# Case Study for Developing a Supportive Model for Linguistic Accessibility for Students

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to identify a structure and process that would support students from minorities who are not native Hebrew speakers in successfully integrating into academia. The college developed and established mechanisms to support diverse students. However, dropout rates in the first year remain high, especially among Arab students who have had minimal exposure to Hebrew.

The research involved a small pilot group of students with significant language barriers. The goal was to make Hebrew based learning more accessible by implementing a new, individualized support model. The model was applied during the 2022–2023 academic year, with continuous monitoring to assess how this guidance led by a researcher fluent in both Arabic and Hebrew impacted the students' academic performance and successful integration into their degree program. Although the researchers initially focused primarily on language difficulties, the findings showed that the language barrier was not the only one. It is not expressed merely through challenges in reading, writing assignments, and exams; rather, it creates additional obstacles, such as difficulty forming social connections, navigating administrative processes independently, and weakened self-confidence. During the study, further challenges also emerged, including severe socioeconomic hardships, complex emotional relationships with family members, and financial pressures. The intersection of language difficulties with these other issues intensified the students' struggles and made the type of support required more complex.

A central and significant finding is the holistic nature of the model, which was successful not only in providing support but also in enabling students to create their own drivers for success. One surprising development was the involvement of students' family members in the process. They

frequently communicated with the researcher, stayed informed, and sought academic guidance to ensure continuity and support at home. Their involvement provided a holistic support system for the students, increasing both motivation and sense of belonging. Bringing the students' personal circles of belonging into the academic space without judgment helped acknowledge essential aspects of their identities and challenges. This, in turn, encouraged them to seek help and contributed to outcomes such as one student saying at the end of the year, *"I love the college."*

As a key conclusion, portions of the model are being applied this year to larger first-year cohorts, which is considered the most critical year in their academic journey.

**Keywords:** Academic integration; Belonging; Diversity; Linguistic barriers; Minorities