Chapter 5

HEBREW LANGUAGE IN PUBLIC DOMAIN: ITS IMPLICATIONS

This chapter undertakes to study the behavior of language/s in public domain. The study investigates the undercurrents of language struggle for its space and survival which epitomizes the overall struggle in the society. Such currents can be parallel indicators in other parts of the world. In Israel the struggle of languages in public space helps us understand the general policy of the government towards its different people who speak different languages and also of the perception of one community towards the other. This chapter is spread over three sections. The first section explores the public space where the choice and use of a language is not simply a mode of communication. This choice varies from symbolic considerations to commercial considerations and to the very mundane need of communication understandability. The second section deals with the various agents of mass communication that contributed in various capacities in strengthening and deepening the hold of Hebrew. In a pluralistic society the choice and promotion of a particular language will inversely affect other languages of the society. In this context the study of Arabic language is made in the third section. The space and status of Arabic in public domain is the result of overall education policy and the curriculum that it entails.

As discussed in earlier chapters language has remained crucial for the Jewish community. The issue of holy and mundane language has time and again generated sharp debate in the Jewish community across all sections of the society. The issue became debated on the streets among the new immigrants. The pioneers of the new state had envisioned Israel to be a melting pot culturally and the pot of course would be Jewish. The efforts were to finally lead to a consensus on Hebrew language, the main carrier of culture. For that end Hebrew was to be revived, made a spoken language and of course it was to be brought out of the sacred hallow that restrained its use and limited its vocabulary. The pioneers succeeded in it, language rivalries subsided in favour of Hebrew and today Hebrew becomes the language of new immigrants in a short duration (through systematic acculturation in Ulpan and immersion programs etc.) and is the dominant language in public domain. Arabic that
remained the main language of the erstwhile Palestine and also of the Jews living there moved to more secluded use and is replaced by Hebrew which emerged from “dead” language to become the dominant language. The best place in Israel to study “language choice” is Jerusalem and in Jerusalem the old city provides a vivid picture of the situation. The old city of Jerusalem is inhibited by Jews, Arabs, Armenians, tourist and others and the interaction of these people are at different levels: commercial, religious, casual and thus provide a clear picture of language choice behavior.

Creating a Consensus for Hebrew

Jewish population throughout the history had considered Hebrew an important language as the religious scriptures were in Hebrew. The status of Hebrew as a language as such was never clear in the absence of religion. Particularly in Diaspora the languages other than Hebrew had a prominent place. Though Hebrew continued to be used in rites and rituals but the Jewish population was drifting away from religion and thus Hebrew in general was restricted to teaching the basics to the children. The local languages of the country in Diaspora would suffice many a times.

At least until the end of the Bar Kokhba revolt in 135 CE, the Jews of Palestine were multilingual, using Aramaic, Hebrew and Greek for different purposes and in different parts of the country (Weinreich, 1980). Latin was an official language of government, attested in military and other official and public inscriptions. Greek was widely used in public and private inscriptions: there was a Greek sign in the Temple advising non-Jews of the penalty for entering the holy places; Greek was used on many Jewish tombs and on synagogue inscriptions. One of Bar Kokhba’s letter to his captains was in Greek. Even though Greek as a language of literacy did not have the same importance for Jews of Palestine as it did in the Diaspora, especially Egypt, its special status is in fact noted in the Talmud, for whereas some authorities held that the Bible could be written in any language, Rabbi Simeon said that it could be written only in Hebrew or in Greek (Spolsky & Cooper, 1991: 27).

Aramaic had long been established as the appropriate language for legal and commercial documents. Two tractates of the Talmud deal specially with marriage contracts and divorce documents, both of which were to be written in Aramaic according to carefully prescribed formulas. But although the form of the documents
was clearly laid down, the rabbis held the written document to be less reliable than the word of those witnesses who saw it being written down or signed. As a result no special status was attached to the ability to write such documents. Given that Hebrew had been written in the square Aramaic letters since the return from Babylon Exile, anyone who could write a religious scroll in Hebrew could presumably write a marriage contract in Aramaic, and there is a reference in the Talmud to schools for scribes where a teacher might be heard dictating a model divorce bill to the class. But it is not clear that writing these Aramaic documents had a special status: in fact, the Talmud says that anyone could write such a document, including a woman or a minor, neither of whom could give evidence in a law court (Spolsky & Cooper, 1991: 27). However, in contrast to this, it must be noted that, as stated above, a number of important literary works were written in Aramaic.

The other document that was written in Aramaic was the Targum or Aramaic translation or interpretation of the Bible. These interpretations had to accompany all public readings of the Torah, but the Talmud held that the Targum was part of the oral law. As such, it was not supposed to be written down or read from a written text, but had to be delivered, one verse at a time, following the reading of the Hebrew verse, either from memory or extemporaneously. The Talmud is clear that the Holy Scriptures could be written down only in Hebrew and that public readings as part of worship could only take place from a Hebrew text. But there is reference in the Talmud to at least one written Targum, and probably there are others. While such documents could not be used in statuary services, they had the sanctity of other sacred writings, and could for instance, be carried out of a house in the Sabbath to save them from a fire.

Language, though important didn’t form the core of the Jewish identity as a people or as a religion. Though the religious texts were in Hebrew it was to be interpreted in the language of the mass so that it could be more easily understood. It did not clash with the sanctity of the message and was well accepted that religious sermons could be given or rather preferably given in language other than Hebrew that was the language of the people.

In a simplistic society as this language choice was motivated by the simple reason of communication. Language was the vehicle of communication and hence the language of the mass was adopted to address them and the holy book in the holy language was interpreted in the language of the mass. Chomsky puts it that Aramaic
oral translation and interpretation of the written Hebrew Torah had become a firmly established custom of public readings (Chomsky, 1957). Fraade clarifies the distinction between formal and written versions of Targum (translation) and the oral version accompanying the public Torah reading, and argues convincingly that it was intended for listeners who could also understand Hebrew⁶ (Fraade, p. 20). Gradually the society became complex, identity got several layers and thus the role of language became complex in human lives. It no more remained a simple vehicle for communication and took symbolic and identity significance in the society particularly in a multilingual society.

Factors behind Language Choice

Language choice in public, no matter how spontaneous it may look, is a complex exercise that any individual undertakes. In a multilingual society when a particular language is used in a particular context and another in another set of context, there is logic behind the use of a particular language. The reasons can be many like identity, economy, skill and at times even fear. The preference for a particular language would also depend upon the person and or institution and its background and association. This is best depicted in the display of sign boards, notices, name plates on private and government buildings, road signs, advertisings, Informative signs, Commemorative plaques, Graffiti etc.

The factors (Spolsky & Cooper, 1991: 81-85) that lead to a particular language choice can be single and at times several and overlapping. Sometimes it’s a conscious and deliberated decisions and at times its involuntary.

In the case of public signs (road signs, public utility signs etc.), there are more than one agent involved in carrying out this task. The first choice is the one who wants the signs to be written and then the one who has to write it. The skills of the sign-writer is a necessary condition, and it should be noted that it pertains to the language knowledge of the sign-writers and not to that of the owner or originator of the sign; in the case of professional signs, therefore, it does not indicate the literacy of the owner, but his choice of language as limited by the capabilities of the sign-writer.

⁶ Steven D. Fraade, Rabbanic views of the Practice of Targum, and Multilingualism in the Jewish Galilee of the Third-Sixth Centuries, unpublished manuscript quoted by Spolsky and Cooper in the Languages of Jerusalem, p. 20.
However, the rule does apply directly in the case of home-made, non-professional signs, especially graffiti.

When the signs are not wholly for symbolic reasons and that the intended readers or listeners are assumed to read or understand it, their language skill equally becomes important and needs to be taken into consideration before a final language choice is made. Here the primary aim of the sign-writer is to convey information as in advertisements, and the major motivation is likely to be economic.

Another very important factor for the preferred use of a particular language is typically motivated by symbolic value attached to the language. The user is ideologically motivated. The user uses the language with which he wishes to be identified. This is equally true with both private and official decisions about language choice or order when multiple languages are used on a placard.

This is best depicted in some of road signs in Jerusalem over a short period of time when it passed through different rulers of the British mandate, Jordanian rule and then the Israeli rule. Some of these street signs clearly record the recent history of Jerusalem. The sign on the Jaffa Gate in Jerusalem’s old city dated from the British period, before 1948, which is why it was written in what were then the three official languages of the Mandate government: English first, Arabic second, and Hebrew third. The second sign chronologically was the expanded sign, the last two lines of which originally formed a complete sign put up during the Jordanian period, and which was therefore written in Arabic with an English transliteration. The Arabic script used was a clear, modern script, reflecting a growing level of literacy. When the Old City came under Israeli rule, this bilingual sign was modified by adding an extra line with the Hebrew name of the street printed on it; the Hebrew was put first in order. Since then, whenever new signs are needed, they are prepared in the same three languages: Hebrew first, Arabic second and English third, the latter a transliteration of the Hebrew. Thus, the official policy in language choice and language order is based not on the necessary condition or on the presumed readership but rather on the symbolic value of the language choice.

At times the socio-cultural and political background of the individual influence the language choice decision. The user prefers to write language or signs in his/her own language or in a language in which he/she wish to be identified. This includes both official and private decisions about language choice or order. Owing to its symbolic value that decided the use of English, Arabic and Hebrew and each had a
turn at the top of the list. Thus the language of a sign or those of a public display proclaim the language loyalty and values of the sign writer. One expression of language-loyalty value is official language policy. This loyalty is likely to be political or socio-cultural. It derives its value from a desire to assert power (by controlling the languages of the sign, and by declaring control or power over the space designated) or to claim solidarity or identity (Spolsky & Cooper, 1991: 84) (statement of socio-cultural membership is in the language chosen).

The market place has its own set of factors that influence the language use. Here the consumer becomes the prime concern and provides a space for diluting other ideological positions as political and socio-cultural identities. When it is consumer governed, then other market dynamics come into play like the product, the target group, the advertising agents etc. For instance the spoken languages in the market of the old city of Jerusalem are Arabic, Hebrew and English. It must be mentioned here that it is an important pilgrim place for the three monotheistic religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam and also attracts tourist from all over the world through out the year. The shopkeepers here have unwritten classifications about the products and their potential buyers. Thus the use of the language for hoardings and advertisements or price tags is governed by such classifications.

Apart from that, internationally prepared advertisements (for international products) are provided to the shopkeepers ready-made, in the international version in appropriate Roman characters. In other national versions as well, the advertisements are prepared in English keeping in mind a broader consumer. Such decisions are prepared by agencies oriented by market forces and the shopkeepers don’t have any significant role in the decision making process and thus the signs do not represent his presumptions.

The varying shopping habits of the consumers in the old city of Jerusalem has specialized the shopkeepers in the use of language for the products in their shops. Arab shoppers in old city buy either non-advertised items (fruits and vegetables, spices etc) or imported items in labeled boxes (cigarettes etc). The shopkeepers do not seem to attract the customers with specially prepared signs, but with a careful and attractive display of objects. It is also interesting to note that the prices marked on fruits and vegetables are written not in Arabic but in European numerals. Arabs assume that the local buyers will bargain as they have idea about the more or less constant prices of these commodities while the Europeans will often not understand the statement of the price unless it is written for them.
Language on Warnings and Prohibitions Signs

The very idea of putting public warning and prohibition signs is to warn the public and thus it is understood to be in the language or languages that is most widely used or understood. Though such signs are often displayed with this goal in mind but there are times when other rules take precedence. For example, warning signs put up by the electricity department in several places in east Jerusalem are in three languages namely Arabic, Hebrew and English. But the order of these languages is not consistent. One expression that goes behind it is the presumed reader condition – that the signs are written in the most appropriate language for the addressees. Thus, it might be argued that the sign-writer assumed that most people would read Arabic, followed by Hebrew and English in that order. Another fact about this region i.e east Jerusalem is that the Electricity Company that put up the signs was under Arab control, and there are good reasons to suspect some other explanation as well. Later, this changed to Israeli grid that took up the task of changing these signs as well and the new order of language became Hebrew followed by Arabic and English. There are still some old sign boards that retain the earlier order of sequence.

There can be conscious attempts for not using a language as well. The possible application for this kind of negative attitude is the symbolic value attached and one prefers not to use a language with which one does not want to be identified with. This negative rule also accounts for a tendency to deface signs by making one or more of the languages on a multilingual sign illegible: the vandal is proclaiming the illegitimacy of that particular language for public display. Many street signs in Israel have the Arabic part defaced. Many believe that the agency which takes care of the sign boards are purposefully not repairing the defaced boards and this is encouraging other vandals.

Language Choice in the Market Place

One of the central issues in the study of multilingual communities is the recognition of the variables which may contribute to an understanding of who speaks what language to whom and when (Fishman, 1971: 583). Fishman believes that by establishing the factors involved in stable multilingual situations, it should be easier to understand less stable situations. He maintains that in a multilingual community, the choice between the languages is dependent on the higher-order construct of ‘domain’.
He defines domain “in terms of institutional contexts and their congruent behavioral co-occurrences” (Fishman, 1971: 586). He gives example of Jersey city where people speak Spanish and English. According to him one such domain here is the family (with role-relationships like father – child, topics like food and home serving as locale); another domain is work (with role relationships like employer – employee, and congruent topics and locale); the family domain is generally associated with Spanish, the work domain with English.

In less stable situations such as immigrant – host relations or contact between speech communities, domains are likely to be more restricted. The model assumed by Fishman is that these higher-order, socially determined factors will determine over all patterns, but there will be room for individual ‘interpersonal fluctuation’ within these (Fishman, 1971: 585).

The Market-place, as Cooper and Carpenter (Cooper and Carpenter, 1976: 254) remarked, is a promising context for the study of language choice: it permits surveys in situations where more detailed household studies are not feasible, and makes it possible to check actual usage against reported claims.

Unlike the use in language of signs, the choice of language when spoken carries extra complexities that need to be dealt with. A critical feature to note is that given the existence of certain conditions a speaker can modify his or her language by learning another language. In a market domain of a regular buyer and seller there is a practical pressure on each to learn the language of the other to facilitate easier transaction. Thus, a pressure for practical easy transaction accounts for change in proficiency. Further dimensions can be added when the language choice is related to a wider context like when one language is politically or socially dominant while the other language is that of a dominated group; or when the social relation itself is valued as much as the practical business (for example, the participants are trying to be good neighbours or fellow citizens).

**Choosing a Language for Communication**

In the case of choosing a language for communication it is necessary that both the speaker and the listener of the language have attained certain level of proficiency in the language in order to communicate. The lack of proficiency on either part will break the communication. In a multilingual situation, appearance is a good first
criterion for determining language choice with a stranger. Clothing is often distinctive and makes it easy to guess the probable language of a stranger. In Israel going by the dress code it becomes very easy to guess the language knowledge of a person. the uniforms of soldiers and policeman, the recognizable garb of various clergy, the robes of the village Arabs, the black suits and hats of the ultra-orthodox Jews, the knitted kippot (skull caps) of modern orthodox Israelis and the dress of the tourists. Assuming one knows the language it is an obvious first guess, in order to meet the communication condition, to start by speaking Arabic to a local or village Arab, Hebrew to an Israeli Jewish soldier, Hebrew or Yiddish to an ultra-orthodox Jew.

In market place the language choice is generally governed by market forces. The shopkeepers are seen to use non-native language in order to suit their customers, In a market where bargaining if prevalent, smart customers tend to create an environment that makes bargaining easier by speaking in the potential language of the shopkeeper. Arab population in Israel in general and Arab shopkeepers in particular have reasonable command over Hebrew as well and the reverse is not generally the case with Israeli Jews. This makes it clear why a bilingual speaking to a monolingual chooses to use the monolingual’s language.

Language Choice in a Bilingual Interchange

There are situations when two interlocutors do not know each others language and thus resort to body language for some basic exchanges. There are occasions when the interlocutors use the language of their earlier interaction with the same person. In a situation when both the interlocutors are bilingual they choose one language over the other and which of course is not “simply” in explanation. It is like multiple identity of a person: national, regional, religious, professional etc. and each identity is displayed depending upon certain factor or set of factors.

This is represented in two situations. In the first situation when two persons interact and each knows a different language, in that case in order to make the communication effective, one can either learn the other person’s language or help the other learn his.

In the second case when two interlocutors are able to use the same two languages then there are conditions that prompts for the choice of one language. The first of these rules relates to the domain. As Fishman (Fishman, 1971) defines, domain
is a construct involving congruence between locale, role-relationship, and topic. Dodson (Dodson, 1985: 325-46) maintains that there are no equilinguals, and that even accomplished or balanced bilinguals have a preferred and second language for various domains and topics. In a typical condition, a speaker will often be forced or will consider it appropriate to use a second rather than a preferred language.

For the Arab population in Israel Hebrew is mainly a work-language. Hebrew is more important for commerce than English. However, English is used twice as much as Hebrew for social purposes and is also the dominant language in education.

**Accommodating the Other Language**

Accommodation in language choice is generally necessitated due to linguistic weakness on the part of one of the speakers. The situation of language choice becomes more complex when each interlocutor is more or less equally at ease in the two languages. In such a situation the choice of a particular language has to do with the absolute and relative power or status of the two languages concerned; it is partly to be explained by desires for expressing solidarity; and partly by accommodating theory.

Speech accommodation theory was developed to account for changes in speech style in the course of conversations: it deals directly with the issue of intra-speaker variation. Beebe and Giles (Beebe and Giles, 1984: 5-32) express the theory in a few basic propositions. Given the ability and the appropriate social circumstances, people attempt to converge towards the speech pattern of their interlocutors when they desire approval or communicative efficiency. How closely they converge will depend on personal skills and the importance of the need for approval or efficiency. On the other hand, individuals will adhere to their own speech patterns or even diverge from their interlocutor’s when the wish either to maintain their own group identity or to dissociate themselves from the interlocutors or to modify his or her speech. Once again, how far will they diverge will depend on personal skills and feelings.

Cooper and Greenbaum (Cooper, Greenbaum and Charles, 1987: 106-112) define it in a systematic and more broader way: “we define accommodation as the adjustment of speech in response to the mutuality which speakers perceive between themselves and their hearers. We suggest that there are four types of mutuality which
are relevant: 1) verbal repertoire, 2) background knowledge, 3) solidarity or intimacy, and 4) power. Phenomenologically, these domains correspond to perceptions of knowing (verbal repertoire and background knowledge), feeling (solidarity or intimacy) and doing (power).

The preparedness of the speaker to accommodate or not other languages will depend on the working of a number of complex conditions: desire for social approval, desire for communicative efficiency, desire to assert group identity in an inter-group transaction, desire to dissociate oneself from the interlocutor, desire to change the interlocutor's speech behaviour (to force a change); all of these will be constrained by social norms and by individual and social notions of optimal social distance. Following Cooper and Greenbaum, these factors can be grouped more succinctly under the power and solidarity heading that covers so much of social behaviour.

Assume two persons speaking are equally bilingual; that they are speaking for the first time, that there is no third party involved, that the conversation takes place in a society with at least two groups of uneven power, each with its associated language. If the interaction is between members of both dominating and dominated groups, the accommodation condition suggest that the convenience of the former will be served by using his or her language, unless he or she chooses to accommodate to the other party. Assume, however that the conversation is between two members of the dominated group: in such a case, the use of the language of the dominant group will have nothing to do with the convenience. The working of conditions like these depend on the ideological values of both people involved that are derived from general social values. Such a situation can be imagined when two Arabs are talking in an Israeli bus.

The power of a language comes from the group who uses, or who proclaims to use it. In a commercial transaction, it is the buyer who is generally assumed to have this power, the result of his ability to decide where to make his purchases. It is this factor that constrains the seller to use or if necessary to learn, the language of the buyers. In the 19th century the Sephardic Jewish merchants knew, and the Ashkenazic merchants needed to learn Arabic; but now under the Israeli rule the Arabic speaking merchants are constrained to use and so to learn, Hebrew for transactions with Israelis and English (and other languages) for transaction with tourists.

The solidarity dimension also involves recognition of group identity. An individual uses his own identifying language (name of his building) to asserts his identity. At time one uses the interlocutor's language which serves two purposes: it
cancels any claim to power associated with his language (which he prefers not to use) and constitutes a possible step towards intimacy. The use of a third language can be an effort at neutrality. In transaction with Arab merchants, many find it appropriate to make the initial greetings in Arabic (canceling the power claim of Hebrew), and then to continue (because of poor control of Arabic) in English, the neutral choice; after a moment, the shopkeeper moves into Hebrew recognizing the dominant rules of the situation.

Passage and Promotion of Hebrew in Public Domain: Its Contributors

There is a debate among scholars whether Hebrew was dead. Some scholars argue that Hebrew continued to live through ages and it is not unique. Latin has a similar case. Despite producing many important works Latin was dead. In later centuries, despite its wide currency, Latin language was a subject of scholarly education only. No longer was its unspoken law, its mystery of natural growth, carried in the bloodstream. Its inner life was extinguished, dead (Spiegel, 1962: 6).

Hebrew a classical language has stood to the test of time. It has adjusted and readjusted itself to suit to the times. Even in its low days it kept producing specialized works (religious and practical booklets though small in circulation) and carried the three virtues of all plain prose: “precision, brevity and clearness” (Spiegel, 1962: 12). This was the case in Diaspora as well as in Palestine. Hebrew in Palestine and now Israel has no longer the remoteness of “holy language”. It has been forced from the narrow confines of exalted utterances, from the Sabbath limits of choice usage, from the atmosphere of rigid solemnity, from the resounding notes of a “trumpet of brass”. No longer is it a cathedral of unearthly height, but a home like cottage of daily use.

Hebrew is no longer a language of abstraction, anemic, unimpressionable, and unresponsive to current needs and experiences. The period of Melitzah, of the stereotyped Biblical manner, is a thing of the past. Formerly, spoken Hebrew used to be a series of quotations. It still is to some extent in Galuth (exile). Anger was expressed in wrathful words from Amos. Distress in the terms of the Psalms. Doubt via Ecclesiastes. The innovators and revolutionaries of these days went to the length of quoting the later Hebrew of the Midrashim, the Talmud, and the prayer books (Spiegel, 1962: 13). Hebrew speech or writing consisted of scattered fragments from
the Bible in varying mechanical combinations. Bible verses were simply
dismembered and joined together again in new unions. The language was used like
inorganic matter, even when knowledge and command of Hebrew were adequate.

Today, words have become organic and full of life and so the creative
potential of the language has been renewed. Hebrew has come out of the shackles of
Biblical text enslavement. The major landmark in the maturity of the language is that
word origin has been intentionally forgotten. The paternity of the word becomes
unimportant by the user. It matured further and even the old language forms are
known chiefly in their new incarnations. This means that the passage from the sacred
to the secular was smooth and was realized only when things were liked back into
history. Now there is coalesce in the past and the present of the language of the user,
and one is enriching the other. Both elements have fused so thoroughly that they are
no longer to be distinguished.

The passage of Hebrew from the enslavement of Biblical, holy phrasic
language to a mundane, encompassing subjects and time in a sensual and emotional
manner is an accepted fact. Hebrew retained from its classical days the unique
conciseness, allusiveness, concomitant by values and meanings of ancient memories.
To this Hebrew incorporated unexpected resiliency, mercurial adoptiveness, the
instinctive-ness of responsity, the pungent simplicity of village talk, of the gossip of
women, human emotions and chirping of birds. The language has matured enough to
conceive an un-translated genuineness of thought and feeling (Spiegel, 1962: 15).

Haskalah – Enlightenment and its Contribution

The enlightenment movement in Europe particularly Germany put a new life and
impetus to Hebrew. The fathers of the Berlin Haskalah (enlightenment) revived the
Hebrew language and created the modern Hebrew literature. The Jewish national
renaissance took up several tasks and projects to bring Jewish people closer to the
nations of Europe by means of Hebrew. Hebrew was chosen as a vehicle to introduce
them to the world of foreign values; to spread through it, the gospel of rationalism that
discarded nationality and thus discarded racial individuality to the Jewish people
(Spiegel, 1962: 20). Hebrew was revived by the fathers of the enlightenment for the
sake of a ‘holy war’ against religion but the same language led surely though slowly
towards a revival of Jewish religious values. For the orthodox it further sanctifies its holiness (Spiegel, 1962: 24).

Through Hebrew they wanted Jews to come closer to other languages and finally pave the way, through Hebrew, for assimilation and absorption. Hebrew for them was not an end in itself, but a means to an end, an implement that, when it had served the purpose, could be thrown away (Spiegel, 1962: 21). The champions of Haskalah had no better choice to reach their people. They used Hebrew to decoy their purpose into the foreign world and the foreign language. But once put to use, Hebrew decided its own destiny.

In the Haskalah generation, Hebrew called upon young forces to revolt against the yoke of tradition, which hindered young blood from creative utterances. But at the end, Hebrew language awakened national aspirations with them (Spiegel, 1962: 22). Hebrew revived old, forgotten yearnings for the motherland, and impelled the first pioneers to go up to Palestine to live the Hebrew life. They understood that unless there was a Hebrew Palestine, unless the language took root naturally in a home land, where the primary and only language of thought and emotion is Hebrew, the language in galuth wouldn’t mean much.

After the revival of Hebrew as a spoken language, it was felt necessary to connect the language with the soil and land. Hebrew thought and speech and Hebrew labor were encouraged and to facilitate it the Hebrew university on Mount Scopus in Jerusalem was established. Hebrew villages were created in Palestine. Hebrew became the vehicle of the Jewish rebirth and the creation of national values and Hebrew culture.

**Print Media in Israel**

The Haskala movement was not only a great thrust to the revival of Hebrew language but it also established a strong ideological base for Jews to learn and promote Hebrew. The pioneers of the state made the best out of it. They channelized all the resources in this direction. Media and its role at this juncture was quite significant. It popularized the language and had different output to cater to different needs in the society. Different religious groups had their publications that suited their religious taste. Likewise the political parties too had their own publications. There were newspapers that were brought out in simplified Hebrew. The new immigrants who
were still learning Hebrew found such newspapers very useful. Apart from popularizing Hebrew the mass media also provided both the mass as well as the intelligentsia with new and diverse vocabulary particularly from the secular world. This too helped in the growth of Hebrew language in a big way.

The volatile situation in Israel demands an effective and intelligent media. It is noteworthy that the media plays a very important role in political, social and cultural life of Israel. Currently, Israel boasts of dozens of newspapers and magazines, catering to a diverse; religious, secular, new immigrants, Moshavniks etc, section of the Israeli society. Especially noteworthy is that in 1863, two monthly papers established in Jerusalem, Halevanon and Havatselet, marked the beginning of the Modern Hebrew press in the Land of Israel. A year later, they were closed down by the Ottoman authorities. In 1869, newspapers began to appear regularly in Jerusalem, despite strict censorship and low circulation.

World War I halted the publication of newspapers, until the British took control of the country, under a League of Nations mandate. Despite censorship by the Mandatory authorities, the growth of the Jewish population was followed by a rise in the number of privately-owned newspapers, as well as those sponsored by political parties.

When the State of Israel was established in 1948, the activity of the press was not subjected to any particular law, although the Mandatory Press Ordinance had required that newspapers be licensed. Instead, the press has been guided by court decisions, which recognized the importance of a free press and its vital role in preserving democracy.

During the eighties and nineties, the Israeli press underwent a process of significant change, not unlike that which occurred in Europe and North America. The media gradually came to be controlled by a limited number of organizations, whereas the papers published by political parties began to disappear. Today, three large, privately-owned conglomerates based in Tel Aviv dominate the mass media in Israel. The Koteret School of Journalism and Communications in Tel Aviv trains journalists for the written and electronic media, in a two-to-three year program. Practical workshops in journalism are also held in the Departments for Communications of four institutes of higher education.
Daily Newspapers

Most of the daily newspapers in Israel are in Hebrew. Apart from it there are newspapers in Arabic, English, French, Polish, Yiddish, Hungarian, Russian and German. Most Hebrew morning dailies have strong political or religious affiliations. Most newspapers depend on subsidies from political parties, religious organizations or public funds. There are around 400 newspapers and magazines including some 50 weeklies and 150 fortnightly; over 250 of them are in Hebrew and the remaining in other 11 languages.

Ha'aretz, (The Land) founded 1919, is Israel's oldest daily, enjoying prestige and a reputation for solid, high-level reporting. It is owned by the Shocken media conglomerate which also owns a publishing house and many local papers.

Yediot Aharonot, (The Latest News) founded 1939, has the highest circulation - some two-thirds of all Hebrew newspaper readers. Such a circulation is without parallel in Western countries. It is the major component of the Moses family media conglomerate, which also owns a publishing house, produces magazines and local papers and is part owner of a music firm.

Several hundred local papers are published in Israel, most of them weeklies appearing on Friday. Many are owned by the Moses and Shocken conglomerates.

Ma'ariv, (Evening Prayer) founded 1948, was for many years the paper with the largest circulation, but it has since lost ground to its rival, Yediot Aharonot. It is owned by the Nimrodi family which also owns a publishing company and a music firm and produces popular magazines as well as local newspapers.

Other publications include Hamodia (the informer), Hatzofeh (The Watchman), Shearim (The Gates), Ma’arachot (Campaign), Bamahane (In the Camp), Ethgar (The Challenge). Globes is a financial daily founded in 1983, the youngest of Israel’s daily newspapers. It is privately owned and has already won a place in the business world.
Periodicals and Publications for Learning Hebrew

Sha'ar LaMatchil
Edited by the Israeli Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture and published by Yedioth Aharonot, Sha'ar Lamatchil is Israel's most established and popular easy-Hebrew newspaper. Written in simple Hebrew with big, bold letters and vowels underneath, Sha'ar Lamatchil is distributed throughout Israel and around the world wherever Hebrew is read and taught.

Sulam Yaakov
This is a colorful, exciting new 8-page Hebrew magazine in easy-to-read Hebrew for third through fifth graders. It is primarily a source of complementary reading and is used by pupils at leisure and even by teachers in class. Themes range from Jewish subjects to science, nature, sports, and friendship. Suggestions for Jewish holiday craft projects. Includes topics for class discussions. Published seven times throughout the school year. Special rates for group subscriptions. It is also a popular gift item by parents to children and grandchildren.

La-Mishpacha
This is an illustrated monthly magazine entirely in Hebrew intended for the adult student of Hebrew. It contains feature articles (with nekudot) on topics of the day and on Hebrew culture. For retaining the readers interest it has word games and puzzles. It is considered great for use in ulpan classes and in college courses.

Gesher
A wide variety of books in easy Hebrew, including classics of Hebrew literature and works dealing with the history of the Zionist settlement, the Jewish people and tradition are published under the series Gesher. There are series for different levels of Hebrew: “Gesher for Children”; “Easy Gesher”; “Gesher for Teens”; “Gesher,” “Gesher - Advanced.”

Foreign Language Papers
Israel is a land of immigrants. This is reflected in the foreign language press that has developed since the fifties and sixties. When immigrants become locals conversant in Hebrew, they read less of the foreign language press; yet several papers continue to appear in Yiddish, German, Hungarian, Polish and Romanian. The large wave of
immigrants from the former Soviet Union has led to the growth of the Russian-language press: four dailies and dozens of periodicals are now published in Russian. In a category of its own is the English-language Jerusalem Post, founded in 1932. It is read by English-speaking immigrants, as well as by English-speaking tourists and diplomats. A daily international edition is distributed in North America and a weekly French edition in Western Europe.

**Political Party Press**

Once flourishing, papers published by political parties are now disappearing in Israel - as has happened in Europe. Today, only three such newspapers remain, intended for religious readers: Hatsofeh, Hamodia and Yated Ne’eman.

**Magazines and Periodicals**

There are hundreds of magazines and periodicals (mainly weeklies and monthlies) published in Israel cover a variety of topics, including nature, tourism, computers and sports; some are geared to specific groups, including women, youth and children. The women's weekly magazine La’isha, owned by the Mosc family, has the largest circulation in the country. The Nimrodi conglomerate publishes two weeklies for youth and children, and a women's monthly, 'At'. The Israel Defense Forces weekly, Bamahane, first published in 1948, is meant for the armed forces, but is also read by many civilians. Many periodicals are published in languages other than Hebrew, for new and veteran immigrants.

One Arabic daily, Al-Ittihad, and many Arabic periodicals are also published in Israel. The Arabic press caters to the Israeli Arab population, a large percentage of which also reads Hebrew. Readers include residents of the areas governed by the Palestinian Authority.

**The Press Council**

The Press Council, established in 1963 on a voluntary basis, functions largely along the lines of the Press Complaints Commission in Great Britain. The council brings together the National Association of Journalists, publishers, editors of the daily press and members of the public. Its goals include protecting the freedom of the press in Israel, maintaining professional ethics, and ensuring free access to information.

The Council's most important achievement has been the enactment of a code of ethics, intended to serve as guidelines for the press. The council is also the body to which
complaints on matters of ethics are referred. It maintains ethics tribunals, which can try newspapers and journalists suspected of practices which violate the code of ethics.

**Military Censorship in Israel**

Under British Mandate law, all publications had to receive prior clearance from the military censor. Israel neither abolished nor applied this law. In 1948, an agreement signed between the government, the army and the press determined that censorship would be based on mutual agreement in order to prevent breaches of state security. Under the agreement, as subsequently amended, the censor supplies to the press a limited list of topics pertaining mostly to military and security-related issues, but not to political ones. Any news item related to these topics has to be vetted by the censor. This means, in effect, that only a small fraction of the news for publication - only matters pertaining to military or security issues - has to be submitted for scrutiny. A ruling of the High Court of Justice in 1989 imposed limitations on the censor: censorship may be exercised only when it is certain that publication of the item in question would harm public safety. When an item is censored, the newspaper may appeal the censor's ruling to a "committee of three," composed of a member of the public (who serves as the chairman), a representative of the army and a representative of the press. The decisions of the committee are binding, and over the years it has in many cases overruled the decision of the censor.

**Public Space for Minority Languages**

Arabic is the largest spoken minority language of Israel. It is the most spoken non-Jewish language of Israel. It is spoken by both the Palestinian Muslims as well as Christians. The public domain in Israel is quite charged because of the ongoing struggle between the two communities: the Jews and the Arabs. Public space becomes the battle ground where each tries to display its control and dominance. The Arabs and Arabic are at a receiving end in this context. The Israeli-Arab social and educational context is problematic (Abu Saad, 1991; Al-Haj, 1987, 1995). As a minority group, Arab students are required to learn Hebrew, the language of the majority group. The social and political problems between Arabs and Jews in and outside Israel influence the learning atmosphere of the minority Arabs learning
Hebrew. Apart from that the cultural origin of the text and the learner's familiarity or lack of familiarity, with that culture affect the overall learning performance.

Language according to Gardner, is an important part of one's identity, and the extent to which one can incorporate another language successfully is related to a variety of attitudinal variables involving ethnic relations. The attitude will decide the motivational level and the cultural milieu in which language learning takes place will influence the attitude. The Arab high-school Hebrew curriculum is potentially problematic in the Israeli-Arab social context in that almost all the stories presented in the text books are culturally Jewish (Abu-Rabia, 1991, 1993; Abu Saad, 1991; Al-Haj, 1987, 1995). In addition the Israeli Arab conflict, the social-ethnic tension between Arabs and Jews in Israel, and the social problems that may be reflected in the daily life of the Arab society does influence the Arab schools in Israel and the Hebrew learning process of the students.

Against the backdrop of growing conflicts in Israeli society and concerns about its democratic character, the current curriculum guidelines and official textbook for civic education in Israel were set to offer a more inclusive civic education that would stress ideas such as pluralistic and democratic citizenship. However, this curriculum does not operate in a vacuum, and despite the language of inclusivity implied in the curriculum guidance, it reveals the complexities and the competing messages in Israeli society. Thus explicitly or implicitly the place and space of each member or citizen viz. a viz. the civic collective is defined by the official curriculum and textbook for civic education. In particular, it is concerned with the tension between inclusion and exclusion and the ways in which civic education acts as a space for both nation building and state formation.

Israel is a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural state. Within the majority Jewish population of the state there are Russian Jews, Bukharan Jews, Moroccan Jews, Indian Jews etc. Each maintains some of their individual identity. Among the non-Jewish population there are Arabs, Armenians etc. Their identity is derived through cultural, linguistic and religious means. Against the backdrop of these existing conflicts in Israeli society and concerns about its democratic character efforts for a more inclusive education is stressed. Education, its curriculum, course content and language of instruction become vital in shaping the future citizenship. Elements of education and its policy are contested among the various groups. Public space becomes the most important battleground where the parties to the conflict proclaim their legitimacy.
With optimism and the progress made on the peace negotiations every now and then, efforts are made in multicultural societies to promote pluralism and an inclusive notion of citizenship. The Arabs are the national minority. They form the largest non-Jewish population which has a fully developed and established language and culture. The inclusive policy is largely aimed towards this population. The state, apart from other channels, tries to achieve it through education. The curriculum guidelines for civic education published in 1994 (Ministry of Education, 1994), were set to offer a more inclusive civic curriculum that would stress ideas such as pluralistic and democratic citizenship. Six years later, the official textbook “To Be Citizens in Israel: A Jewish and Democratic State” (Ministry of Education, 2000b) was published and the curriculum was implemented first in September 2000 in Jewish schools (Ministry of Education, 2000a) and then in September 2001 in Arab schools (Ministry of Education, 2001).

Scholars point out that education in Israel is used to promote the somewhat competing agendas of nation building and developing a shared democratic civil society (Al-Haj, 2005; Levy, 2005). Civic education, in this respect and especially in the context of a deeply divided and conflict-ridden society such as Israel, can be seen as a potentially contested space for competing universal and particular messages (Carter, Donald & Squires, 1993). Civic education has long term repercussions in constructing the image of the other. This image ultimately defines the space they receive in public domain.

The civic curriculum acts as a contested space for both nation building and state formation. It is important to understand the different elements of civic society as this would influence the place and status of other languages and their speakers. The post-modern and post-colonial approaches to the dominant Zionist discourse upon which Israel’s political culture is based (Silberstein, 1996) challenge the Zionist historiography and especially the narrative that portrayed the Zionist enterprise as the “return” of the Jewish people to an empty land (Ram, 1996); they question the democratic nature of the State of Israel and its ability to maintain its democratic character while defining itself as a Jewish state (Ghanem, Rouhana, & Yiftachel, 1999); and, finally, they criticize mainstream sociology for excluding the perspectives and narratives of those groups that were located outside the Zionist discourse, particularly the Arab-Palestinian minority. The use of the term Palestinians to refer to
the non-Jewish Arab/Palestinian origin citizens is in itself a controversial issue in Israeli academic discourse (Bulmer, 1998; Rosenhenk, 1998).

One of the main challenges to research into citizenship education is the nature of the notion of citizenship. The concept of citizenship is “complex and contested, even when discussion is confined to citizenship in the context of Western democratic societies” McLaughlin (1992: 236). One of the difficulties in defining this concept is that it embodies contradictions and tensions, between individual rights and collective responsibilities, freedom and order, and between equality and difference. Werbner and Yuval-Davis (1999: 2) suggest that a salient characteristic of the notion of citizenship is that it serves as a constant site for political struggles between contradicting tendencies. Yet, contemporary citizenship education initiatives and research often fail to address the contested nature of the concept of citizenship and the politics inherent in it.

Citizenship by definition is both exclusionary and inclusionary. On the one hand, it is based on the principle of universality—“Everyone has the right for citizenship” (United Nations, 1948). However, at the same time, the process of determining who is a citizen and who is not involves exclusionary mechanisms of defining the “us” and the “we” (Arnot & Dillabough, 2000). In order to fully grasp this tension, one needs to understand first the tension between universalism and particularism which underlies it. Laclau (1995) suggests that the problem lies in the nature of universalism. Universalism, he claims, does not have a concrete content; it is disembodied. However, when it receives content, it ceases to be universal and becomes particular. Particularism in citizenship does not disappear by using a language of universalistic democratic discourse nor by assuming that what is actually particular is allegedly universal (Carter, Donald, & Squires, 1993).

Thus, the paradox between the inclusionary and exclusionary nature of citizenship lies at the assumption that the principle of universality grants marginal groups entrance to citizenship. However, at the same time, using the same argument of universality, the “otherness” of these marginal groups is denied entrance, excluded from what is assumed to be universal, and pushed into the so-called private sphere.

The education curriculum is one area out of many in which the concept of Israeli citizenship and the meanings of “being Israeli” are negotiated and discursively constructed. It is a powerful site in which the state appears both in its unifying and segregating powers. Schools education—the curriculum—should be understood as a
significant site in which competing bodies of knowledge, identities and discourses are negotiated (McCarthy & Crichlow, 1993; Mills, 1997). Curriculum becomes, from this point of view, part of a discursive field through which the subjects of schooling are constructed as individuals self-regulate, discipline, and reflect upon themselves as members of a community/society. Using this framework will allow us to reveal the tensions that emerge from discourses of civic education in Israel as they are constructed by the Ministry of Education, and the challenges of delivering an inclusive curriculum in the context of a conflict-ridden, multi-ethnic and multicultural society such as Israel. Israel is defined as both a Jewish and democratic state, a definition which in itself poses a great challenge to the task of developing an inclusive democratic civic education. On the one hand Israel, being a democratic state, has committed itself to provide equal individual democratic rights to all its citizens, regardless of their nationality or religion. At the same time, its definition as a Jewish state means that membership in the Israeli civic collective is determined first and foremost in terms of membership in a national-ethnic group, rather than according to universal civil criteria. Kimmerling (2001) argues that while the Arab-Palestinian minority in Israel might be granted access to the material resources of the society as individuals, because the identity of the state has been constructed as Jewish, they are constantly excluded from the symbolic resources of Israeli society.

Shafir and Peled (2002) suggest that the political culture of Israel in relation to citizenship is made up of a struggle between three different and sometimes interrelated, political discourses: liberal-democratic, republican, and ethno-national. This struggle creates a hierarchical structure of membership in the polity. The liberal-democratic discourse is used to distinguish between citizens and those who are not citizens. The republican discourse is used to determine the position of different Jewish groups in the hierarchical structure based on their alleged contribution to the Zionist project. Finally, the ethno-national discourse is employed to create a distinction between Jewish citizens who belong to the Israeli citizenship as a collective, and Arab-Palestinian citizens who are being included merely as individuals (based on the liberal discourse), but excluded as a group.

One prominent expression of this tension between inclusion-exclusion of the Arab-Palestinian minority in Israel; between the civil and political rights they enjoy as individuals, such as voting and the right to be elected, and the limited possibility they have, as a group, to shape the public discourse, can be found in the Basic Law:
Knesset. This regulates the work of the parliament including elections; in particular, Amendment 7a introduced in 1985 determines the terms under which a party can be disqualified from participating in elections. According to Article 7a, a party can be disqualified (1) if it objects to the democratic nature of the State of Israel; (2) if the party rejects the definition of the State of Israel as the state of the Jewish people; or (3) if it expresses racist views. While this article was first set to protect the democratic nature of the State of Israel, one of its other implications is that an individual or a group cannot call for a change in the definition of the state as Jewish using democratic procedures. The definition of Israel as a Jewish state is embodied in this legislation in a way that any attempt to challenge it can be defined as illegal. To a significant extent what this law implies is that the boundaries of civic participation are those identifying with the Zionist project and the collective identity it constructed.

The Israeli education system is divided into different educational sectors which cater to the various social groups in Israeli society. The position of different groups within the hierarchical structure of citizenship has a direct bearing on the level of resources and educational autonomy which they enjoy. The Arab sector, for example, not only suffers from a lack of state resources, but it also does not enjoy the same autonomy, especially with regard to its curricula, as other separate educational systems, such as the religious Jewish schools (Abu-Asba, 1997; Al-Haj, 1994). To a significant extent, the nationally, ethnically and religiously segregated education system of Israel reproduces the position of groups in Israeli society. Al-Haj (2005) also points out that this segregated structure, and the social divisions both inside and outside the education system, also generate a segregated curriculum which strengthen these divisions. “In this sense, the deeply divided society has produced a deeply divided curriculum” (Al-Haj, 2005:52) and a divided curriculum would ultimately produce a divided society.

The Exclusive Nature of the State

The tensions between inclusion and exclusion and between competing messages about the definition of Israeli citizenship and membership in its collective are reflected in the structure that the curriculum guidance (Ministry of Education, 1994) lays out and in the textbook prepared on these guidelines (Ministry of Education, 2000b). The curriculum committee chose the Declaration of Independence of the State of Israel as
the organizing framework for civic education: “The Declaration of Independence reflects the principles upon which the regime in Israel is founded . . . [it] is a starting point to the whole subject matter” (Ministry of Education, 1994: 9). The introductory chapter in “To Be Citizens in Israel: A Jewish and Democratic State” is dedicated to the Declaration of Independence which is entitled “The Foundation of the Regime in the State of Israel.” The Declaration of Independence is seen not only as a departure point, but also as serving two purposes: state formation and nation building; installing democratic values as well as strengthening the “legitimacy of founding a Jewish state for the Jewish people in the Land of Israel” (Ministry of Education, 1994: 9).

The main emphasis of the curriculum is on the Jewish and democratic nature of the state and the rest of the issues the curriculum discusses are derived from it. In the Arab schools the emphasis is more on the democratic aspect and the problems the Arab minority has to face as a national minority which lives in a state with an ethnic and democratic nature.

The Declaration of Independence expresses the vision of the Zionist leadership with regard to the desirable nature of the state as a Jewish and democratic state, a state of all the citizens—Jews, Arabs, Druze and Cherkes, who live within the boundaries of the state and also the state of the Jewish people who live in the diasporas and are not citizens of the state (Ministry of Education, 2000b: 5). Israel is described as a Jewish state and as the homeland of the entire Jewish people. Underpinning this approach is the ethos of in-gathering the exile and the link between the Jewish people and the Land of Israel. These ethos represent a particular (or exclusionary) approach to Israeli citizenship and construct membership in the polity in terms of kinship—the state belongs also by virtue of shared nationality to those who are not actually its citizens.

Both in the UN decision made on November 29th 1947, and in the Statement of Independence, it has been determined that Israel is the state of the Jewish nation. In Chapter 1—Nation and nation-states—we will clarify the terms “nation,” “nationality,” and “nation-state.” We will distinguish between ethnic and political nationality, and based on this distinction we will distinguish between states in which their national identity is ethnically based, such as Israel, and states in which their national identity is politically based, such as the USA (Ministry of Education, 2000: 19). The textbook constructs nationhood as an essential concept for the understanding of what citizenship means, regardless of its exclusionary implication.
The Inclusive Approach

Pluralism is a fundamental democratic principle. It means not only the existence of diverse groups in the state, but also the recognition in their right to express their different worldviews, interests and lifestyle. . . . Pluralism allows different groups to preserve their unique identity while maintaining a common and shared basis of society as a whole (Ministry of Education, 2000b: 110).

Israeli society is often referred to as a diverse society. With growing confidence the Israeli society is debating the diversity and conflict in the society both within the Jewish community and with other communities. This is reflected in the new textbooks that stress the importance of including the diverse groups and discussing their differences:

The extent to which Israeli society gives legitimacy to social diversity in general, and national and religious diversity (Arabs and Druze) in particular, will be discussed (Ministry of Education, 1994: 16).

Israeli society is a heterogeneous society. The diverse groups that comprise the society are different from each other in their national, religious, ethnic, political and class origin and belonging, . . . This is why Israeli society is defined as a multicultural and multi-cultural society with a national minority (Ministry of Education, 2000b: 276–277).

However, it is important to notice that even though Israeli society is portrayed as a pluralistic society, the civic curriculum still draws clear boundaries between the Jewish and non-Jewish groups that comprise it. A differentiation is made between Israel as a multicultural or multi-ethnic society and the existence of a national minority. This distinction implies that the multicultural character of Israeli society refers to the diversity within the Jewish majority while the Arab-Palestinian national minority—which is defined as a separate category—is left outside the boundaries of the multicultural/multi-ethnic Israeli collective.

In contrast to the old generation of textbooks which not only portrayed Israel as a homogenous society but also referred to the Arab-Palestinian minority in Israel as a mere cultural or religious minority (Pinson, 2007), “To Be Citizens in Israel: A Jewish and Democratic State” recognises the Arab-Palestinian minorities’ differences and identifies them as a national minority. Moreover, it presents a complex picture of
their position within Israeli society and recognizes their marginalised position in Israel:

Another reason for the cleavage between Jews and Arabs in Israel is the definition of the State of Israel as a Jewish nation-state. . . . A Jewish nation-state means that the State is the state of the Jewish collective. The Arabs are not part of this collectivity because they do not belong to the Jewish majority. . . . On the one hand, the Jewish Israeli society demand the Arabs to be loyal to the state and to identify with it. . . . On the other hand the Jewish Israeli society does not permit or accept steps which are taken by the Arabs that are aimed at changing the . . . Jewish nature of the state. For this reason, some of the Arab citizens feel that the state is not theirs . . . and they feel that they are not equal to the Jewish citizens of the state (Ministry of Education, 2000b: 290–291).

Though there is departure from the position during the early years of the state the new curriculum, guidelines and textbooks still reproduces the hierarchical structure of Israeli citizenship. Arab-Palestinian citizens are included and granted political rights as individuals, while as a group, they are excluded and denied a voice in the public domain. The case of Arabic language in Israel gives a better understanding of the results of the education policy. As the largest used language after Hebrew in Israel, Arabic is still struggling to define its official status.

The Right to Arabic Language Media

Various pieces of legislation ensure the right of Arabic speaking citizens of Israel to enjoy media in the Arabic language. For example:

(a) The Second Broadcasting Authority for Radio and T.V. Law (1990), in section 5(2)(5), requires that broadcasting should also be in the Arabic language to cater to the needs of the Arabic speaking citizens.

(b) In an amendment from 2001, Section 6(34) of the Communication Law (Bezeq and Broadcasting) (1982), regulates the operation of cable T.V. in Israel. This law empowers the council of communication to authorize a cable T.V. in the Arabic language. Moreover, exceptionally, section 6(34)(3) provides that the Arabic cable T.V. will be allowed to use material from satellite broadcasts in order to better accommodate the Arabic speaking population.
The Duty to Use Arabic in Official Contexts

Several laws dictate the use of the Arabic language in official contexts. The following examples will illustrate this particular right.

(a) Under section 9(a) of the Notary Regulation (1977), a notary confirmation must be made in Hebrew or in Arabic. It is also possible to make it in English, but only in addition to Hebrew or Arabic.

(b) Section 3(2) of the Consumer Protection Regulations (2002) requires cellular phone companies to disclose information on radiation hazards in a leaflet. This section provides that the information should also appear in Arabic.

Rules Regarding Election Rights in the Arabic Language

Representatives of the Arabic population in Israel have always been part of the Israeli parliament. Arab representatives in the Israeli parliament can choose to speak in the Arabic language, but are expected to warn the Speaker that an interpreter will be needed.

In addition, section 76 of the Knesset Election Law (Consolidated Text) (1964) provides that all parties have the right to put Arabic letters on their ballot slips. Another similar provision appears in the Local Authorities Law (1975), where section 7(c) requires that ballot slips should be only in Hebrew or Arabic, and a ballot slip in another language would be invalid.

The above laws are only a small sample of positive group differentiated language rights granted to the Arab minority in a wide range of areas. These laws demonstrate the policy of accommodating the language needs of the Arab minority while strictly avoiding the national aspect.

The Status of Arabic in Case Law

The policy of granting positive group differentiated language rights to the Arab minority by avoiding the national implications can also be discerned in several important court decisions given in the 1990s. Three Supreme Court decisions are taken up which demonstrates that generally, in spite of the lip service paid to the ‘official’ status of the Arabic language, these decisions were not based on the official status of this language. Rather, the rationale underlying these decisions is anchored in
the recognition of constitutional group differentiated rights which emanate from individual human rights. On this basis, case law, through interpretation and legal policy, has further extended the language rights of the Arab minority.

In Re’em Engineers and Contractors Ltd. V. Upper Nazareth Municipality (C.A. 105/92, P.D. 47(5) 189), the Re’em Engineering Company filed an application to the Upper Nazareth municipality to place an advertisement on the billboards in the municipality’s jurisdiction. The advertisement was to be worded solely in Arabic, and it concerned the construction of houses in the Arabic Yafa region. The Municipality refused to grant the requested license since the advertisement did not satisfy the conditions of section 2(a) of the Upper Nazareth By-Law Advertisements and Signs (1964) which required that advertisements be worded in Hebrew or in Hebrew and Arabic together, with Hebrew occupying at least two-thirds of the advertisement. The District Court rejected the application and the company appealed to the Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court considered the case of municipal control of billboards an unofficial act. This policy precluded the need to consider the implication of the official status of either Arabic or Hebrew. Consequently, the Arab minority’s group differentiated language right was encompassed in the principle of individual freedom of expression. Freedom of expression, the Court stated, directly emanates from the character of Israel as a democratic country.

However, as with any freedom or right, freedom of expression at times conflicts with other interests or values and a balancing policy is often required. The Court noted that language is not only a means of personal expression; it is also a cultural asset for national expression. Two principles were thus balanced by the court: freedom of expression and its derivative right to use a minority language and the public interest in the promotion of Hebrew. The Court decided that in unofficial contexts, such as in the case of Re’em, freedom of expression prevails and consequently invalidated the municipal by-law. The Court also cited the ruling of the Canadian Supreme Court in Ford v. Quebec. The Canadian Court discussed a statute enacted in the Quebec province, which provided that French should be used on posters, signposts and commercial advertisements. The Canadian Court held that language is intimately related to the form and content of expression and hence there cannot be true freedom of expression with existing prohibition on the choice of
language. Accordingly, freedom of expression must also include the freedom to express oneself in the language of one's choice.

Significantly, the Supreme Court noted that its policy of recognizing the prevalence of freedom of language in non-governmental contexts reflects the attitude that Hebrew has attained a strong enough status that would not be shaken by granting ample freedom of language to speakers of Arabic. However, the Court observed that should there be erosion in the status of Hebrew, there would be reason to alter the policy with regard to the balance between the importance of Hebrew and freedom of expression.

Thus, although by invalidating the by-law the Court extended the language rights of the Arabic speaking population, the decision in Re'em does not seem to denote a change in policy. Actually, the Court in Re'em followed the language policy of avoiding the official status of Arabic as the legal basis for its decision. The decision is rather based on the policy of recognizing group differentiated language rights as the extension of individual human rights.

A later decision, Meri v. Sabac (M.C.A. 12/99, P.D. 53(2) 128), represents the same policy. The appeal in the Meri case dealt with the question of the validity of a blank ballot slip where the voter was requested to write the letter representing the party of his choice exclusively in Arabic. Section 51 of the Local Authorities (election) Law (1965) provides that a printed ballot slip must contain the party's letter in Hebrew or in both Hebrew and Arabic. This section was not directly relevant to the Meri case since it only deals with printed ballot slips. Section 61(c) of the Election Law, which deals with the filling out of a blank ballot slip in the voter's handwriting, does not provide which language the voter must use. Therefore the Court had to make a policy decision on this language issue where the legislature is silent.

The decision of the Court in this case as well, followed the policy of recognizing group differentiated rights which emanate from individual human rights. Since there may be individuals who cannot write in Hebrew, the Court recognized the legitimacy of an Arab voter writing the letter on the ballot slip solely in Arabic. This decision was based on the importance of securing the citizen's right to vote in a fair, pure and efficient manner and on the principle of equality mentioned in the Election Law. The Court further substantiated its decision on the fact that Arabic is the language of a fifth of the population which accordingly deserves group differentiated rights. However, the official status of Arabic was not part of the decision's rationale.
Conversely, when the Court mentioned the status of Arabic as an official language, it stated that this status is not unanimously accepted.

Another important decision is Adallah Legal Center for the Rights of the Israeli Arab Minority v. the Tel Aviv-Jaffa Council (H.C.4112/99, P.D. 56(5) 393). The central question examined in this case was whether there is an obligation to use Arabic alongside Hebrew on municipal street signs, in municipalities within whose jurisdiction there is a minority of Arab residents. The petitioner was the Association of Arab Civil Rights in Israel. In this case, unlike in previous cases, as noted by Justice Heshin, the minority Justice, it had not been argued that individual Arab citizens’ rights were violated. Specifically, the petitioners did not claim that individual Arabic speaking citizens lost their way or may loose their way because they do not understand the signs in Hebrew. Hence, the petition does not deal with the infringement of individual language rights but rather with group differentiated rights. Collective rights, the minority Justice claimed, have never been granted by the Supreme Court. They should rather be left to the legislature. Furthermore, as observed by Tabory (1981: 288), when the issue was raised in the Knesset, it was rejected on the ground that adding another language to the signs would inevitably lead to smaller letters which would diminish the effectiveness of the signs. In addition, the Minister of Labor significantly noted that he was not aware of any difficulties on the part of Arab drivers in finding their way on the roads. Thus, the legislature seems to have been reluctant to recognize the need to put Arabic on street signs.

The two Justices of the majority opinion, however, accepted the petition and decided that signs in mixed cities should also be written in Arabic. Yet, the two majority Justices differed in their reasoning. Justice Barak does not seem to fully diverge from the previously mentioned policy. Like the minority Justice, he did not accept the claim that Article 82 imposes on the municipalities the duty to put Arabic inscriptions on street signs since the requirement to use Arabic is limited to the domain of official notices. Rather, in his arguments for granting this inherently collective right, he extensively uses the terminology associated with individual rights (Saban, 2003: 121). He argues that there is need to seriously consider such values as ‘a person’s right to language, equality and tolerance.’ This equivocal attitude reflects the awareness that extending the status of Arabic may entail erosion in the status of Hebrew as the national symbol of the Jewish state. In justifying his decision, Justice Barak asserts that his approach is based on the recognition that granting this collective
right would not violate the superior status of Hebrew nor the national integrity of the state as a Jewish state. Nevertheless, Saban (2003: 133) sees in Justice Barak’s decision a slight change of policy since, for the first time, the Court differentiated the Arab minority as a national minority which deserves legal protection.

A more significant change in policy may be discerned in the opinion of the second majority Justice. Justice Dorner based her decision on an extended interpretation of Article 82. She argues that the limited number of domains in Article 82 should not be regarded as a closed list. The lack of Arabic on street signs, she maintained, is incompatible with the status of Arabic as an official language. Hence, the requirement to use Arabic should be extended to street signs as well. This unprecedented argument reflects a policy which diverges from the previously narrow interpretation of Article 82. It arguably goes beyond the decision given by Justice Barak by both explicitly recognizing the collective language rights of Arabs and by substantiating the status of Arabic as an official language.

It is difficult and even unwise to predict what will be the impact of Adallah on the status of Arabic, or whether the policy adopted by Justice Dorner will be followed in future decisions. However, in practice, municipalities in mixed cities are gradually adding Arabic on street signs, albeit at a quite slow pace. In addition, signs in highways have also become trilingual because they serve a mixed population. Thus, in this case, legal policy has had a considerable effect on practice. The fact that there are delays in implementing the Court’s requirement, as argued in a new petition presented by Adalah, arguably reflects the dominant ideological conviction in the importance of preserving the supremacy of Hebrew.

**The Status of Arabic in Legislation**

An examination of Israeli legislation with regard to language rights of the Arab minority demonstrates a highly conscientious policy of granting positive group differentiated rights in accordance with the positive rights enumerated in the international conventions. (United Nations General Assembly Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (the UNGA Minorities Declaration, 1992), the Council of Europe’s Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (the Framework Convention, 1998), and in particular the Council of Europe’s European Charter for
Regional or Minority Languages (the Minority Language Charter, 1990). Significantly, the recognition of these positive rights, in many cases, preceded their postulation in the international documents.

Furthermore, the following examination reveals that positive language rights in Israeli legislation extend far beyond the limited official domains mentioned in Article 82. In addition, it is quite evident that although some of these rights could have been recognized through the interpretation of Article 82, legal policy preferred to grant them through particular legislation rather than through the extended interpretation of the official status of Arabic. Both these observations reflect the policy of granting language rights on the basis of the extension of individual rights rather than by recognizing Arabic as a national right.

The following laws are a representative sample from the body of 35 laws and regulations which grant language rights to the Arabic speaking minority:

The obligation of the authorities is to publish notices to the public in Arabic alongside Hebrew. Many statutes not only grant the right to use Arabic but also impose on the authorities the obligation to do so. The following examples illustrate this duty which appears in many laws:

(a) Under section 9E of the Banking (Service to Customers) Law (1981) (Amendment 2004), the bank controller in Israel is required to notify all bank customers about the maturity dates of their loans. This notification must also be published in an Arabic-language newspaper.

(b) Section 23 of the Control of Prices of Products and Services Law (1996), requires that a general permit or order by this law must be published in at least three daily newspapers, one of which must be in the Arabic language.

(c) Article 1(A)(2) of the Planning and Building Law (1965), defines the term ‘publication in a newspaper’. It states that wherever the law requires notification about building plans in newspapers, the notification must also appear in the Arabic language in areas where at least 10% of the population speaks Arabic.

The Status of the Arabic Language

As noted above, Arabic is one of the three official languages in Article 82 of the Palestine Order. Since section 15(b) of the Law and Administration Ordinance did not repeal the requirement to use Arabic, Arabic retained the status of an official language.
in Israel. However, the status statement in Article 82 needs to be closely examined for clarifying the meaning of the term ‘official’ in this particular context. Although in Article 82 of the Palestine Order, English, Arabic and Hebrew seem to be equally ‘official’, since all government publications were required to be published in all the three languages, the Mandatory Article also explicitly states a preference for the English language: “In case of a discrepancy between the English text. .. and the Arabic or the Hebrew text thereof, the English text shall prevail.” This statement negates the seeming equality and establishes a hierarchy with English primary and Hebrew and Arabic secondary. In legal terms, it meant that the interpretation of laws in courts could only be based on the English version.

When the Mandatory Law was adopted into the Israeli legal system, section 15(b) of the Law and Administration Ordinance (1948) abolished all requirements to use English. Thus, the status of English in Article 82 was abolished. However, the underlying hierarchical policy with regard to the term ‘official languages’ has not been changed. Hebrew, recognized as an important symbol of the national revival, replaced English as the dominant official language. All government documents in the newly born State were written in Hebrew instead of English. The status of Arabic remained secondary as it was under the Mandatory regime. Thus, as observed by Saban and Amara (2004: 20) “. . . .the Israeli Law, like the Mandatory Law, does not formulate a comprehensive bilingual arrangement. It does not grant Arabic the full and comprehensive status of an official language.” Saban and Amara’s use of the term ‘official’ corresponds to the language policy adopted in the Canadian Charter where Article 18 “states lucidly that the laws, rulings of the Parliament and official records will be printed and published in both English and French and that the two versions are equally authoritative” (Saban & Amara, 2004: 20).

However, it should be noted that unlike the Canadian example, the status of the Arab minority in Israel is particularly complicated because as Navot (1999: 43) observes, ‘‘Israel was founded with a classical character of a nation-state.’’ The Arab minority in Israel is characteristically a ‘national minority’ where ‘nation’ means by Kymlicka’s (1995: 11) definition ‘‘a historical community, more or less institutionally complete, occupying a given territory or homeland, sharing a distinct language and culture.’’ Furthermore, as Kymlicka observes, ‘‘a country which contains more than one nation is, therefore, not a nation-state but a multination state.’’ The complexity in recognizing a national minority in a nation-state was also noted by Landau (1993: 204)
119) where he maintains that the most important aspect of the Arabic struggle for self identity is related to the fact that Arabs are a minority within a nation-state which defines itself as Jewish and Zionist. Kretzmer (1990: 164) also mentions the additional complicating element in the case of Arabic in Israel deriving from the fact that the Arabs are part of a nation which has rejected Israel’s legitimacy as a nation-state of the Jewish people.

Thus, since Israel was declared as the Jewish nation-state, the recognition of a national minority within its boundaries, it was felt, would conflict with its very existence. Accordingly, the unequal language policy bequeathed upon Israel by Mandatory Law was compatible with the special character of the state as a nation-state. As in Mandatory Law, the term publish in the adopted article 82 does not denote a bilingual policy but rather, a requirement for translation into Arabic. It requires the translation into Arabic of all ordinances and governmental documents as well as formal publications by local authorities and municipalities. However, an analysis of the fulfillment of these requirements demonstrates gradual erosion in the already limited official status of Arabic enhanced by ideological and practical factors.

According to information given on 17.12.04, by the head of the Department of Arabic Translations in The Ministry of Justice, until 1982 the entire Official Gazette of the Israeli government was translated into Arabic. Until 1982, there was adherence to the translation requirement of all ordinances and other governmental and official notices and forms. However, since 1982, as a result of budgetary cuts, the translations have been limited to only three official documents: statutes, regulations and official pronouncements.

Of the three, only statutes are fully translated and within a reasonably short period after their enactment. Regulations and official announcements are only partially translated and in addition they are published with a delay of about two years. This account arguably reflects a situation which results from the postulation of Hebrew as the only binding language since laws, drafts of laws and debates in the Knesset are all in Hebrew. Thus, in practice, since the Arabic translation has had no binding authority in legal interpretation, the translations have lost their value and seem to have been abandoned and forgotten even by Arab jurists and lawyers. In addition, it is important to notice that legal education, for Jews and Arabs, in Israeli universities and colleges is given in Hebrew and therefore Israeli Arab lawyers and jurists are all highly familiar with the Hebrew legislation. The declining status of
Arabic is also reflected in the fact that law libraries do not hold the available Arabic translations, and those which do, admit that they only have partial collections. Hence, without an explicit policy repealing the requirement for Arabic translations, practice enhanced by ideological underpinning has been gradually impinging on the status of the Arabic translations of laws and other official governmental publications.

Formal and official notices of local authorities and municipalities have regularly not been published in Arabic. Thus, as Navot (1999: 58) observes, "the violation is especially prominent with regard to the publications of the local authorities." This violation was rarely contested in courts, probably because many individual Arab citizens have no difficulty understanding the notices in Hebrew. Furthermore, when such a violation was brought before the courts, until the last decade, the courts were reluctant to invalidate the publication on the basis of the violation of the official status of the Arabic language. Rather, the court's policy was to examine the issue on an individual basis by determining whether the failure to publish in Arabic actually violated the rights of the claimant in any significant way. Such was the case in 1954, where a citizen contested the validity of a formal notice of the Jerusalem Municipality because it was not published in Arabic. The court dismissed this claim maintaining that since the claimant was a Hebrew speaking citizen, he was not deprived by the absence of Arabic. Admittedly, the equivocal policy with regard to the status of Arabic reflects the particular status of the Arab minority in Israel.

There was an underlying anxiety that the recognition of Arabic as equal in status to Hebrew would undermine the character of Israel as a nation-state since "the nation is often associated with language as a marker of its identity" (Suleiman, 2003: 27). The importance of Hebrew as a national symbol was clearly expressed in the Declaration of Independence and in the ensuing legislation of the State of Israel. Concurrently, Arabic has also been traditionally regarded as the symbol of Arab nationality. Suleiman's (2003) analysis of the Arabs as a nation reflects the "strong association which exists between language and people in the conceptualization of group identity in Arab culture" (Suleiman, 2003: 64). Thus, policy decisions with regard to the legal status of Arabic, consciously or unconsciously, have reflected this remarkable ethno-symbolic significance of language in both Jewish and Arab cultures.
At the same time, Israel was established as a democratic country. The Declaration of Independence grants the most basic human rights, including language rights, regardless of group membership. These basic rights denote, as in many other Bills of Rights, a ‘difference blind’ policy which is also defined as a policy of tolerance towards individuals’ cultural rights. But, as Kymlicka (2001: 72) observes, “the list of common individual rights . . . is not sufficient to ensure ethnocultural justice.” Consequently, “it is increasingly accepted in many countries that some forms of cultural difference can only be accommodated through special legal or constitutional measures above and beyond the common rights of citizenship” (Kymlicka, 1995: 26). Specifically, this recognition necessitates a policy which requires the government to take ‘positive’ measures for ensuring group differentiated rights.

In the case of the language rights of the Arab minority in Israel, this minority’s rights are treated as a particular form of “Polyethnic rights” (Kymlicka, 1995: 30), ‘particular’ in the sense that this cultural difference is not meant to be only temporarily protected (as might be the case with the ethno-linguistic rights of other ethnic groups in Israel) but is rather of a permanent nature. The permanent nature of the Arab minority’s language rights reflects the fact that Arabic signifies a national identity which the Arab minority seeks to preserve. However, the national importance accorded to Arabic by the Arab population has been considered incompatible with the national and linguistic aspirations of Israel as the Jewish homeland. This ideological discord has had an unavoidable influence on the legal policy with regard to Arabic. Thus, although legal policy has recognized the Arab minority’s group differentiated language rights, the legislature and the courts were reluctant to acknowledge the national significance of Arabic. Group differentiated language rights have been granted as an extension of individual language rights because granting group differentiated language rights by avoiding the national aspect has not been considered incompatible with Israel’s national aspirations.

**The Status of English**

Alongside the Arab minority, which is a national minority, there are other distinct ethnic groups in Israel. “Obviously, a single country may be both multinational (as a result of the colonizing, conquest or confederation of national communities) and
polyethnic (as a result of individual and familial immigration)” (Kymlicka, 1995: 17). Israel represents a particular type of multi-ethnic society where individual and familial immigration have established a national imprint because Israel was founded to be the Jewish nation-state. Since its establishment, Israel has absorbed Jewish immigration from different countries and cultures. Nevertheless, most of the immigrants share a common basic cultural tradition by virtue of being Jewish. Consequently, these ethnic minorities should more accurately be described as ethnic groups rather than ethnic minorities. This particular characteristic enhances the participation and integration of these ethnic groups into the Israeli culture including the acquisition of the Hebrew language. In addition, since the ethnic groups in Israel are more inclined to assimilate into the Israeli society, their language rights are of a temporary rather than a permanent nature.

English was the dominant official language during the Mandatory period. Upon its establishment, Israel adopted the Mandatory legislation. However, Section 15(b) of the first Israeli legislation, the Law and Administration Ordinance, provided that “Any provision in the law requiring the use of the English language is repealed.” Thus, Article 82 was amended with regard to the English language. Yet, despite section 15(b) of the Law and Administration Ordinance, the Israeli Ministry of Justice published an English translation of Israeli laws and regulations until 1982. In addition, the Israeli citizen is still allowed to use English in his applications to the courts or to government offices. Authorities, for their part, are obliged to respond when a citizen uses English. Rubinstein regards this policy to be consistent with existing practice, by which applications to government offices written in the English language are responded to, even though the legislative provisions are published in Hebrew. Similarly, oral pleadings in English are occasionally heard in the courts when the attorney is a foreigner (Rubinstein, 1996: 101). Thus, the development of English in Israel, as in many other countries in the world “is not the simple end result of language management. Rather, it reflects local and individual language acquisition decisions, responding to changes in the complex ecology of the world’s language system” (Spolsky, 2004: 91). English is used in many contexts and taught in most of the schools. It appears on street signs and in almost all public places. Since tourists and visitors do not recognize the Hebrew letters, English has become an important means for accessing people from all over the world. Thus, market needs dictate the
extensive use of English in spite of the official legal policy reflected in section 12(b) of the Law and Administration Ordinance.

In addition, as previously mentioned, English is the native language of the group of citizens who immigrated to Israel from English speaking countries. Like other Jewish ethnic groups, they ideologically recognize the importance of acquiring Hebrew. However, because of the particular important status of English, this ethnic group tends to remain bilingual.

Nevertheless, there are certain statutes which specifically require the use of English. These requirements are generally not meant only to protect the English speaking ethnic group’s rights but also the rights of visitors and tourists since English has become the world language.

The statutes requiring the use of English may be divided into two categories:
(a) Statutes which regulate matters specifically related to non-Hebrew speaking residents, such as the Entrance to Israel Law (1952) (Amendment 1961) where section 13(8) requires that the rights of illegal residents in Israel should be published in English as well as in Hebrew.
(b) Statutes protecting the health, security or legal rights of Israeli citizens or visitors, such as the Law of Hazardous Substances (1993) which requires that the warning ‘poison’ should also appear in English besides Arabic and Hebrew. These laws and others which require the use of English attest that “English as a global language is now a factor that needs to be taken into account in its language policy by any nation state” (Spolsky, 2004: 91).

The Status of Russian and Amharic

In the early years after Israel’s establishment the massive waves of immigration were mainly composed of holocaust survivors from Europe and Jews from hostile Arab countries. These immigrants came from numerous countries and therefore spoke numerous languages. Accommodating their diverse needs was practically impossible but also ideologically undesirable in a country at the early stages of developing its identity. Furthermore, the importance of establishing Hebrew as the native language of the new country overshadowed the necessity to facilitate the process of the immigrants’ integration. Today, however, the country has established its identity and
Hebrew has successfully gained its dominance as the native language. Consequently, the Israeli society can be more responsive to the needs and difficulties of the new waves of immigration mainly from Russia and Ethiopia. In addition, today the fact that both immigrating populations have a rich culture and tradition which they are trying to maintain alongside the new Israeli culture does not pose any threat to the country’s identity.

In this background the state and the society are showing more openness towards other languages. Prominent among the languages that sections of Jewish population in Israel speak are Russian and Amharic. In the later immigrations Russians made the largest aliya. Today Israel has several national Russian dailies. The status of Russian and Amharic is different from the status of English because these languages do not share the universal status of the English language. Ideologically, the Russian and Ethiopian ethnic groups integrate into the Israeli society and willingly acquire Hebrew. In this respect, these immigrants are not different from other ethnic groups that flocked into Israel since its establishment. However, for several reasons, the policy today towards immigrants’ languages has considerably changed.

The Russian immigrants form the largest ethnic group among the Jewish population. Among the first generation of immigrants there is a significant number of people at the age when language acquisition is slow or practically impossible. This is one of the prominent factors which enhance the necessity to legally protect, albeit temporarily, the rights of the speakers of these languages. There are several occasions when the Israeli legislature ensures the language rights of these ethnic groups. These laws are less extensive than the laws protecting Arabic because the need has relatively recently emerged, following the massive immigration from Russia and Ethiopia. The rights of the Russian speaking ethnic group are more extensively protected since the Russian group is considerably bigger, better organised and hence politically powerful. In addition, the Russian ethnic group maintains close cultural and familial connections with friends and relatives in their former community while the Ethiopian group has basically disconnected itself from its native country. On the other hand, since both are Jewish ethnic groups, their integration into the Israeli society, particularly that of the younger generation, will eventually result in the abolition of these requirements some time in the future. This characteristic clearly distinguishes them from Arabic which has a national significance for its speakers.
The state provides legislative protection to Russian and Amharic. The Second Broadcasting Authority for Radio and T.V. Law (1990), requires the franchise holders to allocate 40% of the broadcasting time to local productions (section 59). The supplement to the law provides that local productions must also be in the Russian language. In addition, a franchise holder must broadcast at least 5% of the programs in Russian or with Russian sub-titles.

In other laws, there are requirements to publish important notifications to the public in Russian as well. For instance in an amendment from 1994 to the Banking (Service to Customers) Law (1981), banks are required to notify the public about the possibility of early release of loans also in a Russian newspaper. Consumer Protection Regulations too, require using Russian in brochures of cellular phones which provide information about radiation hazards.

The legislative requirements to use Amharic are scarce, for instance, centers providing assistance to people who were subject to a criminal attack are required to prepare information leaflets in the Amharic language as well. In addition, notifications about educational scholarships have to be published in newspapers in Amharic in addition to other languages.

Thus, English, Russian and Amharic are ethnic languages but their speakers are not minorities in the regular sense of the term. Rather, the speakers of these languages generally fully identify themselves with the Israeli social and cultural heritage. Their language rights are temporary rights for facilitating their initiation and integration in their new homeland.

**Conclusion**

The real strength of a language is derived from its utility in public space. The space and status a language receives is determined by the perceptions about the language and the speakers of the language. There are several agents that define and shape the perceptions and prominent among them is the state machinery. In a pluralistic society, the patronage by the state to a particular language is ultimately going to benefit the speakers of that language. The reverse is equally true that the elevated position of a particular community will elevate the language that they speak. On the other hand, such a patronage adversely affects other languages in the society.
Israel is a multi-ethnic and multi-lingua state. The Jews and the Arabs have been at conflict. Within the Jewish community there is a divide between the Ashkenazim and the Sephardim. Prior to their immigration to Israel the Ashkenazim used Yiddish as the language of the community. The sacredness and limited vocabulary of Hebrew restricted its use. As a part of the Zionist project and in the larger interest of the Jews the language revival subsided in favour of Hebrew. Hebrew emerged from ‘dead’ language to become the official and dominant language of Israel. Arabic that was the main language of the erstwhile Palestine and also of the Jews living there, moved to a more secluded place.

The Jewish population that has historically been multi-lingual adopted Hebrew as their main language over a very short period of time. Until the Zionist movement, language though important didn’t form the core of the Jewish identity as a people or as a religion. Though the religious texts were in Hebrew it was interpreted in the language of the masses so that it could be more easily understood. It didn’t clash with the sanctity of the message and was well accepted that religious sermons could be given or rather preferably be given in language other than Hebrew – the language of the mass.

This was a pragmatic use of language choice in public domain. Similar practices are seen in market place where the reasons behind a particular language choice can be many like identity, economy, skill and at times even fear. The preference for a particular language also depends upon the individual’s background and association. This is best depicted in the display of sign boards, notices, nameplates on private and government buildings, road signs, advertisings, informative signs, commemorative plaques, graffiti etc. The factors behind the choice of a particular language can be simple and at times several and overlapping. At times such decisions are conscious and deliberated and at times its involuntary.

Language choice in public is a complex exercise. No matter how spontaneously such decisions are taken they take into consideration the intended reader/s or listener/s skill. Many a times such decisions are motivated by symbolic value attached to the language. At times the socio-cultural and political background of the individual influences the language choice decision. The market place has its own set of factors that influence the language use. The customer becomes the prime concern and allows for diluting other ideological positions as political and socio-cultural identities.
Hebrew got the revival momentum in the pre-state era. A major contribution then was the *Haskala* movement. The *Haskala* movement used Hebrew to bring Jews closer to western thoughts and culture and to shed its ethnic individuality. But in the end, Hebrew awakened national aspirations. Hebrew revived old, forgotten yearnings for the motherland and impelled immigration to Palestine to live a Hebrew life. Another landmark in the history of Hebrew language was its emergence as a spoken language. This was an outcome of the pioneers belief that unless Hebrew becomes the primary and only language of thought and emotion, a Jewish nation would be meaningless. It was felt necessary to connect the language with the soil and land. This made Hebrew part of the ideological base of Zionist movement and later of the Jewish state.

Due to this, Hebrew received patronage from all quarters. Religious groups, political parties and other individuals and organizations published their papers and pamphlets in Hebrew. After several ups and down, today Israel has several dailies, weeklies, fortnightly apart from magazines and journals that cater to the various needs of the society. The spectrum of publications covers from the basic beginners Hebrew to high and specialized Hebrew.

All these developments and promotion to Hebrew language had a negative effect on other languages particularly Arabic. Arabic was the dominant language of the region. Even the Jews spoke it but with the coming of the Zionist movement Arabic became the marginalized language. Several other factors are attributed for this inferior status of Arabic. The ongoing conflict between the Jews and Arabs put the Palestinians and Arabic language at the receiving end. The Jewish character of the state of Israel is a hindrance in adopting the inclusive character of a pluralistic society. Though there are efforts made in this direction but a lot more still needs to be done. Though Arabic is the official language and several legislations are done at the state and local levels with regards to Arabic, it still is struggling to get its status defined. The laws and amendments thereof demonstrate the policy of accommodating the language needs of the Arab minority while avoiding their national aspect. These rights cater to the individual but do not recognize the collective. There is an underlying anxiety that the recognition of Arabic as equal in status to Hebrew would undermine the character of Israel as a nation-state since nation is often associated with language as a marker of its identity.
It was the result of a consistent policy that Hebrew established itself in the public domain. A non-spoken language becoming the all purpose language of all could not have been possible otherwise. The emergence of Hebrew as a spoken language was one of the most significant developments of the Zionist enterprise. It was most instrumental in promoting a culture across all sections of the society. The language use in public domain created nostalgia for a Jewish state like the one in golden era. The public use of Hebrew was another manifestation of Jewish dominance.