The Cost of Revival: the Role of Hebrew in Jewish Language Endangerment

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Submitted to the Faculty of the Department of Linguistics
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of the Arts.

Yale University
May 1, 2013

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ABSTRACT

In the nineteenth century, Hebrew had no native speakers; currently, it has nearly eight million. The growth of Hebrew from a "dead" language to the official language of Israel is often described as the most successful language revival project of all time. However, less well-known is the effect that the revival of Hebrew has had on other languages spoken in Israel, specifically those classified as Jewish languages. With one exception, all Jewish languages other than Hebrew have become endangered in the past century, and their speakers have in large part shifted to become Hebrew speakers.

In this essay, I use morphosyntactic, lexical, and population data to examine the status of three such languages in Israel: Karaim, Ladino, and Yiddish. I also outline the methods used in the Hebrew revival and how they affected the status of other Jewish languages in Israel, including what circumstances have prevented Yiddish from becoming endangered. By using historical and linguistic evidence to draw connections between the Hebrew revival and the endangerment of other Jewish languages, my essay calls into question the usefulness of the Hebrew revival as an inspirational model for other language revival projects.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank first and foremost my adviser, Claire Bowern of the Linguistics Department of Yale. Her guidance, encouragements, and corrections were absolutely invaluable over the course of this project. Without her input and investment, this essay would have been much more difficult in the making, had it even been completed at all. I am also grateful to Raffaella Zanuttini and Maria Piñango for their important help in the shaping of this project.

I also want to acknowledge the important influence of Joe Errington of Yale's Anthropology Department, in whose class Endangered Languages in Social Context I first became interested in the question of the Hebrew Revival, and who helped me find relevant literature for this project. I also owe a debt of gratitude to Larry Horn, whose classes in the Linguistics Department fostered my interest in sociolinguistics in general.

These acknowledgements would not be complete without mentioning my fellow linguistics majors, whose graciousness and good humor have made these last four years a labor of love. My senior year, in particular, has been greatly enhanced by the contributions, commiseration, and camaraderie of my fellow linguistics majors. Thank you for everything.

Last but not least, thank you to my friends and family, who have been unflagging in their support of my interest in the study of linguistics from its earliest days. This essay, and by extension, my undergraduate career, are dedicated to them.

1. **INTRODUCTION**

The national language of Israel is Hebrew, which has around 8 million speakers. This was not always the case, however; until the early 20th century, Hebrew was considered a "dead" language—that is, while it was still in use as a liturgical language it had no native speakers and was no one's first language (Hinton 2001c: 416). This revival was unique in terms of the degree of its success, and is held up as providing hope for future revival projects. Language revival expert Leanne Hinton exemplifies the general attitude towards the Hebrew revival when she says, "This revitalization of a language that had not been spoken in daily life for over 2,000 years is an inspirational model for others whose languages are no longer spoken." (Hinton 2001c: 416)

My essay examines what strategies made this revival possible. More importantly, however, it will explore the ripple effect that Hebrew's resurgence has had on other Jewish languages, and how the success of one has led to the downfall of many (Cooper 1981: 67). I also will outline the unique circumstances that allowed Hebrew to succeed where other languages have failed, and contrast them to the situations of endangered languages around the world. Hebrew has gone from being endangered to being the cause of endangerment; by examining how this transition occurred, I will argue against the characterization of the Hebrew revival as an "inspirational model" for other revival projects.

There is ample reason for linguists to desire just such an inspirational model. Language revival—especially revival that leads to a substantial increase in native speakers—is a pressing issue for anyone interested in language. A generation's worth of linguists have been preoccupied by the question of how to stop language loss, or at least stem the tide. Languages are becoming endangered and going extinct at faster and faster rates as increased globalization facilitates language contact. Some estimates put the half-life of the world's languages at less than a hundred

years (Krauss 1992: 5). Language endangerment can manifest in a variety of ways. Some languages are simply spoken by fewer and fewer people. Others are still used by many, but only in very specific genres, leading younger speakers to abandon them altogether. Still others might retain wide use, but long-term contact with a more dominant language leads to a loss of linguistic features and vocabulary over time (Janse 2003: xi-xii). Eventually, these impoverished languages will become less and less useful and give way to other, more robust languages.

Sometimes, when confronted with the prospect of their language becoming endangered, speech communities attempt to slow, stop, or even reverse the process. These attempts are known as language revitalization, language revival, or RLS for "reversing language shift" (Fishman 1991: 2). Many strategies are employed in RLS: educational programs, creation of new media, language standardization, and more (Hinton 2001b: 55-57). However, while some RLS projects have slowed or halted the progress of language endangerment, revivalists almost never succeed in reversing it (Hinton 2001c: 414). There are innumerable ways for an RLS project to go wrong: inadequate resources, state suppression, or simple lack of community interest can all come into play (Hinton 2001a: 5-6). Thus, while there has been and continues to be much work focused on finding strategies for successful RLS, there has been little contemplation of what the results of success would actually look like. That is the central question of this paper: how do the methods and results of the Hebrew revival illustrate the consequences of successful reversal of language shift, especially on other endangered languages and varieties?

Hebrew is one of the few examples available when examining successful RLS. Modern Hebrew is one of the official languages of Israel and has around 8 million speakers. This is a relatively recent development, however; until the early 20th century, Hebrew was considered a "dead" language—that is, while it was still in use as a liturgical language, it had no native

speakers and was no one's first language (Hinton 2001c: 416). Hebrew is often held up as the only example of a "dead" language being successfully revitalized (Kuzar 1999: 267-68). When revitalization efforts so frequently fail, it is unsurprising that a case of such apparent success would be frequently touted as motivational, or that other revival projects would be tempted to model their strategies on those that allowed Hebrew to succeed.

Less discussed, though, is the status of other Jewish languages, nearly all of which are now endangered or near extinction in Israel (Cooper 1981: 67). Hebrew revival relied on state policies and social norms that heavily stigmatized the use of any Jewish language that was not Hebrew; these are the same methods that are often by governments to suppress indigenous or minority languages (Fishman 2000: 216-19). Thus, the strategies of RLS that caused Hebrew's "miraculous" resurgence were also responsible for the loss of dozens of immigrant speaker communities, whose status dropped as Hebrew's rose.

How inspirational and useful is the story of the Hebrew revival for other RLS projects? To examine this question, I will first take an in-depth look at the history of the Hebrew revival, and what strategies and circumstances allowed it to be successful. I will also look closely at how three Jewish languages in Israel were affected by the Hebrew revival, including both the specifics of the languages' individual endangerments and what strategies their speakers have used or are using to attempt RLS themselves. These three languages—Karaim, Ladino, and Yiddish—illustrate different levels of survival, each of which will be examined in individual sections. They also illustrate the ways in which languages with different resources were affected, as Karaim was endangered at the time of revival, whereas Yiddish was the native language of most revivalists themselves. These sections will also be used to illustrate different aspects of language endangerment, including both linguistic shifts and population shifts. Comparing these

different projects may shed light on the source of Hebrew's success by pointing out its weaknesses; by seeing what allows Yiddish to survive where Karaim did not, it may be possible to pinpoint where the forces behind the Hebrew revival are most effective.

The implications and side effects of the sole successful language revival project are important to consider, because they could affect what it is that linguists consider true "success." Linguists are invested in RLS causes because we rely on linguistic diversity to provide our field with data—we would be impoverished indeed if we had to base our theories on only the twenty most widely-spoken languages (Hinton 2001a). However, as language endangerment becomes more and more widely viewed as a human rights issue, linguists become involved in RLS projects for less purely academic reasons, not least among them the belief that a world with fewer languages is worse off for it. However, as Margaret Speas (2008) points out, linguists are often more attuned to the academic issues of revitalization than the day-to-day realities and results of language revival:

> [Asking] a linguist to help you develop a language program is a bit like asking a mechanic to teach you how to drive, asking a geologies to help you build a stone wall or asking a gynecologist how to meet women. Most linguists are trained as cognitive scientists and are more skilled at discovering mechanics than driving. I do not mean to say that what linguists actually do is misguided or useless…It's just that learning to speak a language does not depend on these insights. (Speas 2009: 24)

As linguists work to aid RLS projects, it is important to take stock of what the actual results of successful RLS projects have been. If it turns out that saving one language from extinction means consigning four others to it, linguists must consider whether or not that changes our attitudes towards and methods for RLS. A first step towards this consideration is an examination of what the effects of the most "inspirational model" truly have been.

2.   TERMINOLOGY: Endangerment, Death, and Revival

Before delving into the long history of Hebrew, it is important to clarify the way I will be

defining language endangerment and the associated phenomena. Many of the words used to

describe Hebrew's resurgence—revival, rebirth, resuscitation—rely on the organic metaphor.

That is, there is a reference to the idea of a language as dead, alive, or dying. However, it is

important to keep in mind that the delineations between a language that is "dying" and one that is

"dead" are more nebulous than the organic metaphor would indicate. Does a language die when

its last native speakers die? What about when native speakers begin having children who are not

native speakers? What if a language is still spoken but has been rendered almost unrecognizable

due to language contact? For the purposes of this paper, I will use Sarah Thomason's definition

of a dead language:

> We can give a definition that will be generally useful, but it won't cover all the
> possibilities. Here it is: a language dies when it ceases to be used for any purposes of
> regular spoken communication within a speech community. Old English and Middle
> English are both dead, because no one has spoken them for centuries. Latin died when it
> stopped being the regular language of any speech community (because it turned into the
> Romance languages), although it survived as a spoken lingua franca among educated
> people for a long time afterward…[however] no one studies Latin as a case of language
> death; the cases people study are those in which a once viable language loses ground to a
> dominant language until finally it is no longer a fully functional living language.
> (Thomason 2001: 224-25)

One consequence of this definition is that a language that still has, for example, one or two

isolated native speakers who do not have occasion or opportunity to use it would be classified as

"dead," a classification whose metaphorical finality would be disagreed with by those such as

Bernard C. Perley, author of "Zombie Linguistics: Experts, Endangered Languages, and the

Curse of Undead Voices." However, Perley himself criticizes documentarian views of language

that ignore its importance "as the conduit and catalyst for social relationships," and as

Thomason's definition recognizes the importance of interpersonal communication to a language's vitality, I will continue to use it (Perley 2012: 134). Moreover, given the context of the subject of the Hebrew revival, the description of languages as "dead" does not necessarily preclude resuscitation.

Based on Thomason's definition of language death, I will define as endangered a language that is in immanent danger of death. This danger could be indicated either through population loss, with the language in question being transmitted to younger generations at increasingly lower rates, or through attrition, which will be defined more fully in the section on Ladino in Israel.

Language revival, also known as "resuscitation" or RLS, is also difficult to define completely, as different speech communities approach the problem differently. Rob Amery's 2001 paper "Language Planning and Language Revival" provides this relatively complete definition:

> The term 'language revival' is used here as a cover term for efforts to reintroduce a language to a younger generation of speakers (revitalization); efforts to reinvigorate and extend a significant body of language remaining in the community, but in the absence of fluent speakers (renewal); and efforts to relearn a language on the basis of historical records (reclamation). (Amery 2001: 141)

The Hebrew revival encompassed all three of these definitions. Other language revival efforts might only involve one; for example, the community dedicated to the Ladino revival primarily works toward goals described by the second definition, which Amery also describes as "renewal." Yiddish, on the other hand, survives primarily through "revitalization" efforts.

Because I spend significant amount of time referring to different revival efforts as varyingly successful, it is important that I clarify what I define as success. The success of the Hebrew is clear, in that it has experienced both a rise in the volume of native speakers, a renewal

of modern vocabulary, and official governmental recognition. However, I also will discuss the successful "survival" of Yiddish, which I define as its ability to resist both linguistic interference from Hebrew and significant population loss. Ladino is less "successful" because, while there have been revival efforts, they have not lead to an increase in speakers or the domains in which Ladino may be usefully spoken. Moreover, as I will discuss later, Ladino also exhibits significant linguistic interference from Hebrew. While Yiddish's success is different from and less dramatic than Hebrew's, it is still worth noting, and will be extensively discussed in its own section. Hebrew's success is the success of a revival; Yiddish's success is the successful resistance to that revival.

3.   THE HEBREW REVIVAL

The restoration of Hebrew as a colloquial language has been called a "miracle," a "success story," and a "triumph." It is held up as a one-of-a-kind example of how to bring back a "dead language," and is cited as a role model for other endangered languages looking to make a comeback (Hinton 2001c: 416). However, before modeling other RLS projects on the Hebrew revival, it is important to objectively examine the unique circumstances that were necessary to Hebrew's success, as well as the way those circumstances pattern with strategies of linguistic oppression often used by the same dominant languages which RLS projects are designed to resist.

The resuscitation of Hebrew cannot be understood without first considering the historical context of the language; this context extends back thousands of years. From the 10th century BCE to the 2nd century CE, Hebrew—specifically the Talmudic dialect of Mishnaic Hebrew— was the language of the Jewish people (Rosén 1995: 108). As the Jewish Diaspora scattered

communities throughout Asia, Africa, and Europe, Hebrew became endangered as a first language; Jews became native speakers of either the local language or different Jewish languages. In this respect, the revival of Hebrew as a vernacular truly is unique; it is the only known example of a language with no native speakers becoming the first language of millions of people (Grenoble & Whaley 2006: 63).

However, to say that Hebrew was "dead" or "extinct" after the 2nd century CE would be misleading. As the language of Jewish religious texts and ceremonies, Hebrew had a strong foothold in the Jewish lifestyle, and was regularly learned as a second language, especially by rabbinical students (Grenoble & Whaley 2006: 64). Rites of adulthood, such as the modern bar and bat mitzvahs, have long involved demonstrating the ability to read from the Torah, which requires at least a rudimentary understanding of Hebrew, and many Jewish children are required to attend Hebrew school or Yeshiva before undergoing those rites of passage (Fellman 1981: 32). The ability to read and speak Hebrew also often had important social implications, and was an important component in definitions of Hebrew masculinity for certain European Jewish communities well into the seventeenth century (Boyarin 1997: 151). In the nineteenth century, around three-quarters of Jewish men were at least able to understand the Hebrew Bible (Fellman 1981: 32) While it is true that Hebrew had no native speakers, it was still an important part of Jewish life, and still regularly useful in a way that would disqualify it from Thomason's definition of "death."

This prominent liturgical status provided Hebrew with two advantages. First, it allowed for a preservation of Hebrew phonology, albeit an imperfect one (Wexler 1987: 203). The pronunciation of liturgical Hebrew certainly varied between different speech communities, as a single rabbi might be the sole source of instruction for entire communities. Ashkenazi and

Sephardi communities have different pronunciation systems for liturgical Hebrew, each influenced phonologically by non-Jewish languages surrounding them. For example, Sephardi Hebrew pronounces /d/ and /t/ as dentals, which is similar to Spanish phonology. However, because children were required to be able to read Hebrew in order to reach adulthood through bar or bat mitzvahs, the liturgical importance of Hebrew meant that certain phonemes which may not have been present in the dominant language were not lost within the Jewish community. Fricatives such as /v/, / ð/, and /ɣ/ survived within the Sephardi pronunciation of liturgical Hebrew, despite not being present within the phonological system of Castilian Spanish (Wexler 1987: 212-13).

Secondly, because of the large religious literature, much Hebrew vocabulary survived (Grenoble & Whaley 2006: 64). The creation of a modern Hebrew literary canon was facilitated by the large corpus of extant Hebrew writing available. While not all of this vocabulary was necessarily available to those who were only familiar with Hebrew through religious rituals, this corpus was invaluable to those academics who took on the project of the reclamation of Hebrew as a literary language. Significant invention of new vocabulary was still necessary, but this process was made easier by the availability of other lexical items on which to model new coinages. Just as phonology was preserved through the importance of vocalization to rituals of Judaism, morphology was preserved through literature.

Hebrew never truly vanished from use in the way that is implied by words like "extinct" or "dead." It existed in reservoirs all over the world, all of which had profound cultural motivations to preserve it. However, rather than remaining a liturgical and literary language in a state of stasis, Hebrew has still done something unprecedented, even if its revival is sometimes described in hyperbolic terms. To go from a language with a very limited domain and no native

speakers to the national language of a developed nation and the native language of 8 million people is exceptional, and it cannot only be explained by the reservoirs that kept Hebrew from disappearing during the medieval period. If a strong literature and religious tradition were all that was necessary to allow such a revival, one could imagine that Latin might make a similar resurgence. However, Hebrew, unlike Latin, had a formidable and unique weapon in its arsenal: the Zionist movement.

Beginning in the late nineteenth century, the Zionist movement was organized around the goal of creating a Jewish state in the land of Palestine, which was historically the Jewish homeland prior to the Diaspora (Fellman 1981: 27). Named after Zion, a large hill in Jerusalem which is used metaphorically to refer to the idea of a Jewish promised land, Zionism is based on the belief that God promised the land of Israel to the Jewish people and that they have a right to reclaim their divine inheritance. Zionism was primarily led and organized by Ashkenazi Jews of Europe, where rising anti-Semitism in the nineteenth century led to increasingly bloody government-approved pogroms (Fellman 1981: 32).

The creation of a Jewish state seemed an inviting way to escape the oppression that Jews faced around the world, and Zionism grew in popularity. With Zionism came a new surge of interest in Hebrew. While scholars in Europe had been attempting to create a modern Hebrew literature since the earlier half of the century, the settlers who moved to Palestine began to see the potential for a new use of the language as a spoken vernacular (Hofman 1981). The case for a unified Jewish state would be all the stronger if the residents spoke a unified language; all the better if that language was unique to Judaism. As Yiddish scholar Max Weinreich said, "A language is a dialect with an army and a navy." In this case, Hebrew revivalists looked to make that relationship work in the other direction (Hofman 1981).

Zionists were also connected to Hebrew for more personal reasons, some of which were grounded in more recent history. Hebrew was not the only language spoken by many Jews; the vast majority of Ashkenazi Jews spoke Yiddish as their first language. However, despite being Ashkenazi and Yiddish-speaking themselves, many leaders of the Zionist movement rejected the idea of promoting Yiddish as the language of a hypothetical Jewish state. Yiddish was seen as the language of the Diaspora (Pilowski 1981). It was too closely connected to Germanic and Slavic languages, languages that belonged to the governments that Zionists were looking to escape. Yiddish may have been a Jewish language, but it was seen as a language created out of oppression; it was the language of Judaism in exile. The political impetus that drove Zionism rendered Yiddish unacceptable; Hebrew, a language from the days before the European oppression of the Jews, seemed the perfect choice (Fellman 1981: 29). This anti-Yiddish sentiment would follow the Zionist movement into Israel, and its ramifications will be discussed in more detail in the second half of this paper.

The premier Hebrew revivalist in Palestine, and the one now remembered as the father of modern Hebrew, was Eliezer Ben Yehuda. Ben Yehuda, a university-educated historian and fluent Hebrew speaker, emigrated to Jerusalem in 1881 and began work on increasing the Hebrew lexicon (Fellman 1973: 27). While the extensive Hebrew literature had prevented some lexical attrition, there were still significant lexical gaps, as few new Hebrew words had been created over the centuries. As he worked on his new dictionary, Ben Yehuda also began the first efforts to create a Hebrew-speaking community. He reached out to other Jewish families that had settled in the Jerusalem area and attempted to convince them to become entirely Hebrew-speaking in the home. Ben Yehuda himself committed his family to his ideals; his son Itamar Ben-Avi was the first child to be raised with Hebrew as his first language in a thousand years.

However, in twenty years of work, Ben Yehuda was able to convince only ten other families to become Hebrew-only homes (Fellman 1973: 39).

The goals of Zionist philosophy alone were not enough to convince people to alter their everyday lives. Like many endangered languages, Hebrew was seen as "useless" by parents of children born in Palestine (Hofman 1981: 55). While there were Jewish elementary schools that conducted classes in Hebrew, there were no such high schools; parents who wanted their children to become educated saw no profit in raising them to speak a language that would outlive its usefulness within ten years. Moreover, raising a child to speak Hebrew involved major investment, even for Hebrew-speaking parents, and serious consequences for the child. Ben Yehuda's son was exposed exclusively to Hebrew for years in order to prevent him from acquiring any other language; consequently, he could not form friendships with other children, as no other child alive spoke Hebrew fluently (Fellman 1973: 38). A friend of the family reportedly begged Ben Yehuda's wife to speak to her son in "anything but Hebrew," fearful that he would be permanently damaged by his father's work (Fellman 1973: 39). Even if a couple agreed Ben Yehuda on the importance of Hebrew to the creation of a Jewish state, the commitment required to raise native speakers of Hebrew was often too demanding.

Ben Yehuda's efforts, while intense, did not lead to the results he had hoped for. His attempts to have Hebrew replace Yiddish as the language of the domestic sphere made little in-roads in a community that saw no need to up-end their lives and the lives of their children (Fellman 1973: 44). A strategy of having Hebrew take over the position of "low language" in the diglossia proved ineffective. This obstacle is unsurprising to anyone familiar with the typical problems of reviving an endangered language; revival projects frequently stall at this stage, with a population of adult enthusiasts who are unable to turn their enthusiasm into a new generation of

speakers. What makes the Hebrew revival unique is that it was able to subvert this pattern by abandoning the typical bottom-up technique of attempting to gain a foothold in the domestic sphere first.

As more and more Jews immigrated to Palestine, the community became more and more politicized, and less and less organized around small groups of families. Zionist activists who began moving to Palestine in the twentieth century did so not merely to create Jewish communities in Palestine, but to begin real work towards Jewish governance. Under the influence of the increasing influx of Zionist leaders, public meetings of the Jewish community began to be conducted entirely in Hebrew (Omoniyi 2006). In 1909, the Jewish city of Tel Aviv was founded. While there were still few native Hebrew speakers, the increased politicization of the Jewish population lead to the administration of Tel Aviv being done entirely in Hebrew, and Hebrew grew more and more prominent in public life. The high schools created in Tel Aviv were Hebrew-speaking, eliminating some of the obstacles to raising Hebrew-speaking children. Soon afterwards, the Hebrew Language Council was founded to begin codifying grammatical rules and approving new vocabulary. Ben Yehuda was one of the Council's first members; while approximately one-quarter of the new words in his lexicon did not end up part of mainstream Hebrew vocabulary, his extensive work was still the Council's primary source (Fellman 1973: 70). Ben Yehuda created neologisms for words like *pink*, *cancer*, *elevator*, *microbe*, *umbrella*, *flirt*, and even the Hebrew word for *dictionary*, relying primarily on Biblical sources and attempting to avoid Germanic influence (Fellman 1973: 67-8).

Rather than trying to replace Yiddish in the home, proponents of Hebrew were now having it take the place of the secular languages that had been dominant in the countries from which they had emigrated. By supplanting the former languages of dominance as the language of

the public sphere, Hebrew had rapidly shifted from being a useless language to being the language of status. Instead of working bottom-up by creating a new generation of native speakers, Hebrew revivalists would work top-down by making other languages less desirable.

More than implicit social pressure led to the preeminence of Hebrew. In the early years of Tel Aviv, placards were placed in the streets that said *Yehudi - Daber Ivrit!* meaning *Jew - Speak Hebrew!* Itamar Ben-Avi, the son of Ben Yehuda and the first modern native Hebrew speaker, was one of the faces of the campaign (Amara 2006). Jews who spoke other languages in public often received no response; if they did, it was usually criticism, uttered in Hebrew (Zuckerman 2006: 248). Organizations like the Legion of Defenders of the Language were founded; the rhetoric is telling. Hebrew was no longer being promoted but defended; it was no longer a language but *the* language.

Hebrew's rise to pre-eminence involves a fascinating reversal, in which it changed from language of the oppressed to a language of oppression. Revivalists were able to draw on a number of attitudes about language to aid their cause; in fact, they were able to draw on the exact same attitudes that often lead to language endangerment. As both the language of religion and, with time, the state, it had a double dose of authority to increase its prestige (Mufwene 2003: 330). However, the status of Jews as an oppressed minority in a global context also allowed revivalists to call upon the same impulses of identity and unity in the face of marginalization that drive the supporters of endangered languages (Hofman 1981). Despite being the language of the authorities, Hebrew also had the same political connotations as a language without government backing. It was at one time the language that needed to be spoken and the language that needed speakers, a powerful combination. However, organizations like the Legion of Defenders of the Language still felt it was threatened.

When one is defending something, one strikes out at those one perceives as the attackers; the targets of the "defenders" of Hebrew were often other Jewish languages, the effects upon which will be discussed in the next section. Before long, Hebrew's preeminence was codified into law. In 1948, the Israeli Declaration of Independence was signed. Written in Hebrew, the Declaration established Hebrew as a national language of the new state; Arabic and English were also included (Fellman 1981: 33). Other languages, however, were not given the same legitimacy. Arabic and English were allowable, but no other Jewish language was given the same status as Hebrew. This hierarchy would continue to play out in the policies of the new Israeli government, and would have serious consequences for the languages in question.

It cannot be denied that Hebrew's resurgence is truly impressive. However, examining the language's path from "extinct" to completely revived shows that the path of Hebrew was not always the typical story of an endangered language resisting. To further explore both how the Hebrew revival was unique and how Hebrew became a dominant language, the other Jewish languages with which it shared space prove a useful comparison.

4.   JEWISH LANGUAGES IN ISRAEL

All other languages besides Hebrew, English, and Arabic did not disappear from Israel following the 1948 Declaration. Israel is still home to many other languages besides Hebrew; moreover, Israel is still home to many other Jewish languages besides Hebrew. Before continuing, it is important to define what constitutes a Jewish language.

A precise and accurate definition is difficult to come by. Some have suggested that a Jewish language is any language written in a Hebrew script; however this excludes languages that have a Romanized script, a script altered from Hebrew, or no written form at all. Claiming

that a Jewish language must only be spoken by Jews would eliminate Hebrew itself, as plenty of

non-Jewish Israelis speak Hebrew (Rosén 1995). Limiting Jewish languages to those that are

completely separate and delineated from non-Jewish languages raises difficult questions about

where to draw the line between a dialect and a language, and whether a dialect spoken strictly

within a Jewish community could qualify. Fishman (1985) has a complex and broad definition:

> I define as 'Jewish' any language that is phonologically, morpho-syntactically, lexico-semantically or orthographically different from that of non-Jewish sociocultural networks and that has some demonstrably unique function in the role-repertoire of a Jewish sociocultural network, which function is not normatively present in the role-repertoire of non-Jews and/or is not normatively discharged via varieties identical with those utilized by non-Jews. (Fishman 1985: 4)

To paraphrase, Fishman (1985) defines a Jewish language as a language with a particular and

unique importance to the Jewish community which is also different from any non-Jewish

counterparts on the level of linguistic features, though precisely which features might vary. A

Jewish language might be spoken by non-Jews, but it must be done so in different domains

and/or in a way that is linguistically distinct from the Jewish variety.

There are many Jewish languages other than Hebrew (hereafter referred to as JLOTHs) in

Israel. A brief and non-exhaustive list could include Yiddish, Judeo-Georgian, Ladino, Judeo-

Arabic, Qwara, Judeo-Tigrinya, Judeo-Marathi, Malayalam, and Bukhori (Benor 2008: 1063).

These languages come from different parts of the world, and have varying sizes of speaker

population both inside and outside Israel. However, aside from Yiddish, all are endangered in

Israel, and the average age of a native speaker is around 70 (Fishman 2000: 217). Many have

connections either to small sects of Judaism, such as Karaim and Karaite Judaism, or ethnic

minorities in Israel, such as Judeo-Tigrinya and Ethiopian Jews.

JLOTHs have declined in Israel for many reasons. One of the values held dearly by the

Zionist movement was that Israel should become a true "melting pot" (Kheimets & Epstein

2001: 126). While Jews share a common religion, there still is great cultural variation. The Ashkenazi from Europe were the largest and most culturally influential group, but they were not alone. Sephardic Jews from the Iberian Peninsula and Mizrahi from the Middle East and Northern Africa also immigrated to Israel in large numbers, bringing with them their own cultures, traditions, and languages. However, these differences were seen as a threat to a cohesive Israeli identity, and thus a threat to the legitimacy of the Israeli state (Hofman 1981).

In order to collapse the various Jewish identities into a single category of "Israeli," the new Israeli government created policies to prevent attachment to the identities created by the Diaspora. Immigrants were required to take a Hebrew name and learn the Hebrew language upon moving to Israel (Kheimets & Epstein 2001: 127). The only languages available for study in schools were Hebrew, English, Arabic, and French; this was a sharp shift from only a few decades earlier, when no Jewish secondary schools conducted in Hebrew even existed (Fellman 1973: 39). Publications and entertainment in languages other than Hebrew, English, and Arabic were outlawed. Immigrants from similar areas were settled in different parts of the country to prevent communities of shared Diasporic cultures from forming. This accelerated the process of JLOTH endangerment, as the children of immigrants grew up in Hebrew-speaking peer groups, with little access to the languages of their parents outside the home (Bekerman & Shadi 2003: 478). The situation of Itamar Ben Avi was effectively reversed; while children's parents might still speak a JLOTH, the primary language they would encounter outside the home would be Hebrew.

These "melting pot" strategies affected different JLOTHs to different degrees, but they left none untouched. In the following subsections, I will examine three different JLOTHs: Karaim, Ladino, and Yiddish. Each is experiencing a different level of endangerment within

Israel, and thus are useful examples for examining the various ways in which language endangerment can manifest. Karaim and Ladino provide different kinds of examples of linguistic interference and attrition; Yiddish, on the other hand, is interesting primarily from the point of view of population effects. All illustrate ways in which the Hebrew revival has not only contributed to language endangerment and shift, but in fact relied on it.

4.1. Karaim

When looking for a straightforward example of an endangered Jewish language, one could do little better than the example of Karaim, a Turkic language with Hebrew influences spoken in Lithuania and Ukraine. Karaim is the language of the Karaite sect of Judaism: a sect defined by its rejection of the Talmud. Karaim developed out of Crimean Tatar after the Karaite sect migrated to Crimea from Mesopotamia in the eighth and ninth centuries (Meyers 1999). The Karaite populations, and thus the Karaim language, moved from Crimea to Lithuania in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, leading to its current distribution.[1] An eastern dialect of Karaim was once spoken in Crimea, but it is now completely extinct, with no native speakers (Csató 2001: 271). There is no documentation of any current Karaim-speaking populations in the Middle East, including Israel.

Though it has now disappeared, Karaim was previously spoken in Israel during the twentieth century. In fact, there are still 30,000 followers of the Karaite sect living and practicing within Israel (Meyers 1999). However, there are no longer any native speakers of Karaim within Israel, and those with any knowledge of the language at all know it through its liturgical uses.

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[1] The origins of the Karaite populations in Crimea is a subject of controversy, with various theories claiming they arrived there from the Byzantine Empire, Assyria, or the lands of the nomadic Khazars.

Like most JLOTHs spoken by Jews living in Eastern Europe, speakers of Karaim migrated to Israel both as part of the Zionist movement and as a reaction against increasing anti-Semitism in the years prior World War II. However, Karaim speakers were already an oppressed minority within Lithuania and Ukraine, and within the Jewish populations of those regions as the followers of a marginal sect of Judaism (Csató 2001: 271). The "melting-pot" immigration and education policies of the Zionist movement, and later of the Israeli government, succeeded in scattering these small communities within Israel. Karaim is endangered in Eastern Europe, but there is an active movement to prevent its death, including a summer school for children conducted in Karaim (Csató & Nathan 2007: 223). In Israel, on the other hand, not only is there no longer speaker community of Karaim, but there is also no revival movement, and Karaim is not currently studied in any Israeli university (Fishman 2001: 220). Karaim is an example of the worst-case scenario of a JLOTH within Israel.

That Israel was and is a hostile environment for Karaim becomes clear when one examines the situation of Karaim within other nations. Karaim is endangered everywhere; however, while it no longer has any native speakers at all in Israel, there are still small speaker populations extant elsewhere. According to E.A. Csató's survey in 2001, the western dialect of Karaim is spoken in two places: Trakai, Lithuania and Galicia, Ukraine. While there are two hundred Karaites in Trakai, only about forty of them speak Karaim. The endangerment is further advanced in Ukraine than in Lithuania, where there are by the most recent counts only six remaining Karaim speakers (Csató 2001: 271). In both countries, the speakers comprise the eldest generation, with younger Karaites opting to speak only the dominant local languages. These ratios of Karaim speakers to total Karaites are very small, and provide examples of the typical demographics of an endangered language on its way to complete extinction. However,

the endangerment of Karaim in both Lithuania and Ukraine is less severe than the situation in Israel, where 30,000 Karaites yield no Karaim speakers at all (Meyers 1999).

The situation of Karaim in Israel provides minimal useful data as to the linguistic effect of Hebrew on endangered JLOTHs, as there are no speakers to gather data from. However, the status of Karaim in Europe can provide a useful illustration of the ways in which an endangered language might be interfered with by a dominant language. Endangerment is not just visible in the number of people who speak a language; it also manifests in the way that the language is spoken. The way in which speakers of Karaim exhibit linguistic interference is an example of the effects of endangerment, and understanding the situation of Karaim and its dominant languages can illuminate the analogous relationship between other JLOTHs and Hebrew.

Karaim has always been the language of a minority group, and thus a minority language. Karaim has been dominated by Arabic, Turkish, and various Slavic languages during its history (Gil 2003: 99). Karaim has survived as a minority language for several centuries, but has never spread outside its isolated ethnic community. During the twentieth century, Karaim speakers have not been monolingual. The Karaim-speaking community is too small for knowledge of a dominant language not to be necessary; moreover, there is a tradition of linguistic exogamy among Lithuanian, and those who do speak Karaim typically marry those who do not (Csató 2001). Thus, Karaim speakers often rely on use of a dominant language—Polish, Lithuanian, Ukrainian, or Russian—in order to communicate with members of their own families; on the other hand, it is possible that linguistic exogamy introduced knowledge of Karaim to more speakers than might have been exposed to it otherwise. Whether or not exogamy was helpful or harmful, by the mid to late twentieth century Karaim ceased to be passed down as a first language, and the remaining native speakers are within the elderly population.

There is minimal literature written in Karaim, and spoken Karaim is limited to conversations in the home. The one area in which Karaim still plays a major role is religion, as Karaite ceremonies are still conducted in Karaim and Hebrew, not local dominant languages (Csató 2001). Karaim has also waned in its religious importance, however; when a ceremony calls for a prayer to be read from the Karaim prayer book, non-Karaim speakers will simply place the book on the table "for God to read" (Csató 2002). This stands in stark contrast to Hebrew's liturgical preservation. Karaim's limited usage has lead to an impoverished vocabulary and significant linguistic interference, and even those few fluent Karaim speakers who do exist must use the lexical items of the surrounding languages to fill Karaim's lexical gaps.

Karaim provides examples of a concept important to understand when discussing language endangerment: linguistic attrition and interference. Linguistic attrition[2]—that is, linguistic evidence of a language becoming less robust in the face of a more dominant one—can take many forms. Extensive borrowing frequently occurs, though borrowing alone is not sufficient evidence for attrition. Other possible signs can be a general loss of vocabulary; a loss of linguistic rules, or an incorrect application of those rules; or a loss of linguistic features that do not exist in the more dominant language (Thomason 2001: 12). Forms of linguistic attrition that directly involve the influence of a dominant language on a subordinate one can also be referred to as linguistic interference.

Karaim exhibits interesting forms of interference and attrition, one of which Csató refers to as "code-copying" (Csató 2001: 272). Much as Hebrew ceased to develop new vocabulary during the medieval period, Karaim has not created new terms for modern technologies and

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[2] The term "linguistic attrition" is also sometimes used to refer to the loss of fluency in a language by an individual native speaker; however, this paper will use it exclusively to refer to changes exhibited across entire speaker populations.

exhibits severe lexical impoverishment. Instead of producing new words of Karaim, speakers use non-Karaim lexical items from dominant languages, usually Slavic in origin, and adapt them to Karaim phonology. However, this is distinct from the common practice of lexical borrowing in that native speakers of Karaim do not consider these words part of the Karaim language, and will use lexical items from different languages depending on what non-Karaim languages their conversational partner speaks.

For example, there are no words in Karaim for *to call* or *ambulance*, so those words must be code-copied from another dominant language (Csató 2001: 272-273).

(1) Vïzvat' et't'im   skoranï   k'el'm'it'
     call(RUSS) DI-PAST.1SG   ambulance(RUSS):ACC   come:NEG:A-NONPAST
     'I called the ambulance; it doesn't come."

(1) shows how a Karaim speaker might express themselves when talking to another Karaim speaker who they know has knowledge of Russian. However, if the same speaker were to address another Karaim speaker who was unfamiliar with Russian but spoke Polish, the Russian word *skora* 'ambulance' might instead be replaced by the Polish *ambulans*. Either way, the Karaim accusative suffix *–nï* would be applied to the noun.

Csató calls this practice as "code-copying," a term created by Johanson in 1993 to describe the practice of using elements from one code while speaking in another within the context of a particular speech situation. That is, a Karaim speaker who also speaks both Polish and Russian might code-copy Polish lexical items when speaking to one person, and Russian items when speaking to another. Code-copying is used when a language has been impoverished and must rely on the resources of other, more robust languages to express certain ideas or grammatical constructions (Johanson 1993: 198).

This process is distinct from normal linguistic borrowing, in which another language's lexical item is incorporated into another lexicon permanently. Code-copying should also not be confused with code-switching, a common phenomenon amongst multi-lingual speakers that does not necessarily indicate linguistic attrition; in code-switching, a speaker switches entirely from one code to another mid-sentence. Code-switching does not necessarily indicate disfluency or attrition, and is often exhibited by fluent bilingual speakers of two non-endangered languages (Poplack 2000). For example, the instance of code-switching in (2) comes from a fluent bilingual speaker of English and Spanish in New York City (Poplack 2000: 594):

(2)   'SI TU ERES PUERTORRIQUENO (*if you're Puerto Rican*), your father's a Puerto Rican, you should at least DE VEZ EN CUANDO (*sometimes*), you know, HABLAR ESPANOL (*speak Spanish*)'.

The speaker in (2) alternates between Spanish and English lexical items and syntax fluidly, and could presumably express the ideas in English that are presented here in Spanish, and vice-versa. Code-copying, on the other hand, is used by Karaim speakers to temporarily fill in gaps that would be permanently filled in a more robust language.

When incorporating Slavic lexical items through code-copying, a Karaim speaker will still use Karaim morpho-syntax, such as the suffix *–ni* used in (1). Rather than illustrating a productive change in Karaim, this type of code-copying illustrates the lack of a change that might have occurred in a robust language. Karaim is not evolving. Instead of either developing a Karaim word for something like *ambulance* or permanently borrowing the item from another language, Karaim allows the lacuna to persist, and fills in the hole with whatever foreign term is most appropriate for the shared knowledge of those present. Johanson calls these situationally-dependent usages "momentary copies," as they exist in and are defined by particular moments in time before being discarded.

The influence of nearby Slavic languages shows morphosyntactically as well. Karaim once exhibited subject-object-verb word order, the most common word order for Turkic languages. However, Karaim now shows subject-verb-object word order, the word order most common in Slavic languages. The languages with which Karaim has contact are all either SVO or exhibit free variation, and Karaim has shifted away from its Turkic roots towards the structures of the more dominant languages surrounding it (Csató 2001: 279).

Syntactic change through language contact is not uncommon, and on its own is not necessarily indicative of linguistic attrition. Of more concern are examples of Slavic syntactic constructions being imitated by Karaim speakers despite the existence of productive Turkic constructions which serve the same function. In Turkic languages there are several different constructions and compounds that are used to represent nominal categories, two of which are illustrated below (data and glosses from Csató 2002: 318).

(3) kadin   doktor
     N   N
     woman   doctor
     'female doctor'
(4) kadin   doktor-u
     N   N + POSS[3]
     woman   doctor-POSS
     'gynaecologist'

However, in Karaim, the construction in (4) is no longer used, and instead has been replaced by a Slavic construction. (5) shows the new construction, and (6) the equivalent in Polish, one of the Slavic languages which dominates Karaim. (7) shows the Turkic construction as it was in Karaim before it was replaced (Csató 2002: 320).

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[3] The suffix –*u* is glossed here as being a possessive, as based on Csató (2002). However, it is possible that it is instead the Turkic izafet construction. Either way, the construction in (4) represents a departure and an adoption of a new Slavic construction.

(5) sawuxturuwču   t'isʕl'ɑ̌r'n'in'
    N   N+PL+GEN
    doctor   tooth-PL-GEN
    'dentist'

(6) lekarz   chorób   dziecięcych
    N   N+PL+GEN   N+PL+GEN
    doctor   illness-PL-GEN child-PL-GEN
    'pediatrician'

(7) t'isʕl'ɑ̌r   sawuxturuwčunï
    N   N+POSS
    tooth   doctor-POSS
    'dentist'

In Turkic languages like Karaim, a construction like 'doctor of women' is usually represented by adding a possessive marker to the noun for 'doctor.' However, Karaim, like Slavic, instead represents such a construction by adding plural and genitive markers to whatever it is that the doctor in question is a doctor of: in this case, teeth (Csató 2002: 318).

This is a typical example of a common occurrence among endangered languages that experience linguistic interference at the hands of a more dominant language. Rather than using the Turkic formation in (4), which is not forbidden by any strictures of Karaim morphology or syntax, Karaim speakers have begun to opt for the structure of a dominant local language, and fit their words and suffixes to a Slavic pattern. This loss of morphosyntactic structure frequently occurs when a minority language begins to lose ground. For example, one could examine the erosion of the case system of the endangered variety of Texas German under the influence of English, a language largely devoid of case morphology. While Texas German originally had nominative, accusative, dative, and genitive cases—like the German spoken in Germany—Texas German is losing its cases, first with accusative (8a) taking over genitive roles (8b) and creating a simple binary distinction between nominative and non-nominative (Boas 2003: 395).

(8)　a. wegen　den Tisch
　　　because the　table:ACC
　　　'because of the table'

　　　b. wegen　des Tisches
　　　because the　table:GEN
　　　'because of the table'

In some extreme cases, all case distinction is lost, with nominative morphology applying

everywhere, as illustrated in (9) where a sentence that would normally take accusative case (9a)

is given nominative case instead (9b) (Boas 2003: 395).

(9)　a. nach den ersten Krieg
　　　after the　first　war:ACC
　　　'after the first war'

　　　b. nach der erste Krieg
　　　after the first　war:NOM
　　　'after the first war'

This pattern, in which the morphosyntax and lexical items of an endangered variety are replaced

by the patterns exhibited by the more dominant language, will be similarly illustrated by the

linguistic interference shown by the modern state of Ladino in Israel.　In the next section, I will

examine both the history of Ladino within Israel and its current linguistic status, both of which

can be analogized to the endangerment of Karaim by the Slavic languages that surround it.

4.2. Ladino

　　　By examining Karaim, we were able to see how a Jewish language could disappear from

Israel entirely. Karaim is a dramatic case, and one that is useful illustration of the end results of

language endangerment, but it is not representative of all JLOTHs. The majority of JLOTHs

have not disappeared entirely from Israel; with one notable exception, however, they have all

become endangered, and their speaker populations have aged (Fishman 1981: 217). An example of just such a JLOTH—one that is on the decline but has not yet disappeared—is Ladino.

Ladino is a Romance language derived from Castilian Spanish with Hebrew and Aramaic influences. It is also known as Judezmo, Judaeo-Spanish, and Espanyol, depending on where it is spoken. However, in Israel it is known primarily as Ladino, and thus will be referred to as such in this paper. Ladino has fewer than 100,000 speakers worldwide, with around 70,000 currently living in Israel (*Ethnologue*). Speakers of Ladino far outnumber speakers of Karaim; however, Ladino is still classified as endangered, largely because most speakers are elderly and are no longer passing the language down to their descendents. In 1977, there were over 300,000 speakers of Ladino in Israel (*Ethnologue*). If the rate of decline continues at this pace, Ladino could disappear from Israel within one or two generations. Already, there are no monolingual speakers of Ladino at all in Israel, despite the fact that there are about 1.4 million Sephardi Jews in Israel. Knowledge of another language, most likely Hebrew, is necessary to function in secular Israeli society. The parallels between Ladino's situation in Israel and Karaim's situation in Eastern Europe are easy to draw.

While Karaim was and is spoken primarily by Ashkenazi Jews in Eastern Europe, Ladino is a language of the Sephardi Jews, a separate group that originated in the Iberian Peninsula and whose language is based on the Spanish spoken there. When Jews were expelled from Spain in 1492, the Sephardi scattered through North Africa, the Middle East, and the Ottoman Empire. To this day, the country with the second-highest number of Ladino speakers is Turkey, not Spain (Bunis 1981: 50).

This secondary diaspora had two major consequences for the future of Ladino in what would become Israel. First of all, because many Ladino-speaking Sephardi Jews migrated to the

Middle East, Ladino was the major Jewish language in Palestine from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries (Bunis 1981: 61). Hebrew had not yet been revived as more than a liturgical language, and the Zionism that brought large populations of Yiddish-speaking Ashkenazi Jews to Palestine did not emerge until the late nineteenth century. Thus, small Ladino-speaking communities gained footholds in cities like Jerusalem long before the state of Israel was founded.

However, the migration of Sephardi Jews had other, deeply negative consequences in the twentieth century. After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, many Sephardi Jews were living in the Balkan states formed from its territories. These states allied with Nazi Germany during the Second World War, and their Ladino-speaking populations were nearly entirely destroyed by the Holocaust. For example, the Ladino-speaking population of Yugoslavia dropped from approximately 71,000 in 1940 to approximately 14,000 in 1944. After the end of the war, 8,000 of those speakers emigrated from Yugoslavia to Israel (Gaon & Serels 1987: 54).

As mentioned above, Ladino is still spoken in Israel, in populations consisting primarily of immigrants from the Balkans and their children. However, it exists primarily as a museum piece, rather than a living and robust vernacular. The Ladino-speaking populations that had been installed in Palestine after the Spanish expulsion were pressured to switch to Hebrew in much the same ways as the Yiddish speakers who arrived in the nineteenth century, and Ladino speakers who arrived after the Second World War were subject to the melting-pot policies of the Israeli government. These policies were extremely successful in limiting the usefulness and productivity of Ladino.

One difference between Karaim and Ladino is that there are speakers actively working to preserve Ladino within Israel, while there are currently no revival efforts underway for Karaim.

Ladino is taught as a second language in a small number of Israeli universities, but the main method of preserving the language at the moment is through media organized by the Sephardi community for the express purpose of promoting Ladino. As it stands, there is currently one magazine published in Ladino in Israel, *Aki Yerushalayim*, and a fifteen-minute radio program that is broadcast once a week. (Fishman 2000: 220-25) There is also a minimal Ladino literature, composed both of original works and collections of older folktales, which is active primarily in the Balkans but has supporters within Israel as well. Traditional Sephardi music is also still performed in Ladino (Bunis 1981: 61). On the whole, however, the focus of those working to support Ladino in Israel is not on fostering a strong community of young native speakers but on preserving what history there is left of Ladino.

Why did Ladino not remain strong in Israel, despite a long history of surviving as a minority language in other countries? Like speakers of most other JLOTHs, many speakers of Ladino switched to Hebrew upon arriving in Israel. The lack of education available in Ladino meant that children born in Israel spoke Hebrew whenever outside the home; even today, Ladino is not offered as a foreign language in any secondary schools in Israel (Bekerman & Shadi 2003: 475). These hurdles existed for all JLOTHs. However, Ladino was particularly vulnerable to replacement when it arrived in Israel; while there had been speakers of Ladino in Israeli territory for centuries, the largest wave of immigration came after the Second World War. By then the Zionist interests that advocated for Hebrew as the vernacular language of the citizen of the Jewish state were well-entrenched, and Hebrew had been recognized as an official language under the British Mandate for Palestine for nearly twenty years. Moreover, the devastation of Sephardi populations during the Holocaust did not merely drastically lower the number of Ladino speakers; it also destroyed family and community ties, making Sephardi Jews less likely

to settle together once they arrived in the Middle East (Cooper 1981: 72). JLOTH-speaking populations from Eastern Europe were less likely than populations from Western Europe or North Africa to be immigrating with large groups of other speakers of the same language. Without geographically coherent communities or strong connections between their language and their faith, two advantages shared by speakers of Yiddish that will be further explored later, speakers of Ladino had little motivation or method to resist the encroachment of Hebrew or other prestige languages in Israel.

Much like Karaim, Ladino exhibits its decline not only in speaker population counts but also in how it is spoken. Just as Karaim displays attrition and interference by Slavic languages, Ladino displays attrition and interference by Hebrew and other status languages within Israel. Ladino is not just on the decline; it is being encroached upon.

Tracy K. Harris (1994, 2001) traveled to Israel in the 1970s and 1980s to examine the status of Ladino as it was currently spoken there, and to determine the extent to which other languages were interfering with the Ladino lexicon. According to Harris, Ladino in Israel exhibits "a great amount of lexical and phonological interference from Hebrew" (Harris 1994: 172). Harris also produces evidence of Hebrew morphology encroaching on Ladino. For example, the masculine plural ending *–im* from Hebrew is now being used in the place of the Romance pluralization *–es* traditionally used in Ladino. For example, the Ladino for 'thieves' would typically be *ladrones*, but in Israel is now being produced as *ladronim* despite the fact that the *–es* suffix remains productive. Similarly, the Hebrew *–ut* suffix for feminine adjectives is replacing the Romance *–eria*, yielding *haraganut* instead of *haraganeria* for 'idleness' (Harris 2001: 18). This is a classic example of linguistic attrition, in which features of the dominant

language enter the endangered language despite there being productive options within the endangered language itself.

However, because Ladino is a language with Hebrew influences, Harris also opted to document the more easily-analyzed interference from another prestige language: French. French had long been a prestige language in Palestine, and had also been a *lingua franca* in the Balkans, the area of origin of most Ladino-speaking families in Israel. Harris conducted elicitations with Ladino-speakers and kept track of which "foreign words that were not present in the language before the first half of [the twentieth] century" replaced Ladino words regularly. The following table shows a selection of her data:

Ladino Word	Most Frequently Offered Word	English Meaning
tio	oncle	uncle
tia	tante	aunt
maale	quartier, banlieu	district
chay	thé	tea
regalo	cadeau	gift
komunidad	comunauté	community

Table 1: French interference in Ladino lexicon (Harris 1994)

Harris does not provide detailed enough data to analyze the interference of French on the level of, for example, Polish or Russian in Karaim. Thus, it is difficult to say if the French words of Table 1 are being code-copied into Ladino, or if they are merely evidence of extensive borrowing. No matter what the reason, however, it is clear that French, despite being neither an official language of Israel nor a native language of many Israelis, still is able to have an influence over Ladino. While extensive borrowing on its own is not necessarily the sign of a language on decline, with English being an excellent counterexample, the fact that kinship terms such as *tio* and *tia* are being replaced by their French equivalents is unusual (Thomason 1981).[4] In their

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[4] While English also borrowed the terms *aunt* and *uncle* from French, those borrowings occurred during a period when French was the dominant language of education and government in

2010 paper "Borrowability and the notion of basic vocabulary," Tadmor, Haspelmath, and

Taylor ranked kinship terms as among the least likely words to be borrowed from another

language, beaten out only by words relating to the body, spatial relationships, and sense

perception (Tadmor et al 2010: 233). When words with long histories and little cultural

relevance, such as kinship terms, are being replaced by their equivalent in a higher-prestige

language, that shift is most likely a sign of linguistic attrition.[5]

Sala (1971) also lists significant individual phonological variation in Ladino as a sign of

attrition. This is not the same as variation due to differences in dialect, but rather variations

between speakers of the same language, or often within a single speaker's own speech (Harris

1994: 180). Harris offers evidence of this sort of variation, providing tables such as the one

below enumerating the significant differences in pronunciation of single words between different

informants, which cannot be traced back to any differences in dialect. These tokens were

gathered over the course of single elicitation sessions with each informant, and the variation is

unlikely to be attributable to style shifting (Harris 1994: 180). In some cases the informants use

the pronunciation of the word in other Romance languages; in some cases they create entirely

new pronunciations, use the pronunciations of Western prestige languages, or confuse similar-

sounding Ladino words, as in the case of *avokado*. While the proper pronunciation is by far the

most-often used, the large number of alternate pronunciations with no apparent systematicity

behind the variation is interpreted by Harris (1994) as indicating phonological attrition (Harris

1994: 181).

England, whereas French has no institutional power on that scale in Israel aside from a history of
prestige.
[5] Not all language families show equivalent levels of stability of kinship terminology. However,
Edmonson (1957) shows that Romance languages like Ladino, while not as stable as, for example,
Persian, still maintained significant amounts of kinship terms in common with first-century Latin two
millennia later (12). Abrupt borrowings of kinship terms like those in Table 1 are very unusual.

lawyer	# of tokens by informants
avokato (Ladino pron.)	51
avokatu	2
avokɛto	1
avokado (Ladino for *avocado*)	10
avoka (French pron.)	1
avukat	1
avukato	2
advokato	1
advokat	1
afokato	1
abugada	1
avogado	1
aʃogado (Mod. Spanish pron.)	7

Table 2: Individual variation in Ladino speakers (Harris 1994)

Ladino's 70,000 Israeli speakers seems like a strong base within Israel when compared to Karaim, or any of the JLOTHs in Israel with under 10,000 speakers like Judeo-Tigrinya, Lishan Didan, or Judeo-Berber (Benor 2008: 1063). However, the case of Ladino aptly illustrates how even a significant population of speakers was and is not sufficient to prevent a JLOTH from becoming endangered in modern-day Israel. Those speakers who survived the Holocaust were effectively pushed towards homogenization under Hebrew by the nascent Israeli government, and even the members of younger generations who continue to speak it speak a form that is significantly shifted towards other prestige languages. Moreover, the revival efforts of Ladino have proven ineffective to muster enough support to reverse the population shift, or even halt it; while therehas been an increase in Ladino media, the number Ladino speakers continues to decline.

4.3. Yiddish

The majority of JLOTHs follow the pattern of Karaim or Ladino; they are either no longer spoken at all in Israel, or are quickly disappearing as vernaculars (Fishman 2001: 217).

There is only one JLOTH whose situation is different: Yiddish. The Hebrew revival targeted Yiddish most specifically out of any JLOTH, and thus its continued survival could be held up as a counterexample to assertions of the revival contributing to JLOTHs' decline (Pilowski 1981: 105). However, the ways that Yiddish has managed to survive in Israel will show precisely how unlikely and how difficult to replicate that survival is.

As discussed earlier, the language planning in early twentieth-century Palestine was focused on the promotion of Hebrew as the language of the would-be Jewish state. By the 1910s, Yiddish was the only language that could threaten Hebrew as the predominant language among Jews in Palestine. Yiddish, the first language of so many Ashkenazi Jews, had its own publications, theater, and organizations. Having survived and even thrived in the cities of Eastern Europe, the Yiddish language and its speakers were well situated to create an equally vibrant community in Palestine, even without the support of Zionist leaders (Mendelsohn 1986: 145).

However, Yiddish did not have to overcome a mere lack of support; it was faced with overt hostility. In the second decade of the twentieth century, radical revivalists began attacking Yiddish institutions, both physically and philosophically (Pilowski 1981: 107). Theater productions in Yiddish were shut down and those attending them harassed. Yiddish newspapers disappeared from stores. Rabbis preached that Yiddish was *treif*, or non-kosher; one is recorded as saying that Yiddish was "more *treif* than pork" (Zuckerman 2006: 232). A similar attitude applied to other JLOTHs, which are now often referred to collectively as *loazit,* or "foreign" (Fishman & Fishman 1974: 126). However, the disdain for Yiddish was even more serious; Yiddish was no longer just contrary to the goals of a Jewish state; it was contrary to Judaism (Weinreich 1968: 401).

Despite the efforts of those who now referred to themselves as "defenders" of Hebrew, Yiddish was still the language spoken by the majority of Jews in Europe and the United States, meaning that every wave of Ashkenazi immigrants brought more Yiddish speakers to Palestine (Wexler 2006: 554). Meanwhile, the Yiddish Renaissance was underway in the West. Yiddish literature was being created; governments in Central and Eastern Europe were being lobbied to recognize Yiddish as a national language (Kheimets & Epstein 2001: 140). While Yiddish was being denigrated in Palestine, it was becoming increasingly legitimized elsewhere, and if the Jewish state were to succeed it would need to draw citizens from those places and thus increase its Yiddish-speaking population.

However, if Yiddish had certain cultural advantages, Hebrew had equally strong legal ones. Being the preferred language of those invested in the creation of a Jewish state brought Hebrew access to geopolitical legitimization that Yiddish could not reach. Speakers for Yiddish were still advocating for recognition in countries where it had been spoken for centuries; meanwhile, the creation of an entirely new state gave Hebrew immediate access to governmental validation. Hebrew gained official recognition as a language of Palestine, along with Arabic and English, in the 1920 British Mandate of Palestine (Fellman 1993: 62). When comparing the rise of Hebrew to other revivals, it is critical not to underestimate the extent to which the unusual circumstances generated by the creation of an entirely new government and nation played a role in its success. Most revival activists have to work within, and often against, existing power structures; very rarely are there opportunities to construct and establish entirely new structures and institutions to support one's language of choice (Grenoble & Whaley 2006: 63).

Despite its unofficial status following the British Mandate, Yiddish remained popular; like Ladino, however, Yiddish's potential to challenge Hebrew was damaged by the Holocaust.

The vast majority of Jews killed in Europe were native Yiddish speakers from Eastern Europe; a generation of potential contributors to the Yiddish Renaissance was destroyed (Snyder 2010: 152). Both Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union specifically targeted the intelligentsia when invading countries like Poland; these educated classes often were disproportionally populated with urban Jews. The European Jewish population was "decapitated," to use Stalin's language, and many who could have been political and artistic leaders of the Yiddish-speaking community were murdered (Snyder 2010: 153).

As Yiddish was dealt a severe blow, Hebrew continued to become entrenched as the primary Jewish language, a status further confirmed by its establishment as an official language of the new state of Israel in the Israeli Declaration of Independence in 1948, alongside English and Arabic. As it stands currently, the only two official languages of Israel are Hebrew and Arabic. Yiddish is an official language of Russia, as well as a recognized minority language in Poland, Ukraine, Romania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Netherlands, and Sweden, but still has no official status in Israel (Kuzar 1999: 26).

Despite both the damage done to Yiddish by the Holocaust and its lack of official recognition, it remained and continues to remain Israel's most robust JLOTH by far. Exact population numbers are difficult to tabulate, for reasons that will be explained further below. The official data released by the Israeli government provides a good starting point, though the inadequacies of relying on census data in the case of Yiddish will be explored further later. Results from the 1972 and 1983 census are reproduced below (Isaacs 1998: 87).

Year	1972	1983
First/only language	82,800	52,800
Second language	157,800	130,900

| Daily use | 284,000 | 190,000 |

Table 4: Comparison of Yiddish-speaking Populations from 1972 and 1983 Israeli Census (Isaacs 1998)

Going solely by the data from the census, Yiddish appears to be experiencing a similar decline to other JLOTHs, with fewer and fewer Israeli Jews using it as their primary language, or even finding it useful to use any amount of Yiddish at all. A more detailed look at the 1983 census data reveals a similar pattern to Ladino, with tiny populations of monolingual speakers and a speaker community that overall is dominated by the elderly (Isaacs 1998: 87).

Age:	Total	15-24	25-44	45-65	65+
Total:	189,110	4,175	20,445	64,625	99,865
Only:	8,830	15	90	1,810	6,195
First:	49,420	885	815	14,480	33,240
Second:	130,860	3,275	19,540	48,335	59,710

Table 5: Yiddish Speakers in 1983 Israeli Census by Age and Level of Speaking (Isaacs 1998)

According to Table 4, in 1983 speakers under 45 accounted for only 13% of the Yiddish-speaking population, and only 1.2% of the monolingual population. Nearly 70% spoke Yiddish only as a second language, with their first most likely being Hebrew, or possibly an Eastern European language if they were recent immigrants. Based on this population breakdown, Yiddish should have had no monolingual speakers and very few L1 speakers within a generation. However, when one looks beyond census data, this does not appear the case; while there was only one Yiddish-speaking primary school for girls in Jerusalem in the 1980s, there are eleven now, indicating that the population of young monolingual or first-language speakers is well above the numbers indicated by the 1983 census (Isaacs 1999: 111). How was this turnaround possible?

Given the history of Yiddish's arrival in Israel, one might suspect that the source of its survival would lie in the immigrant population, but data like those in Table 6 seem to contradict that (Isaacs 1998: 88). The proportion of monolingual Yiddish speakers among immigrant populations has not dropped significantly, with monolingual speakers representing approximately 5.7% of the Yiddish-speaking immigrants from 1948 to 1954 and approximately 5% of those in 1980. However, the overall volume of Yiddish-speaking immigrants has greatly declined, dropping by nearly two-thirds between 1948 and 1965. While there are still substantial Yiddish-speaking populations outside Israel, including over 110,000 in New York City alone as of the 2000 census, these populations do not appear to be contributing substantially to the Yiddish-speaking population in Israel. As of 1983, Yiddish was the only or primary language of less than 2% of immigrant men, behind Hebrew, Russian, Arabic, English, and Romanian (Chiswick 1998: 259). Hebrew is the most common language among immigrants to Israel, with 83.1% of immigrant men speaking it as their only or primary language. It is unsurprising that Hebrew is so dominant, even among those born outside Israel; when controlled for education level and country of origin, immigrant men who use Hebrew as their primary language earn 11% more on average than their counterparts (Chiswick 1998: 262).

Year:	1975-80	65-74	55-64	48-54
Total:	15,495	21,890	24,665	62,333
Yid. Only:	780	1,740	1,595	3,600
First language:	5,685	9,010	8,655	18,980
Second language:	9,030	11,140	14,415	39,975

Table 6: Yiddish speakers in Israel by year of immigration (Isaacs 1998)

If census data indicates a drop in Yiddish speakers, and the immigrant community is also on the decline, then how is it possible that there are more Yiddish-speaking schools in Jerusalem now than there were in the 1980s? The answer lies in the division between two different Yiddish-speaking communities. There are two classes of Yiddish speakers in Israel: the secular speakers and the ultra-Orthodox community, or Haredim.

There are currently between 200,000 and 400,000 secular speakers of Yiddish in Israel (Fishman 2000).[6] The secular speakers focus on improving Yiddish resources as a reaction to the history of Yiddish oppression in Israel. They have made significant progress, with Yiddish radio programs, newspapers, theater productions, and literature on the rise, reminiscent of the days of the Yiddish. There are also community groups dedicated to speaking Yiddish in most major cities, and the language is now offered as a foreign language at every liberal arts university in the country, as well as at several high schools. However, this community of speakers is reliant on the availability of resources, rather than the use of Yiddish as a daily vernacular. Most of their lives are still conducted in Hebrew, and while some may pass Yiddish to their children, it is always secondary to Hebrew (Baumel 2006: 7). Moreover, while the lack of violent pushback from the kinds of anti-Yiddish political groups so prevalent in the first half of the century makes the organization of pro-Yiddish groups much easier, that lack of reaction is also telling; there is no need for reactionary "defense" of Hebrew when Hebrew has already won in the political sphere.

The major population that supports Yiddish in Israel, and the reason the number of Yiddish speakers is on the rise, is the ultra-Orthodox community, hereafter referred to as Haredim. Extremely pious followers of Haredi Judaism believe that, because Hebrew is the

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[6] "Secular speakers" are defined not as speakers who are not affiliated with any religion, but speakers whose use of Yiddish is not motivated by religious doctrine, i.e. any non-Haredi speaker.

language of Jewish religious texts, it is a sacrilege to speak it as a vernacular, and thus prefer to

speak Yiddish, as the majority is of Ashkenazi origin (Baumel 2006: 5). Moreover, the Haredi

community in Israel is extremely insular, choosing to have as little to do with the Israeli

government as possible. There is a rabbinical objection in the Haredi community to participating

in the census, which means that Haredim are undercounted in all official population estimates,

including estimates of speaker populations (Isaacs 1998: 86). Thus, the numbers in Tables 4 and

5 primarily reflect the secular Yiddish-speaking population.

The Haredi tendency towards isolation does not just explain the insufficiency of census

data to explain Yiddish's survival; it also explains the survival itself. By and large, Haredim

worldwide live in communities and neighborhoods consisting primarily of other Haredim

(Baumel 2006: 15). Thus, there is no significant social or economic cost to speaking Yiddish on

a day-to-day basis, and Haredi children grow up with Yiddish-speaking peer groups. If one

thinks back to the story of the son of Ben Yehuda, one remembers the importance of a child's

cohort speaking the language one wishes them to adopt. Haredi children are raised to speak

Yiddish as their first language both in and out of the home; those eleven Yiddish-only girls'

schools in Jerusalem were created by and for the Haredi community (Isaacs 1999: 111).[7]

Even the most determined isolationists find it difficult to operate with no knowledge of

the dominant language; different sects of Haredim have differing attitudes towards the occasional

use of Hebrew as a vernacular when required to interact with non-Haredim, as shown in Table 7

(Isaacs 1999: 108). Vernacular Hebrew is referred to as Ivrit, while the Hebrew of Jewish

religious texts is known as Loshn Kovdesh, or LK. Some sects of Haredim authorize the use of

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[7] Information on the number of boys' schools is unavailable because Miriam Isaacs, a female researcher,
was not permitted to visit said schools or discuss the education of Haredi boys.

Ivrit as a vernacular; however, even the most permissive sects (Type 2 in Table 7) require that

Yiddish be used in Yeshiva, Jewish educational institutions.

Group	Yiddish	Ivrit
Type 1: Israeli mainstream	None or minimal	Primary or only
Type 2: Litvish	Minimal; Yeshiva use	vernacular
Type 3: Viznitz, Belz	Yeshiva and vernacular	vernacular
Type 4: Toldos Aaron, Satmar	Yeshiva and vernacular	minimal

Table 7: Use of Yiddish and Ivrit by population (Isaacs 1999)[8]

The use of Yiddish in the Haredi home and school is crucial to its continued survival in

Israel. Finding spouses who speak Yiddish in similar contexts is used as a criterion during the

arrangement of marriages, preventing the insistence on Yiddish in the home from being diluted

through any intra-Haredi linguistic exogamy and promoting the adoption of Yiddish as a

vernacular by those who convert to Haredi Judaism later in life (Isaacs 1999: 109). Moreover,

Haredi families are typically quite large, with demographic growth estimated at three times the

national Israeli average (Baumel 2005: 4-5). Unlike any other JLOTH, Yiddish has a strong

reservoir in a population that is actually on the rise.

Yiddish, thus would seem to be the counterexample to the idea of Hebrew as a cause of

endangerment of JLOTHs. No JLOTH was as consistently targeted during the beginnings of the

revival as Yiddish, and yet Yiddish is the only JLOTH not immediately endangered within Israel.

However, this argument is undercut by the importance of the Haredi community to Yiddish's

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[8] The different sects of Judaism in Table 7 are presented roughly in increasing levels of Orthodoxy. Types 2-4 are all Haredi. Type 2, Litvish, is the least conservative and is not considered a form of Hasidic Judaism (Ozer 2009). Type 4, on the other hand, is the most conservative. For example, followers of Satmar reject all forms of Zionism and are particularly known for their isolationism; a Satmar community in the United States only allowed non-Satmar students into their public school district when forced to by the Supreme Court (*Board of Ed. of Kiryas Joel Village School Dist. v. Grumet*, 512 U.S. 687 (1994))

survival. The Haredi community has special characteristics that allow it to resist the push toward language shift created by the myriad forces supporting the Hebrew revival; Yiddish's resilience shows how crucial those characteristics are to avoid Hebrew's domination, and how difficult it would be for any other JLOTH to offer similar resistance. The various ways in which the Haredi community undercuts the sources of Hebrew's power within Israel illustrates exactly how many of those power sources there are.

4.4. Lessons of the Haredim

Hebrew was uniquely suited to revival in the twentieth century because it could appeal to Jews in Israel both as a language of power and as a language of the oppressed. Languages in need of revival are often the languages of marginalized minority groups who connect the survival of their language to the survival of their history and way of life, and the worldwide Jewish population fits that description precisely, especially in the context of the early twentieth century. However, what makes Israeli Hebrew different is that it also became the language of the State; thus, the Hebrew revival was able to call upon both the loyalty to the marginalized Jewish identity and the various social and economic advantages that come with speaking the standard language of one's government. Most cases of language shift tell the story of the conflict between those two motivations; the revival of Hebrew was able to unite them both.

However, Haredi Yiddish speakers are immune to both of these obligations. Firstly, rather than desiring to work within the institutions of the Israeli government, the Haredi minority intentionally define themselves in opposition to it and rely on their own communities for services traditionally provided by the state, such as education. The advantages offered by speaking Hebrew in the secular community are overshadowed by the obligation to speak Yiddish within

the almost entirely self-sufficient Haredi communities. The ability of the Haredim to operate within their insular communities is a perfect illustration of what the Israeli government was looking to avoid with their melting-pot strategies and pro-Hebrew immigration requirements.

Not only is the top-down pressure of Hebrew as a "high" language ineffective on the Haredim, but so is the bottom-up pressure of Hebrew as the language of the worldwide Jewish minority. The attempt to establish Hebrew as the vernacular language of all Jews is easily disregarded by the Haredim, because their reasons for refusing to use it cite an even higher authority. By making Hebrew something too sacred to use outside of religious ceremony, they make themselves invulnerable to rhetoric like Itamar Ben-Avi's "*Jew – Speak Hebrew!"* Haredim refuse to speak Hebrew because of their Judaism, not in spite of it, and appeals to Jewish identity have no affect.

The Haredim thus can avoid the pressures of the Hebrew revival; however, no speaker community for any other JLOTH has the resources available to resist the two-pronged pressure of institution and identity. A speaker of Ladino in Israel cannot raise their children in a community where everyone they interact with will also speak Ladino fluently, because there is no connection between speaking Ladino and resisting the authority of the Israeli government. A speaker of Karaim could not claim that their use of Karaim superceded the use of Hebrew in terms of defining their Jewish identity, because the Karaite sect has no restrictions on speaking Hebrew as a vernacular. Even non-Haredi speakers of Yiddish are on the decline; it is the particular situation of the Haredim that allows for Yiddish to grow. While Yiddish is an exception to the dominance of Hebrew, examining the success of Yiddish more closely makes it clear just how difficult it would be for any other JLOTH to achieve anything similar.

4.5. Discussion: JLOTHS in Comparison

Jewish languages other than Hebrew in Israel have many things in common. All were stigmatized by the Israeli government and conservative Zionist politics, which created social and economic pressures to shift to the valorized Hebrew. All were languages associated with immigrant populations that found it difficult to recreate their communities after immigration to Israel. All became "low languages" in diglossia with the "high" Hebrew.

However, the extent to which these languages were affected differed, both socially and linguistically. Karaim, a language that was already endangered upon entrance to Israel, was most strongly affected, despite its connection to Karaite Judaism. The small Karaim-speaking population was either not able to organize effectively to prevent shift to Hebrew or was not interested in doing so. While severely endangered, Karaim still exists in Eastern Europe; in Israel, however, there are no longer any native speakers of Karaim.

Ladino, while heavily impacted by the Holocaust, had a larger speaker population than Karaim, and that population has been able to pass Ladino on to new generations of speakers long enough to create a pro-Ladino community in the academic sphere. However, those younger speakers of Ladino are exhibiting the effects of Hebrew's dominance in the way they speak their language, as shown in the discussion of Ladino's linguistic attrition. Karaim did not survive at all in Israel; Ladino has, but in a different form than the way it was spoken when it first arrived.

Aside from the advantage of the reservoir created by the Haredi community, as discussed above, Yiddish also had the largest speaker population of any JLOTH when the state of Israel was created. However, Yiddish was also the most aggressively stigmatized JLOTH, perhaps because of the fact that it could most closely rival Hebrew in terms of demographics. Outside of

the Haredim, this stigmatization proved effective, and while Yiddish is the only JLOTH not to be

endangered in Israel, its speaker population in secular communities is still on the decline.

5.   CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Language Revival and Linguistics

It is important to consider the side effects of the Hebrew model of successful revival,

including the way in which the revival affected JLOTHs within Israel, because those

consequences in many cases run directly counter to the linguistic motivations behind supporting

revival projects. Linguists are often involved in organizing and supporting revival projects as

designers of teaching curricula, authors of dictionaries and grammars, lobbyists for the language

to official institutions, and many other roles. While there is sometimes controversy over the

extent to which outside academics are involved in these projects and what their methods should

be, the pursuit of language revival in general is in general uncontroversial among linguists. Why?

Leanne Hinton gives one very straightforward and unsentimental reason for linguists to

support language revival in her essay "Language Revitalization: An Overview":

> [The] editors of this book, as linguists, certainly share with their colleagues professional
> reasons for preferring to see linguistic diversity maintained. Linguistic theory depends on
> linguistic diversity. It is one of the charges of linguistics to understand the range of
> possibilities within human language and the cognitive models that would account for this.
> The study of historical linguistics, language universals and typology, sociolinguistics, and
> cognitive linguistics has been driven by the study of the very indigenous languages
> whose existence is threatened. (Hinton 2001, 4-5)

Hinton is certainly correct that the more languages are spoken in the world, the more

diverse data linguists have to work with; the more diverse data there is, the more likely it will be

that conclusions drawn from those data will actually be universally representative. However, if

this is the goal of linguists' involvement in language revival, the usefulness of the Hebrew

revival as a model is called seriously into question. Is the data gained from the maintenance of

Hebrew worth the data lost through the death and attrition of other JLOTHs? What is the net

linguistic contribution of the revival of a language that involves the endangerment of a dozen

other varieties?

There are, of course, other motivations for parties outside the speech community in

question to support revival efforts, linguists included. Hinton also describes the importance of

language revival as a question of social justice:

> [Language] retention is a human rights issue. The loss of language is part of the
> oppression and disenfranchisement of indigenous peoples, who are losing their land and
> traditional livelihood involuntarily as the forces of national or world economy and
> politics impinge upon them. Indigenous efforts toward language maintenance or
> revitalization are generally part of a larger effort to retain or regain their political
> autonomy, their land base, or at least their own sense of identity. (Hinton 2001a: 5)

While Hinton is focused primarily on indigenous populations, her point still stands when it

comes to non-indigenous minority communities, as is the case for speakers of JLOTHs in Israel.

Language does not exist in a political vacuum, and the communities whose languages are

endangered are often, if not always, subject to other kinds of non-linguistic disenfranchisement

(Mufwene 2003: 324). This is certainly true of Hebrew, which was and is the language of a

religious community that is marginalized worldwide, and was the subject of massive

stigmatization during the greatest push for Hebrew's revival. The connection between the

Hebrew revival, Zionism, and Jewish "[efforts] to retain or regain their political autonomy, their

land base, or at least their own sense of identity" is obvious.

What is less obvious and more troubling is how the desire to protect human rights

through language revival interfaces with the human rights abuses that were an integral part of the

strategy of Hebrew revival. The "melting-pot" strategies, such as forcefully scattering

communities of other JLOTHs, requiring immigrants to take Hebrew names, and teaching only Hebrew and European languages in schools were designed to be destructive to any "sense of identity" that did not involve identification with Hebrew. Moreover, unofficial strategies such as the physical attacks on Yiddish institutions and the description of JLOTHs as "foreign" or "non-kosher" indicate that the spirit of the revival was not one of universal respect. Commitment to human rights supports language revival in general, but to then use the strategies which were central to the success of the Hebrew revival is nonsensical.

There are many reasons to support language revival as a linguist. However, if one supports language revival for reasons connected to research or human rights, the Hebrew revival is not, as it has been described, "an inspirational model." The Hebrew revival was not successful because it managed to break down the systems that cause language endangerment; it was successful because it managed to alter its own position within that same system.

On a purely logistical note, the Hebrew revival was also unique in that it was able to take advantage of the opportunities made available by the creation of a new state. Even if the strategies that made the revival possible did not conflict with academic and humanitarian motivations for supporting revival projects, the circumstances that allowed Hebrew to become the language of government in a matter of decades are unlikely to be repeated for most other endangered languages. Without those circumstances, it would be difficult for any other language to use the history of Hebrew as a blueprint for its own revival without taking into account major differences of scale.

5.2. Moving Forward

Despite the inadequacy of Hebrew as a general model for language revival, there are still lessons to be learned from the linguistic situation in Israel. One principle that is made clear both by the revival of Hebrew and the status of JLOTHs is the importance of institutional support in creating footholds for reversing or slowing language shift. Most speaker communities attempting to begin revival projects will not have access to the kind of institutional support that Hebrew enjoyed and continues to enjoy in Israel, which is the precise disparity that makes Hebrew an ineffective model for revival in general. However, revival projects can look to Yiddish and even Ladino for examples of how smaller-scale institutional support can be a critical tool in preventing language shift.

For Ladino, the primary institutions involved are academic in nature, or created specifically for the purpose of the preservation of Sephardic language and culture. This level of support is useful for the continuation of some form of speaker community of an endangered language; however, its primary use is in providing either ways for first-language speakers to have access to media in Ladino or for second-language speakers to learn the language in an educational setting (Fishman 2000: 224). The creation of Ladino classes at Israeli universities keeps knowledge of Ladino from being lost entirely, but it does little to promote an increase in the number of native Ladino speakers amongst younger generations, much less create an environment in which monolingual Ladino speakers might exist. Still, Ladino is better-situated in comparison with Karaim, which has no institutional support at all; Karaim's speaker population in Israel was always smaller, but when the use of Karaim in Karaite religious services began to wane and no pro-Karaim organizations were created, there were no resources to keep speaker

populations from shifting to Hebrew. Unlike Ladino, Karaim existed solely in the home, until eventually it did not exist at all.

Both situations contrast clearly with the institutional support that Yiddish received. As discussed above, the strictures of Haredi culture create an environment perfect for language preservation; moreover, the institution via which Yiddish survived—that is, ultra Orthodox Judaism—was not created out of a desire to preserve the Yiddish language, unlike the academic and cultural organizations that support the Ladino speaker community. Instead of having to build a grassroots movement in favor of language revival, Haredi speakers of Yiddish found the preservation of Yiddish as a vernacular woven into the institution that defined parts of their lives completely unrelated to language. Thus, no one had to convince people that Yiddish was worth speaking in and of itself; there were clear motivations to do so besides the maintenance of identity that typically forms the backbone of revival projects.

Rather than looking to the methods of the Hebrew revival for inspiration, revivalists might do better to examine how other languages have managed to escape its effects. The most critical element in Yiddish's survival has been its status as the language of entire Haredi communities: not just the language of the home, but of education, commerce, and religion. If speakers of endangered languages wish to resist shift towards a dominant language, the lesson provided by JLOTHs in Israel is that the language in question should be incorporated into quotidian, non-academic settings, in order to facilitate and encourage use of the language in as many domains as possible. The language in question should not just be studied in schools; it should be the language in which other subjects are studied.

The Hebrew revival contributed to the endangerment of JLOTHs by replacing them in all arenas except the home, a pattern common to cases of language shift all over the world. To slow

and potentially reverse that shift, language revival projects can look for opportunities to reposition their languages as useful elsewhere. Eliezer Ben Yehuda was unable to convince fellow Jews to raise their children to speak Hebrew in the late nineteenth because there were no Hebrew-speaking high schools in Palestine; for new native speakers of a language to be created, revivalists must work towards creating new places for them to speak it. For Hebrew, an entire new state was created. For Yiddish, isolationist Haredi communities sprung up within that state. Leanne Hinton (2001a) says that language revival is usually part of "a larger effort to retain or regain…political autonomy…land base, or…[a] sense of identity" (Hinton 2001a: 5). The Hebrew revival and its results, however, show that political, territorial, and cultural institutions are often precisely what is necessary to allow a revival to succeed.

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