



# Druze Studies Journal

## Book Review:

“Code-Switching and Sociopolitical Identity among the Druze in Israel,” review of: **Kheir, Eve Afifa**. *Codeswitching as an Index and Construct of Sociopolitical Identity: The Case of the Druze and Arabs in Israel*. Leiden; Boston: Brill Academic Pub, 2023. ISBN 9789004534797

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This book focuses on the sociopolitical identity of the Druze and Arabs in Israel through the lens of code-switching. It consists of five chapters. The first and second chapters provided extensive contextual details on the code-switching process, focusing on Arabic, Hebrew, and the Israeli 'Nation-State Law.' Furthermore, the text discussed the Druze faith, the co-existence of Arabs and Druze in Israel, and the interrelation between identity, language, and code-switching. The author's investigation of the language of the Druze community in Israel using Myers-Scotton's Matrix Language Turnover Hypothesis (Myers-Scotton 2002) revealed a process of convergence and the development of a language that combines elements of Arabic and Hebrew within the Druze community. This convergence process resulted in the emergence of a mixed or split language, specifically in the context of bilingualism. An analysis of the longitudinal data collected from the Israeli Druze population in 2000 and 2017 revealed that the phenomenon of individuals transitioning or codeswitching between Palestinian Arabic and Israeli Hebrew was a component of the development of a language that blends Palestinian Arabic and Israeli Hebrew.

The third chapter discussed the novel mixed language and its distinctive features, drawing upon Auer's (1999, 309–332) and Myers-Scotton's (2003, 189–203) (2003, 73–106) views on the occurrence of mixed languages resulting from code-switching. The fourth chapter examined the correlation between code-switching and political identification and evaluated various forms of code-switching within the Israeli Arab Muslim, Christian, and Druze communities. Using concepts from intersubjective contact linguistics and indexicality, this chapter developed a framework that facilitates the examination of codeswitching as a means of expressing and comprehending social identity. The fifth and final chapter looked at Israeli Druze as well as the Druze community in the Golan Heights, a Syrian territory that Israel had taken control of after the 1967 War. Moreover, this chapter examined the interrelationships among code-switching, various mixed language types, identity, and the social and political contexts within the case study, highlighting their interconnected nature. It compared the Golan Heights Druze population and Israel's Druze population. Drawing on theories and concepts from intersubjective contact linguistics, this chapter demonstrated how 'sandwiched' communities develop distinct language forms and identities that closely resemble national identities.

This book primarily examines the phenomenon of code-switching within the Israeli Arab and Druze communities. In recent decades, there has been substan-

tial research on code-switching, which refers to alternating between two or more languages during a discussion. There is still much to learn, particularly in the areas of social, political, and collective identity. Several models and theories have enriched the existing scholarly literature on code-switching research. However, there is a need for more models in literature that explicitly highlight the connection between code-switching and social identity. The study of Palestinian Arabic and the prevalence of Israeli Hebrew in Israel, as well as their effects on the Arab and Druze communities and their languages, remains an insufficiently explored area that needs further investigation. This book introduces a novel framework for understanding codeswitching and sociopolitical identification, explicitly focusing on the codeswitching behavior of Israeli Arab Muslims, Christians, and Druze. The study suggests that sociopolitical identification influences codeswitching patterns that vary across different social groups, resulting in the development of a novel framework.

The author contended that this natural phenomenon could provide valuable insights into significant aspects of Israeli-Arab and Druze societies, as well as contact phenomena in general. These aspects include the dynamics of majority-minority relations, cultural influences, sense of belonging, socio-political identity, and the inevitable impact on the languages individuals speak in these societies. The proposed data collection and analysis in this study aim to provide valuable insights for researchers interested in the field. This will enhance our comprehension of how the dominant languages impact minority groups, the reciprocal relationship between sociopolitical identity and language behavior, and, specifically, the effects of Israeli Hebrew dominance on Palestinian Arabic speakers, influenced by sociopolitical affiliations.

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