Table 9.1. Some linguistic terms from tractate Megillah

Word	Location	Possible Meaning(s)
ashurit	Megillah 8b	Hebrew language
	Megillah 8b	"Ashurit" script
	Megillah 17a	Hebrew language
	Megillah 17a	Hebrew script
targum	Megillah 8b	Aramaic
	Megillah 8b	Translation
	Megillah 9a	Aramaic
	Megillah 17a	Translation
ivri	Megillah 8b	"Ivri" script
	Megillah 18a	"Ivri" language
	Megillah 18a	Speakers of the Ivri language
mikra	Megillah 8b	Hebrew language
	Megillah 8b	Hebrew font?
	Megillah 9a	Hebrew language

some of the various words we are trying to understand. (We ignore others, such as *la'az*, variously "foreign language" and "language.")

The Gemara expands on this phrase, noting (in Aramaic) that a document is not sacred until it is written "in Ashurit script and with [a certain kind of] ink." The added word "script" here and the juxtaposition of the concern about "Ashurit" with the concern about the right kind of ink both reinforce the notion that "Ashurit" refers to a way of writing. However, Megillah 17a (again in Hebrew) refers to "a foreigner who heard [the Megillah] in Ashurit." Here it looks like Ashurit refers to the Hebrew language, particularly in light of the point of the passage, which is that the foreigner who hears the Megillah in Ashurit has fulfilled his holy obligation to hear the Megillah, having heard it in a holy language. But to make matters more confusing, this same passage also refers to "writing in Ashurit." What does it mean to hear something in Ashurit? What does it mean to write in Ashurit?

Going back to 8b, we find an expansion on "written in any language" concerning "*mikra* written in *targum* and *targum* written in *mikra*." We are particularly interested in understanding what "*targum*" means, because we want to know if it refers simply to "translation" or specifically to "Aramaic." Based on this passage from the Gemara, it may represent "Aramaic," in that it comes in the context of various languages; if so, "*mikra*" would mean "Hebrew." In support of the theory that "targum"