Studia Anglica Posnaniensia XXXIII, 1998

THE ROLE OF ENGLISH AS A LANGUAGE OF MAXIMUM ACCESS IN ISRAELI LANGUAGE PRACTICES AND POLICIES

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1. The inexorable spread of the English language

1.1. Planned or accidental

English today is rapidly moving into an unprecedented status as candidate for the sole world language.[1] Despite the special situation created by the revitalization of Hebrew and the ideological monolingualism it spawned, Israel has not been exempt from this diffusion of a universal *lingua franca*. The success of Hebrew, deemed miraculous by many observers and without any doubt the outstanding cultural accomplishment of secular Zionism, has threatened the status and maintenance of rivals, whether autochtonous languages like Arabic, or other world languages like French and German, or other languages brought by Jewish immigrants, including those with long traditions like Yiddish and Ladino. In these circumstances, the continued improvement in the status, use, and learning of English in Israel, fifty years after the end of the British Mandate, is an intriguing phenomenon, for English alone has not just resisted Hebrew but might even endanger it in turn.

Its growing standing is shown by the way that popular and political pressure dragged a reluctant Ministry of Education into agreeing to teach English in earlier and earlier grades. There has been increasing exposure of Israelis to the English language, through television and popular culture, tourism and travel, and commerce and the virtual world of computers. While what is happening

[1] This paper is excerpted from a work in progress with the tentative title *The languages of Israel: Practices and policy in education and society,* which Elana Shohamy and I are writing. It is dedicated to Kari Sajavaara, and acknowledges years of fruitful professional and personal intercourse.

in Israel is in large measure part of the unprecedented spread of English throughout most of the world today, as Fishman (1977; Fishman, Rubal – Lopez – Conrad 1996) has documented, there are some special local conditions worthy of careful attention. The most important of these are the effects of the immigration to Israel of a sizable number of English-speakers and the close political, economic and personal ties with English-speaking countries.

This remarkable spread of English poses a question of importance, that of the effectiveness of language policy. Is it to be explained as an instance of successful implementation of a deliberate policy or set of policies, and so a case of language planning? Or, is it rather the unplanned result of a complex variety of unrelated causes? Or, a third more likely possibility, is it a combination of causes including some deliberate intervention and policy planning?

In trying to answer these questions about any country in the world today, there are a number of specific items to check. The first is whether the contact with English was purely economic, or whether it arose in a colonial situation. In the case of Israel, we are talking of a British Mandate that was equivalent to colonial status. The next question concerns the nature of the initial contact situation. Was any military or political conquest and occupation, or the earliest missionary contact, accompanied by an explicit policy of English language diffusion, or was this an accidental and largely unconsidered concomitant of the nature of the rule? Second, if there was such an implicit or explicit policy, was it implemented, and was the implementation successful? The third question concerns the post-imperial situation. Was there a conscious effort, as Phillipson (1992) claims, to maintain the policy after the colony became independent, or was the continued maintenance and even increased diffusion of English a result of a very complex interplay of special circumstances, as Fishman et al. (1996) seems to show?

Israel since Independence provides an excellent terrain for such an inquiry, both because of the nature of the diffusion and because of the possibility of building a contemporary study on the foundations of the careful examination of the phenomenon that was carried out twenty years ago under Fishman's direction.[2] Who were the conscious agents of spread, and how much effect have they had? While logic would suggest that the British Mandatory government had a part to play up to 1948, Phillipson's thesis would require both the success of the diffusion efforts during the Mandatory period and a continued important role for British (and American establishments) after Independence. In fact, the evidence seems to strongly favor the non-deliberate view. The signs are that the Mandatory government was far from successful in establishing knowledge

[2] Because Fishman et al. (1977) was written while Fishman was in Israel, it included a number of valuable studies of the status of English in Israel in the first twenty years after the British Mandate had ended.

of English, leaving weak and out-dated English teaching models in both the Arab and the Jewish sectors. Since then, British and American intervention has been small, largely in response to local demand and invitation. Thus, we need to look for the underlying causes of the present status of English in Israel outside of direct diffusion efforts.

To answer these questions, we first present evidence on the level and nature of the permeation of the Israeli sociolinguistic repertoire by the English language. Second, we describe the direct policy and planning interventions that might have played a share in this development, and finding them wanting as an explanation, consider the other major forces that seem to have something to do with accounting for the continued growth of English in the post-Imperialistic situation.

1.2. English in Israel – before Independence

1.2.1. Under Ottoman rule

Apart from occasional travelers (Luncz 1882-1919), English was essentially brought to Ottoman Palestine by missionaries and consuls. James Finn, the influential British consul boasted of his qualification for the Jerusalem job through his knowledge of Yiddish (Finn 1878; Hyamson 1939). The first Protestant mission was in fact bilingual, as it was conducted of English and German speaking missions. The teaching of English started in the school conducted by the Swiss-born Protestant Bishop Gobat, but the numbers involved were tiny (Ben-Arieh 1984; Warren 1876). In Jerusalem before the first World War, it was German, supported as it was by an active diffusion policy (Ammon 1992) that was on its way to becoming the major European language. All this, however, stopped when General Allenby occupied Palestine, and the area moved into the colonial realm.

1.2.2. English under the British Mandate

There were two important factors that impeded the spread of the imperial language. The first was the willingness of the British government to recognize the status of the local languages. As early as 1918-19, the place of Hebrew as the third language, after English and Arabic, was recognized, and this three-language policy was written into Article 22 of the League of Nations Mandate for Palestine (1922). The policy included both the use of these two languages alongside English on stamps and money, but also, in Article 15, laid down that the rights of each community to "maintain its own schools for the general education of its own members in its own language." As in other British colonies after the realization of the failure of the English-only policy first tried in India, schools were to be conducted in the local vernacular.

The second was the desire of the Mandatory government to avoid expense. The first commissioner, Sir Herbert Samuel, was in fact concerned that the Mandate should pay for itself. Funds for education were very limited, and the Jews and Arabs were encouraged to run their own schools, each using their own language.

English was the main language of government (although the King's Order-in-Council did determine specific situations in which the other two language could be used). Except in a few private schools, English was not the language of instruction. The only two institutions of tertiary education, both established and funded by the Jewish community, were committed inexorably to Hebrew. The 1913 language war had been a battle over the choice of language for the Technion, and Hebrew won out over German. The very name of the Hebrew University (opened in 1921) proclaimed and certified its linguistic loyalty.

1.2.3. English in Hebrew schools under the Mandate

In spite of this, English slowly grew as the language for contact with government and as the main foreign language taught in both Jewish and Arab schools. The teaching in the 1930s and 1940s followed the typical foreign language approaches, ranging through reading and direct method approaches, with a goal of reading good literature. The approach of the British controlled department of education, was, as Bentwich (1930), at the time inspector of Hebrew schools in the department, reports, to develop ability to understand and use English. The first of these was more important, for it provided access to knowledge not available through Hebrew. In a report written a decade later, Bentwich (1939: 8) again stressed this cultural goal. English literacy, he said, was important, and included a cultural aspect, even more serious than in the study of French in England, for "Hebrew literature is poorer than the English in both content and form." This approach was echoed in a 1941 Memorandum of the English Committee of the *Va'ad Le'umi,* the body responsible for Jewish education during the Mandate:

> it is clear that the English language must for our secondary education provide a tool to inculcate cultural values. ... English for us is the only window to western Culture. (Cited by Horovitz 1986: 21)

Early the Mandate, Bentwich (1930), in setting up the elementary school syllabus for the Hebrew schools, proposed a modified Direct method, allowing for the use of Hebrew for explanations, grammar, and translation. A first text-book for Palestine schools was published in 1928. Morris and Morris (1928) followed a direct method approach. It was quickly followed by a more grammar-translation oriented book, Diengott (1930), which continued in use and was republished up until 1950. Straddling the line, a more advanced text for middle school was published by the inspector himself, Bentwich (1932), justifying itself by the need for grammar and translation exercises that took into account the specific differences between Hebrew and English grammar and idiom.

As well as developing their own textbooks, the Hebrew-speaking schools found it wise to establish their own examination system (Syrquin 1998). Finding unsuitable the spirit and content of the requirements for the Palestine Matriculation examination, modeled in large measure on the West African Certificate of Education, the Va'ad Le'umi which was responsible for the Hebrew schools set up its own Special Committee for Matriculation (Bagrut). They administered their first examinations in 1935 to 653 candidates, 514 of whom passed. The 1932 examination consisted of a composition and summary, dictation and grammar, a three-hour literature examination, and a reading and oral examination. One Shakespeare play was included in the examination. The 1936 examination conducted by the Va'ad Le'umi was shorter (four hours instead of seven plus the oral). It consisted of a composition, an essay question on a Shakespeare play (*Macbeth* in 1936 and *Hamlet* in 1937), a reading comprehension passage, a passage for translation into Hebrew, and a grammar section.

In a survey of English teaching in the Hebrew schools, Bentwich (1940: 9) notes how elitist the curriculum was. It would be preferable, he noted, to have "a curriculum with a more practical aim" for the "average student". The uniform curriculum was too short to allow for the variation in abilities of pupils, so that the best were held back and the average left behind.

1.2.4. English in Arab schools during the British mandate

The initial English programs conducted by English missionaries in Nineteenth century Protestant missionary schools received a major boost with the establishment of the British Mandate at the end of the First World War. The teaching of English alongside the other two official languages, Arabic and Hebrew – each in its own system – was formally established in the 1922 curriculum. English offered access to the ruling government. It was taught especially in the mission schools – there were a hundred by the end of the 1920s, a score of the with government support.

The educational policy of the British Mandate was affected by a number of factors. First, the decision to allow the Arab and Jewish sectors to continue independently meant that the main concern of the Education Department was with Arab schools. Second, the lack of funds meant that efforts had to be concentrated; as a result, urban rather than rural education as stressed (Miller 1985). Third, the policy was influenced (as was much of British colonial education from the mid-nineteenth century), by what was believed to have been the failure of the system applied in India. In India, the policy had involved providing education in English, and the result was what colonial administrators referred

to as over-educated clerks. There was a tendency then to emphasize practical English skills rather than the literature that had been the ideal. Nonetheless, culture (meaning English literature, with Shakespeare at its apex) remained the highest goal. Very little English was taught in village schools (but it must be recalled that by the end of the Mandate, only 50% of the Arab population were developing literacy in any language. The teaching of English in city schools was at a higher standard.

During the Mandate, as Lockard (1996) notes, knowledge of English was a way for Arabs to gain access to professional or advanced technical education, and so hope for social advancement. The weakness of the teaching in the village schools, including the inability of teachers to speak the language, was a regular cause for complaint. There was at least one British administrator, Humphrey Bowman (director of education from 1924 to 1938) who hoped to find a way to unite Arab and Jewish schools in a coordinated system using English, but the idea never came to fruition. Similarly, all attempts to establish tertiary level education for the Arabs of Palestine were unsuccessful.

There were attempts, Lockard (1996: 23) reports, to "wield all the residents of this little country into one people" through the establishment in 1936 of the Palestine Broadcasting Service, whose English broadcasts were addressed to Jews and Arabs alike. The Service did in fact broadcast in three languages, with the budgets for each section proportionate to the populations. It was hoped that through a "neutral" language, English, there could be some mediation between the two already warring populations.

The failures of British political policy in Palestine, and the feeling of both Arabs and Jews that they had been mistreated and betrayed by the Mandatory government led finally to a rejection and revulsion, so that the initial status of English after independence was lowered.

1.3. English in Israeli society after Independence

1.3.1. Loss of official status

The Mandatory Government's decision (King's Order-in-Council, 1922, §82) set English, Arabic and Hebrew as official languages (Fisherman 1972). In amending this law, the newly independent State of Israel simply canceled "any instruction in the Law requiring the use of the English language" (Rules of Government and Law, 1948, §15b). Thus, with the stroke of a legislator's pen, English lost its formal official protection.

This ideological rejection might have been expected as a result of the special status of Hebrew. The revival of Hebrew as a major component in Zionism and Jewish nationalism guaranteed the language a status that is ideologically highly privileged. One of the critical concomitants of this secular Zionist ideology was the strong encouragement of Hebrew learning and use by immigrants, and the active discouragement of public (or even private use) of the other languages known by the population. Official language policy, while not explicit, supports this "monocentricism", and an associated Hebrew-Arabic bilingualism among the minority Arab-speaking population.

This anti-English ideology continues to show up from time to time in public campaigns to discourage the use of English in signs, or to require the dubbing of television programs, or to avoid the use of words borrowed from English. However, in spite of this, English has continued to grow in importance so that it now challenges the hegemony of Hebrew.

It is important to note that although English is no longer required, its use was not prohibited by the change in paragraph 15b mentioned above. Non-Israeli lawyers may plead in it, and it continues to be used in governmental offices and in the courts. The Ministry of Justice continues to publish an English translation of Israeli laws (Rubinstein 1986: 87-92). But before 1967, reflecting in part an animosity towards the former colonial power, the amount of English actually spoken in Israel was modest, as English functioned largely as an in-group language (Fishman et al. 1977: 141).

After 1948, English maintained its place as the first foreign language in schools, albeit with a slight decrease in hours. From 1960, it was a compulsory subject from the fifth grade on, for four hours a week (Fishman et al. 1977: 142). While the educational policy led to widespread acquaintance with English, the results were, Fishman believed, much less successful. There was a 43% failure rate in the 1972 English matriculation examination, a consequence in part of the continued literary emphasis of the examination (Horovitz 1986).

Left alone, there might well have been an attrition in the status and knowledge of English. There were however major changes in English diffusion after 1967, with the increased immigration from English-speaking countries, increased tourism both to and from Israel, and growing economic and political ties with the United States. Under the influence of these changed circumstances, there was a swelling demand for teaching English earlier and longer, with North African immigrants successfully resisting efforts to teach their children the French they spoke and had studied rather than English (Fishman et al. 1977: 143).

Fishman et al. (1977) noted that the knowledge of English was becoming related to socioeconomic class and seen as a "key to economic development". The 1972 census showed that 9% of the over-14 population claimed to speak it once a day. Nadel and Fishman (1977) document the nature of this exposure. Significant proportions of the population reported that they sometimes listened to BBC or Voice of America radio programs. Television, introduced in 1968, was starting to provide access to English-language movies and serials. The majority of movies were in English, shown with Hebrew subtitles. While most

books published were in Hebrew, there was significant English publishing, supported by a level of importing of English-language books. Nadel and Fishman (1977: 159) cite a doubling in the circulation of the English-language daily newspaper from 1962 to 1972 (17,850 to 31,500), and 20,000 weekly circulation for *Time* in Israel in 1972.

Nadel and Fishman (1977: 164) concluded that in the early 1970s, English in Israel was on the rise. It was no longer seen "as a sign of colonialism or of attachment to another language" and was free of any direct tie to Great Britain. It was not perceived as a threat to Hebrew, and would presumably continue to grow alongside it, at the expense of the other languages brought to Israel by the immigrants.

In these first twenty years after independence, then, there was already good evidence of the effect of factors other than the colonial government's explicit policy on the spread of English. The British Mandatory policy itself had been moderate in propagating English as a second language, for it had been quite precise in allocating domains for official use for the two other languages and had allowed the Jewish and Arab communities not just to conduct their own schools but also to establish their own language policies in them.

After Independence, the strength of ideology associated with the teaching of Hebrew, and the insistence on Hebrew as the *lingua franca* for the Jewish population, increasingly multilingual as it was doubled by immigration, naturally weakened the claims and place of English. Thus, while English was left in place in 1948 after the British Mandatory government left, it occupied a fairly tightly restricted niche functionally and demographically and when expressed in terms of proficiency. The rapid expansion started some twenty years later, as the result of a changed demographic, political and economic situation, and with no direct influence from the policy of the English-speaking countries assumed by Phillipson (1992) to be the direct beneficiaries of the spread of the language.

1.3.2. Post-Imperial policies of the Core

Since the loss of direct control in 1948, the British Government has made some efforts to encourage the continued spread of English in Israel. For a number of years, the education officer at the British Council, a person with qualification and interest in the teaching of English, played a useful and effective role in encouraging the professionalization of the teaching field. The budget for this work was limited, and the main effect was to improve the level of professional activities rather than to campaign actively for mass learning.

In fact, more recently, the main thrust of British Council policy would appear to have moved from this limited professional encouragement to active commercial exploitation, in line with a statement by its head that the English language is the "Black Gold" that will supplement the oil found in the North Sea. Britain's financial problems are a serious consideration, with the British Council required to share in government efforts to reduce the £50 billion public sector deficit. In 1989, a decision to do away with the position of Education Officer, responsible for English Language Teaching, was only reversed after strong local protest and a visit by the Deputy Director General of the Council. Four years later, the Council decided to "localize" the post, paying the new incumbent at local Israeli salary rates rather than at the scale for British overseas service, and so save two thirds of the cost (Sandiford, personal communication). During this same period, the Council established commercially viable and competitive English language schools in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and Nazareth, advertising with the slogan "Learn English from the English." The Director-General's review of the year 1992 showed increases in revenues from English language and other teaching from £27.5 million in 1988-89 to £49.6 million in 1992-93, making up in that year just under half of the revenue of the Council. Referring to the new English teaching centers, including the one in Nazareth, the report says that "this is not expansion for its own sake" but a step that "will bring benefit to Britain by forging closer relations with a new generation in new circumstances, by increasing the flow of fee-paying students to British universities, by extending the use of English ..." (British Council 1993: 9).

Thus, while continuing a policy of working to spread English, the stress in British governmental policy now seems to be to take advantage of and exploit commercially the increasing use of the language. Supporting this interpretation, during the last decade, a period of major increase in English use and status in the country, the membership and loan figures at the two British Council libraries have given no evidence of a matching increase. To deal with the financial situation, one goal now, says the Director-General's report (British Council 1993: 6), is to build the Council into "the leading English teaching organization in professional reputation and on a global scale."

Active involvement of the US government in the spread of English in Israel has been even less substantial. The local activities of the United States Information Agency in Israel have never included, as they do in many countries, the establishment of Binational Centers for the teaching of English; there has never been an English language officer in the Embassy;[3] and the support of English language teaching has been limited to a handful of Fulbright lecturers.

There is little evidence then that the increase in use of English in Israel is the result of a continuing post-imperialistic policy of the English-speaking countries. Explanations must be sought elsewhere, in a combination of the changed demographic situation and of the world-wide march of English.

[3] Israel fell for a number of years under the authority of the English teaching officer in Egypt, and in 1998 has been transferred to the newly appointed English teaching officer in Jordan.

1.3.3. Factors leading to increased English

Of particular and specially local importance for Israel has been the continuing increase in exposure of Israelis to people speaking English that has been provided both by English-speaking immigrants to Israel and as a result of tourism to Israel or by Israelis. Immigration to Israel from English speaking countries, relatively low (about a 1000 a year) until 1967, increased five-fold in the next decade. Over 40,000 immigrants came from the United States between 1965 and 1979, and another 19,000 in the next decade. About 13,000 came from South Africa in the same 25 years. The effect of these and of added smaller numbers from other English speaking countries was to produce a sizable English speaking population, with strong educational or business qualifications. In the 1983 census, 60,000 people reported English as a native language. Since then, there have been another 40,000 immigrants from English-speaking countries. These English-speaking immigrants and their children have furnished an important reservoir of native speakers to fill teaching and other jobs requiring English as well guaranteeing an increased demand for services in English. In Jewish schools, about 40% of the teachers are native speakers of English, a figure that would be hard to match anywhere, but in Arab schools all teachers are native speakers of Arabic.

Tourism to and from Israel has also risen markedly over the last decades. The very large numbers of Israelis who travel abroad are most likely to use English there, and while English speakers make up only about 40% of the tourists coming here, a good proportion of the others accept English as a lingua franca. With occasional decreases as a result of the political situation in the region or changes in economic conditions, tourism has been a major growth industry, from 114,000 in 1960 to 441,300 in 1970, rising to 1,175,800 in 1980 (the 1987 figure was 1,378,700; the figures are from the 1989 report on Migration and Tourism of the Central Bureau of Statistics). Again, while there is some variation, close to 38% of these tourists are from English-speaking countries. Anyone working in the tourism industry, or in the various areas of the retail trade that wishes to cater to tourists, has extremely good reasons to want to be able to know English, a language that is likely to be useful in dealings with many of the other national groups.

That Israeli travel abroad, whether to study or on holiday or on business, is also an important factor in providing increased motivation for the knowledge of English and greater opportunities for exposure to it. This shows up in the phenomenon of special English classes for "speakers of English" in a large number of Israeli schools (the Ministry of Education has just published a special syllabus for such children). While most of them are the children of immigrants from English-speaking countries, a sizable proportion consists of Israeli children whose parents have spent a year or more abroad, exposing the children to education in an English-speaking school.

These demographic factors have assured Israelis of increasing contact with English speakers. Part of the significance of this is related to material advantage, namely to the demand for English for employment. The assumption that material need is a significant factor in language use is supported by studies in the market-place. Cooper and Carpenter (1976) showed that in the Ethiopian markets they studied, it was generally the buyer who made the effort to learn the language of the seller. Confirming this, Spolsky and Cooper (1991) found evidence that it was Arab traders in the *shuk* of the Old City of Jerusalem who were learning other language, and that employment was one of the main factors accounting for the knowledge of Hebrew by Arabs. Amara (1991) and Spolsky and Amara (1986) showed employment as a major source of knowledge of Hebrew among residents of an Arab village in the north of Israel.

Cooper and Seckbach (1977) investigated the language skills required in employment advertisements in the Hebrew press in 1973. They found that English skills were mentioned in nearly 10% of the job advertisements they studied, the highest percentage (Hebrew was 9%, other languages under 3%). English was more likely in the prominently displayed or "framed" advertisements, and was most commonly required in non-scientific and non-technical jobs requiring a university degree or in white collar jobs. This interest in language knowledge has presumably continued, but it is not useful to present comparative figures. In current advertisements for positions, while language knowledge is regularly called for in higher level or lower level jobs, it appears that many employers are satisfied with the kind of English knowledge that can be assumed of most holders of Israeli university degrees. That is to say, the compulsory learning of English for the matriculation examination, the weight given to the English section of the university psychometric admission examinations, and the general university requirements for a reading knowledge of English have now institutionalized a general minimal level of English proficiency among graduates of Israeli universities, so that only in special cases (such as a high level position to work overseas or a clerk to work in direct contact with overseas business people) does the advertisement now mention English.

Among groups in which knowledge of English plays a significant role, diplomats and the military deserve mention. Since Independence, Israel has been under constant attack or threat of attack on military, economic and political fronts. Overseas diplomatic representation has therefore been particularly important, so that Israel maintains a proportionately large number of embassies in the countries with which it has diplomatic relations. The need for constant attention to international dealings provides high motivation not just for professional diplomats but for higher level administrators in various government of-

fices to know enough English to conduct business with non-Hebrew speakers. The importance of English in diplomacy is exemplified by the fact that negotiations with the Palestinians are currently being conducted in English, even though many of the negotiators are bilingual in Arabic and Hebrew.[4]

There is similar importance for English in the military sphere. Apart from a short period before the Suez War in 1957 when the supply of French aircraft and weapons encouraged the Israeli Defense Forces to teach French to its officers, the United States has been the major military supplier and purveyor of advanced training. Knowledge of English is then a major requirement for a large proportion of officers in the Israeli army.

Important as the demographic features are, the most dramatic changes in public access to English have come since the introduction of television in the late sixties. Ten years ago, the main exposure came from the four to five hours a day of English lessons on Educational television. At that time, viewers could see English-language programs (with Hebrew and sometimes Arabic subtitles) for under two hours a day on an average. A major boost to this was the import of videos allowed in the early 1970s, with access to English language movies multiplied enormously. With the recent increase of broadcasting hours and the addition of a second channel, the average English-language programming available on Israeli television in 1990 was more than doubled. By then, also, large sections of the country could receive ten hours a day from an English language station in Southern Lebanon and others could watch three hours a night of English programming on Jordanian television. But going far beyond this, the introduction and widespread diffusion of cable television now makes it possible to watch English language programs at any time of the day or night. Of the thirty-five channels, fourteen are purely in English, with the two movie channels also broadcasting a good proportion of English-language films. While many of the television programs broadcast locally are subtitled in Hebrew and sometimes Arabic, they are seldom if ever dubbed, and thus ensure a regular if passive exposure to spoken English. This is supplemented by the regular playing of popular English-language songs on the radio.

Table 1: English language periodicals published in Israel[5]

	1969	1978	1985
Number of periodicals in English	46	79	130
Percentage of all periodicals in English	9.6	11.2	14.3

[4] Interestingly, the difficulties of the negotiations over Hebron were blamed in part on the poor English skills of the head of the Israeli negotiating team.

[5] Central Bureau of Statistics, Yearbook, 1990: 68.

The increase in printed English has not been so dramatic (see Table 1). Since 1969, the number and percentage of periodicals published in Israel has continued to rise. By 1990, there were about the same number of periodicals and newspapers published in English as in all other languages (except Hebrew but including Arabic) put together.

Table 2: Circulation of the Jerusalem Post[6]

	1965	1972	1982	1992
Daily	17,850	31,500	26,000	26,000
Friday (weekend)	25,200	42,000	44,500	45,000

The pattern of change in the circulation of the English daily newspaper, *The Jerusalem Post* (see Table 2) is even more revealing. Nadel and Fishman (1977: 159) reported a large jump in subscribers between 1965 and 1972. They suggested three reasons for the big increase in 1972: the recent increase in English-speaking immigration, the increase in tourism, and the increase in standard of living. The slowdown in the decade from 1972 to 1982 could be accounted for by a number of factors. After a few years in Israel, the new immigrants could by now read enough Hebrew to be happier with the cheaper afternoon papers. Other factors may have contributed to the decline. Many of the older Central European readers were no longer alive. The editorial policy of the paper moved, displeasing many readers. Most recently, the leading Hebrew daily newspaper, *Ha'aretz*, has made its own play for the growing English readership by combining with the *International Herald-Tribune* to prepare a local edition, the back section of which are stories translated from the same day's *Ha'aretz*. The English reader is thus presented with a choice of two daily newspapers.

Public signs provide a revealing picture of the attitude to English. Spolsky and Cooper (1991: 4-8) traced the recent history of the Old City in the current street signs, and explored the various factors that seem to account for the language of signs (1991: 74-94). They found this pattern could be accounted for by three rules. The first is a necessary condition ("write signs in a language you know") while the other two are preference conditions, often in tension: "prefer to write in the language of the person you want to read the sign" and "prefer to write in your own language, or that language that asserts your symbolic values."

[6] Sources for 1965 and 1972, Nadel and Fishman (1977: 159). For 1982 and 1992, the newspaper office.

Table 3: Language used in storefront signs, Jaffa Road, 1974 and 1993[7]

Signs	Total	Hebrew only	Hebrew prominent	Both equal	English prominent	English only
1974 (old)	75	33	27	39	0	1
1974 (new)	53	21	30	40	9	0
1993 (old)	132	39	29	21	8	2
1993 (new)	54	35	28	24	11	7

Nadel and Fishman (1977: 164) counted Hebrew and English lettering on signs on stores in Jaffa Road, the main street in downtown Jerusalem, finding a good deal of English used. Only 28% of the signs used only Hebrew, while English was equal to or more prominent than Hebrew in 44% (see Table 3). When they compared older, more worn signs with newer ones, they found more English in the latter, reflecting, they assumed the rise in international tourism and the rising status of English. In 1993, a count on the same street found an increase in Hebrew-only signs to 38%, higher even than the old signs in 1973. The category with both languages equally prominent has dropped from 39% to 22%. Thus, in spite of the growing tourism and the general increase of English that has been noted in other domains, there are intriguing signs of the success of ideologically motivated efforts to cut down on the prominent use of English in commercial signs.

Another concomitant of the diffusion of English is its appearance within written or oral texts that are otherwise assumed to be in another language. The phenomenon is a complex one, for there is a wide scale of possibilities ranging from obvious code-switching to integrated borrowing. Nadel and Fishman (1977: 151) referred to the broadcasting of interviews with overseas personalities in English with a Hebrew summary and the use of English words in the middle of Hebrew commercials. The Hebrew language press too provides clear examples of the second phenomenon, with the regular use of English words, written in Roman script, especially in advertisements.

More difficult to analyze is the use of words borrowed from English. Modern Hebrew is marked by its use of a large proportion of foreign terms that often exist alongside a successful or unsuccessful term coined or propagated by the Hebrew Language Academy. Ronen, Seckbach and Cooper (1977) found that most articles they scanned in two newspapers in 1950 and 1974 had some foreign words. The sources of the words were harder to decide, as the form in Hebrew was different from the English, and might well have come from French, German or Russian. In about half the cases, an approved Academy term existed.

[7] Sources for 1974, Nadel and Fishman (1977: 164). For 1993, count made by Yael Samra (Samra, personal communication).

The proportion of foreign words did not seem to change over the twenty-year span. In a follow-up study, foreign words were counted in four articles (the main news story, the first sports story, the first article on the literary page, and the first editorial article) in the *Ha'aretz* newspaper on the first Friday in April and September for the years 1950, 1970, and 1990. There were signs of a slight increase in the use of foreign words over the years.

Table 4: Use of English outside school (average minutes per week)

School	Reading	TV/Radio	Writing	Talking	Computer	All uses
Religious Anglo	515	1036	155	642	0	2378
Secular 1	212	1219	54	61	0	1546
Secular 2	102	860	30	32	0	1023
Religious boys	17	84	11	3	100	215

Another way of looking at exposure is to focus attention on individuals and ask how much they use a specific language. Some high school pupils were asked to keep a record of the occasions during a week when they read, wrote, spoke or listened to English. The study[8] of pupils in four high schools found a wide range of exposure (see Table 4). The high end of the range was about 40 hours a week for pupils in a school in a neighborhood where most of the inhabitants are immigrants from English-speaking countries. The low was three hours a week for boys in a religious school, where they are in class almost twice as many hours a day as pupils in secular schools, and where there is neither time nor approval for watching television. In one secular high school, the average time reported was over 25 hours; in a second, it was over 16 hours. In the English-speaking neighborhood, these children of immigrants reported that on the average they spoke English about ten hours a week, and that they spent over eight hours a week reading English. The bulk of the exposure for the two secular school students was television or radio, one school averaging 20 hours a week and the second about 13 hours. Their reading time was less, over six in one school hours and less than two in the other. It was only in the religious boys' school that significant computer use was reported, a situation that will no doubt change with time.

This pilot study must be interpreted with considerable caution. Self-reports are unreliable, there is considerable variation within the groups, and there is no evidence of the effect on English knowledge of the various kinds of exposure.

[8] The study was carried out by Ayelet Shochet, Rivka Friedman, Sarit Dorfman, and Avital Halevy for a class taught by Bernard Spolsky.

At the same time, the data bear out many other observations. One English-speaking immigrant, for instance, reported that her ten-year-old grandchildren have only started speaking English to her and her husband since the family acquired cable television a few months ago.

There is need for more micro level studies of the phenomena of language contact and mixing resulting from the increase in knowledge and use of English by Hebrew speakers and the learning and use of Hebrew by English speakers. Olshtain and Blum-Kulka (1988) have in fact laid the groundwork for such studies, which has been continued in Blum-Kulka (1993). There is need also for more careful study of the extent to which English is used in informal speech among non-native speakers. One observes fairly regular use of phrases and sentences from English in the Hebrew conversation of non-English Israelis, the phenomenon probably most highly correlated with socio-economic status (e.g., in the cafe life of North Tel Aviv) or with occupation (especially among academics and scientists).

While Israeli academic life is largely conducted in Hebrew (with small exceptions, all teaching at the universities is in Hebrew), functional knowledge of English is taken for granted, and academic conferences tend to be conducted either in English or bilingually. English in fact serves as the normal *lingua franca* with overseas visitors, including those from European countries like Germany and Russia where there are Israelis who know the languages. A recent study by Shohamy and Donitsa-Schmidt showed that three quarters of the Israeli Jewish adults whom they asked to rank the four languages (including their own) that they found it most important to speak placed English highest (Shohamy – Donitsa-Schmidt 1997). This was higher among Mizrahi than Ashkenazi Jews. Russian Jews, like Israeli Arabs, ranked Hebrew as more important to them than English. In answering another question, 80% of Israeli Jews assumed that English will be the future language of the Middle East.

While Fishman et al. (1977: 105) found urbanization to contribute relatively little to the spread of English throughout the world, they did note the spread of two significant elements in the global village culture associated with urbanism, namely popular songs and television. The influences they noted were even further strengthened in the last two decades by further developments in television and the parallel development of the personal computer. Nadel and Fishman (1977: 152) mentioned the speed with which Israeli bought television sets after 1968, but noted that they were confined to a single government controlled channel. Already by then, many Israelis could watch the foreign language channels in Jordan or Lebanon. Video and cable TV have multiplied this potential access to the world popular culture that takes English almost for granted. In the decade that the personal computer has been available in Israel, it has become the source of access to a specialized English for an increasing number of young people.

While there have been many Hebrew language programs written, most personal computers use DOS or Windows, and most programming languages are written in code based on English.

Already in the early 1970s, Fishman et al. (1977) found evidence that the status of English in Israel was to be explained more by post-colonial events than by the original colonial policy or by continuing diffusion efforts of English-speaking countries. By then, the effect of the new English-speaking immigration had already started to be felt.

The influence was multiple. First, it produced an increased number of speakers of the language, as the immigrants and their children used the language not just as an intra-group language, but in intercourse with the increasing number of tourists. Secondly, it provided a major resource in native-speaking teachers of the language for both public and private schools. Third, it provided increased opportunities for non-English speaking Israelis to use the spoken language. Fourth, because of the relatively higher level of education and socioeconomic status of the new immigrant group, it contributed to the growing status of the language. Fifth, as English has become the main language of the largest Jewish diaspora in the USA and other English-speaking countries, it has become the language in which the two major communities can best communicate with each other. Finally, and one suspects this was the most important, all these factors have had the effect of showing that an immigrant language can have high status, weakening the monocentricism of Israeli language policy and attitudes.

The continuing spread of English in post-imperialist Israel, then, is the result of a number of complementary factors. The period of British Mandatory rule provided the basis. Had Mandatory Palestine been included in the French sphere of influence, the linguistic history of the country would not doubt have been different. To this extent, there is some support for Phillipson's hypothesis of the importance of an explicit language spread policy. The major impetus for the recent growth, however, was a demographic change coinciding with a period of opening up of the society (through electronic means) to the modern TV, pop and computer culture that is nowadays everywhere expressed in a non-localized variety of English. These changes in the demographic pattern of Israel, on the one hand, and changes in the communications patterns of the world, on the other, have been the major factors in the extraordinary spread of English.

2. The impinging hegemony of English

Hebrew established its ideological and actual monolingual hegemony in conflicts with what might be considered two varieties of German. The first was a Jewish internal struggle with Yiddish, a Jewish variety offered as a plausible alternative as a language of nationalism. While there were continuing skirmishes for another thirty years or so, the battle was more or less won by 1910. The

second was a quick war with a major world language of science and education, German, fought in the days before the First World War, with victory in the Language War confirmed by the military victory of the Allies over Germany and by the British conquest of Palestine in 1917.

That English failed to challenge Hebrew during the thirty years of British rule of Palestine bears witness to the continuing ideological strength and communal cohesion of the Yishuv, the Jewish community of Palestine. It also challenges strongly the view presented by Phillipson (1992) and others who attribute the recent spread of English to the planning and policy of officials of the English-speaking core who stand to benefit. As we have noted, a reluctance by the Mandatory government to take full responsibility for education and its acceptance of the rights of each of the major communities to conduct its internal affairs, including schooling, in its own language, meant that both Hebrew and Arabic survived the period of British rule without a serious threat from English.

The bitterness of the final years of Mandatory rule further weakened the position of English. One example is revealing. Just before the Mandate ended, the British government formally withdrew Palestine from the Universal Postal Union, effectively cutting the territory from international communication. When the new state of Israel joined the organization, it not unnaturally signaled the breach of faith by setting as the languages for the postal services alongside the now official Hebrew and Arabic the international language French. Israeli post offices replaced their French signs with English only in the late 1980s.[9]

The circumstances surrounding the establishment of the State in 1948, especially the failure of the Arabs to form a state in the territory allotted to them in the partition plan and the continuation of a state of war with the contiguous Arab countries, meant that Israel was not at that time called on to deal with the choice between the two official languages, Hebrew and Arabic. It thus avoided a struggle over language choice that marked independence for many states, and was able to continue its essentially monolingual policy in dealing with the enormous and rapid plurilingual immigration that followed.

What we have traced then has been the growing power of English. In spite of the lack of a strong colonial heritage, and with minimal encouragement from the core English-speaking countries, a combination of world-wide developments and special local conditions has helped English overcome its initial weakness and develop into a serious challenge to Hebrew monolingualism. It has done this, as Ben-Rafael (1994) argues, by inserting itself into the Israeli speech repertoire as an additive and not replacive second language. Speakers of Hebrew and Arabic have each come to assume that English can fill a number of significant functions for them, in extra-community relations and in access to economic success and to information and entertainment. English has emerged, it is clear, in current Israeli language practices, as the language of maximum access, the *lingua franca par excellence*, if one might use some borrowed phrases, a language with all the attributes of a prestige language (Kahane 1986) in a period when modern technology and swift population movements multiplies its effects. We need look for no language diffusion policies or conspiracies to account for these developments.

[9] See Spolsky and Cooper (1991: 120).

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