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Bilingual Education and Practical Interculturalism in Israel

*The Case of the Galilee*¹

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INTRODUCTION

Bilingualism in general, and bilingual education in particular, appears to be inherent to practical interculturalism, and vice-versa. Each area has been investigated separately, and connections have been made between interculturalism and education in general. However, no specific study has so far connected bilingual education with interculturalism. The aim of this article is to establish such a connection, deriving from both theoretical and practical issues. Insights from an ongoing project conducted by the Jewish-Arab Center (JAC) at the University of Haifa, concerning the relationship between *bilingual education* and *practical interculturalism* in the northern Galilee are presented in this article. The paper presents theoretical consideration of bilingual education and interculturalism as a framework for understanding and evaluating the social changes that have taken place in the Galilee over the last decade, regarding socio-political relationships between the Arab-Palestinian and the Hebrew-Jewish communities in the region².

Central to this new scheme is its bilingual and intercultural character. Bilingualism derives from the implementation of both Arabic and Hebrew in different social areas, principally in education. Interculturalism is expressed in the materialization of social networks in which Arab-Palestinians and Jewish citizens of Israel interconnect, creating

1. The authors gratefully acknowledge the generous support of the Zeit Stiftung, which has enabled us to implement the *Program for Bilingual Education* at the Jewish-Arab Center, the University of Haifa.

2. From here onwards, we refer to the Arab-Palestinians in the Galilee as the "Arab community", and to the Jewish Galileans as the "Hebraic community", unless the text and the context demand another term. These definitions permit us to rescue our writing and research from the pincers of the ethnic discourse that dominate the social and academic rhetoric in Israel. This is not to say that we ignore the ethno-cultural conflict present between the two communities, but to renounce use of the ethnic hatred vocabulary that invades our lives. We refer to the populations as communities, not from a minority-majority perspective that perpetuates asymmetric power relations and their respective perceptions.

and maintaining their *modus vivendi* in their own social spheres that provide alternatives to the otherwise closed and separatist nature of life in Israel.

Inspired by the ongoing social changes in the Galilee, this paper presents a dialogue-in-progress between bilingual education and interculturalism. Uniting these fields offers us insights for a possible new model of bilingual education as a practical form of interculturalism. Examining this issue in the context of Israel, the first part of this paper briefly presents the historical, socio-political and educational background of the research. The second part discusses bilingual education and interculturalism, examining the connection between them as a framework for understanding new civic developments in the Galilee. The last part suggests a new agenda for bilingual education as an aspect of practical interculturalism.

LIVING SEPARATELY AND TOGETHER IN ISRAEL

Geo-historical Background and Socio-political Data

The State of Israel has adopted a colonizers' attitude towards the Arab-Palestinian community as did its precursor, the *Yishuv* (i.e. the Jewish socio-political and ideological system and the Jewish settlements constructed between the middle of World War I and 1948; Shafir, 1989). This attitude was also in effect the policy regarding Arab land expropriation, encirclement of Arab municipalities, and discrimination in the distribution of resources and the symbolic appropriation of the space (Yacobi, 2002, 2005; Yiftachel, 1994, 1996, 1999; Falah, 1991). This nation-building process started with the expulsion of 700,000 Palestinians during the 1948 War³, and the rise of the State of Israel, with a defeated and weakened Arab-Palestinian community as part of the new state (Pappe, 1999a, 2004). Indeed, since the establishment of the State of Israel, the social space has been constructed on a nationalist socio-political logic, creating segregation and marginalization of the Arab population, which today forms 20% of the population of Israel.

In Galilee, the socio-political situation and socio-geographical structure are such that the two populations live apart from each other in their own towns or villages. This distribution of the space has its roots in the patterns of national conflict between Zionism and the Palestinians which developed in the early 20th century, when living apart was the inevitable consequence of the ethno-national enterprise. Under this historical-ideology, the Galilee was and still is one of the major targets of the Judaization of the space. However, the most striking result of the spatial logic in Israel is the closed nature of most of Israeli society, and the separatism of the relationship between Arab and Jewish communities throughout the country. Social rapprochement by means of bilingual and intercultural activities as proposed in this paper would be invaluable – politically, geographically, socially and educationally. This essay thus offers a theoretical framework for ongoing progress in the Galilee to create a new intercultural Arab-Hebraic public

3. Named by the Israeli-Jews: the War of Independence, and by the Arab-Palestinians – the *Nakbah*.

space. The research project that evaluates these changes asking to what extent the new public space accommodates Arab and Hebraic social life, slowly and reducing the gaps between the two communities. Is a partial socio-political transition from a separatist ideology to an intercultural approach to the Arab-Hebraic relationships can take place? If so, for the subjects involved from the Arab and the Hebraic communities in Galilee, the slow transformation it undergoes is therefore one of the changes from distantness and separation to proximity and familiarity.

The Educational System in Israel – Reflections on Reality Walls and Borders

The educational system in Israel is, for the most part public. The majority of the schools are run by the Ministry of Education, under whose control and supervision there are two separate systems – one for Arabic speakers and one for Hebrew speakers. This means that Palestinian citizens of Israel and Israeli-Jewish children are educated in separate schools, each with its own national or religious affiliation and linguistic heritage. A few Arabic-speaking families choose to send their children to Hebrew schools (a trend that is apparently on the rise), but the reverse is unheard of. However, there is no official documentation of numbers concerning this phenomenon.

Within this national segregation, there are also separate streams in both systems, especially in matters of religious practice. There are separate schools for religious and secular Hebrew L1 speaking children, and separate State and religious (Christian, Muslim, Druze) schools for L1 Arabic speaking children (Hertz-Lazarowitz & Zelinker, in press). Obviously, this applies also to the teachers, parents and regular staff in schools, and affects the teacher-training courses.

Language and Curricula

Educational policies and the curricula naturally derive from the socio-political reality. The school curricula (K-12) are always in Hebrew for Hebrew schools and Arabic for Arab schools. In some subjects they differ in content (e.g. literature, religion, tradition), while in others the programs are quite similar (e.g. sciences, citizenship education). The most marked difference is in the cultural and historical approaches (Benavot & Resh, 2003; Al-Haj, 2002, 2005). Hebrew speaking pupils receive extensive courses in Judaism and Jewish and Israeli history. Studies of Palestinian history and culture do not exist in Arab schools in Israel. Asymmetry is also "reflected in the allocation of teaching hours in the two streams for world history, Arab history and Jewish history" (Al-Haj, 2002: 175). While Arabic speakers receive extensive schooling in Hebrew, and regard Hebrew literature and tradition as part of their curriculum, Hebrew students have no programs concerning Arabic literature or tradition in theirs. Hebrew students read Arabic literature only in translation (some books, edited for Hebrew L1 lessons, contain short stories written by Arab authors). Very few schools do so privately,

and serious exposure to Arab-Palestinian culture can be found only at occasional events or by the local enterprise of school principals or supervisors (Bar-Tal, 2004).

As for language education all L1 Arabic children study Hebrew as a second language as part of their general curriculum and formal education. This is not the situation with Arabic for Hebrew L1 pupils. Naturally, the results of such a policy have a great deal of influence on children's attitudes from both communities, not just concerning each other's language, but also on each other's beliefs, rights and emotions (Spolsky & Shohamy, 1999; Amara & Mari, 2002; Amara, 2005).

BILINGUAL-INTERCULTURAL SOCIAL CHANGE

We believe that a new Arabic-Hebrew dynamic has been in development since approximately 1998, with the establishment of "Galilee" the Arab-Jewish bilingual school. We choose this date as a pivotal point since this school is the major intercultural Arabic-Hebrew enterprise constructed in the region as of that time. As a result, and following the establishment of other intercultural civil contacts between Arab and Hebraic partnerships in different social spheres in the Galilee, we present a theoretical framework for this new intercultural setting, an alternative sphere of civil practice, offering *other* social opportunities in contrast to the normative communal practices.

Changes in Galilee

The new practices are essentially civil society activities, particularly in regard to educational spaces. In the area of bilingual education, three principle developments are contributing to the formation of an intercultural community: bilingual education (Arabic-Hebrew), mainly through the bilingual Galilee School, and the dissemination and intensification of the study of Arabic by Hebraic residents of the Galilee. In addition, Arab and Hebraic student encounters during curricular and extra-curricular activities throughout the school system (kindergarten, primary, junior-high, and high school) play an important part.

In Israel's heterogeneous sphere of civil society, particularly since the deadly events of October 2000, we face an explosion of civil associations committed to various social issues, both Arab-Hebraic and monolingual. These associations and organizations advocate the rights of the Arab community and its citizens reforming allocation and distribution of resources, and joint activities directed towards improving contact between the two communities. Under the civil society category, we can distinguish between four different but related aspects: first, rights-discourse based NGOs, which work for the fulfillment of individual and collective rights for the Arab community, and/or on issues of social justice. Secondly, culture-based organizations operate in several spheres – theatre, music, reading, arts and sports, summer camps, and youth groups; thirdly, there are professional associations devoted to specific issues such as democratic planning and environmentalism; and fourthly, concerning land, housing, the possibility of common

Arab-Hebraic housing in the region, especially within the Jewish areas and cities like Carmiel and Upper Nazareth.

What is important to stress here is the innovation of networks concerning Israeli ways of life, which are in essence mono-national for almost everyone. Each community safeguards its boundaries and suggestions for integration are often perceived negatively. Despite their many differences, these new Arab-Hebraic intercultural ideas and operations offer represent an innovative approach that confronts the socio-political logic discourse that governs the planning and construction of space in Israel.

These new educational and civil initiatives reinforce support for rethinking the goals for the Galilee region. Nowadays, thinking about the Galilee in pure ethnic or conflictual terms misses an important aspect of the socio-political life, which is being effected by the joint efforts of Galilean Arabs and Jews. These new intercultural initiatives rather than mirroring the national spatiality are inverting the logic of the arrangements and consonances of the narratives, both the Arab and the Hebraic. By localizing the new practices from within distinct micro-spaces, they represent a subversive move, thanks to its intercultural basing logic, which contains a critical view of the present relations, and an alternative sociality, which interconnects, in a dialogical and habitual mode, Arab and Jewish neighbors (Svirsky, in press). As a result, socio-political boundaries in the region are being contested, and a partial inversion of inter-social relations is taking place. The new bilingual-interculturalism emphasizes the contradictions of separatist logic, its racial implications, its oppressive character and its bias. The discussion here is not about a total revolution and transformation to be occurred in Galilee at present, but about the understating that influence of this transformation even of the minority is much more far-reaching.

INTERCULTURALISM AND BILINGUAL EDUCATION: THEORY AND PRACTICE

This paper maneuvers between theory and practice. As a theoretical essay, it examines the two main fields – bilingual education and interculturalism, aiming at establishing a new model, based on a perspective that combines them both, to create new model of bilingual education as a practical interculturalism. In terms of the practical context, this paper discusses relevant frameworks of interculturalism and bilingual education in Israel, focusing on the Galilee region, and analyzing them according to the suggested perspective. This part refers, separately, to each field – interculturalism and bilingual education, before addressing the *combined perspective towards a new model*.

Interculturalism

Interculturalism differs greatly from its forerunner multiculturalism that emphasizes the differences and the distinctions in cultures. Interculturalism brings together content and subject in a face-to-face mode, mixes and re-elaborates them; while

multiculturalism divides and distinguishes between them. In certain aspects, therefore, interculturalism and multiculturalism are polar opposites. In contrast to liberal-multicultural policies of minority rights in vogue, interculturalism does not direct its policies to the recognition of weakened collective subjects seeking compensation for past injustices. Instead, interculturalism seeks to deterritorialize relationships between those weakened identities and the perpetrators of their misery by constructing dialogical communication (Svirsky, in press). Rather than promoting a subject-oriented governmental technology and redistributing political and legal advantages for minorities, interculturalism focuses on communication between groups and individuals, on improving of inter-groups relations, and on working within inter-ethnic settings. Primarily, while multiculturalism reinforces separation between ethno-cultural groups, interculturalism re-articulates the in-between space by making it relevant.

An intersection between three approaches that illustrate typologies of cross-cultural encounter, offered by Ram Adhar Mall (2000a, 2000b, 2000c), Fred Dallmayr (1996) and Tzvetan Todorov (1999), can serve us in setting afloat the intercultural logic. In *The Conquest of America*, Todorov presents three axes - the axiological, praxeological and the epistemic axes - to map the attitudes in the cultural encounter⁴ (Todorov, 1999). Firstly, at the axiological axis, we morally judge others, being they good or bad, inferior or superior to us. When we badly judge *the other*, Mall contends that it implies negation of the other; which according to Dallmayr (1996) can take different political forms, from ethnic cleansing and total annihilation, to conversion, assimilation and acculturation. Secondly, the praxeological axis determines our distance to the other's world: here we may identify ourselves with the other and adopt his values, or identify the other with my own values and enforce on him my perspective of the world; these extremes represent self-submission and conquest and between them, there can be apathy or neutralism. Moreover, in terms of physical and cultural distance, people tend to withdraw and reinforce their attachment to their "original" culture (Mall, 2000a). Nowadays, this approach has been endorsed by two apparently contradictory philosophies: the segregationist and the liberal-multicultural,⁵ both of which support cultural essentialism and separatism (Dallmayr, 1996). Thirdly, the epistemic axis teaches us regarding the distinct levels of knowledge concerning the other identity, vicissitudes, needs and cultural contents. Undoubtedly, for dialogical exchanges knowledge about the other is an ontological basic need, while ignorance generally supports bigotry.

Applying Todorov's axes, the axiological, praxeological and the epistemic, to evaluate the case of Jewish-Arab relationships in Israel, we may say that the way in which Jewish residents relate to their Arab neighbors is one of dependence and superiority,

4. Todorov uses this categories to analyze the attitudes of the Spanish conqueror towards the American indigenous nations during the first stages of Colonialism in South and Center America.

5. By Liberal-multicultural trends refer to minority-rights policies derived from the politics of identity and/or recognition as promoted within liberalism by writers such as Will Kymlicka, Charles Taylor, Chandran Kukathas, Joseph Raz, among others. They center on identity and recognition for weakened communities.

addressed the Arab as "other". For example, in the Galilee, contrary to the *vox populi* among the Galilean Jewish residents, according to which the Jewish settlement in the Galilee has brought more economic opportunities to local Arab-Palestinians (Yiftachel, 1997: 225), the patterns of economic "cooperation" between Jews and Arabs after almost three decades of Judaization are a reflection of what occurs in other parts of Israel. More Arab business make a living due to the increase in regional population, but in terms of employment, most Arab-Palestinians in the Galilee employed by Jewish employers are simple laborers: in Jewish-owned factories, as gardeners and cleaners in Jewish households, or construction workers in the different stages of building for the Jewish communities. At the level of commerce, the Arab town is viewed as a place in which merchandise can be purchased at lower prices, and the traditional "humus" lunch in Arab restaurants is perceived by Jewish visitors as their folklorist benevolent contribution to coexistence. In both the occupational and the commercial areas, the Arab is identified by most Jews through a form of subjection based on ethnic and capitalist norms in a hierarchical mode (Foucault, 1982, 1990; Moss, 1998; King, 2003). Most Jewish citizens of Israel view Arabs as inferior to themselves. Arab culture is often described as primitive, and the poverty in Arab towns is ascribed to their alleged inferior economic, professional and entrepreneurial faculties. Both cultural and physical distances separate the two communities: most Israeli-Jews do not speak Arabic and do not know much beyond the folklore level of Arabic culture and Christian or Muslim religious customs (Mor-Sommerfeld, 2004, 2005). In addition, most Israeli-Jews also refuse to know and learn the Palestinian narrative concerning the events that gave rise to the creation of the State of Israel (Pappe, 1999b).

An intercultural approach to the cross-cultural encounter focuses on dialogue and physical proximity as the governing logics and avoids placing any cultural specific center as a normative ruler⁶. It rejects "triumph" and "surrender" as modes of cultural communication, domination and/or absorption generated by cultural imperialism and self-annihilation (Dallmayr, 1996: xviii). Interculturalism is a medium not for including the 'other' within a given public space dominated by a hegemonic power, but for creating new shared public spaces based on inter-group relationships and mutual understanding. As Mall explains, an intercultural philosophy rejects any philosophy as *the* philosophy or any culture as *the* culture; therefore, it refuses to base human communication on hierarchies and rescues human experience and representations from cultural arrogance; it is repulsive to any kind of centrism and welcomes a pluralism of various cultural centers promoting dialogical communication between different traditions instead of leaving the cultural universe as a silent space of separated and immaculate entities. An intercultural philosophy comprehends colonial and other historical relations of oppression not by adopting compensatory policies to weakened subjects but by way of rethinking and

6. Here we have different versions of dialogue approaches: a modern-rationalist dialogue *a la* Habermas pursuing consensus (Dallmayr, 1996), or a Bakhtinian dialogical answerability (Nealon, 1998), or the performative dialogue founded on responsiveness as in Levinas (Nealon, 1998).

reconstructing the relations between cultural others in dialogical terms (Mall, 2000a, 2000c).

Anti-hegemonic shield

In practical terms, the driving force of interculturalism derives from the playing of overlapping and intersectionality. Here the feminist lesson can be of use⁷. Under intersectionality as the organizing logic of understanding of women's space of action, we transit from a pure to an impure characterization. In fact, the heterogeneous courses of social power lead to processes of subjectivation that produce non-pure subjects. These subjects are formed by a matrix of different identities that overlap and cross, notwithstanding the persistent intents of groups to normalize according to, and naturalize one exclusive set. This matrix is infused by the different connections that women perform within the different social sectors as *sections* of life. What is the lesson to be learned? Intersectionality can be put at work intentionally as the engine of intercultural relations. It is not just that people can search and find inward layers of identity due to their material multi-layered social connections to life, layers that are outlander to their "natural" identity and are normally concealed by society. By applying intersectionality, people can construct new material connections to socio-cultural practices. These connections bring to new layers of identity by habitually acting on different *sections* of society and their related identities. It is for this reason that we understand here interculturalism as a philosophy and a practice that endeavors to create new things through the means of interacting, merging and blending.

The Intercultural Practice: The Politics of Familiarity

If the politics of recognition is the materialization of the multicultural moment in Western societies, we adopt here the *politics of familiarity* as the landmark of interculturalism (Svirsky, in press). Familiarity defines relationships of affinity between *cultural others* as partners in common social practices. This affinity among the subjects emerges because of repeated and continuous engagement, which in turn challenges monocultural ways of life, bringing strangers through physical presence to an awareness of their cognitive, moral and aesthetic view of the world. This brings us to replace the normative command of recognition with the tangible act of becoming *familiar* with the other. The difference with multicultural mentalities is enormous: the physical encounter between persons and groups from distant and even conflicting communities adds a ground of affinity and knowledge that is beyond any normative claim for recognition. Replacing

7. During the past two decades, post-colonial non-whites feminist writers brought to the disarticulation of the coherence of the category of 'women' by introducing the consideration of the multiplicity of positionings with which women contend (Gedalof, 1998). This brought *intersectionality* for feminist theory, namely, the necessity for considering and elaborating conjunctly the distinct positionings of women – sexuality, gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, class, and culture – and their varied influences upon identity (Crenshaw, 2004; Anzualda, 1987; Yuval-Davis & Werbner, 1999).

recognition with familiarity increases political relevance for weakened communities through the affirmation of their voices in the inter-group field of invention.

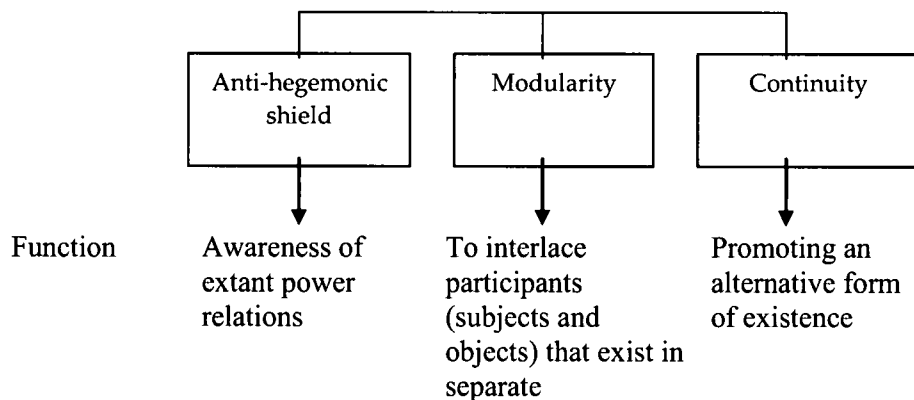
In a politics of familiarity, three main features describe a planned intercultural encounter: an *anti-hegemonic shield, modularity and continuity*. First, following Fraser's (1992) critique on the Habermasian concept of the public sphere, an anti-hegemonic mode or state of mind is needed in the encounter, in order for the intercultural encounter to alert and shields itself from the conditions and the contents of the hegemonic dominant canon. Since hegemonic discourses have the "natural" tendency to penetrate every corner of society, the design of the encounter must evaluate the adoption and incorporation of contents in a way so as not to reproduce asymmetries and oppression but to deterritorialize them.

Secondly, the intercultural encounter must be modular so that the cultural stage, the cultural contents and the cultural participants can engage in an interchangeable and crossed civil activity. The congruence of location, content and the profile of the participants forge a kinship activity that is carried out inside a given cultural community and by its members – a situation within which most of us are embedded in our ritual habits of mono-cultural life. However, when various identities, places and contents are inserted in a modular-intercultural encounter, unexpected cultural and social outcomes can be produced as an assemblage, a socio-cultural montage, as when, for example, Arab and Jewish pupils meet together daily in their common bilingual school. The question here is to what extent the intercultural encounter evades the segmented and ethnic-separatist character of life. As Varshney points out, the choice is between connecting "with others beyond their homes and talk about matters of public relevance" and "intra-connect themselves under the normative communal mandates" (Varshney, 2002: 44).

Thirdly, for the intercultural encounter to influence peoples' ways of life, it cannot be reduced to sporadic and temporary meetings. Continuity needs to be a major feature of the intercultural encounter to fabricate a continuous interaction based on a strategic rationality to produce a conventionality and a social habit.

In addition to the three main aspects of the intercultural practice of familiarity, we need to take into account possible weakening factors from the outside. For example, modularity can be unsatisfactory if the minority group's practices are not included in the intercultural practice; or if modularity is applied in regard to bilingualism or multilingualism, but restrictions on narrative contents narrow the practice. In our model, continuity must be supplemented by extending the scope of the practice, that is to say, the intercultural practice cannot be detached from other spheres. Thus, in schooling, creating a community of teachers and a community of parents needs to be part of the vision.

The following figure presents the components of the intercultural practice of familiarity.

Figure 1: Components of intercultural practice of familiarity

This model can be of analytical use to evaluate different forms of inter-group relations and intercultural dialogue. The three components of the intercultural practice of familiarity refer to three important aspects of all social practices – how society operates concerning relationships between groups; how the practice is organized; and the relevance of the practice to daily life. An attitude of awareness towards the hegemonic dominance equip the encounter with a realistic stand concerning power relations, especially between the collectivities involved in the encounter that generally are the antagonist majority-minority poles in the general society. Modularity refers to the way in which 'things are organized' within the social structure, namely the logic or the governmentality of the practice; and continuity assures to place the intercultural practice within the realm of participants every day life and not as a curiosity.

Bilingual Education: From Individual Bilingualism to Social Bilingualism

Essentially, bilingual education is a practical issue. Different theories have been proposed in order to promote this field and different models have been resulted from them. These models aim to promote bilingual education within educational frameworks; sometimes they create new ones. Bilingual education, however, is not just an educational issue. (Cummins, 1995; Baker, 2001; Amara, 2005; Mor-Sommerfeld, 2005). It refers to linguistic and sociolinguistic, to educational-pedagogical, and to cultural theories. It presents philosophical, social and socio-cultural approaches that aim at broadening knowledge, not just in terms of knowing another-new language, but also through broadening identities and crossing cultures. Theoretically and practically, bilingual education refers both to individual and to social aspects, maneuvering between (Mor-Sommerfeld, Azaiza & Hertz-Lazarowitz, in press)

Research into bilingual education considers individual and social aspects affecting settings and frameworks as well as outcomes. Recent discussion suggests a new

perspective, comparing individual and social bilingualism. According to this approach, *Individual bilingualism* can be defined as knowing more than one language, and behavior patterns of a culture other than one's own (Rodriguez, 1994), dealing with both cognition and emotion. "Bilingualism per se broadens the mind, increases knowledge, reinforces emotions, and creates opportunities, emotional and cognitive, for building a human entity that differs from a monolingual person" (Mor-Sommerfeld et al., in press). *Social bilingualism* is more complicated. Its demands are much higher, and the learning/instruction process requires special skills and curricula. A bilingual society is not simply one of monolinguals using different languages. It is more knowledgeable, more tolerant, and probably more involved, thinking and acting differently, and empathizing with "others" (Mor-Sommerfeld, 2005). These two terms can be distinguished through understanding and analyzing the complementary need of both individual and society, to become bilingual.

Two socio-political phenomena are examples of this connection. One is immigration; the other is that of majorities/minorities, and both exist in the socio-political context of Israeli society and its educational system. Obviously, immigrants must learn the language of their new home. This is not only an individual need. It is also in society's interest that newcomers learn the language. Sometimes there is even more than one language for the newcomer to study. In Israel, individual and social issues are very much involved. Israel is viewed as a country of immigrants, but it is also the country of Palestinian citizens, as a minority. If bilingual education challenges society in terms of tolerance and prejudice (Mor-Sommerfeld, 2004, 2005) then it is in Israeli society's interest to promote bilingual education.

BILINGUAL EDUCATION IN ISRAEL: CHALLENGING THE REALITY

Four successful Arabic-Hebrew bilingual schools are currently operating in Israel. In 1984, a bilingual/bi-national school was set up at Neveh Shalom/Wahat al-Salaam (*Oasis of Peace*), a village founded jointly by Israeli Jews and Palestinian citizens of Israel to prove that the two peoples can live together peacefully. In 1998, a second school opened in the Galilee, and a year later, third opened in Jerusalem. In 2004 a fourth – Arabic-Hebrew school opened in Wadi Ara. There has been discussion about opening additional bilingual schools in other parts of Israel.

All these schools are recognized by the Ministry of Education and are part of the educational system, even though they are the result of private and limited enterprises. These new frameworks aim at challenging and changing the status quo of segregation and inequality, and at creating a common ground where children and adults can meet and learn together. It suggests establishing a *shared* alternative curriculum based on the knowledge, experiences, languages and cultures of both communities.

The schools have approximately equal numbers of Arabic and Hebrew L1 children, including teachers of and in both languages, cultures and narratives. Two of the schools originally based their pedagogy on a cultural-cognitive model for bilingual

education (Mor-Sommerfeld, 2005). According to this model, during the early years, most lessons are given by two teachers, one Arabic L1 and the other Hebrew L1, each speaking and teaching in her/his first language. Bilingual education in these schools is not just about languages, but also about other people's history and culture (Amara, 2005).

The issue of Hebrew-Arabic bilingual schools is complex, and several studies on them have been conducted in recent years (e.g. Amara, 2005; Bekerman, 2003, 2004; Bekerman & Shhadi, 2003; Bekerman & Horenczyk, 2004; Feuerverger, 2001; Mor-Sommerfeld, 2005). These studies indicate that there is a great willingness to deal with the ethno-national conflict and to talk, listen and study the "past", Palestinian and Israeli narratives alike. At the same time, it is clear that the schools offer alternatives by presenting another, shared way of living and studying. On the other hand, it also seems that, so far, these bilingual schools have not approached the ongoing political conflict in terms of the future, or influenced the communities around them. In other words, the educational frameworks show readiness to deal with the past complexities of the national Arab-Palestinian and Jewish-Zionist conflict. Currently, studying together is the far-reaching practice that they offer, but it seems that deducing conclusions for the future is still not on their agenda. Since living, studying and teaching together are thriving, the question is how can they influence their surroundings, and whether these schools are really practical interculturalism centers.

The Galilee School: The Practice of Bilingual Education

In the *Galilee* bilingual school, Hebrew L1 and Arabic L1 speakers live and work together. In the spring of 1998, a group of parents of young children, Israeli-Jewish Hebrew speakers and Palestinian citizens of Israel, Arabic speakers, all living in the Galilee, gathered to discuss the possibility of opening a bilingual class in the region. The initiators were representatives of the Hand-in-Hand NGO that had received a welcome invitation by the authorities – the Ministry of Education and the local Arabic and Hebraic municipalities to open a bilingual school.

The idea of setting up a bilingual school integrating both populations was initially a private enterprise. However, all the authorities concerned supported the concept from the outset. The school opened with one class – first grade. Each year, new children joined the school in a new first grade. The oldest pupils, the first group, are now in eighth grade, and in four years, they will be the school's first graduates.

Bilingual education is about learning and constructing knowledge, and this needs its own pedagogy (Mor-Sommerfeld, 2005). The bilingual pedagogy of the Galilee school is based on the following elements, principles and procedures:

- approximately equal numbers of Arabic and Hebrew L1 pupils in each class; two home room teachers – Arabic L1 and Hebrew L1 – share educational tasks, responsibilities and teaching in each class; the teachers undergo special training;

- each teacher speaks to the children in her/his first language; the two languages are taught and learnt together, but there is no translation from one language to the other; the curriculum is subject-based/subject-derived;
- children learn to read and write in both languages from the first day and thus develop bi-literacy; equal emphasis is placed on the narratives of both cultures; the curriculum is based on a critical pedagogy that emphasizes literacy development in both languages.

The basic principles of the model also include equality, volunteering and cooperation among teachers (Amara, 2005; Mor-Sommerfeld, 2005).

Despite the inequalities between the two languages outside the school, the Galilee School's policy insists on equal numbers of pupils from both backgrounds and languages. Obviously, teaching in a bilingual school is a matter of choice. Although they have all chosen to work at this school, most of the teachers, especially the Hebrew teachers, have had no previous personal or professional contact with teachers from the other culture, even though they all live in the same district. Furthermore, the Hebrew teachers do not usually speak Arabic, and have little knowledge about Arab culture. Each class in the Galilee School is directed by two teachers who share in the teaching and have responsibility for the children's needs. Each teacher speaks in her/his mother tongue, working with all the children as their L1 and their L2 teacher. Together they plan the school year, preparing the subjects to teach, and constructing and coordinating the day-by-day instruction.

This school insists on a *no translation* pedagogy (Mor-Sommerfeld, 2005). This means that the teachers share the instruction by complementing each other, each in her/his first language. In this situation all the children are either L1 or L2 listeners at the same time. The concept of no translation is based on the idea that it is pointless for an L2 child to make any effort to understand his/her L2, if s/he knows that in a couple of minutes s/he will hear what was not understood in a language s/he understands pretty well. Such of instruction demands much preparation, mutual trust and the ability to work with others, to cooperate.

Children entering the school speak either Hebrew or Arabic. By the end of the year, most of them understand the second language and almost all of them can read and write in both languages. How does this happen? Partly because of the teachers (as discussed earlier), and partly because of the language-learning system. *No translation* is one aspect. *Literacy development* is another. Studying literacy in two different scripts, though both Arabic and Hebrew are written from right to left, is one of the most fascinating aspects of the learning process. The children learn both written languages from the beginning, which gives rise to a unique situation. Unlike developing a first language, children in this bilingual school acquire written language in parallel to the spoken, and the written language then acts as a lever that activates the entire learning process. In this process, the children rely on knowledge of the written language in order to develop the spoken one until they become bilingual⁸.

The curriculum is based on *subject matter*. This means that the children study in Arabic and in Hebrew, within and around content, and not just as the subject itself. All of

this influences learning and teaching methods, and choosing and deciding what subjects to teach. Some subjects focus more on Arabic, some on Hebrew. The curricula are then developed spirally, combining the languages (and their texts) with the subjects (and their contexts). This bilingual pedagogy derives from *critical pedagogy* (Freire, 1970, 1993) and *critical literacy* approaches (Mor-Sommerfeld, 2004), offering alternative modes of thought and behavior. Universal humanistic values of equality and mutual respect become not just slogans to hang on walls, but a way of education and life. Finally, it is clear that the socio-historical narrative of both populations is crucial to the school curriculum. In fact, this school is the only one in the area where both narratives are taught and learnt to the same extent. This is not just a matter of bridging between people and cultures or societies and languages. This is a matter of sharing and building a community based on common interests and mutual relationships.

Another important principle or feature of the Galilee School is its commitment among teachers and parents to create a larger Arab-Hebraic bilingual community around the school. As explained earlier, the school offers different activities for teachers and staff only, for parents only, and for all sectors of the school together. For example, workshops and excursions concerning aspects of the socio-political and national conflict take place during the year; courses in Arabic for Hebraic parents; festivities such as the Olive festival, and open lectures, theatre and cinema for the surrounding communities, and so on.

There still are issues that are problematic. Hebrew, for example, is still much more evident than Arabic. All Arab teachers, parents and visitors speak Hebrew. The opposite is rarely the case. The model for the children is thus that adults speak Hebrew, but not necessarily Arabic, and this, obviously will not encourage young children to communicate in Arabic. Hence, in order to achieve "equal" knowledge in both languages, there is a need for more use of Arabic.

Bilingual education aims at challenging and changing the reality of segregation by creating a common ground where children and adults can meet and learn together. It proposes a shared curriculum based on the knowledge, experiences, languages and cultures of both communities. Frameworks of bilingual education can help us to cross borders, to build a shared discourse for new relationships. Considering the Galilee School as a growing learning-community consists of students and their parents, teachers and principals, and other professional staff, we contend that bilingual education influences both the individual and the community, and thus the near geographical society. Shared interests and frameworks of bilingual education develop mutual positive attitudes to others and to their language, culture and history. Bilingualism and bilingual education are seen not just in terms of cognitive and linguistic abilities, but also as a source of broader viewpoints, humanistic values and universal beliefs. It seems that a bilingual society can

8. One of the most remarkable aspects concerns children with learning difficulties. It seems that children exposed to two different scripts have no difficulties. On the contrary, another window, a new pathway to literacy is opened, and this applies equally both first languages.

never be fully democratic if it separates communities and their languages, and thus has prepared the ground for a new understanding of bilingual education as practical interculturalism.

BILINGUAL EDUCATION AS PRACTICAL INTERCULTURALISM: A MODEL

Intercultural Education Worldwide

As Cushner (1998) explains, "one major goal of intercultural education has been to help young people and teachers not only understand the diversity of thought, expression, belief, and practice of those who are different from themselves, but also to guide development so individuals are better skilled at *living* and *working* effectively with others" (p. 4). Since intercultural education (IE) is differently understood and practiced (Cushner, 1998; Coulby et al., 1997; Woodrow et al., 1997), a short survey of the ways in which intercultural education can be interpreted will help us to define our own model.

According to Taylor (1997), the Council of Europe has adopted a 'vertical' approach to intercultural education: "They are concerned with teaching history and European cultural heritage, language tuition and linguistic skills, school links and exchanges, and with teacher training" (p. 59). The components of this approach include social variations within a foreign cultural system; relationships between majority and minority languages; bilingual education; exchange projects of students and teachers to improve verbal and non-verbal communication with people from different cultures; interdependence of European and other cultures; legitimacy of different views; respect for other opinions and truths, and encouragement of critical thinking (Taylor, 1997; Rocha-Trindade & Sobral-Mendes, 1997). "In the context of formal education in the Council of Europe, intercultural education is referred to as a means of preparing young people for life in the highly segmented, multifaceted and multilingual society which seems to be developing in Europe. They are encouraged better to understand different concepts of culture and the fact that there are many layers of culture, that these layers overlap, and that culture is permanently changing" (ibid). For example, the politics of intercultural education in the Netherlands since 1979 "have specific meaning not only for immigrant students from minorities, but also for the dominant groups in the school system" (Hooghoff & Delnoy, 1998: 110). Although the intention has been to spread intercultural education beyond the classroom to parents, teaching staff and representative bodies in the school, it is still mainly a cognitive-oriented program. Incorporated into the educational system to promote intercultural education were to provide basic material on the cultural diversity of Dutch society and an anti-discrimination policy that includes anti-racist education (Hooghoff & Delnoy, 1998). In France, there is no intercultural education. The logic of assimilation and for forging unity through education aims at a republican society "to make all the children the same" (Hinton, 1997: 107). Thus, in France, education for cultural diversity is clearly non-ethnic and non-linguistic.

In Latin-America, intercultural education "has become increasingly associated with a new approach to education for the indigenous peoples who live throughout Latin-America...most notably in Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia, Mexico, Guatemala and Venezuela" (Aikman, 1997: 79). This new approach, has been developed over the last twenty years as a critical response to the policies of cultural assimilation promoted by education. Its aim was "to spread of western-style schooling in the Spanish language with the aim of what was initially termed 'civilizing' and more recently 'modernizing' indigenous peoples so that they could play a role in the development and progress of the nation" (Aikman, 1997: 79).

As Aikman (1997) explains, "intercultural bilingual education (IBE) in Latin-America is generally recognized as a form of education for the indigenous peoples of their respective countries"... "Indigenous peoples have denounced the monocultural and monolingual educations provided by the states as ethnocidal and have been increasingly campaigning for a fundamental reconceptualization of education for indigenous peoples as part of a process of cultural decolonization and recognition of rights to self-determination" (p. 80-1). A central feature of this shift is bilingual education, which in Latin-America is articulated as means for both cultural recognition and integration: "...some indigenous peoples articulate their aspirations for intercultural bilingual education as providing them with useful knowledge with which to defend their interests vis-à-vis the wider encroaching society and also as means of revitalizing and strengthening their indigenous culture" (Aikman, 1997: 80-81).

In Canada, there are four main conflicts or socio-political issues, namely: between the English and the French communities; between the larger population and the First-Nation Peoples (the indigenous peoples); the internal arrangements in Quebec between the different local minorities; and the relationship between the Canadian confederation and immigrant minorities from the Middle East, the Far East, the Caribbean, and Latin-America (Fowler, 1998). Canada is perceived as a leader in the promotion of multicultural policies, and Canadian researchers like Jim Cummins, Will Kymlicka, Charles Taylor, and James Tully have made an enormous contribution to multicultural literature. Since the 1970s, "the development of multiculturalism in Canada encompasses three major components...: cultural integration, ethnic or heritage preservation, and anti-racism" (Fowler, 1998: 308). Within the educational system, "each provincial and territorial school system attempted to deal with problems inherent in cultural and linguistic diversity, generally attempting to provide equality of opportunity for all students, combat racism, and promote positive interaction among cultural groups...use of vernacular languages is becoming more prevalent, especially in the primary grades. Nonetheless, development of fluency in the dominant language remains a primary goal...Emphasis on the preservation of heritage languages has been accompanied by curricular emphasis on heritage cultures. Teaching in aboriginal languages has been promoted, in the Prairie Provinces and in the Northwest Territories (Fowler, 1998: 312-4). The concepts of intercultural education and interculturalism are also present to a limited extent in Quebec, where "intercultural education is used instead of multicultural education to explicitly signal that the province's

commitment to inclusivity and equity is located within the structures of a Francophone society" (Mallea and Young, 1997: 92).

Aotearoa/New Zealand has undergone significant changes since the 1970s, from assimilationist educational policies to a more inclusive and bicultural approach (Bishop and Glynn, 1998; Prendergast, 1997). The tradition implemented in Maori education was inspired by the Treaty of Waitangi⁹, a bicultural education with emphasis on English. This tradition "has come to be questioned by Maori educationalists today" (Prendergast, 1997: 151), opening the way to various Maoris initiatives. However, notwithstanding New Zealand's multicultural moment, "the dominance of monoculturalism and monolingualism is so pervasive in New Zealand" (Bishop and Glynn, 1998: 40), that "it is still possible for *pakeha*¹⁰ children to leave school with little knowledge of Maori language or any degree of understanding of the cultural traditions of their communities" (Prendergast, 1997: 158).

Summing-up the cases presented above one can say that in Latin-America, parts of the Canadian educational system, and New Zealand, the interculturalism has materialized mainly as a multicultural, minority-rights approach, in which priority is given to the promotion of indigenous/aboriginal groups' educational rights. Within this framework, the language/s of the weakened communities claim for cultural and political relevance through different forms of autonomy in education in parallel with varied degrees of learning of the language and culture of the minorities within dominant-culture' schools, private and public. What is pursued here is principally self-control of inner resources for minorities and promoting awareness within the majority/dominant culture regarding historical oppression and the need of recognition. The second approach – present in parts of Europe – focuses around learning of multicultural contents (sometimes including learning of minorities' languages) and promoting skills for intercultural communication. Within this approach, intercultural exchanges between students and teachers groups are encouraged not as a way of life, but as one-time experimentation. The last approach, present in part of the Canadian educational system (in the Quebecois province) represents a combined effort to recognize cultural diversity but restricting it to the borderlines of the dominant cultural wraparound. In addition, there are countries such as France that do not invest almost any effort to promote intercultural education of any sort although their societies are clearly multicultural, and permeated with ethnic conflicts.

We learn that IE adopt perspectives that emphasize different approaches and contents, which can be grouped in three categories: first, a multicultural oriented education based on promoting cultural recognition of minority cultures; second, cognitive approaches that focuses on promoting a 'right' knowledge of how to interculturally

9. Although the Treaty was signed in 1840 by the chiefs of the different Maori tribal groups and Governor Hobson on behalf of the British Crown, and it guarantees the rights of Maori people in terms of estates and cultural treasures including Maori language, in 1877 a monocultural educational system was established through legislation (Prendergast, 1997, p. 150-1). The Treaty of Waitangi is considered the founder action of the nation of New Zealand.

10. "Pakeha New Zealanders are those of European descent; the term *tauiwi* is now more generally used to describe people of non-Maori descent" (Prendergast, 1997, p. 151).

communicate and interconnect; and third, approaches that jointly with a tolerant perspective, are still immersed in some sort of an assimilationist-liberal educational policy. Clearly, intercultural education tolerates a varied range of definitions and practices still, the 'face-to-face' element – which was presented by the authors as an umbilical engine of what we understand bilingual-intercultural education need to be, is not present internationally as a founding logic.

Back to Galilee School: Promoting Intercultural Bilingualism

Since its inauguration, the Galilee School has been functioning within the geopolitical boundaries of the Misgav Regional Council, the area that the Hebraic pupils come from. This can counteract the intercultural effort and must be assessed.

As we have already discussed, bilingual education in the Galilee School is organized through the basic principles, which are *equality, teacher voluntarism and teacher cooperation, no-translation, literacy in two languages, subject matter, critical pedagogy and literacy, the two- narratives principle, and the community principle*. The question is to what extent these principles correspond to the components of the theory of intercultural practice of familiarity; namely, the need of an anti-hegemonic shield, modularity and continuity. This correspondence is addressed in the following table:

Figure 2: Intercultural familiarity of the Galilee Bilingual School

<i>Aspects of the intercultural practice of familiarity</i>	Anti-hegemonic shield	Modularity	Continuity
<i>"Galilee" bilingual school' features and principles</i>	-The logic of equality -The two narratives principle -no translation principle -Teacher cooperation	-Bi-nationalism -Teacher cooperation -Bilingualism: literacy in two languages -subject matter -critical pedagogy and literacy	-learning and teaching together -the community principle

Concerning the need of anti-hegemonic shield, we sustain that four principles fill the requirement. First, in principle, equality runs against asymmetries in the general public space outside school, and indeed the equality formula within school creates circumstances and power sharing that it is absent as a leading logic in Israel. But, rigorous mathematical

equality is not necessarily a proper tool for combating hegemonic dominance since in order to balance wide social inequality historically constructed, we need more than equating students and narrative contents. Dominant discourses tend to penetrate capillary its enunciations and install itself in every social corner and node, and direct thought and behavior: this is the material meaning of social power. Hegemonic components always have a favorable position in the struggle for normativity. This is principally the case with language: in the Galilee School, no matter equal numbers in classroom, staff and parents-forums, Arab mates tend to express themselves verbally in Hebrew during intercultural encounters. For this reason, an educational formula that not just equalize subjects and contents but differentiate in order to give a better chance to the non-dominant language and culture can produce better achievements concerning use and relevance of Arabic. This may be materialized through small deviations from equality in the number of students, in L2 learning and even in subject-matter.

The principle of 'two narratives' clearly bypasses the dominance of the Zionist narrative and the absence of the Palestinian narrative within the Israeli system of education. Within classroom, this means learning of historical events and present politics from a non-hegemonic stance giving place and voice to the Palestinian perspective. The 'no translation' principle creates formal circumstances that require from the learner real efforts to connect with the new language by its means and conditions. 'Teacher cooperation' breaks with the segregate pattern of teaching in Israel by assembling together two teachers, one Arab and one Hebraic that need to cooperate in every educational area of schooling.

Concerning modularity, bi-nationalism (the mix of Arab and Hebraic students, staff and parents), teacher cooperation, bilingualism, subject matter, and critical pedagogy and literacy, function together as interchangeably elements to form an intercultural puzzle of subjects and contents. Still, the missing element here is the stage: the fact that the school operates within the boundaries of the Misgav Regional recreates the preferential role of the Jewish hegemonic space which for minority participants is an unpleasant fact of life. Therefore, to break-down preferability and superiority, an intercultural fabric need to act from within the minority-space. Another problem concerning modularity refers to student's transportation, which in Galilee School remains segregated: Arab and Hebraic students reach school every morning using different school-buses. Geographical and municipalities' issues have lead to this kind of arrangement, which nonetheless does not contribute to the overall enterprise¹¹.

Concerning continuity, two fundamental practices are established: the ongoing practice of intercultural bilingual education, and the practice of enlarging the scope and extent of the school-community to include teachers, staff and parents - as means to consolidate intercultural practices. The questions that arise here is the extent to which the

11. The Arab-Hebraic bilingual school at the center of the country has placed itself within the Arab town of Kafr-Qara, while the Arab-Hebraic bilingual school in Jerusalem transports its Arab and Hebraic students conjointly.

effort to enlarge the school-community is successful in terms of parents involvement, after-school inter-ethnic children and teachers relations and participation in school events; whether the school will succeed in enrolling enough students every year from the two communities; and primarily, to what extent do people in the region see Galilee School as an educational alternative for children and for families.

In summary, it may be said that Galilee School practices bilingualism through intercultural familiarity. It is encounter-oriented, includes cognitive programs, and ultimately challenges and alters the logic of segregation. Still, as we have seen, there are areas and issues in which further problematization and experimentation is needed in order to deepen the scope, relevance and the effect of bilingualism, both as language and as culture.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper discusses bilingual education and interculturalism in Israel, examining Galilee Bilingual School as a case study for considering it as a matter of practical interculturalism. The paper suggests a new perspective for understanding social changes in the regime, defining social bilingualism as a crucial approach for analyzing these changes.

Social-bilingualism is an intercultural phenomenon, promoted intentionally to engage differently with groups-conflict, to induce production and conjunction rather than repetition and disjunction. Thus, the implementation of intercultural-bilingual practices encourages multiplicity. This puts no extra emphasis on one culture, nor does it draw boundaries between the different cultures presented. Rather, what is motivated, registered and played is the constant interaction and communication, with equal emphasis on groups' needs, pasts and expectations. For this reason, interculturalism is about creating new cultures, identities and planes of action with existing ones, and therefore is future-oriented. If monoculturalism homogenizes identity, and culture, and multiculturalism celebrate cultural differences and separate them, interculturalism connects static identities and cultures to forge a commonality. In this respect, not just cognitive but also symbolic, emotional and practical civil aspects are involved in the dynamics of bilingual practice.

The Arab-Hebraic cooperation in the Galilee offers a potential alternative *modus vivendi* to closed community living. Multiplying and diversifying the socio-political objects and subjects of desire through an intensification of a *politics of familiarity*, it may alleviate the segregative form of socio-political affiliation, and disturb dichotomies of 'them' and 'us'. This proliferation broaden the number of identities, or positions or matrices of action-identification, as much "as there are individuals", and create a socio-political field of many identities. A field of many identities instead of a generally essentially defined and restricted multi-cultural space promoted by a politics of identity may lead to an enfeebling of the category itself and even to a negation of it.

The issue of *bilingual education* has occupied researchers, policymakers, and educators for some decades, and a variety of models dealing with this issue have been created. Yet the attitude towards the issue is ambiguous. Most societies are still wary of

bilingual education instead of welcoming it. Bilingualism in general and bilingual education in particular obviously override and break down barriers of time, space, and culture, extending and broadening one's original identity through vicarious experience and by the incorporation and integration of somebody else's hearth and ethos (Mor-Sommerfeld, 2005). However, it can be seen as a threat, and that is perhaps why government attitudes are so ambivalent about it. Because language learning is a means of transmitting a culture to our children (and others), it is given priority in education. However, the questions remain. What language? Which culture? For whom? Language is not merely a linguistic concern. Rather, it is an issue that has socio-cultural and political aspects; and in areas of conflict those terms are expanded and become even more complex. Language in general and language learning in particular can then become a crucial *motive* for both the educational system and the whole of society. Bilingual education can be the key, not just for learning or knowing another language, but also for changing our views and perceptions of others; and thus it becomes an intercultural practice for itself.

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