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Much assistance and moral support (though at times also sharp criticism, due to differences in structuralist orientation) came to Rosén from Haim Blanc, who received his American structuralist education at Harvard. Under the pen-name גָּבָלָן gablan, Blanc popularized the structuralist view of Modern Hebrew in his column לעץ בֵּי אדַם lešon bne ’adam ‘language of human beings’, published in the then-prestigious literary supplement משמאות maṣa in the early 1950s. These were later collected in Blanc 1989.

Unlike Rosén’s insistence on a single standard and uniform system, Blanc, a dialectologist of Arabic, showed great interest in language variation. He claimed that even if Modern Hebrew had not yet reached a stable state, it was not unique in that: “There is no reason to think that modern linguistics is limited in its scope to ‘stable’ languages only” (Blanc 1953:67).

Blanc’s (1968) paper “The Israeli koine as an emergent national standard” sheds light on the process of the formation of an ‘emergent’ (rather than existing) standard, paying attention to the formation of two intermediate native standards, Ashkenazi and Middle-Eastern, both having reached internally uniform pronunciations out of the more variegated pronunciations of their immigrant parents. The two intermediate standards differed mainly in the pharyngeal pronunciation of ע’ayin and כ yet in the Middle-Eastern standard, as opposed to their realization as א ’alef and ח xaf in the Ashkenazi standard.

Blanc was also the first linguist to collect and transcribe a corpus of naturally occurring Israeli Hebrew speech (Blanc 1957 and 1964).

In 1953, Polotsky founded the Department of Linguistics at the Hebrew University. Garbell, Rosén, and Blanc were among the teachers invited to be part of this enterprise. Polotsky himself did not conduct research on Modern Hebrew, but his scholarly inspiration and legacy, along with those of his younger collaborators, have nurtured a great deal of structural linguistic research of Modern Hebrew, too voluminous to be considered here.

References

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Style-Switching

Style-switching refers to the incorporation of non-Hebrew elements into a Hebrew text in order to convey foreignness in particular settings. Among the first scholars to identify style-switching in the Bible and to deal with the phenomenon in any detail were Rabin (1967), with reference to the speech of the watchman from Dumah in Isa. 21:11–12 (→ Addresssee-Switching), and Kaufman (1988:54–55), with attention to the book of Job, the Balaam oracles, theMassa material in Prov. 30–31, and the aforementioned Dumah passage (but see also Baumgartner 1941:609 n. 89 [=1959:228 n. 3] and Tur-Sinai 1965:594). In the words of the latter, with special reference to the impressive number of Aramaisms in these texts “We have not to do with late language or foreign authors, but rather with the intentional stylistic representations of Trans-Jordanian speech on the part of Hebrew authors within Hebrew texts” (Kaufman 1988:54–55).
Building on these studies, Rendsburg (1991; 1996) focused on the two main environments in which style-switching is employed: a) when the scene shifts to a foreign land; and b) when a foreigner is present in the land of Israel. A third arena is also surveyed below, namely c) the use of different dialects or registers of Hebrew within inner-Hebrew contexts.

Narratives set in a foreign land are found most notably in Gen. 24 and Gen. 30–31, both of which are situated in Aram. In the first episode, Abraham’s servant travels to Aram to procure a bride for Isaac. In the second, Jacob flees his native land to live with his uncle Laban in Aram. A third setting, in which style-switching is employed: a) when the foreigner is present in the land of Israel. A third arena is also surveyed below, namely c) the verbal root ד-ג ‘leave, forsake, abandon’, but also ‘allow’; and j) ‘גנבת ‘I was robbed’ (Gen. 31.39 [2x]), an inflected participle (for these items see both Greenfield 1981:129–130 and Rendsburg 2006:166–168).

In addition to these more subtle nods to Aramaic, the author also placed an actual two-word Aramaic phrase into the mouth of Laban, namely, אַלֹוהי יַעֲקֹב יָגָר שָׁבָדִיתא ‘heap of testimony’ (Gen. 31.47), the translational equivalent of Jacob’s Hebrew term גַּלְﬠֵֽד ‘heap of witness’, somewhat akin to Shakespeare’s use of the single expression *et tu, Brute* in *Julius Caesar*, as a reminder that in its actual setting the entirety of the dialogue amongst the Romans took place in Classical Latin, not Elizabethan English. Some scholars would classify this last Hebrew-Aramaic illustration (along with the English-Latin one) as Code-switching, that is, with the involvement of more than one language—reserving the term style-switching for lexical and grammatical issues within a single language, even if many of the features bespeak foreignness (Aramaic mainly, in the texts canvassed herein).

The Massa material in Prov. 30–31 is not technically a story set in a foreign land—instead the reader is presented with proverbial wisdom emanating from Massa in the Syrian Desert—but the effect is similar. The clearest instances of atypical linguistic usages that color the composition as foreign are: a) יְבִנ ‘son’ (Prov. 31.2 [3x]) and b) מִלְקָי ‘kings’ (Prov. 31.3). Both features reflect the Aramaic tinge, with the former replacing standard Hebrew יְבִנ ‘son’, and the latter employing the masculine plural nominal ending ד-י instead of standard Hebrew י-י.

The book of Job, on the other hand, is entirely situated in a foreign land, to wit, the land of Uz—in the area where the southern Syrian and northern Arabian deserts meet—and the main characters (Job and his three friends) are all associated with lands in the general region (see Job 1.1, 2.11). The result is a book replete with both Aramaic and Arabian lexical...
and grammatical features—far too numerous to inventory here (see Greenstein 2003, who also discusses the poetic function of these foreign elements).

The best illustration of a foreigner in the land of Canaan utilizing foreign (again, Aramaic-like) lexical and grammatical features occurs in Num. 22–24, when the prophet Balaam is summoned from Aram to curse Israel. His speech, presented in the form of poetic oracles, includes a host of linguistic elements that achieve the style-switching effect: a) the reduplicatory plural of a mountain harārē ‘mountains of’ (Num. 23.7); b) הבשתח 여러분 ‘be counted, be considered’ (Num. 23.9), with the hitpa‘el serving for the passive, as occurs with the T-stem in Aramaic (in Hebrew one expects the nif‘al, but Aramaic lacks the N-stem); c) יירשシリm ‘mountains’ (Num. 23.9), evoking the Aramaic cognate; d) רוחָה רוח ‘dust-cloud’ (Num. 23.10); e) מבנה nahāsh ‘divination’ (Num. 23.23); f) וניתני ṣattiyya ‘stretched out’ (Num. 24.6), preserving the root letter ṣod of a נִחָשׁ (final-yod) verb, as occurs in some dialects of Aramaic; g) ממלכתו ‘his kingdom’ (Num. 24.7); and h) בְּהִשְׁתַּחֲוָיָ֨תִי ‘where’ when addressing his servants.

Style-switching may also occur within inner-Hebrew contexts (in which case the definition presented in the opening sentence above may require slight adaptation). For example, the presumably Judahite author of the David story incorporates Israelite (northern) Hebrew (IH) elements into the speech of the wise woman of Tekoa (to be associated with Tekoa of the Galilee, not Tekoa near Bethlehem). IH traits include: a) רדִּיבָה תַבִּיק יִתְבְּשָׂח ‘one the other’ (lit. ‘each man his brother’), e.g., Exod. 32.27; and b) the particle of existence יש ‘there is, there are’ (2 Sam. 14.19), in contrast to standard Biblical Hebrew יש תַעִשֶּׂה (Rendsburg 2003).

On a related, though slightly different tack, the author of Ruth may have attempted to portray the language of Boaz and Naomi, representing the older generation in the narrative, with more archaic features, especially in contrast to the diction of Ruth, representing the younger generation (Campbell 1975:25). Thus one finds: a) vestigial dual forms, e.g., atידק ‘immākem ‘with you’ (Ruth 1.8), הָשִּׁים ‘you did’ (Ruth 1.8); b).GetService(‘lākem ‘to you’ (Ruth 1.9)); b) an older historical vocalization in the word ירעה т.register ‘you shall [not] pass (Ruth 2.8); c) paragogic nun forms, e.g., יַד־רֵק ‘you shall cling’ (Ruth 2.8), יִשָּׁב ‘they harvest’ (Ruth 2.9), יִשָּׁב ‘they draw (water)’ (Ruth 2.9); and d) archaic 2s suffix-conjugation forms, e.g., יִשְׂרְדֵּי ‘you shall go down’ (Ruth 3.3 ketiv), יִשָּׂרְדֵּי ‘you shall lie down’ (Ruth 3.4 ketiv)—all in the speech of the two older characters (for further discussion, see Holmstedt 2010:47–49, though the conclusion there is slightly different than the one presented here).

A different approach to much of the same material is taken by Bar-Asher (2008), who believes that the aforesaid dual verbs and pronouns, along with other forms in Ruth, reflect a phonological (and not a morphological) phenomenon, namely, the coalescing of נ and ל in the speech of the female characters (Naomi especially), as a way to represent women’s speech.

These illustrations demonstrate the extent to which the ancient Israelite literati would manipulate language in their literary constructions. The portrayal of foreignness, along with different dialects and registers within the Hebrew realm, was accomplished by means of style-switching in a variety of different literary-linguistic contexts.

References
Stylistic Alternation in Modern Hebrew

1. Introduction

According to one definition, style is the consequence of a choice between alternative expressions available in a language which convey (more or less) the same meaning. Freedom in making such choices is limited by the rules of the language (Enkvist 1964:1–56).

2. Types of Alternative Expressions

Stylistic alternatives exist at different levels of linguistic structure. Thus, for example, at the morphological level one has a choice, in Modern Hebrew, between the regular genitival construction (‘the king’s house’), use of the possessive particle (‘the house of the king’), or an amalgam of both (literally ‘house of the king’).

In syntax, too, there are choices. For example, one can choose between nominal and verbal clauses, e.g., ‘The letter was written by the secretary’. Similarly, one has a choice between independent and suffixed pronouns, e.g., ‘I loved her’ (object pronoun); ‘my family’ (possessive pronoun); ‘I want to have a baby’ (possessive pronoun).

In stylistic expression, another option is to choose between an active and a passive sentence, e.g., ‘The letter was written by the secretary’ versus ‘The secretary wrote the letter’.

In the ‘betrothal of Rebekah’ (Genesis 24:62), for example, one has a choice, in Modern Hebrew, between the regular genitival construction (‘the king’s house’), use of the possessive particle (‘the house of the king’), or an amalgam of both (literally ‘house of the king’). Similarly, one has a choice between independent and suffixed pronouns, for example ‘I loved her’ (object pronoun); ‘my family’ (possessive pronoun); ‘I want to have a baby’ (possessive pronoun).

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