

DIRECT SPEECH IN NON-LITERARY TEXTS: A POSSIBLE SOURCE OF INFORMATION ON THE EARLY CHARACTER OF SPOKEN HEBREW?

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The nature of early Hebrew speech is unknown due to the scarcity of documentation prior to the 1950s. This article presents a new source of information, namely quotations of the spoken language embedded in archival documents from the 1920s–1940s, and discusses its value for the study of the evolution of spoken Hebrew. The advantages of the material as compared to other available sources is analyzed, as well as its limitations. This material offers a rare glimpse at the way ordinary speakers—rather than professional writers or grammarians—experienced the spoken language and represented it in writing. Though an attempt for a reconstruction of early Hebrew speech based on this material is not possible, it can certainly shed light on the overall character of the period's spoken language, as well as on some of its specific traits. The textual examples provided throughout the article offer scholars the access to hitherto unknown material, indispensable for the study of the early layer of Modern Hebrew.

1. INTRODUCTION

The emergence of spoken Hebrew is the sole incident known to linguists in which a liturgical and literary language turned into a spoken vernacular. The study of this fascinating process, though, faces a major problem: the lack of data on which to reconstruct the characteristics of Hebrew speech in its early, formative years. As is well known, documentation of spoken Hebrew from the first decades of its existence is seriously lacking.¹ The first recordings of spontaneous speech were made by linguists in the 1950s,² while from the first half of the twentieth century all that is available is a relatively small number of newsreels and cinematographic films, which record the formal and stylistically elevated usage of presenters, actors, and public figures rather than

¹ E. Glinert, "למקור העברית החדשה המדוברת: עיונים בתחביר הסמוי של 'לפי הטף' לדוד ילין," (*Limkor haivrit haxadasha hameduberet: iyunim bataxbir hasamuy shel 'lefi hataf' ledavid yelin*; On the sources of colloquial Modern Hebrew: The covert syntax of Yellin's Primer *lefi hataf*), *לשוננו (Leshonenu)* 55 (1990): 109–112.

² For transcripts based on these recordings see H. Blanc, "קטע של דיבור עברי ישראלי," (*Keta shel dibur ivri yisreeli*; An excerpt of Israeli Hebrew speech), *לשוננו* 21 (1957): 33–39; H. Blanc, "Israeli Hebrew Texts," in *Studies in Egyptology and Linguistics in Honour of H. J. Polotsky*, ed. H. B. Rosen (Jerusalem, 1964), pp. 132–152.

the daily speech of ordinary speakers.³ Any attempt to reconstruct the characteristics of spoken Hebrew prior to the 1950s has to be based, therefore, on written sources.

Unfortunately, the evidence found in written sources is also scarce and lacking. Some information on the spoken language may be retrieved from the prescriptive linguistic literature of the early twentieth century, aimed at improving speakers' usage. The attempts to correct certain usages unintentionally documented the presence of such usages among speakers, but the evidence found in this kind of literature is fragmented and partial.⁴ Literary dialogues written during the relevant period are even less informative, as they relied on models of speech presentation developed in modern Hebrew literature prior to the transformation of Hebrew into a daily spoken language. Consequently, during most of the twentieth century, literary dialogues tended to be written in an elevated language and to include invented elements, and seldom reflected authentic traits of daily speech.⁵ Hence, as Chaim Rabin pointed out, "today it is necessary to reconstruct really from splinters, from minor comments here and there, in a detective-like manner, the evolution of the revival of Hebrew."⁶

The aim of this paper is to draw readers' attention to a hitherto unrecognized source of information on early Hebrew speech: quotations of the spoken language scattered in archival documents kept at the Tel-Aviv–Jaffa Municipal Archive (henceforth: TAA). Such documents, keeping record of the municipal administrative correspondence and paperwork of the so-called "First Hebrew City," are a unique source of information, as they offer a rare glimpse at the way ordinary people—rather than professional grammarians or

³For the inventory of recordings available see W. Luterman and J. Tryster, eds., *Israel Newsreel Collection, Vol. 1: 1932–1956* (Jerusalem, 1992).

⁴See Y. Reshef, "תרומתה של ספרות: מקורות להכרת העברית המדוברת במחצית הראשונה של המאה העשרים: תרומתה של ספרות" (*Mekorot lehakarat haivrit hameduberet bamaxatsit harishona shel hamea haesrim: trumata shel sifrut tikuney halashon*; Sources for data on spoken Hebrew during the first half of the twentieth century: The contribution of prescriptive literature), *העברית ואחיותיה (Haivrit weahyoteha: Studies in Hebrew language and its contact with Semitic languages and Jewish languages)* 5–6 (2004–2005): 209–227.

⁵This topic has been explored extensively in research. See, inter alia, I. Even-Zohar, "הדיאלוג אצל גנסיין" (*Hadialog etzel gnesin usheelat hamodelim harusiyim*; Gnessin's dialogues and the question of the Russian models), in *אורי ניסן גנסיין: מחקרים ותעודות (Uri nissan gnessin: nexkarim uteudot*; U.N. Gnessin: Studies and Documents], ed. D. Miron and D. Laor (Jerusalem, 1986), pp. 11–41; R. Ben-Shahar, "התפתחות לשון הדיאלוג בסיפורת הישראלית: תחנות עיקריות" (*Hitpatxut leshon hadialog basiporet hayisreelit: taxanot ikariyot*; The development of dialogue language in Israeli prose: Main phases), *סדן (Sadan)* 1 (1994): 217–240; G. Toury, 1945–1930 *נורמות של תרגום והתרגום הספרותי לעברית בשנים (Normot shel tirgum vehatirgum hasifrut leivrit bashanim 1930–1945*; Translational norms and literary translation into Hebrew, 1930–1945), (Tel Aviv, 1977), pp. 152–154.

⁶Ch. Rabin, "תרומתו של אליעזר בן-יהודה לתחיית הלשון העברית" (*Trumato shel eliezer ben-yehuda litxiyat halashon haivrit*; Eliezer's Ben-Yehudah's contribution to the revival of the Hebrew language), *קתדרה (Cathedra)* 2 (1976): 107.

writers—chose to represent the spoken language in writing. They therefore add a unique dimension to the fragmentary information available about the character of Hebrew speech in its initial stages.

Such material may add pieces to the missing puzzle of early spoken Hebrew, but an attempt to suggest a reconstruction of the spoken language based on it would be premature. While the corpus currently available is relatively vast, and includes more than one hundred documents containing quotations—ranging from a single word (usually a curse)⁷ to complete episodes⁸—a careful examination of the advantages and drawbacks of this corpus is a prerequisite for any responsible linguistic analysis. As will be shown below, the relationship between actual speech and its oral and written representations is complex, and presumed quotations included in a text do not necessarily replicate what was actually uttered in reality. As a result, traits of the spoken language may only be retrieved from this material following a careful analysis.

The following pages offer a preliminary discussion of the corpus, focusing on methodological considerations crucial for its effective interpretation. Section 2 presents the main strategies for speech presentation, among them direct speech, sections 3–5 provide a detailed description of the corpus,⁹ while sections 6–7 focus on its possible contribution to research by presenting its advantages and limitations. Special attention is given throughout the text to the unique characteristics of the corpus as compared to alternative sources of information on the nature of spoken Hebrew in its early stages. Numerous textual examples are provided, as the availability of hitherto unknown data may form in itself a significant contribution to the ongoing debate about the emergence processes of Modern Hebrew.¹⁰

⁷For example: “ההרגשהי! [!] מאד, לא נתתי לו לגמור, קראתי לו ‘מנוול’ וגרשתי מזההר” (Nov. 29, 1933, TAA 4-4300) [I got very excited, I didn’t let him finish, I called him “villain” and I chased him out of the room]; “הניל במקום לענות על שאלותי התחיל לגדפני ולחרפני ולקרא אותי בשם ‘נבוזה’ וכדומה” (June 2, 1927, TAA 4-4300) [the abovementioned, instead of replying to my questions, started to swear and curse me, to call me “despised” etc.]; “מר סברוב קורא לי באמצע רחוב הכרמל ‘פרנקלה’” (Feb. 23, 1943, TAA 4-4300) [Mr. Svarov calls me in the middle of Carmel St. “frenkale”].

⁸See below.

⁹The description offered in these sections is relevant not only to the analysis of the corpus currently available, but is intended also to assist researchers interested in pursuing a similar research direction in their efforts to locate data of this kind.

¹⁰For this debate see *inter alia* Ch. Rabin, “מה הייתה תחיית הלשון העברית?” (*Me haita txyiat ha-lašon ha-ivrit?*; What was the revival of the Hebrew language?), in *חקרי לשון* (*Xikrey lašon*; Linguistic studies), (Jerusalem, 1999), pp. 359–376; E. Glinert, *Limkor*; S. Izreel, “העברית המדוברת של התהליכי התהוותה של העברית המדוברת”, *Letahalixei hithavuta shel haivrit hameduberet beyisrael*; The emergence of spoken Israeli Hebrew), *תעודה* (*Teuda*) 18 (2002): 217–238; R. Kuzar, *Hebrew and Zionism: A Discourse Analytic Cultural Study*, (New York, 2001); J. Blau, “הרהורים על תחיית העברית” (*Hirhurim al txyiat haivrit*; Reflections on the revival of Hebrew), *לשוננו* (*Leshonenu*) 65.3–4 (2004): 315–324.

2. STRATEGIES OF SPEECH PRESENTATION AND THEIR MANIFESTATION IN ARCHIVAL DOCUMENTS

The presence of direct speech in archival documents recording the administering of the city of Tel Aviv in its early years is not self-evident. Differently from core features of the language—such as noun and verb inflection, syntactic agreement, and so forth—which obligatorily manifest each time language is used, direct speech is patently associated with specific rhetorical functions, and therefore with specific types of discourse. As direct speech may create a dramatic effect,¹¹ express involvement,¹² indicate a change of tone or point of view,¹³ or enhance the credibility and authority of a report,¹⁴ its employment tends to be confined to discourse types whose goals and functions are compatible with these rhetorical effects, primarily daily conversation, literary dialogue, and journalistic discourse.¹⁵ At the same time, direct speech is not expected to occur in discourse types geared at a more detached, businesslike tone, such as essayistic, academic, or juridical writing.¹⁶ In such discourse types, reference to former speech is not normally expressed through a verbatim quotation, but typically appears as a paraphrase, focusing on the contents rather than on the form of what was said. Administrative texts belong as a rule to the latter group.

During the British Mandate period, though, direct speech occurred fairly frequently in administrative texts, alongside other strategies of speech presentation, in sharp contrast with the contemporary practice. The following text provides such an example.¹⁷

¹¹ A. Wierzbicka, "The Semantics of Direct and Indirect Discourse," *Papers in Linguistics* 7 (1974): 267–307; M. Sternberg, "Proteus in Quotation-Land: Mimesis and the Forms of Reported Discourse," *Poetics Today* 3.2 (1982): 107–156.

¹² W. Chafe, *Discourse, Consciousness, and Time* (Chicago, 1994), p. 218.

¹³ G. N. Leech and M. H. Short, *Style in Fiction* (New York, 1981), p. 348.

¹⁴ L. R. Waugh, "Reported Speech in Journalistic Discourse: The Relation of Function and Text," *Text* 15.1 (1995), p. 132.

¹⁵ See W. Chafe, *Discourse*, pp. 212–223; G. N. Leech and M. H. Short, *Style*, pp. 318–336; L. R. Waugh, "Reported Speech," respectively. As noted by Chafe (p. 218), even in those discourse types, direct speech has a variable distribution.

¹⁶ On the notions of "detachment" versus "involvement" and their manifestations in language see W. Chafe, "Integration and Involvement in Speaking, Writing and Oral Literature," in *Spoken and Written Language: Exploring Orality and Literacy*, ed. D. Tannen (Norwood, 1982), pp. 35–53.

¹⁷ Here and elsewhere, the original spelling and punctuation were maintained, including corrections, underline, or partial vocalization that appear in the original. Obvious spelling and typing mistakes are marked by an exclamation mark, or corrected in square brackets. Omissions and additions similarly appear in square brackets. Features of interest are marked with italics. English translations are provided in the footnotes.

(1) [a]

לכבוד

מדי. נדיבי,
מוזכר העיר

א.ג.

[b]

בהתאם לבקשתו הנני מתכבד להמציא לו דין וחשבון בדבר הוצאת לירה וחצי בירושלים. בתאריך 20.9.38 נסעתי עם ראש העיריה מר רוקח בלוית 2 שוטרים לירושלים. כשבאתי לירושלים מר רוקח נתן לי סך 500 מא"י ואמר לי: „קח חצי לירה וקח את השוטרים ותתן להם לאכול ולשתות מה שהם רוצים“. אני מלאתי את הוראותיו של ראש העיריה ונתתי להם לאכול ולשתות ושלמתי בקפה תבור סך 483 מא"י [...]

[c]

בשעה 2 יצא מר רוקח ממשרדי הסוכנות היהודית ונסעתי למלון עדן[.], מר רוקח שאל אותי עם[!] יש לי עוד כסף אז עניתי למר רוקח שיש לי רק 2 מא"י[...]. אז מר רוקח נתן לי 1 לא"י ואמר: „תלכו לאכול ארוחת הצהרים ותאכלו טוב“, רצוני אמנם לא היה לאכול צהרים אבל השוטרים אמרו זה פקודה מראש העיריה, אנחנו לא נוסעים כל יום אסקורד עם ראש העיריה לכן אנחנו צריכים היום לאכול ולשתות[...]. לשוטרים יש ב"ה תאבון טוב ויודעים בלי עין רע לאכול ועוד יותר את השתיה, ושבא[!] לתשלום שלמתי 450 מא"י (אני לא אכלתי צהרים) אכלתי צהרים אצל דודי פרופסור טורצינר ברחביה. חזרנו לתל-אביב והשוטרים בקשו בכל תקף [תוקף] לקנות להם סגריות[.], קניתי 2 קופסאות קשת ושלמתי 64 מא"י, אני הזרת את השוטרים ואמרתי להם שזה לא יפה כל כך הרבה לדרוש ממני, הם ענו לי שראש העיריה נתן לך על סמך זה את הכסף.

[d]

למחרת לקחתי שוב את „האסקורד“ מתחנת המשטרה בתל-אביב [...]. השוטרים בקשו ממני ארוחת בוקר היות והם לא אכלו, קניתי 8 סנדביצים ושלמתי 120 מא"י, קניתי סגריות ושלמתי 32 מא"י ותסס 20 מא"י, בשעה 12 נסעתי עם ראש העיריה לבית הממשלה ומשמה לקפה וינה[.], ראש העיריה אמר אם השוטרים רוצים לאכול ולשתות מהר לתת להם, נכנסתי אתם לקפה שממול קפה וינה ונותתי[!] להם לאכול ולשתות ושלמתי 260 מא"י, וזה היה מזלי שמהרתי אותם היות ומר רוקח הפסיק אותם באמצע האוכל.

[e]

אני לא רציתי כבר להתוכח אתם היות והם צעקו כל הזמן שאני "יעקע" [...]. וזה אתה לא נותן לנו רק ראש העיריה נתן.

[f]

נסעתי עם ראש העיריה לעטרות וחזרנו לירושלים על מנת לנסוע לתל-אביב, השוטרים שוב קבלו תאבון ובקשו סנדביצים ובירה, את הסנדביצים לקחו אתם לדרך ואת הבירה שתו בקפה שלמתי סך 160 מא"י[...].

[g]

הנני מתכבד למסור לכבודו את החשבון הזה וכמו כן רצוני להעיר שאני תקף שחורתי[!] רציתי לספר לכבודו את כל הענין, היות ובעיני היה זה מוזר מאוד.

[h]

בכבוד רב,

יהושע ברנר

(Sept. 29, 1938, TAA 2-7(14)) 29.9.38 תל-אביב

To Mr. Y. Nedivi
 City Secretary
 Dear Sir,

Following his request I am honored to provide him with a report regarding the expenditure of one pound and a half in Jerusalem. On 9/20/38 I traveled with the mayor, Mr. Rokah, to Jerusalem accompanied by two policemen. When we reached Jerusalem, Mr. Rokah gave me the sum of 500 Palestine Mil and told me: "Take half a pound and take the policemen and let them eat and drink whatever they want." I followed the mayor's orders, and let them eat and drink, and paid in the Café the sum of 483 Mil....

At 2 p.m. Mr. Rokah left the Jewish Agency offices and I went to the "Eden" hotel. Mr. Rokah asked me if I still had money, and I replied to Mr. Rokah that I have only 2 Mil...so Mr. Rokah gave me 1 pound and said: "Go eat lunch, and eat well." Indeed, it was not my will to eat lunch, but the policemen said it is an order from the mayor, we don't go every day to escort the mayor, therefore we need to eat and drink today.... The policemen have, thanks God, a good appetite, and they know to eat well (literally: no evil eye) and even more to drink, and when the time came to pay I paid 450 Mil (I didn't eat lunch) I ate lunch at my uncle's, Prof. Turziner in Rehavia. We returned to Tel Aviv and the policemen asked forcefully to buy them cigarettes, I bought two packets of "Keshet" and paid 64 Mil. I warned the policemen that it is not nice to demand so much from me, [but] they replied to me that the mayor gives you [!] the money on this account.

On the next day I took again the "escort" from the police station in Tel Aviv.... The policemen asked breakfast from me since they haven't eaten, I bought eight sandwiches and paid 120 Mil, bought cigarettes and paid 32 Mil, and soda drinks 20 Mils. At noon I went with the mayor to the government buildings and from there to "Café Vienna." The mayor said if the policemen want to eat and drink, give them quickly. I entered the Café opposite "Café Vienna," and I gave them to eat and drink and paid 260 Mil. And it was lucky that I hurried them since Mr. Rokah stopped us in the middle of the meal.

I didn't want to argue with them any more as they always shouted that I'm a "Yekke".... and its not you who give us, only the mayor gave.

I went with the mayor to Atarot and we went back to Jerusalem in order to travel to Tel Aviv, the policemen got hungry again and asked for sandwiches and beer. They took the sandwiches with them for the road, while the beer they drank in the Café. I paid the sum of 160 Mil...

I hereby hand his excellency this account, and in addition I would like to comment that immediately upon my return I wanted to tell his excellency about the whole matter, since it seemed to me very strange.

With great respect,
 Joshua Brenner,
 Tel Aviv

Indications of certain features of the writer's spoken language may be found in various places in the text. Note especially the spelling of נותתי in paragraph d and חוזרת in paragraph g, which hint at a non-native accent. The

focus of attention here, though, will be on those places in which the writer intentionally tried to represent speech in his text.¹⁸

As was extensively noted by literary critics and linguists alike, several strategies may be employed by speakers and writers to refer to former speech.¹⁹ The corpus under examination poses relatively few problems in isolating cases of direct speech, since it mainly employs three well-defined strategies.²⁰

1) **Referred-to speech**²¹/**Narrative report of speech acts**.²² In this strategy, the report is limited to a general classification of the type of speech event involved, for example, request, curse, quarrel, conversation, and so forth, while no attempt is made to provide specific details on either the exact contents of the exchange or its form.²³ Examples from the text are השוטרים בוקר בקשו ממני ארוחת בוקר (the policemen asked breakfast from me) or מהרתי אותם (I hurried them; both in par. d).

2) **Indirect Speech** provides more details on the verbal interaction involved through a paraphrase of what was said. The utterance referred to is expressed by a subordinate clause, in which deictic elements such as tense, person, and spacio-temporal adverbs are adapted to the circumstances of the reporting speech event, for example, מר רוקח שאל אותי [א]ם יש לי עוד כסף

¹⁸ Writers may choose not to refer at all to the fact that language was used when they report about events that probably involved some kind of verbal exchanges, e.g., נתתי להם לאכול ולשתות (I let them eat and drink; par. b). Such cases are outside the scope of the current research.

¹⁹ For a detailed description of the properties of these strategies and the differences between them, the interested reader is referred to the existing research literature. See, inter alia A. Wierzbicka, "Semantics"; W. Chafe, *Discourse*, pp. 212–219; G. N. Leech and M. H. Short, *Style*, pp. 318–336; L. R. Waugh, "Reported Speech"; B. McHale, "Free Indirect Discourse: A Survey of Recent Accounts," *PTL: A Journal for Descriptive Poetics and Theory of Literature* 3 (1978): 239–287; H. Borer, "הבטים לשוניים של המבע," (Hebetim leshoniyim shel hamaba hameshulav; Linguistic aspects of the combined discourse), *הספרות* (*Hasifrut*) 30–31 (1982): 35–57.

²⁰ Only in rare cases were the boundaries between those strategies indiscriminate in my corpus, and utterances featured traits of two or more such strategies. Such an example appears in paragraph c: "ל"י שראש העיריה נותן לך על סמך זה את הכסף" (they replied to me that the mayor gives you [!] the money on this account). In this case, the subordinator -ש, associated with indirect speech (strategy 2 below) is included side by side with the person conjugation associated with direct speech (strategy 3 below), in this case לך. For a discussion of the phenomenon see L. R. Waugh, "Reported Speech," pp. 141–150. On the other hand, no instances occurred in the corpus of the complex phenomenon of free indirect speech, which intentionally blurs the distinction between quotes and non-quotes (see for example B. McHale, "Free Indirect Discourse." For many examples from Hebrew literature see: E. Doron and M. Ron, "סמנטיקת המצבים," [Semantikot hamatsavim vehamaba hameshulav al pi dugmot min hasiporet hayisreelit haxadasha], *Balshanut ivrit*; Hebrew linguistics] 28–30 [1990]: 21–29).

²¹ This is the term suggested by W. Chafe, *Discourse*, especially pp. 213–214, 237–238.

²² This is the term suggested by G. N. Leech and M. H. Short, *Style*, pp. 323–324.

²³ See in detail W. Chafe, *Discourse*, pp. 213–214; G. N. Leech and M. H. Short, *Style*, pp. 323–324.

(Mr. Rokah asked me if I still had money; par. c, rather than the original לֹא יֵשׁ).²⁴

The choice of this strategy overtly indicates that only a paraphrase of the original speech event is provided. At first glance it seems that only the adaptation of the deictic elements separates it from the original utterance, but in fact indirect speech may also include omissions of elements or significant changes in the syntactic structure compared to the original utterance. A closer examination reveals that the degree of proximity to the exact words used by the original speaker is undetermined, and may range from a minimal deviation from the actual words uttered to a mere representation of the contents of what was said, or even its implications, in the reporting person's own words.²⁵

3) **Direct Speech.** Differently from its alternatives, the choice of direct speech presumably provides an exact verbatim replica of what was actually said. The choice of this strategy implies a commitment of the reporting person to faithfully represent not only the propositional content of the original utterance, but the exact words used too.²⁶ In the text quoted above, direct speech serves as the dominant strategy. Occasionally it features the orthographic convention of being enclosed in quotation marks, for example, “קח חצי ק” (Take half a pound and take the policemen and let them eat and drink whatever they want; par. b), but in other cases no quotation marks appear, for example, ראש העיריה אמר אם השוטרים רוצים לאכול ולשתות מהר לתת להם (The mayor said if the policemen want to eat and drink, give them quickly; par. d). Cases of direct speech were therefore identified based on their grammatical and syntactic properties, regardless of the presence or absence of quotation marks.²⁷

While the use of direct speech is not a conventional feature of administrative discourse, including the period examined, the text quoted is by no means exceptional: throughout the Mandate period, instances of direct speech repeatedly occur in administrative texts. Very often, as in this case, they include mundane utterances, based on colloquial usages, incompatible with the rules of Hebrew grammar but common in daily speech to this day. Thus, for in-

²⁴□ This discourse strategy is widely discussed in the literature. See for instance W. Chafe, *Discourse*, pp. 214–215, 239–240; G. N. Leech and M. H. Short, *Style*, pp. 318–320; B. McHale, “Free Indirect Discourse,” pp. 250–256. For a detailed discussion of the differences between different kinds of deictics see H. Borer, “הבטים.”

²⁵□ L. R. Waugh, “Reported Speech,” pp. 157, 159, 162.

²⁶□ G. N. Leech and M. H. Short, *Style*, p. 320; L. R. Waugh, “Reported Speech,” pp. 137, 154; W. Chafe, *Discourse*, p. 215.

²⁷□ See also note 20.

stance, we encounter in this text the familiar replacement of the imperative by future forms, for example, תלכו לאכול ארוחת הצהרים ותאכלו טוב (Go eat lunch, and eat well; par. c), or the lack of accord between a pronominal subject and its predicate in nominal constructions, such as זה פקודה מראש העירייה (it is an order from the mayor; par. c). Moreover, the instances of direct speech in this text are syntactically arranged in coordinated clauses, typical to speech, rather than in the more complex, subordinate syntax associated with the written language.²⁸ Other texts similarly include features of vocabulary, phraseology, grammar, and syntax typical to spoken Hebrew.

The overall character of this corpus is entirely different from the fragmentary and language-conscious representations of the spoken language included during that period in texts written by professional writers, teachers, and grammarians.²⁹ The instances of direct speech scattered in administrative archival documents seem to reflect on many occasions authentic characteristics of a living, fluent, colloquial Hebrew speech, unaffected by literary, normative, or didactic considerations.

3. TYPICAL CIRCUMSTANCES FOR THE OCCURRENCE OF DIRECT SPEECH

The occurrences of direct speech were not sporadically distributed in the archival documents examined, but were confined to a specific set of circumstances: reports about verbal confrontations that the writer participated in or had witnessed, and in which an official of one of the *Yishuv's* institutions was involved. In most cases, the trigger for the confrontation had been an inappropriate remark of such an official towards an ordinary citizen or towards one of his colleagues (as in examples 2 and 3, respectively). Only occasionally the confrontation had been triggered by the way an ordinary citizen had addressed a public servant (as in example 4).

(2)

תן שכנאי התרגל כבר לענות לצבור הפונה אליו, כעין פזמון: "לא נעים לך? תפנה לרוקה", "לך לרוקה", "תבכה לרוקה", "רוקה יעזור לך", "וכן וכן"³⁰ (Sept. 2, 1938, TAA 4-4300)

²⁸W. Chafe, "Writing in the Perspective of Speaking," in *Studying Writing: Linguistic Approaches*, ed. C. R. Cooper and S. Greenbaum (Beverly Hills, Calif., 1986), pp. 12–39.

²⁹See I. Even-Zohar, "הדריאלוג"; R. Ben-Shahar, "התפתחות"; H. Blanc, "The Growth of Israeli Hebrew," *Middle Eastern Affairs*, 5.12 (1954): 389; Y. Reshef, "מקורות."

³⁰Mr. Shahnai already got used to replying to the public addressing him with a kind of a refrain: "You find if unpleasant? Appeal to Rokah," "Go to Rokah," "Cry to Rokah," "Rokah will help you" etc. etc.

(3)

השוטר קרסנר, הממונה על המשרד שלי מודיע שגזבר בית המשפט העירוני העליבו בשעת מלוי תפקידו באמרו: „צא מן החדר“³¹ (Nov. 6, 1925, TAA 3-א170)

(4)

ביום 25.11.25 בשעה 13.10 באתי [...] אל בנו של אליהו ברנט בענין חוזים לשקד [ששכר דירה] [...] הוא פנה אלי במלים אלה בקול רם, באיזה רשות אתה נכנס לבית נתין בריטי³² (Nov. 1925, TAA 3-א170)

In most cases the verbal exchange had been the trigger for the confrontations. The following example is an atypical exception, as the driver's ways of expression were only a side effect of the main dispute, which focused on his road conduct.

(5)

ביום 20.11.22 בשעה 10.00 בהיותי על משמרתי בפנת רחוב הרצל עברה האוטו העגלה הנ"ל ולא צפצף ולא הראה לי עם היד לאן הוא צריך לנסע שאלתי למה לא צפצפת ולמה לא הראת עם היד. הנ"ל צחק באמרו אלי אני לבד רואה לאן לנסע. הנני מבקש מן להעמידו במשפט ולהענישו כחוק על עברו על חוקי כללי הדרך. ועל שאין לו צפצפה.³³ (Nov. 23, 1922, TAA 2-ב70)

Reports about verbal confrontation are geared towards the use of direct speech, as the objective evidence direct speech provides may support the claims of the person reporting.³⁴ While his *interpretation* of the incident may be subjective and can be contradicted on these grounds, the quote of the actual words uttered can less easily be denied. The inclusion of direct speech in such texts may strengthen the reporting person's position, as it provides a proof for the improper conduct of the other participant in the confrontation.

The scope of direct speech was often limited in the texts examined to one problematic remark which lay at the heart of the confrontation (as in exam-

³¹□The policeman Kersner, who is in charge of my office, announces that the Municipal Court cashier insulted him while fulfilling his duty, saying: "Go out of the room."

³²□n 11/25/25 at 13:10 I came...to Eliyahu Brant's son concerning contracts for rent.... He turned to me with these words in a loud voice, in what permission do you enter the house of a British citizen.

³³□n 11/20/22 at 10:00 a.m. while on duty at the corner of Herzl St., the abovementioned wagon passed without honking or signaling with his hand where he needed to go. I asked him why didn't you honk and why didn't you signal with your hand. The abovementioned laughed saying to me I alone see where to go. I request his excellency to put him on trial and to lawfully punish him for breaking the rules of road conduct. And for not having a horn.

³⁴□n the variable functions of direct speech in different genres see L. R. Waugh, "Reported Speech."

ples 2–4). In other cases it included larger portions of the exchange, quoting both participants, for example,

(6)

מר אוליצקי הפסיקני באמצע בהתרגוזות ומבלי לתת לי לגמור את הודעתי שהיה בה ותור לטובתו, הפסיקני בצעקות. אמרתי לו בשקט: "שמע קודם מה שאני רוצה להגיד לך". על זה התחיל מר אוליצקי לצעוק בקול רם ובטון מצוה: "לא, אתה תשמע מה שאני אומר לך ואתה כן תביא את התכנית לישיבה". על זה אמרתי שוב במנוחה כי "אתי אין לך מה לדבר על זה, תוכל לערער בפני מנהל המחלקה אולם אני לא אוכל לרשום את התכנית". בתשובה לזה התחיל הנ"ל לאים עלי ולצעוק: "טוב, תראה מה שאני אעשה לך אם לא תביא את זה לישיבה".³⁵

(Oct. 19, 1931, TAA 4-4300)

Such longer quotations are particularly common in responses aimed at rejecting an accusation brought forward in a preceding complaint. While the fact of having uttered the words cited in the complaint is usually not denied, the accusation is often handled by providing the fuller context, showing that in that specific context, the words uttered had not been inappropriate. Thus, for instance, the Association of Estate and Property Owners in Tel-Aviv sent to the Tel-Aviv Municipality the following complaint, as part of an ongoing conflict between them, mentioning a conversation between their own representative and one of the Municipality's officials.

(7)

בהמשך השיחה הרשה לעצמו יתן ד"ר בן נתן להכתיר את בעה"ב [בעל הבית] בתאר "שיילוק".³⁶

(Dec. 22, 1937, TAA 4-4300)

The response of the accused official does not deny having used the term mentioned, but provides the fuller context as a proof that no speech act of insulting had been performed.

³⁵Mr. Olitsky interrupted me angrily, and without letting me finish my announcement, which included a concession in his favor, interrupted me with shouts. I told him calmly: "Listen first to what I want to tell you." Hearing this, Mr. Olitsky started shouting in a loud voice and in a commanding tone: "No, you'll listen to what I say to you, and you will bring the plan to the meeting." Hearing this I said again calmly that "with me you ought not talk about it, you could appeal to the director of the department but I am unable to register the plan." In response to this, the abovementioned started menacing me, shouting: "OK, you'll see what I'll do to you if you don't bring it to the meeting."

³⁶Further on in the conversation Mr. Dr. Ben Natan permitted himself to assign the title "Shylock" to the landlord.

(8)

בתשובה לבקשתי זו ענה לי מר חיים, דברים שקשה להבין איך יצאו מפיו של יהודי. "אני אקה את נשמתו של כל אדם החייב לי כסף וכזאת יעשה כל אחד מכם פה בחדר, וגם אתה ד"ר בן-נתן:"...

תשובתי היתה: "חס-ושלום, מר חיים, אין אנחנו שיילוקים, אנו כלנו כאן יהודים בני רחמנים."³⁷
(Feb. 14, 1938, TAA 4-4300)

The subtext of the response is that, considering the circumstances, his own behavior was appropriate and justified, differently from what is implied by the information provided in the complaint letter.

4. THE DISTRIBUTION OF DIRECT SPEECH IN THE ARCHIVAL DOCUMENTS

Locating examples for direct speech in the Tel-Aviv–Jaffa Municipal Archives was not an easy task, as the use of direct speech is the exception, rather than the rule, in documents recording the administering of the city. The usage of Hebrew for administrative purposes developed characteristics of its own from an early stage, and in the early 1920s the foundations for this new, distinct register were already laid.³⁸ Direct speech definitely was *not* an integral part of this evolving register, and most of the documents which referred to verbal confrontations contained no attempt to replicate them. Instead, they tended to classify and summarize the essence of the confrontation through the appropriate verb, that is, the Referred-to Speech strategy discussed above. Thus, reports like those presented in 9[a] and 10[a] were the dominant option in the material examined, while detailed descriptions based on direct speech, like those demonstrated for similar speech events in 9[b] and 10[b], were relatively rare and stylistically marked.

(9) *Event consisting of curses:*

[a] במשטרה העליבני השומר הנ"ל וחרף אותי במלים גסות³⁹ (Nov. 9, 1930, TAA 4-ב311)

³⁷ In response to my request, Mr. Haim said such things that it is hard to grasp were said by a Jew. "I would take the soul of any person who owes me money, and thus would do any of you present in this room, including you Dr. Ben-Natan." My response was: "God forbid, Mr. Haim, we are not Shylocks, we are all here Jews, sons of the merciful."

³⁸ For details see Y. Reshef, "בתכתובת המשרדית של מבני הסמיכות: עיון בתפוצתם של מבני הסמיכות" (*Lidmuta shel haivrit haxadasha bereshita: iyun bitfutsatam shel mivnei hasmixut batixtovet hamisradit shel shnot haesrim*; Modern Hebrew at its inception: A study of construct structures in administrative correspondence), *Mexkarim Belashon* (Language studies) 10 (2005): 171–200.

³⁹ At the police station, the aforementioned policeman insulted me and cursed me with rude words.

[b] באותו רגע התפרצו עלי המתלונן ואשתו בצעקות ובקללות גסות מאוד כמו: שוטרים שודדים, בקשישניקים, רוצחים, פוגרומשיניקים וכו" (Oct. 10, 1934, TAA 4-1311)⁴⁰

(10) *Event consisting of a vociferous dispute:*

[a] ביום 9 לח"ז [לחודש זה] בשעה 11:30 לפנה"צ נכנס למשרד ד"ר בן-רענן והתחיל לצעוק ולהפריע את הסדר במשרד⁴¹ (Aug. 14, 1934, TAA 4-4300)

[b] ובשבתי בעבודתי [...] נכנס פתאום לחדר-עבודתי למשמרה המהנדס מגידוביץ ובטון של מפקד התחיל לגרש את העדים שעובדים אצלו בכביש, שנמצאו במשמרה בצעקו עליהם: "מי צוה לכם לעזוב את העבודה ולבוא הנה"—ופנה אלי בגערה—"מדוע לקחת את האנשים מהעבודה מבלי נטול רשות ממני?" [...] אני שאלתי: "מאין אתה יודע מה שעשיתי?" ואז הוא התחיל לגעור בי ולצעוק עלי בפני הנאספים [...] ואמר להם בטון של שופט: "מי קובל על מי? אתה עליו או הוא עליך? אין צורך במשפטים, לכו!"—ופנה אלי בטון של מפקד: "קרע את הניירות. אין צורך במשפט!" אני [...] אמרתי לו: "את הרברים האחרונים האלה תמסור למפקד המשמרה ולא לי, כי אני רק ממלא מה שהוא מצוה לי ואין ביכולתי לקרוע ניירות רשמיים"⁴² (Jan. 17, 1922, TAA 2-א62)

Yet, although examples like 9[b] and 10[b] were evidently much less common than their alternatives, the occurrence of direct speech was a repeated and salient phenomenon in the archival material examined as compared to the contemporary practice.

The relative frequency of direct speech in texts from the Mandate period may be attributed to the state of Hebrew knowledge in general during that period, and to the partial command of the evolving register of administrative Hebrew in particular. As the language was new to most of its speakers, and as the administrative register was new within the language, not all speakers were familiar with the writing conventions forming in it. Officials of certain Hebrew institutions already used it on a regular basis, but many ordinary citizens—and even public officials whose work did not regularly involve correspondence in Hebrew—had not yet necessarily mastered it. As this specialized

⁴⁰At that moment, the complainer and his wife burst at me with shouts and very rude curses, such as: policemen robbers, bribe-takers, murderers, rioters, etc.

⁴¹On the ninth day of this month, at 11:30 p.m., Mr. Dr. Ben-Ra'anan entered the office and started shouting and disturbing the order in the office.

⁴²While seated at my work...the engineer Magidovitch suddenly entered my study in the police station, and in a commander's tone started to chase away the witnesses who work for him at the road and who were present in the police station, shouting at them: "Who ordered you to leave your work and come here," and turned to me with a reproach, "Why did you take the men from their work without asking for my permission?"... I asked him: "How do you know what I did?" and then he started rebuking me and shouting at me in front of those present...and told them in a judge's tone: "Who complains against whom? You against him or him against you? There is no need for trials, go!" and he turned to me in a commander's tone: "Tear the papers. There is no need for a trial!" I told him: "These things you should tell the commander of the police, not me, since I only follow what he orders me, and it is not in my capacity to tear official papers."

language was not readily available to many of those who needed to deal with the Municipality's administration, they had to turn to more familiar Hebrew styles—in this case to spoken Hebrew, which had been the original mode of expression in the speech events referred to.⁴³

The instances of direct speech in the material examined were mainly concentrated in three classes of texts: (1) Complaint letters, written either by ordinary citizens or by municipality employees; (2) Policemen's reports about unusual or noteworthy events which occurred while they were on duty; (3) Response letters to texts from the two former categories.

Locating documents which included direct speech was partly assisted by the cataloguing system used at the Tel-Aviv–Jaffa Municipal Archive, which occasionally filed texts according to their nature (i.e., complaint, outgoing mail, protocol, etc.) rather than according to their subject matter. The systematic examination of folders dedicated specifically to complaints and reports⁴⁴ provided important insights about the share of direct speech as compared to its alternatives and about changes over time in its distribution. These special folders could be systematically searched, and the cases of direct speech included in them could be retrieved in full.

In many other cases, though, documents containing direct speech were filed according to their subject matter (i.e., sanitation, taxes, water supply, education, etc.), and were therefore scattered throughout the entire archive. Their location was unpredictable, and while many of them were traced for this research, their inventory is by no means full. The extensive search of the archive resulted so far, as already mentioned, in a corpus of more than 100 examples of direct speech.

Interestingly enough, folders entitled “Verdicts,” which contained abridged protocols of legal procedures, turned out to be a poor source of examples for direct speech. My preliminary assumption that such folders would include instances of direct speech was based not only on the semi-oral nature of legal protocols in general,⁴⁵ but also on a specific tendency, noticeable in

⁴³For a further discussion of the stylistic variety found in archival documents recording the correspondence of the Tel-Aviv Municipality in its early years, accompanied by textual demonstrations, see Y. Reshef, “המשכיות מול שינוי בהתגבשותה של העברית הבינונית: עיון במצבה של מערכת הפועל בראשית תקופת המנדט” (*Hemshexiyut mul shinuy behitgabshuta shel haivrit habeynonit: iyun bematsava shel maarexet hapoal bereshit tkufat hamandat*; Continuity versus change in the emergence of standard Modern Hebrew: The state of the verbal system at the onset of the Mandate period), in *מאתיים וחמשים שנות עברית חדשה* (*Matayim vaxamishim shnot ivrit xadasha*; 250 years of Modern Hebrew), (in press).

⁴⁴For example, folders no. 4-4300 and 4-3642, both containing complaints.

⁴⁵See E. Borochofsky-Bar Aba, “דברים שאין הנייד טובל: עיון בטקסטים מקבילים דבורים וכתובים” (*Dvarim sheeyn hanyar sovel: iyun betekstim makkbilim dvurim uxtuvim*; Between spoken and written language: Examining parallel spoken and written texts), *העודה* (*Teuda*) 18 (2002): 353–374.

the period's correspondence, to recourse to legal procedures in case of verbal insults. A typical example for this tendency is recorded in the following text.

(11)

ביום 21.9 נכנס השוטר הסניטרי שרמן אל הבית ששם גר הרוחן קרינסקי, ומצא שגם הגנה וגם החצר לא נקיות. [...] לכן הוא נכנס אל חדרו ודרש ממנו לנקות את הגנה. במקום תשובה התחיל הנתבע לצעוק עליו ואמר לו [גם כן] [גם כן]: שעליו, על הסניטר, להאמין לו בתור רופא, ולא לבעל הבית שהוא בורגני סוחר... וכן. אחר כך הוא אמר עוד: „אתה זוחל [גם כן] לפני איזמוזיק מכיון שהוא עשיר“. כבר לפני חודש היה לנתבע סכסוך עם הסניטרי! ואז הוא אמר לו „שהוא איננו מעיז לדרוש מנת [מהארון] איזמוזיק, שהוא ינקח את הגנה מפני שהוא ועדניק“. אני תובע אותו בעד העלבון הזה (”זוחל לפני...“) למשפט.⁴⁶ (Sept. 27, 1922, TAA 2-א70)

But despite its plausibility, the initial assumption that such folders would be relatively rich in direct speech proved unjustified, and the folders entitled “Verdicts” contained very few such examples. Legal proceedings triggered by verbal confrontations were relatively rare compared to other types of grievances, and their abridged protocols only rarely included a quote of the exact words that caused the lawsuit. The single-page summaries on a standard form included in these folders outlined the charge, the main evidence, the claims of the accuser, defendant, and witnesses, and the verdict. Only three cases out of the dozens examined contained examples of direct speech, for example:

(12)

דברי הנתבע: זה שבועות שלא הייתי בסינמה ולא ידעתי שאסור לעשן. השוטר שאל אותי: אתה יודע לקרא עברית?—אמרת, כן קראתי ההודעה ומיד כביתי את הסיגרה.⁴⁷
(Oct. 19, 1922, TAA 2-א70)

A similarly redundant number of examples resulted from the accompanying documents included in these files, such as policemen's reports or written evidence provided by the accuser or the witnesses. Contrary to my initial ex-

⁴⁶On 9/21 the sanitary inspector Sherman entered the house where Dr. Krinsky lives, and found that both the garden and the yard were not clean.... He therefore entered his room and asked him to clean the garden. Instead of replying, the defendant started shouting at him and told him also that he, the sanitary, should believe him as a doctor, and not the landlord, who is a bourgeois merchant, etc. Afterwards he also said: “You too creep in front of Izmozik, since he’s rich.” Already a month ago the defendant had a conflict with the sanitary, and then he told him “that he does not dare to demand from Izmozik to clean the garden since he is a Committee member.” I sue him to court for this insult (“creep in front of”).

⁴⁷The defendant’s statement: It has been weeks since I have been to the cinema, and I didn’t know it was forbidden to smoke. The policeman asked me: Can you read Hebrew? I said, Yes. I read the notice and immediately put out the cigarette.

pectations, the contribution of the folders entitled “Verdicts” to the current research was not superior to that of any other folder chosen randomly from the archive.

5. THE DIACHRONIC DIMENSION

The distribution of direct speech in the documents examined was not uniform from the diachronic perspective either. The habit to include direct speech in complaints and reports was a relatively short-lived practice, which temporal boundaries overlapped those of the British Mandate. Its emergence was directly connected to the transformation of Hebrew into the frame language of the *Yishuv* after the First World War,⁴⁸ and its decline accompanied the consolidation of Hebrew knowledge within the speech community towards the end of the *Yishuv* period.⁴⁹ The status of direct speech as a live, habitual practice in the documents examined lasted for three decades at the most, the height of its diffusion being the 1930s.

The appearance of direct speech in the texts was directly connected to the transition of Hebrew into a widespread means of daily communication. Diversely from literature, in which direct speech was employed long before spoken Hebrew came into existence,⁵⁰ the inclusion of direct speech in referential texts, anchored in reality, had not been a valid option prior to the transformation of spoken Hebrew into an established component of daily life. While the exact point in which this happened is subject to debate,⁵¹ there is wide agreement that by the early 1920s Hebrew speech was already a factual

⁴⁸ B. Harshav, “מסה על תחיית הלשון העברית” (*Masa al txiyat halashon haivrit*; Essay on the revival of the Hebrew language), *אלפיים* (*Alpayim*) 2 (1990): 39–53.

⁴⁹ See the statistical analysis of R. Bachi, “A Statistical Analysis of the Revival of Hebrew in Israel,” *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 3 (1956): 179–247, and note the comments of linguists from the 1950s on the measure of stability the linguistic system reached by that time, for example, H. Blanc, “Hebrew in Israel: Trends and Problems,” *The Middle East Journal* 11 (1957): 397–409; H. B. Rosen, העברית שלנו (*Haivrit shelanu*; Our Hebrew), (Tel Aviv, 1955); M. Gottstein, “הלשון העברית המדוברת בנושא למחקר” (*Halashon haivrit hameduberet kenose lemexkar*; The spoken Hebrew language as a subject for research), *לשוננו* (*Leshonenu*) 17 (1951): 231–340.

⁵⁰ On the literary and linguistic conventions developed due to this anomalous situation see I. Even-Zohar, *Hadialog*; I. Even-Zohar and K. Shmeruk, “לשון אותנטית, מסירת דיבור אותנטית: עברית ויידיש” (*Lashon otentit, mesirat dibur otentit: ivrit veyidish*; ‘Authentic language’ and ‘authentic reported speech’: Hebrew versus Yiddish), *הספירות* (*Hasifrut*) 30–31 (1981): 82–87.

⁵¹ See, *inter alia*, N. Efrati, מלשון יהודים ללשון אומה: הדיבור העברי בארץ-ישראל בשנים הרמ”ו-תרפ”ו (1881–1922) (*Milshon yexidim lilshon uma: hadibur haivri beerets yisrael bashanim tarnav-tarpav [1881–1922]*; The evolution of spoken Hebrew in pre-state Israel, 1881–1922), (Jerusalem, 2004), pp. 108–126; U. Ornan, “סיומו של תהליך תחיית הלשון” (*Siyumo shel tahalix txiyat halashon*; The last phase of the revival of Hebrew), *מחקרים בלשון* (*Mexkarim belashon*; Linguistic studies) 1 (1985): 261–272.

reality.⁵² From this period on, the presence of direct speech in the texts examined manifestly reflect the growing presence of spoken Hebrew in the daily life of the first Hebrew city.⁵³

Prior to the 1920s, only one isolated example has so far been found in material documenting the very first years of Tel Aviv.⁵⁴

(13)

אז נגש אלי אחד מפקידי הדיליטנס אפרים היילפרין ובסגנון גם וקול רם אמר לי: אין לך הצדקה לשבת בהדיליטנס, אחרי שישבת לנסוע בעגלה פרטית, רד מהדיליטנס, כי לא יתנו לך כרטיס והדיליטנס לא יסע, עד שתדר. ובפנותו אל העגלון אמר: לא תתן לו כרטיס.⁵⁵ (July 1913, TAA 1-514)

In fact, in this early example it is not certain whether Hebrew was actually used at all in the exchange referred to, or was only employed in the written report, representing a speech event which was originally conducted in a foreign language (most probably Yiddish).⁵⁶ Only during the 1920s, direct speech turned into a regular phenomenon in the documents examined; its diffusion reaching its peak in the 1930s.⁵⁷ The living Hebrew speech at its background clearly manifests in occasional usages which are typically associated with the spoken registers of Hebrew. During the 1940s the diffusion of direct speech in the material examined gradually declines,⁵⁸ and no examples from the 1950s have so far been found in the Tel-Aviv–Jaffa Archives.⁵⁹

⁵²See, *inter alia*, B. Harshav, “מסה”; S. Morag, “העברית החדשה בהתגבשותה: לשון באספקלריה של חברה” (*Haivrit haxadasha behitgabshuta: lashon beaspaklarya shel xevra*; Modern Hebrew: Some sociolinguistic aspects), *Cathedra* (1990): 70–92; H. Blanc, “The Israeli koine as an Emergent National Standard,” in *Language Problems of Developing Nations*, ed. J. A. Fishman et al. (New York, 1968), pp. 237–251; R. Bachi, “Statistical”; S. Carmi, “תחיית העברית בראייה בין-תחומית, עם אחד ושפה אחת: תחיית העברית בראייה בין-תחומית, One people and one language: The revival of Hebrew in an interdisciplinary perspective), (Tel Aviv, 1997).

⁵³On the state of Hebrew in Tel Aviv during the Mandate period see A. Helman, “‘Even the Dogs in the Street Bark in Hebrew’: National Ideology and Everyday Culture in Tel-Aviv,” *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 92.3–4 (2002): 359–382.

⁵⁴That is, files belonging to section 1 in the TAA.

⁵⁵Then one of the carriage’s clerks, Efrayim Halperin, approached me and told me in a rude manner and in a loud voice: You have no justification to sit in the carriage since you mounted to ride a private coach, get off the carriage, as you would not be given a ticket and the carriage will not leave until you get off. And addressing the driver he said: Don’t give him a ticket.

⁵⁶Compare to example 15 below.

⁵⁷The corpus currently available includes thirty-nine occurrences from the 1920s and fifty-two occurrences from the 1930s.

⁵⁸The total number of examples found in documents from the 1940s is fifteen.

⁵⁹One such example from the late 1950s is cited from the “letters to the editor” section in the daily *Maariv* by S. Morag, “עשור של עברית: עיונים בתולדות לשוננו בפרק שבין השנייה להשליש” (*Asor shel ivrit: iyunim betoldot leshonenu baperek shebein tashax letashyax*; A decade of Hebrew: On the evolution of our language between 1948–1958), *Leshonenu laam* 10.3 (1959): 67–94 (the quotation appears in section ה):

This diachronic process has parallels in other linguistic phenomena too. As previous studies have shown, certain features that seemed well-rooted in Hebrew at the onset of the Mandate period were either abandoned or replaced by other linguistic habits later on, as part of the social and cultural shaping of the *Yishuv* and the standardization processes of Modern Hebrew.⁶⁰ As the knowledge of Hebrew took root and consolidated, the inventory of available linguistic options gradually expanded. Synchronic distinctions increasingly replaced traditional ways of expression, and a tighter connection was created between the circumstances of language production and the choice of discourse strategies.⁶¹ This development involved, among other things, the gradual exclusion of direct speech from the set of options acceptable in administrative writing.⁶² The diminished presence of direct speech in such texts was one of the signs for the naturalization of Hebrew and for the consolidation of its status as the working language of the emergent speech community.

The diachronic changes in the distribution of direct speech may not have stemmed, though, only from internal processes within Hebrew. In other languages too, changes occurred in the conventions of speech presentation as part of the vast stylistic transformation that accompanied their modernization and standardization.⁶³ Journalistic English, for instance, drifted away from the narrative style that characterized it in late nineteenth century, and developed discourse strategies of its own. These changes affected not only the overall organization of the journalistic text, but also the distribution of specific linguis-

באו אנשים [...] וסחטו כסף [...] בשביל הגרלה [...] אמרתי להם אין לי. יש לי חמישים לירה ולירה אחת בשביל הילדים להאכיל אותם וגם כן יש לי אשה חולנית. אני לא אתן לכם. אני רוצה לתת להם אוכל. אני לא ארעיב את הילדים שלי ואתן לכם הכסף. אתם לוקחים הלחם שלנו מהפה. [...] מיד אשתי נתנה על ראשי מים קרים ואמרה לי מזה יש. אמרתי לה אין שום דבר. אירע לי המקרה זה השבוע.

people came [...] and squeezed some money [...] for a raffle. I told them I don't have. I have fifty Liras and one Lira for the children to feed them and I also have a sick wife. I won't give you. I want to give them food. I won't starve my children and give you the money. You take the bread out of our months.[...] At once my wife poured some cold water on my head and said to me What's up. I told her Nothing. This incident happened to me this week.

⁶⁰For details see H. B. Rosen, "זוטות מהתגבשותה של העברית הישראלית" (*Zutot mehitgabshuta shel haivrit hayisraelit*; 'Obiterdicta' concerning the crystallization of Israeli Hebrew), החוג הישראלי של חברי החברה, (Societatis linguisticae Europaeae Sodalium Israelense: Studia) 5 (1992): 33–39; Y. Reshef, "צורת הכבוד בלשונם של דוברי העברית בתל-אביב," (*Bitshuva lemiktavo miyom...: tsurat hakvod bileshonam shel dovrei haivrit betel aviv bitkufat hamandat*; 'In response to his letter of...': Honorifics in language use of Hebrew speakers in Mandatory Tel Aviv), *תעודה* (*Teuda*) 18 (2002): 299–327.

⁶¹H. B. Rosen, "זוטות," p. 34.

⁶²For a discussion of the processes involved in the emergence of register differentiation in languages see B. Havránek, "The Functional Differentiation of the Standard Language," in *A Prague School Reader on Esthetics, Literary Structure and Style*, ed. P. L. Garvin (Washington, D.C., 1964), pp. 3–16.

⁶³R. Kuzar, *Hebrew*, p. 6.

tic and stylistic devices within it, including various strategies of speech presentation.⁶⁴ A similarly radical stylistic change affected oral journalistic reports, as even a short exposure to newsreels from the early twentieth century suffices to demonstrate. In Hebrew, the transformation of the language into a modern national tongue greatly depended on its capacity to develop register differentiation,⁶⁵ and the exclusion of direct speech from administrative texts was one manifestation of this comprehensive process.

Seen from a broader cultural perspective, the short-lived presence of direct speech in administrative correspondence may have been connected to the general transition from traditional community to modern public institutions which occurred within the *Yishuv*.⁶⁶ The shaping of the *Yishuv* as a modern national society involved a gradual shift from codes of social behavior rooted in traditional community life to new social and institutional arrangements. In addition, the replacement of the Ottoman rule by the Mandatory British rule made its western administrative impact on the *Yishuv*'s institutions.⁶⁷ The intimate relations of the early days of the Tel Aviv were gradually replaced by more impersonal modes of interaction between the ordinary citizen and the Municipality, and the intimacy associated with direct speech was no longer appropriate as the city grew and as its municipal administration became more professional.⁶⁸ The marked stylistic tint of direct speech was no longer compatible with the increasingly modern and formal social organization of Tel Aviv, and it gradually disappeared from texts concerned with the relationship between the municipality and its citizens.

6. LIMITATIONS OF THE CORPUS AS A SOURCE OF INFORMATION ON THE SPOKEN LANGUAGE

The occurrences of direct speech in the archival documents have several advantages over all other available sources of information on the nature of spoken Hebrew in its early years. Unlike the period's literary dialogues, which

⁶⁴ R. Waugh, "Reported Speech," pp. 151–153. In the case of journalistic English, the major changes in this domain affected the distribution of free indirect speech.

⁶⁵ Blanc, "The Israeli *koine*."

⁶⁶ Horovits and M. Lissak, *מיישוב למדינה (Miyishuv limdina)*, (Tel Aviv, 1977); M. Lissak et al., eds., *תולדות היישוב היהודי בארץ-ישראל מאז העלייה הראשונה: תקופת המנדט הבריטי (Toldot hayishuv hayehudi beerets yisrael meaz haaliya harishona: tkufat hamandat habriti)*; The history of the Jewish settlement in Palestine since the first *Aliya*: The British Mandate period), Part 2 (Jerusalem, 1995).

⁶⁷ Anat Helman, personal communication.

⁶⁸ Shavit and G. Bigger, (1936–1909) *ההיסטוריה של תל-אביב: משכונות לעיר, (Hahistorya shel tel aviv: mishxunot leir, 1909–1936)*; The history of Tel Aviv, vol. 1: The birth of a town, 1909–1936), (Tel Aviv, 2001).

reflected fictional, reconstructed speech events, these documents refer to real-world exchanges.⁶⁹ Due to their practical, down-to-earth goal, their writers had a built-in interest to provide an accurate representation of what was actually said: since the people quoted were bound to view the text and react to it, reliability and accuracy were the only way to ensure that they would not be able to deny having said the things attributed to them.⁷⁰ Furthermore, in contrast with all other sources from that period, the documentation of the spoken language was not a main goal of these texts, but merely one of their side effects. As the attention of their writers was focused on the texts' contents, they may have provided more spontaneous, more naïve representations of the spoken language than the conscious reconstructions provided by the period's professional writers and grammarians.⁷¹ The writers of these texts were ordinary people, who were not bound by didactic consideration or by the strict literary norms that affected the period's literary production. In fact, this is the only written source so far identified that preserves ordinary speaker's testimonies about the spoken language.

But despite these advantages, this material has serious limitations as well as a source of information about the spoken language. Written texts do not grant direct access to the original speaker's voice, which may be represented directly and in full only in recordings.⁷² What written texts may provide is at best an *approximate representation* of the original speech events referred to, faithfully documenting the contents of the exchange, or even certain properties of the spoken utterance, but in most cases it is unlikely that they constitute an exact verbatim replica of what was said. As noted by Chafe, cognitive processes set limits on our possibility to remember the actual words used on a specific occasion, and our reproduction of prior speech is bound to be restricted to formulaic, particularly newsworthy or rehearsed words and phrases.⁷³ The rest of the presumed quotations reflects our own words rather than those of the original speaker.

⁶⁹On the possibility that direct speech may be constructed even when it refers to actual, extralinguistic reality see P. Mayes, "Quotation in Spoken English," *Studies in Language* 14 (1990): 325–363; D. Tannen, "Introducing Constructed Dialogue in Greek and American Conversational and Literary Narrative," in *Direct and Indirect Speech*, ed. F. Coulmas (New York, 1986), pp. 311–332. For a discussion of this possibility in our corpus see below.

⁷⁰Compare L. R. Waugh, "Reported Speech," p. 132.

⁷¹On the influence of the degree of consciousness on people's modes of expression see I. Even-Zohar, "1948–1882 וההתגבשות של תרבות עברית מקומית וילידית בארץ-ישראל," (*Hatsmixa vehahitgabshut shel tarbut ivrit mekomit viylidit beerets-yisrael, 1882–1948*; The emergence and crystallisation of local and native Hebrew culture in Eretz Israel, 1882–1948), *קתדרה* (*Cathedra*) 16 (1980): 165–189.

⁷²T. Ten-Have, *Doing Conversation Analysis* (London, 1999), pp. 75–97.

⁷³W. Chafe, *Discourse*, pp. 215–216.

In the texts examined, the possibility of a complete faithfulness to the original speaker is further restricted by the transition from the oral to the written medium. Writing is intrinsically unable to fully represent speech,⁷⁴ and the unconscious interference of rooted habits of the written language may have caused the writers of the texts to unintentionally replace certain colloquial elements with their parallels conventional in writing.⁷⁵ Consequently, despite writers' built-in interest for accuracy, these texts probably provide only rarely a precise replication of the exact words uttered by the original speaker.

In certain cases, evidence for a possible discrepancy between the original utterance and its representation through direct speech is reflected in the formulation of direct speech itself. This happens, for instance, when a quote is either attributed to several people or is alleged to have been said habitually,⁷⁶ for example:

(14)

אנו הושבים שהשוטרים נצבים להשגיח על הסדר והם אומרים תמיד: „אנו נצבים פה להשגיח עליכם.“ צעקות כי תהיינה בתוך האולם, מריבות, השוטר איננו מתערב, אפילו אחרי בקשתנו. הוא אומר: „אנחנו נתערב בעת שיעלה לפנינו הרצון“⁷⁷ (Dec. 1922 or Jan. 1923, TAA 2-א89)

Since it is not plausible that all policemen used exactly the same words on all occasions, the presumed authenticity of direct speech is evidently misleading. By the choice of direct speech, the reporting person apparently commits himself to faithfully repeat the original speaker's words, but in such cases he is intrinsically unable to do so, as it is implausible that the repeated speech events referred to were all identical.

A similar discrepancy between the formulation of the original speech event and its representation through direct speech inherently exists when those two speech events differed in language, as in the following example:

⁷⁴See for example G. Brown and G. Yule, *Discourse Analysis* (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 4–14; M. A. K. Halliday, *Spoken and Written Language* (Oxford, 1989).

⁷⁵On the effect of this unconscious interference in literature see R. Ben-Shahar, “התפתחות.”

⁷⁶Compare L. R. Waugh, “Reported Speech,” p. 160; P. Mayes, “Quotation,” p. 333.

⁷⁷We think that the policemen stand there to keep the order, but they always say: “We stand here to keep an eye on you.” Whenever there are shouts or quarrels in the hall, the policeman does not intervene, even following our requests. He says: “We will intervene whenever it pleases us.”

(15)

הנתבעת ענתה לשאלתו של הסניטר: "צא מפה אם לא..." [האם אתה רוצה גם כן 10 גרוש] מ[צרי] כמו תורכי? את כל זה היא צעקה ביהודית בצעקות גדולות, וכל השכנים התאספו על המקום⁷⁸ (Nov. 7, 1922, TAA 2-544)

The explicit statement that the original language of the quoted utterance was Yiddish rules out the possibility that direct speech reflects the actual words used by the original speaker.

Similarly, direct speech often includes an expression of reservation, attesting to the awareness of the reporting person that the quotation provided may not be accurate.⁷⁹ Such expressions are included, for instance, in the following reports of the same event, described by two different people.

(16)

על הערתי, שכעת המשרד כבר סגור ואין להכנס מדלת צדדית, ענה לי איזה דבר בגסות, כעין: "לא אליך באתי" [...] להערתו של מר פרידיס, שאין הוא יכול לקבל כעת שום דבר, אמר בערך: "אני לא רוצה לדעת כלום, תזכור שמסרתי לך את החשבון הסטטי" —ויצא⁸⁰ (Nov. 24, 1931, TAA 4-4300)

(17)

על זה ענה מר אוליזקי בגסות, שהוא "לא בא אליו" או "שהוא לא שואל אותו" (אינני זוכר את הבטוי המדויק) [...] הוא זרק את התיק על שלחני ואמר לי: תזכור שאני מסרתי לך⁸¹ —והלך (Nov. 24, 31, TAA 4-4300)

These two examples present some other difficulties as well. In example 17, the boundaries between direct speech and indirect speech are blurred: the utterances appear in quotation marks, which are markers of the former, but grammatically bear signs of the latter (i.e., the use of the third person). In addition, these two reports, which refer to the same speech event, are not linguistically identical to each other. While they agree on the general course of

⁷⁸□The defendant replied to the sanitary's question: "Go out of here, otherwise..." "Do you also want 10 Egyptian Pennies, just like a Turk?" All this she shouted in Yiddish, in loud shouts, and all the neighbors gathered in the place.

⁷⁹□B. Mayes, "Quotation."

⁸⁰□On my comment that right now the office is already closed and it is forbidden to enter it through a side door he replied rudely something like "I didn't come to you" To Mr. Fridis's comment that he cannot accept anything now he said approximately: "I don't want to know anything, remember that I handed you the static [?] account," and left.

⁸¹□On this Mr. Olizky replied rudely that "he didn't come to him" or "that he doesn't ask him" (I do not remember the exact expression).... He threw the bag on my desk and told me: "Remember that I handed it to you," and left.

events, and even on certain expressions used, they disagree on the details. The discrepancy between their versions regards features of extreme interest from the linguist's point of view, such as word order (לא אליך באהי in example 16 versus בא אליו in example 17) or the separate realization of the pronoun outside the verbal form (מסרתי לך in example 16 versus אני מסרתי לך in example 17). From the ordinary speaker's point of view, such details are neither noteworthy nor crucial for the utterance meaning. The quotation is accurate enough to fulfill its function, that is, to support the accusation brought forward. From the linguist's point of view, though, speakers' inattention to such details poses a serious problem.

The inattention to minute linguistic details is similarly apparent in repeated reports of a single speech event by the same person. The following examples, for instance, reveal an inconsistency in the realization of the possessive pronoun (לשלחן שלי in example 18 versus אל שלחני in example 19), a feature considered a distinctive marker of written versus spoken Hebrew.⁸²

(18)

לפני איזה שבועות נכנס אלי השמש סעדיה [...] ולקח אצלי גמ"ח [גמילות חסדים] שלש לירות. בעת שקבל אמר צריך לי את הכסף בשביל קנטור. ואמרתי לו. אני נותן לך את הכסף וגם הוא אמר לי לא חשוב לך, קנטור, ולא קנטור, מתי שתכנס לחדר המשפטים אלי, לשלחן שלי, אתן לך את הכסף. וכעת הוא עונה לי אין לי, נתתי את השלש ליתן לקנטור.⁸³ (Dec. 17, 1935, TAA 4-4300)

(19)

והוא אמר צריך לי כעת הרבה כסף ואמרתי לו למה. ואמר, בשביל קנטור אבל לא חשוב לך און [אודון] ליכט, קנטור, ולא קנטור, מתי שתכנס אלי לחדר המשפטים אל שלחני אתן לך את הכסף כמו תמיד.⁸⁴ (April 5, 1936, TAA 4-4300)

⁸²Ornan, "שימוש של כינויי קניין פרודים וחבורים בלשון ימינו" (*Shimusham shel kinuyei kinyan prudim vaxavurim bilshon yameinu*; The use of analytic and synthetic possessive pronouns in contemporary Hebrew), *Divrei hakongress haolami harevii lamadeey hayahadut*; Proceedings of the fourth world congress for Jewish studies, (Jerusalem, 1969), pp. 117–122; K. Dubnov, "כינויי הקניין החבורים והפרודים של שם העצם בעברית המדוברת" (*Kinuyei hakinyan haxavurim vehaprudim shel shem ha-etsem ba-ivrit ha-meduberet*; Synthetic and analytic possessive pronouns related to nouns in spoken Hebrew), *Balshanut Ivrit* ; Hebrew linguistics) 47 (2000): 21–26.

⁸³Several weeks ago the attendant Se'adya came to me...and took from me three pounds of benefaction. When he received it he said The money is needed for Kantor. And I told him: I give you the money. And he also told me: It is unimportant to you, Kantor or not Kantor, whenever you'll come to me to the courtroom, to my desk, I'll give you the money. And now he says: I don't have it, I've given the three pounds to Kantor.

⁸⁴And he told me: A lot of money is needed now. And I said Why. And he said, For Kantor. But it is not important to you, Mr. Licht, Kantor or not Kantor, whenever you'll come to me to the courtroom, to my desk, I'll give you the money as always.

Due to their low informative value, precisely such minute details are the least likely to be accurately represented, restricting the possibility of reconstructing the spoken language based on this material.

On the other hand, all four of the last examples seem to bear, despite the reservations raised about their actual authenticity, a clear spoken quality. They all seem to echo, at least to a certain extent, peculiar usages of the spoken language as it may have been used in reality. Expressions such as *הוא לא קנטור ולא קנטור, שואל אותו* instead of the imperative, and even *צריך לי*,⁸⁵ are typical to the spoken register of Hebrew, and many of them are unattested in other written sources. Here lies the material's main value for research: despite its limitations, it preserved some of the flavor of the spoken language. Its careful analysis may therefore provide invaluable information on the evolution of spoken Hebrew in its early years. Although this material cannot form the basis for a full reconstruction of the character of early spoken Hebrew, it may serve the less ambitious goal of retrieving and dating some of its traits.

7. THE MIMETIC NATURE OF DIRECT SPEECH AND ITS VALUE FOR RESEARCH

Studies on the various strategies available to speakers to report about former speech events repeatedly stress the delusive dimension of direct speech: as opposed to indirect speech, which overtly deviates from the original formulation and offers merely a paraphrase of it, direct speech presumably provides an accurate replica. Yet, as we have seen, the degree of affinity to the original is unknown in direct speech too.⁸⁶ Despite the external appearance, direct speech and indirect speech do not essentially differ in their *actual* faithfulness to the original speech event; what sets them apart is the *commitment* for such a faithfulness conveyed by direct speech, but absent from indirect speech.⁸⁷ While the choice of indirect speech overtly admits and linguistically encodes the intrinsic inability to accurately reproduce former speech due to

⁸⁵□ The construction *לי צריך* instead of *אני צריך* is repeatedly attested in sources from the first decades of the twentieth century. See for example the several occurrences in V. Jabotinsky, *Taryag Millim: Introduction into Spoken Hebrew (in Latin Characters)* (rev. Israeli ed.; Jerusalem, 1950), pp. 22–23.

⁸⁶□ Tannen, “Constructed Dialogue.”

⁸⁷□ N. Leech and M. H. Short, *Style*, p. 320; H. Borer, “הבטים,” p. 37; W. Chafe, *Discourse*, pp. 216–217.

the limitations of human memory,⁸⁸ direct speech allegedly surmounts this limitation.⁸⁹

This peculiarity of direct speech is connected to its mimetic nature. As opposed to indirect speech, direct speech is syntactically independent, and may therefore not only reflect the overall syntactic structure of spoken utterances,⁹⁰ but also preserve a whole series of elements that are ruled out in indirect speech due to its subordinate syntax. Indeed, indirect speech does not entail merely the adaptation of the deictic elements to the circumstances of the reporting speech event, but involves changes and omissions of a whole series of elements which may only appear in independent syntactic structures. Thus, for instance, imperative constructions, as in the following example, may only be retained if direct speech is employed.⁹¹

(20)

ביום אֵן דראש-השנה כשנכנסתי למגרשי התערוכה עכבני ע"י השער ברנש, ספק יהודי ספק ערבי,
במלים: "בוא הנה! לאן אתה הולך?"⁹² (Sept. 1934, TAA 4-3196)

The same holds true for other types of elements, such as vocatives, interjections, direct questions, repetitions, topic-comment constructions, discourse markers, colloquial expressions, evaluative elements (i.e., "damn," "what the hell," etc.), and more.⁹³ Many of those elements are peculiar to the spoken language, and rule out a straightforward conversion of direct speech into indirect speech, for example:

(21)

הוא צועק בקול יותר רם: מה אתה רוצה? הישיבה סגורה!⁹⁴ (April 16, 1934, TAA 4-4300)
(compare: → *הוא צועק שמה אני רוצה*)

⁸⁸H. Borer, "הבטים."

⁸⁹W. Chafe, *Discourse*, p. 215.

⁹⁰L. R. Waugh, "Reported Speech," p. 140.

⁹¹The same is true of free indirect speech, which similarly has a mimetic dimension. Free indirect speech is not discussed here since it is essentially a literary device, and is not found in our examples. On free indirect speech see B. McHale, "Free Indirect Discourse"; G. N. Leech and M. H. Short, *Style*, pp. 325ff.; W. Chafe, *Discourse*, pp. 222, 240–243; S. Rimmon-Kenan, *הפואטיקה של הסיפורת בימינו (Hapoetika shel hasiporet beyameinu; Narrative fiction: Contemporary poetics)*, (Tel Aviv, 1984); H. Borer, "הבטים"; E. Doron and M. Ron, "סמנטיקת המצבים."

⁹²On the first day of Rosh Hashana, when I entered the fairground, a fellow doubtly Jewish doubtly Arab stopped me with the words: "Come here! Where are you going?"

⁹³W. Chafe, *Discourse*, p. 215; B. McHale, "Free Indirect Discourse," pp. 251–252; H. Borer, "הבטים," pp. 37–38; L. R. Waugh, "Reported Speech," p. 140.

⁹⁴He shouts in a louder voice: What do you want? The meeting is closed!

(22)

העירותי לה "אל תצעקי גברת יודעים שכל השכנים הם רשעים והבעלי בתים צדיקים"⁹⁵
(Aug. 29, 1942, TAA 4-4300)

(compare: → (*העירותי לה שלא תצעקי גברת*))

(23)

בתשובה לזה התחיל הנ"ל לאים עלי ולצעוק: "שוב, תראה מה שאני אעשה לך אם לא תביא את
זה לשיבה."⁹⁶ (Oct. 19, 1931, TAA 4-4300)

(compare: → (*התחיל לאיים ולצעוק שטוב אני אראה מה הוא יעשה לי*))

(24)

ביום 11.9.22 אחה"צ בשעה 4 בא אל ביתי במחנה יוסף שוטר ובידו פסת ניר של רשימת 10
אנשים בערך, ושואל הידעתם את פלוני אלמוני?... אז עניתי לו אני אחד מהם מה יש?⁹⁷
(Sept. 14, 1922, TAA 2-ב62)

(compare: → (*עניתי לו שאני אחד מהם מה יש*))

As such elements do not form part of the written language, they could only originate in the period's spoken language. Their presence in spoken Hebrew down to our day provides a further proof for their spoken origin. Thus, although the occurrences of direct speech in our corpus do not necessarily reproduce what was actually said in reality on the specific occasion referred to, they may still record authentic features of the spoken language.

Ways of expression typical to the spoken language occasionally appear in our data also where there are no similar limitations on a transformation of direct speech into indirect speech, for example:

(25)

רק יצא מהשער וכבר שמענו בבית את קול השוטר לוטקר שצעק על הילד: "אני אשבור לך את
הראש"⁹⁸ (Sept. 27, 1934, TAA 4-ג11)

(26)

ע[ל] ז[ה] ענה לי שאינו מקבל פתקאות כאלו. ואמר,, אם אתה תעשה קונצים כאלה אתה לא
תהיה בעירייה הרבה זמן."⁹⁹ (Oct. 7, 1926, TAA 4-א310)

⁹⁵□ remarked "Don't shout, Madam, it is known that all tenants are evil and the landlords are righteous."

⁹⁶□ response to this the abovementioned started menacing me, shouting: "OK, you'll see what I'll do to you if you don't bring it to the meeting."

⁹⁷□ On 9/11/22 in the afternoon at 4 o'clock a policeman came to my house at Maxane Yosef, holding a piece of paper with a list of approximately 10 people, and asked Do you know a person called so and so?... So I answered him: I'm one of them, what's up?

⁹⁸□ He just went out of the gate and we already heard from the house the voice of the policeman Lutzer shouting at the child: "I will break your head."

⁹⁹□ On this he replied that he doesn't accept such notes. And he said: "If you'll do such tricks, you will not be in the Municipality for a long time."

Not all examples in our corpus are of this kind, though. There are cases that bear no signs of colloquialism but fully conform to the conventions of the written language, for example:

(27)

בוכוח [...] אמר מר שכנאי למר שליט, לך ופתח את עורקי דמך ואבד את עצמך לדעת אבל לא בבית הזה¹⁰⁰
(June 20, 1938, TAA 4-4300)

(28)

מר פלוקסמן [...] ענה: אין אני מקבל עובדים מהסתדרות העובדים הלאומית, לך אל הסתדרותך ודרוש שיסדרו אותך בעבודה¹⁰¹
(June 7, 1936, TAA 4-4300)

In other cases, elements that are normally associated with the written language (marked here by italics) are embedded within a context whose overall nature is colloquial,¹⁰² for example:

(29)

למחרת היום באתי שוב בעצמי ושאלתי למר פרץ. מזה זה האם במשך לילה קפץ החשבון בלירה אחת? ענה לי כן, ככה אני רוצה. אמרתי לו תן לי את הקבלה בחזרה, אז ענה לי אני קרעתי אותה ומזה שאני רוצה יכול אני לעשות¹⁰³
(Jan. 10, 1929, TAA 4-4300)

(30)

ע"ז [על זה] ענני בקול "נשק לי באחור" ועוד בטויים גסים שאין לעלותם על נייר¹⁰⁴
(Nov. 23, 1928, TAA 4-ב331)

The presence of such elements does not necessarily testify to these examples' inauthenticity. Due to the period's tendency for more elevated language than is customary nowadays, such usages may not reflect the interference of the written language in the representation of speech, but could reflect actual usages. Yet, there is no real need to decide between these two interpretations, as such examples are in any case insignificant to the study of the evolution of

¹⁰⁰On an argument...Mr. Shaxnai said to Mr. Shalit, Go open your blood veins and commit suicide but not in this house.

¹⁰¹Mr. Fluksman...replied: I do not accept workers from the National Workers' Association, go to your association and demand that they will arrange you a job.

¹⁰²For a similar combination of elements in literature see R. Ben-Shahar, "התפתחות"; G. Shaked, "סגנונה של הסיפורת בשנות ה-40 וה-50: מן היד אל הפה—הסיכוי והתברותו" (*Signona shel hasiporet bishnot ha-40 ve-ha-50: min hayad el hape—hasikuy vehitbaduto*; A lost option: The creation of slang and the literary stylistic tradition), *Mexkarim Belashon* (Linguistic studies) 2-3 (1987): 479-484.

¹⁰³The following morning I came again myself and asked Mr. Peretz. What is it, did the account rise in one pound within a night? He replied to me: Yes, this is how I want it. I told him: Hand me back the receipt, so he replied to me: I tore it, and I can do whatever I want.

¹⁰⁴On this he replied loudly "Kiss my behind" and other rude expressions that paper would not endure.

spoken Hebrew. The main benefit for such research lies in those cases which manifestly reflect a spoken, living Hebrew, essentially different from what is attested in previous linguistic layers or in the period's written registers. While they may not truly quote the specific events they refer to, such instances of direct speech definitely reflect modes of expression the writers were used to hearing—or produced themselves—in real life.

8. SUMMARY

The instances of direct speech embedded in archival documents from the first decades of the twentieth century prove to be, despite their drawbacks, a valuable source of information on the formative years in the emergence of spoken Hebrew. Language use recorded in them has in many cases a natural quality, unparalleled by any other source available from that period.

Provided the limitations of this material are borne in mind, its careful analysis is bound to result in several important insights, regarding both the overall quality of the spoken language and some of its specific features. First, several of the most typical usages of spoken Hebrew are documented in this material, providing dated evidence for their existence in the language. The possibility to determine early dates in which certain usages already existed is invaluable for any discussion of the emergence processes of Modern Hebrew. Moreover, this material strikingly attests to the measure of vitality spoken Hebrew reached at a relatively early stage in its development. It proves that the emergence of a colloquial register did not follow the consolidation of Hebrew knowledge within the emergent speech community, but rather coincided with it. As early as the onset of the Mandate period, a colloquial register already existed in the language, alongside other spoken varieties. Not all speakers relied heavily on foreign usages which were subsequently uprooted from the language; not all speakers used a normative, elevated language, rooted in the Hebrew sources. Many speakers, as is evident from our material, already spoke a variety which developed into contemporary spoken Hebrew. For this kind of Hebrew these texts provide indispensable evidence.

Combined with data derived from other sources, the vital splinters of information retrievable from this material may enhance our understanding of the unprecedented process that enabled the transformation of Hebrew into a spoken, living language.