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**Reimagining Linguistic Landscape: Online Discourses of Israeli Human
Rights Organizations**

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Abstract

Reimagining Linguistic Landscape: Online Discourses of Israeli Human Rights Organizations

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Language Policy and Linguistic Landscape methodologies, which have become popular in the field of sociolinguistics over the past few decades, examine the symbolic usage of language in public multilingual space as it relates to existing social structures and hierarchies. While a number of scholars have applied LL to the physical cityscape in towns and cities across Israel, this research seeks to broaden the scope of LL in two key ways. It first pushes the conception of *public space* to include virtual space, examining the “netscape” as opposed to a physical location. It also expands the notion of *language* to include broader understandings of discourse as a form of language in and of itself. Accordingly, this research assesses the online symbolism and language use of Israeli human rights organizations to gain further insight to not only the linguistic market of Israel, but that of human rights discourse as well.

Through analysis of logos and mission statements of several Israeli advocating for Palestinian human rights, this paper investigates the ways in which these organizations navigate the challenges of translating Palestinian human rights violations into the global human rights

discourse palatable to the Israeli public. The relationships represented through conflict between Arabic and Hebrew play out differently in the physical space than they do in the top-down representations of Israeli human rights organizations, but these language choices are yet made within the contexts of the human rights discourse surrounding the Israel-Palestine conflict. The nature of the conflict inherently suggests the use of Hebrew and Arabic, but the discourse itself requires the use of English as a means for accessing global resources. This research notes the intensified impact of globalization due to the English required for involvement in the human rights discourse and explores the ways in which this confluence of languages and language relations serves to both perform and constitute a unique human rights discourse space for left-leaning Israeli organizations.

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Introduction

Israeli-Palestinian relations have been marked by ongoing conflict since the establishment of Israel in 1948 and the subsequent occupation of Palestinian territories in 1967. In accordance with this conflict between nations, key Israeli and Palestinian symbols such as language are often viewed in conflict with one another as well. The history of Jewish nation-building in Israel around the Hebrew language has firmly rooted the language in the national imagination, and the symbolic role of language as an “assertion of identity”¹ continues to play out in the Israel-Palestinian contestations. As such, the political conflict has led to the equating of Hebrew and Arabic as languages in conflict with one another. This presumed linguistic relationship of conflict, however, points to underlying conflicted social relations.

This research explores the symbolic role language plays as a signifier of identity politics enacted specifically by Israeli human rights organizations advocating for Palestinian rights. It aims to show not only that language choices and symbolism are a product of the language hierarchy within Israel, but also that they also play a role in shaping the field of peace and coexistence dialogue. Accordingly, this research assesses how several Israeli human rights organizations self-represent online, and how their choices construct and perform human rights discourse across languages, essentially creating a language of peace unique to the Israel-Palestine conflict.

¹ Spolsky, B. (2009). *Language Management*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 154.

The first chapter draws on the conceptual underpinnings of critical linguistics to explore the function of language as a symbol for underlying social power. It uses Bourdieu's framework of cultural capital in conjunction with studies of Israel to lay a foundation for understanding its social and linguistic resources. In order to set the scene for analysis of Israeli organizations' linguistic choices in the human rights field, it then goes on to assess the historical and current state of the linguistic market in Israel, highlighting Hebrew, Arabic, and English. These languages have a complex history of entanglement in the region through their modes of social contact which has led to the current hierarchical structure of Hebrew and English being valued over Arabic. The chapter also addresses the state of Arabic, English, and Hebrew in the West Bank and Gaza, representing the linguistic market of the recipient population of these Israeli human rights organizations.

The second chapter examines the development of the human rights discourse and its implementation as a tool for access to global resources. It explores English as the de facto language of human rights globally and how this connection affects linguistic choices by human rights organizations. Drawing on Foucault's conceptions of discourse, further sections discuss the boundaries of human rights discourse in Israel, and how these boundaries are manifested in relation to Hebrew and Arabic in Israel. The chapter also introduces the field of linguistic landscaping, which maps out visual language in multilingual spaces. This thesis suggests the extension of linguistic landscaping analyses into the virtual space and seeks to combine language and discourse within that visual representation analysis.

The third section investigates online materials of several Israeli human rights organizations. After a brief background of each organization, this project analyzes a number of aspects of their

online presence, including visual representation in logos and on home pages, overarching linguistic choices for content, and more intricate wording choices across languages in mission statement language. The analysis draws comparisons across organizations in these key areas to create a rudimentary map of the Israeli human rights discourse as self-represented in online sources. It provides a preliminary foray into the realm of virtual linguistic landscaping, encouraging a new thrust for visual analysis of language and discourse.

Overall, this thesis aims to explore a new area of critical linguistics by applying the methodologies of linguistic landscaping to the virtual public space. It pulls online samples from a set of Israeli human rights organizations to further fold in discourse as part of the language assessed in the parameters of the linguistic landscape analysis. This endeavor aims to broaden not only the concept of public space, but also that of language. This project should serve as a jumping off point for other scholars of the field for pushing into new frontiers of social analysis of language and discourse, both within linguistic landscaping and without.

Chapter 1: Israel's Language Market

Language as Social Power

According to critical linguists, language is both constitutive and representative of the basic and underlying schisms of a society or societies. This means that, in addition to providing a functional means for interpersonal communication, language also serves a symbolic role in setting social limits between speakers and non-speakers. In the modern era, language is often utilized as a tool in this way, sharply delineating boundaries of belonging between groups. Shared language lends credence and strength to “imagined communities... in the nationalist or ethnic enterprise,”² allowing for the creation and maintenance of nations along the lines of language.

Language proficiency is therefore one among a number of competencies that constitute what Bourdieu terms cultural capital, or the “knowledge, skills, and dispositions... acquired through social interactions.”³ As a form of functional capital, language allows for intercommunication in a giving setting. Linguistic capital, however, encompasses much more than the practical function of a language as it also carries a symbolic function of language. The term ‘symbol’ here is used in accordance with Spolsky’s understanding of a symbol as an “assertion of identity”⁴. Thus, those who command not only the practical but also the symbolic functions of language are typically considered members of that society’s dominant culture. Dominant cultures

² Susan Gal, from Suleiman, Yasir. 2013. *Arabic in the Fray: Language Ideology and Cultural Politics*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd, 19.

³ Uhlmann, Allon J. 2017. *Arabic Instruction in Israel: Lessons in Conflict, Cognition and Failure*. Leiden: Brill, 27

⁴ Spolsky, Language Management, 154.

of a society already determine “where and how various components of society will participate”⁵ and reinforce these boundaries through the assertion of their identity through language, often at the expense of groups outside of that language community. In this way, the dominant class creates and sustains the social structures that value certain linguistic proficiencies over others, privileging their own set of linguistic symbols above all else.

It follows then, that relationships between languages in a given society will reflect the social relationships between those language communities.⁶ Given a society at conflict, one could then predict a conflicted relationship between languages reflecting those social tensions. Suleiman highlights this symbolic function of language to serve as a stand-in for social disparities and woes and posits that language is a “site of ideological contestation involving asymmetrical power relations between groups and individuals.”⁷ Therefore, where disparities between the values of languages manifest, concurrent and correlated disparities will exist between their respective language communities.

Furthermore, belonging to a language community is not typically determined solely on knowledge of a language, but rather on being able to bring to bear “the symbolic power of language to signal an identity border that marks who is in, who is out.”⁸ The functional and

⁵ Ben-Rafael, Eliezer. 2009. "A Sociolinguistic Approach to the Study of Linguistic Landscapes." In *Linguistic Landscape: Expanding the Scenery*, edited by Elana Shohamy and Durk Gorter, 49-63. New York: Routledge, 16.

⁶ Calvet, Louis-Jean. 1998. *Language Wars and Linguistic Politics*. Translated by Michel Petheram. Oxford: Oxford University press, 113.

⁷ Suleiman, Yasir. 2004. *A War of Words: Language and Conflict in the Middle East*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 7

⁸ Suleiman, Yasir. 2013. *Arabic in the Fray: Language Ideology and Cultural Politics*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd., 205

symbolic modes of language are addressed below for both Hebrew and Arabic, as the primary languages in the Israel-Palestine conflict, and mapped out in accordance with the linguistic capital afforded them.

Hebrew

Modern Hebrew is currently the only official language of Israel, and according to the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, is the mother tongue of approximately half of the population.⁹ Beyond this, the vast majority (90%) of Israeli Jews are proficient or highly proficient in the language, though only 60% of Israeli Arabs share similar levels of proficiency.¹⁰ Prior to 2018, Arabic was also listed as an official language of the state of Israel. Arabic and Hebrew belong to the Semitic language family, characterized by a shared system of three root radicals that form the basis of most words. Because of this, many Hebrew and Arabic roots carry similar meanings, and words are formed following similar patterns. Since the passing of the Nation State Law in 2018, Arabic has been redesignated as a special status language.¹¹ As the sole official language, Hebrew enjoys a dominant position in all aspects of Israeli political, social, and economic life.

⁹ Druckman, Yaron. 2013. "CBS: 27% of Israelis struggle with Hebrew." *Ynet News*. 1 21. Accessed March 28, 2019. <https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4335235,00.html>.

¹⁰ Berdichevsky, Norman. 2014. *Modern Hebrew: The Past and Future of a Revitalized Language*. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 136.

¹¹ Berger, M. (2018, July 31). Israel's hugely controversial "nation-state" law, explained. *Vox.com*. Retrieved January 7, 2019, from <https://www.vox.com/world/2018/7/31/17623978/israel-jewish-nation-state-law-bill-explained-apartheid-netanyahu-democracy>.

Revival of Hebrew as a National Language

Since the creation of Israel as an independent nation in 1949, state-makers have contributed to the reinvigoration and renewal of Hebrew as the uniting language for the Jewish people. The revival project began years prior when masses of immigrants flowed into the region throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Until this point, Hebrew was no longer a living or spoken language – it's use had long been relegated to the realm of religion and religious study. At the onset of Israeli statehood, the Jewish people spoke a variety of disparate mother tongues from a multitude of origin countries across the world, even today Jews migrate to Israel from diverse linguistic backgrounds. During the strengthening of the state, language was identified as a unifying characteristic for the Jewish people, following the trajectory of many contemporary nation-building projects. The Zionist project of creating a state for the Jews involved, according to Uhlmann and others, "the... bracketing off Jews from gentiles and reconstituting them as a distinct Hebraic ethno-linguistic community."¹² The historical ties of Hebrew to Judaism and the Torah made this connection appear strong from the outset, only serving to strengthen the Jewish linkage with Hebrew as a symbol of nationality and belonging.

The Hebrew Language Committee, founded in 1890 to guide the growth and usage of Hebrew as a modern language, played a central role in vaulting Hebrew to the forefront of the nation-building project. It wasn't until 1920, however, that Hebrew was granted official status by

¹² Uhlmann, Arabic Instruction, 23.

the British in Mandatory Palestine.¹³ By the time of Israeli statehood in 1948, Hebrew was effectively replacing the immigrant languages of its new citizens and state policies governing the usage of Hebrew helped to swiftly spur this process along. The Academy of the Hebrew Language sprung from the Hebrew Language Committee in 1953 and continues to serve as the innovating and regulatory body for the Hebrew language to this day. Their charter involves innovating new Hebrew words, determining appropriate usages of foreign terminologies, and setting grammatical guidelines.

While the Hebrew language has certainly expanded from its previous status as simply “a language of sacred text and daily worship,”¹⁴ it still holds firm to these roots. Hebrew not only symbolizes a shared method of communication amongst modern Israelis, but it also recalls deeper roots of historical religious and ethnic commonalities. The added layer of commonality serves on one hand to strengthen the cohesion of the Jewish identity, and to distance non-Jewish citizens from that identity.

Today, Hebrew is the common first language of Jewish Israelis, and as such enjoys a great deal of prestige through its use in legal arenas, business, and academics. Hebrew is accordingly taught as a native language to Jewish Israeli citizens, and as a foreign language in Arab Israeli schools from the third grade.¹⁵ University instruction is also conducted in Hebrew, highlighting the prevalence of Hebrew as a language for social mobility in Israel. Given that a lower percentage of

¹³ Halperin, Liora. 2014. *The Irony of Erasing Arabic*. October 6. Accessed February 11, 2019. <https://forward.com/opinion/206861/the-irony-of-erasing-arabic/>.

¹⁴ Spolsky, Language Management, 36.

¹⁵ Schwartz, Yarden. 2011. "The Arabic Education of Israel's Jewish Students." *Pacific Standard*. June 17.

Israeli Arabs are proficient in Hebrew, they are thus also relegated to a lower percentage representation amongst Israeli university students, only furthering the accompanying disparity between these populations.

Hebrew in the West Bank & Gaza

Hebrew is not spoken widely in the West Bank or Gaza, though Hebrew language learning has increased over the last decade. Following the 1967 occupation of the Palestinian territories there was a great deal of interaction between Palestinians and Israelis economically, particularly in working class jobs. These Palestinians learned Hebrew primarily for access to jobs and the economic sector. Because of the nature of the jobs they took, however, knowledge of Hebrew tended to be “inversely correlated with education.”¹⁶ The more educated Palestinian populace practiced their Arabic (and English) skills in their own communities, creating a further segregation of the skilled Palestinian workforce from Israeli sectors.

Following the first intifada and the subsequent conclusion of the Oslo Accords in 1995, Palestinians’ access to Israel declined sharply.¹⁷ Consequently, Hebrew language proficiency began to fade among Palestinians such that the younger generations now have little to no proficiency. Only more recently have schools been offering Hebrew – both in the West Bank and in Gaza. In the West Bank, Hebrew is offered at the university level, but direct contact methods produce more

¹⁶ Amara, Muhammad Hasan. 2003. "Recent Foreign Language Education Policies in Palestine." *Language Problems & Language Planning* 27 (3): 217-232, 224.

¹⁷ The Oslo Accords initiated the transition to limited self-governance by the newly created Palestinian Authority in key areas of the West Bank and Gaza, while remaining areas were divided into either joint control or Israeli control. While this divided system was intended to be a transitory one while the peace process moved forward, it has remained in place for over two decades.

reliable spoken Hebrew.¹⁸ Modes of direct contact for learning Hebrew include, besides commercial transactions and in the workplace, exposure during years of imprisonment during and following the intifada. For West Bank residents, Hebrew may be tied up in the ongoing conflict, but it is also linked to economic market access.

In the Gaza Strip, direct contact modes are much less common. Only a small number of Palestinians are allowed access to Israel and the West Bank. According to the Israeli human rights organization, Gisha, exits of Gazan residents have varied between under 5,000 to 12,000 each month since 2017.¹⁹ Regardless, in 2013 Hamas to offer Hebrew as a foreign language in government-funded schools.²⁰ Given the very limited interactions between Arabic and Hebrew speakers in the context of Gaza, this language learning initiative is heavily characterized by the ongoing conflict. Hebrew's linguistic capital in this sense is tied up in its utility in gaining knowledge about an occupying force, symbolic of conflict and oppression.

Arabic

Arabic is an official language of 22 countries worldwide, with various dialects spoken by over 300 million people. Historically, the Arabic language has been spoken by the peoples of the Arabian Peninsula and then spread throughout the current Middle East and North Africa with the expansion of Islam. Arabic, like Hebrew, is first and foremost a language of prestige due to its

¹⁸ Amara, *Recent Foreign Language*, 225.

¹⁹ *Gisha.org*. (2019). Retrieved March 28, 2019 from Gisha: <https://gisha.org/graph/2392>

²⁰ Sherwood, H. (2013, February 13). Hamas Puts Hebrew on the Curriculum for the First Time in 20 Years. *The Guardian*.

strong connection to religion. It is marked by a distinct diglossia wherein the formal (Modern Standard Arabic, MSA) is more closely associated with the classical poetic language of the Qur'an. The informal dialects, often viewed as 'slang,' are used in day-to-day life, and the Modern Standard Arabic is reserved primarily for the educated elite and news broadcasts. This differentiation has led to intense ideological debates in the Arabic language community over the prestige of the formal MSA versus the functionality of dialectic Arabic and the appropriate balance between these two in daily life and education.

Arabic in Israel: A Minority Language

Approximately 21% of the Israeli population is non-Jewish and Arab,²¹ with a native language of Arabic. Until the passing of the Nation State Law July 2018, Arabic retained status as an official language in Israel. While the new law still affords the language special status in Israel, the removal of official status indicates a formal declaration of Arabic's relative unimportance in the Israeli national identity and imagination. Arabic will essentially occupy a purely functional public space for Israel's Arabic-speaking population but is no longer recognized as a unifying factor of nationality or identity.

²¹ I have listed out this population as *non-Jewish Arab* in order to draw a key distinction between the commonly termed *Arab Israelis*, those Palestinians granted Israeli citizenship after 1967 and their descendants, and Mizrahi (Arab) Jews. The Mizrahi Jews have a culturally Arab background from their country of origin (Palestine, Iraq, Morocco, Egypt, and more) and depending on their upbringing, have a varying degree of Arabic language proficiency. As part of the revival of Hebrew with the construction of Israel, the Mizrahi Arabic was one of many languages to get pushed aside by these efforts. Even doubly so, Arabic was pushed out due to its association with the Arab/Palestinian 'enemy,' and the Ashkenazi pronunciations of Hebrew were promoted over the Mizrahi.

Despite Arabic's prior official language status, Arab citizens of Israel have long lived separately from their Jewish counterparts. With the exception of those who reside in one of a few mixed cities, non-Jewish Arab citizens live in Arab towns and villages removed from Israeli towns and villages. Arab and Israeli separation extends past the purely geographic into the social. The Israeli education system is also bifurcated for Jewish Israeli versus Arab Israeli instruction. This split ensures a lack of socialization between Jewish and Arab children, and further leads to disparities in language and other skills. These disparities are compounded by the fact that Arab schools in general receive subpar funding and attention in relation to their Jewish counterparts.

Unlike the strong management of the Hebrew language through the Academy of the Hebrew Language, Arabic enjoys no such overarching institution. The Academy of Arabic Language was founded in 2007 in Haifa,²² but does not command the same control or respect as its Hebrew counterpart. Overall, Arabic language presents a much more unwieldy challenge for management given its geographical and dialectic variations. Despite the space afforded Arabic in Israel from separationist education policies, lack of an overarching institution to provide direction for the language in the modern world has contributed to a sense of stagnation unfelt as such by Hebrew, which consistently reviews and approves new loan words and the like. This trend, along with the use of Hebrew in higher education and new economic endeavors, has led to a view of Hebrew as a language of modernity more so than the other native languages in Israel.

²² Berdichevsky, *Modern Hebrew*, 143.

Hebrew and Arabic Language Trends in Israel

In Israel, the study of Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) is compulsory for grades 7 through 10, although the implementation of this mandate is inconsistent at best.²³ While some Jewish Israeli children accordingly do receive education in Arabic, this education frequently poses Arabic as a language of an unpatriotic/disloyal minority. Beyond this, the Arabic taught in Jewish schools is the formal register and not the dialect. This instruction produces a knowledge base of Arabic that does not prepare students for interacting with Arabic speakers, and dually leads to negative views of Arabic as an overly complex and archaic language. Coupled with the lack of interaction between the populations and the ubiquity of Hebrew, Jewish Israelis rarely find practical use for the Arabic language outside of military applications. Likewise, there is an obvious “open involvement of Military Intelligence in Arabic instruction at Jewish schools,”²⁴ which only solidifies perceptions of Arabic as a language of conflict. Furthermore, Jewish citizens enjoy membership in the dominant class of The Jewish State of Israel, which means their linguistic capabilities are more highly valued than others’. Learning Arabic is therefore often not a priority as it doesn’t grant added access to prestigious social, political, or economic sectors.

The opposite trend is taking place with Hebrew usage amongst native Arabic speakers. Not only are Arab Israeli students schooled in Hebrew from grade 3,²⁵ but the higher prestige associated with the Hebrew language means that speakers of Hebrew will be able to achieve

²³ Schwartz, *The Arabic Education*.

²⁴ Uhlmann, *Arabic Instruction*, 31.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

greater success in various social, legal, and educational interactions. According to Uhlmann the disparity in prestige afforded each language has led to a “pervasive sense that Arabs’ mother tongue – colloquial Arabic – is being eroded under the pressure of Hebrew.”²⁶ Fitted in with Bourdieu’s paradigm of linguistic market and currency, the Israeli market is such that Hebrew enjoys an higher level of linguistic currency in relation to the much lower levels afforded Arabic.

The history of the conflict sparked by the 1949 establishment of Israel has also led to a general sense of unease or distrust between Jewish and non-Jewish Arab citizens, such that “both parties look at the language of the Other as the language of the ‘enemy.’”²⁷ This likely contributed to the maintenance of a segregated education system, wherein a system for Jewish youth only could solidify the national and linguistic identity. While this historical and ongoing separation of Jewish and non-Jewish Arab spaces in Israel has led to the creation and strengthening of these disparities, it has also allowed for “...Palestinians in Israel [to] maintain their national identity.”²⁸

Aside from the identity space afforded by such policies, the increased necessity of Hebrew use to benefit from Israeli society is leading to the decline even of Arabic levels amongst native Arabic speakers. According to Berdichevsky, there has been a noticeable “decline in the level of both spoken and literary Arabic among Israeli Arab students entering universities in Israel.”²⁹ These trends only serve to show that the populace itself is aware of the relative utility (or lack of

²⁶ Uhlmann, *Arabic Instruction*, 66.

²⁷ Suleiman, *A War of Words*, 139.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 138.

²⁹ Berdichevsky, *Modern Hebrew*, 143.

utility) of these languages and is in turn opting for the instrumental functionality of language learning over the symbolic conflict between the two languages.

English

English in Israel

In the increasingly interdependent global economy, English plays an ever-larger role as a non-native language world-wide. In Israel, English is gaining prevalence in key areas of business and education. Proficiency in English is largely viewed as a means for accessing the resources and capital of the international marketplace. On account of this associated prestige, English instruction levels have grown drastically such that English is “taught in state schools more seriously than... Arabic.”³⁰ As such, English is outplacing Arabic as a language of foreign instruction for Israeli Jewish students. English, associated with business acumen and high levels of education, is more highly valued in relation to Arabic, which is most often associated with the lower status of a second-class disloyal population. English likewise commands a high level of prestige amongst non-Jewish Arab Israelis. This population, however, often receives less adequate instruction in English due to the separately funded school systems. Additionally, Hebrew is the more accessible of the two languages to native Arabic speakers because of its shared roots and its pervasiveness as the functional language of Israeli society.

³⁰ Spolsky, *Language Management*, 106.

English in the West Bank & Gaza

In the West Bank and Gaza, English is viewed as the most significant secondary language following only Arabic. As such, English courses are taught starting in the 5th grade,³¹ and are required at the university level.³² According to a 2017 study, however, English language proficiency levels suffer from a lack of exposure to a native English-speaking population – most Palestinian English speakers operate in an environment with few opportunities for speaking English³³ and thus have greater challenges to improve their skills. By and large, English is viewed as a language of modernity, and provides Palestinians a “window on the world,”³⁴ especially as relates to promoting the Palestinian cause internationally. According to Amara, English is primarily viewed as a neutral language in the Israel-Palestine conflict because of its use as a lingua franca throughout the establishment of Israel and the occupation of '67.³⁵

English in the Israel-Palestine Conflict

As foreign to the native Hebrew and Arabic languages of the Israel-Palestine conflict, English is often viewed as a language of neutrality. This view, however, ignores both the political history of the English language in the region and the contemporary thrust of English as purveyor of globalization. English was the dominant language of the British administered Mandatory Palestine in the early 1900s which eventually ended in the split of lands between Jews and Arabs

³¹ Bianchi, R., & Hussein, A. A. (2016). The English Language Teaching Situation in Palestine. In R. Kirkpatrick, *English Education Policy in the Middle East and Northern Africa* (pp. 147-169). Springer, 151.

³² Amara, Recent Foreign Language, 221.

³³ Bianchi, Hussein, English Language Teaching Situation, 155.

³⁴ Amara, Recent Foreign Language, 223.

³⁵ Ibid., 218.

in accordance with Britain's commitment to the Balfour Declaration. Since the establishment of Israel in 1949, the US has continued to strengthen diplomatic ties with the Jewish state to the extent that the US considers the safety and security of Israel as one of its primary interests in the Middle East. Additionally, business partnerships between the US and Israel are many and strong, belying the undergirding cooperative nature of the relationship.

When applied to conceptions of the structural hierarchy and political economy of languages in Israel, English occupies a distinguished position symbolic of its connection to the dominant Hebrew language of Israel. Arab Israelis for example, as non-Jewish citizens, typically do not enjoy the same level of access to English language learning. Without the same level of access, these groups tend to hold less cultural capital in the Israeli language economy that devalues their native Arabic and overvalues Hebrew and English.

Chapter 2: Discourse and Human Rights

Discourse

Discourse, regardless of its focus, is more than just what is being said about a given topic. It also encompasses certain rules of engagement, essentially dictating what “can and cannot be said in a given society or... social context.”³⁶ Foucault describes this notion as a set of discourse possibility conditions, a feature that Bourdieu in turn calls the “political problematic”³⁷ wherein discourse itself is an institution limits or shapes the deliberations that take place within its purview. Furthermore, these “discursive practices... [are] considered as encoded and institutionalized social practices that are not only external to but also constitutive elements of discourse.”³⁸ Essentially, knowledge is inscribed and re-inscribed through usage in society, a process which is both performative of that knowledge and fundamental to it.

On one hand, this may allow certain groups access to a new mode of fighting for their goals or rights, but on the other, it often limits that mode to a specific set of vocabularies and methodologies. Indeed, with the development of a global civic culture which “attempts... to forge a framework based on a common global interest,”³⁹ individual local or regional situations are often

³⁶ Schaffner, Christina, and Anita L. Wenden, 1995. *Language and Peace*. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Company, Ltd., 123.

³⁷ Bourdieu, *Language & Symbolic Power*, 172.

³⁸ Haidar, Julieta, and Lidia Rodriguez. 1995. "Power and Ideology in Different Discursive Practices." In *Language and Peace*, 121-138. Routledge, 123.

³⁹ Schaffner, Christina., and Anita L Wenden. 1995. *Language and Peace*. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Company, Ltd., 219.

molded into compliance with the relevant universal discourses in order to gain visibility and traction in the global conscious.

The universal human rights discourse can be divided into several ideological thrusts: the philosophical, legal, and political. The most predominant of these branches today is the legal branch, which relies on the internal logic of law and international law to achieve human rights victories.⁴⁰ Along these lines, human rights organizations often face the challenging task of reframing issues to fit into the legality framework of the overarching global discourse. Applying this conception to the Israel-Palestine conflict, human rights organizations accordingly “translate international human rights norms on the one hand, and the suffering of the victims on the other, into the conceptions and legal language commonly employed by the state the violates those rights.”⁴¹ This translation process inevitably involves the alteration of narratives to fit into the structure of legality, resulting primarily in a loss of emotion and humanity for the impersonal aloofness of the legal institution.

Golan and Orr, in writing about Israeli NGOs advocating for Palestinian rights, suggest a triangular model for understanding how these organizations in particular must translate both the human rights discourse and the Palestinian discourse into terms appropriate for dissemination and consumption in the dominant Israeli society. This ‘translation’ is primarily a translation of key terminologies into terminologies suitable in other contexts and does not necessarily require

⁴⁰ Evans, Tony. 2005. "International Human Rights Law as Power/Knowledge." *Human Rights Quarterly* 27 (3): 1046-1068, 1050.

⁴¹ Golan, Daphna, and Zuika Orr. 2012. "Translating Human Rights of the "Enemy": The Case of Israeli NGOs Defending Palestinian Rights." *Law & Society Review* 46 (4): 781-814, 782.

concurrent translation across the involved languages of English, Arabic, and Hebrew, though this may also occur. Regardless of the positive intentions, this translation process that “desires[s] to achieve legitimacy”⁴² within Israeli society requires that certain aspects of the original discourse are altered. Such alterations may result in the removal of more emotional appeals and terminologies, which can substantially reshape the original message.

For this very reason, Rogers and Ben-David refer to these left-leaning Israeli NGOs⁴³ as “complicated issue network actors,”⁴⁴ as they must balance advocacy for Palestinians on one hand with the ability of garnering Israeli public support on the other. Since the Palestinian population is often viewed at a minimum with distrust or at a maximum as a direct enemy, these NGOs are challenged to carve a niche in which their efforts don’t in turn paint them as disloyal. They go on to indicate that the most impactful of left-leaning Israeli NGOs have been those that forgo traditional Israeli discourses of security and anti-terrorism in favor of the human rights discourse already adopted by many Palestinian organizations.⁴⁵

During the ‘translation’ process of adapting the human rights and Palestinian discourses to resonate with – or at least to not alienate - the Israeli public, Israeli NGOs inevitably also face additional obstacles based on their individual backgrounds. The coordinators of these NGOs themselves, raised as Israeli citizens, likely bring with them an innate “acceptance of hegemonic

⁴² Golan and Orr, *Translating Human Rights*, 797.

⁴³ This research borrows the term ‘left-leaning’ from Rogers and Ben-David to describe those Israeli NGOs whose aims align most closely with those of the political left in Israel, typically the side most interested in a peaceful resolution of the Israel-Palestine conflict.

⁴⁴ Rogers, Richard, and Anat Ben-David. 2008. "The Palestinian-Israeli Peace Process and Transnational Issue Networks: The Complicated Place of the Israeli NGO." *new media and society* 10 (3): 497-528, 520.

⁴⁵ Rogers, Ben-David, *The Palestinian-Israeli Peace Process*, 519.

assumptions”⁴⁶ about what is fair in a resolution of the conflict. While these notions may not intentionally be brought to bear in their given human rights work, such preconceived tendencies are important to recognize. Without proper attention, these preconceived assumptions cannot be countered and may negatively impact the efforts of the organization or serve to discredit it amongst would-be supporters. One of these uniquely Israeli tendencies is a desire to keep domestic political concerns out of the larger political arena, as opposed to ‘airing dirty laundry in public’. Israeli NGOs that utilize the global human rights discourse fly in the face of this domestic desire to “confine the debate to national and regional politics.”⁴⁷ This often results in the public they seek to appeal to viewing them as partially disloyal to the Israeli state.

Subsequent developments in Israeli politics support this tendency of wanting to resolve issues internally, including the NGOs Funding Transparency Law passed in 2016. According to the law, Israeli NGOs that receive half or more of their funding from foreign political entities are required to declare this in all publications or else face fines. According to the Jerusalem Post, 27 organizations were immediately affected by the law, with 25 of those being left-wing organizations receiving funding from European governments.⁴⁸ The law sparked a great deal of controversy in Israel and abroad, with then UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon citing his regret over the “shrinking space for civil society” in Israel.⁴⁹ Even more recently, a 2018 bill was proposed to “prohibit the documentation and photography of the IDF in action in the occupied territories by

⁴⁶ Golan and Orr, *Translating Human Rights*, 801.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 521.

⁴⁸ Harkov, Lahav. 2016. "UN's Ban Calls NGO Law 'Deeply Troubling'." *The Jerusalem Post*. July 12.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*.

NGOs, activists, and any unofficial Israeli organizations.”⁵⁰ Such a bill would substantially truncate the work of many human rights organizations, which often run important awareness campaigns predicated on exposing injustices of the occupation at the hands of Israeli soldiers. If passed, this bill would ostensibly illegalize the airing of Israel’s ‘dirty laundry’ to the world.

English and Human Rights Discourse

Proficiency in English does not only promise prosperity in international markets. It also brings with it new modes of thinking and access to new discourses. Key among these are discourses of universal human rights which has flourished since the 1948 signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the General Assembly. The language of the UDHR is housed in rights as protected by law, which sets up the human rights discourse from the beginning to go so frequently hand-in-hand with discourses of law – both nationally and internationally. Indeed, the UDHR spurred the subsequent passing of a number of treaties for international human rights laws, building up a distinct universal legal discourse of rights. This build-up of international human rights law, however, requires agreement and action from individual nations. According to the UN, “The domestic legal system, therefore, provides the principal legal protection of human rights guaranteed under international law,” though international procedures may be followed⁵¹. The Declaration was first drafted in English and has subsequently been translated to hundreds of

⁵⁰ Cohen, Noam. 2018. "The Struggle of Human Rights NGOs and the "Funding Transparency" Law in Israel." *NMRZ*. July 12.

⁵¹ <http://www.un.org/en/sections/universal-declaration/foundation-international-human-rights-law/index.html>

different languages, suggesting the primacy of English in not only the creation of, but also the maintenance of universal human rights and the surrounding discourse. This powerful combination of “globalization and rights-culture pressures are enabling English to become the vehicle... for the articulation and maintenance of certain worldwide standards of protection.”⁵²

The Israel-Palestine conflict has for decades now been at the forefront of the global human rights imagination. Voices from both sides of the conflict have found effective ways to amplify and convey their plights. According to Bourdieu this vocalization, or visibility, is key towards realizing one’s goals: “It is the most visible agents, from the point of view of the prevailing categories of perception, who are the best placed to change the vision by changing the categories of perception.”⁵³ In Israel, English is frequently used as an intermediary language in conversations about peace and conflict resolution. English has long played a role in political conflicts in the Israeli-Arab realm first through Britain’s involvement in the Mandatory Period, and then through the UN with the 1949 Armistice Agreement and the Geneva Convention. This trend persisted when the United States took a marked interest in negotiating the peace process between Israel and the Arab states with the Camp David Accords in the 70’s and between Israel and Palestine with the Oslo Accords in the 90s. Now, English continues to serve as an effective tool for organizations to tap into external resources, particularly in foreign capital from the United States and Europe.

⁵² Toolan, Michael. 2003. "English as the Supranational Language of Human Rights?" In *The Politics of English as a World Language: New Horizons in Postcolonial Cultural Studies*, 53-65. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 64.

⁵³ Bourdieu, Pierre. 1991. *Language & Symbolic Power*. Edited by John B. Thompson. Translated by Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 239.

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⁵⁴ Bourdieu, Pierre. 1991. *Language & Symbolic Power*. Edited by John B. Thompson. Translated by Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 239.

Chapter 3: Current Trends: Language Policy and Linguistic Landscape

For decades now, scholars have critically assessed the function of language as a symbol that marks social divisions through the use of structural analyses, which aim to “lay... bare the structure immanent in each symbolic production.”⁵⁵ Bourdieu and Foucault in particular have written at length about the power both inherent in and reflected by language, including that of the previously mentioned conception of discourse as an ever-evolving institution. In more recent decades, several new modes of structural analyses have developed in this vein, including those of language policy and linguistic landscaping (LL).

Language policy consists of the choices that individuals, as members of specific speech communities, make regarding their language production. Spolsky breaks down this conception of policy into three key components: the speech practices of individuals, the beliefs or ideologies surrounding the language, and language management attempts by certain authoritative groups.⁵⁶ Language policy studies thus assume the existence overarching structures – both planned and unplanned -that lead to the hierarchical stratification of languages in relation to one another in the social space. These structures serve as a jumping point for examining how the factors implicit in impacting language choices. The beliefs or ideologies surrounding Hebrew, Arabic, and English were laid out in the previous section, and greatly impact both the speech practices of individuals and are in turn impacted by management from above. In the case of Israel, central management of Hebrew was used to build the Jewish Israeli identity. More recently, the Israeli Nation State Law

⁵⁵ Bourdieu, *Language & Symbolic Power*, 164.

⁵⁶ Spolsky, *Language Management*, 4.

removed Arabic's official language status, completely devaluing the formal status of Arabic and of Arabic speakers. These factors among others influence individuals and organizations to make the language choices they face every day.

The related field of Linguistic Landscaping (LL) examines the results of this confluence of language policy factors on public multilingual spaces, mapping out the visual presence of languages under the assumption that public space is used to "deliver symbolic messages about the importance, power, significance and relevance of certain languages and the irrelevance of others."⁵⁷ Though the study of signs and visual representation of language itself is not a recent one, the concept of linguistic landscaping appeared first in 1997 in the works of Landry and Bourhis.⁵⁸ Subsequent LL studies have evolved from Landry and Bourhis' more experiential methods to rely on more direct counting of signs in a space as a means to study the "sociolinguistic ecology of cities."⁵⁹

When determining these messages that lay behind signs, a number of considerations are necessary. Specifically, each language choice takes place in the context of the surrounding society. When assessing the impacts or intent of a sign, multiple actors play important roles throughout the process, including the initiator/owner, the maker of the sign, and the reader or target of the sign.⁶⁰ All of these actors operate within a publicly contested space which "is used as a battlefield

⁵⁷ Shohamy, Elana. 2006. *Language Policy: Hidden Agendas and New Approaches*. New York: Routledge, 110.

⁵⁸ Landry, Rodrigue, and Richard Y. Bourhis 1997. Linguistic Landscape and Ethnolinguistic Vitality An Empirical Study. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* 16(1): 23–49.

⁵⁹ Spolsky, *Linguistic Management*, 67.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 70.

and is the subject of negotiations between different groups.”⁶¹ Likewise, the decisions these actors make in producing their signs “cannot be divorced from the larger political context in which they operate.”⁶² By looking, then, at surface level self-representation and language choice, LL methods can accordingly provide insight to the ongoing process of the stratification of languages in a given language market.

Scholars Gorter, Ben-Rafael, Shohamy, and others have examined various of Israel’s linguistic landscapes focusing on the interplay between Hebrew, Arabic, and English in mixed cities. Their analysis of signs or “items” addresses such aspects as language choice, font, size, and relative order and location. They also divide items according to their mode of production, either top-down or bottom-up. According to this distinction, top-down signs are those produced by some authoritative public institution whereas bottom-up signs are those produced by private sources, professional or otherwise.⁶³ The findings of these scholars support the importance of studying the social structures such as the hegemony of Hebrew in Israel in impacting language presence in public spaces. Trumper-Hecht’s study of signage in Upper Nazareth details how Israelis and Palestinians are using visual public space as the site for waging a symbolic linguistics warfare over the control of physical space. This jockeying for “representation in the symbolic reality”⁶⁴ is

⁶¹ Shohamy, *Language Policy*, 128.

⁶² Trumper-Hecht, Nira. 2009. "Constructing National Identity in Mixed Cities in Israel: Arabic on Signs in the Public Space in Upper Nazareth." In *Linguistic Landscape: Expanding the Scenery*, edited by Elana Shohamy and Durk Gorter, 238-253. New York: Routledge, 250.

⁶³ Ben-Rafael, Eliezer, Elana Shohamy, Muhammad Hasan Amara, and Nina Trumper-Hecht. 2006. "Linguistic Landscape as Symbolic Construction of the Public Space: The Case of Israel." In *Linguistic Landscape: A New Approach to Multilingualism*, edited by Durk Gorter, 7-31. Multilingual Matters Ltd.,11.

⁶⁴ Trumper-Hecht, *Constructing National Identity*, 250.

indicative of the broader conflict over land claimed by both parties and suggests that symbolic victories in the linguistic landscape may carry with them a degree of social power as well.

Similar studies of the linguistic landscape in Israeli mixed cities also introduce the wide-reaching influence of English as a global language, noting that “the process of globalization is made visible through the presence of English in the linguistic landscape.”⁶⁵ In the physical landscapes of both Jewish and mixed Israeli towns and cities, English is commonly found in areas of higher prestige and commercial settings, pointing to its role in the global economy. According to a synthesis of data by LL scholars Ben-Rafael, Shohamy, Amara, and Trumper-Hecht, English occupies an even greater space in primarily Jewish areas than it does in primarily Palestinian areas. Whereas English is the secondary language for prestige in the market for Israeli Jews, it is Hebrew that plays this role for Israeli Arabs, not English.⁶⁶

Scholars of LL have suggested future paths for the field that include deeper analysis of the role of English as a global language in multilingual spaces in terms of increasing accessibility, edging out minority languages, and speaker choices to use English. Other encouraged thrusts for research include expanding what ‘landscape’ means in the context of LL. To date LL has largely focused on physical landscapes, and more specifically on cityscapes as a subset within this purview. Breaking from this trend, Shohamy and others have briefly addressed the potential for applying LL to cyberspace. The internet fits well within the category of multilingual public space and is replete

⁶⁵ Gorter, Durk, ed. 2006. *Linguistic Landscape: A New Approach to Multilingualism*. Tonawanda, NY: Multilingual Matters Ltd., 81.

⁶⁶ Ben-Rafael et al., *Linguistic Landscape as Symbolic Construction*, 26.

with text for analysis. It is also an “open space... relatively free of monitoring and supervision in terms of contents, texts, modes, themes and languages.”⁶⁷ Because of this, the arenas for analysis on the internet are likely more fluid than those in physical spaces and may involve visiting many virtual sites as opposed to one geographical site. If anything, the lack of top-down restrictions upon virtual spaces should allow for added contestation across a greater variation of texts, including comments sections which gather opinions from a wide cross-section of the public. Areas of examination can also, by design, more easily expand to include discourses as portrayed in a collection of websites, as opposed to physical spaces in which a mish-mash of overlapping discourses are present and vie for attention. Furthermore, the virtual space can gather a more diverse audience in the modern era of web connectivity.

This research explores the cyber arena as a new and fruitful frontier for LL. It examines several Israeli organizations advocating for Palestinian human rights and their self-representations as found on their websites. The LL analyses that follow use similar methodologies to those espoused by Gorter and other scholars of the field to assess the organizations’ use of language in their logos and various aspects of their websites. This surface level view of the organizations’ online materials focuses on what Gorter et alia call the “symbolic practices that give shape to spaces.”⁶⁸ The study of these symbolic practices through LL traditionally provides insights as to the ways in which language choices and representation reflect social realities as they perform those

⁶⁷ Shohamy, Elana, and Shoshi Waksman. 2009. "Linguistic Landscape as an Ecological Arena: Modalities, Meaning, Negotiation, Education." In *Linguistic Landscape: Expanding the Scenery*, edited by Elana Shohamy and Durk Gorter. New York: Routledge, 322.

⁶⁸ Ben-Rafael et al. *Linguistic Landscape as Symbolic Construction*, 26.

realities in physical space, usually a cityscape. This project assesses similar symbolic practices through virtual signage but instead maps insights to virtual spaces, suggesting a future direction for the field of LL. This project secondarily approaches the underlying human rights discourse in order to examine the ensuing limitations and opportunities on conceptions of that virtual landscape. It thus endeavors to begin mapping out a virtual discursive landscape of Israeli human rights organizations advocating for the end of the occupation, with the hope of more extensive such efforts in the future.

Chapter 4: LL Online - Analyzing Israeli Human Rights Organizations

This research analyzes virtual material of several prominent Israeli human rights organizations operating as advocates for Palestinians. By virtue of their efforts, these organizations are categorized as left-wing in the Israeli political sphere. They are intentionally drawn from a pool that varies in several ways, including date of establishment, organizational goals and methodologies, and official status. Each section begins with basic background information about the organization's history, goals, and sources of funding. This is followed by an analysis of the organization's logo and accompanying language choices, and finally by a deeper look at each organization's self-represented goals across its offered languages.

In assessing the materials' use of language in visual and textual self-representation, this research relies upon a series of considerations as follows. It first addresses the high-level language choices made by each organization. What languages are used in the logo, and which are offered for the content of the web page? Do these language choices match? In visual representation, how are the languages portrayed in relation to one another, considering their relative sizes, locations, and fonts. In textual representation, are languages translated or transliterated? Do the different languages say the same thing in translation, or do different languages present the same goals in distinctive ways? In considering each organization's self-presentation, who are the target audiences? Who owns the organization, and where does their funding come from?

Shovrim Shtika (Breaking the Silence)

Shovrim Shtika (Breaking the Silence) was founded in 2004 by veterans of the Israeli military who wanted to shed light onto the realities they witnessed as soldiers in the West Bank

and Gaza. They aim to end the occupation by exposing the truth of military action aimed at controlling Palestinian citizens. Contributors to Breaking the Silence's funding include the European Union, various European civil and governmental organizations, the Rockefeller Center, New Israeli Fund, and the Foundation for Middle East Peace. They coordinate and run awareness campaigns inside Israel and abroad (in the US and Europe). The organization provides links to its annual financial reports on both English and Hebrew versions of its site under the heading "transparency." The Hebrew page, however, is the only page that includes the quarterly reports of donations from foreign entities. These forms themselves are all official forms completed in Hebrew.

Language & Logo

Shovrim Shtika's logo (below) is produced separately in Hebrew and in English. The logo itself is in stark black and white, with the Hebrew lettering appearing to be cut-out, or stenciled, reminiscent of graffiti. This style reminds the reader or viewer of the separation barrier – a key symbol of the occupation of the Palestinian people. The title of the organization is also centered



Figure 4.1: Shovrim Shtika Logo - Hebrew

between two brackets, visually filling the otherwise empty space, perhaps representing the ‘silence’ they argue is too often felt regarding the injustices they seek to illuminate.

The logo for the English page mirrors that of the Hebrew logo – the same structure of bold white lettering between two brackets. The lettering of the English logo, though still printed in bold font, does not retain the same rough, stenciled feel as the Hebrew logo. This suggests that the symbolism of the stenciled lettering type may not resonate as well with the target audience of the English logo, as the Hebrew is intended as a symbol for consumption by a very specific audience in the context of the Israel/Palestine conflict.

The website offers both Hebrew and English pages which exhibit much the same content in translation. The home pages of the English and Hebrew versions of the Breaking Silence website host a carousel of pertinent news stories. Both sites include advertising for their new pamphlets on Hebron, and their upcoming tours to Hebron. The English carousel also features a tour to South Hebron Hills which is not highlighted on the Hebrew page. Of note, the image and language of the pamphlet advertisement slide are both different from English to Hebrew. The English page version includes an image of a uniformed soldier walking down a street – presumably in Hebron overlaid with the English pamphlet title “Occupying Hebron”. The Hebrew page imagine simply shows a



Figure 4.2: Breaking the Silence Logo

neat stack of the pamphlets overlaid with the Hebrew pamphlet title – “קו חברון,” or The Hebron Line.

In the about section, the English reads that the organization aims to “expose to the Israeli public” daily aspects of the occupation in order to “stimulate public debate.” The Hebrew reads instead “להעלות את המודעות” (to raise awareness) in order “ליצור שיח ציבורי” (to create a public discourse). The Hebrew translations suggest first a less aggressive campaign of ‘raising of awareness’ as opposed to a more blatant ‘exposure’ as called for by the English translation. The Hebrew goes on to seek more of an initiation of conversation (‘create a public discourse’) as opposed to a continuation (‘stimulate public debate’). This differentiation indicates perhaps that the discourse surrounding the Israel-Palestine conflict has a longer history in the realm of the English language (as representative of the global) than it does in the Hebrew language (as representative of the local).

Combatants for Peace

Combatants for Peace came together in 2006 when former combatants from both Palestinian and Israeli sides joined forces to work for the end of the occupation. They advocate for non-violence and partnership between Palestinians and Israelis to achieve justice and peace. Having witnessed and been direct contributors in the conflict themselves, they view themselves as uniquely qualified – and obligated- to make their experiences known to the world. They receive funding from a number of European (primarily Swiss and German sources), the New Israeli Fund, and World Vision. The organization provides links to its annual donors’ reports on all versions of its site (English, Hebrew, and Arabic), including the requisite quarterly reports for donations from

foreign governmental entities. There is also an American branch, “American Friends of Combatants for Peace” that operates inside the United States.

Logo & Language

The Combatants for Peace logo is set in white on a teal background. The round logo consists of two men approaching each other on one side almost as though in embrace, while they discard their weapons to the outside of the circle. The hands and weapons outside of the circle are white, while the bodies inside the (white) circle are teal. This break in colors suggests a simultaneous break from the status quo of violence in conflict. Arabic, Hebrew, and English wrap around the circular portion of the logo, reading “Combatants for Peace.” The Arabic and Hebrew are translations, not transliterations. The Arabic translation is four words, versus two for Hebrew and three for English. Based on the location of the Arabic and Hebrew positioned together above the circle, the Arabic is more difficult to read than the Hebrew because of its smaller font to fit the space. The English has ample space below and appears in a larger font. While the placement of the languages may be to some degree aesthetic, the Arabic and Hebrew above appear united in solidarity, and the English below underlines the logo, perhaps suggestive of a common language that could unite the two sides or allow for a more neutral dialogue. To the side of the logo, the organization’s title is written out in larger font, Arabic on top, followed by Hebrew in the middle, and English at the bottom. Again, this positioning may be aesthetic, to keep the organization’s title translations better in line with the logo, though the positionality of the Arabic above the Hebrew yet sends a message that subverts the common narrative of Hebrew’s (and Israel’s) hegemony.

Combatants for Peace lists Arabic, Hebrew, and English as language options for its website. The Hebrew version, however, primarily boasts English content – only the menus are translated into Hebrew. The Arabic page’s content is fully translated into Arabic.

The mission statements as written out in the “About us” section of the website read almost exactly the same. The English and Hebrew pages are both written in English, so there is no variation of note here. The Arabic translation is almost verbatim, with the primary exception arising from the English “...allow both Israelis and Palestinians to live in freedom...” The Arabic reads not “to live in freedom” but instead “التمتع بالحرية” (to enjoy freedom).



Figure 4.3: Combatants for Peace Logo

Ta'ayush

Ta'ayush, founded in 2000, receives fiscal sponsorship from a US-based organization, the Alliance for Global Justice. As such, it is not a registered NGO in Israel, and does not publicly list its finances. The organization broadcasts itself as a cooperative grassroots movement of Israelis and Palestinians and cites that it functions through volunteer activities only. They focus the majority of their work in the field, but also spread awareness through photography and blogging. They espouse non-violent collective action as a means towards justice, equity, peace, and the end of

Israeli occupation. Ta'ayush does not publicly list its finances, as it falls outside the categorization of Israeli NGO.

Logo & Language

Ta'ayush is the Arabic word for “living together” (with connotations of co-existence). The logo shows the Arabic on top, with Hebrew occupying a secondary position, offset to the right underneath. English is below, offset to the left. The Arabic font is largest, followed by Hebrew, and then English. The Hebrew and English are transliterations of the Arabic. The Arabic and Hebrew are both in a much larger, bolder text than the English, with the Hebrew in line with the lower dots of the Arabic letter “ي.” This suggests the togetherness indicated by the name of the organization. Underneath the logo Arabic, Hebrew, and English read in translation: “Arab Jewish Partnership.”

Oddly, the primacy of the Arabic language in the organization’s name and logo is not reflected elsewhere in the website. The web content is offered in English and in Hebrew only. While the use of Arabic in the title on one hand indicates an intentional flipping of the dominant language of Hebrew to a secondary position under the traditionally dominated language of Arabic, the absence of Arabic web content is a stark contrast and suggests perhaps that Arabic plays a merely symbolic role in the logo.



Figure 4.4: Ta'ayush Logo

The mission statement as posted at the top of the Ta'ayush home page in both English and Hebrew read the same in each respective language. The "About Ta'ayush" section includes a more detailed story of Ta'ayush's mission and background. In English, the page describes the situation of occupation in Israel and Palestine as one surrounded by "walls of segregation, racism, and discrimination... the walls of Apartheid.." In Hebrew, the initial quote holds the same, though mention of Apartheid is glaringly omitted, and instead simply reads "walls of segregation, racism, and discrimination" ("חומות ההפרדה, הגזענות והאפליה"). The lack of the term "Apartheid" in the Hebrew content suggests that this term may be too aggressive in the context of the Hebrew language and the Israeli imaginative. Falling outside of what is acceptable or possible to say in the discourse of human rights and fighting the occupation in Israel, "Apartheid" is mentioned in English only to key in on external sentiments of injustice without alienating a potentially sympathetic Jewish Israeli audience.

B'Tselem

B'Tselem was founded in 1989 in Jerusalem with the original purpose of documenting and publicizing Israeli actions in the occupation of the Palestinian territories. Since then, their aims have expanded to calling for the end of the occupation. Funding for B'Tselem comes from a variety of sources, many of which are European. These include the European Union and UNICEF, supplemented by further funding from the Ford Foundation and the New Israel Fund among others. B'Tselem's site features a large disclaimer at the bottom of the home page, noting that much of its funding "may or may not" come from foreign states. The disclaimer also seeks to discredit the 2016 NGO law which they claim "seeks to equate the receipt of foreign funding with

disloyalty.” In accordance with the law, they post their quarterly reports, though only on their Hebrew page.

Logo & Language

The organization’s name comes from a passage in Genesis, which intends to evoke ideas of the “Jewish and universal moral edict to respect and uphold the human rights of all people.”⁶⁹ The logo features the Hebrew with full diacritical vowelling in bold black and white above English and Arabic transliterations. The English is written out in all capital letters, mirroring the block letters of the Hebrew above. Beyond this and the shared black and white color scheme, there is otherwise no connecting factor between the languages.

Despite the primacy of the Hebrew language in the logo, the site is also offered in English and Arabic. Alongside the logo on each page is written “The Israeli Information Center for Human



Figure 4.5: B'Tselem Logo

⁶⁹*Shovrim Shtika*. (n.d.). Retrieved from Shovrimshatika.org: www.shovrimshatika.org

Rights in the Occupied Territories.” This same language appears, translated, on both the Hebrew and Arabic version of the webpage.

The English, Arabic, and Hebrew home pages of B’Tselem’s website both offer the same set of images in an automated scrolling news feed. The featured stories at the time of my research included protests in Gaza, International Women’s Day, injustices in Israeli courts, violence in East Jerusalem, and a fatal shooting of a Palestinian (March 18, 2019). The language accompanying these images was by and large similar in translation, but the story on the Israel courts was a bit more varied. The English read “Fake Justice,” while the Hebrew read “צדק לכאורה” (alleged justice) and the Arabic “سياسة التخطيط” (planning policy). The English seemingly references ongoing issues with “fake news” in the United States, and bluntly accuses Israeli courts of negligence in their rulings. The Hebrew insinuates much the same, but with a softer edge. Instead of directly accusing the legal system of wrongdoing, it opts instead to call its motives or outcomes into question. The Arabic uses the label “policy planning,” a term indicating Israel’s active use of the courts to legally enforce the practices of occupation. This term likely resonates most with the victims of court rulings who may suspect policy planning through Israeli judicial means. Likewise, the term falls outside of the allowable discourse inside Israel, as the idea of such blatant misuse of judicial power remains publicly unpalatable.

In B’Tselem’s mission statement, they (in English) “strive to end the occupation,” whereas in Hebrew they “work with the aim to bring the end of it (the occupation).” The Arabic aligns closely (“works in order to end the occupation”). The slight difference here is the simple addition of a secondary verb “להביא” (to bring) in Hebrew, whereas the English and Arabic directly state “to end” (or “إنهاء”). The use of “to bring” seems to distance the action of the organization from the

direct end of the occupation. It is interesting to note that the Hebrew does not shy away from using the term for occupation (כיבוש) but does shy from direct “ending” it linguistically.

Gisha

The non-profit organization Gisha was founded in 2005 with a focus on promoting freedom of movement for Palestinians. It directs most of its efforts to the Gaza Strip due to the intensity of the occupation and marked restriction of movement for Palestinians there. The organization views freedom of movement as a precursory requirement to the access and exercising of many other basic human rights as espoused by Israeli and international law. In this vein, Gisha offers legal assistance to Palestinians, and brings legal cases to the courts to promote their cause, in addition to its public advocacy campaigns to bring awareness to Israelis and to the world. Funding for Gisha has historically come from a variety of European sources, in addition to the Rockefeller Brothers Foundation and the New Israel Fund. Gisha posts its quarterly reports of donations from foreign state entities in compliance with the Israeli NGO law, but links to them only from their Hebrew page.

Logo & Language

The name of the organization, Gisha, is the Hebrew for “access” or “approach.” The English is a transliteration of this word, but the Arabic is a translation “maslak” with the same meaning. The transliteration of the name into English but not Arabic suggests on one hand a connection between the Hebrew and English speaking audiences on one hand (and perhaps a corresponding disconnect between the Hebrew and English to the Arabic), and a desire to directly connect to the Arabic speaking audience on the other, as the Arabic is translated, not transliterated. The logo

then goes to provide a physical connecting of the Arabic with the English. The ‘g’ of gisha and the ‘mim’ of maslak overlap at the beginning of each word, suggesting an unbreakable unity or solidarity. The Hebrew is centered above the English/Arabic in such a way that the uprights of the ‘hah’ and ‘shin’ line up directly with the ‘sin’ in the Arabic. The Hebrew, though located above the English and Arabic, is nested in between the lower and higher letter heights so as to appear part of the whole.

Below, the full organization name (Gisha- Legal Center for Freedom of Movement) is listed out in English, then in Hebrew and Arabic translations. On the right side, an angle bracket points to the right suggesting forward movement or momentum. Interestingly, this arrow makes most sense when read with the English (read left to right) and not the Arabic or Hebrew (read right to left). This directionality suggests English as either the intermediary language accessible to both sides of the struggle and/or as the primary target audience.



Figure 4.6: Gisha Logo

In the mission statement, the English, Hebrew, and Arabic translations line up almost verbatim across the initial paragraph except for the translations of the English phrase “promotes rights guaranteed by Israeli and international law.” The Hebrew reads “המעוגנת במשפט...” which translates to “anchored in international and Israeli law.” The Arabic reads “في إطار القانون...” which translates to “in the framework of international and Israeli law.” While the differences may appear

trivial, they indicate subtle differences. These particular differences in translation stand out primarily because of the singular difference in Gisha's mission statement, which in turn suggests some importance for the variation. The semantic difference here is subtle, with the English most firmly attesting to the requisite ("guaranteed") nature of the rights by law. The Hebrew and Arabic providing vaguer referents to the firm nature of these rights by law, but still firmly establishing the connection of rights to the law.

Synthesis

Of the organizations discussed above, four are official Israeli NGOs operating in advocacy of Palestinian human rights. Ta'ayush, the only non-NGO entity discussed, is also the only of the organizations to boast Arabic as the dominant language of their name. While most other organizations include Arabic either in translation (Combatants for Peace, Gisha) or in transliteration (B'Tselem), only Ta'ayush uses Arabic for their title and transliterates from the Arabic to both Hebrew and English. It is perhaps the status of Ta'ayush as a non-NGO that affords it the space to appeal more directly to the Arabic-speaking population with its title. The organization does not face the same scrutiny as official NGOs, and as such it may feel freer in its language choices to self-represent in Arabic, and not the more dominant Hebrew or English. If this is indeed the case, one might further expect to see a mirrored predominance – or even existence – of the web content in Arabic, but this is not the case. Breaking the Silence is the only of the organizations to not include Arabic in any iteration of its logo, and also the only to offer separate single-language logos, with its Hebrew and English variations.

In keeping with its lack of Arabic logo, Breaking the Silence also does not include any Arabic web content. This may speak to the slightly nuanced mission of the organization, which is explicitly to open the eyes of the Israeli public to the human rights violations enacted by Israeli soldiers against Palestinians. This campaign, it would seem then, is directed primarily at the majority Jewish population, and not at the 20% plus Arab Israeli population, nor at the Palestinian populations of the West Bank and Gaza. While these Arabic-speaking populations may not need to be a direct part of the organization's mission of breaking the silence, the organization could at the least stand to benefit from their inclusion and support. The lack of Arabic suggests either a conscious decision of exclusion, or perhaps a lack of the linguistic resources necessary to meaningfully include Arabic. All of the organizations feature English if not in their primary logo, at least in an iteration of it (as with Breaking the Silence), and in their web content. Hebrew is also ostensibly offered for each organization, though the Combatants for Peace Hebrew variation only includes menus in Hebrew, and the remaining content is offered in English.

Logos serve the specific goal of visually representing an organization through use of symbols. The logos examined above feature a mix of visual and textual symbolism, including fundamentals of color, size, images, and more. Language choice is also an important symbolic aspect, as different languages are representative of different groups and ideas. All organizations, as products of Israeli citizens, include Hebrew as their own mother tongue, and as the official language of Israel. From the start, this roots each organization in the Israeli landscape, as Hebrew is uncommonly known or spoken outside of Israel. The next most common choice, to include English in some capacity, likely speaks to the desire of such organizations to tap into the universal human rights discourse and support. English enjoys a high level of prestige within Israel as a means

for accessing international markets, but it also has become a de facto lingua franca for the fields of human rights and international law. As such, all of these organizations have either built English into their logos, or else developed a separate logo solely for that purpose.

The use of Arabic in logos can be viewed on one hand as a symbolic gesture to Palestinians, the Arabic-speaking population these organizations advocate for in the first place. On the other hand, the Arabic inclusion may also be symbolic of a greater level of sensitivity to the Arab Israeli citizenry that might be sympathetic to the organizations' goals. An absence of Arabic, however, suggests either a lack of resources necessary to produce quality Arabic content, or perhaps instead represents a judgment call that the Arabic-speaking population is not integral to the mission of the organization. Decisions to exclude Arabic might appear practical in this regard but taken in the context of the social realities of Israel and Palestine in conflict, they can significantly impact their perception and reception by key audiences. Likewise – intended or not - the low linguistic currency accorded Arabic in Israeli society is reinforced through these language choices, in turn cementing the status quo of social power relations.

English may partially fill the gap of understanding between Hebrew- and Arabic-speakers but cannot be expected to fully do so. It may be that these organizations make assumptions about their online audience and feel that English and Hebrew adequately reach that population. The absence of Arabic in these human rights organizations' self-representations, however, points to an underlying absence of Arabic voices in those same spaces. Without Arab voices speaking out in Arabic, the human rights space becomes dominated by the already locally and regionally dominant Hebrew. This pattern of vocalization suggests corresponding losses in translation of the Palestinian

plight to the legal human rights discourse, akin to the triangular translation phenomenon highlighted by Golan and Orr.⁷⁰

All of the organizations examined actively call for the end of the Israeli occupation in their mission text except for Gisha. Gisha acknowledges the occupation and fights against the ensuing human rights violations, but nowhere claims to work towards its end. This may be a conscious decision made with the goal of keeping the organization firmly rooted as a human rights and legal advocacy organizations as opposed to a political organization. Gisha also works more explicitly with Gaza than the other organizations, which may also have some impact over the ways it self-represents in Israeli spheres. The Hamas government of the Gaza Strip is widely viewed as a terrorist organization in Israel, which makes bucking traditional Israeli security discourse more challenging than in relation to the more historically cooperative Palestinian Authority of the West Bank. Thus, in the arena of Gaza, organizations such as Gisha may tread more carefully around claims about the occupation in order to make persuasive appeals to a larger portion of the Israeli mainstream public.

Many of these organizations share a degree of overlap in their funding resources. In addition to similar foreign European governmental grants, e.g. Royal Norwegian Embassy, British Embassy, Finnish Foreign Ministry, there is much crossover in the private realm as well. Key funders of multiple organizations include: Trocaire, Catholic Relief Services, Bread for the World, Diakonia, Oxfam, and Broederlijk Delen. Many of these sponsors or partners are tied directly to

⁷⁰ Golan, Orr, *Translating Human Rights*, 784.

Catholic or Christian programs, suggesting an added layer of complexity from these external goals. The New Israel Fund also supports all the above organizations except Ta'ayush either yearly from their core budget (B'Tselem, Breaking the Silence, Combatants for Peace) and/or through donor-advised contributions (Gisha).

Apart from the NIF, which focuses primarily on liberal advancement of Israeli society, all the above funding organizations project their impact across the globe. Some focus on a wide variety of initiatives across multiple fields (human rights, social justice, etc.), while others cite more pointed goals (fighting hunger, ending poverty, etc.). Perhaps due to their advocacy for global issues, all of these funding organizations offer English pages for their content. This finding supports an understanding of English as a common mode for interaction between funding organizations and their human rights partners or beneficiaries in Israel, which duly underlines the importance of the global human rights discourse to the success of local organizations' activities in the arena of the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Conclusion: Developing a Language of Peace? And New Ways Forward

This research has endeavored to illuminate the possibilities of expansion for linguistic landscaping into both the virtual space and in discourse analysis by proposing broader understandings of *public space* and of *language* as such. LL has had success in application to the physical public space, drawing many insights about underlying social trends from language use in that sphere. Additionally, scholars have begun drawing attention to the impact of English in the multilingual landscape, attempting to formulate theories of the globalization effect on such spaces. The extension of public space to include virtual space has been suggested as a new thrust in the realm of LL but has yet to receive serious attention. The introductory attempts in this research provide only a glimpse at the possibilities in this direction. They also beg a more direct confrontation with the globalizing effect of English, particular given the purview of the research in the human rights discourse.

The inclusion of discourse as a mode of analysis in the LL realm is a new direction as well, given that LL has traditionally focused on the manifestation of different written languages in public spaces. Discursive practices, however, take place in these same spaces and also impact the way people think about their topics, representative of Bourdieu's political problematic. Discourse as conceived of by Foucault and Bourdieu occurs across all languages, and yet is in and of itself a language, or an institutionalized way of talking about things. That is to say that in these theorists' work, discourse- like language – both shapes societies and is in turn bound up in the social stratifications of those very society it has molded. If, as LL argues, written language is representative and reflective of the society producing it, then it holds that discourse will do much the same.

By and large, language and discourse are entirely inseparable, as language provides the medium for discursive practices. In the case of human rights, discourse is also very closely associated with a specific language, here English. At a minimum, simply through the over-arching primacy of English usage, this discourse shapes the very parameters of the linguistic landscape in question. It is in turn molded into a unique Israeli-Palestinian discourse based on the subsequent local (Hebrew and Arabic) language decisions and made along the way.

The intricate hierarchy of linguistic capital associated with Hebrew, Arabic, and English in Israel and Palestine provides an informative backdrop to the language choices made by Israeli human rights organizations advocating for Palestinian rights. One might expect to find a lesser presence of Arabic in these organizations' materials due to the lower status of the language domestically. The nature of virtual space, however, allows for a greater level of curation and brand planning such that organizations can plan their self-representation in a way that might be less possible in everyday or person-to-person life. The complexities of linguistic value in that geographical space certainly cannot be ignored when shifting into the virtual space, but the domination by English is perhaps the most visible factor in this research's assessment of the human rights space. The research suggests that the virtual space is thus intrinsically more susceptible to the globalizing forces of English, even as it is itself a product and purveyor of globalization.

While Hebrew and Arabic languages are symbolically representative of opposed parties in the Israel-Palestine conflict, they are being used in conjunction with one another to symbolically build a new space of cooperative discourse around human rights. Israeli human rights organizations already operate in a difficult situation that requires constant translation of violations

into a narrative consumable by the Israeli public, all while using legal human rights discourse. Within this space, Israeli organizations navigate the symbolic and instrumental functions of language to present an image of collaboration and progressiveness that yet conforms to the structures and ideals of their own society. This collaboration is brought to bear on a society in which the linguistic market greatly favors the dominant Hebrew over Arabic, and yet these organizations consciously choose to introduce and re-introduce Arabic to the eyes of their audiences via logos and other language choices. While the presence of Arabic seems to serve a primarily symbolic function in the eyes of a Jewish Israeli audience, the inclusion of Arabic builds space for its further usage in the discourse and online such that the absence of Arabic in these spaces stands out more than its presence.

With added resources and time, this project could expand to include a greater portion of Israeli human rights organizations to better extrapolate trends and paint a much more comprehensive image of the field. Direct communication with the organizations to build out timelines of language usage, logo development, and mission statement delivery could also allow for the construction of a timeline of these factors and the subsequent projection of language trends in the human rights discourse surrounding the Israeli occupation. Further analysis across other aspects of each organization's site might also yield added complexity to the state of language use in this particular discourse as played out in virtual space.

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