REGULARIZATION IN THE CRYSTALLIZATION OF MODERN HEBREW: THE CASE OF COUNTERFACTUAL CONDITIONALS

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ABSTRACT

Regularization is a process of linguistic reduction through the elimination of variants. Regularization processes occur naturally during language acquisition and learning. In social situations where learners comprise a large portion of the language community, regularization can lead to linguistic change. This was the case during the development of Modern Hebrew. Therefore, regularization processes are essential to a fundamental question about the crystallization of Modern Hebrew: to what extent its grammar continues the grammar of the previous layers of Hebrew and to what extent it features novel characteristics of its own.

This paper focuses on the crystallization of counterfactual conditionals in Modern Hebrew. It shows that this process involved no new linguistic phenomena but only a culling of the large inventory of variants. These variants that coexisted during the revival period were all inherited from the preceding stages of Hebrew. A regularization process, which occurred mainly in the Mandate period, eliminated some variants, such as the positive meaning of ʾilmale and the qatal (regular past-tense) form in the main clause (the consequence). The variants that survived the regularization process underwent differentiation, becoming associated with distinct registers or meanings.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Regularization in the Crystallization of Modern Hebrew

Regularization processes involve the reduction of linguistic diversity through the elimination of variants. It occurs naturally in individuals’ language in language acquisition and learning. Regularization processes happen in all languages and periods, but there are situations where regularization brings about linguistic changes. These changes can occur in social situations where...
learners comprise a large portion of the language community.\textsuperscript{2} This was the case during the early development of Modern Hebrew (MH).

The Hebrew language is a unique case of a language that stopped being used as a vernacular and did not have native speakers for about 1700 years. During these years, Hebrew was used as a part of diglossia and served mainly as a written language. At the end of the 19th century, an effort began to turn Hebrew into a national language that Jews would use in all areas of life. At first, MH did not have native speakers, and the language community comprised only L2 speakers of Hebrew.\textsuperscript{3} The unique social situation in which Hebrew was returned to use in all fields of life raises the question of how the linguistic character of MH was shaped.

A fundamental question concerning the crystallization of MH pertains to the development of its syntax, which is the least conscious part of the language: how much of this grammar is inherited from the previous layers of Hebrew, and how much of it is new.\textsuperscript{4} This paper examines this question through the concept of linguistic change through regularization processes in a situation where most speakers are not native. This question is explored here through the lens of a specific case: the regularization of counterfactual conditionals in MH.

The term “regularization,” as used in this paper, does not encompass all the changes that occurred in MH but only the rapid changes that took place in the first decades of its development and shaped its character as we know it.

\textsuperscript{2} V. Ferdinand, S. Kirby and K. Smith, “The Cognitive Roots of Regularization in Language,” \textit{Cognition} 184 (2019), pp. 53–68 and references therein.

\textsuperscript{3} See e.g., E. Doron, M. Rappaport Hovav, Y. Reshef, M. Taube, “Introduction,” in \textit{Language Contact, Continuity and Change in the Genesis of Modern Hebrew} (ed. E. Doron, M. Rappaport Hovav, Y. Reshef, M. Taube; Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2019); Y. Reshef, \textit{Historical Continuity in the Emergence of Modern Hebrew} (Lexington: Maryland, 2020).

\textsuperscript{4} On these questions, see e.g., L.H. Glinert, “Did Pre-Revival Hebrew Literature Have Its Own Language?” Quotation and Improvisation in Mendele Mokher Sefarim,” \textit{Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies}, University of London, Vol. 51, No. 3 (1988), pp. 413–427; E. A. Bar-Asher Siegal, “לשונם של אנונימיים: הארמית של הזוהר מצוקה מופיעה בידים שונות בלשון העת העתיקה והארמית בימי הביניים: הארמית של הזוהר מצוקה מצוקה (Medieval Jewish Literary Languages: The Case of the Aramaic of the Zohar), in \textit{רומיאיה והארמית בימי הביניים: ידועות ב Universities of London and Jerusalem about the Language and Grammatical Thought}, ed. E. A. Bar-Asher Siegal, D. Ya'akov; Jerusalem: The Academy of the Hebrew Language, 2020), pp. 19–63 and E. A. Bar-Asher Siegal, “The Formation and Cognitive Knowledge of Literary Languages: the Case of Hebrew an Aramaic in Middle Ages” (in this volume); E. Doron, et al, Introduction; Y. Reshef, “From Written to Spoken Usage: The Contribution of Pre-Revival Linguistic Habits to the Formation of the Colloquial Register of Modern Hebrew,” \textit{Linguistic Contact, Continuity and Change in the Genesis of Modern Hebrew}, eds. E. Doron et al., (Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2019), pp. 179–199; Y. Reshef, \textit{Historical Continuity}.\textsuperscript{382}
today. This period encompasses the revival period, which began in the 1880s and lasted some 40 years, roughly until 1920, and the Mandate period, which ended with the founding of the state in 1948. The term “contemporary Hebrew” refers to the language of the more recent decades, from around 1950 until today.5

The departure point for the regularization of various grammatical forms in MH was the considerable variability that characterized the language of the revival period.6 This variability stemmed, inter alia, from the unique ways in which knowledge of Hebrew was transmitted throughout the ages, due to which all phases of the language were simultaneously accessible to its users, especially educated writers.7 The mechanism presented here shows that the syntax formed in the first decades of MH is based on the syntax of Hebrew in the previous layers. MH’s syntax was developed mainly not through innovations of syntactic structures but rather through a selection from existing options. The regularization process involved the decline or disappearance of certain linguistic characteristics among the inventory of existing phenomena, whether inherited from previous stages or borrowed from the substrate languages and the reinforcement of other characteristics.8 In the early stages of MH, this culling process was relatively rapid and complete and took place mainly during the Mandate period.9 Some of the variants that “survived” were replaced in later stages, but more slowly and less completely. Once the regularization process was over, any competing forms that remained underwent semantic or register differentiation, as two hegemonic types of Hebrew emerged: institutional (planned) Hebrew and native (unplanned)

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5. Morag divides MH into three periods: the revival period, the Mandate period and the state period. (S. Morag, "העברית החדשה בהתגבשותה: לשון באספקלריה של חברה" [Modern Hebrew: Some Sociolinguistic Aspects], Cathedra 56, 1990, pp. 70–92). This division is largely based on historical-social parameters, but Reshef demonstrates that there are indeed linguistic differences between these periods (Y. Reshef, "העברית בתקופת המנדט" [Hebrew in the Mandate Period], Jerusalem: The Academy of the Hebrew language, 2016). The regularization processes of syntactic structures are consistent with this division.

6. This, in comparison to languages that were in continuous use as spoken tongues (Y. Reshef, Hebrew in the Mandate Period, pp. 40–71 and references therein).

7. C. Rabin, The Development of the Syntax of Post-Biblical Hebrew (Studies in Semitic Languages and Linguistics, 29), Leiden, 2000: E. Doron et al., “Introduction,” E. A. Bar-Asher Siegal, “Literary Languages.”

8. On linguistic phenomena that characterized Hebrew during the revival period but vanished in later stages, see Y. Reshef, Hebrew in the Mandate Period, pp. 72–103.

9. Y. Reshef, Hebrew in the Mandate Period, pp. 72–103.
1.2 The Case of Counterfactual Conditionals

In contemporary spoken Hebrew, the common and unmarked conditional marker in both factual and counterfactual conditionals is 'im ("if"); in negative conditionals, it is accompanied by the negative element lo. In standard Hebrew, on the other hand, 'im is confined to factual conditionals (whereas in counterfactual conditionals, it is considered incorrect). Counterfactuals use designated conditional markers: lu and 'ilu appear in positive counterfactuals and are only rarely paired with the negative marker lo, while negative counterfactuals feature the markers lule, 'ilmale, and 'ilule, the first two of which are fairly common and the third more rare. These three negative counterfactual markers are now regarded as synonymous. They appear in the same syntactic environments and have the same meaning, "if not," whether they occur before a noun phrase or before a conditional clause. All three are now spelled with the letters lamed-aleph at the end, identical to the spelling of the negative element lo, reflecting their negative meaning. However, in the revival period there were considerable differences between them, reflecting...
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their usage in previous layers of Hebrew.\textsuperscript{16}

This paper will describe and analyze the use of counterfactual conditionals during the revival period and the regularization of their use in MH. Previous studies have examined counterfactual conditionals in the pre-modern stages of Hebrew.\textsuperscript{17} Their use in MH has been mainly discussed from a prescriptive viewpoint,\textsuperscript{18} alongside synchronic descriptions of their use in contemporary Hebrew.\textsuperscript{19} However, no study has provided a synchronic description of their use in the revival period or a diachronic description of their regularization in MH. This paper will do so while showing the relation to overall regularization processes in MH. In a previous article, I examined negative counterfactual conditionals based on other corpora.\textsuperscript{20} In this article, I will focus on the positive counterfactual conditionals. The previous article’s conclusions will be incorporated here.

Data for this study was sourced from two main corpora. The description of counterfactual conditionals in the revival period is based on a corpus of texts dating from 1882 to 1914, available on the website of the Hebrew Academy's Historical Dictionary Project.\textsuperscript{21} This corpus, comprising academic texts by

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{16} M. Bar-Ziv Levy, "על מילים וחברות בני Ведьרה והברית המודרנית: מילים הנהיג טוסל השילוטה ממקה (Regularization in the Crystallization of Modern Hebrew: The Case of Negative Counterfactual Conditionals), \textit{Leshonenu} 83 (2021), pp. 182–202.
\bibitem{17} See e.g., \textit{Biblical Hebrew}: J. C. Beckman, “Conditional Clause: Biblical Hebrew,” in G. Khan et al. (eds.), \textit{Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics (EHL)}, I, 2013, pp. 545–548; \textit{Rabbinic Hebrew}: M. Azar, “Conditional Clause: Rabbinic Hebrew,” \textit{EHL}, I, 2013, pp. 548–550; M. Perez Fernandez, \textit{An Introductory Grammar of Rabbinic Hebrew}, (Leiden: Brill, 1997). \textit{Medieval Hebrew}: M. Goshen-Gottstein, \textit{The Hand of the Tongue}, (Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute, 2006); C. Rabin, \textit{Syntax of Post-Biblical Hebrew}. \textit{Maskilic and Hasidic Hebrew}: L. Kahn, The Verbal System in Late Enlightenment Hebrew (Studies in Semitic Languages, 55), Leiden, 2009; L. Kahn, A Grammar of the Eastern European Hasidic Hebrew tale (Studies in Semitic Languages, 77), Leiden, 2015.
\bibitem{18} On ‘ilmale see Z. Ben-Haim, "כיצד נעשה מילה אמילה (Așilma)" (How should we use ‘ilmale), \textit{Leshonenu}, 18, 1 (1952–3), pp. 27–30, 60; Y. Avineri, \textit{יד הלשון} (The Hand of the Tongue), Tel-Aviv: Izreel, 1964, p. 34; I. Perets, \textit{Guide to the Hebrew Language}, Tel-Aviv: Joseph Sreberk Publishing House, 1965, p. 233–235; A. Bendavid and H. Shay, \textit{Language Guide for Radio and Television}, (Jerusalem: Israel Broadcasting Authority, 1974), p. 143. On ‘iim in counterfactual conditionals see e.g., A. Bendavid and H. Shay, \textit{Language guide}, p. 143; D. Harband, \textit{Kicur Sulhan ‘Arux}, p. 18 (note).
\bibitem{19} M. Ben-Asher, \textit{Syntax of Modern Hebrew}; L. H. Glinert, “The Hypothetical Conditional.” L. H. Glinert, \textit{The Grammar of Modern Hebrew}; T. Bar, \textit{Conditional Sentences}; T. Bar, “Conditional Clause: Modern Hebrew,” \textit{EHL}, I, 2013, pp. 550–553.
\bibitem{20} M. Bar-Ziv Levy, “Negative Counterfactual Conditionals.”
\bibitem{21} https://maagarim.hebrew-academy.org.il/Pages/PMain.aspx.
\end{thebibliography}
seven different authors, yielded 148 positive counterfactual conditionals sentences. Data for the period between the revival and contemporary periods, during which the regularization process took place, is sourced from the Haaretz newspaper corpus. It consists of issues of the Haaretz daily from 1920–1960. The issues, from the first three months of round years (1920, 1930, etc.), yielded 868 examples of counterfactual conditionals. The description of the situation in contemporary Hebrew is based on previous studies, as well as on hundreds of examples of counterfactual conditional sentences collected from literary, cinematic, and television texts and from the Internet, dating from 1960 until the present day. A systematic sample test was conducted in the Maariv newspaper from the first ten days of January 1980 and 1990.

The first part of the paper describes the use of counterfactual conditionals during the revival period and traces its sources in the preceding layers of Hebrew. The second part of the paper describes the regularization of their use in MH, analyzing the circumstances in which this process took place and the factors that affected it. The third part of the paper summarizes the characteristics of the regularization process and examines it as an example of the overall regularization process of grammatical constructions in MH.

2. COUNTERFACTUAL CONDITIONALS IN THE REVIVAL PERIOD
The revival period was characterized by considerable variability (compared to the more limited and uniform situation today), reflecting the breadth and diversity of the material inherited from the previous stages of Hebrew. The section below examines whether counterfactual conditionals during the revival period reflect their use in Classical or Medieval Hebrew and whether revival period literature reflects any new uses.

22. The academic language of the revival period is much closer to contemporary Hebrew than the literary language of that time. However, it too contains linguistic phenomena that were later discarded (Y. Reshef, Hebrew in the Mandate Period, pp. 72–103).
23. Web.nli.org.il/sites/jpress/hebrew/pages/default.aspx.
24. M. Ben-Asher, Syntax of Modern Hebrew; L.H. Glinert, “The Hypothetical Conditional,” L. H. Glinert, The Grammar of Modern Hebrew; T. Bar, Conditional Sentences; T. Bar, “Conditional Clause.”
2.1 Counterfactual Conditionals Markers in the Revival Period

During the Revival period, there was a variety of conditional markers in counterfactual conditionals. In positive sentences, the main use was of designated conditional markers: *lu* and *ʾilu* and also *ʿilmale* in a positive meaning (“if”), and the general conditional marker *ʾim* was rare. Three markers were used in negative sentences: *lule*, *ʾilule*, and *ʾilmale* in a negative meaning (“if not”). In the revival period, *lule*, *ʾilule* and *ʾilmale* are always negative when preceding a noun phrase, but when preceding a clause, they differ in their meaning: *lule* and *ʾilule* are consistently negative, whereas *ʾilmale* can have a negative sense (“if not,” as in Example 1) but also a positive one (“if” as in Example 2); the second of these options is the more common one.

1. ומי יודע עד מתי ארכה מחלוקת זו אלמלא בא מלאך המות ועשה שלום בינינו.
   “Who knows how long the dispute would have lasted had the Angel of Death not come and made peace between us.”

2. אלמלי אנו היינו באים לנזוף. אפשר שהיתה יוצאת, במקום נזיפה לחצנית, שאגה זעומה על העורון של אותה הסביבה החשוכה…!
   “Had we come to rebuke, perhaps instead of an arrogant rebuke, a furious roar would have erupted over the blindness of the dark surroundings…!”

The two opposite meanings of *ʾilmale* often create ambiguity, but the context can help infer the meaning, and so can the spelling. During this period, the negative markers were spelled both with a final *aleph* (*ʾilmale,ʾalil,ʾaleph*) and with a final *yod* (*ʾilmale,ʾalil,ʾaleph*). The spelling of *lule* and *ʾilule* is unrelated to their polarity, for they are always negative, but the spelling of *ʾilmale* is closely correlated with its polarity. When spelled with a *yod* (as in example 2), it is nearly always positive, and when spelled with an *aleph* (as in example 1), it is nearly always negative.

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25. *lo* comes after *lu* or *ʾilu* rarely.
26. Since *ʾilmale* in the revival period had a positive meaning alongside the negative one, in rare instances it was used as an optative marker in monoclausal constructions (without a consequent).
27. A. Z. H. Ginsberg, *Ktavim Balim* (1890), p. 86.
28. Y. H. Brenner, *Leverur Ha'inyan* (1911), p. 15.
29. M. Bar-Ziv Levy, “Negative Counterfactual Conditionals,” pp. 189–190.
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The most common positive markers in the revival period were the designated counterfactual conditional markers: *lu* was the most common, and after it, *ʾilu*. The neutral conditional marker *ʾim* is the third most common in the corpus, but it occurs only in the writing of one writer – Ahad Ha'am – out of the seven writers in the corpus. *ʾilmale* in its positive meaning occurs only in 7% of the cases (11 times), but it appears in texts of four different writers.

![Chart 1: The positive counterfactual markers in the revival period](image)

Revival-period Hebrew inherited all counterfactual conditional markers from the preceding stages of the language: Biblical Hebrew uses the marker *lu* (and *lule*), and the markers *ʾilu*,30 and *ʾilmale* (and *ʾilule*), emerged in Rabbinic Hebrew. In Biblical Hebrew, *ʾim* is used as a conditional marker only in factual and concessive conditionals.31 In the Interim period between the Rabbinic period and the revival era, during which Hebrew was used solely as a literary language, the use of *ʾim* in counterfactual conditionals is common.32

How did *ʾilmale* come to have two opposite meanings in the revival period? Apparently, all three markers – *lule*, *ʾilmale*, and *ʾilule* – were originally negative. This assumption is supported by the fact that, according

30. *ʾilu* appears twice in late biblical Hebrew.
31. J. C. Beckman, "Conditional Clause: Biblical Hebrew," p. 546.
32. C. Rabin, *Syntax of Post-Biblical Hebrew*, pp 179–180; L. Kahn, *Hasidic Hebrew*, p. 307; L. Kahn, *Late Enlightenment Hebrew*, p. 100.
to most etymological analyses, all three contain the negative element *lo*.

Furthermore, when preceding a noun phrase, all three are always negative, in all stages of Hebrew that feature them, and the same is true for *lule* and *ʾilmale* followed by a clause. The only exception is *ʾilmale*, which in Rabbinic-Babylonian Hebrew is nearly always positive when followed by a clause. This development is generally explained in diachronic terms: the marker was originally negative in all syntactic environments, but a semantic shift produced a positive meaning in pre-clausal positions only. In the Medieval period, various writers reverted to the (original) negative meaning of *ʾilmale*. As a result, in the modern Hebrew literature of the pre-revival period, the negative sense was prevalent again, alongside the positive one.

The orthographic situation likewise has its roots in the previous layers of Hebrew. In Classical Hebrew, the spelling of the markers alternated between *aleph* and *yod* regardless of their meaning. The spelling with *aleph* is

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33. *Lule* is generally analyzed as the counterfactual conditional marker *lu* + the negative marker *lo*, and *ʾilmale* as the conditional marker *ʾi* + *lule* + *lo* (M.Z. Segal, *Conditional Clauses in Biblical and Tannaitic Hebrew*, *Leshonenu* 4, pp. 205–207; E. A. Bar-Asher Siegal, *The History of the Forms ‘lule and ʾilmale – Part I: Linguistic Diachrony*, *Leshonenu* 81 (2019), p. 6). *ʾilmale* has been associated with several different etymological analyses involving *lo* (e.g., M.Z. Segal, “Conditional Clauses,” p. 207; Z. Ben-Haim, “How Should We Use *ʾilmale*,” p. 30 [note]; M. Azar, *The Syntax of Mishnaic Hebrew*, Jerusalem: The Academy of the Hebrew Language/University of Haifa, 1995), p. 153; M. Perez Fernandez, *Grammar of Rabbinic Hebrew*, p. 213; E. A. Bar-Asher Siegal, “ʾilmale and ʾilmale – Part I,” pp. 6–7).

34. For certain exceptions, see E. A. Bar-Asher Siegal, “ʾilmale and ʾilmale – Part II,” §3.1.

35. M.Z. Segal, “Conditional Clauses,” p. 208; Y. Breuer, (“על המושג הנורדי ל’étנואיסטים תהלול המבלי” On the Hebrew Dialect of the Amoraim in the Babylonian Talmud), *Language Studies* 2–3 (1987), p. 103. See E. A. Bar-Asher Siegal, “ʾilmale and ʾilmale – Part II,” §3.1, for a discussion of some exceptions.

36. For these explanations see Z. Ben-Haim, “How Should We Use *ʾilmale*,” Y. Breuer, “On the Hebrew Dialect of the Amoraim,” E. A. Bar-Asher Siegal, “ʾilmale and ʾilmale – Part I.” The negative-to-positive semantic shift of Rabbinic Hebrew did not affect *ʾilmale* (E. A. Bar-Asher Siegal, “ʾilmale and ʾilmale – Part I,” and see explanation therein).

37. According to Bar-Asher Siegal, this can be attributed to purism or to a remerging of *ʾilmale* and *ʾilmale* due to their phonetic and semantic similarity (E. A. Bar-Asher Siegal, “ʾilmale and ʾilmale – Part I,” pp. 14–15).

38. In that period, the usage of *ʾilmale* varied among genres and among writers. Kahn writes that, in the Maskilic Hebrew of the second half of the 19th century, *ʾilmale* was negative (L. Kahn, *Late Enlightenment Hebrew*, p. 100), but newspapers of that period yield some examples of positive *ʾilmale*. In the Hassidic literature, *ʾilmale* is generally negative, and positive instances are rare (L. Kahn, *Hasidic Hebrew*, p. 309).

39. *Lule* in the Bible, always negative, is usually spelled with a *yod* but is also found with an *aleph* (Y. Breuer, *תהלול המבלי ולמצוי יד מכתש המלול* (The Hebrew in the Babylonian Talmud According to the Manuscripts of Tractate Pesahim; Jerusalem: The Hebrew University Magnes Press, 2002, p. 53). *ʾilmale* and *ʾilmale* appear with both *aleph* and *yod* in Rabbinic Hebrew, regardless of their meaning (M.Z. Segal, “Conditional clauses,” p. 236; Z. Ben-Haim, “How Should We Use *ʾilmale*;” Y. Breuer, “On the Hebrew...
etymological and mirrors the spelling of the negative marker *lo*. The spelling with *yod* results from a process of dissimilation between the vowel *u* in *lu* and the vowel *o* in *lo*, which transformed the last vowel into *e*. This dissimilation, in turn, triggered the change in spelling, causing the *aleph* to be replaced with *yod*, which is more usual following a consonant vocalized with *tzere*. The correlation between positive *ʾilmale* and the spelling with *yod* was a conscious decision made in the Medieval period. Since the ambiguous polarity of *ʾilmale* posed a problem for readers of Hebrew, Rabbeinu Tam, of the 12th century, suggested that positive *ʾilmale* is spelled with *yod* and negative *ʾilmale* with *aleph*. Editors and proofreaders later applied this convention to earlier texts, thus creating the impression that this correlation between the spelling and the meaning had always existed. 41

2.2 Counterfactual conditionals verbal forms in the revival period

Conditional sentences consist of a clause expressing the condition (antecedent), usually introduced by a conditional marker, and a clause expressing the consequence (consequent). Revival-period Hebrew had three main sequences of verbal forms in counterfactual conditional, all of them comprising a past-tense antecedent and a past-tense consequent:

a. *Haya-haya*: Compound past, consisting of the verb *haya* (past tense of *be*) followed by a present participle form (*qotel*), in both the antecedent and the consequent

If all Jews had accepted the Tolstoy doctrine...this doctrine would have become Judaism42

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40. M.Z. Segal, “Conditional Clauses,” p. 205–206.
41. M.Z. Segal, “Conditional Clauses,” p. 236; Z. Ben-Haim, “How Should We Use *ʾilmale*,” p. 27. Bar-Asher Siegal contends that this kind of proofing began only in the recent generations. (E. A. Bar-Asher Siegal, “ʾilmale and ʾilmale – Part II,” pp. 14–16).
42. Y. H. Brenner, *Leverur Ha'inyan*, p. 15.
b. *Qatal-haya*: Simple past (*qatal*) in the antecedent and compound past in the consequent:

4. וַלּוּ שֶׁמֶם הַחָסִידִים הַרְאָשֹׁנִים אֲנֵה הַגוֹדִים שֶׁמַּספֵּרָם עַל-יָם בּוֹדְרוֹן...בּוֹדְרוֹן לָא תַחְדָּשָׁה

If the first followers had heard the great things told about them in our generation, they certainly would not have understood anything.

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b. *Qatal-qatal*: simple past in both the antecedent and the consequent

5. וַלּוּ חָזְקוּ אֲנֵהֶנָּה בּוֹדְרוֹן...כִּי אָכֵר כְּלֵיָה אֲנֵה בּוֹדְרוֹן...

If we had held this opinion, we would have already finished our words.

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The counterfactuality can be expressed either by using the compound past in the antecedent (which allows using the unmarked conditional element *ʾim*), or alternatively by employing a designated counterfactual marker (which allows using the simple past in the antecedent), or by combining both. When the antecedent precedes the consequent, the latter nearly always begins with *ki ʾaz* or *ki ʿata* when followed by a *qatal* form (example 5) or, less frequently, by a compound past form or some other predicate (example 6). When the consequent precedes the antecedent, it is not introduced by a marker (example 7). As we will see below, specific markers appear with certain sequences of verbal forms.

6. וַלּוּ הִיּוּ מַופִּירָם לְאָנָשָׁה יָמֵל הַמְרָהָמָה הַחָוָה סְכוֹנִים אָמְנָה, אָצֵי רָק בֵּשֵׁה שְׁמה.

Had these people been instructed that expansion and innovation are good indeed, but only when needed to enrich language and not for rhymes, then our language would be beautiful and rich today.

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7. וֹשֵׁנְי הָרָהָרָות יָמֵל לְעַתְשָׁר יָא שֶׁפֶטְנָה הַרְבּוֹת, וּלָתָמְבָּא מָשְׁפַּטְמָאֵי בִּהְמָ בּוֹדְרוֹר.

And these two benefits could have enriched our language a lot, had they been appropriately used.

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In addition to these three main sequences of verbal forms, the markers also appeared in several other patterns in revival-period Hebrew. For

43. A. Z. H. Ginsberg, על פרשת דריך א (al parašat draxim a), 1895, p. 176.
44. N. Sokolow, שנאת עולם לעם עולם (sinʾat ʿolam leʿam ʿolam), 1882, p. 11.
45. J. Klausner, לשון יבונ –شبه היה, (The Hebrew Language – Live Language), 1896, p. 73.
46. J. Klausner, The Hebrew Language – Live Language, p. 10.
example, there are a few cases of *lu* and positive *ʿilmale* with verbs in the *yiqtol* form in both the antecedent and the consequent (example 8).47

But this imitation has led to the use of Orientalisms in our literature. If any of them were translated precisely into a European language, It would arouse unparalleled disgust and nausea.48

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**Chart 2: Sequences of verbal forms of counterfactual conditionals in the Revival period**

The three most common sequences of verbal forms typically relate to the past and express a counterfactual conditional that has not occurred in the past. In rare cases, they represent a hypothetical condition. In contrast, *yiqtol-yiqtol* represents only hypothetical conditionals.

Revival-period Hebrew inherited all counterfactual conditional markers from the preceding stages of the language, along with their usage: The Biblical markers appear with Biblical sequences of verbal forms and the Rabbinic markers with Rabbinic ones. Biblical Hebrew uses the marker *lu* with *qatal-qatal* to expresses past counterfactual conditionals. The consequent can be

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47. *Lule, ʿilule* and negative *ʿilmale* never co-occur with *yiqtol* forms.
48. J. Klausner, *The Hebrew Language – Live Language*, pp. 70–71
introduced by *ki* or by *ki+ʾaz/ʿata*, but these markers are non-obligatory.\(^{49}\) The markers *ʾilu* and *ʾilmale*, and the *haya-haya* and *qatal-haya* sequences, emerged in Rabbinic Hebrew.\(^{50}\) In Biblical and Rabbinic Hebrew, the markers also appear with other sequences of verbal forms, such as sentences expressing hypothetical future or present conditionals, employing *qotel* or *yiqtol* forms in both the antecedent and the consequent.\(^{51}\)

Revival-period Hebrew keeps the correlation between the marker and the sequence of verbal forms according to the original layer. Biblical sequences favor biblical markers, and Rabbinic sequences prefer Rabbinic markers. In this period, both *lu* and *ʾilu* appear with *qatal-haya*. They differ in their distribution with the other two patterns, however: *ʾilu* prefers *haya-haya*, whereas *lu* distinctly favors *qatal-qatal*. The negative markers *lule* and *ʾilmale* also preserve the correspondence between the origin of the marker and the forms’ sequence: the biblical *lule* occurs more frequently with biblical *qatal-qatal*, whereas the Rabbinic *ʾilmale* occurs more regularly with Rabbinic *haya-haya*.\(^{52}\)

In Biblical Hebrew, *ʾim* is used as a conditional marker only in factual and concessive conditionals.\(^{53}\) *ʾim* is found in counterfactual conditionals in some Babylonian Talmud manuscripts, but it is difficult to know whether it is an original or late use.\(^{54}\) In the interim period, during which Hebrew was used solely as a literary language, the use of *ʾim* in counterfactual conditionals is common.\(^{55}\) In this period, the counterfactual conditional was generally expressed using past tense verbs, but sometimes also using other forms, mainly *yiqtol*.\(^{56}\) In the modern writings that preceded the revival of spoken

\(^{49}\) Classical Biblical Hebrew used only the marker *ki* in this context; later Biblical Hebrew also used the bare markers *ʿaz* and *ʿay*. (D. Talshir, "משתנה של הניבית המקראית המאוחרת בברשום המקרא אילוنشرו יבשת烟草 המאוחר" [The Autonomic Status of Late Biblical Hebrew], *Language Studies* 2–3 [1987], p. 170).

\(^{50}\) In Rabbinic Hebrew, the consequence is not introduced by *ki*-phrases (D. Talshir, “Late Biblical Hebrew,” p. 170).

\(^{51}\) A.B. Davidson, *Hebrew Syntax*, Edinburgh, 1896, p. 180; M.Z. Segal, “Conditional clauses,” pp. 206–207; M. Mishor, *משר $#20hydrv אצט$20s怎么看* (The Tense System in Tannaitic Hebrew), PhD Dissertation, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1983, pp. 393–394.

\(^{52}\) M. Bar-Ziv Levy, “Negative Counterfactual Conditionals,” pp. 186–187.

\(^{53}\) J. C. Beckman, “Conditional Clause: Biblical Hebrew,” p. 546.

\(^{54}\) E. A. Bar-Asher Siegal, “ʾilule and *ʾilmale – Part II,” §4.1.

\(^{55}\) C. Rabin, *Syntax of Post-Biblical Hebrew*, pp. 179–180; L. Kahn, *Hasidic Hebrew*, p. 307; L. Kahn, *Late Enlightenment Hebrew*, p. 100.

\(^{56}\) M. Goshen-Gottstein, *Mediaeval Hebrew*, p. 245; C. Rabin, *Syntax of Post-Biblical Hebrew*, pp. 181–182; L. Kahn, *Late Enlightenment Hebrew*, p.137; L. Kahn, *Hasidic Hebrew*, p. 309–310.
Hebrew, counterfactuals were very diverse. In the Hebrew of the Enlightenment period, the most common pattern is qatal-qatal,\(^57\) whereas in Hassidic literature, it is haya-haya.\(^58\)

| 1. ʾilu, positive ʾilmale, ʾim + Haya qotel-haya qotel |
| 2. lu, ʾilu, positive ʾilmale + Qatal-haya qotel |
| 3. lu + Qatal-(ki+ʾaz/ʿata) qatal |
| 4. lu, positive ʾilmale + Yiqtol- Yiqtol |

Chart 3: The counterfactual conditionals’ constructions in the revival period

In conclusion, during the revival period, the markers and sequences of verbal forms all originate in the previous layers of Hebrew. Furthermore, the correspondence between the origin of the marker and the sequence of verbal forms is preserved. In other words, revival-period Hebrew adheres to the original constructions found in previous texts without breaking them into independent components.

The most common patterns in this period are the Rabbinic haya-haya and qatal-haya, both of which have compound past forms in the consequent, and the Biblical qatal-qatal, which has a simple past-tense form in the consequent, but which, unlike in Biblical Hebrew, must include ki in the consequent. Some of the counterfactual conditionals’ characteristics in the revival period continue Medieval Hebrew use, including the use of ʾim and the distinction between the two meanings of ʾilmale through spelling.\(^59\)

3. THE REGULARIZATION OF COUNTERFACTUALS CONDITIONALS IN THE POST-REVIVAL PERIOD

As seen, Revival-period counterfactuals conditionals were characterized by linguistic diversity that was inherited from previous layers of the language.

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57. The consequent usually begins with a ki phrase (L. Kahn, Late Enlightenment Hebrew, p. 93).
58. The consequent generally remains unmarked (L. Kahn, Hasidic Hebrew, pp. 309–310).
59. On the important role played by Interim-Period Hebrew in the crystallization of MH see R. Stern, “What Does Modern Hebrew Continue? The Case of the Presentatives הַכְּחָנִי and הַרְכָּזִי” (in this volume).
During the Mandate period, regularization processes took place, reducing this variety by eliminating variants of both markers and patterns.

3.1 The Regularization of the Counterfactual Conditional Markers

As stated, the four positive counterfactual conditionals markers in the revival period were *lu*, *ʾilu*, *ʾim*, and positive *ʾilmale*. In 1950, after the Mandate period, the two common markers were *lu* and *ʾilu* (*ʾilu* was much more common). The other two markers — *ʾim* and positive *ʾilmale* – were extremely rare in the corpus. But the explanation for the rarity of each is different.

The disappearance of positive *ʾilmale* largely took place during the Mandate period. At the time of the state's founding, clause-initial *ʾilmale* was predominantly negative, although occasional instances of the positive marker still occurred. Sporadic instances of positive clause-initial *ʾilmale* persisted even in later periods, in texts by revival-generation writers. The pace at which regularization occurred differed from genre to genre, and there are even differences within genres, for instance, between newspapers aimed at different sectors. Despite the differences between genres, and the residual late occurrences, we can say that positive *ʾilmale* has effectively disappeared from the language. The fact that contemporary native speakers unschooled in the relevant Hebrew literature are unfamiliar with positive *ʾilmale* indicates that it has virtually become extinct.

Why was the positive meaning of *ʾilmale* discarded? As mentioned, the existence of two opposite meanings was a source of confusion already in the Medieval period. It led to the introduction of a rule for differentiating between them in writing. However, with the revival of spoken Hebrew, the confusion emerged again since the two meanings are pronounced identically. The potential for confusion led the language authorities to recommend using *ʾilmale* in negative contexts only. This case is an unusual one, in which the authorities rejected a literary form that has its roots in Classical sources. The

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60. M. Bar-Ziv Levy, “Negative Counterfactual Conditionals,” pp. 193–195.
61. On linguistic features of revival-era Hebrew that persisted for decades in the language of the revival generation, see Y. Reshef, *Historical Continuity*, p. 15.
62. M. Bar-Ziv Levy, “Negative Counterfactual Conditionals,” p. 194.
63. Z. Ben-Haim, “How should we use *ʾilmale*,” p. 27.
64. Z. Ben-Haim, “How should we use *ʾilmale*,” p. 30; Y. Avineri, *The Hand of the Tongue*, p. 34; I. Perets, *Guide to the Hebrew Language*, p. 234; A. Bendavid and H. Shay, *Language Guide*, p. 143.
language authorities' preference for negative 'ilmale and their rejection of the positive use, prevalent in the Babylonian Talmud, may have been influenced by pre-revival Hebrew literature, which used positive 'ilmale but distinctly favored the negative one. Since 'ilmale was mostly confined to the written language, the opinion of the language authorities apparently carried some weight. The survival of the negative meaning in MH seems to have been motivated by two additional factors: the etymology (the presence of the element lo) and by analogy to lule and 'ilule. The impact of these factors was already evident in written Hebrew of the pre-revival period and grew stronger after the revival of Hebrew as a spoken tongue.

The decline of the positive meaning was accompanied by a decrease of the yod-final spelling, and by a growing dominance of the etymological spelling with aleph, not only in the case of 'ilmale but also in the case of lule and ilule. This process too occurred in the Mandate period. During the revival period and the Mandate period, Rabbeinu Tam's rule, (i.e., aleph-final negative, yod-final Positive) was followed very strictly. But in the post-1948 period, this situation changed drastically. Aleph-final ilmale continued to denote the negative meaning, but yod-final ilmale was more frequently negative as well. In other words, while in the revival period, the spelling with yod was a fairly reliable indication of positive meaning, it lost this function in later periods.

Unlike positive ilmale, it seems that im was common in the spoken language in counterfactual conditionals early in MH. Its rarity in the written corpus in 1950 reflects a prescriptive approach that opposes its non-classic use in counterfactual conditionals. Mordechai Ben-Asher wrote in 1972 that all the grammar books he examined do not mention the use of im in counterfactual conditionals, and thus they ignore the common use in Modern Hebrew. Later standard literature sometimes expressly opposes this use.

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65. On the influence of pre-revival Hebrew on the formation of MH see e.g., L. H. Glinert, "למקורות העברית המודרנית: עדות בתכונת המילים של חסוד ולו" (On the Source of Modern Colloquial Hebrew: The Covert Syntax of Yellin's Primer), Leshonenu 55, (1990) pp. 107–126; Y. Reshef, "From Written to Spoken Usage."
66. M. Bar-Ziv Levy, “Negative Counterfactual Conditionals,” pp. 195–196.
67. M. Ben-Asher, Syntax of Modern Hebrew, p. 147.
68. See e.g., A. Bendavid and H. Shay, Language Guide, p. 143; D. Harband, Kicur Šulhan 'arux, p. 18 (note). Nowadays, this approach continues in Hebrew-teaching, as a first or second language. Though 'im is the most common marker in counterfactual conditionals today, many textbooks do not mention at all the possibility of using it in counterfactual conditionals.
Despite the opposition, the use of 'im in counterfactual conditionals became very dominant in contemporary Hebrew. In the *Maariv* corpus in 1980, 'im occurs in 11% of the counterfactual conditionals (8 times), while in 1990, it appears in 30% of the cases (25 times). This process reflects the weakening of the prescriptive approach, which allows colloquial-language characteristics in artistic and written language.\(^{69}\)

In sum, looking at a written corpus from the Mandate period, it appears that 'im and positive 'ilmale were ceased to be used, leaving only two positive counterfactual conditionals markers – *lu* and 'ilu. But from the perspective of our time, these findings seem puzzling. Positive 'ilmale is not used today at all, whereas 'im is very common in counterfactual conditionals. This case highlights the need to be extra careful in research that relies on corpora from the first decades of MH because of the dominance of the prescriptivist approach in this period, which can lead us to erroneous conclusions.\(^{70}\) Therefore, external evidence from that period should be sought, as well as later corpora, which can help to shed light on findings from earlier corpora.

### 3.2 The Regularization of the Counterfactual Conditional Verbal Forms

As stated above, in the revival period, there were three main sequences of verbal forms to express counterfactual conditionals. The *qatal-haya* sequence, featuring a simple past form in the antecedent and a compound past form in the consequent, favors all conditional markers. The *haya-haya* sequence originates in the Rabbinic literature and favors the Rabbinic marker 'ilu, and also 'im; and *qatal-qatal*, which originates in the Bible appears most often with the Biblical *lu*. In the course of the regularization process, *qatal-qatal* was discarded altogether, leaving two options.

The decline of *qatal-qatal* largely took place during the Mandate period. In the *Haaretz* corpus, it dropped from 13% of the instances in 1920 to less than 1% in 1950.\(^{71}\)

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69. See M. Bar-Ziv Levy, *The Cinematic Representation of Hebrew Speech [1932–1988]* (PhD Dissertation, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2017) for other colloquial-Hebrew characteristics which were not represented in formal or artistic texts at the beginning of the state period, and later became dominant in such texts as well.

70. Y. Reshef, *Hebrew in the Mandate Period*, pp. 299–315.

71. Instances of the verb *yaxol* in the simple past, which appear in the consequent to this day, were not counted.
Why was the qatal-qatal construction discarded after the revival period? Its disappearance is apparently related to disappearance of the modal marker *ki-*. It is a cross-linguistic feature of conditional sentences, both factual and counterfactual, that the consequent expresses modality.\(^{72}\) Modality can be expressed in various ways, including by means of verbs, adjectives, adverbs, etc.\(^{73}\) In contemporary Hebrew, the consequent of a counterfactual conditional sentence is modalized in one of two ways: by means of a compound verb or by means of the modal verb *yaxol* “be able.” Revival-period Hebrew had a third way to express the modality of the consequent: using *ki* (ʾaz/ʿata), meaning “indeed, in fact”.\(^{74}\)

In the revival period, qatal-qatal sequences in which the antecedent comes first consistently feature a *ki*-phrase in the consequent, except for consequents with the verb *yaxol* “be able.” During the Mandate period, this rule was almost completely preserved.\(^{75}\) The use of *ki* became rare in the post-Mandate period. In 1920 it appears in 19 counterfactual conditional constructions (28%), in

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\(^{72}\) A. Kratzer, “Modality,” in Semantik: Ein internationales Handbuch zeitgenössischer Forschung, (eds. A. Von Stechow and D. Wunderlich; Berlin: De Gruyter, 1991), pp. 639–650. Modality concerns the speaker’s attitude to the proposition expressed by an utterance. For our purpose the important point is the ability to express states of affairs that do not hold in the real world as we know it (N. Boneh, “Mood and Modality: Modern Hebrew,” *EHLL*, II (2013), pp. 693–703 and references therein).

\(^{73}\) N. Boneh, “Mood and Modality: Modern Hebrew.”

\(^{74}\) In the Bible *ki* has a similar modal meaning (“indeed, in fact”) not only in counterfactual conditionals but also in other environments, for example: “But Sarah denied it, saying, 'I did not laugh,' for she was afraid. And He said, 'No, but you did laugh!'” (Gen 18:15). Each means of expressing the modality is sufficient by itself, but they can also be combined.

\(^{75}\) With the negative markers the pattern is not maintained (M. Bar-Ziv Levy, “Negative Counterfactual Conditionals,” p. 191).
1950 in 12 constructions (5%) and in 1960 in only 3 constructions (1%). In contemporary Hebrew, when the antecedent precedes the consequent, the latter usually lacks any initial marker, though in rare cases it is introduced by the marker 'az.\(^76\)

Chart 5: The decline of ki (‘az/‘ata) in the consequent of counterfactual conditionals

As stated, in the revival period, \(ki\) was mandatory in \(qatal-qatal\), unlike in Biblical Hebrew, where it is optional, and despite the tendency in the revival period to emulate the language of the Bible. In later stages of Hebrew, \(ki\) lost its modal function and therefore ceased to be used as a means of modalizing the consequent in conditionals. This left only the two other means: the compound past or the modal verb \(yaxol\). As a result, the \(qatal-qatal\) sequence, in which the consequent features a simple past verb, was ruled out, except when that verb is \(yaxol\).\(^77\) The \(yiqtol-yiqtol\) sequence, which was rare in the revival period, was also ruled out and practically not used in the Mandate period.

During the revival period, conditional markers appeared in the sequences of verbal forms in which they were used in their original layer of the language. This correlation was preserved in 1920 but later blurred.\(^78\) At the end of the Mandate period, \(lu\) and \('ilu\) appear in the two remained sequences, \(qatal-haya\), and \(haya-haya\), without a significant difference between them. The three

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76. T. Bar, “Conditional Clause,” p. 550; M. Ben-Asher, *Syntax of Modern Hebrew*, p. 127.
77. L.H. Glinert, “The Hypothetical Conditional,” p. 51.
78. In 1920 \(qatal\) forms occurred in the consequent of counterfactual conditionals 9 times with \(lu\) (15%) and not once with \('ilu\) (0%). In 1940, \(qatal\) forms occurred in the consequent once with \(lu\) (6%), and 7 times with \('ilu\) (5%)
negative markers favor qatal-haya but also occur, albeit much less frequently, in haya-haya. 79 ʾim appears only in haya-haya (and is rare in the corpus).

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | lu,ʾilu, positiveʾilmale, ʾim | + Haya-qotel haya qotel |
| 2. | lu, ʾilu, positiveʾilmale | + Qatal-haya qotel |
| 3. | lu | + Qatal-(ki+ʾaz/ʿata) qatal |
| 4. | lu, positiveʾilmale | + Yiqtol-Yiqtol |

Chart 6: Counterfactual Conditionals in the Mandate Period

Nowadays, there is a register differentiation between the two counterfactual conditionals sequences of verbal forms – qatal-haya is characteristic of more formal writing. There is probably also a slight semantic difference between the patterns: both can relate to the past, but in the haya-haya pattern, the antecedent is not necessarily evaluated in the past relative to speech time. Accordingly, it can describe an option that is still possible, though improbable, and can even be interpreted as a suggestion for future action.

| Colloquial Hebrew | High register Hebrew |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| ʾim + Haya qotel-haya qotel | ʾilu/ lu, + Qatal-haya qotel |
| ʾilu/ lu, + Haya qotel-haya qotel |

Chart 7: Counterfactual Conditionals in Contemporary Hebrew

In sum, the regularization of counterfactual conditionals involved the disappearance of qatal-qatal and yiqtol-yiqtol. As a result, two sequences of verbal forms remained in contemporary Hebrew, featuring a register and semantic differentiation between them. Unlike in the revival period, the correlation between the marker and the sequence of verb forms is not maintained anymore, and the various components of counterfactual conditionals became independent.

79. This is the situation in my corpus; previous studies yielded similar findings (M. Ben-Asher, Syntax of Modern Hebrew, p. 123; T. Bar, Conditional Sentences, p. 151).
4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This paper describes the formation of grammatical construction in MH through regularization, i.e., a process that did not involve the creation of new linguistic phenomena but only the selection of certain options from a range of revival-era variants. The variants that remained after this process underwent differentiation in terms of their register and meaning.

During the revival period, counterfactual conditionals were characterized by variability in markers and constructions compared to today. The numerous variants that coexisted during the revival period originated in earlier stages of Hebrew. Biblical markers appear in the Biblical constructions, whereas Rabbinic markers appear in the Rabbinic constructions. This fact reflects adherence to the Classical sources and perhaps even dependence on them. Other revival-period characteristics reflect Medieval practices, such as the non-classic use of ʾim in counterfactual conditionals and the use of spelling to distinguish between the two meanings of ʾilmale, which is a Medieval convention but not a Classical one.

The regularization process involved discarding some variants: positive ʾilmale and the yod-final spelling, the qatal-qatal, and the yiqtol-yiqtol sequences of verbal forms. This has left us with two constructions, both with a compound past form in the consequent but differing in the antecedent structure: one has a compound past in the antecedent (ḥaya-ḥaya) and the other a simple past (qatal-ḥaya). These two constructions have undergone

![Chart 8: Regularization in the Crystallization of Modern Hebrew](image-url)
differentiation in their register and meaning; *haya* - *haya* is less formal and can express hypothetical rather than just counterfactual conditional.

The regularization of the counterfactual conditionals largely occurred during the Mandate period, when Hebrew began serving as the main language of everyday life in the Yishuv.\textsuperscript{80} However, some of the phenomena discarded continued to occur in later periods, albeit sporadically, such as positive ʾilmale and simple past in the consequent. This reflects the polychronic character of written MH. Written texts from the revival period, for example, often included archaic features that were not characteristic of the Hebrew of the time. Similarly, texts written in the first decades after independence could include revival-era features that had already been discarded from the language but persisted sporadically, especially in the language of older writers.

\footnote{80. B. Harshav, *Language in Time of Revolution*, Jerusalem: Carmel, 2008; Y. Reshef, *Hebrew in the Mandate Period*.}