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Code-switching: The case of ‘Israeli Arab’ students at the Arab American University-Palestine

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Abstract

This study aims at shedding the light on the factors lying behind switching to Hebrew, represented with age, gender, work history and place of residence the phenomenon of code-switching between Hebrew-Arabic among Israeli Arab students at the Arab American University in Palestine. It also studies how code-switching may affect the Palestinian identity of those students. The sample of this study is two-fold. The first was conducted quantitatively through randomly selecting 70 Israeli Arabs to answer an 18-item questionnaire. The findings were statistically analyzed using SSPS, showing the frequencies, values, means and standard deviation which were analyzed using content analysis. Furthermore, the reliability of the paper was tested using the Cranach Alpha formula of which the reliability coefficient was accepted and satisfied at 0.70. The researcher also conducted a qualitative approach through interviewing six students, analyzed using conversational discourse analysis. The study reveals that both age and place of residence were significantly different and affected the choice of Hebrew. The study also reveals that the unconscious and uncontrolled use of Hebrew was the most obvious reason behind switching, while there was also a considerable effect on students’ identity at 72%. Hence, the researcher recommends more research is needed for the study of power relations among social classes of Israeli Arab citizens.

Keywords: Code-switching, identity, Israeli Arabs