development towns are commonly related to ‘Ashkenazim’ and ‘Mizrahim’ (see 3.1.5). Originally, ‘center’ and ‘periphery’ refer to geographical differences – but, as geographic isolation often leads to social marginalization, they are metaphorically

used to refer to power relations in Israeli society. In this sense, “peripheral environments” such as lower class neighborhoods in South Tel Aviv can also be found in the geographic center of the country.

Several participants brought up the association between the concepts ‘Mizrahim’ and ‘periphery.’ Y35f4l1 (24:43) who grew up and lived mostly in the Jerusalem District asserted that people who live in the periphery – in development towns such as Yeruham – sometimes have their own slang. Yeruham, a small town some 30 kilometers south of Beer Sheva in the Negev desert, has become a symbol for the ‘periphery’ – Motzafi-Haller’s (2018) ethnographic portrait *Concrete Boxes: Mizrahi Women on Israel’s Periphery* was recorded there. Therefore, several of my Israeli contacts suggested that I should go to Yeruham for my research, which I did in the second fieldwork stage. Some of the participants’ accounts from Yeruham will be reviewed to further explore the concepts ‘Mizrahim’ and ‘periphery.’

#### 6.4.1 Accounts from Yeruham

T37m3l2 who moved from Ukraine to Yeruham at the end of the 1990s used the in-vivo code *nituk* ‘isolation’ to describe his reality:

##### (49) t37m3l2 (1:22)

*The problem is that there aren’t many people in Yeruham. Sometimes, you don’t have anybody to speak to. [...] In Yeruham, due to the wilderness, do you understand what’s wilderness? Desert, they hardly come and hardly – so, there is not too much there.*

**PS:** *OK, which people live there – ‘olim ḥadashim, too?*

**t37m3l2:** *Yes, ‘olim ḥadashim and pensioners, but very few. They live there and then run away because you can’t survive being isolated. You feel the isolation strongly there because, until you get anywhere, it takes time and you are in the middle of the desert and on shabbat you are stuck there – so, it’s very uneasy.*

הבעיה היא שבירוחם אין הרבה אנשים, אין לך לפעמים עם מי לדבר. [...] בירוחם זה בגלל השממה, אתה מבין מה זה שממה? מדבר, בקושי באים בקושי זה, אז אין שם יותר מדי.

או קיי, איזה אנשים גרים שם, גם עולים חדשים?

כן, עולים חדשים פנסיונרים אבל מעט מאוד. הם גרים והם בורחים משם כי אי אפשר לשרוד, להיות מנותק. שמה הניתוק מאוד מוחש כי עד שאתה מגיע לאיזשהו מקום זה לוקח לך זמן ואתה באמצע המדבר ובשבת אתה נתקע שם, אז זה מאוד לא פשוט.

When I mentioned that I was specifically aiming to include people from Yeruham in my study, he expressed his feeling of being overlooked by Israeli society:

**(50) t37m3l2 (7:48)**

*Very nice, well done – because nobody remembers us.*

יפה מאוד כל הכבוד, כי אף אחד לא זוכר אותנו.

On the contrary, f5+f1l1 who was born in Morocco and came to Yeruham with her family as a child described her environment favorably by stressing the social cohesion and the mutual respect:

**(51) f5+f1l1 (12:54)**

*There's a lot of respect for each other; for each other's language. We try to understand each other [...] because Yeruham, it's like a family, here. It's a place where people are connected to each other and know each other.*

יש הרבה כבוד אחד לשני לשפה של אחד של השני, משתדלים להבין אחד את השני [...] כי ירוחם זה כמו משפחה פה זה מקום שאנשים מחוברים אחד לשני ומכירים.

L6+f4l1 (5:02–6:42), a retired teacher who moved to Yeruham from Jerusalem at the end of the 1970s, recounted the situation at that moment when she started to teach the 6th grade. She believes that all her pupils' mothers were illiterate and did not know how to write in any language – neither in Hebrew, Moroccan Arabic nor French. The men apparently did not know much more Hebrew than the prayers and the children spoke a different kind of Hebrew. She asserted that Yeruham was very isolated from Israeli society – there was very infrequent public transportation service by bus and nobody had a car. In the class that she was teaching, just one pupil had a telephone at home. According to her, nobody went to study outside of Yeruham and almost none of the residents was working somewhere else. She described the different kind of Hebrew that the children spoke as consisting of much more than phenomena of normative incorrect gender agreement, which resulted from a transfer from their L1. She used *ha-kadur hitpotsetsa* 'the ball.M exploded.F' as an example and noted that the Arabic lexeme for 'ball' is feminine. When I asked whether they still speak this kind of Hebrew, she answered:

**(52) l6+f4l1 (7:07)**

*No, I think that it has changed a lot. It was almost like a dialect, a melody – they sang the words differently. Yes, clearly the accent was different. Today, I think they, that Yeruham underwent Israelization.*

לא, אני חושבת שזה מאוד השתנה. זה היה כאילו כמעט כמו דיאלקט, מנגינה הם היו שרים את המילים אחרת. כן, ברור שהמבטא היה שונה. היום כבר אני חושבת שהם, זה, ירוחם עברה ישראליות.

She stated that the situation in Yeruham has improved because it is no longer isolated and because of the generational change: her pupils who were already Israeli-born have become grandparents, themselves. She claimed that she can no longer discern people from Yeruham by their speech because the language also “underwent Israelization.”

**(53) l6+f4l1 (14:36)**

*I think that there is an Israeli slang that enters everywhere – I don't think that it's less in Yeruham than in other places. The slang spreads today because of the media, also because of the social networks and the internet, so I think that it's in all – I don't think that this is particular to Yeruham, I really don't think so.*

אני חושבת שיש סלנג ישראלי שנכנס בכל מקום אני לא חושבת שהוא בירוחם פחות מה שמקומות אחרים. הסלנג מתפשט היום גם בגלל התקשורת גם בגלל הרשתות החברתיות והאינטרנט. אז אני חושבת שזה בכל לא נראה לי שזה מיוחד לירוחם אני באמת לא חושבת.

F5+f1l1 (9:50) equally asserted that youth slang in Yeruham is not any different from the rest of Israel. She added that there are L2 HSs who speak with accents and that she code-switches to Moroccan Arabic when speaking with elderly family members of Moroccan origin. In this respect, she claimed that she can distinguish elderly HSs of Moroccan origin, whereas younger HSs have lost their accent and their origin is no longer significant:

**(54) f5+f1l1 (20:00)**

*You can recognize Moroccans – the older, not the younger ones. [...] all the migration was so long ago that all of them are already Sabras – today, you have even a third and fourth generation.*

מרוקאים אפשר לזהות, את המבוגרים יותר לא את הצעירים [...] כל העלייה היתה כבר לפני כל כך הרבה שנים שכבר כולם צברים, אפילו היום יש לך דור שלישי ורביעי.

To describe this process of assimilation, she used the Zionist concept of *kibbutz galuyot* ‘ingathering of the Exiles,’ in reference to the population of Tel Aviv and thereby argued against regional linguistic differences in MH. This Zionist perspective is also expressed in her statements about the national importance of MH for Israel and the Jewish people, which were analyzed above (see 33).

C36f3l1, who grew up in the outskirts of Tel Aviv and moved to Yeruham for professional reasons and out of personal affection for the local community, described linguistic differences in Yeruham in association with ‘Mizrahim’ and a popular, folksy (*‘amami*) way of life. As examples, she mentioned the lexemes *neshama* ‘soul’ and *kapara* ‘forgiveness; may you be forgiven’ which are used to signify ‘my dear; darling.’

**(55) c36f311 (9:49)**

*There are parts of Yeruham which are very popular and that influences the language, too. [...] So, yes, there's a language that's more popular and it's usually more a – maybe it's more a Mizrahi thing, like all the neshama, kapara, all the... that I less... There are moments when I use it a bit – but, it doesn't come naturally [...] there are situations like in which I can find myself speaking sort of in a more popular way.*

יש חלקים בירוחם שהם מאוד עממיים וזה גם משפיע על השפה. [...] אז כן, יש שפה שהיא יותר עממית והיא בדרך כלל גם יותר נתפשת ככה, אולי יותר כזה קטע של מזרחים כאילו כל ה- "נשמה", "כפרה", כל ה-, שאני פחות כאילו. יש מקרים שאני כזה קצת עושה בזה שימוש אבל זה לא בא לי באופן טבעי [...] יש סיטואציות שבהם כאילו אני ככה יכולה למצוא את עצמי מדברת ככה בצורה יותר עממית.

However, she tried to disconnect the notions 'Mizrahim,' 'periphery,' 'education' and 'linguistic variation,' although she conceded that the discourse about the ethnic categories is more pronounced in Yeruham than in the "center" where she grew up.

**(56) c36f311 (23:19)**

*It's kind of a bomb in Israeli society. This story about Ashkenazi, Mizrahi, Etiopi, all the time they are preoccupied with that. On the one hand, they think that it's getting blurred and on the other hand, they always bring it back into the discourse. [...] In the center of the country they occupy themselves much less with this discourse. In the periphery they preoccupy themselves a lot with it – in Yeruham, all the time.*

זה משהו שהוא פצצה. כאילו בחברה הישראלית. הסיפור הזה של אשכנזי, מזרחי, אתיופיו זה כל הזמן מתעסקים בזה. מצד אחד חושבים שזה הולך ומטשטש ומצד שני כל הזמן מחזירים את זה לתוך השיח. [...] במרכז הארץ הרבה פחות מתעסקים בשיח הזה. בפריפריה מאוד מתעסקים בו, בירוחם – כל הזמן.

In this context, she explained her reluctance to use more than two entries "educated" and "uneducated" for GERT:

**(57) c36f311 (27:35)**

*If I'd start now to write Ashkenazim speak better and to denigrate... Come on, we're over that, you know, it's not... It's primarily a matter of education, if you read books. What, I don't know guys of Mizrahi origin who know to speak a thousand times better than me? Of course I do. No, it's nonsense – No, it's the easiest thing to go to this point.*

אם אני אתחיל עכשיו לכתוב אשכנזים מדברים יותר יפה ומזולזל, נו עברנו את זה אתה מבין, כאילו זה לא. בעיקר עניין של השכלה, אם אתה קורא ספרים. מה, אני לא מכירה חבר'ה ממוצא מזרחי שיודעים לדבר פי אלף יותר טוב ממני? בטח שכן. כאילו זה לא, זה שטויות. זה לא, זה הכי קל ללכת למקום הזה.

The notions ‘Mizrahim’ and ‘periphery’ were often researched in conjunction for linguistic studies (see 3.2.2). Gafter (2014) showed that HSs in a particular community of Yemenite origin in Rosh ha-Ayn, which is considered a development town, differ in their LAs and their language use from the control group of HSs of Yemenite origin in Tel Aviv. As l6+f4l1 described the Yeruham of over forty years ago, it may have been fertile ground for the emergence of variational patterns in MH – a similarly unique environment is documented in Bentolila’s (1983) sociophonological description of *Hebrew as spoken in a rural settlement of Moroccan Jews in the Negev*. However, the participants from Yeruham claimed that no characteristic linguistic patterns of this sort are discernible, today. Further research is needed to reveal if there is any perceptual basis for an over-regional sociolect which Henshke (2015: 163–164) describes as being “characteristic of the speech of residents of the geographic and social periphery.”

#### 6.4.2 Attitudes and *Mizrahi* variants

It was argued in 6.1 that the cognitive process of recursivity leads to the overemphasis of minor linguistic traits in the representation of categories such as ‘Mizrahim.’ Therefore, lay people and linguists alike are tempted to speak of a “*Mizrahi* sociolect,” although just a few co-occurring variants might actually be observable. Which phenomena qualify as *Mizrahi* variants is hard to determine precisely because no perception experiments were carried out to determine what exactly makes someone’s speech sound *Mizrahi*. In this respect, my participants came up with very general characterizations:

##### (58) s20m2l1 (7:22)

*You know, they always say that Ashkenazim speak like more softly, gently and Mizrahim speak more directly.*

אתה יודע אומרים תמיד כאילו  
האשכנזים מדברים יותר ברכות בעדינות  
והמזרחים יותר מדברים ישירות.

S20m2l1 explained that his family frequently refers to these stereotypical associations jokingly when speaking about family members who live in ethnically mixed marriages. The analysis showed that c36f3l1 did not want to resort to common stereotypes about ‘Mizrahim,’ who have been stigmatized on linguistic grounds, as Shohat (1999: 15) points out: “Mizrahim in Israel were made to feel ashamed of their dark, olive skin, of their guttural language [...]” Also Shemer describes the stereotypical cinematic portrayal of ‘Mizrahim’ with linguistic characteristics:

The Mizrahi man in Bourekas Cinema is often portrayed as uncouth, irrational, emotional, oversexed, traditional, premodern, chauvinistic, patriarchal, and manipulative. The language skills of the Mizrahim in Bourekas Cinema are limited, and their pronunciation is grotesque. (Shemer 2013: 28)

This stigmatized representation of the ‘Mizrahi man’ is termed as ‘*ars*,

a term coming from the Arabic and meaning ‘pimp’; it is stereotypically applied to Mizrahim, especially of Moroccan origin. In Hebrew slang, it refers to males displaying bad manners, vulgarity, flashy dress and contempt for social norms [...] (Mizrachi & Herzog 2012: 428)

Just as several other participants, i53f2l1 used the term ‘*ars* and associated it with “swearwords” and “difficult” places such as *Ṭveria* and *Lod* which are in turn associated with the ‘periphery’ (see 1).

Until today, the stereotypical portrayals of grotesque *Mizrahi* characters are a central component of Israeli TV productions. Assi Cohen’s depiction of the character Shauli, an unemployed ‘*ars* of North African origin, is an integral feature of the popular TV series *ha-parlament* ‘The Parliament’ and *’erets nehederet* ‘A wonderful country.’ *Shnot ha-80* ‘The 80s’ mimics everyday life during the 1980s in *Ṭirat Ha-Karmel*, a development town just outside of Haifa: comedian Shalom Asayag acts in the role of his Moroccan-born father as one of the main characters in this partly auto-biographical series that thrives on the portrayal of ethnic stereotypes. In *Zaguri ’imperia* ‘Zaguri empire,’ the screenwriter and director Maor Zaguri narrates a comical-grotesque story about a Moroccan-Israeli family by the name Zaguri who run a falafel shop in the director’s home town, Beer Sheva. Linguistic means are central for the portrayal of *Mizrahi* characters in these series: their speech is characterized by the pharyngealization of the letters *het* and *’ayn*, a very casual style of speech and – especially in *Shnot ha-80* – conversations tend to digress into agitated shouting. It would be worth investigating the linguistic features of the *Mizrahi* characters in these and similar productions on their own terms to determine the linguistic stereotypes on which the cinematic representations of ‘Mizrahi Hebrew’ are based.

In general, the participants asserted that they categorize HSs either as ‘Ashkenazim’ or ‘Mizrahim’ (see 8). When I asked if it is still possible to recognize HSs’ origins based on their speech, a70f3l1 answered:

**(59) a70f311 (52:22)**

*In my opinion, yes. You see it according to the origin. Yes, you see, for example, the Mizrahim – again, we're speaking in general, not in specifics, there are also exceptions. So, the Mizrahim, it's more a language of slang, the talk at home is really slang. Among those from Western communities, the Europeans, you see a little higher language [...]*

**PS:**

*Also among the youth?*

**a70f311:**

*Also among the youth, yes. Look, I am Mizrahit, my parents are from Yemen, but I really insist (on speaking correctly). So I'm saying again, there's all in all, yes, the language is a bit low. Among Europeans it's a bit higher.*

לדעתי כן. אתה רואה לפי המוצא, כן כן. אתה רואה למשל המזרחים, שוב אנחנו מדברים באופן כללי לא ספציפי, יש גם יוצאים מין הכלל, אז המזרחים אז זה יותר שפה של הסלנג, יותר שיחה בבית ממש סלנג. אצל קצת אלה מעדות המערב, האירופאים, אז אתה רואה לשון קצת יותר גבוהה [...]

גם אצל הצעירים?

גם אצל הצעירים, כן כן. תראה אני מזרחית, ההורים שלי מתימן אבל אני מאוד מקפידה. אז שוב אני אומרת לך יש את ה-, בסך הכל, כן, השפה היא קצת נמוכה. אצל אירופאים קצת יותר גבוהה.

It can be seen that negative evaluations of 'Mizrahim' are not restricted to the outside perspective – a70f311 identified as *Mizrahit* because of her parents' Yemenite origin. Besides the association of 'Mizrahim' with 'low language,' participants argued that they can discern a certain *signon* 'style,' a *ṭon dibur* 'intonation, stress pattern' and a *mivt'a* 'accent.'

**(60) r36f311 (16:10)**

*Like, by the accent you hear if someone is Ashkenazi or Mizrahi, even though he was born in the country. Not just the accent, like maybe also the style of speech – but, it's these sorts of fine nuances that aren't always salient.*

כאילו לפי המבטא אתה שומע אם מישהו אשכנזי או מזרחי, למרות שנוולד בארץ. לא רק המבטא, כאילו גם אולי הסגנון דיבור. אבל זה מין נואנסים כאלה עדינים שלא תמיד בולטים.

A30f312 (28:48) also referred to *ṭon dibur* and *mivt'a*, while she claimed that *Mizrahim* speak outright and don't care too much about their language use and what might be understood.<sup>24</sup> The following statement is i38m311's first reaction to Q14 about

<sup>24</sup> A30f312's (28:48) statement also contains elements which hint at an imitation of a *Mizrahi* style: יותר כזה טון דיבור, מבטא וכאילו עצם, זה שהם שמשותריים וכזה זורקים זין ולא אכפת להם כזה. הם יגידו מה שיגידו, לא משנה יבינו לא יבינו, זה כאילו.

distinguishable groups of HSs. He characterized the Hebrew of the “Eastern Jewry” as being marked by a “paroxytone” stress pattern.

**(61) i38m3l1 (12:46)**

*The Eastern Jewry, they have a terribly strange story. That's to say, they came and they spoke Arabic in their countries of origin, which is a paroxytone language. Hebrew is an oxytone language. They came to Israel and began to speak paroxytone Hebrew – it's reversed, very strange. They came from an oxytone language. They reversed what they were used to. Today, they should... Actually, it should have been easier for them to speak Hebrew.*

יהדות המזרח שיש להם סיפור נורא  
מוזר יעני. הם באו והם דיברו ערבית  
בארצות המוצא שלהם שהיא שפה  
מלעילית. עברית היא שפה מלרעית.  
הם באו לישראל והתחילו לדבר עברית  
מלעילית. זה הפוך, מאוד מוזר. הם  
באו משפה מלרעית, הפכו את מה שהם  
היו רגילים, היום אמור. דווקא להם  
היה אמור להיות יותר קל לדבר עברית.

Apparently, i38m3l1 mixed-up the terms for the different stress patterns, while he evaluated the *Mizrahi* stress pattern as “very strange.” He argued that it should have been easy for the L1 Arabic speakers to speak Hebrew, while it is apparently not – at least not the kind of Hebrew with stress on the ultimate syllable. As examples for the *Mizrahi* stress pattern, i38m3l1 cited the words *súkar* ‘sugar’, *‘úga* ‘cake’, *kávod* ‘honor’ and stressed their first syllable.<sup>25</sup>

Some participants referred to the pharyngealization of the letters *‘ayn* as [ʕ] and *‘het* as [ħ] and termed these as “guttural letters.” A70f3l1 stated that she likes to hear these variants, when she talked about one of her model speakers, Gil Hovav:

<sup>25</sup> Stress is indicated by <>.

**(62) a70f311 (8:00)**

*Gil Hovav, it's a pleasure to hear, it's like Eliezer Ben-Yehuda's language they insisted a lot (on speaking correctly) [...] he appears frequently on TV – but, the Sabras don't like to hear – that's to say, the young generation. But for me, it's to hear the accent, the het. Do you know the guttural letters? He's from Eliezer Ben-Yehuda's family. But it's right, the Yemenites, those who came from Yemen maintained the language a lot, they really maintained the correct pronunciation, the correct reading of the Torah. But, I wouldn't say that I'm influenced by my parents.*

גיל חובב, תענוג לשמוע. זה כאילו שפה של אליעזר בן יהודה [...] הוא הרבה מופיע בטלוויזיה, אבל הצברים לא אוהבים לשמוע, זאת אומרת הדור הצעיר. אבל אני, זה לשמוע את האקצנט את ה-ח'. אתה מכיר את האותיות הגרוניות? [...] הוא מהמשפחה של אליעזר בן יהודה. אבל זה נכון, התימנים, אלה שבאו מתימן אז מאוד שמרו על השפה. מאוד שמרו על ההגייה הנכונה על קריאה בתורה הנכונה. אבל אני לא אניד שאני הושפעתי מהורים שלי.

By describing her favorite style of MH as “Ben-Yehuda’s language” who is the symbolic MH grammarian (see 3.2.1) she hints at the fact that [ʕ] and [ħ] are the normative correct realizations of *‘ayn* and *het*, despite their stigmatized representation among the younger generation of HSs (see Gafter 2014: 176–177). Furthermore, she referred to the Yemenites’ special linguistic tradition – the maintenance of the “correct pronunciation.” M44m4l1 whose father was born in Yemen is one of just two participants with Hebrew as L1 who pharyngealized during the interview. M44m4l1 described his use of [ʕ] and [ħ] as conscious performance which he tries to maintain, whereas his children barely pharyngealize due to their (non-Yemenite) environment.

**(63) m44m4l1 (7:15)**

*Let's say, I really try to speak with Het and Ayn. My Yemenite heritage is important to me and so. They [his children] less, they have it a bit, but less – it's like it's going away because it's not around and also because my wife is from a Kibbutz.*

נגיד אני מאוד משתדל לדבר ב-ח' ו-ע'. חשוב לי המורשת התימנית שלי וזה. הם פחות, יש להם את זה קצת אבל זה פחות. זה כאילו הולך ויורד. גם כי אין מסכים, גם כי אישתי קיבוצניקית.

In general, he asserted that he can no longer recognize younger HSs’ country of origin by their look and their speech – just if they are *Mizrahim*. In contrast, he said that he can discern older HSs according to their Iraqi, Moroccan, Persian, Indian, Yemenite origin, while other countries of origin are less discernible. When I asked why it is important for him to “speak with *het* and *‘ayn*,” he explained:

**(64) m44m411 (12:36)**

*Because it's my heritage. In the arrival process of the Jews to here, they erased traditions. They erased the tradition of my father's home. I don't want to erase this – I want this to be a part of the place. It also reminds me that I'm part of the Arab world. That's also important to me.*

כי זה המורשת שלי. בתהליך הגעה של יהודים לפה מחקו מסורות. מחקו את המסורת של בית אבי. אני לא רוצה למחוק את זה. אני רוצה שזה יהיה חלק מהמקום. זה גם מזכיר לי שאני חלק מהמרחב הערבי. זה גם חשוב לי.

Thus, M44m411 explained his style of speech as a purposeful expression of his Yemenite identity which he does not want to get lost and through which he relates to the Arab world – which is a political statement against marginalization. This attitude can be understood as self-conscious construction of a *Mizrahi* identity, just as Weingrod asserts:

[F]or some third-generation Israelis their ethnic membership is critically important. This is especially the case among networks and groups of Mizrahim who are engaged in advancing Mizrahi political agendas and cultural sensibilities. Prominently including younger poets, novelists and artists, as well as lawyers and university professors, they have sought to represent the political concerns and interests of their fellow Mizrahim, and also to retrieve and design viable formats of Mizrahi cultural expression. (Weingrod 2016: 300)

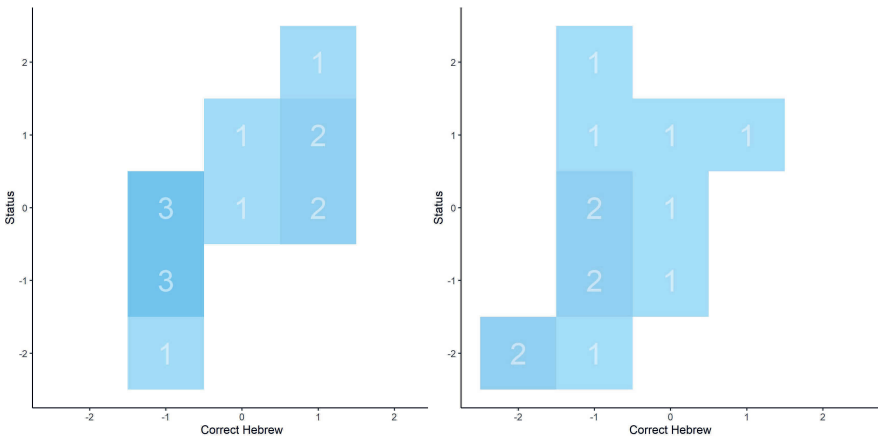
Despite the diverse countries of origin in my sample, just two out of 36 native Hebrew speakers, m44m411 and a8+m111 who is of Persian origin, produced [ʕ] and [h] which are described as indexical *Mizrahi* variants (Colasuonno 2013 and Schwarzwald 2013). All the other participants who referred to themselves as *Mizrahi* – including a70f311 who even claimed to like its sound – did not pharyngealize. In contrast, all Arab participants consistently produced [ʕ] and [h] in their Hebrew speech during the interviews. In this respect, it would be interesting to test if HSs classify the Hebrew speech of Israeli Arabs and Ethiopian Jews, who can transfer pharyngeals from their L1s, as ‘Mizrahim.’ Gafter (2014: 181) analyzed [ʕ] and [h] as being associated with the identity of particular communities of Yemenite origin in Israel rather than being indexical *Mizrahi* variants. He argues that the production of [ʕ] and [h] is a conscious process because he observed a higher production rate of [ʕ] during the reading task of a wordlist, in comparison to the interview situation (Gafter 2014: 90–92). M44m411’s statements (63 and 64) about his conscious effort to pharyngealize underline this argument.

From m44m411’s and a70f311’s examples can be seen that they related to their Yemenite origin in different ways: m44m411 treated his origin as a central component of his identity, while a70f311 conceded to be *Mizrahit*, but also detached herself from

her origin. Chetrit argues that traits of a *Mizrahi* identity can be adopted or rejected, irrespective of one's origin:

There are Mizrahim in Israel with a totally white consciousness, and they despise any Mizrahi claims of oppression and discrimination. Conversely, there are Ashkenazim in Israel with a completely Mizrahi consciousness. And in between are many shades of grey. (Chetrit 2009: ix)

The participants' careful treatment of the categories 'Mizrahim' and 'Ashkenazim' reveals that they were aware of their artificial and potentially problematic nature. Regardless of their origin, most participants displayed a detached attitude towards ethnic concepts. The participants rarely used the categories 'Mizrahim' and 'Ashkenazim' in relation to themselves, unlike other categories such as 'Arabs' or religious categories. The Israeli-born participant S20m2l1 (5:53), whose family is of mixed origin, detached himself from these categories by arguing that it is strange to take Jewish Berbers from Morocco and Jews from Turkey or Egypt and to treat them as one entity.<sup>26</sup> This statement reminded me of Lakoff's 1987 title *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things* which is an allusion to the apparent absurdity of categorization processes.



**Fig. 6.5:** Heatmaps: participants' ratings of 'Mizrahim' (left) and 'periphery' (right)

Comparing the two heatmaps in 6.5, one can see that their overall shape is similar. 'Mizrahim' has a center of slightly negative evaluations in the lower left sector of the

<sup>26</sup> In original: חושב שזה מוזר לקחת יהודי ברברי ממרוקן ויהודי טורקי או מיצרי זה לא משנה ולנסות לשים אותם על אותו הרצף.

diagram and another center of slightly positive evaluations in the opposite sector. The only center of ‘periphery’ coincides more or less with the negative center in ‘Mizrahim.’ Among the entries which were classified as ‘Mizrahim,’ there are no clear patterns: all the entries which refer to ‘Yemenites,’ ‘Moroccans,’ ‘Mizrahim’ or ‘Iraqis’ were rated differently. Two of the positively rated entries which were classified as ‘periphery’ refer to ‘settlers;’ they were rated with the values 0/1 and 1/1. Arguably, this category, which refers typically to nationalist-religious Jews who settle outside the territory of the Israeli state, is less prototypical for ‘periphery’ because it is less readily associated with a low socio-economic status and systematic marginalization than the more typical categories.

The two differing evaluations of ‘Mizrahim’ can be explained with the ambiguous nature of the category. Negative qualities which are expressed in the stereotype of the “*ars*” are associated also with ‘periphery.’ As Wiese (2017: 341) argues, socially stigmatized groups tend to be represented as speaking incorrectly, which can in turn reinforce the negative associations. The representations of these core categories as stigmatized groups exist in parallel to more positive representations. Typically, participants who displayed a liberal perspective on MH (see 6.2.3.2), also expressed a positive attitude towards ‘Mizrahim’ – qualities such as authenticity and flexibility which were associated with ‘standard Hebrew’ were associated with ‘Mizrahim,’ too. In contrast, negative evaluations of ‘Mizrahim’ and ‘periphery’ are typically connected to the conservative perspective (see 6.2.3.3) which posits a causal relation between non-normative linguistic behavior and social decline. From this perspective, violent and criminal behavior is associated with ‘bad language’ and ‘slang,’ as the entry “prisoners” with the rating  $-2/-2$  indicates.

## 6.5 Russians, Ethiopians, new immigrants and the army

In the following, the core categories ‘Russians’ and ‘Ethiopians’ – the most recent large immigrant groups in Israel (see 3.1.2) – will be analyzed in conjunction. In the GERT corpus, eight out of 21 participants used the term *rusim* ‘Russians,’ with the only difference that one used the definite article *ha-* (yielding ‘the Russians’) and one misspelled the term by using *ʁ* instead of *ʁ* (both are realized as /s/). Besides this basic term, two more participants used the more precise wordings ‘*olim mi-rusia ba-shnot ha-70*’ ‘immigrants from Russia in the 1970s’ and ‘*olim ḥadashim mi-brit ha-mo’atsot*’ ‘new immigrants from the Soviet Union.’ It was argued in 5.4.2 that the participants’ use of the term *rusim* ‘Russians’ was neither restricted to people who were born in the state of Russia, nor to L1 Russian speakers. In the Israeli context, ‘Russians’ typically refers to Russian speaking immigrants from the former Soviet Union, but also to immigrants, for example, from Moldova and Ukraine, with Romanian or

Ukrainian as L1. ‘Russians’ and ‘Ethiopians’ are separate categories which are not comprised in the two-class set ‘Ashkenazi/Mizrahi’ that is applied on the veteran Jewish population who settled in Israel before 1970 (Weingrod 2016: 282).

Since almost all immigrants from Ethiopia and the former Soviet Union received the Israeli citizenship as *‘olim*, they are legally defined as Jewish or closely related to a person who is defined as Jewish by the Israeli state (see 3.1.1). While *‘olim ḥadashim* is a transitory designation for immigrants who arrived in Israel within the last five years – the categories ‘Russians’ and ‘Ethiopians’ typically extend to subsequent generations. ‘Russians and ‘Ethiopians’ are considered as belonging to the ‘Jewish society’ – in contrast to the ‘Arab society’ – but their Jewishness has often been questioned in a stigmatizing way, not just by traditional religious voices. In a 2016 newspaper article with the headline *25 years later, Russian speakers still the ‘other’ in Israel*, says MK, then Member of the Knesset Ksenia Svetlova is cited with the statements: “The majority of native-born Israelis think Russian Israelis are not Jews,” and “[t]oo many Israelis make us feel not at home” (Borschel-Dan 2016). According to Idzinski (2014: 61), stereotypes about ‘Russians’ include the metaphorical representations of RUSSIAN MEN AS MAFIOSI and RUSSIAN GIRLS AS PROSTITUTES. As I argued above (see 6.4.2) in respect to ‘Mizrahim,’ the analysis of Russian characters in Israeli TV productions such as *‘erets nehederet* can yield further insights into their stereotypical representations and the associated linguistic stereotypes.

Epstein describes the ambiguous position of the ‘Russians’ in Israeli society as follows:

From a socioeconomic point of view, as well as in terms of citizenship, ex-Soviet immigrants constitute an integral part of the Israeli society, succeeding to delegate some of its leaders to the country’s highest political elite (Chairman of the Parliament Yuli Edelstein and the former Minister of Foreign Affairs Avigdor Liberman are both ex-Soviet immigrants, to name a few). However, when it comes to a debate on the Israeli culture, ex-Soviets make up a separate group which stands out not only by its linguistic capital, but also in its tastes and preferences. (Epstein 2016: 81)

On the one hand, professional qualities and entrepreneurship which are associated with the ‘Russians’ are valued. On the other hand, the expression of their unique cultural traits can be evaluated negatively when it is perceived as a threat to the predominantly Hebrew culture of modern Israel. In this line of argumentation Schwarzwald (2007: 73) asserts that in former times, immigrants confined their cultures to the private space, while adopting the contemporary Israeli culture and Hebrew as their only language in the public space. In contrast, she argues that the “large waves of immigrants from Russia since the 1980s” (my translation) led to a presence of the Russian language in Israel’s public space which would have been unthinkable in the years after the foundation of the state, when everybody tried to

speak only in Hebrew in public (Schwarzwald 2007: 76). The relative importance of Russian in Israel was underlined with statistical data in 3.1 and is summarized by Epstein:

Members of this group are usually faithful enthusiasts of Russian language (no matter whether they arrived from Russia or any other country of the Former Soviet Union). As a result, they have established a highly branched network of cultural institutions that started out almost completely in Russian and later slowly drifted toward Hebrew-Russian bilingualism [...] It is noteworthy that a vast majority of Russian-speaking Israelis do keep in touch with contemporary Russian culture, both by subscribing to Russian cable networks and by attending performances by Russian theaters, singers and musicians, who visit Israel as often as, for example, Russian cities like Kazan and Novosibirsk. A huge number of Russian-speaking Israelis have at least studied basic Hebrew, but only the young generation uses Hebrew as its first language of interfamily communication. Youngsters are also the only ones who read Hebrew fiction, while their parents and grandparents do their best to support Russian bookshops all over Israel. (Epstein 2016: 80)

Generally, participants asserted that they can discern ‘Russians’ in Israel based on their European look, their attire and their accent. Also participants with Russian as L1 confirmed these statements and equally referred to their in-group as *rusim* ‘Russians.’ R27m3l2 was born in Kazakhstan and migrated with his parents to Israel as a child. He described this type of migration with the metaphor *yaldei mizvadot* ‘suitcase children,’ since the immigrants’ young children were brought to the new country, without the ability to make their own choice – just as suitcases.

**(65) r27m3l2 (25:06)**

*When I try harder to have less accent, I feel that I have more accent. It's like I don't feel comfortable with that when I try to hide that I'm Russian. Let's say, on the telephone, they'll recognize less that I'm Russian, but they'll look at me and then, like, hear how I speak – so, like they can know that I'm Russian.*

כשאני יותר משתדל שיהיה לי פחות מבטא חש שיהיה יותר מבטא. כאילו אני לא מרגיש בנוח עם זה שאני מנסה להסתיר שאני רוסי. בטלפון נגיד פחות יזהו שאני רוסי אבל כאילו יסתכלו עליי ואז כאילו ישמעו איך אני מדבר אז כאילו יכולים לדעת שאני רוסי.

When I asked t37m3l2, who was born in Ukraine, whether he could distinguish Ukrainians and Russians when they are speaking Hebrew, he answered:

**(66) t37m3l2 (6:43)**

*When they are speaking Hebrew – no. When a Russian is speaking Hebrew, I know he's Russian, but I don't know from where.*

כשהם מדברים עברית לא. כשרוסי מדבר עברית אני יודע שהוא רוסי אבל אני לא יודע מאיפה.

Other participants with Russian as L1 also claimed that they could recognize Hebrew-speaking ‘Russians,’ while they were not able to make further distinctions about the speakers’ origin. These statements reveal that – just as ‘Mizrahim’ – ‘Russians’ became a basic category which comprises people from diverse countries of origin with several L1s. It is a hybrid category which is associated not only with diverse cultural concepts from the countries of origin, but also with cultural aggregates which are specifically Israeli (see Rozovsky & Almog 2011).

In his illustrative statement, r27m3l2 explained that he suffered from stigmatization as a child because of his lack of knowledge about the Jewish dietary laws (*kashrut*) and the observance of *shabbat* (see 67). He expressed that he has come to terms with his hybrid identity and that he likes to combine components from both the Israeli and the Russian culture for his construction of identity. He described it as conscious process with the words “constructing myself, instead of being constructed.” For example, he stated that he converted to Judaism and familiarized himself with religious knowledge, while, at the same time, he does not like to conceal his Russian accent in Hebrew (see 65).

**(67) r27m3l2 (26:36)**

*Because of communism, they didn't keep up the tradition. Let's say, when a friend came to me – it wasn't like the Russians of the 1970s. When a friend came to me, I didn't know what's kashrut, I didn't know what's Shabbat and what's keeping Shabbat. This brought the children in the neighborhood to call me pork eating Russian, Russian... all sorts of swearwords like that [...] they see that I am Russian, so there will be connotations. But, exactly, now I see a big strength in it. Even if I saw this as an embarrassment – now, I say it's like lucky that I am like this. Now, I both know Hebrew and Russian because I grew up in these two cultures – I am neither completely this nor that. I can combine what I want to be and what I choose as my culture and that's it: constructing myself instead of being constructed.*

בגלל הקומוניזם לא שמרו את המסורת. נגיד אם היה מגיע אליי חבר, זה לא כמו הרוסים של שנות השבעים. אם היה מגיע אליי חבר, אז לא הייתי יודע מה זה כשרות, לא יודע מה זה שבת, לא יודע מה זה לשמור שבת. זה הביא את הילדים בשכונה לקרוא לי כאילו רוסי אוכל חזיר, רוסי כל מיני מילות גנאי [...] רואים שאני רוסי אז יהיה קונוטציות. אבל נכון, עכשיו אני רואה בזה כוח מאוד מאוד גדול. אם לפני ראיתי בזה בושה, עכשיו אני אומר כאילו מזל שאני ככה. כאילו עכשיו אני גם יודע את העברית גם יודע את הרוסית שאני גדלתי בשתי התרבויות האלה. אני לא לגמרי זה ולא לגמרי זה. אני יכול לשלב את מה שאני רוצה ואת מה שאני בוחר בתרבות שלי וזהו. לבנות את עצמי במקום להיות בנוי.

There are linguistic phenomena which originated in the context of Russian-Israeli culture – r27m3l2 (20:41) used the term *ivrit rusit* ‘Russian Hebrew’ for phenomena

of code-switching. Fig. 6.6 shows a picture that I took in *Rehovot* of a shop sign: *matanushka* – the name of the gift shop – is composed of the MH term *matana* ‘gift’ and the Russian diminutive ending *-ushka*. This term is an example for creative linguistic processes where HSs combine resources from MH and Russian. Since

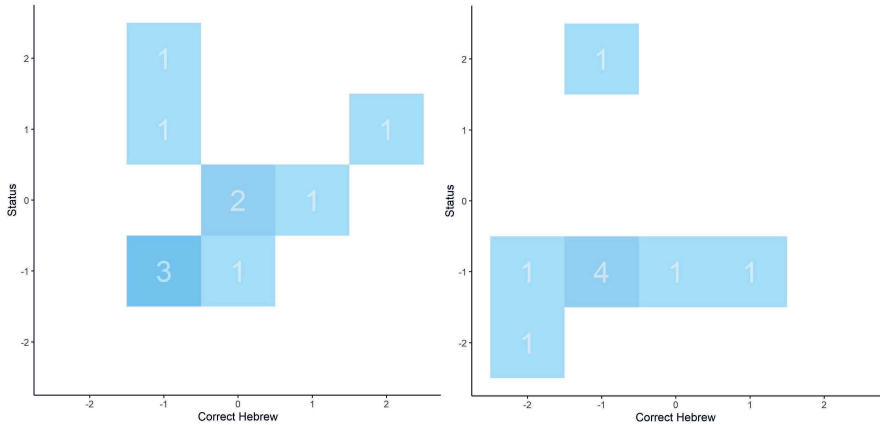


**Fig. 6.6:** *Matanushka*, a gift shop in *Rehovot*

Idzinski’s (2014) ethnographic study on Russian speakers who settled in Israel’s periphery in the 1990s when they were aged between five to 12 years, the Russian-Israeli identity has been researched in relation to the performance of a *Mizrahi* style (Prashizky 2019). Idzinski argues that

the ‘Mizrahi’ (North African and Middle Eastern Jewry) ethnic performance has become a more valued benchmark of belongingness for most of the interviewees than the ‘Ashkenazi’ (European and North American Jewry) performance, which served as the model of belongingness among immigrants from the FSU in the past. [...] most respondents in the current research express a rather alienated attitude towards Ashkenazim as well as proximity and a sense of shared destiny with Mizrahim. (Idzinski 2014: 78)

Idzinski (2014: 50) describes that some of her interviewees were proud to be referred to as Moroccans – not just on the basis of their favorite types of food and music – but, also because of their style of speech: they claimed that their MH was not correct (*tiknit*) and that – unlike the *Ashkenazim* and their parents (in respect to Russian) – they did not care about correct language use. The association of ‘Russians’ and ‘Mizrahim’ also came up during the interviews and is expressed in the proximity of the GERT ratings for these core categories:  $-0.20/0.00$  for ‘Russians’ and  $-0.15/0.07$  for ‘Mizrahim.’ During GERT, a45m2l2 discussed his ratings of these categories with the contact person s35m3l2 (both are Israeli Arabs). A45m2l2 questioned the Russians’ loyalty to the state and both stated that they would learn only “basic Hebrew,” despite being Jewish. A45m2l2 rated his entry ‘Russians’ with similar values as his entry ‘Mizrahim’ and argued that the status of both categories is considered superior to the ‘Arabs’ because they are Jewish – unlike the ‘Arabs.’



**Fig. 6.7:** Heatmaps: participants' ratings of 'Russians' (left) and 'Ethiopians' (right)

**(68) a45m2l2 (12:01)**

*The Russians don't care about the state. Like, their Hebrew is also not correct.*

**s35m3l2**

*No, immigrants from the Soviet Union, yes, they are not even interested, like, to learn Hebrew to the end. Just to get along. That's it – getting along, basic. They have basic Hebrew.*

**a45m2l2**

*Also they are like the Mizrahim.*

**s35m3l2**

*And less...*

**a45m2l2**

*Even less [...] it's also here, their status because they are Jews, at all, they look upon them with a better status than Arabs but their correct(ness) of Hebrew comes close to zero.*

הרוסים לא אכפת להם מהמדינה. כאילו העברית שלהם גם כן לא תקינה.

לא, עולים ברית המועצות כן, אפילו לא מעוניינים כאילו ללמוד את העברית עד הסוף. עד שרק יסתדרו. זהו להסתדר, בסיסי. עברית הבסיסית יש להם.

גם כן הם כמו המזרחים.

ופחות

אפילו פחות [...] זה פה גם כן, שלהם המעמד בגלל שהם יהודים בכלל הם מסתכלים עליהם מעמד יותר טוב מערבי אבל מהעברית התקינה שלהם, זה מגיע כמעט אפס.

The comparison of the heatmaps for the core categories 'Russians' and 'Ethiopians' in Fig. 6.7 reveals that the entries for 'Russians' were rated slightly higher in both respects, while the center of the ratings for both categories is close to  $-1/-1$ . In contrast to the negative evaluation of 'Russians,' which was discussed with a45m2l2's statement (68), several participants' expressed a very positive attitude towards

‘Russians’ – especially to those who immigrated prior to 1989, as a70f3l1’s rating (2/1) of her entry *‘olim mi-rusia ba-shnot ha-70* ‘immigrants from Russia in the 1970s’ illustrates. N31f3l1 (33:00) stated that they are typically educated and that their Hebrew is not incorrect – they just have an accent. A30f3l2 (30:37) who is herself a L1 Russian speaker also asserted that immigrants from the former Soviet Union would care more about speaking correctly than other immigrants and the *Mizrahim*. When comparing the categories, h26m2l1 explained his negative rating for ‘Ethiopians’ as follows:

**(69) h26m2l1 (25:08)**

<p><i>The problem with the Ethiopians – there are those who are really smart and they know and that, but many simply don’t know Hebrew. If you look at a Russian who migrates to Israel, maybe after a year or two he already knows Hebrew, for sure – he goes to the ulpan. Ethiopians can be here for thirty, forty years and they don’t know Hebrew [...] there are studies about that, there are many studies about that.</i></p>	<p>הבעיה אצל אתיופים, יש כאלה שבאמת חכמים ויודעים וזה אבל הרבה פשוט לא יודעים עברית. אם תראה רוסי שעולה לארץ יכול להיות שתוך שנה, שנתיים כבר יודע עברית פיקס, הולך לאולפן. אתיופים יכולים להיות פה שלושים ארבעים שנה ולא יודעים עברית [...] יש על זה מחקרים, יש על זה הרבה מחקרים.</p>
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In the interviews, both categories ‘Ethiopians’ and ‘Russians’ were treated as the prototypical immigrants in Israel. More positive associations were mentioned in relation to ‘Russians’ – they are typically represented as ‘successful immigrants.’ The relative prominence of the category ‘Ethiopians’ – with eight independent referrals during GERT – is surprising, considering that they make up just slightly more than one percent of Israel’s population and that even fewer are L1 speakers of an Ethiopian language. This figure is hardly comparable to the 15% of L1 Russian speakers (see 3.1). The interviews did not yield any detailed characterizations of ‘Ethiopians’ and the few which are documented in GERT are contradictory, as the heatmap with the broad range of ratings for ‘correct Hebrew’ between –2 and 1 illustrates. In terms of status, almost all entries for ‘Ethiopians’ were rated with negative values. It can be inferred that stereotypical representations of ‘Ethiopians’ are based on stigmatizing associations. The only positive exception among the entries for ‘Ethiopians’ is h21f3l2’s entry *etiopim she meshartim ba-tsava* ‘Ethiopians who serve in the army,’ with the values –1/2. Apparently, serving in the Israeli army can improve the immigrants’ social status.

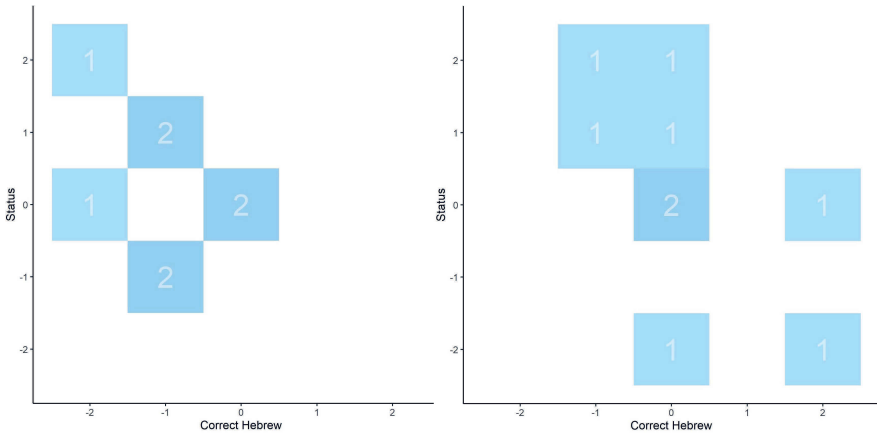
Military service is mandatory in Israel for Jews and therefore, all *‘olim* under a certain age, in principal, have to serve in the army. I38m3l1 explained that the army is a central institution in Israeli society which comprises diverse social groups:

**(70) i38m3l1 (19:13)**

*But the army is not a homogeneous group, the army is, it's the Israeli society, the army minus the Haredim. But the army is the Israeli society – there is everything there.*

אבל צבא זה לא קבוצה הומוגנית, צבא זה, זה החברה הישראלית הצבא, מינוס החרדים אבל הצבא זה החברה הישראלית, יש שם הכל.

A comparison of the heatmaps for the categories 'new immigrants' and 'army' demon-



**Fig. 6.8:** Heatmaps: participants' ratings of 'new immigrants' (left) and 'army' (right)

strates that most entries were rated neutrally or negatively for 'correct Hebrew' and with neutral or positive values for 'status.' These positive ratings for 'status' can be explained because both categories typically refer to members of the 'Jewish society' in Israel (see also a45m2l2's statement 68). Tendentially, both categories were rated more favorably for 'status' than for 'correct Hebrew.' In this respect, participants argued that *olim* who learned Hebrew in the course of their military service had difficulties to adapt their way of speaking after leaving the army.

As a20f2l2's case illustrates, the army service can play a major role during the immigration process and the acquisition of MH. A20f2l2 took up her army service shortly after she had arrived in Israel and had just learned Hebrew on a basic level. She stated that she was not confident to distinguish linguistic phenomena which are characteristic for the army context from regular Hebrew because most of her experiences in Israel – including language courses – took place in the army.

**(71) a20f2l2 (01:17)**

*What's funny is that perhaps, I don't know which words that I'm saying are from the army or which aren't because I [only] know the army language now.*

מה שמצחיק שאולי אני לא יודעת איזה מילים אני מדברת שזה מהצבא או שזה לא כי אני עכשיו מכירה את השפה של הצבא.

A20f2l2 (09:40) mentioned that sometimes other HSs who had not served in the army had difficulties understanding her. Just as several participants, a30f3l2 (38:34) claimed that she can generally determine if HSs served in the army based on their reactions when she talks about army contexts: if the interlocutor does not understand, she knows that he was not in the army or in a different unit. However, 'army' was just used independently by two participants during GERT: the category did not play a central role for the participants' categorizations of HSs in this study.

**6.6 Israeli Arabs**

When I first thought about the proportions of social groups in my samples, I had the impression that Arab participants were over represented in the GERT sample because I had just spoken to five Arab participants. On second thought, I noticed that their ratio among the 21 participants was not far off the actual ratio of Israeli Arabs in Israel's population – 21.1 % (see 3.1). This was the first time that this statistical figure became comprehensible for me. Surprisingly, Israeli Arabs were barely visible during all the time I spent in Israel – probably because the majority lives in villages in the Galilean hillside which are somewhat hard to reach (cf. 3.1.5). In the public space – especially in urban settings – they were either absent or I could not distinguish them from Jewish Israelis. One of the few occasions when I consciously noticed them was when I spent time on university campuses in Haifa, Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. Because of the contrast with the public space outside the campuses, it was an unusual impression for me to see large groups of Arab students strolling on the campus and conversing with each other in Palestinian Arabic, interspersed with many Hebrew and English terms. During my working routine at a canteen in the kibbutz where I learned Hebrew, I had also met many Israeli Arabs who were employed at almost every branch in the kibbutz and commuted to work from the surrounding Arab villages. In the canteen, I observed that L1 speakers of Hebrew, Arabic and Russian pretty much kept to themselves during their lunch break. Although they all had a good command of Hebrew, only very few occasionally engaged in small talk in Hebrew with a member of another L1 group.

If not further specified, the terms “Israeli Arabs” and “Arabs,” in short, will be used in the text to refer to the seven participants with Palestinian Arabic as L1. For GERT, I interviewed six Israeli Arab participants. Besides these participants, I had interviewed one Israeli Arab in the first fieldwork stage: I met s35m3l2 in Akko, a historic coastal town in Northern Israel, which is the next larger town to the participant’s home village in the Western Galilee region. S35m3l2 (50:23) labelled himself as *‘aravi isra’eli* ‘Israeli Arab’, when he quantified his social in-group within the Israeli population with two million people – the same figure appears in the CBS’ data for the population group “Arabs” (see 3.1). The contact with s35m3l2 was established through another participant I had interviewed earlier. In the second fieldwork stage, s35m3l2 helped me to recruit three more participants (s35f3l2, a45m2l2 and t34m3l2) and assisted in the recordings of these interviews which took place in his and the participants’ home town. Both h21f3l2 and r17f1l2 were recruited face to face and interviewed at Tel Aviv University – their Arab home towns are located in Israel’s Central District. A29m2l2 was also recruited face to face and interviewed in his home town in the Haifa district, which is populated almost exclusively by Druze. Six of the Israeli Arab participants declared themselves as Muslims and one as Druze, while only three defined themselves as religious. Bearing in mind their willingness to be interviewed in Hebrew and judging from their statements during the interview, the political opinions of the Israeli Arab participants can be summarized as ranging from liberal to moderately conservative: they expressed a positive attitude towards the state of Israel, not without a critical undertone.

During these interviews, the interaction between Jewish and Arab Israelis was described as limited – not just because of residential segregation (see 3.1.5). However, there are Israeli Arabs who are intensively involved with the Hebrew-speaking society: t34m3l2 (21:52) asserted that there is a new trend among Israeli Arabs in demographically mixed regions to send their children to Jewish schools. H21f3l2 (2:47) also related that her father went to a Jewish high school because, at the time, there was no Arabic high school close to their village. She described her home as multilingual with MH and Arabic as main spoken languages and added that her mother speaks less MH than her father and herself. T34m3l2 (11:49) claimed that Arab men are more involved with Jewish society and therefore tend to speak better Hebrew than Arab women.

Because of the political history of the region, the concepts ‘Israeli’ and ‘Arab’ can be understood as contradictory. Critical views from non-Arabs in Israel and from Arabs from abroad challenge the social identity ‘Israeli Arab:’

Arab citizens of Israel find themselves in a situation of double periphery: Israeli Jewish society questions their loyalty to an ethos of a ‘Jewish democratic state,’ which is an essential concept of the Israeli state- and society-building, while Arabs outside Israel condemn Israeli Arabs as

collaborationists who disengage from the all-Arab struggle against Zionism. Aliens both to ‘their’ state and ‘their’ people, Israeli Arabs developed a culture of their own, which is partly similar to that of the rest of Palestinians – that is probably quite natural, since both groups come from the same people divided by the outcome of the 1948 War, though their civil status is completely different (Palestinian Arabs from the West Bank and Gaza never obtained Israeli citizenship). (Epstein 2016: 79)

This characterization is reflected in s35m3l2’s statement:

**(72) s35m3l2 (21:44)**

*Do you know what the Egyptians say about the Jews – about the Arabs who live here in Israel? The Jewish Muslim. No, you say it’s a joke, but it’s serious. Why do they say this? He lives among the Jews. How is it possible? They would not rely on it. Until you speak with him and make him understand. Therefore, we, the Arabs, live in two worlds. Ask the Egyptians: are you Jewish? And here, too: no, you are Arab. Where should I stand? Where you want me to – Let me live in peace.*

אתה יודע מה אומרים המצרים על היהודים, על הערבים שגרים פה בישראל? המוסלים היהודי. לא זה בצחוק אתה אומר את זה אבל זה היה אמיתי. למה הם אומרים את זה? הוא חיי בין היהודים, איך זה יכול להיות? לא היו מבוטחים לזה עד שתדבר איתו ותן לו להבין את זה. בגלל זה גם אנחנו הערבים חיים בשני עולמות. שאלו את זה למצרים, אתה יהודי וגם פה, לא אתה ערבי. איפה אני אעמוד? איפה שבא לכם תנו לי לחיות בשקט.

S35m3l2 thus described a conflict of perspectives which is characteristic of the Israeli Arab participants’ accounts. For example, s35m3l2 (40:34) described that it is difficult for him to see that the same piece of news is reported on differently in Arabic and in Hebrew media. The switching between “two worlds” has an impact on the Arab participants’ LAs and their language use: these perspectives can get conflated, as s35m3l2’s mix-up between *yehudim* ‘Jews’ and *aravim* ‘Arabs’ at the beginning of his statement suggests. Just as several other Arab participants, s35m3l2 described his language use – even at home – with frequent code-switching between MH and Arabic (see 76).

### 6.6.1 Variation in MH according to the Arab participants

From a quantitative perspective, the six Israeli Arabs completed GERT in a very similar manner as the fifteen other participants. Together, they produced 42 entries, which account for 22.1% of all entries, while they make up for 28.6% of all the GERT participants. On average, Arabs produced six entries – at most ten and at least three. They were less productive than the other participants who average slightly less than

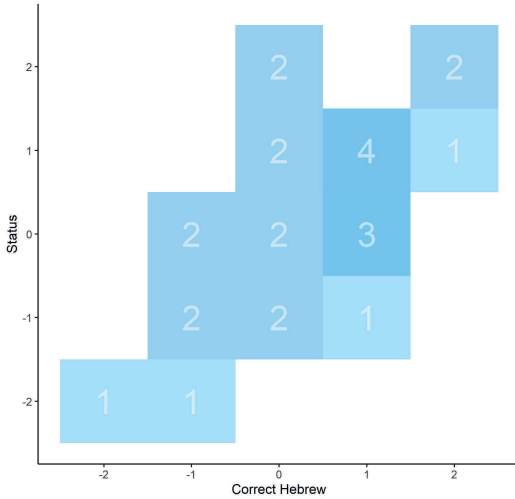
ten entries per person. Unlike three of the others who produced 15 or more entries, none of the Arabs were extremely productive.

**Tab. 6.1:** Ratios of mentions among Arab (A) and other participants (O) in % with n in brackets

Category	A (n = 6)	O (n = 15)
Arabs	83.3 (5)	26.7 (4)
Ashkenazim	66.7 (4)	20.0 (3)
Russians	66.7 (4)	33.3 (5)
Ethiopians	50.0 (3)	33.3 (5)
Mizrahim	50.0 (3)	20.0 (3)
Haredim	33.3 (2)	33.3 (5)
Yemenites	33.3 (2)	0
Druze	33.3 (2)	6.7 (1)
Immigrants	0	40.0 (6)

Table 6.1 is a juxtaposition of the ratios of different participants who mentioned the recurrent categories without the foreign-induced entries. One can see that Arab participants referred to their in-group ‘Arabs’ more frequently than other participants – just one Arab did not mention the category. Typically, Arabs produced several more specific entries with geographical, religious or educational distinctions which were classified as ‘Arabs’ in the summary. They made geographic distinctions among Arabs who live in the Northern, Center and Southern District and religious distinctions between Muslim, Druze and Christian Arabs. The heatmap in Fig. 6.9 reveals that the entries were rated very differently – the ratings are distributed over most of the space of the heatmap. However, the GERT corpus does not contain enough entries to make sensible comparisons between subcategories such as ‘Arabs from the north’ and ‘Arabs from the center.’ In the heatmap, there is a slightly higher concentration of entries around the ratings 1/1 (four entries) and 1/0 (three entries). Among these entries, only “Arabs in Haifa” stems from a non-Arab participant (n31f3l1). The entries which were rated with 1/1 refer to “Arabs in Haifa,” and twice to “Arabs in the center” and “Arabs in the south.” The three entries for 1/0 with a lower rating for ‘status’ refer twice to “Arabs in the north” and once to “Druze in the north.” It can be seen that the Arab participants s35f3l2 and r17f1l2 rated “Arabs in the north” less favorably for status.

S35f3l2 (1:57) who grew up in the Center District and moved to the Northern District argued that Arabs from the center speak better Hebrew than Arabs from the north because in the center, there is more interaction with Jews. H21f3l2 (16:28) who was living in the center argued that she can trace dialectal influence from Palestinian Arabic in Hebrew: she claimed that she can distinguish Arabs from the north and



**Fig. 6.9:** Heatmap: participants' ratings of 'Arabs'

the center and also Bedouins and Druze. She described that Arabs from the north, including the Druze who majorly live there, tend to have a stronger Arabic accent, just as s35f3l2 asserted. Furthermore, she claimed that Bedouins speak faster and that Arabic speakers from the center stretch words, both in Arabic and in Hebrew. A45m2l2 (7:09) also claimed that he can distinguish Arab HSs from the center, from the north and Bedouins because of phonological differences in their native Arabic dialects. For example, he mentioned different realizations of the letter *qāf* in the Arabic dialects as basis for the Arab HSs different realization of *qof* in Hebrew. In a similar manner h21f3l2 mentioned different realizations of the Arabic letter *lām* and respectively Hebrew *lamed*. It can be an interesting line of research to explore the influence of dialectal differences in Arabic on the Arab HSs' production data. The comparison of all the ratings for the core category 'Arabs' reveals the positive influence of the Arab participants' ratings on the average values: the Arabs' average values are 0.94 for 'correct Hebrew' and 0.46 for 'status,' while the other participants' average values for this core category are -0.5 and -0.1.

Besides the frequent referral to their in-group category, Arab participants (66.7%) also referred relatively more often to 'Ashkenazim' than the other participants (20.0%). I already noted that L1 HSs tended to avoid the use of the categories 'Ashkenazim' and 'Mizrahim' for GERT. This behavior is reflected in the lower ratio of use among the non-Arab participants – just 20.0% referred to these categories. The ratios for the categories 'Russians,' 'Mizrahim,' 'Ethiopians' and 'Haredim' do not diverge

considerably: four participants each from both groups referred to ‘Russians,’ three each to ‘Ethiopians’ and ‘Mizrahim’ and just two Arabs referred to ‘Haredim.’

The Arabs frequent referral to ‘Ashkenazim’ and ‘Arabs’ can be understood as an expression of a two-class set – their in-group and ‘Ashkenazim’ as the opposite category. Several Arabs used ‘Ashkenazim’ as a metonymy for ‘Jews.’ During GERT, s35f3l2 listed a hierarchy of the categories she used, starting with the lowest value for ‘correct Hebrew:’

**(73) s35f3l2 (13:05)**

*Correct Hebrew – the lowest is for new immigrants [...] and Russians, too. Every new immigrant, it’s like, you recognize directly, then Arabs, then Mizrahim, then Jews – Ashkenazim.*

עברית התקינה בהכי פחות גם לעולים  
חדשים [...] וגם רוסים, לא? כל עולה  
חדשים כאילו זה, אתה ישר מזהה. אחר  
כך ערבים אחר כך מזרחים אחר כך  
יהודים – אשכנזים.

At the top of her hierarchy for speaking “correct Hebrew” she mentioned “Jews” at first and immediately corrected herself to *Ashkenazim*, which hints at her metonymic understanding of ‘Ashkenazim’ as designation for ‘Jews.’ S35m3l2 (44:34) even used the term *yehudi* ‘Jew’ in a broader sense when he recounted that he met a *yehudi katoli* ‘Catholic Jew’ on a trip to Italy.<sup>27</sup> This compound of the religious concepts ‘Catholic’ and ‘Jewish’ is contradictory, according to the conventional understanding. It can be inferred that for s35m3l2’s categorization, ‘non-Arabs’ are typically ‘Jews’ – which is an effective way of categorization for the Israeli context. By designating a person he met in Italy as *yehudi katoli*, he expressed that the person was Catholic and, at the same time, non-Arab which has to mean European or Italian, in this context.

The only recurrent category with more than four mentions that the Arab participants did not use for GERT is the category ‘immigrants.’ In contrast, 40.0% of the other participants referred to it. S35f3l2 (13:28) associated “Russians” with “new immigrants” in her hierarchy, but she only produced an entry “Russians” for GERT. In a similar manner as for her category ‘Ashkenazim,’ it is likely that she referred to the prototypical ‘new immigrants’ with the category ‘Russians.’

Another prominent category among the Arab participants is ‘Mizrahim.’ They described this category with similar characteristics as ‘Arabs’ in terms of social status, culture, language use and their political marginalization in Israel. Lefkowitz describes this aspect:

<sup>27</sup> In original: כאילו הכרתי קטולי ב, יהודי קטולי הכרתי לפני שבועיים הייתי באיטליה.

Palestinian Arabs and Mizrahi Jews share affinities of socioeconomic class and cultural heritage, while Mizrahi and Ashkenazi Jews share strong religious and national affinities. (Lefkowitz 2004: 17)

In this respect, a45m2l2 who located himself close to ‘Mizrahim’ on his GERT template criticized the social division in the state:

**(74) a45m2l2 (15:57)**

*That's how the state is – divided: Ashkenazim, Mizrahim and Arabs. The Arab will always be at the end. That's the truth – there's nothing you can do.*

ככה המדינה מחולקת, אשכנזים, מזרחים ערבים. מה שיהיה את הערבי בסופו של דבר. זו האמת, מה לעשות איך.

During a45m2l2's (10:29) interview, the contact person s35m3l2 asserted that when speaking with ‘Jews,’ one can recognize ‘Mizrahim’ on the basis of their accent (*mivt'a*) because their parents still speak Arabic or *‘ivrit l'o tkina* ‘incorrect Hebrew’ – a45m2l2 confirmed this statement. S35f3l2 (10:14) also hinted at phonetic similarities in the Hebrew speech of ‘Ethiopians,’ ‘Mizrahim’ and ‘Arabs’ who all can be recognized by their realization of the phoneme /r/. He said that they pronounce it similarly and speak *‘im ha resh shelanu* ‘with our *resh*’.

Generally, Arabs emphasized the concepts ‘ethnicity’ and ‘religion’ for their categorization during GERT, while the native HSs tended to avoid these concepts. They emphasized the concept ‘education’ as main distinctive concept, instead. A comparison between c36f3l1's (see 57) and t34m3l2's strategies for GERT is illustrative for these differences. While c36f3l1 just produced the categories “intellectuals” and “uneducated,” t34m3l2 used three entries which refer to the ethnic domain: he put *ma'arav* ‘West’ right next to *Ashkenazim* in the upper right corner of his template and *mizrah* ‘East’ in the opposite corner at the bottom left. This way of categorizing into ‘West’ – that is to say ‘Ashkenazim’ – and ‘East’ which stands for everything that is not ‘Ashkenazi’ can be understood as a reference to Hall's (1992) post-colonial critique with the title “The West and the rest.”

### 6.6.2 Attitudes towards MH and Arabic

The Arab participants' typical attitude towards MH can be summarized as utilitarian. They described MH AS A TOOL to get along in Israeli society – which means keeping oneself informed, getting access to higher education and qualifying for a professional career. They did not express any affection for MH, in contrast to Arabic. Their attitude

towards Arabic is more emotional and politically motivated, as t34m3l2's answer to Q3 during the guided interview indicates:

**(75) t34m3l2 (4:36)**

*That's an excellent question, but it's like in principle. I speak Hebrew as a means, a means of communication. That doesn't mean that I like the Hebrew language and that, I don't want to say to you if I pass on these things, these principles, to my children or not. It's enough for me when they'll speak Hebrew to live their everyday lives. Yes, but not that they'll love the language and forget their Arabic or something. I would be more satisfied, or more happy if they knew English. English is a world language, a more spoken language [...] You can speak it here, in the state, in Europe and wherever you are. But Hebrew, basically they should know to lead a conversation and to get along with the current status which we are living in - the political one, let's say and all this mess.*

זה שאלה מצוינת אבל זה מעקרונות, יעני. כאילו אני מדבר עברית כאמצעי, אמצעי לתקשר. זה לא אומר שאני אוהב את השפה העברית ואת זה אני לא רוצה להגיד לך אם אני מעביר את הדברים האלה, העקרונות האלה, לילדים שלי או לא. אני מספיק לי שהם ידברו עברית כדי שיחיו ביומיום שלהם. כן, אבל לא שיאהבו את השפה וישכחו את הערבית שלהם או משהו. אני אהיה מבסוט יותר או שמח יותר אם הם ידעו אנגלית. אנגלית זה שפה עולמית שפה יותר מדוברת [...] אפשר לדבר אותה פה במדינה, באורובה ואיפה שאתה נמצא. אבל עברית, בעיקרון שידעו לנהל שיחה, להתמודד עם המצב הקיים שאנחנו חיים בו, המדיני בוא נגיד וכל הבלגן הזה.

T34m3l2 stated that he does not want his children to like MH to such an extent that they might forget their L1 Arabic – just enough to get along in the current political situation which he described with the colloquial Hebrew expression *balagan*, which means ‘mess’ or ‘chaos.’ Thereby, he criticized the circumstances under which the Arabs live in Israel. In his statement, he used Arabic lexemes, such as *mabsuf* ‘satisfied,’ *y’ani* ‘this means’ and *’uruba* ‘Europe.’ While L1 HSs also used the first two lexemes during the interviews, *’uruba* is not commonly used in MH.

In contrast to other L2 HSs who described MH typically as difficult, Arabs described MH as easy and structurally similar to Arabic. S35f3l2 (4:35) stated that several languages are in conflict in Israel and that the easiest solution is to speak MH because it is the language of the majority and it is easier than Arabic – she described Arabic as the hardest language in the world, after German. However, she criticized the marginalization of Arabic and asserted that it is painful to see when Arabic disappears from the public space – especially, when it is deleted from public signs. H21f3l2 (11:32) expressed a similar view by stating that Arabic should be taught correctly and appreciated as a minority language in Israel. However, the Arab participants typically did not frame the widespread use of MH as a threat to Arabic. While they

asserted that their Arabic is influenced heavily by code-switching phenomena from MH, they did not advocate for the safe-guarding of their language against foreign influence – in contrast to several L1 HSs who voiced these concerns in respect to MH. For instance, s35m3l2 (31:30) described his language practice at home as follows:

**(76) s35m3l2 (31:30)**

*For example, me and my wife, it depends.*

*When we want to speak about an incident in the country, you can't find words in Arabic to describe it. No, I am telling you the truth. It's OK for me, I feel fine this way, OK. But that's our problem. You cannot, like, talk about some situation to your wife, for example – you have difficulties to find words in Arabic. It's easier to talk about this situation in Hebrew. [...] There's no way you can talk about a whole situation in Arabic. Only the academic staff know Arabic, nowadays.*

למשל אני ואישתי, תלוי. כשאנחנו רוצים לדבר על מקרה במדינה, אתה לא יכול לתפוס מילים בערבית לתאר את זה. לא, אני אומר לך את האמת. בסדר מבחינתי, אני מרגיש טוב עם זה בסדר. אבל זאת הבעיה שלנו, אתה לא יכול כאילו לספר סיטואציה משהו לאישתך. אתה למשל מתקשה למצוא מילים בערבית. לספר איזה סיטואציה הזאת לאישתך בעברית יותר קל. [...] אין מצב שתספר כאילו סיטואציה שלמה בערבית. רק אנשי הסגל האקדמי שהיום יודעים ערבית.

Just as L2 HSs, in general, Arab HSs were characterized primarily as speaking with an accent and as code-switching frequently between their L1 Arabic and Hebrew. Hawker (2018: 219–220) asserts that code-switching phenomena among Israeli Arabs which have been framed as “Arabrew” have attracted interest from the Israeli public due to their political implications. This aspect was also brought up by several L1 HSs during the interviews. However, in her empirical analysis of these phenomena of code-switching and borrowing, Hawker (2018: 239) argues against the conceptualization of “Arabrew” as a linguistic variety of Palestinian Arabic. The data from this study principally confirms Hawker’s (2018) argument – but, ultimately, perception experiments need to answer this question. Shifting the focus back from PD to DK, the Arab participants’ statements hint at typical attitudinal aspects towards MH which other L2 HSs did not address.

Similarly to the general characterization of ‘standard Hebrew’ in 6.2, Arab participants described it as spoken language or “street language.” In contrast to the other participants, they described ‘correct Hebrew’ as bearing little communicative or practical value. A45m2l2 even used the wording *ze lo shelanu* ‘it’s not ours.’

**(77) a45m2l2 (00:24)**

*Standard Hebrew is what we speak in the street, it's like street language. Correct Hebrew it's not ours. It's for people who are educated.*

עברית סטנדרטית זה שאנחנו מדברים ברחוב. היא שפת רחוב כאילו. עברית התקינה זה לא שלנו. זה לאנשים שמלומדים.

Several Arab participants associated 'correct Hebrew' with religious concepts. A29m2l2 (00:17) described it as the language of Judaism and the *Torah*. H21f3l2 had the impression that religious HSs speak more correctly and use less slang. Consequently, both participants rated 'Haredim' positively for 'correct Hebrew' and neutrally for 'status' during GERT, with the values 2/0.

**(78) h21f3l2 (18:55)**

*Maybe if it's – like I said before – I feel that those who are more religious – so yes, I see that their language is like cleaner, there isn't a lot of slang in there, there isn't, like there's more maybe – yes, that's what I noted.*

אולי אם זה כמו שאמרתי קודם. אני מרגישה שאלה שהם יותר דתיים, אז אני כן רואה שהשפה שלהם היא יותר נקייה כאילו. אין בה הרבה סלנג אין בה, כאילו זה. שמה יותר, אולי כאילו, כן זה ששמתי לב.

Hawker (2018: 239) concludes that "Palestinians and other Arabs inside Israel cannot 'simply' speak" – and I would emphasize this aspect in respect to speaking MH. As t34m3l2's statement (75) revealed, the Israeli Arabs' attitudes toward Hebrew are typically framed within the context of political attitudes. A45m2l2's description of 'correct Hebrew' as "not ours" (see 77) also hints at the function of linguistic representations for the construction of in- and out-groups: speaking 'standard Hebrew' with an accent is represented as the authentic Israeli Arab style of MH, while speaking 'correct Hebrew' is not.

This interpretation is supported by the Arab participants' references to Arabs as model speakers in reaction to Q5.<sup>28</sup> They referred to relatives such as their father, brother or son and to Arab public figures such as Zouheir Bahloul and Lucy Aharish. When I asked h21f3l2, whether she liked the Hebrew of her father because it feels authentic, she affirmed. The Arabs' preference for authentic speakers from their own cultural environment over L1 HSs can be explained, on the one hand, with the conflation of religious and linguistic concepts: even though the prototypical HS is represented as Jewish, they did not refer to Jewish model speakers because as Arabs, they see themselves as representatives of the opposite category of 'Jewish.' On the

28 Q5: מי מדבר את העברית הכי אהובה עליך? 'Who speaks the Hebrew you like the most?'

other hand, their orientation towards Arab HSs can be explained with a general preference for authenticity over assimilation. In this regard, the imitation of Jewish L1 HSs was described negatively: t34m3l2 (23:47) asserted critically that Druze (as fellow Arabs) love the culture of the Jews and consciously try to assimilate by their way of speaking and even call their children Hebrew names – for his description of the Druze, he also used the term *misht'aknezim* ‘those who make themselves *Ashkenazim*’ (see also 6.3).

However, an Arab who displays a high command of Hebrew can also be evaluated positively. For example, 45m2l2 (3:04) expressed his admiration for Zouheir Bahloul and my contact person s35m3l2 immediately joined in the praise:

**(79) PS**

*And do you also have an example for someone who speaks a really beautiful Hebrew?*

וגם יש לך דוגמה בשביל מישהו שמדבר עברית ממש יפה?

**a45m2l2**

*Yes, yes, the member of the Knesset Zouheir Bahloul. He was an example from the [Arab] sector for the whole state. Like, an Arab who speaks better Hebrew than a Jew. They [the Jews] took this as an example for themselves – someone who is not from us, like, the one who is not from our language speaks better than ourselves [...]*

כן כן כן, החבר כנסת זוהיר בהלול. מהמגזר זה היה דוגמה לכל המדינה. כאילו ערבי מדבר עברית יותר טוב מיהודי. לקחו את זה כדוגמה שלהם, אחד לא משלנו, כאילו האחד לא מהשפה שלנו מדבר יותר טוב מאיתנו [...]

**s35m3l2**

*Yes, he was a champion of the Hebrew language. [...] It's like the Jews don't speak his [level of] Hebrew.*

כן זה היה אלוף בשפה העברית [...] היהודים כאילו לא מדברים בעברית שלו.

They described the extensive knowledge of Hebrew as a positive quality which can serve to outshine others – in this case, the Jews – intellectually. Thereby, they characterized Zouheir Bahloul in a way which can be understood as a metonymy for the capacities of the Israeli Arabs, as a whole. The intricate relations between political attitudes, the construction of Israeli Arab identities and linguistic variation in MH among Arab HSs invite further research.

## 6.7 *Haredim*, religious Jews and *datlashim*

In this section, the Jewish religious spectrum will be assessed as a variable for variation in MH. It will be argued that ‘Haredim’ are the prototypical representation of

'religious Jews:' they are conceptualized as occupying one end on the continuum of religiosity, while the other end is occupied by *hilonim* 'seculars.' As the category *datlashim* which is derived from the acronym *datim le-she-avar* 'formerly religious (Jews),' implies, HSs can posit themselves on the continuum of religiosity through their performance of identities. There are lexical means in MH to describe different processes of constructing one's identity in relation to religious concepts. Fania Oz-Salzberger (8:29) stated in an expert interview for this study that *lehithazek*, which literally means 'getting stronger,' is used both by religious and secular HSs to describe an individual's process of becoming more religious. There is also a traditional religious framing for 'regaining one's faith' with the wording *hazara bi-tshuva* 'return to repentance.' Since *tshuva* commonly translates to 'answer,' the opposite process of adopting a secular lifestyle can be termed as *yetsi'a bi-she'ela* 'exit to the question,' which carries a negative connotation.

During the interviews, participants displayed all kinds of different and even contradicting attitudes towards religious concepts: besides self-identifying *datlashim*, there were also participants who gradually embraced a *Haredi* way of life. The formerly religious participants were recruited with the help of an organization which assists individuals in their transition from a religious to a secular life style. An employee of this organization informed me that more than 250 individuals have been reaching out to the organization for assistance every year, and that the trend is growing. In contrast to common expectations, most of the *datlashim* I spoke with (still) kept up personal relations with people from the religious environment – especially with their families. There were also secular participants who sympathized with religious concepts as well as *Haredim* who related in a positive manner to the secular society. Momentary polls such as the one rendered in Table 3.2 suggest that religious categories are mutually exclusive and perpetuate themselves – in the sense that, for example, *Haredim* only give birth to new generations of *Haredim*. However, the analysis of the participants' statements revealed the fuzzy nature of these categories which can be grasped as roles, using Berger & Luckmann's (1967: 91) terminology (see 2.1.2.2).

I conducted three open interviews (m37m11l, g25m3l2 and a22m11l) and one guided interview (a68m3l1) with self-identifying *Haredim* as well as five open (k24f2l1, t35f3l2, y37m2l2, h37f2l1 and m56m2l1) and one guided interview (r36f3l1) with *datlashim* to include different perspectives on religious concepts in the study. All *Haredim* I interviewed took the role of an unofficial ambassador of their community. Especially at the beginning of the interview, they acted formally and presented themselves as serious, dedicated and professional. In the course of the interview, the situation typically developed into a less formal and more friendly atmosphere. All *Haredi* participants advocated for a strictly religious way of life, but at the same time, they stressed the necessity to maintain the discourse with all people, regardless of

their religious beliefs. By participating in the study and talking to me, they actively tried to build a bridge over what is conceived as gap between the *Haredi* and the secular society in Israel.

During GERT, one third of the 21 participants independently mentioned the category ‘Haredim’ and it is the most prominent category from the conceptual domain ‘religion.’ I argued in 3.1.4 that ‘Haredim’ are commonly characterized as one of the most salient social groups in Israeli society, despite their relatively small ratio of five to ten percent of the total population – in this regard, the category is similar to ‘Ethiopians.’ Participants characterized ‘Haredim’ as discernible due to their attire and their (linguistic) behavior. Usually, ‘Haredim’ were represented as speaking Yiddish to some degree (cf. a20f2l2’s statement 8). T37m3l2 (6:23) even claimed that they had a completely different language with many words in Yiddish. Also Assouline (2017: 16) asserts that Yiddish speakers are “regarded, by outsiders and insiders alike, as prototypical embodiment of the Haredi as a member of a segregated minority.”

Except for self-identifying *Haredim* and *datlashim*, most participants stated that they had very little or no personal contact at all with *Haredim*. As a20f2l2’s statement (8) indicates, common representations of the category are likely to be shaped by stereotypical portrayals in TV productions such as *Shtisel* and the coverage on often controversial political events which are associated with ‘Haredim’ by Israeli media.

### 6.7.1 Are there indexical *Haredi* variants?

G25m3l2 who was living in a moderately *Haredi* environment at the time of the interview and identified as religious asserted that he could recognize ‘Haredim,’ based on their way of speaking:

#### (80) g25m3l2 (19:40)

*Usually, I’m never wrong about this. Usually, even if I meet a boy without kipa at the University who looks as if he isn’t religious anymore, after some minutes I understand that he is Haredi. I was never wrong at this. I don’t say that most people don’t want that someone gets onto this, but even from the overtone, from the way of speaking. Maybe, you can also say that about me. There are many who tell me that I don’t sound Haredi. But in the end, it always comes up.*

לרוב אני לא טועה בזה. לרוב גם אם אני פוגש באוניברסיטה בחור בלי כיפה שלא נראה, שלא שהיום הוא לא דתי, אחרי כמה דקות אני אבין שהוא חרדי. אף פעם לא טעיתי בזה. אני לא אומר שרוב האנשים לא רוצים שיעלו על זה, אבל אפילו זה מהנימה, סוג הדיבור. אולי גם עלי רואים את זה. יש הרבה שלא — אומרים לי שאני לא נשמע חרדי, אבל בגדול תמיד זה עולה.

H37f211 who identified as formerly religious also claimed to be able to recognize religious and formerly religious HSs. Earlier in the interview, h37f211 (5:08) told that she tried to avoid using speech patterns which belong to the religious sphere. She stressed that this process of consciously controlling her speech was difficult: despite her effort, she could not help falling back into old speech patterns in certain situations, such as phone calls with her father who leads a religious life. For example, she recounted that her interlocutor in a business-related phone call identified her as former *Haredi* because she had used the variant *beseyder* which she defined as belonging to *Haredim*, unlike the variant *beseider* ‘OK.’

**(81) h37f211 (18:35)**

*I spoke with an advertising company, with which we spoke and made an appointment and when I finished, he said to me: you are a former Haredi, too – correct? [...] I said beseyder. Beseyder – like, it belongs to Haredim. I didn’t even pay attention.* דיברתי עם חברת פירסום שדיברנו איתה וקבענו פגישה ואיך שסיימתי הוא אמר לי: את גם חרדית לשעבר – נכון? [...] אמרתי בסיידר. בסיידר זה כאילו שייך לחרדים. לא שמתי לב לזה אפילו.

**PS:**

*Did you say it?*

את אמרת את זה?

**h37f211:**

*Apparently, I ended the call with beseyder and its like ‘OK,’ but...* כנראה שסיימתי את השיחה בבסיידר וזה כמו אוקיי כזה אבל...

The variant *beseyder*, with the characteristic diphthong, can be classified as *Ashkenazi* pronunciation (see 6.3), but it is not exclusively used by religious speakers, as Rosenthal’s (2007b: 60) description of the term as “archaism” which can be found in the “internet language” indicates.

Assouline (2017: 12) and Sender’s (2019) studies suggest that the *Ashkenazi* pronunciation is represented as the indexical *Haredi* type of variation on the phonetic domain. In this respect, a68m311 who identified as *Haredi* asserted that many *Haredim* have preserved “their exilic accent” – the *Ashkenazi* pronunciation:

**(82) a68m3l1 (18:34)**

*The Haredim who came to Israel preserved their exilic accent to a high degree – their accent is exilic. It's not so pleasant for the native Israeli's ear [...] And part of the Haredim don't speak Hebrew, at all or almost because it's considered as the Holy Language which is only spoken in the Tanakh.*

החרדים שהגיעו לארץ שימרו במידה רבה למבטא הגלותי שלהם. המבטא שלהם זה גלותי שהוא לא כל כך נעים לאוזן של הישראלי ה-native. [...] והלקם מהחרדים לא מדברים עברית בכלל או כמטע בגלל שהיא נחשבה לשון הקודש שרק מדובר בתנ"ך.

A68m3l1 referred to the representation of Hebrew among some *Haredim* as *lashon ha-kodesh* 'the Holy language' which is restricted to religious contexts. Also Assouline asserts that *Haredim* distinguish between *lashon ha-kodesh* (LK in her quotation) and "Israeli Hebrew:"

LK maintains its traditional Ashkenazi pronunciation, which is clearly distinct from that of Israeli Hebrew [...] All speakers implement this distinction in their active usage. Besides, speakers also identify certain lexical and stylistic qualities as typical for IH (especially slang, see 1.4.3) or as typical for LK (such as Aramaic elements). However, such salient elements identified as IH or LK are not always present, so that the same Hebrew sentence may be performed as IH or LK, depending on the context [...] (Assouline 2017: 12)

Interestingly, a68m3l1 recounted that his son switches to the *Ashkenazi* pronunciation when speaking with fellow students and educators in the religious institutes to demonstrate his belonging to the *Haredi* environment:

**(83) a68m3l1 (19:34)**

*The exilic Ashkenazi accent: Even my son – that's interesting – adapted himself to the a bit exilic accent. So, he was born here, clearly – to be more belonging and in [original in English] in this environment. When he speaks with me, he speaks like me, but when he speaks with other people and in the words of the Torah, he'll know to make the shift [original in English] to the correct accent.*

המבטא האשכנזי הגלותי, אפילו הבן שלי, זה מעניין, סיגל לעצמו את המבטא הקצת גלותי. אז הוא נולד פה ברור כדי להיות יותר שייך ו-in בסביבה הזאת. כשהוא מדבר איתי הוא מדבר איתי כמוני אבל כשהוא מדבר עם אנשים אחרים ובדיברי תורה הוא ידע לעשות את השיפט למבטא הנכון.

A68m3l1 asserted that he himself does not speak with this accent and he did not characterize himself as a typical *Haredi* because he grew up in a secular environment and embraced a *Haredi* way of life as an adult. His use of the English lexemes "in" and "shift" in his statement are expressions of this multifaceted identity.

Besides the phenomena of phonological variation, which are summarized under the notion ‘Ashkenazi pronunciation,’ there is further evidence for the HSS’ common categorization of linguistic phenomena as a style of ‘Haredi Hebrew’ – at least, on the lexical domain. Baumel (2006: 61,90) even claims that some lexemes are indexical of certain *Haredi* subgroups such as *Habad*:

Habad’s key word, found often in Kfar Habad, is *Mamash*, literally ‘actually’ or ‘truly,’ which appears at the end of sentences or paragraphs for emphasis, to strengthen hopes for the immediate future: *techef umiyad mamash* (immediately, actually). In fact, some of Habad’s Messianic faction interpret the word as an acronym of the seventh rebbe’s name, Menachem Mendel Schneerson. (Baumel 2006: 61)

Apparently, this ‘Haredi style’ is associated with various contexts: the participants asserted that it is typically used among *Haredim* in educational institutions, professional contexts, with family and friends and even extends to the written domain where it is used in (scholarly) religious texts, *Haredi* newspapers and magazines, to some extent on social media and other literary products aimed at adult and child readers from the ‘Haredi society.’ Baumel’s (2006: 57) ethnographic study on different *Haredi* sects includes an analysis of “internal linguistic codes” which are used in the *Haredi* press. These print products can be found in bookshops in religious neighborhoods in Israel, which exclusively sell texts that are designed for a religious audience.

When I was trying to find out more about *Haredi* variants, the Israeli social scientist, Hadas Hanany, helped me by asking about linguistic differences between secular and religious HSS in a Whatsapp group which was used by religious women. Surprisingly, this elicitation yielded many answers in a short period of time. While a detailed analysis of the resulting small corpus exceeds the scope of this study, it can be summarized as a lexical collection consisting of proverbs and formulaic expressions in Aramaic and Yiddish as well as MH terms which were described as being associated with a different meaning among religious HSS. Similar lexical collections which partly contain identical phenomena with explanations in Hebrew can also be found online or in popular linguistic accounts such as Rosenthal (2007b: 45–56).<sup>29</sup>

For example, several participants claimed that the Talmudic Aramaic expression *ma’i nafka’ mina* is used by *Haredim* with the meaning ‘what can be deduced’ or ‘what is it good for.’ Another lexeme which was frequently referred to as being used with a different meaning by *Haredim* is the verb *l-ahoz* ‘to grasp.’ G25m3l2 explained

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<sup>29</sup> For example here: [https://www.bhol.co.il/forums/topic.asp?cat\\_id=4&topic\\_id=2161233&forum\\_id=771](https://www.bhol.co.il/forums/topic.asp?cat_id=4&topic_id=2161233&forum_id=771); Accessed: 2021-12-22

that it can be used in different constructions such as *eyfo ata o'hez* 'where do you grasp,' which means 'how are you,' and *a'hezta* 'did you grasp it,' which means 'did you understand?'

**(84) g25m3l2 (17:35)**

*There are words – just in retrospective I understood that they are Haredi slang words that a secular [HS] doesn't understand: all sorts of small things, for example, the word 'to grasp.' [...] among Haredim, this is a very useful word – it can be anything, it can be where do you grasp in life and like 'how are you?' Where do you grasp in the problem – 'where are you in the Gemara?' Did you grasp it is 'did you understand?'*

יש מילים שרק בדיעבד הבנתי שהם מילים של סלנג חרדי שחילוני לא יבין. כל מיני דברים קטנים. לדוגמה המילה לאחוז [...] אצל חרדים זו מילה מאוד שימושית, זה יכול להיות הכל זה יכול להיות איפה אתה אוהז בחיים וכאלו מה שלומך, איפה אתה אוהז בסוגיה באיזה גמרא. אחוז זה הבנת.

Further examples indicate that variation occurs not just in form, but also on the “conceptual pole” Kristiansen (2008: 52). These phenomena are described as being more than

a ‘simple’ case of polysemy. It is a case of culturally distributed, conceptual variation masked by invariance in the formal, linguistic aspect. (Kristiansen 2008: 52)

According to h37f2l1, the meaning of *shabat* ‘Saturday’ differs between religious and secular HSs: *leil shabat* – literally ‘Saturday night’ – refers to ‘Friday night’ for religious HSs because sunset marks the beginning of a day in Jewish religious tradition (cf. McGuire 2008: 201). Apparently, conceptualizations of ‘day’ and ‘night’ can differ between religious and secular HSs.

The thorough documentation and description of similar phenomena which can be categorized as ‘Haredi style’ calls for the systematic collection of corpora of spoken Hebrew in specific contexts with religious speakers. The domain of pragmatics is a promising field of research in respect to different linguistic strategies between secular and religious HSs: topics such as politeness, linguistic taboos – especially about sexuality – and argumentation strategies can be explored with a comparative research design. For example, Tsemach & Zohar (2021) describe systematic differences in argumentative texts between students who attended religious schools and students who attended governmental educational institutions.

Although several participants claimed to recognize *Haredim* based on their speech, they did not describe major linguistic differences, which may cause a communication barrier as Rosenthal asserts:

**(Rosenthal 2007a: 187)**

*This disconnection is manifested in Israeli Hebrew in encounters between the Haredi and the national religious groups and with Israel, in general. The everyday religious language either is not understood by the secular hearer in the same age or is lacking contexts and associations.*

הנתק הזה מתבטא בעברית הישראלית במפגש בין הקבוצה החרדית והדתית-לאומית לבין כלל ישראל. השפה הדתית היומיומית או שאינה מובנת למאזין חילוני בין אותו גיל או שהיא נעדרת הקשרים ואסוציאציות.

When I asked h37f2l1 if she had difficulties understanding expressions that secular HSs use, she replied that almost everything was understandable – except for some *slangim* ‘slangs’ such as *shokist*, which is listed as ‘confused soldier lacking orientation’ (my translation) in Rosenthal’s (2015: 166) *Unofficial Dictionary of the Israeli Army*:

**(85) h37f2l1 (11:43)**

*In the secular language, it’s much easier. There are slang expressions that you don’t really understand like shokist or tsahal expressions that come from the army which seculars use a lot and you don’t know what it is – you need a translation what it’s meaning is.*

בשפה החילונית היא הרבה יותר פשוטה יש סלנגים שאתה לא כל כך מבין כמו שוקיסט או מונחים צה"ליים שבאים מהצבא שחילונים משתמשים איתם המון ואתה לא יודע מה זה. אתה צריך תרגום למה המשמעות של זה.

She stated that, unlike most of the “secular language,” the expressions that come from the army were often not understandable, without further explanation. H37f2l1 referred to these lexemes which were not used in the religious environment where she grew up as “*tsahal* expressions” – *tsahal* is the Hebrew acronym for the IDF. She explained that when she left the religious environment, these lexemes were hardly understandable and she had to ask someone for a “translation” to familiarize herself gradually with the new terminology. She added that it is easier to gather information about these lexemes today because they can be searched online. Arguably, these *tsahal* expressions are more salient for her than for someone who grew up watching Israeli TV, which is uncommon among *Haredim*, and surrounded with relatives and friends who were soldiers.

Baumel’s (2006) general observations were confirmed by the participants who had personal contact with *Haredim* – foremost by *datlashim* and religious participants:

The Ivrit spoken among themselves by all the men that I observed was virtually indistinguishable from that spoken in non-Haredi Israeli society. The only phrases missing were those of a

questionable moral nature, [109] as one of the major precepts of Haredi life of all sects is what is known as *lashon nekiya* (clean language). (Baumel 2006: 108-109)

Extreme claims, such as t37m3l2's (6:23) that *Haredim* "have a completely different language," are rather based on stereotypes than on actual experiences.

The participants with an inside perspective – those who identified as religious or as *Haredi* – typically underlined commonalities between religious HSs, while it was typical for the outside perspective to emphasize differences. Several religious participants asserted that there were no major differences between *Haredim* nowadays because they pray in the same synagogues, live in the same neighborhoods and lead similar ways of life. The fact that religious HSs emphasized the particularities of their own language use, compared to the general use of MH, can be seen as the institutionalized construction of a collective religious identity with linguistic means. This collective identity can be understood as a "sub-universe[...] of meaning" in Berger & Luckmann's (1967: 102) terms:

Another consequence of institutional segmentation is the possibility of socially segregated sub-universes of meaning. These result from accentuations of role specialization to the point where role-specific knowledge becomes altogether esoteric as against the common stock of knowledge. Such sub-universes of meaning may or may not be submerged from the common view. In certain cases, not only are the cognitive contents of the sub-universe esoteric, but even the existence of the sub-universe and of the collectivity that sustains it may be a secret. Sub-universes of meaning may be socially structured by various criteria – sex, age, occupation, religious inclination, aesthetic taste, and so on. (Berger & Luckmann 1967: 102)

In comparison to 'Haredim,' other categories which refer to religious Jewish groups were brought up less frequently during the interviews. Since they share similar religious ideals, there are cultural relations between the categories 'Haredim' and 'national religious' who form a large part of the 'settlers.' To find out more about these groups, I asked the two Arab participants s35f3l2 and s35m3l2 if they had noticed any linguistic particularities when I found out that they had studied at Ariel University, which is located in the occupied territories and frequented by a majority of religious students:

**(86) PS (22:05)**

And what do you think, are there differences in Hebrew between those who are religious and those who aren't? *ומה את חושבת שיש הבדלים בעברית של דתיים ללא דתיים?*

**s35f3l2:**

No, no – I didn't not feel that. Style of speech, no, accent but no, there is no difference – only in the thoughts. *לא לא, לא הרגשתי בזה לא. סגנון דיבור, מבטא לא ואבל. לא, אין אין הבדל רק במחשבות.*

**s35m3l2:**

Only in ideology, there is. *רק באידיולוגיה יש.*

**s35f3l2:**

Only in ideology, but in respect to – no, I can't recognize if I hear and don't see. On the telephone I don't recognize, but when I see, I can recognize. *רק באידיולוגיה אבל בכחינת לא, אי אפשר לזהות אם אני שומעת ולא רואה. דרך טלפון אני לא מזהה אבל אם אני רואה אני כן מזהה.*

While these statements indicate that representations of religious HSs do not necessarily include linguistic associations, there were also participants who pointed out that there are differences. For example, y35f4l1 claimed that she could discern national religious on the telephone. In general, religious HSs were characterized as speaking more politely and using the same lexemes which were discussed as 'Haredi style.' Based on the conceptualization of the 'Haredi' as the prototypical 'religious Jew,' the 'Haredi style' can be used by HSs to express religious aspects of their identity, as Baumel illustrates:

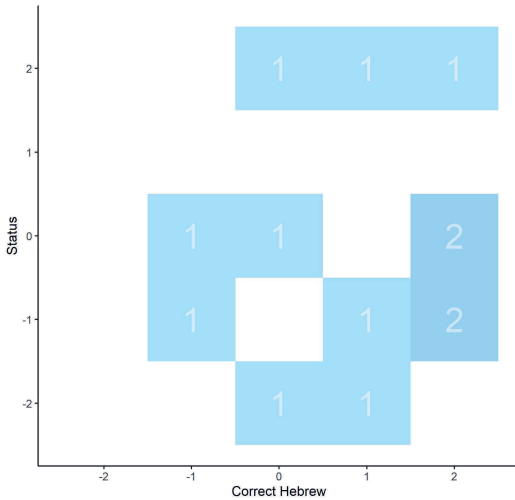
Newly religious Haredim, both men and women, were more likely to continuously pepper their speech with the terms *baruch Hashem* (praise the Lord) and *be'ezrat Hashem* (with the Lord's help) than were veteran Haredim. (Baumel 2006: 107)

However, the most evident differences between religious and secular participants were not formal linguistic, but attitudinal ones – just as s35f3l2 (22:05) put it: "there is no difference – only in the thoughts."

### 6.7.2 Attitudes among and towards *Haredim*

The heatmap in Fig. 6.10 reveals that the 11 participants who referred to the category 'Haredim' with 13 entries related to the category with very different attitudes: in terms of 'status,' three entries were rated with the maximum value, 2, while two entries were rated with the minimum rating, -2. Most entries were rated with the

values 0 and  $-1$  (four for each value). In terms of ‘correct Hebrew,’ the ratings are more uniform: five entries were rated high with value 2, each three were rated with 1 or 0 and two were rated negatively with  $-1$ . There is not much correlation between the two variables since just three ratings (2/2, 0/0 and  $-1/-1$ ) are posited on the diagonal of the diagram. The average ratings for the category are 0.73 for ‘correct Hebrew’ and  $-0.41$  for ‘status.’ ‘Haredim’ is the only core category with clearly better ratings for ‘correct Hebrew’ than for ‘status.’



**Fig. 6.10:** Heatmap: participants’ ratings of ‘Haredim’

The positive GERT ratings can be explained with positive attitudes towards Jewish religious culture and the belief that the Holy Scriptures, the *meqorot* ‘sources,’ serve as model for ‘correct Hebrew.’ This typical conceptualization of HEBREW AS A HOLY LANGUAGE was described in the context of the conservative perspective on language in 6.2.3.3. Positive attitudes towards Jewish religiosity were not restricted to Jewish participants, as the Arab participants’ (a29m2l2 and h21f3l2) association between and speaking ‘correct Hebrew’ and their entries *Haredim* indicates (see 6.6.2). A30f3l2’s following statement during GERT is an example for this attitude: she argued that *Haredim* speak correctly because their Hebrew comes from the book itself – the *tanakh* – and that they certainly do not speak *meduberet* ‘spoken Hebrew.’

**(87) a30f3l2 (36:28)**

Regarding correct [Hebrew], I believe that it's correct, לגבי תקנית אני מאמינה שזה תקני  
 like that, because they are like from the book itself – כזה כי הם כאילו מהספר עצמו,  
 like from the tanakh, from the source. It's not spoken מהמקור. זה בטוח  
 [Hebrew], for sure. לא מדוברת.

S41m3l1 expressed a similar opinion and located his entry *Haredim* in the extreme lower right region of his GERT template (see Fig. 4.10) – thus, indicating a high rating for ‘correct Hebrew’ and a low rating ‘status.’ In respect to ‘status,’ he added that there were also wealthy *Haredim*, in contrast to the poorer majority.

**(88) s41m3l1 (45:09)**

Most of the religious would be here. רוב הדתיים יהיו פה.

PS:

So with relatively better Hebrew? אז עם עברית ליחסית יותר גבוהה?

s41m3l1:

Yes, because they read more. In respect to status, כן, כי הם יותר קוראים. מבחינת מעמד  
 I – they have all kinds of statuses. I can say that אני יכול הם נמצאים בכל המעמדות. אני יכול  
 the Haredim – Haredim, they would be here. Yes, להגיד שהחרדים, חרדים הם יהיו פה. כן,  
 their status is usually low, they are very poor – המעמד שלהם נמוך בדרך כלל הם מאוד  
 ten children at home, high, correct Hebrew. So, עניים עשרה ילדים בבית, עברית תקנית  
 that's here for sure, they also have rich ones. גבוהה. אז זה בטוח כאן הרוב, יש להם  
 גם עשירים.

The following summary of m56m2l1's statements who attended a religious school – a *Yeshiva* – before he chose to lead a secular life further illustrates a positive attitude towards *Haredi* culture. During the interview, he expressed his admiration for the type of argumentation which is cultivated in the *Yeshiva*. He argued that a large portion of the vocabulary which is characteristic for ‘educated Hebrew’ that is nowadays used in juridical and academic contexts originated in the religious Jewish culture of debate. He described this style of speech as ‘*ivrit yeshivatit* ‘*Yeshivish* Hebrew.’ However, he argued that its use is not limited to (former) *Yeshiva* students. He asserted that even educated *hilonim* ‘seculars’ appreciate and imitate this “fantastic” culture of philosophical debate that he experienced in the *Yeshiva*. To illustrate this style of speech, he used the Aramaic term *i'fkha' mistabra'* which can be translated as ‘the opposite turns out to be true’ in reference to this dialectic culture of debate that originated in the context of Talmudic studies. Accordingly, this style of speech is associated with genuinely Jewish education which is based on religious tradition and

a sophisticated culture of debate and reasoning – m56m2l1 subsumed this notion with the common metaphorical wording *ha-moaḥ ha-yehudi* ‘the Jewish brain:’

**(89) m56m2l1 (11:39)**

*Because the whole approach of Talmudic study which developed mainly in Babylon – not in Israel, mainly in Babylon. That’s taking a topic, developing it, every side says its side. But, what’s beautiful, what’s interesting, yes that’s – they say that it contributed to the development of the Jewish brain because of this method of i’fkha’ mistabra’.*

כי כל הגישה של לימוד התלמודי שהתפתח בעיקר בבבל, לא בארץ ישראל, בבבל בעיקר, זה לקחת נושא, לפתח אותו, כל צד אומר את הצד שלו. אבל מה שיפה, מה שמעניין כן שזה, אומרים שזה תרם להתפתחות של המוח היהודי, מכיוון זה שיטה הזו של איפכא מסתברא.

Despite his self-determined alienation from the *Haredi* environment, m56m2l1 displayed a nostalgic stance by asserting that he missed the culture of intensive debate and companionship which he described as characteristic for the *Yeshiva*. Similar enthusiastic accounts can also be found in scholarly literature: Schwarz (2014: 135) paints a vivid picture of a learning technique which is termed with the Aramaic *ḥavruta* ‘friendship’ and the institutionalized debates that he observed in Lithouanian *Yeshivas* in Israel for which he expresses his admiration as follows:

I confess that Chavruta learning was always alluring for me because of the unusual enthusiasm and the tenacity of the learners: How can adolescents or young adults sit together during 8 or even 10 hours per day, six days a week for years? (Schwarz 2014: 136)

Friedman (2016: 232) who coined the term “society-of-scholars” (see 3.1.4) also displays a nostalgic attitude in his paper “*About Miracles*”: *The Flourishing of the “Torah World” of Yeshivot and Kollelim in Israel*, as he remembers his time in a “Tel Aviv yeshiva high-school in the early 1950s.” Within the broader context of language attitudes, nostalgia was analyzed as a typical feature of the conservative perspective on language in 6.2.3.3. HSs who adhere to this perspective, commonly framed the decay of spoken Hebrew within a context of general cultural attrition: Accordingly, the societal trend of *ḥilun* ‘secularization’ has been impacting the educational system and the occupation with the canon of Jewish religious texts – *ha-meḳorot* – has almost perished from curricula. To counteract this trend, i53f2l1 (29:10) stressed the necessity to *lahzor le-meḳorot* ‘return to the sources’ of Jewish culture (see 37). Just as the societal process of *ḥilun* ‘secularization’ was described unfavorably, the opposite process can also be framed as a threat to the modern organization of Israeli society. According to a publication on the homepage of the Hebrew Academy, the term *hadata* “religionization” was coined relatively recently – it was discussed for

the first time by the Academy in 2006 when it had already been in use.<sup>30</sup> This term is described as referring critically to the apparently growing influence of religious authorities on public institutions. Part of the negative GERT ratings for ‘Haredim’ can be explained as an expression of this critical stance towards religiosity.

Just a few entries for ‘Haredim’ were rated higher in terms of ‘status’ than for ‘correct Hebrew.’ A possible explanation for these atypical ratings can be found in statements such as f5+f111’s (16:56): she asserted that *Haredim* speak less correctly because their education is centered on the study of *Torah* and less on *dikduk* ‘grammar’ – at the same time, she expressed respect towards them. The diverging ratings for ‘status’ can be explained with the ambiguous nature of the variable itself which can refer to different notions such as economic and cultural capital. Based on the participants’ statements, stereotypical representations of ‘Haredim’ associate them with a lack of economic power; on the one hand, and, on the other hand, they are allocated with cultural capital due to their religious knowledge, which is an explanation for the positive ratings in terms of ‘status.’

No judgments about the inside perspective on ‘Haredim’ can be inferred from the GERT data because just one self-identifying *Haredi* participant (a68m311) completed GERT, without referring to ‘Haredim’ for the task. However, all *Haredim* – just as the *datlashim* – expressed similar opinions as f5+f111 (16:56) in the interviews. They stated that they considered the Hebrew of *Haredi* boys who attended religious schools inferior to those who attended public schools because they focused on religious matters and texts which are written in Aramaic from a young age, instead of learning MH grammar. Moreover, they described this type of education as orally oriented in comparison to governmental education and university studies which typically require profound competence in writing. In contrast, they asserted that *Haredi* girls study MH grammar properly which enables them to enter the workforce in regular jobs outside of the *Haredi* environment. M37m11 described these aspects as follows:

**(90) m37m11 (0:33)**

*In general, girls study much more [grammar] than boys because boys dedicate most of their time to the Holy Studies. So, for that matter, let’s say that they dedicate two to four hours per week to Hebrew, but girls can dedicate even eight hours, I believe, in their educational framework. So, that’s the fundamental gap, in general.*

בנות בדרך כלל לומדות הרבה יותר מבנים כיוון שבנים מקדישים את רוב זמנם ללימודי קודש. אז לצורך העניין, נגיד, מקדישים לעברית שעתים בשבוע עד ארבע שעות בשבוע אבל עוד בנות יכולות להקדיש לזה, אני מאמין, גם שמונה שעות בשבוע במסגרת הלימודים. אז זה בדרך כלל הפער המובנה.

30 <https://hebrew-academy.org.il/2017/07/10/הדהה/>; Accessed: 2024-10-06

Both a22m11 and g25m312 conceded that they were conscious about flaws in their command of Hebrew. In this respect, a22m11 asserted that it does not bother him to produce minor grammatical mistakes and that he asks his wife or his mother for advice on grammar when he needs to produce written text. G25m312 was less confident about his non-normative language use of MH that he attributed partly to his multilingual childhood – not just to the *Haredi* education he received. He expressed the desire to improve his grammatical skills because his ability to express himself in written form became crucial as a university student.

M37m11's statements reveal a dichotomy which turned out to be typical for the modern Israeli *Haredim* I talked to: on the one hand, he condemned MH out of ideological reasons due to its association with Zionism and, on the other hand, he stressed the necessity of a good command of MH to be able to participate in Israeli society as an individual and to express his groups' political ambitions. At the beginning of the interview, m37m11 described MH, to which he referred as "Ben-Yehuda's Hebrew," as a mere distortion of the Holy Language – *lashon ha-ḳodesh*:<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> M37m11 also produced the variant *loshn ha-ḳoydesh* once, which is characteristic for the *Ashkenazi* pronunciation (see above).

**(91) m37m111 (00:58)**

*Big parts inside the Haredi society are educated in Yiddish. One who grows up with Yiddish and speaks Yiddish both at home and in the educational institutions – his Hebrew will be on a lower level [...] and there are even Ḥasidic places – the more conservative contexts – in which it's forbidden to speak Hebrew because Hebrew is a language that isn't kosher enough for them [...] Ben Yehuda's Hebrew, that's, in fact, an inferior Hebrew. That's a Hebrew – it's a distortion, so to speak, of the original Hebrew which, of course, is the Biblical (mikra'it) Hebrew which isn't called Hebrew among the Haredim, but the Holy Language – loshn ha-koýdesh. The Holy Language, that's the language of the Torah and we really see big gaps between what's written in the Torah and the spoken language – the spoken Hebrew of today. There are big gaps between different words, meanings and things.*

חלקים גדולים בתוך החברה החרדית מתחנכים בשפת היידיש. מי שגדל על יידיש ומדבר יידיש גם בבית וגם במוסדות החינוך העברית שלו בכלל כבר תהיה ברמה עוד יותר נמוכה. [...] ויש אפילו מקומות חסידים המסגרות השמרניות יותר שבהם אסור לדבר עברית שעברית היא שפה לא מספיק כשרה עבורם. [...] העברית של בן יהודה זו עברית למעשה קלוקלת, זו עברית, זה עיוות כביכול של העברית המקורית שהיא כמובן העברית המקראית שהיא לא נקראת עברית בקרב החרדים אלא נקראת לשון הקודש. לשון הקודש זה השפה של התורה ואנחנו רואים באמת פערים גדולים בין מה שכתוב בתורה לבין השפה המדוברת היום. יש פערים גדולים במילים שונות ובמשמעויות שונות ובדברים שונים.

What m37m111 describes as *Haredi* attitude towards the notion 'Ben-Yehuda's Hebrew' is the opposite of what was analyzed in the context of a70f311's (8:00) statement as ideal type of Hebrew (see 62). With the term "not *kosher*" he used a religious framing from the domain of Jewish dietary laws to express the reservations against MH which are typical for more conservative *Haredim* who belong to certain *Ḥasidic* groups. Assouline (2017: 10) also describes this negative attitude towards MH, in conjunction with the preference for Yiddish, as typical for certain "zealous," anti-Zionist groups among the *Haredim*:

[S]peaking Yiddish corresponds to preservation of the traditional way of life, whereas Modern Hebrew is perceived as a new, and hence inferior, entity. Second, the zealous ideology views the establishment of the Jewish state as a rebellion against God, and its modern language a profanity. (Assouline 2017: 11)

M37m111 (8:56) equally asserted that most *Haredim* are typically anti-Zionists. He recounted that, even though his family just spoke MH at home, he went to schools which taught primarily in Yiddish and that the pupils were sanctioned for speak-

ing MH on the school yard. He described the use of Yiddish in *Haredi* educational institutions as a matter of prestige – just as Assouline:

The use of Yiddish in educational institutions testifies to their quality, primarily because the Yiddish-speaking staff is guaranteed to be composed of ‘our people’ only. (Assouline 2017: 17)

Religious participants typically referred to the framing of HEBREW IS HOLY and stressed the importance of speaking respectfully which entails refraining from slander and curse words – *lashon ha-r‘a* ‘evil language.’ When talking about this aspect, m37m111 referred to the religious treatise *shmirat ha-lashon* ‘Guarding of the Tongue’ (Cohen 1975 [1876]) which was also known at least to g25m312 and a22m111. Assouline (2017: 21) claims that, especially among *Haredim*, ‘slang’ is regarded as evil, street language and that the term *slang* is also used metonymically for MH, as a whole. In accordance with this conceptualization, religious participants such as h26m211 and a68m311 asserted that they refrained from the use of MH slang which they classified as *lashon ha-r‘a* that is used merely in the streets and by criminals – a68m311 also produced the only GERT entry for ‘*asirim*’ ‘criminals’ and argued that they contribute to linguistic decay. The notion of ‘linguistic decay’ was analyzed as characteristic for a conservative perspective on language which is not particular to *Haredim*: for example, Schwarzwald (2007: 78) argues for a causal relation between phenomena of language attrition and an increase in youth criminality in Israel, for which she argues with statistical figures from news reports.

As mentioned above, m37m111 – just like the other religious participants – also expressed a positive, utilitarian attitude towards MH: when the atmosphere of the interview became more relaxed, he conceded that he had always been fascinated by the style of Hebrew which is typically spoken by news broadcasters on the radio:

**(92) m37m111 (4:46)**

*And there are Haredim like me, for example, who were exposed to the press, all their life. Because I liked the occupation with news and journalism – it always attracted me. And radio, too, from listening – and radio and reading the non-Haredi press a lot – you learn Hebrew on a high level. And me, for instance, when I speak with seculars – so, they say to me ‘wow, where does your Hebrew come from?’*

ויש חרדים כמוני למשל שהיו חשופים  
כל החיים לעיתונות כי אהבתי עיסוק  
בחדשות ובעיתונות זה עניין אותי ומשך  
אותי תמיד וגם רדיו מההאזנה ורדיו  
וקריאה של הרבה עיתונות לא חרדית  
אתה מלמד עברית ברמה שהיא רמה  
גבוה ואני לצורך העניין כשאני מדבר עם  
חילונים אז אומרים לי וואו מאיפה  
העברית שלך?

From m37m111’s statements can be seen that he also chose formal wordings – especially, at the beginning of the interview (see 90). He stated that he feels less affection

for Yiddish which he claimed to use for practical reasons with members of his community and underlined the importance of a good command of MH to be able to communicate both with *Haredim* and with other members of the Israeli society, on an equal standing. Y37m2l2, who grew up in a conservative *Hasidic* environment with Yiddish as L1 and adopted a secular lifestyle as an adult, shared the fascination for the Hebrew style of the radio. He told that he listened to secular news programs on the radio to acquire this register when he was a boy.

Thus, it can be seen that the cultural and linguistic relations of the Israeli *Haredim* to Israeli society at large are ambiguous and therefore similar to other minority groups, such as the Israeli Arabs: despite their continuous efforts to underline their particular identity, they cannot ignore the influence of general Israeli culture on their daily lives which is symbolized by their extensive use of MH. In this respect, Baumel (2006: 51) states that even major *Haredi* authorities came to display a “fluency of contemporary speech” in the context of their “political activism” in Israel and Assouline (2017: 12) asserts that “[t]he ideological rejection of Israeli Hebrew in zealous sects” is barely implemented in daily life.

## 7 Conclusion

New lines of research for the study of linguistic variation in Israel were explored in this study with the potential to enrich methodological discussions about the study of linguistic variation in general. The choice of Israel as research area was crucial for the development of the original research design. Israel is geographically and culturally remote enough from the well-trodden paths of linguistic research to facilitate a relatively unbiased approach to reassess the established theories about linguistic variation. This effect was naturally reinforced, due to the researcher's position as a cultural outsider to Israel and a non-native HS. As Becke et al. suggest, many parallels can be found in the Israeli context which allow for comparisons and the transfer of hypotheses to other research areas:

While the state is often reduced in public perception to its conflictual relations with its neighbours, Israel offers an important microcosm that can be used to examine topics of global significance such as nationalism, coexistence and areas of tension between religions or migration history in a very profitable way.<sup>1</sup> (Becke et al. 2020: 18, my translation)

All the mentioned aspects about nationalism, religion, and history of migration were central threads in this study. In fact, the prominence of these and additional aspects in the HSs' representations of linguistic variation suggests that they should be considered more thoroughly for the study of linguistic variation in general. While it is assumed that 'regionality' is the main factor for linguistic variation in European contexts, it is evident that additional factors such as the ones that were highlighted in this study need to be considered in any contemporary variationist framework. The analysis of empirical data for this study demonstrated that concepts from cognitive science can enhance such a framework – consequently, it was argued to strive towards a Cognitive Variationist theory.

### 7.1 Methodological aspects

Knowledge about the cognitive basis of social and linguistic categorization processes is a prerequisite for the proper understanding of linguistic variation in its context: In-

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<sup>1</sup> German original: Während der Staat in der öffentlichen Wahrnehmung nicht selten auf die konflikthaften Beziehungen mit seinen Nachbarn reduziert wird, bietet Israel aber einen wichtigen Mikrokosmos, anhand dessen sich Themen von globaler Bedeutung wie Nationalismus, Koexistenzen und Spannungsfelder von Religionen oder Migrationsgeschichte besonders gewinnbringend untersuchen lassen.

sights into the structure of the speakers' own categories, their associations and their contexts of use are needed to determine their meaning and to assert their possible effects on linguistic as well as on social systems. The empirical analysis of the categories that were used by participants during the interviews for this study showed the inseparability of social and linguistic categorization processes (see 6.1). Hence, these processes can at best be studied in conjunction. The label 'Cognitive Sociolinguistics' (Kristiansen 2008) expresses the aim to strive towards such an integrative framework that accommodates cognitive scientific theories within contemporary studies of linguistic and social processes. While theories from sociology and linguistics have been combined in interdisciplinary approaches to some extent, all disciplines would benefit from a more intensive and explicit exchange which can lead to a new theoretic momentum. For example, sociological research can benefit from empirical methods which are applied in linguistics: especially corpus linguistics can help to determine the nature of social categories such as 'Mizrahim' and 'Ashkenazim' and their use.

This study serves as an example for the combination of qualitative research methods, including fieldwork and interviewing techniques, with experiments and quantitatively oriented surveys and thereby, yielded valuable insights into these categories, their meaning and their impact on social structure. A wholesome research design enables the researcher to investigate gaps and relations between conventionalized categories and to find out more about the facts that cannot be modeled in terms of hard data – such as demographic statistics and linguistic structures in corpora and correlations between these types of data.

Theoretical input from the sociology of knowledge and concepts from cognitive psychology such as Rosch's (1978) *principles of categorization* can be applied beneficially for the analysis of social organization and linguistic behavior. From a universal perspective on representations of linguistic variation, the distinction between in-group and out-group – e.g. "our way of speaking" in opposition to "their way of speaking" – is the basis for any representations of regionally marked linguistic variants (cf. Harder 2010: 416). In contexts where societies are typically conceptualized as homogeneous, the differentiation between in-group and out-group is conjured with a regional differentiation of 'here,' i.e. 'our place,' and 'there,' i.e. 'their place.' However, the association of regionally defined concepts and group affiliation is not universal. Especially in immigrant societies such as Israel, 'regionality' can be deferred in favor of more complex concepts such as 'ethnicity,' 'nationality' and 'religion' which serve as primary categories for the speakers' distinctions between in- and out-groups – that is to say, for their construction of identity.

In this usage-based domain, much empirical research needs to be carried out to generate and validate original theories: as outlined in 2.3, it is desirable to strive for a fourth wave of variationist studies with the focus on the integration of cognitive

science into the sociolinguistic research paradigm. For this study, original methods were explored to suit the theoretical aims that were just reviewed. Following the tenets of PVL (see 2.1.4), I claim that in any under-researched area, it is most efficient to start exploring linguistic variation by studying speakers' representations thereof. On the one hand, this line of investigation with a highlight on the speakers' declarative knowledge (DK) is more likely to surface promising areas for future research in a short period of time than cost-intensive large scale surveys with a structurally oriented focus on production data (PD). On the other hand, the collection of DK is a prerequisite for any sensible analysis of PD because context matters. The study of DK requires a research design that is qualitatively oriented. In general, the methodological contextualization within a post-structuralist research paradigm helps to set off PVL from its theoretic predecessors and further underlines its own legitimacy.

In the course of this study, the principles of Grounded Theory Methodology (see 2.2) were followed for the planning and the implementation of an adequate research design that was able to combine both flexible and well-structured elements. In the beginning, open exploration was used to let the research population indicate the hot-spots of condensed meaning. In the following, a sound research design could be achieved through recursivity: the subsequent testing of hypothesis in discussions with the researched population was an integral part of the methods of this study. Thereby, the relevancy of the studied categories for the researched population could be assured. In the light of these methodological considerations, a new context-sensitive method for the elicitation of the speakers' categories for linguistic variation was introduced with GERT. The contextualization of the findings with participants' statements contributed to the general accessibility of the study and revealed further implications which can be tackled in future research.

Leaving the scientific aims of this study aside, some final remarks about working with participants are due. During the conversations which revolved around topics which are typically not on anyone's everyday agenda, participants displayed an incredible amount of enthusiasm and their reflected way of argumentation was at the same time astounding and inspiring. I am convinced that these kind of conversations which enable the exchange of ideas between participants and researchers can have valuable and lasting effects. At the very least, these conversations can help to enrich political discourse about several aspects that were addressed in this study. Personal perspectives on intricate matters such as religiosity, ethnicity and nationalism were constantly exchanged and most likely have been taken up in subsequent conversations. Ultimately, the understanding of social categorization is crucial to understanding the dynamics of harmful social processes such as marginalization, stigmatization and discrimination. Insights into these processes can hopefully contribute to the shaping of respectful societies.

## 7.2 Representations of linguistic variation in MH and lines for further research

The main empirical achievement of this study is the determination of common categories for linguistic variation in MH (see 5.4.3) and their contextualization with participants' utterances (see Chapter 6), which yielded insights into the structure and the use of the categories. While these categories are highly specific to the Israeli context, it became clear that traditional parameters for the classification of sociolinguistic variation need to be applied with consideration: at least for the participants of this study, other variables than 'regionality' and 'social class' turned out to be significant. In accordance with the existing research on linguistic variation in MH, no evidence for common representations of diatopic variation could be found: neither did participants systematically mention any geographical categories, nor did I notice any regionally determined variants during all the time I spent in Israel and when I analyzed the interview corpus that I recorded for this study.

Studies on sociolinguistic variation in MH can depart from the categories which were determined with the method GERT. These categories need to be researched with perception experiments and corpus analysis to reveal common associations with specific linguistic phenomena.

On the basis of Rosch's definition, most of these core categories can be understood as belonging to a basic level of social and linguistic categories for the Israeli context:

[B]asic objects appeared to be the most abstract categories for which an image could be reasonably representative of the class as a whole. [...] objects may be first [35] seen or recognized as members of their basic category, and [...] only with the aid of additional processing can they be identified as members of their superordinate or subordinate category. (Rosch 1978: 34–35)

For example, most participants asserted that younger L1 HSs can be classified as either 'Mizrahi' or 'Ashkenazi,' while subordinate categories such as 'Iraqi' were no longer discernible. The portrayals of *Mizrahi* characters in TV productions reveal that there are stereotypical images for this category, while it is hard to think of a stereotypical image on a superordinate category: arguably, any representation of the more general category 'Israeli' is associated either with *Mizrahi* or with *Ashkenazi* attributes. Therefore, the categories 'Mizrahi' and 'Ashkenazi' qualify as basic categories – they are essential Israeli styles which can be performed with linguistic means, among other things (see the "language as identity marker paradigm" Polzenhagen & Dirven 2008: 255–256).

Also Schmid's description of "basic level terms" resonates with several core categories of this study:

In the field of word-formation, basic level terms occur frequently as heads in compounds, because they have so many facets that can be further specified [...] When they occupy the modifier position, basic level terms are often exploited for their privileged position in associative networks: most things that you need while you are at the dinner-table can be found in this paradigm, for example the items table-cloth, table-linen, table-mat, table-knife, table-spoon, table ware, not to forget the table manners. (Schmid 1996: 293)

Categories such as ‘Mizrahi’ are extremely productive lexemes – there are, for example: *Mizrahi*-music, *Mizrahi*-cinema, *Mizrahi*-food, *Mizrahi*-look, *Mizrahi*-humour and *Mizrahi*-parties (in the sense of a political party) and the modifiers *Ashkenazi*-, *Haredi*-, Arab-, Russian-, periphery-, *Kibbutz*- and army- are similarly productive.

Besides the core categories that were determined with GERT, the concepts ‘standard Hebrew’ and ‘correct Hebrew’ were used by participants to make a basic distinction between conventionalized and normative correct language use (see 6.2). ‘Standard Hebrew’ was described as containing a moderate amount of ‘slang expressions’ and widespread linguistic phenomena which are normatively incorrect. While the notion ‘correct Hebrew’ was associated with *Ashkenazim* and a high level of education, ‘standard Hebrew’ was described as a default category: this notion is neither typically *Ashkenazi* nor *Mizrahi* – but, a hybrid category which can accommodate several and even contradictory stereotypical identities from the Israeli social space, such as the core categories of this analysis which are represented in association with certain linguistic styles that were described in terms of accents, lexical phenomena and different LAs.

Throughout this study, many aspects were highlighted which invite original lines of sociolinguistic research in Israel. First of all, there is still an urgent need for the compilation of multifaceted corpora of spoken Hebrew to expand the possibilities for usage-based linguistic research. The extensive interview corpus of more than 40 recorded hours which was specifically collected for this study is partly transcribed, published as Striedl (2023) and accessible for scientific purposes.

To pursue the path that was taken with this study, future research can try to answer the question: What exactly makes HSs sound Arab, Russian, *Mizrahi*, *Ashkenazi*, Army-like, *Haredi*, Ethiopian and – in respect to the generational variable – senior or young? The analysis of stereotypical portrayals of these categories, for example, in Israeli TV productions can pose a viable starting point for the design of perception experiments.



## A Biographical account of the researcher

For the sake of openness, I am going to share some biographical information about myself. I feel obliged to do so because of two reasons: first of all, my participants were incredibly trusting in the way that they told the stories of their lives and shared their personal opinion with me, even though I was to them in most cases a mere stranger from another continent on a visit for his academic research. Since their openness was very enriching and inspiring for me both personally and for my research, I am going to follow their example. The second reason is the need for any qualitative academic researcher to situate oneself in the framework of the research.

In order to be more open to learning something new about others, you will need to externalize your own thoughts and beliefs. Otherwise, unbeknownst to you, they will be hiding in the background, pulling the strings of your interpretations, and quietly filling in the gaps of what is unknown. (Hadley 2017: 86)

I was born to German parents and German grandparents. Only my grandmother was born in a neighboring country belonging to a German minority (Sudeten Germans), but spent all of her adolescent and adult life in post-war Bavaria. I grew up in a village of 10,000 inhabitants about thirty kilometers south of Munich. All my family, back to my great-grandparents, with the only exception of my grandmother's relatives, spent almost their entire lives in this region where they have been living and working as employees and civil servants. Nobody in my close family pursued a university degree. All of my family members, including myself, and most of the people I came to know in my early life are Catholics – though religion has come to play a minor role in their lives. German or more precisely a variety of Bavarian German is my L1.

In the course of my university studies, I lived in Berlin for four years and for my master's degree I returned to Munich where I have been living for more than five years. During high school, I went to school in France for four months where I lived with a guest family to study French – this was my first major experience abroad. After my graduation from high school, I spent half a year in South America to learn Spanish, later four months in Morocco for my master's thesis and in total up to a year in Israel. During my first longer stay in Israel of five months, I learned Hebrew in an *ulpan* kibbutz program (see 1), two stays of about three months each followed for field work for this study. I learned English, French, Spanish, Arabic and Hebrew, among other languages in which I am less proficient. I immersed myself in different cultures, but I am culturally rooted in my family's tradition and in the region where I grew up and have been living most of my life.

## B Consent form and questionnaire

### טופס הסכמה

אני מסכים/ה להשתתף במיזם האקדמאי

*Linguistic Variation, Varieties and Standard in Modern Hebrew: A Sociolinguistic Survey.*

השיחה תהיה מוקלטת ויכולה להתפרסם במאמרים אקדמיים ויכולה לשמש על ידי מדענים אחרים.

לכן בחרו אחת משתי האופציות:

אני רוצה להישאר אנונימי

אני רוצה להופיע ולצטט עם השם שלי

### נתונים סוציולינגוויסטיים

1. שם פרטי:	6. שנת עלייה:
2. שם המשפחה:	7. ארץ לידת האב:
3. גיל:	8. ארץ לידת האם:
4. מין:	9. הדת שלך:
5. ארץ לידה:	10. כמה שנות לימוד סיימת (כולל לימודים אקדמיים)?

11. יישוב מגורים: \_\_\_\_\_

12. ממתית את/ה גרה במקום זה? \_\_\_\_\_

13. מקום מגורים קבוע קודם: \_\_\_\_\_

14. מקום מגורים בילדות: \_\_\_\_\_

15. איך תתאר/י את היחס שלך לדת? תבחרו אחד:

חרד/ית  דת/ית  מסורת/ת  לא דת/ית  חילונית  אחר

16. האם שירתת בצבא?  כן  לא

17. מהי התעסוקה העיקרית שלך? \_\_\_\_\_

18. מאיזה גיל את/ה דוברת/עברית? \_\_\_\_\_

19. מהי שפת הדיבור העיקרית שלך כיום? \_\_\_\_\_

20. האם את/ה יודעת/שפות אחרות בנוסף לעברית? אם כן - אלו? \_\_\_\_\_

מקום ותאריך \_\_\_\_\_ חתימה המשתתף/ת \_\_\_\_\_

## C Guideline for open interviews

### Demographics

- 1 Please tell me a bit about your family. בבקשה, תספר/י לי קצת על המשפחה שלך.
- 2 How did your family come to Israel and what was their occupation? איך הגיעה המשפחה שלך לארץ ובמה התעסקו?
- 3 Where were your grandparents born and raised? איפה הסבים שלך נולדו וגדלו?
- 4 Your parents? וההורים שלך?
- 5 Where were you born? איפה נולדת?
- 6 Where else have you lived? באיזה מקומות גרת?
- 7 Do you have siblings? How many? יש לך אחים/אחות? כמה?

### Upbringing

- 1 What kind of upbringing did you have? תספר/י לי קצת איך גדלת. מה את/ה זוכר/ת מהילדות שלך?
- 2 What was your role in your family and what were your tasks? מה היה התפקיד שלך במשפחה? היו לך מטלות?
- 3 What kind of kid were you when you were growing up? Were you a troublemaker? איזה סוג של ילד/ה היית כשגדלת?
- 4 Were your parents really strict? האם ההורים שלך היו קפדניים?
- 5 Did your parents have any ideas about what they wanted you to be? היו להורים שלך אילו תוכניות בשבילך?
- 6 Did you spend much time with your / grandparents / aunts and uncles / cousins? ביילית הרבה זמן עם הסבים / דודים / אחיינים?
- 7 Did you go on vacations together? יצאתם לחופשה ביחד?
- 8 Did your family have any pets? היו למשפחה שלך בעלי חיים?
- 9 Do you remember any games you used to play as a kid? את/ה זוכר/ת איזה משחקים שיחקת בילדות?
- 10 What did you do after school? מה עשית אחרי בית הספר?

**School**

- 1 *Do you remember what it was like when you used to go to school every day?* את/ה זוכר/ת איך היה כשהלכת לבית הספר כל יום?
- 2 *How many students used to go?* כמה תלמידים היו בבית הספר?
- 3 *Were there mixed classes at school?* בכיתות היו גם בחורים וגם בנות?
- 4 *What were teachers like when you were at school?* איך היו המורים כשהיית בבית הספר?
- 5 *Which subjects or topics did you like most in school?* אילו נושאים הכי אהבת בבית הספר?
- 6 *Which languages did you learn in school?* אילו שפות למדת בבית הספר?
- 7 *Who or what helped you learning languages?* מי או מה עזר לך ללמוד שפות?
- 8 *Were / are there different groups in your school? What are the different groups called and who would be in them?* היו קבוצות שונות בבית הספר? איך קראו לקבוצות האלה ומי היה בהן?
- 9 *How can you tell someone belongs to one group or another? Does ethnicity play a role?* איך את/ה יודע שמישהו שייך לקבוצה מסוימת? האם המוצא היה חשוב?

**Work**

- 1 *Are you working now? Please tell me about your job.* כרגע את/ה עובד/ת? תספר/י לי על העבודה שלך בבקשה.
- 2 *What was your very first job?* מה הייתה העבודה הראשונה שלך?
- 3 *Do you remember what you were excited to spend your money on?* את/ה זוכר/ת מה רצית לקנות עם המשכורת שלך?
- 4 *What did / does your working routine look like?* איך זה נראית שגרה העבודה שלך?
- 5 *In which situations is language important at work?* באילו מצבים השפה חשובה בעבודה?
- 6 *In which languages do you communicate?* באילו שפות את/ה משתמש/ת בעבודה?
- 7 *What do/did your parents do?* כמה מתעסקים ההורים שלך?

## Religion & traditions

- 1 *What kinds of traditions can you remember growing up with in your family?* את/ה זוכר/ת אילו מסורות היו במשפחה שלך כשגדלת?
- 2 *Do you (plan to) keep these traditions alive with your own family?* את/ה רוצה לשמור על המסורות גם במשפחה שלך?
- 3 *How do you usually spend Shabbat? Do you have a tradition for Shabbat?* בדרך כלל מה את/ה עושה בשבת? יש לך מסורת לשבת?
- 4 *What do you remember about the foods your family used to make?* מה את/ה זוכר/ת על המאכלים במשפחה שלך?
- 5 *How did you celebrate Shabbat/ Pessah/ Rosh HaShana/ Sukkot/ Shavuot/ Hanukka ...?* איך חגגתם את החגים? שבת, פסח, ראש השנה, סוכות, שבועות, חנוכה
- 6 *What's your favorite memory of a holiday?* מה הזיכרון האהוב עליך של חג?
- 7 *Please tell me about your feelings about religion? How was it in the past, in your childhood?* איך את/ה מרגיש לגבי הדת? איך הרגשת פעם/בילדות?
- 8 *What do you do to prevent colds? What do you do when you get sick?* מה את/ה עושה כדי למנוע הצטננות? מה את/ה עושה כשאת/ה חולה?

## Neighborhood

- 1 *This is such a nice/interesting/colorful neighborhood. What kind of people live here?* זאת שכונה מהמדה/מעניינת/צבעונית כזה. איה סוג של אנשים גרים פה?
- 2 *What made you move here?* למה עברת לפה?
- 3 *Do you know your neighbors? Do people talk to each other?* את/ה מכיר/ה את השכנים שלך? אנשים מדברים זה עם זה?
- 4 *If you needed milk/eggs could you ask a neighbor?* אם את/ה צריכ/ה חלב או ביצים תוכל/י לשאול שכן?
- 5 *Is there any neighborhood place where people get together?* יש מקום בשכונה שבו אנשים נפגשים?
- 6 *Do you think the community could be closer together?* האם לדעתך האנשים כאן יכול להיות יותר קרובים?
- 7 *How has your neighborhood changed?* איך השכונה השתנתה?
- 8 *What do you like best about your neighborhood? What are the things that make you feel good/bad about your neighborhood?* מה את/ה הכי אוהב/ת בשכונה שלך? מה הם הדברים שגורמים לך להרגיש טוב/רע בשכונה שלך?
- 9 *Did anything really big ever happen around here that you remember? Where? Did you see it?* האם משהו ממש משמעותי קרה פעם בשכונה שאת/ה זוכר/ת? איפה? ראית את זה?
- 10 *Do you remember when ... happened?* את/ה זוכר מתי זה קרה?

### Friends

- 1 Are there people around here you spend a lot of time with outside your family? What do you do together? Where? יש אנשים שאת/ה מבלה הרבה זמן איתם חוץ מהמשפחה? מה אתם עושים ביחד? איפה?
- 2 What is your role in with your friends like, what are your tasks? מה התפקיד שלך בין חברים?
- 3 How was it where you grew up? What were your activities with friends? איך זה היה במקום שגדלת בו? מה היו הפעילות שלך עם חברים?

### Language at home

- 1 Which languages did your grandparents use? a. with each other b. with your parents c. with you and your siblings באילו שפות השתמשו הסבים שלך ביניהם? עם ההורים שלך? איתך ועם האחים שלך?
- 2 Which language was dominant? Did the situation matter? איזו שפה הייתה דומננטית? הסיטואציה השפיעה?
- 3 Which languages did your parents use a. with each other b. with you and your siblings באילו שפות השתמשו ההורים שלך ביניהם? איתך ועם האחים שלך?
- 4 Which languages influenced you as a child? אילו שפות השפיעו עליך שהיית ילד/ה?
- 5 With whom did you speak these languages? עם מי דיברת את השפות האלה?
- 6 How did you live together? איך גרתם ביחד?
- 7 How did you learn languages? איך למדת שפות?
- 8 Were your parents attentive when you learned a language? Did they correct you? ההורים שלך תיקנו אותך כשלמדת שפה? האת/ה נשמע/ת כמו ההורים שלך? הילדים שלך?
- 9 Do you sound the same as your parents? Do your kids? היית אומר/ת שהאחים שלך ואת/ה מדברים באופן דומה או יש הבדלים? אילו הבדלים?
- 10 Would you say that your siblings and you speak similarly or are there differences? Which? היית אומר/ת שהאחים שלך ואת/ה מדברים באופן דומה או יש הבדלים? אילו הבדלים?

**Local language**

- 1 *Are there special expressions or a certain style of speech at the place where you live?* האם יש במקום שאת/ה גר/ה בו ביטויים מקומיים או סגנון דיבור מיוחד?
- 2 *Have you noticed any changes in the way people talk and sound around here?* האם הבחנת השתנות בדיבור של אנשים כאן ואיך נשמעים?
- 3 *Can you tell by the way people talk around here that they come from here?* אפשר לדעת רק לפי הדיבור שמישהו בא מכאן? או מקבוצה חברתית או קהילה מסוימת?
- 4 *Do people from this neighborhood sound different?* האם אנשים בשכונה הזאת נשמעים שונים?
- 5 *Do you think that your (ethnic) background plays a role in how people sound? How? Why?* את/ה חושב/ת שהעדה שלך יכולה להשפיע איך אנשים נשמעים? באיזה צורה? למה?
- 6 *Do you speak the same way as your friends? What kind of differences do you notice?* את/ה מדבר כמו החברים שלך? איזה הבדלים יש?
- 7 *Has anyone ever told you, you sound different? Why?* מישהו אמר לך כבר שאת/ה נשמע/ת משונה?
- 8 *What kind of words do you use that other people don't use?* באילו מילים את/ה משתמש שאחרים לא משתמשים?
- 9 *Are there people whom you find hard to understand when they speak Hebrew?* יש אנשים שקשה להבין אותם כשהם מדברים עברית?

### Language attitudes

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 Have you ever tried to change the way you talk? Why? What did you do?   | ניסית פעם לשנות את סגנון הדיבור שלך?  |
| 2 Has anyone ever given you a hard time about the way you talk? What did they say? What did you think about that? What did you do about it? | האם מישהו אי פעם ירד עליך בגלל צורת הדיבור שלך? מה אמרו? מה חשבת על זה? מה עשית בקשר לזה? |
| 3 Do you think that you try to change how you sound when you are in certain environments? Which ones? Why?                                  | את/ה חושב/ת שאת/ה מנסה להישמע אחרת כשאת/ה במצבים מסוימים? באילו מצבים? למה?               |
| 4 Did you ever experience conflicts because of the way you speak with your friends, relatives, neighbors?                                   | היו לך סכסוכים בגלל סגנון הדיבור שלך עם חברים, קרובי משפחה או שכנים?                      |
| 5 What do you think about the way that youth today sound? What has changed?   |   |
| 6 What is slang according to you?   | מה זה סלנג מבחינתך?   |
| 7 Who in Israel speaks slang and in which situations?   | מי בארץ משתמש בסלנג ובאילו מצבים?   |
| 8 Can you say something in slang?   | את/ה יכול להגיד משהו בסלנג?   |

### Standard Hebrew

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 What defines Standard Hebrew for you?                                 | מה או מי מגדיר את העברית הסטנדרטית לפיך?        |
| 2 How important is it for you to know Standard Hebrew?                  | כמה זה חשוב לך לדעת את העברית הסטנדרטית?        |
| 3 What do you think about the Hebrew Academy?                           | מה את/ה חושב/ת על האקדמיה ללשון העברית?         |
| 4 Do you speak Standard Hebrew? In which occasions?                     | האם את/ה מדבר/ת בעברית הסטנדרטית? באיזה מקרים?  |
| 5 In your opinion which actor or host speaks the best standard Hebrew?  | לפיך איזה מנחה או שחקן מדבר את העברית הכי נכון? |
| 6 Which public figure speaks the most beautiful Hebrew in your opinion? | איזה אדם ציבורי מדבר את העברית הכי יפה?         |

### Other languages than Hebrew

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 When do you use other languages than Hebrew and why?  | מתי את/ה משתמש/ת בשפות אחרות חוץ מהעברית?                 |
| 2 Which languages do you speak most often?  | באילו שפות את/ה משתמש/ת לעתים קרובות?                     |
| 3 In which language do you feel most safely? Why?   | באיזו שפה את/ה מרגיש/ה הכי בטוח/ה? למה?                   |
| 4 In which language do you dream?   | באיזו שפה את/ה חולמ/ת?                                    |
| 5 In which language do you prefer to sing?  | באיזו שפה את/ה מעדיף/ה לשיר?                              |
| 6 Which media do you use in different languages?  | באיזו מדיה את/ה משתמש/ת בשפות שונות?                      |
| 7 In which language do you speak, with yourself as well, when you are sad/ happy/ angry/ tired? | באיזו שפה את/ה מדבר/ת כשאת/ה מרגיש/ה עצוב/שמח/עצבני/עייף? |
| 8 Did you have problems or conflicts in public because of the language you spoke?               | היו לך בעיות או סכסוכים בגלל השפה שדיברת?                 |
| 9 Do you find similarities between the different languages you came across in your life?        | לפיך, יש דמיון בין השפות השונות שנתקלת בהן בחייך?         |

### For Hebrew L2

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1 What is special for you about Hebrew? How does it sound?     | מבחינתך במה העברית מיוחדת? איך זה נשמע?     |
| 2 Where and with whom did/do you learn Hebrew?                 | איפה ועם מי למדת/לומד עברית?                |
| 3 Who helps you learning Hebrew?                               | מי עוזר לך ללמוד עברית?                     |
| 4 What difficulties do you have learning H.?                   | אילו קשיים יש לך ללמוד עברית?               |
| 5 Are there topics at class which make you feel uncomfortable? | בכיתה יש נושאים שמפריעים לך?                |
| 6 Did you know about Israel and H. before you came here?       | מה ידעת על הארץ ועל העברית לפני שהגעת?      |
| 7 Do you want your children to learn your mothertongue?        | את/ה רוצה שהילדים שלך ילמדו את שפת האם שלך? |

### Miscellaneous

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | <i>What kind of music do you like?</i>  | איזו מוזיקה את/ה אוהב/ת?  |
| 2 | <i>What was the best concert you were ever at?</i>                                  | מה היה האירוע הכי טוב שהיית בו?                                   |
| 3 | <i>Who's your favorite artist?</i>  | מי האמן האהוב עליך?   |
| 4 | <i>What is your favorite movie? What is it about?</i>                               | מה הסרט האהוב עליך? על מה זה?                                     |
| 5 | <i>What do kids do around here? At night? On weekends?</i>                          | מה ילדים עושים כאן? בלילות או בסופה"ש?                            |
| 6 | <i>What do you do on Purim? Do you dress up? What was your best costume ever?</i>   | מה אתם עושים בפורים? את/ה מתחפש/ת? מה הייתה התחפושת הכי טובה שלך? |
| 7 | <i>Have you ever witnessed a tragic event?</i>                                      | האם ראית אי פעם משהו טרגי?  |
| 8 | <i>Have you ever had a near death experience? What happened? Did it change you?</i> | האם אי פעם היה לך חווית מוות קרוב? מה קרה? זה שינה אותך?          |

### Feedback

- |   |   |                             |
|---|---|-----------------------------|
| 1 | <i>Did you feel comfortable during the interview?</i>   | הרגשת בנוח במהלך הראיון?    |
| 2 | <i>Were you able to speak in your natural language?</i> | יכולת לדבר בשפה הרגילה שלך? |

## D Questionnaire for guided interviews

### Language attitude

- Q1** *What is 'ivrit tiknit and 'ivrit standartit for you? What's the difference?* מה זה בשבילך עברית סטנדרטית ומה זה עברית תקנית? מה ההבדל?
- Q2** *How important is it for you to speak correct Hebrew?* כמה זה חשוב לך לדבר בעברית תקנית?
- Q3** *How important is it for you that your children speak correct Hebrew?* כמה זה חשוב לך שהילדים שלך ידברו בעברית תקינה?
- Q4** *In your opinion who speaks the most correct Hebrew?* לפיך מי מדבר את העברית הכי תקינה שיש? יכול להיות שתם מישהו שאתה מכיר או גם אדם ציבורי.
- Q5** *Who speaks the Hebrew you like the most?* מי מדבר את העברית הכי אהובה עליך?
- Q6** *What do you think? Is Hebrew important for the State of Israel?* מה אתה חושב? האם העברית חשובה למדינת ישראל?
- Q7** *What do you think about the Hebrew Academy?* מה אתה חושב על האקדמיה ללשון העברית?
- Q8** *Are there mistakes in Hebrew which annoy you?* האם יש טעויות בעברית שמפריעות לך?
- Q8a** *Which other languages are important to you? Why?* חוץ מהעברית איזה שפות חשובות לך ולמה?
- Q8b** *Which languages do you want your children to speak?* באילו שפות היית רוצה שהילדים שלך ידברו?

**Language practice**

- Q9** *Do you speak correct Hebrew? On which occasions?* האם אתה מדבר עברית תקנית? באיזה מקרים?
- Q10** *What's it like when you speak with your friends?* איך זה כשאתה מדבר עם החברים שלך?
- Q11** *Are there special expressions or a certain style of speech at the place where you live?* האם יש במקום שאתה גר בו ביטויים מקומיים או סגנון דיבור מיוחד?
- Q11a** *Can you tell by the way people talk around here that they come from here?* אפשר לדעת רק לפי הדיבור שמישהו בא מכאן? או מקבוצה חברתית או קהילה מסוימת?
- Q12** *What (else) is characteristic for the people from here?* מה מאפיין את האנשים שמדברים ככה?
- Q13** *Do you think that you try to change how you sound when you are in certain environments? Which ones? Why?* אתה חושב שאתה מנסה להישמע אחרת כשאתה במצבים מסוימים? באילו מצבים? למה?
- Q13a** *Do you adapt your speech when you speak with religious people? Do you say shavua tov / shabat shalom?* אם אתה מדבר עם דתיים לדוגמה תגיד שבוע טוב או שבת שלום?
- Q13b** *Do you think that you speak differently from your parents?* אתה חושב שאתה מדבר בצורה אחרת מההורים שלך?
- 13c** *Do your children speak differently?* איך הילדים שלך מדברים עברית? זה שונה ממך?

**Local / group varieties (others) begin with exp.**

- Q14** *Are there people or groups who speak with a certain style of speech? Can you distinguish them because of their speech?* יש אנשים או קבוצות חברתיות שיש להם איזה סגנון דיבור מסוים שלהם? אפשר לזהות אותם רק לפי הדיבור? כמה העברית שלהם שונה? יש לך דוגמאות?
- Q14a** *In what is their Hebrew different? Do you have examples?* איך זה נשמע?
- Q14b** *How does it sound to you? Do you like their way of speech?*
- Q15** *What (else) is characteristic for the people from here?* מה מאפיין את האנשים שמדברים ככה?

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