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CONFLICT AND RECONCILIATION MOTIVES IN THE HEBREW CURRICULUM FOR THE ARABIC JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN ISRAEL

Abstract:

The curriculum for Hebrew literature in the Arab sector (Arabic Junior high schools) was approved by the Minister of Education and Culture in 2008. Along with declared aims connected to the discipline itself, such as the usefulness of the Hebrew language and the beauty of its literature, the curriculum also includes specific ideological social and civic aims. These include acquiring knowledge about the cultural traditions of the Jewish people as well as developing consideration for their social and cultural sensitivities. The three anthologies based upon the very curriculum were published in 2009. The fundamental assumption of this research, which relies on an extensive foundation of theoretical work, maintains that the literary curriculum does have the ability to achieve these social aims. The aim of the research was to examine how the corpus of Hebrew literature in the curriculum reflects the relationship between Arabs and Jews in Israel, as individuals and as representatives of different cultures and traditions especially concerning the issues of conflict and reconciliation.
The findings, based upon combined qualitative content analysis tools, revealed that only a small part (12%) of the literary works in the three anthologies indeed dealt with matters of conflict and reconciliation. Most of those literary works avoid direct implications to the Arab-Israeli coexistence.

Keywords:

Conflict and reconciliation, Hebrew Curriculum for the Arabic sector, school readers.

JEL Classification: A30

ıntroduction

Teaching Hebrew language & literature in the Arab sector from the establishment of the State to the present day

English was the language of instruction in Arab high schools during the period of the British Mandate in most subjects (in some subjects it was Arabic). During this period, the Arabs did not learn Hebrew at all. Already during Israel's War of Liberation in 1948, the provisional Jewish government decided to impose a military government on the Galilee, the" Triangle", the Negev, and the cities Ramla, Lod, Jaffa, Acco and Migdal, which were inhabited by a decisive majority of Arabs. The legal framework of this Israeli action was based on adopting and integrating the emergency defense regulations of the British Mandatory Government of 1945 within the legal system of the new state. This military framework imposed on Israel's Arab population special laws, regulations and procedures.

As a consequence, beginning with 1948 until the gradual cessation of the enforcement of these laws and regulations in 1966, the Military Government was the primary Israeli institution that interacted with Israel's Arab minority, which during this period numbered 12% of the population of the country.

The Military Government was a unit within the Israeli army attached to the Central Command, but whose day-to-day activities were subordinate to all three Army Commands: North, Central and South. Despite the name ‘Military Government’, it was clear that its central mission was civilian: special administration of Israel's Arab minority. This administration was presented as security supervision over a hostile population which was also defined as a fifth column that might join with external enemies of the state. It manifested itself in many ways including limiting freedom of movement, freedom of assembly, and freedom of activity in general as well as supervision over education (Boimel, 2002). In accordance with this supervision, the first inspectors of teaching Hebrew to Arabs, during this period, were Jews (Shohamy, E. et al, 1996).

The teaching of Hebrew to Arab citizens began immediately after the establishment of the State. This was a compulsory subject in every Arab-speaking elementary school (from fourth grade and up) as well as in high schools, for 4 -5 hours a week, and needless to say, in teacher seminaries. The teaching of Hebrew in the Arab sector was not easily received either by the Jews or by the Arabs, and was accompanied by many disputes in the newspapers of the time. Over time, two opposing approaches to this issue developed, as demonstrated by Shohamy& Spolsky (1999; 2002).

Opponents were against the teaching of Hebrew to Arabs for political and religious reasons while supporters supported it for the following reasons (*The Encyclopedia of Education*, part B, page 663): practical reasons-integrating the Arabs in the life of the country and ideological reasons-strengthening their loyalty to the laws and institutions of the country. Both of these reasons, practical and ideological, had clear and immediate implications for the molding of the identity of pupils in Israel's Arab sector.

Between 1948 and 1958, three different study plans were written for Arab elementary schools (Shohamy & Spolsky, 1999). In every one of these, the teaching of Hebrew was designed to achieve three major goals: as a key to study the Hebrew nation and its culture; as a means for unmediated written and oral communication with the Jewish sector; and as an instrument to cultivate Israeli citizenship. Examining these three aims shows that they focused on becoming acquainted with the Jewish people and its culture. In 1959, a study plan for elementary schools was published. The aims mentioned above served as its basis, although wider aims were added such as bridging the divide and bring the two peoples closer together.

In addition it contained discussions about general didactic issues. In comparison, the teaching of Hebrew in the high schools remained devoid of any study plan. At the beginning of the 1960s, the Ministry of Education published a study plan for the teaching of Hebrew in Arab high schools. Its title was *Study Plan for the Teaching of Hebrew and Hebrew Literature in Arabic High Schools* in grades 9-12. The authors of this plan had two principal goals for the teaching of Hebrew language and literature:

a. To provide the Arab pupil with fundamental accurate and comprehensive knowledge of the Hebrew language. The ability to understand all the reading material as well as practical written and spoken instructions in the language for both practical and cultural needs.

b. To open a gateway for Arab students to Israeli culture and its values, past and present, enabling them to understand the social and cultural life of the Jewish community in the State of Israel.

In 1972, the Ministry of Education and Culture in cooperation with the Department of Curricula in the University of Haifa formed a committee whose task it was to prepare study plans in Hebrew for Arab students. But it wasn't until 24 March 1975 that a study plan for high schools was finally approved by the Minister of Education and Culture. In 1976, the new curriculum for high school (relating to both studies and matriculation) was published in a special General Director’s Bulletin.

It was determined that within the framework of the curriculum, high schools would study Hebrew language and literature for a period of three years for a minimum of four study units and a maximum of six study units, and that each study unit would be budgeted 90 hours.

Despite the contexts of command and control of the period in question during which the plan was prepared (1976), still affected by the prior period of Military Government, an Arab inspector was appointed to supervise Hebrew teaching in the Arab sector. This constituted a half time position until 1995. The inspector's job included overseeing the absorption of new teachers into the system, visiting schools (fieldwork), preparing curricula and overseeing their implementation, preparing teachers to teach according to these curricula and above all preparation and evaluation of matriculation exams. (Shohamy, E. et al, 1996).

Examining the aims of the Hebrew literature curriculum for pupils studying in Arab schools stated in its preface shows that it was designed to:

- enable competent communication with Jewish citizens
- facilitate the integration of the pupils into the life of the country
- prepare graduates of Arab high schools to be absorbed into institutions of higher learning in Israel
- enable the pupil to become acquainted with the main areas of the cultural and literary heritage of the Jewish people throughout the ages and to appreciate Hebrew culture
- nurture esthetic sensibility through familiarity with the functions of linguistic structure in both poetry and prose, expression of different contents and recognizing the degree of matching between content and form (1976 curriculum, pp.4-5).

Apart from the last aim which relates only to literature for literature's sake, all the other aims see literature as a means to achieve civic and cultural goals.

From this we may learn that the declared aims of the curriculum related to the communication and literacy needs of the students along with the need to become integrated into the cultural discourse of Israeli society by becoming acquainted with its culture and tradition while avoiding conflicts and texts that might arouse "extreme reactions". In the new program of 2004, for high school students, units deal with dilemmas pertaining to identity conflicts as well as motives of war and peace (Zamir & Hauptman, 2010).

The advent of the 21st century, during which the new program was formulated, is characterized by three parallel trends within the Arab education system:

1- Equalization of budgets between the Jewish education system and the Arab education system according to the website of the Arab Education Department).

2- Reduction of the gaps in educational achievement between the Jewish educational system and the Arab educational system (Hirshfeld, 2001)

3- Elimination of the involvement of the Shin Bet (Israel's Internal Security Agency – analogous to the FBI) in the Arab educational system.

Starting from the academic year, 2015-2016, Hebrew as a second language has become compulsory subject to all Arab pupils from kindergarten to grade 12. This program, named "Hebrew on the sequence" aims at building open communication between the various populations, creating a dialogue between the Arab and Jewish cultures, narrowing social gaps as well as promoting the needed integration into Israeli society both economically and culturally (Education Ministry Updates,16/08/2015).

The role of literature in the process of political socialization: Conflict resolution & Reconciliation through literary texts

Literature has the potential to play a crucial role in Conflict resollution & Reconciliation. Political behavior studies show that patterns of political behavior**,** such as support for a certain political party, tolerance of minorities and support for freedom of speech are formed and internalized by the individual during childhood and adolescence. During these early stages of life, literature is considered a strong political socializing agent (Zamir, 2005, 2006). In his book *Education through art* (1967), Read, a pioneer in the development of the concept of peace culture, argues that literature is the best tool for cultivating personal relations, values and moral virtue. A function of literature and the arts in society and education, Read explains, is to expand human responsibility as well as ethical values. During early stages of life, literature is considered a strong political socializing agent among many others, such as family and school. Children's stories range from stories with a didactical content, at one end of the spectrum, to neutral content stories that apparently have no didactical intent at all at the other end. According to Stephens (1992), it is those stories that have a neutral didactic content that more easily influence the reader ideologically; Latent ideology in the story leaves the author above suspicion of political or ideological bias, so that it is easy for the readers, whatever their political views, to open their minds to the author's writing. Latent ideology is more easily absorbed by the reader since it does not meet with his immediate resistance. Therefore, inexplicitly stated ideology is often considered, and wrongly so, legitimate. Even stories that are apparently free of any ideological content will impart some kind of ideology; for example, a tale presenting a protagonist's way of life, which is supported by the author may assimilate ideological statement about what is and what should be. The values, constructing the ideology, touch upon the past, the present and the future: the traditional values, the prevailing ethics of the present, and the wish to create the values of the future (teaching values to children who will be tomorrow's grown-up citizens) in order to improve society (Stephens, 1992).

The theory of literary criticism that claims that literature instills values and shapes the identity of the reader can be divided into three approaches: the historical-documentary approach, the moral-ideological approach, and the socio-national approach (Feingold, 1977). The historical-documentary approach holds that literature is an important source of information about people, cultures and historical periods; knowing "where we come from" will help the reader answer the question about "where we are going." To "remember" is not a purely intellectual activity, but it can motivate people to act in the present and in the future. This approach holds that literature fulfils a very important function in instilling in the student a national education: reading literature describing the characteristics and the unique features of national life in the past, the reader-learner learns about herself/ himself as a member of a nation, intensifying her/his identification with his people and society (Cohen, 1985).

The moral-ideological approach maintains that literature is a means of instilling universal human values relevant to peace education; literature enables the reader to assimilate

important universal ideals and to deal with the negative influence of extraneous ideals. This approach stresses literary content that supports values claiming that "language is the means and literature is the form; neither the means nor the form possess any importance in themselves; they are important only because they support human values" (Fisher, 1972). Every discussion about social and moral values is not extraneous to literature and it is not "forced" upon it; on the contrary, it is an immanent part of the literary work. Levingston (1976) too favors character education through literature claiming: "In front of you, today, he is a pupil, but tomorrow he will be a citizen of the great wide world" (ibid. p. 73). The socio- national approach considers literature as a means of instilling in the pupil love and loyalty for his people, country and fatherland. One of the indications of this approach is that it can be felt strongly in periods of national crisis or mental stress; in such times, there is a greater desire to see literature as a means to refresh values or to restore them. An outstanding example of this approach can be found in an article written by Iram and Yaoz (1981) objecting to the prevalent trend to teach literature disassociated from any discussion of values, preferring to stick to the text and its poetic features and perennially trying to forge "tools of literary analysis." In their view, evading any ideological commitment in the realm of nationality, religion and state exerts a pernicious influence on the image and world of education.

The aim of the research

The aim of the research was to examine how the corpus of Hebrew literature in the Arab curriculum reflects the relationship between Arabs and Jews in Israel, as individuals and as representatives of different cultures and traditions especially concerning the issues of conflict and reconciliation.

The hypothesis of this research is that literature itself, especially as represented in textbooks, can be an instrument of socialization in general and a directed instrument for understanding the social ‘other’ in particular. The research question is thus: How are motives of Conflict and Reconciliation being represented in the Hebrew curriculum for the Arabic junior high schools in Israel?

Methodology

Content analysis is defined as a methodology in which a series of procedures is performed on the text with the intent to formulate a diagnosis of and significant generalizations from the text (Kripendorff, 2004).). The integrated content analysis methodology combines qualitative and quantitative techniques. In other words, the systematic production of valid deductions from within the given text, based upon the understanding and interpretation of the researcher (naturalistic generalization). At the same time, this would include the recognition of prominent elements that repeat themselves within the text itself. This method requires a detailed framework of criteria in order to classify statements and ideas into indisputable and independent categories. In order to balance out the weaknesses of the qualitative method, we have relied on a great many detailed quotations from the textbooks in order to preserve the maximum amount of accuracy when presenting the content (Weber, 1990).

The corpus of the research

The literary corpus chosen for this research comprised of 117 literary works included in three school readers, approved by the Minister of Education. The readers, entitled “Kerem”, were publishes in 2009 by "The Wadih" Publication, Haifa, for Hebrew studies in Junior high schools of the Arab sectors: 7th, 8th, & 9th grades.

The Categories, which were derived from the literary works, have been as follows:

Conflict resolution and reconciliation between humans

Conflict resolution and reconciliation between non- humans (Allegories).

Unresolvable violent conflicts (humans & non- humans).

Mere hope for peace

Reconciliation with nature (keeping the quality of the environment).

Findings

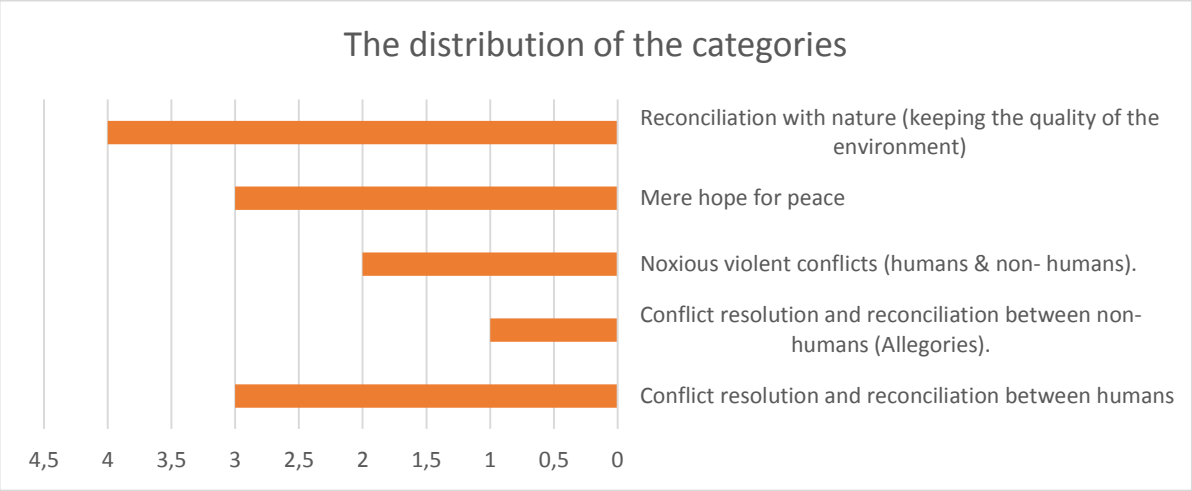
The findings, based upon combined qualitative content analysis tools, revealed that only a small part (12%) of the literary works, namely, merely 13 literary works in the three anthologies, indeed deal with matters of conflict and conducts of reconciliation:

Only 3 literary works deal with conflict resolution and reconciliation between humans, Just 1 literary work deal with conflict resolution and reconciliation between non- humans , 2 literary works deal with noxious violent conflicts (both humans & non- humans), 3 literary works deal with mere hope for peace and

4 literary works discuss reconciliation with nature.

Table No. 1:

Conflict resolution and reconciliation between humans	**Conflict resolution and reconciliation between non-humans (Allegories).**	**Noxious violent conflicts (humans & non-humans).**	**Mere hope for peace**	**Reconciliation with nature (keeping the quality of the environment)**
Who's to blame, by Fania Bergstein. 7th grade reader, p 41.	The legend of the Jorden river, by D. Omer, 7th grade reader, p 188.	The Scorpion & the frog by Aesop tales, 8th grade reader, p. 106	Let us make a little peace, by L.Naor, 8th grade reader, p. 170.	Even the ear needs environmental quality, by R. Shachar, 7th grade reader, p 57.
The farmer's sons, Aesop tales, 8th grade reader, p. 139.		The great wall of China, unknown, 9th grade reader, p. 21	A pigeon with an olive leaf, by L.Naor, 8th grade reader, pp. 182-183.	Air Pollution, unknown, 8th grade reader, pp. 143-144.
Long lasting friendship' by H. Matan, 9th grade reader, pp. 163-166.			Maybe this is the peace, by N. Jonathan, 9th grade reader, pp. 120-121.	How to behave in public places? Unknown, 8th grade reader, p. 213.
				The cellular phone, Unknown, 9th grade reader, pp. 151-252.



Graph No. 1: The distribution of the categories stemming of the corpus

The highest number of literary works (4) discuss reconciliation with nature.

Discussion & Conclusions

The relationships between the Jewish majority and the Arab minority in Israel are especially complicated. Those fragile relationships are primarily influenced by the unresolved Arab- Israeli conflict, since the establishment of Israel in 1948.

This year had marked the separation between the Arabic and the Hebrew education systems and each sector received separate and distinct curricula (Svirsky, 1990).

Yet, mutual language studies (Arabic to the Jewish sector or vice versa) as well as original literature seem to be an authentic source through which pupils can understand the culture of the "other". Mutual language and literature studies offer the reader the opportunity to learn about the "other" ,they help the reader to introduce himself to the narrative of the "other", and even enables him to experience a shred of contact with the "other", whether by way of the reading about heartrending experiences (Gordon, 1983) or identifying with the struggle opponent side.

The advantages of literary works of a second language become even more significant in the light of tensed relationships between parties, which are bound to nourish their negative images and stereotypes about each other through violent reality. However, the analysis of the selections included in the Kerem anthologies showes that the narratives avoid a profound and genuine discussion about the ongoing conflicts and the means for reconciliation between Arabs and Jews. The findings reveal that only a small part (12%) of the literary works, namely, merely 13 literary works in the three anthologies, indeed deal with matters of conflict and conducts of reconciliation. Moreover, the findings show that only three literary works deal with conflict resolution and reconciliation between humans: the first deals with conflict resolution and reconciliation between sisters, the second describes reconciliation between brothers and the third refers to certain ways of

maintaining a long lasting friendship. Within this category, the absenteeism of processes of conflict resolution and reconciliation between Arabs and Jews is evident.

Just one literary work deal with conflict resolution and reconciliation between non-humans while describing the reconciliation that comes after the rivalry between three brooks that finally unite to one river, the Jorden. Two literary works deal with noxious violent conflicts. The narrative about non- humans conveys the vicious nature of the scorpion. The narrative about humans describes the wars that led to the building of the Great Wall of China. Even though the Arab-Jewish long lasting violent conflict is evident in everyday life in Israel, the corpus portrays a noxious violent conflict, which occurred a long time ago, in a far away country.

Three literary works deal with the abstract hope for peace, not mentioning the disputes in Israel. Four literary works discuss reconciliation with nature and convey, pedagogically, how to keep the quality of the environment and maintain sustainability.

The absence of narratives about the Arab- Jewish continuing Conflict, as well as the nonappearance of episodes of relevant conflict resolution and reconciliation compel discussion in and of themselves. Derrida (1997) claims "there is absolutely nothing outside the text". That is to say, the phenomenon of absence from the text has a presence in itself from which questions naturally derive regarding that very omission. The omission of the Jewish-Arab conflict from the corpus seems to reflect great caution, taking into consideration the social and cultural sensitivities.

This existing gap between the Jews' and the Arabs' perceptions concerning educational decisions may stem, mainly from five crucial factors (Samucha 2001): 1. Jewish Dominance – The Jewish population built Israeli society and structured it according to its own specific insight and needs. The Arab minority, on the other hand, joined an existing society as a defeated minority. Therefore, the Arab population is inferior in the Israeli social structure, when it comes to the distribution of resources and policymaking. 2. Arabs' Link to the Palestinians and Arab Nationality – The ethnic roots, language, culture, and historical point of view of Israeli Arabs were all identical to their Palestinian counterparts until 1948. Therefore, they are loyal to Palestinian nationality, and many of them see their destiny as one they share with the Palestinian. 3. Islam - Religious views rarely limit themselves to lifestyle, and in the case of Arab Israelis, often affect their position towards the state and the Jewish majority. We can witness this development in the founding of Islamic political parties. 4. National Security – The complex link of Israel's Arabs with the Palestinians arouses suspicion among many Jews in Israel, and some see them as enemies. The second large political party's campaign slogan of the Feb. 10 general election 2009, "Without loyalty there is no citizenship", widely reflects this notion. 5. The Definition of Israel as a Jewish and Democratic State – Zionist ideology maintains that Israel is "the home of the Jewish People"; the dominant language is Hebrew language and its institutions and laws are of Jewish disposition (Amara, 2007).

The corpus at hand indeed conveys common universal-humanistic ideas of reconciliation and conflict resolution. Yet, the very fact that this corpus does not represent the acute Arab - Jewish conflict as well as the attempts to bridge it, indicates that the conflicting and vitriolic narratives about the costs of war and peace still remain an absolute taboo for the young youth.

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