Minority Languages and Language Policy:
The Case of Arabic in Israel

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PhD Thesis

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ABSTRACT

This study deals with language policies towards Arabic in Israel as reflected in official and unofficial discourse. The study's main claim is that the current discourse towards Arabic in Israel can be characterized based on three theoretical constructs – Indigenousness, Functionality and Officiality. These constructs generate four distinct models for the interaction between Hebrew and Arabic on a societal level – Balanced Bilingualism, Symbolic Bilingualism, Functional Bilingualism and Hebrew Monolingualism.

Language Policy, in its most basic sense, refers to the actions taken by a state to regulate the status of the languages spoken in its territory. Beyond this descriptive level, this area of study is concerned with the processes and mechanisms which influence language policy decisions and their implementation. This includes, for instance, the role that ideologies and orientations towards languages and their users play in the creation and implementation of language policies, or the ways in which language policies are used to maintain, promote or establish the socio-political position of (majority and minority) linguistic groups.

Arabic is the mother tongue of the heterogeneous Arab minority, which comprises about one-fifth of the Israeli population. Arabic is an official language in Israel in the force of a Mandatory Order (Article 82 of the Order in Council, 1922) which was adopted into Israeli legislation in 1948. This order dictates the comprehensive Hebrew-Arabic bilingual conduct of state authorities. In practice, Arabic's public position in Israel is marginal, and Hebrew enjoys almost absolute dominance in Israeli public spheres.

The leading argument that explains the position of Arabic in Israel has traditionally been based on the conflict between the collective identities of the two main national groups in Israel – the Jewish (majority) and the Arab (minority). In this research, I examine the possibility of a change in Arabic's public position in Israel in light of a number of developments in recent years that potentially shed new light on the traditional discourse.

In this study, I examined the attitudes and perspectives towards a language policy that would extend the current role of Arabic in Israel. This was done on two levels – among public figures

and decision-makers and among 'general' members of the linguistic groups. The positions of majority and minority group members were examined based on two sources of data – a questionnaire survey and a series of focus group sessions. The examination centered on a number of 'policy scenarios' that characterize the use of Arabic in several public spheres. The public spheres were chosen based on a preliminary study and include: government services, public television and Arabic studies in Jewish schools. The positions of public figures were examined through an analysis of the discourse of decision-makers around one specific issue: the question of Arabic's official status in Israel.

The analysis of the **focus group** sessions (chapters 3 and 4) yielded two main concepts that were repeatedly used by the participants in their arguments in favor or against language policies towards Arabic in Israel. One is the concept of Indigenousness, which refers to the linguistic rights and privileges that may be derived from a group's indigenous status, that is, from the fact that it existed as a unique group prior to the establishment of the state. The second is Functionality, referring to the tension between language policy goals directed towards concrete and immediate benefits (such as having access to services, to information, protecting one's safety, fulfilling everyday-life tasks) and between 'symbolic' policy goals directed towards the symbolic and collective-identity interests of the linguistic group.

These two notions were found to be powerful for revealing a complex, underlying mechanism that legitimizes and de-legitimizes language policies in the current Israeli context.

The analysis of the **decision-makers' discourse** (chapter 5) yielded four distinct positions towards the current and desired status of Arabic – The absolute equality position, The de jure equality position, The hierarchy position and The Hebrew-only position. Three test cases were used to examine the level of legitimacy these positions receive and the status of each position within the boundaries of the (Jewish) public discourse.

The **survey** (chapter 6) included 466 Israeli students, Jews and Arabs, divided into five subgroups according to ethnic and linguistic characteristics. The findings revealed a supportive position among Arab respondents and an unsupportive position among Jewish respondents

regarding extension of the current role of Arabic in Israel, giving rise to the following general issues:

- A similar pattern of hierarchy among language policy domains was found within all five subgroups. Government Services was the domain which gained the highest level of support. Next were policies concerning the use of Arabic on Israeli public television and lowest were the policies concerning the teaching of Arabic in Jewish schools.
- Among Jewish respondents, a clear tendency was revealed to favor a multilingual policy over a Hebrew-Arabic bilingual one.
- The linguistic minority-majority dichotomy (native Hebrew speakers vs. native Arabic and Russian speakers) was almost completely overshadowed by the ethnic division (Jews vs. Arabs).

The findings of the three data sources were integrated into four 'societal bilingual models', characterizing the interaction between Hebrew and Arabic in Israel (Balanced Bilingualism, Symbolic Bilingualism, Functional Bilingualism and Hebrew Monolingualism). The models were built based on the notions of Indigenousness and Functionality. The description of the models refers to the ways in which the models correspond to the four patterns of Officiality and how they characterize the positions of majority and minority group members (revealed in the survey and the focus group sessions). The models are discussed in light of general language policy principles and in relation to their potential to theorize about the specific Hebrew-Arabic language policy domain in Israel.

1. INTRODUCTION

This study deals with the *discourse of language policies towards Arabic in Israel*. More specifically, it deals with the perspectives and positions that arise regarding the possibility of extending the public role of Arabic in Israel. It will be claimed that the current language policy discourse towards Arabic in Israel can be characterized based on three theoretical concepts: Indigenousness, Functionality and Officiality. I will show how the different use of these concepts by certain sectors and groups dictates different models for the interaction between Hebrew and Arabic on a societal level. I will demonstrate, based on these models, which positions are characteristic of each sector, which positions are on the margins or outside the discourse boundaries and which policy models have the best chance of being implemented. To set the ground for this, I first clarify the basic terms and notions the study is based on and the background information relevant for understanding the current Israeli Hebrew-Arabic domain.

1.1 Language Policy and Planning - Early Models

According to Spolsky and Shohamy (1999), *language policy* is:

> *"[a]n explicit statement, usually but not necessarily written in a formal document, about language use… where the maker of the policy has some form of authority over the person expected to follow it" (p. 32).*

Thus, Language Planning is:

> *"[d]eliberated efforts to influence the behavior of others with respect to the acquisition, structure, or functional allocation of their language codes" (Cooper, 1989, p. 45).*

While language policy and planning activities have certainly been going on for centuries, they emerged as an academic discipline only around the second half of the 20th century. Language Policy and Planning (LPP) developed as a subfield of sociolinguistic in the 1960s, mainly as a response to real world problems. The first studies were primarily aimed at solving the immediate language problems of emergent postcolonial states in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. A series of conferences, projects and publications made up the early days of the field as an academic discipline, the two main ones being *Language problems of developing nations*

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(Fishman, Ferguson, & Das Gupta, 1968) and *Can language be planned?* (Rubin & Jernudd, 1971). These were the outcome of international research projects that focused on India, Indonesia, Israel and Sweden. These classic publications provided the first empirical accounts of LPP studies on a national level and revealed the main issues. 'Language policy' and 'planning' were understood primarily as the actions that the state needs to take in order to regulate the status of the languages spoken within its territory. This included, for example, which languages should be recognized as official, which languages should be taught at schools, what actions should be taken to preserve languages under threat of extinction and so on.

A large number of frameworks and typologies were developed in the first decades of LPP research. They centered largely on the goals that a policy towards a certain language could meet (Cooper, 1989; Ferguson, 1968; Haugen, 1983; Kloss, 1966; Nahir, 1984; Neustupny, 1974 among others). Hornberger's (1994) 'Integrative Framework of Language Policy and Planning goals' summarizes most of the early models and covers nearly 30 policy goals. Her framework represents two main distinctions – LPP types and LPP approaches. The LPP types, based on Kloss (1966)[1] and later devolved by Cooper (1989), identify three subcategories. The first is status planning, which refers to the laws or regulations determining the permissible or required languages in certain situations. The second planning type is corpus planning, which concerns the approved forms of language such as spelling, grammar or lexicon and the third is acquisition planning, which relates to the requirements, situations or opportunities for learning a desired or required language or a variation of that language. The second main distinction is between 'policy' and 'cultivation' approaches to language planning. This distinction, which did not become as widely accepted as the 'types' distinction, is based primarily on Neustupny's (1974) and Haugen's (1983) typologies. The policy approach focuses on macro-level policy goals, concerning mainly standard or official languages, while the cultivation approach relates to goals such as the revival, spread or maintenance of smaller languages.

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[1] See a critical discussion on this typology in Schiffman, 1996, p. 30-37.

Despite the richness and depth of these models, they were descriptive in nature and refrained from dealing directly with the non-linguistic (social, political etc.) dimensions, or as Ricento (2000) characterizes them, 'ideologically neutral' (p. 197). By the 1990s, several scholars had started to question the assumptions that the field was based on and called for more theoretical and critical notions in order to study language policies in a more explanatory way. Researchers were concerned with questions like the following: How does a language policy actually serve the interests of various social groups? Is it being used to establish or maintain majority groups' political power? Can language planning be used as a mechanism to create a change in the social status of minority groups? What role do ideologies and orientations towards languages and their users play in the creation and implementation of language policies?

Cooper's (1989) *Language planning and social change* was one of the first publications to raise these questions. His planning scheme ('who plans what for whom and why') called upon researchers to consider the wider social and political context when evaluating the chances of a policy being adopted. He also highlighted the importance of 'bottom-up' forces in triggering the planning process. Schiffman (1996) proposed the notion of 'Linguistic Culture' as a theoretical concept in order to examine language policy. Linguistic Culture refers to "the sum totality of ideas, values, beliefs, attitudes, prejudices, myths religious structures […] speakers bring to their dealings with language from culture" (p. 112). Hence, according to him, greater emphasis should be put on the covert aspects of a language policy. France and the U.S., for example, are characterized as societies in which mythologies about language and policy are so deeply rooted within the linguistic culture that it is unnecessary to create an actual, official policy.

Indeed, in the past two decades, the field has experienced a significant theoretical development related to the incorporation of concepts rooted in human and civil rights discourse and ideas from political theory. I will focus on the notion of 'linguistic minorities', highlighting its relevance to language policy decisions.

1.2 **Language Policy as Planning for Linguistic Minorities**

The interconnection between language policies and minority (language) rights is receiving more and more attention in the literature. The main claim is that language policy should concern the interests of minority groups (those who are numerically inferior or underprivileged in terms of power, status and entitlement). A 'fair' and 'just' language policy, then, is one that attempts to promote the interests of linguistic minorities – speakers of languages other than the dominant language[2].

The arguments advocating minority language rights are mainly based on the following three assumptions: (1) the minority-majority language hierarchy is not a linguistic process but rather the result of power relations and political events; (2) The expected losses of minority languages are predicted to cause social, economic and political displacements of their speakers; (3) language loss for linguistic minorities does not result in greater social mobility (see mainly Blommaert, 2005; May, 2001; Tollefson, 1991). These underlying assumptions attempt to challenge the 'traditional LPP school' for viewing language policies as useful for integrating linguistic minorities into mainstream socioeconomic systems. Accordingly, multilingualism and cultural heterogeneity are viewed by this line of thought as a *positive* condition that can be a national resource rather than an obstacle to economic progress, modernization or national unity (Ruiz, 1984, see a critical review in Ricento, 2005).

Another perspective relevant to linguistic minorities is '*language rights as human rights*'. The leading argument of those who hold this view is that an individual's or a defined group's right to maintain the use of their chosen language and the right of all to acquire the dominant language should be viewed (by the state and by international bodies) in a similar way to other more generally recognized human rights, such as the right to shelter or the right to education. De Varennes (2001), for example, states clearly that "most – if not all – of what are called today language rights derive from general human rights standards." Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson, probably the greatest supporters of this notion, note that "linguistic rights are one type of

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[2] See Simpson's 2001 (p. 579-580) summary of characteristics of minority languages proposed in the First International Conference on Minority Languages held at Glasgow in 1980.

human right and as such one intricately interlocking element in a set of inalienable, universal norms for just enjoyment of one's civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights" (1995, p. 483). Thus, the 'human rights view' is closely related to universal arguments and a struggle towards international covenants and constitutions that would regulate universal standards for states dealing with linguistic minorities. The main claims against existing international convents that deal with linguistic issues[3] is that they are phrased too vaguely and are not powerful enough in forcing states to implement language rights-- mainly those that are beyond mere protection against discrimination and grant equal opportunities to those given to majority language speakers (de Varennes, 1996; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000, 2006)[4]. In terms of language policies, Linguistic Human Rights advocates demand a wide range of policies in the form of a 'linguistic vision' they refer to as Linguistic Diversity (LD). LD entails a strict and comprehensive implementation of policies - both negative (i.e., protecting individuals from discrimination), and positive, (i.e., maintaining and promoting one's identity); they should refer to both individuals and collectives; they should consider both territorial and personal factors; and they must be based on both 'hard laws' (such as covenants and charters) and 'soft laws' (such as declarations and Supreme Court decisions). A non-comprehensive language policy, especially in the field of education, has the potential to create real and concrete damage to linguistic minorities and may even lead to a what is referred to by Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson (2006) as 'linguistic genocide'[5] (p. 278).

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[3] The international documents referring to language rights that are considered central are mainly: The UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, 1992; The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, 1998 and The Oslo Recommendations regarding the Linguistic Rights of National Minorities, 1998.

[4] See also Habermas (2001) for the idea of states and regional constitutions' 'catalytic effect' in putting forward the interests of social groups

[5] The use of quite harsh terminology such as 'linguistic genocide' or 'linguicism' (Skutnabb-Kangas & Philipson 1995, p. 497) has drawn some criticism towards the writers, portraying them as 'radicals'. The writers object to their characterization as such (see a reply by Skutnabb-Kangas, Phillipson & Kontra, 2001 to such claims made by Jan Blommaert, 2001). In any case, it is doubtful whether a stronger 'pro-linguistic minorities' approach can be found in the current sociolinguistic literature.

1.3 Language Policy for Arabic in Israel

The focus in the present study is on policies towards the Arabic-speaking minority in Israel[6]. There is neither a single comprehensive document that regulates government policy towards the languages spoken in Israel, nor is there a constitution, which in many cases establishes the normative ground for policy regulations. There are a number of documents and legal sources to consider in order to learn about Arabic's *de jure* status as well as various factors to contemplate in order to evaluate its *de facto* position. These two levels will be referred to in this order.

1.3.1 Arabic's De jure Status

Article 82 of the Palestine Order in Council, 1922

Legally, both Hebrew and Arabic have a status as *official language*. The fundamental document to establish the official status of the languages goes back to the period of Mandatory Palestine. Article 82 of the Palestine Order in Council, 1922 under the subtitle "official languages" states that:

> *"All Ordinances, official notices and official forms of the Government and all official notices of local authorities and municipalities in areas to be prescribed by order of the High Commissioner, shall be published in English, Arabic and Hebrew. The three languages may be used in debates and discussions in the Legislative Council and subject to any regulations to be made from time to time, in the government offices and the Law courts."[7]*

This order was incorporated into Israeli legislation in 1948 with one change – the abolishment of the status of the English language. The order concerning the Hebrew and Arabic languages

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[6] The terms "Arabic-speaking minority", "Arab minority" and "Arab citizens" in Israel are used alternately in this study. By these terms, I refer to the part of Israel's population that lives inside the pre-1967 borders and has Israeli citizenship. Arabs in Israel comprise about one-fifth of the population in Israel, numbering over 1,450,000. They belong to three religious communities: Muslim (83%), Christian (9%), and Druze (8%). Arab citizens populate three distinct geographical areas in Israel (the Galilee area in the north, the 'Triangle' in the center of the state and the Negev region in the south) and a number of Jewish-Arab 'mixed cities'. (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2008). For an updated review of sociolinguistic aspects of Arabs in Israel see Burstein-Feldman et al., forthcoming. For a general discussion on social, political and legal aspects of the Arabs in Israel see, among others Kretzmer, 1990; Rouhana, 1997; Smooha, 1990.

[7] Drayton (1934)3 Laws of Palestine 2569

remained unchanged, granting both Hebrew and Arabic the status of official languages. Thus, this accord dictates a demand for three areas to be conducted bilingually: (1) The central authority (as far as the conduct of the authorities is concerned and as far as the possibility exists to proceed in any one of these languages.), (2) Official announcements of the local authority and (3) Access to the public services of the central authority, including courts.

Latter Legislation

Article 82 is the most central piece of legislation referring to policies towards Arabic, but some references can be found in later legislation as well. Later language-related legislation reveals a non-uniform attitude towards Arabic. Numerous laws which have been legislated since 1948 oblige the state to use Arabic in different contexts such as in the media, public notices, security instructions, ballot slips and so on (see a partial list in Deutch, 2005, p. 273-5). At the same time, a considerable amount of legal regulation gives clear precedence to Hebrew. One example, with a rather symbolic weight, is the Citizenship Law, 1952 which requires "a certain knowledge of the Hebrew language"[8] as a condition for citizenship. A similar example is the Chamber of Advocates Law, 1961, which requires knowledge of Hebrew as a condition for registration by the Bar Association. Additionally, as early as 1953, the Supreme Institute of the Hebrew Language Law approved the establishment of the Hebrew Language Academy. It was only in 2007, some 50 years later, that a similar law regarding the establishment of an Arabic Language Academy has been approved but is yet to be carried out.[9] Over the years, public assistance had been granted to Ladino and Yiddish in the form of 'national institutions'[10], with no similar arrangements for Arabic.

1.3.2 **Arabic's De facto Status**

The equal legal status of the two languages, as reflected in Article 82 is merely theoretical. While Hebrew is used in all public contexts (the Israeli parliament – 'the Knesset', the law

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[8] Section 5a(4)

[9] See discussion in chapter 5 (5.5.3)

[10] The National Authority for Ladino Culture Law, 1996 and The national Authority for Yiddish Culture Law, 1996.

courts, academia, government documents, and commerce) and in most television and radio programs, Arabic is used mainly for local matters in Arab villages and towns. The clear gap between Arabic's *de facto* and *de jure* status has been noted in the literature many times: "[Arabic] is without a doubt a minority language, denied in law and in fact the status that might be expected to result from being the second official language" (Spolsky & Shohamy, 1999, p. 104. See Ben-Rafael, 1994; Fishman & Fisherman, 1975; Landau 1987; Merin, 1999; Shohamy, 2006; Spolsky, 1994; Spolsky & Shohamy, 1999a; Tabory, 1981 for similar statements). I will strengthen this claim with examples from a number of public domains:

Government services and information are generally inaccessible in Arabic. Apart from local branches of state agencies in Arab municipalities, Arabic versions of official forms are in most cases not available.[11] In terms of approaching the authorities in Arabic, Sommer's (2003) study reveals a very problematic picture. Out of 102 official applications that were sent in Arabic to various state agencies, only 21 received any response. Government offices that chose to respond requested a Hebrew version of the application and did not refer to the Arabic version at all despite the legal obligation to do so (p. 444). In the state's government web portal, which provides online access to most government services, only about 1% of forms are provided in Arabic (110 out of 8600)[12] despite specific instructions in various State Comptroller's reports. Additionally, about half of the state's ministry websites are completely inaccessible in Arabic, including Finance and Housing. The following example highlights the problematic nature of this issue. During the second Lebanon War in the summer of 2006, Home Front Command emergency regulations did not appear in Arabic on the Ministry of Defense's website, nor was it possible to receive information in Arabic via the telephone service[13]. Following continual requests from Arab citizens and public figures, the situation was partially resolved.

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[11] But see for example ACRI's petition to the Supreme Court regarding the unavailability of forms in Arabic in the East Jerusalem Interior Ministry office in which the vast majority of applicants are Arabic speakers H.C.6683/99 Association for Civil Rights in Israel v. The Minister of the Interior. The petition can be viewed on ACRI's website http://www.acri.org.il (last visited April 2008).

[12] Lavi, T. (February 5, 2008) "Ministry of Finance: gov.il will be translated into Arabic by the end of the year". *Haaretz Online*.

[13] Editorial (July, 17, 2006) "Home Front Command does not publish regulations in Arabic". *Walla News.*

The situation is similar in *courts*. Despite the specific reference to courts in Article 82[14], Arab litigants in practice are unable either to conduct trials in Arabic or to submit legal documents in Arabic and are forced to conduct the procedure in Hebrew or bear the translation costs[15].

Another provision, which is stated clearly in Article 82, concerns the obligation of the state to publish its regulation in the 'Official Gazette' in Arabic. Since 1982, due to budgetary cuts, regulations and official announcements are only partially translated into Arabic and with a delay of about two years (Deutch, 2005). Furthermore, based on the Interpretation Law, 1981, the Hebrew version has precedence. Hence, these translations have practically lost their value. In addition, public announcements made by government and state authorities are also rarely published in Arabic. The important point to mention in this context is that when such cases were put before the courts, the court was generally reluctant to consider Hebrew-only publications as a strict violation of the law. A solution was offered to the petitioners only when they were able to prove a concrete injury caused to them as a result of the Hebrew monolingual publications[16].

The *electronic media* are an especially problematic area in terms of the scant public presence of the Arabic language and implementation of relevant policies. Arabic is by and large absent from the Israeli public media, both from the publicly-owned channel ('channel 1') and the public-commercial channels-- channels 2 and 10 (Avraham, 2003; First & Avraham, 2004). The Broadcasting Authority Law, 1965 (section 3) and The Second Authority for Television and Radio Law, 1990 (section 5) state rather generally that the authority's role is "to provide broadcasts in Arabic for the needs of the Arabic-speaking population", which leaves it up to the broadcasting authorities to determine the exact extent and nature of the programs. In 1992, the second authority published its rules and regulations, determining a criterion of 18% Arabic broadcast

[14] See also Criminal Procedure Law 1982 S.H 1982 which grants translation services in criminal proceedings.

[15] See petitioners' demand in H.C 972/02 Adalah v. the Director of the Courts, Sections 14-22 (on file with author).

[16] See for example H.C 527/74 Khalf v. the District Committee for Planning and Construction, 29(2) P.D 319. See a discussion on this issue using three additional court cases in Pinto, 2006 p. 242-5.

hours out of the channels' weekly broadcast time, including original Arabic productions, newscasts and translation of programs into Arabic. As stated in the regulations:

"The franchisee will broadcast varied programs in the Arabic language or translated into correct Arabic via subtitles or dubbing in the Arabic language, <u>for no less than eighteen percent of the total weekly broadcast time</u>, but no less than half an hour per week; at least half an hour a week will be dedicated to a program produced originally in the Arabic language." **[17]**

However, in 2000, a dramatic change was made in these regulations, determining a minimum of 5% weekly broadcast time in Arabic, either Arabic programs or translations into Arabic. Moreover, similar regulations regarding the Russian language have been added to the section[18]. In practice, the second authority hardly satisfies the lower criterion. In addition, according to a sample study carried out by Mossowa (The Advocacy Center for Arab Citizens in Israel) in 2004, there were many more translated programs than Arabic-speaking programs, broadcast mostly during unpopular timeslots and none on primetime slots.[19] Regarding the public channel, in 2002 the Israel Broadcasting Authority (IBA) transferred all Arabic-language programs from terrestrial Channel 1 to a satellite channel ('Middle East' channel and later to 'Channel 33'), making these programs available only to viewers with a satellite or cable television connection[20]. Despite repeated objections by Arab organizations, Arabic programs were not reinstated on the public channel ('channel 1'). In addition, a number of years ago, the state published a tender for the establishment of 'special-dedicated' television channels, among

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[17] Regulations of the Second Television and Radio Authority (Television Broadcasts by franchisees), 1992, section 10c (emphasis added).

[18] According to the chairman of Mossowa center, Mr. Jafer Farah, the minister, under pressure from the second authority, managed to carry out this move largely by promising the Arab MKs that an Arabic commercial television channel was soon to be established (personal communication, October 10, 2007)

[19] 997/05 Mossowa v. The second Television and Radio Authority. Petition, sections 30-35 (on file with author).

[20] H.C.375/03 Mossawa v. Israel Broadcasting Authority petition section 13 (on file with author)

them one in Arabic and one in Russian. Such a channel in Russian started to broadcast in 2002 but no channel in Arabic has been established to date[21].

The field of *education* is usually considered to be the one in which language-related policies regarding Arabic are broadly implemented. This is partially true. Indeed there has been an in-practice policy ever since the establishment of the state that conducts both primary and secondary state education in Arabic. For many, the right to Mother-Tongue-Medium education is a non-trivial privilege and some even view it as the most crucial element in minorities' cultural survival (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). Spolsky and Shohamy (1999) characterize the policy of using Arabic as the language of instruction in Arab schools as a 'significant and rare status marker' of the Arabic language in Israel (p. 117). Yet, it should also be noted that the Arab educational system does not enjoy full autonomy, which is expressed mainly in terms of state control over curricula and staff employment (Al-Hag, 1995).

Two additional issues should be mentioned with regard to education – *higher education* in Arabic and *teaching of Arabic in Jewish schools*. At the moment, there are four Arab institutions for higher education, which are accredited by The Council for Higher Education (CHE). All four are teacher training colleges[22] and they are 'Arab' in terms of the students attending the college but not with regard to language of instruction. In an inquiry carried out on September 2007, I found that in all four institutions a certain number of courses are taught in Hebrew and there is no de jure institutional policy of Arabic language instruction.

At present, no *Arab university* exists in Israel. This demonstrates very clearly the extensive political dynamics involved in policies towards Arabic. The idea of establishing an Arab university has been put forward by various Arab public figures ever since the 1970s without any success. It was only in the 1990s that such a proposal started to be negotiated in more concrete terms. In the mid-1990s, the Municipality of Nazereth and various Arab political figures initiated

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[21] In 2004 the all-Jewish group, 'Ananey Tikshoret', won the tender for the Arabic television channel. Later, the group dropped the tender and now there are attempts within the Arab sector to set up an Arab group to apply for it.

[22] The College of Sakhnin for Teacher Education, The Academic Arab College Of Education, Haifa, Beit Berl Academic Institute for training Arab Teachers, and Al-Qasemi Academic college of education, Baqa el-Garbiah.

a plan to establish an academic institution in Nazereth that would later be developed into a university. According to the plan, the language of instruction would be Arabic in an attempt to 'preserve the Arabic language and culture in Israel' (Abu El-Hija, 2003, p. 81) but would be accessible to all potential candidates, Arabs and Jews alike. This proposal was put forward in the Knesset by MK Mahmid in 1995[23] and the project started to develop. Between the years 1999 and 2001, when the Labor Party headed the government and a left-wing party minister (Yosi Sarid) headed the Ministry of Education, significant progress was made, including concrete actions taken by the CHE. However, between 2001 and 2003, when the right-wing Likud party headed both the government and the Ministry of Education, the CHE was no longer supportive of the plan in its original form and progress was largely frozen. Abu El-Hija's (2003) analysis indicates that the change in government played a major role in these happenings, suggesting also that the change in the CHE's position was affected by the position of the Minister of Education (Livnat), who heads the CHE *ex officio*. In 2005, when Arab organizations called upon the government to implement the CHE's previous commitments regarding the institution in Nazarath, Livnat (still Minister of Education) openly claimed that establishing a university on ethnic or religious grounds is a 'racist' idea and that residents of the Galilee, Arabs and Jews, should attend a college in the Galilee or any other university around the state[24]. In the past couple of years, the Ministry of Education, headed by a Labor Party minister (Prof. Yael Tamir), has renewed its negotiations with the Municipality of Nazareth and other bodies regarding the establishment of the Arab institution, but practical steps have yet to be taken.

Another policy issue related to education is the teaching of Arabic in Jewish schools. As a rule, since the late 1980s, Arabic has been a compulsory subject in Jewish schools. This policy dictates a three-year compulsory program for students in grades 7 to 9 of two to three hours a week[25]. As Spolsky and Shohamy (1999, p. 147) have shown, there is a dramatic drop in the number of students after the compulsory period, and an even more abrupt one for the last two

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[23] Motion for Agenda no. 7784 MK Hashem Mahmid on: Establishment of a University in Nazareth, 12.12.1995

[24] Huri, J. (May 4, 2005) "Livnat: the demand for an Arab university is racist". *Haaretz Online*

[25] See a detailed discussion in Spolsky and Shohamy, 1999 p. 138-152

years of high school (p. 147). It is commonly agreed that the policy of teaching Arabic in Jewish schools is very unsuccessful and ineffective in terms of the skills students acquire in the language. This situation results from a combination of factors, chief among them are the low motivation of students and negative attitudes towards the language by both students and their parents (Kraemer, 1990). Another factor is the frequently changing curriculum, especially with regard to the variety of Arabic being taught – Modern Standard Arabic or the spoken dialect – a reflection of Arabic's diglossic nature[26].

In summary, Arabic's public role in Israel is marginal. Legislation aimed at preserving or promoting its status exists in parallel to a monolingual type of legislation that seeks to strengthen the role of Hebrew. Moreover, pro-Arabic legislation and arrangements are in many cases not put into practice and the authorities' failure to implement pro-Arabic policies is often *not* viewed by the court as a violation of the law. The most prevalent explanation for this phenomenon centers around the issue of 'nationality'.

1.3.3 **Nationality – The Leading Argument**

The link between *language* and *nationality* has been extensively discussed in the sociolinguistic literature in the past half century. Fishman's (1968, 1977) studies in the late 1960s established an essentialist approach according to which language is a major element in an individual's and a group's national identity. Various sociolinguistic case studies focused on the ways in which groups that consider themselves distinct national minorities use language to establish or strengthen their collective identity.

At the same time, national majority groups have been characterized as using the dominant language in an attempt to create national unity within the state – a process that evidently creates tension between majority and minority national groups (see Kotze, 2001 for a summary). In terms of policy decisions, the almost unquestionable link between language and ethnic identity is used to justify the promotion of comprehensive minority language rights:

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[26] See further explanation on p. 29

"Without wishing to endorse a crudely primordialist/essentialist view of language, and while recognizing that the concept 'language' itself is fuzzy, and that linguistic identity interacts and co-articulates with many other factors, particularly those of class and gender, we would risk the generalization that lack of linguistic rights is one of the causal factors in certain conflicts, and linguistic affiliation is a rightful mobilizing factor in conflicts with multiple causes where power and resources are unevenly distributed along linguistic and ethnic lines" (Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995, p. 496)

Over the years, a number of researchers have questioned this position, characterizing language as only a *contingent* factor of ethnic/national identity. Edwards (1994), for example, believes that minority members tend to realize the economic benefits in shifting to the majority language and make their language choices accordingly. This, according to him, makes language only a secondary or surface feature of national identity and thus the advocacy for minority language rights is 'regressive' in terms of the minority's interests and unnecessary in terms of protecting the uniqueness of the group. Postmodern theorists have also rejected the essentialist claim, viewing the construction of identities as a complex, dynamic process which should not be rooted in ethnic, cultural and, by extension, linguistic affiliation (see Pennycook, 2006 for a discussion)[27].

Despite these challenges to the tight link between language and national identity, in the Israeli context, 'nationality' has been the leading argument to date for discussing the tension between Hebrew and Arabic.

Arab citizens in Israel have resided in the territory known as 'Palestine' and became a minority population when the State of Israel was established in 1948, following a political and violent rivalry around competing claims to the land[28]. These events surrounding the founding of the state created two distinct national groups – a Jewish majority and an Arab minority. The ongoing conflict between these two nationalities is claimed to be largely reflected through language, as the following studies indicate. Israel was established as a 'Jewish state' and the

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[27] See also Le Page & Tabouret-Keller, 1985; Myhill, 2003 for other non-essentialist approaches to the relation between mother tongue and national identity.

[28] For a detailed discussion on historical and political happenings relating to Arabs' becoming a minority population in the State of Israel see *inter alia* Ghanem, 2001; Morris, 1987; Rouhana & Ghanem, 1998

role of Hebrew as a unifying character of a Jewish-Zionist national identity was openly and actively promoted from its earliest days (Harshav, 1993; Kuzar, 1999, 2001). Hebrew's actual strength is generally described as deriving not from its legal status but rather from its function as a national symbol (Kremtzer, 1990 among others). Suleiman (2004), describes the relation between Hebrew and Arabic in Israel as 'linguistic conflict', where language is used as a 'loaded weapon' (p. 218). He believes that the opposition of members of the Hebrew Language Committee (forerunner of the Hebrew Language Academy) to borrowing lexical items from Arabic (p. 140) was powerful in shaping negative perceptions of the Arabic language and its users. Ben Rafael's (1994) interviews with Arab citizens in Israel indicate that despite general proficiency of Arabs in Hebrew, the need to retain Arabic as a symbol of national identity is what has impeded the process of shifting to Hebrew dominance.

Shohamy and Donitsa-Schmidt (1998) showed how negative attitudes of Israeli Jews towards peace in the Middle East were correlated with negative stereotypes of Arabic and low motivation to study the language. Lefkowitz (in Sulieman, 2004, p. 143) acknowledges one exception to the general tendency of the low motivation of Jews to study Arabic – a security-driven motivation. According to him, a strong interest in Arabic in the Israeli army and intelligence services is the main source of motivation for many Israeli Jews to learn the Arabic language. Similarly, researchers who have looked at the visibility of Arabic on public and private signs in various geographic areas in Israel have also used the national-political conflict to explain Arabic's scant presence in public spheres in general and in Jewish environments in particular (Ben-Rafael, Shohamy, Amara, & Trumper-Hecht, 2006b).

A recent analysis of the existing dissonance between Arabic's de jure and actual status was carried out by Saban and Amara (2004). The writers concluded that the ability of the legal system in Israel to create a fundamental change is very limited. They claim that such a change is dependent largely on a "political culture that is committed to (or at least tolerant of) bi-nationalism" (p. 38), a characteristic they were unable to attribute to Israeli society.

The tension between the collective identities of the two national groups in Israel is thus the major element used to explain the marginal public position of Arabic and to predict a non-optimistic scenario regarding the possibility of change.

1.4 Study's Purpose and Motivations

In the current study, I examine the positions and perspectives that arise when the possibility of extending Arabic's de facto role in Israel is proposed. This is done on two levels – among public figures and decision-makers and among the 'general public' to whom the policies are addressed.

A number of recent developments in Israel's public life have brought the issue of Arabic's role in Israel into the public discourse in a way that elucidates the traditional discourse and introduces additional concepts. Two developments are of particular relevance to the current discussion.

One was the breach of the 'tacit agreement' regarding the lack of enforcement concerning Arabic's de jure status. Later in the study, Arab political personas, as well as social institutions in the Arab sector will be evaluated, especially in light of their demands to expand the use of Arabic in different public spheres. The demands concern the use of Arabic in establishments such as the courts, official state correspondence and street signs. Courts and other official institutions to which the demands have been addressed present different responses to the legitimacy of these demands – some accept the official status of the Arabic language as a legitimate argument and some oppose it. In any case, the following status quo has been violated: the state does not implement the official status of Arabic and the Arab sector does not demand its implementation. Personas in the Israeli-Jewish public understood that a reaction that only targets specific language-related demands is not enough. A more general statement regarding the place of Arabic in the Israeli public is a necessary reaction to these claims. Indeed, in the following chapters it will be shown that the reactions came, among other things, in a series of bills. At the center of these is the official status of Arabic.

A second development was connected to steps towards the formulation of a constitution for Israel. Although the Knesset was ordered to act on the drafting of a constitution in Israel as

early as 1950, only the 16th Knesset, which started its term in 2003, has started to take concrete action in this direction. The question of the relationship between the Jewish majority and the Arab minority has arisen once more, carrying within it the issue of the status of the Arabic language. The discussions regarding the desirable formula of the constitution provoked many reactions and resulted in the formulation of several suggestions for a constitution by independent organizations in the Israeli public. Three organizations (IDI -The Israel Democracy Institute, IRAC - The Israel Religious Action Center and the Institute for Zionist Strategy) have suggested three different alternatives that carry within them three different outlooks towards languages in Israel. While some of the assemblies that formulated these proposals included Arab delegates, the Arab sector in general did not view these suggestions as documents that truthfully represent its stand, and acted to create independent documents, which were formed almost exclusively by Arab personas.

In the years 2006-7 no less than *four position papers* were published by organizations in the Arab sector and were generally labeled '*The Vision Documents*'. Before I briefly present them it is important to note that the totality of associations in which these documents were created and to which they were addressed, is broader than the one presented here. In other words, they all treat the processes of creating a constitution in Israel and some are distinctly built as alternative proposals, yet this is only one of the elements that enabled their creation. It is impossible, within the limits of this discussion, to present the comprehensive meanings of these documents, and in my argument I will focus only on the way in which they address the issue of the desirable status of Arabic. It should only be stated that they are doubtless an important milestone of the relationship between the Jewish and Arab public in Israel, as they are one of the most definite and concrete attempts by the Arab public to openly present a broader outlook on its future in the State of Israel[29].

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[29] Academic conferences dealing with the meanings and implications of the 'future vision papers' were held at Tel-Aviv University on December, 4 2007 by the Konrad Adenauer Program and the Walter-Libach Institute and at Haifa University on December 13-14, 2007 by the School of Political Science. See also the virtual roundtable on Adalah's constitution in Adalah (2007).

The representative document among the four is the one published by the National Committee for the Heads of the Arab Local Authorities in Israel[30] called The Future Vision of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel.[31] This document analyzes the condition of Arabs in Israel today. It also presents the detailed functional plans regarding the manner in which they should be part of Israeli society in the future. The three additional documents were published by social or research organizations in the Arab sector, each with a slightly different orientation.

Adalah (the Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel) published a document called The Democratic Constitution.[32] This legal document, which is phrased as a draft constitution proposal to Israel, came explicitly as a reaction to such proposals in the Jewish sector, which were viewed by the organization as "distinguished by their lack of conformity to democratic principles."[33] Another document, The Haifa Declaration was formed under the auspices of Mada-al-Carmel (The Arab Center for Applied Social Research) and is more declarative than functional.[34] The central emphasis of the document is on the presentation of 'the Palestinian narrative,' meaning the point of view of the Arabs in Israel on historical occurrences surrounding the founding of Israel. Their wish is that this point of view be internalized for Israel's public life in the future. Lastly, the document that was published by Mossawa Center for Arab Citizens in Israel, was called An Equal Constitution For All?[35] This position paper critically analyzes the process towards the creation of a constitution in Israel and presents its stand

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[30] The chairman of this body, who initiated this 'vision document' project, Mr. Shawqi Khateeb is also the chairman of the High Follow-up Committee for the Arabs in Israel. The follow-up committee is an independent political organization of Arabs in Israel that coordinates the political actions of various bodies in the Arab sector.

[31] The document is available on the Knesset official website:

http://www.knesset.gov.il/committees/heb/material/data/H26-12-2006_10-30-37_heb.pdf

(last visited March 2008). (Hereafter 'the High follow-up committee's document').

[32] The document is available on Adalah's website www.adalah.org (last visited March 2008). (Hereafter 'Adalah's constitution').

[33] Idem. p. 3

[34] The document is available on Mada's website www.mada-research.org (last visited March 2008). (Hereafter 'Haifa declaration').

[35] The document is available on Mosswa's website www.mossawacenter.org (last visited March 2008). (Hereafter 'Mossawa's position paper').

concerning the manner in which the constitution should treat issues related to the Arab minority.

A detailed discussion of the positions involved in the breaking of the status quo regarding the status of Arabic and the exact constitutional proposals regarding languages is presented later on in the study in chapter 5. The point I wish to make here is that these developments paved the way for a new examination of the ways in which the public role of Arabic is perceived. More specifically, I wish to find out which policies are viewed as legitimate and which are de-legitimized and on what grounds. What are the main notions that best characterize the desired role of Arabic? What are the types of policy models that follow from these notions and what do they mean in terms of policy implementation?

I chose to observe these questions on two levels – that of the decision-makers and public figures and that of 'the general public'. This choice dictated the integration of two methodologies-- qualitative and quantitative-- which attempt to draw an informative picture both in terms of a sizeable target population and in terms of how intensely the questions can be investigated. As will be described in the methodology chapter (chapter 2), the qualitative data sources include two types – focus groups and documents. The quantitative inquiry is in the form of a survey.

The structure of the study is as follows:

Chapter 2 describes the methodology of the study. I explain the decision to integrate the two types of methodologies and how this integration is relevant to the aims of the study. The three data sources (focus groups, documents and a survey) are described, and the framework used for the analysis and integration of findings is presented.

Chapters 3 and 4 present the findings of the focus group sessions. Each of these chapters discusses one central theme that emerged from the analysis of the four focus group sessions. Chapter 3 focuses on the notion of 'indigenousness'. That is, the ways in which the characterization of Arab citizens in Israel as a 'native' / 'homeland' / indigenous community ('the indigenous argument') interacts with arguments supporting or opposing language policies towards Arabic. The focus of Chapter 4 is on the tension between the 'functional' and 'symbolic'

goals of language policies. I show how this distinction is helpful in revealing a complex mechanism that legitimizes and de-legitimizes Arabic language policies within the current Israeli context.

Chapter 5 deals with the issue of 'officiality'. It analyses the question of Arabic's official status as reflected in the Israeli decision-makers' discourse. The analysis centers on two public arenas – the Knesset and the courts, revealing the different perspectives on what 'official status' means (or should mean) when applied to Arabic in Israel.

Chapter 6 presents the findings of the quantitative data from a questionnaire study. This survey data examined the attitudes of 466 respondents to a range of Arabic language policies. The discussion centers on three main findings: a pattern of hierarchy among language policy domains; a multilingual vs. a Hebrew-Arabic bilingual policy; and the tension between the linguistic minority-majority dichotomy (native Hebrew speakers vs. native Arabic and Russian speakers) and the ethnic (Jews vs. Arabs) division.

Chapter 7 is an integration of the three data sources. In this chapter, I unify the notions that arose in the previous chapters in order to create general models that characterize the interaction between Hebrew and Arabic in Israel. The models are viewed in light of the policy models they dictate and the chances of their being implemented.

2. METHODOLOGY

As noted in the introduction, the aim of this study is to examine perceptions and positions regarding a change in policies towards Arabic in Israel. The goal is to create general models for the interaction between Hebrew and Arabic on a societal level. To achieve this goal, four methodological issues were invoked:

- The policy options ('scenarios') to be examined
- The target population
- Types of data sources
- Method of analysis

2.1 Preliminary study

The first step was to locate a limited number of public spheres in which policies towards Arabic could be examined. This was done in a preliminary study that examined dozens of organizations, projects and initiatives dealing primarily, or among other things, with extending the public role of Arabic in Israel. These organizations and projects included non-profit organizations, legal and educational centers and philanthropic funds-- within both the Arab and the Jewish sectors. This study lasted about a year and included observations, interviews and the reading of relevant material.

The language-related activities of the institutions examined were found to be centered on the following four goals:

- Facilitating Arabic speakers' access to language-related services provided by state authorities
- Making Arabic more visible on Israeli public television
- Creating Hebrew-Arabic bilingual educational environments
- Promoting Arabic studies among Jewish Israelis

Based on the above goals, it was decided to center the policy scenarios used in the study on the following three 'policy spheres'. These spheres were believed to reflect policy issues that are relevant to the current situation of Arabic in Israel:

- The use of Arabic in government services
- The use of Arabic on Israeli public television
- Arabic studies in Jewish (state) schools

2.2 **Participants**

Our basic assumption was that a study dealing with perceptions and positions towards language policies should examine the two parties involved – the ones who create policies (policy makers and those who strongly influence them) and the ones who are supposed to act upon them, that is, the 'general public'. It was also clear that the subjects selected to inform us about attitudes and perceptions of 'the general public' would have to include speakers of the two main populations – Jews and Arabs, including as much as possible, additional linguistic, religious and ethnic divisions.

2.3 **Data Sources**

In an attempt to draw as rich a picture as possible, it was decided to integrate two types of methodologies: quantitative and qualitative. The quantitative data source is in the form of a survey and the qualitative ones are based on two sources – focus groups data and documentation. The survey enables the examination of a large group of respondents while the focus groups are much more limited in the number of participants they include. On the other hand, focus groups enable a closer and more in-depth examination of participants' positions on the issues at stake while surveys are more limited in this respect. Attitudes, opinions and positions raised by a participant in a focus group can be clarified and exemplified at length or challenged by other participants, a situation which is not possible for survey respondents. Hence, it is believed that the integration of these two sources would reflect 'layman positions' in a more accurate way.

2.3.1 **Focus Groups**

Focus groups, at the broadest possible level, are collective conversations or group interviews in which participants are asked about their opinions on products, ideas, concepts, social phenomena etc. Over the past century, focus groups have been used for a wide range of purposes (originally in military intelligence and market research) and entered the field of social sciences towards the second half of the 20th century. By now, focus groups have been established as an important instrument in qualitative research, offering unique insights into the possibilities of critical inquiry of social and political phenomena (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2000; Madriz, 2000), including language-related ones (Wodak, 2006).

In terms of the procedural issues (i.e., selecting focus group members and facilitating focus group discussions), the following points should be mentioned. According to Morgan (1998), the average number of focus groups in social science studies ranges between three and five. Krueger and Casey (2000) report a similar number (three to four groups) and suggest implementing the 'theoretical saturation' principle of Glaser and Strauss (1967), according to which collection of data is stopped at the point at which findings begin to repeat themselves and no new theoretical insights are obtained. Regarding the number of participants in a focus group, Morgan (1998) reports an average of six to eight participants in groups gathered for non-commercial purposes, ranging from four participants (Kitzinger, 1995) up to fifteen (Goss & Leinbach, 1996). Regarding studies that aim to explore the attitudes of participants from different ethnic groups, there is no consensus among researchers as to whether groups should be ethnically homogenous or mixed. Some believe researchers should avoid mixing people "who may feel they have different levels of expertise or power related to the issue" (Krueger & Casey, 2000, p. 27) while others claim it is a positive element of the 'dialogic' dynamics of the discussion.

Make-up of the Study Focus Groups

The study included four focus groups with the following characteristics: 'Jewish secular', 'Jewish religious', a mixed Jewish-Arab group and an Arab group. The Arab group included participants

of the three religious groups (Muslim, Christian and Druze). All participants were Israeli university or college students. The number of participants in each group ranged between four and fourteen. All Jewish participants were native speakers of Hebrew and all Arab participants were native speakers of Arabic. Most of the participants were somewhat familiar with their co-participants in the group from previous interactions in the academic institution where they were studying. In total, 32 participants formed the four groups, 21 Jews and 11 Arabs; 22 women and 10 men.

The sessions

Each group met once for a 90-minute session. Sessions took place on four different occasions between January of 2006 and December of 2006. The sessions were held in the university or college where the participants were studying (Bar Ilan University, located in the center of the state and the Western Galilee College in northern Israel). Prior to the session, the participants were given a very general description. They were told that the discussion would deal with 'languages in Israel'. No previous knowledge or preparation was requested. The session of all-Arab participants was held in Arabic. The session was led by a professional moderator, a native speaker of Arabic who had several orientation meetings with the writer of this study. The three other sessions were carried out in Hebrew by the writer of this study, a native speaker of Hebrew and the graduate of an academic course in group dynamics.

Focus material

Similar to the survey, the session questions were based on the list of policy scenarios identified in the preliminary study (see 2.1 above). The participants were asked to state their opinion regarding each of the scenarios (extending the role of Arabic in government services, on public television and in Jewish schools). The questions were phrased as generally as possible, enabling the participants to refer to the topic from whichever perspective they chose. The role of the moderator was limited to presenting the questions, verifying terminology, and facilitating the discussion in the most natural way possible.

Transcription

All sessions were recorded on a digital recorder and fully transcribed. The transcribers were native speakers of the language in which the session was held in (Hebrew or Arabic). Transcription conventions were based on Psathas and Anderson (1990). The Arabic transcript was translated into Hebrew twice by professional translators and the two translated versions were cross-validated. The analysis of the Arabic transcript was based on the Hebrew version.

2.3.2 Documents

Documents were used to analyze the positions and perspectives in policy-making processes, including those of policy makers themselves as well as other influentials involved such as public figures, elite or pressure groups from the Jewish and Arab sector. Policy-making processes were analyzed with one specific issue in mind: the question of the official status of Arabic as reflected in two arenas – the courts and the Knesset. The documents observed were selected accordingly to represent:

- The official discourse of the majority group. Documents include: court rulings, respondents' responses to the court (in cases in which respondents were official bodies such as government ministries, municipalities etc.), bills proposed by Jewish Knesset Members, minutes of the Knesset plenary sessions and Knesset committee meetings.

- The official discourse of the Arab sector. Documents include: petitions to the court by Arab organizations, position papers of Arab groups and organizations, bills proposed by Arab Knesset Members and minutes of Knesset plenary sessions involving Arab Knesset Members.

2.3.3 Survey

A survey was developed to explore respondents' perceptions about the idea of extending the role of Arabic in Israel in several domains. The survey was developed specifically for this study. In terms of content, the items were based on the list of 'policy scenarios' developed in the preliminary study (see 2.1 above). The formation of the items was motivated by existing surveys in the sociolinguistic literature (language use surveys: Broeder, Extra & Maartens, 1998; policy

surveys: Fishman, Cooper & Ma, 1971, chap. 5,7; Spolsky & Cooper, 1991 p. 9-17; Swan & Lewis, 1990; socio-psychological survey: Bourhis, Giles & Rosenthal, 1981; surveys of attitudes towards Arabic in Israel: Kraemer, 1990; Shohamy & Donitsa-Schmidt, 1998; sociological survey – Russian Jews in Israel: Ben-Rafael et al., 2006a). The survey included 466 Israeli adults (average age 24.4 years), divided into five sub-groups along linguistic, ethnic and religious lines (see chapter 6 for a description of sample and instrument).

2.4 **Data Analyses and Interpretation**

The general analytic framework of the study was inspired by 'Grounded Theory' (GT). GT is an analysis style that encourages social scientists to 'ground' their theoretical work in data, emphasizing the need for grasping participants' viewpoints in order to understand social phenomena such as interaction, process, and change. In Glaser's (1998) words, GT is "[T]he systematic generation of theory from data acquired by a rigorous research method" (p. 3). The notion of GT originated in Glaser and Strauss's (1965) influential study *Awareness of Dying* and later developed as a conceptual framework in their 1967 book *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*[36].

GT, as a framework for analyzing and interpreting data, aims to identify the theoretical concepts which lie at the basis of the events examined. The final goal is to reach a limited number of theoretical principles (called 'core categories') out of a longer list of concepts that evolve during the process of data assessment. In practice, the researcher starts by scanning the data and locating repetitions in the data (themes, topics, 'titles') in order to create preliminary categories. Labeling is first done in an intuitive way and becomes more fine-tuned as larger bits

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[36] Later, GT was divided into two main versions – the 'Glaser version' (Glaser 1978, 1998, 2005) and 'Strauss and Corbin's version' (Strauss 1987; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1997. See Glaser, 1998 chap.3 for a discussion on 'The Rhetorical Wrestle'). Two main differences between the versions, which have dictated my choice of the former one, can be described as follows. In terms of methodological orientation – beginning in the 1980s, Strauss clearly identified his GT version as a 'qualitative methodology', a move from which Glaser refrained, allowing for the inclusion of quantitative data sources as well. Second, Strauss and Corbin's version includes a coding procedure of three distinct stages ('open', 'axial', and 'selective') while Glaser's 'Theoretical Coding' is not further divided. I found Strauss and Corbin's coding procedure unnecessarily lengthy for my purposes. For these two reasons, I follow Glaser's version. Hence, any references to the term GT from this point would relate to this 'type' of GT.

of data are examined. This 'Theoretical Coding' procedure repeats itself again and again, with new categories being added and old ones being rephrased or removed each time. The list of categories is gradually reduced until it includes a limited number of theoretical notions that the researcher finds most relevant to the issues being studied ('core categories'). At the end of the process, the core categories are tied together in a general model that hopefully explains the issues at stake.

An analysis along these lines was adopted in the current study as a way of integrating the different data sources and reaching an understanding of what the data 'mean'. Each data source was first analyzed separately. The quantitative data (the survey results) were statistically analyzed and generalizations were obtained. Due to their different nature, the two qualitative data sources (focus group transcripts and documents) were coded separately but in the same fashion. That is, the transcripts were referred to as one collection of texts and the documents as a second collection. The 'theoretical coding' was set up in a traditional way, with the identification of relevant topics and themes. It gradually became apparent that the most informative way to code the data would be according to 'lines of argumentation' that characterize the positions of participants in the focus groups or the public figures represented in the documents regarding the policies examined[37]. The focus group data yielded two main theoretical concepts – Indigenousness and Functionality – and the documents revealed four distinct patterns of 'Officiality'. These three notions, along with the generalizations obtained from the survey's findings, were integrated into 'Societal Bilingual Models', characterizing possible interactions between policy implementation considerations for Hebrew and Arabic.

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[37] In the process of analysis, data and preliminary findings of the study were discussed in a three-day Grounded Theory workshop led by Dr. Glaser (April 24-26, 2007) for researchers who are conducting Grounded Theory-style studies in several sociological fields. In the workshop, the current study's findings were observed and the continuation of analysis was outlined.

3. ARABIC LANGUAGE POLICIES IN ISRAEL AND THE NOTION OF INDIGENOUSNESS

The aim of this chapter is to explore the notion of 'indigenousness' within the context of Arabic language policies in Israel, as it was revealed in the study's focus group sessions.

The term 'indigenousness' in this context ties together all of the discursive events in which participants used arguments that referred to the following: the fact that Israeli Arabs are a *native* population in this area; and/or the fact that they existed as a distinct community on the borders of what is now Israel prior to the establishment of the state in 1948; and/or that they are a '*homeland*' minority in Israel. For the purposes of this discussion, the terms 'indigenous' and 'indigenousness' are compatible with the terms 'native/s' and 'homeland minorities'.

The structure of the chapter is as follows: I start by introducing the distinction between two types of linguistic minorities – 'national' and 'indigenous' minorities, focusing on the relevance of this distinction to Arab citizens in Israel. Next, an additional category is incorporated – that of immigrant groups, highlighting the relationship between this 'minority type' and the current Israeli linguistic context. I then move to discuss the ways in which 'indigenousness' was expressed in the focus group sessions in relation to language policies towards Arabic in Israel. I conclude with two main 'summary options,' characterizing the interaction between 'indigenousness' and language policy decisions.

3.1 National Minorities, Stateless Nations and Indigenous Minorities

Based on traditional typologies of ethnic minorities, the category of 'national minority' mostly refers to a politically subordinate group of people who have been, often involuntarily, incorporated into a larger state. These groups see themselves as distinct 'nations' based on a shared 'national identity' defined as the "collective political consciousness or the will to achieve an independent state" (Smith 1981, p. 72). National minorities, also known as 'stateless nations,' are usually settled for generations in a territory they view as their homeland. In most cases, the right to self-determination is a key issue. Typical examples include the Catalonians in Spain, the Scots in Britain and the Quebecois in Canada. Israeli Arabs are characteristic of this

category and this is indeed the term most commonly used in the Israeli 'discourse of rights' when referring to Israeli Arabs in general and to language-related rights in particular (see chapter 1, 1.3.3).

The category of '*indigenous minorities*' does not have a universal definition but is used to describe native peoples who inhabit a certain territory to which they are historically connected. Formal definitions provided by international bodies (such as the UN) characterize them as small in number and concentrated in a specific geographical area. They are believed to practice a 'traditional' or 'non-modern' way of life and speak a language that is, in many cases, under threat of extinction as a result of contact with the majority language (WGIP, 2001)[38]. Examples are the Native Americans, the Sami in Scandinavia and the Inuit in Canada.

It is very clear that most of these characteristics of 'indigenous minorities' are not applicable to Israeli Arabs. Israeli Arabs comprise about one-fifth of the population in Israel. It cannot be said that they are spread across the entire state, but they do populate three distinct geographical areas and a number of Jewish-Arab 'mixed cities' – certainly not one limited territory. Arabic, their language, is by no means a language under threat of extinction. It is the language of the Arab world, which numbers around 180 million native speakers. The literary Arabic dialect is shared by all Arab nations[39], no matter what vernacular is used in a specific country or region, and it is a major and widespread language among world languages – fifth in terms of native speakers. Palestinian Arabic is the dialect spoken by Israeli Arabs[40]. Despite borrowings from Hebrew words and structures in the language of Israeli Arabs (Amara, 1995), Hebrew and

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[38] United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations (WGIP) (2001) Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, United Nations Office at Geneva.

[39] The major distinction in Arabic varieties is between the *literary*/written variety and the *vernaculars*. The literary variety is comprised of Classical Arabic of the Quran and the classical literary periods, and Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) developed from it. MSA is the shared form used today in the media and Arabic literature. The vernaculars are the spoken Arabic dialects, unique to each country, region and sometimes even a town or a village (Spolsky & Shohamy, 1999, p. 116-123).

[40] It is in fact the general name for a few urban and village dialects spoken by Arabs in Israel (Spolsky & Shohamy, 1999, p. 122). The language of Israeli Arabs has been characterized as 'Diglossic' (Amara, 1988). The term Diglossia, first coined by Ferguson (1959) refers to cases where two distinct and named varieties of a related language (in this case, Classical Arabic and the local Palestinian dialect) are divided into higher (public, written etc.) and lower functions (home, community etc.).

Palestinian Arabic are not mutually intelligible languages. As a rule, Palestinian Arabic is used as the first language of Israeli Arabs - residents of Arab towns and villages as well as mixed cities. While the spoken Palestinian dialect is sometimes viewed as being in 'competition' with Hebrew for Arabs living in mixed Jewish-Arab neighborhoods (Spolsky & Shohamy, 1999, p. 123), no one predicts that the spoken dialect will cease to exist.

In this chapter, I would like to focus on the indigenous element in relation to how Arabic language policies are perceived by Israeli Jews and Arabs and *not* to portray Israeli Arabs as 'indigenous peoples' in the way described above.

The fact that 'indigenousness' is a relevant characteristic of national minorities is nothing new. In some typologies, national minorities and indigenous peoples are grouped under the general category of '<u>homeland minorities</u>', emphasizing the fact that both types of groups have been settled for centuries in a territory they view as their homeland[41]. Kymlicka (2001), for example, discusses the role these groups play in the state-formation process as a distinguishing criterion. He notes that while stateless nations were "contenders but losers in the process of European state-formation…, indigenous peoples were entirely isolated from that process" (p. 122). Stateless nations wanted to form their own states but lost the political struggle, while indigenous peoples were outside of this system. However, despite this difference, the 'national component' is strong enough for Kymlicka to unite both these groups under the definition of 'national minorities': "While having certain unique characteristics, it seems to me that indigenous peoples typically share the tendency … to resist state nation-building policies, and to fight instead for some form of territorial self-government…In this respect, indigenous peoples may raise many of the same issues as stateless nations" (p. 120). Anaya (1996) too claims that these 'national groups or peoples' have the same *substantive* rights to 'self determination' (p. 126). Including indigenous peoples under the umbrella of 'national minorities' (or emphasizing the 'national element' in their characterization) may be interpreted from Anaya's arguments as

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[41] For some, historical attachment to a territory may be either 'real' or 'mythical' (Smith 1999, p. 152-7). The interpretation given in Yiftachel (1992) and Yiftachel & Ganham (2005) on this matter is that both Arabs and Jews in Israel view themselves as homeland communities of the territory – Arabs due to actual residency in past generations and Jews on the basis of Biblical oaths about the 'Promised Land of Israel'.

an empowering mechanism for indigenous peoples, who are more vulnerable to violations of their rights to self-determination. 'Traditional' national minorities or stateless nations are in a better position in this sense – their claims for self-determination are in general more legitimately viewed by the international community. As a result, indigenous peoples may benefit from being included in the 'national minority' category in their struggle for social and political rights.

In this chapter, I have a different perspective. I will try to show what happens when the indigenous element is put at the center of the discussion regarding a 'typical' national minority. In particular, I wish to demonstrate what the 'indigenous arguments' used by the participants add to the perpetual debates regarding the place of Arabic and its speakers within the Israeli context.

It is notable that referring to Israeli Arabs primarily by the term 'indigenous' or 'homeland' minority[42] (as opposed to 'national minority') is a new phenomenon in the Israeli discourse, which is becoming more and more prevalent. While in the past the term 'national' was almost exclusive, nowadays, there is a growing tendency among Arab organizations and political figures to highlight the 'indigenous'/'homeland' element when characterizing their sector. One example is The Democratic Constitution published in March 2007 by Adalah, the Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel (see chapter 1, 1.4) for details about the Arabs' 'future vision' documents). One of the opening paragraphs of the document states the following:

> *"Since their [Israeli Arabs'] political status has been changed against their will, making them a minority in their homeland; since they have not relinquished their national identity and since the rights of a homeland minority must include inter alia, those rights which should have been preserved and developed as much as possible had they not*

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[42] The parallel use of the terms is an attempt to deal with the Hebrew/English terms. In Hebrew, 'indigenous minority' (MIUT YELIDI) and 'homeland minority' (MIUT MOLEDET) are used equivocally, especially by Arabs referring to their sector. It could be related to the fact that both terms in Hebrew originate from the same lexical root Y.L.D 'to be born'. An additional term to discuss this issue was used by Jamal (2004) MIUT MEKORI 'original minority'.

become a minority in their homeland, <u>thus, the legal starting point of this constitutional proposal is: The Arab citizens in the State of Israel are a homeland minority.</u>"[43]

Again, this is *not* to say that the territorial argument has not been used in the past. The 'who was here first' dispute between Israeli Jews and Arabs is at least as old as the state and has been brought up by both groups repeatedly in the public discourse. What is new is the shift from 'indigenousness/homeland' as one characteristic among many to its becoming the *defining* element.

3.2 **Immigrant Minorities**

An additional category of ethnic minorities that needs to be added to this discussion is that of immigrants. The most relevant issue to our discussion is whether immigrants - newcomers to a state - should be treated as a distinct ethnolinguistic group with regard to language policies or whether a language policy should apply to all linguistic minorities in the same way, whether they are newcomers to the state or minorities that have been residing in the region for generations. The traditional models of language policies regarding the ethnolinguistic makeup of a state do not refer to this distinction and seem to take the former position. Lambert's (1999) Scaffolding for Language Policy divides states into *Homogeneous, Dyadic* and *Mosaic*, based on the number of ethnolinguistic groups comprising the state. However, as documented by the examples in table 1.1 below, the 'type' of ethnolinguistic group (immigrant community or homeland group) does not serve as a distinctive feature. Spolsky & Shohamy (1999), based on Fishman's (1969) 'Great Tradition' component, focus on the state's general linguistic ideology as the defining criterion. Language policies in this model are characterized as 'monolingual', 'bi-lingual' or 'multilingual' according to the state's tendency to promote languages other than the majority language. Here, we do not find a reference to the way states treat (or should treat) linguistic minorities of different types.

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[43] Adalah's Constitution footnote 32 at 1(4), emphasis added. Similar statements have been made in the other 'Vision papers'. In 'the High Follow-up Committee's paper' the writers demand that the State of Israel 'recognize the Palestinian Arabs in Israel as an indigenous national minority' (footnote 31 at 6). In the 'Haifa Declaration' too, 'homeland minority' is the principal term used to describe Israeli Arabs throughout the text (footnote 34 at p. 14, 15, 16 and 17).

Table 1.1 - Defining Criteria for Language Policies

Fishman (1969) / Spolsky & Shohamy (1999)	Lambert (1999)
Monolingual ideology (or Single Great Tradition) New Zealand, Israel (↓)[44]	Homogeneous Japan, Russia, the United States
Bi-or tri-lingual ideology Ireland, Spain	Dyadic (or triadic) Switzerland, Belgium, Fiji, Canada
Multilingual ideology	Mosaic Nigeria, India, Papua New Guinea

In his 1995 book, *Multicultural Citizenship,* political philosopher Will Kymlicka proposed a theory that advocates 'group differentiated rights for national minorities'. The theory is based on the distinction between 'national minorities' (including both 'stateless nations' and 'indigenous peoples') and immigrant groups. A gradual attrition in the languages of immigrant groups is viewed as an inevitable phenomenon that is legitimate in the 'state nation-building' process. However, this is not relevant for the languages of national minorities since this nation-building process does not apply to them and should not be used to justify the erosion in the status of their languages. National minorities should have the opportunity to maintain their distinct cultures, and it is the government's responsibility to ensure that their language is not absent from the public sphere. Thus, Kymlicka's theory is based on two main justifications: a sociological one regarding the unique 'societal culture' national minorities are entitled to preserve, and a moral justification according to which immigrants' choice to leave their homeland is an act that should result in renunciation of their collective rights, including those related to language.

Kymlicka's proposal does not occupy much of the general Language Policy and Planning (LPP) and Language Rights (LR) literature, but some reactions can be found - both positive and

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[44] The arrow indicates Israel's tendency towards 'bi-lingual ideology'

negative. Stephan May (2001) follows Kymlicka's distinction between the two types of minorities, arguing too that only national minorities and indigenous peoples can demand rights concerning the formal inclusion of their languages in the civic realm. At the same time, he stresses that immigrant minorities should be entitled to active linguistic protection by the state, at the very least in the private domain. Adopting one of the key tenets from international law, he claims that where numbers warrant it, immigrant minority groups should enjoy these rights in the public domain as well. In May's view, the distinction between the two types of minorities is a useful tool for what he calls 'ethnolinguistic democracy', which is neither 'ethnolinguistic equality' for all such groups nor is it an attempt to create equality with dominant, majority languages.

Skutnabb-Kangas (2000), a strong advocate of inclusive language rights for all linguistic minorities[45], is very critical of this distinction. In her view, it has the potential to restrict the language entitlements of ethnic groups, such as the right to mother-tongue-medium education, which she finds crucial. Beyond that, Skutnabb-Kangas believes that the kind of discourse that supports immigrants' integration into the dominant society by adopting the majority language (Kymlicka & Patten, 2003, p. 3-12) is extremely problematic. She sees it as a dangerous obstacle to real 'Linguistic Diversity' and "part of the assimilationist myths leading to linguistic and cultural genocide instead of Linguistic Human Rights" (2006, p. 280).

In the Israeli context, the distinction between the two types of linguistic minorities is relatively new and has been discussed from legal and political perspectives rather than a sociolinguistic one. Former Chief Justice Aharon Barak uses a claim based on this distinction in the Adalah Supreme Court case against the Municipalities of Tel Aviv - Jaffa[46]. In its petition to the Supreme Court, Adalah demanded the use of Arabic on signs in mixed cities. Justice Barak ruled in favor of the petitioners' request by claiming that Arabic is the language of a minority that has been living in the land for centuries. Thus, it should be treated differently from other minority languages in Israel, such as those of immigrant groups. In his words:

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[45] See Chapter 1, 1.2

[46] H.C. 4112/99, Adalah, v. The Municipalities of Tel Aviv-Jaffa

"What distinguishes the Arabic language, and why is its status different from that of several other languages—in addition to Hebrew—that Israelis speak? Does our approach not imply that residents of different towns in which there are minority groups of speakers of various languages, will now be able to demand that the signs in their towns will be in their language as well? My response is negative, since none of those languages are the same as Arabic. […] Arabic is the language of the largest minority in Israel, which has been living here from time immemorial. This is a language that is linked to cultural, historical, and religious attributes of the Arab minority group in Israel. This is the language of citizens who, notwithstanding the Arab-Israeli conflict, wish to live in Israel as loyal citizens with equal rights, amid respect for their language and culture. The desire to ensure dignified coexistence between the descendants of our forefather Abraham, in mutual tolerance and equality, justifies recognizing the use of the Arabic language in urban signs—in those cities in which there is a substantial Arab minority (6%-19% of the population)—alongside its senior sister, Hebrew. . ."[47]

Saban (2003) presents a view supporting an application of Kymlicka's distinction concerning the Israeli context in a way that gives precedence to Israeli Arabs over Israeli immigrant groups (p. 130-133). Pinto (2006) too discusses Kymlicka's proposal in relation to Israeli Arabs and immigrant groups - mainly the Russian-speaking community, and outlines a number of difficulties which arise when attempting to apply it to the Israeli linguistic reality. Pinto's conclusion is that Israeli Arabs are indeed entitled to a privileged position when making language-related regulations. However, this conclusion is based on 'language as a cultural marker' argument. According to Pinto, Arabic is the Israeli Arabs' core marker of cultural identity whereas the Russian language does not entail the same meaning for the Russian-immigrant community.

Some of these controversial issues concerning the comparison between immigrant and homeland minorities were brought up by the participants in the study's focus groups. Most of the arguments were not as articulately presented as in the scholarly writings and some were expressed in a very intuitive way. Nonetheless, as will be shown below, the sessions managed to create a rich and quite unpredictable 'map of arguments.'

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[47] Idem. 417-8 (Emphasis added)

3.3 **Indigenousness in the Focus Group Data**

In what follows I will describe the discursive events in which the issue of indigenousness was brought up when participants were talking about the need for Arabic language policies in different Israeli public domains. Section 1 presents the three different views held by Arab participants. Section 2 focuses on the comparison between Arabic as the language of an indigenous minority and the languages of immigrant groups. To summarize, I propose three policy options believed to reflect the ways indigenousness is perceived as an element relating to language policy decisions.

The four focus groups will be referred to using the following abbreviations:

- FG-1 refers to Focus Group 1 consisting of secular Jews, native speakers of Hebrew. (Hereafter 'Jewish-Secular')

- FG-2 refers to Focus Group 2 consisting of religious Jews, native speakers of Hebrew. (Hereafter 'Jewish-Religious').

- FG-3 refers to Focus Group 3 consisting of Jews and Arabs, native speakers of Hebrew and Arabic respectively. (Hereafter 'Mixed').

- FG-4 refers to 'Focus group 4' consisting of Arabs (Christians, Muslims and Druze), native speakers of Arabic. (Hereafter 'Arabs').

As noted in chapter 2, the participants were university and college students. The discussions in focus groups 1-3 were held in Hebrew and in focus group 4 in Arabic facilitated by a native speaker of Arabic.

It is important to note that the discursive events discussed here include two types. (1) those events in which the issue of indigenousness was brought up *spontaneously* by the participants. (2) Those which occurred *as a response* to the moderators' question or comment on this issue. It is fair to say that in both cases the participants rarely used the actual terms (e.g., 'indigenous', 'native', 'homeland'). Rather, they employed more general descriptions, such as 'we/they are a minority that has been living here for generations'.

3.3.1 Three Arab Views on the Relationship between Indigenousness and Arabic Language Policies

This section examines how Arab participants view the relevance of the indigenous element to Arabic language policies. The discursive events analyzed revealed the following three positions:

(1) The Moderate View - our indigenous status is not relevant for language policy decisions.

(2) The Intermediate view - our indigenous status should entail Arabic language policies.

(3) The Radical view - our indigenous status outweighs the right of the majority to make policy decisions regarding Arabic.

The intermediate view is the easiest to describe since it formulates the 'indigenous argument' in a way that follows straightforwardly from the introduction. Since the two other positions are made clearer when viewed in relation to the intermediate position, the intermediate view is presented first.

The Intermediate View ('Our indigenous status should entail Arabic language policies')

This position, which sees indigenousness as a justification for demanding services in Arabic, was the prevalent view among the Arab participants who discussed this issue. One typical example is taken from FG-4 ('Arabs'). Early in the discussion, the moderator introduced the question of the desirability of using Arabic in government offices. R. expressed his view that public services in Israel should be available in Arabic, outlining the following argument:

> *We, as a minority who did not arrive in Israel a year or ten years ago,*
> *should have a place in this state and should have our rights in terms of*
> *language (FG-4, 29).*

R. added that this special status, which results from the fact that Arabs were living in Israel before the establishment of the state, should entail not only policies regarding public services in Arabic but also an educational policy requiring the study of Arabic in Jewish schools.

Among the Arab participants in the focus groups, this position is the 'intermediate' one because participants include those who are less supportive of this view and those who are more supportive of the relevance of the indigenous element to language policies. Moreover, this position was usually the starting point to which participants referred when presenting the moderate and the radical views on the issue.

The Moderate View ('Our indigenous status is not relevant for language policy decisions')

In the discussion in FG-4, when the issue of road and street signs was introduced by the moderator, T. made a claim similar to the one described above, saying that signs should be available in Arabic since Arabs are a native population. P. opposed this view, saying that what is relevant is the fact that Jews are now the majority population in Israel and therefore, it makes sense that Hebrew, the majority language, is the language used on signs. T. insisted, asking P. 'what was here [in Israel] 59 years ago?', referring to the situation prior to the establishment of the State of Israel. But P. maintained his view, replying:

> *Give me a break, who cares what was here before? 59 years ago there*
> *was a war (FG-4, 172-180).*

Thus, P. presents a view that refuses to see Arabs' indigenousness as an element which should legitimize demands for language-specific services in Arabic. A similar view was expressed by two other Arab participants. Still in this group (FG-4, 'Arabs'), at one point in the discussion of road signs, an argument was raised regarding the inclusion of the Arabic 'original names' of places on signs. The participants were referring to places currently populated by Jews, which prior to the establishment of Israel were populated by Arabs and carried 'Arab names'[48]. A

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[48] During the 1948 war, about 400 Palestinian villages were occupied by Jews (418 is the exact figure given by Khalidi, 1992). A dozen or so suffered only minor damage. The rest were repopulated by Jews (either by Jewish villages and towns that were their neighbors or by new ones established afterwards on the erstwhile village lands). The Hebrew names of these latter have replaced their Arabic predecessors. Some of these new Hebrew names resemble the Arab ones (e.g., Acca/Acco, Bisan/Beit-She'an) and some are completely distinct (El-Majdal/Ashkelon). This has long been a controversial issue in the Israeli discourse. The 'similar' Hebrew names are viewed by Arabs as "mockingly echoing' the Arab names" Khalidi, 1992, p. xxxii; the names which have been changed completely are seen as an attempt to keep the old villages 'anonymous to the outside world'

number of participants claimed that in such places, signs should state the 'Arabic names' as well as the current 'Hebrew' names. For example, F. mentioned the Jewish town 'Ben Ammi' in the north of Israel, which prior to the establishment of the state was populated by Arabs and was named 'Um-al-Farage'[49]. F. said that in her opinion, the signs directing to 'Ben Ammi' should state its former name 'Um-al-Farage', possibly between brackets or in smaller print. R. objected to this idea, claiming that 'no one knows the original names'. Moreover, he didn't see any real functional need for it as he could not imagine people actually saying 'I need to get to Um-al-Farage'. F. responded by saying that the elders know the Arab names and that although the Arab names are not actually used, 'it's important that it's written'. R. ended this argument by saying:

These are only signs, not history lessons (FG-4, 250-269)[50].

Here again, the position represented by R.'s arguments does not wish to link the Arabs' status as a native population with language-specific services, which the state is supposed to provide.

A third example reflecting the moderate view on the relevance of Arabs' indigenous status to language policies is taken from FG-3 ('Mixed'). H., an Arab participant, explained why she was against a policy promoting the use of Arabic in the Knesset. According to her view, the Arabs' change of status as a result of the establishment of Israel cannot be used as an argument to justify the use of a language other than Hebrew in the Knesset:

> *I think that using Hebrew [in the Knesset] is the most reasonable thing.*
> *The fact is that we stayed here [in Israel], my family stayed here, and by*
> *doing that accepted the laws of the Jewish state. I don't know how my*
> *family felt about it, whether they wanted it or whether it was forced on*
> *them, but it doesn't matter, that's the reality (FG-3, 398).*

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[49] See Khalidi (1992, p. 34-5) for more details about Umm al-Faraj / Ben 'Ammi

[50] Compare R's arguments with Nachtomi's (2005) discussion about language changes used in place of genuine actions to promote the status of minority groups (i.e., politically correct labels for groups). In the case of the Arab minority in Israel, Nachtomi sees such actions as 'humiliating and falsifying' (p. 87-8)

What may be inferred from H.'s arguments is that by making the decision to stay and live in Israel, 'the Jewish state', as she named it, the Arabs have basically accepted the dominance of Hebrew as the language of the state.

It is important to note that unlike R., who objected altogether to the reference made to 'what was here 59 years ago', this participant finds the historical argument irrelevant to language issues but relevant in other respects. At least for this participant, accepting the dominance of Hebrew for policy decisions, despite Israeli Arabs' indigenous status, does not make their situation prior to the establishment of the state irrelevant. Earlier in that discussion session, H. was asked by the moderator if a policy requiring the study of Arabic in Jewish schools was needed in her opinion. She answered:

> *I don't really care if they [Jewish students] study Arabic in schools […] at the end of the day it's their choice whether they want to speak Arabic or not. What I would like is Jewish schools to teach about the history of Israeli Arabs. They may do it in Hebrew, it doesn't matter (FG-3, 144-146).*

As we see from this response, Israeli Arabs being a native population is indeed an important issue for H. Nevertheless, she does not necessarily see language policy as the right 'arena' in which to express it.

The Radical View ('Our indigenous status denies the majority's legitimacy to make policy decisions regarding Arabic')

A different view, which seems to take the indigenous component a step further, was made by N., (an Arab participant in FG-3 'Mixed') in response to O., a Jewish participant. O. was talking about the need to recognize Hebrew as the sole official language in Israel – the only language in which the state provides language-related services. This was said within the context of discussing immigrant languages. O. claimed that establishing Hebrew as the sole official language is a reasonable way to protect the centrality of Hebrew in Israel and to prevent 'absurd future scenarios' in which Israel functions in several different languages - the languages of possible future immigrants (FG-3, 368). N. took O.'s suggestion to mean that O. was against recognizing Arabic as an official language and responded very emotionally:

> *We were born here, our fathers speak Arabic, their parents, their grandparents and their great grandparents all spoke Arabic. Who are you to come from I don't know where and tell me: your language - I don't want to speak it, it should not be recognized [as an official language] in Israel (FG-3, 376).*

In N.'s view, as reflected by this excerpt, the Arabs' indigenous status is indeed relevant to the current status of Arabic and the way decision makers should refer to it. Further, she seems to be undermining the Jews' legitimacy to make such decisions since the Jews came to this land 'from who knows where', while the Arabs have been living on this land for generations.

3.3.2 A Comparison of Indigenous Minorities and Immigrant Groups

A large portion of the discussion in the focus groups relating to the issue of indigenousness revolved around the comparison between indigenous minorities and immigrant groups. Three main positions can be identified:

(1) Arabic language policies should take precedence over policies supporting immigrant languages

(2) Policies supporting immigrant languages should take precedence over Arabic language policies

(3) The distinction between the two types of minority languages in relation to language policies is discounted

Arabic Language Policies over Policies Supporting Immigrant Languages

Participants advocating the precedence of Arabic language policies over such policies for immigrant languages seem to be basing their position on two main arguments:

The 'general argument' - Israeli Arabs are entitled to better linguistic services[51] than immigrants since *immigrant groups in general* made the choice to move to a different state while indigenous groups were born into this minority situation[52].

'The Israel-specific argument' - Israeli Arabs are entitled to better linguistic services than immigrant groups since immigrants in Israel are *Jews arriving in a Jewish state* and are therefore expected to adapt to the Hebrew language while Arabs are not.

The General Argument

The rationale for the general argument was stated very clearly by V., a participant in FG-2 ('Jewish-Religious'). The moderator mentioned a statement by S., who claimed that road signs should be available in Arabic since "it's their [Israeli Arabs'] state too, they were born here" (FG-2, 114). The moderator asked the other participants whether they also felt that being native to a territory is relevant for determining language policies. V. answered positively, saying

> *When a person immigrates to another state he makes a choice. A person*
> *who was born here was not given that choice. But when someone chooses*
> *to immigrate to a different state, then he is aware of the fact that he may*
> *face language difficulties. This is something that he consciously brings*
> *upon himself and this changes the whole picture (FG-2, 338).*

While S. was referring generally to services provided by the state in the minority languages, the discussion in FG-4 ('Arabs') brought up more concrete examples in relation to this distinction. After participants stated that road signs in Israel should be available in Arabic, the moderator in FG-4 asked how the state should respond if Russian speakers in Israel asked for signs in Russian. P. claimed that 'this is not the same,' arguing that Russians in Israel are on a par with Turks in Germany, and both groups, according to him, are not entitled to having road signs in their

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[51] This vague term 'better linguistic services' will be partially clarified through examples of specific services discussed below. However, the relevant distinction between 'practical' and 'symbolic' services or language policies directed towards minorities' functional needs and those directed towards preserving the unique group identity will be discussed separately in chapter 4.

[52] This argument basically echoes Kymlicka's argument described at the beginning of the chapter.

languages. J. responded saying that he does not understand why P. believes Israeli Arabs should enjoy this kind of service while Turks in Germany should not. P. answered that

> *We [Israeli Arabs] are not newcomers to this state. We stayed here, we did*
> *not come from somewhere else […] you may compare the Russians to the*
> *Turks [in Germany] but not the [Israeli] Arabs to the Turks' (FG-4, 194-8).*

As seen in the above example, the indigenous argument is used to favor Arabic over Russian in state language policies. The justification given for this stance was not specific to the Israeli context as Russians in Israel were compared to an immigrant community in a different state.

The Israel-Specific Argument

According to this argument, immigrants in Israel are seen as a special type of immigrant, what has been referred to in the literature as 'Returning Diaspora'[53]. These immigrant groups are on the one hand a minority (they come to Israel from a different cultural/linguistic background). On the other hand, being Jewish makes them a part of the majority group. Some participants relied on the special characteristics of these groups to claim that their linguistic needs should be lower on the state's list of priorities. In other words, the linguistic privileges that Arabic speakers should be entitled to do not stem solely from the fact that Arabs are natives to the place while immigrants are not. Participants holding this view emphasize the fact that immigrants in Israel are *Jews* who came to a Jewish state and therefore are expected to adapt to Hebrew, the language of the Jewish majority.

One such argument was made in FG-4 ('Arabs') when discussing the issue of subtitles on Israeli public television. N. observed that subtitles are available on Israeli public television in Russian but hardly ever in Arabic, a situation that he defined as 'unfair'. According to him, since Russian immigrants are Jewish, they should be expected to acquire Hebrew, the language of the Jewish

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[53] Ben-Rafael, Olshtain and Geijst (1997) claim that this special type of immigrant has been ignored in the literature. In addition to Israel, they may be found in Germany, Romania, and Hungary among other states. The two distinguishing characteristics they state are: 1) being exiles in their countries of origin and a feeling of home-coming upon immigrating 2) immediate and unconditional acceptance by the target society (p. 364)

majority. Israeli Arabs, on the other hand, should be entitled to use their language when watching national television. In his words:

> *I see sometimes on [national] television subtitles in Russian, even though they are Jews who immigrated to Israel[54]. When they come to Israel they should pick up Hebrew, but they speak Russian. On television, you can see subtitles in Russian, and we, Arabs, who had been living in this place before the establishment of the state, we don't see any subtitles in Arabic on Israeli television. It's not fair. (FG-4, 29).*

The fact that this service – subtitles on public television – is not provided in Arabic is problematic in the eyes of this participant. However, what makes this situation especially wrong in his opinion is the fact that it is available in Russian, the immigrant language. 'Precedence to Arabic' in this context means that a situation in which a language service is provided in an immigrant language and not in the indigenous language is viewed as illegitimate. The justification given for this position is based on the indigenous argument, but it includes an additional component - the 'Jewish argument'. For N., the fact that Russian immigrants in Israel are Jewish - not the mere fact that they are an immigrant community - is what should grant them fewer linguistic privileges than the Arabs. D., a participant in FG-1 ('Jewish-Secular'), believes that the linguistic privileges for Arabs over immigrants should be *statutory*, based on the fact that immigrants in Israel are Jews coming to a Jewish state. When discussing whether road signs in Israel should be available in Arabic, B. raised the issue of the Amharic speaking community in Israel – Jews arriving in Israel from Ethiopia in the 90's. B. asked 'what about areas populated with Ethiopians - do we have to put up signs in Amharic? It's never ending!' (FG-1, 62-8). D. responded:

> *It's not 'never ending'. Here, with Arabic, the criterion is national and not which Diaspora these people arrived from. The assumption is that everyone who arrives in Israel as a Jew should know Hebrew. So if you put up signs in Amharic it will be nice but it should not be obligatory by law, unlike with Arabic (FG-1, 69).*

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[54] the participant used the term 'made Aliya' which is a term unique to describe Jewish immigration to Israel

Here again, the fact that immigrants in Israel are Jews plays an important role in legitimizing differentiated language policies. D. goes further than N., the participant mentioned above, claiming that this distinction should be based on legislation. Language-specific services for Arabic speakers should be legally determined while such services for immigrant communities are regarded as the state's 'act of good will'.

Policies Supporting Immigrant Languages over Arabic Language Policies

In general, participants holding this position believe that Israeli Arabs are in a better position than immigrants in terms of developing their skills in Hebrew since Arabs have been born and raised in a Hebrew-speaking state. Immigrants, according to this view, have not had the opportunity to be exposed to Hebrew until their arrival in Israel. Therefore, it is the fact that immigrants are presumably less proficient in Hebrew than Arabs that justifies their need to be supported in terms of language services.

The arguments constructing this position are well illustrated by the discursive event described below. The participants in FG-2 ('Jewish-Religious'), were asked whether government services (such as forms and office hour services) should be available in Arabic. The following discussion started:

> *L: If you're asking about state administration, then it should be done in Russian. Russian is needed much more than Arabic. I was in the Ministry of Interior the other day and there were people there who spoke only Russian, they went to the clerk and they didn't know what she was saying and she didn't know what they were saying, and I was thinking: so many people in Israel speak Russian. So if you're asking about Arabic, I don't think it's really needed. If at all, the state should start with Russian. There are more Russian speakers who run into problems when dealing with bureaucracy.*
>
> *Moderator: So you're saying money should go first towards services in Russian because there are more Russian speakers who can't speak Hebrew.*
>
> *L: Yes, there are more immigrants from Russia… Arabs have been living in this place for a long time. You will not find Arabic-speaking immigrants. They [Arabs] live in Israel and they can learn Hebrew…it's not just that*

they can, they have to learn to speak Hebrew. If not the older generation then the next generation. But there is mass immigration from Russia, and these immigrants do not have the ability to deal with Hebrew. The couple I saw - they were in their 30's. They will not start learning a new language, and even if they do, it will not be very successful.

Moderator: *Aha…*

L: *So I think they [Russian speakers] need this help more than Arabs who live here and already have all the… already have everything.*

Moderator: *What do you think? Do you agree? If we invest money we should do it towards Russian?*

S: *I also think that we should invest more in Russian because Arabs are more proficient in Hebrew and in addition, there are many [Jewish] Israelis who speak Arabic, so Arabs can always find someone who speaks Arabic if they need help, so they can manage. (FG-2, 23-35)*

Why is it then, according to L. and S., that language services in Russian are needed more than those in Arabic? I will now elaborate on their arguments. When asked about the need for services in *Arabic*, L.'s intuitive reply was that 'Russian is needed more', bringing up an example of a Russian-speaking couple who could not communicate with the staff at a government office. That incident made her think that there must be many more Russian speakers who face these kinds of problems. The moderator, trying to clarify her reply, asked if her claim was that priority must be given to Russian speakers because there are more Russian speakers than Arabic speakers who are not skilled in Hebrew. L. then gave the rationale of her claim to favor Russian speakers. She uses the indigenous argument ('Arabs have been living in this place for a long time') in order to support her assertion that Arabs must be more skilled in Hebrew than Russian immigrants[55].

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[55] This is not a completely accurate assertion in terms of the sociolinguistic reality in Israel. While it could be claimed that Israeli Arabs, in general, are skilled in Hebrew, this is not the case for certain populations within the large Arab sector depending mainly on their contact with Hebrew speakers (e.g., Arab villagers in the Galilee (Spolsky & Shohamy, 1999, p. 107)). Compared to these Arab populations, Russian immigrants are at a tremendous advantage in Hebrew. The arguments underlying participants' assertions are meaningful for our purposes regardless of their factual accuracy. In this case, for example, it was important for us to show that

Indigenousness is perceived as an *advantage* Israeli Arabs have over immigrants in the sense that they have been living in a Hebrew-speaking environment for longer and having more opportunities to become skilled in Hebrew. Unlike in the discussions described above, in which indigenousness was used as an argument to favor the language of the indigenous minority over the languages of immigrants in state policies, here the same argument leads to the opposite conclusion. What seems to lead to L.'s conclusion is the fact that she takes into consideration only the issue of *skills in the majority language* as a criterion to determine services in a minority language. In other words, she does not consider factors that were discussed by participants in other groups, such as keeping a distinct group identity or assimilating into the majority group.

As we have seen in the previous section, participants were advocating differentiated policies towards Arabic since they believed Arabs, being natives in the area, should not be expected to adapt to the majority language, while immigrants should. L. does not mention any of this. According to her, Israeli Arabs grow up in a Hebrew-speaking environment and they should make use of the opportunities they are given in order to become proficient in the majority language ('they have to learn to speak Hebrew'). Note that L. does not say that Arabs are indeed more skilled in Hebrew than Russians but that 'they must be', or that 'it would be fair to assume'. S. is more determined on this issue; for her, it is a fact that 'Arabs are more skilled in Hebrew than Russians' that she, too, uses in order to justify priority for Russian over Arabic in language services. Interestingly, she uses an additional argument to the one used by L. S. claims that Arabs are in a better position than Russians because Arabs can rely on Jewish Israelis who speak Arabic if they run into problems when communicating in Hebrew[56]. It is not clear from

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indigenousness is *perceived* as a factor that should facilitate speakers' skills in the majority language, whether this is really the case in Israel or not.

[56] This is a particularly problematic assertion in terms of the Israeli reality. Arabic, in general, is not a language commonly spoken by Jewish Israelis. There are, *theoretically*, two exceptions to this claim. The first is the population of Jews who came to Israel from Arabic-speaking countries in the 1950s, which amount nowadays to about 475,000 speakers (Grimes, 1996). However, these are speakers of a number of Judeo-Arabic languages (e.g., Judeo-Moroccan, Judeo-Iraqi etc.) which were the local dialects spoken by Jewish communities in their Arabic-speaking countries of origin. These Judeo-Arabic dialects are distinct from both Standard Arabic and most spoken Middle East varieties (Grimes, 1988, see also fn.1). Additionally, Spolsky and Shohamy (1999, p. 141) believe that these estimations are 'over generous' and fluent speakers are usually over the age of 60 or 70. The second concerns the fact that the teaching of Arabic was made compulsory in Jewish schools in the 1980s.

her words whether this is an advantage indigenous minorities generally have or whether this is a specific phenomenon in Israel. In any case, the fact that majority group members in Israel are (allegedly) skilled in Arabic is an additional factor that is used to favor language services in Russian over those in Arabic. This factor (regardless of whether it is true of Jewish Israelis) provides additional support for the 'skills in the majority language' argument. For S. as well as for L. the focus of language services is no other than enabling minorities to 'get things done' when dealing with state administration.

Discounting the Distinction between Two Types of Minority Languages

Both Jewish and Arab participants expressed the position that the distinction between indigenous minorities and immigrant groups is not relevant to language policy decisions. The main arguments presented may be summarized as follows:

- The same language policies should apply to all linguistic minorities, both indigenous minorities and immigrant groups

- All linguistic minorities, indigenous as well as immigrant, should adapt to Hebrew, the majority language

- The categories creating this distinction are not meaningful

The Sympathetic View – All Linguistic Minorities are Equal

In both FG-1 ('Jewish-Secular') and FG-3 ('Mixed'), the argument supporting equal policies towards all linguistic minorities was articulated during discussions regarding the use of Arabic on signs and in government offices. The immediate response of some participants in both groups was that if such a policy towards Arabic were to be employed, it should be carried out towards other minority languages, specifically Russian and Amharic, the languages of Jewish immigrants from the former USSR and Ethiopia, respectively (FG-3, 30; FG-1, 62). The

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Nevertheless, factors such as low motivation of students, negative attitudes towards the language and a small number of hours result in impracticable skills of Jewish students in Arabic (see Chapter 1, 1.3.2). These kinds of assertions, which are clearly different from the sociolinguistic actuality, are sometimes analyzed in the literature as 'myths about language' (see for example Schiffman, 1996).

participants holding this position did not see a reason to favor Arabic speakers over speakers of other languages in functional policies. One part of this argument, which forms the basis of this position, comes from a positive/sympathetic perspective that maintains that all linguistic minorities, whoever they are, face similar problems when having to function in an environment where a language other than their first language is spoken. According to this view, Arabic speakers are indeed in a problematic position, but so are all non-native speakers of Hebrew. Therefore, there is no justification for specific policies towards Arabic. M., a Jewish participant in the 'mixed' group, supported this position, claiming that when dealing with state administration, it is hard for everyone who doesn't speak Hebrew as a first language, not just for Arabs. She gave the example of her parents, who immigrated to Israel 30 years ago from an eastern European country, and up until today, whenever they receive official letters, they ask her to explain to them 'what they are being asked'.

> *It's not that they don't know Hebrew, they have been living in Israel longer*
> *than I have, it's just that it's not their mother tongue (FG-3, 85).*

This sympathetic view was echoed by several other participants in this group. E., a Jewish participant, said the following about his grandmother:

> *She came from Morocco 50 years ago and she speaks basic Hebrew, but if*
> *you ask her to fill out a form in the Ministry of Interior, she would not have a*
> *clue. I am sure it's the same with Arabs, at least with the elders (FG-3, 81).*

Another Jewish participant in this group talked about her grandmother, who speaks Hebrew but watches the news in Persian (her mother tongue) because she is not able to comprehend the news on the Israeli public channels (FG-3, 309). In this focus group, the comparison Jewish participants drew between Arabic speakers and other non-native Hebrew speakers seemed to be acceptable to the Arab participants too. H., an Arab participant, talked very emotionally about an elderly Arab woman who was riding a bus in northern Israel in an area populated by many Arab towns and villages. This elderly Arab passenger wanted to get off the bus at the village where she lived. The woman, who could not speak Hebrew, repeatedly asked the driver whether he had a stop there, but the driver, not knowing any Arabic, did not comprehend. H.

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said that at one point the bus driver got very upset and yelled at the woman. It was only after she intervened and explained to the driver what the woman was asking that this incident was resolved (FG-3, 91). According to her, the bus company, being a public company, has to make sure that drivers working in Arabic-speaking areas are able to communicate with Arabic speakers on at least a basic level to prevent situations like this one. Later in the discussion, this participant mentioned that she had witnessed similar incidents involving elderly Russian-speaking immigrants. They too, according to her, were having difficulties communicating with bus drivers and experiencing aggressive responses as a result. She admitted that in this context the problems Russian-speaking immigrants face are no different from those experienced by Arabic speakers and therefore, in her eyes, the bus company policy should meet their needs too (FG-3, 106).

The perspective that compares linguistic minorities on the basis of sympathy towards their similar linguistic needs was expressed in FG-4 ('Arabs') too. As mentioned, the case of the Turkish immigrants in Germany was brought up when discussing the need to use Arabic on road signs in Israel. T. used this example as part of his criticism towards what he sees as insufficient use of Arabic on signs in Israel. The Israeli Arabs and the Turks in Germany, both perceived by him as being significantly large minorities[57], experience similar difficulties resulting from not having their language used publicly by the state. The fact that the Turks in Germany are an immigrant population and that the Israeli Arabs are not was not a relevant factor in the eyes of this participant. According to him, the state has an obligation towards minority populations that speak a language other than the majority language.

As shown in the above examples, one way in which the distinction between the two types of linguistic minorities – indigenous and immigrants - became irrelevant was by sympathizing with the functional obstacles all minorities face when coming into contact with state institutions operating in the majority language. This position does not view indigenousness as a privileging

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[57] There are about 7 million Turk immigrants in Germany out of a population of over 80 million, which, by *percentage*, is much smaller than the Arabs' share of the population in Israel (over a million out of a population of about 6 millions). This participant, however, chose to refer to both groups – Arabs in Israel and Turks in Germany as 'large minority groups'.

element; however, it is 'positive' in the sense that its holders do not reject language policies towards linguistic minorities. Rather, they reject policies that are based on the distinction between the two types of minorities.

All Languages are Equal (but not as equal as Hebrew)

The second argument that discounts the distinction between the two types of linguistic minorities is rooted in the position described above – the state should not create a distinction between linguistic minorities and they should all be treated in the same way. However, according to this view, all linguistic minorities are equal but not equal to native Hebrew speakers, speakers of the majority language. The distinction between the linguistic minorities is not relevant since what is important is the centrality of Hebrew, the majority language. That is, the centrality of Hebrew overshadows the differences between the linguistic minorities. This position was expressed much more strongly by Jewish participants, but it was also articulated by Arab participants. In FG-2 ('Jewish-Religious'), there was nearly a total consensus concerning the irrelevance of the distinction on the basis of the centrality of Hebrew. L. put it very clearly:

> *In my opinion it doesn't matter what kind of minority you are, there is a*
> *majority language, so deal with it. The state cannot adapt itself to a*
> *thousand little languages that have emerged (FG-2, 341).*

In the secular group, the tone of the arguments was a bit more moderate but the conclusion was similar. When discussing whether state policies should apply to all linguistic minorities in the same way, B. argued that the starting point for policy decisions should be that 'it is the minorities' obligation to acquire the majority language'. She acknowledged the difference between the two types of groups and admitted that for people who 'willingly move to a different state' this process is more naturally expected, but even people who were born in a place that speaks a language other than their mother tongue should not be treated differently:

> *I don't think it is impossible for them to acquire the majority language*
> *because it is all around them (FG1, 596).*

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As mentioned, arguments discounting the distinction between Arabic speakers and immigrant groups on the basis of the centrality of Hebrew are also found among Arab participants. However, contrary to the position held by Jewish participants described above, which referred to all levels of language policy, these arguments were made only when polices that are less practical in nature were discussed. FG-3 ('Mixed') discussed whether Arabic should be an official 'co-language' in the Knesset. In other words, should Arab Knesset members be allowed to make their speeches in Arabic during the Knesset plenum sessions? Most of the Jewish participants in this group firmly claimed that where the Knesset is concerned, the dominance of Hebrew should not be questioned, and that minority languages, Arabic as well as the languages of immigrants groups, cannot be officially used by Knesset members representing these sectors (FG-3, 396). H., an Arab participant in this group, agreed to this view, saying that in the context of the Knesset 'it makes sense' that Hebrew functions as 'the common denominator' between the different minorities (FG-3, 398). She clarified that where policies referring to things such as forms in government offices are concerned, this should not be the case. In these cases, Arabic speakers have a justification to demand specific services in their language (FG-3, 402).

The Categorization of Linguistic Minorities is Artificial

The third argument that opposes specific language policies for different linguistic minorities is based on the claim that the categories themselves – 'indigenous language' and 'immigrant language' - are not inclusive enough to determine policy decisions. In FG-3 ('Mixed'), I., a Jewish participant, was dissatisfied by these categories as a criterion for specific language policy decisions. He claimed that it is difficult to determine how long a language should enjoy the special status of an **'immigrant language'**, referring to the linguistic privileges its speakers may be entitled to. Y. claimed in response that 'the definitions are very clear'. According to Y., it takes about a generation for immigrant groups to adjust to the new environment, and it is within that period that their linguistic needs should be facilitated by the state. Speakers of an indigenous language, referred to by Y. as the language of a minority 'that has been living here before the establishment of the state', should be entitled to certain services in their language continuously and not temporarily, as speakers of immigrant languages (FG-3, 382). I. was not convinced that this is indeed a valid criterion. He claimed it was probable that in 200 years

Russian would be still used as a first language of immigrants who arrived in Israel in the 1990s from Russian-speaking countries. In that case, he said, the Russian language will not fit the definition of 'an immigrant language' since its speakers have not just arrived in Israel. At the same time, it will not be compatible with the definition of 'an indigenous language' either (FG-3, 379-392).

This uneasiness with the categories and the feeling that they are somewhat arbitrary or at least not meaningful enough to advocate group-differentiated policies was also expressed in the two Jewish groups (FG-1, FG-2). D., a participant in FG-1, held the position described above, that indigenousness is a valid component in policy decisions and should be used to favor indigenous minorities over immigrant groups (FG-1, 114). B. objected to this, arguing, like H., that this distinction does not capture all linguistic situations. She mentioned the case of the Chinese speaking community in the United States, in particular the generations which were born in the States and have been able to maintain Chinese as their dominant language. B. was trying to show that there are groups that slip between the two categories and that the distinction may be blind to the specific needs of an immigrant community striving to maintain its cultural and linguistic characteristics[58].

In FG-2 ('Jewish-Religious') we find an additional example of participants expressing their uneasiness with this typology of linguistic minorities. This was done by mentioning another minority group they perceive as 'natives' – Jewish communities living outside Israel. This position was presented by Z. in response to two arguments that arose during a discussion regarding the need to use Arabic in government offices and on road and street signs. V. was in favor of using Arabic in government offices and on road and street signs, claiming that even if Arabs are proficient enough in Hebrew, they would feel more 'true to themselves' using their own language. She believed that this was especially true in times of political conflict and tension between the Jewish and Arab populations in Israel (FG-2, 112-114). S. supported V.'s position, saying she could sympathize with the frustration Israeli Arabs must feel when they

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[58] See Benhabib (1999) and Young (1997) for discussions of the limitations of Kymlicka's two basic categories, some of which are very similar to the arguments presented by B.

drive around 'in their state', 'where they were born', and signs were not available in Arabic, their language (FG-3, 116). Following these two arguments Z. joined the discussion, firmly objecting to what had been said. Z. opposed S.'s use of the indigenousness argument in order to advocate policies supporting the Arabic language. According to her, the fact that a community was native to a certain place should not automatically grant its members special language rights. She used as examples two Jewish communities living outside Israel that she perceived as 'natives' – the South African and the New York communities. She claimed that according to S.'s logic, Jews born in those places were in a position to demand services in Hebrew - a situation Z. found absurd. When S. tried to claim that Jews born in South Africa and in the States were speakers of English and not Hebrew, Z. responded that they may nevertheless believe that in Hebrew they feel most 'true to themselves', echoing V.'s earlier argument regarding Israeli Arabs (FG-3, 121-126)[59].

3.4 Two Options regarding the Interaction between the Indigenous Element and Language Policies

After reviewing the various points of the discussions in which the indigenousness element was referred to by the participants in the focus groups, I would like to propose two *summary options* that reflect tow different ways of viewing the interaction between the indigenous element and language policies.

- Indigenousness as an irrelevant factor for language policy decisions.
- Indigenousness as a hierarchic element among minority languages.

Summary Option 1 - Indigenousness as an Irrelevant Factor in Language Policy

At one end of the scale is the position that being a native population within the borders of a state is not an argument that can be used to advocate specific policies towards that minority's language. As noted by the discursive events presented above, it would be wrong to assume that this position is merely the outcome of *a conservative view* which is not sympathetic towards

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[59] Compare with Myhill's (2003) arguments against 'authenticity hierarchy'. Myhill discusses Jews in the Diaspora as a group that does not share the same language but has a common cultural identity.

minorities' linguistic needs. This is indeed one aspect of the argument, but the same claim also emerged from what may be regarded as a very *liberal stance,* which places all linguistic minorities on the same grounds. This view sympathizes with the difficulties linguistic minorities face as individuals when attempting to get things done in an environment where their language is not spoken. Another characteristic of this position is that it is *common to both majority and minority group members*. Though less predictable, it was not unusual for speakers of the indigenous language to regard their indigenous status as irrelevant for language policy decisions. In other words, indigenousness in this context is *not* an issue in which the attitudes of Jews and Arabs are divided in a predictable way, such that Arabs, the minority group, advocate an association between indigenousness and language policy while Jews, the majority group, do not acknowledge such a connection.

At least as far as minority members were concerned, we have also seen that the reluctance to make the association between an indigenous status and language policy decisions was at times a reflection of a general refusal to adhere to historical events as a way of reclaiming the collective rights of minorities. In other words, the past belongs in the past and it is not relevant for present language policy demands *or for any other political or legislative demands from policy makers*. On other occasions, the reluctance to make this association was specific to language-related issues. The wish to delve into the past and make it present in the general public discourse exists, but it is expressed through other collective demands, not those concerning language.

Summary Option 2 - Indigenousness as a Hierarchic Element among Minority Languages

The second general position in the data is that the indigenous element creates a hierarchy[60] of minority languages concerning language policies. The indigenous element is viewed in two

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[60] Giles, Bourhis and Taylor's (1977) theory of 'Ethnolinguistic Vitality' is worth mentioning in the context of 'hierarchy'. Immigration/migration is described by the writers as one of the factors that explain a hierarchy

different ways, concluding in two *opposite* policy scenarios:

(1) Precedence to indigenous languages over immigrant languages in policy decisions.

(2) Precedence to immigrant languages over indigenous languages in policy decisions[61].

Indigenousness should give precedence to indigenous languages over immigrant languages in policy decisions

As was shown above, the fact that the Arabs are native to Israel was used as a justification to claim the priority of Arabic in language policy decisions over other minority languages. Yet, two issues require clarification. First, this position was upheld in consideration of the fact that immigrants to Israel are usually Jewish ('returning Diaspora'). It could not be inferred from the participants' arguments whether they would still maintain this view if immigrants in Israel had not been part of the majority group. Second, it is not clear whether participants with this view believe that immigrant languages should be supported but only *secondarily* to indigenous languages or that immigrant languages should not be supported at all. In other words, their position may stem from the belief that, in principle, immigrant languages should not be supported (since, for example, immigrants are better off adapting to the majority language). Alternatively, it may reflect the view that immigrants, in general, are entitled to language services, but if budget problems arise indigenous languages must be given priority.

Indigenousness should give precedence to immigrant languages over indigenous languages in policy decisions

We may schematically sum up the arguments presented in 3.3.2 above as leading to this general conclusion:

Being born and raised in the target state, indigenous communities have been more exposed to the majority language than immigrants have (or at least have had the opportunity to be).

As a result –

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between minority groups (in general) and the majority group. However, there does not seem to be a meaningful distinction between *types* of linguistic minorities

[61] The statements are phrased in general terms and not in the Israeli-specific terms (such as 'Russian immigrants' or 'Israeli Arabs'). We do not wish to claim that all participants meant to generalize their arguments, only that we can use some of the specific arguments to construct more general ones along the same lines.

Indigenous communities are more proficient in the majority language than immigrants are (or so we may assume).

If we believe that

The (most) relevant criterion for determining language policies is *proficiency in the majority language*.

Then the conclusion is that

Language policies should favor the languages of immigrants over those of indigenous communities.

These two 'hierarchic options' are, of course, very different from one another. Yet, they have two characteristics in common. The first is that neither of these options questions the centrality of the majority language – Hebrew, in this case. Indigenous languages may be viewed as inferior or superior to immigrant languages but none of the minority languages is perceived as positively as the majority language. The dominance of Hebrew is the most basic assumption from which the debate starts. The second element common to both positions is the legitimacy of the majority group in determining the extent to which other languages will be used by the state. None of the arguments constructing these positions mentioned the option of involving the minorities themselves in the decision making process regarding the linguistic policies addressed to them.

One last comment should be made with regards to these two options. Strictly speaking, there is a third option which came out of the data – one which not only advocates precedence to Arabic over immigrant languages but also questions the legitimacy of the dominant group's right to dictate policy decisions towards indigenous minorities, due to their special status. This was reflected in the argument called 'the radical view' (3.3.1 above). However, it was decided not to present it as a distinct option due to the scarce presence of this type of argumentation. This view was much more prevalent in the discourse of Arab public figures, as will be noted later in chapter 5.

4. THE *FUNCTIONAL/SYMBOLIC* TENSION IN ARABIC LANGUAGE POLICIES IN ISRAEL

The issue of which goals a language policy may or should fulfill is extremely central. A policy requiring the use of a minority language in the state's courts, for example, is intuitively seen as an act aimed at facilitating minority speakers' access to a public institution. It is a practical procedure that allows essential activities to be accessed, ensuring that language is not an obstacle in carrying out goals. At the same time, the fact that a minority language is used in a public domain, such as government institutions, has various implications that reach beyond this procedural level. When linguistic minorities are able to interact with the state in their mother tongue, they are more likely to feel they are being treated as equal and legitimate citizens. The use of a minority language in public spheres sends a message that the minority language has a respectable place in the state, and that its speakers are a unique and significant collective. The important question is how these two levels interact. Is there a clear way to delineate between the two? Are the 'non-procedural' aims a (positive) outcome of the procedural goals, or can they stand alone as justifications for a language policy? Are both rationales legitimate in the same way? What happens when language policies are demanded in order to meet strictly 'non-procedural' goals?

The structure of this chapter is as follows:

- Review of the relevant terminologies proposed in the literature

- Our proposed terminology (*the functional/ symbolic distinction*)

- Illustrating the distinction based on discursive events from the study's focus groups, using the three 'policy scenarios' that were discussed during the sessions:
  - Arabic forms and office hours in government services
  - The use of Arabic on public television
  - The use of Arabic by Arab Knesset members during Knesset sessions

- Three concluding patterns in the functional/symbolic distinction as a (de)-legitimizing mechanism

4.1 Terminologies in the Literature

The tension between the aims and rationales of language policies has been treated from a number of different perspectives in literature. I present the ones found to be most useful in constructing the terminology of the current chapter.

Instrumental vs. Integrative Motivations for Language Policies

Spolsky and Shohamy (1999) distinguish between '*instrumental*' and '*integrative*' rationales and motivations for language policy. Instrumental motivations aim at achieving goals, such as allowing access to information and literature not available in other languages. Another example is policies that promote the proficiency of citizens in the majority or other languages for economic reasons, such as effective industrial co-operation. Integrative motivations basically reflect one's right to learn, speak or use 'Xish' because one is 'X.' In this case, 'Xish' has a *symbolic* value, such as creating identification with the nation, or with another collectivity, such as a minority group. Spolsky and Shohamy acknowledge the fact that this dichotomy is not clear-cut since interactions between the two categories are very common, if not inevitable. They claim, for example, that instrumental policies may have political implications. Yet, they believe that despite the limitations, it is a heuristic solution, and leave it open to further exploration.

Instrumental vs. Moral Commitments of Language Policies

Coulombe's (2000) examination of Canada's Official Bilingualism places the issue of citizenship via the distinction between instrumental and moral commitments of language policies at the heart of the matter. The instrumental commitment represents a *modus vivendi* approach, which sees the need to regulate the conflicting interests between ethnolinguistic groups. Moral foundations of a given language policy derive from the notion of a just state, where citizens feel empathy for each other and recognize the worth of each constituent community. Coulombe sees reducing language policy to an instrumental issue as dangerous. Although the instrumental approach functions as a useful buffer in which the two linguistic populations are in majority-minority settings, it cannot be the only element at the core of language policy. A language

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policy should also put into practice a shared moral commitment, which is seen by Coulombe as more "congenial to the ideal of citizenship" p. 290.

Assistance vs. Symbolic Rights-Claims

Levy (2000) proposes a categorization of types of cultural rights-claims based on normative issues as well as on empirical literature. In his categorization, a distinction is made between '*assistance* rights-claims' and '*symbolic* claims'. The former concern claims to assist the minority in "things that the majority can do unassisted" (p. 127) which, in the field of language, are realized in policies such as multilingual ballots, interpreters or bilingual employees in courts. The latter concern claims to the status, worth or contributions of a certain group, and are expressed in things like the national anthem, national holidays, the name of a polity and so on.

One example of a symbolic claim discussed at length is the official status of a minority language. For Levy, it highlights the difference between the two types of claims. While assistance language rights-claims function as a mechanism to ease the minority's interaction with the state, claims to recognize a minority language as official affect the very identity of the state. Hence, from the minority's perspective, the absence of assistance language rights may cause inconvenience, whereas denying the status of their language may create a feeling of being unwanted as members of the state. The issue of official status of a minority language also emphasizes the interaction between the two types of claims. The official status of a minority language may function as a 'purely' symbolic act, as in the case of Romansh speakers' demands for a change in the status of their language in Switzerland's constitutional amendment (p. 155)[62]. However, Levy is aware of the fact that official status has an important impact on the more practical claims of the 'assistance' type. In many cases, he claims, the recognition was not sought for its own sake but as a means for paving the way to more 'concrete' language right claims.

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[62] See a discussion about Romansh's official status on Chapter 5, 5.2

Instrumental vs. Intrinsic Values of Language

Réaume (2000) proposes the distinction between the 'instrumental and intrinsic value of language' as a concept to theorize about language rights as well as a practical tool for establishing a language policy. This distinction is derived from Joseph Raz's (1988) theory regarding interests (or 'values') justifying the legal protection of 'goods' in a more general sense. According to Raz:

> *"Something is instrumentally good if its value derives from the fact that it makes certain consequences more likely, or that it can contribute to producing certain consequences. Something is intrinsically good or valuable if it is valuable independently of the value of its actual or probable consequences, and not on account of any consequences it can be used to produce or to the production of which it can contribute causally"* (p. 200).

For example, works of art can be of instrumental value if referred to as a means to acquire prestige or knowledge. However, they may also be viewed as intrinsically good since the activities of watching and contemplating works of art are in themselves activities that enrich one's life, apart from their instrumental value.

Réaume (2000) views language as having both instrumental and intrinsic values, along the lines proposed by Raz. The instrumental value of language enables the enjoyment of other rights that depend on the possibility of linguistic interaction, such as the right to education, the right to vote, the right to a fair trial, the right to public health and so on. Instrumental language rights, then, aim at

> *"[e]nsuring that language is not an obstacle to the effective enjoyment of rights with a linguistic dimension, to the meaningful participation in public institutions and democratic process, and to the enjoyment of social and economic opportunities that require linguistic skills"* (p. 56).

The intrinsic value of language, on the other hand, views the use of a certain language *as good in itself*. Language is seen as the central marker of a group's identity. It signifies the group's cultural inheritance by representing the cultural accomplishments of the community as well as being a kind of cultural accomplishment in itself. 'Intrinsic justifications' for a language policy, then, are concerned with the role of language in maintaining cultural differences. In Réaume's

words: "any account of the value of culture that treats it as merely instrumental to extrinsic ends can only provide a very insecure foundation for cultural protections[63]" (p. 245)

Rubio-Marín (2003) attempts to give a more accurate account of the instrumental-intrinsic distinction based on Reaume's notions. She rejects the 'dominant language argument'. In other words, she does not accept that the optimal way to accommodate the instrumental language needs of a minority is to facilitate their acquisition of the dominant language. This, according to her, highlights the interaction between the two levels: "This is indeed the main difference between an instrumental and a non-instrumental approach. Only the latter approach requires, as a matter of principle, institutionalized accommodation of the minority language" (p. 68).

4.2 Proposed Terminology – Functional vs. Symbolic Justifications for Language Policies

The terminology I will be using is 'functional vs. symbolic justifications for language policies'. It is basically an integration of the observations characterized above with a number of variations:

Functional justifications for language policies are directed towards the functional *interests* of a linguistic group. That is, they are concerned with concrete and immediate benefits, such as having access to information, ensuring that language is not an obstacle to fulfilling everyday-life tasks, or that language does not create a threat to one's personal safety.

Symbolic interests are concerned with non-concrete benefits. That is, the use of a language is perceived as a way to achieve goals with symbolic and identity elements. This definition is two-fold: 1. The symbolic nature of language policies may strengthen one's feeling of belonging to a distinct ethnic group; using the 'intrinsic terminology', they concern one's 'core marker' of

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[63]Réaume (2000) uses the terms 'culture' and 'language' interchangeably as she explains: "The philosophical debate has focused on the value of culture, rather than language *per se*, but given the relationship between the two, arguments about the value of one should be readily transposable to the other" (p. 246)

cultural identity. 2. 'Symbolic' and 'identity' elements also involve one's ability to identify with and feel part of the general societal framework to which one belongs ('the state')[64].

In the following, I turn to three 'policy scenarios' discussed in the focus group sessions to elaborate on my proposed terminology. My aim is to highlight the ways in which the tension between the functional and symbolic interests of linguistic groups was manifested when discussing policies towards Arabic in Israel.

4.3 Policy Scenario 1 – Arabic Administrative Services in Government Offices

In this section, I discuss policies with salient functional components – Arabic administrative (forms and office hour services in government offices). These policies are predominantly associated with everyday life activities, such as bureaucratic procedures. The benefits of such policies to the speaker of the minority language are intuitively associated with instrumental elements, such as being able to communicate comfortably with a service provider. From the perspective of the majority group, it is reasonable to assume that these policies are easy to support or at least to tolerate. They seem to give rise to very basic principles on which democratic societies are based – a citizen's right to access the services provided by the state.

'Purely Functional' Justifications

By 'purely functional justification' I refer to the position according to which the use of the mother tongue is *essential* for enabling the *general* minority population's access to the relevant services and information. This cannot be accomplished in a reasonable way or with reasonable effort by a sizeable portion of this population unless the state provides the relevant mother tongue assistance (such as bilingual forms and staff in government offices). In other words, the

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[64] In this aspect I differ from the 'instrumental-intrinsic' approach, which sees something as having an intrinsic value only if it cannot be exercised or achieved in any other way (see for example a discussion in Margalit & Halbertal, 1994; Pinto, 2006, p. 247-8). Hence, the goal of promoting one's identification with the state would become 'instrumental' since it can be achieved by other 'non-linguistic' means. In my view, it is important to distinguish this goal from concrete, everyday life benefits and thus it is placed in the 'symbolic' category.

absence of these services in the speakers' mother tongue is a real and actual obstacle to benefiting from state services.

The 'purely functional' position was very uncommon in groups' discussions on these types of services. When asked whether these services (forms and office-hour services in government offices) should be available in Arabic, none of the participants claimed that they should be since the Arabic-speaking population *in general* would be denied access to the services if they were not provided in the speakers' mother tongue. The general position was that *the majority* of the Israeli Arab population is skilled enough in Hebrew that the lack of mother tongue services is not a real obstacle to their benefiting from these services.

V., a participant in FG-2 ('Jewish-Religious') presented this position very clearly:

> *I think that the starting point of this discussion should be that Arabs study*
> *Hebrew at schools. So they speak Hebrew at a level that enables them to*
> *fill in forms and get services in Hebrew (FG-2, 25).*

B., a participant in FG-1 ('Jewish-Secular') made a similar claim, regarding the need to use Arabic on road signs. She did not rely specifically on the fact that Arabs study Hebrew at schools but generally that "Arabs know Hebrew because they live here" (FG-1, 89). This, according to B., makes signs in Arabic unnecessary. C. claimed in response that she was not sure this was true for the entire Arab sector (FG-1, 91). But B's position was unchanged, arguing that it suffices that *the majority* of Arabs know Hebrew well enough to make such a policy superfluous (FG-1, 92).

Among the Arab participants, it was also evident that the 'purely functional justification' in the current Israeli context does not apply to the majority of the Arab sector. This was indicated by a number of Arab participants, who chose to highlight *specific populations* within the Arab sector for which the lack of Arabic services is an actual obstacle. These are people within the Arab sector whose Hebrew skills are poor. As a result, they run into difficulties when dealing with state administration. One such population is the elderly, whom T. from FG-4 '(Arabs') was referring to:

*Many times you find older Arab men or women who are not skilled in
Hebrew and they have to go to these places [government offices] and
they have to speak there and understand what is being said. They are
forced to take a relative with them who speaks Hebrew. (FG-4,21)*

N. an Arab participant from FG-3 ('Mixed') made this claim regarding Arab villagers on the periphery of the state who hardly have contact with Hebrew speakers. They too, according to her, are unable to deal with the Hebrew-speaking state administration:

*I am talking about someone who was born and raised in an Arabic-
speaking environment, how would he know Hebrew? I am talking about
uneducated people, people who live a very simple life style. (FG-3, 35-42).*

The perspective from which the Jewish and the Arab participants' claims were made is very different. V. and B. use the fact that Arabs are skilled in Hebrew to weaken the need for these polices. N. and T. present a sympathetic view towards the difficulties of Arabs who are not skilled in Hebrew, despite the fact that they are not significant in numbers. This difference in perspectives is indeed very relevant and will be referred to below when discussing 'partial functional justifications'. Nonetheless, the point to make at this stage is that the absence of Arabic is not perceived as an actual obstacle to benefiting from the relevant services for the population in general.

It is apparent, though, that the 'purely functional' reasoning for these policies in the current Israeli context is not strong enough. The justification, according to which the services/information cannot be accessed in a reasonable way for a sizeable portion of the minority population, does not justify the demand for improving access to these services.

Partly-Functional Justifications

Under 'partly functional' justifications, I include arguments that focus on the practical need for mother tongue polices in order to access the relevant services. However, unlike the 'purely functional justification', these arguments are less broad in two ways. First, they need not necessarily apply to the vast majority of the minority population. Second, the lack of mother tongue services is viewed as creating *inconveniences* as opposed to no access at all. Hence, this

position is 'functional' because it relies on the importance of mother tongue services for the actual and concrete accomplishment of certain procedures, such as interacting with state officials. It does not refer to other, less concrete goals, such as a citizen's sense of belonging to the state or a group's collective identity.

As noted in the previous sub-section, for many of the participants, the fact that the majority of the Arab population is skilled in Hebrew proved to be a good enough reason not to provide forms and office hour services in Arabic. However, for others, the functional justification was still seen as valid despite the fact that it does not apply to the entire Arabic population. In other words, the fact that *a certain population* within the Arab sector is denied access to services due to their lack of skills in Hebrew should justify *a broad* mother tongue policy. T.'s argument described above regarding the older Arab population represents such a position. T. is sensitive towards the difficulties the older Arab population faces with Hebrew-speaking service providers in government offices. But his argument does not remain pure sympathy. T. clearly claims that even only for the older people, Arabic services should be available "so they are not forced to drag along other people to translate Hebrew for them" (FG-4, 21).

In addition to these specific populations, some participants claimed that even for the more educated populations who are skilled in Hebrew, it is *more convenient* to function in their mother tongue when facing state administration, and this justifies the use of Arabic:

> *J: They should employ Arabic speakers in these places [government offices]. There are always situations in which we cannot find the correct word in Hebrew, so why shouldn't there be one of us we can talk to?*
>
> *F: do you mean that there should be a work-station for Arabic speakers only?*
>
> *J: would you rather speak to someone you cannot easily and comfortably understand? Would you rather be in a situation in which your message did not get through accurately? (FG-4, 20-28)*

J. does not claim that Arabs cannot access the services at all, but that they would do it more easily and efficiently if they were able to interact with Arabic-speaking service providers. F.

reacts with surprise to the possibility that J.'s argument may lead to the justification of a broad policy, but J. does not believe it is too far-reaching.

A Jewish participant made a similar claim regarding another linguistic task which involves literacy skills– reading signs. The moderator asked the participants if they would still support the use of Arabic on road and street signs in places where Arabs are known to be skilled in Hebrew. C. answered in the affirmative, justifying her view by claiming that:

> *Even if they [Arabs] read Hebrew, it is still much more comfortable for*
> *them to read the signs in Arabic (FG-1, 56).*

One additional component of these 'partly functional' arguments is *the distinction between the oral and literacy skills* among the minority in the majority language. In the current context, the distinction is between the Arabs' ability to speak and comprehend Hebrew and their ability to read and write in Hebrew.

The position that involves this distinction was mainly made as a response to claims about the generally good Hebrew skills of Israeli Arabs. Some participants maintained that this may be true for oral skills but not where literacy skills are concerned. In FG-3 ('Mixed'), I., a Jewish participant claimed that there were many services in Israel that are provided in Arabic and Israeli Arabs, in general "can get by without knowing Hebrew" (FG-3, 16). N., an Arab participant, claimed in response that this is not necessarily true. While many Arabs can speak Hebrew, not as many can read and write in Hebrew. The latter, according to her, do not easily get by when dealing with state services (FG-3, 18-20).

C., a participant in FG-1 ('Jewish-Secular') brought up this issue in response to B., who claimed that Israeli Arabs "can speak Hebrew" (FG-1, 89). According to C., the fact that Arabs can speak Hebrew does not mean that their reading and writing skills are necessarily good. She said that she had come into contact with numerous Israeli Arabs who were good speakers of Hebrew but not all of them could read and write in Hebrew (FG-1, 91-96).

From I.'s and C.'s arguments, we can infer that 'knowledge of Hebrew as a second language' is too general of an argument. It could be that Israeli Arabs generally meet the criterion of

'knowing Hebrew' but that does not mean that their access to services is straightforward. In the terms used above, this might not be considered a 'purely' functional argument since the lack of literacy skills is not an *absolute* obstacle to the enjoyment of state services. Nonetheless, it plays 'a functional role' where these services are concerned.

In this sub-section, we note that even a functional argument that would be easier to think of as a yes-or-no criterion has in-between or partial representations. This becomes apparent when considering sub-sectors within the minority group, when looking at different linguistic skills and when comparing 'no access at all' to 'convenient access'.

Symbolic Justifications

Another line of argument used to justify Arabic services in government offices was based on the fact that completing such tasks in Hebrew creates difficulties that are on an *emotional* level rather than a practical one. The core of these arguments is related to the issue of one's 'identity'. Arabic is perceived by some participants as an essential identity component of Arabic speakers. In this view, tasks such as completing forms and receiving information in a language one does not 'identify with' put the speaker in an awkward situation, regardless of his/her abilities to function in that language in terms of oral or literacy skills. Looking at specific examples, we get a better understanding of what participants meant by 'identity' or 'emotional obstacles'. In the discussion in FG-2 ('Jewish-Religious'), participants argued that such services should be available in Arabic for reasons of accessibility, following the line of the arguments presented above. The moderator asked whether this view still applies in a situation where all Arabic speakers are skilled in Hebrew. K. gave the following reply:

> *K: I think yes because it could be that they do not identify with Hebrew emotionally. It is completely legitimate because they are not Jewish and Hebrew is in some sense unique to the Jewish people.*
>
> *Moderator: what do you mean by 'they do not identify with Hebrew emotionally'?*

K: They are Arabs, they are not Jewish. They have their religion, they have their faith, they do not believe in the same things Jews believe in and they naturally do not identify with the language.

Moderator: So you're saying it would be more comfortable, easier for them to function in Arabic?

K: It would be more comfortable for them [to get services in Arabic] because it's their mother tongue but also easier emotionally… they would feel more, how should I put it? They would feel more 'true to themselves' when they get services in Arabic, because, I don't know, I look at myself, if I were in their place, in times of tension between Arabs and Jews, I would not feel so comfortable to get services and do all kinds of everyday life things in a language that is not mine. (FG-2, 110-114)

For K., then, these 'identity obstacles' are created by the need to function in a language which you do not see as 'your own', a language 'unique' to the other group, a language you do not feel 'authentic' using. K. understands this difficulty and claims that this is a good enough reason to enable Arabic speakers to receive these services in their language. From the quote, it is clear that this identity obstacle is rooted in the difference between the Jewish and the Arab groups and is intensified when the two groups are in political conflict.

U., a participant in FG-4 ('Arabs') described this view from his perspective as an Arabic speaker. Some participants in the group believed that it was not 'practical' to demand such services in Arabic. U. objected to this view and claimed that Arabs have the right to demand these services in Arabic because:

Language is the place of the individual, language is one's existence, especially in this state (FG-4, 126)

For U., language is an essential part of who a person is. It is clear that U. does not justify his demand for Arabic services on functional grounds but in connection with one's need to feel present in a linguistic situation. A situation in which Arabic speakers are required to fill in forms or receive information in Hebrew is a situation in which he/she **'does not have a place'** as an interlocutor.

Arabic forms and services in government offices were seen by some Arab participants as a legitimate tool for Arabic speakers to strengthen their status as a minority. According to them, Arabic should be used in government institutions to represent the fact that the Arab population is an integral part of Israeli society:

> *I think that services must be available in Arabic [in government offices] because we are two peoples living in one state. It is true that Israel is a Jewish state, but we are also entitled to have a place in this state, we live here too. (FG-4, 18)*

Here, the notion of 'having a place' through language is being used in the context of a group. The presence of Arabic in such public offices is a reflection of the Arabs' right, as a group, to be present as a distinct body in public places. The participants holding this view emphasized that this is not motivated by the need to facilitate the Arabs' access to services but rather as a symbolic act to make the point that Arabs are part of this state.

Symbolic Justifications– Reactions of the Majority Group

This link between practical services and symbolic justifications was very difficult for the majority group to accept. The general reaction towards these claims was that symbolic arguments are *not relevant* when considering practical services.

One representative example is L.'s reaction to K.'s argument about the Arabs' inability to 'identify emotionally' with Hebrew, which should justify the use of Arabic in government offices (see quote above). L.'s response was as follows:

> *I don't think the matter of identity is relevant here; it is simply easier for people to read in their mother tongue. I don't think we need to consider anything beyond that when discussing this issue [use of Arabic in government offices]. (FG-2, 128).*

The implementation of functional policies for symbolic justifications is viewed by the majority as a superfluous and costly gesture. For example, the suggestion to require the presence of Arabic speakers in government offices created much antagonism. It was seen as a waste of

state funds and more than that – as a threat to the employment possibilities of Jewish candidates.

V. was the person who initiated this discussion by advocating a policy requiring the hiring of Arabic speakers in government offices. For V., the availability of such a service should be directly related to the Arabs' status as Israeli citizens. In her view, it is a legitimate component of being an equal citizen. V. emphasized the fact that she was not referring specifically to areas with a significant Arab population but to all areas, including "Tel Aviv, Rishon Le-Zion or Ashdod[65]" (FG-2, 70-76). The other participants strongly objected to this view, expressing a concern that such a comprehensive policy may result in employing unqualified workers and in giving precedence to Arab workers over Jewish ones:

> *If you are forced to have an Arabic speaker in the staff, then you will end up employing someone simply because he can speak Arabic, even if he is not the most qualified person for the job. […] you will have to go through the trouble of finding someone who is fit for the job and is also an Arabic speaker instead of giving this job to someone who cannot speak Arabic but can do the job much more professionally. (FG-2 84, 94)*

These examples point out that putting functional services into practice on the basis of symbolic justifications is perceived as illegitimate and burdensome to the majority group. The idea that services should be funded by the state, not for the sake of accessibility but to fulfill other 'non-functional goals,' such as avoiding identity obstacles or strengthening the minority's sense of belonging to the state, is not tolerated very well.

4.4 Policy Scenario 2 – Arabic on Israeli Public Television

In this section, I discuss participants' positions regarding policies concerning the use of Arabic on Israeli public television. The participants were asked what role Arabic should have on Israeli public television. They were directed to refer to two types of channels – the national channel

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[65] These places were mentioned as examples of cities with a majority of Hebrew speakers. Jaffa which has a large Arab population is officially part of the municipality of Tel-Aviv; however, in this context, Tel Aviv is referred to without a connection to Jaffa.

('channel 1') and the two public-commercial channels ('channel 2' and 'channel 10'). We have defined 'Arabic on public television' as including both programs in Arabic and the use of Arabic subtitles for programs in other languages. In what follows, I focus on how the tension between the practical and symbolic elements was revealed in these discussions. I would like to show that unlike in the policies that are more 'practical' in nature, the close interaction between levels here is evident in all aspects of the issue discussed.

A Potential Functional Justification – News Material

Access to news information was perceived by participants as a vital practical issue. It was generally agreed that the demand to watch the news in one's first language is a legitimate one. Jewish participants were in general very sympathetic towards the idea that news information should be available to Arabs in Arabic. Jewish participants were able to identify with the difficulties one experiences when trying to consume this type of information in one's second language. A number of them mentioned their grandparents who speak Hebrew but nonetheless prefer to watch the news in their mother tongue – Arabic (FG-3, 281), Persian (FG-3, 309) etc. Although this is not a 'purely functional' justification in the sense that it focuses on convenience rather than 'no access at all', it was, in principle, legitimate in the eyes of the majority group.

However, despite the 'practical legitimacy' given to the Arabs' need to access news material in Arabic, the policy question was still debatable. In other words, it did not necessarily lead to the conclusion that there should be an Arabic newscast on Israeli public television. The additional parameter which, for some, played a role was whether this information was available from other sources. D. and M., Jewish participants in FG-1 and FG-3 expressed this claim:

> It's not that you cannot add broadcast hours in Arabic, but today, in the
> era of cable and satellite television, there is no point in that, it is
> completely passé. (FG-1, 395)

> In my opinion, today the issue of Arabic broadcast is not really a problem.
> In the past, there was only one public channel but today with the satellite
> channels, there is variety for everyone. (FG-3, 245)

The Arab participants generally confirmed this claim. When asked by the moderator if they watch the news on Israeli public television, only one participant claimed he did so on a regular basis. Some said they read the news on the internet (FG-4, 430) and the majority reported that they watched the news on the Arab channels, such as MBC and Al-Jazeera (FG-4, 457).

Thus, a policy that requires Arabic newscasts on Israeli public television is seen (from a functional point of view) as *not relevant,* as opposed to illegitimate. The functional justification does not seem to apply--not because it is theoretically illegitimate-- but because in the current context, it is not relevant. In this case too, although access to news material in Arabic is viewed as an essential demand, a state policy is rejected on other grounds – the fact that the information can be accessed through other sources. The reality that created access to news information from sources other than Israeli public television significantly reduced the strength of the functional reasoning.

This discussion, of course, leaves the question open as to whether the state has an obligation to broadcast news (and other) material in Arabic, regardless of the fact that it can be accessed from other sources. This obligation is based on reasons that go beyond ensuring Arabic speakers' access to information.

Symbolic Justifications

Although Arabic television is available to Israeli Arabs via sources other than Israeli public television, some participants have nevertheless acknowledged the need for its presence in this public sphere.

A number of justifications were given for the need to have a policy supporting Arab programs on Israeli public television for 'symbolic reasons'. Two main arguments will be described:

Arabic Television as a Means of Showing Respect towards Arabic Speakers

A number of discursive events made it clear that the place of Arabic on Israeli public television is seen by Arabs as a way *to show respect* towards the Arab sector as a collective and towards speakers of Arabic as individuals. When the extent of Arabic programs, time of broadcast or content is problematic, it is experienced as an act of disrespect towards Arabic speakers.

A very emotional incident that took place in FG-3 ('Mixed') highlights this issue. The group discussed the role Arabic should have on Israeli public television. E., a Jewish participant suggested allocating a non-primetime slot for speakers of minority languages. N., an Arab participant, took this suggestion to be very offensive:

> *E: There should be specific hours, they should designate, for example, 6 to 8 o'clock in the evening on a certain channel to programs for the different cultures in Israel.*
>
> *N: Excuse me, are you the only ones who work? Are you the only ones who go to work and come back in the evening?*
>
> *E: This is not what I said, I simply made a suggestion*
>
> *N: We work, we do everything. Why can't we watch television in the evening? I did not come here to fight but I hate it when people are being so racist. I don't have anything against anyone in the world but when I hear such things I get really upset. What is convenient for you is not convenient for me?*
>
> *E: First of all this is not racism, there is no need to exaggerate*
>
> *N: I don't know, this is how I see it, you've really given me food for thought. (FG-3, 283-300)*

In N.'s eyes, the idea of having Arabic programs on 'niche hours' is disrespectful. It fails to see Arabs as individuals with schedules, plans, and leisure time similar to that of any other (Israeli) adult. In other words, programs in Arabic or with Arabic subtitles on 'popular' slots send Arabs the message that their needs are appreciated and are taken into consideration by decision makers.

Another comment that expresses a feeling of being disrespected concerns the age groups to which Arabic programs are targeted. Some Arab participants claim that a significant portion of Arabic programs on Israeli public television are programs for children:

> *At the moment we get only 'babies' milk'. We want more programs for adults (FG-4, 455)*

This statement clarifies the idea that a policy needs to respect its target population by addressing all levels of the population. A policy that deals with television programs for a certain group and does not sincerely acknowledge the needs of the adult population leaves the target group with a feeling that they are being offered 'babies' milk', not the appropriate material for their levels, needs and areas of interests.

Arabic Television as a Means of Strengthening the Arabs' Sense of Equal Citizenship

An additional line of reasoning dealt with the function of Arabic programs to make the Arabs feel 'present' as a *significant* group within Israeli society. This issue should consider their size in the population and their right to have control over the material directed at their sector.

P., an Arab participant, claimed that in order for Arabs to feel that they are represented in a decent manner, and for their language to receive its appropriate place, the proportion of programs in Arabic should reflect the Arabs' proportion in the population, that is, about one-fifth of the programs:

> *If I had to give scores from 0 to 10 to these channels [channel 1 and*
> *channels 2 and 10] in relation to the use of Arabic, I would give them all*
> *'0'. '10' means that Arabic is represented in a decent way. What I would*
> *like to see is 20% representation of Arabic on these channels, both in*
> *terms of the programs and in terms of the staff. (FG-4, 431)*

For P., one of the key elements to feeling 'represented' is the amount of broadcast time. A policy that would make Arabic speakers feel that their language is present would take into account the number of Arabs in the population and 'translate' it into actual broadcast slots. Public television is viewed as a public sphere that should mirror the relative size of social groups in society.

D., a Jewish participant, makes a clear distinction between the functional and symbolic elements in the use of Arabic on Israeli public television. Public television for him is a cultural sphere in which Arabs are entitled to be present:

> *It is more a matter of Arabs' right to have their share in the dominant culture, the Israeli culture. The practical issue of having access to information is not really relevant here (FG-1, 424)*

Another issue presented by Jewish participants in two of the groups (FG-1 and FG-3) portrays the matter of Arabic on public television as a potential for the *autonomous* actions of the minority.

R. from FG-3 claimed that newscasts for the Arab population should be done by Arabs in Arabic. It is inevitable, in her view, that 'Jewish' newscasts "are biased" and "represent the Jewish point of view" (FG-3, 272; 281). She believed that this was not something Arabic subtitles could solve and that the only way to overcome this problem is by giving Arabs control over the entire process.

D. from FG-1 presented a similar view. For him, programs targeting the Arab sector, over which Arabs do not have full control, are patronizing and arrogant on the part of the state.

> *I don't think there is room for these special programs for the Arab sector like there used to be in the past. They were 'talking' to the Arab sector but it was basically a hidden Zionist propaganda. The state was trying to promote all kinds of Jewish- Zionist values… no wonder that when they first had a chance, Israeli Arabs 'escaped' to Arab channels which don't have these pedagogical pretensions. (FG-1, 362)*

What is evident from these examples is the fact that the use of Arabic, the minority's mother tongue, on public television goes well beyond the minority's practical need to access information in the speakers' first language. Although it was generally agreed by the participants that Arabs do not use Arabic broadcasts on Israeli public television as their main source of information, it did not make these broadcasts unnecessary. It seems that the state's obligation to facilitate this service does not 'stop' at the practical level – it is viewed as an important tool to strengthen the minority's status as a group, to their feeling appreciated, and so on. This concerns not only the very existence of Arabic programs (or subtitled programs) but also the time slot, the target age group, the group's control over content etc.

Symbolic Justifications – The Majority Group Reactions

A number of discursive events that took place in the Jewish groups (FG-1 and FG-2) illustrate the participants' responses towards the symbolic roles of Arabic programs on public television. The first two concern the possibility of broadcasting a program in Arabic on primetime in one of the two public-commercial, Israeli channels – channel 2 and channel 10.

D: I think that 20% of broadcast hours for Arabic programs or Arabic subtitles is reasonable, but it should be spread out, not just on primetime

C: primetime?? Do you mean that there will be a program in Arabic at 9 in the evening on channel 2 or 10?

D: I guess people will protest against it

C: People will definitely protest

D: Maybe once every few weeks

C: So families can have quality time with their children (laughing)

(FG-1, 412-419)

Z: If something like that happens [Arabic program on a popular slot], there will be riots. There are people who are really sensitive to these things.

Moderator: What do you mean "riots"?

Z: if there is a program in Arabic people will ban it and make sure the rating is low

Moderator: Do you agree with Z. that Arabic programs on these channels will 'create riots'?

S: Yes, if this is done on primetime it will really freak everyone out.

(FG-2, 291-293)

The slot that the participants discuss (programs broadcast around 9pm on the public-commercial channels) is mainly occupied with entertainment programs. Some may claim it is the 'holy of holies' of Israeli popular culture, not so much in terms of quality, but certainly in terms of popularity. It is for many, as C. said, an activity shared by the whole family. It is reasonable, then, to assume that the participants are not referring to newscasts or other programs of the informational type. The 'militant' terminology used by the participants ('riots', 'protest') makes it clear that Arabic is not welcome in this cultural sphere. C. was completely amazed at D.'s suggestion and responded with a cynical comment. Z. was indeed surprised but mainly angry and expressed her objection very firmly. For these participants, Israeli primetime television is not a legitimate place to fight for Arabic's public role and for the importance of its presence.

The other discursive event evolved in response to the moderator's question whether there should be more Arabic programs on channel 1 and channels 2 and 10 or more Arabic subtitles. G. opened by answering the following:

> *G: No, I don't think there should be more programs in Arabic because it is annoying. I'm telling you this from my experience. When I sit at home and want to watch something and all the channels broadcast Arabic programs like on Friday mornings, it is really annoying.*
>
> *Moderator: G. said that programs in Arabic are annoying, Is it annoying because you do not understand the language?*
>
> *G: No, it is annoying… I don't know… because I personally don't like the language. When you watch television you want to relax and watch something you like…*
>
> *K: Yes, and it is also the issues they discuss, they are not really relevant for us. They always talk about minority rights and how they are being discriminated against*
>
> *S: Yes, it's too heavy*
>
> *K: I don't really relate to these issues, so that's why I can't watch these programs and that's why I don't want them to be broadcast. (FG-2, 290-321)*

What is clear from this discussion is that Israeli public television is not perceived as a legitimate arena for the Arab minority to lead social struggles and to attempt to promote their status as a collective. Public television, whether on primetime or not, is a 'place' where people 'can relax'. If the language or the content are not in line with the majority's preferences – if they 'don't like the language' or 'do not relate to the issues'-- then there is no room for it.

Two main things emerged from the example of Arabic programs on public television in relation to the functional/symbolic elements of such a policy. The first concerns *the tension between the two levels*. We saw that (in theory) the two elements were present as justifications for the policy. The functional element was expressed mainly in the form of access to news material and the symbolic ones concerned the importance of using Arabic on public television for the Arabs' sense of equal and respected citizenship. In practice, it became evident that the functional justification is weak due to the availability of information from other sources. This, however, did not lessen the importance of the other, symbolic reasoning. Participants expressed the wish to see Arabic used on public television, not so much in order to enable Arabic speakers' access to information, but in order for them to feel represented, to feel that they are part of a valuable and autonomous group etc. In other words, the symbolic goals turned out to be important goals in their own right and were not perceived merely as *a potential positive outcome* of a policy concerned with instrumental functions.

The second issue concerns the response of the majority group. The use of Arabic on public television for non-concrete purposes did not gain much support. However, what is important to note is that there was no 'objection in principle' to the idea of assigning symbolic objectives to a policy with (potential) functional elements. The participants viewed the presence of Arabic on public television as an act that may compromise their personal comfort. A situation, in which one is 'forced' to watch a program in Arabic when one expects to have quality time with the family or simply relax, is perceived as awkward and uncomfortable. The participants do not deny the legitimacy of the symbolic arguments in this context. They simply do not want the implementation of such goals to take place in 'their' timeslots or on 'their' channels. This differs from the responses towards symbolic justifications for Arabic administration, which denied the legitimacy of these arguments all together. There, the idea that instrumental policies, such as

services in Arabic in government offices, should be based solely on symbolic justifications was very difficult to accept. Here, it seems acceptable for the majority group that Arabs demand the use of Arabic on public television for reasons other than access to information. However, this is tolerable as long as it is not done on the majority's turf.

4.5 **Policy Scenario 3 – The use of Arabic in the Israeli Parliament ('The Knesset')**

Here, I examine the functional/symbolic discourse in relation to a policy that is more 'symbolic in nature'. The policy discussed relates to the ability of Arab parliament members ('Knesset members') to make speeches in Arabic during Knesset sessions[66]. The participants were asked whether this is a procedure that the state should allow and support.

Functional Justifications

Despite the salient symbolic element, discussions around the practical issues were present too. Interestingly, this was the issue that emerged first in most cases– whether the absence of such a policy would create a concrete practical obstacle to Arab speakers. Two elements were brought up: the first concerned the Arab Knesset members and the second concerned the general Arab sector.

The first practical issue the participants brought up was the importance of this policy in enabling Arab Knesset members to express themselves easily and accurately, using their mother tongue during Knesset sessions.

This argument was not acceptable for most of the participants, who objected to this policy. The general claim against this argument was that if a person 'managed to become a Knesset member', then it was fair to assume that his/her level of knowledge of the majority language is high enough to express him/herself freely in that language. Additionally, it was claimed that

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[66] Arab Knesset members in Israel are allowed to use Arabic in Knesset sessions provided they give a notice in advance (see Deutch, 2005). In practice, this right is very rarely exercised.

demanding that minority speakers in official positions be fluent in the dominant language is legitimate, as C. from FG-1 put it:

> *I think that in general, people in official positions should know the dominant language. Israeli Arabs in such positions know the language, they don't have any problem expressing themselves in Hebrew. (FG-1, 446-7)*

The other practical issue that emerged was the importance of this policy in giving the general Arab population access to matters discussed by its representatives in the Knesset. This argument was not persuasive enough in the eyes of the participants to justify the policy either. The symbolic issues involved in these discussions turned out to be so strong that they overshadowed the possible consequences of a situation in which Arabic speakers are unable to (fully) comprehend what is being said by their representatives.

Symbolic Justifications

The 'Laconic Arguments'

The first line of arguments opposing an Arabic policy in the Knesset may be characterized as 'laconic'. Participants did not feel the need to add any explanations to a general claim, according to which it is Hebrew that should be used in the Knesset. This can be seen in the following quotes from three Jewish participants in three of the groups:

> *Y: In the Knesset people must speak Hebrew and that's it! (FG-3, 337)*

> *S: Arab Knesset members have to speak Hebrew in the Knesset, full stop. (FG-2, 390)*

> *C: I don't think Arab Knesset members should be allowed to make speeches in Arabic, because… ah… in the Knesset people must speak Hebrew (FG-1, 434)*

The firm terminology ('that's it', 'full stop') used by Y. and S. sends the message that further explanations are simply not required. The view that the majority language is the language that must be used in the Knesset is almost axiomatic. C. is looking for a justification for her

argument but after pausing settles for the general statement. It's important to note that participants were not so laconic regarding their positions for or against policy suggestions in any of the other discussions.

Why is it then that the use of Hebrew in the Knesset is perceived as so central? What is it about the use of Arabic in the parliament that creates such antagonism? The following more 'reasoned' discursive events shed light on these issues.

Official Status – The ad hoc Criterion

> *D: We need to look at what is done in other places*
>
> *C: In other places they speak the language of the state*
>
> *D: In Switzerland there is an Italian minority and they speak Italian in the parliament*
>
> *B: If there is more than one official language, that's something else*
>
> *D: Arabic is an official language in Israel. I think you have a problem with this piece of information*
>
> *C: Ahh, I don't think so*
>
> *D: The official languages in Switzerland are French, German and Italian so they can make speeches in any of the languages with simultaneous translation. In Israel the [official] languages are Hebrew and Arabic so why can't they make speeches in Arabic?*
>
> *C: I don't think it's the same thing, not at all*
>
> *D: So you don't accept the criterion of official language*
>
> *C: No, I don't want Arab Knesset Members to make speeches in Arabic*
>
> *(FG-1, 432-441)*

The reason B. and C. are trying to use in their objection to the use of Arabic in the Knesset is 'officiality'. First, they seem to agree that Israel should follow the policies applied in other

countries where the right to use a minority language by its speakers in the parliament is derived from its official status. This arrangement, in theory, seems reasonable and fair to them. When they find out that this is indeed the situation in Israel too – that Arabic is recognized by law as an official language-- they withdraw their argument. The criterion of 'officiality' is good in theory and may be the appropriate one for other countries, but not for Israel. This 'comparative approach', according to which one justifies an argument by giving evidence based on what is done in other places or fields, collapses when it fails to be in line with B.'s and C.'s beliefs. What they argue is that something unique in the Israeli context prevents them from tolerating a situation in which Arabic would be used in the Knesset.

Representation

- Language as Representative of the State

This line of reasoning is based on the well-known argument that creates the link between the Jewish characteristics of the state and the use of Hebrew as its automatic and obvious manifestation. Since the Knesset is Israel's 'representative body' it should give rise to 'Israeli symbols' – Hebrew being one of the most central ones. Hence, Hebrew, 'Israel's language', is the language that Knesset members must use. A Jewish participant in FG-3 stated this argument:

> *This is something more symbolic. We live in Israel, a state where the dominant language is Hebrew. As a Knesset member you represent the entire state, it is only appropriate that you speak Hebrew. (FG-3, 344)*

> *S: They [Arab Knesset members] set an example, they have to speak Hebrew*

> *Moderator: Set an example for whom?*

> *S: For the people, they are Knesset members*

> *L: They are representatives*

> *S: Exactly, they represent the people, so first and foremost they have to speak Hebrew to set an example …[interrupted] (FG-2, 390-394)*

For S., Arab Knesset members, like any other Knesset member, are representatives of Israel and therefore should set an example to the Israeli public by using Hebrew. Interestingly, the term S. is using is '(a) people'. Strictly speaking, this term may mean 'nation' referring to the State of Israel. However, this term in Hebrew ('AM) is used as part of the phrase 'the Jewish people' and not 'the Israeli people'. This is not to say that S. claims that Arab Knesset members are representatives of the Jewish people, but it certainly indicates that the Knesset is strongly associated with Israeli-*Jewish* characteristics.

- Language as Representative of the Minority Group

While Arab Knesset members are part of Israel's 'representative body', they are also the representatives of their own sector. As stated above, the use of Hebrew was viewed as a significant element in the role of Knesset members as representatives of the state. The question now is to what extent the use of Arabic by Arab Knesset members is viewed as an important element in their role as representatives of their Arabic-speaking sector. Some Arab participants have indeed claimed that they would like Arab Knesset members to speak Arabic in the Knesset to feel they are 'being represented' (FG-4, 501-6). V., a Jewish participant in FG-2 raised this issue in response to S.'s arguments above regarding the need for Arab Knesset members 'to set an example' (repeated here):

> *S: They [Arab Knesset members] set an example, they have to speak Hebrew*
>
> *Moderator: Set an example for whom?*
>
> *S: For the people, they are Knesset members*
>
> *L: They are representatives*
>
> *S: Exactly, they represent these people, so first and foremost they have to speak Hebrew to set an example to…*
>
> *V: But they represent their sector too*
>
> *S: OK, they do so by being Knesset members (FG-2, 390-396)*

For S., The presence of an elected Arab in the Knesset satisfies the representation of the Arab sector in the parliament. Something similar was claimed by P., an Arab participant:

> *They [Arab Knesset members] may speak in Arabic or in Hebrew, it doesn't matter to me as long as they stand there [in the Knesset] and state in front of everyone what the demands of the Arabs living in this state are. (FG-4, 497)*

What P. is basically saying is that the parliamentary work of Arab Knesset members determines how successfully Arabs are represented and how well their voice is heard. The language in which it is conducted is less important to attain that goal.

- What is 'a representative body'?

In the following discursive event, B., a participant in FG-1, uses the 'representative argument' to draw the line between legitimate and non-legitimate Arabic services. When the argument is challenged, it becomes evident that it might not be so obvious what 'representative' means in this context:

> ***B****: As a Jew living here in Israel I don't have a problem with simultaneous translation or any other service in Arabic, the question is why it is done*
>
> ***D****: But you stop when it comes to the Knesset*
>
> ***B****: That's right (laughs)*
>
> ***D****: It's interesting*
>
> ***B****: The Knesset is a representative body, it's an official body of the state*
>
> ***D****: The court is also an official body*
>
> ***B****: I don't know, it seems different to me, I don't know how to explain it*
>
> ***D****: This is probably something beyond logic*
>
> ***C****: No, it's not beyond logic, it seems very logical to me*

B: See, in court, if an Arabic speaker wants the trial to be carried out in Arabic because it concerns him and he wants to understand every word of it, then I think it's his right

D: The Supreme Court too?

B: Yes, if the court discusses his matter, yes

D: OK, so the Supreme Court, another small leap and we are in the Knesset

[everyone laughs]

B. starts by claiming that the important thing for determining various Arabic policies is the functions that they are supposed to fulfill – or in our terminology – their 'justifications'. She seems to support any kind of Arabic policy as long as it is justified. However, she agrees that when the Knesset is concerned, this statement does not apply. When she tries to give a reason why the Knesset is a place where Arabic services are not legitimate, she claims that "the Knesset is a representative body," "an official body of the state." D. confronts her with another 'official body of the state' – the court – an arena in which the use of Arabic is potentially more legitimate.

The dialogue that develops between B. and D. on this matter is very interesting because it attempts to capture the specific place where this 'legitimacy line' should be drawn. B. claims that the Knesset is different from other official bodies since it goes beyond the private matters of an individual. Put in our terms, the court is a legitimate place in which to provide services in Arabic and the Knesset is not, based on 'practical elements'. When B. agrees that the Supreme Court may also fall under the definition of 'practical', the argument collapses. Since the Supreme Court is viewed by Israelis as an institution of extremely high public significance, it is clear that once it has been included in the category of 'legitimate for the use of Arabic', the representative argument falls apart.

Accessibility of the Majority

The following discursive events highlight the functional issue from a different perspective than we have seen thus far. Up until now, I have referred to 'accessibility' as linguistic material provided for the minority group. In other words, it refers to the ability of minority speakers to access information that is relevant to them, and the problems that may arise when such information is not provided in their mother tongue. During the discussions of the possibility of enabling Arab Knesset members to use Arabic in Knesset sessions, participants used the accessibility argument to justify their objection to such a policy:

> *G: In the case of the Knesset, the majority of Knesset members speak Hebrew, so it is much more reasonable to speak Hebrew. It is more convenient and more accessible to everyone. (FG-3, 343)*

When the possibility of simultaneous translation was raised in FG-3, the position among the group members remained in opposition:

> *M: What is said during Knesset sessions is broadcast nationally. You cannot expect a state with a majority of Hebrew speakers to listen to someone who speaks in Arabic (FG-3, 349)*

G. and M. are concerned that the use of Arabic by Arab Knesset members would be inconvenient for the majority of Knesset members who are not Arabic speakers and for the entire population when watching or listening to Knesset sessions. What may be inferred from this argument is that practical procedures, such as using translation or subtitles, are too high a price for the majority group to pay in order to enable the minority group representatives to speak in their mother tongue in the parliament-- no matter what the 'non-practical' benefits for the minority may be. V compares these two elements succinctly:

> *I do not agree [with S.] that Arab Knesset members should speak Hebrew to set an example to the public. They are the representatives of their sector. I think they should speak Hebrew in the Knesset only because it is important that everyone understand what is being said. There are 120 Knesset members and the majority of them do not speak Arabic. (FG-2, 398)*

It is important for V. to clarify that she acknowledges the representative role of Arab Knesset members in the eyes of their sector. At the same time, the practical obstacle of not being able to comprehend the minority language justifies the objection to the use of this language in the Knesset.[67]

The following dialogue between D. and C. from FG-1 illuminates an additional issue related to the majority's ability to access what is being said by the minority's representatives. D. is trying to understand why C. is concerned about not understanding what is being said in the Knesset by Arab Knesset members:

> *C: We should be able to understand what they [Arab Knesset members]*
> *are saying when they speak in the Knesset*
>
> *D: Are you afraid they will say things you don't like?*
>
> *C: They can say it in Hebrew, and they do. I sometimes listen to Arab*
> *Knesset members on the radio, they definitely talk, they have no problem*
> *expressing themselves and I don't have any problem with that, I don't*
> *have any problem with them expressing their opinions*
>
> *D: So if they say the same things you don't like in Arabic, does it matter?*
>
> *C: Yes, it matters. It matters to me. […] when Knesset members make*
> *speeches there are reporters, people watch it on television, people listen*
> *to it on the radio, I want to be able to understand what they are saying.*
> *(FG-1, 466-474)*

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[67] See in this context Justice Ya'akobi-Sh'vili's claims when dealing with demands of Western Galilee College students to allow posting of signs in Arabic around the campus (H.P 156/99 Student Union Western Galilee College v. Western Galilee College P.M (1), 744). According to Justice Ya'akobi-Sh'vili, forbidding the posting of signs in Arabic does not violate the principle of equality since 'it is possible to assume that all (Western Galilee College) college students read and write Hebrew well, as Hebrew is the language of instruction in this institution' (p. 748). According to him, posting signs in Arabic is more likely to create inequality in the opposite direction (idem. section 6) in which the majority of students would not be able to read the ads in Arabic while all Arab students would be able to read the ads if they were published in Hebrew.

What seems to be the issue here is C.'s concern of not *having control* over what is being said by Arab Knesset members. She claims that they are entitled to express their opinions freely on the media, but the possibility that it would be done without Hebrew speakers having the ability to comprehend what is being said is intolerable. The context of Knesset sessions makes it especially difficult since the information is widely publicized. The issue is not the trouble majority members would have to go through in order to access the material, but the feeling of helplessness regarding the idea that 'negative' things would be said in a significant body, such as the parliament.

In what ways do these issues about the use of Arabic in the Israeli Knesset enhance our understanding of the functional/symbolic elements? At the center of the discourse we find 'symbolic arguments', or arguments based on non-concrete outcomes or benefits to the speakers. However, contrary to what we have seen so far concerning other policies, these arguments involve the symbolic concerns of *both groups*. The issue of the use of Arabic in the Knesset created *two competing symbolic arguments*, one from the point of view of the minority group and one from that of the majority group. The first is *Arabic should be used in the parliament to strengthen the minority's sense of having a unique place*. This was based on the role of Arab Knesset members as representatives of their sector and the use of their mother tongue in the Knesset to symbolize that role.

The second states that: *Arabic should **not** be used in the parliament since it is a body with 'symbolic meanings' for the majority groups*. This was based on the centrality of Hebrew as the symbol of the Israeli-Jewish state. In this way, the use of Arabic in the Knesset is a potential threat to the Jewish characteristics of the state.

As noted, the notions of 'symbolism' and 'representation' were repeatedly challenged. Regarding the symbolic role the use of Arabic may have for the minority groups, majority group members generally stated that their own concerns about the characteristics of the state are more relevant. Among minority members, although they agreed that the Knesset has a representative function for their sector, they did not all see the use of Arabic in the Knesset as a necessary manifestation of this function.

Additionally, participants' attempts to define 'representative' by placing it in opposition to 'functionality' were far from straightforward. The attempt to draw a line between legitimate and non-legitimate language policies on the basis of 'representative vs. functional' failed when the Knesset was compared to another public sphere – the Supreme Court.

The functional considerations of the minority group-- such as the ability of Arab Knesset members to express themselves easily or the access of the Arab sector in general to that information-- were not absent from the discourse but were considerably overshadowed by the symbolic concerns of the majority group. Interestingly, the potential use of Arabic in the Knesset led to the problem of accessibility on the part of the *majority group* – something we did not come across in the discussions surrounding other policies. Participants from the majority group were concerned about the fact that they would not be able to comprehend what was being said in the minority language or that they would be forced to rely on interpreting or subtitles. The significance of a body like the parliament made this possibility extremely problematic.

4.6 The Functional/Symbolic Distinction as a (De)-legitimizing Mechanism – Three Concluding Patterns

Three 'policy scenarios' were used above to explore the functional/symbolic discourse: Arabic forms and office hours in government services, the use of Arabic on public television and the use of Arabic by Arab Knesset members during Knesset sessions. Both functional and symbolic arguments were used by the participants in their pro and counter arguments regarding these policies. One very clear pattern emerged in the use of the functional/symbolic tension to legitimize (or de-legitimize) the need for the aforementioned language polices. Three such argumentation patterns can be identified:

Irrelevant Functional Justifications

Most of the functional arguments were viewed *in theory* as legitimate and important. They concerned minority speakers' right to access news information and to function properly when interacting with the state administration. However, for many of the participants, these

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arguments were not strong enough to justify the relevant policies since they were perceived as hypothetical in the current context. The rationale of the argument was not rejected, but when applied to the context of Arabic speakers in Israel, it fell apart. The claim was that Arabic speakers were entitled to these functional benefits, but that they were able to access them without an explicit state policy sanctioning the use of their language. This was based on two main reasons:

a. The minority's competence in the majority language
b. The availability of information in their mother tongue from outside sources.

In an attempt to legitimize these arguments, it was suggested that functionality be viewed in a way that allowed for 'partially functional' justifications. Thus, it was claimed that a functional argument may still justify a language policy even if it applied in limited amounts to the minority population. Another such partially functional argument demanded the acknowledgement of inconveniences and inefficiencies that may occur when one functions in a second language, despite being skilled in it. This, it was claimed, was a valid functional argument and extremely relevant to Arabic speakers in Israel.

An additional attempt to legitimize these functional arguments in quite an unusual way highlighted the reason why the functional need had become irrelevant. Minority group members claimed that the need to become skilled in Hebrew 'was forced on Israeli Arabs' since they were not given alternatives when interacting with the state. In this way, de-legitimizing Arabs' right for language services on the basis of their knowledge of Hebrew would be 'adding insult to injury'.

Exigent Symbolic Justifications (for the majority)

Some symbolic justifications were de-legitimized on the basis that they were a burden to the majority group. This was the outcome of a situation in which symbolic benefits were argued for *separately* from functional ones. When it was acknowledged that the use of the minority language was desired for reasons such as promoting the minority's sense of equal citizenship and not for the sake of concrete benefits, the policy was viewed as unjustified. Participants

were unable to justify a policy that required the use of the minority language on the basis of symbolic benefits alone. For example, the idea of requiring the use of Arabic in government offices strictly for the sake of making Arabic more visible and present in a public domain was viewed as a waste of state funds. Similarly, extending the use of Arabic on public television primarily for the benefit of showing respect towards Arabs' language and culture was considered problematic. The cost of such an act for the majority group was seen as too high as it infringed on their leisure time. What was at stake here was the idea that the core of a language policy is functional. In other words, symbolic benefits to the minority are acceptable, but only as an 'added value' to the functional ones. They are not legitimate in their own right.

Intimidating Functional and Symbolic Justifications

Certain arguments to justify the use of a minority language were rejected on the basis of being perceived as a threat to the majority's symbolic interests. When a policy concerned a domain with an exceptional significance to the majority group, both types of justifications were discarded. This was evident mainly when the use of Arabic in the Knesset was considered. The symbolic interests of the majority group overshadowed any argument made in favor of the policy. The use of the minority language in such an institution was viewed by the minority as symbolizing the Arabs' existence as a distinct and meaningful political body. In opposition to this, the concerns of the majority group focused on the Jewish characteristics of the state, symbolized by the exclusive use of Hebrew. What became evident was that when the minority's symbolic interests clashed with those of the majority, the latter would take precedence. To put it bluntly, the symbolic interests of the majority are perceived as more important than those of the minority.

Moreover, when the symbolic interests of the majority are at stake, *functional interests* too are overshadowed. The symbolic element of using Hebrew, the majority language, in the Knesset is so strong that it makes the need to facilitate the Arabs' access to what is being said irrelevant. The majority group, which in most other cases felt the need to deal with the minority's functional demands and to refer to the issues practically, disregarded such arguments on the basis of its 'symbolic interests' – in this case, the Jewish characteristics of the state. Many of the

other functional arguments were indeed rejected, but not before the functional elements were considered. Here, the minority's functional interests (e.g., convenient access) were not treated as the core of the matter – they were basically overlooked. Thus, the message sent to the minority is that their functional interests are not taken into account *unconditionally*. In other words, the minority's right to function properly without their language being an obstacle is not a completely stable right that is valid in all contexts and under all circumstances.

5. THE QUESTION OF ARABIC'S OFFICIAL STATUS IN THE DISCOURSE OF DECISION MAKERS IN ISRAEL

5.1 Official Languages

In this chapter, I examine the official status of Arabic as it is reflected in the discourse of decision makers in Israel. The assumption is that the official status of a language is a crucial part of the discourse dealing with the language policy regarding that language. On the one hand, the official status provides the legal foundation on which the practical language policy should be based. On the other hand, it is also a tool through which one can understand the public position of the language, and the chances of any language policy's success. Allegedly, it could be claimed that this is an issue without complicity. Thus, a language could be either one or the other – with an official status or without. The implications of a language that has an official status should derive directly from the legal document that dictated it. Nonetheless, in Israel, as in many other countries, the situation is more complex.

The stance of official languages in different countries is reflected in different ways, and may be interpreted in various ways (see discussion in Shohamy, 2006 p. 61-3). Yet, it seems that one can refer to certain commonalities concerning all official languages. These languages are granted official recognition by the government, and are anchored in some kind of legal document, at times by the state's constitution, but not always. The official recognition includes an obligation of state authorities to conduct their official activities, their legal system, the arms of administration and so forth in that language. Such a general description of an official language is provided in a report published by the UN regarding indigenous minorities. In section 14 titled 'Language', an official language is described like this:

> [a] "language used in the business of government (legislative, executive, administrative and judicial) and in the performance of the various other functions of the state"[68]

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[68] Study of the Problem of Discrimination Against Indigenous Populations, UN Doc. E/CN.4/Sub.2/476/Add.6

This is the most basic common denominator. However, states differ widely in their interpretation of official status and their in-practice language policies. These differences are connected to factors like the manner in which the official position expresses an attitude towards its speakers, the historical context in which the official status was determined, the way in which official languages reflect the linguistic reality and so on.

McRae's (1975) *minority versus equality* criterion is one characterization of this phenomenon. According to the *minority model*, the state provides special language rights for its officially recognized linguistic minorities, which are numerically or socially weaker. The *equality model* applies to states that attempt to place two or more official languages "on a relatively equal footing before the law" (p. 42). Welsh in England and Wales is McRae's example of the first category. Swedish in Finland is one of McRae's examples of the second category as a language that enjoys formal equality with Finnish in spite of the numerical disparity of its speakers. The minority/equality criterion allows for the two models to take place in the same country; McRae classifies Belgium as operating according to the equality model with regard to French and Dutch, and according to the minority model with regard to German. Additionally, states such as Canada and Belgium, which exhibited a shift in their formal language regime from the minority model to the majority model, reflect, according to McRae, a tension between the language groups concerning which of the models is appropriate.

Another criterion for examining policies towards official languages is the '*territoriality/ personality principle*', also proposed by McRae in his 1975 article. According to the territoriality principle, language policies are determined based on the territory in question. Thus, in a certain territory, one language is officially recognized for public matters. According to the personality principle, an individual is entitled to public services in his/her own language regardless of where he/she chooses to reside. This principle was introduced and found useful by various other researchers (Myhill, 1999; Patten, 2003; Paulston, 1997; Réaume, 2003).

Saban (2002) describes the official status of language as a reflection of the form of governance. He distinguishes between three types of states. The first are bi/multinational states, such as Belgium and Canada, which view the nation's languages as an expression of cooperation

between the communities. The second includes civic nation-states, such as India and South Africa, which acknowledge several minority languages in an attempt to lessen national tension. The third are ethnic nation-states, such as Malaysia and Slovakia, which acknowledge only the language spoken by the majority.

5.2 **Two Cases**

As mentioned, the description of the official status of languages is riddled with problematic terminology. The vagueness and lack of clarity in the term 'officiality' leaves room for multiple interpretations. This point can be clarified through several examples.

One example is connected to the process of Romansh becoming an official language in Switzerland. Cathamos (1993) describes the events that led to the adoption of Romansh as a national language in 1938 in the constitution of Switzerland. In the first few decades of the 20th century, as part of a wider struggle for the recognition of the rights and the status of Romansh speakers, a few demands regarding the promotion of the language's position, such as a demand for official recognition from the confederation, were put forth in the canton of Grisons. Up until that date, French, German and Italian were considered to be national languages in Switzerland's constitution. The legal change that was accepted in 1938 determined that Romansh would become one of the country's four spoken languages, but not an official language. It was determined that the position of an official language is one which forces the authorities to conduct all their activities in this language, and this obligation does not apply to Romansh, except for the possibility speakers would have of referring to the authorities in their language. This move did not change the practical situation of Romansh speakers at all, since the right to approach the government in their own language was given to them prior to the legal alteration.

However, the fact that the Romansh language became a national one was crucial to ensuring that the political issue of the Romansh-speaking minority was included in the public discourse and even to a broader discussion regarding the national nature of the confederation and its attitude towards minorities.

The link that this arrangement created between an 'official status' and a 'national language' is not trivial. Prior to the inclusion of Romansh to the list of official languages in Switzerland, the phrase 'national language' was interpreted as one of a symbolic-declarative meaning, as well as functional one regarding the state's obligation to conduct its business in that language. The legislator, whose declared aim was to remove the administrative obligations (and the economic ones that derive from it) towards Romansh, chose to do so by separating these two elements of 'national language'. In this way, a 'national language' carries within it a symbolic-declarative element alone, whereas an 'official language' allows practical conduct on an administrative level. With that, the Romansh speakers were granted a political achievement (an acknowledgment of being one of the groups the Swiss confederation is build on) but were obstructed from the opportunity to make demands on a procedural level.

Another example is the position of the Albanian language in the Macedonian Republic. The Albanian minority in Macedonia is an indigenous national minority that includes about twenty five per cent of the population in the Macedonian Republic. In the constitution of Macedonia, which was legislated in 1991, the Macedonian language was declared to be "the official language" the republic[69]. In addition, it was stated that in areas "where the majority of the inhabitants" or "a considerable number of inhabitants" are of one nation, their language, in addition to the Macedonian language, would be considered an official language[70]. In August 2001, the Ohrid Accord was signed, and ended the violent struggle that took place between the national groups of the republic. The Albanian minority's success in receiving recognition as a national group is most clearly expressed in the subject of language. Following this accord, the aforementioned section in the constitution was changed, and now states that in areas where at least twenty per cent of the population is of one nation, their language is the official one-- in addition to the Macedonian language[71]. The Albanian language is not directly referred to as an official language in the language section, and the small section relating to languages still

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[69] Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia (November 1991) Section 7(1).
www.servat.unibe.ch/icl/mk00000_.html (last visited April 2008).
[70] Idem. Section 7(2,3)
[71] Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia (November 2001). Section 7(2)
www.minelres.lv/NationalLegislation/Macedonia/Macedonia_Const2001. (last visited April 2008).

addresses the Macedonian language alone. The Ohrid Accord, however, makes it clear that the goal of this change was to promote the status of the Albanian language, as stated in section 7 in the appendix:

> *"The Assembly shall amend by the end of the term of the present Assembly its Rules of Procedure to enable the use of the Albanian language in accordance with Section 6.5 of the Framework Agreement, paragraph 8 below, and the relevant amendments to the Constitution set forth in Annex A."[72]*

It seems that in Macedonia, the legal change has practical meanings. In his review of the developments in Macedonia following the Ohrid Accord, Pettifer (2006) refers to the issue of language as an essential field in the Albanian minority's national struggle. Among the achievements of minority since the signing of the agreement are the founding of an Albanian-speaking University in an area where there is a majority of Albanians (Tetovo) and an official recognition of the status of the Albanian language in the University of the Country's Capital (Skopje).

Hence, an interesting hierarchy was created here between official languages. The Macedonian language is an 'unconditionally' official language, and its status as such is guaranteed with no limitations in every area in the country and with no demographic considerations. In contrast, the Albanian language has a 'contingent official status'. The criterion for an official status was deliberately altered in order to enable Albanian speakers to keep it, but the message is that it is not an equal apparatus in a symbolic-declarative way. The Albanian language is, in fact, an official language in the areas where it satisfies the demographical-territorial criterion, but is not directly described as one in the constitution. It seems that this reference is reserved for a language that is considered to be the national symbol of the Republic alone, and not for any 'official language'.

Thus, the core use of the phrase 'official language' is not informative enough to reach unambiguous conclusions when referring to the status of the language and its relationship to

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[72] The Ohrid Framework Agreement of the Republic of Macedonia, 13.08.2001 coe.int/t/e/legal_affairs/legal_co-operation. (last visited April 2008)

other, officially-recognized languages in the state. In certain cases, an official status defines the language's function as the state's symbol. In other cases, an official status simply means that the state is obligated to provide services in that language. Even in the same state, the status of an official language may be interpreted differently when addressing different languages.

5.3 **The Complexity of the Israeli Case**

Arabic's official status in Israel is by no means a straightforward case. To sum up what was described in the introduction, Arabic is officially recognized and its scope of officiality is, in theory, extremely broad. Article 82 of the order-in-council adopted by the Israeli legislation in 1948 obliges bilingual conduct of the state in both Hebrew and Arabic in a large number of municipal and governmental functions. In practice, however, Arabic's position in Israel is extremely marginal. The tension between the privileges granted in Article 82 and what is actually carried out by the state has been attributed by researchers to the complex situation between the Jewish and the Arab groups in Israel surrounding the issue of conflicting national identities. It was also shown that the Israeli court was in many cases reluctant to view the state's monolingual conduct as a violation of the law. Finally, the political conflict was described as an element dictating a pessimistic scenario regarding the chances of significant change in Arabic's de facto status[73].

The analysis in the current chapter focuses on two levels: how Arabic's *current* (official) status is interpreted and the *desired* roles that the Israeli public wishes to ascribe to it. I will show that both of these levels yield numerous positions. In other words, not only is Arabic's future (official) role viewed in different ways; its present status, which is defined legally, is open to a range of interpretations.

Two procedures described in the introduction will assist in these definitions: the undermining of the status quo regarding the demand to enforce the official status of the Arabic language and the steps taken towards the drafting of a constitution in Israel (see chapter 1, 1.4) in order to

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[73] See Chapter 1, 1.3.3 including references of the relevant studies

examine the attitude towards the current and desirable status of Arabic in Israel. More specifically speaking, I will focus on the 'discourse of decision makers' in two main arenas – the Knesset and the courts. I will examine the range of opinions that are brought before decision makers and the level of legitimacy they receive.

The structure of this chapter is as follows. Initially, four stances are described which, in my opinion, represent the range of existing interpretations concerning the current and desirable status of Arabic in Israel:

(1) The 'absolute equality' approach

(2) The 'de jure equality' approach

(3) The 'hierarchy' approach (which includes two options: The 'special status' option and The 'hierarchy among official languages' option)

(4) 'The Hebrew-only' approach

Later, I will discuss these approaches with the help of three 'test cases':

(1) Discussion in the Constitution, Law, and Justice Committee of the Knesset regarding the constitution proposal, in the course of its preparation for first reading.

(2) Bills to abolish Article 82

(3) A bill for the establishment of an Arabic Language Academy.

5.4 Four Views of Arabic's Official Status in the Decision Makers' Discourse in Israel

5.4.1 The Absolute Equality Approach

This approach views the official status of Arabic in Israel as the basis for requiring an equal conduct of the authorities in Hebrew and in Arabic. It is rooted in the assumption that languages with an official status necessarily require an equal attitude on a declarative-formal level, as well as on a practical one. As we will note, this approach is relevant on two levels. First – it offers an interpretation of how the state should act *today*, namely the way in which the

official status of Arabic should be interpreted at present. Second – it proposes an assumption about how it is correct in principle to treat the official status of Arabic, as manifested in the 'linguistic vision' of figures in the Arab sector in Israel. These two aspects will be looked at in this order.

'Official status' (interpreted from Article 82) allows an equal treatment of languages that are defined as such (this is the correct way to interpret the current legal situation)

The basis for this claim is the mandatory accord, Article 82. As mentioned, this accord appears under the title "official languages". It demands bilingual conduct in Hebrew and in Arabic in three areas: (1) The central authority (as far as the authorities are concerned and as far as the possibility to conduct their business in any one of these languages) (2) Official announcements of the local authority and (3) Accessibility to the public service of the central authority, courts included. The demand for equal use in both its official languages is justified by the claim that this is the legitimate interpretation of the agreement. In other words, this approach grants a strict and unambiguous interpretation of the accord, according to which Hebrew and Arabic – both being under the same title of "official languages" – are entitled to equal use by the authorities in the (very broad) areas defined. Moreover, any conduct that does not implement this principle is a blatant flouting of the rule of law. We will now exemplify this claim with the aid of several legal cases in which the matter of Arabic's official status constituted the basis of the petitioner's demand for the equal use of Hebrew and Arabic by the authorities.

The most familiar legal case in this context is that of *Adalah v. the Municipality of Tel-Aviv* which dealt with the language of signs in Jewish-Arab mixed cities[74]. This Supreme Court ruling was discussed at length from different perspectives (see for example Ben Shemesh, 2003, 2005; Benvenisti, 2003; Gontovnik, 2003 p. 67-70; Saban, 2003) and will be mentioned again later. For the time being, only the demand in the petition will be addressed. The petitioners – Adalah and ACRI (the Association for Civil Rights in Israel) – demanded that the municipalities of the cities involved - Tel Aviv-Jaffa, Ramla, Lydda, Acre and Nazareth Illit – use Arabic in all types of

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[74] H.C 4112/99, Adalah et al. v. The municipality of Tel-Aviv Jaffa et al., 56(5) P.D 393

municipal signposts within their jurisdiction and in "equal size to the Hebrew one"[75]. The leading argument in this plea was the official status of Arabic according to Article 82. The petitioners viewed the "practical relevance" of this agreement as an obligation of the local authorities to use both Hebrew and Arabic equally.[76]

In the Supreme Court case *Adalah v. the municipality of Haifa*[77] similar demands were put forth concerning the parallel use of Hebrew and Arabic in the municipal framework. In this case, Haifa municipality was required to publish its announcement to the public in the Arabic language and in the Arabic press just as it does in the Hebrew language and in Hebrew press. The starting point of the legal plea, which demanded *equal* treatment for Hebrew and Arabic, was the fact that Arabic was an official language in Israel:

> *"As the Arabic language is recognized as an official language in Israel, all of the state's authorities, as well as authorities acting upon judgment, including local authorities, are obliged to treat the Arabic language with equality and to lead an equal use of it"[78]*

Another Supreme Court case is *Adalah v. The Director of the Courts.* This case dealt with the use of Arabic in the courts of Israel[79]. The petitioners claimed a wide range of demands connected to the use of Arabic in Israeli courts, such as translation services in Arabic, a possibility for the litigants to file documents in Arabic without bearing the translation costs etc. In this case too, the petitioners based their demand for Arabic in the courts on the fact that Arabic is recognized as an official language in Israel, according to Article 82. In their opinion, the direct reference to the courts in this accord grants Arabic the status of "an official language in the courts"[80].

The approach, as it appears from these examples, is that the authorities are obligated to supply different services in Arabic as they are given in Hebrew. It is a clear result of Arabic having an

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[75] H.C 4112/99, Adalah et al. v. The municipality of Tel-Aviv Jaffa et al. (unpublished, on file with author), petition, section 2

[76] Idem. petition, section 19

[77] H.C 1114/01 Adalah v. The municipality of Haifa

[78] H.C 1114/01 Adalah v. The municipality of Haifa (unpublished, on file with author) petition section 24

[79] H.C 792/02, Adalah v. The Director of the Courts

[80] H.C 792/02, Adalah v. The Director of the Courts (unpublished, on file with author), petition, section 29-31

official status. Hence, 'official status' is interpreted as one that grants the languages that attain it an equal position as far as the obligations of the branches of authority are concerned.

'Official status' should allow in principle an equal use of the languages that are defined as such ('because so it should be').

Does the approach of the Arab sector concerning the equal treatment of languages that are defined as official depend upon the specific interpretation of Article 82 alone (due to the fact that this particular agreement was determined that way) or could there be a more general interpretation of the meaning of the phrase 'official language'? The following discussion indicates that the second possibility is the correct one-- at least in the Israeli context. From the 'future vision documents' (see the following explanation) that were recently published by different organizations in the Arab sector, it is clearly understood that the meaning of the phrase 'official language' allows for equal use of the languages of that status on a basis that is more than a simple reliance on an historic legal agreement.

In the 'future vision documents', language is introduced as one strand in a general web of arrangements, rooted in the will to change the current relationship between the national groups in Israel. This demand reflects a situation where the Jewish group does not have complete supremacy concerning the characteristics the state, and that the languages, along with other national symbols, reflect that situation. The context in which these words are stated requires one to abandon the definition of Israel as 'a Jewish state'.

Is the demand for the similitude of the languages necessarily an expression of a demand for bi-national agreements? The answer is not clear and requires a much deeper examination outside the scope of this research. For our purposes, it is only possible to give a brief response. In the Adalah constitution, for example, there is no mention of the phrase 'bi-national state'. The phrase used is "bilingual-multicultural state"[81]. It is possible that the phrase 'bilingual state'

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[81] 'Adalah's constitution' footnote 32 at p. 3

represents an intermediate stage between the situation today and a 'bi-national' reality[82]. It is also possible however, that this is an attempt to abandon the worn out phrase 'bi-national state', which is automatically rejected by many populations in Jewish-Israeli society. I will now specify the suggestions these documents make regarding the language.

The broadest treatment of the matter of official languages can be found in Adalah's 'Democratic Constitution'. In the introduction, it demands acknowledgement of Arabic as an official language as a derivative of the "basic rights of the Arab sector" along with other rights, such as the returning of lands and possessions and exercising the right to cultural autonomy[83]. The main justification for exercising these rights is the fact that the Arab minority in Israel is an indigenous minority[84]. A wide detailing of the practical meaning of an official status and especially of how it should apply regarding the Arabic language is given in the second chapter of the Bill-- 'the basis of authority and regime' under the section 'Bilingual State'. In this section, Hebrew and Arabic are both defined as Israel's official languages and are granted equal status.

There are two fundamental differences between this proposal and Article 82 regarding the range of applicability that official status is granted. The equality in their status should be expressed by the use of both languages in the legislative authority and the executive authority. As far as the judicial branch is concerned, the parallel use is only required from the district level and up, while smaller units are allowed to conduct themselves in any one of the languages (or as the writers put it "an imagined federal regime"[85]). Other than that, there are two additional areas where the equal use of Hebrew and Arabic should occur, by virtue of their official status – education and the public electronic media. Regarding education, the demand refers to educational institutions in each of the languages, including higher education – (institutions that conduct themselves in one language or the other, not bilingual institutions). Regarding

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[82] This argument was expressed by Dr. Raif Zraik in his paper "Legal and historical aspects of the 'future vision documents'", Tel Aviv University, 4.12.07

[83] 'Adalah's constitution' footnote 32at chapter 1(7)

[84] See chapter 3, 3.1 for discussion

[85] 'Adalah's constitution' footnote 32 at footnote 4.

electronic media, there is a demand for legal arrangements that will grant "a suitable and equal status for both official languages"[86].

In the three other 'vision documents', the reference to the issue of language is more limited, yet in every place where there is a demand for official recognition of the Arabic language it is taken to refer to *an equal status* for the languages:

The leading argument in a document published by the Mossawa organization ('An Equal Constitution For All?') was the 'indigenous dispute' regarding the privilege of collective rights, the most central being connected to language. There is a demand for equality between Hebrew and Arabic as official languages, detailing the areas in which they should be manifested, using the Canadian constitution as a model[87].

In the 'Haifa Declaration' as well (a document published by Mada-il-Carmel center), the demand for equal status for Hebrew and Arabic was based on the argument, in principle, that Arabs in Israel are a national-indigenous minority[88]. Moreover, the authors also cite the existing legal document, Article 82, which they view as additional grounds for their demand for equality in the status of the languages[89].

And finally, in the document 'The future vision', published by the High Follow-up Committee, there is a demand for a "fundamental bilingualism in Israel"[90]. There are no details concerning the practical meaning of this demand, but it is mentioned that it is based on the creation of equality between Hebrew and Arabic.

It is interesting to compare the unambiguous, equalitarian approach with the one that arises from another important document that aims to define the place of Arabs in Israel – the proposal for Basic Law: The Arab minority as a national minority. This proposal was put forward by three Arab Knesset members (MK's Bashara, Zhalka and Taha) in July 2003 – only three years

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[86] Idem. Chapter 2 (17-g)
[87] 'Mossawa's position paper', footnote 35 at Chapter 5(3)
[88] 'Haifa declaration', footnote 34 at p. 11
[89] Idem. at p. 13
[90] 'The High follow-up committee's document, footnote 31 at p. 14

prior to the publication of the 'vision documents' discussed above. Section 8 of the bill addresses the Arabic language and is phrased as follows:

"(a) The Arabic language, the national language of the Arab minority, is the second official language in the State of Israel.

(b) The state will take the necessary measures to grant the Arab national minority appropriate chances to study their mother tongue.

(c) All government publications will be published in Arabic"[91]

It is clear that the approach emerging from the bill regarding the status of the Arabic language is much more moderate than the one described in the 'vision documents'. Arabic is defined as an official language, yet a clear statement regarding the necessity to view it as having a status equal to that of the Hebrew language, is absent. The initial implication of an official status for Arabic is Arabs' right to study their mother tongue, which is a considerably weaker demand as far as collective rights are concerned (for discussion see: Saban, 2002, p. 256-247). The topic of argument is not even the ability to be *educated* in the mother tongue, which could be interpreted as a demand for studying in Arabic in higher education as well. In addition, the demand regarding the obligation of the local authorities is quite limited. It refers only to official publications and does not include the possibility of addressing the authorities in Arabic. One might say that these demands ultimately try to preserve the existing situation and do not demand the creation of a new one.

In conclusion, as noted by the aforementioned examples, the clear approach that the Arab sector presents today is that an 'official status' allows equal use by the authorities of the languages defined as such. Today, this is a result of the existing legal arrangement, and principally due to the fact that Arabs in Israel are a national-indigenous minority. The language, according to the desired model, is one of many ways in which the involvement of the Arab

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[91] Proposal for Basic Law: the Arab minority as a national minority in:

http://www.knesset.gov.il/privatelaw/data/16/1124.rtf

community is reflected in national symbols - whether for the sake of creating a bi-national framework or in order to minimize the Jewish hegemony in the Israeli public sphere.

While the Arab sector presents a rigid and unambiguous interpretation of the existence of Arabic and Hebrew as official languages – one that forces the state to use them equally – the positions presented by the majority regarding the phrase 'official language' are much less definite. In this discussion, it is also necessary to distinguish between this stance as an interpretation of the existing situation and the situation seen as favorable in principle.

'Official status' is (today) a phrase open to interpretations

Rubinstein and Madina (1996), in their description of the status of Hebrew in Israel, use the phrase 'primary official language' to demonstrate the actual supremacy of Hebrew over Arabic in Israel:

> *"The change which came about in the status of the Hebrew language as the primary official language did not result from a provision in the law. Its official status still derives from Article 82 of the Order in Council. The new reality is what gave Hebrew its senior status" (p. 98).*

The authors are, of course, aware of the fact that this is not the formal definition of Hebrew according to the law, but their choice to demonstrate the supremacy of Hebrew by using the existing phrase ('official language'), points to an approach that enables a hierarchy among languages while maintaining the phrase 'official language'.

In addition, Chief Justice Aaron Barak chooses a similar terminology when he mentions the status of Hebrew in Israel:

> *"What, then, are the core characteristics shaping the minimum definition of the State of Israel as a Jewish state? These characteristics have both a Zionist aspect and a heritage one. In their core stands the right of every Jew to immigrate to Israel, where the Jewish people would form a majority; Hebrew is the state's principal official language and most*

of its feasts and symbols reflect the national revival of the Jewish people; The heritage of the Jewish people is a crucial element in its religious and cultural legacy"[92]

The status of the Hebrew language as a 'central official language' constitutes (with other elements such as the right of return etc.) the kernel that establishes the Jewish nature of the state. The fact that one official language could be a 'main' or 'central' one makes it immediately clear that even though they are both defined as official languages this does not imply that they are equal. There is no attempt to by-pass the phrase 'official language' when describing the supremacy of the Hebrew language. In other words, the assumption is that this situation is a valid interpretation of the phrase as it now exists.

This approach, which enables an open interpretation of the status of Arabic, can also be found in the legal discourse as an argument that deals with the demands of the Arab sector for the equal use of Hebrew and Arabic by the authorities. This is clearly exemplified through the words of the Attorney General, who represented one of the bodies the petition addressed in Supreme Court Case 4112/99. As mentioned, this case addressed the demand to add municipal signs in Arabic in mixed cities. In his answer to this plea, the Attorney General attacked the use of Arabic's officiality as an argument on which the petitioners based their claims:

> *"The mere assertion that both languages are official languages is not enough to determine that their status is equal. Indeed, it is possible for the legislator to rule that the status of the official languages is equal, but it is not the only possibility. Exactly as the authority is permitted to create a distinction between official languages and languages that are not official, it is permitted to set a hierarchy among the official languages and to rule further that the extent of this 'officiality's' distribution would vary from one language to another"*[93]

The Attorney General claims that it is not possible to use the core definition of Arabic as an official language as an argument for not fulfilling a state's legal duty. The supremacy of one official language (Hebrew) over another (Arabic) in his opinion, is no less legitimate than the equalitarian interpretation.

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[92] 11280/02 Central Elections Committee for the 16th Knesset v. MK's Tibi and Bshara, PD, 57(4) 1, p. 22.

[93] *Adalah vs. the municipality of Tel Aviv*, respondents' reply (on file with author), section 8, emphasis added

Justice Heshin, in his ruling in the Supreme Court, also offers an open interpretation of the phrase official language:

> *"The phrase 'official language' is ambiguous; we might even say a vague phrase the boundaries of which may change from time to time and from one court system to another."[94]*

According to Heshin, the fact that in a certain place (for instance Canada) a very wide range is allowed for the phrase official language to the benefit of both languages, does not reflect on our locality. Moreover, even if we set our own range for an official language, but in a different time, meaning, the days of the mandatory government in Israel, we should not hesitate to redefine the meaning of that range for contemporary times. This statement clearly leaves room for interpretation about which content should be defined as the 'officiality of a language'.

We can see that in Heshin's opinion, the official status of Arabic in Israel permits at least an 'especially superior status'. One might understand from his words that this is the only automatic interpretation that could be given to the phrase 'official language'. This is not necessarily the maximal interpretation – it is possible for official languages to be completely equal in their status, but it is not directly interpreted from the course of their officiality. This should be said explicitly by the legislator and is not an interpretation that could be executed by the judiciary alone. The judiciary can, at most, apply the idea of an 'especially supreme status', as it sees fit in specific cases, but it certainly cannot rule automatically that equality is necessary according to their definition alone. An example of this is the ruling of justice Heshin in the *Meri vs. Sabac* case[95]. This case dealt with the validity of a blank ballot slip on which a voter wrote a letter representing his party of choice exclusively in Arabic. Justice Heshin indicated that his decision to validate this action was an act of "assimilating that especially supreme status" of Arabic[96].

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[94] Idem. Section 10.

[95] M.C.A Meri v. Sabac 12/99 P.D 53(2) 128

[96] Adalah vs. the Municipality of Tel Aviv, Footnote 46 at section 10

From these examples one can see that different factions within the Jewish-Israeli public are not deterred by the use of the phrase 'official language' as describing the supremacy of the Hebrew language. For them, it does not constitute a fundamental contradiction. In other words, the fact that it is possible to speak of a central / main / first official language, assumes a possible hierarchy within the limits of this phrase. I will not get into the discussion about whether this interpretation is correct in light of the phrasing of Article 82, since it is a purely legal question. I will only mention that in these discussions, it is not uncommon for the current official status of Arabic to be seen as open to interpretation.

The question of whether the (practical) supremacy of the Hebrew language reflects a legitimate legal interpretation is important, but is only the first stage of the discussion. The next question regards the *desired status* of the Arabic language. Assuming that the state is no longer restrained by the content of the mandatory agreement and that the relationship between the languages is open to interpretation– what, then, is the desirable formula and what ideal situation does it represent?

As was described at the beginning of this chapter, the role of groups within the Jewish-Israeli public regarding the desired status of the Arabic language was shaped by two factors. The first concerns the demands of the Arab sector to implement Article 82 in a manner that assumes an equal status for Hebrew and Arabic. This step, taken by the Arab sector, which according to many culminated with a Supreme Court decision dealing with signage mixed cities, created a feeling among some in the Jewish-Israeli public that there was a need for a far-reaching, proactive handling of the question of Arabic's official status, rather than allowing this status to be dictated by an agreement that originated prior to the founding of the state.

Whether the act of the Arab sector was viewed as democratic, i.e., one which warrants enforcement, or as an illegitimate attempt to create political gain, clearly the agreement could no longer be ignored, either by Jewish or by the Arab factions. Groups in the Jewish-Israeli public understood that if the status of Arabic in their eyes differed from that accorded it by the Arab population, the remedy lay with the legislature. Otherwise, the matter would be determined in court, by one group of judges or another. The second factor, as mentioned, was

the initial process of drafting a constitution, one that began a few years ago. This process raised the issue of the Arab minority, including the question of the status of the Arabic language.

I will now depict the apparent answers to the question of Arabic's desired status, as they emerge in the majority group, notwithstanding the variability of their motives and considerations. Three main approaches may be discerned:

- The de jure equality approach

- The hierarchy approach

- The Hebrew-only approach

The common denominator underlying these three approaches is the acceptance of the supremacy of Hebrew. The first two approaches demand some kind of recognition of the Arabic language as a language of a higher status than other languages spoken by minorities in Israel. In that way, they differ from the 'Hebrew-only' approach, which requires a special definition for only one language in Israel – Hebrew. In spite of the common basis, these three options differ from one another in a number of respects related to the implementation of this principle and the meaning granted to the topic of terminology. The terminology issue is at times semantic, but mostly functions as a convenient tool for underlining fundamental differences in the approaches and the assumptions.

5.4.2 **The De jure Equality Approach – Language as an 'Exceptional Symbolic Ring'**

According to this approach, Hebrew and Arabic should be defined as official languages with a formal *equal status.* This kind of equality is a 'declarative equality'. In other words, it does not assume equality in the conduct of the state towards them. The assumption is that the Jewish group in Israel should dictate the state's identity and characteristics, and so it is only appropriate that Israel should be defined as a Jewish state and that its national symbols should represent it. However, in the field of language, the state should act differently. An official status of a language, according to this approach, is understood as a public-symbolic resource that should be shared equally with the Arab minority.

Why is language viewed as a symbolic factor in which it is acceptable to deviate from the Jewish dominance? There are two arguments for this – historical and practical. Historically speaking, Hebrew and Arabic were both defined as official languages. Furthermore, in light of the tendency to allow unequal interpretation, it is justifiable to view the mandatory accord that was adopted for the Israeli legislation as an expression of an equal status. Hence, it is correct to keep this agreement and respect a somewhat existing contract between the groups. The practical side suggests that language is an area in which the supremacy of Hebrew is so significant and basic that no declaration of equality regarding language would change the existing linguistic balance of power. In other words, language is an area in which the majority group should feel comfortable to make compromises without being concerned about an actual change in the Jewish character of the state. Thus, what does this declaration contribute to the issue of an equal, official status? Beyond its indication of the will not to disrupt the historical status quo between the two sectors, it expresses an intention to include the Arab minority as a significant group in the Israeli arena and to create a feeling of belonging among the members of this group. Moreover, it distinguishes between the language of the Arab minority and that of other minorities in Israel.

An example for this approach can be found in a proposal formulated by IRAC – The Israeli Religious Action Center[97] - the legal-social branch of the organization for Reform Judaism in Israel. It is an independent center, which has been active for about twenty years. Concerning the discussion in the Knesset's constitution committee about the Language section, the center presented its position, as follows:

> *"Language:*
> *(a) Hebrew and Arabic will act as official languages in the State of Israel.*

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[97] The proposal's sections dealing with language and state symbols can be viewed at
http://www.knesset.gov.il/HUKA/FollowUpLaw_2.asp

(b) A complete freedom of languages will be recognized in the State of Israel, which includes the right to use a language, to foster it, to teach it and to bequeath it to future generations".[98]

From the commentary added to the proposal, one might understand that regarding both languages as official should invoke the "centrality of the principle of equality"[99]. (b) which concerns full language freedom, refers to all minority languages. The fact that Arabic was mentioned in (a) and that the writers were not satisfied with including it in (b) indicates that Arabic was considered to have a higher status than other minority languages. Differing from the approach presented by the Arab sector, this approach to official status did not suggest a bi-national attitude at all. The equal status was confined to this arena, and only in a declarative way and not in practice.

In fact, this approach distinguishes between the symbolic- declarative aspect of the official status and the practical one, and chooses to strengthen the former. On the declarative level, the two languages are recognized as official without creating a formal hierarchy between them. Thus, since the situation dictates a practical dominance of the Hebrew language, the official definition will not be a factor in changing this fact.

Does this proposal regarding a declarative equality in the status of the languages center on the majority's point of view in complete disregard of the feelings of the Arab public? Not necessarily. Delegates of the Arab sector indeed express a stance that demands equality on the practical level as well (see the 'absolute equality approach' above) but the declarative element is clearly seen as important. In a document written by the Mossawa center ('An equal constitution for all?'), a proposal of the Constitution Committee of the 16th Knesset is criticized for suggesting that Arabic should receive a special status and not the official status it had had before. Even though it is not clear from the proposal or from the commentaries whether the actual status of the Arabic language would change, the writers of the document see it as a

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[98] Idem.

[99] Idem. Commentary

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"worsening of the current status of Arabic"[100]. In other words, the distinction between the declarative and the practical aspects was not necessarily a strategic move to weaken the status of Arabic and to empty it of any practical substance.

In conclusion, this approach is similar to the Arab sector's approach in their demand for formal equality between the languages. In any other respect, these two approaches are very different. The official status is viewed as a means of shaping the equality that should prevail between Jews and Arabs, yet it allows supremacy to Hebrew on the level of actual arrangements. Language is an exceptional, symbolic arena in which one can enable a declarative equality between the languages while assuring superiority to other Jewish symbolic national fields.

5.4.3 **The Hierarchy Approach**

The hierarchy approach abandons the equal status approach on both the declarative and practical levels. It is rooted in a desire for the *recognition of the status* of both languages, while creating a *hierarchy* in favor of Hebrew. I.e. both languages have their own status, but Hebrew has a stronger one. An additional principle underlying this approach is the attempt to create an equilibration between an official status as one that paints a desirable reality and one that reflects the current situation from sociolinguistic and legal perspectives. In other words, according to this approach, the 'linguistic vision' that the official status of Hebrew and Arabic should express cannot be significantly detached from the actual condition of the languages in the existing linguistic reality on the one hand and in the prevailing legal opinion on the other hand.

The hierarchy approach manifests itself in two ways:

- The option of a hierarchy between official languages
- The special status option

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[100] Mosawa's document, footnote 35 at p. 48

The 'Hierarchy among Official Languages' Option

In this option, there is no renunciation of an official status for Arabic, but the creation of a hierarchy is enabled due to the enforcement of Hebrew by its definition as a 'state language'. We will examine this approach through the bill that was formulated by an independent body in Israel – The Israel Democracy Institute (IDI). This institute has been active since 1991 as a non-partisan association that deals with the shaping of parliamentary democracy in a variety of areas in society and government in Israel. This bill, under the leadership of Supreme Court President (Emeritus) Meir Shamgar, was published by the Institute in 2005 and is the result of ongoing discussions in the Institute itself, as well as in the Constitution by Consensus committee established for this purpose five years earlier. The public committee included about a hundred members from different sectors in Israeli society and public figures, such as Knesset Members and ministers. The publication of this proposal received many responses in public discourse and its draft was discussed before the Constitution, Law, and Justice Committee of the Knesset in connection with the drafting of a constitution for the State of Israel. The Constitution by Consensus committee of the Israel Democracy Institute is currently working on preparing the draft constitution for its first reading in the Knesset.

In the first title-page of the Institute's draft constitution, called 'Basic Principles', under the section 'Language', the following draft is proposed:

> *"(a) Hebrew is the state language*
>
> *(b) Arabic is an official language. Regularization of the use of the Arabic language in state institutions will be determined by the regulator."*[101]

In this proposal, Arabic is defined as an official language in Israel. In the commentaries attached to the draft constitution, the proposal to anchor the official status of Arabic in a constitution recognizes "the special status of the Arab minority"[102]. The legislator will be the one to determine 'the detailed implementation' of this status. It is clear, however, that the status

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[101] A complete (Hebrew) version of the IDI draft constitution (hereafter 'IDI constitution') is available on the Institute's website: www.idi.org.il

[102] Idem. Commentary.

ascribed to Arabic, despite its officiality, is different from the one ascribed to Hebrew. Hebrew, according to this proposal, is granted the status of "a state language"[103]. From the commentaries, we understand that since "the State of Israel is not a Jewish-Arabic bi-national state [...] there is no place to grant both languages equal status as state languages"[104]. The proposal does not explain what a 'state language' is, but the use of this phrase alone overrides the demand to view official languages as equal. The cancellation of the de jure equality between Hebrew and Arabic is not achieved by repealing the official status of Arabic. Rather, it is manifested by the insertion of the phrase 'state language', which can be interpreted as the language of the nationality that defines the state. As long as Israel is not a bi-national state, the existence of two 'state languages' is not possible. Since Arabic is an official language but not a state language, it does not have a status equal to that of Hebrew, and of course the question of the equality of official languages in no longer relevant. There is no use of the word 'official' for Hebrew, but it is clear that 'state language' enjoys higher status. The logic underlying this proposal is, therefore, that official languages are not equal if only one of them is a 'state language' (or worthy of being one).

In this proposal too, there is a distinction between a functional status and a symbolic status. Unlike the de jure equality proposal, this distinction is made through the phrase 'state language'. The message is that only the language titled state language carries the symbolic-national element, while a language that is an official language alone, does not.

Even though this proposal leaves us with many open questions, the conclusion regarding the status of an official language is clear – the element that should grant equality among languages is not the essence of their officiality. Rather, the question is whether they are 'state languages' – the languages that reflect the 'nation that defines the state'. Since, according to this proposal, the Jewish nation is the one that defines the state, Hebrew alone is the language that reflects

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[103] The term used in Hebrew is 'SFAT HA'MEDINA' – literally, 'the language of the state'. The Constitution, Law, and Justice Committee of the Knesset which translated this relevant section from the IDI proposal used the term 'state language'. In this section we highlight the 'national element' in the meaning of the term 'state language'. Later on, it is dealt with in direct comparison with the term 'national language' (p. 135).

[104] IDI constitution, footnote 101

this nation. Thus, Arabic, despite its special status in relation to other minority languages, is not, by definition, equal to Hebrew.

The 'Special Status' Option

The 'special status' option justifies Hebrew's supremacy by waiving the status of an official language in favor of *special status*. The proposal of the Constitution Committee represents this option most clearly. The 16th Knesset rose to the challenge that had been faced by the first Knesset with the founding of the state– the drafting of a constitution for the State of Israel. The proposal of the Constitution, Law, and Justice Committee (sitting as the Committee for the Preparation of a Constitution by Broad Consensus) of the 16th Knesset is an outcome of three years of hard work. The committee conducted over eighty meetings, which included representatives from different sectors of Israeli society, public figures, legal experts and members of the academic community. Its activity was accompanied by a professional committee which included, among others, Prof. Ruth Gavison. In February 2006, the committee submitted to the President of the state and to the Speaker of the Knesset alternatives for a draft constitution including the relevant commentaries. In the chapter 'Basic Principles' under the section 'Language' (section 7) the following draft is suggested[105]:

"(a) Hebrew is the language of the state
(b) Arabic has special status as the language of the Arab residents in Israel"[106]

This proposal is based on a long list of considerations, assumptions and outlooks. The following are the principal ones.

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[105] The draft for this section in the proposal was expanded towards the discussion in the 17th Knesset, as will be explained later.

[106] The sixteenth Knesset Constitution Law and Justice Committee Sitting as The Committee for the Preparation of a Constitution by Broad Consensus – Proposal for a Constitution (Hereafter 'Committee's Proposal'). (Emphasis added). For the full text see http://huka.gov.il/wiki/index.php

This alternative quoted above is considered alternative a'. Alternative b' offers no inclusion of the language issue in the constitution.

'Special status' for Arabic reflects the prevailing legal interpretation

This claim is based on the assumption that 'special status' is the proper status for the Arabic language in Israel since it correctly represents its legal status today, as understood from legal rulings that have dealt with it. This claim could be clearly demonstrated with the aid of the background document that accompanied the committee's sessions and comprised an important source for the committee's discussions[107]. The document reviews different legal rulings concerning the issue of the Arabic language in Israel (especially Supreme Court 4112/99 regarding the signs in mixed cities). The conclusion of the writers is that the State of Israel is not a bilingual state "according to most opinions on the legal level"[108] and that the legal cases represent "a move away from a perception of Arabic as one of the two official languages towards seeing it as no more than a minority language entitled to protection"[109]. In this sense, this option presents an approach that sees the official status as a mirror reflecting the existing condition. The main part (or at least one of the main parts) of this status is to give a true expression to reality. Thus, being one of Israel's two official languages is not the status that reflects Arabic's position today. Hence, it would not be legally correct to define it as such.

The hierarchy between the languages is intrinsically correct

Besides the fact that an equal, official status for both languages is viewed as not truly representing the legal and linguistic reality, it is also viewed as normatively undesired. The writers of this proposal stress in their commentaries that it is based on their understanding that Israel is a state in which "the Jewish nation realizes its right for self-determination" and it is only proper for it to be manifested through the language. The creation of a special status for the

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[107] Background Document on Minority Collective Rights. Presented to the Constitution Committee of the Knesset, August 2005, Gavison Ruth and Babalfur Tali. (Hereafter 'background document'). The document can be viewed on the Constitution Committee's official website http://huka.gov.il (last visited April 2008).

[108] Idem.p. 54

[109] Idem. p. 53

Hebrew language, truly expresses in their opinion, the special connection between the state and the Jewish people[110].

The declaration of an equal, official status is not practical

The writers of the proposal view the declaration of an equal official status for Hebrew and Arabic as pointless. First, they claim, previous attempts made in other places teach us that "there isn't any country which is genuinely bilingual or multilingual"[111]. Secondly, in connection to Israel, this act appears to have no chance of carrying any practical significance, as mentioned in the background document:

> *"It can be assumed that any kind of effort would not grant the languages an actual equivalence, due to the fact that in Israel it is very difficult to get along without speaking Hebrew, but it is quite easy to manage without knowing Arabic, outside of Arab areas."[112]*

And more:

> *"An empty announcement in the constitution will only cause endless litigation in an attempt to change an unchangeable reality."[113]*

This is an inclusive proposal

The writers of this proposal do not view it as being offensive towards existing achievements as far as the status of Arabic is concerned. According to them, any kind of offer that does not include a statement concerning an equal official status for languages would be viewed by the Arab sector as offensive. But since their reading of the legal situation is different, their feeling is that no damage was really done in a sense that 'something that does not exist cannot be taken'. As far as the writers are concerned, although this is not an equal proposal, it still 'acknowledges' the Arab minority in two ways. First, Arabic is granted a unique status in

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[110] Committee's Proposal, footnote 106, commentaries to 1(7)

[111] Idem. commentaries to 1(7)

[112] Background document footnote 107 at 49

[113] Idem. at 56

relation to other minority languages "due to the fact that Arabs in Israel are an indigenous minority and not an immigrant group"[114] and secondly, the proposal acknowledges the "collective-cultural significance" of the Arabic language, beyond its importance as a language of individuals[115].

A declaration of equality could harm the Arab minority

Another argument that tries to establish the benefits of the hierarchy option over the equality one does that by warning against a situation in which the Arab minority would be the one to find itself at a disadvantage:

> *"This kind of declaration [on an equal official status for Hebrew and Arabic] may encourage demands that a significant effort would be made in order to create a situation in which Arabic speakers would not need Hebrew. Such a situation will harm the Arabs' chances of integration and harm the entire Israeli market."[116]*

A declaration of equality, according to this argument, may create a situation in which Arabs in Israel will be able to function exclusively in Arabic without the knowledge of Hebrew. This argument creates a slight difficulty. There is no dispute over the fact that in a case where Arabs would not speak Hebrew at all, many doors in Israeli society would be shut to them. However, it is not clear how this kind of scenario could be reconciled with the firm assertion of the writers that it is not within the power of an equal declaration to effect an actual change.

The option of a hierarchy among languages is legally problematic

The last argument that we will address clarifies the advantage of the special status option over the option of a hierarchy among official languages. It seems that the choice of the phrase

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[114] Committee's Proposal, footnote 106, commentaries to section 7

[115] Idem.

[116] Idem. emphasis added.

'special' instead of 'official' solves a difficulty among the writers, who view the phrase 'official language' as a legally closed phrase. When a proposal for retaining the status quo of languages which enjoy an official status and creating a hierarchy within those limits was brought up, it was rejected by Prof. Gavison:

> *"When there is a formulation of an official language, it is always of an equal status. I am not familiar with a situation in which there is a hierarchy among official languages."[117]*

There is not much specification as far as the practical-functional aspects are concerned, since according to the writers there is no place for it in a constitution whose role is on the level of 'providing inspiration' and where the details are left to the legislators. When the discussion regarded the matter of signs and the extent to which it should be detailed in the legal document, Prof. Gavison presented the following approach:

> *"On the level of the constitution, all that needs to be said is, that Hebrew is the state's language and that Arabic has a special status. […] There is one fundamental question here, which is agreed upon, and that is that both languages are acknowledged but do not share an equal status. …But as we know, a constitution is a very thin and vague text and which gives an inspiration. The inspiration which it has given me, is that Arabic is not like any other language."[118]*

How, then, may one put this 'inspiration' into practice? The writers mention two principles that are supposed to guide the decision makers. The first determines that the regularization will not affect the areas in which Arabic enjoys a special status, particularly the public school system in Arabic and the municipal and interurban signs. The second leading principle speaks of expressing the special status through strengthening the status of Arabic "among its speakers, as well as among the society in general"[119]. What does the "society in general" mean? The matter is not mentioned explicitly, but one may understand that steps that are taken are not extensive as far as the efforts and sacrifices from the majority are concerned. This may be understood

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[117] Constitution, Law, and Justice Committee of the Knesset, Transcript no. 497 'Basic principles- symbols, education and culture' 7.6.05. (Hereafter 'transcript – symbols'). The full transcript is available at:

http://huka.gov.il/wiki/index.php

[118] Idem.

[119] Committee's Proposal, footnote 106, commentaries to section 7

from the words of Prof. Gavison at a meeting that discussed the fundamentals of the Arab minority's collective rights and the way in which they should be expressed in the legal document:

> *"Arabs have the right to conduct an educational system in their own language, the right to bequeath their language and to develop their language. They may even have the right to receive subsidization for all of these things. But Arabs do not have a collective right to force the Arabic language upon the majority of the public. They do not have that right. This is not a bilingual state."[120]*

The hierarchy approach then, defines the difference between the status of Hebrew and Arabic by positioning the concept 'official language' in comparison with two other phrases – 'special status' and 'state language'. 'State language' is undoubtedly interpreted by both of the hierarchy options, as having a higher status than merely an official language because it bears national-symbolic meanings. Is the difference between 'official which is not state language' and 'special status' fundamentally semantic, or does it have another significance as well? Is it possible to determine which of the two has greater strength and establishes a stronger place for Arabic? The answer is not trivial and will be clarified when the approaches are compared in the test cases discussed below (section 5.5).

5.4.4 **The Hebrew-Only Approach**

The basis for the Hebrew-only approach is the will to create a hegemony of the Hebrew language, on a declarative level as well as a practical one, in which the Hebrew language alone is entitled to have an official status in Israel. The arguments favoring this approach are twofold. One addresses the rationales to grant *Hebrew* (and not any other language) an official status. The second refers to the reasons why *Arabic* should not be recognized as such.

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[120] Constitution, Law, and Justice Committee of the Knesset, Transcript no. 337 'Collective rights of the Arab population' 29.11.04. (Hereafter 'transcript – Arab population'). The full transcript is available at http://huka.gov.il/wiki/index.php

The official language as a representative of the state nationality

This argument addresses the fact that Hebrew has a superior status in Israel because it is the language of the Jewish nation. According to this approach, it is the Jewish nation that defines the State of Israel, and therefore its language is the one entitled to official recognition. From a public-declarative standpoint, the official language of the state represents its national characteristics, and therefore there is no place for granting an official status to other languages that do not convey the state's Jewish character. The language, as a national symbol, should express Jewish symbols alone. Even if Arabic has a legitimate symbolic-collective role for the Arab minority, this does not make it a symbol of the State of Israel.

The official language as an Israeli uniting factor

According to this claim, there must be one all-Israeli language through which different groups in Israeli society unite. Although it is appropriate for the groups to keep their distinctive character; from the linguistic perspective, the situation of a 'Tower of Babel' is problematic and impedes the chances of a fair and genuine communication. Since Hebrew is the main language of communication in Israel, it is only natural for it to serve that purpose.

No precedence to Arabic over other minority languages

Since the symbolic role of an official language is viewed as a national element and one that has no place for Arabic within it, we are left with the functional role alone, which guarantees its speakers access to procedures connected with state administration. In this sense, Arabic does not take precedence over other (common) minority languages, such as Russian. The fact that the Arab minority is one that has national characteristics is not relevant to the question of its accessibility to information and services in Arabic. If an official status should fulfill this need of a minority, then the Russian language or any other language of a linguistic minority which is of a recognizable scale in Israel should be granted the same status.

<u>An equal status as a risk</u>

Granting an equal official status to Hebrew and Arabic is viewed as an act that necessarily signals a will for bi-nationality in broad public spheres. Moreover, it is looked upon as one that will stimulate the Arab sector to demand further rights with an equalitarian nature.

This approach is embodied in the bill drafted by the Center for Zionist Strategy – an independent Israeli research center established in 2005. The bill, submitted to the Constitution, Law, and Justice Committee of the Knesset for consideration, views Israel primarily as the home of the Jewish people. This precedes the explanation of its democratic characteristics[121]. In the chapter describing the characteristics of Israel as the national home for the Jewish people, the Hebrew language is declared as "state language"[122]. It goes on to note that "a community is entitled to keep its own culture, language and tradition", while the reference is "to a noticeable community, including members of any kind of religion".[123] The communities' right to "add exclusive contents to the education system or to hold private educational institutions" is also mentioned[124].

This proposal completely omits the phrase 'official language' and bases the hegemony of the Hebrew language on the phrase 'state language'. But no other language, including Arabic, is discussed directly, except for the right of Jewish and non-Jewish communities to keep their language and hold separate educational systems.

The renunciation of an official status for the Arabic language then, is a denial of any kind of precedence to this language. Different from the hierarchy proposals, which stand for establishing the supremacy of Hebrew as well, this approach is not interested in granting a

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[121] The Center for Zionist Strategy, 'Constitution for the State of Israel'. Sections 1-2. For a full transcript of the proposal of see http://www.knesset.gov.il/committees/heb/material/data/H18-12-2006_14-33-16_hukatmedinatisrael.pdf

[122] Idem. Section 22

[123] Idem. Section 30

[124] Idem. Section 31

special status to any language other than Hebrew in general, nor to languages that pose a threat to the state's Jewishness, in particular.

5.5 Three Test Cases

5.5.1 Test Case 1 – Constitution, Law, and Justice Committee meeting (14 January 2007)

On January 14th 2007 the Constitution, Law, and Justice Committee of the 17th Knesset (sitting as the Committee for the Preparation of a Constitution by Broad Consensus) conducted a meeting as part of preparing a draft constitution for first reading. The meeting dealt with the chapter 'Basic Principles', focusing on the seventh section - Language[125]. The proposals brought up for discussion were the Committee's proposals, dealt with in the previous Knesset and formulated by the professional committee, with the addition of alternatives suggested by other institutions at the time that had passed since the drafting had been completed. This meeting is highly relevant here. Firstly, it allows us to compare the different approaches towards the current and desired status of the Arabic language in Israel and to pinpoint the differences between them. Moreover, the discussions in this session allow us to understand the place of the different statuses and the extent to which they are legitimately entitled to form a body of crucial significance to the drafting of a constitution. In other words, the examination of the proposals discussed at the session represents well the 'limits of the discussion'. While the proposals that attained support reflect the variety of legitimate discussions, the absence of certain approaches clearly signals that they were seen as basically 'off limits'.

The chairman of the committee, MK Ben-Shushan (from the politically center party Kadima), and five other committee members were present at the meeting. Three were from the two current largest parties in the Knesset (MK Avital and Vilnaey on behalf of the Labor Party and

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[125] Constitution, Law, and Justice Committee of the 17th Knesset sitting as the Committee for the drafting of a constitution by broad consensus, transcript no. 110 'Basic principles – Language, State Symbols, the Hebrew Calendar' 14.01.07. The transcript is available on http://www.knesset.gov.il/HUKA/FollowUpLaw_2.asp (last visited April 2008). Unless otherwise is specified, all citations in this section are taken from this transcript. Emphases are mine.

MK Dotan from Kadima). MK Gafni was from an orthodox party and MK Levi was from a religious-Zionist party. Besides them, around 20 guests were invited: from the Justice Department, from different civil institutions whose proposals on the matter of language were discussed in the committee (such as the Israel Democracy Institute and the Center for Zionist Strategy) and other interested parties.

Two issues in this discussion will be examined. First – the way in which the status of Arabic is perceived today, and second – the approaches that emerge regarding the desired status of Arabic.

Is Arabic an official language in Israel?

The legal advisor to the committee, attorney Zanberg, was asked to open the discussion. His review began with a clarification of Hebrew and Arabic's legal status today. It is important to mention that the advisor acts as the professional persona in this matter ex officio, and by virtue of his membership in the professional team that accompanied the Constitution Committee in the previous Knesset (the 16th Knesset) with the draft constitution. It was clear to the chairman that the advisor should "lead the discussion". The advisor's review of the status of Hebrew and Arabic was long, profound and detailed. It especially addressed the mandatory Article 82 with all its different interpretations over the years, both in rulings and in practical implementation. Even though the advisor mentioned the fact that Article 82 does not distinguish between the two languages the starting point of his review was that:

> "It is difficult to read [Article 82] in a simplistic and facile way. I depict here the complexity and have no clear answer to give."

In conclusion, the advisor says:

> "There is reference neither in the interpretation, nor in the actual case, to Article 82 as one that compels full bilingualism in Israel, as is accepted nowadays in Canada or other multilingual countries. Article 82 does not determine bilingualism or was not understood as doing so."

This approach was primarily based on the assumption that the document defining the status of the languages today was open to interpretation; i.e., it presented a different approach than

that of the Arab sector regarding a rigid and unambiguous reading of the document (the 'absolute equality' approach). The advisor left open the possibility that this may have been the original intention ("the section was not understood as determining bilingualism") but the general feeling was that the interpretations over the years had been inclined towards the second approach. Despite the desire to portray a broad and objective picture, the advisor's words were interpreted by some committee members as if he were saying that Arabic was *not* an official language in Israel, the way MK Dotan clearly put it:

> "*I can say that I have learned quite a bit today. I truly believed that Arabic was an official language of the State of Israel and I must say that I learned today that it isn't so, and the Order in Council and so on, thank you very much for the great knowledge you provide us here.*"

At an advanced stage of the meeting, when the committee members tried to distinguish between 'official status' and 'special status,'' the chairman asked them to stop the discussion in order to present the following question to the delegates of the Justice Department:

> "*Is the Arabic language an official language in the State of Israel?*"

Five times the representative of the Justice Department answered in different ways, resorting repeatedly to the explanations of the legal advisor, attorney Zandberg, regarding the complexity of the mandatory order, and each time the chairman went back to his demand for a 'yes or no' answer. The **sixth** time the delegate answered:

> "*It is indeed mentioned in the Order in Council that it is an official language. And the ruling interpreted it with nuances but this question cannot be answered. It is not a yes or no question.*"

At this point, the chairman was satisfied and went on with the meeting. Thus, the legal experts present a very ambiguous stand on the question of Arabic's official status. We can see that beyond the assumption that the document is open to interpretation regarding the extent of Arabic's officiality – whether the limits of its validity are smaller than those of Hebrew –the *mere officiality* of Arabic is not presented as obvious either.

What are (truly) the alternatives for Arabic's desired status in Israel?

As mentioned, the discussions in this meeting helped explain the existing proposals regarding the desired legal status of Arabic, the degree of legitimacy they are granted, and where they are situated in the discourse – at its center or on the periphery. No less important – what are the proposals that do not enter the discourse at all and remain outside the boundaries of the decision makers' discourse? It seems that it is proper to open with the formulated proposals that were formally brought before the committee, which represent, at least on the declarative level, the main options for discussion. The documents prepared for the discussion include three alternatives, as presented in the following table[126]:

Table 5.1: Three Alternatives for the 'Language Section' Presented at Constitution, Law, and Justice Committee Meeting (14 January 2007)

	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C
Hebrew	Hebrew is the language of the state	Hebrew is the language of the state	Hebrew and Arabic serve as official languages in the State of Israel
Arabic	Arabic has a special status as the language of the Arab citizens of Israel.	Arabic is an official language. The regulation of the use of Arabic in state institutions or before them will be according to law.	Hebrew and Arabic serve as official languages in the State of Israel

Alternative A is the proposal of the Constitution Committee of the 16th Knesset[127]. This is actually section 7 in the 'Basic Principles' chapter, dealing with Language. Alternative B is the

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[126] This table is based on the background document 'The Language section' available at:

http://www.knesset.gov.il/committees/heb/material/data/H11-01-2007_9-03-23_safa.doc

[127] Committee's Proposal section 7 footnote 18. In the constitution proposal, which was formulated at the of the 16th Knesset's term, alternative A' was presented as it appears here in addition to another alternative, according to which the section would not be included in the constitution at all.

proposal of the Israel Democracy Institute, as it appears in the institution's proposal "Constitution by Consensus"[128]. Alternative C is the proposal of IRAC (The Israel Religious Action Center), which was prepared for the purpose of the discussion and is part of a wider document dealing with constitutional fundamentals. The proposals brought before the committee were the two 'hierarchy approaches' and the 'de jure equality approach'.

In addition, there was a fourth proposal suggested by the Center for Zionist Strategy.[129] It was not presented in writing to the committee, but was originally intended to be discussed, and its writers were invited to take part in the debate.

The three proposals presented in writing were to be thoroughly defined by the advisor before the discussion was opened for 'further proposals'. Thus, in principle, the two 'hierarchy approaches' and the 'de jure equality approach' were supposed to be the three main proposals while the 'Hebrew-only approach' was to be relegated to a secondary level. In reality, however, this was not the case. Rather, the two hierarchy alternatives were discussed most thoroughly and occupied the greater part of the discussion. The 'de jure equality approach', despite being allegedly one of the three central proposals, was hastily mentioned and was rejected without extensive discussion. The 'Hebrew-only approach' was granted broad representation by the professional bodies, as well as by members of the committee, but nevertheless remained in a minority position. The option of 'absolute equality status' was utterly outside of the discussion and was not mentioned in any form. We will now demonstrate this assertion through a closer examination of the debate.

In presenting the alternatives, the legal advisor concentrated on the two 'hierarchy alternatives'. According to both, Hebrew and Arabic have a legal status but Hebrew is the 'state language' or a 'language with a special status'. According to the advisor, the general idea was to enable the definition of 'state language' in order to grant supremacy to the Hebrew language while examining the exact meanings of Arabic's status. The third alternative – Alternative C of

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[128] footnote 15

[129] see footnote 30

the Israel Religious Action Center (regarding an equal, official status for both languages) was not presented at all by the advisor at this stage, although it corresponded to the two 'hierarchy alternatives' in the discussion sheets placed before the debaters. The advisor presented this alternative only after being asked about the existence of a 'Hebrew-only' option. It is important to mention that the chairman clearly defined the purpose of the advisor's review as a way of presenting the committee members with the written alternatives "before the discussion is opened for further possibilities".

After presenting the alternatives (as mentioned, the hierarchy alternatives alone) MK Levi wondered whether there exists an alternative that grants a legal status only to Hebrew. The advisor answered laconically that such a proposal was indeed suggested by the Institute for Zionist Strategy, with only Hebrew being referred to in the constitution. The advisor did not develop this issue or discuss its implications. At that point, he brought up an "additional approach" that proposes an equal status for Hebrew and Arabic. Explaining that this was the third alternative, which was presented in writing to the committee members, he described it as follows:

> *"Hebrew and Arabic will function as official languages; That is to say a clearly equal and specified status for both languages. An actual bilingual status."*

Following this statement, the advisor returned to his review. He again focused on the two hierarchy alternatives and on the need to clarify the differences between them.

The approaches were clarified at a considerably earlier stage of the discussion. All members of the committee accepted the need to justify the supremacy of the Hebrew language. Since the committee members were the key speakers at the meeting (and not the external guests), the 'de jure equality approach', which was not supported by any of them, was not discussed at all. The chairman confirmed that none of the committee members was in favor of that alternative, and indeed nobody was. As will be further explained, this proposal - the 'de jure equality' approach - was discussed one more time, but its marginal status remained the same. Most members of the committee agreed that it was meaningless to grant the Arabic language a legal status and tried to focus the discussion on clarifying the differences between the two hierarchy

proposals; namely, the meanings of 'official status' as opposed to 'special status' for Arabic. These efforts were often interrupted by MKs Levi and Gafni, who supported the 'Hebrew-only' approach and repeatedly tried to focus the discussion on this proposal. In MKs Levi's and Gafni's opinion, there was no room for mentioning Arabic at all in the chapter being discussed at the meeting (the chapter of Basic Principles which includes Language, State Symbols and the Hebrew Calendar) since this act presents Arabic as one of the state's symbols. MK Levi stated that Arabic is not in any way a state symbol and MK Gafni explained:

"I speak of common sense […] I am going with the simplest logic […] If you talk about symbols then the symbol is Jewish. The name [of the state], its definition, the language, everything. If it is a practical matter to grant rights to the Arab minority, then the issue should be anchored comprehensively in the chapter dealing with rights."

This approach actually provides an argument that directly contrasts with the main argument of the 'de jure equality' approach. There is no place for giving Arabic symbolic power, not even as an exceptional symbolic area, because it is a matter of 'all or nothing'. Since the state's name - The State of Israel (and its definition as a Jewish state) -- place the Jewish element in the center, there is no room for treating language differently. Thus, an illogical situation is created in which some of the symbols exclusively represent the Jewish nature of the state and others do not. The proposed solution was not designed to completely disregard the issues concerning Arabic, but to distinguish between the symbolic element and the practical one and to anchor privileges related to the use of Arabic in a separate chapter that addresses minorities. Thus, Arab citizens' right to preserve their language is recognized, but not in a way that sees it as a state symbol.

Other than MKs Levi and Gafni, the 'Hebrew-only' approach was further reinforced by the Chairman of the Center for Zionist Strategy who was invited to the discussion in order to present the draft constitution formulated by the institute. In the proposal of the Center for Zionist Strategy; as mentioned, the Hebrew language alone has a legal status. The Arabic language is not granted any status. The privileges that its speakers are entitled to are included in the section that covers the rights of minority language speakers in general, in order to preserve their language.

The main argument presented by the Chairman of the Institute, Mr. Israel Harel, regarded this arrangement as an inevitable reaction to the Arab minority's behavior "over the last few years and especially in the last few months". Harel was referring to the 'future vision documents' published by Arab organizations[130]. He specifically referred to the document of the follow-up committee and to that of Mossawa, which he harshly spoke of as "… de facto a bill of divorce from the State of Israel". The 'future vision documents' reflected, in his opinion, a secessionist behavior evident in various areas. According to him, the absence of Arab members at the constitution committee was further evidence that the Arab population was not interested in being an integral part of Israeli society. The language section should be, in his opinion, a mechanism protecting the majority group from these tendencies. An official status for Arabic, especially one that positions it in an equal status to Hebrew, might give the Arab minority legitimacy for its assumed secessionism, and cause further demands such as these. Harel stated:

> *"The fear is that the language might serve as a tool that would lead us to a bi-national state."*

Harel claimed that if the Arab minority's position 'identifies with the state,' which according to him means recognizing Israel as a Jewish state, then it would be adequate to grant Arabic widespread, diverse rights, including an equal official status.

Thus, an official status, according to this approach, is understood to be a reward from the state for 'an adequate behavior', which accepts the state's definition as defined by the centralism of the majority group. Annulment of the official status and withholding any kind of legal status is, in this sense, a 'punishment' for secessionist behavior and a tool for stemming these undesirable tendencies.

The 'equal official status' received further attention when a delegate of the Israel Religious Action Center was given the opportunity to speak. The delegate, Reform Rabbi Kariv, further defined two elements of the proposal that were introduced at the beginning of the chapter:

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[130] see Chapter 1, 1.4

what is the meaning of 'equal status' in this proposal and in what way can it be reconciled with an unequivocal desire for a Jewish identity for the state? The Center's delegate clarified that the proposal for an equal status for languages was mainly declarative and that it was clear to its writers that in practice, the dominance of the Hebrew language would remain.

The declarative issue was important since it expressed the assumption that the role of an official status was to sketch an optimistic vision regarding a cooperative relationship with the Arab minority. Unlike the 'Hebrew-only' approach, which views the official status as an act that nurtures secessionist tendencies among the minority, the Religious Action Center chooses 'legal action as a chance rather than a risk' approach. On the matter of the state's identity, the Institute's representative stated that this proposal did not seek to undermine the existence of the state as Jewish. This proposal takes into account the fact that the state's Jewish identity was well established through other sections, such as defining it as a Jewish state definition, the right of return, etc. Rabbi Kariv explicitly stated that:

> *"The discussion here is conducted as if [the language section] is the only section according to which the image of the State of Israel is determined as a Jewish state and as the national home of the Jewish people. If matters were so, we would indeed have to demand that this entire section reflect the fact that this is a Jewish state and a democratic state."*

Despite the narrow interpretation of equal status proposed by Rabbi Kariv, the Institute's proposal (which is, as mentioned, one of the three official alternatives in the discussion), was not considered a relevant option by the members of the committee and was not discussed further.

So what about the 'absolute equality approach'? This option, as mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, demands an equal official status for both languages in practice. Moreover, the language matter, according to this option, acts as a reflection of the equal status of Arabs in the identity of the state in general. As understood from the description of the alternatives officially brought up for discussion, this option was not among them. In addition, no delegate among the guests was designated to present such an option. None of the committee members who were present proposed this option as a preferable alternative or as one that should be discussed.

Due to the absence of Arab committee members from the meeting, the 'absolute equality approach' was removed from the agenda. It should be mentioned that at the time of the meeting, the majority of the 'future vision documents' had been publicly distributed, all including some reference to the desired status of the Arabic language. A couple of these documents were even available as background documents at the meeting. However, except for their mention by the Chairman of the Center for Zionist Strategy as reinforcement of his position about the isolationism of the Arab sector, no further mention of their stance concerning languages was made.

The approach that received the most legitimacy was the hierarchy approach, in all of its variations. Now we will examine the principles on which this approach is based, as manifested in the discussion.

The possibility of creating a formal hierarchy between the languages in a way that assures the supremacy of Hebrew received the greatest support. Additionally, most opinions tended to mention the Arabic language in a manner that granted it a favored status over other minority languages. MKs Levi and Gafni's opinions, regarding the complete omission of Arabic from this section did not receive any support from the other members. In other words, most members did not oppose mentioning Arabic in the chapter 'basic principles', which comes immediately after the 'state symbols' section. Moreover, it should be mentioned that an option suggesting not including a section dealing with languages in the constitution was raised in the discussion and did not receive much support, which certainly indicates that members of the committee wanted to deal with the subject. The *manner* in which the hierarchy between the languages would be determined was the issue that occupied the greater part of the discussion and concentrated on two central questions: first – is Hebrew's supremacy indeed secure in its definition as a 'state language', and second – should Arabic remain an official language or rather, should it be granted a 'special status'.

Before we specify the claims and conclusions of this discussion, it is important to mention that the entire discussion was accompanied by awkwardness concerning terminology. It was clear that the phrase 'official language' is *relatively* more legal-based than the terms 'state language'

or 'a language with a special status', but all three suffer from vagueness. On the one hand, the situation granted the debaters a certain freedom, since they were not restrained to a rigid conceptual setting in the sense that 'all possibilities are theoretically open'. On the other hand, it demanded maximum clarity since it was not possible to explicitly determine the practical meaning of each option.

Regarding the first question-- the definition of Hebrew as the 'state language'-- the members of the committee asked for clarification that this definition represents the following fact: the Jewish factor is the main factor in the state's definition. The legal advisor, attorney Zanberg was requested to explain how this phrase came about and the intentions of the writers who selected it. The advisor explained that this phrase was shaped by the professional committee (of the 16th Knesset's Constitution Committee), based on constitutional drafts from other nations, such as Switzerland's constitution concerning 'national language.' He added that the root of this choice is the following:

> *"State language is viewed as a phrase that alludes to a Jewish state […] this characterizes the root of the state. It is the language of the state. The state is regarded as having a unique identity, in which Hebrew is its language. The term 'official language' is more technical, more legal. That was the idea."*

The members of the committee were satisfied with this interpretation of the phrase, namely because it carries the symbolic-representative element of the state as a Jewish state. However, in order to guarantee that this phrase would create the supremacy of Hebrew over Arabic in a practical way too, they demanded that the phrase 'official language' not be omitted for Hebrew and that 'state language' be clarified with regard to Hebrew. They requested that it also include the following interpretation, as MK Levi presented it:

> *"I believe that 'state language' is also an unclear phrase. State language is a phrase that we revive today. Everybody has addressed the matter as if it is obvious that 'state language' is more than 'official'. I do not believe so. State language can be interpreted as a cultural matter. Many things are possible. We are familiar with our judges' creativity. We should at least write that Hebrew is the state language, and therefore, it is the official language."*

MK Levi's clarification was unanimously supported. Thus, state language supposes at least an official status and no less.

As for the definition of Arabic, as aforementioned, the two main options were to leave it as an official language or to change its status to that of a language with special status. The majority of the discussion focused on the first option, to leave it as an official language. There are a number of reasons for this. First, it seemed that in light of the agreement over the definition of Hebrew as a 'state language,' it was guaranteed supremacy and the fear that Arabic's 'officiality' would be granted the same privilege dissipated. Second, keeping the phrase 'official language' was viewed as an indication that a certain status quo and continuity concerning the status of Arabic would be maintained-- at least on a declarative level. Third, the phrase 'special status' was viewed as potentially creating difficulties among those with a pro-Hebrew approach, as well as among those who feared that Arabic would lose its place entirely. There was an agreement that this was the vaguest of the three phrases. Among those who supported Hebrew's reinforcement, the concern arose that due to such a vague phrase the legislator or the court would interpret it in a way that would grant Arabic an equal status to Hebrew. This concern was raised by a delegate of the Israel Democracy Institute. He explained why, in his opinion, an official status is preferable to the phrase special status:

> *"[According to alternative A'] Arabic has a special status. There is a question mark as to the meaning of the words special status alongside privileges. Of course the court is entitled to take it in all different directions, including ones that would make it equal to Hebrew."*

For those who feared the weakening of Arabic, the vagueness of the phrase was also viewed as problematic, but for the opposite reason. The concern was that the status would be completely devoid of substance since it was not clear what the minimum requirements are for 'special status'. The claim was that in spite of the fact that the phrase official language is not completely clear, it is agreed upon by all that it presumes a certain minimum. This was defined as "an obligation of the legislator to bring the language into manifestation on national contexts".

One could argue then, that in order to maintain the phrase 'official language' for Arabic, the symbolic element was 'removed' from it and granted exclusively to Hebrew through its

definition as 'state language.' The state is a Jewish state and its language is the language of the majority – Hebrew. So what remained of the phrase official language? It seems that the practical content or the 'technical-legal' content, so called by the legal advisor, has remained. This has compelled the authorities to use this language in different circumstances. Moreover, while an official language is granted some presence in public spheres, a language with special status is not.

The approach that received the greatest legitimacy (the hierarchy approach in the version of 'hierarchy among official languages') lay between the more pro-Hebrew approach (the Hebrew-only approach) and the more pro-Arabic approach (the de jure equality approach). Allegedly, it represented an almost perfect compromise. This remained true as long as the option was examined in light of the other approaches. Indeed, compared to the other proposals, the hierarchy approach was the compromise option. But if one takes into consideration that the absolute equality status was not brought up at all as a practical possibility, the picture changes. Once the option of completely equal status had been presented among the variety of possible options, the hierarchy approach was no longer the most balanced one. Rather, it tipped the scales towards the pro-Hebrew side. In other words, the absence of the absolute equality approach made the chosen option seem quite conciliatory; in fact it was a pro-Hebrew approach when examined on a larger scale. In addition, due to the absence of representatives from the Arab sector the absolute equality approach was not represented or even mentioned. In that situation, the minority could not hope that an approach praising equality that goes beyond the de jure equality approach would be heard if there was no one present to represent it.

5.5.2 **Test Case 2 –Bills for Amendments of Article 82**

The second arena examining the different approaches (to the official status of Arabic) concerns several bills brought up by Knesset Members about Article 82 for Order in Council.

In 2001, MK Kleiner proposed an annulment of Article 82 so that Arabic's official status would be rescinded and Hebrew would remain Israel's exclusive official language[131]. MK Kleiner's proposal came, among other things, as a reaction to the Adalah Supreme Court case[132], which enforced the use of Arabic in municipal signs in mixed cities. MK Kleiner's proposal clearly represented the 'Hebrew-only' approach. MK Kleiner does not view Arabic's official status as a valid feature of Arab national identity. In his opinion, attempting to form such as identity through language is not a legitimate act. He presented the bill at the Knesset with the following words:

> *"Lately, as part of the signals of time, and parallel to the attempts to form a secessionist, Palestinian, national identity within the State of Israel - a national identity that differs from a religious identity, which should of course be fully respected - a legal fight for the enforcement of this disregarded ruling has begun, in areas in which it is necessary but also in those where there is no justification to do so."[133]*

From this, we understand that if an official language has a part in forming a national identity then this role is reserved for the Hebrew language as it represents a national Jewish identity. It excludes the Arabic language, whose attempts to enforce its status are viewed as an act of national secession. Moreover, it seems that MK Kleiner's claims are not addressed to the legal system for granting this interpretation to the status of Arabic. Rather, his claims concern the representatives of the Arab sector, who are trying to change the status quo in order to achieve political gains:

> *"My suggestion is to use the Arabic language wisely and not automatically while politically and cynically exercising the provision of law. Until today, there has been an informal agreement: the Jews did not alter the law and the Arabs did not try to seriously enforce it. This was the situation until today".[134]*

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[131]Proposed Law (Order in Council – Amendment – Official Language), 1999 (Proposal of Knesset Member M. Kleiner) – p/579.

[132]Adalah vs. The Municipality of Tel Aviv, footnote 46

[133] Knesset minutes 7 November 2001

[134] Idem.

Hence, in addition to the fact that the attempts to enforce Arabic's official status are illegitimate as far as the state's national identity is concerned, they are also considered an illegitimate legal action that takes advantage of a legal lacuna. The equal interpretation for an official status that the Arab sector demands is certainly not present in the agreement, according to MK Kleiner. Moreover, as far as he is concerned, it was clear to both sides that this interpretation did not exist. This demand, which deviates from a 'tacit agreement', should lead to a formal change of the agreement in order to prevent a situation where additional attempts will be made to enforce a status. From his point of view, this status does not truly exist.

The third issue that arises from this bill, which characterizes the 'Hebrew-only' approach, is the belief that Arabic cannot be granted a special place over other minority languages. Addressing this issue, MK Kleiner took a functional perspective on how the state should handle minority languages. The state should provide services in languages other than Hebrew only in geographical areas that have a 'relevant need' for it. In other words, areas in which the majority of citizens are not Hebrew speakers – be it an Arabic-speaking population or other common minority language, such as Russian.

Thus, this proposal is far from any equal interpretation of the status of languages in a declarative-symbolic sense as well as a practical one. It unequivocally supports the assurance of supremacy for the Hebrew language. It also differs from the hierarchy approach in that it does not recognize a need to favor Arabic over other minority languages in Israel.

This bill was not adopted. However, it seems that other Knesset Members were not satisfied with the existing situation, and three additional proposals have been presented in the Knesset over the last few years. Do the new proposals maintain the same tendencies or are we witnessing a change in how Arabic's desired status is presented? As we will see, two out of three proposals demonstrate a less pro-Hebrew approach.

In January 2005, while speaking at the Knesset's special meeting marking Hebrew Language Day, MK Eldad announced his intention to initiate a proposal that would settle once and for all the status of languages in Israel:

"Members of the Knesset, I have placed in your compartments a language bill, which opens with the words: "The language of the State of Israel is Hebrew" and ends with the words: "Article 82 of the order in council will be abolished". It is time for the status of the Hebrew language to be determined by the law of the State of Israel and not as a mandatory residue. I will be happy if you would all join this bill."[135]

MK Eldad's proposal, which ultimately did not reach the Knesset table, was not fundamentally different from MK Kleiner's. It did not include a demand for endowing the Arabic language with a special status either. It only stipulated accessibility for the population in areas that require it. Nevertheless, this did not grant Arabic supremacy over other minority languages.

A tendency towards change might be detected in two other proposals –by MK Hendel and by MK Eitan. In both proposals, the determination to assure Hebrew's supremacy remains, but there seems to be a transformation from the Hebrew-only approach towards some kind of hierarchy option. In the first one, we see the creation of a special status for Arabic. The second calls for the creation of a hierarchy among official languages that reduces the range of validity for Arabic compared to Hebrew. This will now be clarified.

MK Hendel's draft bill[136] tried to promote a step that does not call for the abolition of Article 82 but for its amendment. In the proposal's first part, it is suggested that the status of the Hebrew language be defined as that of an official language in the Flag and Emblem Law, 1949, alongside the national anthem and the flag. In the second part, Knesset Member Hendel suggested the amendment of Article 82 of the order in council so that it applies *only to the Arabic language.* This could be accomplished by changing the subheading "official languages" to "the use of the Arabic language"[137]. In presenting the bill at the Knesset, MK Hendel explained his proposal, saying:

"A democratic Jewish state is entitled, after almost 60 years of existence, not to rely on a ruling made by the High Commissioner at the time of the British Mandate. It is entitled to grant Hebrew the status it deserves – the same as that of the flag and the national anthem. This should be done without detracting from it in the slightest, and I repeat my

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[135] Knesset minutes, 4 January, 2005

[136] Proposed Law - Hebrew Language Law, 2006 (proposal of Knesset Member Tzvi Hendel) p/533/17.

[137] Idem. Section 2(1)

words over and over so that no misunderstanding will occur – I did not change the section dealing with Arabic, it will remain as it is. Yet, the Hebrew language will not remain at an equal level with the Arabic language; it will receive the status of a symbol."[138]

MK Hendel was determined to show that this proposal would not harm the Arabic language "in the slightest". As far as the state's obligation to publish official signs in Arabic is concerned, it is partially true, but this is not the case in other areas. According to MK Hendel's approach, none of the languages today enjoys an official status. In this sense, no harm would be done to Arabic. It is possible that this resulted from his belief that the subheading 'official languages' was not strong enough to determine the 'true official status' of languages. However, he demanded in his proposal that this heading be changed. If it has no meaning, it is difficult to understand why it should be changed. Despite all this, Arabic would be granted a unique status superior to other minority languages. In that sense, this proposal differs from the 'Hebrew-only approach'.

One can see that, either through strategic motives or through an acknowledgment of the importance of Arabic, there is a move towards the hierarchy approach granting Arabic a special status. Hebrew becomes an official language through a revised law, which grants it the status of state symbol alongside the anthem and the flag. The existing agreement then grants Arabic a special status for services that should be provided by the state in that language. Yet, the power of the agreement to indicate an official status has expired. This step, as noted above, allegedly does not detract from the status of Arabic since the state's obligation to provide official services remained unchanged, but Arabic's 'official status' does not include the symbolic content that might have been included if the original Article were to remain as it was. The symbolic content reserved for official languages alone is now guaranteed only to the Hebrew language.

MK Eitan's bill for the amendment of Article 82 was placed on the Knesset table in July 2006[139]. This proposal too creates a hierarchy among languages, but unlike MK Kleiner's, it aimed to change the Article so that the order regarding the publication of official announcements in

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[138] Knesset minutes 8 November, 2006

[139] Proposed Law- Amendment of Order in Council (official Languages), 2006, (proposal of Knesset Member Michael Eitan) p/17/1064.

Hebrew would stay as it was. Concerning Arabic, it would apply only to cities in which at least one-third of the population was Arabic-speaking[140]. In the bill and commentaries, there was no direct discussion about the phrase 'official language,' but in practice, this status is only granted a functional meaning. According to this approach, since the aim of this order is to enable the language speakers access to official announcements in their languages, there is no justification for it to be done in places where Arabic speakers do not constitute a great percentage of the population. There is no direct treatment of the national-symbolic interpretations of this Article, but indirectly speaking the statement is that they do not exist or are irrelevant. Thus, an 'official language' is reduced to being a language in which the authorities are obliged to publish official announcements in geographical areas where its speakers constitute a large percentage of the population (one-third). Thus, Hebrew and Arabic are two official languages (in the sense that the state is obliged to publish announcements in those two languages), while the range of Arabic is smaller.

Up until now, the amendments to the mandatory order (in its different versions) was not given legitimacy in the Knesset. Yet, the beginning of a process can certainly be detected, starting with the dissatisfaction with the order dictating that a language's status originates in the mandatory period. In the past, the Arab sector's recourse to Article 82 to make demands to the authorities was described as a 'cynical use' of a legal lacuna. The way to handle this was to 'plug' this hole. Today, it seems that an understanding exists that there is a need for an active movement and for creative solutions that consider a variety of factors. Second, there seems to be an acknowledgment that a proposal that does not recognize a special status for Arabic over other minority languages is not likely to be accepted. It is possible that ultimately the Knesset will decide to change the order, but it seems that if this happens, it will be done in a way that grants Arabic supremacy over other minority languages. Moreover, it seems that it will be done out of the genuine will to settle the matter of statuses of languages in Israel, rather than as a reaction to 'unjust' attempts by the Arab sector to receive political gain.

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[140] Idem. Section 1

5.5.3 **Test Case 3 – the Arabic Language Academy Law- an Exceptional Egalitarian Event?**

The bill for founding a 'Higher Institute for the Arabic language' is the third test case with which to examine the different approaches to Arabic's official status and the amount of legitimacy each receives.

In July 2006, MK (at the time, now Minister) Raleb Magadlah presented a bill for the founding of a language academy for the Arabic language[141] in the Knesset. According to this proposal, the duty of this institute is to "direct the development of the Arabic language based on the study of the language in all periods and branches thereof"[142] and its costs would be fully covered by the state's budget. Both languages are presented as equal – as official languages by law according to the mandatory order. This proposal actually presented an institute that parallels the Hebrew Language Academy, as its writer indicated in the discussion just before the preliminary reading:

> *"…I am very sorry. I expected that today you would all join together on this good and worthy proposal. I have taken the version of the Hebrew Language Academy, word for word…"[143]*

The official status of Arabic is interpreted by the initiators of the proposal as completely equal. They assume that Arabic should be granted an equal status to Hebrew and that both are worthy of an institutional infrastructure. In other words, according to the writers of the proposal, the equal standing of Hebrew and Arabic constitutes the main argument for the founding of the Institute.

The argument regarding the officiality of Arabic as a justification for the demand to establish counterpart of the Hebrew language Institute was rejected by some of the MKs. MK Alon[144] presented the most radical counter position. During the abovementioned discussion, he stated the following:

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[141] Proposed Law - Supreme Institute for the Arabic language, 2006, (proposal of Knesset Member Raleb Magadlah) p/17/1355

[142] Idem. Section 2

[143] Knesset minutes, 13 December 2006 (Hereafter 'Arabic Language Academy preliminary reading')

[144] Member of the religious right-wing party Ichud Leumi – Mafdal

"It [the Arabic language] is not the official language of the state."[145]

MK Saar[146] did not deny the existence of the order dictating an official status for Arabic, but did not view this as relevant justification for the proposal at hand:

"The order in council which you rely on goes back to the days of the British Mandate, when there was one land in which Jews and Arabs lived together and Arabs formed the majority [...] to create now a duplicate of the Hebrew Language Academy, in the face of an Arabic Language Academy, on the same pattern...that is a step towards turning the State of Israel into a bi-national state."[147]

MK Saar stressed the fact that the arrangement granting Arabic an official status was determined a very long time ago, during a different demographical reality. It can be understood from his statement that this status for Arabic is not relevant as a basis for the demands regarding Arabic today. It certainly does not justify equal treatment for the two languages. He views this demand for the equal treatment of Hebrew and Arabic as an illegitimate attempt to alter the Jewish character of the state, and not as a lawful manifestation of Arabic's official status.

The Education Minister, Prof. Yael Tamir, who presented the proposal at this discussion, addressed MK Saar's reservations in the following way:

"First, according to the law, Arabic's status is a privileged status. It is not like any other language."[148]

Minister Tamir had a more minimalist interpretation of Arabic's current status than the one presented by the writer of the proposal. She referred to the 'special status' approach, according to which the status of Arabic is not equal to that of Hebrew but is unique compared to other minority languages. However, she did not see the fact that this interpretation would lead to supporting equivalent, state-funded institutions for Hebrew and Arabic as a bad thing. This

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[145] 'Arabic Language Academy preliminary reading' footnote 143

[146] Member of the right-wing Likud party

[147] 'Arabic Language Academy preliminary reading' footnote 143

[148] Idem.

approach enabled the approval of the bill. It did not demand the acceptance of the absolute equality approach, but neither did it abolish the relevance of Arabic's status.

In the discussion at the Knesset plenum (where the proposal was presented for second and third readings) MK Baracah[149] praised the approval of the bill. He pointed out an additional aspect concerning the official status issue:

> *"There is no doubt that this bill, [for the establishment of the Arabic Language Academy] would promote the status of the Arabic language as an official language. I know, as many others do, that there are all sorts of voices lately, which are part of the poisoned wave of racism against the Arab population that wish to harm the Arabic language and its status. I hope that this law will also act as a proper answer to these actions by strengthening the status of the Arabic language as an official language in Israel."[150]*

MK Baracah presented the existence of a higher institution for the Arabic language as an act capable of promoting the official status of Arabic and endowing it with an essential meaning. As understood by the Arab Knesset members, the demand for equal handling of Hebrew and Arabic is based on the definition of Arabic as an official language. At the same time, it acts as a tool for the reinforcement of this status as significant and valid.

In spite of the dissatisfaction expressed by some Knesset members, this bill was approved and the establishment of the institution was endorsed. Arabic's official status functions in this context as a 'self-perpetuating operation'. At first, the proposal received its strength from the official status of Arabic. The initiators referred to Arabic's official status to create legitimacy for the founding of a higher institute for the Arabic language even though it is clear that in practice its status is far from being equal to that of Hebrew. Once the establishment of the Institute was determined, a process began to actively create a counterpart of the existing institute in Hebrew. This process added actual content to Arabic's official status, which had been regarded for many years as irrelevant.

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[149] Member of the left-wing Arab-Jewish party Hadash.

[150] Knesset minutes, 21 March 2007

Yet, approval of the bill, despite signifying the positive position of the majority group towards the status of Arabic, is far from truly adopting an equal interpretation for the status of the two languages. One might claim that this marks no more than equal treatment in the context of a *special status* and not a state of fully equality. It is possible that viewing the language academy more as an academic institution than as a state institution with truly symbolic meaning helped enable the bill. Either way, there was no fundamental deviation from the approach granting Arabic special status.

5.6 **Conclusions**

In this chapter, I have examined the public-official discourse concerning Arabic's official status. It was seen that the Arab sector grants a broad, equal interpretation to the status of Hebrew and Arabic ('the absolute equality approach'). This approach characterized how Arabic's status should be interpreted *today*, as well as the desired model in principle. In the majority group, three main approaches emerged:

(1) The 'de jure equality approach' which stands for a *declarative* equal status of the languages, while granting the Hebrew language supremacy in other symbolic areas.

(2) The hierarchy approach, according to which Hebrew's supremacy is expressed on both the declarative and the practical levels, while Arabic is granted an advantage over other minority languages. This approach was presented in two ways. The first leaves Arabic as an official language but creates a hierarchy between the 'officiality' of the two languages. The second abolishes Arabic's official status in favor of a 'special status'. In both of these proposals, Hebrew's status is strengthened by its being proclaimed a 'state language'.

(3) The 'Hebrew-only' approach, which demands hegemony for Hebrew and opposes any special precedence being granted to the Arabic language's status over other minority languages.

I examined the legitimacy of these approaches using three test cases: 1. A Knesset committee meeting dealing with the language section in the state's constitution proposal; 2.Bills regarding the amendment of Article 82; and 3. The approval of the Arabic Language Academy bill.

The discussion at the Constitution Committee session reflected the strong domination of the hierarchy approach. The Hebrew-only approach received a broad representation but remained in a minority position. The 'de jure equality approach' stayed at the margins of the discussion and was easily rejected. The absolute equality approach remained entirely out of this discourse. The hierarchy approach – which acted as a 'consensus' position - formed a bridge between a more pro-Arabic approach and a more pro-Hebrew one, positioning it as the median approach within the boundaries of the public-Jewish discourse.

Our examination of this matter through the bills to amend Article 82 pointed to a tendency to move away from the Hebrew-only approach towards some sort of hierarchy approach (which grants Hebrew supremacy but also gives precedence to Arabic over other minority languages). Moreover, one also finds an acknowledgment of the need to take a concrete and creative approach to the question of official status and to abandon the position which does away with the implications with regards to the status of Arabic.

The approval of the Arabic Language Academy bill is the only instance in the last few years in which the legislator approved a bill based on the equal interpretation of language status. Yet, although it was accepted, it does not indicate the true acceptance of an equal status for languages. Rather, it shows a tendency to occasionally tolerate an equal interpretation within the framework of the clear supremacy of Hebrew.

Together, these three test cases indicate the following:

The Jewish public discourse, as demonstrated by these test cases, ranges from the 'Hebrew-only approach' to the 'de jure equality approach'. The latter represents the most pro-Arabic stand that can be found within this discourse. The representatives of the Arab sector continue to present the absolute equality approach in various situations, but (at least for the time being) it is not essentially accepted within the Jewish discourse as a legitimate possibility. When the representatives of the Arab sector are not part of the discourse, the absolute equality approach

does not arise in the discussion at all. When decision-makers from the Jewish public are required to address it, the responses range from calling for its complete abolition to attempting to 'bend' it towards a more pro-Hebrew approach.

The hierarchy approach comes across as the most dominant one in the discourse of decision makers in the majority group. This is reflected by how Arabic's official language should be interpreted today as well as its future, desired place. This is allegedly, as was stated, a compromise approach that is more pro-Arabic than the 'Hebrew-only approach' and more pro-Hebrew than the 'de jure' equality approach'. However, taking into account a wider discourse addressing the Arabic position, this approach seems more pro-Hebrew than conciliatory.

Nevertheless, even within the limits of a dominant pro-Hebrew approach, such as the hierarchy approach, demands for the Arabic language that are rooted in equality (e.g., the establishment of an Arabic language academy that parallels the standards of the Hebrew one) are made.

Finally, although the absolute equality approach is not within the boundaries of the public-Jewish discourse, it seems that its strength cannot be disregarded. One might argue that it acts as a catalyst for making the Jewish public realize that official status of Hebrew and Arabic should be actively settled and that it is no longer possible to rely on a historical agreement. Whether the motivation comes from the will to strengthen Arabic's status or whether they relate to a concern for Hebrew's status, it is an important process.

6. QUANTITATIVE SURVEY: ATTITUDES TO ARABIC LANGUAGE POLICIES IN ISRAEL – PRACTICAL AND IDEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The general aim of this survey was to explore perceptions about extending the role of the Arabic language within Israel in several domains. The issues were examined from several perspectives, both practical and ideological: (1) attitudes to a range of Arabic language policies that are either not currently in practice or constitute an extension of current policies. Policies in three specific domains (government services, public television and education) were examined ('Study 1' 6.4 below) (2) Attitudes to Hebrew-Arabic 'societal bilingualism' (a configuration according to which the two languages would share de facto equal status) along with possible ideological motives either supporting or opposing such a model ('Study 2' 6.5 below) (3) Attitudes to a multilingual model that would include all linguistic minorities in Israel ('Study 3' 6.6 below).

6.1 Respondents

Respondents consisted of 466 Israeli adults and their selection was based on the following principles:

- Homogeneity:

  All respondents were students in academic institutions in Israel studying toward their BA degree.

- Representation:

  All surveys were distributed during required English courses. In most Israeli academic institutions these courses are not related to the students' fields of study and students are assigned to them according to their level of English. Thus, a large range of academic interests were represented.

- Geographical distribution:

The academic institutions chosen for the study were spread over three main geographical areas – the center (Tel-Aviv area), the North (Haifa and the Galilee) and the Sharon (coastal) area.

- Socio-economic background:

  The sample was designed to include respondents from both universities (58.6%) and academic colleges (41.4%).

- Subgroups:

  Five subgroups were created based on ethnicity, religion and linguistic characteristics. The distribution is shown in Table 6.1 below:

Table 6.1: Distribution of Participants According to Subgroups

Jews			Arabs (Arabic native speakers)	
Native Hebrew speakers		Native Russian speakers[151]	Muslims	'Non-Muslims' (Druze and Christians)
Secular	Religious			
98 (21%)	133 (28.5%)	75 (16.1%)	118 (25.3%)	42 (9%)
306 (65.7%)			160 (34.3%)	
466 (100%)				

The mean age of respondents was 24.4 years (SD 6.1); 105 males (22.6%) and 360 (77.4%) females. The gender pattern was stable across institutions (23.4% males in universities, 21.4% in colleges) and across subgroups (16.9%-29.9% males).

6.2 **Instrument**

The survey was developed specifically for this study based on existing sociological, psycho-sociological and policy questionnaires in the literature (see chapter 2, section 2.3.3). The survey

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[151] All participants in this sub group are first or second generation immigrants from Former Soviet Union (Hereafter FSU).

was developed in Hebrew. The possibility of creating an additional version in Arabic was considered and rejected based on the fact that the validity of the survey would suffer significantly due to possible differences between versions and the fact that Arabic-speaking students' stronger academic language is generally Hebrew. The inquiry itself was conducted by the author who was present on all occasions to provide a general description of the study as well as instructions on how to fill out the questionnaires. She was also available for questions and clarifications during the entire time that respondents were filling out the survey.

6.3 **Pilot Studies**

The first version of the survey was tested on two occasions (December, 2005) with 36 respondents, all of them students at Bar Ilan University. Following this pilot work, precise definitions were added to a number of terms used in the survey (e.g., 'official language', 'mixed cities', 'Arab university'), six questions were eliminated and the phrasing of three others was changed.

A corrected version was tested (January, 2006) among 20 respondents, all students at Bar Ilan university. Following the feedback from this pilot study, the sequence of studies in the survey was changed: the two studies concerning Arabic were placed after the one dealing with multilingualism.

6.4 **Study 1 – Attitudes to Arabic Language Policies**

Study 1 examined attitudes to several language policies that concerned extending the current role of Arabic in Israel. This was done in two ways. First, attitudes to a large number of policies in a variety of domains related to the Arabic language were examined ('General Measure' 6.4.1 below). And second, policies in three domains were looked at more closely, along with specific options for implementation ('Three Domains 6.4.2 below).

6.4.1 Attitudes to Arabic Language Policies - General Measure

<u>Construction and design of the measure:</u>

This part of the study examined respondents' attitudes to a range of policies concerning the use of Arabic in a number of domains. These were either language policies that are *not currently in practice* or *policies that expand those presently implemented in Israel.* The list of items was based on preliminary study of current initiatives and projects related to the use of Arabic in Israel. The search included a large number of organizations and institutions in Israel, mainly non-governmental, which are somehow involved with projects related to the Arabic language (see Chapter 2 section 2.1 for more details).

Fourteen items were constructed, providing a range of policy suggestions for extending the current use of Arabic in Israel in different domains. The list is not exhaustive but includes a large variety of policy suggestions that are currently being promoted or which have been implemented in other places and are relevant for the Israeli context:

- Government services (e.g., extending Arabic office hour services in government offices, extending the use of Arabic on inter-city road signs)

- Public television (e.g., extending the amount of Arabic programs on public channels, encouraging the establishment of a commercial Arabic television channel)

- Education (e.g., extending the current amount of Arabic studies in Jewish schools, encouraging the establishment of more Hebrew-Arabic bilingual schools, supporting the establishment of an Arab university)

- Culture (e.g., supporting Arabic literary translation projects)

- The private sector (e.g., encouraging large privately owned institutions to provide services in Arabic)

The general question to the respondents was:

"Assuming that the State of Israel allocates resources to establish or strengthen projects, services or institutions related to the Arabic language, to what extent would you support each of the following suggestions?"

For each item, respondents were asked to rate--using a 5-point Likert scale-- the extent to which they favor the suggestion. One (1) was the most negative point on the scale ('highly undesired') and five (5) was the most positive ('highly desired'). A factor analysis was conducted on the responses to the list of items. It was found that the items cluster into a single factor, which explained 71% of the variance. The reliability coefficient was calculated and was found to be very high (0.92). In light of this, one *general measure* was calculated for this part, which was the mean scores of subjects for all items.

Analysis of results:

In order to examine whether significant differences existed between the groups regarding the 'general measure', analyses of variance were conducted. Duncan posthoc tests were used to examine the sources of differences between the groups. The results are presented in Table 6.2 below.

Table 6.2: Attitudes to Arabic Language Policies (General Measure for a Range of Domains) – Means, SD and Results of ANOVAs

I Secular Jews N=96 **Mean** **(SD)**	II Religious Jews N=133	III Former Soviet Union (FSU) N=72	IV Muslim Arabs N=100	V Non-Muslim Arabs N=40	F	Duncan Procedure
3.14 (0.82)	2.49 (0.93)	2.52 (0.85)	4.62 (0.39)	4.50 (0.58)	152***	II, III < I < IV, V

*** P<.001

Table 6.2 above shows a very positive position among Arab respondents, indicating strong support for policies to extend the role of Arabic in Israel. This is seen by the particularly high mean scores of both Arab groups (4.5 and 4.6 on a 1-5 scale). Among the Jewish groups, the

results of the religious and FSU groups indicated an unsupportive stance. Their scores were on the negative side of the scale, with no significant differences between them. The Jewish secular group fell in between. They were slightly more supportive than the other Jewish groups and much less supportive than the Arab groups. This group's score (3.14) was close to the neutral point on the scale.

6.4.2 Attitudes to Arabic Language Policies - Three Domains

<u>Construction and design of the measures:</u>

This part of the study examined respondents' attitudes to Arabic language policies *in three specific domains* - government services, public television and Arabic studies in Jewish schools. These three domains were chosen out of a larger list constructed for the first part of Study 1 ('General Measure' 6.4.1 above). Unlike the 'general measure,' which examined the extent to which a change in Arabic policies is generally desired, the additional aim of this part was to examine attitudes to the concrete implementation options provided for each policy.

The three domains observed in this part of the study are the following:

(1) 'Government Services'

This domain was looked at through two components: 1. The use of Arabic in state administration in government offices and 2. The use of Arabic on public signs. A sample item: '*Where, in your opinion, should office hour services be available in the Arabic language in government offices in Israel?*'. The options presented were designed to cover the possibilities relevant for the Israeli context, including 'Arab towns and villages' and 'Jewish-Arab mixed cities'.

(2) 'Public Television'

The items concerning the public television domain covered two types of public channels in Israel: the national channel and the public-commercial channels. The use of Arabic on public television included both Arabic programs and Arabic subtitles. A sample item: '*To what*

extent, in your opinion, should Arabic broadcasts be shown on the Israeli national channel ('channel 1')?'

(3) Arabic studies in Jewish schools

The items concerning this domain focused on three educational levels: elementary, high school and matriculation examinations. The items were designed as statements and referred to the teaching of Arabic as a compulsory subject in Israeli Jewish schools. A sample item: '*Arabic should be taught as a compulsory subject in Jewish elementary schools*'.

Three measures were calculated, one for each domain:

The 'Government Services' measure 1 was constructed of four items. (Alpha reliability was 0.89). Its value indicated respondents' mean score on the four items, which is presented in percentages.

Measure 2 was 'Public Television'. It was constructed of two items (alpha reliability was 0.93). It was the mean score of the items, presented in percentages.

'Arabic studies in Jewish schools' was measure 3 and was constructed of three items (alpha reliability was 0.86). Since these items were originally dichotomous, their scores were recalculated to match the scale of the above two measures. In this way, all three measures were based on the mean scores of 4-point scale items, which are presented in percentages. A summary of the measures is presented in Table 6.3 below:

Table 6.3: Attitudes to Arabic Policies in Three Domains – Description of Measures:

	Name of measure	# of items	Alpha	Calculation
1	Government Services	4	0.89	Mean score of items
2	Public Television	2	0.93	Mean score of items
3	Arabic studies in Jewish schools	3	0.86	Mean score of converted scale

To examine whether significant differences existed between the groups, an analysis of variance was conducted for each measure. A Duncan posthoc test was used to examine the sources of differences between the groups. The results of the Duncan procedure are presented in Table 6.4 in the far right column.

To examine the differences between the three measures within each group, an analysis of variance for repeated measures was conducted for each group separately. Paired T-tests were used as posthoc comparisons to examine the significance of differences between the measures. The results of the t-tests are presented in Table 6.4 in the bottom row.

Table 6.4 - Attitudes to Arabic Language Policies (Three Domains) - Means, SD and Results of ANOVAs[152]

	I Secular Jews N=98 **Mean (SD)**	II Religious Jews N=133	III FSU N=74	IV Muslim Arabs N=117	V Non-Muslim Arabs N=42	F	Duncan Procedure
Government services 1	80.73 (17.20)	70.01 (21.59)	67.99 (19.97)	94.76 (10.11)	93.15 (12.01)	47.43***	II,III < I < IV, V
Public TV 2	51.14 (15.23)	40.90 (16.49)	46.45 (17.37)	84.89 (14.38)	85.11 (14.40)	169.12***	II < I, III < IV, V
Arabic studies in Jewish schools 3	23.72 (26.71)	16.35 (25.00)	10.47 (21.10)	62.60 (23.50)	66.66 (19.65)	100.43***	III < I < IV, V
	259.84***	319.64***	191.89***	115.58***	41.38***		
t-test 1,2,3	1>2>3	1>2>3	1>2>3	1>2>3	1>2>3		

***$P<.005$

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[152] the high SD's are due to the fact that the measure is based on dichotomous items

Comparison of Subgroups - Jewish Respondents

As can be seen in Table 6.4 above, all three Jewish groups presented a positive position towards Arabic language policies in government services. The secular respondents were the most supportive with a mean score of 80.73 (on a 1-100 percentile scale). The mean scores of the other two Jewish groups were lower, but clearly remained on the positive end of the scale. The policies concerning the use of Arabic on Israeli public television gained much less support among the Jewish respondents. The general picture was not supportive, with secular and FSU groups presenting a neutral position and religious respondents revealing an even lower mean score of 40.9. A dramatic drop in the level of support among Jewish respondents was evident in relation to policies concerning Arabic studies in Jewish schools. All three Jewish groups presented a clear negative position, reflected by their low mean scores. The FSU respondents were the least supportive (with a mean score of 10.47 that indicated an unequivocal objection towards compulsory Arabic studies in Jewish schools).

Comparison of Subgroups - Arab Respondents

The Arab respondents, in general, revealed positive positions towards the policies examined as indicated by the respondents' mean scores presented in Table 6.4. In all three domains, Arab respondents' mean scores were significantly higher than those of the Jewish respondents. There were no significant differences between the two Arab subgroups. Policies relating to government services gained the highest level of support among Arab respondents (with a particularly high mean score of over 93). Next were the policies concerning the use of Arabic on Israeli public television (with a mean score of around 85). Similar to the pattern revealed by the Jewish respondents, Arab respondents presented a drop in their level of support where Arabic studies in Jewish schools were concerned, though their mean scores were still on the positive end of the scale (around 60).

Comparison of Domains

Concerning the differences between the three domains, Table 6.4 above reveals that all five subgroups exhibited the same pattern. As indicated by the t-tests, 'government services' (1) was the most preferred domain by all respondents. The policies concerning the use of Arabic on

public television (2) were in the middle, while 'Arabic studies in Jewish schools' (3) was the least supported across all subgroups.

Three Domains - Frequency Distribution

A closer look at the distribution of responses enables a better understanding of the results presented in Table 6.4 above. Tables 6.5-6.8 below present the distribution of responses within each subgroup, highlighting distinctions made by the respondents concerning the different policy options provided.

Domain 1 – Government Services

Table 6.5 – Frequency Distribution of Attitudes to the use of Arabic in State Administration (Forms (F) and Office Hour Services (OH))

	1(%) not available at all		2 Arab areas		3 Arab areas & mixed cities		4 in all places	
	F	OH	F	OH	F	OH	F	OH
Jewish secular N=98	3.1%	7.1%	8.2	22.4	25.5	40.8	63.3	29.6
Jewish religious N=133	10.5	12.8	20.3	29.3	33.1	43.6	36.1	14.3
FSU N=74	9.5	9.5	29.7	41.9	28.4	28.4	32.4	20.3
Muslim Arabs N=117	0	0	2.6	3.4	9.4	10.3	88	86.3
Non Muslim Arabs N=41	2.4	0	2.4	7.3	7.3	14.6	87.8	78
Totals N=463	5.4	6.7	13.2	21.4	22.5	29.6	59	42.3

F= forms (χ^2=117.48; p<.001)

OH= office hour services (χ^2=192.54; p<.001)

1= The service should not be available at all in government offices

2= The service should be available in Arab villages and towns only

3= The service should be available in Arab areas and mixed cities only

4= The service should be available in all government offices

Table 6.6 – Frequency Distribution of Attitudes to the Use of Arabic on Public Signs (Municipal (M) and Intercity (IC) Signs)

	1(%)		2		3		4	
	M	IC	M	IC	M	IC	M	IC
Jewish secular N=98	7.1	8.2	19.4	4.1	37.8	19.4	35.7	68.4
Jewish religious N=133	13.6	13.5	29.5	17.3	35.6	23.3	21.2	45.9
FSU N=74	12.3	6.8	43.8	31.1	28.8	21.6	15.1	40.5
Muslim Arabs N=117	0.9	0.9	5.1	5.1	14.5	12	79.5	82.1
Non Muslim Arabs N=42	0	0	9.5	9.5	9.5	14.3	81	76.2
Totals N=464	7.6	6.9	21.6	12.9	27.3	18.5	43.5	61.6

MC=municipal signs (χ^2=192.54; p<.001)

IC=inter-city road signs (χ^2=154.55; p<.001)

1= signs in Arabic should not be available at all

2= signs in Arabic should be available in Arab towns only[153]

3= signs in Arabic should be available in Arab towns and mixed cities only

4= signs in Arabic should be available everywhere

Tables 6.5 and 6.6 above present the results of the items that examined respondents' attitudes to the need for Arabic policies in government services. Table 6.5 deals with state administration: the use of Arabic on official forms (F) as well as the need to provide Arabic office hour services (OH). Table 6.6 focuses on the need to use Arabic on inter-city (IC) and municipal signs (M). Respondents were asked to choose in which of the four options (1-4) these

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[153] Options 2 and 3 for Inter-city Signs refer to signs *directing* people in Arab towns and mixed cities

types of services should be provided in Arabic. The figures in the table indicate the choices of each subgroup.

Table 6.5 exhibits an explicit stance among the Arab groups supporting the availability of both forms and office hour services in Arabic in government offices. This is evident in the high percentage of respondents (78-88%) who chose the fourth option for both services. Among the Jewish groups, the secular group revealed a supportive stance, with a high percentage of subjects choosing the fourth ('most supportive') option regarding forms in Arabic (63%); note too that a relatively high percentage of respondents among the two other Jewish groups (religious and FSU) favored the least supportive option for both forms and office hour services (9.5-12.8%).

The difference between the two types of services – forms and office hours – was relevant among the Jewish groups. The results regarding the second and third options (services in Arab towns and mixed cities) showed a preference for office hour services (40.8% for Jewish secular, 43.6% for Jewish religious and 41.9% for FSU). However, within the fourth option (services throughout the country) the preference was for forms (63.3% for Jewish secular).

In Table 6.6, the difference between the Jewish and the Arab groups is also apparent. A clear majority of Arab respondents (76.2-82.1%) chose the fourth, most supportive option while the distribution of results among the Jewish groups was more varied. The general pattern exhibited by the secular group showed increased percentages from the first, least supportive option to the fourth, most supportive one for both services (from 7.1% to 35.7% for municipal signs; from 8.2% to 68.4% for inter-city signs). This pattern does not characterize the two other Jewish groups, for whom the fourth option was generally not the most favored one for each service.

Regarding the difference between the two types of service (municipal and intercity signs), the pattern resembles the one revealed in state administration described above. Where Arab towns and mixed cities are concerned (options 2 and 3), Jewish respondents showed a preference for municipal signs. However, when the fourth option was suggested (the availability of Arabic signs throughout the country), the preference was for inter-city signs. This pattern characterizes all three Jewish groups.

<u>Domain 2: Public Television</u>

Table 6.7 – Frequency Distribution of Attitudes to the Use of Arabic on Public Television (National Channel (N) and Public-commercial Channels (P-C))

	1(%)		2		3		4	
	N	P-C	N	P-C	N	P-C	N	P-C
Jewish secular N=98	12.2	26.5	59.2	58.2	25.5	14.3	3.1	1
Jewish religious N=132	40.2	52.3	50.8	42.4	6.1	3.0	3.0	2.3
FSU N=74	27	36.5	59.5	50	9.5	9.5	4.1	4.1
Muslim Arabs N=114	0	0	5.3	10.5	45.6	43	49.1	46.5
Non Muslim Arabs N=42	0	0	2.4	11.9	47.6	42.9	50	45.2
Totals N=460	18.5	26.5	38.3	36.3	24.3	20.0	18.9	17.2

N= Israeli national television channel (χ^2=310.40; p<.001)

P-C= Israeli public-commercial channels (χ^2=304.46; p<.001)

1=There should be no Arabic programs and no Arabic subtitles

2=A small portion of the programs should be in Arabic or translated into Arabic

3=About half of the programs should be in Arabic or translated into Arabic

4=Most programs should be in Arabic or translated into Arabic

Table 6.7 presents the results of the items that examined respondents' attitudes to the role Arabic should play on Israeli public television. The items concerned two types of public channels: the national channel (N) and the two public-commercial channels (P-C). Respondents were asked to choose the extent to which Arabic programs or Arabic subtitles should be broadcast on these channels (1-4). The figures in the table indicate the percentage of respondents from each subgroup who chose the relevant option.

The most obvious finding was the unsupportive position of the Jewish respondents towards the use of Arabic on Israeli public television, clearly leaning towards the two less supportive options (option 1 and 2). In the Jewish religious group, the option suggesting no Arabic programs and no translation into Arabic on the public-commercial channels was the most favored, comprising over half of the respondents (52.3%). Option four, which suggested Arabic programs and Arabic subtitles on most programs on Israeli public television, was chosen by a very low percentage of respondents from the three groups (1-4.1%).

The results of the Arab groups are almost equally divided between option 3 (42.9-45.6%) and option 4 (45.2-50.0%). These two options (the use of Arabic in about half of the programs and in the majority of the programs) cover the clear majority of Arab respondents for both types of channels.

When observing the least supportive option among Jewish respondents, a particularly negative tendency was revealed towards the use of Arabic on the public-commercial channels. About one-fourth of the secular group (26.5%), about one-third of the FSU respondents (36.5%) and over half of the religious respondents (52.3%) believed that Arabic should not be used at all on these channels.

Domain 3: Arabic Studies in Jewish Schools

Table 6.8 – Frequency Distribution of Attitudes to Arabic Studies in Jewish Schools

	Elementary school (%)	High school	Matriculation examination
Jewish secular (N=97)	46.4	30.9	18.4
Jewish religious (N=133)	27.8	21.2	16.5
FSU (N=74)	20.3	13.5	8.2
Muslim Arabs (N=115)	88.7	80.0	81.7
Non Muslim Arabs (N=42)	92.9	88.1	85.7
Totals (N=461)	51.6	42.8	38.2

Elementary (χ^2=152.24; p<.001)
High school (χ^2=156.81; p<.001)
Matriculation examination (χ^2=203.10; p<.001)

Table 6.8 presents the results of the items that examined respondents' attitudes to Arabic studies in Jewish schools. The questions asked whether Arabic should be taught, as a compulsory subject. Each referred to a different level: elementary, high school and matriculation examinations. Two options were given for each question: 'yes' and 'no'. The figures in the table indicate the percentage of respondents who answered in the affirmative on each item.

Both Arab groups revealed a positive position towards teaching Arabic in Jewish schools, with over 80% support for all three questions, and a tendency to favor the elementary school option. All three Jewish groups showed a similar pattern of decreasing support from 'elementary' through 'high school' to 'matriculation examinations'. The secular group had a supportive stance, indicated by the relatively high percentage of respondents who believed Arabic should be a compulsory subject in Jewish elementary schools (46.4%). The FSU group was unsupportive. The most favorable question of the three ('elementary') was chosen by about one-fifth of the respondents in this group (20.3%) and the least favorable question (matriculation examination) was as low as 8.2% of respondents.

6.5 **Study 2 - Hebrew-Arabic Societal Bilingualism**

Study 2 deals with a hypothetical scenario that places Hebrew and Arabic in Israel on a relatively equal footing in society. This scenario, termed 'Hebrew-Arabic Societal Bilingualism', portrays a situation in which the status of Arabic would be significantly strengthened in a number of social contexts. The study was divided into two parts, the first examining respondents' attitudes to this scenario ('General Measure' 6.5.1 below). In the second part, possible justifications to support or oppose a change in the status of a minority language were observed in an attempt to reveal the relevant ideological factors that play a role in the current Israeli context ('Linguistic Ideological Motives' 6.5.2 below).

6.5.1 Hebrew-Arabic Societal Bilingualism – a General Measure

Construction and design of the measure:

The Societal Bilingualism measure was constructed using the following predetermined components:

(1) A comprehensive bilingual educational policy

(2) The broad use of Arabic in government agencies and in academic institutions

(3) The use of Arabic in national symbols (e.g., the Knesset, national anthem)

A list of items was created, each in the form of a statement. Reliability of items was tested using Cronbach's alpha coefficient to check internal consistency between the items. Eight of the items were retained. Alpha reliability coefficient value was 0.95.

Sample items: *'Arab Knesset members should make speeches in Arabic during Knesset sessions'*; *'The national anthem should be changed to include a text in Arabic'*.

Respondents were asked to rate on a 5-point Likert scale the extent to which they agreed with each of the statements. 1 was the negative end of the scale and represented the 'strongly disagree' position and 5 was the positive end of the scale, representing the 'strongly agree' position.

In light of the high value of alpha, a measure was calculated using the mean scores of the respondents for the list of items.

Analyses of results:

In order to examine whether significant differences existed between the groups regarding the 'Societal Bilingualism' measure, analyses of variance were conducted. A Duncan posthoc test was used to examine the sources of differences between the groups. The results are presented in Table 6.9 below.

Table 6.9 - 'Hebrew-Arabic Societal Bilingualism' – Means, SD and Results of ANOVAs

I Secular Jews N=94 **Mean (SD)**	II Religious Jews N=128	III FSU N=67	IV Muslim Arabs N=95	V Non-Muslim Arabs N=40	F	Duncan Procedure
1.97 (0.80)	1.58 (0.63)	1.56 (0.53)	4.35 (0.49)	4.30 (0.72)	393.04***	II, III < I < IV, V

P<.001

As noted in Table 6.9, the results were clearly divided between Jewish and Arab respondents. The two Arab subgroups supported a Hebrew-Arabic bilingual model, revealing a mean score of about 4.3 (on a 1-5 scale). There were no significant differences between the two subgroups. The three Jewish groups all exhibited a negative position towards the bilingual model. The secular respondents were slightly more supportive than the other two groups, but all three were clearly on the negative end of the scale, with mean scores lower than 2.

6.5.2 Hebrew-Arabic Societal Bilingualism – 'Linguistic Ideological Motives'

Construction and design of the measures:

The purpose of this part was to explore the possible motives leading to the support of or opposition to actions that would strengthen the status of Arabic.

A set of arguments defined as components of 'linguistic ideology' was constructed. These arguments refer to various justifications (e.g., social, moral, legal) for broadening the use of a minority language and the probable consequences of this situation-- on the part of both the majority and the minority groups. The list of items was created based on the Israeli public discourse on these matters as well as on the general language policy literature.

In order to determine whether the items could be grouped into categories, a Varimax Free Factor Analysis (with an orthogonal rotation) was performed. The analysis yielded four factors,

which explained 67% of the variance. The following table (6.10) presents the loadings of the four factors:

Table 6.10 - Rotated Component Matrix for 'Ideological Motives'

Item #	Components			
	1	2	3	4
1	-.080	-.051	-.077	**.831**
2	-.013	-.009	-.007	**.842**
3	-.021	.125	**.826**	-.048
4	.065	**.708**	.114	-.279
5	**.855**	.149	.107	-.120
6	**.899**	.034	.054	.015
7	.170	.033	**.767**	-.037
8	.176	**.737**	.270	-.069

- The items composing the first factor were identified as those referring to difficulties of Israeli Arabs, as individuals, to function with two languages (e.g., effects on skills in their mother tongue). This factor was defined as factor 1 'Individual Bilingualism'.

- The items composing the second factor were identified as those referring to the role of Arabic as a cultural and national symbol of the Arab sector in Israel. This factor is defined as factor 2 'Group Symbol'.

- The items composing the third factor were identified as those referring to language rights – the extent to which one's right to use one's mother tongue is perceived as a basic/fundamental right of the individual in a minority group. This factor is defined as factor 3 'Language Rights'

- Item 1 presents a concern for the status of Hebrew, the majority language, if the use of Arabic is increased. Item 2 presents the claim that the demand to strengthen the status of Arabic is politically motivated. Since the relation between these two items was not transparent, I decided not to group them together into one factor ('factor 4') but to leave them as separate items for the regression analysis.

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The three factors defined above were used as measures of linguistic ideology. The value of each measure was the mean score of the items within it. The items were presented to the respondents in the format of statements. Sample items: *'Arabic is an important cultural characteristic of the Arab sector in Israel'*; *'One's right to use one's mother tongue is similar to basic rights, such as the right to an education or the right to shelter'*. For each item, the respondents were asked to rate on a 5-point Likert scale, the extent to which they agreed with the statement. 1 represents the negative end of the spectrum ('strongly disagree') while 5 was the positive end ('strongly agree').

Analyses of results:

In order to examine whether significant differences existed between the groups regarding the three 'Ideological Motives', an analysis of variance was conducted for each measure. A Duncan posthoc test was used to examine the sources of differences between the groups. The results of the Duncan procedure are presented in Table 6.11 in the far right column.

To examine the differences between the three measures within each group, an analysis of variance for repeated measures was conducted for each group separately. Paired T-tests were used as posthoc comparisons to examine the significance of differences between the measures. The results of the t-tests are presented in Table 6.11 in the bottom row.

Table 6.11: Measures of Linguistic Ideology – Means, SD and Results of ANOVAs

	I Secular Jews N=94 Mean (SD)	II Religious Jews N=128	III FSU N=67	IV Muslim Arabs N=94	V Non-Muslim Arabs N=40	F	Duncan
Individual bilingualism 1	1.62 (0.70)	1.82 (1.01)	1.67 (0.79)	2.84 (1.21)	3.11 (1.09)	35.19***	I, II, III < IV, V
Group symbol 2	3.76 (0.70)	3.71 (0.93)	3.39 (1.00)	4.71 (0.52)	4.60 (0.58)	32.89***	III< I, II, < IV, V
Language rights 3	3.81 (1.09)	3.85 (1.04)	4.23 (1.02)	4.91 (2.12)	4.58 (0.66)	11.41***	I, II < IV, V
T test	1 < 2,3	1 < 2,3	1 < 2< 3	1 < 2, 3	1 < 2,3		

***P<.001

As noted in table 6.11, the first ideological component – 'Individual bilingualism' - gained the least support among the respondents. All three Jewish subgroups were highly unsupportive of this measure, as reflected in their mean scores of around 1.7 (clearly on the negative end of the 1-5 scale). The Arab respondents were also unsupportive of this measure. Their scores were indeed significantly higher than those of the Jewish groups; however, they scored in the neutral part of the scale (mean scores of about 3). In other words, Arab respondents did not view their individual bilingual situation as something that creates difficulties on a personal level (i.e., threatening their mother tongue skills).

'Group symbol' was the second component that examined the extent to which the respondents perceived Arabic as a symbol of Israeli Arabs' cultural and national identity. The FSU subgroup was the least supportive with a rather neutral position (mean score 3.39). The other two Jewish groups were more supportive, showing mean scores towards the positive end of the scale. Arab respondents presented very positive positions, indicated by the high mean scores of both subgroups.

Concerning the respondents' perception of language rights as basic rights, all groups were supportive to a certain extent. The Arab respondents were the most supportive and no differences were found between the two subgroups. The FSU group was second, with a mean score of 4.23, which characterizes a positive attitude to the issue explored. The secular and religious Jewish groups were the least supportive. Their mean scores were towards the positive end of the scale.

A regression analysis was conducted to examine the correlation between the societal bilingual model and the linguistic ideological parameters. The analysis included the three measures described above and the two additional items, which were left as separate parameters (see description of the data in Table 6.10 above).

Table 6.12 – Regression Analysis of Ideology Measures and 'Hebrew-Arabic Bilingualism'

	Beta
Individual bilingualism	.315***
Group symbol	.411***
Language rights	.099***
Item 1 – Hebrew	-.194***
Item 2 –Political actions	-.113***

Table 6.12 indicates that all ideological parameters were significantly correlated with the bilingual model. The three measures – 'individual bilingualism', 'group symbol' and 'language rights' were positively correlated. In other words, the higher the support for these measures, the more positive the attitudes were to the bilingual model. The remaining two ideological parameters – 'Hebrew' and 'political action' --were negatively correlated with the model. Thus, the more concerned one is about the status of Hebrew, the less supportive one is of the model. Similarly, the view of language policies as being oriented primarily towards gaining political strength was correlated with negative attitudes to the bilingual model. Out of the five parameters, 'group symbol' was the one most strongly correlated with the model.

6.6 **Study 3 - Multilingualism**

While studies 1 and 2 examined respondents' attitudes to the type of policy Israel should implement with regards to *Arabic* (or how 'bilingual' Israel should be), study 3 focused on the desired interaction between Hebrew and *minority languages in Israel, in general*. In other words, this study looked at how 'multilingual' respondents would like Israel to be.

Construction and design of the measures:

A list of items was created to include the following predetermined 'goal categories' of a language policy in Israel.

A monolingual category:

(1) Strengthening the role of Hebrew, the majority language

Multilingual categories:

(2) Promoting minorities' *functional* interests (language policies designed to assist minorities' access to services which require linguistic skills or rest on linguistic interaction)

    a. within their communities

    b. in broader public domains

(3) Promoting minorities' symbolic interests (language policies concerning the use of minority languages for non-concrete purposes directed towards identity and symbolic elements)

High scores for category 1 represent a monolingual position.

High scores for categories 2 and 3 represent a multilingual position.

Reliability of the list of items was tested using Cronbach's alpha coefficient to check internal consistency between the items. Out of 25 items, 19 items were retained. Alpha reliability coefficient values for all predetermined categories were found to be high and ranged from 0.75-0.91:

Category 1 - 'Hebrew'. This category included 5 items. It examined attitudes to strengthening Hebrew through the following aspects: 1. Maintaining the dominance of Hebrew in Israel 2.

Strengthening linguistic minorities' skills in Hebrew and 3. Encouraging correct use of Hebrew. A sample item: "*The language policy in Israel should establish Hebrew as the main language of communication between people living in Israel*". Alpha reliability was 0.91.

Category 2 – 'Functional –Within the Community'. This category included 4 items, which examined attitudes regarding assisting linguistic minorities in language-related services within their individual communities. Two aspects were examined: mother tongue education and mother tongue services in the relevant geographical areas. A sample item: '*The language policy in Israel should enable minorities to study in schools where the language of instruction is their mother tongue*.' Alpha reliability was 0.76.

Category 3 – 'Functional- Outside the Community'. This category included 4 items, which examined attitudes to assisting linguistic minorities in language-related services in broad societal domains. The three aspects explored were the following: access to public media, to the world of work and to administrative services provided in government services. A sample item: '*The language policy in Israel should enable minorities to access information on public television and public radio in their mother tongue*'. Alpha reliability was 0.75.

Category 4 – 'Symbolic'-. This category was constructed from 5 items, which examined attitudes to the role of a language policy in promoting minorities' interests that are beyond an everyday operational level. The following two aspects were considered: minorities' sense of belonging to the state and minorities' sense of a distinct collective identity. A sample item: '*The language policy in Israel should make sure that minority languages appear in state institutions and in national symbols (e.g., the Knesset)*'. Alpha reliability was 0.91

In light of the high coefficients of reliability, measures were created (one for each category), based on the mean score of the responses for the items included in the category.

The Pearson Coefficient of Correlation was computed to examine distinctiveness among the measures. Correlations between the measures are presented in Table 6.13 below:

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Table 6.13 - Inter Correlation among Policy-Goal Categories

	Category 2	Category 3	Category 4
Category 1 -	***-.59	***-.55	***-.67
Category 2 -		***.79	***.80
Category 3 -			***.78

***P<.001

Correlations were found to be significant at a high level, which indicates a link between the measures on the one hand and the unique meaning of each measure on the other. The negative correlation between the monolingual category (category 1 'Hebrew') and the three multilingual categories (categories 2, 3 and 4) supported the validity of the questionnaire.

The general question to the respondents was:

"Assuming that the State of Israel is interested in designing a language policy, that is, standardizing officially the relationship between Hebrew and languages of linguistic minorities (native speakers of a language other than Hebrew, for example, Arabic, Russian, English, Amharic) by legislation, allocation of resources etc., to what extent would you like this policy to answer each of the following goals:"

For each item, respondents were asked to rate on a 5-point Likert scale the extent to which they agreed with each statement. One was the negative end of the scale ('strongly disagree') and 5 was the positive one ('strongly agree'). The items were not presented according to the categories but concurrently.

Analyses of results:

In order to examine whether significant differences existed between the groups regarding the 'policy goals categories', an analyses of variance was conducted for each category. A Duncan posthoc procedure was used to examine the sources of differences between the groups. The results are presented in Table 6.14 in the far right column.

To examine the differences between the four categories within each group, an analysis of variance for repeated measures was conducted for each group separately. Paired T-tests were

used as posthoc comparisons to examine the significance of differences between the categories. The results of the posthoc comparison are presented in the lowest row.

Table 6.14- Language Policy Goals as a Function of Group and Category: Means, SD and Results of ANOVAs.

	I Secular Jews N=97 Mean (SD)	II Religious Jews N=130	III FSU N=74	IV Muslim Arabs N=97	V Non- Muslim Arabs N=39	F	Duncan Procedure
Hebrew 1	4.58 (0.41)	4.66 (0.38)	4.29 (0.54)	3.03 (0.77)	3.28 (0.61)	170***	IV<V<III <I,II
Functional 'within' 2	3.24 (0.87)	3.20 (0.88)	3.69 (0.69)	4.60 (0.46)	4.57 (0.53)	71***	I,II < III < IV, V
Functional 'outside' 3	3.36 (0.74)	3.22 (0.89)	3.73 (0.76)	4.50 (0.56)	4.47 (0.56)	55***	I,II < III < IV, V
Symbolic 4	2.67 {0.93}	2.39 (0.90)	3.2 (0.90)	4.57 (0.56)	4.57 (0.56)	134***	II < I < III < IV, V
F	81.06***	196.65***	23.89***	83.51***	38.41***		
Paired t-test P<.001	1>2,3>4	1>2,3>4	1>2,3>4	2,3,4>1	2,3,4>1		

***P<.001

Comparison of Subgroups

As noted in Table 6.14, the scores of the Jewish respondents for the 'Hebrew' category were generally very high, indicating a desire to strengthen the role of Hebrew, the majority language. The scores of secular and religious Jews were the highest (4.58 and 4.66 respectively on a 1-5 scale) and next were the FSU respondents (with a mean score of 4.29 for this category). The scores of the Arab respondents for the Hebrew category were close to the neutral part of the

scale. The Non-Muslim respondents were slightly more supportive (3.28) than the Muslim respondents (3.03) of the establishment of the dominance of Hebrew in Israel. Regarding the two functional categories, the respondents presented a similar pattern for both categories ('within -' and 'outside the community'). The Arab respondents were highly supportive of language-related services, both within and outside the community. Their mean scores were around 4.5. Among the Jewish respondents, the secular and religious groups expressed a neutral position regarding the functional goals that a language policy should fulfill. The FSU respondents were more supportive than the other two Jewish groups but still below the positive end of the scale (Mean scores around 3.7).

The 'Symbolic' category represented the most considerable differences between the subgroups. The Jewish-religious respondents were clearly on the negative end of the scale (mean score of 2.39), indicating a non-supportive stance concerning the importance of a policy promoting the symbolic interests of minority groups. The Jewish secular group was next, with a mean score of 2.67, which was still on the negative end of the scale. The FSU respondents exhibited a neutral position on this issue, while Arab respondents in both groups were highly supportive (mean score of 4.57).

For all four categories, the FSU respondents were situated in the 'middle'. On the one hand, their position was more 'multilingual' than that of the other two Jewish subgroups (less supportive of 'Hebrew' and more supportive of the three 'linguistic minority' categories). On the other hand, they were clearly less supportive than the Arab respondents.

Comparison of Categories

When comparing the categories within each subgroup, Table 6.14 shows that the subgroups clustered according to the wider ethnic groups – Jews and Arabs. For all three Jewish subgroups, the goals concerning the continuity of Hebrew dominance were the most important. As noted by the t-test analyses, Category 1 ('Hebrew') was significantly higher than the other three. The functional categories (2 and 3) were in the middle, and there were no significant differences between them. The category that gained the least support among all three Jewish subgroups was the symbolic one, concerning the group identity interests of

linguistic minorities (4). For the two Arab subgroups, the only significant difference found was between 'Hebrew' (1) and the other three categories. Arab respondents generally viewed the goals directed towards strengthening the role of Hebrew as less desirable than the ones directed towards promoting the functional and symbolic interests of linguistic minorities.

6.7 **Summary of Results**

The following is a summary of the above results:

Arabic Language Policies - (Study 1)

The 'general Arabic language policies' measure explored the possibility of extending the current role of Arabic in a variety of domains. Arab respondents were very supportive, while Jewish respondents exhibited a neutral position with a tendency towards more negative positions.

Among the three specific domains that were observed more closely, Arabic policies in government services gained the highest level of support. Policies concerning the use of Arabic on public television were second and Arabic studies in Jewish schools were last. This pattern was consistent across all five subgroups. However, there were significant differences between the Jewish and Arab respondents.

Jewish Respondents

The Jewish respondents held positive positions regarding Arabic policies in government services. In relation to municipal signs, a preference was shown for sings in Arab areas rather than for sings throughout the country. This finding seems to indicate that providing public signs in Arabic is perceived as essential for facilitating the needs of the Arabic-speaking population, but only within the geographical areas where this population lives. A similar tendency towards Arab areas was also clear regarding office hour services. This could be related to the fact that where non-Arab areas are concerned, the investment in minority language human services was seen as wasteful. This was not the case with services that require fewer financial resources.

Jewish respondents ranged from neutral to negative in their attitudes to the use of Arabic on Israeli public television. The level of support was lower where the public-commercial channels

were concerned (compared to the national channel). Since the former are very popular among Jewish viewers[154], this might mean that the presence of Arabic on these channels was perceived as too intrusive. In other words, it could be that policies related to the use of Arabic on public television are not tolerated because they are perceived as intrusions into the Jewish community's familiar and comfortable territory. Jewish respondents were very unsupportive of policies requiring the study of Arabic in Jewish schools as a compulsory subject. Support decreased from the elementary school level to high school and was lowest for matriculation examinations.

For all of the measures examined in study 1, the Jewish secular group was the middle group. Jewish secular respondents were found to be less supportive than the Arab respondents and more supportive than at least one of the two other Jewish groups (the religious and the FSU).

Arab Respondents

Arab respondents presented *positive* attitudes to policies in all three domains. Policies in the government services domain were the most favored, followed by the 'public television' domain. Policies relating to Arabic studies in Jewish schools came third. The attitudes were most positive concerning studies in elementary schools. No significant differences were found between the two Arab subgroups.

Hebrew-Arabic Societal Bilingualism – (Study 2)

Attitudes to a scenario that positions Hebrew and Arabic in parallel interactions leveling society ('Societal Bilingualism') were examined. The measure presented a *broad* use of the Arabic language in the educational system, state agencies, academic institutions, and national symbols. The Arab respondents were supportive while the Jewish groups were *clearly negative*.

Linguistic Ideology

A set of arguments presenting the possible justifications for supporting or opposing a change in the status of a minority language was defined as 'Linguistic Ideological Motives'. Three

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[154] See chapter 1, 1.3.2)

measures for 'linguistic ideology' were obtained. 'Individual Bilingualism' dealt with justifications relating to the difficulties that Arabic speakers may face as individuals who are required to function in two languages. The second concerned the importance of a language in creating a distinct collective identity for the minority group ('group symbol'). The third measure covered the idea that language policies should promote basic rights that the minority is legally entitled to ('language rights'). The justifications on the individual level (individual bilingualism) gained the least amount of support from all subgroups. These arguments were viewed as completely irrelevant by the Jewish groups and rather unimportant by the Arab respondents. The Jewish respondents were moderately supportive of two measures: 1. The importance of Arabic as a symbol of Israeli Arabs' collective identity and 2. The view that minority language use helps promote basic and legitimate rights in the Arab sector. The Arab respondents were highly supportive of these two types of arguments.

The relevance of the linguistic ideological parameters to the bilingual model was examined. The results showed that the view of Arabic as an important element in Israeli Arabs' collective identity was most strongly correlated with a supportive position towards a bilingual model. Two factors hindered the level of support in the bilingual model: 1. A concern for a decrease in the status of Hebrew and 2. Viewing language demands as actions that are primarily politically motivated.

Multilingualism – (Study 3)

The 'multilingualism' questionnaire examined respondents' attitudes to the policy that Israel should implement regarding linguistic minorities in its territory (native speakers of languages other than Hebrew). The predetermined categories differentiated between a monolingual and a multilingual position. The latter was further subdivided into the 'functional' and 'symbolic' interests of the minority groups that the policy refers to.

Monolingual vs. Multilingual Policy Goals:

Jewish respondents favored a monolingual policy over a multilingual one, giving precedence to goals that strengthened the role of Hebrew, the majority language. In contrast, Arab respondents gave priority to multilingual goals (goals to assist and support linguistic minorities).

<u>Functional vs. Symbolic Policy Goals:</u>

All Jewish subgroups favored functional policy goals (goals to ensure that language does not create a barrier in one's everyday life procedures) over symbolic ones. The latter - policy goals, which refer to collective identity issues, were viewed negatively by native Hebrew speakers and neutrally by Russian-speakers. The Arab respondents did not make a distinction between these two types of policy goals.

<u>Levels of Functionality:</u>

No hierarchy was created between the two levels of functional goals. Policy goals directed towards minorities' functional needs within their community were neither more nor less desired than goals that referred to minorities' functional needs in broad, public domains.

The FSU group was the middle group in all categories. The behavior that native Russian speakers exhibited was more monolingual than the Arab groups. They showed more support for strengthening the role of Hebrew. At the same time, they were more multilingual than the other Jewish groups. They showed a higher level of support in the three multilingual categories than the native Hebrew-speaking groups.

6.8 **General Conclusions**

The above results point to the following general issues:

Although the majority group was generally unsupportive of extending the current role of Arabic in Israel, a differentiation between specific domains did appear. Certain domains were more favored than others. Within each domain, different implementation options varied in the level of support they received. This differentiation seems to point to a *functional motivation* – one that focuses on the operational needs of the Arabic-speaking population. Most groups were not willing to make sacrifices on behalf of the majority group for policies beyond the functional level. The level of support in the use of Arabic in government offices and on public signs decreased where non-Arab areas were concerned, and when the cost of demanding services was an issue. The use of Arabic on public television was perceived negatively where popular

channels were concerned. The study of Arabic, especially in higher educational levels such as high schools, was seen as too demanding to make the effort worthwhile. In other words, the rationale leading to this tendency seemed to be derived from the idea that language polices should be implemented to fulfill instrumental goals. Goals to make Arabic more visiblein Israel's public spheres or encouraging the majority group to become familiar with the language, for example, were probably too far-reaching for the majority group to justify the personal and financial efforts involved in their implementation.

Within the generally supportive stance of the Arab respondents towards extending the role of Arabic in Israel, a similar pattern of differentiation between the more and less instrumental policies was apparent. It could be that this pattern among the Arab groups reflects the reluctance within certain parts of the Israeli Arab sector to take an active role in Israel's public life, a lack of faith in the possibility of their becoming an integral part of Israeli culture. This could also mean that certain sectors within the Arab population do not see any benefits for the majority group to be acquainted with their language.

Progressing towards a Hebrew-Arabic bilingual model on a societal level is a particularly undesired process in the eyes of the majority group. The factors that may play a role seem to include a combination of two forces. The first concerns the specific Israeli situation and the second is broader. In other words, it relates to how minority languages are generally perceived. The importance that the majority group attributes to Hebrew was evident throughout the entire study-- when a bilingual and a multilingual model were concerned. Broadening the role of Arabic was perceived as a threat to the sole dominant position that Hebrew should have in Israel. Similarly, Arabic language policies were viewed as illegitimate mechanisms aimed at strengthening the political standing of the Arab sector in Israel. The concern for Hebrew reflects a concern for the Jewish character of the state, which may be jeopardized by non-Jewish symbols (in this case Arabic). However, beyond the local political struggle concerning Israel's national character, the other element which seems to play a part is the perception of linguistic minorities-- especially those who differ considerably from the majority group. As revealed by the results concerning ideological motives, Jewish respondents ranged from neutral to moderately supportive of arguments highlighting the importance of a minority language in

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creating a distinct cultural and national group identity. Similarly, the arguments concerning the universal/humanistic nature of language rights were not viewed positively-- especially by native Hebrew speakers. In other words, the majority group in Israel seems unwilling to change the hegemony of Hebrew, for fear of changing the balance of political power between the groups. At the same time, it seems that they would have been less reluctant to change policies if language demands were perceived as an essential component of minorities' collective demands.

The ethnic division - Jews vs. Arabs - was the most prominent and consistent across all studies. Arab respondents were significantly more positive than all three Jewish groups in their attitudes about all three proposals: 1. Extending the role of Arabic 2. Hebrew-Arabic bilingualism and 3. Multilingualism. The two Arab subgroups (Muslim and non-Muslim) reacted similarly to most of the measures explored. This could mean that the classification based on religion within the Arab sector is not relevant to the issues examined in these studies. Alternatively, it could indicate that the measures explored were not sensitive enough to denote the differences. The behavior among the Jewish subgroups, however, was more varied. Two elements were relevant: the linguistic minority component (native vs. non-native Hebrew speakers) and religious affiliation. When attitudes to extending the current role of Arabic in Israel were examined, the secular group was in the middle across all measures. Jewish secular respondents were less supportive than the Arab respondents and more supportive than at least one of the two other Jewish groups (religious and FSU). Likewise, when a more radical model was proposed (the Hebrew-Arabic bilingual model) the secular group was the least negative although all three Jewish groups were unsupportive. What seems clear is that being a secular, native Hebrew speaker is correlated with a relatively positive position towards Arabic, as compared to being a religious native Hebrew speaker or a native Russian speaker.

When attitudes to multilingualism in Israel were examined, the FSU group was the middle group (situated between the Arab groups and the native Hebrew-speaking groups). Although Russian speakers favored the Hebrew category over the ones directed towards linguistic minorities, their level of support of all the multilingual categories was higher than that of the native Hebrew speakers. In other words, when multilingualism is concerned, being a non-native

Hebrew speaker is correlated with a positive position. Unlike in the two other studies, which concerned the role of Arabic, in this specific study, the element of being a linguistic minority was evident among Russian speakers. However, the fact that the two linguistic minorities – Arabic and Russian speakers - were not clustered together on any of the measures examining attitudes to linguistic minorities in Israel indicates that the ethnic component among Russian speakers is probably stronger than their 'non-native Hebrew-speaking' status. Thus, being a linguistic minority plays a role in Russian speakers' attitudes to the linguistic reality in Israel, but less so than their ethnic affiliation.

7. INTEGRATION OF FINDINGS - MODELS OF SOCIETAL BILINGUALISM

In the previous chapters, I examined the issue of language policies towards Arabic in Israel from three different perspectives. First, the attitudes of a large group of speakers towards the current and future role of Arabic in Israel were analyzed quantitatively. Second, two main themes (from a series of four focus group sessions that discussed Arabic's public role in Israel) were analyzed: (a) the notion of indigenousness, and (b) the functional-symbolic tension. Third, the question of Arabic's official status as reflected in the discourse of policy-makers in Israel's public spheres was examined. Here, the main findings of each chapter are outlined and then an integration of the findings through four 'societal bilingual models' (which characterize the current discourse regarding Arabic's desired public role in Israel) is presented.

7.1 Summary of Findings

Chapters 3 and 4 presented the analysis of a series of four focus group sessions. The participants were Israeli adults, university and college students. Two groups included Jewish participants-- one secular and one religious. The third group included Arab participants – Muslim, Christians and Druze. The fourth was a mixed Jewish-Arab group. The four sessions were led by a moderator who asked the participants to state their opinions on the current and possible future role of Arabic in Israel. The discussions focused on four domains: government services, education, public television and national symbols. The analysis of the focus group data yielded two main themes: 1. The notion of indigenousness and 2. The functional-symbolic tension:

Indigenousness and Language Policy

The first theme that emerged was the relevance of 'indigenousness' in determining language policies. Indigenousness was the term used to correlate all arguments in which Israeli Arabs were characterized as a 'native' / 'homeland' / indigenous community either to support or oppose language policies. Despite the common elements, the term 'indigenous minority' was deliberately distinguished from the term 'national minority'. As explained in the introduction to the chapter, the motivation for focusing on the indigenous element reflects a relatively new

tendency in Israeli public discourse, replacing the more traditional characteristic of the Arab minority as a 'national minority'. I decided to explore this tendency and examine how it functions where language policies are at stake and when 'layman's discourse' is concerned.

When discussing different language policies towards the Arabic-speaking sector in Israel, the issue that the Arab community existed in what is now Israel prior to the establishment of the state was referred to repeatedly by all the groups. These discursive events from the four sessions were closely analyzed, looking at the ways in which the indigenous argument interacted with language policy issues. Three distinct patterns were revealed:

 The first saw *indigenousness as an irrelevant factor for language policy decisions*. This position basically assumed that simply because a group has historically occupied a certain territory, this was not a valid argument for claiming language privileges in the present. The discursive events leading to this position have shown that it was, in some cases, the outcome of a 'majority-oriented' attitude, which does not support facilitating the needs of minority groups. Yet, in many other cases, it derived from what may be seen as a 'linguistically liberal' stance, which believes all linguistic minorities are entitled to the same level of protection and support-- regardless of their historical background. This position was not uncommon among Arab participants, some of whom rejected the idea that their indigenous status was relevant to any kind of political demand concerning the present situation of the Arab sector in Israel. Others believed indigenousness to be a legitimate basis for many political demands, but not for language-related ones.

The second pattern of interaction argued for *indigenousness as a hierarchical element among minority languages*. This line of argumentation stemmed from an issue that occupied a large portion of the discursive events analyzed. It included the comparison between the languages of indigenous minorities and those of immigrant groups. In practice, the reference was mainly to the Russian-speaking community in Israel, and how policies towards Arabic should be viewed in relation to them. Two almost opposite positions emerged according to this pattern. One maintained that *precedence should be given to indigenous languages over the languages of immigrant groups*. The claim was that immigrants are expected to adapt to the majority

language, while this should not be the case with indigenous communities whose indigenous status 'grants' them the privilege of protecting their language. I have shown that participants made this assertion both as 'Israeli-specific' and as a general point. Some participants believed it was a legitimate claim because immigrants in Israel are mostly Jewish. Thus, Hebrew is in some sense part of their own identity as well. Others argued for the validity of this assertion regardless of the unique Israeli situation, claiming that immigrants have made a decision to move to an environment that does not speak their language, while indigenous minorities were forced into the new linguistic reality.

The opposite position advocated the *precedence of immigrant communities over indigenous ones in language policy decisions*. What stands at the core of this argument is the belief that language policy decisions should be based solely on minorities' proficiency in the dominant language. Indigenous communities were said to have an advantage over newcomers because they have longer exposure to the dominant language. Jewish participants holding this position felt it would be fair to *assume* that Israeli Arabs are indeed more proficient in Hebrew than the immigrant communities in Israel because they have been exposed to Hebrew for longer. In the more extreme cases, participants claimed that simply because an indigenous community has the opportunity to become proficient in the majority language – whether they put it into effect or not – is a good enough argument to favor immigrant communities when determining language policies.

These two patterns – *indigenousness as an irrelevant factor for language policy decisions,* and *indigenousness as a hierarchical element among minority languages* -- were the dominant arguments. A third position also emerged. Although uncommon, this position should be noted because it diverges significantly from the other lines of argument. This position sees *indigenous status as granting autonomy to the minority in language-related decisions*. While it could be seen as an additional argument for favoring indigenous languages over the languages of immigrant groups, this is not the case. However, it did add an element that was not apparent in the previous two patterns. This position questioned the state's legitimate right to make decisions regarding the language of an indigenous group. The fact that a language is historically present in a certain place, it was claimed, gives its speakers the right to continue making

decisions regarding how and where it should be used. In a more practical sense, its indigenousness should play a role in the decision-making process regarding its status and use. This is the most radical view on the issue and as noted, it was quite atypical. Yet, compared to how indigenousness is perceived by public figures in the Arab sector, this view is not radical at all. This point will come up again in the section that integrates the findings from all sources.

The Functional / Symbolic Distinction

The second theme revealed through the focus group data was the distinction between the 'functional' and 'symbolic' aims of language policies. 'Functional aims' refer to goals directed at achieving concrete and immediate benefits, such as having access to services, to information, protecting one's safety or fulfilling everyday tasks. 'Symbolic aims' concern the ability to achieve goals with emotional, symbolic or identity elements, such as strengthening one's attachment to his/her ethnic group, to the state etc. It was apparent that participants repeatedly turned to these notions when constructing their arguments in favor of or against policies concerning the Arabic-speaking sector.

The analysis followed three policy scenarios: 1. The use of Arabic in government offices 2. The use of Arabic on public television and 3. The use of Arabic in the Knesset by Arab Knesset members.

This distinction revealed a complex underlying mechanism to legitimize and de-legitimize language policies in the current Israeli context:

For all three policy scenarios examined, minority group members used both functional and symbolic justifications to argue in favor of policies. This means that *it is not the policy itself that can be characterized as functional but rather the interests it aims to promote.*

The functional argument in its pure form did not suffice for any of the policies observed. None of these policies was presented as *essential* in order for the *general* Arab minority population to access services and information. Instead, participants-- mainly from the minority group-- adapted the functional argument to justify their demands. They claimed, for example, that a policy was essential for certain populations within the Arab sector as opposed to the entire

population. They also made the case that a policy should enable 'convenient access' as opposed to 'no access at all'. This indicates that for functional justifications to suffice as a basis for Arabic language policies in the Israeli context, they needed to be adopted in a restricted way.

Among minority group participants, the distinction created three patterns of de-legitimization of the Arabic language policies:

(1) Irrelevant functional justifications

(2) Exigent symbolic justifications

(3) Intimidating, non functional (and functional) justifications

Functional justifications for language policies were *theoretically* legitimate in the eyes of majority group participants. The idea that language policies are necessary to facilitate Arabic speakers' access to services and information was almost never rejected in principle. In practice, however, most of the minority's functional arguments were discarded as being 'irrelevant'. The fact, for example, that Arabs have (even partial) access to information in the majority language, or that news material is available in Arabic through outside, non-Israeli sources, was cited as grounds for rendering these services in Arabic unnecessary.

Symbolic justifications for Arabic language policies were generally seen as *illegitimate* by the majority group. Interests, such as strengthening Arabs' distinct group identity or their sense of belonging to the state, were not viewed as a solid and legitimate basis for the implementation of language policies. These justifications were rejected on two main grounds that were characterized as *'exigent'*, and *'intimidating'*. The first sees language demands based on symbolic interests as a burden for the majority group because, for example, they are a waste of state funds. The latter sees these demands as threatening the symbolic interests of the majority group. For example, the idea of allowing Arabic to be used in the Knesset was perceived as a threat to the Jewish character of the state. When the symbolic interests of the majority group were at stake, they overshadowed not only the minority's symbolic interests but their functional interests too.

In chapter 5, the official status of Arabic in the public discourse (specifically that of decision-makers) was examined. Two areas were observed – the court and the Knesset. The analysis revealed four distinct positions towards Arabic's current and desired official status.

The first position, *'the absolute equality position,'* defines official status as entailing equality between the languages recognized as such-- both declaratively and in practice. This position was only presented by the Arab sector and related to the way Arabic's official status should be interpreted today but also to how Arabic's 'officiality' should be viewed in principle.

Within the (Jewish) majority group, the following three positions were identified:

(1) *The de jure equality position,* which advocates an equal *declarative* status to Hebrew and Arabic. This position is based on the assumption that the Israeli context allows the treatment of language as an 'anomalous symbolic arena'. In other words, the supremacy of Hebrew should be realized in all symbolic contexts except for the field of language, in which the state is in a position to grant Arabic a symbolic status without risking a real change in the de facto dominance of Hebrew.

(2) *The hierarchy position* believes the supremacy of Hebrew should be realized both declaratively and in practice. Yet, a privileged status should be given to Arabic over the languages of other minority groups in Israel. This position had two different ways of creating a hierarchy between the languages. One preserves Arabic's official status but creates a hierarchy between its scope and that of Hebrew's officiality. The second suggests abolishing Arabic's official status in favor of 'a special status'. In both these options, the supremacy of Hebrew is secured through its recognition as a 'national language'.

(3) *The Hebrew-only position* demands complete hegemony for Hebrew and rejects any statutory uniqueness to Arabic or to any other minority language.

Three test cases were used to examine the level of legitimacy the four positions received in the decision-makers' discourse. The first test case concerned proposals for the 'language section' in the official draft of an Israeli Constitution discussed by the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee of the Knesset. The second dealt with bills proposing a change in Article 82, the

mandatory agreement determining the official status of Hebrew and Arabic. The third was the law regarding the establishment of an Arabic-language Academy in Israel. The analysis of the test cases revealed the following issues:

The positions in the Jewish public discourse, as reflected by the test cases, range from the 'Hebrew only position' to the 'de jure equality position'. The latter represents the most pro-Arabic position identified among Jewish decision makers. Arab public figures repeatedly presented the 'absolute equality position', but it was not perceived as a legitimate option-at least not for now. When Arab figures were not part of the decision-making process, the 'absolute equality position' was completely absent from the discussion. When Jewish decision makers were forced to confront it, the reactions ranged from complete dismissal to attempts to 'bend' them into more pro-Hebrew positions.

The hierarchy position was the most dominant one in the Jewish decision-makers' discourse. More specifically, a change was seen. Discourse shifted from the Hebrew-only position into one that acknowledges a special role for Arabic and places it in a privileged position compared to the other minority languages spoken in Israel. The hierarchy position reflects the most favorable interpretation of how Arabic's official status should be implemented at present (and also the role that Arabic should have in the future). This position is, theoretically, conciliatory as far as Jewish discourse is concerned; i.e., it is more pro-Arabic than the 'Hebrew-only position' and more pro-Hebrew than the 'de jure equality position'. However, when the full range of positions is considered (when the 'ultimate equality' position figures in the discourse), the hierarchy position becomes much more Hebrew-oriented than conciliatory.

The findings also showed that even within the limits of the dominant pro-Hebrew positions, linguistic demands for the Arabic language based on a Hebrew-Arabic equality perspective can still be put into practice. One clear example was the establishment of the Arabic Language Academy in parallel to the format that exists for Hebrew – the Hebrew Language Academy.

Finally, although the 'absolute equality' position stretches beyond the boundaries of the Jewish public discourse, it may not be completely powerless. It was apparent that this position acts as a catalyst that draws many within the Jewish public to realize that the official status of Arabic

should be actively dealt with. Relying on a vague historical arrangement is no longer appropriate. It was gradually acknowledged that Arab attempts to enforce Arabic's officiality, as they interpret it on the basis of Article 82, cannot be dismissed anymore as 'an improper political act'. This breaking of the status quo has started to be treated, not in a defensive way, but in a way that seriously considers the future role of Arabic in Israel's sociolinguistic reality. Whether the motivation lies in a desire to strengthen the status of Arabic or whether it is derived from a fear of losing the dominance of Hebrew, it is still an important development.

Chapter 6 examined the attitudes of 466 Israeli adults towards current and possible future Arabic language policies in Israel. The subjects were Jews and Arabs divided into five ethnic, religious and linguistic subgroups. The survey looked at a range of language policies with a special emphasis on the role of Arabic in three domains: government services, public television and education.

The findings revealed a supportive position among minority group subjects (Arabs) and an unsupportive position among majority group subjects (Jews) towards extending the current role of Arabic in Israel. Yet, important distinctions were found among the subgroups and among policy scenarios, pointing to the following general issues:

(1) A hierarchy of language-policy domains

(2) A tendency to favor a multilingual policy over a bilingual Hebrew-Arabic one

(3) An interaction between two linguistic ideological forces – an Israeli-specific one and a 'universal' one

(4) A 'linguistic minority' element is overshadowed by an ethnic (Jewish-Arab) element

(1) The subjects differentiated between policy domains and implementation options. This tendency was revealed through two main findings. The first was the hierarchy among domains common to all Jewish subgroups. Extending the use of Arabic in government services (through office hour services and public signs) was the most supported domain. The policies concerning extending the use of Arabic on Israeli public television were next. The least favored policies suggested more Arabic studies in Jewish schools. Taking into consideration the tendency of Jewish subjects to favor the implementation of government language policies 'within Arab

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areas' over their implementation 'throughout the state' led to the conclusion that the *desirability of policies is determined according to their functional value*.

It was suggested that the majority group was tolerant of functional policies - policies concerning the minority's needs to function properly on an everyday level. When policies were directed towards extending the presence of Arabic publicly or increasing the majority group's familiarity with the minority language, the attitude was much less accepting. Although the Arab subjects were supportive of the policies in all three domains, the hierarchy among the three domains was clearly apparent among them too. This may mean that they put greater emphasis on policies aimed at facilitating their functional everyday needs. This may also be a sign of pessimism among Arab subjects towards the chances that Arabic will become a meaningful element in Israel's public life and among Jewish Israelis.

(2) A desire to maintain the central role of Hebrew in Israel was evident among majority group subjects throughout. Still, when this monolingual position was confronted with a multilingual scenario and with a Hebrew-Arabic bilingual scenario, the former was preferred. The Hebrew-Arabic bilingual measure (suggesting a broad use of Arabic in the educational system, state agencies, academic institutions, and national symbols) gained the lowest level of Jewish subjects' support amongst the entire list of the survey's measures. The multilingual measures, suggesting strengthening the role of various minority languages in Israel, were moderately supported by Jewish subjects. In other words, these findings seem to indicate that if the majority group's monolingual position is to change, it will be towards multilingualism and not towards Hebrew-Arabic bilingualism.

(3) An interaction between Israeli-specific factors and universal factors was revealed in the subjects' linguistic ideological motives (the set of arguments portraying possible justifications for supporting or opposing a change in the status of a minority language). On the one hand, Jewish subjects were against a broad use of Arabic, for reasons that are characteristic of the Israeli political context, such as the fear of jeopardizing Hebrew's role as the sole national symbol or a concern that Arabs would become more powerful in Israel's political scene. On the other hand, the view of language policies as promoting one's basic-universal rights was not very

positively viewed by native Hebrew speakers. These two forces were positively correlated with the Hebrew-Arabic bilingual measure. In other words, the majority of the subjects were reluctant to effect a change in the status of Arabic because they feared an ensuing change in the political status quo between Jews and Arabs in Israel. Yet, this position could have been less negative if language policies were viewed as a legitimate reflection of minorities' legal and moral rights.

(4) The general division of attitudes in the study was along the ethnic (Jewish-Arab) divide. This tendency did not change significantly when compared to the linguistic minority parameter (as revealed by the attitudes of the Russian subgroup). The survey included two subgroups of non native Hebrew speakers – native Arabic speakers and native Russian speakers. Thus, the FSU subjects were theoretically affiliated with two groups – the (Jewish) majority group and the 'linguistic minorities' group. In practice, the ethnic element (being Jewish) was much stronger than the 'linguistic minority' element. The Russian subgroup was not clustered with the Arab subgroups on any of the study's measures-- not even on those concerning multilingual policies towards minorities in Israel in general. Although the linguistic minority component of the Russian subject was evident to some extent, on the whole, their attitudes were much more similar to the native Hebrew speakers than to their 'fellow linguistic minority members' (native Arabic speakers). An additional element that slightly diverged from the clear Jewish-Arab dichotomy was the religious affiliation parameter. The Jewish secular subgroup was situated between the Arab subgroups and the two other Jewish subgroups; for many measures they exhibited a more supportive position towards Arabic than the other Jewish subgroups, but were less supportive of these measures than the Arab subgroups.

7.2 Societal Bilingualism – a General Scheme and Description of the Models

The integration of the findings from different data sources reveals four models that characterize the interaction between Hebrew and Arabic in Israel on a societal level. The models are based on the different ways in which Functionality and Indigenousness are

perceived in relation to Arabic language policies in Israel, as can be seen in table 7.1 below. The issue of a language's legal status was also considered in the application of the models:

Table 7.1 Models of Societal Bilingualism as Determined by Functionality and Indigenousness

	Balanced Bilingualism	Symbolic Bilingualism	Functional Bilingualism = Hebrew-dominant Multilingualism	Hebrew Monolingualism
Functionality	+	-	+	-
Indigenousness	+	+	-	-

Functionality is defined as the position according to which language policies should aim at facilitating the functional, instrumental interests of linguistic minorities. The position sees language policy goals as achieving concrete and immediate benefits, such as providing access to services, to information, protecting one's safety or fulfilling everyday-life tasks.

Indigenousness refers to the fact that a minority group existed as a unique group prior to the establishment of the state. The indigenous element acknowledges the rights/privileges that may derive from a group's indigenous status.

Balanced Bilingualism

This model advocates equality between the languages, both declaratively and practically. Declaratively, the two languages are perceived as 'the languages of the state'. This calls for two 'national languages' for 'two national groups'. The 'indigenous argument' is used to strengthen the uniqueness of the Arab minority but also as a way to claim that its rights should be perceived equally by the majority group in all respects, including language. Practically, this model does not accept Hebrew's dominance in state agencies and services. According to this model, the state has an obligation to provide various everyday-life services in Arabic and to enable Arabic speakers to communicate with state officials in their mother tongue. The indigenous status also dictates the right to policies concerning the use of Arabic in broad public contexts. For example, the use of Arabic on national television is seen as a way of 'normalizing'

the presence of Arabic in a public sphere, in addition to serving more functional purposes (such as having access to information).

This model characterizes the official position of the Arab sector as represented by its public figures. This was seen very clearly by how Arab representatives viewed the status that Arabic should be granted in Israel ('the absolute equality position'). Regarding the Jewish public discourse, the study showed that this model is currently beyond the discourse boundaries. It is not considered a real option by Jewish decision makers and is not evident in the discussion unless Arab representatives are present. In the eyes of (general) majority group members, this model is highly undesirable. The survey indicated that this was the least desired option of the possible sociolinguistic scenarios proposed to the majority subgroups. In relation to minority group members, this is a more radical model than participants have generally portrayed. The focus group data revealed that such a broad interpretation of the indigenous argument was very uncommon among Arab participants and usually stayed within the context of the supremacy of Hebrew.

Symbolic Bilingualism

In this model, Arabic language policies have symbolic-declarative goals. This is derived from the perception of Arabic as an element of Arabs' distinct group identity within Israeli society. From the perspective of the minority group, this means accepting the de facto dominance of Hebrew in the way the state functions for the benefit of symbolic achievements. According to the majority group, the rejection of the functional demands is rooted in the idea that although they may be legitimate, they are irrelevant, of the premise that Arabic speakers are proficient enough in Hebrew to be able to receive basic services in the majority group. The indigenous status is interpreted in a way that gives precedence to Arabic over other minority languages in Israel, but not in a way that determines equality between Hebrew and Arabic (symbolically or practically). Declaratively, this model grants Arabic a legally acknowledged special status, which does not recognize Arabic as a 'national language' – a status reserved for Hebrew. Here, Arabic's unique status essentially means that it is the only language other than the majority language to be formally recognized by the state. In terms of language policies, they focus on all-

Israeli or all-Jewish contexts. One such representative policy objective is the wish to familiarize Jewish Israelis with the Arabic language.

This model can be said to characterize the 'official consensus position' in the Jewish public discourse. It is in line with 'the hierarchy position' - the preferred option for Arabic's official status. In addition, it reflects a very prominent line of argument among Jewish public figures that criticize Arabs' demands to enforce Arabic's official status as a political act and not as a 'genuine struggle' for functional purposes. This illegitimacy of functional demands was found to characterize the attitudes of the majority group members in the study. However, on the whole, this was not their preferred model. As noted by the survey and the focus group data of the majority group members, functional demands were not very positively viewed. Yet, symbolic demands were clearly rejected. Among minority group members, despite a generally positive attitude towards Arabic language policies, symbolic policies were significantly less desirable. For example, the policy concerning Arabic studies as a compulsory subject in Jewish schools was the least favored policy among all the subgroups – both Jewish and Arab.

Functional Bilingualism ('Hebrew-dominant Multilingualism')

Functional bilingualism focuses on the minority's functional interests when determining policies towards the Arabic-speaking sector. The leading argument claims that 'functionality' is the most relevant criterion for language policy decisions. While the symbolic model represents a compromise of the functional component for the sake of declarative-symbolic benefits, this is *theoretically* the opposite option. In other words, the symbolic language demands are renounced, while the functional ones promote Arabic speakers' preferred status. However, the way the functionality argument was structured, it inevitably led to a position in which precedence to Arabic could not be maintained. Majority group members justified functional demands primarily on the basis of one's ability to carry out tasks in the majority language. Thus, if a certain service cannot be obtained by the minority in Hebrew, the state is required to provide that service in the minority's mother tongue. This kind of argumentation results in a policy that obliges the state to enable linguistic minorities' access to services. When functionality is put at the center, all linguistic minorities are entitled to the same level of

assistance, and the Hebrew-Arabic bilingual element becomes a 'multilingual' one. In terms of the indigenous argument, it is interpreted as (possibly) relevant for some political demands, but not for language-related ones. This was evident in the focus group data of some minority group participants who claimed that language policies are not the right arena to fight for the acknowledgment of Arabs' unique status in Israel. Hence, this model places Hebrew as the sole dominant language and Hebrew speakers as the only ones who represent their collective identity through language. At the same time, it realizes the importance of making sure that language is not an obstacle for minorities in accessing services and information.

This model characterizes the preferred scenario among majority group participants in the study. As we saw in the survey and in the focus groups, the wish for the continuation of Hebrew's role as a sole symbolic element in Israel was very central. Majority group respondents in the survey were more supportive of multilingual policies than of Hebrew-Arabic bilingual ones. Majority group participants in the focus groups repeatedly used the comparison between Arabic and immigrant languages to de-legitimize policies that privileged Arabic. In terms of the public discourse, this 'weak' interpretation of the indigenous argument was not found among Arab public figures. The Jewish decision-making discourse did not exclude the suggestion to place Arabic in the category of 'minority languages' along with languages of immigrant communities. It figured repeatedly in statements of public figures, both religious and secular. However, it stayed in a minority position, overshadowed by those acknowledging a special position for Arabic.

Hebrew Monolingualism

According to this model, the state's language policy is concerned primarily with protecting the dominant language and the interests of its speakers. The model is derived from a monolingual ideology that sees multilingualism as a threat to national unity and highlights the benefits of linguistic homogeneity for the social and economic progress of both majority and minority groups. Declaratively, there is only one officially recognized language, which is also the 'national language'. Practically, the state is not legally (or morally) obliged to facilitate either functional or non-functional needs of linguistic minorities. Hence, minority language policies are not

issued (or not implemented) when they are viewed as jeopardizing the interests of the majority group – either as a collective entity or as individuals. The indigenous element is viewed as irrelevant for language policies as well as for any other political demands. The fact that a group represents the historical residents of the state's territory is completely overshadowed by the importance of ensuring that the majority language becomes the sole language of communication for all citizens.

This model was outside the 'official Jewish consensus'. It was very rarely proposed by Jewish officials involved in policy making or planning as an actual option for a policy towards Arabic or other minority languages in Israel. However, it did appear among majority group members -- mainly through the focus group data. On several occasions, majority group members rejected the *functional* demands of the minority group when perceived as clashing with the interests of the majority group. For example, the policy concerning Arabic-speaking staff in government offices was rejected by some participants due to its potential to jeopardize the chances of Jewish candidates applying for such positions. In another case, Jewish participants were willing to disregard the functional difficulties that may arise from prohibiting Arab representatives to use their mother tongue in public-national spheres due to the symbolic, non-Jewish message it would carry. In other words, the obligation of the state to facilitate the functional needs of Arabic speakers is not taken for granted-- at least not when the interests of the majority group are at stake.

7.3 The Models in General Language Policy Principles

The models indicate where the Israeli discourse is situated on the 'linguistic ideological scale' proposed in the literature, and the position it reflects regarding some of the debates that occupy researchers in the field. The Israeli discourse on Arabic language policies reflected by the study revealed the following two issues:

- A great distance from the 'liberal linguistic scenarios'
- A strong tendency towards the language-identity link

As described earlier in the study, 'Linguistic Diversity', 'Ethnolinguistic Democracy' and 'Language as a Resource' represent the main pro-linguistic minority approaches in the current macro-sociolinguistic literature[155]. Differences and variations between these models/ approaches certainly exist. However, they can all be characterized as 'linguistically liberal' because they challenge the idea that monolingualism is a necessary condition for national unity and prosperity and they advocate minority language rights.

The models found in the current study highlight the disparities between the Israeli discourse and the above mentioned approaches in a number of ways. First, the monolingualism model is not out of bounds. Although relatively marginal, it does exist among majority group members within Israeli society. Thus, it cannot be claimed that there is a comprehensive acceptance of the state's obligation to facilitate the linguistic needs of minority groups. The 'functional bilingual' model does represent a multilingual element. However, it is very limited as it takes Hebrew's dominance as unquestionable. Second, protecting a group's mother tongue is not perceived as a significant action in its own right. When it is assumed that services and information can be accessed by the minority in the majority language, the motivation to support the use of the minority language by the state decreases considerably. Third, multilingualism and especially Hebrew-Arabic bilingualism is certainly not perceived as a national resource. Multilingualism, as represented in the functional bilingual model, is seen as a necessary compromise that majority group members are willing to make in order to be 'in line' with basic democratic/liberal principles. It does not reflect the belief that a linguistically diverse environment can truly work for the benefit of the majority. In general, bi/multilingualism is perceived as a 'zero-sum game'. In other words, policies supporting minority languages would unavoidably jeopardize the status of the majority language and work against the interests of its speakers.

Observing the models in relation to the *language-ethnic identity* question sheds light on some of the issues being debated. The Arab elite groups refer to this argument as justification for

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[155] For a review see chapter 1, 1.2 and Chapter 3, 3.1

language demands (as reflected in the 'balanced bilingual model'). The tendency to strengthen the indigenous element, as I claimed, adds an important component to the traditional national argument, but it is does not weaken the fundamental dichotomy in terms of group affiliation between the Jewish and Arab groups. On the contrary: the monolingual and the functional bilingual models send the minority group the message that the language-ethnic identity link exists as long as it refers to the majority group. Thus, majority group members as well as Jewish public figures strongly advocate the dominance of Hebrew on the basis of its being a central (Jewish) identity element, but they are not willing to attribute this feature to Arabic for its speakers.

It is important to note that none of the four models proposes a scenario that considerably differs from the language-ethnic/national identity link. Arguments along these 'contingent' lines do exist, largely emanating from Jewish intellectuals who point to a non-national alternative. Ram (2006), for example, calls for a complete (and constitutional) distinction between citizenship and nationality in Israel as the only real democratic alternative (p. 185-202). Azoulay and Ophir (2007), in their response to Adalah's constitutional proposal, criticize the great importance the authors assign to Arabs' distinct national characteristics. They see it as being at odds with the possibility of 'a non-national state' that would work for the national interests of both groups. Kofman's (1999) model of 'The Israeli (Hebrew) State' proposes an all-Israeli secular citizenship not based on ethnic affiliation. This "utopian task" (in the writer's words, p.201) requires undoing the Hebrew-Jewish link in order to make Hebrew the uniting, Israeli-cultural element. Thus, both Jews and Arabs are expected to give up the language component as an ethnic-religious marker for the sake of truly equal membership in a 'secular Hebrew culture', as distinct from a 'Jewish culture'.

These kinds of arguments differ considerably from all four models found in our study. The main point of divergence concerns the fact that they require weakening the language-ethnic identity link among Arabic speakers, but more importantly, among (Jewish) Hebrew speakers. This position was completely absent from the data analyzed in the current study. A much weaker 'contingent tendency' figured in certain discursive events. For example, some minority group members were willing to renounce the public use of Arabic as the 'flag' of their struggle for

collective rights. Likewise, in the Jewish public discourse there was a proposal to view language as 'an anomalous symbolic arena' (the 'de jure equality position'), and to accommodate a larger symbolic position for Arabic, on the assumption that the supremacy of the Jewish element can be manifested through other symbols. Thus, it is possible to make concessions in the language field without really changing the Jewish hegemony in the identity of the state. However, despite these 'contingent deviations' of both sectors, the Israeli discourse is still in a position where language and ethnic-national identity are closely tied in relation to the desired public role of Arabic in Israel.

7.4 **The Models as Future Prospects**

The models highlight the gaps between the Jewish and the Arab sectors on issues of language policy related to Arabic in Israel. In addition, the models help demonstrate the gaps in both sectors between the positions that characterize the elite and decision-makers and those common among the general population for whom the policy is intended.

The element of **indigenousness** as a basis for language policy decisions was brought into the discourse by the Arab sector. The Arab elites have gradually promoted the idea that the historical presence of a community in the territory is relevant to the way this group should be treated today in various fields, including language. In this way, the traditional 'national discourse' ('Israeli Arabs/Palestinians in Israel form a group with distinct national characteristics') has been extended into a 'national-indigenous discourse'. Thus, in addition to justifying Arabic as a symbol of a distinct national identity, there is a claim to acknowledge the native-historical status of the community. In so doing, its right to 'continuity' in terms of language as well as other collective features is legitimized. The models demonstrate how this argument has been integrated into the language policy discourse via different interpretations.

The stronger interpretation, according to which the indigenous status should grant no less than equality between minority and majority languages, was characteristic of the Arab elite only. It evokes the balanced bilingual model. The indigenous argument, albeit in a weaker interpretation, was found among Jewish decision-makers as well as among Arabic speakers.

Among Jewish decision-makers, the weaker interpretation arose by 'translating' the indigenous element into acknowledging Arabic as a minority language with a 'special' status. Among Arabic speakers, the weaker interpretation was manifested by criticism of the need to apply the indigenous element automatically in every domain. Thus, the importance of the indigenous element in the struggle for rights was acknowledged but not necessarily in relation to public use of the language. The weaker interpretations of the indigenous element allowed for the two intermediate versions of bilingualism – the 'functional' and 'symbolic' models. For majority group speakers, the indigenous element was generally perceived as irrelevant for language policy decisions, resulting in preference for the monolingual model.

The way indigenousness has been integrated into the language policy discourse raises two important questions that have yet to be answered. First, is it only a matter of time until this position (the view that the indigenous element is relevant for dictating minority language rights) seeps into the general public? Can it be seen an example of change, which originates 'at the top' and gradually disseminates into the wider population, or is it an attempt doomed to remain at a declarative level because the chances of being legitimized by the public are very small? As far as adopting the indigenous element in its broader sense is concerned, it seems that the state is not ready to take these steps right now.

In September 2007, the UN general assembly adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which included recognition of the rights to land, resources and self-government. The terminology used made it clear that the declaration applied to the situation of Israeli Arabs just as much as it did to the Maori in New Zealand or Native Americans in North America[156]. Israel was one of the 11 states that were absent. As the Foreign Ministry explained[157], this was because the voting took place on the Jewish New Year. Yet, they clarified that Israel would not have voted in favor of this declaration even if it took place on a regular 'weekday'-- mainly because Israel objects to the 'collective' nature of the rights assigned by the declaration. If this incident is an indication of the approach towards Israeli Arabs' indigenous

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[156] http://www.iwgia.org/sw248.asp

[157] Eiyn-Gil, A (October, 5 2007). "Unfortunately, we were unable to consider raising an objection" Haaretz online.

status, then it is a very negative one. Nonetheless, it could be that the negative reaction was due to the broad scope of the declaration. Perhaps if specific, less intimidating demands had been made, the reaction would have been different.

Furthermore, assuming that the indigenous element gains acceptance in the discourse, what can we say about its potential to create a positive change in the complex interrelations between the Jewish and the Arab groups in Israel? On the one hand, this may pose an alternative to the perpetual national discourse that does not currently seem to lead to any progress but instead to a greater 'withdrawal' of each side towards its initial positions. It is possible that the indigenous discourse that attempts to promote the rights of the Arab sector from a different ideological perspective could break the almost automatic objection of the Jewish sector to these kinds of demands. On the other hand, there is a chance that this process could actually end up increasing the polarization between the two communities.

To the best of my knowledge, while this question has not been examined in depth, one important reference can be made. In an academic workshop dealing with the implications of the Arab 'vision documents' which took place on December 2007[158], the issue of indigenousness was repeatedly brought up by Arab participants. Algazi, a professor from Tel-Aviv University, was the first to criticize this discourse. In his paper, he claimed that relying too much on the indigenous element would not necessarily benefit the Arab sector in its struggle for rights. In his opinion, the more appropriate process would be the one that moved away from the majority-minority dichotomy in the direction of democratization, which aims at promoting the interests of all 'underprivileged' in Israeli society and does not emphasize the uniqueness of the Arab sector. This position was asserted without denying Arabs' right to define themselves as a national group or even work to promote bi-national legal arrangements. It seems that at the moment, this theoretical element has definitely made its way into the language policy discourse. Nevertheless, its wider implications are still to be discovered.

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[158] See footnote 29

The element of **functionality** – access to services and information as a central criterion for language policy decisions – is the second issue around which major points of tensions are centered. The claim that language policies should aim primarily at facilitating the everyday-life needs of the minority community was commonly at odds with the idea that additional, less concrete objectives should also play a role. This tension was most clearly manifested by the two 'middle' models. In the balanced model ('balanced bilingualism'), the conflict between the two types of policy goals was less apparent because the demand to use Arabic was very broad. The model assumes that both levels (functional and symbolic interests of the minority) are relevant and legitimate, and it is not necessary to renounce one component for the sake of the other. In the monolingual model, the conflict was not truly relevant either, as the state's obligation towards the minority's functional interests was not accepted in principle, or was immediately rejected when it was perceived as a threat to the majority group.

The two middle models, based on a partial position for Arabic, demonstrated this conflict more clearly. Majority group members found it easier to accept a policy based on functional goals for minority language speakers ('functional bilingualism'). However, placing functionality at the center does not permit a unique status for Arabic. The other option – renouncing functional demands for the sake of symbolic achievements ('symbolic bilingualism')-- has its drawbacks too. Arabic speakers cannot easily settle for symbolic acts that do not have much meaning in terms of the actual use and presence of the language in public spheres.

For these reasons, the two middle models represent the *dilemma* the Arab sector is currently facing in relation to the goals that Arabic policies should promote. On the one hand, 'functionality' as a leading argument to advocate language policies is more legitimate in terms of the liberal-democratic values advanced by the majority group. It is easier to justify Arabic language policies on grounds of access to services and information than on grounds of fostering the Arabs' group identity-- especially when national identity is at stake. On the other hand, the situation is such that Arabic speakers are perceived by the majority group as capable of functioning in Hebrew reasonably well or of receiving information in their mother tongue from outside, non-Israeli sources. Additionally, the functional argument results in favoring services in

immigrants' languages since their speakers are perceived to have greater needs. In my opinion, resolving this dilemma demands dealing with two issues.

First, the axiomatic assertion that Arabic speakers are 'generally proficient' in Hebrew needs to be challenged by highlighting the differences between sub-sectors within the Arab population, such as younger versus older age groups, men versus women, periphery areas versus central towns, Arabs residing in mixed cities as opposed to all-Arab towns and villages etc. In addition, a more specific criterion should be determined for the concept of being 'sufficiently proficient' in the dominant language. This means distinguishing between different levels of linguistic skills, such as oral and literacy skills. This may also mean taking into consideration the possibility raised by some minority group participants that in some areas, one's skills in L2 (second language) can never be as good as mother tongue skills.

The second issue concerns the need to state clearly and unfalteringly that symbolic goals for language policies are legitimate in their own right and not only as by-products of functional goals. We have seen that the symbolic element that Jewish decision-makers are most open to is that of familiarizing the majority group with Arabic through the teaching of Arabic in Jewish schools. Ironically, this is the policy least favored by both Hebrew and Arabic speakers. Public use of Arabic (in government offices, on signs, on public media channels etc.) has the *declared* goal of normalizing the presence of Arabic in Israel *in addition* to facilitating access to services and information. As a symbolic goal, this is still far from being widely acceptable to both groups. The state needs, of course, to determine to what extent such goals can be applicable, based on financial and other considerations. Yet, until this claim is unequivocally made, state authorities and majority group members will continue to reject linguistic demands as 'unnecessary'.

The interaction between these two elements should ultimately be expressed in the **legal status** ascribed to the language. In the current context, it seems that the basic question, before content issues are discussed, is whether the legal status is a tool that can be used to create a change in the language's status or whether it is nothing more than a declaration with no real influence over the sociolinguistic reality. I believe the analysis points to the first option. Indeed, Article 82 was widely ignored for years by state authorities. In other words, Arabic's legal status

as an official language was ineffective for changing the tendency to establish the dominance of Hebrew in Israel. Nevertheless, the actions of Arab elite groups to change to status of Arabic have started specifically with attempts to enforce Article 82 and to ascribe a practical meaning to this legal arrangement. In other words, the legal element has been brought into the discourse and even placed at its center.

These actions were not overlooked by the Jewish sector for long. At first, attempts were made to de-legitimize the claims of the Arab elite, but gradually it was realized that the legal element could not be avoided in the discussion – whether the motivation was to strengthen the status of Arabic or to reinforce its marginal status. Now, the question about the content to assign the legal status becomes much more relevant. I believe that no other way exists but to seriously deal with Arabic's legal status, especially now that the issue has been put on the agenda. Assuming that the option which was proven most dominant among Jewish decision-makers ('The hierarchy option') is the one to be put into practice, this should be seen as a positive development in terms of strengthening the status of Arabic. Although this option ascribes to Arabic a weaker status than it had gained in the historical arrangement, it is stronger than its current position because it distinguishes Arabic from other minority languages and also acknowledges, to some extent, its indigenous status.

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תקציר

מחקר זה עוסק במדיניות לשון כלפי השפה הערבית בישראל כפי שבאה לידי ביטוי הן בשיח הרשמי והן בעמדותיהם של דוברים מן השורה. טענתו המרכזית של המחקר היא כי ניתן לאפיין את השיח העכשווי בנוגע למקומה הציבורי של ערבית בישראל באמצעות שלושה מושגים מרכזיים: ילידיות (Indigenousness), פונקציונליות (Functionality) ורשמיות (Officiality). החלתם של מושגים אלו יוצרת ארבעה מודלים שונים לדו-לשוניות חברתית:

(1) דו-לשוניות מאוזנת (Balanced Bilingualism)

(2) דו-לשוניות סמלית (Symbolic Bilingualism)

(3) דו-לשוניות פונקציונלית (Functional Bilingualism)

(4) חד-לשוניות (Hebrew Monolingualism)

במובנו הבסיסי ביותר, מתייחס המושג מדיניות לשון (Language Policy) לצעדים הננקטים על ידי המדינה במטרה להסדיר את מעמדן של השפות הדבורות בתחומה. מעבר לכך, עוסק תחום מחקר זה בתהליכים ובמנגנונים אשר משפיעים הן על החלטות מדיניות והן על יישומן בפועל. דוגמה לתהליך מעין זה אפשר למצוא בהתייחסות לתפקיד שממלאות עמדות כלפי שפות וכלפי דובריהן ביצירה וביישום של מדיניות לשון, או לדרך שבה נעשה שימוש במדיניות לשון על מנת לבסס או לקדם את מעמדן החברתי-פוליטי של קבוצות לשוניות שונות.

השפה הערבית היא שפת האם של המיעוט הערבי בישראל, מיעוט הטרוגני המונה כחמישית מאוכלוסיית המדינה. מעמדה הרשמי של השפה הערבית בישראל נקבע מכוחה של הוראה מנדטורית שאומצה לחקיקה הישראלית בשנת 1948 (סימן 82 לדבר המלך במועצתו, 1922). הוראה זו מכתיבה דרישה להתנהלות דו-לשונית רחבת היקף בעברית ובערבית בזרועות השלטון השונות (השלטון המרכזי, השלטון המקומי והשירות הציבורי). בפועל, מעמדה הציבורי של השפה הערבית הינו שולי ואילו השפה העברית נהנית מדומיננטיות כמעט מוחלטת בזירות הישראליות הציבוריות.

ההסבר העיקרי למעמדה השולי של ערבית בישראל נסוב באופן מסורתי סביב הקונפליקט בין הזהויות הקולקטיביות של שתי הקבוצות הלאומיות בישראל: קבוצת הרוב היהודית וקבוצת המיעוט הערבית.

במחקר זה נבדקו עמדות והשקפות כלפי מדיניות לשון שמטרתה להרחיב את מקומה הציבורי הנוכחי של השפה הערבית בישראל. בחינה זו נעשתה בשני מישורים: בקרב דמויות ציבוריות ומקבלי החלטות ובקרב דוברים מקרב הקבוצות הלשוניות השונות.

עמדות הדוברים נבדקו באמצעות שני כלים מתודולוגיים: סקר וקבוצות מיקוד. הסקר הקיף 466 סטודנטים יהודים וערבים שנבחרו ע"פ חמש תת-קבוצות אתניות, דתיות ולשוניות. מאפיינים אלו הנחו גם את בנייתן של ארבע קבוצות המיקוד. פרטי השאלון והשאלות שנידונו בקבוצות המיקוד התבססו על תסריטים שתארו מצבים אפשריים שונים בהם נמצאת השפה הערבית בשימוש בכמה זירות ציבוריות. הזירות הציבוריות הנבחנות נבחרו בעזרת מחקר מקדים והן:

- שירותים ממשלתיים - קבלת קהל וטפסים במשרדים ממשלתיים, שילוט בשפה הערבית.
- טלוויזיה ציבורית - שידורים בערבית ותרגום לשפה הערבית בערוץ הממלכתי (ערוץ 1) ובערוצים הציבוריים-מסחריים (ערוצים 2 ו-10).
- לימודי ערבית בבתי ספר יהודיים.

עמדותיהם של **גורמים רשמיים** נבחנו באמצעות שיח מקבלי החלטות סביב סוגייה אחת: שאלת מעמדה הרשמי של השפה הערבית. הניתוח התרכז בשתי זירות ציבוריות (הכנסת ובתי המשפט) והתבסס על מסמכים משפטיים, הצעות חוק ופרוטוקולים של דיוני מליאות הכנסת וועדותיה.

ניתוח **קבוצת המיקוד** (פרקים 3 ו-4) העלה שני מושגים עיקריים שאפיינו את דיוניהם של המשתתפים והיוו את הבסיס לתמיכה במדיניות לשונית כלפי השפה הערבית או להתנגדות כלפיה. המושג הראשון, *ילידיות*, מתייחס לזכויות הלשוניות שמעמדה הילידי של קבוצה עשוי להעניק לה, הווה אומר, מידת הרלוונטיות של עובדת היות המיעוט הלשוני אוכלוסייה שהתקיימה כקבוצה עצמאית ונפרדת טרם הקמתה של המדינה, למדיניות לשונית עכשווית כלפי קבוצה זו. המושג השני שהעלה הניתוח הוא *פונקציונליות*. מושג זה טומן בחובו את המתח שבין מטרות מדיניות המכוונות כלפי אינטרסים מידיים ופרקטיים (כגון נגישות למידע ולשירותים או בטיחות אישית) לבין מטרות בעלות ערך 'סימבולי' המכוונות למילוי הצרכים הזהותיים-קולקטיביים של הקבוצה הלשונית.

השימוש במושגים אלו נמצא יעיל בתאור המנגנונים המורכבים של מתן ושלילת לגיטימציה למדיניות לשונית כלפי השפה הערבית בהקשר הישראלי הנוכחי.

ניתוח **שיח מקבלי ההחלטות** (פרק 5) חשף ארבע עמדות שונות בעניין מעמדה הרשמי של השפה הערבית בישראל: 'עמדת השיוויון המוחלט', 'עמדת השיוויון דה-יורה', 'עמדת המדרג' ו'עמדת העברית הבלעדית'. עמדות אלו נבחנו באמצעות שלושה מקרי מבחן: סעיף ה'שפה' בהצעות חוקה למדינת ישראל, הצעות חוק לשינוי/ביטול מעמדה של השפה הערבית בישראל והחוק להקמת 'אקדמיה ללשון הערבית'. מקרי מבחן אלו שימשו לבחינת מידת הלגיטימיות לה זוכות העמדות השונות ואת מיקומן בגבולות השיח הציבורי (היהודי).

תוצאות **הסקר** (פרק 6) הצביעו באופן כללי על תמיכה נמוכה בקרב הנשאלים היהודים ותמיכה גבוהה בקרב הנשאלים הערבים לרעיון הרחבת מקומה של השפה הערבית בישראל, בהתאם למגמות הבאות:

- דפוס דומה של היררכיה בין הזירות הציבוריות איפיין את כל חמש תת-הקבוצות. זירת השירותים הציבוריים נמצאה כזירה המועדפת ביותר. אחריה הייתה הזירה שעסקה בהרחבת מקומה של השפה ערבית בטלוויזיה הציבורית. לימודי ערבית בבתי ספר יהודים זכו לתמיכה הנמוכה ביותר.

- בקרב הנשאלים היהודים נמצאה נטייה חד-לשונית (עברית) מובהקת תוך העדפת מדיניות רב-לשונית על פני מדיניות דו-לשונית עברית-ערבית.

- הדיכוטומיה האתנית (יהודים למול ערבים) האפילה כמעט לחלוטין על הדיכוטומיה רוב-מיעוט לשוני (דוברי עברית כשפת אם למול דוברי ערבית ורוסית כשפות אם).

ממצאי המקורות השונים כונסו יחדיו ליצירת ארבעה מודלים לדו-לשוניות חברתית המאפיינים את מערכת הגומלין בין עברית לערבית בישראל. המודלים נבנו ע"י החלה או החסרה של המושגים *ילידיות ופונקציונליות* תוך התייחסות להשלכות של כל מודל על *מעמדה הרשמי* של השפה הערבית. ניתוח סיכויי ההיתכנות של כל מודל נעשה באמצעות ממצאי הנתונים הכמותיים והאיכותניים. הדיון בארבעת המודלים נעשה תוך התייחסות לעקרונות מדיניות לשון כלליים כמו גם למקרה הפרטי של הזירה העברית-ערבית בישראל.

תוכן העניינים

עבודה זו נעשתה בהדרכתו של פרופ' יואל
וולטרס מן המחלקה לאנגלית של
אוניברסיטת בר-אילן

מיעוטים לשוניים ומדיניות לשון:
המקרה של השפה הערבית בישראל

חיבור לשם קבלת התואר
"דוקטור לפילוסופיה"

מאת:

דפנה יצחקי

המחלקה לאנגלית

הוגש לסנט של אוניברסיטת בר-אילן

רמת גן   אייר תשס"ח