

**ANGLIA POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY**

**Faculty of Education**

**Learning English as a Fourth Language:  
The Case of the Arab Pupils in Israel**

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**Abstract**

**Doctor of Philosophy**

**Learning English as a Fourth Language:  
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**Hanna Elias Jubran**

This study examines the function of the affective factors in learning English as a Foreign Language among the Arab pupils in Israel (APIs). For these pupils, English, which is the gateway to academic life, is considered a fourth language, due to the diglossic nature of Arabic itself, their L1, and Hebrew, the State language. The research profiles the Interlanguage of these pupils by exploring the lingual, cultural and socio-political factors. The dynamic interplay among the affective factors and the learners was revealed through a set of targeted materials and questionnaires.

The research was conducted at two levels; firstly, a longitudinal study, which accompanied 21 participants from the same grade for two and a half years in their learning of the language, secondly, it included a cross-sectional study, which focused on 280 learners who represented the Arab pupils' population living in Arab-only villages and cities, mixed Jewish-Arab cities and the Bedouin population in the South of the country. Thus, the effect of Hebrew, as one of the affective factors, could also be examined.

The data collected in the longitudinal study covered a variety of texts, and the analysis of the learners' Interlanguage included both deviant and correct structures and forms, thus resulting in an appreciation of both the process and the product of language learning. Triangulation was used in the form of additional questionnaires and personal interviews with the participants. The data were analysed according to Corder's paradigm, using a computer program that was specially developed for the research.

The cross-sectional study, in addition to the lingual factors, tested for social, political and cultural factors that affect the learning process of the APIs. The data collected were subjected to descriptive analysis which revealed various correlations between the learners' demographic, cultural, social and political backgrounds and their knowledge of English.

The results of both studies reflect a pattern that characterises the APIs' Interlanguage as being unique for this group. It is by shedding light on this group that the contribution to knowledge becomes apparent; whether at the level of learning English as a fourth language in a diglossic society, living a turbulent social, economic and political life, or by analysing their Interlanguage and identifying patterns that characterise their deviant and correct language usage. The pedagogical outcome of this research, and the body of information produced in the corpus of language collected throughout the study can serve language researchers, educational policy makers, text-book authors, teachers and students in their quest for better understanding the process of learning and teaching English as a Foreign Language.

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## **List of Abbreviations**

API	Arab Pupil in Israel
CA	Contrastive Analysis
EA	Error Analysis
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
ESL	English as a Second Language
IL	Interlanguage
L1	Mother Tongue
L2	Second or Foreign Language
LT	Language Testing
MSA	Modern Standard Arabic
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
TL	Target Language
UG	Universal Grammar

## Research Map

September - 2000	Permission of school and parents obtained Choice of participants from grade 10 for the longitudinal research Collecting and processing of the first batch of data
October - 2000	The October Events erupt- Aseel Asleh, a 12-grade pupil is killed
December - 2000	Collecting and processing of the second batch of Data
February - 2001	Permission obtained from schools for the cross-sectional research Data collecting and processing of the cross-sectional research
March - 2001	Collecting and processing of the third batch of data
May - 2001	Collecting and processing of the fourth batch of data
September - 2001	Participants move to grade 11
October - 2001	Collecting and processing the fifth batch of data
February - 2002	Collecting and processing the sixth batch of data
May - 2002	Collecting and processing of the seventh batch of data  One of the participants withdraws from the research
September - 2002	Participants move to grade 12
February - 2003	Collecting and processing of the final batch of data
May - 2003	Participants start their Bagrut exams
June - 2003	Participants graduate
August - 2003	End of data processing for the participants in both types of the research
March - 2005	Submission of thesis

## Key to Phonetic Transcription

### الحركات وأحرف المدّ Long and Short Vowels

short low back vowel	-	a	اَ	الفتحة
short high back vowel	ـُ	u	وُ	الضمّة
short high front vowel	ـِ	i	يَ	الكسرة
long low back vowel	ا	Ā ā	أ / آ	الألف
long high back vowel	و	Ū ū	وُ	الواو
long high front vowel	ي	Ī ī	يَ	الياء

### الصوامت وحرفا اللين: الواو والياء Consonants and the /w/ and /j/ vowels

glottal stop	ء , ʔ , ʕ	ء , ʔ	الهمزة
voiceless dental fricative	ث	θ	الثاء
voiced palato-alveolar fricative	ج	ǰ ǰ	الجيم
voiceless pharyngeal fricative	ح	ħ ħ	الحاء
voiceless velar fricative	خ	x x	الخاء
voiced dental fricative	ذ	ð	الذال
palato-alveolar fricative	ش	ʃ ʃ	الشين
emphatic voiceless alveolar fricative	ص	ʂ ʂ	الصاد
emphatic voiced alveolar stop	ض	ʐ ʐ	الضاد
emphatic voiceless alveolar stop	ط	ʈ ʈ	الطاء
emphatic voiced dental fricative	ظ	ʒ ʒ	الظاء
voiced pharyngeal fricative	ع	ʕ ʕ	العين
voiced velar fricative	غ	ɣ	الغين
bilabial approximant	و	w w	الواو
palatal glide	ي	y y	الياء

## Prologue

Being a teacher is a mission; being an English teacher is a mission impossible. As an English teacher in Israel, you are accountable for the academic future of your pupils, much more than any other teacher. Regardless of the subject they might want to pursue at university, these pupils need English.

Parents ask; pupils ask; fellow teachers ask: “What is it with us, Arabs, and English?” “The reasons are many”, I would answer, without really thinking about details. This question, however, had haunted me till I had the opportunity to start investigating it in this research. What I had only implicitly known as a teacher, I had the chance to confront, reflect and analyse explicitly as a teacher-researcher. As a result, my reading of the reality has become much more complex than before. The Interlanguage I have analysed has revealed a complex world of realities, where the linguistic reality is only one of two other interwoven realities: cultural and socio-political. Nowhere could these realities be lived than in the case of the Arab Pupils in Israel (APIs). These pupils are the third generation in an ongoing struggle over identities, rights and existence. Their mother tongue, Colloquial Arabic, is struggling to keep its identity as an Arabic language, due to the assimilation into Hebrew; their culture, which is traditional Arab, is also going through changes due to local and global trends of globalisation, and finally, their political status puts them in a situation where they are treated as second-class citizens in the Jewish State of Israel.

None of this is new to me; what is new, however, has been the realization that these factors play a much greater role in the daily lives of my pupils than I had ever imagined. It was naïve of me to think that only adults are aware of the complex



realities in which we live; I failed to understand that living in this country produces ‘adult children’ whose lives are a preamble to the many stations in the Via Dolorosa of the Palestinians who were born and live in Israel.

Today, when people ask me about the enigma of learning English by the Arab pupils, I know what to answer them: “The reasons are many”, I would say, but this time I would definitely think of the details.

This research is about the APIs’ Interlanguage, written by another learner of English as a Foreign Language. Most of what applies to the pupils, applies to the teacher-researcher as well.

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **Research Context**

### **SECTION I**

#### **1.1.1 Statement of the Issue**

Gardner's (1985) Socio-educational Model of L2 Learning posits that the social and cultural milieu in which learners grow up determines the attitudes and motivational orientation they hold towards the target language, its speakers, and its culture. In the reality of the APIs, a third pillar should be added: the socio-political aspect. These three aspects, language, culture and politics do not live separately; on the contrary, their interaction is so interwoven that it is sometimes difficult to discuss the one without mentioning the other two. When the APIs go to school they take the three aspects with them, therefore, in order to fully appreciate their linguistic, cultural and socio-political milieus, one has to gain a comprehensive perspective of the complex reality in which they live. This reality cannot be fully comprehended unless we understand their historical, social, political, cultural and educational backgrounds. Each one of these factors represents a tension in the lives of the Israeli Arabs.

### 1.1.2 Aims of the Research

The research aims at exploring the Interlanguage of the Arab Pupils in Israel (APIs).<sup>1</sup> The theory of Interlanguage (IL) refers to “the interim grammars which learners build on their way to full target competence” (Ellis, 1994:30). The term was coined by Selinker (1972). Corder (1971, 1981) then referred to it as “transitional competence” whilst Nemser (1971) called it “approximative system”. However, these three terms are not necessarily synonymous (Selinker, 1992:24). This theory, which came after Corder’s (1967) seminal paper on errors and their meaning, gave the notion of a foreign language, in both its correct and deviant forms, a new look; IL is a complete language, though idiosyncratic; the errors in it were an indication that learning was taking place. The implications of such a theory on learners and teachers meant that errors had always been a natural stage in the learning of a new language. Errors were not bad habits any more that had to be eradicated, as the behaviouristic theories had perceived them (Skinner, 1957; Brooks, 1960, cited in Ellis 1994).

This research explores the APIs’ Interlanguage not only from the linguistic viewpoint, but also from the cultural and socio-political aspects as well. The author’s anti-positivist paradigm about epistemology makes him see the reality of the learner and the language as being one. In order to understand the APIs’ IL, one has to understand the three aspects together. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, theorists of SLA and practitioners of ESL tended to see language in terms of the formal qualities of language (Corder, 1974). IL research focused mainly on grammar and pronunciation

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<sup>1</sup> Since the self-definition of the Arab population in Israel is still elusive for many, it has been decided that the neutral term, Arabs living in Israel, be used. This should solve all the subdivisions used by the Arabs, such as: Israeli Arabs, Palestinians, Moslem (Christian) Arabs, Palestinian Arabs, etc. See chapter I for discussion of the problem.

in the classroom (Ullman, 1997). By the 1980s and 1990s, discussions shifted from language itself to learning processes and learning styles (Cohen and Aphek, 1981; Oxford, 1990). In the late 1990s, researchers (Peirce, 1995; McKay and Wong, 1996) started to question the way in which SLA theories had understood the language learner's relationship to the social world. Peirce (1995) asked why learners communicated successfully in some situations, while in others they preferred to remain silent. This, according to Peirce (ibid), could not be sufficiently explained by personality traits such as introversion, or lack of motivation; the learner's ability to speak was also affected by relations of power between speakers. Spolsky (1989) stated structural inequalities such as racism, sexism, and class discrimination could limit learners' exposure to English as well as their opportunities to practise it. Some of these factors, such as racism, cannot be defined as purely social; they are more socio-political in nature, especially when the learners form a minority discriminated against.

Schumann's (1986) discussion of acculturation leading to assimilation is probably the closest to being socio-political in nature. Amara (1999:215), building on Schumann (1986), states that political issues and their impact on language have not been sufficiently studied in Israel. Moreover, the assembly of the socio-political aspect as a third factor in the IL research of the Arab learners has not been looked into in that respect. It is by identifying and bridging this gap that the research will contribute to knowledge in the field of SLA theories. Language can be explored through linguistics; language can also be understood through the application of the inseparable cultural aspects of learning a language, but when the learners live in a charged political situation as well, and look to clarify their confused identities, it is only

through the combination of all these factors that we can understand their learning environments.

Through the combination of both inductive and deductive methods, qualitative and quantitative approaches to methods and methodologies, this research will explore the APIs' IL, which is considered a natural language on its own (Adjemian 1976; Eckman, 1991). The research will look for both rigour in the design and presentation of the deductive research, while at the same time, for depth and richness in the case-study approach chosen for the inductive research. The mixing of paradigms in investigating SLA should only guarantee a wider perspective on such a complex phenomenon. Simultaneously, the use of contradictory paradigms requires intricate, yet delicate, weaving through both worlds. I am aware of the problems in following such a path, but the way I perceive the role of language in the lives of human beings is that it is too complex to be investigated using one single methodology. This is, therefore, a multi-methodological research of the multi-layer IL. When required, I will move between the two worlds, but I will be dwelling mostly in the world of anti-positivism, looking at the language and the learner as two inseparable entities. Doing the research from a practitioner's point of view, being both the researcher and part of the research, choosing a case-study as a methodology in dealing with the learner and their language, looking for richness and depth in presenting and exploring these two entities in and out of the classroom, being aware of my role as a subjective interpreter of cultural, social and political issues of *my* people and pupils, assuming a role of advocacy, being a human among human beings, all of these factors put me in a situation where I should be able to present the self to the others, bring the inside worlds of the APIs to light so that these worlds will be better understood by their

citizens and those dwelling around them. All of this will be done mostly through applying various methods of analysis to their written discourse, inside the classroom. Setting these boundaries should guarantee a faithful presentation, though subjective, of the 'natural' setting of how English is taught. The research, however, does not claim issues of teachability and learnability to be at the focus of its investigation; it is rather the exploration of the charged burden of tensions that the APIs bring to the classroom and how, through language, among other means, they try to release some of the pressure that relentlessly builds up in their daily lives. This is a continuous process of recharging and discharging energies in their quest to find that space where they can finally get their voice heard, and listened to. Then, according to the 'logic' of my world, they should be able to resolve some of their tensions, thus creating a better learning environment for themselves.

It is within this perspective of the process of learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in general, and as a Fourth<sup>2</sup> Language among the APIs in particular, that the research will fill a gap and make a contribution to knowledge.

The research will focus on the IL of 21 pupils in an Arab high school in Israel learning English as a foreign language. Data, in the form of different written tasks- such as dialogue completion, describing an event and essays- both targeted and non-targeted, will be collected on average every three months and will be analysed. A questionnaire on the participants' linguistic, cultural and socio-political backgrounds will also be administered to gain further knowledge about the participants. Linguistic

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<sup>2</sup> The view that the author holds in this respect is that for the APIs, Diglossia is more than just a variety of the same language. For instance, the High variety, contrary to the Low, is very rigid when it comes to morpho-syntax rules and does not allow any flexibility. Such rules need to be learnt at school, similar to the process of learning any other foreign language.

and critical discourse analysis will be carried out on the texts so that the linguistic, cultural and socio-political characteristics of the language can be explored. The research, which is inductive and uses qualitative methods to research, will use a case study approach to the presentation of the data, where the key feature of such an approach is not on the method, or the data that are collected, but rather the emphasis given by the researcher to providing an understanding of certain processes as they occur in their context, thus targeting richness and depth (Trafford, 2000).

During the period in which the longitudinal research will take place, a cross-sectional study will be carried out on 280 pupils from four demographic backgrounds: Arab-only cities; Arab-only villages; mixed Jewish and Arab cities and the Bedouin sector in the south of the country. The study, which will be conducted once, will use a questionnaire to gather data on linguistic issues in English, Arabic and Hebrew. The pupils participating in the study will be from grades 9 and 10. The data collected from this study will be analysed looking for patterns among the three languages. A sample of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix 1. The aim of the study, which will be deductive in nature and will apply quantitative methods in data analysis, will be to study the linguistic behaviour of the APIs using their prior linguistic knowledge, through translation and vocabulary.

Since no comprehensive research has been carried out to address the specificity of the APIs' English learning environment, the gap in knowledge that this research will fill should help teachers of EFL in general, and teachers of English in the Arab sector in Israel in particular, to better understand the process of learning English as a Fourth Language. Language pedagogy researchers, linguists, EFL book publishers and

education policy makers are also among the audience that this research will target. The topic is significant because it can provide the APIs with opportunities for academic achievement by becoming more proficient in English; the key to higher education in Israel, and the whole world.

To conclude this section, the aim of the research is to explore, interpret and shed light on the APIs, learning English as a foreign language. This research does not undertake to improve or change the investigated phenomena, although it will advance propositions for further research.

Since the aim of this research is to carry out a comprehensive exploration of the APIs' IL, investigating its linguistic and non-linguistic components, the main research questions that this research tries to answer are:

- a- What are the main linguistic characteristics of the APIs' IL?
- b- How does the prior linguistic knowledge of the APIs, their cultural and socio-political backgrounds shape that IL?

The first chapter of this thesis looks into the linguistic, cultural and socio-political backgrounds that constitute the narrative of the Arab Pupils in Israel (APIs). These three aspects are looked into as dynamic events that are the source of the major tensions in the APIs' lives: tensions between languages, cultures and identities. A summary of the chapter reveals the present reality in which the APIs live and learn.

The second chapter presents the theoretical perspectives that guided the research. Major SLA theories are discussed, with a stress on those particular ones that are



relevant to the study. The notion of the interwoven language and culture is also presented to clarify the interdependency of both. Socio-political issues, such as “minority-majority” relations and “self-identity” constitute the third angle of the language, culture and socio-politics debate. A conceptual framework, which is designed out of this discussion, directs the rest of the research. A summary presents the dynamics that combine all three in the linguistic repertoires of the APIs.

The third chapter deals with the methodology adopted in the research. A presentation of the paradigms used in the research opens the discussion, to be followed by the research design and considerations taken to carry out the research. The use of both qualitative and quantitative approaches is explained including the use of a case study, issues of generalisability, and triangulation. The boundaries of the research are set through presenting the specificity of the sample, time and place of the study, and the limitations of the methods and methodologies. Data collection procedures and data analysis, with a focus on the theoretical perspectives for choosing the relevant methods concludes the discussion. A summary threads the different methodological issues together in order to set the stage for presenting the findings.

The fourth chapter presents the findings of the research, of both the qualitative and quantitative parts. The chapter opens by presenting the factual findings of each to be followed by the interpretive findings. A summary presents my findings.

The fifth chapter discusses the conceptualisation of the evidence. The research questions are answered, followed by a critique of the research. The contribution to

knowledge is then stated and propositions for further research are advanced. The chapter concludes with a reflection on the intellectual journey taken by the researcher.

References and appendices close the thesis.

## **Section II**

### **Introduction**

This section discusses the three tensions in which the APIs live. The first part explores the linguistic tension that exists between Arabic and the other languages in the APIs' linguistic repertoires. The second part discusses the cultural tensions that affect and form the daily reality of the APIs. The third part looks into the socio-political background, which is a major source of tension for both the APIs themselves and those living around them.

#### **1.2.1 The Linguistic Tensions**

The prior-linguistic knowledge of most learners of English among the APIs consists of Colloquial Arabic, their mother tongue; Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), the high variety of their diglossic language, and Hebrew. These languages, together with English, are the source of tensions at the linguistic, cultural and socio-political levels.

The APIs face three kinds of linguistic tensions:

### 1.2.1.1 The Tensions with English:

When the Arab students start to learn English, they face a completely foreign language that is quite different from what they are used to. The difference starts with learning a third writing system, after Hebrew and Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), which, though both are Semitic languages, they differ in the alphabet they use. While Arabic and Hebrew are written from right to left, the Roman alphabet uses the “wrong” direction in both reading and writing. Teachers of English at the elementary level are presented with errors typical to the early stages of solving directionality problems, such as the confusion between “b” and “d” and “p” and “q”.

Arabic and English differ phonetically, and each uses sounds that do not exist in the other language. A typical feature in the English of many Arabs is the confusion between the two labial /p/ and /b/ phonemes. This mixing is also apparent in their use of Hebrew, which differentiates the two. Other differences between the two languages are:

**Vowels:** Arabic has far fewer vowels and diphthongs than English and articulation is more stressed than English. There is also the use of glottal stops before initial vowels.

**Consonants:** The glottal stop is a phoneme in Arabic. /r/ is a voiced flap, very unlike the RP /r/. There are also problems in consonant clusters, intonation, rhythm and stress and junctures.

**Grammar:** Word order: Arabic is a language that makes full use of case marking (nominative, accusative and genitive) to denote grammatical relations between various components of utterances (Abboud, 1975; Alish, 1989). As a result, word order is flexible. In many cases there is no obvious canonical order since both SV-type and VS-type utterances are used equally in the language with different pragmatic outcomes. (Mansouri, 2000:29).

Arabic, similar to other Semitic languages, has two main tenses: Present and Past. There are certain forms that allow the use of an equivalent Past Perfect in English. The other tenses in English, especially the Present Perfect, do not have a similar structure in Arabic, and are hard to compare. Finally, there are no modals in Arabic.

While many of these differences get settled throughout the learning process, other, non-linguistic elements, surface at a later stage to create more challenges to the Arab learners. Cultural issues, which will be discussed later, are an example of such challenges.

#### **1.2.1.2 The Tensions with Hebrew**

Hebrew is the State's official first language, which is the *lingua franca* among the different Jewish groups, except for some ultra-orthodox Jews, who still refuse to use Modern Hebrew (Hallel and Spolsky, 1993).

Hebrew was revived as a normal spoken language in newly settled villages in Palestine between 1890 and 1910 as part of the ideologically driven Jewish return to

Palestine (Hallel and Spolsky, 1993). For the Arab pupils, Hebrew is taught as the third language. Instruction starts at the third grade and continues till the twelfth when the pupils sit for the Bagrut exam. The Hebrew language program has both instrumental and educational goals and it includes language and literature, even though the motifs of most literary pieces are Zionist in nature. The teachers of Hebrew in the Arab sector are Arab teacher-training colleges and university graduates.

Although Hebrew is a Semitic language like Arabic, it uses a different alphabet. Hebrew is considered a second language for the APIs. Unlike English, there are many cognates in the two languages, a matter that facilitates its acquisition. However, in the Modern Standard Hebrew, more and more of the English lexicon is penetrating Hebrew, exposing Hebrew speakers to English, while, at the same time, creating problems for the Arab pupils, who have now to deal with a language which is distancing itself from them.

On the whole, the status of Hebrew as a second language, and the degree of exposure to it in the daily lives of the Arabs, especially those living in mixed cities, or near Jewish cities, make the acquisition of the language rather easy. Hebrew is even spoken in the West Bank and Gaza, where its function is primarily instrumental (Spolsky and Shohamy, 1999:21).

Hebrew, at the linguistic level, creates relatively a minor tension for the APIs. The more serious tension lies at the cultural and socio-political levels as discussed later.

### **1.2.1.3 The Tensions with Arabic**

Arabic belongs to the Semitic-language family. Other languages in this family include Akkadian, Amharic, Aramaic, Assyrian, Hebrew, Maltese, Phoenician, Sabaean, Tigre and Ugaritic. From this group Amharic, Arabic, Aramaic, Hebrew, Maltese and Tigre are living languages. Hebrew was a language in a state of long “hibernation”, but was successfully revived as the official language of Israel. Aramaic is still spoken in two villages in Syria. Out of this group Maltese is an exception in two ways; it is written using a modified Latin alphabet and it is the one dialect of Arabic to have broken off and become its own language (Finlay, 1987:45).

Arabic is the language of instruction in the Arab and Druze sectors in Israel. Together, these two sectors constitute about 20% of the population in Israel. For the Arab pupils, Modern Standard Arabic is taught at schools and is considered their first foreign language. Colloquial Arabic is the mother tongue of all native speakers of Arabic.

Arabic is a diglossic language. However, unlike the Romance languages that eventually developed as independent languages from the Latin source, Arabic dialects are still treated as variants of the same language despite the extensive lexical and phonological differences exhibited both among the various regional varieties and between these regional varieties and the standard language. Ferguson identified the existence of such varieties in four languages namely, Arabic, Greek, Haitian Creole and Swiss German. Ferguson defines ‘diglossia’ as:

*a relatively stable language situation in which, in addition to the primary dialects of the language (which may include a standard or regional standards), there is a very divergent, highly codified (often grammatically more complex) superposed variety, the vehicle of a large and respected body of written literature, either of an earlier period or in another speech community, which is learned largely by formal education and is used for most written and formal spoken purposes but is not used by any sector of the community for ordinary conversation (Ferguson 1959b: 336).*

The relationship between these two distinct varieties is manifested in the superimposed 'High' variety, which corresponds to Modern Standard Arabic, and in the many 'Low' varieties that represent the different dialects of Arabic spoken across the Arab world. Arabic scholars have been engaged in a long debate on the relationship and the actual functions of both varieties, with one group (e.g. Hussein, 1954) believing that colloquial Arabic is a direct outcome of illiteracy and, therefore, should be replaced by Modern Standard Arabic in all forms of life. The second view recognises the presence of a wide rift between the two varieties and proposes two different approaches towards minimising such a rift. The first approach consists of a gradual move towards the use of Colloquial Arabic in all functions of life, whereas the second calls for the gradual modification of structural and semantic rules of the standard language so that it is possible to introduce certain colloquial features into the classical / standard language (Al-bunain 1987:207). However, much of the debate tends to focus on the problems presented by the diglossic nature of Arabic in a way that stresses the negative aspects of such a situation.

In the past, the prevailing attitude was that if there were to be an accommodation between the two varieties, it is the colloquial ones that need to be altered to bridge the gap between them and the standard language, not the other way around. However, this view did not solve the issue since the idea of using the colloquial varieties, though modified, for writing and for other formal functions was ill received in the Arab world. There were three main reasons for this (Al-bunain, 1987): (a) politically, regional dialects would only widen the differences between Arab countries, which would minimise the chances of a united Arabic nation; (b) educationally, there was a lack of previous experiences in the use of colloquial Arabic for educational purposes as well as the obvious economic cost of such an operation; and (c) religiously, as Standard Arabic is the language of the Holy Koran, its status should be elevated rather than down-graded.

Al-bunain (1987:209) reports that it is, in fact, reasonable to talk about the differences not only between the Standard language and the many colloquial varieties but also between these two and a third form of the language namely Classical Arabic. This claim prompted many scholars (e.g., Bakalla, 1980) to describe the Arabic language situation as triglossic rather than diglossic. However, using these terms does not really capture the nature of this complex socio-linguistic phenomenon. It has been shown that looking at such a situation along a continuum can reflect the language situation more accurately and may account for a vast array of language variation instances both across and within Arab countries. Bakalla (1980: 87) maintains that:

*“Diglossia normally involves a two-pole system, in which each pole stands on its own and does not contribute to the other in any significant way. But this is not the exact*



*linguistic picture of the Arabic-speaking world; Classical Arabic, as a living Standard Arabic, has the more prestigious place while dialect is looked down upon by the same educated Arabs who use it in day-to-day unofficial situations. But throughout the ages, there has been another variety of Arabic that comes between these two varieties (known as common or middle Arabic). This variety is based mainly on Classical Arabic but it is influenced by the dialectal environment to a lesser or greater degree.”*

The spoken forms of the Arabic language differ from the Classical (or Standard) Arabic in terms of pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary. The two forms of the languages live more or less side-by-side. One is strictly a spoken form while the other is literary. Additionally the dialects differ from each other in at least the same degree that each differs from Standard Arabic. On the other hand, Standard Arabic is a well-defined entity and is uniform throughout the Arabic speaking world with only minor variations in vocabulary. The grammar, syntax and much of the vocabulary has changed little since the Koran was written in the seventh century.

Even though spoken Arabic is not standardised, each dialect does have a definite set of grammar rules, which if not followed leads to unintelligible speech. It is incorrect to think of the existence of two separate languages, one classical and the other colloquial, rather it should be seen as a continuum, where the simple jargon sits at one end, and the most ornate, elevated, classical language, completely inflected for case and mood, sits at the other. Where a given person's speech sits on this continuum depends on a lot of factors, not least of which is how well the two speakers know each other.

Another very important factor in determining the formality of the language is the formality of the occasion. The full-blown classical form of the language is typically spoken when reading the news, or giving university lectures, television or radio interviews, speeches and sermons. In these situations, the use of language emphasises a formality that is recognised, thus emphasising implicitly the ‘ceremony’ or ‘ritual’ of the occasion.

Conversely, Colloquial Arabic is written only in cartoons and movie scripts; there is however one TV Channel, the Lebanese LBC, which broadcasts the news in a semi-colloquial language. Writers occasionally write dialogues using Colloquial Arabic in novels and short stories.

## **Summary**

The state of tension among the four languages in the Arab learners’ repertoires, Colloquial Arabic, MSA, Hebrew and English reflect the complexity of the linguistic situation in which these learners live. The distance between Arabic and English does not facilitate acquisition at entry level due to the differences discussed above. Even common lexical factors, such as cognates, do not exist except in very rare cases, and mostly in the Colloquial language. On the other hand, Hebrew is threatening the existence of the Colloquial language. At school, the Hebrew curriculum imposes Jewish and Zionist symbols on the Arab learners, while preventing the Arabs from studying their own heritage, although lately there have been some changes in the Arabic curriculum in that respect. In such a case, instead of having languages “living” together in a state of harmony, where a favourable learning environment might exist,

we have a state of mistrust between two languages: Arabic and Hebrew. This is far from being the convenient scenario for a third distant language to flourish naturally.

The present linguistic reality can be better appreciated when seen through the social and cultural aspects in the APIs' lives. The following section will discuss these aspects with reference to historical events when necessary.

### **1.2.2 Socio-cultural Tensions**

Since the establishment of Israel in 1948, the Arab population has gone through major changes in their life patterns. While some of these changes had positive economic outcomes on certain sectors, the cost for others has been devastating: these "positive" changes were accompanied by a loss of cultural and social values, thus changing the nature of the Arab society as a whole forever.

The changes that the Arabs underwent can be divided as follows:

#### **1.2.2.1 Demographic Changes**

Since the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, the number of the Arab population has increased dramatically. In 2002, it reached 1,232,900, including East Jerusalem, out of 6,518,800, the population of Israel; i.e. one of every five Israelis is an Arab (National Bureau of Statistics, 2002). It is important to state here that the only cause for the increase in the number of Arabs in Israel is due to the high birth rate among them. As for the Jews, the increase in their numbers is due to immigration,

especially after the huge Russian and Ethiopian immigration in the late 1990s, which brought over one million immigrants to the country.

#### **1.2.2.2 Social Changes-**

Among all the changes that occurred to the Arabs in Israel, the rise in their education stands out. The rate of those who cannot read or write dropped from 50% in the late sixties to 36.1% in 1970 and to 18.9% in 1980. (Alhaj, 1996). In the year 2000, 284.498 Arab pupils attended school (National Bureau of Statistics, 2000).

The contact with the Jewish community has been a determining factor in the modernisation process, and the Arabs started using Hebrew as a second language in their daily contacts. This has also led to exposing the Arabs to a variety of mass media communication systems in Arabic and Hebrew (Smootha, 1998). With these changes, there has been a transformation in the living patterns of the family: a clear trend of leaving the village to go to the cities and substituting the harsh farmer's life with 'easier' jobs. This has led to the disintegration of the typical Arab family. The patriarchal rule has weakened and the father has lost some of the authority he had had with his children especially that connected with his control over family land. The confiscation of lands has added to that process, and the number of houses built on agricultural lands has made the share of land for each child smaller. The social benefits given by the state to the elderly have made them more independent, and this too has led to the weakening of the relationship between children and parents (Alhaj, 1996).

Studies have shown that there is a strong trend among families, that their children should reach higher education (Marii and Benjamin, 1975). The rise in the standard of living, the exposure to the mass media and the effect of the Jews on them created new consumption patterns among the Arabs. A new consumer society has evolved, and women and children have become part of the decision-making process in the family (Alhaj, 1987).

While these changes are inevitable under the present circumstances of cross-cultural influences, the older generation, especially in the more traditional villages, cannot deal with them, thus adding to a wider rift between generations. A by-product of such encounters has been increasing numbers of drug users, especially among the young, in addition to the adaptation of foreign western life styles in the behaviour and dress codes. Had this change been one-directional, from the traditional to the modern, it would not have caused major tensions apart from the ordinary generation gap types. However, the strong opposite phenomenon of moving back towards Islam has attracted scores of families and individuals into following a life pattern that sees the West as evil. This polarisation has set deep roots among certain groups that have become fundamentalist in their view of any non-Moslem, including Christian Arabs, as being infidels. This, no doubt, has clear implications on the outcomes of their encounters with foreign cultures.

The constant contact with the Western-oriented Israeli society and culture exposes the Arabs to different values and codes of behaviour. When teenagers try to imitate and adopt these behaviours, tensions arise (Stendel, 1996). Moreover, these attitudes are taken into the classroom in general, and to the English class in particular, where the

culture presented in the textbooks is so alien to them. Amara (2000) sees the way English is taught in schools as an alienating factor that distances the pupils from their ethnic identity, thus leading to widening the draft between Jews and Arabs. Cultural confrontation and the definition of what is right and wrong can hardly be settled without long lasting effects on each group. What is seen as a reality in the western teens' lives, such as going out with a friend from the opposite sex, is still considered a taboo in many parts of the Arab society. This cultural gap, which for the least ignores the existence of others, and takes into account only the modern Western lifestyles of the Jews can hardly have a positive effect on the learning atmosphere. The same cultural gap and feelings of alienation can also be seen in the lifestyles and learning environment of the Orthodox Jews (Leshem, 2001).

The same tension with Western values in the English lesson can also be seen in the daily contact with Hebrew. As seen earlier, the linguistic tension with Hebrew is only a minor one, due to the similarities between both languages; it is here, in the cultural and social domains that this tension becomes apparent.

Many Arabs speak Hebrew as an instrumental language, especially in the Area of the Triangle, in the centre of the country, where workers travel and work in the nearby Jewish cities. The use of Hebrew has interfered with the Arabic colloquial language, and in that area specifically, it has become part of their daily linguistic repertoire (Amara, 1986).

Exposure to Hebrew has also become widespread due to the mass media in Israel. The state's TV is in Hebrew, although recently, an Arab channel has been launched.

However, the quality of the programs broadcast on the latter makes many Arabs watch the more serious Hebrew channels. The written media has many languages, but the educated among the Arabs read Hebrew newspapers (Hallel and Spolsky, 1993).

There is evidence that the APIs' motivation to learn Hebrew remains more instrumental than integrative. Abu Rabia (1993) carried out a research on Arab and Jewish pupils in Israel and found that the motive of the students in learning their target language was instrumental rather than integrative, regardless of the social context.

In Hebrew language classes, the APIs are required to study Jewish religious texts and Jewish Talmudic scholars. A Hebrew language teacher in an Arab high school described her pupils' reaction: "Some children see it as imposed on them. It makes it hard for the teacher to motivate students to study. It doesn't relate to Arab children as a whole... but because of the Bagrut we have to cover the material" (Coursen-Neff, 2001:3).

However, the contact with Hebrew is not unidirectional; Hebrew is also penetrating Arabic and affecting the colloquial language. In the mixed cities, where the motivation for using Hebrew has become integral as well, the proficiency in Hebrew has not come cheap; it has come at "the cost of Arabic maintenance" (Spolsky and Shohamy 1999:22).

## **Summary**

The cultural tension in the APIs' lives can be seen as a form of two contradictory forces that pull in different directions; on the one hand, and due to recent micro and macro events in the Arab world, there are those who oppose Western values as being alien to the traditional Arabic culture. On the other hand, there are others who believe that modernity cannot be expressed in the traditional norms of the Arab society. These two opposing groups bring their views and attitudes to the classroom where tensions arise whenever a cultural issue is discussed. The alienation is clearly seen in the Western values presented in the English lesson, but they also live in the Hebrew lesson as well, although the causes are different; while the former is mostly cultural, the latter has a national imprint in it.

The linguistic and cultural tensions in the APIs lives are socio-politically bound; nowhere could these tensions be felt more than in this domain.



### **1.2.3 Socio-political Tensions**

The APIs live in a political reality that does not make their lives easy: on the one hand, there is the identity problem, which changes according to the political situation in the area. On the other hand, the Arabs are treated as second-class citizens and this reflects on their daily life patterns, including their education. Of all the factors that affect the APIs, this is probably the most serious.

The following sections will explore this complex reality, which is yet another source of tension.

#### **1.2.3.1 The National Identity of the Arab Minority**

Whether from the theoretical or historical points of view, the Arabs in Israel are part of the Arab Palestinian nation. The term “Israeli Arabs” was created with the creation of the Palestinian refugees’ problem, which in itself was the by-product of the establishment of the State of Israel over the ruins of the Palestinian nation (Bishara, 1993). According to this, the viewpoint from which the history of the Palestinians outside Israel was written, it is impossible to point to a nation or a national group as being “Israeli Arabs”. The redefinition of their existence as Arabs in Israel is linked to the redefinition and recreation of the Palestinian cause. What distinguishes these Palestinian Arabs inside Israel from other Palestinians, is that their existence has been on the move towards the margins of the Israeli society; they are a minority that lives inside the Jewish State, as citizens of a country which they did not choose and the country itself does not want them to be its citizens; they live in a state which is not

theirs. Moreover, Israel declares itself as a state for many of those who are not its citizens - the Jews at the Diaspora. In the case of Israel, not only is religion not separated from the state; religion is not separated from the nationality either. It is a state with a national religion that deals with the question “who is a Jew?” and not “who is an Israeli?”

In such a situation, it is no wonder that integration in the country, though aspired to many, has become almost impossible to realise. The Palestinians in Israel see themselves as being unwanted, and being a part of the wider Palestinian people, they stand by their demand of self-determination, which should culminate in the establishment of the Palestinian state. In October 2000, when the latest Intifadah (uprising) erupted in the occupied territories, the Arab minority took to the streets in the largest demonstrations the country had seen since Land Day, 30-3-1976, when 6 Arab citizens were killed. During these demonstrations, thirteen Arabs were killed and scores were wounded when the police opened fire at them. This was another turning point in the relations between the two peoples, and today, almost five years after the events, the rift between the Arab citizens and the Jews is still widening.

At a time when the Palestinian cause is still far from being resolved, and when violence has become a common headline in the daily news, it is not surprising that this issue of self-identity is still unstable. Although the Arab pupils still go to school and try to lead a normal life, it is very difficult for them to do so successfully when, in reality, they still do not know who they are. The volatile political situation in the region creates a sense of instability, which accompanies them wherever they go. The never-ending shifts in the definition of their self-identity do not help stability either.

The APIs, being part of the larger Arab population, follow the main political trends in the country and are affected by them.

### **1.2.3.2 The Process of Politicisation**

The Arab population in Israel went through a wide process of politicisation, accompanied by changes in behaviour patterns, from a local traditional identity, into one based on the need to become part of the national collective, and this was done under a new evolving educated leadership (Rouhana, 1989).

At the beginning of the seventies, a wave of national awakening hit the Arab population. Among the factors that led to it was renewing the relations with the Arabs in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, after the 1967 War. The international recognition of the PLO and the results of the Yom Kippur War led to the restoration of their national dignity, which was called by some researchers the 'Palestinisation process' (Smootha, 1990). However, this process was accompanied by a desire from certain Arabs to integrate into Israeli society, after having realised that their future was strongly linked to that of the country, and they demanded that they become part of the policy makers (Alhaj, 1996). This is true in spite of the fact that there have always been Arab parties, and Arabs were given the right to vote. However, these parties were never independent and acted under the umbrella of major Jewish parties, such as the Labour Party.

In the 1996 elections, and due to the changes in the election system, where it became possible to vote for the prime minister separately from the party he / she belonged to,

the number of Arabs who voted for the Arab parties increased dramatically, leading to more Arab parliament members than ever before.

Today, the Arabs are represented by 10 Members of Parliament, but they are still divided into parties. However, when an Arab local crisis arises, the Arabs act, such as during the events of October 2000, when the Arab population almost entirely boycotted the elections that followed, thus contributing to the defeat of Prime Minister Barak. There is a clear trend among the Arabs today that their priority should be gaining equal rights, and their fight for them should be in Parliament, even in the rather illogical act of boycotting elections. For the Arabs, this is the same as taking part in the elections and saying no.

The present political situation finds the Arabs in a state where they are demanding to be part of Israel, as an ethnic minority, provided that it becomes a state for all its citizens, rather than a Jewish state. This unrealistic claim from the Jewish viewpoint means that the state should relinquish all its Jewish symbols in order to accommodate a more democratic attitude towards its non-Jewish citizens. This is not easy to achieve, since any such change will lead to an upheaval in the reality of what it means to have a Jewish state.

The addition of the political factor to the picture puts the APIs in a state of instability both at the cultural, social and political levels. Amara (1999:87) summarises the social and political changes among the Palestinians in Israel thus:

1. Accelerated process of modernisation, with Israel forming an important part, including rise in the standard of living.

2. Switch from agriculture to labouring in Israel Jewish enterprises, mainly as “blue collar”, and to a lesser degree as independent entrepreneurs.
3. Parallel processes of ‘Israelisation’ and ‘Palestinisation’, in which the spiritual link with the Palestinians was strengthened.
4. The strengthening of their ambition to civilian equality and to Arab-Jewish coexistence in Israel.
5. A higher level of organisation and political assertion.
6. They have been undergoing a process of Islamisation since the 1980s, returning to religion, leading to the strengthening of the Islamic fundamentalist movements in Israel.

An analysis of the above reveals the opposite forces that are working on the entity of the APIs. The modernity and higher standard of living that the Palestinians have achieved living in Israel is contrasted with a contradictory process of both ‘Israelisation’ and ‘Palestinisation’, coupled with political assertion and Islamisation. It is hard to imagine a ‘better’ recipe for chaos than this!

The APIs face all of the above in their daily lives inside and outside school. In addition, they have one more factor to deal with in this micro cosmos; the Ministry of Education and the National Curriculum. The Education Minister, Limor Livnat, stated that she would like to see that “there is not a single child in Israel who doesn’t learn the basics of Jewish and Zionist knowledge and values” (The Jerusalem Post, 2001). Although she later explained that she was not referring to the Arab children in Israel, it is clear who gets the priority in the mind of the top education policy-maker.

In the following section I will discuss the role the Ministry of Education plays in the school lives of the APIs.

### **1.2.3.3 The Ministry of Education**

The Ministry of Education supervises 2,500 vocational, agricultural, and comprehensive schools. These schools are divided into 2000 Jewish schools, where Hebrew is the language of instruction, and the rest are non-Jewish schools, where Arabic is the language of instruction. The latter part includes Arab, Druze and Circassian schools.

The Ministry of Education has two independent systems for non-Jewish children: one for the Arabs, and the other for the Druze. The Bedouin schools in the North are under the national Jewish state supervision system, and those in the South are under the Arab supervision system. As we will see later, this division between northern and southern Bedouins has had a significant impact on the education levels of both groups, leading to a complete seclusion of those who live in the south.

The implications of having independent systems for each sector in the country did not help much in terms of equal opportunities for all. The allocation of budgets, among other factors, discriminated against the Arabs in general, and the Bedouin sector in particular. Chart 1 describes the situation of the APIs today in relation to the Jewish pupils. The numbers speak for themselves (Coursen-Neff, 2001: Appendix B).

Chart I

Numerical Comparison of Jewish and Arab Education in Israel

	Jews	Arabs
Enrolled students (2000-2001) (total number)	77.8% (1,250,000)	22.2% (356,000)
Allocation of teaching hours (1999-2000) (average weekly teaching hours/student)	81.6% (1.84)	18.4% (1.5 1)
<b>Schools</b>		
Average pupils/class (1998-1999)	26	30
Average children/teacher (1999-2000)	15.5	18.7
Distribution of classrooms (1998) (total number)	80.5% (34,747)	19.5% (8,423)
Schools with libraries (1994-1996)	80.7%	64.4%
Schools with educational counselling (1994-96)	78.7%	36.2%
Schools with psychological counselling (1994-1996)	83.2%	40.0%
Schools with counselling by a social worker(94-1 worker (1994- I 996)	64.4%	53.7%
Schools with truant officers (1994-1996)	65.1%	53.7%
<b>Teachers</b>		
Teachers with an academic degree (1997-1998)	59.5%	39.7%
Teachers rated "not qualified"	4.1%	7.9%
Primary schools with voluntary in-service training (1994-1995)	87.9%	60.1%
Primary schools with no programs to improve teaching (1994-1995)	6.4%	21.5%
<b>Kindergarten (ages 3-5)</b>		
Kindergarten attendance (private, municipal, and state) (1998-1999)		
age 3	89.3%	22.5%
age 4	92.9%	33.5%
age 5	94.0%	80.7%
Pupils/teaching staff: government kindergartens (1999-2000)	19.8	39.3
<b>Special Education</b>		
Distribution of teaching hours (total)(1999-2000)	85.9%	14.1%
Teaching hours for integration (mainstreaming)(98-99)	91.6%	8.4%
Special education kindergartens (1998-1999)	484 (91.5%)	45 (8.5%)
Integrated kindergartens (1998-1999)	61 (100%)	0 (0%)
Special education schools (excluding kindergartens) (1998-1999)	222 (83.5%)	44 (16.5%)
Students in primary schools for "handicapped children" (1999-2000)	13,165 (85.4%)	2,253 (14.6%)
<b>Performance</b>		
Drop-out rates by age seventeen (1998-1999)	10.4%	31.7%
<i>Bagrut</i> pass rate among all seventeen-year-olds(99-2000)	45.6%	27.5%
<i>Bagrut</i> pass rate among examinees	63.0%	43.4%
Qualification rate for university admission among all seventeen-year-olds (1999-2000)	40.4%	18.4%
University applicants who were rejected (1998-1999)	16.7%	44.7%
University students studying for first (undergraduate) degree (1998-1999)	91.3%	8.7%
University first degree recipients (1998-1999)	94.3%	5.7%

The situation in 2001, according to the National Bureau of Statistics, reflects a certain degree of improvement in the Arab sector in terms of the numbers who sat for the Bagrut exams, and the number of those who passed. Nevertheless, the gap between the two sectors is still very wide.

In 2001, the percentage of seventeen-year-olds who attended school among the age group was 81% Jews, 66% Arabs, and 63% Bedouins, which is the highest rate achieved compared to the year before (48% Bedouins). The pass rate among examinees was 47% in the Jewish sector, 33% in the Arab sector and 28% in the Bedouin sector. The Bedouin sector had the highest rate of Bagrut certificates (58%) with the minimum required points.

This gap between the Jews and Arabs is one of the reasons why the Arabs are not likely to feel full citizens of Israel. The implications of this gap mean that the Arab students will be prevented from pursuing their higher academic studies in the Israeli universities.

The Israeli government has, to a certain extent, acknowledged that its Arab education system is inferior to its Jewish education system. In a report by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2001:307), the following statement appears:

*“There is a great deal of variance in the resources allocated to the education in the Arab versus the Jewish sector. These discrepancies are reflected in various aspects of education in the Arab sector, such as physical infrastructure, the average number of*



*students per class, the number of enrichment hours, the extent of support services, and the level of education of professional staff.”*

The report does not relate to the source of funding for the Jewish sector, part of which comes from international Jewish organizations, a phenomenon that does not exist at the Arab sector.

Recently, new statistics have been published regarding the gap between Arab and Jewish pupils. According to Ha'aretz Newspaper (6/1/2005), the percentage of Jewish pupils among the age group of 18 who are eligible for the Bagrut certificate is 53%, compared to 33% among the Arabs. The expenditure of the government, on average, on each Jewish pupil is 4935 New Israeli Shekels (around £ 600), compared to 862 NIS (£ 110) on the Arabs. In addition, the gap between the Jewish and Arab pupils in the Psychometric exam (university entrance exam) is 128 points. The dropout rate among the Arabs is 12%, compared to 6% among the Jews. Furthermore, there is a lack of 4000 teaching positions and 1,700 classrooms in the Arab sector. However, there is a bright side to this news item, that the position of the Shabaq (Internal Security Services) person in the Ministry of Education, who had a say on whom to appoint as a head-teacher, or a teacher, in the Arab sector, has been relocated. From now on, this person will work from outside the Ministry of Education; his position will not be transparent anymore and he will work under a different office, since mixing education and security is not politically correct anymore.

Another aspect that hurts not only the Arab sector, but also the whole nature of what a multi-cultural society means, is the language policy in Israel. In a country where there

is a mosaic of cultures and languages, one would expect to see the state nourish this heritage, instead of trying to obscure its uniqueness through the melting pot. The insistence on engraving the Jewish nature on every aspect of Israeli life has not come without a cost, this time for the Jews as well, as will be seen in the following section.

#### **1.2.3.4 Language Situation in Israel**

The state of Israel can be seen as a multicultural society, which, in spite of its Jewish nature, has a variety of languages due to the different ethnic groups living in it. In addition to the Arabs living in the country, the numerous waves of immigrations have brought a myriad of languages and cultures. Immigrants arrived from many Arab countries, including Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Yemen. They came from Eastern Europe, Greece and Iran. Many arrived from English speaking countries, from North America, Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand. And in the last few years, a big wave arrived from Ethiopia and the former USSR.

It is worth mentioning that the Russian immigration, in addition to its huge numbers, came at a time when the appreciation of foreign languages and cultures in the Jewish state had reached a degree of maturity, and thus Russian was supported and promoted, unlike the other languages that were ‘sacrificed’ for the sake of Hebrew. The dominance of the Russian immigration, including its wide representation in the Israeli Parliament, has also contributed to the present status of that language. The state of the various languages in Israel today can be categorised as follows (Spolsky and Shohamy, 1999):

**Arabic:** although the second official language, it is mostly spoken by the Arabs in Israel, with only a few Jews from the first generation of immigrants who had arrived from Arab-speaking countries. As mentioned earlier, immigrants were not encouraged to use Arabic in Israel, and for many it was a language with a low status, being the language of the enemy.

**English:** is the official foreign language to be taught at school. In addition to the native English-speaking immigrants, the language is considered an asset, given its global status as the *lingua franca* of the world.

**Russian:** is still maintained and used on a daily basis among the Russian immigrants. There are Russian newspapers and magazines published in the country, in addition to Radio and TV programs.

**French:** is still taught in a number of schools as a second foreign language. In the past it used to be the language of instruction in schools that were run by private Christian schools in the Arab sector. Today, more than 30,000 pupils learn French on a regular basis (Hallel and Spolsky, 1993).

**Other languages:** Spanish is gaining popularity due to the soap operas on TV. The Ministry of Education reports that scores of pupils are filling up the courses offered for this language (Yediot Achronot, 16/3/02). Amharic, Yiddish, Ladino, Circassian and other minority languages are still used in some communities, but are not included in the foreign-language policy of the Ministry of Education.

#### **1.2.3.4.1 Arabic as a Second Language for Jews**

The state of maturity that caught the Russian immigration waves and preserved their language was the outcome of other inner tensions in the language policy regarding other languages as well. Arabic for the Jews, which can provide a good perspective on the previously discussed subject of Hebrew among the Arabs, is one example of how socio-politics plays a role in the formation of the general policy of the Ministry of Education.

The teaching and learning of Arabic in Jewish schools in Israel has been a source of controversy. Much debate has focused on whether to teach spoken or Standard Arabic, or which spoken variety to begin with and what grade (Hallel and Spolsky, 1993). Other issues of concern have been the attitudes of various groups to learning the language (Kraemer, 1990), the appropriate means of teacher training, and whether or not all pupils should learn the language (Yonai, 1992:6).

In 1988, the Ministry of Education decided to make Arabic a compulsory subject in seventh to twelfth grades. In 1992, Modern Standard Arabic was given priority to be taught, with spoken Arabic as an option. Arab and Islamic history are taught in the two highest grades (Yonai, 1992:186-190).

Today, there are about 650 full-time positions for teachers of Arabic in Jewish schools, and are filled by about 1,000 individuals. Generally, spoken Arabic is taught in the primary schools by teachers who do not know the other variety of Arabic, and

Standard Arabic is taught in high schools by university graduates who are not fluent speakers of the language (Hallel and Spolsky, 1993).

The learning of Arabic in the Jewish schools is purely instrumental, being a requirement for graduating. However, unlike Hebrew for Arabs, which is a necessity for work and daily contact, the Jews do not need to speak Arabic at all. Even the language they learn is at a level that prevents them from using it for communication.

The situation at the academic level is, however, more positive; the contribution of the Jewish Iraqi immigration to the Palestinian and Arabic literature, for example, has been monumental. Many translations of famous Arab writers, such as Egyptian Noble prize winner Naguib Mahfouz, have been introduced to the Jewish readers thanks to their contribution (For a discussion on the role translation has had on the Israeli arena, see Amit-Kochavi (2004). This interaction between Jews and the “forbidden language” needed some time to mature. Today, one can be more optimistic that once the political tensions are over, there is a big hope that Arabic will be rediscovered as a language with its own culture and heritage, away from the political burden it holds on its users from both sides, Jews and Arabs.

#### **1.2.3.4.2 English for the Arabs**

Since English is the core of this research, it is important to understand the importance of English for the APIs and the learning environment in which the learning process takes place.

English has been the only compulsory first language in Israeli schools since the 1969 reform (Ben-Rafael *et al.*, 1989:6). The Ministry of Education (1988:5-6) recognises English as “the principal means of international communication today... , a World Language,” and aims to teach a practical communicative command of the language. All schools follow a common curriculum, although it is worthwhile researching if the choice of a common curriculum is convenient in a multicultural society. English, at the 4-point intermediate level, is a pre-requirement by all universities; without English the academic future of all students is blocked. However, some regional colleges have provided alternatives to universities, by allowing students with 3-point Bagrut in English, they still require them to achieve a certain level of English before they proceed.

The 4-point Bagrut exam consists of a written and an oral part. The oral examination has four parts: 1) Personal Interview held by an external examiner. 2) Extended Role Play, also held by the external examiner. 3) Literature - testing short stories, poems and essays, which the students have learned in grades 11 and 12. 4) Testing the ‘Reading File’ which consists of six simplified novels. The pupils choose one of several written tasks and write about it in the file, but they discuss the stories orally.

As for the written test, it consists of three major parts: 1) Three Unseen Passages of various lengths and degree of complexity. One of the passages is to be answered in the mother tongue. 2) Cloze- A multiple-choice cloze where various grammatical and lexical aspects are tested. 3) Written Task, of about 100 words on a different genre every year.

The English Bagrut exam is a representation of the rationale behind the English curriculum. The main aim of the learner is to pass this exam, regardless of the degree of English proficiency this learner has acquired. Through personal communications with other colleagues, and through my experience as an English teacher in high school, and one who prepares for the exams and marks them, I can say, with a high degree of confidence that this rush for the Bagrut has come at a cost of the level of English in the Arab sector. No means was spared in this frenzy for the mark, including unethical considerations. The English Bagrut exam, as stated by the Chief Inspector for English, Judy Steiner, in a meeting with the Bagrut markers in Summer 2001, has more evidence of cheating than other subjects. This remark, which was supposed to stress the integrity of the marking process, is an indicator of what is done at schools in order to pass the English exam. This is hardly a medal of honour to the reported increasing success rate in the subject.

However, there is hope in the new English curriculum, which has become mandatory for the twelve graders in 2004. This curriculum marginalises the role of the Bagrut test and advocates the use of alternative assessment tools, such as project work, during the different stages of learning the language. However, here too, the possibility of cheating exists, but not at the same scale. The philosophy behind this approach is that teachers should worry about teaching the language according to the new curriculum, and the pupils will be ready for the test when it comes. Not seeing too much difference in the format of the new suggested Bagrut exam makes many teachers sceptical of the suggested technique.

### **1.2.4 The English Curriculum**

The English Curriculum has seen a revolution in its latest shape; the rationale behind it makes the approach to learning and teaching English benefit from the latest theories and expertise of other countries that teach English as a foreign language.

#### **2.4.1 The Old Curriculum:**

The previous curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2002) was written with the assumption that the vast majority of Israeli pupils had their earliest contact with English in their fourth or fifth grade classes, and that their main exposure to the language was at school. It was therefore feasible and appropriate to write a curriculum that included a list of the structural items (grammar and vocabulary) that would provide pupils with a basic control of the language.

The old curriculum dealt with the four skills of language: listening, speaking, reading and writing. In terms of grammar and vocabulary, each grade was provided with a set of grammar rules and a vocabulary list that were to be covered in the syllabus. There was no logical explanation to why a certain rule was introduced at a certain stage, and many rules were reintroduced at later stages as well.

As far as the Arab pupils were concerned, the curriculum had only the Jewish pupils in mind when it was formulated. Textbooks were written by the Jews and for the Jews. In the 80s, all Arab pupils used a Ministry of Education approved series called “English for Speakers of Hebrew”. These and other later textbooks talked only about



Jewish holidays, and when Arabs were mentioned in these books, it was only in a stereotypical form. Even glossaries that were translated into Arabic had numerous errors in them. To conclude, the subject matter of these books had very little appeal to the Arabs. Even today, due to the political situation, not many 12 graders are eager to have their first English lesson dealing with the Memoirs of Yitzhak Rabin. When you feel alienated from the textbook you are using, it becomes very difficult to talk about motivation.

#### **1.2.4.2- The New Curriculum**

The need for a new curriculum is clearly expressed in its rationale, as it appears in the final version of the English Curriculum (2002:9-10) (Appendix 6).

There is little doubt that the aim of this curriculum is to give English its due status and to provide the pupils and teachers with better learning and teaching environments. However, when it comes to the Arab pupils, and teachers, they are both at a disadvantageous starting point; Arab pupils are not exposed to English the way their Jewish counterparts are; and many, though a similar situation exists among the Jewish sector, do not have the 'luxury' of having a computer at home, let alone being connected to the Internet. Many schools do not have a proper "English Room" for its pupils and teachers. Libraries still lack English books, let alone audio-visual materials. Very few schools have access to the Internet, and only a small number of them use the Internet as a teaching medium. Almost all Arab teachers are native speakers of Arabic, while at least 40% of Jewish teachers of English are native speakers of the language. Medgyes (1992) indicates that there are significant

differences between native and non-native English teachers in terms of their teaching practices. These differences can be attributed to their diverged language backgrounds. However, teacher's effectiveness does not hinge upon whether they are native or not.

Although it is still too early to judge the new curriculum, a lot has to be done before it can be implemented equally in both sectors. As stated earlier in this study, the implementation of one curriculum in a multi-cultural society is controversial; it is not easy to create one with all the needs for the different groups in mind. Some groups will eventually pay a high price for such mini-globalisation attempts.

## **Summary- The Arab Pupils in Israel**

The political and social environments of the Arab pupils in Israel do not play a beneficial role when it comes to providing a supportive learning environment. The Arab pupils in Israel live in a country that is not theirs and are still looking for a way to find their true self-identity. The status of English for them cannot be more important, but at the same time it is becoming more and more difficult for them to keep up with the rapid change in that status. Although the number of pupils who achieve the Bagrut certificate has been on the rise lately, English still constitutes a major hurdle in their academic achievement. The diglossic state of Arabic has not played a positive role in the definition of a stable mother tongue either, and the competition that Hebrew is having with Arabic has added to the instability of the learning system in Israel. There are those who claim (Atallah, 2002) that there exists a political conspiracy to weaken the Arabic language, as one of the multi-fronts of the war between the Jews and the Arabs inside Israel, and that describing the phenomenon of the disintegrating of Arabic as socio-linguistic, is naïve. One can see the weakening of Arabic as an act of negating the other's culture in a hegemonic conflict, but labelling this as a conspiracy theory is unsubstantiated.

The following chapter discusses the theoretical perspectives that set the ground for the research carried out in this thesis.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **Theoretical Perspectives**

This chapter discusses the main SLA theories related to the research. The discussion moves from the general to the particular, where the directly relevant theories and models are looked into in details, regarding the three levels of exploring the IL: the linguistic, cultural and socio-political. The first level deals with theories of IL, the role of prior linguistic knowledge and cross-linguistic influences. The second level outlines the inseparability of language and culture, thus setting the scene for the third level, that of the influence of socio-political factors on learner language.

The chapter ends by describing the conceptual framework that guides the research and assigns its boundaries.

## **Second Language Acquisition Theories**

### **Introduction**

Any practitioner who tries to study Second Language Acquisition (SLA) will be dazzled by the myriad of theories and models that have been competing for consideration as being more thorough and more representative of the complex issue of language-learning in general. Long (2000) suggests that there are more than 60 such theories and models.

The acceptance of a certain theory that relates L2 to the existing prior knowledge of L1 is not an easy concept to follow, due to the huge numbers of theories in the field. However, the term acceptance, as used here, simply means that, among the myriad of models suggested, this one in particular seems to satisfy the way a person perceives what a language theory is, which is, in our case, through a practitioner's view as a language teacher. This view also takes into account the fact that there is clear application of L2 theories into L2 pedagogy, thus taking Spolsky's note that 'we have a traditional concern to consider not just the explanatory power of a theory but also its relevance to second language pedagogy' (1990:610). However, this relevance to language pedagogy is not clear-cut, and views vary between a complete rejection of the application, as stated by Tarone et al. (1976), to giving the green light to a full application of any theory grounded in 'hard evidence about what works', as Long's (1990) invitation states, cited in Ellis (1994:687). However, as it is often the case with opposing theories, the truth lies somewhere in between. The author's position is that teachers should be exposed to SLA research and should be encouraged to try what

works, provided that they have the knowledge of how to select what is relevant to the local specificity of their pupils, within the frame the curriculum sets on them. Reading about SLA research gives the teacher an explanation of at least why a certain theory has been applied in the rationale behind the curriculum. Understanding what goes on in the theoretical side helps the teacher to better appreciate the results of their teaching, especially when it comes to changing the curriculum every few years, in accordance with new theories or models that become popular at the time of change.

### **Section I Dichotomy of SLA theories**

Theories of language acquisition in general, whether L1 or L2, have dealt with the process of acquisition from a dichotomous approach: many aspects of these theories were either...or. When theories and models suggested a multi-layer approach, they too depended on an expansion of the same previous binary system: the five stages of initial L2 learning (White, 2000) stems from the duality of L1 and UG; Krashen (1981) differentiates between acquisition and learning; Schumann's (1978) Acculturation Model discusses internal vs. external factors; the theories and models of language acquisition are full of dichotomous terms: use and usage (Widdowson, 1978); comprehensible input (Krashen, 1982) and output (Swain, 1985) ; competence and performance (Chomsky, 1965); teaching and learning, etc. What about a third dimension in these theories? Is there not anything between 'in' and 'out'? Is there not a third reality between learning 'inside' and 'outside' the classroom? Is there not a third state between teaching and learning; a state where the teacher does not teach, but the learner manages somehow to produce something new without having learnt it? Not wanting to take the issue to philosophical discussions, as stated before, the truth,

which is ever changing, is always somewhere in between the two poles. This is the basis for finding certain theories more applicable than others in a person's epistemological paradigm, and an argument for an eclectic approach to teaching.

### **2.1.1 The L1 vs. UG Access Dichotomy**

SLA theories can be looked at in terms of the way they relate the process of learning a second language to the L1. Generally speaking, there are two approaches to the field: L1=L2, or L1  $\neq$  (not equal to) L2. Between these two extremes there lie different combinations of similar processes that occur in both L1 acquisition and L2 learning. White (2000:130) identifies five different perspectives on how L2 acquisition can start, all depending on the extent of presumed involvement of the L1 grammar (full transfer, partial transfer or no transfer) and the extent to which Universal Grammar (UG) constrains Interlanguage representations:

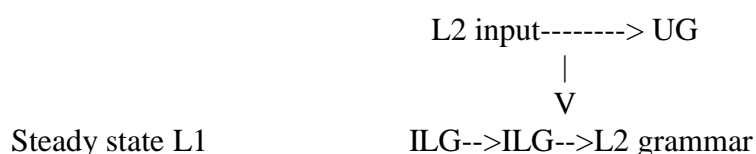
The first view is that of full transfer of L1 and partial access to UG. This is the position that the L1 grammar constitutes the learner's representation of the L2 and is used to analyse the L2 input; in other words, the L2 initial state consists of the L1 final state<sup>3</sup>. (Schwartz and Spouse, 1996).

*L2 input ---> steady state L1 grammar--->ILG--->ILG--->steady state ILG*

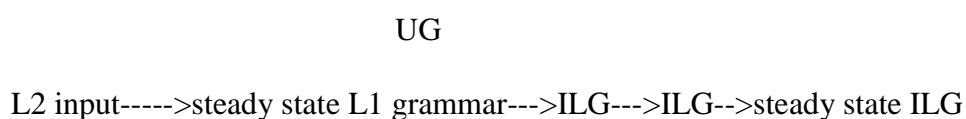
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<sup>3</sup> The steady state of L1 grammar in our case is not well defined since the diglossic state of Arabic does not allow for a clear-cut definition of what kind of grammar exists in the learner's mind: is it the acquired Low Variety, the learned High Variety, or a mixture of the two? Since learning English as a foreign language takes place parallel to the learning of the High Variety of Arabic, in addition to Hebrew, the notion of the final state of L1 in this view is fuzzy.

The second view is that of no transfer of L1 and full access to UG. According to this view, L2 grammar is acquired on the basis of UG principles and parameters interacting directly with L2 input; the L1 final state does not constitute the L2 learner's grammar or mental representation at any stage (Epstein, Flynn and Martohardjono, 1996, 1998).



The third view consists of full transfer of L1 and full access to UG. In this case, L1 and L2 acquisition differ with respect to their starting point, but are similar with respect to involvement of UG. This view shares characteristics of the two previously-discussed approaches.



Here, the learner first refers to the L1 grammar, but if this grammar is unable to accommodate the L2 input, the learner can turn to UG options, including new parameter settings, functional categories and feature values, in order to arrive at an analysis more appropriate to the L2 input.

The case of having different L1s, as stated in the previous footnote, makes parameter setting an option only when there are differences between English and the other grammars, which is a clear case due to the distance of Arabic and Hebrew from English. At the same time, full access to these grammars might prevent learners from



converging on the L2 grammar in order to notice relevant properties of the L2. Such a restriction may lead to fossilisation (Selinker, 1972).

The fourth view is that of partial transfer of L1 and full access to UG. This view states that the L2 initial state draws on properties of both the L1 and UG concurrently. However, the assumption of what is found in initial L2 grammar is controversial. Vainikka and Young-Scholten (1994, 1996a, 1996b) propose that only L1 lexical categories are found in initial L2 grammar. Functional categories are not transferred.

In this respect, L2 learners are like L1 acquirers, who are also assumed, on the weak continuity hypothesis, to lack functional categories initially (Clashen, Eisenbasis and Vainikka, 1994). In response to L2 input, learners gradually project functional categories, drawing on the full inventory in UG, just as L1 acquirers are assumed to do. In principle, L2 learners should converge on the L2 grammar. This view, in comparison to the prior one, should make fossilisation less probable due to the noticing of relevant properties of the L2.

The fifth and last view is that of partial transfer of the L1 and partial access to the UG. This view is shared by the recent work of Eubank, Beck and Aboutaj (1997) and Eubank, Bischof, Huffstutler, Leek and West (1997). For them, L2 grammar is permanently impaired in a local domain with a range of consequences not found in native-speakers' grammars, therefore, ultimate attainment is necessarily non-native like. This is the view that I find representative of my beliefs concerning language acquisition; it gives a role to L1, or prior linguistic knowledge in the case of more than one language, but at the same time it explains why wild grammars are not

produced. Furthermore, the ultimate-attainment issue means that the learner will never become a native speaker. This is taken more as an objective realisation of the learning process, not a 'missed' opportunity; the frustration of failing to become a native speaker of the language disappears and is replaced by a more realistic goal of becoming a proficient user of the language.

White (2000:130-157) discusses certain problems in this approach as to what, for example, counts as evidence for data at the initial state; whether UG places limitations on the acquisition process itself or on the form of the grammar, as some researchers see it (Borer, 1996; Carroll, 1996; Gregg, 1996). The term "access" should therefore be replaced by "restriction", which is the real role of UG (Dekydtspotter, Sprouse and Anderson, 1998).

Similar problems are raised regarding transfer. Research on developmental stages suggests that L2 learners with different mother tongues behave differently with respect to certain properties (White, 1985; Vainikka and Young-Scholten, 1996b; Hawkins and Chan, 1997). In contrast, other work on developing Interlanguage grammars has claimed similarities between learners of different L1s and between L1 and L2 acquisition. Epstein et al. (1996, 1998) and Flynn (1996) appear to believe that successful acquisition of an L2 property that is not exemplified in the L1 is sufficient to demonstrate lack of L1 involvement in the Interlanguage representation.

White's view is that, as far as UG availability is concerned, the approaches described above cannot be fully assessed without considering Interlanguage grammars beyond the initial state, therefore it is very difficult to deal with the developmental stage

without investigating the final state (ultimate attainment) of the L2 learner. So, while in L1 acquisition the working assumption is that all acquirers of the same language or dialect achieve essentially the same end state, L2 learners end up with different grammars due to fossilisation. Second language learners starting with different L1 grammars as the initial state will not in fact be taking the same developmental path. This view stands in clear accordance with the 'fuzzy' state of the initial grammars present in L1, which, in addition to the fuzziness in the nature of these grammars and what they consist of, there is no evidence to indicate that the learners are starting at the same initial state of L1. This cannot be more evident than in the case of a diglossic language as explained earlier. I do not think a theory that ignores the role of L1 in the acquisition of a second language can be advanced without controversy.

The role of prior linguistic knowledge goes beyond the fact that the learner already knows another language, or languages. The knowledge accumulated in the learner is not the equivalent to that of a monolingual multiplied by the languages they know. In this case, one plus one is greater than two. Cook (1991, 1992) describes the "distinct compound state of mind" that a bilingual speaker has; the multi-competence framework in which they work.

Grosjean (1998:175) defines a bilingual speaker as being "a specific speaker-hearer with a unique- but nevertheless complete- linguistic system. The competencies of this speaker-hearer are developed to the extent required by his or her needs and those of the environment."

What this framework addresses is that being multilingual, even with incomplete systems, is not to be compared to the high status sometimes given to native speakers. In the case of English, being the *lingua franca* of the world today, there are more non-native speakers of English than native speakers. English has become more than one well-defined, protected language. The linguistic repertoires of many speakers of English include a variety of ‘Englishness’, which can be seen as an attempt to address the multilingual, multicultural societies in which we live. Internal issues of English-speaking countries of what constitutes Standard English are of little relevance to the learner of English as a foreign language. Being a speaker of English is a prestigious matter, but being bilingual, or yet multilingual, is much more than that; it is simply being multi-skilled.

### **2.1.2 The Acquisition vs. Learning Dichotomy**

Krashen (1981) proposed that learners had two processes available when it comes to learning a second language: the first involves the re-use of the same processes that had operated in acquiring the first language; the second has to do with school instruction and language study. The former he termed ‘acquisition’, the latter ‘learning’. Krashen proposed a five-point theory of second language acquisition, the Monitor Theory, which had great influence on researchers and teachers alike. The five points were:

1. *Both learning and acquisition play a part.*
2. *The learning process monitors the output of the acquisition process.*

3. *There is a natural hierarchy for all learners of any language as a second language.*
4. *Acquisition of new elements of the language depends on the availability of suitable models in the input at the right time in the learner's history of exposure to the language.*
5. *How much input becomes intake depends on certain emotional factors (referred to as the Affective Filter).*

Krashen's theory was exclusively concerned with grammar, not even the whole grammar, but rather part of it. Vocabulary and sociolinguistic competence were not considered, nor was the ability to produce language. This was one more attempt to form a theory of second language learning. However, Krashen's dichotomy was modified by Long (1983a), Pica (1987, 1996) and Swain (1985), among others, although they basically accepted the dichotomy of the conscious learning in class, and the natural, subconscious acquisition, which usually happens outside the classroom.

It was Selinker's (1972) theory of Interlanguage that gave the term "learner language" a new meaning. While Contrastive Analysis compared L1 with TL, IL was seen as an idiosyncratic language sitting between L1 and TL. To compare IL with TL, you need to perform Error Analysis (EA). EA excluded the role of L1 in this comparison, although transfer could be found in analysing Inter-lingual errors.

The following section discusses the theory of Interlanguage and its relevance to classroom teaching and learning. Issues of transfer, variability and testing conclude the discussion of the linguistic level of the theoretical perspectives.

### **2.1.3 Theory of Interlanguage**

It was the introduction of the concept of ‘Idiosyncratic Dialect’ by Corder (1971), and that of ‘Approximative System’ by Nemser (1971), and ‘Interlanguage’ by Selinker (1972) that made the whole issue of error irrelevant, since, according to the above concepts, we cannot call such a language deviant, or erroneous. These accounts of language development underscore the notion of an orderly and systematic linguistic process that is half imitation and half invention (Edmundson 1985, Pfaff, 1987; Berko-Gleason, 1993). Language development is orderly and systematic, but it is also complete, yet not totally complete. Although language development arrives at certain stages of accomplishment and achievements, according to Durkin (1986) they “will be subjected to addition, elaboration, refinement, reapplication and re-organisation in the years ahead” (p. ix), so it is a life-long process. Because there are both continuous and discontinuous characteristics of language development, we have begun to focus our attention on both the normative and the non-normative patterns of language behaviour. The latter forms are no longer looked at as “strange”, “deviant” or “broken”. One of the non-normative linguistic behaviour patterns can be found in Interlanguage.

The notion of Interlanguage is central to the explanation of SLA. Interlanguage is the result of the interaction among many language acquisitive device factors in any two or more languages developing more or less simultaneously; in our case, the learning of MSA, Hebrew and English. According to Selinker, who coined the term in 1972, Interlanguage may be viewed as an adaptive strategy in which the speaker tries to speak the interlocutor’s L1 although he has little proficiency in it. This strategy uses

simplification, reduction, over-generalisation, transfer, formulaic language, omissions, substitutions and restructurings. Speakers of a native language do not suddenly become speakers of another language; they go through a process of making and testing hypotheses about the target language, with or without the assistance of formal instruction. They begin with knowledge about language in general, gained from their L1, and move toward the target language. They usually readjust their mental model of the target language. Those hypotheses which correspond to the rules of the target language become part of the mental mode. Other hypotheses are either revised or discarded. The learner is always on the continuum between L1 and TL (Selinker, 1972), usually moving toward the TL, unless a decision is taken to 'stop' this motion, for a variety of reasons, psychological or social, and this might lead to fossilization (Brown, 1993).

Ellis (1985) explains Interlanguage as the theoretical construct which underlies the attempts of SLA researchers to identify the stages of development through which L2 learners pass on their way to L2 or near L2 proficiency. According to Ellis, learners do not progress from zero knowledge of a target rule to perfect knowledge of the rule. They progress through a series of interim or developmental stages on their way to target language competence. Interlanguage is described as permeable, dynamic, changing and yet systematic (Selinker, 1972; Corder, 1975). According to Anderson (1984), Interlanguage goes from a nativisation process to a denativisation one. For Klein (1986) Interlanguage or learner-language varieties should be viewed not only as systematic as well as variable, but also as creative with rules unique to themselves and not just a borrowed form of the other languages. Interlanguage, however imperfect from a normative point of view, represents the learner's current repertoire and, as

such, a learner variety of the target language. Corder (1981) defines the structural properties of Interlanguage as: (a) a simple morphological system, (b) a more or less fixed word order, (c) a simple personal pronoun system, (d) a small number of grammatical function words, (e) little or no use of the copula, and (f) the absence of an article system. Interlanguage is a working model, a grammar, a system that can be used quite effectively for communication purposes.

Although many of these points seem justifiable, the context of the research and the setting of its boundaries do not only allow the use of EA; they also make it a suitable method for characterising the IL of the API, since, as rightfully claimed by Hammarberg (1974:185), EA cannot only deal with the errors and neglect the non errors. It is this weakness, among others, that were overcome by designing the research in such a way that has taken all these points of criticism into consideration. The characterisation of the API's IL does not depend solely on the erroneous utterances of the pupils; the process of error diagnosis did ask for the pupils' intentions when they wrote something; the statistical measures used and the quantification of the data did allow for statistical inferences, and most importantly, EA was used as one of many means to explain the process of learning that takes place among the API.



#### **2.1.4 The Concept of Language Transfer**

According to the theory of IL, there are forces that lead to non-native ILs, the most important of which is language transfer.

Similar to many other issues in SLA theories, the concept of language transfer has seen its share of controversy. Still, it is difficult to imagine a complete theory of SLA that ignores the role of prior linguistic knowledge on the learner of a foreign language.

The source of the controversy is related to the early behaviouristic theories of L2 acquisition. Although these theories have long been discredited, certain elements in them remain 'intact', one of them being the role of L1 on the acquisition of L2. The terms 'interference' and 'transfer' are no longer associated with the behaviouristic interpretation of the phenomenon as being cases of interference or hindering the acquisition of L2, nor are they seen as falling back on the native language; other acquired languages can also have an effect on the newly acquired language as well. This, among other factors mainly dealing with the ambiguity of the term (Dechter and Raupach, (1989:x-xii) provide seventeen different definitions of the term!), led some researchers to suggest that the use of the term 'L1 transfer' is completely inadequate and should be substituted by alternative terminology: Corder (Gass and Selinker, 1983) and Tarone (Gass and Selinker, 1983) suggest a reconsideration of the concept altogether and a substitution of the term 'transfer', being 'misleading...[and that it] obscures the complex interaction between the first and the second language systems and language universals' (Gass and Selinker, 1983:281). Instead, they suggest

dropping out the term ‘transfer’ completely and using ‘L1-L2 facilitation’ as an alternative term (Gass and Selinker, 1983:294). Sharwood Smith and Kelleman (in Ellis, 1994:301) have argued that a super-ordinate term that is theory neutral is needed and suggest ‘cross-linguistic influence’ instead. Kellerman (Ellis, *ibid.*) suggested restricting the use of the term to ‘those processes that lead to the incorporation of elements from one language into another’ (Ellis, *ibid.*). Odlin (1989:27) offers a ‘working definition’ of transfer, though not without problematic terms within the definition itself, like the word ‘influence’:

*“Transfer is the influence resulting from the similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired.”*

What is interesting in Odlin’s definition is the fact that the influence of transfer is not minimised to L1. In our case, we are talking about influences that can result from Colloquial Arabic (L1) on MSA (L2), into Hebrew (L3) and finally into English (L4), passing of course through other languages that might exist in the learners’ repertoires, such as in the case of bilinguals due to marriages to non-Arabs. Furthermore, this influence is by no means unilateral; there have been cases of influence on L1 resulting from L2, or L3. Atallah (2002) investigated the influence of Hebrew on L1 and L2 among the API and found out that this effect goes as high as the level of policy makers of the Arabic Curriculum. Amara (1999) also showed the effects of such influence on the language of an Arab village in Israel. This kind of influence is defined in the literature as ‘borrowing transfer’, in contrast to the more common ‘substratum transfer’ that of the influence of L1 on one or more L2s (Odlin 1989:12-13). In borrowing-transfer, which normally begins at the lexical level, the group

exerting the influence is often a speech community with larger numbers, greater prestige, and more political power. In such cases, words associated with the government, the legal system, the schools, the technology and the commercial products of the dominant majority are among the first to make their way into the minority language.

Although the theories of IL and transfer are found in the learner language in and out of the classroom setting, it is the former that this research is investigating. As many other aspects in SLA theories, classroom instruction is controversial, not only in terms of its effectiveness in language acquisition, but also in the ways IL is assessed.

The following section explains when classroom instruction matters.

### **2.1.5 Natural Vs Classroom Settings**

If we use Krashen's acquisition versus learning dichotomy, we see that acquisition, not learning, is the more natural way of acquiring a new language. However, our reality as teachers of English to the APIs is that English is taught in class by non-native speakers of the language. Teachers who have their own ILs vary in their proficiency level, and pupils cannot control whom they have as their teachers. The reality in which teaching English takes place does not only occur in a non-natural environment, where teachers are non-native speakers, but the Bagrut exam itself cripples the learning process by obliging teachers to teach more about strategies on how to pass the exam, even at the expense of teaching the language.

Classroom instruction, in the case of the APIs, assumes three facts that teachers have to deal with:

- a. Prior linguistic knowledge plays an important role in the learning process of the language (See the discussion above).
- b. Errors are important indicators of the learning and teaching processes (See the section on Error Analysis.)
- c. Classroom instruction, even though not the best environment for language acquisition, does work.

Classroom instruction works, although there are more natural ways of acquiring a language. However, when it comes to which aspects of language the classroom can help more than others, evidence has shown that grammar is such a domain. Eckman et al., (1988) have proved that grammar instruction can be effective in enabling learners to progress along the natural order more rapidly. One way in which this might be achieved is by teaching marked features within the sequence. Pienemann (1984), states that grammatical features that are not subject to developmental constraints may be amenable to instruction. Formal instruction may help learners to comprehend the meanings of grammatical structures, even if it does not enable them to use the structures in production (Buczowska and Weist, 1991). Harley (1989) and White et al. (1991) have shown that formal instruction helps to improve grammatical accuracy. Classroom instruction can also help when it provides comprehensible input or output, according to Krashen's (1982) Input theory and Swain's (1985) Output theory, although Krashen is generally an advocate of no instruction at all.

Other researchers, such as Smith (1981), see instruction as facilitative to the natural acquisition by speeding it up. The Interface Hypothesis of Sharwood Smith (1981), cited in Ellis (1994), claims that this can be done by (1) supplying the learner with conscious rules, and (2) providing practice to enable them to convert this conscious, 'controlled' knowledge into 'automatic' knowledge.

The degree to which instruction works, or how it works, is not within the boundaries of this research. However, since the classroom, so far, is the most common place where teaching and learning take place, it is important that we keep a level of awareness to the huge number of variables that take place in such an interaction. Whether researchers can always successfully separate one aspect of this interwoven world and study it separately 'outside' its 'natural' world is, for the least, problematic.

The parties involved in this interaction are situated in their own realities that it becomes very difficult to even try and come up with a hypothesis, or a theory, whose aim is to direct the parties to how to get involved into the process. Language learning and language teaching involve much more than 'learning' or 'teaching' as mechanisms; there are human beings involved in the action, and when that happens, these mechanisms have to be studied 'inside' their creators: the teacher and the pupils.

The discussion therefore, is not as dichotomous as the learning vs. acquisition theory tries to put it. It is not even the traditional dichotomy of 'theory' and 'practice'. As Rampton (1997:12) points out, these dichotomies are breaking down in social sciences, "Applied Linguistics has no longer to choose 'either / or' between discovery and usefulness, between activity within and outside paradigms, and there are no

principled reason why at different moments, the applied linguist shouldn't aim for both, bringing them together".

From the discussion above we can see that the trend of distancing oneself from the binary way of thinking is gaining momentum. Probably the best way of concluding the subject is by looking at the dichotomous terms as the extremes where the specific theory under discussion starts and ends. The focus should be on what lies in between.

As stated above, errors are a reality with which teachers have to live. The significance of errors has seen shifting emphases during the different periods of the short history of SLA theories. Error Analysis (EA), as a method of analysing learner language, has also seen its days of acceptance and rejection. However, it is hard to imagine a classroom where errors are not mentioned.

### **2.1.6 Error Analysis**

Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991) claim that the study of SLA can be said to have passed through a series of phases defined by the modes of inquiry researchers have utilised in their work: contrastive analysis, error analysis, performance analysis and discourse analysis (p.81). As we look into the roots and development of error analysis, let us first overview contrastive analysis so as to gain better insight into how error analysis became more popular among SLA researchers. Our discussion will be limited to the role of errors in each stage.

The behaviouristic theory of language learning, which prevailed in the 50s, perceived errors as something to be avoided, since language learning, like any other kind of learning, took the form of habit formation (Brooks, 1960). This belief of learning was eventually discarded by the well-known, radically different perspective, which was proposed by Chomsky's (1959) review of Skinner's Verbal Behaviour. His review discarded the use of the terms 'stimulus' and 'response' in language learning theory; 'reinforcement' was not significant in such a theory since children, while acquiring their L1, were rarely corrected by their parents. Chomsky wrote that human learning, especially language acquisition, cannot be explained by simply starting off with a "tabula rasa" state of mind. He claimed that human beings must have a certain kind of innate capacity which can guide them through a vast number of sentence generation possibilities and have a child acquire a grammar of that language until the age of five or six with almost no exception. He called this capacity "Universal Grammar" and claimed that it is this very human faculty that linguistics aims to pursue.

It was Corder who first advocated in ELT and the applied linguistics community the importance of errors in language learning process. Corder (1967) discusses the paradigm shift in linguistics from a behaviouristic view of language to a more rationalistic view and claims that in language teaching one noticeable effect is to shift the emphasis away from *teaching* towards a study of *learning*. He emphasises great potential for applying new hypotheses about how languages are learned in L1 to the learning of a second language.

Corder goes on to say that in L1 acquisition we interpret the child's 'incorrect' utterances as being evidence that he is in the process of acquiring a language and that

for those who attempt to describe his knowledge of the language at any point in its development, it is the 'errors' which provide the important evidence (ibid.: 23). In second language acquisition, Corder proposed as a working hypothesis that some of the strategies adopted by the learner of a second language are substantially the same as those by which a first language is acquired-(this does not mean, however, the course or sequence of learning is the same in L1 and L2). By classifying the errors that learners made, researchers could learn a great deal about the SLA process by inferring the strategies that second language learners were adopting. Selinker (1992:150) reiterated Corder's idea when he stated that, for learners themselves, errors are 'indispensable,' since the making of errors can be regarded as a device the learner uses in order to learn.

Selinker (1992) pointed out the two highly significant contributions that Corder made: "that the errors of a learner, whether adult or child, are (a) not random, but are in fact systematic, and are (b) not 'negative' or 'interfering' in any way with learning a TL but are, on the contrary, a necessary positive factor, indicative of testing hypotheses (*ibid*: 151). Such contribution in Corder (1967) began to provide a framework for the study of adult learner language. Along with the influence of studies in L1 acquisition and concepts provided by Contrastive Analysis (especially language transfer) and by the Interlanguage hypothesis (e.g. fossilisation, backsliding, language transfer, communication and learning strategies), this paper provided the impetus for many SLA empirical studies.

In the 1970s and early 80s, a large number of papers on error analysis were published throughout the world. However, it lost its attention and enthusiasm gradually as more



and more criticism was made against the approach and method of error analysis as we have shown earlier.

What is important here is the effect the role of errors had on language learning theories: from the early Transfer Hypothesis of Fries (1957:V), where he sees that L1 acquisition is different from L2 learning, to Corder's (1967:16) over-generalisation hypothesis, which states that "some strategies adopted by the learner of a second language are substantially the same as those by which a first language is acquired", or to a synthesis of both as Taylor (1975:18) suggested, errors shifted from being a purely negative sign into a necessity indicating that learning is taking place. Whether the errors should be the focus in the analysis and explanation of the learner language is debatable, however, these errors give us the chance to see what went wrong so that we can take some remedial action and interfere in the learning process, by taking 'shortcuts', or avoiding 'landmines' when possible. This should be done with complete awareness that certain features in SLA theories cannot be changed, such as the order of learning, as stated in Pienemann's Processability Theory (1998).

Errors are also an indication of the variations that exist in the learners' IL. Variations are significant because they allow the teacher / researcher to look for the developmental patterns in the pupils' ILs. However, variations within individual learners have shown that IL is an extremely dynamic language, which is very much dependent on a variety of factors that control its nature. Language Testing (LT), another reality in classroom teaching, is yet one more aspect that has to be dealt with in order to complete the discussion of the theoretical perspectives of this research. The

following section looks into language variations and language testing and how they should be combined in order to support SLA theories.

### **2.1.7 Language Variations in Second Language Acquisition and Language Testing**

Ellis (1994: 22-23) considers all variations in language-learner language to be part of variability, and classifies them into two main categories: systematic variability, which includes individual variability and contextual variability, and non-systematic variability, which includes what he calls free variability and performance variability.

In Language Testing (LT), the distinction is not that between systematic and non-systematic variation, but rather between two types of systematic variation: (1) variation due to differences across individuals in their language ability, processing strategies, and personal characteristics (e.g., cultural and background knowledge, affective schemata), and (2) variation due to differences in the characteristics of the test method, or test tasks (Bachman, 1998: 3).

Tarone (1998:73) makes a similar distinction, arguing that the term ‘individual difference’ should be used for differences in performance across individuals, and the term ‘variation’ should be reserved for “synchronic situation-related variation in the use of a second language.” Variation, she goes on to point out, “ought to be reserved to refer to shifts within the performance of any given individual”.

Among the many sources of variability, such as mood, learning strategies, skills..., three are central to both fields of SLA and LT:

1. Individual differences in the language ability, which are acquired or measured.
2. Individual differences in the strategies and other processes that individuals employ in language use, as well as on language test tasks and SLA elicitation tasks.
3. Variation in the tasks and context and their effects on language use, as well as on performance on language test tasks and SLA elicitation tasks.

We should here make a distinction between language and language ability. LT is not language per se that is being measured or acquired, but language ability.

The field of language ability, or proficiency, that dominated the field of language testing in the 1960s and 1970s was one that derived largely from a structural linguistics view that saw language as being composed of discrete components (e.g., grammar, vocabulary) and skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing).

The Eighties saw a broadening of the theoretical basis of SLA, away from the early theories of contrastive analysis and error analysis. Lado's (1957) and Wardhaugh's (1970) early discussions of contrastive analysis had long been abandoned in current SLA. The same could be said about Corder's (1967, 1970) and Richards' (1974) discussions of error analysis. However, the description of Interlanguage differences

and learner errors does continue to be part of SLA research, within more recent linguistic paradigms (James, 1998).

When it comes to the empirical research in SLA, much of it continued to focus, rather narrowly, on acquisition of the linguistic aspects of language ability, such as morphology, syntax, and lexis, just as language testing continued to focus on these same elements (Bachman, 1998:3).

One area, which has to be looked into in our case, is the nature of L2 ability and the factors that affect its development in classroom settings. Findings from Harley, Allen, Cummins, and Swain (1990:24) indicate that academic tests tended to be related, that academic skills were strongly related across languages, that cognitive factors were more strongly related to discourse competence and writing than to grammatical competence, and that “language proficiency must be conceptualised within a developmental context as a function of interactions that students or learners experience in their language” (Harley, Allen, Cummins, and Swain. 1990:25).

As to variations in tasks and context and their effects on language use, research has shown (Tarone, 1998) that it is common for the language production of L2 learners to vary systematically in grammatical accuracy and fluency (among other characteristics) in response to contextual changes. This may lead to seeming inconsistencies among respondents on language tests or SLA research tasks from one task to the next. It is therefore essential that the researcher specify the situational features, or characteristics of the tasks he or she designs, so as to facilitate the

investigation of the degree to which variations in performance, or Interlanguage output on the task, are in fact the result of the specific features of that task.

It is now well established that the way individuals use language, and perhaps their ability to use language, for communication varies as a function of features in the language use context or situation (e.g. Catchcart 1986; Tarone 1988; Bayley 1991, 1994; Young 1991, 1993; Tarone and Liu 1995).

Performance in SLA elicitation tasks states that variation in language production by the same L2 learner is common, and shifts in accuracy may be triggered by such contextual factors as shifts in the identity of the interlocutor and the learner's relationship both that interlocutor, topic, degree to which the learnt was encouraged to focus on accuracy... (Tarone, 1988). A later study by Tarone and Liu (1995) showed that the more relaxed the context was, the more accurate the performance.

Performance in language tests also reveals systematic variation from one task to the next. Research has shown that, even when tasks are identical, the topic can affect Interlanguage performance. (Smith 1992) found that the pronunciation, grammar, fluency, and overall comprehensibility of many teaching assistants were all subjects to variation in relation to changes in topic, and in relation to particular test tasks. In general, any factor in the test domain that researchers change can lead to changes in an Interlanguage user's perceptions and assessment of the communicative situation, and thus to changes in Interlanguage performance on the test. Douglas (1986) suggests that rather than attempting to minimise the effects of test method on the

interpretation of results, LT and SLA researchers should employ them to design tests that are appropriate for particular populations.

To conclude, the problem of authenticity and the nature of language-use tasks continue to be one of the issues that need to be looked into in more depth in the future. Many SLA researchers consider authentic, unmonitored language use (vernacular) to be the primary source of data for the investigation of language acquisition, and hence place great value on “authentic” tasks (Tarone, 1998). Bachman and Palmer (1996) argue that in order to make inferences about language ability that will generalise beyond the language test, we need to design test tasks that correspond to non-test language use tasks. However, the problem of the so-called observer’s paradox (Labov, 1972), and the bandwidth fidelity dilemma (Cronbach: 1984:174-175) create difficulties in assigning research on authentic observation and in being able to generalise. The observer’s paradox prevents authenticity because of the existence of the observer, and, while broad, authentic samples of language use yield more generalisable, but less accurate inferences about components of language ability, narrow, less authentic samples yield more accurate but less generalisable inferences (Bachman and Palmer, 1996: 22).

The researcher has to be aware of the type of test administered and its aims; in our case, when very specific structures are elicited, such as interrogatives, it is not the communicative domain of the language that is being tested, but rather the language instructional domain, as Bachman and Palmer (1996) distinguish them. We test situations in which language is used for the purpose of teaching and learning.

## **Summary**

In the previous section we have seen how the various models of SLA came short of providing a complete theory that addresses all the issues in language acquisition. Most of these theories focused on the linguistic aspect of acquisition, and many of them saw acquisition as a binary system of 'either' / 'or'. This paradigm of dichotomous reality can help to explain basic issues in linguistics theory that are needed for a better understanding of language acquisition in general. However, as language is not a separate entity of the human being, it is affected by other external and internal factors that reside outside the linguistic world of the learner. To explore IL through these perspectives, a different paradigm has to be applied.

## **Section II A Different Paradigm: Away from Dichotomies**

### **Introduction**

Previous SLA theories usually saw learning as an individual process that takes place inside the learner's "black box". Researchers tried to understand what happened in that box between the input and the output stages, mainly through psychological mechanisms (e.g. Dulay et al., 1982). Universal Grammar theories in SLA (e.g. White, 1989) perceived these mechanisms as being universal and innate, with a language faculty responsible for learning. Cognitive approaches saw a more general learning mechanism being applied in the learning process (e.g. Corder, 1967; Selinker, 1972).

Other researchers have focused on the language learner and studied how learner differences might affect language learning, (e.g. Gardner, 1985). These differences were perceived as being fixed characteristics and included traits as language aptitude, learning style and motivation. These traits influence the outcome of the language, but the universal developmental path remains the same. Some researchers have also investigated social and cultural factors (e.g. Schumann, 1978), but these factors were not taken as having a big influence on language learning, although this is not true, as we will see at the conclusion of the research.

Prior linguistic experience and its contribution to language learning got the attention of researchers in the 1980s. Krashen (1982) introduced the notion of comprehensible input as being crucial in language learning. However, Swain (1985) claimed that



output also played an important role in the learning process; learners need to produce language to learn. These two approaches to language looked at the interaction between the learner and the language being learned. Other researchers combined both input and output in the learning process and investigated ways of how negotiation of meaning with the interlocutor could make input and output comprehensible (e.g. Ellis, 1990; Swain, 1985). Both the Input and Output theories require that extra step, that  $i+1$ , to be effective, a reminder of Vygotsky's (1978) 'zone of proximal development', where the learner acquires new knowledge through the help of a caregiver, someone who is more knowledgeable. This latter paradigm of understanding language acquisition reflects the multitude of factors that play a role in the learning process, and that things do not happen only inside the 'black box' of the learner.

These latest trends, although they have stressed interaction as an important factor in language learning, have not emphasised enough the social aspect in it. Recently, more voices have been heard against the simplicity in which language learning is being perceived. The cognitive, individualistic assumptions of earlier research oversimplified the learning process by excluding other complex and interpretive factors that existed in it, such as critical discourse analysis and critical sociolinguistics (e.g. Firth and Wagner, 1997 and Rampton, 1991, 1995); feminist post-structural theory (Norton, 2000) and socio-cultural theory (Lantolf, 2000; van Lier 2000). This latest trend puts the notion of SLA as a more complex process than ever before. The effect of such a trend, which is influenced by Vygotskian and Bakhtinian views, puts more emphasis on the social nature of self and the sociality of learning (e.g. Davis, 1995; Toohey, 1998, 2000).

Bakhtin (1984) argues that discourse and meaning are fundamentally social and that learning takes place when the learner transforms the language of the other into their own:

*“Words are, initially, the other’s words, and at foremost, the mother’s words. Gradually, these ‘alien words’ change, dialogically, to become one’s ‘own alien words’ until they are transformed into ‘one’s own words’ (Bakhtin, 1984, cited in Smolka et al., 1995:181).*

Bakhtin stresses the situatedness of language in particular social, historical, cultural, and economic environments. Vygotsky (1978) sees learning as taking place with others, and he views the transition between the two planes as a dialogic process in the ‘zone of proximal development’ described as:

*The distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (p. 86).*

Learning, therefore, takes place not just through dialogue, but particularly through dialogue with ‘experts’, whether adults or more ‘capable’ peers. Mental action, according to this view, is mediated by culturally constructed artefacts, which include technical and psychological tools. Lantoff and Appel (1994) explain Vygotsky’s claim that, just as they use technical tools for manipulating their environment, people use psychological tools for directing and controlling their physical and mental behaviour. Both Bakhtin and Vygotsky are seminal in current socio-cultural theorists that see learning as located in social interactional processes, and language learning in

particular as a socialisation process that leads to knowledge through interaction with more expert others. Lave and Wenger's, (1991) "legitimate peripheral participation" theory focuses on the relationship between learning and situated social situations and conceptualises the learning process as one of participation in a community of practice. Knowledge, according to this theory, is located within the community, which is a shared history of learning, involving relations of mutual engagement, negotiation of a joint enterprise, and the development of a shared repertoire (Wenger, 1998). Through interaction in society, the social roles of its members change, while their understanding and knowledgeable skills develop. For learning to take place, learners should have access to practice, rather than to instruction.

Lave and Wenger (1991) see learning and identity as inseparable. Moving toward full participation in practice involves becoming part of the community and developing a sense of identity as a master practitioner. This, Lave and Wenger (ibid.) acknowledge, requires changes in cultural identity and social relations.

### **2.2.1 Cultural and Socio-political Issues regarding Cross-linguistic Influences**

Since cross-linguistic influences carry on with them more than the linguistic factor, such influences are also the source of a longer-term issue of cultural and even socio-political effects. The new words that travel from one language into the other, especially when such a transfer follows the rule of cultural and socio-political gravity, moving from the high-status language and culture, which is usually the majority's, into the low-status language and culture of the minority. These words do not ameliorate the low status of their language, as some pseudo-educated believe, but

rather disintegrate the centuries-old heritage of that language and culture. This is not just an act of linguistic transfer; there is much more to it than a quick look can yield; what is at stake here is the heritage of a whole nation.

In the case of Hebrew and Arabic cross-influence, where Hebrew is the high language and culture of the majority, most of the words that ‘dropped’ from Hebrew into Arabic were words that dealt with aspects of everyday life: bus-station, medical centre, police, train, orange-juice, salary, tax, national insurance, value added tax, city names, etc. These words have penetrated Arabic in such a way that people made all the linguistic adjustments necessary to conceal their foreign state. Such adjustments included applying morpho-syntactic rules on them, including number and gender, in addition to certain phonetic and cosmetic alterations so that no trace of their origin would be discovered (Zuckerman 2003). In such a case, what starts as just a few cases of limited words travelling over linguistic borders, becomes a feature of yet another local dialect of Arabic. Dialects in Arabic have long stopped being a linguistic issue; today, there are clear cultural and socio-political implications attached to them. There is the danger of losing one’s mother tongue, Colloquial Arabic.

Hebrew, which is going through a similar process regarding other Western languages, seems very selective to which words and expressions can or cannot travel through its high-security borders; curses in Arabic were the first to be accepted into Hebrew, although they did not go through the adjustments to cover their origin. Curses are said without paying attention to gender or number; the same expression is used with all.

From the Colloquial language, the effect is now starting to show up in the pupils' written MSA. From personal communications with local researchers of Arabic, I have been shown a few cases of transfer, where the word was written using the Arabic alphabet and subjected to the syntactical rules of the language. The dilemma these researchers are facing is what to do in order to stop such 'an attack', using a researcher's expression, from weakening Arabic. Taking the critical period which the Arabs in Israel are living through, their fears seem justified.

Being bilingual, and conserving one's mother tongue, even if it is a minority language, has its benefits for each of the three interactive aspects of language, culture and socio-politics.

There are advantages for becoming bilingual. Research shows (Corson, 1998: 162) that bilingual people perform better than monolingual, on divergent thinking test; they have some advantages in their analytical orientation to language; they show some increased social sensitivity in situations requiring verbal communication, and they have some advantages in thinking clearly and in analytical functioning.

These advantages become even more significant when we look back at the multicultural society in which we live. There have been some attempts for bilingual Kindergartens in Israel and some television programs, mostly for teenagers, which used both Arabic and Hebrew with subtitles for the other language, but these programs were broadcast in the Arabic section, so they were meant more as an integrative gesture on the part of the Arabs into Jewish society. This is still far from

having proper bilingual education, such as the case in the immersion classes in Canada.

Cummins and Swain (1986 cited in Corson. 1998:162-3), provided a guide to the research in bilingual education, which gives strong evidence that quality bilingual programs have been influential in developing language skills and building academic achievement generally. They also show that older learners have advantages over younger ones in some respects, and, most importantly for our case, they conclude that a quality bilingual program will support and aid development in the first language. The implication of such views is that a high level of proficiency in both languages is likely to be an intellectual advantage to children in all subjects, when compared with monolingual classmates; in social situations where there is likely to be serious erosion of the first (minority) language, then that language needs maintaining if academic performance is not to suffer, and that high level second language proficiency depends on well developed first language proficiency.

### **2.2.2 Identity and Education**

In order to better explore the subject of identity among the APIs and why it is related to their school lives, one has to look at the way other cultures and countries have treated this issue.

The Runnymede Trust, in its publication “Equality Assurance in Schools: Quality, Identity, Society (1993:13), talks about the difficult tasks teachers and schools have in dealing with their responsibilities in a multicultural society where equality is to be

preserved. Under the objectives discussed to carry out such a scheme of equality, the publication puts emphasis not only on learning about diversity but also on values and concerns which different communities and cultures have in common. The suggested scheme of objectives is divided into three groups: knowledge and understanding, skills and attitudes.

The first part talks about the required types of knowledge to achieve equality. One of the types is “knowledge of the history and development of one’s own cultural traditions, and of the ways in which these both foster and constrain one’s own personal identity.” (ibid: 13)

Under skills, we find the following: “ability to contribute to one’s own cultural traditions, including the traditions of mainstream public, cultural and political life” and “ability to analyse and criticise features of cultural traditions, and to identify instances of prejudice, intolerance and discrimination”.

As for attitudes, we have “willingness to sustain the positive aspects of one’s own traditions, and therefore willingness to be constructively critical when appropriate” and “willingness to accept reasonable and equitable procedures for resolving tensions”.

One would be naïve to believe that such objectives are fulfilled by individuals of both the majority and the minority groups, but the mere fact that they are stated as a clear education policy is a good enough basis to realise that we live with different cultures, and more importantly, that we can learn from them. The APIs are not encouraged to

express their own feelings about the discrimination they face on a daily basis, neither do they have the ability to analyse and criticise prejudice when they face it. Unlike the Jewish sector, where pupils can freely talk about their identity and national interest, such talk within the school is viewed as unwise. It is not supported neither by the teachers nor by the principals, not as long as the security services have a say of who can become a principal or not in public schools (Mari, 1978:64). Pupils may feel the reluctance of their teachers to engage in such issues. Moreover, most Arab pupils still attend traditional schools, where principals and teachers hold a high authoritarian position (Khatab and Yair, 1995) which is not conducive to open debate. However, they still find ways to express their identity, either by engraving the Palestinian flag on their desks, or by doing the same with Israeli symbols, but this time by misrepresenting them. In the English literature program taught in schools, the essay “My Dungeon Shook”, by James Baldwin, is a favourite because it talks about common issues of discrimination against the blacks in the United States of the sixties.

To conclude this section, the issue of identity is not a unique problem of the APIs; it is rather a common problem of many minorities. The only difference is that, unlike other countries, Israel has not resolved this tension with its ‘natives’. The APIs are still seen by many as second-class citizens, and they have to be treated as such.

### **2.2.3 Teachers as Researchers**

Researching one’s practice in such a complex situation, where the process of language acquisition is not yet fully revealed, and the variables involved are numerous, requires the researcher to be very clear in terms of what is being studied. The setting of boundaries cannot be stressed enough. In addition, there has been a kind of division of



roles between researchers and teachers: researchers produce and teachers receive. Much of the earlier research done for pedagogical reasons (James, 1998), was seen as flawed according to the standards set by the academia to what research should be like. The acceptance of teachers-researchers as 'real' researchers is still debatable, especially by those who follow the top-down, positivist paradigms. The problem lies in the way each side perceives reality and how it could be understood. As Kincheloe (2003:14) argues "[t]he realm in which humans live and work is much too multifaceted, complicated, and culturally diverse for the implementation of universal approaches to professional practice". This argument, I believe, will not abate soon; each side will fight for their beliefs in what constitutes reality.

A more realistic way of looking at the controversy is probably through the eyes of a practitioner researcher who is aware of the standards of academic research. This researcher already has an advantage over external 'visitors' to the world under investigation in that they are a part of the same phenomenon they want to investigate. The issue is, therefore, how this rich knowledge can be manipulated in such a way, that the practitioner does not fall for the same misconception that reality resides in their world only. The practitioner researcher has to accept the fact that the way this reality is brought to light is dependent on its acceptance by others; the non-positivists have to 'reason' with the positivists, and vice versa, the positivists, have to re-evaluate their sense of what reality is. This is a long process whose outcome does not have to be the winning of one side over the other. Both trends will have to coexist. Here again, dichotomies create a problem rather than solve one. More of the methodological constraints on practitioner-based research are dealt with in the following chapter.

The following section discusses the conceptual framework and its boundaries in this world of vibrating reality. One thing is clear though; the APIs' IL alone is a vibrating phenomenon; the IL vibrates as a developmental language that changes continuously; the learners live in a fluid socio-political situation; the theoretical perspectives still lack a real theory that can explain what SLA is, thus they vibrate as well, and, finally, the reality under which the APIs' IL is investigated is also torn between two polarized groups of experts who claim that there is only one way of beholding reality: their way.

#### **2.2.4 Conceptual Framework**

Maxwell, (1996:37) defines the conceptual framework as a concept map; a picture of the territory the researcher wants to study, not of the study itself. It is a visual display of the researcher's current working theory.

Glatthorn, (1998:870) explains the source of conceptual frameworks: "A conceptual framework is typically developed from theory. It identifies the concepts included in a complex phenomenon and shows their relationships. The relationships are often presented visually in a flowchart, web diagram or other type of schemata".

The benefits of using a conceptual framework are stated in Robson (1993:150-151): "Developing a conceptual framework forces you to be explicit about what you think you are doing. It also helps you to be selective; to decide which are the important features; which relationships are likely to be of importance or meaning; and hence, what data you are going to collect and analyse".

May (1993:20) perceives the conceptual framework as: “The idea of theory, or the ability to interpret and understand the findings of research within a conceptual framework which makes ‘sense’ of the data, is the mark of a discipline whose aim is the systematic study of a particular phenomenon.”

Finally, Delamont (1992:16) sees “The deployment of theoretical or analytical concepts (as) what separates social science from journalism, and it is therefore essential to find some form somewhere.”

Being a practitioner researcher, my conceptual framework has developed as a combination of my readings of SLA models, my own experience and observation, and from reflecting on reading, experience and the development of assumptions regarding my own practice as a teacher of English as a Foreign Language.

There is a relation between the research approach and the function of the conceptual framework (Punch, 2000:29, 55, 71). Since this research combines both inductive and deductive methods, the conceptual framework was modified at each stage to reflect the needs of the different research approaches that have been used. At the first stage of my research, I mainly looked at the lingual aspects of the APIs’ IL. While collecting the data, I noticed that one of the respondents, who lived in a mixed Jewish-Arab city, had given an answer typical of the Jewish learners of English. When I decided to investigate this phenomenon further, by applying a deductive approach with a wider sample, I was faced yet with further data that pointed to factors beyond the language-culture issue. After having read more about it, I decided to investigate the issue, in depth, with my original sample of the longitudinal study. Only

when I had performed this latest stage, did I see the complete picture, which had evolved in stages. The inclusion of additional layers to the conceptual framework made some prior theories less relevant, so I excluded them from the conceptual framework, while at the same time modifying and adding relevant ones. The decision of which variables to include in the conceptual framework was thus made as the research developed. My original framework helped me do the initial stage of the inductive research. From there, I turned into the completely different deductive approach, using a quantitative method of collecting and analysing the data. After the 'side-road' phenomenon had been investigated, I completed my original inductive research, not before having changed my research criteria in that section. I have discovered that the combination of both methodologies, the mixing of two paradigms that were worlds apart, have helped me explore the APIs' IL at the micro, macro and meta-levels. The same conceptual framework has also helped me in designing my research, choosing the sample, selecting the data and analysing them as factual, interpretive and conceptual findings. It is on this third level, the conceptual level that this thesis resides.

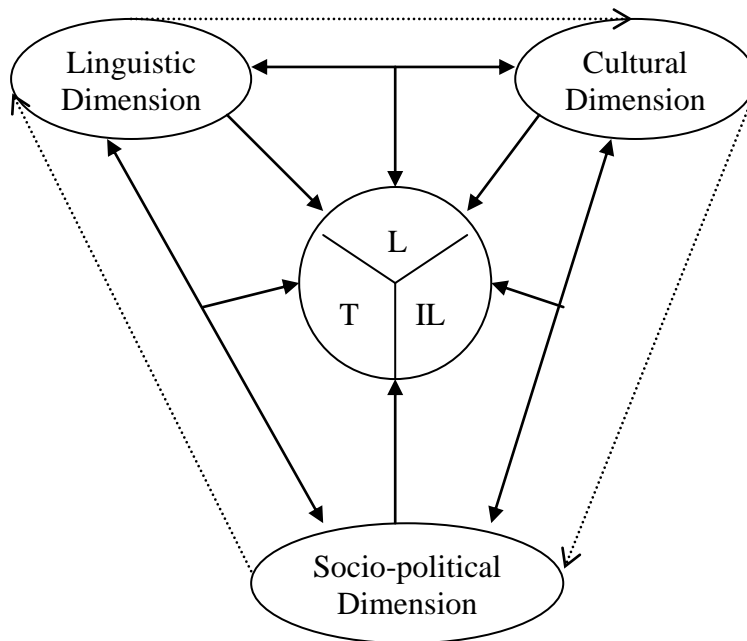
I will relate to the conceptual framework in the following chapter when I talk about the research design and considerations. I will also depend on it in my conclusion chapter to show how my evidence has derived from the data.

The variables that are included in my conceptual framework are (See Diagram 1):

- a. The learner, researcher and IL, being one.
- b. The linguistic factors affecting IL: prior linguistic knowledge (Diglossic L1; L2), transfer and classroom instruction.

- c. The cultural factors: attitudes of the respondents and their surroundings to the language and culture of the TL, motivation and cultural tensions.
- d. The socio-political factors: the identity crisis, the APIs minority status, and the attitude of the respondents towards the government's treatment of the APIs. According to a recent poll carried out by Adala Institute, 94% of the Arabs do not trust governmental institutions. One of the major issues that need a more active interference from the government is education (Haaretz Newspaper).
- e. The three-dimensional model displayed in Diagram 1, which shows that each one of the three factors creates a vibration in the state of the learner and IL, due to the tensions it generates. The optimum state for the learner to be at is in that space where these tensions are at their weakest. This is the space where the learner manages to resolve some of these tensions, thus weakening their negative effect on their learning of English, or any other subject in fact.

DIAGRAM – 1  
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



L=Learner; T=Teacher; IL= Interlanguage. The dotted line indicates that the whole system is dynamic and in motion (vibrating).

The three dimensions affect the learner, the teacher (being a learner himself) and the learner's IL on three levels:

- a. The micro level: each dimension affects the learner/ teacher / IL separately.

This provides the factual findings of the research.

- b. The macro level: each two dimensions affect the learner / teacher / IL together.

This provides the interpretive findings of the research.

- c. The meta level: all three dimensions affect the learner / teacher / IL together.

This provides the conceptual findings of the research.

## **Summary**

This chapter has covered the relevant SLA theories and models that deal with the three aspects of language mentioned in the conceptual framework. A trend can be noticed in this theoretical perspective in that the latest theories and models have stressed the social aspects much more than the earlier ones, which saw in language learning more of a linguistic issue. The socio-political issue has not had its share in these theories. It is in this context that this research is carried out; the case of the APIs, where a gap in knowledge exists regarding the interaction of the three aspects. By bridging this gap, this research contributes to knowledge in the field of learning English as a Foreign Language in particular, and in Second Language Acquisition in general.

The following chapter deals with the research methodologies followed in the research.

# CHAPTER THREE

## Research Methodology

### Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodological perspectives as they have been determined by the conceptual framework. Since the main research is inductive and theory grounded, the methodological framework could not be set in advance; only general attributes could be set. Much of the framework evolved as the research developed. When a new path had to be followed, the framework had to change. Up to a certain point in the research, the framework was flexible enough to fit all the changes that took place in the research. However, certain items of the framework, including methods, had already been set before the data collection started. This included the decision of using a longitudinal research, the type of data to be collected for error analysis, the sample, the use of a case study, etc. What was added later, mainly issues related to the cross-sectional study, required changes in certain methods and tools. What is to be emphasized here is the fact that carrying out such a complex research is a cyclical process that takes the researcher into revisiting and modifying the original plan with which it had started.

The chapter starts by considering the notions of paradigms and how the researcher perceives ontology and epistemology. Paradigms are used as an umbrella under which the research takes place. They are similar to the 'point of view' from which the narrator tells the story and understands the reality of the characters. The application of



the conceptual framework under the chosen paradigms sets the colours and texture of the fabric from which this reality is beheld.

The research design explains the considerations that were taken in the decision-making stage. The fieldwork section covers the sample, data collection and data analysis.

## **Section I Methodological Perspectives**

### **3.1.1 Paradigms**

Research paradigms, which are “a network of coherent ideas about the nature of the world and of the functions of researchers” (Bassey, 1990), and they are usually categorised as positivist and anti-positivist. Among the anti-positivist, there is the interpretive paradigm, which is the one applied in the qualitative part of the research.

According to Bassey, the main difference between the two paradigms is in the way each perceives reality; to the positivist there is a reality ‘out there’ that exists independently of people. The interpretive paradigm, on the other hand, sees reality as a construct in the human mind. “People perceive and so construe the world in ways which are often similar but not necessarily the same” (Bassey, 1990). So there can be different interpretations of what is real. In this paradigm, the observers are part of the world they observe, and by observing, they may change what they are trying to observe. To the positivist, however, the world is rational; discoveries about the reality of the world can be expressed as factual statements.

Language, to the positivists, is “an agreed symbolic system for describing reality”, (Bassey, *ibid*) while the interpretive sees language as approximately the same agreed system, but in it “different people may have some differences in their meanings, in consequence, the sharing of accounts of what has been observed is always to some extent problematic” (Bassey, *ibid*).

While the purpose of research in both paradigms is to describe and understand the phenomena of the world, they differ in the degree of certainty in which they perceive the outcome of this understanding: to the positivist researcher, “understanding enables one to explain how particular events occur and to *predict* what will be the outcome of future events” (author’s italics); the interpretive is much less sure; to them “[I]t may offer *possibilities*, but no certainties, as to what may be the outcome of future events” (author’s italics).

The following chart summarises the differences between two paradigms: positivist and phenomenological (Trafford, 2000):

**Chart 2 Differences between Paradigms**

	<b>Positivist Paradigm</b>	<b>Phenomenological</b>
<b>Basic Beliefs:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. The world is external and objective</li> <li>. Observer is independent</li> <li>. Science is value free</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. The world is socially constructed and subjective</li> <li>. Observer is part of what is observed</li> <li>. Science is driven by human interests</li> </ul>
<b>Researcher would:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. focus on facts</li> <li>. look for causality and fundamental laws</li> <li>. reduce phenomena to simplest elements</li> <li>. formulate hypotheses and then test them</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. focus on meaning</li> <li>. try to understand what is happening</li> <li>. look at the totality of each situation</li> <li>. develop ideas through induction from data</li> </ul>
<b>Preferred methods include:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. operationalising concepts so that they can be measured</li> <li>. analyzing data from large samples</li> <li>. expressing findings quantitatively</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. using multiple methods to establish views of phenomena</li> <li>. small samples investigated in depth and / or over time</li> <li>. expressing findings through values, beliefs, feelings and perceptions.</li> </ul>

Choosing a specific paradigm affects the research approach, which can be qualitative or quantitative. The difference between qualitative and quantitative methods reflects the main differences in how each paradigm perceives epistemology. The following table, given in Cohen et al (2000:272), summarises these differences:

**Chart 3 Differences between Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches to Research**

<b>Quantitative Approaches</b>	<b>Qualitative Approaches</b>
Numbers	Words
Predetermined, given	Open-ended, responsive
Measuring	Capturing uniqueness
Short-term, intermittent	Long-term, continuous
Comparing	Capturing particularity
Correlating	Evaluating
Frequencies	Individuality
Formality	Informality
Looking at	Looking for
Regularities	Uniqueness
Description	Explanation
Objective facts	Subjective facts
Describing	Interpreting
Looking in from the outside	Looking from the inside
Structured	Unstructured
Statistical	Ethnographic, illuminative

Each one of the above approaches seems to live on the opposite side of the other. However, certain criteria of each can travel from the one to the other, where, according to the nature of the research, a combination of both can become possible.

## **Section II Research Design Considerations**

### **3.2.1 Considerations Regarding the Nature of the Research**

The research discusses the Interlanguage of the APIs learning English as a foreign language. The method used to investigate their Interlanguage is through EA. The research is not going to develop an SLA model, but will rather investigate the learner language of the respondents. Through this analysis, the research investigates the stages of language development as perceived by the deviations made by the learners, in order to identify certain patterns that might characterise their language as a group sharing the same L1; so, in addition to the individual profile for each learner, there is also a collective one, since they all belong to the same people, culture and language, Arabic. But again, they are Arabs who live in Israel with all the social, economic and political implications that derive from the situation, and which clearly reflect on their learning environment. In addition, the research attempts to explain the external and internal factors that affect the shaping of the participants' Interlanguage.

The choice of a case study to present the data requires special considerations to be taken into account, and these are discussed in the following section. However, the use of triangulation is essential in this case, since we need to gain rich and deep data in order to understand the research phenomenon of Interlanguage. The methodological perspectives of triangulation will also be discussed in the following chapter.

The research is inductive in nature and it combines qualitative and quantitative methodologies. In terms of validity and reliability issues, my research is high on

validity, low on reliability, due to the nature of case studies and the use of triangulation. However, there is also a cross-sectional study whose aim is to investigate the APIs' Interlanguage synchronically, in contrast to the diachronic nature of the longitudinal study. This complementary research is deductive and uses quantitative methods and is high on reliability, low on validity. Comparing the participants in the longitudinal study with those who are at similar levels in the cross-sectional study, would shed light on the similarities between the two groups, thus strengthening the generalisability issue of the findings.

### **3.2.1.1 Learners and Interlanguage**

The conceptual framework discussed at the end of the previous chapter puts the APIs' IL at the focus of the research. The nature of the IL (Selinker, 1972) is that it is developmental thus changing all the time. To capture the reality of something which is in motion you can do one of two things: either to move along with it over time, or to 'immobilise' it by taking a 'snapshot' of it. The implication of the first choice requires the application of longitudinal research, while the second requires a cross-sectional study. The advantages and disadvantages of each choice can be set only through the paradigm adopted by the researcher. However, the application of both choices should guarantee an almost complete, thorough picture of the phenomenon under investigation, in our case, IL. I have decided to use both choices, using both paradigms and both research methods discussed above.

Using two opposing paradigms in the same research is paradoxical. How can the researcher live in both worlds and represent them simultaneously? What implications

does this double identity have on the research as a whole? And finally, since the research investigates IL as a micro-cosmos of tensions, is the researcher not adding to these tensions by applying a paradoxical approach?

The decision to use both paradigms, and thus both methods to research: inductive (qualitative) and deductive (quantitative), did not exist in the primary design of the research. The idea was then to use a single, inductive approach, qualitative method, interpretive paradigm to exploring the APIs' IL. However, at the first stage of collecting the data, I came across a certain linguistically marked phenomenon<sup>4</sup> that made me decide to further investigate the phenomenon. Additional observation of similar phenomena, coupled with further reading about cross-linguistic influences and reflecting about the issue, uncovered a new dimension that had to be included in the conceptual framework: the socio-political aspect. Having encountered unexpected phenomena in the inductive part has enriched the research in that it has led to investigation of new, unplanned paths.

The main research is still the longitudinal one, where depth and richness of the data and its analysis are sought. The choice of a case study as a research method is in accordance with the anti-positivist paradigm, which sees reality as being individually represented by the participants. The language under investigation, IL, is also multi-layered and encompasses much more than just the linguistic aspect. The inseparability of the language from the learner, being the means through which they can express

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<sup>4</sup> The structure under discussion is that of using the word 'life' in English as plural. In Arabic, as it is in English, the word is singular, whereas in Hebrew it is plural. An utterance like 'Life are beautiful', is common among Hebrew speakers as a case of cross-linguistic influence from L1, Hebrew. The use of such an utterance by a native speaker of Arabic can indicate that it is Hebrew, not Arabic, which is the source of transfer. Since the participant lived in a mixed Jewish-Arabic city, I decided to investigate the phenomenon further and see what other effects living in a particular setting, has on the APIs' IL.

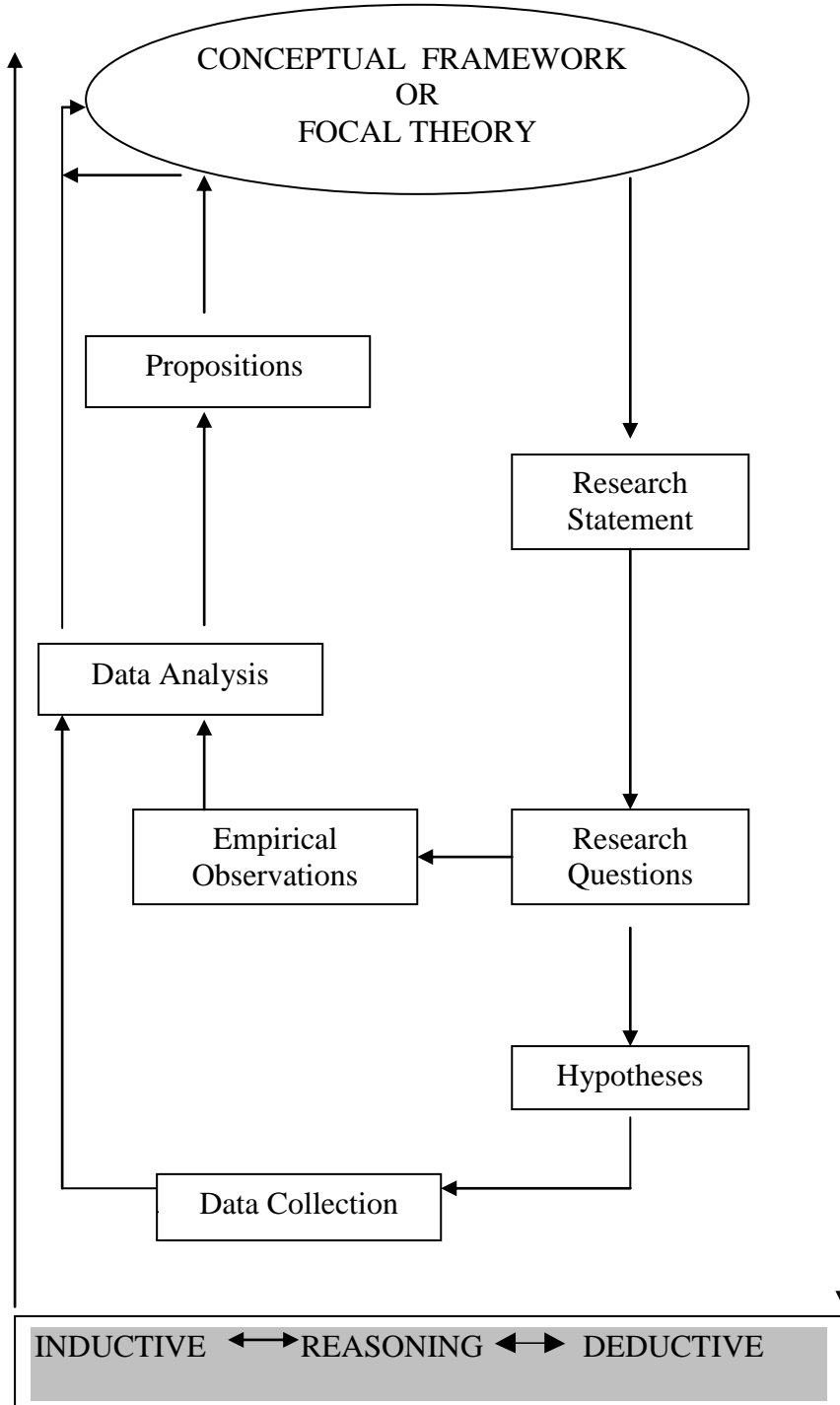
their inner reality, is yet another reason why certain paradigms are more convenient to exploring this reality than others. Language is much more than the linguistic representation of this reality; it is the cultural and socio-political aspects as well. To gain appreciation of the particularity of the phenomenon under investigation, a non-positivist paradigm has been applied.

The secondary research, which took a 'snapshot' of the developmental IL at a certain time and place, had a different focus. Taking a cross-section and investigating it synchronically meant that several variables had to be included in the design. While the longitudinal research looked for specificities, the cross-section looked for patterns and generalisability; the sample was much larger, the data were targeted to investigate certain linguistic and cultural phenomena, but these data were shallow, low on validity. The main aim of investigating IL in this part was to look for patterns that could explain the linguistic and cultural behaviours of the learners who share the same L1 and live under the same general circumstances. However, when it comes to the method of data collecting and the nature of the study as a whole, this is a completely different paradigm, where the reality sought was 'out there' in the external world. The respondents had no faces, they were more subjects used to carry out the research than participants who had names and individual identities. The data were formalised in a way to be measured, rather than interpreted. Quantified data were used to present the facts focused on. It was a different paradigm altogether. However, after having taken this unplanned route, the research went back onto *terra firma*, where the researcher, as a practitioner, carried out his research. The side-track the research explored was a triangulation tool used in the case study in terms of methodology and data collection.

Diagram 2, given in Trafford (2000), explains graphically the design of the research:

Diagram 2

MODELLING THE RESEARCH PROCESS





### 3.2.2 Considerations Regarding Practitioner-based Research

When doing practitioner research, the following issues have to be taken into consideration regarding the research design; they are critical in the decisions regarding the methodologies to be used and the collection and analysis of data as well.

Practitioner research, according to de Schutter and Yopo (1981:68 cited in Anderson et al (1994:17)) has the following general characteristics of participatory research:

- *The point of departure for participatory research is a vision of social events as contextualized by macro-level social forces.*
- *Social processes and structures are understood within a historical context.*
- *Theory and practice are integrated.*
- *The subject-object relationship is transformed into a subject-subject relationship through dialogue.*
- *Research and action (including education itself) become a single process.*
- *The community and researcher together produce critical knowledge aimed at social transfer.*
- *The results of research are immediately applied to a concrete situation.*

Except for the last two, which have to do more with the application of the research, the rest have clear implications on the research and the way it should be carried out. The difference between this paradigm and positivism is repeatedly emphasised so that the standards applied on this kind of research paradigm will not be the same as

positivism. Practitioner research differs from academic research. The main difference between the two is that the practitioner research represents insider or local knowledge about a setting. An observer can spend months studying a class setting, but they can never acquire the tacit knowledge that the teacher has on that class. This, however, does not mean that turning this knowledge into an explicit form is an easy task. The subjectivity in which the practitioner lives makes it difficult for them to “step back” and take a dispassionate look at the setting. This issue has to be clearly addressed and considered, especially in the research design. As mentioned before, without a proper setting of boundaries to the research, the inside reality of this world will never be displayed correctly.

### **3.2.3 Choosing a Case Study**

The main factor that characterises the various definitions of a case study is that of the “zooming in” effect. A case study is “an instance drawn from a class (or category of instances)” (Adelman, Jenkins and Kemmis, 1983:3). For MacDonald and Walker (1977:181), it is “The examination of an instance in action”. Wilson (1979:448) gives a more detailed definition that closely fits the aim of this research: “A process which tries to describe and analyse some entity in qualitative, complex and comprehensive terms not infrequently as it unfolds over a period of time.” Gronbach (1975: 123) adds the factor of explanation and analysis to the previous definitions, “interpretation in context”. The definition given by Merrican (1988:21) includes both the choice and interpretation factors: “An intensive, holistic, description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit”.

Case study research can be based upon single or multiple cases, which may be:

- a. Exploratory: defining questions for further investigation or determining parameters of the issues.
- b. Descriptive: simple account of the issues under investigation, presentation of fact, or personal accounts of events.
- c. Explanatory: explaining causality between variables.

In my situation, the research is based upon multiple cases, and the cases are explanatory. This type may be used to test hypotheses and can facilitate the testing with a rich and extensive data collection effort, including qualitative and quantitative evidence (Yin, 1993).

The purposes of case studies are:

- a. to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of the groups under study; and
- b. to develop general theoretical statements about regularities in a social structure and process (Becker, 1968:233). In our situation, these regularities are the variations that take place in the Interlanguage of the respondents.

There are certain paradigms that have to be taken into consideration concerning the nature of the social world and the way in which it may be investigated. These paradigms concern:

- a. the very essence of the phenomena under investigation;
- b. the grounds of knowledge and how individuals understand the world and communicate this as knowledge to others;
- c. the relationship between individuals and their environment

Depending upon how these sets of assumptions are combined, the researcher may seek universal truths which explain and govern the reality which is being observed. Alternatively, the researcher may seek an understanding of the way individuals create, modify and interpret the world in which they find themselves (Burrell and Morgan, 1979).

Choosing a case study as an approach to research has its advantages. In such an approach, the method or the data collected are not the key features, it is rather the emphasis given by the researcher to providing an understanding of the processes as they occur in their respective contexts. The insights gained by the reader when this is achieved might not occur otherwise.

In our case, the APIs form a special group of learners, in some cases similar to, but also, different from all other learners. It is by setting the boundaries around places, times and events, as Ragin and Becker (1992) put it, that the researcher is able to provide explanations of variable-oriented activity, and allow a gradual appreciation of the situation. In the longitudinal study, the boundaries have been set to include the school in the Arab village where the activity of learning takes place for two and a half years, with 21 participants who are in contact with the researcher almost three times a week. It is this choice of place, time and events that can help us better understand the learning processes that go on inside these pupils' minds and souls.

### **3.2.3.1 Triangulation**

In the research design section, it was decided that triangulation would be used in this case study so that more reliable information could be obtained in a variety of methods.

While case studies “zoom in” in order to look at one instance in a classroom, triangulation “zooms out” to ensure that this instance is not dealt with from just one perspective. Thus, the research significance of triangulation is that it deepens understanding of phenomena and situations through accessing multiple perspectives.

Denzin (1970:3) insists on the multiplicity of methods to be used in empirical events: “...that is, empirical events must be examined from the vantage provided by as many methods as possible”. McNiff (1994:84) on the other hand, limits triangulation to the use of a minimum of three independent sources. The stress here should probably be more on the independence of factors, rather than the number of sources. Maxwell (1996:75) combines both definitions, without assigning numbers to it “Triangulation is the collecting of information from a diverse range of individuals and settings, using a variety of methods”. What is important here is that triangulation gives the researcher the possibility to reduce bias or distortion due to a narrow focus, and strengthens research design by cross checking. In this way, it widens the base from which data are drawn and it increases the researcher’s confidence in the data due to the ‘spread’ of its resources.

The nature of case studies is that they assign boundaries on the research. Through triangulation, the researcher can overcome the limitations of this single specific method. Moreover, the data to be analysed are richer, so that the chances that consistency of findings, due to similarities of method are reduced.

### **3.2.3.2 Issues of Validity and Reliability**

When dealing with the issues of validity and reliability, certain assumptions are to be checked. Mason (1996:26-28) considers assumptions about validity from the technical, ontological and epistemological viewpoints.

Technically, the data under investigation are complimentary in an organizational sense. They cover different written genres of what the pupils learn so that they can be reasonably associated one with another and compared.

Ontologically, in the longitudinal research, the subjectivist approach of Nominalism to social science was applied. In this approach, the social world external to individual cognition is made up of nothing more than names, concepts and labels that are used to structure reality (Burrell and Morgan, 1985:2). The social realities that are being compared in these cases are thus similar.

Epistemologically, the anti-positivist approach applied by the researcher indicates that the world can only be understood from the point of view of the individuals, who are directly involved in the activities which are to be studied (ibid). The different data sources and methods can contribute to a coherent explanation of the research

question. The IL characteristics of the APIs are investigated from the same viewpoint about epistemology: anti-positivism.

The main longitudinal research is inductive in nature, high on validity and low on reliability. The triangulation methods used in collecting the data and background information about the respondents add to the strength of its validity.

As for the cross-sectional study, it is high on reliability, low on validity. This is due to the use of a deductive methodology that tests assumptions (hypotheses) through the application of an objective methodology. This approach is reflected within the spread of the respondents' demographic backgrounds and the sample size of 280. These factors combine together to provide my methodological handling of data collection and its interpretation within this aspect in my research design.

Issues of generalisability and replicability are relevant in the quantitative constituents of the research. Generalisability was not an issue in the main longitudinal study. However, representability of the smaller group of respondents to the bigger group of the cross-section was checked.

In terms of the longitudinal research, the term 'validity' has a different connotation than that used in the cross-sectional study. For practitioner researchers, validity is perceived as 'internal', which is generally defined as "the trustworthiness of inferences drawn from data" (Anderson et al., 1994:27). External validity, on the other hand, refers to "how well these inferences generalize to a larger population or are transferable to other contexts (ibid).

Lincoln and Guba (1985), cited in Anderson (1994), propose that the comparable standard of “trustworthiness” is more appropriate for naturalistic inquiry. A study’s trustworthiness involves the demonstration that the researcher’s interpretations of the data are credible or “ring true” to those who provided the data. In my research, I have chosen the participants from the four demographic backgrounds that represent the spread of the Arab population in Israel: Arab-only cities, Arab-only villages, Mixed Arab-Jewish cities and the Bedouin Sector. In addition, the questionnaire that was used to collect the data was designed in such a way that it did not so much test the participants’ knowledge of English, as it did the way their IL behaved in their specific demographic backgrounds, thus allowing for representability and transferability of their situation into the wider population.

### **3.2.3.3 Generalisability:**

Using a case study approach imposes constraints on issues of generalisability and replication. These issues arise from the natural quality of case studies, and qualitative research in general, which limit the context, boundaries and the volume of evidence. However, these issues are not as clear-cut as they sound.

The fact that the results obtained from qualitative research cannot be generalised to other contexts has been used as a means of frequent criticism against it (Long, 1983 b; Seliger and Shohamy, 1989; Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991).

However, the issue of generalisability in quantitative research does not pass the test of criticism on the grounds that the data had been quantified. As Lazarson (1995, 465)



justly indicates, “quantification of any set of data does not ensure generalisability to other contexts, nor does a large sample size”. The selection process of the population must be carefully considered when statistical inferences are made. In addition, although the vast majority of published studies in applied linguistics have employed quantification, only a limited number of them have used large sample size.

Donomyer (1990, 181) shows that generalisability is a serious problem in almost all the research conducted in this field. “Even statistically significant findings from studies with huge, randomly selected samples cannot be applied directly to particular individuals in particular situations.” Sometimes there arises a need to adjust the generalisation to accommodate individual idiosyncrasy, and at other times the whole subject has to be ignored.

In our case, I feel that a combination of both types of research best serves the context and situation under discussion. However, the question of whether the quantification and the generalisability issue fit those standards assigned by researchers should not always be the measure that indicates the quality of the research. Although the characteristics of rigorous research require such a standard, we have to be realistic enough to admit, as Donomoyer (1990) suggests, that matters of research are not just abstract, epistemological issues about the way we view the world; they are also issues of legitimacy and power. While theorists and researchers have the resources to access or to analyse large aggregates of data, many practitioners, especially teachers, deal with individuals and do not have the same access. In other words, the characteristics of rigorous research cannot be divorced from the political realities, and the ideological biases of our profession.

To conclude this argument, the choice of a research methodology can be evaluated as being correct only when it succeeds in serving the purpose of and explain the research itself, regardless of whether it is controversial or not. In this research, EA was used in spite of the controversy in it; the sample of the 21 respondents in the case study is sufficient in terms of the population under investigation, and the quantification of the data in the deductive (quantitative) research has also been carried out in a way that provided the research with the patterns it was looking for. Moreover, the choice of the schools and the pupils in the deductive research, and the 280 respondents who took part in it, served the purpose of the research by helping to answer the research questions about the special characteristics of the APIs. Whether these numbers are large enough to make generalisability tendencies safe is not the main issue, in spite of the significance of the population size.

The two research questions have informed my compilation of the conceptual framework by determining the factors that should be included in it: the lingual, cultural and socio-political. My choice of methods was therefore based upon the most appropriate ways by which I could access and collect the data that were needed in order to answer my research questions. Among other methods, in the longitudinal research, I needed to access data that represented the students' IL, which was developmental in nature and at the same time representative of their written IL in general, thus the decision to collect data at certain intervals, in different text formats. This too determined the choice of the participants, the easy access to them, not only to collect the data, but also to seek clarification for any vagueness in their writing, thus the choice of the school where I teach. The cultural and socio-political aspects determined the design of questionnaires that investigated their cultural and socio-

political backgrounds, thus investigating their attitudes toward the learning and use of English and Hebrew, Western cultures and the relationship with the State, among other factors. To better explore their IL, I carried out critical discourse analysis to explore the non linguistic aspects that are reflected in their use of the language.

In the cross-sectional study, I designed a questionnaire to collect data on cross linguistic influences of the pupils' linguistic repertoires, and checked for cultural and political attitudes in the vocabulary section. The choice of the participants and their respective schools and demographic backgrounds was also guided by the research questions and the conceptual framework. The participants in the cross-sectional research had to represent the different communities in the Arab sector, both Christian and Moslem, urban and rural. All of this was done while acknowledging the research questions that looked for the special characteristics and the specificity of the APIs' IL, while keeping in mind the contribution to knowledge this research had to present to the field of SLA. This determined the engagement in a specific type of literature including SLA relevant theories, critical theory, Error Analysis and discourse analysis. Transfer was also investigated both linguistically and socially. Finally, the atmosphere in which the research was carried out was linguistically, culturally and socio-politically unstable due to the locality of the area. This determined the paradigm of anti-positivism in order to better explore the tensions that accompany the participants in their daily lives, and made the researcher perceive language learning as a process of conflict resolution, as it is reflected in Diagram 1.

### **3.2.4 Ethical Considerations**

Since the research deals with human subjects, the relevant ethical considerations published in the “APU Ethics Guidelines for Research, 1997” have been taken into consideration, especially the issues concerning informed consent (paragraphs 25,26), openness and honesty (par. 27,29), right to withdraw without penalty (par. 31), confidentiality and anonymity (par. 32,33,34), protection from harm (par. 35,36,37), briefing and debriefing (par. 38, 39) and reporting on ethical issues throughout (par. 43). The schools’ and the parents’ consent was obtained before the research started. To protect anonymity, letters will be used instead of names.

## **Section II Fieldwork**

### **Introduction**

The research deals with two kinds of data: data collected in the longitudinal study and those in the cross-sectional study. The first type gives us the possibility to look into variations of the students' IL diachronically, where the stress is on the individual. The cross-sectional study, however, gives us the possibility to look into the IL of different groups synchronically, allowing us to look for developmental patterns of the data beyond the individual. While the first type allows us to understand the affective factors that form the IL for each individual, the latter gives us a cross-section of samples of how this IL behaves within a certain group of learners of the TL. The combination of both should help us characterise this language, IL, as being unique, not only for each individual, but also for a group of individuals sharing the same L1, in addition to the other affective factors, such as socio-politics and the interaction among the other languages in the country.

### **The Longitudinal Research**

#### **3.3.1 Considerations Regarding the Longitudinal Study**

In the design of the longitudinal study, the following aspects were taken into consideration:

- a. The research was undertaken in the classroom where the participants and non-participants took part in the given tasks. Although the pupils who asked about it were told that what they were doing was part of

the research, the atmosphere of the whole class doing the task made them feel that they were doing just another task, which would not be graded.

- b. The nature of the data collected for analysis was constrained by two factors: first, it was confined to the written substance, due to reasons discussed later. Second, the way English is taught is with the sole purpose of helping the pupils pass the Bagrut exam, which provides them with the opportunity of pursuing an academic career. It has to be stated clearly here that this teaching environment does not allow for the language to progress naturally, and many aspects would not get the attention they deserve. In such an environment, the teaching of the language is divided according to the relative importance of each of the skills in the decisive Bagrut exam. The order of importance of the four skills is reading, writing, speaking and listening. About 60% of the mark is given to three reading comprehension passages. When pupils get to grade 11, they start dealing more with strategies of how to answer the questions in the Bagrut exam. Special strategies and techniques are taught and practised in order to help the pupils answer correctly, or at least reduce the chances of making mistakes. With such an aim in mind, it is clear that the learning environment is artificial, especially when we deal with the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades.
- c. The data should be similar to that the pupils deal with in class so that they produce a language under the same circumstances they are used to. This

guarantees familiarity with the material and adds to the natural setting of their learning environment: on the one hand, the pupils will be dealing with their familiar linguistic repertoires when they do a certain task, so the picture we get of their Interlanguage will be representative of their present state of the language. On the other hand, the affective factors that can affect their output, such as anxiety, are minimised, because the data are collected under a 'relaxed' situation. MacIntyre, (1995) states that anxiety can be facilitating or debilitating, depending on its degree. The type of anxiety which interests us here is that which occurs inside the classroom, such as the worries about being formally evaluated (test anxiety) and the worries of looking foolish in front of peers (social anxiety) (MacIntyre and Gardner, 1991;). Sparks and Ganschow (cited in MacIntyre, 1995), however, posited that language aptitude is the dominant factor in language learning success and regard language anxiety as a side effect.

- d. The main part of the research deals with the 21 respondents in the longitudinal study. However, the way the data are collected for EA does not shed enough light on the other affective factors in the learning process of these pupils. All the relevant data for EA were collected in the written form, and although the choice of this method was justified under the specific circumstance of this research, it is still inherently limited. The main factor that has to be dealt with here is that the production of the written data allows the students to better monitor their task; their utterances are not intuitive, a factor which is very useful when dealing with research that looks into planned action. This, of

course, stands in complete contrast to the natural setting of spoken data, but this is not within the boundary, nor the aim of this research.

The variety of forms and genres of the data collected (asking questions, translations, essays, letter writing...) guarantee a spread of the data so that if the pupil had a problem with one genre, or the opposite, if he or she was good in that specific form or genre, then the variety would guarantee a clearer picture of the Interlanguage of the pupil than if the data were constrained to one genre only. Research has shown that the outcome of the pupils' Interlanguage changes according to the nature of the task (Smith, 1992; Tarone, 1998).

The collecting of background information and attitudes towards learning English both at school and at home was undertaken through a set of questionnaires that asked about a variety of related factors. The same method was used to obtain socio-economic background information so that interaction among the various factors could later be investigated.

- e. Errors are only a means of characterising the Interlanguage of the respondents. The research is not a corpus of the APIs' errors; the corpus is a by-product of it. A profile was created for each of the respondents which included the data collected of them, the errors, the analysis of the errors, personal and background information, the learning environment at school and at home and other external and internal affecting factors such as motivation, acculturation, learning style, etc.



### **3.3.1.1 Choosing the Sample**

The subjects were chosen from the 10<sup>th</sup> grade in one of the two schools where I teach. The school chosen represents a much wider demographic variety of the Arab pupils in Israel (more than 40 different Arab villages and cities). The pupils are all in their sixth year of learning English and are at the 4-point-intermediate Bagrut level. In grade eleven, some of the pupils will go to the advanced, 5-point Bagrut. The pupils are 8 boys and 13 girls (out of 15 boys and 16 girls). Nineteen of the pupils live in Arab-only villages and cities, and 2 in mixed, Jewish-Arab cities. The pupils of this grade major in Physics and are chosen according to the average of their grades in all subjects, including English. Usually, an average grade of 85% is required, and for most students, English is a factor that usually limits their average, so for many of them the lowest grade is usually in English.

After the approval of the school had been obtained, the nature and aim of the study were explained to the 10<sup>th</sup> grade pupils, and a form was handed out explaining all the ethical considerations involved in the study. Twenty-one pupils obtained their parents' approval with a signed form. Ten pupils decided not to take part in the research, some of them making the decision on their own, without telling their parents about it.

Gaining access to the school and obtaining the permission was facilitated by the fact that it was the school where I have been teaching for years, and the principal himself was a Ph.D. candidate at the time. Furthermore, the school, being private, did not need to obtain the Ministry of Education's permission in order to carry out the research.

Finally, the fact that the participants were my students made it easy for them to accept me and act freely regarding their decision whether to participate or not. The parents' permission was obtained within a week, and this formal part of the research was thus, completed.

### **3.3.1.2 Choosing the School**

The school is owned by a private body, but follows the curriculum of the Ministry of Education. The school has a good educational reputation and many pupils attend it although there are high schools in their own towns and villages. The administration encourages teachers to pursue higher degrees, and many teachers do so. The principal, in particular, encourages research and the school is visited by many researchers in the field of education. Generally, there is a facilitating atmosphere in this school and no problems were encountered regarding granting permission to carry out the research, as was mentioned earlier.

Another factor which differentiates this school from others is the nutrition of the national Palestinian identity among its pupils, but at the same time calling for coexistence and mutual respect. The owner of the school is a Catholic priest and has received many international awards for his work in that field and he runs a study centre for the three monotheistic religions in the school. It is important to mention that the school had lost one of its pupils in the October 2000 events, and this made a great impact on the forming of pupils' national identity, many examples of which can be seen in the data collected for the research.

### **3.3.1.3 Nature of the Data**

The research material was chosen according to the nature of the longitudinal study; on the one hand, the data had to be similar in nature so that certain aspects could be compared in order to check for gain in knowledge. On the other hand, they had to cover different genres so that they would provide a variety of text types and represent different learning tasks. Although these tasks do not necessarily tap the same source of linguistic knowledge, as Birdsong (1989:118, cited in Ellis 1994:613) suggests, the results of one type of test may not be useful in providing the concurrent validity of another source, nonetheless they still provide important information regarding developmental patterns in a variety of learning opportunities; a learner can be more productive in certain types of texts than others.

The whole idea of using controlled data is also controversial. Hatch, Shirai and Fantuzzi (1990) have pointed out to the dangers of using them in that they might mislead because the results they provide fail to generalise to other types of data. However, since the whole research is carried out in a controlled classroom situation, where the language is dissected and assessed according to various subsystems, the nature of the data used follows the general pattern of learning done in the learning environment. As shown by Diagram 1 in the conceptual framework, the whole system is dynamic and developmental, so any aspect that is explored can never capture the whole picture of the learning environment since it is always in motion and changing. What this research aims to accomplish is an exploration of the learning process within the boundaries of time, space and the surrounding affective factors. Any change in one of the major constituents in this delicate equilibrium will lead to a

set of reactions that can change both the process and the outcome of the learning experience of the APIs. To quote Birdsong (1989:613) again “each method carries with it impediments to the translation of data to theory”.

The tasks were chosen according to the syllabus taught at school. A very important subject is that of interrogatives, so one of the collected samples simulated an interview where the respondents were asked to provide the questions. Another dealt with informal letter writing; a third consisted of translating sentences from colloquial Arabic into English; the fourth was essay writing, etc. Each sample had its own rationale, and the idea was to test a variety of genres learnt by the respondents.

As for the cross-sectional study, the questionnaire comprised two parts:

The first part included a table that had sentences in English, Arabic and Hebrew, and the pupils were asked to translate each of the sentences into the two other languages. Seven sentences were written in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), two in Hebrew and one in English. The rationale behind this choice was that our pupils are still being asked to translate, from and into English. Those pupils who live in mixed cities and are regularly exposed to Hebrew might face interference from L1, L2 and also L3. MSA was chosen because it is the medium used for written Arabic. As learners of a foreign language with a diglossic situation, Arab pupils usually process Colloquial Arabic in speaking and MSA in writing and reading. This unique situation does not always help the learners of a foreign language when they have to “fall back” on the mother tongue as a learning, or communication strategy. The mixing of both varieties in the pupil’s L1 repertoire has the effect of erasing the clear borders between the two

domains of High vs. Low Varieties; pupils confuse the colloquial meaning of a word as being the classical meaning and vice versa. The APIs' knowledge of their own L1 is deteriorating and this affects their reading comprehension abilities in L1 and any other foreign language that they learn. Through my present experience as an English teacher, and my previous one as a teacher of Arabic, I have come across many cases where pupils had to get help understanding the Arabic translation in their bilingual English-English- Arabic dictionaries.

The idea of using translation in elicited data is controversial. After all, the controversy around EA as a whole had to deal with its individual constituents, and translation was one of them.

Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982:258) suggest that 'the use of translation as an elicitation technique in FL/SL research artificially increases the L2 learner's reliance on the MT, and accordingly, the proportion of interference errors'. Although this claim might sound true, it is not always the case. Mattar (1999) has found that the subjects of his study made consistently, but not significantly more interference errors in the blank-filling task than in the translation task.

In other research by Kobayashi and Rinnert (1992), respondents were asked to compose essays in two different ways: writing in Japanese and then translating, as well as writing directly in English. The findings showed that the translations were rated higher (in content and style) than were the direct essays. This demonstrated the interface of SLA with testing in that testers would traditionally not consider the possible role of mental translation and overt translation in the writing process. The

study revealed certain advantages of translation: ideas were easier to develop, thoughts and opinions could be expressed more clearly, and words could be more easily found through the use of a dictionary.

Although these results encourage the use of different types of cognitive activities in L2 essay writing, they also show that translation has its benefits when the whole process of learning, not only EA, is taken into consideration.

The sentences used for translation were picked from texts that were familiar to the 9th graders. A pilot study was carried out among teachers of all the schools that took part in the research and they were asked to approve the level of the sentences and see if it was similar to that of their pupils. As a further measure, I asked students in an average grade nine class in my school to read the questions and see if the instructions were clear. Three students, out of thirty-eight, said that they did not know the meaning of the word 'Government' in part two. However, I disregarded this having had the teachers' reassurance of the familiarity of the vocabulary list to their pupils. Also, the number of pupils who did not understand this word was less than 10%.

The second part was a list of 15 words in English that pupils should have heard or used on a daily basis. The pupils were instructed to translate the words into Arabic or Hebrew. The idea was to see which language the pupil was going to use when translating: Colloquial Arabic, MSA, Hebrew, Hebrew and Arabic, Arabic transcription of Hebrew words, Arabic transcription of English words, etc. The use of transfer could be checked here, especially 'substratum transfer'. In the case when Arabic is the target language for translation, the use of certain colloquial varieties can

sometimes reveal the interaction between politics and sociolinguistics, as shown by Amara (1999).<sup>5</sup>

By analysing the pupils' answers, a theory could be developed on the interaction between Arabic and Hebrew in the students' English. Are the pupils able to deal with MSA only in their written language, or has this language been influenced by Colloquial Arabic, or Hebrew as well? The more languages the pupils choose to translate into, the clearer the indication that the pupils do not have one clear language which they refer to when they need to express themselves in Arabic; some might prefer Hebrew to Arabic, others might choose the colloquial language, while the rest might find any other combination of Arabic and Hebrew to express themselves. English will always be one of the most important factors that can decide the academic future of the APIs. These pupils live in a social and political situation that makes their learning process of English unique. In spite of all the limitations that the context of the research puts on it, being pedagogic in nature and using EA as one means of data analysis, it is hoped that the outcome will clarify the circumstances and processes that take place in the learning environment of these pupils. By doing this, the special needs of the APIs as a unique group could then be met, and the affective factors that affect the formation of this learning identity could be understood. Then, different sectors, such as teachers, textbook writers, education policy makers and the learners themselves can then do something to improve the situation and help to create better opportunities for the APIs.

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<sup>5</sup> In his book 'Politics and Sociolinguistic Reflexes', Amara shows how the dialect of one border village which was divided between Israel and the West Bank, has changed through the years, where each part developed their own dialect. This change reflected the social and political affects on language even in the case where the whole village constituted, originally, one big family.

### **3.3.2 Data Collection**

Since the study is longitudinal in nature, the data for the research were collected every three months. Starting September 2000, a written sample of the pupils' English was collected in a variety of forms. The samples comprised targeted and non-targeted elicitation materials. The distinction here is between a task that checks for a very specific language structure, such as interrogatives, and one that allows for a freer writing style, such as essay or letter writing, where a variety of structures could be examined. This second type, which James (1998:19) calls the "broad trawl" elicitation, allows for a more natural setting in the assigning and performance of the task, in addition to a wider bandwidth of the data itself. In our case, more data were broad trawl than target elicited.

1. The first batch consisted of 10 questions that the pupils were asked to form in a simulated dialogue between the pupil and another person, on one of two occasions: finding more about someone's hobby and interviewing a person celebrating their one hundredth birthday.

Asking questions, in its various forms: open-ended, closed ended, or tag questions is one of the most important language skills that are taught at an early stage, especially when the communicative approach of language teaching is being used. The subject is taught from year one of English, with the emphasis moving from yes/no questions, to open-ended and tag questions. Pupils in grade 9 (6<sup>th</sup> year of English) heavily practise the use of open-ended questions, and it is expected that they master the subject by the



10<sup>th</sup> grade, although most of them still have difficulties in asking questions even when they reach grade 12. In the English Oral Bagrut Test, which constitutes 20% of the whole Bagrut mark, 50% of the mark goes to asking questions. That is why this subject is being researched.

All the pupils, respondents and non-respondents, were given the task to do in class and were asked to complete it individually. The time allowed for completing the task was 30 minutes, and most students finished in about 20 minutes. Only two respondents needed the full 30 minutes. Allowing all the students to take part in the task did not make the non-respondents feel 'left out', while at the same time it helped to ease the pressure on the respondents being asked to perform a task that was part of the research. During the whole process of the data collection, all students were allowed to take part in the activity, so that the activity itself was treated as just another exercise done in class. The students were told that what they were doing was part of the research and that it would not be graded. The tasks were not returned to the students although some asked for them. I did however have informal conversations regarding the results with a few students, participants and others.

2. Three months later, the second batch was collected. This task also dealt with interrogatives, and the purpose was to check how the pupils Interlanguage developed within the period of three months, during which time interrogatives were practised again in class. Again, this was part of the syllabus, and the pupils continued learning according to the regular syllabus of English. During this period of three months, the pupils were introduced to the Present Perfect Tense, which does not exist in Arabic or

Hebrew, and it was the purpose of one of the questions in the second batch to check their use of this tense. The collection of the data went smoothly.

The students were given a role-play, where they were approached by a friend, the teacher, who wanted to sell his computer. The pupils were instructed, in Arabic, as to the specific questions they were supposed to ask their friend in order to find out more about the computer. This task was elicited and it meant to investigate specific structures in the interrogatives. The use of Arabic in the instructions was to make sure that the questions asked about the specific structure, including the *wh-* word. There were six questions altogether, where the first asked about the kind of computer the friend had; the second asked about the reason for wanting to sell the computer; the third was about the price; the fourth inquired about any problems the computer could have had; the fifth question asked about the period the friend had had the computer (use of Perfect); the sixth and last question asked about the kind of computer the friend wanted to buy in the future (use of Future). The last question was administered to check the pupils' knowledge in differentiating the planned versus unplanned future actions. This task, similar to the previous one was targeted as well.

The pupils were given the task to complete in class and were instructed to work individually. The time allocated for completing the task was 15 minutes, which was practical for such a task. Most pupils finished the task in less than ten minutes. The pupils were advised to take their time and to have another look at what they had done, so it can be said that all the pupils gave their best in completing the task and were not pressured for time. All the pupils in the class were asked to complete the task.

3. The third batch was collected in March 2001. This batch was different from the others in that it was part of the questionnaire that was introduced in the cross-sectional study. The main longitudinal study respondents took part in the cross-sectional study as well. For the Error Analysis part, all the questions that were answered in English were separated from the main body of the questionnaire and encoded separately in the same manner as that described in batch-one. The parts that had English in them consisted of 9 sentences, 7 in Arabic and 2 in Hebrew, and the pupils were asked to translate them into English. The second part comprised 15 words, where the pupils were asked to answer in Arabic or in Hebrew. The questionnaire was administered in class, and the whole lesson, 40 minutes, was dedicated to its completion. After having collected all the questionnaires, the longitudinal study respondents were separated from the rest, and their English answers were processed.

That same group of 21 respondents had their whole questionnaires processed again in the same manner as the 280 respondents from the cross-sectional study. This should allow for comparisons between this group (the 21 respondents) and other similar groups (other 10<sup>th</sup> grade pupils in the cross-sectional study). One of the outcomes of such a comparison could add to the transferability and representability issues of the longitudinal study, if similar patterns emerged in both groups.

4. The fourth batch was administered towards the end of May 2001. The final exams start at the beginning of June, and I therefore decided to collect the data a few days earlier.

The method of Error Analysis used this time was the broad-trawl method, i.e. no targeted elicitation was followed. The pupils were asked to write an informal letter to a friend telling them about a meeting that took place with a celebrity. The pupils were instructed to write about 100 words. At this stage of learning, the pupils had already practised this genre.

The task was done in class and the pupils were asked to think about who the person was, the location where the meeting had taken place and the gifts that had been exchanged at the end of it. I explained the form a personal letter should take. It is important to stress here that this was not the first informal letter these pupils had written in class. The pupils were given 30 minutes to write the letter. All the class participated in the task, respondents and non-respondents. At the end of the lesson the letters were collected and there were two pupils who could not finish in time. They were asked to deliver their letters incomplete. Each time a task was part of the research, the pupils were told that it would not be marked, and that they should do their best to work individually because this would help me understand their production and better help them in the future. The pupils followed the instructions and the tasks were completed smoothly.

The pupils' letters were coded into the computer program exactly as they were handwritten. The only factor that was ignored in the analysis stage was the spacing between the words. Although I made it a point to copy the spaces accurately, I could not include them in the analysis because the letters were handwritten and the rules concerning spacing in printed letters could not be followed. This process was time

consuming, but the availability of the students to ask for any illegible items made my work more efficient.

5. The fifth batch was collected in October 2001, almost five months after the fourth. Now the pupils were in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade.

I have come to realise that attempting to keep the three-month interval between each two batches was unrealistic, especially at the beginning and end of the school year. Nevertheless, the time interval was kept whenever possible; besides, there was little formal learning during the summer holidays, although a couple of respondents participated in English summer courses.

It is important to mention here that five respondents are now learning English with a different teacher. These pupils are at the advanced, five-point Bagrut level. They learn one extra hour (45 minutes) a week and are prepared for the advanced test. The textbooks they use are more advanced and the tasks they do are more varied; i.e. they write formal letters rather than informal ones for the four pointers, the Cloze type is open rather than multiple choice and the reading comprehension passages are more complex in terms of style, content and type of questions, requiring more inference from the reader than the less-advanced test.

The aim of the fifth batch was to investigate the effect of colloquial Arabic on learning English. Five sentences were read to the pupils in Colloquial Arabic, and they were asked to translate them into English. The rationale behind this method was to check for any specific error patterns that could emerge when dealing with

colloquial Arabic in a written environment. As stated before, colloquial Arabic is spoken and never written, whereas MSA is written and spoken only in formal settings such as in some academic lectures, religious sermons and the media. In a natural school-learning environment, pupils are never asked to transfer a spoken text from Colloquial Arabic into a written MSA. The opposite might sometimes happen to check comprehension. However, since MSA is used mainly in reading and writing, it is worthwhile investigating the effect of Colloquial Arabic, which is the spoken mother tongue, on the learning process of English, mainly to check for transfer.

Each item was repeated twice and 2-3 minutes were given for translating it. The item could be a part of a dialogue, a statement, or a question and an answer. Whenever necessary, another minute was given to those who needed more time to complete the task. At the end of the activity, which took around half-an-hour, the respondents' answers were collected. All the pupils participated in the task, and arrangements had been made with the other teacher for the five-point students to attend and perform the task. Although the items chosen for translation were decontextualised, the structures used were familiar to the students, being part of their daily conversations.

6. The sixth batch was collected in February 2002. The midterm tests in December, unlike the year before when there were no such tests, made it difficult for me and the pupils to find the right time to administer the required task in January.

The task for this batch was to write an essay on the use of cellular phones and relate to an event that had happened to them where the use of the cellular phone proved useful. The pupils at this stage are more exposed to this genre, and this is one of the genres

they might be asked about in the Bagrut exams. In this exam, the pupils are required to do a writing task on a different genre each year, usually informal letter writing, expressing an opinion, description, etc. The advanced five-point pupils are asked to do two writing tasks, one of which is related to the contents of one of the reading comprehension passages that appear in the test.

The rationale for choosing this genre was to check the pupils' Interlanguage when dealing with a task that requires the switch from one genre; expressing an opinion, to another; narrative. This switch is expected to reveal how the pupil moves from a more formal writing style to a more relaxed one, which is the narrative form. In addition, this is also a good time to look for any emerging differences in the writing of the more advanced pupils and compare them to the rest, who are still at the intermediate level.

I asked the students to do the writing task, each in their own classrooms; the four-point pupils in my classroom, and the five-point ones with the other teacher. All the pupils in both classes, respondents and non-respondents, were asked to do the task in class and they were not told that the task was for the research. They did their task with the impression that it was going to be marked by the teachers. This writing environment guaranteed more seriousness towards writing the task; it was noticed that the pupils were less ready to invest in their tasks when it was not intended for it to be graded. The disadvantage of such a scenario is the anxiety created because of the grade, however, this could be controlled by the fact that the pupils knew that this grade did not have a big effect on the final grade. In addition, anxiety is also one of the affective factors that play a role in the learning process, and it is worthwhile testing its effect on the students' performance.

The pupils were given 45 minutes to finish the task, although most of them completed it in less than half an hour. Two respondents, together with three other pupils from the class, needed the maximum time in order to finish.

7. The seventh batch, which was collected in May 2002, was originally a part of a questionnaire (Appendix 5) whose aim was to check the pupils' attitude towards English. The last question asked the pupils to write about the way they perceived English as a language; its degree of difficulty, its importance for them, English at school and if they were doing anything to improve their English outside the class.

The pupils completed the questionnaire in class. The pupils learning in the advanced class had no English lesson that day, and were asked to join their original groups. So, for the second time that year, all the participants completed the task together. It is worth mentioning that the first four to finish the task were from this group of advanced students.

One of the participants (F) decided to drop out of the research at this stage. I tried to understand if anything was wrong, but she said that she no longer wished to participate. I tried to convince her that we had almost finished, and this was the last task for the year, but she was quite determined to stop. I later understood that she had had a bad day and it was just a matter of misfortune that the task fell on that particular day. I tried to talk her into doing the task a few days later, but I did not succeed.

8. The eighth batch was collected in February 2003. In this batch the participants were asked to redo the questionnaire they had completed in March 2001 (batch 3). This



final task enabled the research to look at the gain in knowledge achieved two years after having completed the first task.

The questionnaire was completed in class. The pupils were given half an hour for this task. One of the original 21 participants did not take part in it because she had already decided to withdraw.

### **3.1 Data Processing – The Use of Error Analysis**

Although the method is controversial (Schachter and Celce-Murcia (1977); Sheen (1980)), I have found it to be very relevant to the needs and boundaries determined for this research. Schachter and Celce-Murcia point out the danger of studying errors in isolation and in not considering non-errors. Sheen points out that estimates by researchers of the number of syntactic errors due to interference, ranges from 5% to 70% and that spontaneous errors are difficult to analyse. Subjects should be asked about their intentions, both for erroneous responses and for those where no apparent error has been made.

Others had a more direct criticism of EA, similar to the arguments given by Schachter and the others above. Bell (1974:35) calls EA 'a recent pseudo-procedure in applied linguistics' and attacks it on the grounds of poor statistical inferences, the subjectivity of interpretations of errors, and its lack of any predictive power. Hammarberg (1974:185) points to the 'insufficiency of error analysis' since we only analyse errors and neglect the description of non-errors.

However, these weaknesses could be overcome if addressed in the planning of the research methodology.

The second step of data processing is the diagnostics of errors.

### **3.3.3.1 Diagnosing Errors**

Since the data collected were in the written form, the diagnosing process did not explore problems of phonology, such as mispronunciations. To determine if an utterance was erroneous, spelling was first considered. Spelling errors were subdivided into those caused by the non-use or over-use of capital letters. Arabic does not have the equivalent of 'capital letters', therefore, many learners of Arabic do not understand that the use of capital letters in English goes beyond the size of the letter. Some learners ignore the subject completely, while others overuse capital letters. It is not uncommon to find capital-letter mistakes due to bad handwriting habits, such as using the <F> at the middle or end of the word, resulting in utterances like 'iF', or 'diFFerent'.

A second subdivision of spelling errors is that due to phonetic causes, such as errors resulting from confusing bilabial sounds, like the /p/ phoneme in Arabic, which does not exist in Arabic, thus leading to generalising it to /b/. A third subdivision was that of errors due to vowel misrepresentations, again a problem for Arab learners, since Arabic has far fewer vowels and diphthongs than English.

A fourth subdivision is that of spelling errors not due to the above. Punctuation errors, not including capital letters, whether the omission, misuse or overuse of punctuation marks, are also given a separate category. This is also a common problem among the APIs, although the cause is not necessarily Inter-lingual. However, one can say that Arabic is less sensitive to punctuation than English.

The other types of errors were diagnosed according to two factors: grammaticality and acceptability. The former type is easier to identify, since the rules of grammar are clear. Syntax and morphological errors are included under the term grammaticality. As for acceptability, the identification of the error is more problematic since this is a practical, not a theoretical notion. Unlike grammatical errors that are decided by the knower of a language, it is the user who decides the acceptability of the utterance (James, 1998:66). The field here is that of semantics, not syntax, e.g. collocation appropriacy.

### **3.3.3.2 Analysing Errors**

The third step after the diagnosing stage is analysing the errors. The procedure is as follows:

First, the type of deviant utterance is defined as either a mistake or an error. Corder (1967, 1971) introduced the error vs. mistake distinction into modern debate and he associates errors with failure in competence and mistakes with failure in performance, using Chomsky's distinction of the two.

The main factor that affects this distinction is intentionality. To use James' (1998:78) definition to distinguish the two, "an error is an instance of language that is unintentionally deviant and is not self-correctible by its author. A mistake is either intentionally or unintentionally deviant and self-correctible." Mistakes can be corrected by the user only if prompted. Slips, on the other hand, are self-corrected without prompt. Errors cannot be self-corrected until more input has been provided to the user; they are the outcome of ignorance of TL rules; in other words, the user needs more learning. It is in this content that the distinction is important because the teacher can tell if the learner is systematic in his or her use of the error, or that the deviant form is only a mistake that can be corrected by a prompt. Remedial action can be designed according to this distinction.

The second step in the analysis stage is assigning the grammar class of the error, i.e. the part of speech. To this category I have added the "Wh-words" as a separate item, since the whole subject of interrogatives is problematic to the APIs, and it is important for the research to distinguish the type of errors made in such questions.

The third step is to try and find a subcategory for the error according to the relevant part of speech. In the case of an error in the verb, I would like to know if it is in the verb tense or if the verb is auxiliary or not. The same could be said about the pronouns category; is it a pronominal copy, a possessive pronoun, etc? This subdivision is important for the stage of designing remedial action in order to eradicate the errors, where possible.

The fourth step is to decide if there is lexical connotation to the error; the original word might be correctly used, but is erroneous semantically. In this category, two levels were assigned; the use of a wrong lexical term, for example, small instead of short, and, semantic misrepresentation, where the utterance used is not what the user had intended, such as the use of food instead of bait, or home instead of dormitory. The general meaning is clear, but the semantic representation of the word is misleading. It is clear that the learner refers to communication strategies in order to express the meaning they intend; in this case, it is semantic narrowing. This type of error is indicative of the degree of exposure the learner has to the language.

The last step is to define the source of the error, whether it is Inter-lingual, or Intra-lingual. In the case of the former, cases of interference or transfer can be discussed. This category is important because, in the case where the source of the error is Inter-lingual, it allows us to research the effect of L1, L2 and L3 on English, i.e. cases of transfer.

To conclude this section regarding the aims of this research, it could be safely said that the use of transfer in EA can shed light on issues other than errors, like those dealing with cultural effects on the language. This view can be expressed in spite of the existing controversy, and similar to the general discussion above on error analysis as a whole. Again, when we examine the boundaries of the research, we see that certain arguments, despite being correctly presented, are more relevant to the issue of theory developing and do not affect the aims of this research. It is always a good idea to be aware of the controversy on a certain subject, but controversy should not stop us

from using the right tools to reach our aim, especially when modifications are made to take the problems into account.

After the analysis stage of the level of error, we move to analysing the modification the learner has made to the correct utterance. This can take one of several forms: omission, over-inclusion, misselection, disorder and blend. A sample of the respondents' writing is found in Appendix 3.

Finally, we have to determine the intended correct utterance in TL. This could be done in a variety of ways; either through the text itself, content, cohesion, etc., or through asking the learner, when possible, what they had intended when they used the utterance. Being the teacher of the participants in the research, I was able to ask the students to clarify the intended meaning almost always, thus providing a solution to the 'intentionality' issue mentioned above (James, 1998:76).

To conclude this stage, we can say that the process of identifying and analysing the errors is time consuming, and the process itself is controversial. However, throughout the whole process of EA, great care was followed to overcome any weaknesses that were part of the controversy about the subject. For instance, pupils were asked to explain any utterance which seemed unclear to me. I was always aware of the fact that EA was one of many means of explaining the pupils' Interlanguage, and therefore, the profiling of each pupil's Interlanguage took both the erroneous and non-erroneous utterances into consideration. In addition, further action was taken to improve the quality of the research as suggested by James (1998:116), for example, by assigning numbers to the repeated errors and not dealing with them separately. The knowledge

of the researcher of the other languages involved in the Inter-lingual errors helped to identify these errors related to interference. The use of a variety of genres provided access to the pupils' Interlanguages in different contexts, and finally, the use of systematic measures to analyse the errors, as those provided by the computer program, all helped in making the process less controversial. To conclude, many weaknesses found in the earlier stages of analysis were corrected so that the outcome would be more methodologically grounded.

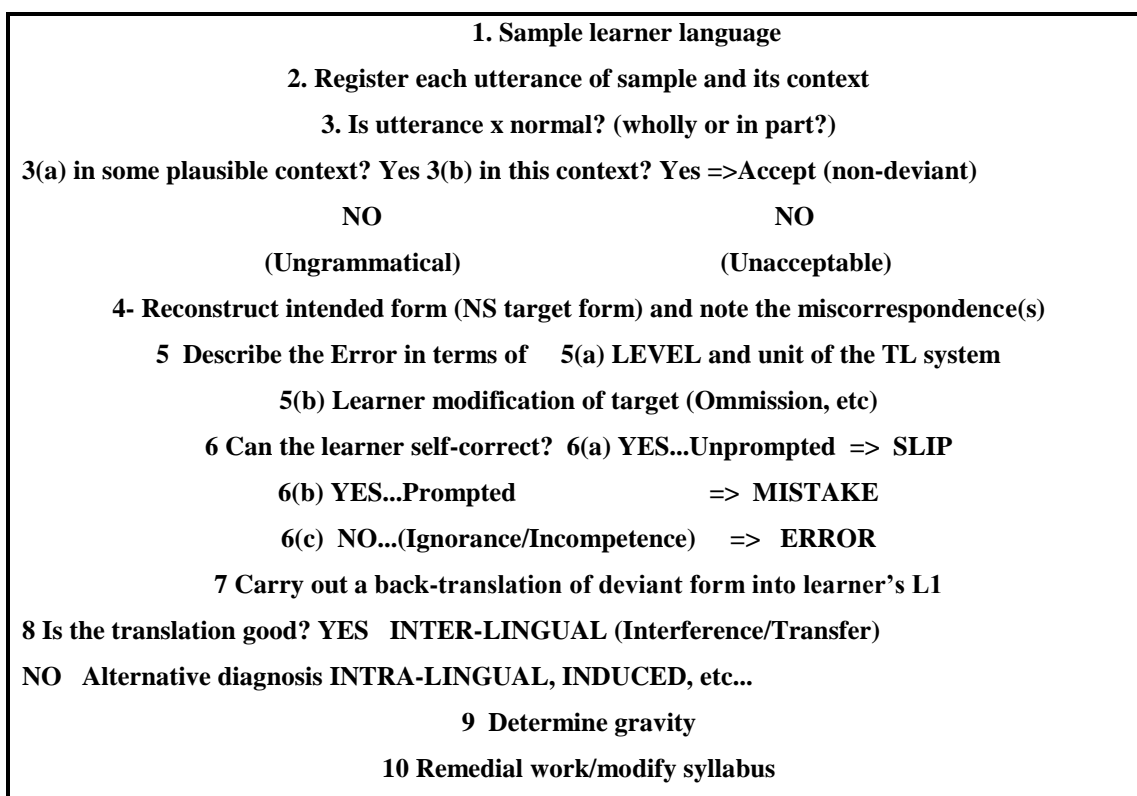
### **3.3.3.3 Data Coding**

After the data had been collected, it was coded into the computer by using a computer program that was especially developed for the research. The program accepts the data, and allows the user to build a profile of errors for each text. These errors can then be accessed for various statistical calculations. The idea for building the profile was adapted from Corder (1981), quoted in James (1998), and certain modifications were made to fit the special needs of the research. A by-product of the research will be a corpus of learner English of the APIs.

Following is the original algorithm used in the process of EA:

## Chart IV

### Corder's Algorithm for Error Analysis



This algorithm was originally proposed by Corder (1971, 1981) and subsequently elaborated by Levelt (1977).

During the coding stage the pupils were approached to clarify any legibility problems due to unclear handwriting. Although not instructed to, two pupils handed in their first task printed, but did not activate the spellchecker. Having the data typed facilitates the coding process, by allowing scanning, for example. In addition, there are no legibility problems, keeping in mind that many Arab pupils usually have orthographical difficulties. However, the main drawback of printed data is that this is not the way the pupils write on a daily basis, and some spelling errors could thus be corrected, even without the pupil being aware of it.



In the coding process, I was accurate in representing the written image of the text, so I copied the text the way it appeared on paper, including the spaces. I did not include the spaces in my error analysis, even if they were erroneous, because it was difficult to distinguish single spaces from double ones. This, of course, is one advantage of using printed data, but the element of keeping the pupils' original handwritten samples was considered to be more important.

Another factor that played an important role at this stage was that it was possible for me to ask the pupils to explain and clarify any ambiguities in their texts. This included asking the pupils to use L1 to explain what they meant when they used a certain utterance, which helped me determine the intended and correct meaning of the deviant form.

### **3.3.4 Data Analysis: Analysing Gain in Knowledge**

Another form of data analysis looked for the gain in knowledge among the respondents in the longitudinal research. The analysis was carried out in two ways:

The first looked at the errors in the same questionnaire that had been used in the cross-sectional research. As mentioned earlier, the respondents in the longitudinal research were asked to fill out the same questionnaire as the cross-section group so that it would be possible to compare the two groups. This was done at the beginning of the research when the respondents were still in Grade 10. Two years later, the same respondents were asked to fill out the questionnaire again, so that the two

questionnaires could be compared during a two-year interval, thus allowing for an insight into any gain of knowledge that might have occurred during this time.

The two questionnaires were compared in more than a single way depending on the section being analysed: the translation, or vocabulary section.

In the translation section, the correct vs. incorrect factor was looked into. Generally speaking, if a sentence that was translated correctly in the 12th Grade had been translated incorrectly in the 10<sup>th</sup>, then that should reflect gain in knowledge in that field. In this category, no special attention was given to the type of error since the aim was to compare between correct vs. wrong translation.

In the second section, that of the vocabulary, looking into patterns in the correct answers was important, since it was expected that the respondents would not really find difficulty in the translation of the vocabulary itself; what would be more indicative is the language and the way the word had been translated. In this section, the right vs. wrong dichotomy is only a minor indicator of progress.

#### **3.3.4.1 Assessing the Three Free-writing Texts**

In order to assess the three free-writing texts, an additional assessment tool had to be used, which would consider the language as a whole, not only the errors. The following two sections explain the rationale and process of the assessment tool.

### 3.3.4.1.1 Rationale for Assessment

The data in the longitudinal research have been collected and analysed for errors, however, as stated earlier in the research design, the objective of the longitudinal study was not only to look at the deviations in the written Interlanguage of the respondents, but to try and analyse it as a whole; looking for the characteristics of such a language so that a profile of the Arab pupil in Israel can be built.

In the Research Context chapter, I had mentioned that the pupils in Israel are now following a new English curriculum (see Appendix 7), although the respondents still follow the old curriculum. One of the major differences between the two curricula concerns assessment; while the old relied mostly on testing the product, the new curriculum looks for ways to assess the process. In the new curriculum, language was divided into four areas: Social Interaction, Access to Information, Presentation and Appreciation of Literature, Culture and Language. Each area had its clear standards, levels of progression, benchmarks and criteria for assessment. The learning process was thus perceived as a continuum, a paradigm compatible with the nature of this research, in that it investigated another continuum, the Interlanguage.

The written output of the 21 respondents will thus be analysed according to two domains: that of Presentation and that of Appreciation of Language.

The New Curriculum defines the standard of the first domain as:

*“Pupils present information and ideas in an organised and planned manner in a variety of formats, in both spoken and written English, on a wide range of topics”*(The English Curriculum 2002:28).

It is worth remembering here that the research deals only with written English.

As for the other domains:

*“Pupils appreciate the nature of language and the differences between English and other languages” (ibid: 30)*

In our context, by other languages we mean Arabic, Hebrew and any other language that might exist in the very rare cases where the mother tongue is different from Arabic (See Appendix 7). The point here is that the new curriculum encourages the learner to compare English to other languages, thus acquiring an additional perspective on the similarities and differences among languages.

#### **3.3.4.1.2 Designing a Rubric to test Presentation**

To test gain in knowledge in the respondents' Interlanguage, an assessment tool has to be developed which will cater to the following specifications and tests of appropriateness (Appendix 4):

1. it has to be objective
2. it has to assess processes, in addition to the final outcome
3. it has to include valid criteria
4. it has to include various aspects of the language

Three texts that were chosen for assessment were those that did not include targeted materials, i.e. the informal letter, the essay and the reflection. The other text types were targeted for specific syntactical structures, mostly for interrogatives. Another

text, which tested the process of translating simultaneously from the colloquial language into written English, was assessed separately because of its unique nature.

The process of assessment went as follows:

A copy of the texts for each respondent was printed with the errors emboldened and underlined. This was done in order to facilitate the assessment of certain criteria, such as accuracy.

The assessment was carried out according to the chart described in Appendix 4. The maximum mark a respondent could achieve for a certain criterion was three points, indicating that the progress expected at this level had been achieved. A mark of two indicated partial progress, while a mark of one reflected no progress whatsoever. The minimum mark a respondent could get for the whole 11 criteria is 11, and the maximum is 33. The texts that were analysed had been written on 22-5-01; 7-02-02, and 29-5-02. All texts had been written in class and, already, analysed for errors.

The analysis was carried out by calculating the Mean. The three texts were compared to see if a pattern emerged that would indicate clear gain in knowledge especially as the three texts were written in different periods of time. Needless to say, the type of text and other affective factors will always have an impact on the results. Still, the criteria used in the assessment process should give an idea about the progress of the respondents in the domains of Presentation and Appreciation of Language.

## **The Cross-sectional Study**

### **3.3.5 Considerations Regarding the Cross-sectional Study**

The following factors were taken into consideration while designing the cross-sectional study:

- a. All the pupils taking part in the research follow the same English syllabus, and though not all of them necessarily use the same textbooks, most of them do, due to the limited local publishers' market, and the need for approved books by the Ministry of Education. The syllabus is centralised, and all the pupils at a certain level are expected to learn certain linguistic features of the English language. This situation, although it does not reflect the intake of the pupils, can at least guarantee that the input in the classroom is somehow similar.
- b. To cover the Arab sector in Israel, pupils had to be chosen from the following demographic backgrounds; pupils living in Arab-only cities, Arab-only villages, the Bedouin sector, and mixed Jewish-Arab cities.
- c. The method used for data collection was a questionnaire. This method was chosen because of its practicality due to the number of participants, 280, and to the distance of the schools. However, this method has its limitations. A pilot questionnaire

was therefore administered to pupils in grade 9, so that the material itself would not be difficult to the participants because the research was not intended to test proficiency in English, but rather other linguistic influences. The questionnaire was subsequently adjusted. In addition, the questionnaire was shown to ninth-grade teachers to get their approval of the standard of the materials included there. None of the 5 teachers asked objected to it. The inclusion of the ninth grade in the sample helped to look at the learners at the end of junior-high school, and compare them to the tenth graders who were at the same level of the respondents in the longitudinal study.

### **3.3.5.1 Nature of the Data**

The design of the cross-sectional questionnaire accounted for the fact that the raw data to be collected in the cross-sectional study were not meant to test English proficiency, but rather cross-linguistic influences among the three languages that exist in the APIs' linguistic repertoires.

The questionnaire consisted of two parts: the first dealt with translations from and into the three languages. Each sentence was meant to test a specific structure, with a different degree of difficulty. A sentence like "What time is it?" tested exposure to English in very common, mundane language situations. Other sentences, especially those given in Arabic, tested inflection, subject-verb agreement, animate vs. inanimate nouns and word order in what seems to be a very simple structure in Arabic, but

needs a high degree of processing when translated into English. Again, at the lexis level, the sentences did not include any unfamiliar vocabulary.

The second part, which consisted of a list of 15 words in English, was intended to check more than simply knowledge of English. There were a few words that checked for exposure to culture in English, such as ‘hotdogs’ and ‘remote control’, which could create a problem for some pupils, although the reassurance I had received from the English teachers who taught lower grades, and my own experience in the field, made me decide to retain them.

In the second part the pupils were asked to answer in Arabic or in Hebrew. The idea was to see who will choose Arabic and which Arabic, Colloquial or MSA, and, who will choose Hebrew only. There will also be those who will choose both languages, although the instructions did not ask them to do so. Once the data had been collected, it would be possible to look for patterns that characterise these choices and relate them to the demographic background, whether living in Arab-only, or mixed Jewish-Arab cities.

For a detailed explanation of the rationale behind the questionnaire, see Appendix 2.

### **3.3.5.2 Choosing the Sample**

The pupils in the cross-sectional study were chosen from grades nine and ten, the same grade as the pupils in the longitudinal research. No specific requirements were



made by me as to the academic quality of the pupils, and it was up to the teachers who helped me administer the questionnaire to choose the class.

The pupils represent the API in the following sectors:

- a. Arab-only city dwellers. These pupils live and attend to schools where Colloquial Arabic is the language of communication. Hebrew is used only instrumentally, dealing with the official authorities, or at school, in the Hebrew lessons. Some textbooks, especially in the sciences, are written in Hebrew, but the instruction language remains Colloquial Arabic. However, the exposure to Hebrew is always there, especially in the media.

The socio-economic status is average, and many work in white-collar jobs in their cities. Industry is almost non-existent in the Arab cities, and industrial and construction workers have to travel to Jewish cities for their livelihood.

- b. Arab-only villages. Today, most of the villages have their own secondary schools. However, many parents prefer to send their pupils to more prestigious schools in the nearby cities, especially those run by private bodies.

One of the main differences between city and village dwellers is that, in the latter, you can still find people working in agriculture,

and the family representation is much stronger than that in the cities. Many villages are characterised by having one or two big dominant families, a fact that can cause some social instability, especially during the elections for the local councils.

The socio-economic status in the villages is also average, with a tendency to being low, especially in times of economic troubles in the country, like the situation now (2002-4), where the highest rates of unemployment are always in the Arab villages.

- c. The Bedouin region. These pupils live in the south of the country, in the Negev desert. The Bedouins used to live a nomadic life in this part of the country, and for them there were no borders to prevent them from moving to water and grazing areas. When the Bedouins found a long-term supply of their needs, they settled down in the area. Some tribes settled in the Negev area. With the establishment of Israel in 1948, many Bedouins found they were cut off from other tribe members, and their nomadic life had to stop. The government tried to confine the Bedouins to permanent settlements, but the move was unsuccessful; some refused to move and are still living in unrecognised villages, where no municipal services are provided. Those who took the offer found themselves living in ghettos, with soaring unemployment rates, neglect from the authorities, and severe socio-economic problems. Needless to say living in such an environment has a devastating effect on the

academic achievement of the pupils. The region has the lowest results in the Bagrut exams nationwide.

- d. Mixed cities dwellers. Pupils were chosen from one of the mixed cities in the country where the majority of the population is Jewish. The Arabs usually live in their own neighbourhoods. These Arabs use Hebrew on a daily basis and it has become a part of their linguistic repertoire. Many of them are fluent in Hebrew and the Arabic they use is characterised by its high incidence of Hebrew expressions. The pupils in these mixed cities are exposed to a more modern way of living than those living in the more traditional Arab-only cities and villages.

### **3.3.5.3 Choosing the Schools**

The four schools were chosen according to the demographic backgrounds of their pupils: those who live in an Arab-only city, in a mixed Jewish-Arab city, in the Arab Bedouin region in the South of Israel, and the fourth from Arab-only villages. This selection, in addition to the demographic background, enables the research to look into the effect of transfer to English from Arabic and Hebrew as well.

#### **3.3.5.4 Data Collection of the Cross-sectional Study**

The cross-sectional study was carried out in three centres that represented the Arab demographic distribution in Israel and comprised 280 respondents from the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades. The first centre had pupils from Arab-only cities and villages; two schools were chosen for the study, and the respondents came from more than 40 Arab villages and cities, mostly from the Galilee area. The second centre was in a mixed city with a Jewish dominance in the Tel Aviv area. The third centre was also in an Arab-only city, but unlike the previous centre, all the respondents came from the Bedouin sector in the south of the country.

A copy of the questionnaire (Appendix 1) was faxed to two of the schools selected for the study (the Bedouin and the mixed city schools). After having received the principal's agreement for the study, I attached a letter to the fax explaining the procedure to be followed for administering the questionnaire. I talked to the English teachers in the schools on the phone and explained the nature of the research. The teachers were asked not to interfere or answer any questions, and to make sure that the pupils worked individually. The time allotted to the task was 40 minutes. I talked to the teachers after the questionnaires had been collected, and they reported that everything went according to the instructions.

#### **3.3.6 Data Analysis**

After the questionnaires had been received, the answers were coded according to the nature of the answers; some were categorised as being right or wrong only, while

others had a number of categories checked in them. Unlike the longitudinal study, where the utterance was either correct or incorrect, the answers here could have a variety of forms, especially in the part that asked for translation. An answer could be correct in one language, while partly correct in the other, or, some pupils might have opted to give the meaning of a word in MSA, while others in Colloquial Arabic. Some respondents, for example, answered only in Hebrew, or part in Hebrew and part in Arabic. Therefore, the categorisation of the answers had to take all of these possibilities into consideration.

Generally speaking, the answers were divided into two main categories: the correct answers and the wrong ones. The first category was divided into sub-categories according to the different languages used in the answer and the different ways of providing the correct answer, while the other part was divided into patterns of errors, including the language issue as well. This division would allow for comparisons among the different groups to be carried out, both horizontally (age) and diagonally (city types).

### **3.3.6.1 Statistical Analysis**

The statistical analysis used in the cross-sectional study was descriptive in nature and looked mostly for frequencies and cross-tabs. Correlations between certain factors, such as the language used and city type, were looked into. Significance at the ( $p=0.05$ ) level was considered for analysing the first question in the questionnaire.

## **Summary**

In this chapter I have explained the methodological considerations and the research design that guided me in doing this research. Throughout the chapter, I have kept in mind the fact that the whole issue of EA is controversial, and therefore I have provided measures to address controversial factors by overcoming the methodological weaknesses mentioned in the literature on the subject. The profiling of the APIs' Interlanguage, including both deviant and non-deviant utterances, was prepared through a set of systematic measures that should guarantee an objective representation of the characteristics of this Interlanguage. However, as the paradigm used in the main research does not separate language from the learner and considers the whole research as being situated (Lave and Wenger: 1991), the issue of numbers and statistics in a learner language should be considered as representing one aspect only of that learner's linguistic production. The process of how this language was produced is outside the boundaries of this research.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **FACTUAL FINDINGS**

#### **Introduction**

The conceptual framework that has guided this research sets three levels for the analysis of the data: linguistic, cultural and socio-political. As Diagram 1 shows, the analysis of each level separately will provide the factual findings of the research; the combination of two levels will give the interpretive findings, and finally, the interaction of the three levels will provide evidence for the conceptual findings, which are discussed in the following chapter.

This chapter starts by presenting the findings from the main longitudinal research, each according to the research design in the previous chapter. The texts that have been analysed are:

- Texts 1+2 Targeted structures- Interrogatives.
- Texts 3+8 The cross-sectional questionnaire.
- Texts 4+6+7 Free writing (Informal letter-Essay- Attitude about English).
- Text 5 Targeted Translation – Colloquial Arabic.

The findings that are presented are the result of analysing the data according to the following criteria:

1. The linguistic level:
  - a. Error analysis of the interrogatives (Texts number 1+2+ part of 8).
  - b. Error analysis of the other texts (Texts number 3-7).
  - c. Performance analysis of the three free-writing texts (Texts number 4+6+7).
  - d. Developmental patterns in the three free-writing texts (Texts 4+6+7).
  - e. Gain in knowledge in the questionnaire used for the cross-sectional study (Texts number 3+8).
  
2. Affective factors: (The term "affective" is used in the broad sense here since some of the factors (e+f) are only affective insofar as they affect attitude/acculturation.)
  - a. Motivational factors.
  - b. Exposure to language.
  - c. Cultural factors.
  - d. Learning environment.
  - e. Socio-economic background.
  - f. Socio-political background.

The second section will analyse the data collected in the cross-sectional study. The analysis covers the following aspects:



1. The Translation Section

- a. Translation from Arabic into English and vice versa.
- b. Translation from Arabic into Hebrew and vice versa.
- c. Translation from English into Hebrew and vice versa.

2. The Vocabulary Section

- a. Cognates in Arabic.
- b. Cognates in Hebrew.
- c. City names.
- d. Words with cultural connotations.
- e. Words with political connotations.

## **Section I Factual Findings of the Longitudinal Study**

### **4.1 Error Analysis of the Interrogative Tasks:**

The respondents of the longitudinal research were given three tasks that dealt with interrogatives. As mentioned in the previous chapter, asking questions is an important part of the syllabus and it is one example where fossilization usually occurs.

Although the error analysis performed on the texts covered all parts of speech, only the relevant ones -mainly verbs- are dealt with here. In the case of targeted structures, there is usually one specific side of language that is investigated. In this specific structure, the errors are usually either in the use of the auxiliary verb, or the main verb itself. Other errors can be in the word order (errors of misorder), or, to a lesser degree, the use of the correct 'Wh' word, or the omission of a question mark, or replacing it with a full stop (See Appendix 8 for a sample page of the computer program used for analysing the errors).

### **Summary of Findings**

The findings show that there are two issues in interrogatives that cause a problem for the APIs: the main problem is in the use of the verb, and the secondary one is in the word order required in that structure.

#### **4.1.1 Findings of the Verb-Category Errors in Interrogatives**

Here are the findings of the three targeted tasks on interrogatives:

**Table 1**  
**Display of Findings of the Verb-Category: Errors in Interrogatives**

Part of Speech	Task –1 October, 2000	Task –2 December, 2000	Task –3 October, 2002
Verb – main	85	64	49
Verb – tense	37	22	4
Verb - auxiliary	23	27	31
3 <sup>rd</sup> person –s	3	7	13

The findings show that in the period of two years, errors in the verb category have decreased, although they have levelled off at around 40% improvement rate. Within the same verb category, learning seems to be taking place regarding the use of the verb tense, but at the same time the use of auxiliary verbs still creates a problem. The same could be said about using, or overusing (double marking) the 3<sup>rd</sup> person -‘s’ with interrogatives. For example, sentences like, “Does this computer has a problem?”; “How much does this ticket costs?” and “Who usually go with you?” reflect the different variations of such use, whether it be the double marking error of using the 3<sup>rd</sup> person –s in the first and second sentences, or the omission of the –es in the third sentence, mostly morpheme errors.

The more tenses the pupils are exposed to, the more errors there are in the use of the auxiliary verbs. If finishing high school is an indication, there is a trend of fossilisation taking place in the use of the Present Simple, the Present Perfect and the Past Simple tenses. The ‘progressive’ tenses, such as the Present Progressive are acquired more easily than the other tenses. The addition of the progressive ‘-ing’ to the verb is less problematic to the pupils than the third form required in the Perfect tenses. This might have to do with L1 where the formation of the progressive requires changing the base form of the verb, while the Perfect itself does not exist in Arabic. As mentioned in Chapter One, Arabic has two tenses only, Present and Past.

## **4.2 Error Analysis of the Three Free-writing Texts:**

### **Summary of Findings**

In performing Error Analysis on the three texts of the free-writing style, among the longitudinal research group, the findings reveal that:

- a. Most errors were at the category of syntax, followed by morphology.
- b. In the spelling-errors category, which included punctuation as an item, it was found that punctuation was the major cause for errors, followed by capitalisation errors. All these errors are related to the category of mechanics in the writing system.
- c. In the syntax errors category, the main errors were those related to verbs (aspect, tense, morpheme errors...)
- d. In terms of the source of errors, the majority of errors were due to Intra-lingual factors, so that transfer caused only about 10% of the errors.
- e. In the category of modification of errors, most errors were due to misselection, followed by omission.

### **4.2.1 Findings of the Three Free Writing Tasks**

The following section looks into the findings of the errors in the three free-writing samples: the letter, the essay and the reflection on the importance of English. These are the same texts that will be subjected to Performance Analysis, where the language as a whole, not only the errors, will be compared among them, looking for gain of knowledge achieved during the period of time that had passed between the first, second and third texts.

**Table 2**  
**Mean Distribution of Type-of-Error Category in the Three Texts**

<b>Text</b>	<b>Spelling Errors</b>	<b>Non-spelling errors</b>	<b>Total</b>
Letter	45%	55%	100%
Essay	38%	62%	100%
Reflection	44%	56%	100%
<b>Average</b>	<b>42.33%</b>	<b>57.67%</b>	<b>100%</b>

The findings show that spelling causes almost 42% of the errors made by the respondents.

Table 3 displays the type of errors under the spelling-error category:

**Table 3**  
**Mean Distribution of Spelling Errors in the Three Texts**

<b>Text</b>	<b>Labials</b>	<b>Vowels</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Capitalization</b>	<b>Punctuation</b>	<b>Total</b>
Letter	0.2%	22.2%	17.7%	17.7%	42.2%	100%
Essay	0%	25.3%	23.6%	18.1%	33%	100%
Reflection	2.5%	20.4%	18.1%	29.5%	29.5%	100%
<b>Average</b>	<b>0.9%</b>	<b>22.63%</b>	<b>19.80%</b>	<b>21.77%</b>	<b>34.90%</b>	<b>100%</b>

The findings show that-among spelling errors on average-the highest rate is that of punctuation (34.9%), followed by errors in the use of vowels (22.63%). Errors due to phonetic problems, such as the use of the /p/ and /b/ phonemes, form less than 1% of the spelling-errors category. Capitalisation errors form almost 22% of the total number of errors. Punctuation errors are mostly caused by omission of commas. Arabic behaves differently in its stylistics rules as to when and how to use commas,

which are usually substituted by conjunctions. Generally speaking, Arabic is much more liberal than English in the use of punctuation marks. Moreover, not having capital letters in Arabic affects the awareness of using full stops at the end of the sentence, since, as teachers, we have always stressed the combination between the use of full stops, question marks and capital letters.

Examples regarding this type of error can be found in different variations, from the non-use of a capital letter at the beginning of a sentence, or with proper nouns, such as “palestine”, “canade(i)an” and “english”, to the random use of capitals in any place in the word or sentence, such as “iF”, “This” and “Trees”. The fact that Arabic does not have capital letter seems to impede noticing when one is needed.

Table 4 displays the mean distribution of errors according to the part-of-speech category:

**Table 4**  
**Mean Distribution of Errors according to the Part-of-Speech Category**

<b>Text</b>	<b>Pron.</b>	<b>Noun</b>	<b>Adj</b>	<b>Verb</b>	<b>Adv.</b>	<b>Prep.</b>	<b>Art.</b>	<b>Conj.</b>	<b>Phr.</b>	<b>Total</b>
Letter 1	12%	8%	10%	40%	4%	10%	8%	5%	3%	100%
Essay	12%	15%	6%	36%	2%	14%	7%	5%	3%	100%
Reflection	8%	11%	8%	37%	3%	11%	12%	6%	3%	100%
<b>Average</b>	<b>10.7%</b>	<b>11.3%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>37.7%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>11.7%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>5.3%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Pron=Pronoun; Adj=Adjective; Adv=Adverb; Prep=Preposition; Art=Article; Conj=Conjunction; Phr=Phrase (not a word)**

The findings show that, in the category of parts of speech, the highest cause of errors is that of verbs (37.7%), followed by prepositions (11.7%) and then nouns (11.3%). These findings are indicative of the rate of errors made in comparison to the number of occurrences of the appropriate part of speech used, but they do not tell, for

example, that the use of adverbs is almost error-free; the respondents use verbs far more than adjectives or adverbs.

Errors in this category include not only syntactical errors, but lexical errors as well. The respondents confused nouns with verbs, had problems with tenses and some common confusables, such as “do” and “make”. A widespread lexical error in the verb category is the use of “learn” instead of “study”.

Table 5 displays the Mean distribution of cause of error (intra-lingual / inter-lingual / other):

**Table 5**  
**Mean Distribution of Cause of Error (Intra-lingual / Inter-lingual / Other)**

<b>Text</b>	<b>Intra-lingual</b>	<b>Inter-lingual</b>	<b>Other*</b>	<b>Total</b>
Letter 1	72%	10%	18%	100%
Essay	77%	11%	12%	100%
Reflection	81%	8%	11%	100%
<b>Average</b>	<b>76.7%</b>	<b>9.7%</b>	<b>13.7%</b>	<b>100%</b>

\* Punctuation mistakes are included among “other” since it is unclear what causes them.

The findings show that 76.7% of the cause of errors is Intra-lingual, compared to 9.7% Inter-lingual. The remainder of “other” errors is mostly related to errors of punctuation.

Examples of Intra-lingual errors include all kinds of spelling errors, wrong forms of verbs, lexical errors, syntactical and morpho-syntactical errors. Word order, the use of auxiliary verbs and comparison of adjectives all fit into this category.

As for the Inter-lingual errors, they can be manifested in the wrong use of prepositions, such as In Monday; the overuse of the definite article “the”, such as: “The life is beautiful”; errors of agreement, especially with inanimate objects that are singular in Arabic, and plural in English, such as “This trees is big”, and finally verbs that can be derived from nouns in Arabic, while the same derivative holds a different meaning in English, such as “I backed from school”, meaning “came back”. A similar error is that of using “learn” for “teach”, since both derive from the same root in Arabic.

In the “other” category, the analysis could not reveal the cause of errors in punctuation, such as the under-use of commas, or the omission of full stops and question marks. Although Arabic is less demanding than English when it comes to punctuation, it was difficult to establish whether the error originated from a mis-application of the rule in English, or from the loose use of punctuation in Arabic.

Table 6 displays the Mean distribution of modification of errors in the four texts:

**Table 6**  
**Mean Distribution of Modification of Errors in the Four Texts**

<b>Text</b>	<b>Omission</b>	<b>Over-inclusion</b>	<b>Misselection</b>	<b>Misorder</b>	<b>Total</b>
Letter 1	23%	14%	56%	7%	100%
Essay	19%	13%	63%	5%	100%
Reflection	31%	12%	52%	5%	100%
<b>Average</b>	<b>24.3%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>5.7%</b>	<b>100%</b>

The findings show that, in the category of error modification, on average, misselection is the main cause of errors (57%), followed by omission (24.3%), and



then by errors of over-inclusion (13%). Errors due in disorder, such as in interrogatives, accounted for 5.7% of the errors.

Errors of omission include the omission of the indefinite article in the sentence “I want to tell you about very interesting meeting” (Respondent number 1); or the pronoun in “Do you believe?”. The omission of a letter or letters from a word, or a comma from a sentence, also belongs to this category. Another example is the omission of the relative pronoun, among other omissions, in the sentence “I want something in area (where) I cant communicate” (7).

Errors of over-inclusion are best demonstrated in the numerous examples of the retaining of the definite article “the”, or the topic marker in “milan it’s very buatifull city”(15). Over-inclusion of letters in a word, or punctuation marks is also included here.

Errors of misselection, are, in fact, the most common since they simply refer to the wrong choice the learner has made. Instead of the Past Tense, the learner chooses the Present Perfect; or, the addition of the Past Tense morpheme –ed to the verb “shake”, instead of “shook”<sup>6</sup>. This category shows that the learner was not out of choices, but rather had made the wrong one. These errors are an indication of the state of knowing and not knowing a rule, and are considered typical transitional errors.

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<sup>6</sup> Although this example reflects a similar transition error in acquiring English as L1, where learners use ‘shake-shook-shaked and then shook’ again, the modification made by the learner in this case was to select the wrong form of the past tense; ‘shaked’ for ‘shook’. The learner is aware of ‘took’ for ‘take’, but is not aware of the possibility of applying the same rule here.

Finally, errors of disorder deal mostly with variations to the rigid rules of the English language regarding word order. Errors such as “When the people will understand...?” (9), are a good example of this type. Another example of errors that are in the same category is “no body had seen her” (15). Disorder also refers to spelling mistakes at word level, such as ‘freind’.

### **4.3 Error Analysis of the Colloquial-Arabic Translation Task**

This task was carried out differently to the others:

Firstly, it was timed. Although the pupils were given sufficient time to finish translating each sentence, they were still under pressure and the degree of anxiety was much higher than in the other tasks.

Secondly, the text dealt with the spoken Colloquial language. To reiterate, the diglossic nature of Arabic puts the Colloquial language in the speaking and listening domains, while MSA deals with reading and writing. The situation that the respondents faced in this task was different because they had to translate from the produced Colloquial language, through the ‘written’ MSA. Usually, when the Arab learners produce a written text in English, they ‘think’ in MSA, which is closer to the written medium than the Colloquial language.

Thirdly, using the researcher’s local dialect in Colloquial Arabic might also require ‘translation’ to the pupils’ own dialect. Colloquial Arabic has a variety of dialects, but although these variations do not cause a problem in communication, they still need processing.

For all of these reasons this text was analysed separately. However, the findings were not dissimilar to those of the other texts.

Spelling mistakes constituted 35% of all errors, less than the average of the other texts, in spite of the fact that it was written under pressure. In terms of syntax errors, the verb category comprised 58.46% of all errors, followed by the pronouns category at 16.41%. As for the 'Grammar class', errors in the verb tense constituted 36.7% of total errors under the verb category and auxiliary verbs were 13.51%. Inter-lingual errors comprised 8.7% within the source-of-error category, and 'misselection' was the main reason for errors in the 'modification' category with a rate of 56.7% of all errors.

To sum up, the pupils did nearly the same as, or sometimes better than, the other texts. It seems that using the Colloquial language did not create a unique problem in the pupils' ILs.

When we come to sampling some of the errors of this genre, we come across the fact that since the text was both Colloquial and spoken at the same time, many of the respondents used the opportunity to change the original text into other semantically-similar texts, but not necessarily faithful to the origin. For example, the expression "What a beautiful car!" was changed into "Waw! It's a great car" (2). The word "beautiful", which was spelled in all possible combinations, was replaced by nice, great, pretty and wonderful. There were two respondents who did not translate the sentence at all, and there was one who only translated part of it. When asked for the reason they said they had been busy translating the other sentences.

Whether Colloquial or not, some common errors did appear in all the genres: the problem of using the Present Perfect tense also surfaced in this text. The sentence “How long haven’t you seen him?” was translated into: “How long do you see him?”(5); “How long do you don’t see him” (7); “How many time haven’t you seen him?” (9), and “How many days you don’t have seen it?”(11), among others. The way the sentence combined both negation and the use of a period of time must have created a problem for the respondents, who used all possible variations of auxiliary verbs and tenses. Although it is not the aim of this study to investigate it, this text in Colloquial Arabic reflects the different communication strategies that the respondents have used in their effort to transfer a spoken text in the low variety of a diglossic language, through its high variety, and then into a foreign language. This process is much more complicated than the almost direct translation of an MSA written text into written English.

One final example of another syntax feature in which respondents made errors was that of the pronominal copy in the relative sentences. A sentence like “have you seen the book I was reading it this morning” was common among them (Respondents number 1,2,4,5,8,9....). The fact that the pronominal copy is a feature of both varieties in Arabic has led most of the respondents to use it in their translation. This text, being spoken, seems to have had no effect on the use of this feature, which is so common among the APIs at all levels.

#### **4.4 Gain in Knowledge**

Due to the developmental nature of IL, it is possible in longitudinal studies to look for developmental patterns in certain categories. While error analysis remains limited in its scope due to the focus on erroneous occurrences, performance analysis can shed more light on developmental patterns since it deals with both correct and deviant linguistic structures.

#### **Summary of Findings**

The three free writing texts were assessed according to the rubrics stated in Chapter 3 (Assessment of the Longitudinal Research). The texts were collected when the respondents were in grades 10, 11 and 12, each text covering a different year. The findings of assessing each text and comparing them should reflect any gain in knowledge.

In investigating gain in knowledge in the three free-writing passages in the longitudinal research, the results show the following findings regarding the nature of the tested criteria:

1. In the criteria of: accuracy, register, awareness and organisation of language, the results showed a clear pattern of progress in each criterion within the time frame of the research, a fact that could indicate gain in knowledge.
2. In the criteria of: content, organisation, syntax, vocabulary and appropriacy, the findings reflected a mixed pattern of progress and regression, which may indicate

that certain criteria are easier to master than others. Of course, the results may change according to the nature of the task, or the time when it is done.

3. When comparing text 1 with text 3, all criteria, except for organization, reflected gain in knowledge in the relevant criteria.

#### **4.4.1 Gain in Knowledge in the Three Free Writing Tasks:**

Table 7 displays the findings of the Mean distribution of the grades given to each criterion of the three texts. There emerges a pattern of gain in knowledge.

Table 7 displays the findings of the Mean distribution of the grades given to each criterion of the three texts. There emerges a pattern of gain in knowledge:

**Table 7**  
**Mean Distribution of Criteria of Assessment in the Three Free-Writing Texts**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Text 1</b>	<b>Text 2</b>	<b>Text 3</b>
Accuracy	1.5	1.5	1.8
Register	1.8	1.8	2.2
Awareness	1.9	1.9	2.0
Organisation of Language	2.0	2.0	2.2

The findings indicate that the criterion of ‘register’ shows the greatest improvement, followed by ‘accuracy’. The findings also show that no improvement whatsoever occurred between the first and second texts (The results are out of 3).

Table 8 reflects a changing pattern among the three texts

**Table 8**  
**Comparison of the Criteria of Assessment in the Three Texts**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Text 1</b>	<b>Text 2</b>	<b>Text 3</b>
Content	2.1	2.0	2.3
Organisation	2.2	1.9	2.1
Syntax	1.6	1.5	1.8
Topic	2.1	2.0	2.4
Vocabulary	1.9	1.7	2.1
Appropriacy	2.0	1.8	2.1

Although the findings reflect a mixed pattern of gain and loss of knowledge regarding the different criteria among the three texts, there is a clear pattern of gain in knowledge among all criteria, except organization, between the first and third texts.

#### **4.4.2 Gain in Knowledge in the Cross-section Questionnaire**

After having carried out error analysis on the two identical texts, a comparison was made in order to test gain in knowledge in the pupils' answers during the period of the research. As mentioned above, comparing the results of the respondents in grade 10 with the results of the cross-section study will add to the representability of the longitudinal research.

Table 9 displays the results of the translation section in the three languages: Arabic, Hebrew and English.

**Table 9**  
**Display of Findings of Gain in Knowledge in the Translation Section of the Longitudinal Study**

No.	S	T	Grade 10		Grade 12	
			Correct answers	Percentage	Correct answers	Percentage
1	A	E	7/21	33	9/20	45
<b>9</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>13/20</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>20/20</b>	<b>100</b>
2	A	E	10/21	48	14/20	70
11	A	H	17/20	85	20/20	100
3	A	E	20/21	95	20/20	100
12	A	H	16/19	84	19/20	95
4	A	E	15/21	71	15/20	75
<b>13</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>8/20</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>18/20</b>	<b>90</b>
5	A	E	8/21	38	11/20	55
<b>14</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>8/20</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>17/20</b>	<b>85</b>
6	A	E	11/21	52	12/20	60
<b>7</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11/20</b>	<b>55</b>
15	A	H	13/21	62	14/20	70
<b>8</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>1/21</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>18/20</b>	<b>90</b>
17	H	A	15/20	75	19/20	95
10	E	H	14/20	70	16/20	80
16	E	A	14/20	70	16/20	80
*18	H	A	20/20	100	19/19	100

This sentence tests Word Order only – Correct means SV. A= Arabic, H=Hebrew, E=English.

The results show that there has been an increase in knowledge in all the sentences translated from and into the three languages. Significant results have been found in the translation of the following sentences:

Translating the Hebrew “beān kama attah?” into English- literally, “son of how many (years) (are) you?”



Translating the following sentences from Arabic into Hebrew:

“al-hayātu ġamīlatun” (the life beautiful); “hāḏā al-kitābu qadīmun” (this the book old); “hāḏihi al-a šġāru kabīratun” (this the trees big) and “turīdu al-mu’allimatu an ta’rifa ismaka” (wants the teacher (feminine) to know your name).

As for the vocabulary section, significant results were found in the translation of the following three words into Arabic: Computer, Police Station and Remote Control. These results reflect a trend of an increase in using Modern Standard Arabic in the pupils’ linguistic repertoires.

Table 10 displays the results of the significant findings in the gain in knowledge in the vocabulary section:

**Table 10**  
**Display of Findings of the Gain in Knowledge in the Vocabulary Section**

No.	Word	Lan.	Grade 10		Grade 12	
			Correct Answers	Percentage	Correct Answers	Percentage
1	Computer	MSA	7	37	17	85
1		COL	6	32		
1		HEB	3	16	3	15
1		MIX	3	16		
		Tot.	19		20	
2	Police Station	MSA	8	38	15	75
2		COL	5	24	2	10
2		HEB	3	14	3	15
2		MIX	5	24		
		Tot.	21		20	
3	Remote Control	MSA	20	100	14	70
3		COL			1	5
3		HEB			5	25
3		MIX				
		Tot.	20		20	

#### 4.5 Error Analysis of the Cross-Section Questionnaire

Table 11 displays the results of the error analysis carried out on the same text by the respondents in grades 10 and 12.

**Table 11**  
**Display of the Results of Error Analysis in the Two Elicitation Tasks**

Type of Error	Elicitation-1 (6/3/2001)	Elicitation-2 (12/10/2002)	Gain / Loss in Knowledge
Pronoun	18	11	+ 7
Noun	6	8	- 2
Adjective	7	0	+ 7
Preposition	10	13	-3
Articles	23	20	+3
Articles – Over inclusion of “the”.	15	11	+4
Verb	63	43	+ 20
Verb - Tense	9	8	+1
Verb – Auxiliary	12	6	+6
Verb - 3rd Person ‘s’	37	24	+13

The findings show that there has been a decrease in the number of errors in almost all the categories above. The elimination of errors in the adjective category is significant. The use of articles, mostly the definite article, poses a problem for the respondents: of the 20 errors in the use of articles, 11 were due to overuse of the definite article. This is one of the cases where transfer from L1 is evident. The use of the definite article in “The life is beautiful” in 11 of the original 15 cases reflects the kind of stubborn errors that persist in the respondents’ IL.

Under the verb category, although there has been a decrease of 20 errors in general use, the number of errors due to the misuse of the third person ‘s’ was still high. The use of the verb ‘want’ in the sentence “The teacher want to know your name” is indicative of the problem some respondents still face regarding this syntax feature.

## **4.6 Learning Environment of the APIs**

The learning environment questionnaire was designed to help understand the environment in which the respondents live away from school. The data collected can help provide depth to the cases under investigation and, at the same time, explore the learners' realities as seen through their eyes.

### **Summary of findings**

The respondents of the longitudinal research have the following attitudes towards the following criteria:

#### **4.6.1 Motivational factors for learning languages**

The findings show that the respondents are motivated to a certain degree to learn languages. What creates this motivation is whether the learning of a certain language affects their academic future or not. Arabic, for example, is not perceived as such.

#### **4.6.2 Exposure to languages**

The findings show that the respondents are much more exposed to Hebrew than English in their daily-life contact with languages.

### 4.6.3 Cultural factors

The findings show that the respondents have a positive attitude towards Western culture, although that attitude is not necessarily shared by those in the surroundings in which they live.

### 4.6.4 Learning Environment and Socio-economic Factors

The findings show that the respondents, apart from the political situation, live in a favourable learning environment.

## 4.7 Respondents' Attitude Regarding the Importance of Languages

The following table reflects the respondents' attitudes towards the importance of the three languages in their present and future academic lives. The findings are sorted from the most to the least important:

**Table 12**  
**Attitudes Regarding the Importance of Arabic, Hebrew and English in the Pupils' Lives**

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Agree that Hebrew is important for living in Israel	100 %
Respondents' parents believe that English is one of the most important subjects for academic success in the future.	86 %
Agree that Arabic is important for living in Israel	81 %
Agree that English is important for living in Israel	76 %
Respondents believe that their parents provide them with a facilitative learning environment.	72 %
Respondents believe that English is one of the most important subjects for academic success in the future.	71 %
Respondents are encouraged to watch English programs by their families.	67 %
Respondents love their mother tongue	67 %
Arabic is important for academic success	29 %

The findings show that, apart from the importance of Arabic for academic success, the respondents have positive attitudes to learning languages.

All respondents agree that knowing Hebrew is essential to living in Israel, while only 81% believe the same about Arabic. English, being an international language, is in third place regarding the importance of knowing a language in Israel.

While 67% of the respondents show a high degree of “love” for their mother tongue, the percentage drops to 29% when it comes to the academic role that Arabic plays in their lives. This is understandable since universities do not use Arabic at all; as a matter of fact, Arabic Language and Literature are taught in Hebrew.

As for the need for English in academic life, 86% of the respondents’ parents believe in the importance of such a language in their children’s future. This is probably the reason why they encourage them to watch English, although the percentage is lower (67%). It is interesting to note that the parents’ awareness of the importance of English for academic life is higher than the respondents themselves. The difference in attitudes could be due to the fact that not all respondents are satisfied with their achievement in English, therefore, they try to solve the problem by minimising its importance.

#### 4.8 Exposure to Foreign Languages

**Table 13**  
**Respondents' Exposure to Languages**

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Respondents use Hebrew on a daily basis with family members	95 %
People use Hebrew in their daily contact with each other	95 %
Respondents read Hebrew magazines	76 %
Television as the source of the extra exposure to English.	57 %
Respondents always read Arabic books and magazines	52 %
Respondents are exposed to English, outside the classroom setting, for more than two hours a week.	43 %
English speakers in respondents' environment	24 %

The findings show that the respondents are much more exposed to Hebrew than to English in their daily-life contact with languages.

Hebrew is used on a daily basis with family members; 95% of the respondents' families use Hebrew, in addition to, and mixed with Arabic. The degree of exposure to Hebrew is therefore very high. The same exposure is apparent when it comes to the media; 76% of the respondents read Hebrew newspapers and magazines, compared to only 52% who read newspapers and magazines in Arabic, their mother tongue. Throughout the study, the results show the degree to which Hebrew has penetrated the daily lives of the Arab sector in Israel.

English, on the other hand, and quite understandably, does not receive the same amount of exposure; most respondents depend on English in the classroom to provide their main source of exposure to the language. Only 57% use the TV as an extra source of English, while the amount of time spent on such exposure, TV included, is very limited. Only 43% of the respondents are exposed to more than two hours of

English outside the classroom. As for the availability of English speakers within the respondents' immediate surroundings, it is very limited at only 29%.

#### 4.9 Cultural Factors and Acculturation

**Table 14**  
**Cultural Factors and Acculturation**

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Respondents like English songs more than Hebrew songs	72 %
Western culture is closer to the respondents than the Jewish	67 %
Respondents would like to study at a Western university	67 %
Respondents don't like the Arabic culture and way of life	57 %
Environment perceives Western culture as being evil	48 %

The findings show that the respondents have a positive attitude towards Western culture, although this attitude is not necessarily shared by those in the surrounding in which they live.

The exposure to Western songs and music, mostly through MTV, makes them aware of the 'other', mixed Eastern-Western style of the Hebrew songs. 72% of the respondents prefer Western to Hebrew songs. 67% of the respondents feel the Western culture is closer to them than the local Hebrew culture. The same preference for the Western lifestyle expands to academic life as well; 67% of the respondents would prefer to study at a Western university. More than half of the respondents do not like the Arabic way of life, although almost half of them live in an environment in which Western culture is perceived as evil. It is worth mentioning that the period in which this study was carried out was anti-Arab, both locally and internationally, probably explaining the alienation of those in the respondents' surroundings to Western values and culture. However, the respondents themselves show a higher

degree of acceptance of the West, probably because they encounter it through MTV rather than real-life news channels.

#### 4.10 Socio-economic Background

**Table 15**  
**Learning Environment and Socio-economic Factors**

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Owning a house	95 %
Having a computer at home	86 %
Father has academic education	67 %
Respondents living in families consisting of 4-5 members	62 %
Father working	62 %
Mother working	62 %
Mother has academic education	62 %
Sharing a room with brothers /sisters	62 %
Respondents believe that their economic situation is average	57 %
Access to Internet	52 %

The findings show that the respondents' socio-economic status is average. In the villages, where most respondents live, people build their own houses; the idea of renting one is not common in villages.

As for academic education, two thirds of the respondents' parents have higher education degrees. While 86% of the respondents have computers at home, only 52% of them have Internet access. This is mostly due to the still relatively high fees that Internet access providers charge. Another factor is the unwillingness of some parents to expose their children to the unsafe world of the Internet.



#### 4.11 Political Attitudes

**Table 16**  
**Respondents' Political Attitudes**

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Government is not fair to Arabs	95 %
Respondents don't have equal academic opportunity	95 %
Respondents' definition of self identity as - An Arab (first)	86 %
- An Israeli (last)	86 %
- A Palestinian (second)	57 %

The findings reveal that almost all the respondents believe that the government has not been fair to the Arabs. Furthermore, this government does not provide them with equal academic opportunity. As for the identity crisis, 86% of the respondents define themselves as being Arabs first, then Palestinians. The Israeli component in their identity comes last after the other four of Arab, Palestinian, Moslem or Christian.

The feeling of living in a state of discrimination against the Arabs is reflected harshly even among the respondents, who are teenagers. At this early age, they are already aware of the politics and reality of being part of a minority.

## Summary

At the linguistic level, the respondents' Interlanguage reveals various degrees of general developmental patterns, in addition to the individual variations. These patterns are in accordance with the nature of the learner language described in the theoretical perspective, especially by Selinker (1972), Nemser (1971) and Corder (1971). The variation and variability among the respondents range between the incorrect and unacceptable, to complex forms of language use and usage; from spelling errors involving mainly vowels and confusable sounds, such as /p/ and /b/, to lexical errors, such as using PhD (the academic degree) for Dr. (the title), to elaborate sentence structures, such as: "So I went to him, all sweating, I shaked his hand, while I myself was shaking.. then he shaked my hand.." and finally to highly symbolic and poetic language, such as: " I saw aseel swimming with the angels in the pool of the Lord..." Some of the uses of English, whether deviant or not, reflect cases of transfer from both Arabic and Hebrew, where, as stated above, this transfer is not only linguistic, but cultural as well. A few cases of code switching and borrowing are also apparent. Among the advanced respondents, awareness of Pragmatics can be seen, such as the use of "Oh my gosh!" The tone of the language ranged from the narrative / descriptive to the symbolic and sarcastic, revealing a high degree of proficiency.

## Section II

### Factual Findings of the Cross-sectional Study

#### 4.12 Translation Section according to Age Group

**Table 17**  
**Display of Findings of the Translation Section according to Age Group**  
**(9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Grades”**

No.	S - T	9 C/TI	9 C%	10 C/TI	10 C%	Average C%
1	A-E	37/142	26.1	22/106	20.8	23.45
9	A-H	106/144	73.6	86/124	69.4	71.5
2	A-E	65/138	47.1	27/103	26.2	36.65
11	A-H	124/130	95.4	89/94	94.7	95.05
3	A-E	107/140	76.4	78/109	71.6	74
12	A-H	105/132	79.5	99/123	80.5	80
4	A-E	77/137	56.2	54/104	51.9	54.05
13	A-H	96/131	73.3	78/113	65.5	69.4
5	A-E	43/135	31.9	24/105	22.6	27.25
14	A-H	59/136	43.4	56/121	46.3	44.85
7	A-E	22/135	16.3	17/96	17.7	17
15	A-H	117/136	86.0	105/125	84.0	85
8	H-E	72/133	54.1	58/93	62.4	58.25
17	H-A	129/145	89.0	119/128	93.0	91
10	E-H	89/129	69.0	90/121	74.4	71.7
16	E-A	74/134	55.2	68/105	64.8	60
6	A-E	35/140	25	21/101	20.8	22.9
*18	H	144/144	100	123/125	98.4	99.2

S= Source Language; T=Target Language; A=Arabic; E=English; H=Hebrew;  
C=Correct Answers; TI=Total.

\* Sentence no. 18 checked for the canonical word order in Arabic: Subject-Verb or Verb Subject

The findings above show that in the translation of each of the sentences from Arabic into English, and from Arabic into Hebrew, the respondents scored higher in the correct Hebrew translations than the English ones. On average, the respondents scored

74.3% in their translation from Arabic into Hebrew, and only 38.5% in the translation from Arabic into English.

This was also the case with the translation from Hebrew into Arabic and from Hebrew into English of sentences 8 and 17; the respondents scored higher translating into Arabic than into English (91% compared to 58.25%).

The average correct translations between the two classes reveal that grade-9 respondents scored higher than grade-10, with a result of 58.67% and 56.86% respectively.

As for the translation of sentence number 18 from Hebrew into Arabic, the findings show that almost all the respondents chose SVO, rather than VSO, the canonical word order.

#### 4.13 Translation Section according to City Type:

**Table 18**  
**Display of Findings of the Translation Section according to City Type**

No.	S - T	City-1		City-2		City-3		City-4	
		N=63	%	N=65	%	N=114	%	N=38	%
1	A-E	8	12.7	32	49.2	16	14.0	3	7.9
9	A-H	55	87.3	65	100.0	113	99.1	35	92.1
2	A-E	24	38.1	24	36.9	39	34.2	5	13.2
11	A-H	56	88.9	55	84.6	99	86.8	14	36.8
3	A-E	44	69.8	55	84.6	79	69.3	7	18.4
12	A-H	58	92.1	63	96.9	100	87.7	34	89.5
4	A-E	28	44.4	38	58.5	57	50.0	8	21.1
13	A-H	56	88.9	60	92.3	101	88.6	33	86.8
5	A-E	15	23.8	31	47.7	14	12.3	7	18.4
14	A-H	57	90.5	62	95.4	102	89.5	36	94.7
7	A-E	6	9.5	14	21.5	13	11.4	6	15.8
15	A-H	59	93.7	64	98.5	105	92.1	33	86.8
8	H-E	40	63.5	18	27.7	72	63.2	0	0.0
17	H-A	63	100.0	62	95.4	113	99.1	35	92.1
10	E-H	54	85.7	64	98.5	97	85.1	35	92.1
16	E-A	62	98.4	55	84.6	106	93.0	16	42.1
6	A-E	11	17.5	14	21.5	30	26.3	1	2.6
*18	H	60	95.2	64	98.5	113	99.1	32	84.2
<b>Average</b>			<b>64.98</b>		<b>70.22</b>		<b>64.8</b>		<b>47.67</b>

S= Source Language; T=Target Language; A=Arabic; E=English; H=Hebrew; C=Correct Answers; City 1=Arab-only cities; City 2= Mixed; City 3=Arab-only villages; City 4= Bedouins.  
\* Sentence no. 18 checked for the canonical word order in Arabic: Subject-Verb or Verb Subject

The findings show that the respondents from the mixed cities scored the highest in their correct translation of the sentences above (70.22%), to be followed by almost the same score for the respondents in the Arab-only cities and villages (64.98% and 64.8%). The respondents from the Bedouin sector scored the lowest with an average of 47.67% correct answers.

The same results were found in the translation from Arabic into Hebrew. The respondents from the mixed city category scored the highest, with a correct average of 94.61%, to be followed by almost the same average for the Arab-only cities and villages with 90.23% and 90.63% respectively. The Bedouin sector scored the lowest with an average of 81.1% correct sentences.

As for the translation from Arabic into English, although the same order is maintained, but the average correct answers drops dramatically; the mixed-cities respondents come first with 49.73% correct answers, to be followed by Arab-only cities and villages at 33.05% and 31.8% respectively. The Bedouin sector respondents lag behind with 15.08%.

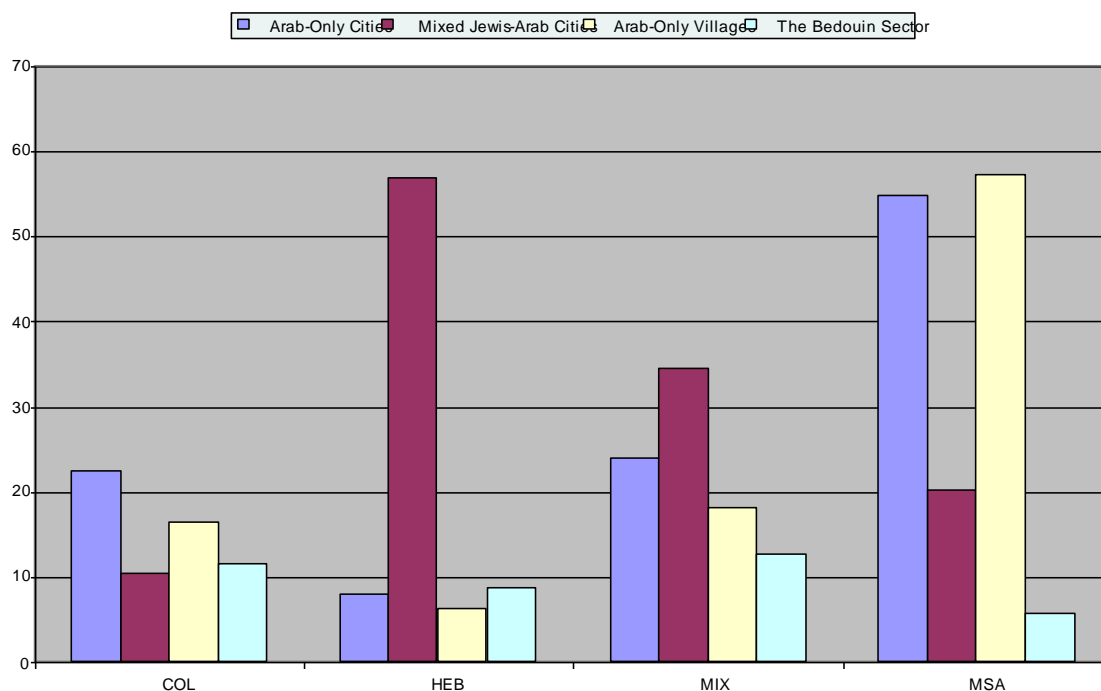
#### 4.14 Vocabulary Section: Arabic Cognates according to City Type

**Table 19**  
**Display of Findings of the Vocabulary Section – Arabic Cognates according to City Type**

No.	Word	Lan.	City type-1		City type -2		City type -3		City type-4	
			N=63	%	N=65	%	N=114	%	N=38	%
1	Computer	MSA	34	53.97	17	26.15	62	54.39	23	60.53
1		COL	6	9.52	0	0.00	15	13.16	2	5.26
1		HEB	10	15.87	41	63.08	4	3.51	0	0.00
1		MIX	13	20.63	6	9.23	33	28.95	2	5.26
		<b>Tot.</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>98.46</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>71.05</b>
2	Telephone	MSA	31	49.21	8	12.31	54	47.37	13	34.21
2		COL	22	34.92	19	29.23	29	25.44	7	18.42
2		HEB	1	1.59	30	46.15	3	2.63	0	0.00
2		MIX	8	12.70	8	12.31	27	23.68	1	2.63
	Wrong T.		1	1.59	0	0.00	1	0.88	2	5.26
		<b>Tot.</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>60.53</b>
3	Police Station	MSA	32	50.79	14	21.54	67	58.77	2	5.26
3		COL	13	20.63	4	6.15	14	12.28	0	0.00
3		HEB	2	3.17	38	58.46	3	2.63	0	0.00
3		MIX	5	7.94	2	3.08	20	17.54	0	0.00
	Wrong T.		5	7.94	4	6.15	7	6.14	8	21.05
		<b>Tot.</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>90.48</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>95.38</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>97.37</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>26.32</b>
4	Doctor	MSA	33	52.38	12	18.46	66	57.89	15	39.47
4		COL	19	30.16	10	15.38	17	14.91	11	28.95
4		HEB	10	15.87	25	38.46	28	24.56	4	10.53
4		MIX	1	1.59	17	26.15	2	1.75	1	2.63
		<b>Tot.</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>98.46</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>99.12</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>81.58</b>
5	Nurse	MSA	23	36.51	5	7.69	62	54.39	14	36.84
5		COL	11	17.46	1	1.54	19	16.67	0	0.00
5		HEB	5	7.94	52	80.00	2	1.75	0	0.00
5		MIX	7	11.11	5	7.69	24	21.05	1	2.63
	Wrong T.		3	4.76	0	0.00	3	2.63	1	2.63
		<b>Tot.</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>77.78</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>96.92</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>96.49</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>42.11</b>
6	Hospital	MSA	54	85.71	23	35.38	80	70.18	8	21.05
6		COL	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
6		HEB	2	3.17	36	55.38	3	2.63	0	0.00
6		MIX	6	9.52	5	7.69	26	22.81	1	2.63
	Wrong T.		1	1.59	1	1.54	4	3.51	1	2.63
		<b>Tot.</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>99.12</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>26.32</b>

# Graph 1

## Use of Languages in the Arabic Cognates



The results show that, in the Arabic-cognates category, pupils who live in Arab-only cities have used more colloquial Arabic than any other group. As for the use of Hebrew, the results show a significant preference for the use of Hebrew by the pupils who live in mixed cities. The same goes for the use of Arabic and Hebrew in the translation; pupils in mixed cities have used both languages more than the other groups. However, when it comes to the use of MSA, pupils from both Arab-only cities and villages show a clear preference to using it in comparison to the other groups.

To summarise the results of using the different languages in the APIs linguistic repertoires when translating a word from English, there is a clear pattern of using Hebrew alone, or Hebrew and Arabic in the “mixed-city” pupils, while pupils of Arab-only cities and villages prefer the use of MSA. The Bedouin Sector, scored the



lowest, among the four groups in translating correctly to any language. They also used MSA and mixed Arabic-Hebrew the least in comparison to the other groups.

Notable in the results of the Arabic-cognates category is the fact that, although the closest translation from English in this case is that of the colloquial equivalent in Arabic, the pupils did not opt for it and preferred to use MSA, or Hebrew, instead. This is an indication that colloquial Arabic remains a spoken language first and pupils prefer the use of MSA in the written language even in the case of cognates.

#### 4.15 Vocabulary Section: Hebrew Cognates according to City Type

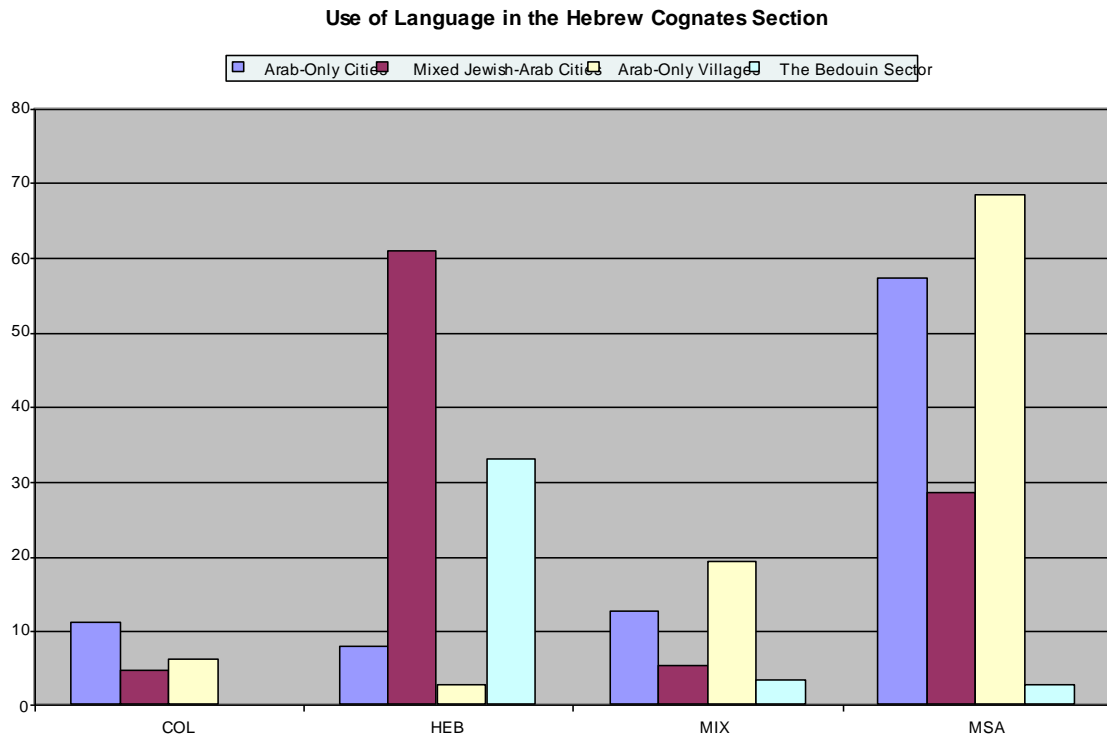
**Table 20**  
**Display of Findings of the Vocabulary Section – Hebrew Cognates according to City Type**

No.	Word	Lan.	City type-1		City type -2		City type -3		City type-4	
			N=63	%	N=65	%	N=114	%	N=38	%
7	Yogurt	MSA	30	47.62	6	9.23	73	64.04	6	15.79
7		COL	7	11.11	3	4.62	7	6.14	0	0.00
7		HEB	6	9.52	50	76.92	4	3.51	0	0.00
7		MIX	6	9.52	3	4.62	18	15.79	0	0.00
		<b>Tot.</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>80.95</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>95.38</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>92.98</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>15.79</b>
8	University	MSA	42	66.67	31	47.69	83	72.81	11	28.95
8		COL	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
8		HEB	4	6.35	29	44.62	2	1.75	0	0.00
8		MIX	10	15.87	4	6.15	26	22.81	2	5.26
	Wrong T.		3	4.76	0	0.00	1	0.88	1	2.63
		<b>Tot.</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>93.65</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>98.46</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>98.25</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>36.84</b>

The results reflect a significant difference between the Bedouin sector and the three other sectors regarding the percentage of correct translating of the two words that are cognates in Hebrew. Only 15.79% of the Bedouin pupils translated Yogurt correctly, and they all translated it using MSA. The same could be said about the translation of

the word “University”; only 36.84% of the Bedouin pupils translated correctly, compared to more than 93% among the other sectors.

Graph 2



The distribution of the results of translating the Hebrew cognate words reflect a clear trend of using Hebrew among the mixed-city category, while the pupils of Arab-only cities and villages opted for MSA. The results show that even in the case of Hebrew cognates, where the closer translation of the word is in that language, pupils in the Arab-only sectors use Arabic much more than Hebrew. Similar to the results of the previous category of Arabic cognates, there seems to be a significant preference to using Hebrew in the mixed-city category, regardless of the nature of the word translated. Pupils in the Arab-only cities use MSA far more than Hebrew, or Colloquial Arabic.

#### 4.16 Vocabulary Section – Politics according to City Type

**Table 21**  
**Display of Findings of the Vocabulary Section – Politics according to City Type**

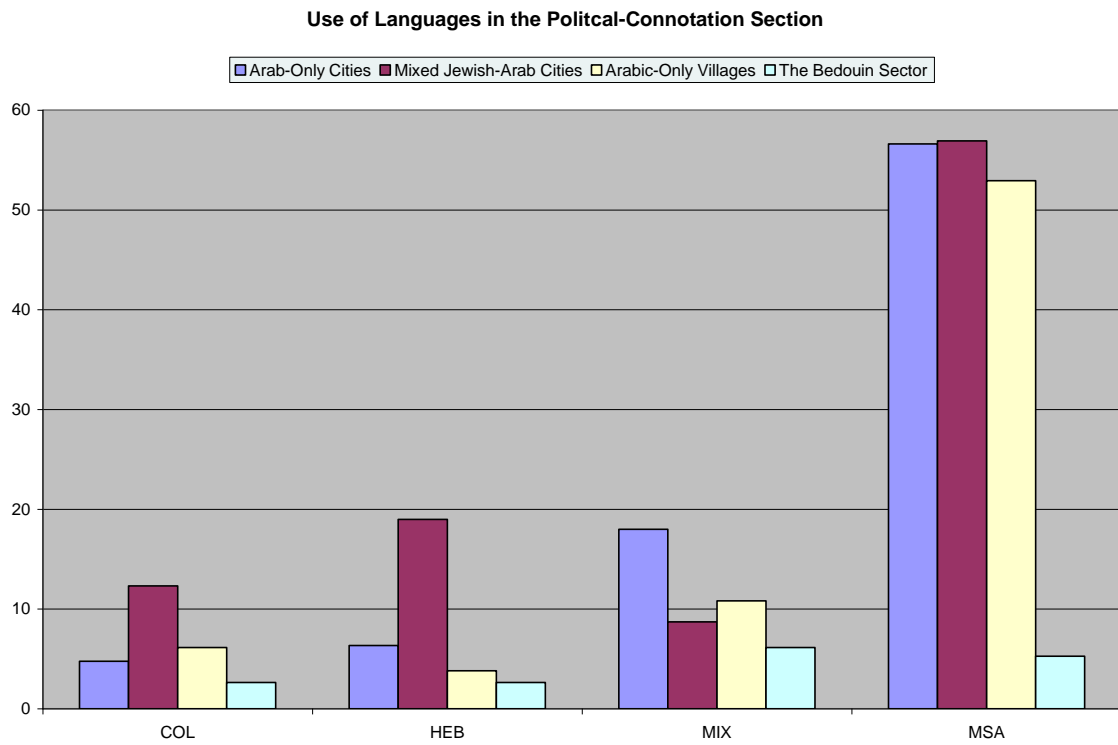
No.	Word	Lan.	City type-1		City type -2		City type -3		City type-4	
			N=63	%	N=65	%	N=114	%	N=38	%
9	News	MSA	39	61.90	54	83.08	76	66.67	22	57.89
9		COL	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
9		HEB	5	7.94	2	3.08	8	7.02	6	15.79
9		MIX	14	22.22	7	10.77	7	6.14	3	7.89
	Wrong T.		5	7.94	1	1.54	13	11.40	7	18.42
		<b>Tot.</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>98.46</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>91.23</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>100.0</b>
10	Government	MSA	23	36.51	39	60.00	31	27.19	12	31.58
10		COL	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
10		HEB	4	6.35	1	1.54	2	1.75	7	18.42
10		MIX	11	17.46	5	7.69	2	1.75	2	5.26
	Wrong T.		4	6.35	4	6.15	21	18.42	4	10.53
		<b>Tot.</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>66.67</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>75.38</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>49.12</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>65.79</b>
11	Jerusalem	MSA	45	71.43	18	27.69	74	64.91	24	63.16
11		COL	3	4.76	8	12.31	7	6.14	2	5.26
11		HEB	3	4.76	34	52.31	3	2.63	0	0.00
11		MIX	9	14.29	5	7.69	28	24.56	6	15.79
	Wrong T.		2	3.17		0.00	1	0.88		0.00
		<b>Tot.</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>98.41</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>99.12</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>84.21</b>

In the category of words with a political connotation, the results show that, except for the word Jerusalem, which will be dealt with separately, the trend of using Hebrew among the mixed-cities pupils has been reversed; 83.08% of the pupils in this category used MSA in their translation of the word “News”, and 60% the word “Government”. In addition, there is no significant difference this time between the percentage of the correct answers between the Bedouin sector and the Arab-only cities and villages.

With the word Jerusalem, the results show that, except for those in the mixed cities, the pupils prefer to use the Arabic “Al-Quds” for Jerusalem, and not the Hebrew equivalent. It is only in the mixed-city category that the use of the Hebrew equivalent

is common. In the ongoing political struggle between the Jews and Palestinians as to whose capital it is, it seems that the pupils of the mixed cities have accepted the use of the Hebrew word “Yerushalayem” much more than the other sectors.

Graph 3



The results show that in the category of words with a political connotation, there is a significant preference to using MSA in both the Arab-only cities and villages and the mixed-city pupils.

#### 4.17 Vocabulary Section – City Names according to City Type

**Table 22**  
**Display of Findings of the Vocabulary Section – City Names according to City Type**

No.	Word	Lan.	City type-1		City type -2		City type -3		City type-4	
			N=63	%	N=65	%	N=114	%	N=38	%
12	Afula	MSA	20	31.75	1	1.54	30	26.32	1	2.63
12		*COL	28	44.44	15	23.08	59	51.75	7	18.42
12		HEB	2	3.17	39	60.00	4	3.51		0.00
12		MIX	7	11.11	4	6.15	17	14.91		0.00
	Wrong T.		2	3.17	2	3.08	1	0.88		0.00
		<b>Tot.</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>93.65</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>93.85</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>97.37</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>21.05</b>
13	Nazareth	MSA	47	74.60	10	15.38	77	67.54	2	5.26
13		*COL	3	4.76	9	13.85	9	7.89	4	10.53
13		HEB	4	6.35	26	40.00	2	1.75		0.00
13		MIX	9	14.29	4	6.15	24	21.05		0.00
	Wrong T.			0.00	6	9.23		0.00		0.00
		<b>Tot.</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>84.62</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>98.25</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>15.79</b>

\*- The use of the city name without the definite article was checked under Col.

The results of the category of city names reflect a significant difference between the Bedouin and the other sectors with regard to the correctness of translation. While, on average, fewer than 19% of the Bedouin sector pupils translated the city names correctly, the numbers soar to more than 80% in the other sectors.

The results also show that in the case of translating the word “Afula”, more pupils translated it into Arabic without the definite article, which should be used in the correct translation. These results indicate that use of the definite article “the” is problematic in this case even in Arabic. As explained in the rationale for using the words on the list (Appendix 2) the claim is that there is lack of knowledge in certain grammatical features in Arabic itself, a fact which could explain the occurrence of certain inconsistencies in the use of similar features in English.

#### 4.18 Vocabulary Section – Culture according to City Type

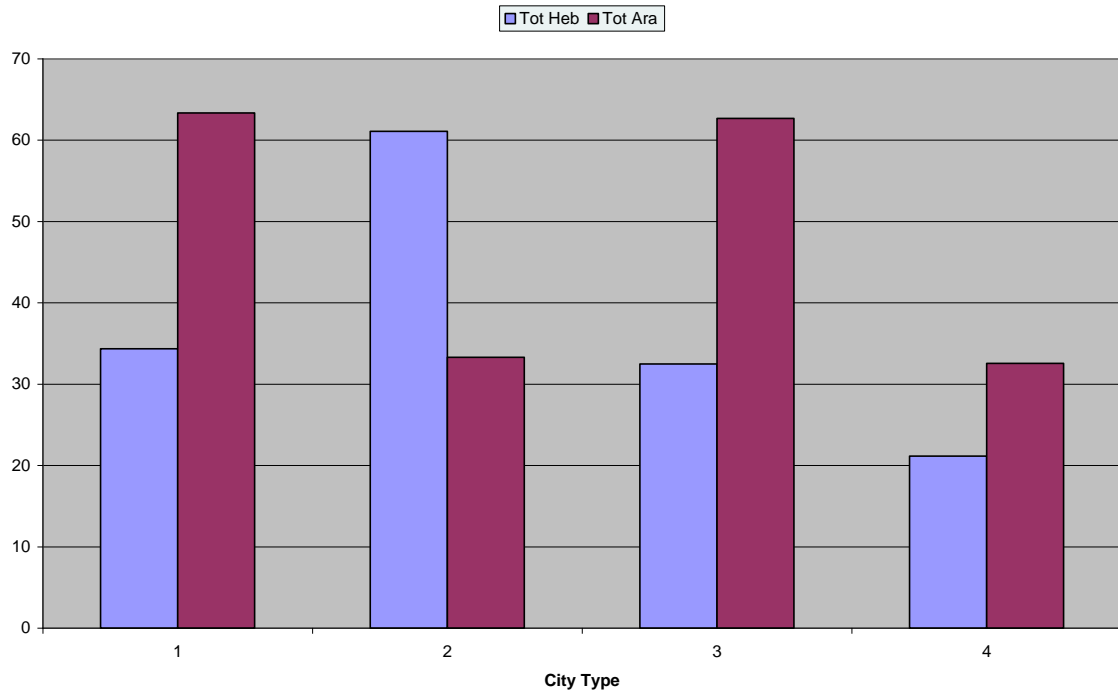
**Table 23**  
**Display of Findings of the Vocabulary Section – Culture according to City Type**

No.	Word	Lan.	City type-1		City type -2		City type -3		City type-4	
			N=63	%	N=65	%	N=114	%	N=38	%
14	Hotdogs	MSA	26	41.27	33	50.77	27	23.68	2	5.26
14		COL	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
14		HEB	6	9.52	8	12.31	13	11.40	25	65.79
14		MIX	9	14.29	6	9.23	1	0.88	3	7.89
	Wrong T.		5	7.94	5	7.69	12	10.53	3	7.89
		<b>Tot.</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>73.02</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>80.00</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>46.49</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>86.84</b>
15	Remote Control	MSA	34	53.97	2	3.08	77	67.54	2	5.26
15		COL	2	3.17		0.00	1	0.88	5	13.16
15		HEB	4	6.35	48	73.85	5	4.39		0.00
15		MIX	10	15.87	2	3.08	22	19.30		0.00
	Wrong T.		2	3.17	3	4.62	4	3.51	1	2.63
		<b>Tot.</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>82.54</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>84.62</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>95.61</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>21.05</b>

The results show that in the category of words with a cultural connotation in the Bedouin sector there is a mixed trend of exposure to the words; while “hotdogs” reflected a very high exposure, only 21% knew what a “remote control” was. Although the results may not reflect the exposure to the item itself, the Bedouin sector scored higher than the Arab-only villages as to knowing what “hotdogs” are, while the trend was reversed in translating “remote control”; the Arab-only village pupils scored the highest in translating this word among all sectors.

Graph 4

Use of Arabic and Hebrew in the Vocabulary Section



The results of Graph 4 reflect a clear trend of using Hebrew more than Arabic in the mixed-city sector, with a reverse trend in the other sectors. These results reflect the degree Arabic is diminishing in the daily use of the Arab pupils living there.

When the whole Graph is considered, we can see that in the Arab sector as a whole, the use of Hebrew is gaining power everywhere. These results have far-reaching effects in the long run on the linguistic, social and political situation of the APIs in general.

## **Summary**

The findings in the previous sections reveal the effect of the individual factors on the APIs' ILs. As it has been stated in the conceptual framework, the analysis of each aspect on its own gives the factual findings of the research. In the following section, two aspects will be analysed together, thus providing the interpretive findings.



## **Section III Interpretive Findings**

### **Introduction**

The following section deals with the interpretive findings of the data in the longitudinal research. While factual findings were drawn as a result of analysing the data according to each of the three levels separately, interpretive findings involve analysing each two together, as shown in the conceptual framework's diagram. The interpretation will cover the following aspects: language and culture, language and socio-politics and culture and socio-politics. While the first two aspects will be dealt with through the APIs' language in both the longitudinal and the cross-sectional study, the cultural and socio-political aspects will be interpreted externally, i.e. according to the affective factors that play a role in the APIs' lives in and out of school.

In order to appreciate the interpretive findings of the APIs' Interlanguage, discourse analysis was performed on two of the texts: the letter writing about meeting a celebrity and the essay on the use of cellular phones. This type of analysis reveals the existence of patterns in the text and helps in exploring the connection between what is in the text and what is behind it.

### **4.19 Interpretive Findings of Language and Culture**

Table 24 displays the findings of the text analysis of the task whereby students write a letter to a friend telling them about a celebrity they have met.

**Table 24**

**Display of results of the categories used in the letter-writing task**

No.	Sex	Celebrity	Field	Qualities	Gifts		Remarks
					Given	Received	
1	M	Will Smith	Show Business	Handsome, humble	No Details		
2	F	Azmi Bishara	Political Figure	Strong personality	Book	Book by author	Member of Parliament
3	M	Elvis Presley	Show Business	-----	Ring	Day spent	Sarcastic tone
4	M	Tal Banin	Sports	Skill	No details.		Israeli Football player
5	F	Ariel Sharon	Political Figure	(Criminal)	None		Irony
6	F	Superman	Fictitious Figure	Helping Others		Magic Ring	
7	M	Madonna	Show Business	Popular, sweet	Kiss	Kiss, gift	
8	M	Robin Hood	Fictitious Figure	Fights against evil	Arrow	Machine gun	
9	M	Aseel Asleh	Martyr	Love	Secret of peace	Spreading the secret	A pupil killed in the October 2000 events
10	F	Ricky Martin	Show Business	----			
11	F	Ricky Martin	Show Business	Handsome	T-shirt	No details	
12	F	Majda Roumi	Show Business	Lovely, caring			A Palestinian Singer
13	M	Jennifer Lopez	Show Business	Sexy			Used Hebrew for 'rear end'.
14	F	Natalia Orriaro	Show Business	Kind	Engraved wood	T-shirt	
15	M	Roberto Baggio	Sports	Skill	Shield	T-shirt + football	
16	F	Marcel Khalifeh	Show Business	Cute, friendly	Necklace	The Palestinian Flag	A Palestinian Singer
17	F	Bono	Show Bus.	Charity		Autograph	U2 lead singer
18	F	Marcel Khalifeh	Show Business		Poster from Palestine	Latest Album	
19	F	Marcel Khalifeh	Show Business		Map + flag of Palestine	A song for the prising	The uprising
20	F	Alanis Morrisette	Show Business	Kind	Palestinian dress	Song + poster	A Canadian singer
21	F	Sting	Show Business	Lovely wonderful			

The findings show the following distribution of the fields from which the celebrities have come:

Out of the twenty-one respondents, ten chose a Western singer or an actor, two an imaginary Western character, seven a political figure or a political artist, and two a sports figure. Of the sports figures, one is Israeli, and the other is International. Of the political figures, one is Jewish (anti-hero), one is an Arab Israeli Member of Parliament, and the others are Palestinians.

Three of the imaginary encounters took place in Arab countries: Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. One encounter was in heaven, while the rest were in ordinary places, such as hotels and restaurants.

The qualities for which the respondents chose their celebrities ranged from the positive: caring, loving, understanding, helpful, skilled and charismatic, to the negative where one had 'criminal'.

At the linguistic level, the texts revealed typical morphemic developmental errors, such as: 'shaked', 'thrilledfull', 'he thoughts', 'maked', 'broughted' and 'spoked'. Other errors were phonological in nature, for example, 'groub', 'emparassing' and 'to thing'. A different kind included morphological errors, such as 'a player football', and there are syntax errors, such as: 'when you come to visit me you will can look up on the picture', and 'are you believe'. There were also lexical errors and discourse errors under the category of 'genre-fidelity' (James, 1998), such as the opening and closing of informal letters.

The findings show that in terms of culture, the majority of the pupils are exposed to Western / American culture. Similar to other teenagers worldwide, they watch MTV and have clear preferences about choosing their celebrity. One of them (13) was quite explicit about what he liked in Jennifer Lopez and because it is taboo, he code-switched into a colloquial Hebrew word for Lopez's "rear-end"; it seems it is easier to use explicit or graphic words in yet, another foreign language, even when the language in use is already foreign. Another (3) used the opportunity to be sarcastic about people who believe that Elvis Presley is still alive. A third example is the three girls (17,20,21) who showed taste and knowledge about other celebrities who are not necessarily 'hot' or top of the charts although they are still popular in the West. It is interesting to note the qualities some of the respondents attribute to their celebrities: both respondents 1 and 10 mention the celebrity's loyalty to their fans, in spite of the fact that the meeting did not really take place. This reflects critical taste and understanding of the singer-fan relationship, which is symbiotic in nature.

The exposure of some APIs to the Western culture does not necessarily cover other deep-rooted factors in their world of social behaviours. Respondent no 5 writes to her father "Dad...you learn (taught) me that I must tell you everything have happened to me". In this society, for some at least, there must be no secrets between parents and children.

A different socio-linguistic issue is the problem of deixis in the talk about hotels and restaurants (10,16); it is always 'the' restaurant and 'the' hotel. This is a case of cultural transfer from L1, where the use of the definite article is widespread in such cases. This use is probably a reminiscent of the times when there was only one

restaurant in the village, so people would go to *the* restaurant, meaning the one and only restaurant. The same phenomenon is noticed when people talk about going to ‘the’ cinema, or theatre, which is still common in English.

The respondents’ choices of celebrities did not include only real celebrities, such as Will Smith, Madonna and Ricky Martin; two respondents (6 and 8) chose imaginary, or semi-realistic figures like Superman and Robin Hood. The common factor for choosing these two celebrities, who are in this case heroes, was the social factor of helping others. Here, values are celebrated rather than physical appearance or strength.

#### **4.20 Interpretive Findings of Language and Socio-politics**

Still, one cannot ignore the sense of insecurity in the first respondent who received a charm-ring to protect her from evil. It is equally striking that the second respondent gave Robin Hood a machine gun, probably a more effective weapon against evil!

This sense of insecurity becomes rage in the case of respondent (5) who chose Sharon as a celebrity, who, in this case, is definitely not a hero. One wonders, why a teenager would bother to be involved in politics when she can dream about meeting her idol. When the political tension is drawn into the circle of tensions that exist in the lives of the APIs, that curiosity abates. This respondent has taken the opportunity to express a deep sense of frustration and revolt at the current Intifadah which, according to the point of view of the Arab world, was caused by Sharon’s visit to the El-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. The outcome of this visit led to the eruption of the second Intifadah where this time, thirteen Arabs, citizens of Israel, were killed. The famous multiple

re-runs of Muhammad Al Durra, the child who was caught in the crossfire between the Israeli soldiers and the Palestinians, while his father begged them to stop, must have left a deep impact on the pupils. The respondent's reaction to this video on TV is very violent, and she wishes she could kill Sharon, but this same explosive feeling is brought under control when a friend tells her that she is stupid to think that way.

The above example is, no doubt, an extreme case of how some pupils might feel under the present political situation. However, there are voices which are less violent, but still very clear and assertive about where they stand regarding the conflict between Jews and Arabs, in and out of Israel. Respondent no. 9 takes a trip to heaven, similar to Prophet Mohammad's 'Night Journey'. This motif, which appears in world literature, takes the respondent to a meeting with his friend Aseel, who was killed during the October 2000 events in Israel. Aseel, who was mentioned twice in this context of celebrities, was a role model for many of the pupils in the school, not only because he was an "A" pupil in everything, but also because he was an example of reason and moderateness. Aseel, was an active member in the Seeds of Peace movement, which calls for coexistence and mutual tolerance between Arabs and Jews, in and out of Israel, thus the irony of his senseless killing. But surprisingly, Aseel revealed to this earthly visitor the secret for resolving all our tensions: love. Exactly as prophets do, he asked this visitor to spread the message of peace through love. This example is the other extreme of the political dichotomy of love and hatred, war and peace, integration and segregation in the Israeli society.

Whether extreme or not, the political issue cannot fade away from the daily reality of the APIs. The Palestinisation of the APIs can be manifested not only by the choice of

celebrities, but also by the gifts exchanged. Each of the four respondents (12, 16, 18, 19) mentions Palestine, in some way, whether through giving or receiving the Palestinian flag, or the map of Palestine, or even a Palestinian national costume. Whatever the gift, the symbolism is clear: these pupils live in a reality that prevents them from expressing their own identities as Palestinians. Some voice a political statement on how they see the question of a Palestinian State resolved (the flag), others get focus on borders issue of such a state (the map), while a third group might not even wish to touch on the un-resolvable issues of the Palestinian people, and settle for a symbolic feature of the culture in their narrative (the dress). Even the place where some of these meetings take place, like Syria and Lebanon; countries that are at war with Israel and thus are off-limit to the Israelis, although some of the pupils' extended families might still be living there, is indicative of the tensions and hopes of the APIs.

#### **4.21 Interpretive Findings of Culture and Socio-politics**

The three entangled features of language, culture and socio-politics make it difficult to draw a clear line as to where each domain starts and ends. Language and culture are almost inseparable, while socio-politics affects culture and limits it by setting borders that confine and restrict its development. In the previous section we saw how language and culture interact; in addition, we saw how language played a role in reflecting aspects of the socio-political situation under which the APIs live. The same can be said about the interaction between culture and socio-politics; the latter decides the extent to which a certain culture can develop, thus manipulating and forming a hybrid of the original culture. The Arab pupil in Israel lives a life which is neither

Arabic nor Jewish, and although there are trends, mostly religious, to keep the Arab / Islamic type of this culture, this whole process takes place in a volatile political situation that can easily help or prohibit a certain trend from developing, according to what is considered correct at that time. The result of such artificial life is that the opposite forces of politics, culture and religion can only distort what could have otherwise been a normal developing culture of a minority ethnic group within the dominant majority. In such a case, it is no surprise that the minority reflects a culture that exaggerates events and follows a unique way of prioritizing issues in its life. The members of this culture can only mingle with their own people; go out on special occasions, such as a school trip or a birthday party; panic when an ordinary event occurs, such as missing the bus, and are usually dependent on adults to help them. Among these adults, parents and teachers play a major role; the contact with the family has to be maintained, even in minor mundane occurrences, and what is mundane in one culture is perceived as dangerous, or at least problematic, in another. The APIs are still far from what Jewish teenagers reflect: confidence, independence and the know-how to deal with problems; while many Arab pupils live under the heavy shadow of the authority of the government, the police and the dominant Jewish people in general, Jewish pupils receive all the support they need, at all levels, that whatever is there is theirs and that a degree of Israeli Chutzpah (arrogance) is a good recipe for a daily meal of dealing with others. The dominant-dominated interaction cannot be more apparent.

Yet, to put the issue into perspective, one cannot ignore the restrictions imposed on the Arab teenagers by their patriarchal society, or the generation gap in general. Jewish teenagers too are affected by external events, such as suicide bombing, when



their whole life is shaken. It is not easy to live with a feeling of being under siege, when buses, restaurants and places of entertainment lose their original function and become targets for suicide bombers. Both Jews and Arabs were killed in such attacks. Still, when all is over, the Arabs feel more restricted because they stand on the wrong side of the fence, that of the villains. When feelings erupt after such tragic events, being in the wrong place at the wrong time can sometimes be dangerous.

Table 25 is a summary of situations where a cellular phone came in handy at an emergency. Although not everyone talked about emergencies, still there is a clear pattern as to what creates such an emergency: pupils get lost, usually on school trips, others miss the bus and panic, and there are those who needed the phone to help them on the road. While these situations can be seen as normal, mundane occurrences in a teenager's school life, for the APIs, they are emergencies. The exaggeration of the effects of such minor incidents is culturally bound; in times of trouble call a family member and they will come to the rescue.

**Table 25****Situations where the use of a cellular phone came handy**

No	Place	Problem	Solution
1	Forest	Dangerous animal	Called the special unit
2	Summer school	Lost our way	Called the teacher
3	Home	Noisy ringing	Turned it to “shake” mode (vibrate)
4	School trip	Lost each other	Called the teacher
5	On the way to a party	Car broke down	Called friends at the party.
6	Home	Emergency at home	Sister called
7	Party	Friend couldn’t get to party	Parents picked my friend up.
8	Israel	Insecurity	Just having a phone
9	School	Missed the bus	Called my dad to pick me up
10	School	Missed the bus	Called Mom. Going to be late.
11	On the way to a party Back form the party	Brother got lost – brother’s car broke down on way back	Called friend for instructions – called father to help with car
12	School trip	Best friend got lost	Called for help using someone’s cell
13		teenagers put it to silly use	
14	School trip	Got lost with a friend	Called the other group members
15	Haifa	Missed the bus	Called brother to pick him up
16	School	Father did not pick her niece up	Teacher called mother and told her child was ok with her at home
17	Road	If car breaks	Will be saved by a phone call
18	Swimming pool	A friend drowned	Saved him and called his dad
19	School trip	Witnessed a road accident	Teacher called an ambulance
20	Road	A friend’s car broke down	Called father to pick them up
21	Road	Sister lost her way driving	Worried mother called the sister

The table above gives us a close look at the world in which the respondents live. The socio-political situation under which the respondents live affect their culture in such a way that their mundane lives have turned into a cultural ghetto, where, if the age factor were ignored, one would suspect that this was the world of probably ten-year-old pupils, not seventeen. The whole setting of the events that took place in the pupils’ lives, and required the use of the cellular phones as ‘life savers’, is limited by the space granted to these pupils to wander within. The ‘extreme’ and ‘dangerous’ situations in which the pupils had to use the phone in order to call for help reflect the borders within which they live. So, where do these pupils go? One of them (1) described an imaginary situation where the ‘special units’ had been called in order to save him from a dangerous animal. Israel has neither forests nor dangerous animals;

the situation described fits more a child's description of fading traces from a folkloric world.

A frequent cause for using the cellular phone for help is getting lost. So, where do these pupils get lost? One of them (2) got lost in Oxford on her way to her English lesson. To get lost in a foreign city is an acceptable scenario; you solve the problem by asking for directions, for example, but the lost pupils did not ask for help from locals or passers-by, they simply called the teacher.

A common place where pupils get lost is school trips (4, 12, 14). Pupils call the teacher, or their friends and they are back in familiar territories. The feeling of being separated from others creates a sense of emergency where the use of cell phones becomes a necessity.

People also get lost on their way to a specific destination, usually a party. The pupils' time that they spend away from home is either a school trip, or a friend's birthday party.

Emergencies arise when pupils miss the bus. Missing the bus creates a big problem for them because it requires making special arrangements to be picked up from school. Missing the bus can be sometimes traumatic, especially when the way home means changing two or three buses. The danger in such situations is not in what might happen to them on their way back home, especially when girls are involved; the tension arises as to the protective parents and the need to update them, and the other family members, of any event that affects their daily routine. While some teenagers

might find such a change healthy, and perhaps amusing, the APIs perceive it as an emergency.

Many of the APIs live in a protective bubble imposed on them by their parents. The sense of personal freedom is very controlled, and the 'leash' these teenagers are given is not that elastic. The socio-political situation in which these teenagers live has added to the already controlled culture of the Arabs in Israel. Instead of finding release in parties and school trips, the API is put under more cultural restrictions, which, partly due to the socio-political situations, become harsher.

#### **4.22 Attitudes Regarding Learning English: Voices from the Classroom:**

In one of the tasks, the respondents were asked to reflect on the way they perceived English in terms of difficulty, importance and exposure to the language, in and out of school.

In order to appreciate the human factor and the dynamics that take place in the learners' linguistic world, I have decided to quote the respondents own words regarding their attitudes to English. The language in quotes has been left unmodified, the bracketed comments are the author's and were added to clarify certain ambiguities.

The respondents' reflections reveal a certain degree of awareness of both external and internal affective factors on their learning processes. Although the factors themselves were not expressed directly, it is easy to relate them to the appropriate terminology.

The respondents' attitudes can be divided into two groups:

- a. Those who have a positive attitude to the language; they feel that English is an easy language and that they can master it. In their reflection they mention such factors as attitude to language and motivation, both instrumental and integrative.
- b. The second group consists of those who have a neutral attitude towards English; they like the language, but they do not know how to master it. They are aware that English is a difficult language to learn, but on the other hand, they manage without it.
- c. The third group are students with negative attitudes.

The following section discusses the APIs' voices as learners of English. By listening to these voices we can complement the exploration of the linguistic side of the learning process as perceived by the pupils themselves. Again, it is amazing how well these pupils implicitly know what constitutes a favourable learning environment, while at the same time, they are critical of any negative aspects that can directly, or indirectly, hinder their learning process.

## Group I Favourable attitudes

**Table 26**  
**Favourable Attitudes towards Learning English among the Respondents of the Longitudinal Research**

No.	Respondents' Comments about English as a Foreign Language	Comments
3	<i>We should realize the importance of English in our lives.. English is the most important language and without it we are lost.... "I LOVE English and it really has become a big part of my daily life...it is a very cool language!"</i>	Awareness of importance of English. Loves English.
9	<i>"English...when I see or hear this word I remember immediately movies and music. I don't see English a problem for me at all, I feel it close to me...English seems as an easy language for me ....because I love it!"</i>	English reminds learner of pleasant things – close – Loves English
13	<i>I don't think English is a difficult language because I love it! And when you love something its difficulties won't block your way... At least 25% of my day is ENGLISH. I listen to western music, I talk with some friends in English, I watch movies and programs</i>	Loves English. Daily exposure.
17	<i>"...I practice it almost everyday. It's the means I use to contact my friends whose mother tongue is English ... English language is a key that will be open for me the door to my academic life..."</i>	Daily exposure – Motivation
20	<i>Well...I think that English is not an easy language but I do believe that this fact doesn't make English a problem for me, and the main reason is that I like this language and I'm very interested to learn more about it....</i>	Aware of difficulties, but likes English

The reflection of the first group on their attitudes to English reveals a positive correlation between the degree of liking the language and the exposure to it. This seems to facilitate the learning process. In addition, learners show a degree of motivation of both kinds: instrumental and integrative, both of which are crucial in the learning of a foreign language (Lambert 1974:98; Gardner 1985; Crooks and Schmidt 1989; Gardner and MacIntyre 1991). Although motivation, in both its forms, was seen as a main contributor to L2 achievement, the majority of the studies, which have been correlational in nature, failed to attribute direction to motivation as being the cause or the result of success in L2 learning, or perhaps both (Ellis 1994:514). In our case, the respondents of this group “like” and “love” English mostly due to the fact that it is the language of songs and movies. English is not only perceived as the key to their academic future; there is fun in knowing English in the present as well. For a

teenager, the world of music and movies is a valid reason for them to perceive English as fun.

Another common factor among this group is that they reflect a certain degree of self-confidence; they know that they are in control, and even if English has its difficulties, they will not give up. English is too important.

## Group II Neutral attitudes

**Table 27**  
**Neutral Attitudes towards Learning English among the Respondents of the Longitudinal Research**

No.	Respondents' Comments about English as a Foreign Language	Comments
2	<i>"It's not as easy as abc...For me, but in order to achieve my dreams I must make it as easy as abc, but I don't now how can I do it!.....my needs for English in my life is to have a high mark in the bagrut in order to learn medicin. that's all... I like this language!"</i>	English is not easy. Instrumental motivation – to learn medicine. Likes English.
7	<i>"I know that the English is the international language in world and I know it important in our life. The problem is not her [referring to English] the problem is How to make this our great language. Because I like this language"</i>	English is important. The problem is us (learners) not English. Likes English
8	<i>...english as a language can be considered as a difficult language to learn..it is considered a third language for us...we have a good way of learning this language in our school, but I think that is not enough.....we can do a lot.....to set meeting with a forigen school".</i>	English is difficult; it is a third language. We can do more at school to enhance our knowledge of English
12	<i>"First, I like English very much....one of the important subjects in our life...I have to study hard to be Excellent in English specially because I have no good base in this language. But I am always doing my best to improve my language more and more.."</i>	English is important. Likes English, Problem is elementary school.
14	<i>"It is positiev that the English is a difficult language because of the language material have a erigular things more than ther rule [more irregularities than regularities] ..I am good in larning English and writing English cause of my frind Natalia who is caneadian, that I chating whith her "</i>	English is difficult. "Weird" grammar rules. Confidence in using English. Exposure through Internet chats.
16	<i>"I can't say that English is a big problem for me, but it's not easy. ...those grammer rule Im not sure that I use them when I speak....I feel that I need the English in my life not just know, in the future too."</i>	Not so easy a language. Grammatical problems. Awareness of status of English.
18	<i>"English is not a big problem to me, but I think about It a lot. It always wanders in my mind even if I talk Arabic... I noticed that my self confidence [lack of] is playing a part from my long trip for learning English ."</i>	Always think about English. Not enough self confidence to use it.
21	<i>" ...English it's a very important subject to learn because t's the international language..but this subject it's not easy because we don't use it every day we just learned at school this thing make it difficult I thing."</i>	Awareness of the status English has. Limited exposure – school is not enough.

What characterizes the members of this group is that they are aware of the importance of English in their lives, however, this fact does not make English any easier. The problems of learning English are attributed to different factors: some simply state that it is not an easy language; others try to analyse the source of difficulty and they attribute it to the “weird” grammar of the English language, where the exceptions to a rule outweigh the rule itself; there are those who perceive the problem as one of language distance: English is a third, or a fourth language to us, thus the difficulty. Regardless of the reason, there is a certain degree of difficulty that makes this group feel they have a problem reaching their expectations regarding the English language.

Another factor that the respondents find crucial in the learning process is exposure; a number of them feel that the English they get at school is not sufficient to enable them to reach their objective of mastering that language. One repeatedly suggested solution is to meet other speakers of English in other schools, or, better still, to meet native speakers, who they call ‘foreigners’. This suggestion does not only reflect the need for extra exposure to the language, it is also a reaction to the boring curriculum which they have to follow in school. These pupils continually express their boredom regarding the teachers’ relentless threat of the Bagrut exam. As mentioned earlier, initially in grade 11, and more intensively in grade 12, English teachers gear their teaching towards the requirements of the Bagrut exam, and instead of teaching the language, they deal more with techniques and strategies of how to pass the exam even when, for example, the passage has not been understood. This, it seems, is not proving successful, and the learners want an alternative.



To sum up, one third of the respondents of the longitudinal research are aware of the complexity of the English language, but at the same time they blame the curriculum, or their teachers, for their problems with English. These pupils like English, but are not happy with the way it is being taught.

### Group III Negative Attitudes

**Table 28**  
**Negative Attitudes towards Learning English among the Respondents of the Longitudinal Research**

No.	Respondent's Comments about English as a Foreign Language	Comments
4	<i>" English is a very hard language, it is very far from my daily life. I seldom use english in my chat with others, it is the third language in our land, that mean hebrew more used by peoples...english isn't tached in a wright way in schools...it isn't improve the students english knowledge"</i>	English is very hard. Not enough exposure. English is not taught effectively. Students do not benefit.
5	<i>"The English language is a problem for me. It a difficult language. I find my problem so hard that I can't solve it. Maybe I don't use it like the Hebrew language. I know that it is not my teacher's problem..... I hope to find a solution"</i>	English is a problem . A very hard language. Cannot solve this problem alone. Hope to find a solution.
10	<i>"About my english, I think that it's vere good. I have manny words. I have many ideas to show and to talk about. But, I don't know why I can't do...in my heart always I'm thinking in english when I'm talking to my self...,but I never success to show my language in front of this person I trust in [the teacher] Im using english in the net but to use in there give you time to think about what you want to talk or give you chance to correct your mistakes. ....So, I need your help, if you pleas"</i>	Knows enough vocabulary. Finds it difficult to express herself in class. Has more confidence when chatting (more time to prepare) Needs teacher's help.
11	<i>"English, in my opinion is a hard language, because it has many rules (in Gramar)...in our school we have to meet other schools from countries that there mother language is the English. and the problem for you that you have to learn this language if you say (yes, or, NO) you have and must to learn it, because this language is the language that all the people in the world talk it..."</i>	A hard language. Many grammar rules. Need more exposure. It is an evil you have to deal with. International language.
15	<i>"...I feel that English is very difficult and I'm so far from it, I just use it at school, my mark in all the exams of English is between 65%-75%, this isn't support me to like it or to use it.....to improve my present knowledge I started to wrote to my friend in Italy but this didn't help cause I haven't some one to correct me when I wrong/ all of this make me afraid and hate english."</i>	English is very difficult. Distance. Low academic achievement. Took initiative to solve the problem. Result: frustration...hates English.
19	<i>"English is a problem for me, there is a lot of thing that I need to be the best, and I need incerugment to choise the writ way. My big problem I want to use this English, I want to speak without worry, afraid this things what I think that I need."</i>	English is a problem. Needs guidance. Aware of its importance.

The third group reflect a sense of hardship and frustration. The respondents in this group know that they have a problem, but are not sure how to deal with it. English is so problematic that even if they tried doing something about it, they would fail. Some have tried to take the initiative and widen their exposure to the language through chatting on the Internet, but to no avail. Others have simply given up; they are waiting for a solution, but do not know how and when it will happen. They know that they have failed, that they have jeopardized their future, and, most seriously, they feel powerless to do anything about it.

The members of this group reflect the situation of many pupils who simply could not make it on their own. They form about one third of the respondents, and although they come from a relatively high level group, they face the same problems as the rest of the pupils in the other classes. The pupils feel that the system has let them down, whether it is the curriculum, the school, the teachers, or any other factor that they cannot name.

## **Summary**

The conceptual framework of this research has set the analysis of the data at three levels, factual, interpretive and conceptual. The first two levels have been dealt with in the Fourth Chapter, while the conceptual findings are dealt with in the following chapter.

At the factual findings level it has been shown that each of the three affective factors, which plays a role in the lives and IL of the APIs, complements the other two. The

lingual factor has revealed both a universal developmental pattern, mostly apparent in the Intra-lingual errors found in the data. The Inter-lingual errors, which were a case of transfer, reflected the distance between Arabic and English. As for Arabic, in addition to the distance factor, its diglossic state did not play a facilitative role in the acquisition of English. Pupils had problems dealing with Arabic at both levels, and on several occasions, they had comprehension difficulties in Arabic itself. The use of the dictionary as an aid was counterproductive in the case when the Arabic translation of a word misled the pupils due to their weakness in their mother tongue.

At that same linguistic level, Hebrew played a negative role in the pupils' linguistic repertoires. The more Hebrew enters Arabic, the more problems the APIs have dealing with their own mother tongue; instead of having a solid mother tongue which the pupils can relate to in order to compare, analyse and understand linguistic phenomena, the role of L1 has become yet another factor that complicates the already complicated situation under which the APIs live and learn.

At the cultural level, the tension between the Arabic and Jewish cultures has its impact too. The present situation of the Arabic culture is far from stable. On the one hand, there are the Intra-cultural forces which are in a state of war with the fundamentalist, Islamic religious trends and the secular, nationalistic trend, including the Christian Arabs, which is more open to the West. On the other hand, this same progressive trend is at war with the local Jewish and the Western culture as a whole. These foreign cultures are moving at a speed much greater than they can, or are willing to. They simply do not trust these cultures anymore, and, unlike the

fundamentalists who see the West as evil, they see the evil in the West as a threat in that it tries to diminish their heritage.

The socio-political factor, which consists of micro and macro elements, is the most apparent of all three factors. The APIs are subjected to political games that they do not like; the discrimination within the state in which they live makes it very hard for them to accept their reality as being fair, and the political forces that play a role trying to distort it at all levels, leave little hope, if any, for integration. Simply and bluntly put, the Arab citizens, pupils, teachers, workers and human beings are perceived as second-class citizens. It is no wonder that, after almost 55 years of living under the Israeli State, they are still looking for their lost identity.

Each one of the three above-mentioned factors creates a state of continuous tensions in the APIs' lives. Living in such tensions, let alone learning, is so demanding that carrying on becomes difficult. This situation is far from being idealistic for learning to take place.

The interpretive findings, which were the combination of each two factors together, have revealed yet another level of the intricate relationship between the APIs and their surrounding. Language has been used as a means to reflect the conflicts in the API's life; what is seen as normal in a teenager's daily life has taken a new look quite different in the life of the API. Teenagers think about politics instead of love and fun. What is worse, their reality has turned them into distorted human beings. On the one hand, they have matured prematurely, thus depriving them of the childhood they are entitled to have. On the other hand, they are culturally and politically underprivileged,

in that they live in a state that does not allow them to discover their true identity. There is nothing in these pupils' lives that gives them hope for the future. Their lives are filled with obstacles that only become more complicated as they advance in their lives. The origin of these obstacles, however, is clearly set at the birth of each child, as to whether it is a 'chosen', or probably, just another gentile child.

In the following chapter, a discussion of the conceptual findings brings this research to an end, thus profiling the APIs as learners of English and human beings.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Conclusion and Discussion**

#### **5.1 Research Statement**

This research was undertaken with the aim of exploring the Interlanguage of the Arab pupils in Israel, seeking to discover its linguistic, cultural and socio-political dimensions. The research investigated the written discourse of 21 pupils in a two-and-a-half year longitudinal study. In addition, a cross-sectional study was carried out with 280 pupils from four different demographic backgrounds: Arab-only cities; Arab-only villages; Mixed Jewish-Arab cities and the Bedouin sector in the south. The cross-sectional study looked into the linguistic behaviour of the participants in terms of their prior linguistic knowledge and investigated cross-linguistic influences on their use of English. Cultural and socio-political aspects were also examined.

The research focused on the ILs of the Arab pupils in Israel, whose living and learning conditions are far from being normal when compared to most Jewish citizens in Israel. This minority is treated as second-class citizens, and the learning of English is doubly complicated since English is their fourth language after Colloquial Arabic, their mother tongue, MSA and Hebrew. MSA, although it shares some aspects with the colloquial language, mostly in semantics, is still considered a difficult language to learn for the Arab pupils. In the latest Bagrut results (Ministry of Education, 2003), the national average of all those who sat for the Arabic exam, was even less than the national average of English. MSA is just another complex language that the APIs

have to learn. The disadvantage of having to cope with a diglossic language limits the proficiency level that learners can achieve as children, and which they can subsequently use in their foreign language learning (Krashen, 1996). Furthermore, the undeclared war against MSA (Atallah, 2002) has more than the linguistic outcome of degrading Arabic; the native speakers themselves feel humiliated in this aspect as well. When road signs, for instance, reflect the disrespect the authority has towards MSA, by displaying misspelling city names, the message is clear. A more severe case can be found in the opening of a new terminal in Ben Gurion International Airport, where Arabic, though an official language, was ignored completely in all the signs stated within the terminal, which were only in Hebrew and English. Perhaps the latest blow to the status of MSA, as conceived by the government, is the bill advanced by right-wing Knesset Member Eldad to remove the status of Arabic as an official language in Israel (Haaretz, 4/1/2005).

MSA is not just a language of communication among the Arabs; it is much more than that. Fishman (1989) argues that language becomes part of the secular religion, binding society together. Chomsky (1979:191) states that “questions of language are basically questions of power”. The state, in this case, can practice its hegemony by manipulating the language of the minority; a typical case of one of Althusser’s (1971) Ideological State Apparatuses.

In addition to the language distance<sup>7</sup> between English and Arabic, the cultural aspect provides its own trauma. The APIs, as teenagers, rebel against their traditional

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<sup>7</sup> Language distance is not only language typology, which focuses on classifying languages according to their structural characteristics, but also the cultural closeness or distance which is influenced by geographical distance. For more on this, refer to Keszkes (2000:87) and Kellerman (1983) for the psycho-typology; the way the learner perceives closeness or distance from the foreign language.

society, while still trapped in a history which reminds them of certain social norms that are far from being comprehended by the western eye. In such a society, being a teacher is not only revered, but feared as well. Undoubtedly, this image is changing, but in rural areas, it does not succumb to the pressure of the new generation easily, and the status of the teacher as a source of authority remains fixed (Khatab and Yair, 1995). Teacher-pupils relationships are highly determined by the demographic background of the pupils, and gender plays a role as well, where male teachers are more feared than their female counterparts, and female pupils maintain a distance from their male teachers, a typical patriarchal society. This was one of the reasons for this research to focus on the written discourse as the source of data, since it allows more space to exist between teacher and pupils, thus facilitating contact. Another reason for avoiding the use of the spoken language is the social tensions that exist among the various demographic groups of pupils, where some rural groups feel threatened by the superiority of the city-dwellers for being more open and more articulate. These tensions have constantly surfaced over the years leading to a situation where some pupils have taken a vow of silence, never to speak again in the presence of their classmates. However, as it will be stated later, this problem could have been solved through one-to-one interviews had the research intended to investigate the spoken language as well.

## **5.2 Methodology**

The methodology set for this research in the initial stages has not been followed blindly, but has been subject to a change in developmental patterns, similar to the IL discussed in the research itself.



The first attempt to explore the APIs IL was limited by the linguistic approach of analysing the texts they had produced. The methodology followed for that purpose was therefore set accordingly, and included mostly inductive approaches in order to categorise the IL. EA was performed on the texts, and it soon became clear that this aspect could only describe rather than interpret the APIs' ILs. There was a need to consider the learners as well, not only the language they had produced; this approach would have described only the product, not what it held underneath regarding the world in which the learners lived. Even when performance analysis was carried out on the whole text, including the deviant structures, and a deductive approach was used in the cross-sectional study, the research was still missing some other vital components that could not be found in the linguistic-only analysis. The results did yield some important information about the characteristics of the APIs' ILs, but failed to produce a comprehensive exploration of the language.

When the two other factors were added to the conceptual framework, the cultural and socio-political factors, the methodology changed to more probing techniques; rather than following a positivistic approach, which distanced itself from the learner and detached the learner from the product, the language, a more pertinent approach was followed, which took a more holistic view of the learner. Thus, critical discourse analysis was carried out, and the interpretive approach used for the cultural factor was upgraded with a critical approach, which depended mostly on a practitioner research perspective. The methodology used focused on the learning issues of the APIs' IL from a subjective viewpoint, and thus interpreted the social lives of the learners, mostly negotiating meanings and looking at the personal constructs of the individuals among the respondents. The categorisation in the discourse analysis took the cultural

factors into consideration and the cross-sectional study investigated culturally-related vocabulary. The researcher, at this level, becomes part of the research, with the conceptual framework putting him at the centre, together with the learners and the IL. The need to portray, analyse and interpret the uniqueness of real individuals and situations and to capture the complexity and situatedness of the APIs, then prompted the choice of a case study as a research method. This choice is the direct result of the paradigm followed in this educational research, which “seeks to understand and interpret the world in terms of its actors and consequently may be described as interpretive and subjective” (Cohen et al. 2000:181).

Adding to the multiplicity of research approaches used in this research is the critical educational approach, which takes the political and ideological contexts into account and examines and interrogates the relationships between school and society. This is a view which states that “what counts as worthwhile knowledge is determined by the social and positional power of the advocates of that knowledge” (Cohen et al. 2000: 29). This view, Cohen (ibid) notices, echoes Kuhn’s (1962) notions of paradigms and paradigm shifts, where the field of knowledge or paradigm is seen to be only as good as the evidence and the respect in which it is held by ‘authorities.’

Habermas’ (1972) definition of worthwhile knowledge and modes of understanding which go around the three cognitive interests of ‘prediction and control’, ‘understanding and interpretation’ and ‘emancipation and freedom’, best summarises the methodological approaches used in this research. The first was used mostly with the cross-sectional study, the second with the longitudinal research at the cultural level, and the third at the socio-political level, mostly to interpret and understand,

although the same approach would probably better serve action research. The mixing of the three paradigms enabled the research to follow the conceptual framework, which in itself provided the factual, interpretive and conceptual findings of the research.

The APIs' IL was explored in two different types of research: longitudinal research, which studied the developmental patterns and the linguistic, cultural and socio-political aspects of 21 pupils for two and a half years, and a cross-sectional study, which focused mostly on cross-linguistic influences between English and the other languages in the APIs' linguistic repertoires. The main longitudinal research, which was inductive in nature, analysed various samples of the pupils' written discourses and looked for linguistic patterns through the use of performance analysis, which looked for both the correct and deviant forms of the pupils' IL. Variations and developmental patterns were also identified, and gain in knowledge was investigated.

Samples of the pupils' IL were subjected to critical discourse analysis where the two other dimensions of the research were revealed: the cultural and socio-political aspects of the language. The APIs, similar to other learners, do not live in a vacuum, and the learning process of English uncovers the human beings behind the learners, who through English, tell their unique stories about who their heroes are and how they perceive languages, cultures and power relationships in their society. By revealing the human aspect, the research manages to shed light on the whole process of learning, where, in addition to the positivistic world which can explain only so much of the APIs' world, there lies another non-positivistic realm, where the learners make their subjective voices heard, thus revealing what it means for an API to be a learner of

English. The researcher, who is a member of the Arab sector in Israel, and a learner of English as well, is totally submerged in the flux of forces that shape and reshape the identity of being a learner and a citizen of a state with which he feels in eternal conflict. Unfortunately, it is this state of conflicts and tensions that dyes the APIs with sanguine colours.

The data, therefore, had to be analysed at various levels, each corresponding to the relevant aspect of the research: the linguistic, cultural and socio-political aspects.

Linguistically, the analysis of the data has revealed that in terms of error analysis, many of the errors were typical of universal, developmental errors common among all learners of English as a foreign language. However, other errors were Inter-lingual in nature, which shows that L1 Interference has taken place in the learning process. About 10 per cent of the errors were in this category, and this result is another proof of the uncertainty that exists in the field of error analysis. Similar studies have revealed estimates between 3 per cent and up to 25 per cent (James 1998:181).

With Inter-lingual errors, verbs had most errors of all parts of speech investigated. The proper use of auxiliary verbs created a challenge for many learners, and this is one of the areas where fossilization can take place in the learning process (Selinker, 1972). Morpheme errors, with all the controversy around the subject (Ellis, 1994:95-96) of how morphemes are acquired, reveal universal patterns of acquisition as the findings showed in the previous chapter.

In the non-deviant forms of the language, the findings showed that the respondents have advanced in terms of register and accuracy, which means that, in time, and given enough exposure, these learners have become better learners, not only by eliminating errors, but also by improving the level of English they use, whether on the lexis or syntax levels. Other writing-related skills, such as organisation, did not reveal a clear pattern of development. This can be explained by the fact that organisation, as a writing skill, is not directly related to the learned language itself, but has to do more with personal and individual skills that the learner needs to acquire in order to become better organised in their writings. This result might also be indicative of the fact that not enough attention is given to the teaching of organisational skills in writing, while accuracy, in both its forms of spelling and grammar, receives most attention. It would be interesting to investigate if similar results would be found in the APIs' L1. The implication of such research is that the learner might benefit by first improving literacy and writing skills in the mother tongue, and subsequently applying these organisational skills to learning any other foreign language.

Interrogatives remain another challenge for the APIs. In addition to the main problem of understanding the function of auxiliary verbs in English in general, and in interrogatives in particular, the rigid word order of English, compared to the more liberal demands of Arabic, where intonation plays a stronger role, seems to have an additional effect on errors of this kind. During years of conducting oral exams with pupils in the Bagrut exams, I have noticed the complexity of interrogatives, and the high degree of cognitive processing they require (Pienemann, 1983) in order to understand and apply the process of asking questions in English, and that this is one area where fossilisation can take place at very early stages of learning. However, no

strong evidence has yet shown that there is a clear universal order of acquisition which applies to different L2s. What we have here is weaker evidence which shows that a sequence applies to a specific group of learners. However, this too, is restricted by syntactic structures such as negatives, relative pronouns and interrogatives (Ellis, 1994:111).

The cross-sectional study revealed those linguistic patterns that are related to the prior linguistic knowledge of the learners. Patterns revealed an increase in the use of Modern Standard Arabic, in relation to Colloquial Arabic, according to rise in age. Pupils who live in mixed cities used Hebrew the most among the four groups investigated. The same group made least errors in translation and vocabulary. This might reveal advanced cognitive development, and stands in accordance with Vygotsky's (1978) view on the subject. The same could be concluded regarding Schumann's (1978) Acculturation Model regarding Integration, Seclusion and Assimilation. No significant differences were found among Arab-only cities and villages. The Bedouin sector group made the most errors and had the lowest results of all the groups.

The cultural dimension revealed a similar pattern; the mixed-cities pupils knew the most about vocabulary which reflected exposure to culture. Here too the Bedouin pupils were last among the four categories. Investigating the cultural aspect is intended to counterbalance the attention usually given to viewing language learning from a language acquisition perspective (Atkinson, 1990) and has stemmed from the belief that language learning is a socialisation process which credits context and

culture for much of what happens in the learning process (Watson-Geges, 1988). This view has been applied in the conceptual framework of the research.

The participants in the main longitudinal research revealed how these cultural aspects interact with their learning process and become part of the linguistic repertoires they use. The girl, who wants to take revenge for what PM Sharon has been doing to the Palestinians, chose to tell her father about her feelings and made him the audience for her writing. This specific choice has its implication on the linguistic level as well, since assigning the purpose of writing has its implications on the register used, including various syntactical features, such as the use of structures and tenses that suit expressive writing styles. The choice of such a charged topic requires a certain mastery of the language, which goes beyond the linguistic domain.

The socio-political dimension was revealed mostly in the text about meeting a celebrity, where seven pupils chose a political figure as their favourite person. The gifts exchanged were patriotic symbols of Palestine. One chose Prime Minister Sharon, but as a symbol of the anti-hero. Here too, similar to the effect of socialisation on the nature of the language used, the politicisation of the content is similarly effective. The type and quality of language is set both by the learning environment, and the content of production. Evidence in the respondents' data has revealed the clear connection between the linguistic, social and political inputs and the type of language produced.

The 'background' questionnaire revealed a unanimous feeling of discrimination against the Arab citizens of Israel. The outcome was that many pupils consider

themselves Palestinians first while the Israeli side was either secondary or neglected altogether. This is yet another indication that the APIs unfavourable living conditions seep through their entity as learners, thus leading them to a state of anxiety that does very little to stabilise their learning process. The conceptual framework puts all of these forces into action, revolving around the learner. In the case of the APIs, stabilising and controlling these forces can facilitate learning, however, this not an easy mission.

### **5.3 Conceptual findings**

When discussing the results of the cross-sectional study, one cannot ignore the clear evidence which proves that mixed-city pupils are better learners of English than those in the other sectors, and that, the Bedouin pupils are the lowest achievers. The aspect of socialisation and exposure has an influence on their educational potential.

Although individual aspects of language learning have not been examined, evidence has shown that the trend described above is representative of the whole group as belonging to a mixed Arab-Jewish city, an Arab-only city or village, or the Bedouin sector. There was no significant difference in the results between the Arab-only cities and villages; that is why these two groups could be considered as one.

The factual findings have revealed how each sector behaved linguistically, culturally and socio-politically when dealing with English as a foreign language. However, each aspect has represented one dimension only of the learning process.



The interpretive findings have revealed the second dimension of the process; this is when two aspects work together to reveal relevant findings which would otherwise have remained hidden. The linguistic aspect could not have revealed the social aspect had they not been combined together. When the linguistic and social aspects were combined they revealed that the APIs carry with them not only the oddities of a distant, foreign language, but also a culture and a history which affect their daily lives as learners in more than one way.

The conceptual findings put the three aspects in motion, thus revealing the third dimension of the learning process of the API. Again, with all the delimitations in the research, which will be addressed shortly, evidence has shown that some sectors of the APIs succeeded more than others in their mission of learning English. The reason for this relative success, at the sector level, can be attributed to the fact that the members of this sector have managed to resolve some, if not all, of the tensions that had previously inhibited the learning process. The degree of integration and socialisation with the surrounding western society has helped to ease the cultural and socio-political tensions, thus resulting in a higher academic achievement.

At the linguistic level, Arabic in both of its diglossic varieties, the high and low, is in no way supportive, or even facilitative to the learners of English. The linguistic repertoire of Arabic is simply alien to Prot-Indo-European languages. What adds to this alienation is the fact that Arabic remains a closed system due to its sanctity as the language of the Koran. Some aspects of the Classical Arabic taught in schools have not changed for the last fourteen centuries!

Colloquial Arabic is in a state of instability due to the polarised forces that affect it: MSA at the one extreme, and Hebrew at the other.

The average Arab learner feels a part of the Arab language and culture and usually respects the language by demonstrating their ability to deal with such an old language. However, this adherence to Arabic seems to distance the learner from English, at least culturally. As mentioned earlier in the discussion on the diglossic state of Arabic in Chapter One, the opponents of MSA see it as a restricting factor which prevents the Arabs from reaching other cultures. One cannot live in both worlds simultaneously; the optimum state one can aspire to is a state of equilibrium between the two. However, this is almost a virtual transitory state where one can only pass through, but not stop. Most learners take one of the two sides, adopting one while relinquishing the other. What the pupils in the mixed cities have done is to make a decision and relinquish their L1. By siding with Hebrew rather than Arabic, they have resolved the linguistic tension that inhibits their learning process of English. After all, Hebrew is much closer to English than Arabic. An examination of the cognates that exist in Modern Hebrew reveals how open it is to adopting new words into the language. Evidence has shown that these pupils use Hebrew far more than any other group in the research. By getting away from the rigidity of Arabic, these pupils have given themselves the chance to facilitate learning English. With language there comes culture. Here too, the pupils in the mixed cities have been exposed to a culture which is much more western than their Arab-city-only counterparts. The traditional Arabic culture has submitted in to the daily influences of the Jewish culture, leading to assimilation. The result is that these pupils are not only moving away from their L1, but from their culture as well. These two features are apparent in the degree of

Hebrew that they use with their Arabic (Amara, 1986), and in the fluency of their Hebrew, having lived with the Jewish people all their lives. The cultural aspect can be clearly seen in the way they dress and in certain social norms that are not usually accepted by the more traditional Arabs elsewhere in the country.

Speaking the language of the Jewish people, and living a normal life of community and friendship with them definitely has an impact on the way these Jewish people are accepted by the Arabs. With the weakening of the nationalistic feelings of both the Arabic culture and language, there is little surprise that these pupils have stopped seeing the Jewish people as the enemy, thus removing the third conflict that hinders their learning process.

The pupils in the mixed cities have neutralised the negative affective factors that had created an obstacle to their learning of English; unlike others, they have used the Jewish people and the Hebrew language as a bridge to the western world, that of the English language and culture.

In Israel, the Arab learner of English is surrounded by forces that block their advancement toward achieving the required knowledge of English. The trick is to find a point of equilibrium where these forces neutralise each other. Some manage to reach this point, thus keeping their identity as Arabs, others, however, find it very difficult to maintain this act of balancing the forces and they give in to the pressure each aspect applies on the learner. The solution is clear, if they cannot resist the pressure, they have to relinquish something: the Arabic language and culture. The decision over which force to succumb has a significant impact on the learning outcomes.

The Bedouin sector represents the learners who dwell in rural areas, with a low socio-economic status, and a high degree of seclusion. These learners could not resolve any of the conflicts that exist in their lives. At the linguistic level, their language repertoires consist mostly of their L1, which is a local dialect that cannot be easily understood by other non-Bedouin Arabs. MSA remains a problem for them because the Bedouin educational system suffers from severe neglect by the authorities; the whole learning environment is non-supportive and the academic achievement of the pupils is the lowest in the Arab sector altogether. This is also true about Hebrew, but as the Bedouins serve in the army, this improves later on. English, therefore, remains alien to them due to the lack of teachers, among other factors. The geographical location of the Bedouin settlements, some of which are still unrecognised by the government, not receiving basic services, such as electricity and running water, makes it very unattractive for good teachers to go and live in this part of the country.

As for the cultural aspect, the Bedouins are trapped in their traditional lifestyle which resists innovations and western values. Similar to the Innuits in Canada, attempts were made in the past to relocate the Bedouins to permanent settlements, only to create ghettos and cities of destruction with soaring unemployment rates, poverty and crime. At the socio-political level, the Bedouin serve in the army and they receive all the benefits that their Jewish counterparts are granted in the form of cheap land, low-interest loans and adjusting grants. However, these same released soldiers go back to their homes only to find their families are still living in the sub-human conditions described above. There is no way these Bedouins can ever resolve their socio-political conflicts as long as they are treated this way. The Israeli Jews still look down on them

as do the Arabs, partly because they serve in the army, and many consider them to be traitors and partly because they perceive them to be less civilised.

The third sector, the Arab-only villages and cities are moving on the right direction regarding English learning. Many have achieved sound knowledge of English, both at the lingual and cultural levels. However this is not the case in the socio-political aspect where there is much to be done, as a sector, before they are ready for any compromises regarding the acceptance of the state as being theirs.

Some Arab villages and cities, especially in the Triangle area, are close to Jewish major cities and many are in daily contact with them. The use of Hebrew is taking its place in the daily linguistic repertoire and is subsuming it. Using the same analysis as above, this part of the Arab sector has reached a 'modus vivendi' by allowing their mother tongue to become a hybrid of Arabic and Hebrew, thus resolving the lingual tensions between Arabic and Hebrew and moving closer to English through Hebrew. Pupils in these areas are much more fluent in Hebrew than other Arab pupils in the Galilee area, where the largest Arab population lives. However, the advantage these pupils gain in language, they lose in culture due to the religious fundamentalism that is becoming widespread in the area. The call for going back to Islam as a way of life has left its impact on the daily lives of the pupils especially on girls who are expected to dress traditionally with head coverings. The West is perceived as evil and cable-television is not encouraged since it exposes its viewers to western culture. Most of the pupils in this part of the country watch Arabic-only channels. However, as with every extremist movement, there are those who move to the other extreme. This area also has the highest rate of drug users in the whole country.

As for the socio-political aspect, the conflicts have not yet been resolved, especially as the area is geographically close to the West Bank and the Palestinian nationalist feeling is constantly fed by the neighbouring Intifadah. This is further exacerbated by the atmosphere of religious fundamentalism which hinders progress by creating a psychological and a sociological barrier to the learners.

The pupils in this area are in a better situation than the Bedouins with their English learning, but they lag behind their peers in the Galilee area in the north.

The pupils in the Galilee area, where the population is mixed Christians and Moslems, have the highest concentration of Christian Arabs in the country. For them, the conflict with Hebrew has been partly resolved academically, since Hebrew is one of the basic subjects needed for higher academic achievement. Pupils are not as fluent as their counterparts in the Triangle area, but they manage quite well. The existence of the Christian communities in this area has left its impact on the familiarity of the existence of other European languages, such as French and Italian. Many schools in the area are run by private bodies that belong to Christian religious groups, and although these foreign languages are no longer taught, many Christians speak a European language in addition to English. The exposure to these foreign languages is a daily routine in the private schools, where part of the school staff, and not necessarily teachers, are native speakers of these languages. Generally speaking, the sounds of a western language being spoken in this part of the country, is not considered alien. The lingual compromise has therefore been reached through the existence of the foreign Christian institutions in the country.

Regarding the cultural aspect, the existence of the Christian communities delays and limits the effect of the Islamic fundamentalist movements well-entrenched elsewhere. Although one can see the growing increase in girls dressing traditionally, they remain a minority, especially in the private schools. Moslems who attend Christian schools are used to seeing monks and nuns, to listening to talks about the Christian religions and to taking part in religious feasts, such as Christmas. Regardless of the aims behind the creation of this atmosphere in schools, the advantages of learning English are apparent: western culture is encouraged and is not perceived as a source of evil. Pupils in the Galilee area do better in the English Bagrut exams than those in the Triangle, and much better than the Bedouins. In fact, until recently, most English teachers came from the Galilee area, and most of them were Christians. The indication of the connection between language and culture could not be expressed more clearly. The cultural conflicts have partly been resolved due to the more relaxed atmosphere of having Christians and Moslems living together, thus neutralising any negative effect fundamentalist movements can have on the learning process of English.

This part of the Arab sector does have Moslem-only villages and the problems regarding English there are no different from those in the other areas.

As for the socio-political aspect, this has not yet been resolved. On the contrary, it has become more complicated, especially since the October events and the continuous confiscation of Arab lands. The pupils in this area, similar to other Arab pupils in the country, are still treated as second-class pupils in comparison to the Jewish educational system. Their schools are under-budgeted and the learning environment is

far from acceptable. Again, had it not been for the Christian schools in the area, the situation would have been much worse.

As seen in the longitudinal research, almost all the respondents feel that the country has not been fair in the way it has been treating them. They simply cannot see themselves as true citizens of Israel. The socio-political conflict is far from being resolved, thus the daily tensions of politics will always be felt and negatively affect, an otherwise, normal learning environment.

To conclude this part of the discussion, when the three forces of language, culture and socio-politics are at work, the learning process is affected. For the learner to advance and achieve a higher level of English, some of the tensions have to be resolved; the lingual tensions between colloquial and MSA; the tensions between Arabic and Hebrew; the cultural tensions between religions and civilisations, and finally, the most basic, and probably the most important tension of all, the socio-political conflict which, once it has been resolved, can guarantee the minimum required of what it means to be a true citizen of a country.<sup>8</sup>

According to this reading of the situation of the APIs, and with the discussed paradigms in mind, it is finding a point of equilibrium, where each force neutralises the other, that optimum learning can take place. In fact, the best a learner can aspire to is to compromise by accepting some of the realities in which they live. The price of compromise is sometimes high, especially when identities, languages and cultures are

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<sup>8</sup> These same obstacles can become an incentive for individual learners to excel in their quest of becoming successful learners. However, the boundaries of the research do not take these individual differences into consideration and treat the APIs as a group of learners who belong to the same minority.



involved. Not compromising can mean stagnation, with no hope of a better academic future.

#### **5.4 Research questions revisited**

The two research questions that were asked at the beginning of this research were:

1. What are the main linguistic characteristics of the APIs' IL?
2. How does the prior linguistic knowledge of the APIs, their cultural and socio-political backgrounds affect that IL?

The first question builds mostly on the longitudinal research. The API's written IL reflects the following linguistic characteristics:

##### **a. Phonology**

The API learner does not always differentiate between the /b/ and /p/ phonemes. For those learners who face this problem, they simply hear both sounds as being voiced and non-aspirated, mostly at the beginning of the word. In the written IL this reflects in the spelling mistakes they make in words such as /boor/ instead of /poor/. Evidence suggests that this inability to distinguish the two sounds can lead to fossilisation. Advanced learners can still have this problem after years of using English, however, more in speaking than in writing.

## **b. Morphology**

The most evident characteristic is the problem learners have with inflectional morphemes, especially the third person singular present –s. This morpheme is one of the problems learners face in dealing with agreement markers in general. Problems of agreement have also been seen in the translation task from Arabic into English, where respondents failed to transfer the agreement into English. Animacy caused more difficulty than other features in this respect. The sentence “hāḍihi al-a šḡāru kabīratun” (This trees Big) is a good example of such difficulty, where the sentence was translated into – This trees is big / This trees are big / These trees is big.. Bates and MacWhinney’s (1982) Competition Model sheds more light on this phenomenon.<sup>9</sup>

## **c. Syntax**

The API does not adhere to the rigid rules of English regarding word order. Arabic, which allows both SVO and VSO, is much more liberal in this respect, and learners tend to use this feature in English as well. The problem arises more in the use of the direct and indirect objects than in the other parts of speech. Adverbs usually impose themselves in such an IL to much higher nodes. A sentence like: “I love very much my mother” is common among the APIs.

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<sup>9</sup> The Competition Model is a functional model of language use and language acquisition, proposed initially by Bates and MacWhinney (1982). It views the task of language learning as that of discovering the particular form-function mappings that characterise the target language. These mappings are viewed as having varying ‘strengths’ in different languages. This is usually illustrated with reference to the function of ‘agency’, which has a number of possible formal exponents: a) word order b) agreement c) case and d) animacy.

Interrogatives, auxiliary verbs and the Present Perfect tense are among the most problematic features of the APIs' IL. Here too, fossilisation is evident. This is one example where L1 interferes with the learning process of English and where most of the Interlingual errors occur.

Relative clauses are another area where the APIs have difficulty, especially in the retaining of the referring pronoun. This is a typical feature of Arab learners as a whole, since both high and low variety of Arabic, require the referring pronoun in relative clauses.

#### **d. Semantics**

The API has a tendency to paraphrase and expand what can be expressed in a much simpler way. This feature is quite common in Arabic where it is usually accepted. Although learners might use this feature as a communication strategy, it does create a problem in the discourse domain, where coherence can suffer because of this overuse.

Idioms are almost non-existent in the APIs' IL, neither are phrasal verbs. This is one area where avoidance takes place in the APIs' IL, since the whole subject of prepositions is confusing, whether standing alone or as a part of the phrasal verb.

One last semantic feature in the APIs' IL is the overuse of the definite article "the" in expressions like "The life is beautiful". In Arabic, the definite article is used even when talking about something in general. The problem here is semantic and has its origins in L1, where the rules of usage are different.

To answer to the first research question, the API's IL has certain developmental universal features which are common among all learners of English, regardless of their L1. In addition, there are features that are due to cross-linguistic influences, mainly in the form of transfer. The APIs' IL reflects a tendency to ignore punctuation rules, spelling included, and to overuse run-on sentences. The influence of L1 on the APIs' stylistic writing is reflected in more than just errors of morpho-syntax; other aspects, such as cohesion, are also affected.

To answer the second research question evidence has shown clear cases of transfer from both L1, L2 and L3 to L4. By transfer here we mean a more general meaning than its linguistic connotation. The API transfers not only grammatical structures and functions, but also pragmatic features as well. These are apparent in the way students address each other in the dialogue completion tasks; in the mixing of formal and informal styles and in the texture of the texts. Many texts, as in 'meeting a celebrity', are stylistically Arabic, both colloquial and MSA, but were written in English. The prior linguistic knowledge in the APIs' case does not seem to have a facilitating effect on the learning of English as a foreign language. Language distance, both in its structural and cultural meaning, among other factors, is partly to blame.

However, prior linguistic knowledge did play a positive role in the cross-sectional study, where the evidence showed that pupils who live in mixed cities did better than any other group. This might suggest that their knowledge of Hebrew and their tendency to use it with, or instead of Arabic, has played a facilitative role in their learning process. Although the study dealt with very limited aspects of the language, such as translation and vocabulary, a clear pattern emerged to suggest the positive

effects of such knowledge. According to Schumann's (1978) Acculturation Model, this is a case where assimilation is taking place. Other factors, such as personal affects, cannot be excluded when trying to generalise.

The cultural background, which can hardly be separated from the linguistic one, is also apparent in the APIs' IL. In the cross-sectional study, clear differences were seen in the vocabulary section; here too, on average, living in a mixed city seems to have a beneficial effect on language, through culture. The more open the culture, the more receptive it is to other cultures. The evidence has also shown that the opposite is also true: the Bedouin sector, which is geographically and culturally isolated, has come last in almost all categories in the questionnaire that had been administered to the participants. This evidence stands in clear accordance with Schumann's (1978) Acculturation Model of segregation. It also supports Luria's (1978) views of the Vigotskian theory of cultural differences in thinking.

Cultural effects were more evident in the main longitudinal research where more genres were investigated. Clear cultural patterns emerged, especially in the letter writing task and the essay on the use of cellular phones. Family relationships, social norms and gender issues are all reflected in the APIs' IL. Cultural tensions and confusion are apparent in their move away from their Arabic culture, while at the same time still living in it. This confusion definitely has an impact on the learners IL. The quasi-childish style and naivety in some respondents' writings reflect the protective environment in which they live. There are the more daring, usually males, who reject this culture and break taboos in their writings, sometimes using the protection of a foreign word. Still, with both extremes, this is a group of learners who

are looking for answers in their persistent cultural search for identity. These learners seize the opportunity to write in a foreign language in order to escape the censorship that the Arab society imposes on them. However, by doing so, they have created chaos in their writing, trying to insert so much into so little; all of their hopes and dreams into a foreign language which although inviting in its readiness to accept them, has strict rules regarding acceptability and grammaticality. All this is done in an environment which is not kindly disposed towards western values, and sees English as a representation of the West.

Strongly visible in the APIs' IL are traces of the socio-political background. This is one aspect that has a significant impact on the whole formation of the APIs' IL: the socio-political background sets the limits as to what the Arab learner can achieve. When we set aside the individual factors, it is true to say that the APIs in general do not live in a supporting learning environment, neither for English nor for any other subject. This socio-political situation has made the APIs into second-class learners. This could affect their IL because the opportunities they have been given to learn English are minimal, and any unexpected successes are due to individual efforts that receive little support, if any, from the surrounding environment.

The frustration and the feeling of being second-class citizens; the feeling of unfairness that exists in their world; the never-ending search for a stable and respectful identity, and the simple fact that there is no such thing as real peace, all put the APIs under a constant pressure. This chaotic feeling and frustration are evident in the pupils' ILs in the longitudinal research. Their ILs are as confused as they are; they look for expressions to describe their situation; they gasp for air in their writing about the

political situation; their language is charged with anger and heavy feelings. Instead of writing about typical teenage topics, they remember their friend who was murdered during the October events. Their English is too fragile and weak to handle such passionate feelings, thus, the result is a poor attempt to express genuine emotions in an IL which succumbs to the demands of a lingua franca, which, in itself, stubbornly insists that it can be learned regardless of the environment in which the learner lives.

The API is a learner who is constantly under linguistic, cultural and social pressures. The special characteristics of this learner are apparent in their IL at all these levels. Linguistically, one can possibly identify that the learner is an Arab; culturally and socio-politically one can definitely say that he/she is an API. The signs in their ILs are just too vivid to ignore.

### **5.5 Issues of Generalisability**

Apart from the cross-sectional study, the issue of generalisability does not play an important role in this kind of research. Both the topic of research, IL, and the highly subjective and interpretive nature of the research limit generalisability. Representability of the respondents to the larger group, is probably more crucial in this case. The respondents in the cross-sectional study were chosen from major sectors of the Arab population in Israel, and the linguistic patterns that have emerged could be seen as being representative of the APIs in general. The paradigms followed in this research are mostly non-positivistic and they look for exploration and interpretation rather than generalisation. The case study approach, which looks more for richness and depth of understanding of the phenomenon under investigation, also

excludes generalisability as an issue. The aim of this research is to explore how a certain group of learners, with a common and unique language, culture and a socio-political situation, learn English as a foreign language. The case of the Arab pupils in Israel is yet another piece in the colourful and intricate mosaic of language learning theories and models that have been explored in this research.

## **5.6 Critique**

The dynamic and volatile situation, in which the research took place, and the IL itself, being developmental and dynamic, puts severe limitations on the issue of generalisation. What this research claims to have investigated is the APIs' IL within a specific time frame and under the conditions described during the time it took to complete. The research claims representability of the APIs, rather than generalisability.

The research, for reasons already stated, deals only with the written aspect of the IL. Including the spoken medium could definitely widen the scope of the research. However, having established the research in the non-natural environment of classroom learning, it was felt that the spoken language could not be used in a similar investigation. Yet, personal interviews, which involve the spoken language, added to the triangulation tools used in this research.

This research has considered the API as a human being who is easily affected by the environment in which they live and learn. The use of the conceptual framework combined both the internal and external forces that affect the API's learning process.



The inclusion of inductive and deductive methods and methodologies in the research enabled it to reach the opposing extremes in the learners' worlds. Some might feel that the samples of data and respondents were not statistically broad; others might call for a natural setting for the whole research. However, the boundaries that were set for this research put it in the specific context that was described in the conceptual framework.

The research has dealt with the respondents as part of a larger group, the Arab sector in Israel. Although the longitudinal study dealt with individuals, no individual affective factors, such as language aptitude and motivation, were investigated. This research does not claim, nor does it aspire to develop another language acquisition theory. The focus can switch from psychological to sociological factors, since the respondents under investigation are seen as representatives of the APIs' society in general, which in itself is a part of The Arab Sector in Israel.

There are other ways in which the APIs' ILs could have been investigated, but this is all a matter of paradigms. The paradigm that was used in this research combined both positivistic and non-positivistic approaches to methods and methodologies; the use of a case study; the combination of the cross-sectional study with the longitudinal research; the various levels of analysis from error analysis through critical discourse analysis; the subjective view of the practitioner researcher, being part of the research and the knowledge of the environment in which the research took place, all add to the thoroughness and rigour that this research set as an achievable goal. The result is an exploration of the Interlanguage, the learner and the teacher all together.

## **5.7 Contribution to knowledge**

Second language acquisition theories have not succeeded yet in providing one thorough theory as to how learning takes place. Waiting for such a theory is probably naïve, as Spolsky (1990) suggested. Until one is established, the focus remains on how individuals and groups learn. Interlanguage is highly individual, but certain aspects are common to a group belonging to the same L1, learning under similar conditions. Exploring the Interlanguage of the APIs has revealed that the learner cannot be detached from the cultural and socio-political milieus in which they live. Prior linguistic knowledge also plays a part in the learning process. The APIs learn English as a fourth language, due to the diglossic state of their language, as one of four such languages in the world (Ferguson, 59b). The unique cultural state of the APIs, being Arab, both Moslem and Christian, living under yet a third semi-western culture, the Israeli one, marks them as a ‘unique’ population. The socio-political status of being an Arab minority in a Jewish country surrounded by an Arab majority is also unique. The conflicts that arise from within such a situation are not that common in our world.

By combining the three worlds, the linguistic, cultural and socio-political, and by providing evidence as to how the APIs learn English, this research contributes to knowledge in the field of EFL in general, and learning English as a fourth language in particular.

## **5.8 Propositions**

Since the nature of this research has been inductive, especially in the longitudinal research, and since it explores the APIs' Interlanguage during a specific, set period of time, which can change due to the volatile situation of the area as a whole, the following propositions can be advanced for others to test as hypotheses:

1. How would changes in the socio-political situation affect the learning of English among the Arab minority in Israel, if there were to be a resolution to the conflict in the Middle East?
2. What would a similar research reveal once the new English Curriculum has been applied? Will the new approach lead to different results?

## **Summary**

This has been an exploration of the APIs and their ILs. Today, one year after the graduation of the respondents from the longitudinal study, none have yet been admitted to university; some of them want to improve their Bagrut results in order to have a better chance of being accepted to the subject they want, (usually medicine). Others are trying to get exemption from English in the Psychometric test (university entrance exam) so that they would not be required to study English courses in their first year of university, and there are those who will never continue their higher education because they simply could not get the 'right' mark in English. The reason could be one or more of the three: lingual, cultural or socio-political.

Having adopted a practitioner approach in this research, I have become more appreciative of issues and concepts outside the immediate field of my research. Lave and Wenger's (1991) concept of 'situated learning' has served as my guide to work collaboratively with other teachers to develop a community of practice, mainly through action research. As I have concluded the previous paragraph, the causes of the APIs' failure to achieve a brighter academic future are numerous. This, however, does not exempt us, we teachers, from becoming more productive in the resolution of some of the conflicts that the APIs are facing. I, for one, have started doing my share.

## **Epilogue: My Intellectual Journey**

It has been almost 4 years since I started my new discovery path in learning and teaching. Having chosen a practitioner research approach made me see things I did not know existed before. Today, I am a better teacher just due to the fact that my intellectual journey has made me realise that each one of my pupils is a world on their own. I never realised how heavy the burden each one of them had been carrying on their shoulders all those years; I was saddened when I discovered that these pupils had been doomed to live a life of suffering and sorrow because they were born in what we call the Holy Land! Had this country not been holy, many of the problems between Jews and Arabs would have been solved. This is probably the curse the citizens of this region have to suffer for having the privilege of being born and of living in the land of the prophets.

Professionally, I have come to realise that textbook material needs to be adapted to the pupils' own experiences. I have started paying more attention to cultural issues, and helped my pupils appreciate what other cultures have to offer. On the linguistic level, I have started to compare similarities and differences of certain aspects between English, Hebrew and Arabic, which should result in a wider appreciation of how languages behave. Finally, I have realised that decreasing the tension in which these pupils live can only benefit their learning environment, so I have started paying more attention to the daily conflicts they have faced and tried to provide them with a more balanced and objective approach to dealing with them.

Academically, I have come a long way since I started my naïve search for improving language learning through Error Analysis only. Soon enough, I have come to see the limitations of such an approach, although, for educational purposes, there is still some benefit in it in that it can show where some problems exist and persist. The result that showed that only 10% of the errors were Interlingual was important since it limited the possibility of blaming L1 for all of our problems in English.

My search for the perfect conceptual framework was not easy; I had to change many of the constituents, through readings and reflection on my readings, till it finally reached its present form. This is a conceptual framework that has guided me and fine-tuned my search. My involving of the critical education research into my thesis has helped me complete the circle and realise that language, culture and socio-politics are inseparable, especially for learners who live under similar circumstances as ours in this region.

The transformation I have experienced has made me a more controlled person, with wider eyes and more acute perceptions for observation. I know I have matured in the last five years more than at any other time in my life. I am still searching for answers, and life-long learning has become my aim in life.

Never, in my wildest dreams, could I have ever imagined how demanding such a journey could be. The stamina I have had for this project must have come from another source, not from me! The quest for the Ph.D. has simply haunted me. Today, having come closer than ever before, I can feel the respect of touching academe.

Being an English teacher is, after all, a mission possible!

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## Appendix 1

### The Cross-sectional Questionnaire

Name - \_\_\_\_\_ Class- \_\_\_\_\_ City / village \_\_\_\_\_

ترجم الجمل التالية إلى اللغة المطلوبة -الإنجليزية العربية والعبرية –

\*(Translate the following sentences into the required language: English, Arabic and Hebrew)

عبرית	ENGLISH	عربية
		الحياة جميلة <b>**al-ḥayātu ḡamīlatun</b>
		متى قرأت الكتاب؟ <b>matā qara'ta al-kitāb?</b>
	What time is it?	
בן כמה אתה ? <b>beän kama attah?</b>		
		هذا كتاب قديم <b>hāḏā kitābun qadīmun</b>
		هذا الكتاب قديم <b>hāḏā al-kitābu qadīmun</b>
		هذه الأشجار كبيرة <b>hāḏihi al-a ṣḡāru kabīratun</b>
		أين يعمل والدك؟ <b>ayna ya'malu wāliduka?</b>
אחותי לומדת באוניברסיטת חיפה. <b>achofī laumeädit bi'universitat (C) haifa</b>		
		تريد المعلمة أن تعرف اسمك. <b>turīdu al-mu'allimatu an ta'rifa ismaka</b>

ترجم الكلمات التالية إلى العربية أو العبرية :

(Translate the following words into Arabic or Hebrew)

Computer - \_\_\_\_\_ Nazareth - \_\_\_\_\_ Afula - \_\_\_\_\_

Jerusalem - \_\_\_\_\_ Yogurt - \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone - \_\_\_\_\_

Hospital - \_\_\_\_\_ Police station - \_\_\_\_\_ Doctor - \_\_\_\_\_

Nurse- \_\_\_\_\_ News - \_\_\_\_\_ Government- \_\_\_\_\_

Hotdogs - \_\_\_\_\_ University - \_\_\_\_\_ Remote control - \_\_\_\_\_

\*- Instructions for the questions were given in Arabic only.

\*\* Phonetic transliteration was not included in the original questionnaire.

## Appendix 2

### Rationale for Using the Questionnaire

#### Section One – Translating Sentences

This section comprises sentences that need to be translated into two of the three languages: Arabic, Hebrew and English. Seven sentences were written in Arabic, two in Hebrew and one in English. The objective of this section is to check a variety of lingual factors that play a role in the structure of the pupils' Interlanguage.

##### Sentence 1

Source language

Sentence in English

Rationale

الحياة جميلة

Arabic.

**Life is beautiful.**

While the use of the definite article in sentence 1 is redundant in English, it is required in Arabic. This should check for the transfer of the definite article.

In Hebrew the word "life" is plural; therefore, a failure to translate the Hebrew word into the correct form might also indicate transfer from Arabic into Hebrew.

##### Sentence 2

Source language

Sentence in English

Rationale

متى قرأت الكتاب؟

Arabic

**When did you read the book?**

The main aim of this sentence is to check for the use of the auxiliary 'did'. Neither Arabic nor Hebrew has auxiliary verbs. Variations might include the use of 'do', 'did', 'have', 'had', or any other known auxiliary verb learned by the pupils. This sentence might also help in the testing of the emergence of the auxiliary verb as a steady part of the question-forming process in English. The use or non-use of the auxiliary verb has implications for the theory of Interlanguage, such as the problem of fossilization.

##### Sentence 3

Source language

Rationale

**What time is it?**

English.

This sentence should check for the ability to transfer a simple, widely used expression into Arabic and Hebrew. The translation of the sentence into Arabic might have 4-5 variations, depending on the use of Colloquial or Classical Arabic. The same could be said about Hebrew, where variations might depend on the familiarity of the Arabic speaker of Hebrew. The way this sentence is translated can test the effect of Hebrew on Arabic in simple, daily-used sentences, thus revealing the assimilation of MSA and colloquial Arabic into Hebrew.

#### Sentence 4

**Source language**  
**Sentence in English**  
**Rationale**

בן כמה אתה?

**Hebrew**  
**How old are you?**

This is another example of a very simple sentence that we expect learners to be able to produce at an early age. As in sentence no. 3, the idea is to transfer the whole structure into correct Arabic and English, without translating it word-by-word. Again, since we are dealing with the written medium, the use of MSA is expected. Here too, the exposure to simple English can be checked.

#### Sentence 5

**Source language**  
**Sentence in English**

هذا كتاب قديم

**Arabic.**  
**This is an old book.**

#### Sentence 6

**Source language**  
**Sentence in English**  
**Rationale**

هذا الكتاب قديم

**Arabic.**  
**This book is old.**

These two sentences have the same word order in Arabic. However, the correct translation into English requires paying attention to the meaning as well. A literal translation into English would be: 5- This book old, and 6- This the book old. Translating into Hebrew also requires changing the word order. If the same errors occur in both English and Hebrew, this can suggest that the source of the error might be the result of comprehension issues in the source language, Arabic.

#### Sentence 7

**Source language**  
**Sentence in English**  
**Rationale**

هذه الأشجار كبيرة

**Arabic**  
**These trees are big.**

This sentence checks for a complex inflectional rule in MSA concerning inanimate nouns. In Arabic, the equivalent of the pronoun 'this', not 'these' is used and the adjective that follows should agree to the number, i.e. the singular, so a literal translation would be: This trees big (singular). In colloquial Arabic, however, there is no such restriction. Transfer from classical, or colloquial Arabic into English could be tested. The use of the copula can be tested too. In Hebrew, the restriction does not apply, so we should expect the pupils to translate the demonstrative pronoun into its plural form.

#### Sentence 8

**Source language**  
**Sentence in English**

أين يعمل والدك؟

**Arabic.**  
**Where does your father work?**

**Rationale** This sentence investigates the use of the auxiliary verb and the question structure as a whole. Asking questions is one of the most problematic structures for our pupils, and the variations produced for such a structure reflect the problem, especially in the choice of the relevant auxiliary verb. This might be one of the cases where fossilization takes place at an early stage of learning.

**Sentence 9**  
**Source language** אחותי לומדת באוניברסיטת חיפה.  
**Sentence in English** **Hebrew**  
**My sister studies (is studying) at Haifa University. (Translation into English is not required here)**

**Rationale** The canonical word order in Arabic, V-S-O is checked here to see how much this is followed when the source language is different.

**Sentence 10** تريد المعلمة أن تعرف اسمك  
**Source language** **Arabic**  
**Sentence in English** **The teacher wants to know / what your name is / your name.**

**Rationale** This sentence checks both the use of the third person –s and the use of the structure “what’s your name”. The use of a question form in such a sentence is not triggered by the MSA form; therefore if the pupils use a question here it would then be an intralingual error. In Hebrew, as it is in Arabic, the situation is different, since the use of a question in the written language does not require any changes, except for the addition of a question mark at the end of the sentence.

### **Vocabulary Section in the Cross-sectional Research:**

This is the third in the three sections in the cross-sectional research. The vocabulary section examines the pupils’ Interlanguage according to four categories:

**Category I – words that test exposure to English at different levels:**

**Word 1** **News**

**Rationale** To test exposure to words used in the media in English.

**Word 2** **Hotdogs**

**Rationale** To test exposure to the culture in English. The word is culturally marked.

**Word 3** **Remote Control**

**Rationale** To test exposure to technology or technical vocabulary in English.

**Category II – words that have a political connotation:**

**Word 4**

**Rationale**

**Jerusalem**

Both Israel and the Palestinian Authority have Jerusalem as their capital city; For years, Israel has been trying to win the war among the Israeli Arabs by using the word Orashaleem (the Arabicized Yerushalayem), and not Al-Quds (its Arabic equivalent).

**Word 5**

**Rationale**

**Government**

Although this was a word that was unfamiliar to some grade nine pupils in the pilot, I decided to keep it and test its use by the higher grades pupils. This word has a civic, quasi-political connotation for the Arab pupils in Israel. Usually these words represent the Jewish authorities, and pupils are exposed to them more in Hebrew. The word tests if the Arab pupils use the more common Hebrew word, or the equivalent Arabic word.

**Category III-**

**words that could be used as cognates in Arabic and / or Hebrew:**

**Word 6- Police station; Word 7- Computer; Word 8- Telephone; Word 9- Doctor; Word 10 Nurse**

**Rationale**

All of the above words are used as cognates in Colloquial Arabic. They all have an equivalent in MSA.

**Word 11**

**Rationale**

**Hospital**

This word fits more the category of semi-cognates in colloquial Arabic, and is still used by some children (and elderly) in certain villages. This word can test for the longevity of certain words in colloquial Arabic and the switch to the MSA equivalent.

**Word 12-**

**Rationale**

**Yogurt**

The word is a cognate in Hebrew. This word, among many others, tests how Hebrew is penetrating Arabic and playing a greater part in its daily use. One of the issues under discussion here is whether the pupils, in similar situations, opt for the MSA equivalent, or rather, in the case of the written language, are tempted by the more convenient Hebrew cognate. Again, this can be used as an indication of the competition between Hebrew and Arabic in the daily use of language.

**Word 13**

**Rationale**

**University**

Another cognate in Hebrew. The word tests whether, in such a case, the preference will go to choosing the Hebrew cognate word, which is phonetically closer, or the Arabic equivalent.

**Category IV**

**Words that test the use of the definite article in the names of cities in Arabic.**

**Word 14**  
**Rationale**

**Nazareth**

in colloquial Arabic there is no clear rule for when to use the definite article with names of cities. This subject is important because there is a tendency among the Arab pupils to overuse the definite article. This word, which should be common enough among pupils, being the biggest Arab city in Israel, retains the definite article in Arabic. If, however, pupils are not aware of the Arab name of the city, they will not use the definite article. Furthermore, Hebrew does not use the definite article with this word; therefore, it can also test for any transfer from Hebrew into Arabic.

**Word 15**  
**Rationale**

**Afula**

this city is Jewish, but unlike Nazareth, it is not well-known. Arabic also uses the definite article in its name, again, for no particular reason. Pupils who don't know the English equivalent might not use the definite article with Arabic. Hebrew does not use the definite article. This situation reflects part of the complexity in the use of the definite article between Arabic and English, a problem which is also apparent in the other sections of the research. In addition, knowledge of the name in Hebrew might interfere with the correct translation into Arabic.



### Appendix 3

#### A Writing Sample of Two of the Respondents of the Longitudinal Research

**Student ID: = 141 Age: - 16 Sex: - Female City: - Jdayeh City Type: - Arab Only**

Text ID=Letter-1      Substance= Written      Date= 23/05/01

Original Text

Dear Peter;  
Hi

I am fine, how are you? I hope you are doing fine too, I decided to send you this letter to tell you how much I feel happy and to let you know what I did the last week!  
I travel to Jordan to watch life Majeda's party It is a remarkable party. I enjoyed there so much!! in addition, after she finished to sing. I talked to her face to face, and I asked her all my private Questions which I really hope that she can answer frankly!! She treated me so so nice, she is a lovely person who cares about all her audience  
I liked to give her to be with her always and to remind her of palestine people I gave her an arabic head cover and kissed her!! ohh peter what can I tell you dear!?  
she was so nice with our arabic groud. she makes us feel so comfortable!!  
please peter send me back, I still exciting!

your's s.....

Text ID=Passage      Substance= Written      Date= 07/02/02

Original Text

Three years ago, when I was with my friends in a school trip, one of my best friend got lost, the first thing that we do. we told our teacher and all the teachers what happened with us, we start to look for him. It was so hard for us, and we order to back to the same place which we was in...maybe we will find him there.. and we did back but there is no body. our teacher got angry, he felt so bad and he did not know what to do!! he thought to call the police station and he did. we called the police station and after 10 mints, they came to us and the teatcher start to tell them what was the story exactly! but unfortunality may did not succed to find him. and after some hours some one called me at my cellular phone, he was my best friend who we lost.. he called me by cellular phone which he could find from someone...

**Student ID: = 257 Age: - 16 Sex: - Female  
City: - Ibillin City Type: - Arab Only Years\_L\_E:- 6**

Text ID=Letter-1      Substance= Written      Date= 23/05/01

Original Text

22.5.2001

Dear Breget..

You are not going to believe it..I met her..I met my favourite singer ever....I met Alanise: Alanise Morissette.

I'm not really sure if you know her becuase right now she is not working that much, her breakthrough was in 1996 with her lovely song "ironic" and the incradible album "Jagged little pill".

Last month me and my family were in Canada - her homeland - we went to visit our uncle, and guess what..?! I found out that my cousin is a big fan of her, just like me, but he was more lucky, because he got the chance to meet her in personal, he partiseated in a competion he won, and the award was meeting her, and since he was very sick I was the lucky one and replaced him. The meeting was in a hotel, She was so kind, she answerd all my questions, even the stupid ones, I asked her if she is single

or not, she told me that she broke up with her boy friend a month ago, also I was very interested in her visit to India, actually, after talking with her, I'm considering to visit this land. I didn't forget to ask her if she has a new album, she told me that she is working on it.

In the end of the meeting she sang to me a little bit from one of her new songs! it was a wonderful song, that was her present for me in addition to a big poster, and as for me it was very hard to choose a gift, finally I decided: to bring her the Palestinian folklor dress, she loved it.

Briet, now after meeting her I love her even more. She is a great person.

It was a dream comes true for me.

with love

B.....

Text ID=Passage

Substance= Written

Date= 07/02/02

Original Text

Some people consider cellular phones dangerous or annoying. I think that if we know how to use them, they can be very helpful. What happened the last summer might be a great example of what I'm saying here. At that time my best friend Mona had got her driving licence and she decided to take me with her for a ride, we went to Haifa and we had a very good time. Suddenly, in our way home, we realized that something was wrong with the car, it turned out that we had a breakdown and our car stopped working, means, that we were in a big trouble, we needed someone to take us back, fortunately we had a cellular phone, I called my father and he came to pick us up.

As you can see in this case the cellular phone was very helpful. because without it we could have been stuck there forever.

## Appendix 4

### Assessment of longitudinal research

#### **Rationale for assessment:**

The data in the longitudinal research have been collected and analysed for errors, however, as stated earlier in the research design, the objective of the longitudinal study was not only to look at the errors in the written Interlanguage of the respondents, but to try and analyse it as a whole; looking for the characteristics of such a language so that a profile of the Arab pupil in Israel could then be built.

In the Research Context chapter, I mentioned that the pupils in Israel are now following a new English curriculum (see appendix 7), however, the respondents still follow the old curriculum. One of the major differences between the two curricula concerns assessment; while the old relied mostly on tests, the product, the new curriculum looked for ways to assess the process. Language was divided into four domains: Social Interaction, Access to Information, Presentation and Appreciation of Literature and Culture, and Language (p.21). Each domain had its clear standards, levels of progression, benchmarks and criteria for assessment. The learning process was thus perceived as a continuum, a paradigm which fits the nature of this research, in that it investigates another continuum, the Interlanguage.

The written output of the 21 respondents will thus be analysed according to two domains: the Domain of Presentation and the Domain of Appreciation of Language.

The New Curriculum defines the standard of the first domain as:

“Pupils present information and ideas in an organized and planned manner in a variety of formats, in both spoken and written English, on a wide range of topics”. p. 28

It is important to note here that the research deals only with written English.

The New Curriculum defines the standards of the other domains as:

“Pupils appreciate the nature of language and the differences between English and other languages”. P. 30

In our context, by other languages we mean Arabic, Hebrew and any other language that might exist in the very rare cases where the mother tongue is not Arabic.

The following charts, which have been modified to fit the nature of the research, represent the various factors that will play a part in the assessment process:

#### **Levels of Progress for the Domain of Presentation**

Domain	Foundation	Intermediate	Proficiency
<b>P R E S E N T A T I O N</b>	<p>Pupils present information about personal topics using basic organizational skills.</p> <p>Pupils use basic vocabulary and simple syntax.</p>	<p>Pupils present information and ideas about general topics fluently using basic organizational skills.</p> <p>Pupils use a broad range of vocabulary and simple syntactic structures accurately and appropriately to the format.</p>	<p>Pupils present information and ideas fluently on a wide range of topics using more advanced organizational skills.</p> <p>Pupils use rich vocabulary, complex syntactic structures, discourse markers and varied registers to match audience and purpose accurately and appropriately.</p>

## Benchmarks for the Domain of Presentation

Pupils will meet the standard for the domain of presentation when they:

Foundation	Intermediate	Proficiency
describe people, places, things and events	react to the content of something read, seen or heard	present an argument for or against a particular point of view
produce a short piece of coherent writing and/or speech that conveys personal experiences	express ideas and opinions about general topics and experiences using main and supporting ideas	

### Domain of Presentation Criteria for assessment and Progress

Criteria	C o n t i n u u m		
	Foundation Level	Proficiency Level	
Content	<i>Limited</i>	—————→	<i>In-depth</i>
Length	<i>Short</i>	—————→	<i>Extended</i>
Organization	<i>Basic</i>	—————→	<i>Advanced</i>
Register	<i>Emergent</i>	—————→	<i>Appropriate</i>
Syntax	<i>Simple</i>	—————→	<i>Complex</i>
Topic	<i>Personal</i>	—————→	<i>General</i>
Vocabulary	<i>Basic</i>	—————→	<i>Rich</i>

### Levels of Progress for the Domain of Appreciation of Language

<i>Foundation Level</i>	<i>Intermediate Level</i>	<i>Proficiency Level</i>
Pupils appreciate that languages are different.	Pupils are aware of how English differs from their mother tongue.	Pupils gain insight into the complexities of languages.

## Benchmarks for the Domain of Appreciation of Language

Pupils will meet the standard for the domain of appreciation of language when they:

Foundation	Intermediate	Proficiency
know how word order and English writing systems are organized and how these elements compare with their mother tongue	compare different elements of English, such as tense and gender, and compare them to their mother tongue	are aware that words in English are borrowed from a wide range of languages
are aware that not all words can be translated on a one-to-one correspondence	are aware that languages use different idiomatic expressions in order to convey the same idea	are aware that languages differ in syntax
	are aware of differences in cultural conventions in English and their mother tongue, such as in greetings	are aware of the differences in the appropriate use of language and the dynamics of language changes, such as shifts in word connotations

Criteria	C o n t i n u u m	
	Foundation Level	Proficiency Level
Appropriacy Awareness Organization of Language	<i>Emergent</i> <i>Limited</i> <i>Word</i>	<i>Appropriate</i> <i>In-depth</i> <i>Discourse</i>

Designing a rubric for the domain of presentation:

To test the gain in knowledge in the Interlanguage of the respondents, an assessment tool has to be developed which will cater to the following needs:

- a- it has to be objective.
- b- it has to assess processes, in addition to the final outcome.
- c- it has to include valid criteria.
- d- it has to include various aspects of the language.

## A Rubric for Assessing the Domains of Presentation and Appreciation of Language

Criteria	Points possible			
<b>***** Domain of Presentation *****</b>				
Accuracy	3	<i>Comprehensible</i>		<i>Accurate</i>
Content	3	<i>Limited</i>		<i>In-depth</i>
Length	3	<i>Short</i>		<i>Extended</i>
Organization	3	<i>Basic</i>		<i>Advanced</i>
Register	3	<i>Emergent</i>		<i>Appropriate</i>
Syntax	3	<i>Simple</i>		<i>Complex</i>
Topic	3	<i>Personal</i>		<i>General</i>
Vocabulary		<i>Basic</i>		<i>Rich</i>
<b>***** Domain of Appreciation of Language *****</b>				
Appropriacy	3	<i>Emergent</i>		<i>Appropriate</i>
Awareness	3	<i>Limited</i>		<i>In-depth</i>
Organization of Language	3	<i>Word</i>		<i>Discourse</i>

Respondents were asked to produce 3 texts which were not targeted; i.e. the informal letter, expressing an opinion and the reflection. The other text types were targeted for specific syntactical structures, mostly for asking questions. Another text, which tested the process of translating simultaneously from the colloquial language into written English, will be assessed separately, because of its unique nature.

The process of assessment went as follows:

A copy of the texts for each respondent was printed with the errors emboldened and underlined (this is an option of the computer program used to analyse the errors). This was done in order to facilitate the assessment of certain criteria, such as accuracy.

The different criteria were assessed according to the procedure discussed in the chart below. The maximum mark a respondent could achieve within a certain criterion was five points. Although the criteria could have been given different marks, the same scale was used for each criterion to guarantee consistency in the calculation of gain in knowledge.

Criteria	Procedure
<b>Accuracy</b>	The emboldened and underlined errors in the texts were used as an indicator of the errors. These included mostly syntax and spelling mistakes
<b>Content</b>	The texts were read and assessment looked for relevance to the task and depth of execution.
<b>Length</b>	The average number for each text was calculated. Those above and below the average were assessed accordingly. The average words for the three texts were 218, 162 and 107 respectively.
<b>Organization</b>	In the letter-writing, the organization of the genre itself was considered, in addition to other factors, such as dividing the text into paragraphs. Cohesion was a major factor in this category.

<b>Register</b>	This included the type of language used i.e. formal or informal, types of expressions and discourse characteristics.
<b>Syntax</b>	Errors were not considered here; it was rather the simplicity or complexity of the syntax used that was assessed.
<b>Topic</b>	Expressing ideas about general subjects and relating to personal experiences.
<b>Vocabulary</b>	Vocabulary was assessed according to the level of the class. Accuracy in using the correct lexis was also a consideration.
<b>Appropriacy</b>	Use of appropriate lingual and cultural conventions in the presentation of the text.
<b>Awareness</b>	The use of correct idiomatic expressions; not translating on a one-to-one basis; differences between the two languages, such as word order.
<b>Organization of Language</b>	Language organization from the word to the discourse level.

## Appendix 5

### English Environment Questionnaire

Name-

1- I believe that English is \_\_\_\_\_ for my academic success in the future:

- a- *the most important subject*
- b- *one of the most important subjects*
- c- *an important subject*
- d- *not so important*
- e- *not important at all*

2- In my family \_\_\_\_\_ believe(s) that English is an important subject for my academic success in the future:

- a- *both my parents*
- b- *my father*
- c- *my mother*
- d- *my brothers and sisters*
- e- *no one*

3- In addition to formal teaching of English at school, I get \_\_\_\_\_ of English every week:

- a- *0 minutes*
- b- *between 1-30 minutes*
- c- *between 31-60 minutes*
- d- *between one to two hours*
- e- *more than two hours a week*

4 -The extra amount of English I get every week comes mainly from:

- a. *TV*
- b. *the Internet*
- c. *books and magazines*
- d. *people I talk to*
- e. *other*

5 -My family \_\_\_\_\_ if I watch programs in English:

- a. *encourages me*
- b. *doesn't mind it*
- c. *doesn't like it*

6- The environment in my family makes it..... to learn English.

- a. *easy*
- b. *hard*

7-In my extended family / village / town, many people speak English.

- a. *True*
- b. *False*

8-In my extended family / village / town, people believe that the Western culture is evil.

- a. *True*
- b. *False*

9-I ..... the Western way of life.

- a. *like*
- b. *don't like*



- 10- In my family we ..... use Hebrew in our daily conversations.  
a. *sometimes*  
b. *never*
- 11- I read Hebrew newspapers / magazines at home.  
a. *True*  
b. *False*
- 12- I like Hebrew songs more than English songs.  
a. *True*  
b. *False*
- 13- The Jewish culture is closer to me than the Western.  
a. *True*  
b. *False*
- 14- In my extended family / village / town, people use Hebrew in their daily conversations.  
a. *True*  
b. *False*
- 15- I can live in Israel without knowing Hebrew.  
a. *True*  
b. *False*
- 16- I can live in Israel without knowing English.  
a. *True*  
b. *False*
- 17- I can live in Israel without knowing Arabic.  
a. *True*  
b. *False*
- 18- I \_\_\_\_\_ Arabic.  
a. *love*  
b. *like*  
c. *don't like*  
d. *hate*
- 19- I \_\_\_\_\_ read Arabic books and magazines at home.  
a. *always*  
b. *sometimes*  
c. *rarely*  
d. *never*
- 20- I believe that Arabic is important for my academic success in the future.  
a. *True*  
b. *False*
- 21- I \_\_\_\_\_ the Arabic culture and way of life:  
a. *love*  
b. *like*  
c. *don't like*  
d. *hate*
- 22- I would like to study in a(n).....university.  
a. *Arabic*  
b. *Jewish*  
c. *Western*
- 23- The way I see myself is: (please number your choices)

- \_\_\_ - Arab
- \_\_\_ - Israeli
- \_\_\_ - Moslem / Christian
- \_\_\_ - Palestinian

24- I feel that the government is being fair to the Arabs.

- a. True
- b. False

25- I feel that I have equal opportunities for academic achievement.

- a. True
- b. False

26- My house belongs to my family.

- a. True
- b. False

27- There are \_\_\_\_\_ people in my family. (*Please provide number*)

28- My father is \_\_\_\_\_. (*Please provide profession*)

29- My mother is \_\_\_\_\_. (*Please provide profession*)

30- My father's education is:

- a. elementary school
- b. high school
- c. higher education
- d. none

31- My mother's education is:

- a. elementary school
- b. high school
- c. higher education
- d. none

32- I have a computer at home.

- a. True
- b. False

33- I am connected to the Internet.

- a. True
- b. False

34- I share my bedroom with \_\_\_\_\_ people. (*Please provide number*)

35- Our economic situation is considered:

- a. very good
- b. good
- c. average
- d. not so good
- e. bad

Thank you for your time – Hanna Jubran

## Appendix 6

### Rationale for the New Curriculum

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, English is without question the major language in the world, with 350,000,000 native speakers, another 350,000,000 second language speakers, and 100,000,000 fluent foreign language speakers. English is now solidly entrenched in Israel as the "first foreign language," as it is labeled in the Policy on Language Education in Israeli Schools (Ministry of Education, 1995, 1996). For Israelis, whatever other languages they may use, English is the customary language for international communication and for overcoming barriers to the flow of information, goods and people across national boundaries. English is the language most generally associated with international trade and tourism, with higher education and research, and with the electronic media. It is the language that, after Hebrew and Arabic, is considered the most valuable asset of a plurilingual Israeli citizen. For all these reasons, it is the foreign language for which there is strongest local demand. Therefore, it is imperative to aim for the highest achievable standards of excellence for the teaching of English as a Foreign Language in Israeli schools. That is the goal of this document: to set the standards for the teaching of English in Israel, in schools under the supervision of the Ministry of Education.

What is a national curriculum? It is a blueprint for constructing course books, syllabuses, teaching materials and lesson plans. It is a document that represents a consensus of views of professionals in the field, and that will be refined as teachers and textbook writers add their interpretations.

When, a little over a decade ago, the previous curriculum (Ministry of Education, 1988) was written, it was still reasonable to assume that the vast majority of Israeli pupils had their earliest contact with English in their fourth or fifth grade classes, and that their main exposure to the language was in school. It was therefore feasible and appropriate to write a curriculum, a major part of which was a list of the structural items (grammar and vocabulary) that would provide pupils with a basic control of the language. The circumstances today, and even more in the foreseeable future, are quite different. More and more pupils have extensive contact with English before beginning formal English instruction, whether through radio, television, computers, family, travel, or meeting overseas visitors. Most pupils, at whatever age they start learning English in school, have already learned words and phrases of the language. Any simple listing of items to be taught will therefore be arbitrary and over-rigid.

Swayed by these considerations, the Curriculum Committee explored other approaches. The comprehensive discussions that led to the present document began with a two-day meeting of the English Advisory Committee in 1994 at which a list of proficiency guidelines was drafted. Organized more or less following the traditional division of language proficiency into the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, these guidelines provided an invaluable map for the revisions of the matriculation examinations (Bagrut), that were published in June 1996. They served also as a starting point for the work of the Curriculum Committee, which began its thorough study chaired at first by Professor Elite Olshtain.

After extensive investigation of curricular models used in other countries, the committee has devised a model it believes to be best suited to Israeli pupils. It incorporates principles that have been refined in recent efforts by national educational systems to develop higher standards of excellence in foreign language teaching and in other fields. This curriculum not only affirms the national need to set standards in order to equip pupils with the knowledge of English that the modern world demands but it also serves as the basis for quality education.

As a consequence of their studies, discussions and debates among the committee members and colleagues, they have adopted a framework intended to set out as clearly as possible the goals of the curriculum and to make as explicit as they can the ways in which they believe the goals can be met. They have left to course book writers, schools and teachers as much freedom as possible in choosing the methodology and they confidently leave it to them to add the creative imagination that will bring the teaching of English alive.

## Appendix 7

### Domains in the English Curriculum

#### Section Two- Domains: Standards, Levels of Progression, Benchmarks and Criteria

#### Standards for Each Domain

<b>Domain</b>	<b>S t a n d a r d</b>
<b>Social Interaction</b>	Pupils interact effectively in English, orally and in writing, in varied social contexts with people from varied linguistic and cultural backgrounds.
<b>Access to Information</b>	Pupils access information in English, from oral and written texts, from a variety of sources and media, making use of that information for a variety of purposes.
<b>Presentation</b>	Pupils present information and ideas in an organized and planned manner in a variety of formats, in both spoken and written English, on a wide range of topics.
<b>Appreciation of Literature and Culture, and Language</b>	Pupils appreciate literature that is written in English and through it develop sensitivity to a variety of cultures.  Pupils appreciate the nature of language and the differences between English and other languages.

## Levels of Progression for Each Domain

Domain	Foundation	Intermediate	Proficiency
<b>Social Interaction</b>	<p>Pupils interact and convey simple messages.</p> <p>Pupils interact using basic vocabulary and comprehensible, but not necessarily accurate, syntax.</p>	<p>Pupils interact fluently using appropriate register for a limited range of social contexts.</p> <p>Pupils interact using a broad range of vocabulary and simple syntactic structures accurately.</p>	<p>Pupils maintain effective communication, using appropriate register for a wide range of social contexts.</p> <p>Pupils interact using rich vocabulary and complex syntactic structures accurately.</p>
<b>Access to Information</b>	<p>Pupils obtain and use information from short oral and written texts, in simple language, that may include unfamiliar grammatical structures and vocabulary.</p> <p>Pupils obtain and use information from texts by applying their knowledge about vocabulary, syntax, simple discourse markers, text structure and punctuation.</p>	<p>Pupils obtain and use information from different sources, that include longer oral and written texts in more complex language, that deal with less familiar topics.</p> <p>Pupils obtain and use information from texts by applying knowledge of vocabulary, syntax, morphology and a wider range of discourse markers.</p>	<p>Pupils obtain and use information from unadapted, extended oral and written texts that deal with content in depth.</p> <p>Pupils obtain and use information from texts by applying knowledge of rhetorical organization.</p>

Domain	Foundation	Intermediate	Proficiency
<b>Presentation</b>	<p>Pupils present information about personal topics, orally and in writing, using basic organizational skills.</p> <p>Pupils use basic vocabulary and simple syntax.</p>	<p>Pupils present information and ideas about general topics fluently, orally and in writing, using basic organizational skills.</p> <p>Pupils use a broad range of vocabulary and simple syntactic structures accurately and appropriately to the format.</p>	<p>Pupils present information and ideas fluently on a wide range of topics, orally and in writing, using more advanced organizational skills.</p> <p>Pupils use rich vocabulary, complex syntactic structures, discourse markers and varied registers to match audience and purpose accurately and appropriately.</p>
<b>Appreciation of Literature, Culture, and Language</b>	<p>Pupils become acquainted with and relate to short literary texts written in simple language, appropriate to their age and interest.</p> <p>Pupils are aware that their culture is different from other cultures.</p> <p>Pupils appreciate that languages are different.</p>	<p>Pupils respond to literary texts.</p> <p>Pupils become acquainted with norms and behaviors in a variety of cultures.</p> <p>Pupils are aware of how English differs from their mother tongue.</p>	<p>Pupils gain cultural, historical and social insight from reading unadapted literary texts.</p> <p>Pupils develop critical perspectives toward different cultural values and norms.</p> <p>Pupils gain insight into the complexities of languages.</p>

## Appendix 8 – The Computer Program Used for Analysing Errors

Analyse

Analyzing the errors of Jenineh Abeer

text	Type	Level	Modification	Correct word	Remark
would like	1	04/04/10/00/01	3	(always) wanted / wished	wrong use of modal / believes
it	1	06/00/00/00/01	3		
AZMEE BSHARA	2	06/00/00/00/01	2	Azmi Bishara	
.	1	05/00/00/00/03	1	, (2)	
.	1	05/00/00/00/03	3	;	Problem in punctuation.
we	2	06/00/00/00/01	3	We	Conc error
arabic's	1	06/02/10/02/01	3	Arabs'	Confusing Arabic with Arabs.
most	1	04/03/04/02/02	1	interesting / important	L1- Most can be used alone
	1	04/04/10/00/02	1	was	Copula
have	1	04/04/10/00/01	3	having	
For	1	06/00/00/00/01	3	for	Overuse of capital F

delete      sort

Text ID: Letter-1      Written/Oral: Written

In my **BirthDay** I **acheved** my dream. **do** you believe ?  
 Maybe you don't know **about** what I am talking about.  
**look**  
**Before** a **wile** I met the person who I **would like** to be like. **It** **phd. AZMEE BSHARA**. I like his **personalty** and here I mean by it his **stronge** **personalty** and the way he **thoughts** , I don't mean his political life. he is a charismatic person.  
 I met him in **Nazarth on** his ofice, it was a personal interview, **we** talked about **the** life in Israel , the **arabic's** situation here **also** we talked about the effect **From the** **society at** the teenagers and the relation between them. **it's** was great. and the **most** thing that he **approched** me **How** to deal with problems.  
 In the last few **minute** we exchanged **giFts**. I gave him copy **From** my **Favorit** books. but he gave my a book that he had written.  
 This meeting was the **lovely** giFt that I **get** on my **BirthDay**.  
 Azmee Bshara.. it's the **personalty** **Who** I looking to **have**.  
 This meeting was **joyous**...  
 Now I'm looking **For** a dream that I want to achieve .

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