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On diglossia in Ancient Hebrew and its Graphic Representation

This article is to some extent a review of the works of Gary A. Rendsburg on diglossia in Ancient Hebrew¹, but it is more generally about the terminology used and the possibility of detecting diglossia in the ancient Hebrew texts, and more specifically about the graphic representation of linguistic phenomena, exemplified by diglossia.

"Diglossia refers to the phenomenon of two synchronic varieties of the same language, one used for colloquial and informal purposes, the other for literary and formal purposes" (Rendsburg, 1990, 2). Rendsburg follows here the definition of Charles Ferguson, who in his article² presented four examples of languages with diglossia, spoken Arabic vs. classical Arabic, Swiss German vs. standard German, Haitian Creole vs. standard French, and spoken Greek vs. literary Greek. These are fairly extreme examples, in the sense that the differences between the two varieties are quite big. But Ferguson assumes diglossia to be very widespread, and another scholar, Roy Andrew Miller, is of the opinion that "probably no language on earth has ever been written as it is spoken."³

If I understand Rendsburg correctly, diglossia would exist in any language that has the above-mentioned varieties, irrespective of how great the differences between the two are, or whether the differences are on the level of phonology, morphology, syntax or the lexicon⁴. If, on the other hand, I do not, he posits a diglossia for Hebrew, both ancient and late, that is more or less similar to the one we find in Arabic in modern times, i.e., the differences between the two varieties of language are rather extensive. This is perhaps a more correct understanding of his thesis; cf. the following⁵.

It is Rendsburg's hypothesis, that diglossia can be established for ancient Hebrew. More specifically, that "in Biblical Times two separate varieties of Hebrew could be distinguished: 1) a written dialect used for literary composition and for formal orations, and 2) a spoken language used for everyday communication." classical language." (Rendsburg, 1990, 19).

(Rendsburg, 1990, 3). His thesis is as such not new, but his is the first systematic treatment of the material.

Rendsburg opts for using the terms "written (dialect)" and "spoken (dialect)". For the former, there are other terms, like classical, standard, literary, and formal, and for the latter colloquial, substandard, popular, informal, vernacular, familiar, conversational, and vulgar. Rendsburg is aware of the shortcomings of the terms written and spoken, but he uses them, since they have become standard in the scholarly literature. I would prefer the terms colloquial and literary, for two reasons: 1) The difference between the two varieties is not clear-cut, as the terms written and spoken seem to indicate; one would also assume them to be mutually dependent. 2) The colloquial can be written, without for that matter becoming "written dialect"⁶, and vice versa. It is more meaningful to talk of "literary spoken language", or "written colloquial", than "spoken written variety", or the like.

Rendsburg posits diglossia in post-Biblical Hebrew: Qumran Hebrew (QH) is the literary variety, Mishnaic Hebrew (MH) the colloquial. "This diglossia can be retrojected to Biblical times. ...the literary dialect of post-Biblical times is the natural outgrowth of the earlier classical language. ... MH is ... the continuation of colloquial Hebrew in Biblical times." (Rendsburg, 1990, 15). This has also been proposed by other scholars.⁷

Rendsburg also assumes, that any regional dialects would have had more in common with each other than any of them did with the classical Hebrew in which the Bible is written. At the risk of simplifying the actual facts, he assumes the dichotomy of spoken vs. written Hebrew (Rendsburg, 1990, 21-22).

Rendsburg's method is as follows: Numerous usages, common in MH, that occur in isolated instances in Biblical Hebrew (BH), "are to be considered colloquialisms that have infiltrated the classical language." (Rendsburg, 1990, 23). As a control, he uses the post-Biblical Ben Sira, Daniel and the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS). If these usages are lacking or are rare in these works, he assumes that they are spoken forms. "Otherwise one might wish to label them late usages, regardless of dialect, whose origins may be found in their sporadic appearance in BH." (Rendsburg, 1990, 24)⁸. As a second approach, he uses the analogous diglossia in Arabic. Rare usages that run counter to the norms of BH grammar, but have parallels specifically in spoken, not written, Arabic, will be considered as forms of the spoken language.

The data Rendsburg uses in his study are purely grammatical, and mainly morphological. This he bases on the assumption that dialectal differences are best determined through morphology. Phonology is, of course, impossible to use, because of lack of evidence, and he assumes that "vocabulary differences are not always that great between written and spoken versions of the same language." (Rendsburg, 1990, 26-27).

Inspired by Kurth Sethe's article on the history of the Egyptian language⁹, and

his graphic representation of it, Rendsburg presents his results in a diagram (fig. 13, p. 184, a slightly "enlarged" version of fig. 12, p. 176), that I present here in a slightly different form; I have changed the inclination of the "graph", and written axes for time (T; the x-axis) and change (C; the y-axis), in order to make it clearer, and comparable to other diagrams in this article¹⁰. I will return later to the discussion of the criteria for discovering diglossia in ancient Hebrew.

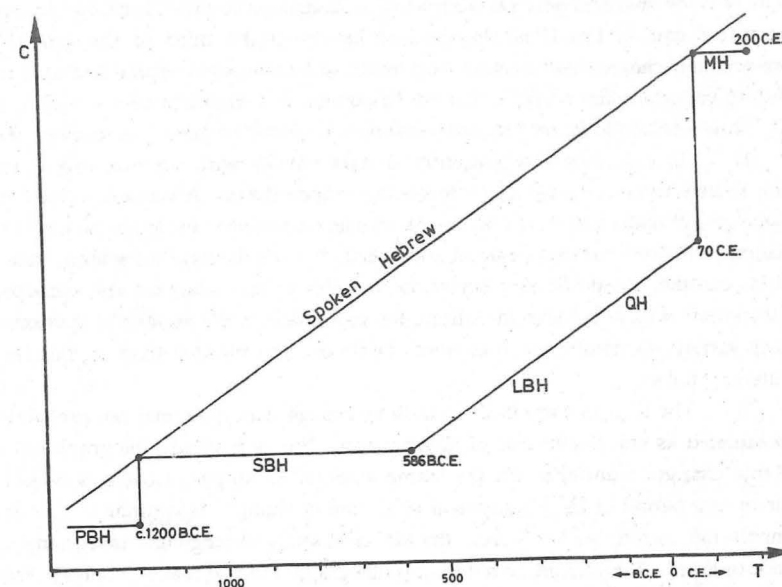


Figure 1: The development of spoken (colloquial) and written (literary) Hebrew, acc. to Rendsburg, 1990, 184. PBH = pre-Biblical Hebrew, SBH = Standard Biblical Hebrew, LBH = Late Biblical Hebrew.

Now any chart or diagram of this kind is meant to be read, and in this case, I simply quote the author: "At some time before the first extant Hebrew literature was composed, let us say c. 1200 B.C.E., there was a brief instant when the written and spoken dialects are very similar. With the standardization of classical Hebrew, especially from c. 1000 B.C.E.¹¹ onward in Jerusalem, and the continued development of the spoken idiom, the difference between the two dialects became more pronounced. After 586 B.C.E., written Hebrew begins to decay a bit. Although it continues the pre-Exilic literary standard, it is more susceptible to influences from the spoken idiom. Thus LBH and QH are placed on a slightly slanted line. The events of 70 C.E. and the end of Jewish life in Jerusalem soon thereafter brought the death blow to the literary Hebrew of BH/QH. Now the spoken language took over

as the means of writing, so that both the Mishna and the Bar Kokhba letters of the 2nd Century C.E. are couched in this idiom. Presumably, spoken Hebrew continued its natural development, until it too died out c. 200 C.E. or perhaps a bit later.

What the chart illustrates best of all is the diglossia of ancient Hebrew. Throughout the Biblical period, we can speak of two dialects, one written and one spoken, which differed from each other in many ways." (Rendsburg, 1990, 175).

In order to make a diagram that shows a fairly complicated development, one has to be somewhat abstract. On what level of abstraction to present it, is up to the scholar, of course, but it is also limited by the possibilities of the graphic representation chosen. All diagrams are meant to be read or interpreted, and it is therefore important that it say no more or less than it is intended to do.

Now let's turn to figure 1 again. What does it or can it really say or convey?¹²

1) To represent the written or literary variety with a single line is in order, since written language tends to become standardized. A single line for the spoken or colloquial variety is, on the other hand, somewhat more abstract, since variation must have occurred (dialects, sociolects). For the diagram to be more "true to life", the lines should be as many as the varieties of the colloquial, and perhaps the thickness of each line should indicate the proportion of the number of speakers of each variety. Some of these lines would be closer, others farther from the line for the literary dialect.

2) The lines that are inclined indicate change with time, that can probably be postulated as universally true of all languages. But as it stands, the graph says that this change is uniform, i.e. the "same amount" of language changes would occur in any period of its development (the "rate of change" is constant). This is definitely not correct; we know from the historical study of languages that changes are not uniform. This should be reflected in the graph, but is it really possible? We have no "unit of change" with which to work, and how should we evaluate changes in the different levels of language, i.e. the phonological, grammatical (morphological and syntactic), semantic, and lexical? As for Hebrew, details in the graph cannot be realized at present, since we do not know enough about the historical development of the (spoken) Hebrew language.¹³

3) How great was the difference between the colloquial and the literary varieties? I.e. how far should the lines be from each other? This is dependent upon the inclination of the line(s) for the colloquial. Since we assume a standardization for the literary dialect, it will be represented by a horizontal line, until it begins to change. How different is it from the colloquial, when it begins to "adapt itself to" that variety? This can probably not be ascertained. But this leads to another question:

4) Why is the literary (spoken) variety shown as changing between 586 B.C.E. and 70 C.E.? Or, to put it differently: Since the "changes" in question are "influences from the spoken idiom" (Rendsburg, cited above), how extensive must

these be, in order to be called changes, rather than simply "lapses" of the writer, i.e. colloquialisms that have found their way into the text? And if there are real changes in the literary language, why doesn't the line for that incline more and more towards the line for the colloquial? Perhaps this period should be represented by many lines, since the works are not all equally affected by the spoken language, i.e. they are written in a more, or less, "classical" (pre-exilic) Hebrew¹⁴.

5) Perhaps we should assume that however much the colloquial and literary varieties resembled each other, they were probably never exactly the same. This would be excluded by the very fact that they wrote only the consonants, and not the vowels (phonological level). Research has also shown that the differences between written and spoken are greater than one might think, especially in the structure of texts and sentences¹⁵. Thus the lines for the two varieties should never converge, only come (very?) close to each other.

A new version of the diagram can be seen in figure 2, where all the above mentioned points have been taken into consideration. The slanting of the lines and the distance between them must be accepted as tentative, corrections having to be made when we know more about the development of the Hebrew language. The number of lines for each variety is also tentative; we know that there existed dialects in ancient Hebrew, but not how many they were, or how different from each other.

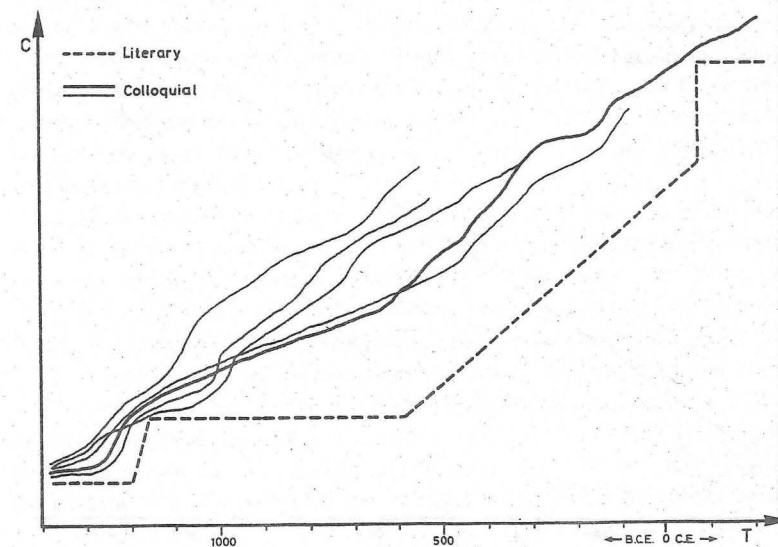


Figure 2: The development of colloquial and literary Hebrew. A modified version of the chart in Rendsburg, 1990, 184.

A point not mentioned above is the question of the beginnings of a language. When does Hebrew become a language on its own, instead of being a North-west Semitic dialect? This is perhaps of no special consequence for the question of diglossia in ancient Hebrew, yet it must be of some importance whether we include e.g. Moabite, Edomite and Ammonite (and even Ugaritic?) as dialects of Hebrew or reckon them as separate languages. The diagrams do not indicate any special beginning for Hebrew, simply because it would be saying too much; we do not know when it "began".

Since there are so many unknowns in figure 2, perhaps we should rest happy with a more abstract presentation¹⁶, more like Rendsburg's chart, but with points 3, 4 and 5 above taken into consideration. We would then get the diagram in figure 3. This diagram must be read as saying no more than the following: At some fairly early point in time, the written standard ceased to be used, because the colloquial had become very different from it. The new written standard was used until about the turn of the 7th century B.C.E., when it started to change, in that it began to resemble the colloquial more and more. Sometimes in the 1st century C.E., this standard was abandoned in favour of a written variety that was quite similar to the colloquial then spoken. This became the new standard written language, used until the language died out altogether sometimes around 200 C.E.

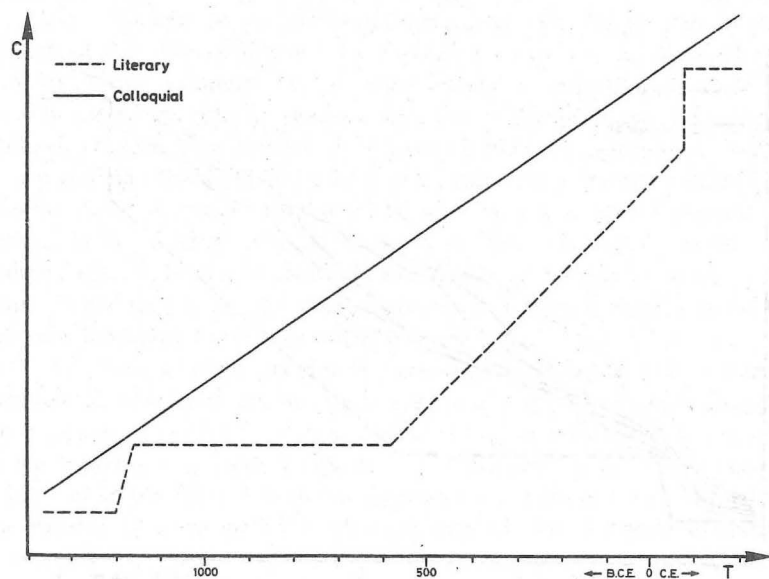


Figure 3: The development of colloquial and literary Hebrew, acc to Rendsburg, 1990, 184, but with slight modifications.

But is this a correct description (or picture) of what really happened? Are the examples in Rendsburg's studies really examples of the kind of diglossia he assumes existed in ancient Hebrew, or can they be explained differently?

Before we try to answer these questions, there are two further points regarding the chart, that should be mentioned, concerning the oldest and the most recent periods. According to Rendsburg, when he deals with the period before 1200 B.C.E., "during this earlier era a literary language existed which still employed the case endings, verbal moods, dual pronouns and verbs, and the internal Qal passive." (Rendsburg, 1990, 182). Presumably these features were also present in the spoken language, but had vanished by ca. 1200 B.C.E., when the new standard, based on the then spoken variety, was taken into use. But most of the features of this older literary language are based on vowel-variation, and were therefore not reflected in the written language. And if we follow Rendsburg's arguments, consecutive type (compound) verbs were only used in the literary language throughout antiquity, while the progressive type was used in the colloquial (Rendsburg, 1981, 675). But SBH is supposedly modelled after the spoken Hebrew of its time, and if that did not use consecutive forms, then it must be considered to be a "leftover" from an earlier period. This is a further argument for not letting the lines coincide at this point (cf. above, point 5). And if the writing was more or less the same in the earlier and the immediately following period, there is no need for the sudden break in the diagram around 1200 B.C.E. If these changes can be assumed, on the other hand, to have been reflected in the spoken literary (formal) variety, perhaps we should include a third line to indicate this; since only the consonants were written, a singular noun could be read with or without the case-ending. Perhaps the spoken literary variety even retained some of the older features mentioned above for a (short or long?) period of time after 1200 B.C.E. This we simply cannot know.

About the latest, MH period, Rendsburg says that "there can be no question that MH was the spoken Hebrew of Jews in Eretz Israel during the last few centuries B.C.E. as well as the first few centuries C.E." (Rendsburg, 1990, 15). Further, "although our present edition of the Mishna dates from R. Judah's activity c. 200 C.E., the Mishna refers to and even quotes authorities from centuries before, ... c. 200 B.C.E. ... the Copper Scroll from Qumran, ... is written in MH and is dated before 70 C.E." (Rendsburg, 1990, 14). This seems to me to state that the beginning of MH as a literary language lies before 70 C.E. Possibly even as early as 200 B.C.E.? This would also seem to indicate, that the Bar Kokhba letters, that are "written in good MH" (Rendsburg, 1990, 10), are written in a literary language that can hardly be said to be the colloquial of his day, if we allow for the continuing development of a colloquial, that originally served as the model for the new written standard. But how great the differences were depends upon when the MH literary standard was taken into use, and how much the colloquial had changed between that time and the writing of the

Bar Kokhba letters.

Taking these two further points into consideration, I present a new diagram (figure 4), where the literary language is represented with two lines, one for the written variety, the other for the spoken variety. The diagram is very tentative, and should merely be taken as an attempt to interpret the facts somewhat differently, and to further refine their presentation.

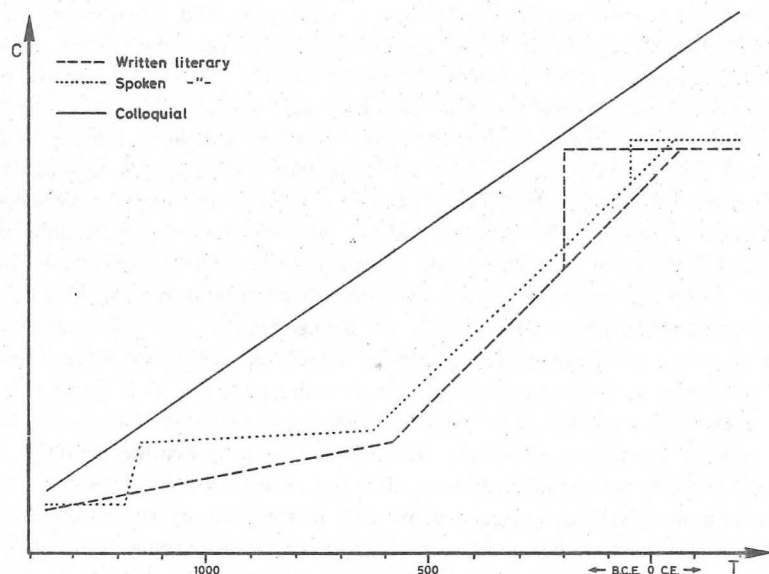


Figure 4: The development of colloquial and literary Hebrew; a modification of figure 3.

The above showed that the facts can be presented differently, without, in this case, affecting Rendsburg's hypothesis. The facts that he works with are anomalies, or exceptions to the (rules of) grammar as established in the various grammars that exist for the Hebrew language of the Old Testament. Many of these can be interpreted as colloquialisms, that have made their way into the literary language. But in order to be recognized as colloquialisms, they must anticipate later Hebrew usage (MH) or be related to comparable use in the cognate Semitic languages.¹⁷

One might expect to find colloquialisms especially in portions of the text that are direct quotations. But Rendsburg has shown convincingly that this is not the case, i.e. if we accept the 598 colloquialisms that he has isolated. This makes studies like that of J. MacDonald¹⁸ and others in a similar vein without much value; they assume direct quotations to be taken from the spoken language directly. But Rendsburg is probably right, when he says that "it is clear that when Biblical authors composed their works they couched everything, including direct speech, in the

Having isolated the colloquialisms, their presence has to be explained. Rendsburg's explanation (hypothesis) has been presented already. He posits diglossia, in the sense Ferguson used it, for ancient Hebrew. But are other explanations possible? That there were differences between the written and the spoken language seems obvious. But were they big enough to make the situation diglottic? If we assume it more likely for a colloquialism to make its way into a text when the difference between the colloquial and the literary is large, then it seems obvious that the literary will change more and more with time, following to some extent the changes in the colloquial. This is actually what happened, if we interpret the diagram correctly. Rendsburg shows clearly, that the number of colloquialisms increases in the later (post-Exilic) books (Rendsburg, 1990, 165-6). That there are fewer colloquialisms in the earliest literature could perhaps be explained as follows: The spoken language in the period 1200 - 586 B.C.E. simply did not change very much, and was fairly similar to the written language. Only after this period did the spoken language begin to change at a higher rate, and the written language reflected these changes.

An even easier solution would be simply to ascribe all the colloquialisms to slips of the pen of later scribes of the MH period and later. This is admittedly a possibility, and Rendsburg's argument against it fails to convince: "... one would be hard pressed to explain all anticipations of MH in the Bible in this manner. That is to say, an individual occurrence might be explained thus, but certainly the proliferation of such usages points to their authenticity." (Rendsburg, 1990, 23; cf. p. 173). The slips that are made must depend upon the education and skill of the scribe, and taking into account the long period of transmission of the text, it seems reasonable to assume that colloquialisms must have found their way into the text at some stage or stages in the transmission. That this is true in a non-Masoretic tradition can be seen in 1QIsaa,¹⁹ and in a Masoretic tradition, in the Chronicler's copying of Samuel and Kings. In the former, it is precisely "the proliferation of such usages" that can be explained with slips of the pen of a late scribe. It's simply not easy to refute this possibility on any legitimate grounds, unless it be proven that there is a limit to the number of colloquialisms (as Rendsburg seems to suggest), above which they must be ascribed to the spoken language at the time of composition of a work, rather than to the time of some later scribe/scribes.

In spite of the strong case for the above explanation, I will venture another hypothesis, based on the existence of several different (regional) dialects in ancient Israel²⁰. Rendsburg himself has written much on this subject²¹, and says that "theoretically there existed many different dialects of Hebrew in ancient Israel." (Rendsburg, 1990, 21). What I propose, is that SBH was based on one dialect (Judaean?), probably the dialect of the politically most influential part of the population, and that in this dialect the written and spoken varieties were fairly

close for several centuries. What happens around the Exile, is that traditions and their writing down is taken over by people speaking another dialect (Israelite?), a dialect more like the one that later becomes MH (or even the very same dialect?). Again, a "shift in dialects" may have occurred in the 2nd(?) century B.C.E., and the dialect that now became the basis for the written standard to be, was a slightly earlier stage of what became spoken MH. This hypothesis is illustrated by the diagram in figure 5. The lines for the different dialects are, as always, tentative, as is the slanting of the lines (rate of change). As can be seen, I assume that there existed several dialects, more or less different, some that simply became extinct, others that were absorbed by the more prestigious "standard" language of their time. I have also retained the two separate lines for the literary variety, as in fig. 4, above.²²

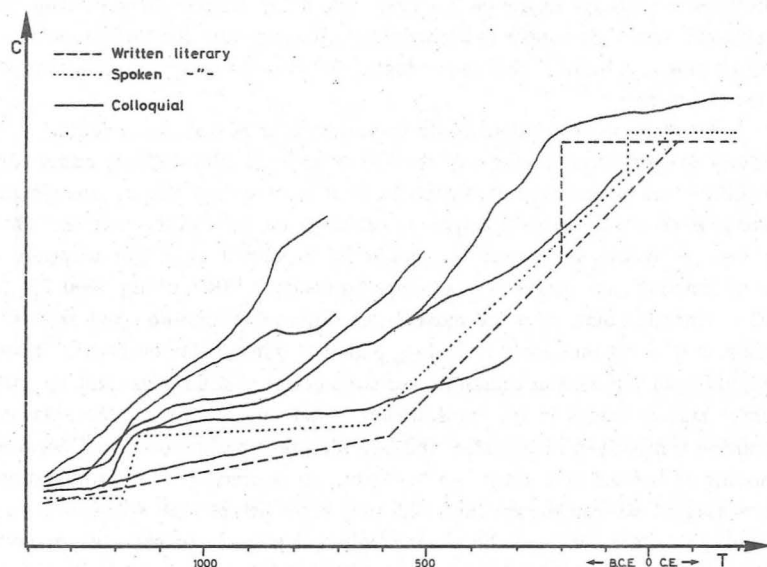


Figure 5: The development of the colloquial and literary varieties of the Hebrew language, according to a model based on different dialects, rather than diglossia.

I am not sure whether this hypothesis explains the facts better than Rendsburg's diglossia, but it does explain them. What I really want to say is not so much that Rendsburg is wrong, rather that his explanation is perhaps too simple. He at least admits to some simplification with regard to dialects (Rendsburg, 1990, 21-22, cf. above). A hypothesis should be able to explain the facts, but not at the risk of simplifying them beyond what is reasonable. Other factors may also have been important, as e.g. Aramaic, that influenced Hebrew more and more, although opinions differ on how much precisely it did affect it. Perhaps the term diglossia, in

some modified sense, could be used to describe the linguistic situation in ancient Israel, that must have been quite complex at times, with extensive bilingualism in certain periods (Hebrew and Aramaic), and perhaps even trilingualism in the centuries around the turn of the millennium (Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek). In still earlier times, they had at least contact with Phoenician and Akkadian, that may have had some effect for the development of Hebrew. To state it more simply: The situation is bound to have been more complex than suggested by Rendsburg's hypothesis.

It also seems somewhat precarious simply to project back into time a situation in a late period. This is done also in Arabic, but "the origins of Arabic diglossia are the subject of considerable debate." (Rendsburg, 1990, 4). I.e. how far back in time should the modern situation be extended? What's more, it is questionable whether diglossia is the term that best describes the language-situation in the post-Biblical period. Most of the written records from that period are religious documents, and it must not be forgotten, that much of what we have is in Aramaic. The question is what language was used for documents, letters, and generally non-religious purposes. If it was QH, we can posit diglossia. If, on the other hand, it was MH or even Aramaic, the situation becomes more complex, and diglossia does not apply, or at least only in a modified sense.

I have not looked at any of the 598 colloquialisms that Rendsburg has isolated. I have simply assumed they are in fact examples of colloquialisms, and chosen rather to look at his hypothesis in general. Whether all his adduced examples are in fact colloquialisms remains to be seen; as far as I can see, interpreting them as such is in most cases quite reasonable²³. It is the explanation of the presence of these colloquialisms that has been the subject of this article.

Notes

1 Rendsburg, Gary A. *Evidence for Spoken Hebrew in Biblical Times*, doct. diss., New York University, 1980; "Diglossia in Ancient Hebrew as Revealed Through Compound Verbs", in Y.L. Arbeitman and A.R. Bornhard, eds., *Bono Homini Donum: Essays in historical Linguistics in Memory of J. Alexander Kerns*, Amsterdam, 1981; *Diglossia in Ancient Hebrew*, American Oriental Series, vol. 72, New Haven, 1990.

2 "Diglossia", *Word* 15 (1959), pp. 325-340.

3 *The Japanese Language*, Chicago, 1967, p. 138, as quoted in Rendsburg, 1990, 2.

4 Rendsburg mentions other uses of the term diglossia (esp. that of J.A. Fishman), but the sense in which Ferguson applied it seems to be the most common. Cf. e.g. Lyons, John, *Language and Linguistics*, Cambridge, 1981, pp. 284-286, and Crystal, David, *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language*, Cambridge, 1987, p.43. According to Lyons, diglossia does not exist in English-speaking communities, but he mentions French as an example of a diglossic (or diglottic) language, and Crystal mentions only the languages studied by Ferguson.

For a more extensive discussion of diglossia, cf. Ammon, Ulrich (ed.), *Status and Function of Languages and Language Varieties*, Berlin, 1989, esp. Berruto, Gaetano, "On the Typology of Linguistic Repertoires", pp. 552-569 (esp. pp. 553-6), and Khubchandani, Lachman M., "Diglossia and Functional Heterogeneity", pp. 592-607.

5 Cf. also his quote from Ullendorff: "...Perhaps, like literary and Classical Arabic throughout the ages, BH was the compromise language of a tribal confederation, that of Israel and Judah, while Mishnaic was the colloquial, the patois, actually used by the people." (from *Is Biblical Hebrew a Language?*, Wiesbaden, 1977, p. 11), Rendsburg, 1990, 16.

6 I will follow Rendsburg in using the terms language, dialect, variety and idiom more or less indiscriminately. Perhaps this reflects the difficulty in delimitating exactly the colloquial and the literary. None of these terms are used in an exact sense in the scholarly literature; possibly they cannot be defined at all.

7 He thus accepts MH as a living, spoken Hebrew, rather than an "artificial, scholastic jargon". I will refrain from discussing this any further, but I would not assume that this is proven beyond all doubt. Nevertheless, the scholarly opinion favours Rendsburg's views on this matter.

8 But aren't the "late usages" we find in e.g. Chronicles, colloquialisms that have found their way into the text? The fact that they are rare or lacking in these late works says, I would assume, more about the skill of the author/compiler/scribe than it does about the dichotomy of spoken/written in an earlier period.

9 "Das Verhältnis zwischen Demotisch und Koptisch und seine Lehren für die Geschichte der ägyptischen Sprache", *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 79 (1925), pp. 290-316.

10 I have also corrected the proportions in the diagram. For some reason or other, the period 1200-586 B.C.E., 614 years, is longer (horizontally) than the period 586 B.C.E.-70 C.E. that is 656 years! The period 70-200 C.E., 130 years, is out of all proportion with the rest.

11 This date is not found on the diagram. Note that this is a description of the diagram on p.176, that lacks the short period before 1200 B.C.E., but is otherwise identical.

12 The following discussion of the diagram is not intended as a critique of it. Rather, it simply shows that it serves its purpose, but also that it can be misinterpreted and perhaps even misleading. Rendsburg is to be highly commended for using graphic means to clarify his thesis; this is something that is too seldom seen in the scholarly literature.

13 See my article "Late Biblical Hebrew - Fact or Fiction?" in *Qumranica Mogilanensia*, vol. 6 (The Milik Festschrift, vol. 1, forthcoming), and the references there. This situation will possibly be remedied when the computer programs being developed in different parts of the world for detailed research on the OT text become available for general use.

14 Perhaps the period should be represented with a ladder-like line, where every step is a new "standard", set by the work in question. Better still, there should perhaps only be points, where one point stands for some biblical book from this period, and the point's distance from the line for the colloquial would indicate how like the colloquial it has become. The evenly sloping line on the diagram as it stands (fig. 2 & 3), would indicate a gradual change towards the colloquial, but this cannot be quite true, since the "quality" of the written language must have depended a lot upon the knowledge and schooling of the scribes, which was not necessarily worse in a later, than in an earlier, period. Thus e.g. Esther and Daniel, presumably more or less contemporary compositions, could and should not stand on the same line, since the number of colloquialisms found in them is so different. This number differs even for the pre-Exilic literature, so one might

wonder if that should be represented with a wavy or rippled horizontal line, rather than a straight line.

15 For a quick reference, cf. Crystal, op. cit., p. 179.

16 We should perhaps make the diagram three-dimensional, with the 3rd (z-) axis representing variation; Choosing one line for every (regional) dialect is problematic, since delimitations of dialects are most often very difficult to make; their boundaries are "floating". Any graphic representation of "real facts" is necessarily abstract.

17 So Rendsburg. Cf. also Driver, G.R., "Colloquialisms in the Old Testament", in Cohen, David (ed.), *Mélanges Marcel Cohen*, The Hague, 1970, pp.232-239.

18 "Some Distinctive Characteristics of Israelite Spoken Hebrew". *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, 32 (1975), pp. 162-175. See also the references in Rendsburg, 1990, 20-21.

19 For this work, cf. Kutscher, E.Y., *The Language and Linguistic Background of the Isaiah Scroll (1QIsa^a)*, Leiden, 1974.

20 On this subject in general, cf. Garr, W. Randall, *Dialect Geography of Syria-Palestine, 1000-586 B.C.E.*, Philadelphia, 1985.

21 See the bibliography in Rendsburg, 1990, 229-230.

22 For a description of Hebrew in its different stages, with a complex situation of many dialects (or "Lokalsprachen"), see Knauf, Ernst Axel, "War 'Biblisch-Hebräisch' eine Sprache?", *Zeitschrift für Althebraistik*, 3 (1990), pp.11-23. Knauf's description would, if I understand him correctly, definitely favour my hypothesis of a complex dialect situation. According to him, the Hebrew of the OT was never the language of communication in any time or place, but a product of a cononizing process. What we had was Judaic with local and social dialects, and at least two Israelite languages. In order to speak of "Althebräisch", we must include Moabite, Ammonite, and Edomite.

23 Not forgetting the possibility that some of them might be Aramaisms or due to influence from Aramaic. So e.g. possibly the independent possessive pronoun (Rendsburg, 1990, 119-123, esp. footnote 29, p. 123).