Chapter 3

EDUCATION AND HEBREW LANGUAGE POLICY

Modern states have taken upon the task of educating its people. States undertake education as a social policy aimed at bringing about change. So education has a functionist role to play in the society and education is not meant simply to eliminate illiteracy. This chapter would explore the role of state in education and how the state language policy helps achieve the goals expected out of the functionist role of education. The chapter is spread over four main sections. The first section would deal with the role of state in education and the possible theories around the functionist role of education. It would question the purpose of education whether it is the goal in itself or there is some larger function that is to be achieved through education. The second section would deal with the place of language in Israeli society and education. Israel is an splendid example to show how the political leadership and the state influence the language behaviour of its people. This change is brought about in a controlled and sustained way through the curriculum, course material and assessment process. The third section deals with Ulpan, an exclusive stream of Hebrew language teaching programme, its origin, mechanism and contribution. The fourth section elaborates upon the language education to non-Jewish population in Israel. The Palestinians or the Israeli-Arabs cannot imagine a life without Hebrew in their daily life but at the same time they find it difficult to identify with the course content. This further exemplifies the functionist role of inclusion and exclusion that the language plays and the state makes full use of it.

The Role of State in Education

The role of state in education is a very complex issue. Its goal, means to achieve that goal, and the target group have all come under the critical scrutiny of scholars. Education as a social policy can be seen as action designed by government to engineer social change; as a mechanism for identifying human needs and devising the means of meeting them; as a mechanism for solving social problems; as redistributive justice; as the means of regulating subordinate social groups etc. Apart from these some other logical questions need to be addressed: first, why does the state so significantly engage in the provision of education? Second, what kinds of social policy ends are
pursued through education, overtly and covertly? Third, in whose interests are they pursued and who actually benefits? The second and the third questions are interrelated and for convenience would address them together. Whatever be the nature of the society our vital concern is the problem of order. And ‘order is the first requirement of the diverse, specialized, interdependent activity of modern man, and this order the state alone can maintain’ (MacIver, 1957: 459). Education is one of the instruments that the state uses to achieve order. Durkheim has emphasized that education is basically and essentially a social function (Durkheim, 1956: 80). According to him education ‘must in some degree be submitted to the state’s influence’ (Durkheim, 1956: 80). Though he supported the existence of the schools other than those for which the state was directly responsible, he argues that ‘the education given in them must remain under its control’ (Durkheim, 1956: 80). Durkheim felt that the role of the state was mainly one of outlining certain basic and essential principles in education, and of ensuring that these were followed in all schools. Such principles involved respect for reason, for science, for ideas and for sentiments which are ‘at the base of democratic morality’ (Durkheim, 1956: 81).

Maintenance of order is intricately linked to the successful transmission of acquired skills, knowledge and values from one generation to the other, which in turn is fundamental to the continuity of any society. In simple societies, enculturation as well as teaching/learning of other basic tasks such as food gathering took place within a relatively undifferentiated social framework. In her study of the development of children in the New Guinea society of the Manus, Margaret Mead has shown how their education is both a familial and socially collective responsibility (Mead, 1942). But in complex societies the educational institution shares the primary burden of rationalizing and organizing a portion of the enculturation process. Schools are sponsored by authorities in order to impart to youth skills and ideas deemed of central importance. From this point of view a school is an institution established for the specific purpose of exposing persons – assembled voluntarily or by compulsions of law – to formal curricula. The curricula deal with technical and social skills as well as explanations of the past, present and the likely future of one’s role in it. In formal terms, this is what takes place in the classrooms, at assemblies, on outings, during sporting events and at other activities commonly associated with schooling in our society. Through symbols, inherent in song, dance, written and oral history, and literature the individual is supplied with stimuli which helps shape his goals and plans.
in life. Thus, we see that education performs the important ‘functional role’ of assigning individual roles or the function of role allocation and simultaneously also keeps the cycle going by replacing the older generation by the newly enculturated members of the society. Simultaneously, the active role played by the state ensures that the children learn and imbibe values central to the existence of the state and as some sociologists would say to suppress the spirit of questioning established rules and to produce law abiding citizens under already established laws. The state however primarily uses these symbols to serve the purpose of fostering national integration by bringing out shared commonalities.

While dealing with the political function of education, P. W. Musgrave draws a general conclusion that ‘education may not be a sufficient condition for democracy, but it certainly is a necessary condition for its survival’ (Musgrave, 1965: 147).

Mannheim’s arguments underline the fact that, whatever political or social ideal we may adopt and seek to maintain, ‘a necessary condition for its survival’ is an educational system and pattern geared to that political aim. In short, consensus has to be planned; it doesn’t happen automatically. It is only obvious that the state should intervene in such a major way in an activity, which can be central to legitimizing its existence. Governments of all forms have used the education system to legitimize the existing order, be it democratic, monarchical or authoritarian regimes.

The Israeli education system like any other education system in the world is oriented towards these functional and political goals. The Yishuv before the establishment of the state and the state machinery particularly the Ministry of Education, after the establishment of the State defined goals and made policies. The policy makers were fully aware of the new fragile nature of the new society the state of Israel was building. The leaders were to make new nation and the process had to wage on two fronts: one at the divide within the Jewish community that had arrived from different quarters of the world with different backgrounds and the second with the Palestinians. For this end language, and here I mean Hebrew, played a crucial role in both binding the Jews as a community, and at the same time creating a “us” and “them” situation with respect to the Palestinians.
Social Transformation through Education in Israel

Israel at the time of the declaration of independence enshrined the principle of equal rights for all citizens irrespective of their race, religion, gender or nationality. For almost six decades now, Israel is still highly stratified by gender, ethnicity and social class. Though the state extended educational access to various segments of its population, various indicators continued to reflect these social divisions (Kashiti, Arieli, and Shapira, 1992: 318; Statistical Abstract of Israel 1957, 1961, 1970, 1981...). Theories of development propose that educational expansion has a key role in economic development and social transformation. In contrast to this position a number of scholars question the power of education alone to narrow inequality or to transform stratified societies.

In Israel the political volatility makes politics the epicenter of all activities including education. Political considerations are more powerful than education in social transformation. In 1948, when the state of Israel was established it defined the principles of the new state. In the long history of politics of conflict, another watershed came when Israel signed the Oslo accord in 1993. In contrast to South Africa’s apartheid regime, whose laws and policies officially codified extreme and especially virulent forms of racial and ethnic privilege and power, the Israeli state generally made greater provision for the formal political equality for members of all the ethnic groups of which its citizenry was comprised. However, the advent of the Oslo Accords in Israel differed in at least one crucial respect from the changes in South Africa. Unlike the abolition of apartheid, which sought to transform the internal workings of South African society, the Oslo Accords were not directed at changing the ethnicity-based patterns of power and privilege that in fact have characterized Israeli society since the state’s founding in 1948. Most Israelis understood that the Oslo Accords were intended as an external policy only and that domestic affairs would remain unaffected.

In Israel, ethnicity, gender and social status remain closely linked. The economy can be divided into core and semi peripheral sectors. The Jewish citizens of European descent (Ashkenazim) have greater social, economic, and political power than either Jews of African or Asian heritage (Mizrachim, also known as Sephardim).
or Arab Israelis. As is the case with most nation-states, Israeli society is also stratified by gender such that men have greater social, political and economic power than women. Educational outcomes in each nation reflect these patterns.

The role of education policy which forms the part of the development policy of a state influences the final outcome in the society. There is vast literature and theoretical attempts to understand the role of education and language skills in social mobility. There are four major perspectives which incorporate the theoretical attempts:

1) **Functionalist or modernization theories** hold that educational institutions are secular national institutions that serve economic growth and political stability by a) building citizenship across ethnic particularisms; b) allocating, sorting, and selecting people for the workforce in meritocratic and rational ways; and c) enhancing individual mobility. Drawing in many cases from neoclassical economic theorizing about human capital, this perspective sees women as being integrated into modern public life as the expansion of jobs in industries and services provides opportunities for them in the growing labor market. According to this perspective, patriarchal and traditional norms will be undermined by market forces that rely on achievement, individualism, competition and merit. Thus, development will lead to greater equality for women and minority. The implications of modernization theory are that as education and other forms of human capital are equalized, occupational and income stratification by gender and ethnicity will decline.

2) **Conflict theories** hold that economic expansion is one of the primary interests of the state and that formal schooling is a central tool for accumulation and legitimacy. According to this perspective, schools prepare youngsters for work, sorting and selecting them largely in accord with student’s ethnicity, gender and class locations. The legitimacy of the prevailing social order is taught and reproduced in schools because children learn to pursue merit and mobility in bureaucratic settings. This view challenges the relatively sanguine view of nation building through mass education promulgated by modernization theory.
3) **World institution theories** hold that the historic rise of mass schooling corresponds more to the emergence of the secular state than to economic force per se. Although schools are not necessarily required to serve economic interests, as an institution they hold important symbolic value. World institution theory, associated with John Meyer, Francisco Ramirez and their colleagues, emphasizes the worldwide similarities among states and schools (Boli, 1985: 145-70; Fuller, 1992). Bruce Fuller further refines this theory and holds that states in many developing societies are under enormous pressure to look modern and to act in ways that address economic and social problems without undercutting the legitimacy, material interests, or advantages of elites. As a result in developing nations, schooling is organized and delivered in ways that serve the political and symbolic goals of the state but does not necessarily educate the masses. The contradiction for the fragile state is that it cannot transform education and make it universally available without undercutting the class interests of political and economic elites, which it needs to bolster in order to maintain its legitimacy and tax base. Consequently, development may lead to a broadening of education, but it will be superficial, with those most in need of extensive education less likely to receive it (Fuller, 1991).

4) **Empowerment theories** resemble modernization theories in that they call attention to the positive effects of the expansion of education but typically place great emphasis on education's ability to transform individuals in ways that go beyond changes in their economic prospects. This theory emphasizes how education gives women in particular better ways of organizing their lives and developing understandings that can challenge the prevailing oppressive social and sexual order. Higher levels of education are associated with greater political participation, reduced fertility and decreased infant and child mortality, as well as increased labor force participation and relatively higher incomes (Kelly, 1982: 1-7).

Israel is a multiethnic society in which ethnicity and social stratification has been intimately tied to its historical development. We define the concept of ethnicity to designate the cultural, linguistic and historical differences among groups in Israel. These categories also correspond to those used by government census enumerators. In Israel there are four major groups: Israeli Arabs, Israeli born (citizens of Jewish
descent whose fathers were born in Israel [also known as Sabras]), Mizrahim (immigrant Jews of South African, Australian, South American, West Asian and North African descent), and Ashkenazim (immigrant Jews of U.S., Western and Central and Eastern European descent). Within these main groups, there are additional ethnic and religious distinctions that are salient to the society. The power and privilege of Ashkenazim is best understood as a product of Jewish nations history. Israel, in a way, was an outpost of the developed and industrialized nation-states (what is sometimes called the First World). With roots in the First World and corresponding access to its political resources, instruments of violence, economic power and cultural capital, the Ashkenazim in Israel were able to establish and maintain their dominance over other ethnic groups in their society.

**Table 3.1**

**Israeli Educational Attainment by Gender and Ethnicity, 1980,**

**Civilian Labor Force 15 and Older**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity by Gender</th>
<th>Ashkenazim</th>
<th>Mizrachim</th>
<th>Israeli Born</th>
<th>Arabs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type of School</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary: Vocational/ Agricultural</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary: Academic</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>21.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yeshiva</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postsecondary for practical engineering &amp; technology</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other postsecondary</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University technikon</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other postsecondary</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not study</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.2

Israeli Occupational Attainment by Gender and Ethnicity, 1980,
Civilian Labor Force 15 and Older

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity by Gender</th>
<th>Ashkenazim</th>
<th>Mizrachim</th>
<th>Israeli Born</th>
<th>Arabs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientific and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other professional and technical</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrators and managers</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled blue-collar</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>41.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled blue-collar</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Note: The numbers in the table are in Percentage.

Though the tables here do not provide an exhaustive data and analysis of the state education policy and the social mobility across ethnic and gender lines but it definitely is a reflection of the same. The education policy (which includes infrastructure, curriculum, course content, language of instruction etc.) is framed towards a nationalistic goal determined by the interests of the political elites which takes a social and moral value but at the same time maintains hierarchy in the society. The tables reflect this among the four main components of the Israeli society. The
economic achievement and class mobility commensurate with the educational achievement and the type of education achieved.

**Language in Israeli Society and Education**

The tables 3.1 and 3.2 indicate the general attainment by ethnicity and gender as a result of larger education policy. The education attainment corresponds to the occupational attainment of these segments of the society. These are indices of the economic development and finally facilitate social mobility. It very clearly show the functional role of education. But, the education policy contains more to it; the language of instruction, curriculum, course content etc. would all decide the final outcome of education. So this section would deal with the language profile of Israel and its impact on the overall educational outcome.

The construction of Jewish identity has long been closely allied to linguistic choice. By the late Second Temple period, 2000 years ago, a triglossic linguistic repertoire was well established. The possession and control of the three languages (Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek) that constituted the repertoire of Jews were important elements in the construction of the various identities that Jews could claim in their Diaspora life. For men in particular, knowledge of *Leshon ha Kodesh* of Hebrew and Aramaic, became the mark of an identified and identifying Jew, the sign of education and of belonging to the community. Literacy meant learning to read Hebrew script, and the ability to read and write texts in Hebrew or Aramaic. There were exceptional periods – the Greek speaking Jews of Alexandria at the time of Philo in the first century of the Common Era were such a case – but generally – even during the Golden Age a thousand years ago in Spain when Jewish writers used Arabic and knew Latin and Spanish – the status of Hebrew and Aramaic was unchallenged.

With Zionist movement a campaign was made to bring back the Jewish Diaspora community back to Eretz Israel. The new immigrant society had brought with it different languages, thus creating several groups and gaps between them. Language became a core issue that the Zionist leadership had to handle very carefully. On the other hand the leaders had to make a choice of national language for handling this problem and for building a new Jewish society. As much of the planning and policy making was focused on state building, the full potential for developing language capacity could not be realized. Several languages of the new immigrants
gradually disappeared. Its only recently that the new policy acknowledges the unfortunate loss of the potential of early immigrant languages especially French and Arabic and call to correct this especially in the case of Russian. But the pressures on the new policy are immense. The Hebrew ideology and the practical arguments for a working language common to all guarantee its continued place at the center of any policy. English has forced its way in, so that all agree that it would be grossly unfair to deny it to any school students. Arabic is protected as the language of the major autochthonous minority. The arguments for teaching it as a second language are politically strong. Its practical value is realized by the Jews both in the case of eventual peace with the Arab world or as an important tool for monitoring in the continuing conflict. Beside these three languages which make the irresistible core of a language education policy, there are many others with excellent claims. French is not just the heritage language of a significant immigrant language, but has functional significance as a language of international communication and a long tradition of significance in Western culture. Russian is the community language of 800,000 immigrants, and for them it is a language of culture and education; it has important potential as a language for trade. Spanish, poorly represented in present language education programs, is a language of a significant number of immigrants and an important language for developing trade with Latin America and other countries. Yiddish, preserved as community language with the ultra-orthodox community, is a major heritage language for Jews outside it. Ladino is another of the heritage languages that has minimal recognition, and there are others not yet acknowledged by the system. Amharic remains the community language of the 75,000 immigrants from Ethiopia, and recognizing it provides an important way to recognize their cultural identity. There are a various other languages brought by immigrant groups which if preserved would strengthen the national linguistic capacity of the country. There are voices supporting the need to start building some capacity in Japanese and Chinese and other potential trading partners.

The Israeli Ministry of Education supervises 2,500 vocational, agricultural and comprehensive schools. These are organized into schools with Hebrew as the language of instruction (2000) and those with Arabic (500). Those teaching in Hebrew are for Jews; the Arabic schools are for non-Jews. There are also sixty or so schools outside the system supported partially by state funds (especially since the previously anti-Zionist ultra-orthodox political parties first entered the government)
but receiving minimal supervision from the Ministry of Education. Within the State system, there are two distinct sub-systems, each with its own schools, inspectors, and curricula: the first is the secular stream, with about 500 schools, and the second is the religious stream, comprising about 160 schools. State-supported secondary schools are generally independently governed, either by an elected board or a municipality or a kibbutz system or an educational network but their curricula are under control of the Ministry. Within Israel proper, there are two State supported systems for non-Jewish children, one comprising 160 schools and 20 kindergartens under the supervision of the Division for Arab Education, and a second smaller system of 25 schools and 3 kindergartens under the supervision of the Department for Druze Education. Schools for Bedouins (who are also speakers of Arabic) in the North have a special supervisor, under the Jewish school inspectorate, while those in the South are under supervision of the Division of Arab Education. The thirteen non-supervised and non-official schools for non-Jews teach less than 0.5 percent of the total student population in Israel. About 2500 Circassians (there are others in the Caucasus, Turkey, Syria, Jordan and Iraq) live in two villages in Israel. While not Arabs, they are Sunni Moslems.

Table 3.3
Hebrew language education statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Students in Hebrew Education</th>
<th>Schools in Hebrew Education – Total</th>
<th>Schools in Primary Hebrew Education – Total</th>
<th>Secondary Schools in Hebrew Education – Total</th>
<th>Classes in Primary Hebrew Education – Total</th>
<th>Students in Hebrew Education – Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>864972</td>
<td>6233</td>
<td>1455</td>
<td>472</td>
<td>15453</td>
<td>389748</td>
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<tr>
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<td>884203</td>
<td>6509</td>
<td>1450</td>
<td>481</td>
<td>15501</td>
<td>394069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>901292</td>
<td>6699</td>
<td>1455</td>
<td>476</td>
<td>15796</td>
<td>401870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>972765</td>
<td>1982</td>
<td>1466</td>
<td>481</td>
<td>16220</td>
<td>412556</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>995217</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>1484</td>
<td>476</td>
<td>16374</td>
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<td>1980</td>
<td>1026430</td>
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<td>1475</td>
<td>478</td>
<td>16964</td>
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<td>1051970</td>
<td>2026</td>
<td>1491</td>
<td>488</td>
<td>17272</td>
<td>446210</td>
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<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>1077156</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>1499</td>
<td>477</td>
<td>17685</td>
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<td>2110</td>
<td>1523</td>
<td>520</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>--------</td>
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Hebrew is the language of instruction for all students in the Israeli State schools and State Religious schools. The schools of the ultra-orthodox independent system continued the use of Yiddish. In the first year of the state, after some discussion, it was decided that schools in the Arab sector should continue to use Arabic as language of instruction. The Arab schools taught Hebrew as a second language starting in the second or third grade. Some 40 percent of the children in Jewish schools learn Arabic for three years, from 7th to 9th grade; a smaller number start it earlier and continue it later, but the success of the teaching remains questionable (Koplewitz, 1992: 29-66; Kraemer, 1993: 83-106). All students in both Jewish and Arabic systems learn English as the principal foreign language, starting in fourth or third grade or earlier and continue to the 12th grade. In addition, a significant number of students learn French, Russian Yiddish and some other languages (Halle, 1993: 37-49) as well.

**Language Policy**

A consolidated document has been published setting out language education policy (Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport, 1995; Office of the Director General, Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport, 1996). It starts by reaffirming the prime importance of Hebrew and Arabic as mother tongues and as languages of instruction
for the two communities. There is recognition of the need for each community to learn the other's language, and an additional year (10th grade) is added to the teaching of Arabic required in Jewish schools. The place of English as the first foreign language is stated, and permission is given to start teaching it in third grade. French and Russian are encouraged as languages of special significance. Other languages are also to be encouraged. New immigrants are to be encouraged to maintain their home languages while acquiring Hebrew (Shohamy, 1994: 131-142; Spolsky, 1996: 45-53).

The Policy further establishes the literacy goals in Hebrew and in Arabic for both the Jews and the Arabs. It makes further provision for language maintenance in the languages of immigrants, with special reference to Russian and Amharic. There is a long-established policy permitting immigrant students and students who have been overseas for long period to take the school leaving examination in any language they choose to offer. The policy stresses and makes provision for teaching of Hebrew to immigrants for one year and for developing literacy in that language. Within the Arab sector, there is provision for the teaching of Hebrew, optionally in the first grade and compulsorily from the second grade until the twelfth (the end of secondary education). For speakers of Hebrew, Arabic is a required subject from 7th to 10th grade (the fourth year has just been added in the new policy) and optional in 5th, 6th, 11th and 12th grades. Schools may choose to offer French instead of Arabic, and new immigrants are exempted from the requirement.

English is considered the first foreign language and is optional in 3rd and 4th grade and compulsory throughout the rest of the school system. While the policy mentions French as an option, both popular sentiment and university entrance requirements mean it is never selected instead of English. French, recognized as important because of cultural, political and economic ties and as the community language of a sizable body of immigrants, is taught optionally (or as a required subject in place of Arabic) from 5th to 12th grade. Russian is offered as an optional language for new immigrants (and as an alternative to Arabic or French) throughout the system. The policy encourages students to also study a third foreign language. Languages in which there exist programs are Yiddish (also used as language of instruction and taught in the independent ultra-orthodox schools), Ladino, Spanish and German; the policy seeks to add others like Japanese. The new policy also encourages the development of special language schools.
With the increasing confidence that Hebrew is no more a threatened language, education policy has given more prominence and importance to other languages in the educational arena. There is a gradual move from the traditional monolingual (Hebrew) plus English program and philosophy to a more open acceptance of multilingualism and language maintenance. It is being strongly believed that Hebrew has come out of its initial and nascent stage when it needed protection that was primarily to be provided by the state. Encouraged by the established position of Hebrew in the Israeli society the Ministry of Education is undertaking new and bold language education programmes. Increasing programs are leading to growing professionalization of the fields. The new policies have also led to steps to bring language inspectors together for the first time. The Ministry is funding and roping in the services of experts to streamline the language policy.

Organization of Language Education

The new policy rationalizes and modifies existing policies and practices, and in particular set general goals and lays down funding mechanisms for the teaching of languages in the schools. Within the Ministry of Education, responsibilities are shared by the Chief Inspectors for the various languages (under the authority of the Pedagogical secretariat), the directors of the various levels of education, and the curriculum division. Further supervision and direction is provided by local education districts. Final policy decisions are made at the individual school level.

The results therefore vary. All schools in the Arab sector use Arabic as their language of instruction, and teach Hebrew as a second language and English as a foreign language. In Jewish state schools, Hebrew is the language of instruction. All students learn English, many schools starting it before the official 3rd grade. Only about 50 percent of students learn Arabic for the required three years. The other languages for which there are significant numbers of students are French, Russian and Yiddish.

For each language, there is a curriculum drawn up by the chief inspector with the advice of a national professional committee, and approved by the Ministry of Education. The curriculum also serves as the basis for the school leaving examinations.
The language Education policy provides a basis of optional and required teaching hours for each language, but these hours may be supplemented by local educational districts and by schools from their own resources.

At the elementary and secondary school level, English is the language studied by all students. There is some teaching of Arabic, French and other languages at elementary school. At high schools, all students continue with English, and a large proportion adds to this Arabic (about 50 percent), French (about 10 percent), Russian (2-3 percent), or Yiddish (2-3 percent). In the school leaving examinations, all students take English, and about 10 percent take one or more other languages.

**Mother tongue education:** The Policy establishes literacy goals in Hebrew and in Arabic as mother tongues in the two major sectors, Jewish and Arab. It makes provision further for language maintenance in the languages of immigrants, with special reference to Russian and Amharic.

There is a long-established policy permitting immigrant students and students who have been overseas for long period to take the school leaving examination in any language they choose to offer.

**Second language education:** The policy stresses and makes provision for teaching of Hebrew to immigrants for one year and for developing literacy in that language.

Within the Arab sector, there is provision for the teaching of Hebrew, optionally in the first grade and compulsorily from the second grade until the twelfth (the end of secondary education).

For speakers of Hebrew, Arabic is a required subject from 7th to 10th grade (the fourth year has just been added in the new policy) and optional in 5th, 6th, 11th and 12th grades. Schools may choose to offer French instead of Arabic, and new immigrants are exempted from the requirement.

**Foreign Language Education:** English is considered the first foreign language and is optional in 3rd and 4th grade and compulsory throughout the rest of the school system. While the policy mentions French as an option, both popular sentiment and university entrance requirements mean it is never selected instead of English.

French, recognized as important because of cultural, political and economic ties and as the community language of a sizable body of immigrants, is taught optionally (or as a required subject in place of Arabic) from 5th to 12th grade. Russian
is offered as an optional language for new immigrants (and as an alternative to Arabic or French) throughout the system.

The policy encourages students to also study a third foreign language. Languages in which there exist programs are Yiddish, Ladino, Spanish and German; the policy seeks to add others like Japanese. The new policy also encourages the development of special language schools.

**Curriculum, syllabus and materials:** The earliest areas developed in Hebrew teaching were the normativistic teaching of Hebrew grammar and language and the cultural and ideological teaching of Hebrew and world literatures. These areas are well institutionalized with university departments and formal examinations. New areas are developing. In the field of written expression, there is an examination but no provision for teaching. Interest in teaching literacy is being shown especially in the elementary schools, and supporting courses are offered in some teachers' colleges.

The teaching of English has moved from an earlier (pre-1960, say) concern for literature and culture to a stress on English as an international language of communication. The immigration of English-speaking teachers in the 1970's means that a good proportion of the teaching, particularly at high schools, is done by native speakers. As a result, there has been growing emphasis over the years on oral ability. More recently, a new interest has been expressing in the teaching of reading.

The teaching of Arabic is hampered by the difficulty of dealing with diglossia. While there are some programs in the spoken variety, most classes are taught in Hebrew and concentrate on the grammar and literature of the Modern Standard (Literary) Arabic language. The political contest between the two people, Jews and Arabs, further hampers the cause of Arabic amongst the Jewish population. The Arabs who join such courses find difficulty in reconciling with the Jewish symbolic content in the course material as teaching emphasis is on the cultural value of the language.

The Russian curriculum aimed to capture the grammatical and literary goals of the native-language curricula in the former Soviet Union. A new syllabus is being developed to teach Russian to speakers of Hebrew, or to those immigrant children who did not attend high school in Russia.

There is a large textbook industry in English, highly sensitive to changes in the teaching and examination syllabuses, and the competition has led to relatively high quality. There are locally developed materials for Arabic and French and some for
Russian. Audio, visual and computer-based materials are available, especially in English, and some in Arabic.

**Assessment of students:** At the end of high school, the Bagrut examination serves both for school leaving and university entrance purposes. The syllabuses for these examinations are often seen as the principal method of controlling the teaching in the schools. The examinations are fairly traditional, and the final grades take into account school grades. Because of concerns about reliability, the universities established their own parallel Psychometric examination, which includes sections in general ability, mathematics, and English.

The Bagrut language examinations test the various skills. English includes separate listening and speaking sections alongside the written examination. Other assessment is local or district. From time to time, there are national proficiency assessments, especially in Arabic and English.

**Teacher qualifications and support:** As a general rule, elementary school teachers are trained in teachers' college and high school teachers in universities. The supply of trained teachers varies by subject.

There is a felt shortage of English teachers, so that in addition to the existing programs, the Ministry of Education is conducting a program to recruit native speakers of English with university degrees and offer them training in speaking Hebrew and in English as a Foreign Language methodology.

The training of teachers of Arabic to speakers of Hebrew is supported also by the Israeli Army, which conducts programs in conjunction with the teachers' colleges for elementary and intermediate level teachers and through the universities for high school teachers. As most teachers of Arabic in the Hebrew sector teach it for only part of their day, there remain rooms to expand. Few of the qualified teachers however are fluent enough to teach in Arabic.

A good number of the teachers of French were trained in French speaking countries or in Romania before they immigrated. Others are provided training by the programs in the universities in Israel. The French curriculum is revised and necessary changes are made. There is an abundance of teachers of Russian with university qualifications.
Language teachers are supported by Ministry of Education and local education inspectors and advisers, although few have sufficient time (many have only part-time positions). There is a support unit especially for the teaching of Arabic to Hebrew Speakers. The cultural institutes and attaches of the various countries involved also provide varying amounts of support. There is a large English Teachers' Association, and smaller and newer teachers’ groups for other languages.

There are programs for visits to France and to Egypt. The Ministry of Education has also initiated a summer program, through community centers, which brings native speakers of English and French to conduct informal programs in the two languages.

**Ulpan**

The present day status of Hebrew in Israel is largely due to the fact that the politically motivated revitalization of the language came to constitute a central component in building a new Jewish national identity. This ‘mission’ as Karmi (Shlomo, 1997) characterizes it, was promulgated in countless speeches, statements, journals and newspaper articles, literary forums and books, and the ideological symbols were institutionalized in text books and other publications, committees and organizations publishing houses and schools, and teachers’ colleges and the Hebrew University. Of all these a lot of credit goes to the scheme of teaching Hebrew language through Ulpan.

The Ulpan (plural Ulpanim) is an educational system that provides instructions in Hebrew language and elements of Jewish culture to new adult immigrants to Israel. Ever since, over one million immigrants have studied in Ulpanim. Three bodies share in the administration of the Ulpan system. The Division of Adult Education within the Ministry of Education Culture and Sports oversees the pedagogical elements that include: hiring and supervising instructors, development of curricula and learning materials, evaluation of student achievement, and awarding graduation certificates. The Ministry of Absorption and Immigration together with the Department of Immigration within the Jewish Agency oversee the general absorption of the immigrants during the period in the Ulpan.
The Development of Ulpan

One of the defining myths of the revival of Hebrew is the story that mothers learned the languages from their children. Whatever the truth of this may be – and there is good reason to suspect that the high proportion of Hebrew words in their native Yiddish would have made the task of understanding their children much easier (Glinert, 1987: 39-56). In the early years, from 1905 until 1935, any adult Hebrew teaching emphasized ways to encourage speaking. The local adaptations and development of the Direct Method into the ‘Hebrew in Hebrew’ approaches (Haramati, 1972) provided a basis for this activity. The sicha (conversation) method was, Schuchat (Schuchat, 1990: 107) reports, the principal activity. Reading and writing were added later. With increased immigration, between 1935 and Independence in 1948, the Jewish Agency and the Histadrut (General Federation of Labour) organized evening classes of adults that reached some 60,000 students.

The mass immigration that followed the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 gave rise to a more determined assault. The new immigrants came for the most part without any formal preparation. They were not like the earlier Zionist settlers who had spent time learning Hebrew and preparing themselves for a farming life before they came to Israel. Most lacked knowledge of Modern Hebrew, although many had had a religious upbringing and as a result training in the Bible and Prayer Books and its language. But for anyone with professional or academic training or experience, successful integration as a useful member of society called for a more structured approach to language learning.

The model that emerged for such language instruction was called Ulpan. Schuchat (Schuchat, 1990: 116-20) attributes the idea for the Ulpan to the initiative of an American immigrant, Rabbi Joshua Shuval, whose name before coming to Israel in 1948 was Louis Schwefel. Shuval had been trained as a conservative Rabbi at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York and was active for a time in the conservative youth movement, Young Judea. During the Second World War, he learned about the Armed Services Training Program (ASTP) at Cornell University. The ASTP, opened at a large number of US college campuses in 1943 – 44, was intended to teach soldiers functional control of a spoken language in the hope that they would thus be useful to the Army. Soon it became a model for US government
language schools and the intensive approach was adopted in modified form by some American universities (Spolsky, 1995a, 1995c).

When Shuval came to Israel in 1948 and started teaching at the Hebrew University, he proposed that the US army methods be adopted as a way to solve the problem of teaching Hebrew to the thousands of new professional immigrants. He met with initial resistance but was able to persuade the minister of Education, Zalman Shazar, to try this idea. Shuval collected US Army language teaching material and working with an enthusiastic Hebrew teacher, Mordechai Kamrat, planned the first intensive course. In 1949, they were allotted a building in a Jerusalem suburb, Baka, to start a new programme at the Etzion residential absorption centre. Because the students were adults and the methods were new, they decided not to call it a school but an ‘Ulpan’ a word in Talmudic Aramaic which meant custom, training, instruction or law, and in Modern Hebrew had been used as an equivalent for ‘studio’. This first Ulpan had two classes each with 25 students. From the beginning, the programme included singing and excursions to what was essentially a conversational approach.

The underlying initiative and motivation were of course more than educational and were the results of a highly pragmatic effort to meet an urgent social need (Harmati, 1972: 64). The success of the very first Ulpan caught everyone by surprise. Shuval helped start some more Ulpanim based on this model in other parts of the country and then was involved in the starting of broadcast in easy Hebrew. Soon there were 120 residential Ulpanim all over Israel. Altogether in the first 20 years of the state some 120,000 students studied Hebrew in Ulpanim. The numbers who were thus afforded formal instruction in Hebrew was a considerable achievement for a new state struggling for political and economic survival. The Ulpanim reached out to some 10 per cent of the immigrants during the time. The large majority were left to pick up Hebrew informally in their daily life.

A number of different models for the Ulpan developed over time, but the most typical was the residential Ulpan. This took place at residential absorption centers run by the Jewish Agency for new immigrant families. The full-time course lasted for five months. Instructions were offered in graded classes each with fewer than 25 students. Classes usually met five hours every morning, with some organized afternoon activities. The total hours of formal instructions provided in such a course was about 530. By comparison, it might be noted that European school language programmes offer usually around 800 hours in the first foreign language (Bergentoft, 1994: 17-46).
Beatens Beardsmore and Swain (Beardsmore, 1985: 1-15) estimated that it takes school students surrounded by the foreign language about 1000 hours to reach a good level of proficiency (and twice as long if they are not in an environment where the language is spoken).

A second model was the kibbutz Ulpan. The first was opened in 1951 at Kibbutz Ein Hashofet, near the historic site of Megiddo on the Hifa to Afula highway. This too started with a pragmatic reason, in order to overcome the labour problems of the kibbutz which needed additional unskilled workers but was prevented for ideological reasons from hiring new immigrants in the neighbouring towns and villages. The kibbutz Ulpan, and a related programme for foreign volunteers, seemed to meet this need.

By 1970, there were 100 kibbutz Ulpan programmes, and they had taught Hebrew to some 20,000 new immigrants and tourists (Ministry of Education, 1971). In theory, participants spent half a day working and half day learning. The effectiveness of this model of Ulpanim was studied by Mittelberg and Ari (Mittelberg, 1992) who concluded that the achievement and satisfaction level of the participants in these Ulpanims were much low.

The Ulpan model was also adopted by Israeli universities as a method of providing an intensive programme during the summer months for foreign students and new immigrants. In these programmes, emphasis was naturally placed on the academic language and skills that would be required by students whose course would be taught completely in Hebrew, as is the case in Israeli universities.

In the towns, non-residential Ulpanim, sometimes with classes only in the evening, and generally less intensive than the residential Ulpanim, were developed for immigrants already living in these towns.

The Structure of Ulpanim

The Ministry of Education has now taken over the responsibility for the Ulpanim from the Jewish Agency. The section for Hebrew language teaching is part of the Division of Adult Education. There are four kinds of Ulpanim under the supervision of the section. The first type is the basic Ulpan, intended for immigrants when they first arrive. The basic Ulpan is designed to cater to the various needs and are evaluated and redesigned from time to time. The regular Ulpanim offer a five
month programme, with 25–28 hours of instruction a week, which means approximately 400–500 class hours for the programme. **Kibbutz Ulpanim** aim at the same amount of time and hours. **Ulpanim** for elderly immigrants offer a 10-month programme, with 12 hours a week of instruction, and so reach the same total. Since 1995, there have also been vocationally oriented **Ulpanim** for immigrants from former Soviet Union with skills in a trade and a promise of employment in their trade from the Ministry of Labour. The first such group focused on the building trades. The regular curriculum was augmented with the teaching of trade terminology and an internship in the workplace. After two months, any student who did not reach the required level in Hebrew were moved to a regular **Ulpan**, where they continued to receive financial support. Similar vocational **Ulpanim** are organized for people in computer science and fashion.

The second type is **advanced Ulpan**, provided for immigrants who have completed the five months of the basic **Ulpan** and are who required a higher level of Hebrew skills. This kind of general advanced **Ulpan** also last five months, but meets only eight hours a week. There are also professionally oriented advanced **Ulpanim**, five months of 25 – 28 hours a week, for immigrants with needs for terminology and advanced Hebrew skills. Professional advanced **Ulpanim** are offered in four general divisions: management and business, education and social professions, medicines and medical paraprofessionals, and technical professions.

A third kind of **Special Ulpan**, lasting five months and meeting eight hours a week, is established on an *ad hoc* basis for special cases. One such programme was offered in Tel Aviv for homeless people, collected in the streets, and provided with a hot meal as well as a Hebrew class. This programme was run in collaboration with a charitable organization working with the homeless. In three towns, **Ulpanim** are offered for mental patients. Also, in collaboration with a social welfare organization, **Ulpanim** are offered for deaf and blind immigrants. Other special **Ulpanim** can be established on an ad hoc basis.

A fourth category is the **Ulpanit** (literally, small **Ulpan**), set up for veteran immigrants who for one reason or another missed an **Ulpan** exercise when they first arrived in Israel. By 2000, there were more than 1000 **Ulpanim** classes under the supervision of the Ministry. The largest number (400 classes with nearly 10,000 students) are basic **Ulpanim**. kibbutz **Ulpanim** takes another 40 classes with more than
900 students. Over 350 classes in advanced Ulpanim provide Hebrew education to another 9000 students. Rounding out the picture, 180 classes in Ulpanim for older immigrants served over 4000 students.

In addition to this there are Ulpanims catering the tourists who come and pay for their own expenses. The Ulpanim for the Ethiopian immigrants are under the supervision of a separate section of the Ministry. Many a times Ethiopian teachers are employed to teach them.

There is a well developed university Ulpan programme at the Hebrew University, offering three kinds of programme. One is intended for any student who fails to reach a required level in Hebrew entrance examination, Ptor, all students must undertake. The second is for students applying for admission but not yet admitted. There is another one-year programme for overseas students. In 1995, there were 464 immigrants and 779 overseas students in these programmes. The drop out rate varies from 5 percent (summer programme) to 18 percent (the regular preparatory programme for new students). Teachers are allowed autonomy in their approach. The unit also runs a training programme for Hebrew language teachers. There is a programme training teachers of Hebrew as a second language also at David Yellin College. Bar-Illan University offers a smaller programme to about 300 students a year, 90 per cent of them are new immigrants. The Ulpan contains two learning framework:

**Primary Ulpan** contains a 500 hour structured program of instruction. Adults from the general population study 25 hours per week for 5 months. Professionals from the medical and technological fields can study in a primary Ulpan that caters specifically to these populations. There are also specialized Ulpanim for youth, elderly, hearing impaired, emotionally disturbed, battered women, homeless, substance abusers and others. The primary Ulpan for immigrants from Ethiopia provides 1000 hours of instruction over a ten month period.

**Secondary Ulpan** is a flexible framework that provides 80-300 hours of instruction over a period that ranges from several weeks to one year. Specialized secondary Ulpanim cater to specific populations that include: medical professionals, university students, teachers and others. Secondary Ulpan schedules instruction to suit students time limitations. Classes take place in diverse locations that include, among others, learning centers and work locations.
In addition, the Division of Adult Education and the Department of Employment within the Ministry of Absorption operate vocational integration Ulpanim for unmarried mothers and unemployed persons whose lack of fluency in Hebrew hinders their employment opportunities. A programme for incarcerated persons operates within prisons.

**Assessment**

Initially Ulpanim did not have any systematic mechanism of evaluating its students. The nature of evaluation was very local and that too was very flexible. Each Ulpan decided its own mechanism. Initially it didn’t matter much but as the society got more settled this discrepancy had to be worked out as it had an adverse impact. The knowledge of Hebrew was important for placements and higher studies in universities and hence a uniform system for evaluation of Hebrew knowledge was felt necessary. The state gradually intervened, organized and standardized the different facets of language education that influenced the final outcome of the evaluation process. Prior to 2001, a student who completed a course of study in an Ulpan after having attended 80 per cent of the classes received a graduation certificate, regardless of his academic achievements.

The awarding of a certificate solely on the basis of attendance reflected a non articulated government policy that encouraged immigration and refused to employ Hebrew language proficiency (or lack of proficiency) as a criterion for an immigrants’ educational or vocational absorption. From its early days, the Ulpan employed examination as an instrument of assessment: placement examinations to place incoming students, and periodic examination and final examinations to evaluate student’s achievement within an Ulpan curriculum. (The periodic and final achievement examinations are to be distinguished from proficiency examinations that assess language proficiency, independent of any particular course of study.)

In 1989, an attempt was made to introduce obligatory final examinations in the Ulpanim. Professor Elana Shohamy of Tel Aviv University headed a team of professionals from the Division of Adult Education that developed a battery of proficiency examinations for purposes of evaluation and diagnosis. Political pressure prevented the examinations from being administered on a national level. Instead,
Ulpan teachers were given the option of administering the examinations in their classes and were under no obligation to report the results.

In the summer of 2000, the Division of Adult Education initiated a project to assess the quality of the Ulpan. To that end, the Division introduced a mandatory national final achievement test to be administered in each and every Ulpan class. The Ulpanim were provided with an overall framework of:

a) Setting clear goals for curricula;

b) Assessment of student achievement appropriate to those goals;

c) Assessment of student achievement relative to socio-demographic factors: of gender, age, education, and country of origin;

d) Assessment of quality of instruction;

e) Development of relevant programs for teacher advisement and training.

It also made the awarding of Ulpan graduation certificate contingent upon a student fulfilling three conditions:

i) Attending not less than 80 per cent of classes;

ii) Completing all classroom assignments;

iii) Participating in the final examination.

The Ulpan graduation certificate was amended and expanded to two pages. The first attests to one’s having participated in a specific number of classroom hours and enables him to continue his Hebrew language studies without an entrance examination. It also granted civil servants six months seniority. The second page records the student’s level of language proficiency and his final examination grade.

The graduation certificate from Ulpan provides several tangible benefits. It is a prerequisite for admission into advanced courses in Hebrew language instruction and vocational retraining programme. Other than this, the examinations were developed on four levels:

Level 1 – parallels level B1 of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEF) or the first three study units in the curriculum.

Level 2 – parallels B1 in the CEF or 5 study units in the curriculum,

Level 3 – parallels B2 in the CEF,

Level 4 – approaches level C2 in the CEF.

Examination on levels 1–3 are intended for students from the primary Ulpan; level 4 is intended for secondary Ulpan students.
The introduction of the guidelines to the *Ulpan* produced a marked improvement in the quality of the language instruction provided. First, it required the articulation of precise goals both for *Ulpan* teachers and students. Second, instruction necessarily became more goal oriented and focused. Teachers on every level could be assessed on the basis of student’s test results – and were further guided accordingly. Third, examinations provided relevant socio-demographic information of each student and this facilitated the developing of pertinent curricula and study materials as well as overseeing the administration of the entire system.

**Oral Examination:** An oral section was included in the final examination, following the recommendations of researchers (Smith, 1999: 4). They pointed to the great significance that accorded the oral component during the course of study. Some 60 percent of classroom time is devoted to teaching and practicing speech skills. It was considered equally important that the oral skill of the students be examined despite the difficulties involved in administering and grading individualized exams. As opposed to the written exam that is administered by outside examiners in testing centers, the oral exam takes place within the *Ulpan*. The *Ulpan* principal and teacher (other than the student’s classroom teacher) serve as examiners. The friendly circumstances surrounding the administration of the oral examination lessens some of the tension typically associated with testing. The oral exam contains three forms of interaction:

- **interview** – whereby the examiner ‘interviews’ the student;
- **oral presentation** – whereby the student, after adequate preparation, ‘lectures’ on a subject of his choice and responds to the examiners’ questions relating to the presentation;
- **speech acts** – whereby the student is expected to utilize appropriate forms of speech acts in response to artificially manufactured situations.

These forms of interaction represent the speech skills that students encounter within their *Ulpan* studies.

To insure the reliability of the exam and uniformity of criteria for determining level and grading, *Ulpan* teachers are given specific instructions on the following points:
manner of asking questions, manner of reacting to student responses (Underhill, 1989: 42);
• determination of levels of grammatical skills with regard to: verb, syntax, and nouns – that distinguish between levels 1 and 2 and between 2 and 3;
• determination of the following communication skills: understanding and response, fluency of speech, intention of the speaker;
• calculation of the oral grade.

Written Examination: The final written exam is conducted nation-wide and is administered at designated testing centers throughout Israel. Periodic exams are held on the final Thursday of each month at the same hour. The written exam tests the level at which a student completes his studies at the Ulpan and his grade within that level. The written exam contains three sections:
  • Reading comprehension
  • Language (grammar)
  • Written expression
  The written exam has two questionnaires. One relates to reading comprehension and the second to language (grammar) and written expression. Students are first tested in reading comprehension and after a fifteen-minute break, they are tested in language and written expression.

Grading: The written examinations are sent to a staff at a national center for grading. After grades are given:
  • Graduation certificates are issued to individual students;
  • Classes of students tested are evaluated with regard to:
    a) Percentage of students tested relative to total number of students per class;
    b) Mean examination grade.
  When significant deviations occur, relevant persons are asked to explain.
There is also an extended follow-up of the mean exam grades from Ulpan classes. In this way, the in-service teaching needs of individual teachers can be identified and provided.

The contribution of the examinations is clear and unequivocal. Instruction within the Ulpanim is more uniform, more focused, and more effective. An analysis of test result helps in improving the overall language skill of the students, bring
uniformity, better training of the teachers etc. Furthermore it supplies relevant data regarding the socio-demographic nature of the students that keeps on changing and the concerned authority adapts to the changing needs and requirements of the group.

The Division of Adult Education collects data relating to the gender, age, educational background, occupation, and country of origin of students tested. These data allow the Division to develop suitable curricula, learning materials, and teacher instruction— and oversee the entire system.

For a better understanding one such data is taken. There were eighteen tests scheduled from the period between June 2001 and November 2002. More than 16,000 students were tested, some 65 percent women and 35 percent men. The largest age group consisted of persons between 21 and 30; more than 50 percent were between 21 and 40, 10 percent were above 51, and only 2 percent of those tested were more than 61. Eighty eight percent of those tested during this period attended morning classes, with 18 percent attending evening classes.

A socio-demographic statistical analysis indicates that most of the Ulpan students who were tested had educational background of between 12-16 years of schooling, and only 20 percent had less than 11 years of schooling. Only 23 percent of those tested completed primary Ulpan at level 1; 70 percent of the students concluded their studies at level 2 or 3. Seven percent of those tested failed the exam.

An analysis of the test results indicates that women students do better than men on all parts of the test. The difference is particularly striking in composition; it is less noticeable in the oral examination.

An analysis of age groups indicates that within the 21 to 30 age group, students attain the highest results in the oral section, in the overall grade for the written section, and in all parts of the written exam. As a rule, there is an inverse proportion between age and performance; the older the student, the lower his grades. The exception to this rule is the group below age 20, whose grades were lower than the 21-30 year olds.

Additional findings indicate that persons who have more years of schooling will score higher in oral presentation, reading comprehension, language, composition, and receive a higher overall grade in the written part.

There is no significant difference, however, between persons who have 15-16 years of schooling and those who have more than 17. Test results indicate that women do better on exams across all age groups and levels of education.
Final examinations are presently perceived by instructors and students as an inseparable part of the instruction program within the Ulpan. Student achievement is rising. Primary Ulpan graduates score higher on entrance exams to secondary Ulpanim and other learning frameworks. Consequently, the graduation diploma and certificate issued by the Ulpan carry more weight than ever before. It has been argued that the inclusion of nationwide achievement tests into its program has transformed the traditional Ulpan from a body that absorbs immigrants to an institution that instructs immigrants. That argument requires further consideration.

Language Content in Ulpan

The Ulpan has always been unique in its emphasis on teaching the Hebrew language in its cultural context. It was perceived as an institution where the Hebrew language should be taught together with cultural values, together with the Jewish heritage. Despite the fact that in various documents the Ulpan is defined as “a highly intensive institution for learning the language” (Weinberg 1993:73), its founders and initiators did not perceive it as merely “a school for language”, but rather as an institution where the everyday functional language is taught as part of a religious, cultural, social and historical context (Polani, Weinberg, Rivlin 1994: 8). The objective of the Ulpan was to create a sense of ‘heritage’, of Jewish continuity; and the belief was, and still today, that creating a sense of ‘heritage’, of ‘being a part of’ is feasible if Judaism, the Jewish people and the land of Israel are regular and integral feature of the educational program. Language and heritage had and to certain extent still have equal status in the educational program, a sort of “roots” and “tree-tops” which together make up the tree. This was the objective of all frameworks in which Hebrew was taught – evening classes for laborers as well as night schools for new immigrants. The very word used for “teaching” Hebrew in Ulpan – “LeHanchil” to impart, to bequeath rather than “to teach” – reflects this perception. Berl Katzenelson, one of the first Hebrew teachers in the twentieth century, who coined this term saw in it the utmost achievement of the new Hebrew culture. He regarded the Hebrew language not merely as a means of communication but rather as the key to the spiritual possessions of the nation, the very gate to the Jewish cultural treasures for all generations (Weinberg, 1992: 23). The professed purpose of the Hebrew classes in which he and other taught was to teach the communicative languages so that the new immigrants would be able to find work and,
at the same time, to “impart” cultural values so that they could be integrated into the Israeli society (Weinberg, 1992: 73). The first name of the department which was in charge of the *Ulpanim* after the establishment of the State of Israel – The Department for the Cultural Absorption of Immigration and for Imparting/Bequething the language, or The Department for Imparting/Bequething the language and Immigration Absorption. Other scholars also attest to this perception (Fischler, 1987: 136).

Accordingly, all teaching materials – curricula, textbooks and even examinations, reflect this attitude, although there are some variations in the details. Itzchak Zicherman, in his monograph entitled: “The Learning Problems of the Adult Learner” (mimeograph, 1963) states that the objective of the *Ulpan* is to enable the learner to master the different language skill while acquiring “values” at the same time. Values according to him, are “the development of the ability to appreciate and evaluate problems and public figures and Good citizenship”. Shlomo Kodesh defines the objectives of the *Ulpan* as follows (Kodesh 1973: 80):

a) To teach the Hebrew language for communication and livelihood

b) To bring the students of the *Ulpan* closer to the land of Israel and to create in them a sense of pride and emotional belonging to the land of their fathers.

c) To infilter their souls with the eternal values of the Bible which is our certificate of ownership of the land of Israel

d) To motivate them to be a part of the forming Israeli society...

e) To change their distorted attitudes regarding military service, physical labor as a profession, agricultural work, attitudes which originated from Diaspora life and which left their mark on the Jews...

f) To enhance their total identification with the state of Israel to the extent of giving their life for its existence

g) To cultivate in them a ‘joie de vivre’ and an optimistic outlook regarding life in general and the Jewish existence in particular.

The values, which emerge from objectives b – g, can be acquired by learning the Bible, Talmud, Hebrew literature and Jewish history. Textbooks and curricula reflected this philosophy. Even in textbooks aimed at beginners, in addition to the linguistic part, one finds chapters from the Bible, sections of the Talmud, extracts of literature and chapters in history and geography. In textbooks aimed at the more advanced level this tendency is even more pronounced.
Even the linguistic part of most textbooks for beginners was steeped in “values”. The following two phrases are translated from the Hebrew text:

“There’s work and then there’s work”, said the secretary, “there’s work in Israel; you need to work and need to love the land...”

or:

“Morris thought: I came to Israel as an adult, and here I’m a child once more...I’ll learn to speak and begin everything anew. I’ll be a new man in the land of Israel”.

Even when the course material changed the content continued to be the same. The philosophy and the motives behind language teaching did not change. The introduction to the 1972 curriculum for the primary Ulpan clearly says: The main objective at this level is: teaching the language as it is spoken and written in Israel...To this objective one has to add another: to acquaint the student with the country, the people and the Jewish culture. Among the subjects of this curriculum one finds subjects such as: the kibbutz and the moshav, Jerusalem, Holidays and memorial days.

The same phenomenon can be found in later curricula. The two curricula in use at present in the Ulpanim (curriculum, 1993) written after the beginning of the wave of the immigration primarily from former Soviet Union, and aimed at answering the special needs of this particular population, is an example of the complexity of the integration of language and values, “roots” and “tree-tops”. Two of the twelve “areas of functioning” included in the curriculum – Media and Civil Studies – cover subjects such as the Knesset (Israeli parliament) and the government, the judicial system and similar topics.

“The land and the culture” covers subjects such as the flag, the national anthem, immigration and ethnic groups, the different forms of agricultural settlement, Jerusalem, Jewish leaders and chapters in history. These are clearly “content” areas rather than functional areas. In addition, an integral part of the curriculum is the chapter entitled “The world of Judaism” which includes subjects such as the Hebrew calendar, Jewish festivals, the Jewish life cycle and the Jewish bookcase. These subjects are to be included as an integral part of the educational program of each class.

The curriculum for secondary Ulpanim (curriculum for Advanced Ulpan 1993) also reflects the perception that the emphasis in the Ulpan should be on
teaching the language in its cultural context, on imparting cultural values as the language of communication, on both “root” and “tree-tops” in every curriculum. The objectives of this curriculum as stated in the introduction are:

- To enrich and enlarge the student’s vocabulary
- To enhance the student's mastery of the different language skills
- To introduce the students to the Jewish heritage in order to produce in them an affinity to the country and its culture
- To acquaint the students with the different strata of the Hebrew language for the purpose of enabling them to read and understand Jewish sources in the original and enjoy them.

Following this introduction, the curriculum includes three chapters: the first one – language, the second – Jewish heritage subjects such as Jewish history and Zionism, Judaism and geography, and the third – Israeli society. One half of the lessons should be allotted to the Jewish heritage subjects.

Until the mid 1980’s, the content part of the curriculum was mandatory, as can be inferred from the examinations in use at that time. For example, in the second part of an exam (used in 1950s) the ‘content’ part includes questions such as: “what were the boundaries of the land according to God’s promise to Abraham? What does the Law of Return say? The Laws of the State are legislated by ....The total area of the Negev is...”. In addition, the students had to write down the name of the government ministry in charge of taking care of abandoned children, the Ulpanim, and the calling of the reserves.

The main linguistic objective of the Ulpan today is to enable the learner to acquire linguistic survival skills which translate into the five language skills: speaking the language, comprehending it, reading and writing, and understanding a televised text. At the end of 500 hours – the duration of the primary Ulpan – the learner is supposed to be able to function socially and professionally reasonably well, unless that profession requires specialized language skills. If it does – he is offered a sequel framework, a secondary Ulpan of 160 hours in which he acquires vocationally oriented language – terminology and special language skills relevant to his profession. Both frameworks are voluntary – the immigrant is not obligated to attend, and following the absorption philosophy enacted, except for very few professions, one does not have to prove proficiency in the language to be employable.
Readjusting the Emphasis on Language

From the beginning, the Israeli Army played a major role in teaching Hebrew to immigrant recruits. The story of the sergeant who needed to have his orders translated into a dozen languages may be a mythical one, but even in the early 1960s, there were occasions when the army broadcast over public radio an announcement of a practice call-up of reserves in a score or more of languages. Just as it developed its own basic education in Hebrew for native speakers who had not reached the level through regular schooling, so it developed its intensive course for new immigrant recruits to prepare them for more efficient services. Here too, formal instruction was offered in small groups by minimally trained Hebrew-speaking recruits.

The combination of intensive instruction in an immersion system with small classes and military discipline played a major role in the rapid absorption of many immigrants. At the same time, there is good reason to suspect that the army taught most of its Hebrew outside the classroom, where the demands of a strictly Hebrew environment and the intensity of daily military life made up for the lack of formal instruction.

Teaching of Hebrew to children was an essential feature of the revitalization of the language. Even in Diasporic life this remained an important element of Jewish life to impart the education of Hebrew language to their children. The state of Israel was built upon by the immigration of this Diasporic community: half a million from 1904 to the establishment of the state in 1948, two and a half million between 1948 and 1994, 70,000 of whom arrived in the first three years. Usually about a fifth of these immigrants have been under the age of 18. The initial policy motivated by ideological considerations was towards imparting Hebrew to these immigrants with an assumption that it would replace the home language of these immigrants. Of late, this policy has seen some changes in approach and the idea that immigrants should maintain their home language has gained some ground.

Despite such ideological shifts, the status of Hebrew was not to be diluted. This was neither done when Hebrew was nascent in Israel nor now when it is so established. Even in special cases as in 1990s, at the height of immigration from the former Soviet Union and Ethiopia, classes for new immigrants were conducted round the year throughout the country. The goal was to reach a satisfactory level of Hebrew even at the cost of other subjects in the curriculum. No consideration appears to have
been given to bilingual education as a method of dealing with this problem (Spolsky, and Elana Shohamy, 1999: 103-106).

The approaches to teaching Hebrew to immigrants, whether adults or children, have been ideologically committed to the notion that the new language must replace the old one. Since 1995-1996 multilingualism is trying to establish itself in the new language education policy. Confident of the survival of Hebrew in the Israeli society the government as well as the society seems ready to accommodate other languages.

**Language Education for non-Jewish Population in Israel**

Israel is a multi-ethnic and multilingual state. Arabs form the largest non-Jewish population of Israel. The Arab population is largely of Sunni Muslims followed by Christians. Apart from that there are Circasians, Armenians etc. The Jewish state has minorities with different and established culture and a language that also has religious sanctity attached the task of the state education system becomes very crucial. The role of the school curriculum in multicultural societies is a central issue in the sociology of education. One of the main debates has to do with the relationship between education for multiculturalism and the use of curriculum for shaping the collective memory and strengthening the national ethos. It becomes all the more difficult due to the ongoing conflict between the two people Israelis and the Palestinians.

In such a situation of animosity the achievement level of the desired goals of the education policy would be determined by several factors including ideological reasons, perception towards the language and the speakers of the language, pragmatic reasons etc. To what extent is the knowledge of Hebrew significant for Arabs and Palestinians in particular is not an issue of debate. Ibrahim (1981: 324) points out that ‘language is of profound political importance and, hence, the centrality of language in the political life of any community or group hardly needs to be underscored’. Ben-Rafael and Brosh (1991: 2-5) indicate that ‘because languages are major collective symbols, crucial means of communication, valuable social resource, and – most important – the principal carriers of culture, their distribution in society involves the political center.’

Islamic teachings urge their followers to learn Hebrew and even excel at mastering it. It is imperative that certain Muslims not only learn but also attain
proficiency in foreign languages as a religious duty (Al-Abed Al-Haq and Smadi 1996). Several Indian Islamic scholars learned Hebrew and have extensively used Hebrew resources in their writings. Thus, religious motivation can enhance the learning of Hebrew. Abd-El-Jawad and Al-Abed Al-Haq (1997: 420) maintain that ‘the Jews have always been more aware than the Arabs of the importance of the role of language in the political conflict. Although Hebrew has not been taught widely in the Arab countries, Arabic receives the attention of Jews, though Jews have negative attitude towards it.’ Barhoum (1995) indicates that Arabs do not have a better perception of Jews because Arabs are ignorant of Hebrew or have no access to it.

Apart from the ideological and pragmatic reasons the language attainment level depends a lot on the perceived perception of language and the speakers of the language. There are also close connections between attitudes and prejudice and stereotypes. For most Arabs learning Hebrew is not intended or geared toward a so called ‘normalization’, i.e. it is not learned to live and to integrate with the target language, people and culture. A sizeable number learn other foreign languages with an integrative motivation. The non-Jewish populations in Israel, particularly Arabs, are aware and make distinction between their attitude towards Hebrew and attitude towards Jews.

Moreover, most believe that learning Hebrew will not influence the status of Arabic, i.e. learning Hebrew will not be at the expense of Arabic nor will Arabic be dominated by Hebrew. The situation of the ground gives a different picture. “A detailed and well documented examination of the status of Arabic in Israel shows, unequivocally, that it is much inferior to that of Hebrew. This situation did not arise accidentally but has been a natural result of Zionist ideology and of the policy pursued by the Israeli government towards Arabic and its speakers” (Ibrahim: 324). A similar attitude of Israelis to learning Arabic (Koplowitz: 1992; Kraemer: 1993; Kraemer, Olshtain and Badier: 1994; Spolsky: 1994) is reflected. Chaim Herzog, the former president of Israel, (in Ben-Rafael and Brosh, 1991: 8-9) states: “We live in an area where we are but a small minority, while the vast majority speaks Arabic. We must get to know the Arab People, to respect its tradition, literature, and culture. We will not be able to do this if we do not know the language....I cannot conceive that in this country, every Jew will not know Arabic.’

Despite similar position by several other political leaders the fact remains that the education system and culture of Israel is mostly influenced by the religious parties
who become vital due to coalition politics. The religious and national fervour in their
discourse make multicultural ideology a distant task. As their political discourse a
specific national ethos stands at the center of the school curriculum. This is especially
ture in states like Israel that are experiencing an “intractable conflict” in which the
past is used to justify the present.

**Hebrew as a Second Language for the Speakers of Arabic**

Teaching Hebrew to Arabic speaking minority in Israel is faced with lack of
professionals. Unlike teaching of Hebrew to new immigrants where the approach is to
replace the immigrant’s language with that of Hebrew, the teaching of Hebrew to
Arabs has from the start been acknowledged as additive. The Ministry of Education
stress the term second language for Hebrew taught to Arabic speakers, in contrast to
foreign in the 1976 programme of studies. Hebrew is taught in Grade 3 and continues
till Grade 12, where it is a subject for the Bagrut (secondary leaving examination).
The programme has both instrumental and cultural aims, and includes Hebrew
literature. The teachers of Hebrew in Arab schools are Arabs. Druze children follow a
similar Hebrew programme, which includes material by Druze writers translated into
Hebrew. Druze schools also use Hebrew textbooks to teach science subjects. Students
in the government-supervised Arab schools in East Jerusalem have a more practically
oriented Hebrew programme. Hebrew is not taught in Arab schools in the West Bank
and Gaza, which followed the Jordanian or Egyptian curriculum until 1996 when they
came under the control of the Palestinian Authority. The new Palestinian Authority
proposes to offer Hebrew as an optional foreign language.

Hebrew is the second language for the Israeli Palestinians, who make up a
fifth of the population of Israel. It is so because Hebrew is necessary for work and
higher studies. It is the language that most of them rate as the most important for them
to learn even ahead of their mother tongue, spoken Palestinian Arabic and their
language of national identity, Modern standard Arabic (Spolsky and Shohamy, 1999:
115-137). It is a second language and not a foreign language even in technical sense
as it is acquired not just in formal teaching in schools but also in the normal social
context of daily life. In fact, there is reason to suspect that this informal natural
language learning in the context of work and daily life plays a more significant part in
the learning of Hebrew by Israeli Palestinians than does the formal teaching built into the educational programme.

Without the knowledge of Hebrew, an Israeli Palestinian is severely restricted in access to government, employment and higher education. Arabic remains the language of the home and of religious life (for most Palestinians: Christians or Muslims) and of the community for those who live in villages or in Arab neighborhoods in the town. Though the schooling is in Arabic, Hebrew is slowing penetrating the teaching of subjects such as science.

Knowledge of Hebrew by Israeli Palestinians varies widely, depending generally on the amount of contact. It is highest in the mixed towns like Jaffa, Lod, Ramla and Haifa, high in villages that are close enough to the metropolitan centres to be suppliers of work for them, and lowest in villages in the Galilee with least contact with Hebrew speakers. It is especially high among those speakers of Arabic – Druze and Bedouin and Circassian – many of whom serve in Israeli Defence Forces.

This interaction has greatly influenced the Palestinian language behavior and they have started extensively using Hebrew words in their daily usage. Though Arabic is quite rich in vocabulary but still Israeli Palestinians are borrowing Hebrew words in many of the newer domains (Amara, 1995: 165-72; Spolsky and Amara, 1986: 43-54). The spoken language is full of such borrowing.

Israeli Palestinians learn Hebrew for practical reasons. All the Israeli universities, Jewish funded institutions are committed to Hebrew ideologically and effectively – the battle over language for the Technion is part of the Great Tradition, and the name of Hebrew University proclaimed this commitment. The Israeli Palestinian community sees Hebrew as a vital tool for life, without which they are blocked from productive functioning in the Hebrew speaking society which dominates them. Though this community is officially recognized but still it is not exempted from learning Hebrew.

**Teaching of Hebrew to Israeli Palestinians – Historical Sketch**

Under the British Mandate, Arab education was in Arabic with English taught as second language. Hebrew was not taught at all in Arab schools. Arabs, the numerical majority in Mandatory Palestine, saw no need to teach the language of the Jewish
minority in schools, although individuals picked it up in contact situations as they had earlier picked up Yiddish. Indeed, the British Mandatory education system (Miller, 1985) was unable even to achieve reasonable results in teaching Arabic.

The teaching of Hebrew in Arabic sector schools began immediately after the establishment of the State of Israel. Four or five hours a week of Hebrew was compulsory in all elementary schools starting in Grade 4 and the requirement continued in all secondary schools and in Arab teachers training programmes. The decision raised considerable controversy in the press. Four distinct views emerged. There were some who opposed it completely for political and religious reasons. Three groups supported it, each for a different reason. One argued that Arabs should assimilate completely. Another thought it was important for pedagogical reasons. A third group thought it was important for learning citizenship.

As there had been no teaching of Hebrew during the mandate period there was a dearth of qualified teachers to teach Hebrew in the Arab schools. The first Hebrew teachers in the Arab schools were Ashkenazi Jews. This did not serve the purpose as they didn’t speak Arabic. They were soon replaced by new Jewish immigrants from Arabic speaking countries, especially from Iraq. They too found the work unrewarding and were soon replaced by Arabic speaking teachers who had been given special training. By 1955, 90 per cent of the Hebrew teachers in the Arabic sector were Arab themselves. But they too were good enough for elementary teaching and not for high Hebrew (Salmon, 1957: 93-97).

By 1957, Hebrew was securely established in the curriculum of Arabic schools. Teaching Hebrew was still on back seat as a great deal of effort was being put into the development of curriculum for this sector, writing textbooks and training teachers in all subjects (Koplewitz, 1973: 323-334). Salmon (Salmon, 1957: 94-96) identifies three goals for Arab education at this period: The first goal was to develop studies relevant to the Arab nation and its culture. The second was to develop the linguistic skills needed for communication – written and oral – for the Arabic speaking community. The third was to prepare Israeli Arabs for Israeli citizenship.

In 1959, a new curriculum for elementary schools fixed the hours for teaching Hebrew in Arab sector at three per week. A curriculum for secondary schools appeared only in the 1960s, with the title Curriculum for Hebrew Language and Literature for High Schools for Arabs, 9th to 12th Grades. The curriculum aimed at giving the Arab students basic, extensive and accurate knowledge of Hebrew.
language, ability to understand written Hebrew and control of the spoken and written languages for practical and cultural purposes. The second goal was to open up to the Arab students access to Israeli culture and its past and present values, and to help them understand the social and cultural life of the Jewish community in the State of Israel.

As more teachers were available, the programme was expanded. Starting in 1967, Hebrew was taught three hours a week from Grade 3. In 1973, an extra weekly hour was added. In 1972, the Ministry of Education set up a committee in conjunction with the division of curriculum for Arab students. The curricula were published in 1977, becoming operative four years later. There was a separate curriculum for each elementary, intermediate and secondary levels.

A revised language and literature curriculum was developed in 1993, tested in 10 schools in the Galilee, and used by all schools after 1995. The new curriculum covers the four basic skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing. There are new emphases on suiting material to the age and social context of the student, and on the contribution of learning Hebrew to the integration of Arabs into the social, political, economic and cultural life of the State.

In 1998 about 190 Arab students were in training to be Hebrew teachers, 75 at the Haifa Arab Teachers College, 70 at Beit Berl Teachers College and the rest at other institutions. Over 200 Arab students were majoring in Hebrew language and literature at Haifa University, 70 at Ben Gurion University and 50 at other universities. About 20 were taking advanced degrees in Hebrew.

**Success or Failure of Language Teaching**

About one third of the Arabic speaking population claim Hebrew as a second language. It is reasonable to assume that there has been an increase in Arab knowledge of Hebrew. Based on the ground situation of the status of Hebrew among the Arabic speaking population, some scholars believe that many students are not able to reach the required level of Hebrew for Higher education. Though it is a second language for many it actually is a foreign language due to the alienation from the Hebrew speaking population, their geographical settlement, their level and frequency of interaction with Hebrew speaking population etc. Another reason that leads to misconception regarding the success of Hebrew teaching to Arabic speaking
population is the fact that both Hebrew and Arabic are Semitic languages and this helps in quick development of spoken ability of the language. Thus, Arabic pupil know Hebrew better than English, even though the number of hours of instruction is fewer.

Hebrew is compulsory to pass the Bagrut examination. The failure in the examination restricts one from Higher studies. The ‘compulsion’ for Hebrew speakers to learn Arabic is much weaker and unenforced. Israeli Arabs are highly motivated to learn Hebrew, for the language is seen as a necessary preliminary to aspects of daily life, like reading letters, making or receiving phone calls, and in longer run, as a bridge to jobs and higher education and success.

This situation complemented by the non-implementation of the official status of Arabic. Only a few official forms appear in both Hebrew and Arabic. In banks and health institutions, written Arabic is rarely used if ever, even by Arabic speaking employees. It is also because the authorities on the desk do not know Arabic. Receipts and other commercial documents are also generally in Hebrew. Arabic-speaking parents thus assign the learning of Hebrew a high priority. Some go so far as to send their children to Hebrew-speaking schools. There are gender differences, with males more likely to mix with and visit Hebrew speaking –areas, and more likely to be influenced by Hebrew society and to develop stronger proficiency in the language.

There is asymmetry in relations between Jews and Arabs in Israel, with higher self-esteem among the former group. As members of the minority group, Israeli Palestinians are naturally attracted to the higher status language and values of the majority. Exactly the opposite may be adduced for the failure of Jews to learn Arabic.

Hebrew teachers for Arab schools are trained at Beit Berl College in the Institute for training Arab teachers, and in the Arab College in Haifa. The Arab College does not yet offer a B.Ed., so its graduates need to continue at Beit Berl. However, neither programme recognizes teaching Hebrew as a second language as a second field.

One of the central issues in the teaching of Hebrew in Arab schools continues to be the amount of Jewish content. Jewish sacred and traditional texts (Bible and rabbinical writings) take a prominent part in the curriculum, and there is also a great deal of emphasis on the Jewish world. One problem with this is the amount of archaic and difficult Hebrew. The second is that the Arab students feel they spend more time learning Judaism than their own religion and traditions.
In 1970s Koplewitz (Koplewitz, 1973) noted the complaints that Arab students spent more time on the Bible than on the Qura'n. This raises a fundamental but basic issue about the place of the Arab minority in Israel. It was discussed in the report of the Peled Committee (Ministry of Education and Culture, 1976) which distinguished between the goals for Jewish and Arab sectors. In the former, Jewish identity is stressed, and in the latter, loyalty to the state. In an analysis of the curriculum, Peres et.al (Peres, 1970: 147-64) drew attention to the fact that this knowledge of Jewish culture and language is at the cost of knowledge of their own.

Smooha (Smooha, 1989) pointed out the asymmetry: Arabs are better trained in Jewish matters than Jews are in Arab. Smooha (Smooha, 1992) reported that Arabs in the late 1980s overwhelmingly rejected the educational goal of being ‘loyalty minority members in a Jewish state’ but accepted a pluralistic goal. It was for this reason that they agreed to the teaching of Hebrew and Jewish culture in their schools.

Yuval Drosh and Yaakob Lieberman in a report in Haaretz (Haaretz, 13th July 1997) showed that Arab students study Hebrew language and literature an average of eight hours a week, while Jewish students learn these same subjects only three hours a week on average. The curriculum for Arab schools include nationalist Hebrew poetry.

**Hebrew among the Arabs in Israel: Sociolinguistic Aspects**

The Arab population in Israel needs to be studied from the sociolinguistic aspects of the Hebrew language. The issues needed to be examined are: Hebrew knowledge and its use, integration and diffusion of lexical items into Palestinian Arabic in Israel, Hebrew in the language landscape of the Arab villages and cities, and attitudes toward Hebrew.

For the Israeli Arabs and also for the Palestinians Hebrew is the main foreign source of linguistic innovation. If we compare the slow acculturation of Arab society to the culture, as relates to English, with the fast and dynamic acculturation to the Israeli Jewish culture, we obtain insights into the processes of modernization: Hebrew is a major source of modernization for the Arab society in Israel.

The prestige of Hebrew is related to the progress of Israel in many domains. Many Arabs perceive Israel as a modern country with an advanced technology. To join this progress, many young Arabs learn Israeli patterns of behavior. Despite this, Arabs attach different values to the two languages, Arabic and Hebrew. Arabs are
aware that Arabic is a beautiful, rich, and prestigious language; Israeli Arabs are also aware that the mastery of Hebrew is a means for achieving economic, educational, and social levels similar to those existing among Jews. This implies that Arabs learn Hebrew for practical and integrative reasons. This situation, in fact, reflects the nature of the relationship between the Palestinians and Jews in Israel from various perspectives. First, Israel is defined and perceived by Palestinians as a Jewish-Zionist state and not a country for all its citizens. Consequently, the Palestinians are seeking to enhance their national identity in the Jewish State; Arabic serves as an important component in this national identity. Second, the Arab-Israeli conflict has not contributed to a softening of the differences between the Arab minority and Jewish majority in Israel; in some cases, the conflict has strengthened the differences. Third, because Arabs and Jews live in separate locations within Israel, there has not been extensive contact between the two groups; this segregation has even helped preserve some distance between the two peoples. All these factors have served to deny a social convergence at a higher level toward the dominant Jewish culture and its language (Hebrew) among the Arabs in Israel.

The dual identity (Palestinian and Israeli) is reflected in the repertoire of the Palestinians in Israel. The tension between the two identities has limited the degree of convergence to Hebrew, the language of the dominant culture. This means that the Arabs adopt the strategy of linguistic integration not assimilation. On the one hand, Israeli Arabs attempt, through achieving a high linguistic competence in Hebrew, to join the wide social network shaped by the culture of the majority; on the other hand, they preserve their identity through their mother tongue, Arabic.

Table 3.4
Teaching Hebrew to Arabs and Arabic to Jews - a comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Arabic to Hebrew Speakers</th>
<th>Hebrew to Arabic Speakers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beginning</td>
<td>In 19th Century</td>
<td>After 1948</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical Background</td>
<td>Support and opposition</td>
<td>Support and opposition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasons for learning</td>
<td>Security, Media</td>
<td>Jobs, Education, Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>Low and unrewarded</td>
<td>High and rewarded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry Policy</td>
<td>Compulsory (French is a substitute)</td>
<td>Compulsory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupil’s attitude</td>
<td>Reluctant</td>
<td>Unpopular but necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental View</td>
<td>Discouraging</td>
<td>Ambivalent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
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<td>-----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preference</td>
<td>English and French over Arabic</td>
<td>Hebrew over English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possibilities of visits</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Essentially Foreign</td>
<td>Second</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental support</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning</td>
<td>Grade 7</td>
<td>Grade 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimal Hours</td>
<td>3 Hours per week</td>
<td>4 Hours per week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Language</td>
<td>Arabic taught in Hebrew</td>
<td>Hebrew taught in Hebrew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Material</td>
<td>Not interesting (stereotype)</td>
<td>Not interesting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral testing</td>
<td>20% of final</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular testing</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Right to Education in Arabic

There is no specific legislation requiring instruction in the Arabic language in schools where the majority of the students speak this language, but this has in fact been policy since the establishment of the state (Amara and Mar‘I, 2002). Nevertheless, since Arabic is spoken by a large minority of the Israeli population, special reference is made in the leading law on compulsory education to both the Arabic language and culture. Section 2(11) of the National Education Law (1953), indicates among the goals of the educational system in Israel, to teach the language, culture, history and heritage of the Arabic population in Israel and to recognize the equal rights of all Israeli citizens. In addition, section 4 of this law guarantees that curricula in non-Jewish schools should be adjusted to suit the needs of their particular student population. Furthermore, in a more recent piece of legislation, the Regulations on National Education (the Advisory Committee for Arab Education) (1996), section 5 states the power of the committee to advise the minister on issues concerning the education of Arab citizens. Section 5(1) further states that the committee can recommend the development of an educational and pedagogical policy for the different age groups in the educational system which would ensure equal rights to the Arab citizens in Israel by considering their particular heritage, culture and language.

However, two things can be outlined, about which there is a broad consensus: a) educational policy is not simply aimed at imparting knowledge to citizens/individuals to equip them with the means to become productive beings in
their own right or for the benefit of individuals alone. It performs functional role from the societal point of view in which his skill is going to be absorbed. This means the education policy is intricately intertwined with social policy and is an important component of it. b) Social policy is not just limited to the actions of the government. Welfare services can be provided by charitable bodies, by individuals caring for members of their family in their own homes, or on a commercial basis (private pension plans or private medical schemes etc.). However, as far as education is concerned, the state is primarily responsible for funding and controlling it. These two aspects are important when we consider the use of education as social policy in Israel.

**Conclusion**

In modern democratic states policy making is a two way channel – bottom-up and top-bottom. In such situation political power can be used to bring about language change, while language change can be used to redistribute political power. The state has taken upon itself the task of educating its people. Education has become the social policy of the state. Sociologists and theorists too believe that state should have a decisive tole in education in order to bring about ‘order’ which is the prime concern. Maintenance of order is intricately linked to the successful transmission of acquired skills, knowledge and values from one generation to the other, which in turn is fundamental to the continuity of any society. The educational institutions share the prime burden of rationalizing and organizing a portion of the enculturation process. So, education performs the important ‘functional role’ of assigning individual roles or the functional role allocation and simultaneously also keeps the cycle going by replacing the older generation by the newly encultured members of the society. The state too plays active role to ensure that the children learn and imbibe values central to the existence of the state and in someway suppress the spirit of questioning established rules and to produce law abiding citizens under already established laws. Several mechanism are devised to eulogies for symbolic manifestation that would serve the purpose of fostering national integration by bringing out shared commonalities.

Governments of all forms have used the education system to legitimize the existing order, be it democratic, monarchial or authoritarian regimes. The Israeli education system too oriented itself towards these functional and political goals. This
is true both during the Yishuv as well as after the establishment of the State. The policy makers handled the nascent and fragile Israeli society both within the various Jewish factions and outside with the Palestinians. Hebrew played a crucial role in binding the Jews and at the same time creating a “us” and “them” with the Palestinians.

The state, as the prime provider of education to its citizens doesn’t have eradication of illiteracy as the only goal in its mind. The state and its education policy create hierarchy in the society that suits the larger polity of the state and helps in the smooth running of the state-craft. So, the role of education policy and the language of instruction have direct repercussions on the ethnic, gender and social status of the citizens. The course, curriculum and the evaluation process would all decide the final outcome in the society and hence would influence the social mobility. The course content creates curiosity in one to know more of and associate with it while it causes dejection in the others as they cannot identify with the discourses therein. Hebrew got promoted by state mechanism but for the Arab minority learning it was like catch-22 situation. They resisted it but needed it at the same time. This dichotomy cost them the most in the final outcome and over all achievement level. The Arab population that interacts more with the Jewish population is more conversant and fluent in Hebrew than those whose area of operation doesn’t have much direct contact with Hebrew speaking population.

The Education and the Hebrew language policy of Israel have created a harmonious attitude towards Hebrew, placing it high on regards. The dominant position of Jews in Israel provided a special status to the speakers of Hebrew. This edge of Hebrew over other languages had a negative effect on the social standing of the speakers of those languages and the language itself. The education system of Israel was instrumental in using language policy for the functional role of attaching high values to Jewish and Israeli symbols and legitimizing them.