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Micro language planning and the revival of Hebrew: A schematic framework

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ABSTRACT

Supported by contemporary evidence, this study discusses the revival of Hebrew a century ago (within two or three decades), with a focus on the actual total shift of pre-Israel Palestine's Jewish community from Yiddish and several other languages to Hebrew as an all-purpose means of communication. First, four "factors" that prevailed prior to and during the revival are discussed: the "communicative," "political," "religious," and "literary." The study then proposes schematically that the shift to Hebrew evolved in a cycle consisting of four consecutive albeit partially overlapping "steps": (1) The children are instilled with desired language attitudes. (2) The children acquire the code, Hebrew. (3) The children transfer Hebrew, now a second language, out of the schools. (4) With these children now adults, their newly born receive Hebrew as a first language. Finally, the study suggests that, in the absence of a central authority, the revival can be seen as a case of "micro language planning," in which potential speakers constituted "language planning agents" active in "language planning cells." (Language revival, Hebrew, language planning, language shift, vernacular)*

The revival of Hebrew (approx. 1890–1914) – variously labeled unique, unprecedented, and even "miraculous" – is still attracting the attention of language planning theoreticians as well as practitioners (e.g. Bar-Adon 1977, 1988b; Saulson 1979; Rabin 1980, 1986; Nahir 1978a, 1983, 1987, 1988; Ornan 1984; Dagut 1985; Shur 1990, 1996; Glinert 1991; Harshav 1990, 1993; Spolsky 1995). An observation of its historiography shows that, rather as in Hebrew language planning generally, the study in recent decades of the Hebrew Revival reveals three stages in its development. In the first stage, much of the relevant literature was popular, even romanticized (e.g. St. John 1952, Tur-Sinai 1960); the Revival's initiation and success were almost exclusively attributed to or identified with Eliezer Ben-Yehuda and his Hebrew Language Committee (later Academy). In the second stage, the Revival was beginning to be re-evaluated, and as a result, considerably "de-romanticized." It was recognized that:

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(a) A linguistic revival, particularly of the magnitude of the Hebrew Revival, could not possibly be carried out by a single individual.

(b) The revival was a collective effort of a group with which Ben-Yehuda had little or no contact, i.e. the teachers in the rural schools of Palestine.

(c) Only 4% of Jerusalem's Jewish community spoke Hebrew in 1914, when the Revival was virtually over in most parts of the country, even though this was Ben-Yehuda's home town and center of activity (Census 1918, Bachi 1956).

(d) The Hebrew Language Committee, established by Ben-Yehuda and associates, was inactive between 1891 and 1904, i.e. during most of the Revival's period.

It was therefore concluded that Ben-Yehuda could have had little or no significant impact on the status (as distinct from the corpus) of Hebrew (Fellman 1973, Nahir 1978b, 1988; see also Glinert 1991).

In the third, current stage in the historiography of the Revival, some investigators have begun to realize that, in the absence of any central, coordinating body to direct and encourage the Revival during most if not all of its formative years, it is altogether historically unjustified to label the process as language planning, at least according to current definitions. Thus, according to Dagut (1985:72), "What seems to stand out most clearly is the restricted role played by deliberate planning in the whole process of this particular revival." It also seems to be of interest that the contemporary local government, receiving its directives from the central Ottoman government in Turkey, showed no interest at all in the numerous languages spoken by the local population – all different from the languages used in Turkey. No government ministry or department had any responsibility for the country's languages, let alone Hebrew or its potential revival (Ornan 1984). Thus it is obvious that the Revival did not come about as a result of "language planning" per se. The relation between the Revival and language planning will be discussed further below.

The major objective of this study, then, is to attempt a brief schematic analysis of the sociolinguistic events in pre-Israel Palestine which brought about within about 25 years an unprecedented feat: the shift away from Yiddish – dominant in rural Jewish Palestine, whence the Revival eventually began its spread – to Hebrew, which was to become the community's major vernacular as well as its national language.[1]

THE CURRENT STUDY OF THE HEBREW REVIVAL

Language (or speech) revival can be defined as "the attempt to turn a language with few or no surviving native speakers back into a normal means of communication in a community" (Nahir 1984:30). Since Hebrew is the only language known to have been fully and successfully revived (cf. Haugen 1966:26, Fishman 1972:2),[2] either as a result of language planning or through some other means

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(see below), scholars continue to search for the reasons behind this success, perhaps because none offered to date has been deemed satisfactory.

Recent theories include that of Sivan 1980, who lists five reasons for the success of the Revival: (a) the return of Jews from their centuries-old exile to their homeland in Palestine; (b) the powerful, Bible-based Hebrew traditions; (c) the "spiritual preparations" for the Hebrew Revival initiated by Ben-Yehuda; (d) the structure of Hebrew, which makes its lexical expansion relatively easy and trouble-free; and (e) the new, different lexical needs of the community, which were the result of its members' new life in Palestine (1980:59–60).

Another thesis is offered by Harshav 1993, who discusses the Revival in terms of three complex historical causes: (i) the "life" of the Hebrew language, which at the time of the Revival was in many respects still alive and well; (ii) the revival of written Hebrew in the 19th and 20th centuries as a new vehicle for writing modern fiction and poetry, for translations, and for journalistic, essay, and popular-science writing; and (iii) the establishment of "new social cells" in what was seen by immigrants as the new country's "social desert."

In still another recent study of the Revival, Shur 1990 investigates the "macro" processes or the "political conditions" said to have been prevailing prior to and during the Revival. Viewing it as just one of several components of the "Zionist-Israeli Nation-building process" (1990:30), Shur analyzes the language revival strictly in light of its contribution to or role in the creation of a Jewish national home in Palestine.

These and other recent studies (e.g. Glinert 1991, Shur 1996) discuss various interesting aspects of the Hebrew Revival and some of the factors that made it possible. Nevertheless, the most intriguing and elusive question still remains unanswered: What exactly happened in Palestine between 1890 and 1914 that caused the majority of the Jewish community (virtually the entire, relatively large, rural Jewish community) to shift from Yiddish to Hebrew? In a recent study (Nahir 1988), I have proposed a somewhat schematic explanation of this shift. The objective in the present study is to review, revise, and update the schematic analysis presented there, and then to discuss a novel way to view the Hebrew Revival. I will suggest that the Revival may be seen not simply as a case of language planning, but of "micro language planning," in which the potential speakers constitute "micro-language planning agents" who operate in "language planning cells."

From such a schematic presentation it may be possible, following further study of other language revival attempts, to draw generalizations that will contribute both to language planning generally and to the possible formation of a theory of language revival. Some scholars have questioned the generalizability of the Hebrew revival. Thus Paulston (1996:180) believes that because of the uniqueness of the situation of Hebrew, it is questionable whether "Israel and its languages [can] be generalized to any other language situation." It seems to me that all sociolinguistic phenomena are unique in their own ways, yet many of them are

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being analyzed and generalized, then to be used critically in the search for an understanding of other language situations. Fishman (1991:288), explaining his choice of Modern Hebrew (in Israel), French (in Quebec), and Catalan (in Spain) to represent "success stories" of "RLS" (Reversing Language Shift), maintains that "there is much to learn from them in connection with RLS-efforts more generally, as well as particularly."

Finally, a distinction should be recognized between LANGUAGE REVIVAL, which has never been achieved, and SPEECH REVIVAL, which has been achieved in the case of Hebrew (see Nahir 1977b). Nevertheless, "language revival" is used throughout this study because it, or its Hebrew equivalent *txiyat halašon*, has been almost universally applied as a cover term for both since the genesis of the Revival, by participants, observers, and scholars alike. Several alternative terms have been suggested in the literature recently, replacing the previously exclusive "revival" in labeling the shift to Hebrew, e.g. "nativization" (Bar-Adon 1977), "renaissance" (Blau 1981), "reactivation" (Bar-Adon 1988a), "normalization" (Glinert 1991), "revernacularization" (Fishman 1991), "revitalization" (Bar-Adon 1988a, Spolsky 1989, 1995, Ó Laoire 1996), and "full return" to Hebrew (Morag 1990). None of the terms used to date, however, including "revival," seems actually to represent the full scope of the extraordinary process. This is probably the reason that some scholars at times use both the newly proposed terms and the old "revival" with little or no distinction (e.g. Blau 1981, Ó Laoire 1996, and Bar-Adon 1988a, who admits he does so for "convenience"), and the reason that others reserve one term for the new USERS of the language and another for the LANGUAGE to which they shifted, e.g. "nativization" vs. "revival" (Bar-Adon 1987). In fact, the full revival of Hebrew involved not merely the revernacularization, revitalization, or nativization of spoken Hebrew; it also involved many aspects of WRITTEN Hebrew that exist only when the spoken form has been revived – formal and private letters, memos, reports, the press (especially daily), etc. As Fishman states (1991:291), "What was ultimately accomplished was not merely the vernacularization of Hebrew but also its re-standardization, its secularization and its association with the entire life-experience of both sexes, rather than only those of males alone." Thus, other than demonstrating the resources of the English vocabulary, there seems to be no benefit in replacing the well-established, generally recognized, convenient, and indeed more accurately descriptive designation, "revival," which has been in popular as well as scholarly use since the very beginning of the process (even though during most of the 19th century, prior to the revival of Hebrew speech, the term denoted the revival of secular Hebrew literature; see Rabin 1986, Pelli 1989).[3]

THE HEBREW REVIVAL: A SCHEMATIC ANALYSIS

Based on a few attempts at language revival (see n. 2), one successful and some others less so, it is obviously impossible to establish confidently either a "lan-

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guage revival model" or "preconditions" that will have to be met before a future revival attempt has a reasonable chance of success. This study POSTULATES, however, that future study may well establish the need for two conditions to exist in a given community if a speech revival attempt is to be successful:

(a) Certain prevailing FACTORS, such as a communicative need resulting from a state of bilingualism or multilingualism. This may be a consequence, in turn, of a chain of historical events that have relocated and brought together groups of speakers of different languages – or other unique social, political, religious, or economic forces.

(b) A CODE which, perhaps in an earlier variety, is seen to have been related to a substantial segment of the community where the revival attempt is to take place (see Nahir 1978a; for "conditions" for the survival of small languages, see Winter 1993).

It should be noted that, as indicated by its definition above, "speech revival" in this study refers to the resurrection of an old language, to the point where it is used by a community for at least most of its communicative needs, and it is spoken as a first, native language by at least a significant segment of the community. The reference in this study is clearly not to situations like those of Irish (Ó Laoire 1996), or Maori (Spolsky 1995), or other languages in which a "revival" or restoration to a previous status has been attempted, at times with some partial success; these are perhaps best described as cases of "language maintenance" or "language spread" (Nahir 1984). These languages never completely ceased being used in spoken form; however, they have not been fully restored as the major vernaculars of their communities. There is also a basic, critical difference between the revival of Hebrew speech and situations like those that prevailed in Europe, in which newly acquired political independence has caused the transformation of indigenous languages such as Finnish, Czech, and Slovenian (perhaps even Greenlandic) into fully "legitimate" standard languages. Language planning involved in these and similar cases may well be labeled "language standardization" (ibid.)

The above two conditions, then – unique sociocultural and sociolinguistic factors, and a related revivable code – prevailed in pre-Israel Palestine's Jewish community at the turn of the 20th century. Thus it seems that an analysis of the Hebrew revival should be based on an identification and examination of (a) FACTORS prevailing in the community (and for a while elsewhere, too) before and during the revival period; and (b) language planning STEPS, conscious and deliberate or otherwise, which led to the speakers' shift to Hebrew, the target language.

Factors at work during the revival

A close observation of contemporary documents indicates that – in addition to the STEPS taken during the revival period, which were the immediate cause of its success – the scope, effectiveness, and speed of the Hebrew Revival were also

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critically dependent on the sociolinguistic/sociocultural background, or the FACTORS prevailing in Palestine's Jewish population, as well as in major East European Jewish communities, before and during the period. These factors (the first three of which are discussed in Nahir 1983) contributed heavily to the success of the Revival, each with varying impact; it is safe to say that, without them, the steps taken would have produced much poorer or even no results. Four major sociolinguistic/sociocultural factors seem to have been at work during this period: the communicative, the political, the religious, and the literary.

The communicative factor. Language planners and theoreticians seem to agree that the communicative needs of a community are critical for achieving language planning goals (Haugen 1966, Rubin 1971, Nahir 1984, Paulston 1988b). All attempts at language revival except that of Hebrew have failed probably because, for historical reasons, this factor was not at work. In Ireland, attempts to revive Irish have been unsuccessful largely because English was in general use by the time the revival was attempted (Macnamara 1971, Wright 1996b). In Irish, as in other attempts at language revival (e.g. Welsh, Cornish, Frisian, or Maori), the realistic goal was survival as a SECOND language (see Winter 1993). Thus it seems that, unless some unique social, cultural, political, economic, or other forces are intensely at work, a communicative vacuum, usually in the form of multilingualism, must exist in a community before it will attempt the revival of a language.

It has been thoroughly documented by now (e.g. Haramati 1979, Nahir 1983, 1988) that an acute communicative vacuum indeed prevailed at least in Palestine's urban Jewish community; it was the result of the two-millennia-long history of the Jewish people which culminated in the revival of Jewish political aspirations and the drive, led by the Zionist movement, to resettle the Jews in Palestine (Harshav 1993). This largely multilingual community comprised immigrants relocating from various East European countries, plus some small Jewish groups that had been in the country for decades and in turn were made up of scores of linguistic subgroups. All these communities constituted, as Ben-Yehuda discovered upon his arrival in the country in 1882, a "Babel Generation," in which "each group [spoke] in the language of the country it had come from" (1917/18:95).[4] According to another of the numerous sources, Jerusalem's Jewish community, like most others in the country, suffered from an acute state of multilingualism; its members spoke, among other varieties, Judeo-Spanish, Palestinian Arabic (spoken by local-origin Jews), North African Arabic, Georgian, Tatar, and various dialects of Yiddish (Peres 1964:19). Other contemporaries, such as the leading educator H. Zuta (1929), also reported that linguistic fragmentation constituted a serious problem to the community. The communicative factor was thus clearly evident prior to the Revival, although it was concentrated in the urban centers. In the "settlements," which consisted almost exclusively of East European immigrants, the use of Yiddish was almost universal, although most of the settlers could also speak the language of their "old country" – Rus-

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sian, Ukrainian, Polish etc. In the settlements, therefore, the communicative factor was much less dominant in this period.

The "communicative factor" could thus also be labeled the "relocation factor." Nevertheless, the former designation has been selected because, however viewed, ultimately the result is a communicative vacuum.

The political factor. Political aspirations and motivations have been found to underlie numerous goals of language planning, including those that have been partially or fully achieved (e.g. Heyd 1954, Haugen 1966, Fishman 1971, Polomé & Hill 1980, Bourhis 1984, Spolsky 1995). The case of Hebrew at the turn of the century, when its revival in speech form was the language planning goal sought, was no exception. As noted above, Palestine's rural "settlements" consisted mostly of native speakers of Yiddish; therefore, at least in the settlements, the revival of Hebrew was to involve a concurrent shift away from Yiddish, the normal vehicle for communication. But a shift from one means of communication to another would require an especially powerful political factor, to make up for the weakness of the communicative factor. Such a political factor indeed prevailed in the community, reflected in a uniquely favorable attitude to Hebrew and a strong unfavorable attitude to Yiddish (both are discussed by Nahir 1983 and Harshav 1993.) An influential contemporary essayist, Asher Ginzberg (better known as Ahad-Ha'am), although then living in Europe, was a frequent visitor and observer of developments in Palestine's Jewish community. He thus both reflected and, because of his status, helped to formulate the community's position vis-à-vis the Hebrew language. The language of the Bible, he contended, used in written form for over two millennia, was for the Jews the only possible national language. It was in this language that the Jewish people "created a great, respectable literature [and in which] it had realized the full scope of its national spirit [since] the threshold of History ... This language alone has been and will ever be our national language" (Ahad-Ha'am [1906] 1946:179–80). Ahad-Ha'am's numerous essays had a profound, lasting impact on the country's Jewish intelligentsia, educators, and leaders, the groups who led the shift to Hebrew. Although he was an outsider throughout the Revival period, his writings both accelerated and recorded the process.

Contemporary evidence abounds that Palestine's Jewish intellectuals viewed the language revival as critical for national revival in the ancient homeland, which was their ultimate goal. One of these intellectuals was Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, who insisted that the revival of Jewish nationhood and the revival of Hebrew were inseparable. For him, unlike Ahad-Ha'am, one without the other would be meaningless: "If I did not believe in the redemption of the Jewish people, I would have no use for the Hebrew language ... For what is [the value of] Hebrew ... for one who has ceased to be a Hebrew? With the death of the nation [the Hebrew language] has died, and with its revival it will live too!" (1881:50–51; see also Mandel 1981). A leading contemporary educator similarly recalled later that both

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revivals were "greatly instrumental in bringing our dispersed people closer ... in our gathering of the exiles and tongues" (Azaryahu 1929:57).

Although Yiddish was almost universally spoken in the rural regions, many resented its use because it reminded them of their people's long exile from their homeland and the recurrent persecutions they endured, during which Yiddish was the dominant Jewish vernacular (Harshav 1993, Ben-Rafael 1994). Furthermore, since it had been used mostly as a vernacular, many contemporary educators considered it a "vulgar" language, "unfit for use in the schools as a vehicle for matters of science" (Azaryahu 1929:62). To Ahad-Ha'am, despite the widespread use of Yiddish in Eastern Europe, it was merely a "Jewish-German Jargon, spoken by our people in the northern countries for several centuries [but] no more significant for them than the other exile-languages, using it ... only when compelled to, for the sake of the unlettered in Hebrew .... [It] has not been and will never be for our people anything but an external, temporary means to understand each other" (1903:179). Probably also because of its linguistic relationship to German, the language of the Third Reich, a study of Israeli attitudes to Yiddish decades later still found it to be undesirable and "derided as a symbol of the unpleasing aspects of diaspora existence" (Herman 1968:499).

The political factor was boosted substantially in 1905 when, more than halfway toward the completion of the Revival, a wave of immigrants, the "second immigration," began to arrive in Palestine, considerably augmenting the country's tiny Jewish population. This resulted mainly from the formation in 1897 of the political Zionist movement in Europe (whose objective was to establish in Palestine a national homeland for the Jews), from the Dreyfus affair, and from renewed pogroms in Eastern Europe; thus the new immigrants were highly motivated politically. They also thought that Hebrew, symbolizing a departure from life in the diaspora, could contribute significantly to their cause. In fact, to them, a national revival in the ancient land of the Bible was inconceivable without a concurrent revival of the language of the Bible. As Fishman observes in a somewhat similar context (1974:23), "A modern speech community wants its language to be ... theirs, i.e. like them in some way, reflective of their individuality in some way, protective of their history in some way."

The religious factor. For about two millennia, a fundamental cornerstone of Jewish law has required all Jewish males to participate in daily religious services, in the synagogue or at home, and also to study the Bible and the Talmud (with at least some of their numerous commentaries) on a regular basis. Consequently, the regular study and use of religious Hebrew texts constituted an integral component of all males' education and way of life from early childhood (see Rabin 1976). These texts were written in Hebrew, with the exception of parts of the Talmud and a fraction of the Bible, which were written in Aramaic (an ancient Semitic language, closely related to Hebrew, and spoken in large parts of the Middle East when the Talmud was compiled). As a result, virtually all males had

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a solid if passive knowledge of the Hebrew language. In fact, at least to the extent that it was used in rituals, even many females were quite familiar with Hebrew religious terminology. This basic, dominant feature of Jewish religion and education led to three significant linguistic phenomena relative to Hebrew language corpus and Hebrew language acquisition:

(a) It kept the Hebrew language in constant use for approximately two millennia after its demise as a vernacular. Therefore, unlike "dead" languages such as Latin, the corpus of the language was readily available to the revivers in the late 19th century as a "revivable" language. The second "condition" for language revival (see above), the availability of a historical code, was thus met.

(b) It resulted in the regular acquisition of Hebrew by generations of Jewish males. This, in turn, resulted in the uninterrupted production in Hebrew of religious, religio-philosophical, legal, and other religion-related works, including liturgy and poetry, all having large numbers of potential readers.

(c) It secured the survival of the phonology of Hebrew, albeit in different varieties in the various speech communities of the Jewish diaspora.

The departure from religion and its observance by a substantial number of Jews that has occurred in Europe in recent centuries (see Harshav 1993) did not have a significant impact on the acquisition of Hebrew before or during the Revival period, because it was usually accompanied by the adoption either of the "enlightenment" (the promotion and creation of non-religious, liberal, "enlightened" literature; see Chomsky 1957, Pelli 1989, Harshav 1993), or of Jewish nationalism and an eventual return to Zion. Both called for the study and acquisition of Hebrew, which by the late 19th century became a symbol of Jewish national-political aspirations and a potential national language. The acquisition of Hebrew as a "living written language" (Nahir 1988) was therefore never abandoned.

Universal religious education has been linked to Hebrew language attitudes in still another way. The study of the Bible has reinforced in the minds of Jewish students a special relationship between the Jews and the land of the Bible, which they knew was "given" to their forefathers in Hebrew. This attitude to the language of the Bible was even more intense among the young Zionists who, as part of the "second immigration" (begun in 1905), moved to Palestine to settle and "build" it. Hebrew had become, in effect, "the first archaeology that linked the newcomers to the Bible and to the land of the Bible" (Harshav 1990). Such a perception of the language of the Bible, and a considerable mastery of both, is clearly evident in numerous contemporary records, biographies, and memoirs involving the early settlers – most of them well versed in religious Hebrew literature, though often totally rejecting religion and its practices.

Finally, from the very beginning of Jewish life in the diaspora, an important by-product of universal religious education and Hebrew literacy was the well-documented status of Hebrew as a lingua franca among Jews throughout their

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scattered communities, including those in Palestine. By and large, then, all Palestine's Jewish males and many of its females at the turn of the century were in a position to transform their Hebrew from a "living written language" to an all-purpose language.

The literary factor. As has been indicated, because of universal religious education, the impact of the religious factor did not fade even after the early 19th century when a considerable move away from religion took place. At this time, a combination of a solid though passive knowledge of Hebrew, along with a secular outlook on life, led to the development in Eastern Europe of a relatively large body of secular, liberal literature, labeled the "Haskala [enlightenment] literature." Though the era of secular literature in Jewish life is said to have begun in the mid-18th century with the publication of the first Hebrew periodical, the first literary novel, *Ahavat-Tsiyon* [The love of Zion], by Avraham Mapu, was published in 1853 (Chomsky 1957, Pelli 1989, Harshav 1993). The Haskala literature actually transformed written Hebrew from a means of communicating religious messages, in religious contexts, to a means of expressing all other experiences, on the levels of the individual, the community, and even the nation.

In the second half of the 19th century this new trend developed a powerful momentum, and Hebrew literature gained legitimacy as an almost fully developed national literature, although readers were scattered in different countries and speech communities. This literary revival contributed to the Hebrew language/speech revival in numerous ways involving the corpus of Hebrew; perhaps the most important was the adoption by writers of new literary genres, including the novel (e.g. A. Mapu), secular poetry (e.g. Y. L. Gordon), and essay (e.g. Ahad-Ha'am). This eventually led to the development of more "modern" syntax and grammar, which freed the language from old restrictive forms. It also allowed the language to adapt to and better express modern life experiences by borrowing European literary techniques, forms, and styles. By the late 19th century, just prior to and during the language revival, the new "literary" Hebrew, developed in the major Jewish communities of Eastern Europe, was used not only in traditional literary forms, but also in many other types of texts, such as journalism, news commentaries, literary criticism, reviews, popular science, essays, reference books, and dictionaries – aptly labeled by Harshav 1993 as an entire "communication infrastructure."

Most residents of Palestine's rural settlements, where the shift to Hebrew was by far the most effective, had been exposed to this new form of written Hebrew either before or after arriving in their new homeland. This "factor" is thus closely related to the religious/educational factor discussed above, in that most of those involved in the revival had acquired an older variety of written Hebrew via their childhood education, and a "modern" written Hebrew variety as adults. Contemporary records indicate that, like many European Jews, they used the modern variety in an ever-increasing number of written discussions and debates on na-

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tional issues and on the great difficulties faced by many communities in Europe and Palestine. When the first Hebrew daily newspaper was established in 1895, both the range of topics to be covered and the time pressure involved in production forced the users of Hebrew further to eliminate the impractical aspects of the language – grammatical, lexical, and stylistic – and concurrently to adjust it to the demands of the new reality and to modern life. As Rabin put it (1967:15), the language now began "to be 'corrupted' and receive the vitality and flexibility which are typical of modern Hebrew." The conviction that the corpus of literary or written Hebrew was now ready to serve as a basis for a revivable spoken language, thus meeting one of the two conditions for language revival, is clearly evident in contemporary records. For example, discussing her emotional ties to Yiddish literature vis-à-vis her commitment to Hebrew, Rachel Katsnelson-Shazar had no doubt (1946:18) that "the transfer of the Hebrew language from a language-of-reading to a language-of-speech was done in the literature ... The language created by Mendele and Byalik would redeem us from the domination of foreign languages, and the new Hebrew nation would speak in the language of Brenner and Gnessin." It seems, then, that the corpus of the language used in reading and writing by the would-be speakers of Hebrew, just prior to and during the Revival, was adequate. But the very use of the language for reading by the same would-be speakers also contributed to their ability to acquire it in spoken form, when the opportunity to shift to Hebrew speech finally presented itself.

The shift to Hebrew: Four steps

Crucial as the above "factors" were to the success of the Hebrew revival, their identification in itself fails to answer the most critical question: What was done to bring about the actual shift of the community from the predominant use of Yiddish to Hebrew – which, despite its high status, was still a written language? In fact, this question was asked even as the shift was taking place: "There are many in the country who know Hebrew, but there are very few, almost none, who use it for everyday needs, and the question is how one can turn people who know Hebrew into people who use Hebrew" (Tsemah 1952:122). The question seems to be even more acute in the light of findings on other revival attempts. Studies involving languages such as Irish (Macnamara 1966, 1971), Cornish (Green 1966), Welsh (James 1977), and Walapai (in Arizona, Winter 1993), have asserted that, as a rule, people will speak their native language or some other language that will best help them achieve their communicative goals, or otherwise serve their interests. As in all other behavior, reinforcement and reward are critical in communication. In Palestine's rural settlements, Yiddish, the almost universal vernacular, would clearly promise a communicative or social reward; therefore only an exceptional situation would cause native speakers of Yiddish, children and adults, to speak Hebrew.

Despite a considerable number of studies focusing on the Revival, including some on the role of the schools in the settlements (e.g. Haramati 1979), the ques-

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tion of the actual shift to Hebrew has hardly been investigated.[5] What still needs to be explained is what was done to make "a relatively *rapid and clean break with prior norms of verbal interaction*" (emphasis in original, Fishman 1991:291). Bar-Adon (1977:489) attributed the process to "the children," arguing that "ONLY CHILDREN could ... carry out the ... NATIVIZATION in Modern Hebrew [which] resulted in a NATIVE LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE" (emphasis in original). Bar-Adon further suggests the interesting notion of "mini-generations" of children, somewhat like a "school year," with "generations" of siblings and peers partially overlapping. This notion may help to account for the intensity and speed of the process; yet it fails to explain why the children did not follow the basic behavioral principle referred to above, when they chose to speak a language that would not produce reinforcement in the form of effective communication. In other words, the notion still falls short of explaining why the children would speak Hebrew to their peers and siblings when everybody's native language, including their own, was Yiddish. The following is a schematic framework that attempts to answer these questions. It suggests that the ACTUAL SHIFT to Hebrew in the settlements (from which this language later spread to the rest of the community) involved a process consisting of four consecutive though partially overlapping steps, not necessarily conscious: (1) The children were instilled with desired LANGUAGE ATTITUDES; (2) the children were presented with and acquired the CODE, the Hebrew language; (3) the children transferred Hebrew, now a second language, and the attitudes instilled in them OUT OF THE SCHOOLS; and (4) when these children became adults, their newly born children received and spoke Hebrew as a FIRST LANGUAGE.

Step One: Attitudes. Numerous records from the revival period indicate convincingly that, although Yiddish was the language spoken, the community's attitude to Hebrew was intensely favorable; and further, that this was part and parcel of the Jewish national revival in Palestine (Ben-Yehuda 1881, 1918, Ravnitsky 1890, Yudelovitz 1929; also see above section on the "political factor"). With no political control over their collective destiny vis-à-vis the government of the Ottoman Empire, many members of the community, particularly in the settlements, considered linguistic revival the one area over which they could have at least some control. Many of the community's leaders, educators, and intellectuals viewed it as no less than a precondition for national revival. If only the language of the Bible – spoken by their independent ancestors in ancient times, and used in written form ever since – could regain its status as a vernacular and a national language, then a major step on the way to national revival would be taken. This attitude was probably what led Israel Belkind, an early settler and leader attending the first Hebrew Teachers' Association conference, to call on students to study Hebrew "with all their vigor, and cause it to be spoken by the entire new generation so that it is then spoken throughout" (Yudelovitz 1929:94). Soon after the Association was founded in 1909, a resident of Tel-Aviv, the "first

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Hebrew city," discovered that "to speak Yiddish in the street one needs enormous courage" (Yehoash 1917:1.158). Similarly, Berl Katsnelson, a newcomer to Palestine who later became an influential leader in the country's labor movement, reported on a dilemma he faced which involved prevailing language attitudes: "When I arrived, I could not construct a single sentence in Hebrew, but I did not want to speak Yiddish. I decided that I would not utter even one Yiddish word. And for ten days I did not speak at all" (cited in Harshav 1990). These and numerous similar recorded sentiments (see Haramati 1979) leave no doubt as to the vigor of the community's feelings about Hebrew in this period.

Contemporary evidence also shows that such powerful feelings soon found their way into a growing number of schools in the settlements. A former student recalls in his memoirs, for example, how as early as 1891 the status of Hebrew vis-à-vis Yiddish was brought home to him by his teacher in the very first class: "[It was] Hebrew in Hebrew, that is, forget Yiddish which we spoke at home and ... speak his language, Hebrew" (Neiman 1963:22). A visitor in a school in Gedera in 1907 found a teacher "implanting the Hebrew spirit in the hearts of the little ones" (R.Z.L. 1902). It was thus abundantly clear to children that Hebrew was the community's prestigious language, to be preferred when acquired. Communicating in Hebrew would now constitute a potent reinforcement, so the children knew, consciously or otherwise, that it was time to acquire the code.

Step Two: The code. The settlements' schoolteachers (often characteristically labeled "teachers-leaders") and other revival activists recognized, early in the process, that a successful shift to Hebrew was conditional on its use as the language of instruction for all subjects. Yet they soon realized that numerous logistic and linguistic barriers existed; probably the most formidable was the need to teach students various subjects in a language they did not know. To overcome this difficulty, "preparatories" were established in some schools; here children would devote one or two years to total exposure to Hebrew speech, prior to entry into elementary school. This "immersion" was the preparatories' only stated objective; within a year or two, once the children acquired a reasonable proficiency in the language, they would enter first grade, where instruction was in Hebrew (Azaryahu 1933). In this way, according to a contemporary educator, children would "get used to speak in Hebrew [so that] when they enter school, they will be prepared to read books" (Hovav 1902).

We may note here that, in modern second language "immersion" programs – which have mushroomed in recent decades in many parts of the world, as a popular instrument for achieving bilingualism – the sole declared objective of the lower levels (notably kindergartens) has been, just as in the preparatories of the Revival period, the development of the children's oral proficiency in the target language, as preparation for future study exclusively in that language.

Contemporary reports indicate that the preparatories' accomplishments were both conspicuous and highly consequential. For example, Itamar Ben-Avi, Ben-

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Yehuda's son, reported in 1902 on a preparatory where "they speak Hebrew ... and in three months!" (1902:110). A visitor to a school in Zichron-Ya'akov, an early settlement, observed first-year students who had graduated from a preparatory, and found that they "read Hebrew and showed what they knew in grammar, history, arithmetic and geography – all in Hebrew" (Hazichroni 1902:242). Still another observer, a leading contemporary educator, asserted, "As to their effect on the revival of the language among the children, [the preparatories] did wonders. Thanks to them alone the children used Hebrew almost regularly, and when they entered school they could continue to develop their potential" (Azaryahu 1929:79). In fact, these children now became "the most effective vehicle for spreading Hebrew speech" (ibid.) Another leading contemporary educator (Zuta 1929:121) also confirmed that the preparatories were the instrument that "made Hebrew spoken both by our children and the next generation" (see Haramati 1979 and Nahir 1988 for more contemporary records).

As to the other schools – mostly elementary, but secondary schools as well – their role in the shift to Hebrew was by all accounts equally critical, as was the dramatic rise in their numbers. For example, between 1903 and 1913, the total number of Hebrew schools grew from 17 (16 in the settlements) to 60, including 20 kindergartens (10 in the settlements), 34 elementary schools (28 in the settlements), two secondary schools, two teachers' colleges, one vocational school, and even an art school (Azaryahu 1929). This impressive growth was accompanied, however, by numerous handicaps, such as a severe shortage of qualified Hebrew-speaking teachers, a shortage of texts and teaching materials (Yudelovitz 1929, Azaryahu 1929, Zuta 1929), and an acute paucity of Hebrew lexical items for modern life or even for some basic everyday concepts, such as 'newspaper', 'match', 'flowers', 'office', and 'train', and of terms for teaching the various school subjects (Nahir 1978a). These difficulties and others eventually led to the establishment in 1903 of the Hebrew Teachers Association (Kimhi 1929).

Despite overwhelming problems, countless reports in the contemporary press point to the pivotal role of the schools in the shift to Hebrew. For example, just a few years after the first school (in Rishon-Letsiyon) introduced Hebrew as the language of instruction, a teacher visiting in 1891 reported that he had found there "high-school students [who] spoke simple, fluent Hebrew and were led by expert, thoroughly devoted teachers ... Hebrew was the dominant spoken language" (Grazovsky 1891:3). A visitor in 1908 similarly noted that schools "keep improving ... due to ... our culture carriers – the Hebrew teachers ... the only channel through which flow the new currents in literature and in life" (Ben-Moshe 1908:85).

Based on the evidence, then – even if, as Harshav 1993 rightly maintains, its accuracy cannot always be rigidly verified (see Nahir 1996) – the teachers' efforts in giving their students the linguistic code, combined with the highly motivated students' efforts in acquiring it, proved an unequivocal success. Children

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of all ages now spoke Hebrew, albeit as a second language, in their respective schools. Their next task was to transfer the use of Hebrew out of their schools into the streets, and finally into their homes.

Step Three: Transfer out of schools. This was by far the most formidable of the steps involved in the language shift. Yet if the cycle was to be completed, it was critical that the children – having been instilled with the desired language attitudes, and having by and large acquired the target language – should now transfer it out of the schools; they had to speak it, albeit still as a second language, both in and out of the schools, in the streets with their peers and others, and finally in their homes. This proved much more difficult to accomplish than the Revival activists expected, as a contemporary observer noted in 1891: "Even the Hebrew school graduates, who were already more or less fluent in the language, mostly stopped speaking Hebrew when they were away from school, especially at home" (Smilansky 1930:9). Nevertheless, as a result of the persistent pressure of Step One, the children, who now could speak Hebrew as a second language, realized (perhaps subconsciously) that although speaking their native language, Yiddish, would result in more effective communication, using Hebrew, even inadequately, would result in a considerably more powerful reward. Furthermore, in using Hebrew they felt they were participating in and contributing to the community's efforts towards national revival. Yiddish, deemed a symbol of a miserable past in a forced exile, was neither prestigious nor desirable. As would be behaviorally expected, then, the children chose Hebrew.

Records show that the first phase of this step was the development of a "children's tongue" for use with peers, which was different from the "children's mother tongue," in use for other purposes. Azaryahu (1910:137) found that, "while [Hebrew] is not yet the children's mother tongue, it has already become throughout the country the children's tongue." Similar accounts abound. A visitor to Rishon-Letsiyon observed, for example, "All the youngsters who attended school speak and write Hebrew. In the streets and homes one can hear much Hebrew spoken" (Haviv 1910:3; see Bar-Adon 1977 for the notion of "mini-generations" of children speaking Hebrew with their siblings and peers, which may help in accounting for the intensity of this step). Another report, from Zichron-Ya'akov, states: "At last our teachers have prevailed and Hebrew is dominant in our settlement. [You] will find speakers of Hebrew not only among the students at school but among the settlement's young men and women as well ... I was one of them" (Hazichroni 1902:242). This situation began to lead to a "children-to-adults" direction in language acquisition, typical of immigrants' language behavior universally – although, atypically, Hebrew was neither the dominant language nor as yet the native tongue of more than a small minority. As a witness later recalled, "The children forced their parents to learn Hebrew [and] brought it into the home. The mothers would take Hebrew evening classes ... and the mother-child language was thus created" (Feinsod-Sokenick 1929:266). According to a press re-

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port on Zichron-Ya'akov, its younger students would "speak Hebrew amongst themselves [showing] everyone that instead of [Yiddish] which they used to speak they now speak Hebrew" (Anon. 1902:130).

A similar linguistic bridge between the schools and the home was noted by a writer whose friend's little daughter "did not only learn to speak Hebrew at school, but has also been teaching her parents whatever she knows" (Pirhi 1905:5). These developments and the consequent growth in the number of Hebrew speakers eventually resulted in the formation of social "islands" of young people among whom Hebrew was spoken, though still as a second language (Haramati 1979:252). The number and size of such "islands" grew while Step Four, partially overlapping, was already well underway.

Significantly, these developments were followed by a rapid, impressive increase in the number and circulation of Hebrew newspapers, particularly after the first waves of the "second immigration" had begun to arrive in the country in 1905 (Kressel 1964). In fact, it was already observed in 1912 that "there is now hardly a [young] man or woman who cannot read a Hebrew newspaper" (Klausner 1915:256).

Step Four: A first language. At this point the children – who, in the three earlier steps, were instilled with the desired language attitudes, acquired the code, and then transferred Hebrew out of the schools, all within one or two decades – had grown up, married, and had their own children. With the political factor still at work in the community, the language attitudes instilled in these young adults in Step One were still prevailing. Therefore the language spoken in the new homes by the new generation was Hebrew – even though, for the parents, this was (particularly in the early phases of this step) still a second language. To the new generation, however, Hebrew was now a native language in all respects. Gradually the community became accustomed to children speaking it as a native language, although adults either could not speak it or spoke it as a second language (as did many children, though in ever-declining numbers as the process proceeded). This situation, still representing the "child-to-adult" direction in second-language acquisition, was observed by an educator visiting Palestine in 1910, who found that "the young generation ... speaks Hebrew, and the old – almost all speak Yiddish" (Berkman 1911:31). This is probably why everyone was surprised when a new physician in one of the settlements announced that he would deliver a lecture in Hebrew: "The public here is used to hearing school-children chatter in Hebrew, but they did not expect a learned physician to use it" (Anon. 1907:3).

The use of Hebrew as a native language by the new generation was now occurring in an ever-growing number of families, as children became adults and married. When the number of such families came to make up a significantly large group of native speakers of Hebrew, i.e. when this number was large enough to constitute a Hebrew speech community, then it could be said that the community had finally shifted from Yiddish to Hebrew, and that Hebrew speech – including

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those aspects of the written language that exist only when the language is used in spoken form as well, e.g. memos, formal and informal letters, reports, and written announcements – had been restored, or revived.

As in the previous steps, this point obviously cannot be precisely demarcated, but it was undoubtedly reached some time within the decade prior to the 1916 Palestine census, when 40% of the country's Jewish population (34,000 of 85,000 aged two and over) declared Hebrew as their "only or first language" (Census 1918, Bachi 1956). Whether or not Harshav's doubts (1993) are well founded as to the accuracy and dependability of the census results (see Nahir 1996), it is still significant that, among the young people in the settlements and in the newly founded (in 1909) town of Tel-Aviv, 75% claimed Hebrew as their first language. According to Bachi, a statistician and student of the revival, by 1914 "the future of Hebrew was guaranteed [since] it had become the younger generation's major language" (1956:80). A contemporary observer's report in 1913 on a group of youths playing soccer in Tel-Aviv seems to validate Bachi's hindsight: "Even in the most heated moments of the game you could not hear them utter a single non-Hebrew word. To me that was the best proof that the language had 'penetrated' them and had become an integral part of their being. It was a great victory for the pioneers of the revival of the language" (Yehoash 1917:1.160).

THE REVIVAL OF HEBREW AND LANGUAGE PLANNING

The revival as micro-language planning

As indicated above, scholars investigating the revival of Hebrew in recent decades have begun to reevaluate not only Ben-Yehuda's role in status planning during the period in question, but also his contribution to the actual shift of Palestine's Jews from Yiddish to Hebrew. It has also been noted that even closer scrutiny of the process should lead to questioning whether it resulted in fact from "language planning" as defined in the language planning literature (e.g. Haugen 1966, Neustupný 1970, Rubin & Jernudd 1971b, Fishman 1974, Karam 1974, Eastman 1983, Nahir 1984, Cooper 1989). Virtually all definitions require that a language planning activity involve some kind of deliberate planning by an organized body enjoying either legal or moral authority, such as a government agency, commission, or academy. With more objective, in-depth investigation of the issue in recent years, it is becoming evident that neither of these requirements was met in the case of the Hebrew Revival. Through most of the Revival period, no organized body had either the power, legal or moral, or the responsibility to bring about the restoration of Hebrew as a spoken language. Even the Hebrew Language Committee, formed by Ben-Yehuda and his associates in 1890, was disbanded a few months later – to be reactivated only in 1903, when the shift was past its critical phase. In fact, even at this point the Committee practically ignored the STATUS of the Hebrew language, largely focusing its attention on its CORPUS (particularly the lexicon). Much activity of the Committee (and later of the Hebrew Language Academy)

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involved approving or disapproving, often rubber-stamping, new developments in the lexicon (Fellman 1973, Nahir 1978a, 1979). As Dagut described it (1985:68), "The actual revival ... was a grass-roots process, springing from the nationalist aspirations of the ordinary men and women – and children – who enthusiastically set about conducting their lives in the new-old language" (see also Glinert 1991). Actually, "the very existence of [Ben-Yehuda's] legend clearly shows that the revival was 'unplanned' ... It can be fairly said that Hebrew [was revived] through the collective will of the speakers of Hebrew, not by any governmental or other fiat" (Dagut 1985:68).

As to some possible outside, extra-community support from the local government in the efforts to revive Hebrew – or for that matter, in the pursuit of any other language planning goal by any one of the many other communities in the country – the total lack of interest or involvement on the part of the colonial Ottoman government has been mentioned earlier. Based on the evidence, it seems safe to conclude that the revival of or the shift to Hebrew involved little or no language planning, at least not as generally defined. Nor did it consciously involve, for the same reasons, Haugen's four language planning processes: Selection, Codification, Implementation, and Elaboration (1966, 1983).

If the Hebrew Revival did not result directly from language planning, there remains the question whether it can be described as a case in which language planning played any role at all. Establishing a relationship between the Hebrew Revival and language planning would prevent it from being deemed a historical "accident," from the study of which social scientists and language planners would have little or nothing to gain.

Recently some scholars have begun to distinguish MICRO vs. MACRO processes in language planning (e.g. Shur 1990).[6] Although these terms may be variably delineated, the distinction is still useful because it allows us to view the revival of Hebrew as a clearcut case of MICRO-LANGUAGE PLANNING. The shift from Yiddish to Hebrew during the Revival period may thus be regarded as having resulted from an aggregate of small, individual and seemingly insignificant micro-language planning (MLP) activities, the language planning "goal" being that of language revival (see Nahir 1977a, 1984). As I have shown here, these activities were carried out mostly by schoolteachers and principals, but also by various other activists – parents, school superintendents, local leaders etc. – all "MLP agents," operating in "MLP cells." Seen in this light, it may even be possible to discern in their activities a pattern comprising Haugen's four language planning "processes" (1966, 1983). Many individuals in the settlements, the MLP agents, made decisions, or SELECTIONS, involving a shift to Hebrew; and they either participated in or used the results of other agents' activities that led toward the CODIFICATION of Hebrew. They then worked toward their IMPLEMENTATION, and finally ELABORATION. Although this issue obviously needs further study, it seems that the revival of Hebrew speech in its entirety may well be seen as a case of micro-language planning.

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CONCLUSION

This study has re-introduced, in revised and expanded form, an earlier schematic analysis of the revival of Hebrew, with a focus on the actual, unprecedented, complete shift of Palestine's Jewish community at the turn of the century from Yiddish (and to a lesser extent, a variety of other languages) to Hebrew as an "all-purpose" means of communication (Nahir 1988). Discussing first the four factors that were at work before and during the Hebrew revival – the "communicative," "political," "religious," and "literary" – the study views the revival schematically as a four-step cycle that was taking place as the actual shift unfolded in the country's "settlements." Each of the two categories, the "factors" and the actual "steps," seems to have been virtually indispensable to the successful conclusion of the historic enterprise.

At the same time, it should be noted that, though no planning agency was significantly active in or responsible for the process, several bodies were involved – in varying degrees, and for varying periods – in activities that, indirectly and at times even unintentionally, somewhat accelerated the process, thus reducing the time required to complete the four-component cycle. One of the three major bodies involved, the Hebrew Language Committee, became active in 1903, when the shift was well under way; and even then its limited impact was almost exclusively on the corpus rather than the status of Hebrew. Its contribution was that, in its lexical work, it somewhat facilitated communication in the language, thus making its use more effective and its acquisition consequently more feasible.

Another group involved was the Hebrew Teachers Association, established in 1903, also after the critical point in the Revival. Through its activities, this body affected to a certain extent the quality of the teachers in the later phases of the process, and this may have had some impact on the effectiveness of two or three of the "steps" discussed above. Finally, the labor movement, which emerged close to the completion of the Revival (after the beginning of the "second immigration" in 1905), contributed to the shift mostly by organizing Hebrew language courses for its members and other adults, further stimulating a process which was near completion.

In the absence of a central agency that deliberately planned or organized the shift to and revival of Hebrew, the case may well be seen as one of "micro language planning," in which the potential speakers, highly motivated, constituted "teams" of non-centralized, individual "micro-language planning agents" operating in "language planning cells." Whatever pattern is accepted, the case of the Hebrew Revival shows that it is not impossible for a community to shift from one language into another; yet it will take a long chain of highly unlikely, probably unfortunate historical twists before such a sociolinguistic experiment can again be successfully accomplished. Further research should also establish the applicability of the Hebrew Revival to other language revival attempts, and the extent to which the "factors" and the "steps" discussed above may serve as "conditions"

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or "predictors" of success in future language revival cases. Such study may then contribute to the future formation of a model or theory of speech (or language) revival.

NOTES

* This study is based on an earlier paper (Nahir 1988). Considerably revised and expanded, it is presented here to allow the inclusion of recent approaches by this and other investigators and the presentation of a proposed unified analysis of the Hebrew Revival. I am grateful to Dr. Christina B. Paulston and to my wife, Dr. Tsipora H. Guttman-Nahir, for her invaluable comments on an earlier version of this study.

[1] Minority languages used by large numbers of speakers include Arabic, one of the country's two official languages, spoken mostly by the country's Arab community (about 10% of the population), and, beginning in the late 1980s, Russian, spoken by immigrants from the former Soviet Union (see Glinert 1995).

[2] Several recent attempts have had some success (for the case of Maori in New Zealand, for example, see Spolsky 1989), but none meets all the requirements in the above definition of language revival.

[3] See also Rabin 1986 for discussion of the use and scope of the term "language revival."

[4] Translations from Hebrew are by the writer.

[5] It should be noted that even the most successful second-language teaching methodology, including the popular language immersion method, is guaranteed to produce bilinguals. Because of the above-mentioned behavior principle, an education system alone cannot replace its students' native language with another, and none is known ever to have done so.

[6] However, Shur's distinction (1990) between "micro" and "macro" processes in language planning is restricted to the difference between the actual shift to Hebrew, on the one hand, and the general prevailing socio-cultural background, including the "political conditions," on the other (p. 30).

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