

**THE TREND FOR ENGLISH FOR YOUNG LEARNERS (EYL)
IN GRADES 1 AND 2 IN ISRAEL:
A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS**

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This PhD thesis is dedicated to my unique and beloved parents Lina and Avraham Bassan. As pivotal figures in my life their constant devotion and support have given me the confidence and have made it possible for me to write and complete this work. I love them dearly.

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The trend for English for Young Learners (EYL) in Grades 1 and 2 in Israel: Critical Discourse Analysis

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Abstract

The English language enjoys a growing status in Israeli society (Spolsky & Shohamy, 1999; Stavans & Narkiss, 2001, 2003). This has resulted in a steady growth in teaching of English for young learners (EYL) in schools and in an official recommendation for teaching EYL in Grades 1 and 2 nationwide. This educational initiative seems a socio-cultural phenomenon, shaped by external forces of globalisation and socio-political trends (Crystal, 1997, 2003; Pennycook, 1994; Graddol, 2006) affecting and reflecting people's identities (Norton, 1997, 2000; Norton Peirce, 1995), social practices and ideologies.

Critical discourse analysis is used as the theoretical framework and analytical tool (Gee 1999, 2005) for the examination and analysis of discourses mobilised by parents, teachers, position-holders and pupils, for the ways in which they enact their identity ('ways of being') and construe the hybrid Discourse of EYL. Analysis of 33 in-depth semi-structured interviews and samples of published texts reveal a range of commonsense dominant Discourses such as the 'Discourse of consumerism', the Discourse of the 'good, Jewish/Israeli parents' and the 'Discourse of Americanisation and internationalisation' to which the actors involved wish to belong.

Findings illuminate that the forces behind the promotion of EYL seem to be driven by social, ideological and political concerns rather than pedagogical ones. The Discourse of EYL (and the D/discourses from which it is construed) seems to have a regulating effect on social, educational decisions, schools' policy and classroom practices, and the distribution of goods, shaping people's everyday life. There is evidence for the possibility that people in Israel (parents in particular) project themselves, with hopes and desire, into an idealised, abstract, global world of 'knowing English' in which EYL plays a major part. Findings highlight the ways in which the attitude of Jews in Israel towards learning languages is a marker of their identity.

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Glossary of Terms

CDA- Critical discourse analysis

CL – Critical Linguistics

CP – Critical Period

CPH – Critical Period Hypothesis

CT – Critical Theory

DM – Discourse Models

DT – Discourse Theory

EFL - English as a Foreign Language

EGL – English as a Global Language

EIL – English as an International Language

ELF – English as a Lingua Franca

ESL English as a Second Language

EYL – English for Young Learners

FLA – Foreign Language Acquisition

GEMS – Growth, Efficiency and Measurement Tests

SL – Second Language

SLA – Second Language Acquisition

TYTB – The Younger The Better

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 The growing status of English

The English language enjoys a growing status in the Israeli society. Spolsky & Shohamy (1999) state that English is: “The principal international language desired, it seems, by all, used by many, and taught as the first foreign language throughout the educational system” (p. 29). Indeed, there is an increased growth in the status, use and demand for English in Israel. Over the years, English has become a symbol of social status and knowledge of English is perceived as a valuable asset, associated with education, prestige and economic welfare (Ben-Rafael, 1994). The official languages in Israel are Hebrew and Arabic; however, although English is not one of the official languages, it is significantly more prevalent than Arabic (Donista-Schmidt, 2004). This is clearly evident in everyday life as well as in the local linguistic landscape (street signs and posters), media and advertisements, information and other local services.

The significant role English plays in Israel is part of globalisation processes whereby English has become the world’s most used and most common language. “English is spoken by more people (as first, second, or foreign language) than any other language and is considered by more countries as a desirable lingua franca than any other language.” (Crystal, 2001: 54)

In this era of rapid globalisation, English has become the world's global language. English has assumed the role of the leading language in current international trade, computer technology and universal communication. As such, the English language has been actively promoted by policy-makers and educators in many countries around the world striving to achieve modernisation and internationalisation (Nunan, 2003; Pennycook, 1994; Phillipson, 1992; Tollefson, 1995, 2002).

The past few decades have produced extensive literature on the widespread use of English and the dominant role it plays in many non-English speaking countries. Wide-

ranging studies have shown that the role of English as a global Language (EGL) is not an uncontroversial issue. Studies range from proponents of EGL, who speak of possible advantages of a *lingua franca* (Cameron, D., 1999, 2002; Crystal, 2001; Tollefson, 1995, 2002) to opponents thereof, who warn against the hegemony of English and linguistic imperialism (Pennycook, 1994; Phillipson, 1992; Skutnabb-Kangas, 1999). (See chapter 3 of this study.)

The spread of EGL has generated debates on the meaning, significance and implications of the power of English in language learning, language teaching and language use (Pennycook, 1994; Phillipson, 1992; Tollefson, 1995; Fairclough, 1992a). Dominant discourses point in the direction that the growing spread of English has become an intricate part of the political, educational, social and economic lives of people in many countries in the world (Cameron, D., 2002; Crystal 2000, 2001; Graddol, 1998, 2006; Tollefson, 2002). As such, it is closely linked to questions of human behaviour and identity.

Pennycook (2000) holds a critical perspective on the global spread of English and argues: “As Robert Phillipson (1992) and I, (Pennycook), have argued, this global spread of English is bound up with many cultural, economic, and political forces” (p. 97). Pennycook (2000) calls for developing “a means of dealing with questions of power and English, since the use of English in many contexts is always tied up to questions of power” (p. 1). (See chapter 3).

1.1.1. The growing interest in English for young learners (EYL)

The status of English as a global language is tied up with the evidently growing interest in English for Young Learners (EYL), aged 5-12, and the demand for early English Foreign Language (EFL) or English as a second language (ESL) programmes in many countries around the world (Brewster *et al.*, 2002; Graddol, 2006; Jung & Norton, 2002; Moon & Nikolov, 2000; Nikolov, 2002; Nikolov and Djigunović, 2006). It can be argued that one of the consequences of the global spread of English is the growing tendency to introduce English language learning to young children (see section 1.3).

Studies (Moon & Nikolov, 2000; Nikolov, 2002) have shown that many countries have recently taken steps to introduce the teaching of English to pupils in their schools at an earlier age or grade level than in the past. This trend is noticed in foreign language education circles in many countries around the world (Nikolov and Djigunović, 2006).

In a survey of teaching English to young children (Internet, 2004) it was argued that people in the field of education all over the world have recognised the need for EYL and are making efforts to promote it. Furthermore, many countries in East Asia, Japan and China in particular, have started teaching English in primary schools, mainly because they see English as an international tool which they can use with the rest of the world (Graddol & Meinhof, 1999). In countries where EYL within the school system is not prevalent, many parents enrol their children into private English schools. This situation is often a cause for competition between the children and also creates pressure on the school system to introduce EYL in schools.

The following quote is one example which highlights the increasing demand for EYL in many countries around the world:

“If English truly has the role of a global language, governments are keen to encourage their citizens to have English language competence for their country’s economic benefit. Pressure to introduce early English learning has often come from parents who strongly believe that having English as a tool will benefit their children greatly by giving them more opportunities to gain economic, cultural or educational advantages. Until recently, however, English language learning in many countries did not begin until secondary school. This brings us to the next trend, the lowering of the age at which children learn a foreign language.”
(Brewster *et al.*, 2002:1)

Thus, the growing popularity of EYL worldwide is one of the outcomes of the dominant role English assumes in modern societies. Furthermore, it appears that the increasing steps taken for the teaching of EYL in many countries are partly due to the manifestations of government policy. Tollefson (1989, cited in: Jung & Norton, 2002) argues:

“In many non-English speaking countries, learners' acquisition of English can be profoundly affected by a government's policy toward the role of English in the society and also by the procedure for implementing those decisions in its educational systems" (pp. 245-246).

Similarly, Jung and Norton (2002) state:

“A government's wish to equip its citizens with improved English proficiency prompts many non-English speaking countries to introduce English education at an early age” (p. 245).

However, Rixon (1999) maintains that:

“In many countries, decisions about the appropriateness of introducing English to Young Learners often seem to be made at a level which is more likely to be driven by political, economic and social ambitions, and may not involve deep consideration either of the research on language learning capacities at different ages, or of optimum conditions for learning” (p. vi).

Furthermore, increasing numbers of publications on international perspectives of teaching English to young learners (Moon & Nikolov, 2000; Nikolov, 2002) provide evidence of the growing demand for EYL in Europe. Particular attention is given to EYL initiatives, innovative programmes, curriculum design and implementation thereof. Publications of resource materials for teachers of EYL (Cameron, L., 2001; Nikolov, 2002; Rixon, 1999) and the proliferation of many specialised course books for young learners further support the growing popularity EYL enjoys in many non-English speaking countries.

1.1.2. The growing interest in EYL in Israel

Israel wants to consider itself part of the Western world and, as such, has not been exempt from the diffusion of English as a global language (Fishman *et al.*, 1977). “The status of English in Israel is a reflection of a socio-cultural development characterised by a convergence toward Western norms and models” (Ben-Rafael, 1994:181).

In addition to global forces, strong forces of internal pressure for EYL, created mainly by the three p's: parents, principals and politicians, have over the years, resulted in many schools introducing English in grades 1 and 2. For example, in the city of Tel Aviv, 90 percent of the 60 elementary schools have English in grade 2 and over 60 percent have English in grade 1 (Ministry of Education, 2006). Six other cities bordering Tel Aviv quote similar percentages. A comprehensive overview of the Israeli socio-linguistic context is provided in chapter 2. However, the following observations will help in understanding the current situation.

In recent years, due to an economic recession, Israel has experienced large budget cutbacks in education. Examination results nationwide have deteriorated significantly and in spite of the lowering of the age for beginning to learn English in schools, students do not achieve the level of English proficiency required for the universities (Spolsky & Shohamy, 1999). Yet, demand for EYL in schools keeps growing and the Ministry of Education has recently launched a new programme formally promoting the teaching of EYL in grades 1 and 2 nationwide (see chapter 2).

1.2. Statement of the problem

The emerging picture is that the growing demand for EYL is interconnected in complex ways with prevailing socio-cultural, socio-political forces. This raises doubts as to whether the topic of EYL in grades 1 and 2 in Israel can be investigated from a pedagogical perspective of teaching and learning only, or rather from a critical socio-linguistic perspective. If the latter, then the questions to be considered pertain to EYL and issues of power, hegemony, ideologies and the ways that economy, discourse, and other social forces interact and construct the social system.

Investigating the topic from a critical, socio-linguistic perspective calls for a study seeking to understand how the promotion of EYL is interconnected with larger economic and political interests on the one hand, and how it is contextually located on the other. In other words, there is a need to develop a localised understanding of the EYL phenomenon in Israel and the implications thereof for teaching, learning and using

English, while bearing in mind the broader social, cultural, political and ideological context.

Thus, it has become evident to me that the topic of EYL in Israel is not simply a pedagogical concern but rather a socio-cultural phenomenon, shaped by external forces of globalisation and socio-political trends (Crystal, 2003; Nunan, 2003; Pennycook, 1994, 2000). As such, the EYL phenomenon does not only affect classroom practices but also affects the ways people negotiate their identities (Norton, 1997, 2000; Norton Peirce, 1995), shapes and is shaped by social and cultural perceptions, social practices, beliefs and ideologies.

Indeed, the issue of EYL, along with the EYL in grades 1 and 2 innovation, has developed into a social discussion or Conversation with capital 'C' (Gee, 2005, see chapter 2 and chapter 6) affecting classroom and everyday social practices. School-teachers, parents, pupils, position-holders and people in general have developed opinions on the topic, thus becoming active participants in this 'Conversation'.

On a personal level, in my capacity as a teacher educator and an English teachers' counsellor in the Ministry of Education, I have been developing and teaching courses in EYL as well as observing English lessons in grade 1 and 2 classes. At the same time, I have encountered controversial reactions ranging from over-enthusiasm on the one hand, disagreements, ambivalence and resistance on the other. Additional outcomes include unfair distribution of social and financial resources, unjust allocation of hours and lack of qualified teachers for teaching English in grades 1 and 2. Over the years I have become concerned with these developments and decided to research this further.

This led me to believe that there is a need for a study which adopts a critical approach to the topic of EYL in Israel. Theoretical frameworks which adopt a critical viewpoint situate educational research in its social context and look at social problems, ideologies, power differences and relationships in society. But prior to pursuing this investigation, it is necessary to clarify the two concepts which play a dominant role in this study: The concept of Discourse (with a capital 'D') as it is used in this study, and the concept of EYL and the meaning thereof in this study.

1.3. Discourse (with a capital 'D')

The concept of Discourse (with a capital 'D'), set apart from discourse (with lower-case 'd'), was first conceptualised by Gee (1996, 1999, 2005). Influenced by Foucaultian thought and critical theory, Gee introduced the notion of Discourse as the melding together of systems of language-in-use (words and phrases which he identifies as discourse) and non-language issues such as feeling, believing, acting, interacting and more. In this study, the notion of Discourse represents the ways in which people as social subjects choose and use their words and actions for constituting themselves in particular ways in particular situations. Thus, Discourse relates to the ways individuals enact 'who-they-are-doing-what' (Gee, 2005). Discourse is framed as regulated ways of speaking and acting, which define and produce knowledge, identity and social relations, thereby influencing forms of social practices and shaping the ways in which the topic of EYL is implicated in daily life. Conversely, Discourses are also seen as both produced by social practices and shaped by them.

The study of D/discourse entails adopting a critical discourse approach as the theory and method for the analysis of the EYL phenomenon. Conducting a critical discourse analysis would make it possible to uncover discursive patterns and circulating discourses mobilised by the actors involved. The notion of D/discourses and critical discourse analysis as a theoretical framework are presented and discussed in detail in chapter 4.

1.4. English for young learners (EYL)

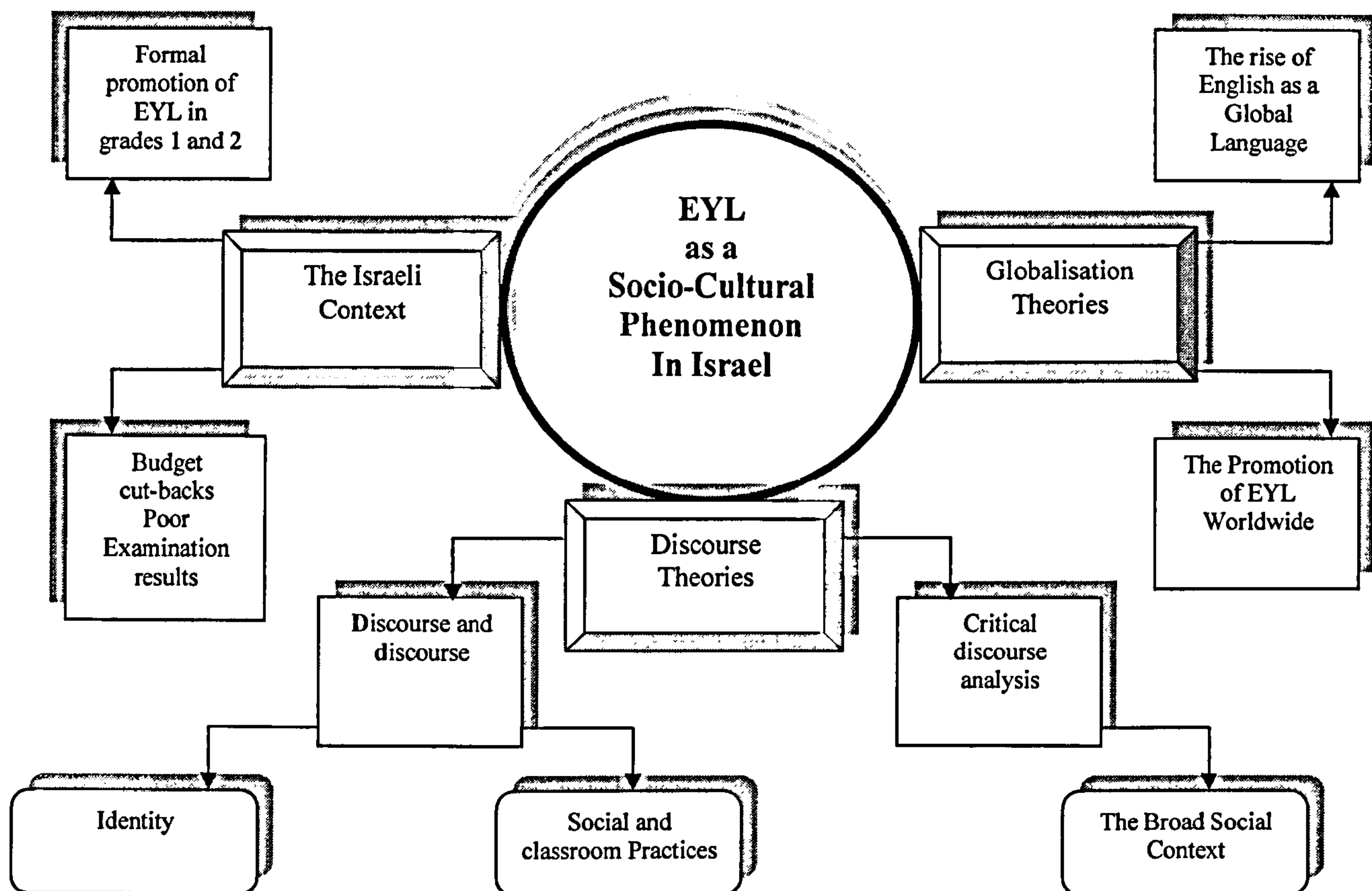
The literature pertaining to the teaching of foreign (or second) languages to young children is concerned (for the most part) with children between five and twelve years of age. Indeed, the meaning of the term 'young' takes on a different form for different people. In some situations the age of ten is considered young, whereas in other situations the term young reflects a general continuous drop in age and involves children in kindergartens and even younger (Cameron, L., 2001). However, people in different countries generally use the term 'young learners' (YL), or 'English for young learners' (EYL) as a general term for young children mainly under the age of ten, who learn English in schools.

Despite some ambiguity regarding the term ‘young’, there is a worldwide consensus on the fact that teaching foreign languages to young children has been taking place for a long time. In the context of this study, the acronym ‘EYL’ pertains to the notion of teaching English as a foreign language in the early years of primary school, namely children from the age of five to ten. The term ‘EYL in grades 1 and 2’ pertains specifically to a relatively new nationwide initiative, promoted by the Ministry of Education in Israel, which formally recommends the teaching of English to children who are five to seven years of age and who study in grades 1 and 2.

As there is a widely held belief (Nikolov, 2002; Nikolov & Djigunović, 2006) that young children are better at second language acquisition (SLA) than later starters, there is a large body of research that reviews the theoretical background and empirical evidence related to this claim. Issues around ‘the age factor’ and the question of the existence of a ‘critical period’ (CP) play an important role for linguists interested in SLA or in research related to early modern language acquisition (Nikolov, 2002). A more detailed review of the literature pertaining to SLA and age effects is provided in chapter 3.

So far it can be argued that there is still insufficient empirical research to underpin the expanding demand for EYL with evidence of how, and to what level, children develop proficiency in foreign languages, and how realistic are the aims of current innovations in teaching EYL. Nevertheless, there is a widespread belief (both world-wide and in Israel) that there are definite advantages in favour of introducing language learning during the early years of life, which outweigh the disadvantages. However, this is a controversial issue, which will be examined in chapter 3. The reality is that EYL is spreading despite the controversies. However, the focus of this research is not on questions regarding ideal age and SLA/FLA. Rather, the focus of the study is on the topic of EYL framed as a socio-cultural phenomenon (see figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1: EYL as a socio-cultural phenomenon



1.5. The objectives of this study

The overall purpose of this study is to use critical discourse analysis to examine, interpret and explain discourses mobilised by parents, teachers, pupils and position-holders on the topic of EYL in grades 1 and 2 in Israel. The study will focus on the topic of EYL as a socio-cultural phenomenon set against a background of political uncertainties, educational budget cutbacks and lack of evidence of improved level of English in schools.

First, the aim is to show the ways in which the EYL phenomenon is intricately woven into the social, cultural, political, economic and educational layers of Israeli society; to examine and analyse the manner in which the phenomenon affects and reflects people's identities, ideologies and beliefs; to clarify and magnify the subtle ways in which the linguistic behaviour of Jews in Israel is a marker of their identity.

Second, the aim is to examine and analyse oral discourses and discursive practices of the actors involved for the ways in which they relate to the power of EYL in Israeli society. People's discourse will be analysed for their ideological content and for the social positions they hold for the actors involved.

Third, the aim is to examine, analyse and interpret people's discourses for the ways in which they construe Discourses on the topic of EYL. To recognise and identify such Discourses for what they represent for the actors involved. Thus, in this study, I aim to bring to the forefront of the discussion analyses of significant D/discourses previously unnoticed or unrecognised.

1.6. Overview of the chapters

In the next chapter I will present a description of the Israeli sociolinguistic context relating to past and recent policy for language education and linguistic social practices. I will provide a more detailed picture of the development of the English language as part of the general language practices in the country. This account is needed in order to present a solid picture of the language policies, practices and ideologies practiced in Israel. Moreover, this will provide a clearer understanding as to how Israel is located in relation to the growing demand for EYL.

In chapter 3, I provide a literature review on two interrelated topics, which have given rise to this particular study, namely, the topic of English as a global language (EGL) and the topic of age, EYL and second language acquisition (SLA). In chapter 4 I provide the theoretical framework of discourse theory (DT) and critical discourse analysis (CDA), which is the conceptual framework of this study.

Chapter 5, the methodology, includes the research design, the methods of data collection and the reasons for choosing them. Chapter 6 includes Gee's (2005) tools of analysis in which I explain how the data collected (mainly via the tool of research interviews) will be analysed. Chapter 7 presents the findings, analysis and interpretation of the data. In

chapter 8, the discussion, I discuss the findings by addressing the research questions which have raised the motivation for this study. In chapter 9, the main conclusions of the study will be presented along with the limitations of the study and suggestions for further research.

Prior to presenting the local Israeli context I will state the research questions which have guided this study.

1.7. The research questions

The overarching question is:

What are the driving forces behind the demand for EYL in grades 1 and 2 in Israel?

Question 1

What are the circulating D/discourses mobilised by parents, teachers, pupils and position holders on the topic of EYL? What do the actors involved say or do in constructing the D/discourses?

Question 2

How are the identified D/discourses on the topic of EYL implicated in everyday life?

Bearing these questions in mind, in chapter 2 I will present the Israeli sociolinguistic context.

Chapter 2

The Israeli Context

2.1. Introduction

Israel is a young country, comprising a diverse population of 7.2 million people, many of whom are immigrants from different parts of the world (Central Bureau of Statistics Israel, 2007). Whilst the majority of citizens were born in Israel, approximately 20 percent are an Arabic-speaking minority (ibid). The Jewish majority consists of many new immigrants. Approximately 1,000,000 new immigrants have arrived from the former USSR in the last decade as well as approximately 100,000 Jews who have arrived from Ethiopia (ibid). Other new immigrants speak many other languages, such as French, Spanish, German, Yiddish, Russian, Amharic, Romanian, Hungarian, Persian, etc. This social and cultural heterogeneity places language in Israel in a central position making it an integral part of everyday life and turning Israel into a unique “lingual-cultural laboratory” (Stavans & Narkiss, 2003:1).

Israel has two official languages, Hebrew and Arabic, the two languages used in governmental and educational institutions. Other foreign languages are integrated and taught within the education system. At the same time, Hebrew is the dominant language for official, public and private use by most of the citizens. In addition, English has a very strong presence and enjoys an actively growing popularity (see the examples that follow). Studies by Spolsky & Shohamy (1997, 1999) of language policy and its implementation point towards the hegemonic use of Hebrew in almost every aspect of life, imposed by the official social institutions. Stavans & Narkiss (2003) shed some light on the dominance of Hebrew in Israel, especially over the Arab minority, when they write:

“While the official language policy has implicitly supported the ‘hegemony’ of Hebrew or ‘mono-centricism’, there has been a parallel ‘existential’ need for Hebrew-Arabic bilingualism among the minority Arab-speaking population. This Hebrew-Arabic bilingualism is highly skewed in favor of Hebrew, with Arabic being used as a social, educational, literary and cultural language only among Israeli Arabs” (pp. 3-4).

Hebrew is used for daily communication, legislation and courts of law, commerce, media, entertainment and everyday social and official interaction. Excluding the Arab educational sector, which conducts itself in Arabic, Hebrew is the main language used in the education system where all subjects and lessons are conducted in Hebrew.

Section 2.2 presents a description of the Israeli sociolinguistic context dating back to the time before its independence in 1948. It relates to past and recent policy for language education, as well as language and social practices. It presents a more detailed picture of the development of the English language as part of the general language practices in the country. This account aims to provide the basis for understanding the topic of EYL framed as a social phenomenon as identified in this study.

2.2. The languages of Israel

Spolsky & Shohamy (1999) provide a detailed overview of the historical, social and sociolinguistic developments of the languages used in Israel, dating back as far as the 19th century, during the times of Ottoman Palestine, the British Mandate, and leading up to Israel's independence in 1948 and developments to date. Their account offers an up-to-date explanation of the languages in Israel with particular attention to ideology, policy and language practices.

Israel being part of the Middle East and bearing in mind its status as a focus of four religions - Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Baha'I - the sociolinguistic landscape and the changing social multilingualism have always been of major concern for educators and sociolinguists alike. I will highlight some points which may reflect on the current sociolinguistic situation and developments in the country.

2.2.1. Historical context

Before its establishment in 1948 as a sovereign Jewish State of Israel, Israel was under the British mandate from 1919-1948. During this period, the British government promoted the Hebrew language and established Hebrew as the official language (alongside Arabic and English). The linguistic identity of the country's Jewish population was manifested in the Hebrew language triumphing over the other languages immigrants brought with them: Arabic, English, French, German or Yiddish. Hebrew was the

language of instruction in Jewish schools and universities. During the years of the British mandate, the use of the Hebrew language continuously expanded, changing and adapting itself to cater for the developing modern public and cultural life, work and technology (Fishman *et al.*, 1977).

After 1948 and Israel's independence, the British ban on Jewish immigration from different parts of the world was cancelled. The enactment of 'The Law of Return' stated that any Jew was entitled to come and live in Israel and become a citizen. Waves of immigrants arrived, many from Arabic speaking backgrounds. At that time, the Israeli authorities, who were composed mainly of Jews of European origin, regarded the Islamic and Arabic culture and language as inferior. This led to changes in the language situation in the new country, consciously implementing a 'melting pot' system whereby all immigrants had to learn Hebrew - the National, official language.

During the 1950s and 1960s there was an increase in the public and official use of Hebrew with a parallel increase in the use of other languages in private situations. At this point, Arabic was also added as an official language, due to the fact that there were a large number of Arabs who had remained within the borders of the Israeli State following its independence in 1948. However, despite the fact that a large majority of the Jewish immigrants came from Arabic-speaking countries such as Morocco and Iraq and spoke Arabic, the Arab language was strongly identified with the non-Jewish population of the country. This negative association blocked the acceptance of Arabic as a wider-used language in Israel.

Ben-Rafael (1994) has surveyed the sociology of languages in Israel over the years with particular emphasis on Hebrew. He has mapped out the growing dominance and rise of Hebrew, suggesting some ideological and social reasons for the Hebrew hegemony in the developing State of Israel. In his findings he states that:

“Hebrew has penetrated, transformed and unified the groups of immigrants who arrived in this country and who were originally speakers of Eastern and Central European languages. Over the generations, Russian, Polish, Romanian and German have been ‘dematernalised’ in favour of the new language, modern Hebrew” (Ben-Rafael, 1994: 76).

Following the Six Day War in 1967, the use of English gradually increased resulting in some resistance to the Hebrew hegemony. This took different shapes over the years, influencing Israel towards becoming a more multilingual society open to Western, particularly American, influence. This coincided with the increasing flow of new immigrants mainly from the former USSR, the significant Arab-speaking community of Arab Israeli citizens who speak and study Arabic, and the impact of English in the form of forces of economic globalisation, the media, information technology and modernisation. I will now discuss some of the abovementioned influences which affected the increase in use of English.

2.3. The increased use of English

2.3.1. Immigrants

Israeli society today is comprised of three main groups of immigrants. The largest group is the new immigrants from the former Soviet Union (over 1,000,000), who speak Russian or variations of it (Central Bureau of Statistics, p. 13). Their arrival has significantly affected the sociolinguistic landscape of Israeli society. Over the past few years, many newspapers are published in Russian, television and radio offer programmes in Russian, political parties have significant Russian representation, local offices provide services in Russian, and large supermarkets, catering for the immigrants' particular food requirements, have emerged and proved successful.

Another group of immigrants consists of approximately 100,000 immigrants from Ethiopia (ibid), mainly speakers of Amharic and Tigrinya. This group still undergoes a slow process of integration.

In addition, there is a large number of foreign workers who are not immigrants and, in most cases, not Jewish, who have arrived in Israel during the last 20 years. Almost 300,000 have arrived from the Philippines, Africa, Romania and other countries, all speaking different languages. With time, they have settled mainly in major cities, and established families who have become users of the Israeli education system.

2.3.2. The Arabic-speaking minority

The Arabic-speaking minority totals approximately 1,000,000 Israeli Arabs, comprising about 20 percent of the population of Israel (Central Bureau of Statistics). Arabic is an official language recognised for official education and public use (Spolsky, 1994). However, as Myhill (2004) states:

“Though Arabic is in name at least an official language of Israel (and e.g. laws are supposed to be written in Arabic as well as Hebrew), this is far more decorative than substantive when compared with official minority languages in Western democracies” (p. 192).

In reality, Arabic is hardly ever used outside the Arab sector, the Arab villages or municipalities. Other examples of lack of use of the Arabic language in Israel provided by Myhill (2004) relate to speeches in the Knesset (the Israeli Parliament), which by law could be given in Arabic but are very rare. Moreover, Arabic-language State television is limited to certain hours during the day and, generally, there is reluctance for any explicit legislation or policy-making regarding the status of Arabic in Israel.

The Israeli Arab community has been strongly influenced by Hebrew, which is compulsory in the Arab sector and is taught from grade 2 in all the Arab schools. There seems to be a growing demand for Hebrew and for Arabic-Hebrew bilingualism amongst the Arab population. Young Arab people seeking employment seem to need more Hebrew on a daily basis and thus make an effort to master it. This move towards Arabic-Hebrew bilingualism seems to be dominant only on the Arab side, not in the Jewish sector.

2.3.3. The role of English

During the British Mandate (1919–1948), English was the principal language used in government. This has given English a firm base and thus it has remained the principal foreign language in Israel, the demand for it increasing continuously. In 1977, Joshua Fishman (Fishman *et al.*, 1977) published results of a pioneering survey on the spread of English in Israel. It detailed studies showing the growing importance of English over time. In view of this survey Spolsky (1996) stated:

“The fact that Fishman was in Israel while conducting research for the first major sociolinguistic study of the diffusion of English means that Fishman (1977) pays special attention to English in Israel and includes several detailed studies (Cooper & Seckbach, 1977; Nadel & Fishman, 1977; Rosenbaum *et al.*, 1977)” (p. 5).

Fishman *et al.* (1977) and Fishman *et al.* (1996) documented the unprecedented spread of English in most of the world today which is also evident in Israel. They noted special conditions in Israel, such as the immigration from Western countries, the ties between the United States and Israel, the mass media, politics etc.

Spolsky (1996) discusses the impact of the processes of globalisation and the spread of English in Israel dating back to the 1970s. In his opinion, the status of English has been growing as a result of globalisation forces and of the fact that Israel used to be ruled under the British mandate British colony. He proposes additional reasons for the spread of English: the fact that it was used for business, science, and travel; the fact that it was the language of the Jewish Diaspora in the United States; and, more importantly, the considerable number of English-speaking immigrants who arrived in Israel in 1968 and thereafter, having a significant impact on local society, thus strengthening the value and use of English.

With regard to English in the education system, studies by Spolsky & Shohamy (1997, 1999), Spolsky (1996), Ben-Rafael (1994: 2001), Donitsa-Schmidt (2004) and Stavans & Narkiss (2003) indicate that, over the years, the demand for English has continued to increase. Regarding the demand for English in lower grades, they assert that parental pressure gradually forced schools to start teaching English at an earlier age.

Two significant issues discussed among sociolinguists are that English may become a threat to Hebrew (Narkiss, 2002) and that Hebrew-English bilingualism is becoming a possibility for the future (Ben-Rafael, 1994). Although, in practice, there is a dominant use of Hebrew in all domains of society, other languages are also used, English more than others. In increasing circumstances Hebrew is forced to compete with English. Evidence collected by Spolsky & Shohamy (1999) leads them to argue that: “...the Israeli language practice is firmly multilingual, and that the plurilingual citizen is the rule rather than the

exception” (p. 250).

An additional point they make concerns the weakness of Arabic within the different domains in society and the education system, in spite of the fact that it is acknowledged as the second official language. Thus, part of the sociolinguistic situation existing in Israel is characterised by situations, in which official policy statements are sometimes contradicted by the social and language practices of the people.

The picture that emerges is that language practice in Israel is in a state of change. The earlier model of 50 - 60 years ago inclined towards multilingualism, followed by a strong tendency for an ideological monolingualism and dominance of Hebrew (Shohamy, 1994). In recent years the direction points towards multilingualism and pluralism. It should be emphasised that research concludes that language practices have had, and continue to have, a central position for educators and sociolinguists in Israeli society.

2.4. Language policy and practice

For many years the Israeli education system had no official, structured language policy. Spolsky & Shohamy (1999) maintain that:

“While there has been no national attempt to formulate a new language policy, there has however been an important change in the policy for languages in Israeli schools. Over the past few years, a number of fundamental changes had been taking place in a piecemeal fashion. These have now been crystallised and given a new direction in the first formal statement of a Policy for Language Education in Israel, a document issued in the Ministry of Education Director General’s Circular dated 1 June, 1995 [Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport, 1995]” (pp. 26-27).

In 1993, a Center for Language Planning was established, headed by Professor Spolsky, aiming to provide a coherent formal policy on language teaching in schools and taking into account demographic, social, ideological and political issues. This led to the publication of a Ministry of Education “Circular”, on the subject of language policy, issued in 1995 by the Director-General of the Ministry of Education and revised in 1996. It became the 1995-99 ‘Policy for Language Education in Israel’.

The document defines the language situation in Israel pertaining to all education sectors (Jewish, Arab, Bedouin, religious, secular and other), addresses the teaching of first (mother tongue), second, foreign and other languages, and explains, describes and defines the purposes, objectives and relevant facts regarding languages in educational institutions. For example, Hebrew and Arabic were redefined as the two languages of instruction for the two communities, with emphasis on each community learning the other's language. English was redefined as the first foreign language, compulsory from grade 5 all the way through the school system, with special permission given to begin teaching in grade 3. The policy encouraged new immigrants to maintain their native languages, with provisions made to preserve these languages, especially Russian and Amharic.

Over the last ten years, a number of amendments and recommendations have been added to the language policy document, many of which pertain explicitly to the teaching of English. These changes relate to a new English curriculum published in 2001, the modular *Bagrut* (matriculation) examinations, new assessment guidelines, Professional Standards for English teachers, and recommendations for an earlier beginning of learning English in grades 1 and 2 in schools nationwide. The status of English in schools and society will be discussed in detail further on in this review, paying particular attention to the EYL in grades 1 and 2 recommendation.

This outline points to certain changes in language policy and practice in Israel, perhaps a reflection of the complex socio-cultural, socio-political circumstances represented in people's social practices and beliefs. In other words, changes in language or social practices may not be directly related to the official language policy, but rather a result of changes in local ideologies and beliefs. In the next section I will discuss the ways in which social language practices and ideologies are interrelated.

2.5. Social practices, language practices and ideology

Language policy, language practices and ideology are interrelated in that people's beliefs and ideologies, forming part of social practices, affect policy, and vice versa. Language practices include myriad factors, which are not necessarily a direct result of language policy or social planning. Similarly, any changes hoped to be achieved by specific top-

down social or language planning depend, to large extent, on people, their histories, attitudes and beliefs. In addition, attitudes and beliefs may differ from the language practices and may, in fact, change the social practices or policy. One of the symptoms of Israeli culture is that people's ideology (beliefs and theories they hold) is often shaped by social factors or external global trends and international influences. Changes in language practices during Israel's short statehood are a good example of society's responses to trends, political and social forces.

Spolsky & Shohamy (1999) argue:

"Because this pattern of language practice is necessarily associated with socially driven values, the language practice of speech communities is closely intertwined with an accompanying set of values and attitudes, a set of beliefs or a well-formed ideology about the values to be assigned to the varieties that make up the practice" (p. 263).

The stance taken in this study is that the spread of English in Israel today, of which the growing EYL phenomenon is an integral part, can be understood as deriving from certain ideologies, beliefs and attitudes represented by discourses. In an attempt to understand the effects of the current remarkable spread of English in Israel, I will review the development of English over the last century. I will refer to English during the period of the British mandate, the changes over the years following independence, leading up to the significant position it enjoys today.

2.6. The history of English in Israel

During the British mandate, English was the main language of government. Hebrew and Arabic were included as the local languages, used by local communities to run their own schools, using their own language. In the Jewish sector, English was taught as the first foreign language with emphasis on understanding the culture and literature, mainly Shakespeare. In the Arab sector, although only 50 percent of the Arab population at that time developed literacy skills in any language, "Knowledge of English was a way for Arabs to gain access to professional or advanced technical education, and so hope for social advancement" (Lockard, 1996, cited in Spolsky & Shohamy, 1999:161). English

was used as a 'neutral' language to bring together the Arabs and the Jews. However, this attempt failed, and both sectors rejected English, reviving their native language, while also forming a sort of anti-English ideology, thus demonstrating an anti-colonial stance.

Following 1948 and Independence, English continued to be the first foreign language taught in schools. In the 1960s it was a compulsory subject in schools taught from grade 5 until the *bagrut* (matriculation). During these years there were major changes in the diffusion of English. Immigration from English-speaking countries, the increase in tourism from and to Israel and the strong economic and political relationship with the United States generated a demand for more English lessons in the education system. Indeed, Fishman *et al.* (1977, cited in Spolsky & Shohamy, 1999) pointed out that English was becoming related to socio-economic class and a "key to economic development" (p. 162).

According to Nadel and Fishman (1977), during the years 1960 to 1970, Israelis made particular efforts to use the English language in different ways. They listened to English programmes (BBC), watched English films and read English magazines: Nadel and Fishman (1977) concluded that in the early 1970s, "English in Israel was on the rise" (Nadel and Fishman, 1977, cited in Spolsky & Shohamy 1999: 163). Section 2.7 describes in detail the changes that took place during the 20 years following Israel's independence.

2.7. English as cultural capital

By the 1970s, English was becoming increasingly desirable. The reasons for this mainly relate to socio-cultural, demographic, geopolitical, and economic local developments within Israeli society, rather than any explicit top-down policy.

According to Olshtain & Kotik, (2000):

"In the past two decades a more pluralistic view of society has gradually developed in Israel and with it the recognition of the value of a multilingual tapestry as an integral aspect of modern Israel. English, in particular, has gained a special status in Israel like in many other countries, mainly because of its function as a Language for World Communication (LWC)" (p. 206).

According to Ben-Rafael (1994), English, Arabic and Yiddish, act as class markers in society. His findings indicate certain aspects of stratification in Israeli society with respect to linguistic norms and uses. He states that data from his studies on language in the Israeli society “concur with Bourdieu’s theory of linguistic capital” (Ben-Rafael 1994: 129). Thus, “the language that is most valued by individuals of all classes, as an asset of linguistic capital, is also the one that seems to best differentiate the privileged from the underprivileged” (p. 129). Indeed, the language he refers to is English. “The upper-middle class is clearly characterised by a mastery of English” (p.129).

Furthermore, his data indicate that cosmopolitan values and cultures, such as knowledge of English, seem to “distinguish the culture of the more privileged strata, while ethnic legacies are more dominant among the groups that make up the social periphery” (Ben-Rafael, 1994: 130). Competence in English is associated with education and prestige and constitutes a marker of inequality. The *investment* in English, which he argues is mostly a personal one, is therefore investment in cultural and social capital which will inevitably enhance people’s status in society.

He reflects on the intricate ways, by which the notion of language is interconnected to issues of identity within the Israeli culture: “This language constitutes a status symbol, a power asset, and a boundary marker the importance of which can be measured by the efforts Israelis invest in its acquisition” (Ben Rafael, 1994: 189).

Myhill (2004) has investigated the ways in which Jews have viewed the relationship between language and identity and its development in Jewish history up to present times. Myhill (2004) identifies two explanations for such relationship. The first is that “Jews appear to develop a particular emotional attachment to languages which are associated with certain historical catastrophe” (pp. 154-5). English is not a Jewish language such as Yiddish (a language still thriving in ultra orthodox communities and respected by secular Jews) and is largely associated with the years of the British mandate, unfavourable times for the Jews in Palestine. However, English was and still is growing in popularity and demand.

Another explanation pertains to the prestige associated with the language. Thus, he claims:

“It should be acknowledged that the linguistic behavior of Jews in terms of everyday language usage can largely be explained in terms of the prestige associated with a language. In most circumstances, like most other peoples, when a prestigious new language appears on the scene, Jews are likely to embrace it” (Myhill, 2004: 155).

Myhill’s (2004) explanations of language ideology and Ben Rafael’s (1994) findings seem to fit in well with the current position of English in Israel. Indeed, English is mostly used for contacts with overseas, business, high-tech or travelling. However, it seems that somehow the State of Israel is not large enough. The heart (and eye) is wandering off with the hope and desire to either revive the past or aspire for better, bigger global opportunities represented largely by English. The following section presents additional reasons for the increase in the demand for English in Israeli society.

2.8. Causes of the spread of English in Israel

As was stated previously, various immigrant groups have contributed to the demographic changes in Israel. In addition, Israel, being a new, modern, fast-developing country, has attracted many tourists. Tourism has been a successful and growing industry resulting in the need for many people involved with tourist services to use English on a daily basis, thereby enhancing the need and demand for the language.

The introduction of television in 1968 with English programmes (not dubbed into Hebrew) brought the English language into every household. The recent innovations of satellite, cable TV, MTV and popular music, the personal computer and the Internet, have made English all the more accessible and popular.

Environmental print in the form of public signs on stores and streets, names of fashion shops, business logos, international large food chains and local brand names use a significant percentage of English words or names. English is used abundantly in advertisements for local goods, in jingles, video clips and various media channels. The use of English has become popular and habitual in everyday social life, at places of work especially in the hi-tech industry and academia.

The regular borrowing of words and expressions from English in Hebrew conversations has introduced Hebrew slang based on English words. This in itself is an intriguing sociolinguistic phenomenon. This may be a result of fashionable trends, the wish to attract customers, or other reasons which all point to the fact that English is prevalent and intricately involved in the everyday life of society.

An additional point is that Universities in Israel demand that all candidates sit for a particularly high level entry examination in English due to the fact that, although the actual courses are conducted in Hebrew, most of the academic literature in books and journals is in fact in English.

Employment is a further factor. The last decade, with the growing use of modern technology in communications, Internet, medical products and devices, bio-technology and nano-technology, has placed Israel in the forefront of the international business arena, resulting in the need for the use of English.

Since Israel's independence, economic and political connections with the USA have been steadily thriving. The USA is considered Israel's best ally and the largest Jewish Diaspora, which supports Israel financially through special funds or donations, resides in the United States. English has naturally become an important tool for communication between the two communities.

2.9. English in Israeli society today

English is woven and intertwined in all political, cultural and social aspects of life in Israel. People from all levels and professions share the importance of English, albeit there is disagreement over the status of the official languages - Hebrew and Arabic (Stavans & Narkiss, 2001).

According to Narkiss (2002), English symbolises a western cultural world and guarantees a linkage to a cultural and geographical centre which is represented by western culture. He claims that English threatens the dominance of Hebrew and, together with Hebrew, poses a threat to Arabic. Moreover, "the central role English plays in the world, and its accessibility in Israel turn it to a powerful tool for those who feel deprived and taken

advantage of by speakers of Hebrew and Arabic” (Narkiss, 2002: 260). In other words, although English is identified as a global, universal, language, mainly as a result of the emphasis placed on learning it, English enables the creation of an Israeli identity which is not based solely on Hebrew.

The popularity of the English language in Israeli society is all the more surprising when one considers that Israel is a country in the Middle East where one would expect the Arab culture and language to have greater presence, influence and demand. Moreover, in view of the inseparable connection between Israel and the surrounding Arab states, some of which are still in a state of war and others with whom peace has been achieved, one would have expected a growing demand for the study of the Arabic language. However, Arabic, “the language of the minorities” (Spolsky & Shohamy, 1999: 118), is becoming less and less popular in Israeli society and many schools have omitted Arabic lessons from their curriculum altogether.

Research (Shohamy & Donitsa-Schmidt, 1998) on language attitudes and stereotypes amongst people towards the importance of the English, Arabic and Hebrew languages reveals that Jewish people perceive Hebrew and English to be almost equally important. Arab people view Hebrew as a more important second language, English following closely. In the 1996 Ministry of Education’s Director-General’s “Circular”, following the Language Policy for Education, the recommended allotment of hours for English and Arabic are skewed in favour of English. More hours were allotted for English and, in addition, the few recommended hours for Arabic could, in fact, be put to use for teaching other languages, mostly French, Spanish, and German, the decision being given to the schools, the parents and the pupils.

This review of the role and status of English in Israeli society sets the scene for a better understanding of the development of English in the education system. I will now address more specific issues which pertain to English in the education system in general and EYL in particular.

2.10. English in the education system

2.10.1 The English curriculum

The Ministry of Education (2001) published a new official English curriculum. The new, standards-based curriculum, dividing English teaching into four domains, replaced the previous one dating from 1988, which was based on communicative-competence.

One of the major issues the curriculum writing committee had to consider relates to the beginning age or grade level for English instruction in schools. Indeed, the committee considered the prevailing circumstances where pupils have more contact with and exposure to English prior to grade 4, the formal English instruction grade level. However, there is no explicit indication as to the recommended age or grade level for the teaching of English before grade 4. Therefore, EYL and the advisable age for the beginning of English lessons in schools prior to grade 4 has remained vague and has been left to the discretion of the principals.

In section 2.11 I will elaborate on the topic of EYL as it is reflected in the curriculum and will illuminate some of the existing problems related to this. I will first discuss recent developments.

2.10.2. Recent developments

In recent years, Israel has experienced large budget cutbacks in education. Schools in certain residential areas have been forced to close down and their teachers have been made redundant. Elementary schools have officially been given financial autonomy, whereby each school decides and controls its budget allocation. On the other hand, school budgets have been reduced drastically, creating a permanent lack of resources and funding.

An additional development in recent years relates to the substantial number of new immigrants from the former USSR. One would have expected an increased demand for the study of the Russian language in schools but the formal school system does not offer any studies of Russian. Recent research on Russian immigrants' attitudes toward English, Hebrew and Russian, shows that English is valued more by the immigrants than either Hebrew or Russian (Donitsa-Schmidt, 2004).

2.10.2.1. Growth, Efficiency and Measurement of Schools tests: ‘GEMS’ tests

One of the more recent developments initiated by the Ministry of Education is the ‘GEMS’ tests (the initials for Growth, Efficiency and Measurement of Schools). These are national tests produced by the official body within the Ministry of Education for evaluation, testing and assessment. Pupils in grade 5 and grade 8 in every school in the country are tested every other year in four subjects: Hebrew language, Science, Mathematics and English. These tests are designed to check additional parameters, such as school climate and routines, pupils’ attitudes towards teachers, violence and other similar issues.

These tests have been administered since 2000, with considerable wash-back effect on schools, principals, teachers and pupils. They are statistically analysed by the official national assessment board and the results are provided to every school, coupled with suggestions and recommendations for improvement or progress. The very fact that English is one of the subjects tested for the ‘GEMS’ attests to the importance of English in the school system. Moreover, this has increased the demand for EYL (Ministry of Education, 2006), following ‘the younger the better’ belief commonly held by parents and stakeholders. The ‘common-sense’ argument underlying this statement reflects the ‘preventive medicine’ logic (‘better prevent than lament’) whereby it is assumed that if pupils begin their English learning earlier, (i.e. in grades 1 or 2) results on the ‘GEMS’ tests will improve.

Indeed such results collected and published yearly since 2002 provide a number of noteworthy observations. These have pointed to substantial differences between schools situated in different parts of the country as well as within different sectors of society. Schools in privileged areas scored significantly higher grades in comparison with the schools in underprivileged areas.

According to figures from 2002, 28 percent of pupils in Israel obtained very low grades in the English ‘GEMS’ examination. These results illustrated that the population living on the periphery, mainly in northern and southern Israel, achieved the lowest scores in English. One assumption that could be made is that children from affluent areas have better knowledge of English than children from less affluent backgrounds. Indeed, the English ‘GEMS’ scores reveal serious gaps between the international élite and the bulk of

the remaining population (Ministry of Education, 2006). Bearing these developments in mind, I will now provide an overview of the issues pertaining to EYL.

2.11. English for young learners (EYL)

A noteworthy development demonstrating the growing status of English over the last two decades is the demand and pressure to commence English instruction in schools at an early age. In the 1990s English was compulsory from grade 5 but there has been steady pressure to begin instruction earlier. The acting Chief English Inspector and many regional English inspectors disapproved, and for many years resisted such pressure for different reasons.

Among these reasons was the belief that it is important to obtain complete literacy skills in the native language (L1), another language would interfere and thus cannot be introduced before L1 is safely acquired. An additional argument concerned the lack of professional staff, budget and/or materials suitable for the teaching of young learners, thus imposing unnecessary pressure on the system. However, this opposition did not withhold the pressure of the three p's: parents, politicians and principals, for the introduction of English lessons in grades 1 and 2 nationwide.

Whilst the English curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2001) does not specify the grade level for the commencement of English in schools, it states:

"The planning to initiate a school language program in the early grades should take into account the need for pupils to master basic language and literacy skills in Hebrew (or Arabic and Hebrew) before studying English. The availability of suitable English staff and materials also needs to be taken in consideration" (p. 34).

One interpretation of the above recommendation is that English should not be introduced before the second or even third grades, by which time children would have mastered "basic and literacy skills in L1" (p.34). However, in fact, many schools (more than 50%) nationwide introduce English in grades 1 and 2 using private or public resources.

2.11.1. EYL in Grades 1 and 2 taught by home-room teachers

Against the recommendations of the official Advisory Committee for English (consisting of Professor Spolsky, Professor E. Shohamy, Professor Olshtain and Dr. Steiner), and against its own curriculum policy, the acting Director General and the Minister of Education in 2002 decided to formally recommend the introduction of English in all grade 1 (pupils of the age of six years) and 2 (pupils of the age of seven years) classes in the country. They launched a new, innovative National Project of English in grade 1 and 2 to be taught by home-room teachers. Home-room teachers are class-room teachers who are not English language teachers, but have specialised in early childhood education and teach Hebrew, children's literature, mathematics, reading and writing.

Home-room teachers, already teaching in the system, are requested to take on this endeavour without additional compensation. The rationale presented by the initiators was that home-room teachers have the necessary qualities and skills suitable for teaching young children. In addition, younger children will prefer a known figure rather than a professional foreign language teacher.

Following this plan, the costs of training home-room teachers were expected to be considerably less than those associated with a four-year English teacher training programme and would provide a practical solution to the shortage of English teachers in schools. It should be noted that this idea is already in practice in Japan and in some Eastern European countries, such as Poland, Yugoslavia, the Czech Republic and in other countries where English is taught as a foreign language (Nikolov & Curtain, 2000).

In fact, this recommendation is taking different forms. Principals decide how often and in what manner English will be introduced and who will teach it. In certain regions (south of the country, big cities, e.g. Netanya and Petach Tikva) the recommendation is followed and home-room teachers have to comply and teach English. In other regions principals find other solutions which often include additional expenditure.

Due to the government budget cutbacks such additional expenditure is covered, *inter alia*, by reducing the number of English teaching hours in grades 5 and 6 in favour of grades 1 and 2. However, English teachers and the English inspectorate argue that this

re-distribution in the allotment of hours is contrary to the best interests of the higher grade pupils since they are not receiving the appropriate number of hours, resulting in the creation of unnecessary gaps in the 5th and 6th grades. They further argue that this may be one of the reasons for the gaps in 'GEMS' test results.

A recent study by Shohamy and Inbar (2006), initiated by the Ministry of Education, investigated questions on EYL taught by home-room teachers versus English teachers. The issues studied pertained to: differences in attainment, perceptions amongst pupils, teachers, principals, inspectors and position holders and differences between home-room teachers and English teachers. Although findings have not yet been officially published, the research in itself is evidence of the growing interest in the topic of EYL and the new initiative.

Indeed, the abovementioned developments have generated reactions from both supporters and proponents of EYL. This topic will be presented and discussed in detail in chapter 3.

2.12. Summary

Israel is a society, which has been continuously absorbing waves of immigrants for many years. Consequently, Israeli language practice is multilingual and plurilingual with Hebrew and Arabic being the two formal languages. Despite the diverse other languages spoken in Israel, English is undoubtedly the most prevalent foreign language. English, being the international, global language, is gaining prestige and popularity amongst new immigrants and *sabras* (those born in Israel) alike.

EYL is one of the manifestations of the growing popularity of the English language. It is now officially recommended to teach EYL in grades 1 and 2 in schools nationwide. Parents, politicians and principals actively promote EYL in schools while many English teachers and professionals are skeptical of this sweeping movement. The issue is problematic mostly in light of the low 'GEMS' examination results in the periphery. Additional concerns pertain to the reasons underlying the growing pressure for the promotion of EYL in grades 1 and 2.

Indeed, the conditions for EYL in grades 1 and 2 are affected by a complex interaction of different factors, such as socio-cultural and political forces, popular trends, waves of globalisation and more. In this study I seek to explore the ways in which people rationalise and explain the promotion of EYL in grades 1 and 2. In order to conduct this inquiry I will need analytical tools, which will allow me to describe, interpret and explain the phenomenon and the forces driving it. The theoretical framework for this investigation will be presented in chapter 4.

So far I have argued for the need to frame the issue of EYL in grades 1 and 2 as a socio-cultural phenomenon. To obtain a larger picture, theories pertaining to EGL and EYL need to be addressed. In the next chapter I provide a review of the literature on these issues.

Chapter 3

Literature Review

3.1. Introduction

In this chapter I bring together and discuss the available literature on two separate, yet interrelated issues, namely, English as a global language (EGL) and English for young learners (EYL). This overview is needed in order to provide a broad setting and the overall context for the ways in which forces of the global spread of English have an effect on socio-cultural and sociolinguistic developments in Israel. One of such developments is the continuous lowering of the age level for teaching English in schools (see chapter 1) and the overwhelming popularity of EYL among parents in grades 1 and 2 nationwide (see figure 3.1 at the end of this chapter).

In section 3.2 below I begin the overview by presenting reactions to the global position of English and the spread and uses of EGL. Thereafter, I present the literature on the topic of EYL, one of the manifestations of the global spread of English (see Graddol, 2006, p. 88 for the percentage of primary school pupils learning English in EU countries based on Eurydice data published in 2005). I will specifically discuss issues of age effects and second/foreign language learning. One of the questions in this respect is what is the best age to begin learning a second or foreign language in schools? This question is contested in light of opposing findings regarding the effectiveness of foreign language learning at an early age in schools and other controversial issues relating to the quality of both the teaching the language learning experience, continuity of learning and more (Nikolov and Djigunović, 2006). In section 3.3 I will present opposing views on this issue and conclude by pointing out varied positions amongst language experts in Israel.

3.2. Globalisation

Globalisation, a highly topical, contentious term, is an economic, political and social process, whereby world-wide geographical limitations are decreasing and world-wide

communication is increasing. One of the definitions of the term, provided by Giddens (1990: 64, cited in Block & Cameron, 2002) is:

“The intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa” (p. 1).

One major linguistic manifestation of globalisation is the widespread use of English which has become the world's global language (Crystal, 1997, 2001, 2004; Pennycook, 1994, 2000). Graddol (2006) points out that “the current enthusiasm for English in the world is closely tied to the complex process of globalisation” (p. 13). Furthermore, according to Crystal (2004), “a language achieves a genuinely global status when it develops a special role that is recognised in every country” (p. 3). Indeed, English has become the world's leading language in current international trade, computer communication and, over the last decade, has been actively promoted in many countries striving to achieve modernisation and internationalisation (Crystal, 2004; Graddol, 2006; Nunan, 2003; Pennycook, 1994; Phillipson, 1992; Tollefson, 1995, 2002).

The unassailable spread of English (see Graddol, 2006) has attracted research on globalisation effects on English language learning, policy and use (Pennycook, 1994; Phillipson, 1992; Tollefson, 1995). Literature in the field of applied linguistics includes debates and discussion on the meaning, significance and implications of EGL for policy, language planning learning and teaching. Indeed, literature on EGL emphasises the different ways in which the English language has become part of the political, educational, social and economic life of many countries worldwide (Block & Cameron, 2002; Canagarajah 2006; Graddol, 1998 2006; McArthur, 1998; Tollefson, 2002).

3.2.1. The status of English as a global (world) language

“A language becomes a world language for one reason only - the power of the people who speak it” (Crystal, 2004: 10). Different manifestations of power, such as political power, economic power, cultural power and more, influence the growth of EGL at different times. According to Crystal (2004), the contemporary power of English is a result of many factors, two of which can be identified as main causes. One is the

expansion of the British colonies and the British colonial power during the nineteenth century, and the other is the emergence of the United States as the leading economic power and, with it, the forces of globalisation and Americanisation. English, the dominant language used in the USA, is associated with economic and political dominance. English has become popular, influential, and knowing English signifies power, mobility, success, pleasure, employment opportunities and prestige (Crystal 2004).

Crystal (2004) recognises ten domains, in which the English language has become paramount. These domains are: politics, economics, the press, advertising, broadcasting, motion pictures, popular music, international travel and safety, education, and communications. To this end he asserts that, although there is no guarantee that English will remain the global language, “for the foreseeable future, it is unlikely that another language is going to replace English in its global role” (p. 11). Indeed, people want to learn English and continue to do so in increasing numbers all over the world.

EGL has major implications for speakers of other languages in many non-English speaking countries and is felt in most aspects of life, such as in education, economy, commerce, international gatherings, media, academia, technology, the Internet and everyday social practices. Additional implications pertain to the linguistic character of the English language which is changing rapidly. According to Crystal (2004), English is no longer ‘owned’ by any particular country. Rather, “a language which has come to be spoken by so many people has ceased to be owned by any of its constituent communities – not the British... nor the Americans” (pp. 22-23). However, Graddol (2006) describes the current situation of the global spread of English as follows:

“Global English is not a ‘done deal’. It is already possible to see another story unfolding, within the present century, in which present forms of globalisation give way to greater regionalism and more complex patterns of linguistic, economic and cultural power” (p. 13).

In the context of globalisation, English has become controversial and has generated much concern (Phillipson, 1992, 2003). The spread of EGL has raised questions and challenges with implications for TESOL, pedagogical and classroom practices, constituting both a

threat and an opportunity in many societies. Some central challenges for applied linguists in the twenty-first century pertain to the powerful global networks of EGL, governmental policies and issues of local identity.

Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas (1995, 1996) and (Phillipson, 1992, 1999a, 1999b), strong critics of globalisation, view the global spread of English as a medium of ‘linguistic imperialism’ or, ‘linguicism’ (Skutnabb-Kangas 1999). They believe that the global spread of English is inherently problematic and inextricably linked to wider political issues. It is part of larger global forces and serves the interests of the institutions and governments that have promoted it. They hold the view that English is imposing the western world on local societies, on educational institutions, and on students.

Other linguists, for example, Crystal, (1999, 2004), Cameron (2002), Cameron et al. (1999) and Graddol (1998, 2006), take a more measured view of the consequences of the global spread of English. They discuss different outcomes of English being used widely in different parts of the world and express possible advantages of the phenomenon as well as concerns regarding the ways people in different societies negotiate their local identity, their desired values, interests and linguistic diversity. Prior to discussing implications of EGL on everyday life, I present critical and other more measured approaches to EGL in sections 3.2.2 and 3.2.3.

3.2.2. Critical approaches to EGL

There are linguists who believe that the global spread of English is a problematic political and cultural phenomenon. Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas (1996) and Phillipson, 1992, 1999a, 1999b, 2003), strongly oppose the worldwide expansion of English and the global position it holds. Phillipson (2003) believes that English is the language of the powerful and poses a threat to other languages, cultures and identities. He states:

“The hierarchy of languages of colonial times has been maintained, with English correlating with socio-economic privilege. This has serious adverse effects on civil society and democratic participation in the political process. English is the language of the powerful” (p. 7).

Phillipson (1999a, 1999b) argues that the English language is an integral part of global structures of dependency and that the spread of English may be one of the factors contributing to the loss of indigenous languages around the world.

3.2.2.1. Linguistic imperialism

Phillipson (1992) draws on Kachru's (1985, 1986) notion of the 'three circles' of the different countries, in which the English language is used in the world. The 'inner circle' represents the core English speaking countries where the dominant group consists of native speakers of English, such as Britain, the USA and Australia. The 'outer circle' consists of former colonial countries, where English is used as a second language, among them Ghana, Nigeria, India, etc. The 'expanding circle' consists of countries, in which English is a foreign language and is used mainly for international communication (e.g. Japan, Israel, Scandinavia, etc.).

Phillipson (1992) makes a distinction between the 'dominant' group of the core English speaking countries and the 'dominated' group on the periphery. He argues that the English language was imposed on a number of countries in the periphery (countries outside the 'centre'), and has successfully displaced some of the main languages therein. He claims that the English language, used by the 'dominant' group (countries in the inner circle), deliberately replaced some of the indigenous languages (spoken in some of the former colonial countries) and imposed the English culture that is associated with it. In his view, economic exploitation has been part of linguistic and cultural imperialism.

Phillipson (1992, 1999a) notes that the support of EGL (by people and nations around the world) is not an accidental or a natural result of world forces. Conversely, it has been a deliberate government policy of English speaking countries (such as Britain and the USA) to promote the worldwide use of English for economic and political purposes. Similarly, Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson (1989) maintain that the promotion of English around the world may bring economic and political advantages to the countries promoting the spread of English. They say:

“...it has been British and American government policy since the mid-1950s to establish English as a universal ‘second language’, so as to protect and promote capitalist interests” (p. 63).

Thus, they claim that those who acquire the English language in a situation where it plays a dominant role (in the countries on the periphery in particular) are victims of ‘linguistic imperialism. In some countries in the periphery the process of imperialism has succeeded in replacing the indigenous languages spoken there. Additionally, Phillipson (1992) argues that the spread of English poses cultural and political threats which should be opposed. He maintains that it is important to fight linguistic imperialism, to stop and oppose the spread of English by initiating language planning policies, or by engaging in critical pedagogies.

3.2.2.2. English as a social and international gatekeeper

Another critic of the effects of globalisation forces is Pennycook (1994, 1998, 2000). He also holds the opinion that the spread of English privileges certain groups of people, such as native speakers of English and non-native élites who have had the opportunity to master the language. On the other hand, the special role the English language has achieved may disadvantage others who have less or no opportunity to learn it.

Pennycook (1994, 1998, 2001b) examined possible implications of the spread of English in the world. In his opinion, the global status of English is part of globalisation processes representing an extension of western and American geopolitical dominance over subaltern groups (ethnic and cultural groups or states on the periphery). Such forces of globalisation tend to weaken these groups, nations or states as economic and political entities. He disagrees with the view of language that suggests that it can be free of cultural and political influences and believes that language is never neutral but rather associated with political, cultural and social concerns.

“Language plays a central role in how we understand ourselves and the world, and thus all questions of language control and standardisation have major implications for social relations and the distribution of power. Language is always political and, never neutral” (Pennycook, 2001b: 84).

Pennycook (2001b) considered possible implications of the spread of English within different countries and the ways in which people take up English in education, work positions and in their daily lives. He disagrees with the common belief that English,

bearing an international status, is considered to be neutral and beneficial. In his opinion, English poses a threat to other languages. "In bilingual or multilingual societies, the prevalence of English can easily lead to the disregarding of one or more other languages" (Pennycook, 2001b: 81). In his view, English functions as a gatekeeper to positions of prestige and/or social positions within modern societies.

"With English taking up such an important position in many educational systems around the world, it has become one of the most powerful means of inclusion into or exclusion from further education, employment, or social positions. In many countries, particularly former colonies of Britain, small English speaking elites have continued the same policies of the former colonisers, using access to English language education as a crucial distributor of social prestige and wealth" (Pennycook, 2001b: 81).

Pennycook (1994) points out that "dominant discourses" (p. 23) in EGL seem to ignore larger social, political and economic concerns. Thus, applied linguists and teachers working in English language teaching should accept some of the critical perspectives on the global spread of English and explore the political, ethical, and social understandings of EGL. Pennycook (1994) speaks of a particular discourse of English as an international language (EIL) and states:

"To the extent that this discourse of EIL has permeated much thinking on English language teaching, there is an urgent need to investigate the construction of this discourse and its relationship to English language teaching" (p. 24).

Other opponents of the supposed benefits of English being the world's leading language argue that English, together with technology, will become more and more a tool of social divisiveness and will highlight and differentiate between the economic haves and have-nots.

"Unsubstantiated faith in the supposed benefits of English language education for all may divert precious resources away from more urgent language education for development tasks and ultimately benefit mostly the relatively well-off at the expense of the poorest" (Bruthiaux, 2002: 275).

Critical reactions to the global spread of English include particular perspectives on methods of English language teaching and learning. One example is presented in Canagarajah's (1999) ethnographic work bringing a resistance perspective to the teaching and learning of English in countries in the periphery (the outer circle).

3.2.2.3. The resistance perspective

Canagarajah (1999) addresses the implications of globalisation adopting a 'critical resistance perspective'. His general message is that people should not equate globalisation with greater freedom, that there are dangers in globalisation overtaking the identity and culture of third world countries, and that these communities have concerns about the use of teaching methods developed in the west, their cultural relevance and appropriateness. He argues in favour of the resistance perspective which:

"...provides for the possibility that, in everyday life, the powerless in post-colonial communities may find ways to negotiate, alter, and oppose political structures, and reconstruct their languages, cultures, and identities to their advantage" (Canagarajah, 1999: 3).

In his view the intention is not to reject English, but to "*reconstitute* it in more inclusive, ethical and democratic terms" (p. 3).

Canagarajah (2002) argues that teachers and educators from the periphery should become more sensitive to their local classroom and socio-cultural contexts because there is no longer a one-way flow of expertise from centre to the periphery but the contrary. By designing local methods, local professionals are empowered.

"Periphery teachers ...are freed from thinking that effective/efficient methods come from centers and expertise in the West. ...They are liberated from center expertise to become more sensitive to their local classroom and socio-cultural context" (Canagarajah, 2002: 149).

The above critical voices raise linguistic, educational and economical issues alongside cultural, political and ethical ones. However, it seems that such voices are becoming fewer and weaker in relation to the more widespread perceptions about the spread of

English which discuss advantages or benefits of the global spread of English. Some linguists have argued in favour of the need to reframe the concept of globalisation and to address newer, more relevant issues which pertain to the development of world Englishes (WE) and English for international communication.

3.2.3. A pragmatic approach to EGL

Literature on the effects of the spread of English includes those who hold a more pragmatic approach to EGL. From this position, EGL is not perceived as the ‘Imperial’ language and the reasons for learning English are more practical in nature and run counter to Phillipson’s (1992) argument of ‘Linguistic Imperialism’. Some linguists (Cameron, 2002; Crystal, 1997, 2004) argue that the concept of ‘Linguistic Imperialism’ can be interpreted as acceptable and desirable. It can be viewed as a natural, valuable aspect, neutralising the notion of English being a threat with the idea of “unity in diversity” (Cameron, 2002: 69).

Some social theorists such as Giddens (1990, 2000) argue that globalisation is a fact of life which cannot be ignored. Thus, we should take a positive viewpoint and use the opportunities to engage with new challenges, for purposes of communication and for building new identities and ways of life. “For globalisation is not incidental to our lives today. It is a shift in our very life circumstances. It is the way we now live” (Giddens, 2000, p. 19).

Crystal (1997, 2001) believes that local languages and the linguistic identity they offer must be maintained while, at the same time, access to EGL, widely perceived as the language of opportunity, needs to be promoted. The relationship between the two does not necessarily have to be in opposition. The preferred situation is similar to that of bilingualism: the co-existence of two languages, one of which would be used as the global language shared by the world community providing access to the international scene, with the other being the local, regional language, providing access to local community and identity. This, he says, has brought about the developments of “varieties of English or new Englishes” (Crystal, 1997:131) and creates a situation of an “unprecedented growth in regional varieties” (Crystal, 2001:55). Hybridisation and

diversity of the English language and the development of local varieties have become the norm.

3.2.3.1. English as an international language (EIL) and English as a *lingua franca* (ELF)

New forms of globalisation have developed new norms, in which English is used as a *lingua franca* (ELF) (primarily across the countries of the ‘expanding circle’), or as an ‘international language’ (EIL) for international communication across national and linguistic boundaries (Jenkins, 2006). ELF is used for wider communication by speakers from all levels of society and all walks of life. As such, English has achieved the status of a ‘common language’ and provides exceptional opportunities for mutual understanding between nations and people as well as possibilities for international cooperation and collaboration (Crystal, 2004). From this perspective, ELF strengthens both local and historical identities and facilitates the promotion of international and cultural opportunities.

According to Canagarajah (2006), the expanding circle communities use ELF for everyday communication in business, the media, Internet and more, facilitating movement across borders. Canagarajah (2006) argues that “multilingual speakers don’t seem to defer to inner circle norms when they communicate with each other in English” (p. 23). Furthermore, in view of evident geopolitical changes, a need has arisen to reconfigure the relationship between English varieties and speech communities in the world. Referring to statistics provided by Graddol (1999) and Crystal (1997), which show that the number of English speakers outside the inner circle is now greater than those within, Canagarajah (2006) states:

“In terms of currency of the language, English is more commonly used in multinational contexts by multilingual speakers than in homogeneous contexts by monolingual speakers” (Canagarajah, 2006: 23).

Thus, it appears that English has become a “contact language” (p. 23), serving purposes of contact within intra and international relationships, between different communities, native and non-native English speaking countries alike.

The great motivation for and promotion of the English language worldwide, the constantly growing number of people using English in more places, non-native speakers of English around the world who wish to learn English, and its high status all point towards a 'revolution'. "A 'revolution' is any combination of events which produces a radical shift in consciousness or behaviour over a relatively short period of time, and this is what has happened" (Crystal, 2004: 2-3).

An additional issue in this regard is that any discussion of an emerging global language has to be seen in the political context of global governance. Indeed, linguistic changes in different societies lead to policy statements, linguistic priorities, choices and decisions having to be made. Thus, the linguistic future of any state, whether it wishes to promote English deliberately or not, depends greatly on political decisions, allocation of resources and language planning by the local government.

Graddol (2006) argues that in view of extraordinary changes, which have taken place in the world over the decade, "more people than ever want to learn English" (p. 10). His findings confirm that "English learners are increasing in number and decreasing in age" (p. 10). He further claims that "on the one hand, the availability of English as a global language is accelerating globalisation. On the other, the globalisation is accelerating the use of English" (p. 22).

3.2.4. Forces of globalisation and EYL in Israel

The continuing impact of the spread of English is reflected in everyday life in Israel (see chapter 2). The emerging picture is that people in Israel welcome the English language with all that it represents as well as the historical legacy of the role of English in Israel. They see themselves as part of the global, modern community in which English is the global (or contact) language for intra- and international relationships.

Growth of private English language schools nationwide, the proliferation of English language teaching materials and course-books, the increased use of English words and American slang in the media (T.V, magazines, radio, Internet) are additional effects of the EGL pressure existing in Israel. Social movements and pressure for the promotion of English language learning at an earlier age are one of the significant outcomes of the

spread of English (see chapters 1 and 2), resulting in curriculum innovations and EYL programmes being introduced in schools country-wide. Thus, it can be argued that the pressure of the global spread of English impacts the promotion of EYL at a younger grade level. The two, in combination, act as a powerful force of globalisation. Such forces raise a need to examine different responses to the idea of EYL by various people in society. This study sets out to conduct such examination. The next section presents a review of current research perspectives on EYL and early second/foreign language learning and exposes complexities relating to the topic of EYL.

As was mentioned in chapter 1 (section 1.4), the literature pertaining to EYL refers (for the most part) to a relatively broad range of ages, namely to children between five to ten years of age. The situation is different in the case of EYL in grades 1 and 2, which refers explicitly to children from 5 to 7 years of age, who are, by definition, much younger. The term ‘early’ is used here as a general term and refers to young learners of various ages under the age of 10 (and not specifically to children in grades 1 and 2).

3.3. Age effects and EYL, second language acquisition (SLA) and foreign language acquisition (FLA)

3.3.1. English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL)

Most of the studies of the effects of age on language learning have been conducted on English as a second language (ESL) learners. These are situations, in which learners are exposed to the second language (SL) not only within their classroom but outside the classroom in their daily natural environment. Such situations are common amongst immigrants to foreign lands.

Foreign language settings are quite different in that the learners are exposed to the foreign language in the classroom settings only, where the input in that language is provided almost solely by the teacher. This distinction is made for two reasons: a. research conducted on age effects and SLA cannot necessarily be drawn upon in situations of FLA (see discussion in Garcia Mayo & Lecumberri, 2003; Hyltenstam & Abrahamsson, 2001; Marinova-Todd *et al.*, 2000); b. in the context of this research,

which is conducted in Israel, despite the widespread use of English in Israel (as presented in chapter 2), English is considered a foreign language and therefore any arguments on age effects and SLA should be viewed bearing this point in mind.

A considerable body of research has been conducted on age factors and language learning in bilingual or second language contexts (for a comprehensive overview see Singleton & Ryan, 2004). A variety of opposing views on the subject range from the position that young learners are in general more efficient and effective second language learners than adults, to a contradictory position saying that older learners are more effective and more efficient learners.

3.3.1.1. Age and the critical period hypothesis (CPH)

The critical period hypothesis (CPH) is the notion that language is best learned during the early years of childhood (Scovel, 1988, 2000). The term critical period (CP) is used to refer to a special bio-programming period when language acquisition can take place naturally and effortlessly, however, after a certain age, the brain is no longer able to process language this way (Ellis, 1986). Academic discussions on the concept of the CP and the existence of the CPH have generated on-going research ranging from emphasis on performance, attainment, production and age of onset, to issues pertaining to motivation, social, psychological and environmental factors.

Some researchers in recent years have agreed with the existence of a CP and have confirmed that there is a maturational limit (usually set around puberty) beyond which it is impossible to acquire a SL (or certain aspects of it) to native-like proficiency. For example, Scovel (1988, 2000) claims that learners who begin to be exposed to a second language after the age of 12 cannot ever “pass themselves off as native speakers phonologically” (Scovel, 1988: 185).

Supporters of the CP claim that experiments have shown that in young learners both hemispheres of the brain are responsible for the language function, while at puberty the left hemisphere takes over, which makes language acquisition and learning more difficult. This lateralisation process may be responsible for learning differences between children and adults.

Current thinking accepts the idea of a critical period, but researchers in the field are inclined to rename it a ‘sensitive’ period because of substantial evidence from children who fail to achieve native-like performance as opposed to adults who do. Indeed, analysis of research to date suggests that there is a linear process of deterioration, starting from as young as one year, with no particular ‘cut-off’ point (Heyltenstam & Abrahamson, 2001). This process of deterioration may be at least partly counteracted by social and environmental factors.

Other explanations of age effects on SLA pertain to cross-linguistic, motivational, educational and cognitive factors (Garcia Mayo & Lecumberri, 2003). For example, in a study which examined older beginners who achieve native-like proficiency, it was found that they were characterised by very high levels of motivation (Marinova-Todd *et al.*, 2000).

Furthermore, there is reliable research (see section 3.3.1.2), as well as anecdotal evidence that in an immigrant situation, learners who begin learning a second language (SL) at a young age achieve, on average, native-like levels in that second language. Conversely, adults, on average, do not achieve this level. Social and environmental factors, the amount of time of exposure, motivation and learning conditions may account for at least some of the reasons for this argument.

Age related research in SLA draws on conflicting theoretical perspectives. These derive from the complexities involved in defining the critical age for second/foreign language acquisition (SLA/FLA) as there is evidence both for and against the CPH. In the following section I present a short summary of arguments for and against ‘early’ (generally, relating to pupils under ten years of age) second/foreign language acquisition. This is not a comprehensive summary but one which presents points of contestation highlighting the topic of age and SLA as an unresolved question.

3.3.1.2. Arguments in favour of early second/foreign language learning

The basic argument in favour of early second/foreign language learning is the evidence in support of the existence of the critical period for learning (Johnson & Newport, 1989). Based upon the premise of the existence of the CP are claims that young children are faster and better acquirers of a new language. Supporters further claim that children can

acquire more than one language at a time and transfer the generic skills and strategies needed for language communication (Vos, 1998).

Studies of age and foreign language learning (Curtain & Pesola, 1994; Rosenbusch, 1995) indicate that early foreign language learning results in cognitive benefits, gains in academic achievements, and positive attitudes toward diversity. Other studies have shown a rise in self-esteem and motivation on the part of young learners (Spolsky & Shohamy, 1999). It has been argued that early language programmes are useful not only for language attainment but also, in the long run, for the development of self-confidence as language learners and contribute to the increase of tolerance and motivation towards language learning. These aspects are rarely considered as they are difficult to operationalise and quantify. The topic of motivation and self confidence should be followed up years after early exposure is over (Nikolov, 2002).

In addition to the increase in the young learners' motivation and positive attitudes, an early start may later ensure good proficiency. Length of exposure may influence second or foreign language acquisition in a favourable way: the longer the exposure to language learning, the better (Nikolov, 2002).

The question of accent serves as an additional argument in favour of early beginning of second/foreign language learning. Studies appear to show an advantage for younger second language beginners in accent and phonological proficiency. For example, young children learning English as a foreign language show more accuracy in their pronunciation of English than older learners (Singleton & Ryan, 2004). Other studies of immigrants also show that, on the whole, the degree of authenticity of second language accent correlates with the age of arrival to the new country, with younger arrivals usually outperforming older arrivals (Singleton & Ryan, 2004).

Beyond linguistic and psycholinguistic aspects of the debate, there seem to be equally important issues pertaining to cognitive, psychological and cultural issues (Brewster *et al.*, 2002). From the psychological aspect, early exposure to a second/foreign language within the school system has the advantage of providing children with self-confidence and positive attitudes with regard to the foreign language being learned at the time of the study (Vilke, 1998).

Studies have shown that bilingualism in primary school promotes cognitive development and has wide-ranging social advantages (Mohanty, 1994). Similarly, it was found that primary school children studying a foreign language achieved relatively higher scores in basic skills such as mathematics and reading compared to children who did not study a foreign language (Rafferty, 1986). Other studies have claimed that early exposure encourages cognitive flexibility and verbal creativity (Lambert *et al.*, 1973).

From the social and cultural point of view, it is argued by researchers that learning another language allows children to extend their understanding of people beyond their dominant culture. Furthermore, it is claimed that with recent developments in technology and the Internet, early language learning (English in particular) would duly prepare pupils for participation in the global community.

The above position, that success in second language learning is inversely related to age, coincides with the popular belief in ‘the younger the better’ (TYTB) axiom. Although some researchers claim that this folk belief does not provide a good basis for research in second language acquisition, the familiarity of this popular belief cannot be ignored. Indeed, such anecdotal experience must constitute evidence of some kind: “Science has frequently found substance in what was previously stigmatised as unscientific popular wisdom” (Singleton & Ryan, 2004: 61).

3.3.1.3. Arguments against early second/foreign language learning

Arguments against early second/foreign language learning focus on research studies which provide evidence that older learners learn more efficiently than younger learners. A number of studies have shown that given similar time and exposure, older learners learn a second language substantially faster than younger learners (Marinova-Todd *et al.*, 2000).

Marinova-Todd *et al.* (2000) further claim that children who study a foreign language for only a year or two in elementary school show no long-term gains: “They need several years of continued instruction to achieve even a modest proficiency” (p. 28). They conclude by saying:

“We hope this review of thinking about the critical period for L2 learning will dispel the persistent myths that children learn more quickly than adults and that adults are incapable of achieving native-like L2 proficiency” (p. 28).

Studies providing evidence that there is no clear cut-off point for language learning are also reported in Lightbown & Spada (1999) and Bialystok & Hatuka (1994). Similarly, Dekeyser (2003) argues that: “Children learn better and adults learn faster” (p, 335). This means that, according to Dekeyser (2003), young children learn languages implicitly, without explicit explanations or cognitive/metacognitive strategies, whereas adults can use cognitive and metacognitive strategies and benefit from explicit explanations.

Recent research of age and the acquisition of English as a foreign language (EFL) (Garcia Mayo & Lecumberri, 2003) addressed issues such as EYL and attainment, length of exposure and grammar, the role of pronunciation in written proficiency and learning strategies. However, none of these studies reached any significant conclusions on the benefits of EYL.

Indeed, there is a lack of studies showing that foreign language instruction in younger grades achieves linguistic gains compared with additional time invested in math, science, music, art, or even basic first language instruction. Thus, decisions to introduce foreign language instruction in elementary grades should be weighed against the costs to other components of the school curriculum.

Opponents argue that older learners are more efficient learners and that time and valuable teaching resources should be allotted to them then. It is further suggested that administrators and parents should not encourage foreign language instruction at a young age on the assumption that early foreign language teaching will be most effective. Furthermore, they should be realistic as to what can be expected from younger learners (Marinova-Todd *et al.*, 2000; McLaughlin, 1992).

Studies have shown that, although most young children can ultimately attain native-like levels of language mastery, they need a vast amount of time, exposure and opportunities for interaction in order to do so – as in the case of immigrants or any situation where children spend a substantial part of their waking time in a second language environment. However, in view of the different forms of globalisation taking place worldwide (see

section 3.1) and the developments of varieties of ‘Englishes’ taking different shapes and forms, it seems that native-like level of language mastery may not be a realistic or necessary goal in EYL teaching and learning.

The topic of EYL has provoked opposing reactions amongst linguists in Israel. In view of recent developments formally recommending the introduction of English in grades 1 and 2 nationwide (see chapter 2), the reactions presented below include opinions on the new initiative as well as general viewpoints vis-à-vis EYL.

3.3.2. Reactions to EYL in Israel

Principals, politicians and parents argue that exposing pupils to English at a young age coincides with modern educational views which claim that preparing pupils for the modern world and global society (where English is the global language) is the main goal. Their decisions seem to be driven by the commonly held belief ‘the younger the better’. In opposition, English teachers and some language experts in academia argue against this belief. In their expert opinion EYL in grades 1 and 2 is a populist movement following social trends and pressure. It is, therefore, a matter of unfair distribution of resources in order to be popular among people in society. Conversely, more English teaching hours should be allotted to older pupils who are, in their professional opinion, more efficient language learners.

3.3.2.1. Opponents of EYL

Olshtain (Kotik & Olshtain, 1997; Olshtain, 2004; Olshtain & Kotik, 2000) is one of the objectors to EYL. In her opinion, children do not acquire languages better when they are young and early age provides no advantages in learning a foreign language. Olshtain argues that TYTB is a myth and believes that learning English at the stage when the child is just acquiring first language reading skills (in grades 1 and 2) might be damaging. However, she is aware of the fact that this is a popular trend in society which cannot be stopped. Nevertheless, she states: “It is best to begin teaching English only in grade 4, after the children have acquired the Hebrew language” (Olshtain, 2004: 5, translated from Hebrew original by me).

One other opponent is Ur who argues that in the context of learning EFL over a period of 12 years, this long-term, drip-feed process of learning English is useless. Thus EYL is a

“fallacy based on wishful thinking and faulty assumptions” (Ur, cited in Read, 2003: 5). Furthermore, Ur believes it is a populist decision based on political reasons. Ur (2003) states:

“Unfortunately, English is being introduced earlier and earlier, because of the popular assumption that younger is better. This is happening all over the world. It’s the ‘laymen’ who believe this, who have the votes; the people who make the decisions want to be elected; hence the decision to bring English early is purely political. It has little to do with the good of the students themselves” (p. 66).

Ur (2003) concludes: “I would say: start English in fourth grade, and then increase the number of hours of English in higher classes to five or six hours a week. But then, I’m not a politician. I’m only a teacher” (p. 66).

3.3.2.2. Proponents of EYL

Conversely, Shohamy & Inbar (2006) and Bejerano (2005) are identified as proponents of EYL. With regards to the question ‘Is younger better?’ Shohamy and Inbar (2006) argue that this question is no longer the important issue in the discussion because English is already taught in schools and learned by young children. In her opinion, young children are exposed to English via television (with subtitles rather than dubbing being the norm), new technology and the Internet, and thus arrive in grade 1 actually knowing a lot of English. It is therefore understandable that parents and children expect to continue learning English in grades 1 and 2 in school.

Furthermore, additional psychological benefits of starting young have been supported by a longitudinal study conducted in Israel by Shohamy (1995) the findings of which show that young learners benefit from an early start with regard to self-esteem and positive attitudes towards the language.

Similarly, Bejerano (2004) supports early English instruction in schools and advocates the use of children’s storybooks and visual aids in planning EYL programmes. In her arguments supporting EYL she refers to Tucker (2001), who stresses the need for appropriate learning conditions such as:

“...explicit or implicit policy and language planning, the existence of a well developed curriculum supported by written materials, the availability of appropriate materials, trained professional teachers, as well as the availability and use of appropriate assessment procedures” (p. 597).

Bejerano (2004) claims that young children learning English are highly motivated and, when provided with appropriate teaching and learning materials, show quite impressive results and attainment.

3.3.3. Conclusion

The existence of a critical (or ‘sensitive’) period, although reasonably well supported by research, does not lead logically to the conclusion that children should begin English at a young age in schools. Immersion in the second language in kindergartens or in primary schools (such as maximum or total exposure) can be expected to produce good learning of the second language in general and accent and pronunciation in particular. However, an early start in schools is not expected to produce substantial learning or improvement in ultimate achievement when compared to a later start.

Available evidence does not firmly support the hypothesis that younger second/foreign language learners are generally more efficient and successful learners than older language learners. However, it would also be wrong to conclude that such learners are generally more efficient and successful than younger learners. There is still insufficient empirical evidence to justify the expanding demand for early second/foreign language learning with evidence of how and to what level children develop proficiency in the language, and how realistic the aims are of many current innovations for teaching EYL.

The above overview has shown existing controversies on the issue of age and second/foreign language learning. Many additional parameters are involved in this debate some of which are social, cultural and psychological. TYTB axiom is popular and accepted world-wide, with great impact, regardless of research-based recommendations. Indeed, the debate over the CPH seems marginal in comparison with the popular axiom which seems to be the most widespread and universal argument in favour of EYL. This strong folk belief is indeed a common ‘act of faith’ that younger children learn languages better and more easily than older children. Such a commonsense assumption is popular

amongst people in society and is typically used by parents. In view of forces of globalisation, the growing spread of EGL worldwide and the impact thereof on the continuous demand for EYL, it seems that the pertinent questions to be addressed are: “How do people in Israel (parents in particular) rationalise and explain the trend for EYL?”, “How do they conceptualise the reasons for their interest in EYL in grades 1 and 2?” and “what are the dominant forces behind such moves?”

3.4. Summary

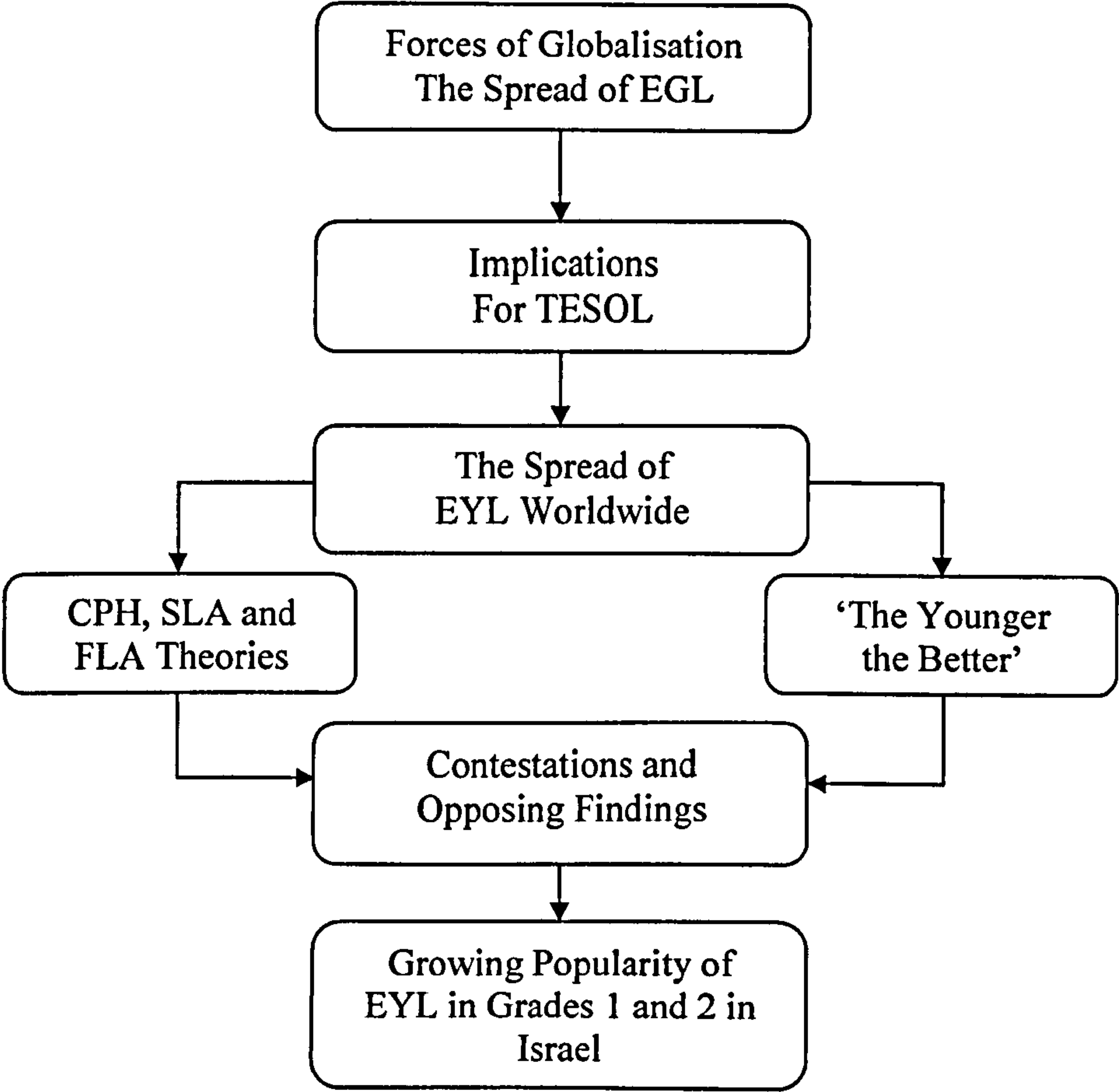
This overview has illuminated the global dominance of English which has led to the great enthusiasm for EYL programmes in the world and to the promotion of EYL in grades 1 and 2 in Israel. The perennial question of the optimal age for starting foreign language learning is still unanswered, while the common folk belief ‘the younger the better’ seems to dictate the norm.

This outline has highlighted the need for a study which brings to the fore socio-cultural perspectives on the topic of EYL for the purpose of exploring the reasons driving the promotion of EYL in grades 1 and 2 in Israel. Such a study is timely in view of the lack of research pertaining to socio-cultural perspectives of the EYL phenomenon. Adopting a critical approach to this investigation will enable the exploration of implicit issues which have been naturalised by everyday discourse and social practices.

In this chapter I have presented and discussed the literature on both the global context and the spread of EGL and the interconnected topic of EYL. Figure 1.1 below is a graphic representation of the two interconnected topics.

In the next chapter I present the theoretical framework of critical theory (CT), discourse theory (DT) and critical discourse analysis (CDA). This will provide the conceptual framework for this study.

Figure 3.1. Forces of Globalisation and EYL



Chapter 4

Theoretical framework

4.1. Introduction

This study has raised a need to examine different responses to the idea of EYL by various people in society. It has set out to conduct such examination by using critical discourse analysis to investigate D/discourses mobilised on the topic. In this chapter I will outline and discuss the theoretical framework of critical discourse analysis locating it within critical, qualitative, social research in education. This outline is needed in order to establish both the theoretical and analytical role of critical discourse analysis as it is used in this study. From the theoretical perspective it is set within the intersection of critical theory (CT) and theories of discourse with the aim of answering questions regarding the relationship between language, society and education. From the analytical perspective, critical discourse analysis provides tools with which to examine and understand social phenomena whilst bringing social theories and linguistic theories into dialogue.

4.2. The organisation of this chapter

At the outset I will present the notion of ‘discourse’ and discourse theory (DT) with emphasis on discourse as language-in-use and as a social practice and the notion of ‘Discourse’ as framed in this study. Then I will present and discuss the notion of discourse drawing on Foucault’s (1972) critical theory of discourse, which has provided a significant theoretical framework for a range of critical and post-structuralist work in the study of discourse analysis and socio-cultural phenomena. Next, I will present and examine the theoretical orientations of a variety of approaches to critical discourse analysis, a growing field in social qualitative research (Fairclough, 2003; Gee, 2005; Luke, 1995; Pennycook, 2001b; Rogers, 2004; van Dijk, 2001; Wodak & Meyer, 2001).

Particular attention will be paid to the reasons for choosing Gee’s theoretical framework (1996, 1999, 2004, 2005), which I have found suitable for this study. As critical discourse analysis is both a theory and a method, the implications thereof will be discussed leading towards a version of analysis, which will enable the systematic exploration of the discourse on the topic of EYL in grades 1 and 2 in Israel.

4.3. Discourse

4.3.1. Formalist and functionalist paradigms of discourse

Different understandings of the notion of discourse fall under two main linguistic paradigms. The paradigms provide theoretical frameworks and different assumptions regarding the general nature of language, the goals of linguistics in the theoretical or applied sense and methods of studying language. Schiffrin (1994) presents two theoretical paradigms for the term discourse: the ‘formalistic’ or ‘structural’ paradigm, which views discourse as ‘sentences’ and places emphasis on the structure of language, and the “functionalist” (Schiffrin, 1994: 20) paradigm which views discourse as “language-in-use” (p. 20).

4.3.1.1. Formalist (structuralistic) paradigm

Linguists who place emphasis on the form of language regard language primarily as a mental phenomenon and study language as an autonomous system (Schiffrin, 1994). Along similar lines, Cameron (2001) notes: “The most straightforward definition of *discourse* is the one often found in textbooks for students of linguistics: ‘language above the sentence’” (p. 10). Cameron (2001) refers to Stubbs (1983), who defined discourse as “Language above the sentence or above the clause...(in) larger units, such as conversational exchanges or written texts...language in use in social contexts” (p. 1).

The word ‘above’ signifies that discourse entails larger language units than simply one sentence and that discourse is viewed as a level of structure higher than a single sentence. Viewing discourse as ‘a unit above the sentence’ represents a classic definition of discourse as derived from formalist assumptions, whereby the focus of the analysis is on the ways different units of language function in relation to each other. This approach disregards the functional relations between discourse and the context of which discourse is a part (van Dijk, 1985).

4.3.1.2. The functionalist paradigm

The functionalist view of discourse (e.g. Halliday, 1989) regards language first and foremost as a social phenomenon. The notion of discourse is regarded as the articulation of language in systematic ways by different people in society in particular contexts. It is taking the viewpoint of discourse as ‘language-in-use’ and, thus, the analysis of language

use cannot be independent of the analysis of the purposes and functions of language in human life. Discourse is therefore interdependent with social life and analyses of discourse intersect with meaning, activities, and systems outside of itself (Schiffrin, 1994).

This notion is further echoed by other linguists in the ways they typically use and refer to the term discourse. The following examples present a range of definitions of discourse with emphasis on its function as language-in-use:

“The study of discourse is the study of any aspect of language use” (Fasold, 1990: 65).

Similarly, Brown & Yule (1983) state:

“The analysis of discourse is, necessarily, the analysis of language in use. As such, it cannot be restricted to the description of linguistic forms independent of the purposes or functions which these forms are designed to serve in human affairs” (p. 1).

However, the notion is used not only in the ways linguists typically use discourse to mean ‘language-in-use’. There is a different understanding of the idea of discourse referred to by discourse analysts as *beyond* language-in-use, reflecting the influence of the French thinker and cultural historian Michel Foucault (1972).

Jaworski & Coupland (1999) note:

“There is a large body of opinion that stresses that discourse is *beyond* language in use. Discourse is language use relative to social, political, and cultural formations – it is language reflecting social order but also language shaping social order, and shaping individuals’ interaction with society... discourse is an inescapably important concept for understanding society and human responses to it, as well as for understanding language itself” (p. 3).

The notion of discourse/s and the theory of discourse and knowledge as conceptualised by Foucault (1972) have been tremendously influential in the interpretation and

understanding of the term in sociolinguistic research. In the following section I will present the Foucaultian notion of discourse and discuss the implication thereof on critical (as opposed to non-critical) approaches to discourse analysis. I will then address the notion of Discourse (with a capital 'D') set apart from discourse as theorised by Gee (1996, 1999, 2005) and the meaning thereof in this study. Thereafter, I will present and discuss critical discourse analysis as a theory and a method, while marking key common tenets and differences amongst the various approaches. Areas of contestation and similarities between researchers working in post-structuralist and critical discourse analysis approaches will be presented.

4.3.2. Foucaultian notion of 'discourses'

According to Foucault (1972), discourses are "practices which systematically form the objects of which they speak" (p. 49). The idea of discourses (in the plural) is that they are systematically organised sets of meanings, used and manipulated to construct knowledge, identity and social relations. People, authorities and institutions exercise power and social control through discourse by constructing truths about the social world. Discourse is therefore socially constructed in that it defines, constructs and positions human subjects. Thus, discourse is constructive and constitutive and becomes a powerful part of everyday life establishing, maintaining or resisting power relations in society.

In his theorisation, Foucault (1972) wished to understand what were considered 'natural' constructs in society and how these constructs are a product of power/knowledge relationships. The notions of power/knowledge dominance and resistance is expressed by Foucault (1972) in terms of *regimes of truths*, which are sets of rules, statements, and understandings that define what is true at any given time or what counts as truth. Foucault (1972) holds a critical view of the role which certain kinds of knowledge have played in modern Western societies. He claims that widespread assumptions regarding aspects of social life can be misleading. Thus, what seems to be understood or known as truth or reality, should be challenged and turned upside down, to be critically examined, in the search for a different truth or another reality. In other words, claims to authority, social 'truths' and everyday social life represented by discourse are never neutral or innocent and we, as members of society, should not assume that the intentions of particular institutions are neutral or innocent. Foucault's (1972) position is that

discourses, therefore, must be analysed with a critical perspective, setting them within particular socio-political contexts.

Foucault's notion of 'knowledge' pertains to different kinds of social, cultural, political or other resources people draw on (or use) in their daily lives to understand everyday reality. He argues that people draw on a variety of contents present in the media, conveyed in everyday communication and in the workplace and include personal histories and experiences. Using such resources (and theories) people formulate their own understanding of truths and articulate them in discourse.

4.3.2.1. Critical approaches to discourse drawing on Foucault

Foucault's (1972) theorisation of discourse contributed to the post-structuralist movement, which provided the theoretical framework for many discourse theorists working from a post-structural or a critical tradition. Critical approaches to discourse, which draw on Foucault, view discourse as a form of knowledge and view language as a social practice. They emphasise the contextually dependent nature of truth claims and show how power-knowledge and truth claims are developed in relation to particular circumstances. The following are examples of interpretations of Foucault's theory which have contributed to my understanding of the notion of 'discourse' and have informed my own work on discourse analysis in this study.

Luke (1995) explains Foucault's notion of power/knowledge as follows:

"These knowledge-power relationships are achieved, according to Foucault, by construction of 'truths' about the social and natural world, truths that become the taken-for-granted definitions and categories by which governments rule and monitor their populations and by which members of communities define themselves and others" (pp. 8-9).

Critical discourse analysts examine and challenge these truths by studying the way language, in the form of discourses, can serve as a form of regulation and domination in social life. The notion of discourse is articulated by Kress (1985, 1989) as the way people use language to act, interact and construct meaning in their daily lives. This systematically-organised language marks out identifiable systems of meaning, fields of

knowledge and beliefs which are found within the larger system and therefore do not exist in isolation. Here, too, the interconnectedness of power-knowledge and truth-claims are highlighted.

“Discourses are systematically-organised sets of statements which give expression to the meanings and values of an institution. Beyond that they define, describe and delimit what it is possible to say and not possible to say (and by extension-what is possible to do or not to do) with respect to the area of concern of that institution, whether marginally or centrally. A discourse provides a set of possible statements about a given area, and organises and gives structure to the manner in which a particular topic, object process is to be talked about in that it provides descriptions, rules, permissions and prohibitions of social and individual actions” (Kress 1985:6, 7).

Drawing on Foucault, Fairclough’s (1989, 1992a, 1995, 2001, 2003) critical theorisation of discourse maintains that language, in the form of discourses, serves as a form of regulation, domination and power in society. Society is organised and regulated by power which governs what can be said, by whom and under what conditions. Fairclough (2001) states: “Discourse is, for me, more than just language in use: it is language in use, whether speech or writing, seen as a type of social practice” (p. 18).

Thus, according to Fairclough (2001), discourse represents a dialectical conception of language and society whereby “language is a part of society; linguistic phenomena *are* social phenomena of a special sort, and social phenomena *are* (in part) linguistic phenomena” (p. 19).

Fairclough (2001) argues that linguistic phenomena are social phenomena in a sense that “whenever people speak or listen or write or read, they do so in ways which are determined socially and have social effects” (p. 19). Thus, language and society partially constitute one another. The analysis of language as an ‘autonomous’, ‘independent’ system (a viewpoint held by the formalistic paradigm), is therefore not very meaningful. Fairclough (1992a) claims that discourse has three functions: “Three dimensions of the social are distinguished – knowledge, social relations, and social identity” (p. 8).

Rogers (2004) reviews varied positions and definitions of *discourse* as provided by different linguists (Brown & Yule, 1983; Fairclough, 1992a; Gee, 1996; Kress, 1985; Stubbs, 1983). Her theorisation pertains mainly to discourse and critical discourse analysis in educational frameworks and critical literacy. She claims that within such frameworks discourse is not merely a reflection of social contexts but constructs and is constructed by contexts.

“Discourse is never just a product, but a set of consumptive, productive, distributive, and reproductive processes that is in relation to the social world” (Rogers, 2004: 5).

Also in the field of educational-related theory of discourse, (and critical discourse analysis) Gee’s (1996, 1999, 2004, 2005) theory of language and the distinction he makes between Discourse and discourse (see section 3.3) has been particularly important for education researchers in the United States. Influenced by Foucaultian thought and critical theory, Gee (1996, 1999, 2004, 2005) also holds the viewpoint that D/discourse is not merely a pattern of social interaction but rather is always ideological, social, political and affected by power relations. For him also, D/discourses are constitutive and therefore they construct, maintain and transform social practices. Gee’s (1996, 1999, 2005) social theory of D/discourse is characterised by setting apart big ‘D’ and lower case ‘d’ discourse.

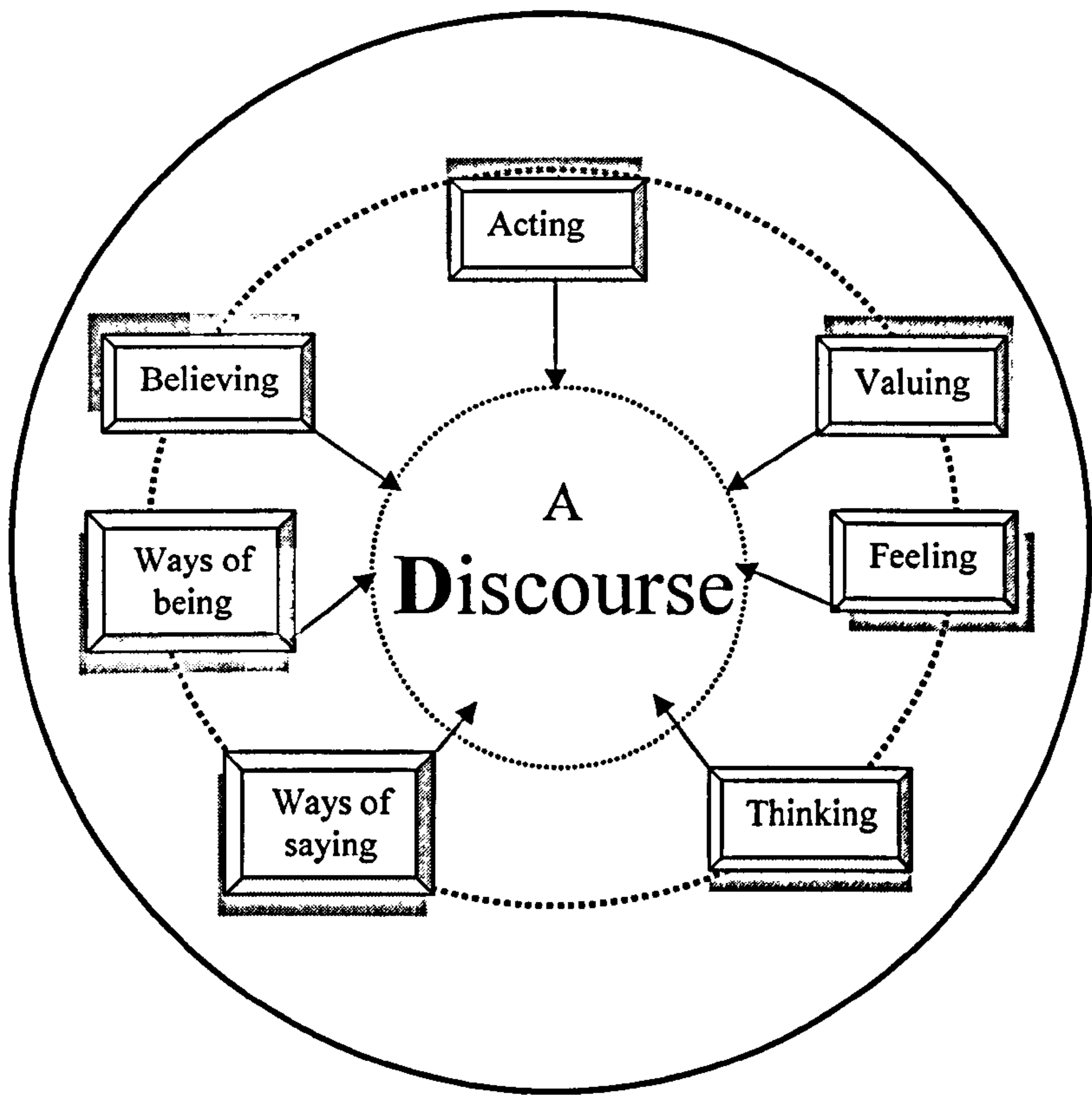
With reference to Gee’s theory of D/discourse, Rogers *et al.* (2005) state: “The important thing to keep in mind about Discourses (both big and little d) is that they are social and political and have histories of participation that are saturated by power relations” (p. 30). In this study, Gee’s (1999, 2005) theorisation of D/discourse is adopted to examine circulating discourses on EYL. I will now discuss the notion of Discourse as used in this study.

4.3.3. Discourse and *discourse*

For Gee (1999, 2004, 2005), lower case ‘d’ discourse refers only to linguistic elements, utterances, words, sentences, language bits and grammar, “Language-in-use or stretches of language (like conversations or stories)” (Gee 2005: 26), and how these are used ‘on-site’ in the action of speaking and interacting. However, Gee (2005) argues that knowledge, activities and identities are not constructed through discourse alone. Rather, they are enacted through “*who* we are and *what* we are doing” (Gee 2005: 26), which involves much more than just language.

On the other hand, what he calls Discourse with capital ‘D’ is the melding together of language-in-use (little ‘d’ discourse) and non-language issues such as thinking, feeling, believing, valuing, acting and using various sorts of objects or symbols that are associated with discourse (see figure 4.1). Discourses include the ways people use discourse to enact specific identities as members of a socially meaningful group.

Figure 4.1: Discourse and discourse (Gee 2005)



Little **d** discourse (the language bits) and big **D** Discourse (language bits integrated with ways of representing and being while using language) are constitutive and work together to construct, maintain and transform interactions. The notion of **Discourse** is also used by Gee (2005) as one of the six tools of analysis (tools of inquiry) he offers for conducting systematic critical discourse analysis. On the basis of this notion Gee (2005) presents a theory and method for studying how language is recruited “on site to enact specific social activities and social identities” (p. 1). Gee’s theoretical framework is presented in section 8 of this chapter.

4.3.4. Discourse as framed in this study

The notion of **Discourse** as representing and encompassing the integration of language, actions, interactions and ways of thinking, believing and acting plays a significant part in this study. Indeed, the analysis of the data (Chapter 7) will draw heavily on this notion which is a central element of Gee’s (2005) theoretical framework. In the analysis process I will be looking at the ways individuals choose and use their words and phrases (and describe their actions) for constituting themselves in the act of speaking and doing. I will be examining the ways people use language to enact ‘who-they-are-doing-what’.

Thus, **Discourse** is framed in this study as regulated ways of speaking and acting, which define and produce knowledge, identity and social relations, thereby influencing forms of social practices and shaping the topic of EYL. Conversely, **Discourse** is also seen as produced by social practices and shaped by them. The notion of **D/discourse** will be used in this study as a lens for observing, clarifying and magnifying language practices and the socially situated identity people take on or seek to have vis-à-vis the topic of EYL.

4.3.5. Discourse models

In this study, I will be drawing heavily on the concept of Discourse models (DM) also used as cultural models (Gee, 2005). This term is used to describe conscious or unconscious theories existing in people’s minds, used to help them understand situations in everyday life. These pre-formulated understandings of socio-cultural truths or realities are sometimes simplified, generalised or stereotyped in view of people’s local context and situated meaning.

People rely on their everyday practices and experiences to help them adopt, resist or construe relevant Discourse models, which are, in most cases, simply a representation of their perspectives or understandings of situations in everyday life. Discourse models, implicit or explicit, also exist in resources which are available to people through the media, written and spoken materials, social and other interactions, all of which are part of daily life and social practices. The notion of DM, used also as a tool for conducting discourse analysis, will be revisited in chapter 6, section 3.1.2.

Prior to presenting Gee's (1999, 2005) approach to D/discourse analysis and to discussing other approaches to critical discourse analysis, I wish to expand on the relationship between discourse and identity (Gee 1999; Norton Peirce, 1995). I stress the need for a close examination of the ways in which D/discourses frame and shape people's identity and vice versa.

In section 4 below I present the terms subject position, investment and Bourdieu's (1991, 1999) notion of cultural capital. I discuss the ways these concepts pertain to this study and address the need for combining them with the critical discourse analysis framework offered in this study.

4.4. Identity, subject position and investment

Discursive practices both have the power to shape people's identity and provide a resource for identity construction. According to Gee (2005), identity is one of the seven "areas of reality" or "building tasks" (p. 11) (see section 8.1.3) people construct in and through discourse, when using language. People take on various situated identities in different social situations and therefore identity is not a stable internal state of being, but socially constructed through discourse, changeable and flexible. Thus emphasis is placed on the notion of '*who is-doing-what*' posing the question of "who you are when you speak or write and what are you doing?" (Gee 2005: 22). Gee further explains: "What I mean by a 'who' is a *socially situated identity*, the 'kind of person' one is seeking to be and enact here-and-now" (p. 22).

Similarly, Norton Peirce (1995) and Norton, (1997, 2000) addressed the complex qualities of the notion of identity and claims that identity is socially constructed through

discourse, and must be understood with reference to large and often unequal social structures, which are produced and reproduced in everyday social interactions. Thus, from this viewpoint, people take up different subject positions (see explanation below) and different identities within different situations.

Norton (1997) argues that identity is: “How people understand their relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how people understand their possibilities for the future” (p. 410).

Another way of relating to the notion of identity and inter-personal relations is by using the terms subjectivity and subject position (Davies & Harrè, 1990; 1992; Norton, 1997; Norton Peirce, 1995; Pennycook, 2001a) mainly associated with post-modern and post-structuralist theories. The notion of subjectivity refers to the ways in which people’s identity is formed through discourse and is never objective or single, but rather changing and multiple. Social and cultural concerns are interlinked and people’s identities are produced in the dynamic relation between some previously given categories of identity and the different subject positions they take up through and by discourse (Duff & Uchida, 1997; Norton Peirce, 1995). This notion draws on Foucault (1972), who argued that human subjects (and subject positions) are constructed through discursive practices. For example, ‘the underprivileged’, ‘the unemployed’ and other ‘titles’ are products of modern, educational, social and economic discourses.

Subjectivity refers to the sense of self, a sense of being a person, and subject position is the opportunities provided in a discourse for being that person. It represents the possibilities for self-hood or socially recognisable ways of being that exist within a discourse. This notion captures the idea that people draw on a range of discourses which are available to them, through which they recognise themselves, to form (or assume) their subject positions. Subject positions can be created or changed, within and through language, through the construction of new discourses, which may be adapted or appropriated by other people. Thus, subject positioning may be created or transformed through discourse, depending on the way people position themselves or get positioned by others.

4.4.1. Cultural capital and investment

In this study I will be drawing on the concept of cultural capital or linguistic capital developed by Bourdieu (1977, 1982, 1991). Bourdieu's theory of linguistic capital means that language has a social value in society (according to the symbolic importance of the language) and thus has the power of attraction. According to this perspective, language that is most valued by individuals, as an asset of linguistic capital or symbolic power, (the power it symbolises or that is attached to it) is also the one that seems to differentiate the privileged from the underprivileged people in society.

Bourdieu (1982) argues that from the earliest stages of school education, the importance of linguistic styles and norms are determined by the discourse of the teacher. This discourse exemplifies and establishes which language variant is prestigious; it dictates what deserves to be transmitted - what and who are eligible for transmission. In other words, the symbolic power of language is drawn from the social context and social interaction. Dominant, socially powerful perceptions and norms structure social reality, thereby controlling and making the world.

Drawing on Bourdieu's (1977) concept, the notion of cultural capital relates to types of cultural resources such as language, education, status, friendships, knowledge etc, as opposed to material resources such as capital and money. Thus, in this study the term refers to patterns of knowledge created in people's minds with relation to specific sets of social forms, whereby some forms of cultural capital enjoy higher value than others.

Norton Peirce's (1995) theorisation of subjectivity and investment draws on the economic metaphor of cultural capital (Bourdieu 1977, 1991; Gee 2005). Norton Peirce's (1995) concept of investment is related to people's desire to increase the value of their cultural capital in a particular linguistic market. This notion is used for the most part in the context of language learning as a substitute for the idea of motivation.

Norton (1997) argues that when language learners 'invest' in the activity of learning a language, they are actively building their social identity with relation to the changing world. They are 'being and acting' language learners. "Investment, then, is not a fixed

personality trait, but a construct that attempts to capture the relationship of the learner to the larger, changing, social world” (Norton 1997: 410).

While this concept essentially pertains to motivation, learning and language learners, it is the relationship between the notion of ‘investment’ as part of classroom practices (and /or educational initiatives) and the “larger, changing social world” (p. 410) which is significant in this study. In other words, I would like to draw on this notion and suggest that investment is a construct that plays a significant role not only in the context of the language learner but also in the larger social context of social practices, educational initiatives, social structures, global and socio-political trends in the wider societal context.

Investment is a theoretical construct which captures people’s beliefs, ideologies and position (how people position themselves and get recognised by others) with relation to the EYL phenomenon and the wider societal levels. On the basis of this notion, I argue that discursive practices should be examined for the ways they shape people’s identities, and are in turn shaped by them. Employing a critical approach to this examination will enable the description and understanding of natural and accepted beliefs pertaining to EYL in Israel.

In light of the above, I will now present critical discourse analysis as theory and method and discuss different approaches thereto. This overview will serve as background in order to contextualise Gee’s (2005) theoretical framework. In section 8 I will then discuss Gee’s (2005) approach to discourse analysis and explain the reasons for choosing this approach over the others. I will begin this explanation by establishing a difference between CDA and cda.

4.5. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

4.5.1. CDA and critical discourse analysis

Gee (2004) draws a distinction between the term Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) written in capital letters and the term, critical discourse analysis, spelled out. He personally associates CDA with Fairclough’s (1992a, 1995) approach to discourse analysis (see section 5.3.2) and conversely, the term critical discourse analysis (the term

spelled out) with “a wider array of approaches, including Fairclough’s, my own and others” (Gee, 2004: 20). Additionally, when referring to ‘critical’ discourse analysis (as opposed to ‘non-critical’ discourse analysis), he does not mean only Fairclough’s work but critical approaches to discourse analysis in general (see section 4.5.4).

Although in the literature the term critical discourse analysis is typically referred to with the capitalised initials CDA, in view of the above distinction made by Gee (2004), for the purposes of this study, I will from now on use the abbreviated form cda to present and discuss the theory and method in general. When referring to the work of Fairclough I will use CDA. When referring to Gee’s approach or to the approach used in this study, I will use the term **Gee’s critical discourse analysis**, or **critical discourse analysis** respectively, without an acronym or abbreviation.

4.5.2. Critical discourse analysis

Cda is a discourse oriented theory of language and discourse in social institutions. Drawing on Critical Linguistics (CL) and Critical Theory (CT), cda focuses on how social relations, identity and power are constructed within a larger social context as part of a process of social change.

“Critical discourse analysis focuses on how language as a cultural tool mediates relationships of power and privilege in social interactions, institutions and bodies of knowledge (see, for example, Bourdieu, 1977; Davies & Harrè, 1990; Foucault, 1972; Gee, 1999; Luke, 1995, 1996)” (Rogers *et al.*, 2005: 367).

Cda is both a theory and a method and has influence over two main areas: the formation of knowledge and the formation of socio-cultural identities and inter-personal relations. Positioned within CT and socio-cultural approaches cda is a critical framework with which to explore socio-cultural, educational phenomena and provides systematic analytic techniques with which to implement the explorations.

The theoretical position of cda is that people, through discourses, draw upon different discursive resources (Fairclough 1992, 2003), to articulate and construct their ideological interests, their social formations and understandings of everyday life. Reality or truth is

understood as being discursively constructed, made and shaped by various social and discursive forces.

According to the cda framework, discursive forces are frequently naturalised - made 'obvious' - in everyday discourse. The position held by critical discourse analysts is that reality is often presented simply as 'the way things are'. Presenting the world as natural and factual does not mean to say that the way things are is inevitable, unchangeable, or acceptable. It may result from particular actions or decisions and often serves particular interests, associated with power and control (Fairclough, 1992) and the distribution of social goods (Gee, 2005).

Cda is set apart from mainstream discourse or sociolinguistic analyses in that it does not only engage in description but deals with interpretation and explanation of socio-cultural phenomenon. As a method, it helps illuminate, explain and interpret relationships between language and society and the construction of socio-cultural practices. Cda helps describe, explain and interpret how discourse systematically constructs particular forms of the social world.

Cda does not have a unitary theoretical framework (van Dijk, 2001, 2002). The different approaches vary in the theories they derive from, the sources of philosophical orientation they follow, the tools they offer for the analyses of the issues they wish to address and the ways they are applied in a range of disciplines. "Studies in CDA are multifarious, derived from different theoretical backgrounds and oriented towards very different data and methodologies" (Weiss & Wodak, 2003:12).

Prior to locating the different approaches in relation to one another, I wish to note the principles shared by cda approaches. These mark the differences between cda and other sociolinguistic approaches to discourse analysis.

4.5.3. Approaches to cda

4.5.3.1. Common principles

Fairclough and Wodak (1997: 171-280) discuss the following seven fundamental principles of CDA (used here with capitalised initials, as it is typically referred to in the literature).

1. CDA addresses social problems: CDA addresses the “linguistic character of social and cultural processes and structures”.
2. Power operates through language: “Power relations are discursive”. Language is not only a reflection of social relations but constitutes and produces them in a dialectical fashion. “Discourse constitutes society and culture”.
3. Ideologies are often produced through discourse: “Discourse does ideological work”.
4. Discourse must be part of context and must relate to previous discourses. “Discourse is historical”.
5. “A socio-cognitive” approach is needed to understand how relations between texts and society are mediated.
6. “Discourse analysis is interpretive and explanatory” and uses systematic methodology. Discourse analysis describes, interprets and explains social phenomena.
7. “CDA is a socially committed scientific paradigm”. CDA is committed not only to explain but to change what is happening in particular contexts.

Relationships of power and control in society, which are believed to be operated through and by discourse, are emphasised in CDA literature. For example, van Dijk (2001) states that CDA focuses on the ways “discourse structures enact, confirm, legitimate, reproduce or challenge relations of power and dominance in society” (p.353). Weiss & Wodak (2003) assert: “CDA takes an interest in the ways in which linguistic form are used in various expressions and manipulations of power” (p. 15).

An additional key feature of cda is the emphasis placed on social problems and on the relationship between language and society, which is absent from many other linguistic

approaches (Meyer, 2001). Thus, cda explicitly includes extra-linguistic factors such as society, culture, ideology and thus claims to be an interdisciplinary approach.

Chouliaraki & Fairclough (1999) apply the abovementioned principles in their approach to CDA and explore further theoretical issues of discourse in modern life. They offer a version which is a dialogue between critical social theory, linguistics and social change in contemporary society. They view social life as social practices, and discourse as one of a number of elements of social practices, which are in a dialectical relationship with each other. Within their theoretical and methodological framework, they focus on Halliday's (1978) systemic functional linguistics (SFL) as the major linguistic theory, which they see as the closest one to the perspectives of critical social research. They argue that "CDA and SFL can be seen as complementary to each other" (p. 2).

In the following section I will present and discuss Fairclough's theory and method of CDA (1992a, 1992b, 1995, 2001, 2003), which has been very significant in the field.

4.5.3.2. Fairclough's approach to CDA

Drawing on the CT tradition of Marxist and neo-Marxist approaches and on Foucault's (1972) concept of 'discourses', Fairclough's approach to CDA emphasises issues of power and dominance in society. It is used to denaturalise, challenge and expose ideologies which have become naturalised through discourse in order to resist social inequality (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999).

Fairclough (1992a) has developed a systemic 'three dimensional' tool (three-part scheme) for conducting CDA. This includes the analysis of the relationship between three levels of the text (a) the actual text – what people actually say (words, utterances, sentences); (b) the discursive practices (the actual communicative event and the process involved in creating, writing, speaking, reading, and hearing); and (c) the larger social and political context (processes in society) that bears upon the text and the social practices. Fairclough (1992a) believes that, although CDA can draw on a wide range of approaches to text analysis, he draws on Halliday's SFL (Halliday 1978), a linguistic theory and method which sees language as multi-functional and places emphasis on the

function (meaning) of language and the relationship between language and other social contexts.

4.5.3.2.1. 'Orders of discourse'

Fairclough (2003) adopted the concept of 'orders of discourse' as the "linguistic elements of networks of social practices" (p. 24), which he terms "discourses, genres and styles" (p. 24). To clarify the terms, *genres* are diverse ways of acting and producing social life through language. They represent ways of interacting and include the mode of communication such as an interview, a talk, an article etc. *Discourse* is a way of representing aspects of the world, social positions and ideologies. *Style/styles* represent 'ways of being' in a language context (Fairclough, 2003). It is the social or personal identity of people which comes across in using the language. A systematic study of the relationship between genre, Discourse and style enables the identification of shifts in discourse patterns within and across domains with regards to social and discursive practices and identity construction.

According to Fairclough (2003), genre discourses and style are not pure linguistic concepts, but are elements that join the linguistic and non-linguistic parts of texts and social events to form 'the orders of discourse'. In other words, the networking of the three elements above, in certain combinations or articulations, makes and creates meaning within social practices. "So orders of discourse can be seen as the social organisation and control of linguistic variation" (Fairclough, 2003: 24).

Different approaches to CDA bring about different models and contestations. In section 5.4 I will point out one example of such contestation and distinguish post-structuralist understandings of discourse and CDA (Foucault, 1972; Pennycook, 2001b) from critical understandings (Fairclough 2003; Gee 1999, 2005; Luke, 1995; Wodak, 1996; Wodak & Meyer, 2001) of CDA.

4.5.4. Areas of contestations and similarities

One example of contestation is between Pennycook's post-structuralist approach to discourse analysis (Pennycook 2001b) and Fairclough's CT approach to CDA (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999; Fairclough, 1992a, 2003). Both approaches draw on

Foucault's (1972) concept of 'discourse' but appropriate the concept in different ways. Post-structuralist and critical understandings of discourse and CDA both discuss power and the discursive positioning of subjects. Critical perspectives of discourse analysis, however, emphasise the material base of discourse (i.e. discourse is a reality which needs to be investigated through systematic analysis). They emphasise the idea of ideology being represented by power relations involving domination or hegemony.

As was stated above, Fairclough's (1992a, 2003) theorisation draws on CT, Marxist and neo-Marxist approaches. His approach focuses on domination and empowerment and on the ways in which changes in the broader social and cultural domains are reflected in changes in discursive practices.

Conversely, Pennycook (2001a) draws on a post-structuralist conceptualisation of power and discourse and holds a postmodern problematising stance by which all social relations are problematic and language is always political, never neutral or natural (Pennycook, 1994). Pennycook (2001a) also draws on Foucault's (1972) notion of discourse, however, his concern is with the dynamic, multiple and contradictory effects of discourses, resistance and agency which, in his opinion, are diffused in all the networks of social structures and discursive practices.

At the outset, Pennycook (2001a) acknowledges the work of Fairclough, Wodak and others and points out that their work has opened up possibilities for more politicised analysis of texts and discourses. He supports the key principles which underlie CDA, for instance, the dialectical relationship drawn between language and society, the ways in which power, text and meaning are interrelated and the view that language is central to human life, fundamentally tied up with socio-cultural politics of the 'every-day'. His disagreement derives from the fundamental belief underlying post-structuralism and postmodernism, namely, the basic skepticism about common assumptions, the questioning and the problematisation of the given. In other words, Pennycook's (2001b) theorisation poses a fundamental skepticism about science, truth claims, claims for a true reality, theory formation or claims to scientificity.

Pennycook's (2001a) fundamental skepticism is also apparent with regard to discourse theory and the notion of identity, which he terms subjectivity. In line with other post-

structuralist theorists (Norton, 1997, Weedon, 1987), Pennycook believes that the way people relate to the world is through ongoing negotiations which produce different possible (multiple) subject positions. Therefore, it is possible for a person to take up a particular subject position, which changes in different times and purposes, depending on his/her own perception of his/her subjectivity and the ways he/she is subjected by others. The endeavour of constant questioning of people's assumptions calls for constant reflexivity and the on-going need for discursive interpretation.

In similar ways Gee (2004) notes that both Fairclough and himself have been "influenced by poststructuralist thought (e.g., Foucault, Bourdieu and Bakhtin) and neo-Marxist critical theory (e.g., Althusser, 1971; Gramsci, 1971)" (p. 20). The differences in their approaches lie in the linguistic side of critical discourse analysis. Namely, Fairclough's work is based on his own version of Halliday's (1994) model of grammatical and textual analysis "a model more pervasive in England and Australia than in the United States" (Halliday, 1994).

Conversely, the linguistic side of Gee's work is based on his own version of "non-Hallidayian models of grammatical and textual analysis (e.g. Chafe, 1979; Givon, 1979) and sociolinguists (Gumperz, 1982; Hymes, 1974, 1981; Labov, 1972a, 1972b), combined with influences from literary criticism (e.g. Chatman, 1978)" (Gee, 2004:20). Gee (2004) does not regard his approach and the analytical tools he offers as being in contestation or disagreement with any particular other but rather compatible with other approaches in various ways.

"Although both Fairclough and I have been influenced by post-structuralist thought....the two models are not incompatible, and the differences reflect differences in training and background and not principled disagreements" (Gee, 2004:20).

In his model of discourse analysis, Gee (1999, 2004, 2005) highlights two main issues: the first argument is that in order to make empirical claims, all discourse analysis must have specific viewpoints about the relationship between form and function of language. Thus, empirical work must apply specific analytic techniques for relating form and function in the analysis of oral and/or written texts.

The second argument is that in addition to engaging in close form-function analysis of discourse, *critical* analysis of discourse must involve specific empirical analyses of how such form-function correlations correlate with specific social practices such as to help constitute the nature of such practices. In other words, he emphasises the point that people's social practices, enacted by and through their discourse, are empirical claims in that they inherently involve issues of power, status, solidarity and distribution of social goods. People in society, groups or institutions, reinforce, reproduce and enact power through the language they use.

Rogers (2004) and Rogers *et al.* (2005) paid particular attention to a range of critical discourse research carried out in education. Rogers (2004) explains the application of cda in educational settings by looking at each part of the concept, 'critical', 'discourse' and 'analysis', separately. The essential point being that in the analysis of discourse, all three parts must be included to qualify as critical discourse analysis. Clarification of each term contributes to the understanding of the theory and method and how this can be applied in educational research.

4.5.5. Critical and non-critical approaches

The difference between critical approaches and non-critical approaches to discourse analysis lies in the fundamental understanding of the relationship between language-in-use and social practices. Non-critical approaches relate to social practices only in terms of describing extant social interactions and social relationships, whereas critical approaches are explicitly concerned with implications of language-in-use on social practices. Some of the implications relate to issues of status, solidarity, distribution of social goods, political power and control, the formation of identity and more.

Critical approaches attempt to de-familiarise and de-naturalise taken-for-granted assumptions about social realities and social phenomena. An important goal for critical approaches would be to reach beyond describing or uncovering problems but also to be able to show the ways conventions of language form and use are tied to social relations of power and control.

Fairclough (1992a) explains:

“Critical approaches differ from non-critical approaches in not just describing discursive practices, but in showing how discourse is shaped by relations of power and ideologies, and the constructive effects discourse has upon social identities, social relations and systems of knowledge and belief, neither of which is normally apparent to discourse participants” (p. 12).

Similarly, Gee (2004) explains:

“In fact critical discourse analysis argues that language in use is always part and parcel of, and partially constitutive of, specific social practices, and that social practices always have implications for inherently political things like status, solidarity, distribution of social goods, and power” (p. 33).

Gee (2004) further argues that all discourse analysis must be critical discourse analysis if it is to be scientific and true to its subject matter, i.e. discourse.

Rogers *et al.* (2005) present the findings of a comprehensive literature review of critical discourse studies carried out in educational research. On the topic of theories of language and their relation to theory and method of cda they state:

“While Gee’s discourse theory and analysis assumes language is political and social and thus ‘critical’, he does not refer to his brand of discourse analysis as CDA, a point that he made specifically in Gee (2004). Nevertheless, Rogers, Tyson and Marshall, classify Fairclough (1989, 1992), Gee (1996), and Lemke (1995) together under ‘critical discourse theories’” (p. 376).

4.5.5.1. Critical approach in this study

In this study a critical approach to D/discourse is adopted to allow a closer investigation of the issue of EYL with the intention to uncover significant ideologies which have been either naturalised or made invisible. Furthermore, it will enable us to track the way people enact their identities and negotiate their position in society with relation to the

English language, its global implications, the power of knowing English and the power of EYL.

Critical discourse approaches (as reviewed above) are theoretically and analytically diverse, offer different tools of analyses and are used on applied topics in a variety of domains such as political, economic, media, gender, institutional and education discourse (Rogers 2004; Rogers *et al.*, 2005). The approach one chooses depends on the particular questions put forward in each research. The overarching question asked in this study was the main motivation behind it, whilst the specific questions were articulated following the decision to use Gee's approach.

In order to achieve clarity, in section 6 I will present the research questions put forward in this study. The reasons for using Gee's (2005) framework as theory and the tools for answering the questions are presented and discussed in section 7 in this chapter. In this section I will also present and discuss key concepts which form the basis for Gee's (1999, 2005) theoretical framework. In chapter 6 I will present and illustrate the analytical tools he offers for the analysis.

4.6. Research questions

The overarching question is:

What are the driving forces behind the demand for EYL in grades 1 and 2 in Israel?

Question 1:

What are the circulating D/discourses mobilised by parents, teachers, pupils and position holders on the topic of EYL? What do the actors involved say or do in constructing the D/discourses?

Question 2:

How are the identified D/discourses on the topic of EYL implicated in everyday life?

4.7. Reasons for using Gee's framework in this study

The focus of this study is the topic of EYL in grades 1 and 2 framed as a phenomenon or a 'Conversation' (Gee, 2005). The aim of the study is to examine, explain and analyse discourse mobilised by Israeli parents, teachers, pupils and position-holders for the ways they formulate their understandings of EYL and other related issues they see as relevant.

Thus, the questions guiding this study seek to explore implicit or explicit discursive forces promoting EYL and are connected to the ways the actors involved use language and other things they bring with them to the talk (such as their ideologies, actions, beliefs, theories etc). The questions seek to reveal the ways in which the actors involved use discourse to enact their situated identities and get recognised for '*who* they are and *what* they are doing' (with regard to the topic) thereby construing the Discourse of EYL.

I have found Gee's model of discourse analysis suitable for this study in preference to other models for the following reasons:

1: Gee's model of D/discourse analysis foregrounds the notion of Discourse/s as "ways of being" in the world (Gee, 2005: 26-7). On this basis, his approach offers a deep understanding of other forms of social practices such as identity, investment, status, relationships, the distribution of goods, power relations and more. Adopting Gee's model will contribute to a broader understanding of the D/discourses of EYL in grades 1 and 2 in Israel.

2: In the field of sociolinguistics, particular approaches to discourse analysis (some of which were presented and discussed in this chapter) give more emphasis to spoken or written texts deriving from the media, politics or other areas of social practices. Gee's work in the field of linguistics and discourse analysis has been of much relevance to issues concerning education and schools (Gee, 2004). Gee offers a version of critical D/discourse analysis applicable in educational settings in terms of its goals, aims and functions. The tools of analysis he offers can be implemented within wider educational contexts in that they relate to identity construction, cultural models (or DM) and social practices of the subjects involved.

3: Gee's model aims to bridge the gap between the more linguistically oriented study of language and the various socio-cultural approaches. It offers a balanced system for the study of language on the one hand and of language as a social practice on the other. I believe that using his model would enable me to integrate a systematic framework for the study of form and function of language employed by participants in this study.

A deeper understanding of Gee's particular framework is needed. In section 8 below I present and discuss concepts which form the basis for Gee's theoretical framework. More explicit implications for conducting critical discourse analysis in this study context will be addressed coupled with suggestions for the ways the theoretical framework suggested here may illuminate issues pertaining to the phenomenon of EYL in grades 1 and 2. In chapter 6 I will explicitly address the tools of analysis he offers and the ways in which they will be used.

4.8. Gee's approach to critical discourse analysis

4.8.1. Building tasks

According to Gee (2005), there are seven building tasks, "seven areas of reality" (p. 11), which are the components of any "discourse situations (i.e. situations in which language is put to use)" (p. 97). People create discourse situations by using language to carry out and build one or all of the seven building tasks. For every discourse situation analysts can ask a question regarding each of the building tasks. These can be applied to a particular piece of data with the aim of clarifying and explaining it. Not all building tasks will be immediately obvious in the data being analysed as some will be more significant than others.

In this study, the methodological technique of research interviews created a suitable and appropriate discourse situation, in which people could speak about issues regarding EYL. The reasons research interviews were chosen over other possibilities of collecting oral discourse will be addressed in chapter 5.

The short explanation of each of the building tasks provided below will generate some hypotheses to be further examined in the data findings, analysis and interpretation

provided in chapter 7. Thus, the descriptions of the seven building tasks presented below take into consideration the particular context of the study.

The seven building tasks people build in talk are:

- 1: Significance
- 2: Activities
- 3: Identities
- 4: Relationships
- 5: Politics (the distribution of social goods)
- 6: Connections
- 7: Sign systems and knowledge.

4.8.1.1. Significance

Language is used to make things significant by attaching to them certain value or importance in any given situation. People use language to articulate their viewpoints, opinions and beliefs, thereby making particular issues significant. **The question raised in this regard is: “How is this piece of language being used to make certain things significant or not and in what ways?” (Gee, 2005: 11).**

In this study, inter-actional language of spoken texts was collected by means of interviews conducted with parents, teachers, pupils and position-holders (see chapter 5 for the research design). Language produced in the interviews is composed of the different social languages (see chapter 6 section 3.1.5) participants assemble on the topic, the situated meanings they articulate on the spot and the Discourse models they draw on, all of which are employed in complex ways in the interview situation.

Participants attach significance to certain things by choosing and using particular linguistic resources, repeating certain words or phrases, using certain grammatical features, descriptive language, metaphors and more. In the analysis my interest is to identify what has been made significant, and explain and interpret the language for what it represents for the actors involved.

4.8.1.2. Activities

Language gives meaning to and gets meaning from social or other activities. Similarly, language is used by people to get recognised as taking part in certain activities. Thus, people build an activity when they speak and act in particular ways, for example, when meeting a neighbour in the hall vs. when taking part in a meeting. **The question in discourse analysis is: “What activity or activities is this piece of language being used to enact (i.e. get others to recognise as going on)?” (Gee, 2005: 11).**

In this study participants were engaged in the activity of interviews, initiated and conducted by myself (the researcher) in order to obtain data for conducting discourse analysis. This created the role of interviewees for the participants and the role of the interviewer and discourse analyst for me. They filled the role I created for them and jointly we co-constructed the ‘activity’ of the interview.

Furthermore, interviewees inter-textually created other activities within the interview talk. This was evident when they volunteered particular information or initiated discussion pertaining to things outside of the interview context. For example, when describing particular afternoon activities they do with their children (or parents), personal experiences, daily practices and more.

4.8.1.3. Identities

Gee (2005) uses the term “situated identity” (p.141) to describe the type of identity one takes on, or is attributed by others, in particular situations. People use language to get recognised as acting in a particular role or position and thus people’s identities change depending on how they use language in specific situations. **The question in discourse analysis is: “What identity or identities is this piece of language being used to enact (i.e. get others to recognise as operative)?” (Gee, 2005: 12).**

The notion of identity is central in this study. The viewpoint is that language makes it possible to say the same thing in many different ways and thus people choose a particular way (and not a particular ‘other’ way) of speaking and acting. They thereby align themselves (consciously or subconsciously) with both certain ways of understanding the social world (drawing on particular DM) and with the people who have historically understood the social world from that perspective. People identify themselves with

certain subject positions, using forms of language, in order to enact their situated identities.

The questions asked in the course of the interview generated responses which, in turn, involved the construction of situated identities. For example, the 'parent' identity participants enact involves a variety of different ways of being a parent: these include 'a good parent', a 'consumer parent', an 'inferior parent', 'a pushy parent', a 'critical parent' and more.

4.8.1.4. Relationships

People use language to signal the sort of relationship they have or intend to have with other people or other situations while speaking or writing. Every discourse situation involves the construction of relationships by which people enact and recognise a particular set of interactions suitable to that particular situation. **Discourse analysis question: "What sort of relationship or relationships is this piece of language seeking to enact with others (present or not)?"** (Gee, 2005: 12).

Participants are given the opportunity to talk about the topic of EYL vis-à-vis their social and discursive environment, practices and interactions in everyday life. All of these sustain the notion of relationships they have outside of the interview activity, which are brought into it in their particular uses of language. Furthermore, participants build relationships with the interviewer (myself) within which they reconstruct and represent other relationships.

4.8.1.5. Politics (the distribution of social goods)

Politics or the distribution of social goods is the term used to explain power relationships in society. The ways language is used to convey ideas has implications over creating or reproducing power relationships, and generally on the division and distribution of social goods in society. **Discourse analysis question: "What perspective on social goods is this piece of language communicating (i.e. what is being communicated as to what is taken to be 'normal', 'right', 'good', 'correct', 'high status', 'low status' etc)?"** (Gee, 2005:12).

As members of the social world, participants communicate their views containing political implications. They say what they understand to be 'correct', 'good', 'important', 'true', 'real' etc with regards to EYL as they associate EYL with things such as: 'knowledge', 'status', 'cultural capital', 'an economic good', or a 'commodity'. They are thereby giving political meaning and significance to EYL and to the power of English.

4.8.1.6. Connections

Language is used to make relevant connections between one idea and another. Ideas which are conveyed in one situation are not always connected to other situations unless language is used to make or break the necessary connections. **Discourse analysis question: "How does this piece of language connect or disconnect things; how does it make one thing relevant or irrelevant to another?"** (Gee, 2005: 13).

Participants use language to make (or not make) certain things relevant to the topic of EYL by connecting different issues to one another. They do so drawing on their DM, social practices, past histories and discursive resources. Participants make connections between EYL and investment, EYL and the western world, EYL and being successful, EYL and international relations, economic globalisation and more.

4.8.1.7. Sign systems and knowledge

Language is used to make meaningful sign systems for the construction of opinions and forms of knowledge. Different sign systems can be used to create certain forms of knowledge relevant only to certain privileged groups, in given situations. **Discourse analysis question: "How does this piece of language privilege or disprivilege specific sign systems or different ways of knowing and believing or claims to knowledge and belief?"** (Gee, 2005: 13).

Participants use linguistic and other sign systems to signal and create meaningful forms of knowledge. Linguistic signs and signals such as the use of 'voices', figurative language, intertextuality, grammar and repetition of particular words and phrases are part of the process by which Discourses are construed (see chapter 6). In this study the notion of sign systems and knowledge also includes paying attention to the fine line of working with two languages, namely Hebrew and English.

4.8.2. Tools of inquiry

Along with the concepts presented above, Gee (2005) offers tools for conducting analysis. Presented as “thinking devices” (p 70), they hold a double function of being both a theory and an analytical tool, constituting the basis with which the analysis is conducted. In the attempt to separate theoretical concepts from tools, I hereby present the six tools of inquiry by their names. Explanations and examples thereof will be given in chapter 6.

The six tools are:

- 1: ‘Social languages’
- 2: ‘Situated meanings’
- 3: ‘Discourses’
- 4: ‘Discourse models’
- 5: ‘Conversations’
- 6: ‘Intertextuality’.

4.9. Summary

In this chapter I presented the theoretical notion of a discourse and Discourse drawing on Foucault’s (1972) theory of discourses. Particular attention was given to the way D/discourse is framed in this study. Similarly, socio-cultural approaches to discourse, identity, the notion of cultural/linguistic capital and the ways they are related to this study were presented and discussed.

An overview of the theoretical framework of critical discourse analysis was presented with particular reference to the choice of using Gee’s (2005) framework to describe, interpret and explain the relationship between language, social practices, and the social world.

While I acknowledge the fact that there are other approaches to discourse analysis which I have not chosen to adopt, I believe Gee’s (2005) version can be applied to this study by following the conceptual framework he offers (presented in this chapter) and the systematic tools of inquiry (which will be illustrated in chapter 6). This is not an uncomplicated endeavour. It involves the working together of theoretical constructs and

their careful application to the data collected, while aiming for a convincing and coherent analysis.

Guided by the theoretical framework presented here and the literature review pertaining to EYL/ SLA and EGL presented in chapter 3, I will proceed to chapter 5, where I present the methodology chosen for the study. In chapter 5 I discuss critical discourse analysis as the paradigm, approach and method chosen for this research and relate this to the conceptual and contextual framework of the study. Thus, I will show how the study of D/discourse analysis, carried out from a critical perspective, fits in with the orientation of critical sociolinguistic qualitative research in education.

Chapter 5

Methodology

5.1. The purpose of the study

This study aims to enhance the understanding and explanation of the promotion of EYL in grades 1 and 2, a new educational initiative introduced nationwide in Israel, framed as a socio-cultural phenomenon (see chapter 1). This will be achieved by describing, interpreting and explaining the discourses mobilised by parents, teachers, pupils and position holders on the topic of EYL. The picture will be completed by the establishment of relationships between participants' discourse and Discourses they construe (*who* people are and *what* they are doing), ideologies, social practices and the social world.

5.2. The aim of this chapter

The aim of this chapter is to clarify and justify the paradigm, approach and method chosen for this research and relate them to the conceptual and contextual framework of the study. I will describe how the study of D/discourse analysis, carried out from a critical perspective, fits in with the orientation of critical socio-linguistic qualitative research in education.

I will first present the theoretical foundations of critical social research and link them to critical discourse analysis used as theory and method in critical, qualitative, social research in education. This will comprise elements that have been carried forward from chapter 4, the theoretical framework. I will proceed with a detailed description of the research design and the data collection process, which is carried out mainly by means of research interviews. The reasons for choosing interviews and the ways they are used will be discussed. Afterwards I will address issues of trustworthiness of the research and of the research methods (interviews) alongside issues of generalisability, reliability, validity and ethical considerations. Finally, the limitations of the research will be presented.

5.3. Locating the study

5.3.1 Critical, social theory and theory of D/discourse

This study is located within two strands of research: one strand draws on critical qualitative educational research and critical social theory, the other draws on theories of D/discourse. Critical, social, qualitative research in education, which draws on critical theory, is based on critical approaches to understanding social theories. Discourse theories, drawing on Foucault's notion of *discourse* (1972), are based on the principle of language-use as a social practice, reflecting and constructing the social world.

5.3.1.1. Critical social theory

Critical theories attempt to identify and confront issues of power and hegemony and are concerned with the ways that economy, race, religion, education, class etc, construct and transform social systems in modern society. According to Kincheloe & McLaren (2000):

“A critical social theory is concerned in particular with issues of power and justice and the ways that the economy, matters of race, class and gender, ideologies, discourses, education, religion and other social institutions, and cultural dynamics interact to construct a social system” (p. 281).

Critical social theorists seek to challenge and question natural taken-for-granted social phenomena, confront and question people's beliefs and what seems to be rational conscious behaviour. Critical theorists believe that certain groups in society are privileged over others and therefore have access to material and cultural goods in society. They believe that society is dominated through power which, in practice, takes a variety of ideological, material, cultural and linguistic forms. Thus, language plays a central role in the formation of knowledge, subjectivities and control.

Discourse theories and Foucault's notion of *discourse and power* (1972) have been extremely important in setting the principles underlying critical theory and in the development of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as an approach for studying language and society (see chapter 4). Kincheloe & McLaren (2000) state:

“Critical researchers appreciate the fact that language is not a neutral and objective conduit of description of the ‘real world’”. Rather, from a critical perspective, linguistic descriptions are not simply about the world but serve to construct it” (p. 284).

In other words, discursive practices (how people speak, what they say and how they act within a local context) are implicit rules that regulate and control social practices and social constructions (Foucault, 1972). This conceptualisation allows the critical researcher to probe more deeply into complex issues of everyday social practices.

Kincheloe & McLaren (2000) further claim that it is difficult to explain exactly what critical theory is because there are many changing and evolving critical theories, and to have a particular design would be against the basic position of critical research. The notion of critical theory being an un-unified set of theories is further echoed by Rogers *et al.* (2005), who argue that: “Critical theory is not a unified set of perspectives. Rather, it includes critical race theory, post-structuralism, post-modernism, neo-colonial studies, queer theory and so on” (p. 368).

An additional concern of critical social research is the need for a critical examination of the tacit rules that guide the production of cultural norms and regulations in modern society. A critical perspective views the notion of culture and cultural models (Gee 1999, 2005; Norton Peirce, 1995) as playing a significant role in the ways society is regulated. It is assumed that there is a relationship between modern popular culture in the forms of English TV shows, movies, computers, Internet, music, etc., acting as a mechanism of control and regulation over D/discourses and social practices in contemporary western societies. Critical social research aims to examine and define these relationships,

The perspective held by critical theorists is that all social relations are influenced by power relations in society and by the unequal distribution of social and cultural goods. However, these understandings are influential but not binding. They are not predetermined or unquestionable but rather “they provide a conceptual and normative orientation that organises the questions critical researchers ask” (Carspecken & Apple, 1992: 510). Critical researchers stress that the answers to the questions are not known or presumed beforehand. Rather, these assumptions (based on a particular critical world

vision) raise the motivation for the research and are related to the particular questions posed, which in turn set the procedure and the method for the critical study.

“It is those questions and the vision of society that stand behind them, not only the method, that sets critical work apart from other ethnographic research” (p. 510).

Similarly, Roman & Apple (1990: 62) suggest that “prior theoretic and political commitments” of the critical researcher are “informed and transformed by the lived experiences of the group she or he researches”. This calls for critical qualitative researchers to engage in a dialogue with their informants and strengthens the viewpoint that the researchers’ own “theoretical and ideological views are powerful, but these perspectives are also shaped by what they learn from their informants” (Roman & Apple, 1990).

5.3.2. Critical qualitative social research in education

Critical social research in education is oriented towards addressing the ways education functions as an integral part of the patterns that organise our society. From a critical perspective, education, schooling and classroom practices are viewed as intimately connected to patterns of power and control, unequal distribution of social and economic capital, external forces of globalisation and socio-political trends that organise and shape modern capitalistic societies. Education, schools and classroom practices are viewed as microcosms of societies, representing dominance, hegemony and power relations (Canagarajah, 1999; Fairclough, 1995, 2003; Gee, 1996; Norton Peirce, 1995; Pennycook, 1994, 1997).

This notion is maintained by Carspecken & Apple, (1992) who state:

“Education does not stand alone, a neutral instrumentality somehow above the ideological conflicts of the society. Rather it is deeply implicated in the formation of the unequal cultural, economic, and political relations that dominate our society” (p. 509).

Carspecken & Apple (1992) argue that western capitalist countries such as the USA and Britain have made efforts to bring education “more closely into line with industrial needs” (p. 509). Thus, they assert that critical educational researchers are increasingly conscious of issues relating to internal school and classroom practices such as content, curriculum, assessment, gender, race and class, as well as questions regarding the connection between school practices and the role of schools within the larger social context and everyday social practices.

So far I have located this study within the critical theory research paradigm and theories of discourse in education. In the following section I will present and discuss the contextual framework of this research that has determined the conceptual framework which underpins it.

5.3.3. The contextual framework of the study

The main point regarding the selection of the paradigm and the selection of the research approach is that this study does not focus on the effectiveness of the EYL in grades 1 and 2 initiative, or on evaluating the initiative for its introduction in pedagogical terms. Rather, it sets out to examine and confront the ‘phenomenon’. As a critical study, it aims to address the phenomenon with regards to issues, which have been accepted as natural and taken for granted within school and social systems. It aims to do this by raising the topic for discussion and investigating people’s discourse for what it means and what it represents.

This study fits within a critical paradigm because it aims not only at making an empirical-descriptive, interpretive contribution about the EYL phenomenon; it also aims at making a contribution towards change regarding school and classroom practices and the distribution of goods pertaining to EYL. However, I will focus largely on the potential this research has to enhance our understanding of discourses on EYL and less on its place in social or educational transformation.

This research fits within a discourse-oriented conceptual framework as it places the notion of D/discourse as the ways people recruit language, actions and ideologies “to enact their social identities” (Gee, 2005:1). This study draws on critical theories of

language and on the notion of D/discourses as shaping social practices, being shaped by them, serving as a form of regulation and domination in society.

5.3.3.1. The intersection between D/discourse and social events

The point of intersection between the study of D/discourses and social events has been addressed in the literature. Making such connections has emerged out of the need linguists have to consider questions related to the relationship between language and society (Bakhtin, 1981; Fairclough, 1989; Foucault, 1972). This need did not arise in isolation. According to Rogers *et al.* (2005: 365), “The 1970s were characterised by the transformation of linguistic theories and methods in the social sciences, from traditional linguistics to interactional linguistics, to critical linguistics”. In addition, Rogers *et al.* (2005) point out that this transformation was part of a more widespread change in society, the emergence of other movements, such as the peace movement, women’s movement and others which were “accompanied by broader linguistic turn in the social sciences, a movement away from methodological individualism, and the proliferation of post-structural and post modern theories” (p. 366).

Indeed, the main argument for adopting a critical discourse analysis framework for this study lies in its aim to challenge hegemonic discourse, and analyse implicit or tacit theories people have (or draw on) for supporting their views on the topic of EYL. I argue that adopting critical discourse analysis as a theory and a method will enhance the understanding of EYL as a socio-cultural phenomenon.

Guided by the above orienting framework, in the next section I will discuss the selected approach within a critical, qualitative, social paradigm. I will then address interviews as a means of data collection and the reasons for choosing interviews in this study.

5.4. The research approach

5.4.1. Combining social theory with the study of D/discourse in social education research

The selection of approach for this particular study has presented two main difficulties: firstly, the analyses rely on the subjective interpretations and understandings of individuals participating in the research (see section 5.6 on research design); the second

difficulty is that analyses rely on my own interpretations of the discourses mobilised in the interviews. However, the main reason for choosing this approach has grown out of the need to answer the research questions which pertain to the relationship between discourse and society, between EYL and the social context within which it is embedded. Therefore, choosing the critical discourse approach, as the theory and method of analysis, has grown out of two principles: firstly, it provides close, systematic analyses of linguistic features of discourse (form-function analysis) and their construction of Discourse; secondly, it is an approach which integrates the study of language and the study of society.

5.4.2. Critical discourse analysis in social educational research

Rogers *et al.* (2005) remark that early work in linguistic analysis in education research “grew out of sociolinguistics (Gumperz, 1982; Labov, 1972b; Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975), linguistic anthropology (Silverstein & Urban, 1996), and the ethnography of communication (Gumperz & Hymes, 1964; Hymes, 1972)” (p. 366). These included the study of micro-interactions that occurred in classrooms, the study and analyses of classroom talk, student-teacher and classroom interactions. At the same time, sociologists, interested in education, looked at schools and classrooms “to theorise about the ways in which social structures are reproduced through educational institutions (Bourdieu, 1977, 1984; Bowels & Gintis, 1976; Oakes, 1986; Willis, 1977)” (Rogers *et al.*, 2005: 366).

Drawing on critical social theory, discourse analysis, as an approach which integrates the study of language and the study of society, brings social theory and discourse analysis together. Thus, educational theorists draw on critical social theories on the one hand and discourse theories on the other to examine the ways in which broader social forces and macro-structures are manifested in micro-level analyses of school, classroom practices and everyday social practices. In fact, discourse analysis theory and method do not come from educational research, but rather from fields connected to linguistics. Education researchers have been using critical discourse analysis as an approach to answer questions regarding the relationship between language and society, thereby emphasising the significance in bringing into dialogue social theories on the one hand and linguistic theories on the other.

In order to reconcile the social and the linguistic perspectives (without reducing them to one another), it is necessary to develop conceptual tools which will enable the connection of the two perspectives. Critical discourse analysis is therefore an attempt “to bring social theory and discourse analysis together to describe, interpret, and explain the ways in which discourse constructs, becomes constructed by, represents, and becomes represented by the social world” (Rogers *et al.*, 2005: 366).

5.5. The approach in this study

The main interest in this research is to gain understanding of the EYL phenomenon via analysis of people’s discourses. The questions posed in this study demand that attention is given to both the linguistic details of the discourses and to the larger social, historical and cultural context that bear upon them.

In this study, critical discourses analysis is used with oral discourse collected via the instrument of semi-structured interviews conducted with teachers, parents, pupils and acting stakeholders. Semi-structures interviews are flexibly organized interviews guided by more general questions aimed at generating opinions and explanations in participants’ own words. This means that topics and questions were offered to the interviewees but were carefully designed to elicit their ideas and opinions on the subject of interest. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews enabled the collection of comparable data across a sample of interviewees while focusing on particular topics. “With semi-structured interviews you are confident of getting comparable data across subjects”. (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003, p.96).

I would like to note that data in the form of oral discourse could have been adequately collected by using oral texts not produced specifically for this research purpose. Indeed, situated oral discourses produced in everyday talk and ‘ordinary conversations’, such as classroom discourse, staff meetings, parent-teacher meetings, policy meetings or other formal or informal discussions, could have been collected and analysed. However, the choice was made to use interviews. The reasons for this choice are explained below.

5.5.1. Reasons for using interviews

The research interview was chosen as the dominant instrument for data collection because this study aims to gain in-depth knowledge of participants' opinions, beliefs, ideologies, and ways of being and acting on the topic of EYL. Interviews are therefore the appropriate tool for the purpose of gathering this kind of in-depth descriptive data as they allow me to probe deeper into participants' explanations and understandings, using their own words.

In methodology literature it is claimed that the choice for using any method of data collection derives from holding a particular theoretical and epistemological stance towards the formation of knowledge, data collection and analysis. The choice to use the research interview is based on the viewpoint that it is a sensitive and powerful tool for obtaining and constructing knowledge.

“If you want to understand the way people think about their world and how those definitions are formed you need to get close to them, to hear them talk and observe them in their day-to-day lives” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998: 32).

In social educational research, the collection of data by means of interviews has become the most common qualitative tool employed (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Merriam, 1998). The value of the interview method in this study lies in its power to bear upon the research questions asked. The questions call for a study, which would employ a type of methodology that would use interactive techniques of producing and generating oral discourse and in-depth data, being sensitive to the complex relationship between the individual and the social. Thus, the assumption is that the oral discourse produced in interviews is part of the natural, habitual commonsense ways people talk and act.

In section 5.7, where I present the details of the research design, I discuss explicitly the ways in which interviews are used in this study. In section 5.9 I relate to the interview as a research tool and address possible problems deriving from the fact that the data were produced in interview situations rather than in 'ordinary conversations'. The ways in which this fact might have affected the data will be noted. Furthermore, trustworthiness of data along with ethical considerations will be addressed.

So far, I have argued for the use of critical discourse analysis as the methodological approach chosen for this study and for the use of interviews as the main tool for data collection. I will now examine ontological and epistemological issues.

5.5.2. Ontological and epistemological issues

Informed by critical theory, this study is based on a critical realist ontology (Corson, 1997). Critical realism is an ontology (theory of being) which emphasises the need to view phenomena in the social world as real entities and “especially the reasons and accounts that people offer to interpret the material and immaterial aspects of their world” (Corson, 1997: 166). A realist ontology means that, although reality is a matter of interpretation, a certain reality does exist and needs to be discovered by systematic analyses. As indicated by Corson (1997), “Ontological and epistemological questions are closely related to one another, since claims about what exists in the world almost inevitably involve questions about how what exists may be known” (p. 168).

Thus, ontological issues refer to theories of being and pertain to the question of what really exists in the world with the aim of theorising the point of intersection between theoretical issues and the real world of social interaction. Ontological questions about social life ask ‘what kind of things really exist in the world and in everyday social life and how basic are they’? Epistemological choices are made according to the researcher’s beliefs and pertain to what accounts for scientific data, how it is collected and what it represents.

This study proposes that the D/discourse of EYL is construed by various discourses which have a regulating effect on people’s social and classroom practices and vice-versa. Thus, this study follows an epistemology, based on the belief that people’s accounts are basic scientific data which can be studied and analysed for the knowledge they construe. In this study, the role of critical discourse analysis as a theory and method is to discover realities represented and constructed in and by discourse.

5.5.3. Critical discourse analysis as a method

Critical discourse analysis is a combination of both theory and method (Rogers *et al.*, 2005; van Dijk, 2004). As reviewed in chapter 4, approaches vary depending on the object of the study, the theories they draw on, and the methods chosen for the analyses. “Analysts bring a range of theoretical and methodological tools to bear on their research problems and perspectives” (Rogers *et al.*, 2005: 379). The main point in this issue is to use methods that will help researchers learn more about the phenomenon under study.

Rogers *et al.* (2005) address the question often discussed in critical discourse analysis research, namely, the application of more standardised analytical procedures. They state that the problem with method and analysis standardisation is that “it runs counter to the epistemological and ontological tenets of a critical paradigm” (p. 379). They further state: “Those who argue for more systematic analytic procedures are trying to counter critics who say that CDA researchers search their data for examples of what they are trying to prove, instead of letting the data ‘speak’” (p. 379).

These critics recommend that critical discourse analysts examine actual language patterns with some degree of explicitness and reconnect these patterns with the social and political themes that inform their work. Summing up the counter argument they state that: “Others (Bucholtz, 2001; Gee 1999) argue that there needs to be a diversity of approaches and that such diversity strengthens the framework and the method” (Rogers *et al.*, 2005: 380).

This study seeks to uncover and analyse discourses for the ways in which these represent people for ‘*who* they are and *what* they are doing’ with regard to the topic of study and pertain, amongst other things, to their situated identities and the cultural models they hold. Thus, it draws on the theory and method offered by Gee (1999; 2005), bearing in mind the need for a systematic examination of language patterns on the one hand and the socio-cultural and political context within which it is embedded on the other.

I will now present the details of the research design. This will provide a clearer basis for understanding how critical discourse analysis is put to work as a method in this study.

5.6. Research design and administration

5.6.1. Stages of the research design

The research design was developed in stages. Attention was paid to choosing the site, to issues regarding the complexity of interviewing young children, to arranging interviews and to other ethical issues. The design comprises three stages. The first stage was the identification of the problem, whereby EYL in grades 1 and 2 was framed as a socio-cultural phenomenon and not as another educational initiative to be evaluated. The second stage was the selection of the research approach and tools of analysis (as discussed above). The third stage was the data collection process which included choosing the school, classroom observations, sampling the participants and conducting the interviews (a complete list of all participants in the study is provided in appendix 10 p. 314 on this theses). I wish to stress that there was some overlap between the second and third stages because the particular approach to discourse analysis and the tools of analysis were continuously reviewed and re-evaluated to fit the purpose of the study and to best answer the questions posed in the study.

5.6.1.1. Published texts

Textual sources of data, pertaining to EYL in grades 1 and 2, were included in the corpus of data. These consist of Ministry of Education letters and circulars, a position paper, 6 newspaper articles (including on-line articles) all collected from 2003 to date. The purpose of collecting written texts in addition to spoken discourse by means of interviews was to ensure multiple sources of information. The collection and analysis of written texts as well as oral discourse will give the study a greater degree of trustworthiness and credibility (see section 5.9). However, the questions in this study pertain to what people actually *say* about the EYL phenomenon and, as such, call for data collection techniques which will ensure production of oral discourse.

5.6.2. Data collection process

The first step in the data collection process was choosing the site, which would further lead to choosing the informants for the purpose of interviews. There could have been different ways of choosing the site and the informants such as: interviewing neighbours, friends and family members who are connected the topic of EYL in grades 1 and 2. However, I made a choice to undertake the data collection in a school in which English

was previously taught in grades 3 or 4 and which was introducing English in grades 1 and 2 as a new initiative that school year.

This choice was taken for a number of reasons: the EYL in grades 1 and 2 initiative, being a novel issue in a school's policy and practice, was expected to generate discussion among the staff, the pupils and their parents. (In retrospect, this assumption had been proven correct as I later discovered that parents constantly requested this innovation to take place.) Furthermore, choosing a single school as a site would provide access to the principal, teachers, pupils, parents and other stakeholders, all of whom would share the novelty of the new programme, would be involved in the topic under study, and would be prospective informants in the study.

5.6.2.1. Choosing the site

Choosing a particular school was not a simple task. At the outset, I contacted the Ministry of Education in order to obtain a list of schools in which the EYL initiative was to be first introduced that school year (2003-4). Principals from the list were approached by me and I introduced myself as a researcher, presented the topic of the study and stated the reasons for contacting the school. This preliminary conversation was important for a number of reasons: firstly, I verified the information I had been given with the updated details of the particular school; secondly, it enabled me to inquire about the type of population attending the particular school.

As the aim of the data collection process was to gain access to multiple, varied discourses from different groups in society (the EYL initiative being the common topic), it was important to ensure a site that comprised heterogeneous social, cultural, economic and personal groups. Furthermore, bearing in mind that my intention in this study is to demonstrate that discourses on the topic of EYL are widespread, the issue of having a varied representation of participants was significant.

Following a process of elimination, the site chosen was a school with approximately 500 pupils from grades 1-8 in a city bordering Tel Aviv. According to an informal declaration statement provided by the school, the population of the children attending it is heterogeneous, consisting of families from both high and low socio-economic backgrounds, new immigrants from former USSR and/or other countries, single-parent

families, observant and secular Jewish families. (The site is not unusual and does not stand out in any particular way from other schools in the vicinity.)

The second step in the data collection was setting up an introductory meeting with the principal. In this meeting, access to the school was formally granted, the research aim was clarified and details of the research design were discussed (for example, the need for parents' interviews and making home visits for this purpose). As a researcher conducting all the data collection on my own, I was also provided with phone numbers of the English teachers and the home-room teachers of grades 1 and 2.

This was followed by the first formal interview with the principal. At a later stage, phone numbers of sampled parents were provided to me by the secretarial staff. Data collection took place during the school year of 2004 beginning in January and was completed in July 2004.

It is noteworthy that, throughout the time of the data collection, I had the feeling that I was welcomed in the school by the staff, by the pupils and later by the parents. Moreover, I had the feeling that the research (and its importance) was acknowledged by the principal, teachers and parents alike.

5.6.2.2. Classroom observations

The third step in the data collection process was classroom observations. The purpose of the classroom observations was to get acquainted with the teachers and pupils, to establish an informal relationship with them, thus creating a basis enabling personal interviews to take place at a later stage. I was present in 12 English lessons in the two grade 2 classes. During the observations I was less a spectator and more an 'active observer', whereby I walked around the classroom and got familiar with the teachers and the pupils. In addition, the observations provided me with opportunities for informal talks with the teachers before and after the lessons.

5.6.2.3. Conducting the interviews

The fourth step in the data collection process was conducting interviews with the teachers. Four grade 1 and 2 home-room teachers and three English teachers were

interviewed (in addition to the preliminary interview with the principal). Furthermore, parents' interviews were conducted at this stage during set times at their convenience.

Interviews with parents which took place in the following manner: with the help and assistance of the two teachers in each grade 2 class, seven different pupils were sampled (three boys and four girls). This was an intentional sampling in order to create a wide variety of participants representing families from different cultural, economic, social and personal backgrounds. For example, a new immigrant family from the former USSR, a religious family, working-class family, middle class family, etc.

To establish my connection with the parents, the teachers initiated a preliminary introduction by speaking to the parents of each of the seven pupils via phone-calls. They provided the parents with a general overview of the study, the purpose of the interviews and asked for their consent to be interviewed by me. Thereafter, I called each family, introduced myself and set up dates and times for the interviews. Most of these interviews took place at the interviewees' homes at their convenience; others took place in the school. None of the parents objected to the interviews.

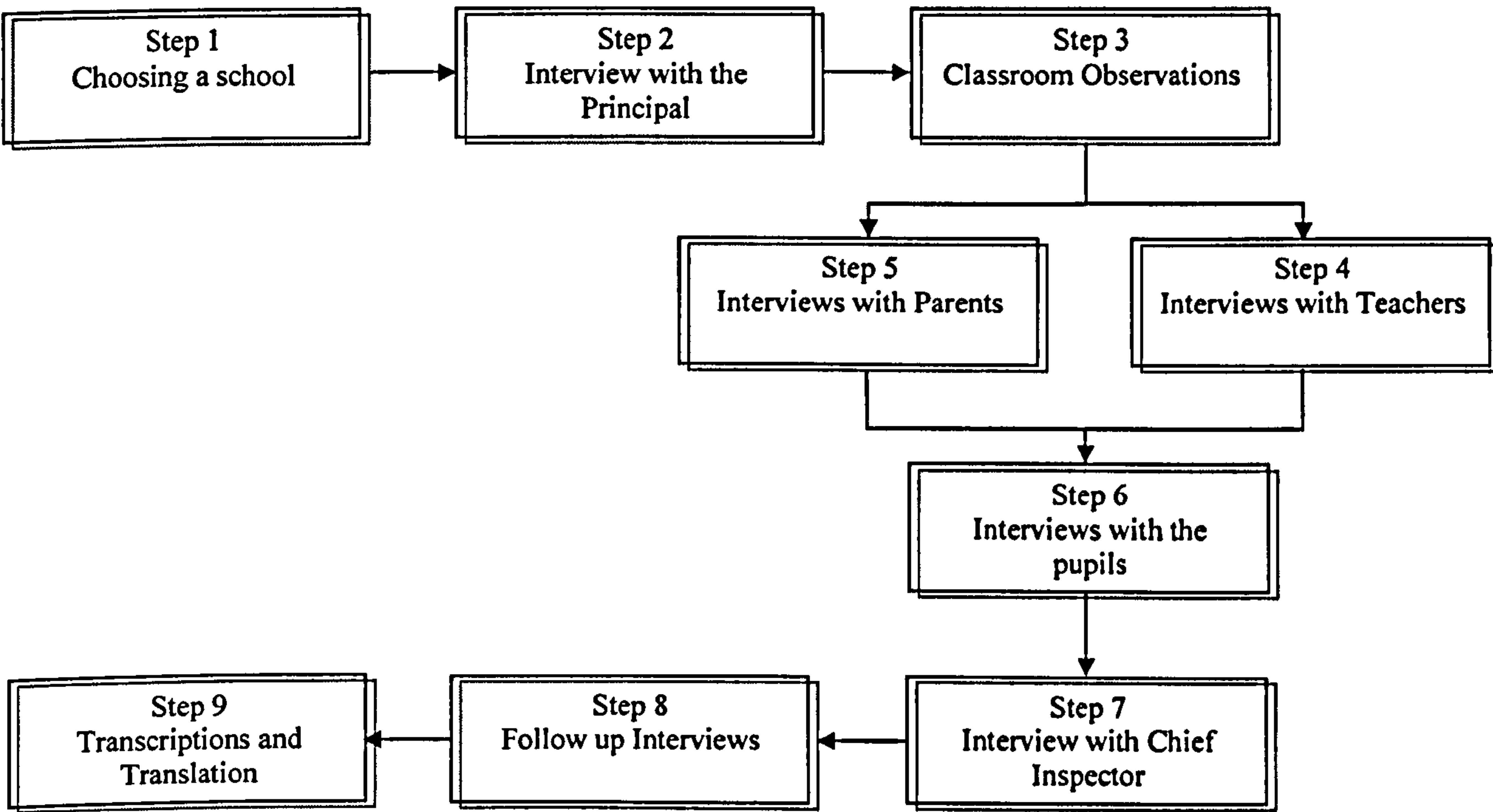
The sixth step of the data collection process was conducting interviews with the pupils, which were carried out in school. With teachers' help and assistance a sampling procedure that would ensure a varied representation of the pupils was implemented: boys and girls, different personal abilities, varied backgrounds and socio-economic status. A total of ten individual interviews and two group interviews, one of boys and one of girls, were conducted.

Following this, and in the seventh step, the Chief Inspector for English Studies in the Ministry of Education was interviewed. The eighth's step included follow-up interviews conducted with five out of the 33 interviewees where further clarification or verification of information was required. I found that 33 interviews gave me ample data, sufficient for the purposes of this research. To quote Kvale (1996: 101) on this issue: "Interview as many subjects as necessary to find out what you need to know".

All interviews were conducted in Hebrew. They were audio-taped, transcribed and translated from Hebrew to English (step 9). The complex issues of transcriptions will be

addressed in section 5.11 of this chapter where subtleties regarding translations from Hebrew into English will be discussed as well as the processes taken for generating and reducing the data.

Figure 5.1: The Research Design and Data Collection Process of Oral Discourse



In the next section I will discuss in detail the nature of the main instrument of data collection used in this study, namely the research interview. I will examine the interview situation and the ‘active interview’ as the ‘co-construction of knowledge’ between the interviewer and the interviewees (Block, 2000; Kvale, 1996).

5.7. The interviews as a research tool

Interviews have been considered a major tool for data collection in educational research for a long time. Methodological literature offers a wealth of information on the practical aspects of research interviewing such as techniques for asking questions, establishing trust, the structure of interviews and more (Briggs, 1986; Cohen *et al.*, 2000). In this study, the interview is used within a critical discourse perspective and therefore is treated not only as an empirical method for data collection and a useful mode of systematic social inquiry, but as such that involves a basic form of constituting knowledge. In other words, the interview is not a spontaneous exchange of views between people but a carefully pre-planned questioning and listening situation with the purpose of obtaining carefully tested, reliable and valid knowledge about the EYL phenomenon.

5.7.1. Interviews as a construction site for knowledge

The complexity of the research interview as a method of data collection is supported by methodological literature. According to Kvale (1996:14) the interview is seen as a “construction site for knowledge”, whereby the human interaction between the interviewer and interviewee produces and constructs scientific knowledge through and by that interaction. Kvale (1996) further argues that qualitative interviews will be characterised as scientific or unscientific depending on which of the many definitions of science is chosen. One of the broad definitions of science he uses is: “the methodological production of new, systematic knowledge” (p. 60). Although these concepts are in themselves complex, and although the interview does not belong to the methods of the natural sciences, Kvale (1996) argues that qualitative research interviews can produce systematised scientific knowledge. “I will argue that the qualitative research interview can produce scientific knowledge in the meaning of methodologically secured new and systematic knowledge” (Kvale 1996: 61).

Block (2000) addresses the problematisation of interview data while discussing the different roles of interviewers and interviewees. Block (2000) notes that there has been a long tradition in social science whereby “anthropologists, sociolinguists and educationalists see interviews as conversations and co-constructed discourse events (e.g. Briggs, 1986; Burgess, 1984; Cicourel, 1964; Mishler, 1986), and therefore, not as direct windows to the minds of interviewees” (p. 758).

Block (2000) points out that conceptualisations of data produced by interviewees adopt different stances regarding the interview context and the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee. He argues that: "Interview data are not seen as the production of an individual interviewee but as the co-construction of the interviewer and the interviewee" (p 759). Thus, interviewees respond to researcher's prompts and questions and together they co-construct the data.

5.7.2. Reflexive approaches to interviews

The notion of interviews seen as negotiated accomplishments of both the interviewer and the interviewee, shaped by the context and the situation taking place, has been previously addressed in the literature. Schwandt (cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) notes that:

"It has become increasingly common in qualitative studies to view the interview as a form of discourse between two or more speakers or as a linguistic event in which the meanings of questions and responses are contextually grounded and jointly constructed by interviewer and respondent" (p. 663).

On similar lines, Holstein & Gubrium (1995, 1997) advocate a reflexive approach to interviews. They note that until recently researchers have focused on the findings and contents of interviews (the *whats*) and that it is time to pay attention to the contexts, the particular situations, the people involved, and the interactions taking place (the *hows*). The term "Active interviewing" (p. 113) is used by Holstein and Gubrium (1997) to explain the active process of knowledge construction between the interviewer and the interviewee. It relates to the interview process as an occasion for constructing (not only discovering, saying or conveying) information, representing reality (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995).

Thus, the role of the interviewer in the 'active interview' situation is not to dictate interpretations, but to provide a situation whereby subjects can produce a range of meanings that address the issue under discussion, as described by Holstein and Gubrium (1997):

“The active view eschews the image of the vessel waiting to be tapped in favour of the notion that the subject’s interpretive capabilities must be activated, stimulated and cultivated. The interview is a commonly recognised occasion for formally and systematically doing so” (p. 122).

The interview situation becomes such that the participant’s knowledge, beliefs and perspectives are activated and implicated in that situation. The respondent becomes an ‘active participant’ in the interview whereby he/she responds to, or is affected by, the issue being discussed and is involved in the emerging data. This active process of knowledge construction transforms the respondent from a position of storing opinions or emotions into a ‘participant’ producing and constructing forms of knowledge. The notion of the ‘active participant’ relates to the different positions taken by the participant or placed on the participant during the interview or prior to it. Indeed, participants (interviewees) are being positioned in certain ways by the interviewer and by the type of questions they are being asked.

5.7.3. Positioning in interviews

In methodology literature, the interview situation has posed questions regarding the notion of subject position and identity construction within such situations. Pomerantz (2000) examines interviews from a critical discourse perspective and argues: “interviews are not just ritualised speech events where one individual elicits information from another. They are also sites of struggle where individuals strive to construct representations of themselves” (p. 25). From this perspective individuals choose the linguistic ways of stating their ideas. As they choose, they are:

“...aligning themselves with both certain ways of understanding the social world and the people who have historically understood the social world from that perspective. That is they are identifying themselves with certain subject positions” (Pomerantz, 2000: 26).

The notion of “subject positions” (Pomerantz, 2000: 27) is referred to as “possibilities for social identity that are available at particular times and places” (Pomerantz, 2000: 26). In critical discourse research this notion refers to “the possibilities for self-hood or socially

recognizable ways of being that exist within a discourse” (Pomerantz, 2000: 27). Thus, over the course of an interview, individuals use various social and linguistic resources to construct representations of themselves. Similarly, they draw on Discourse models available to them (conscious or sub-conscious theories they hold) to construe their opinions and beliefs. Pomerantz (2000) notes:

“A critical discourse approach assumes that as individuals participate in an interview, they must choose among the linguistic and social resources available for and constitutive of the interview talk. That is, they must decide what an interview entails and how to go about accomplishing this goal” (p. 28).

5.7.4. The use of interviews in this research

In this study, interviews were conducted in order to obtain oral discourse for the purpose of building a data corpus for the purpose of conducting critical discourse analysis. As was mentioned in section 5.3.3, this could have been accomplished by collecting language samples which are not produced in pre-planned interviews but rather occur naturally in everyday speech events. Indeed, a variety of data sources were collected and analysed, mainly to supplement the interviews. However, the choice of using data produced in interviews rather than using language samples which existed in different forms is an intentional one.

In addition to the reasons stated in section 5.3.3, the following considerations were included. Firstly, the choice for using interviews is based on the belief that within the interview situation a ‘space’ will be created for the construction of knowledge and in-depth understanding of the EYL phenomenon. The interview situation will allow the possibility for individuals to draw on their histories, ideologies, personal subconscious or conscious theories, to choose and articulate the linguistic ways for stating their opinions regarding EYL and any other issues they choose to associate with this topic. Furthermore, within the research interview situation they will align themselves with their personal understanding of the topic under study, the social world and the ways they and others have understood it.

Secondly, however equally crucial, to the best of my knowledge and professional experience, existing speech events on the topic of EYL (in the Israeli context) have centred on pedagogical or policy issues such as: for and/or against EYL, assessment of EYL, programmes, planning, evaluation and the like. Conversely, the nature of this study and the choice of using research interviews for the collection of data have made it possible for the issue to be investigated from a different perspective. People's knowledge, beliefs and perspectives are activated in the production of knowledge on the topic. Interviews are therefore used in this study as an instrument for collecting oral discourses, unobtainable via other instruments.

5.7.4.1. My personal conduct in the interview

Important issues in this respect are the way I presented myself, the questions I asked, the way they were asked, my responses and general conduct, all of which might have affected the data produced within the interview situations. Indeed, all of the above might have affected participants' responses to my presence and to my questions. In the interview situation I presented myself as a researcher, with a background in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) and a particular interest in EYL (i.e. not as a teacher). A typical introductory statement was: *"Hello, my name is Rivi. I am a researcher with particular interest in EYL. My professional background is teaching English in the school system"*.

The creation of a good, open and pleasant atmosphere was essential so that interviewees would feel at ease with me personally and with regard to the topic discussed. At the start I expressed my sincere interest in their views and opinions. For example, I said: *"I have come as a researcher to hear your opinions, thoughts and views on EYL"*. I avoided judgements, remarks or criticism. I was constantly aware of my facial expressions, body language as well as verbal responses so as to allow maximum opportunity for the interviewees to express their opinions freely.

5.7.5. The interview guide

I followed an interview guide (Kvale, 1996), which contains the topics, guidelines, planned order of the questions and alternative questions (appendices 5, 6 and 7). The guide was designed to ensure the elicitation of meaningful talk. It began with general

questions pertaining to English and EYL, gradually moving on to questions relating to respondents' personal experiences, everyday social practices, ideologies and beliefs. I did not follow the order of the questions strictly but kept it flexible. Flexibility is important for the promotion of good interaction, for reaching a continuous flow of conversation, and for obtaining varied information. The interviews lasted between 60 and 180 minutes and, since it was difficult to determine which questions would encourage the respondents to speak, I used clarification techniques and probes such as "*can you expand on this*", "*please give examples*", "*what do you mean?*", "*why?*" etc.

5.7.6. Pilot interviews

One of the measures taken was conducting pilot interviews before I began the full-scale data collection project. The pilot interviews served as good practice in order to find out if the questions would really get the respondents talking, whether they would speak formally or casually and to examine my conduct in the interview situation. As Johnstone (2000) suggests:

"Pilot-testing an interview format also helps you see what kind of an interviewer you are, whether for example, you are prone to letting the conversation wander and take longer than you told the interviewee it would, or whether you are the sort of person who insists so vehemently on sticking to the plan that you risk missing interesting other topics or styles" (p. 114).

Thus, preceding the formal data collection for this study, I conducted a small-scale pilot study in a different school. This included interviews with three teachers, two mothers and six Grade 1 and 2 pupils. Furthermore, I observed several English lessons in grades 1 and 2 and carried out informal talks with inspectors and colleagues. This pilot enabled me to fine-tune and determine the interview questions and develop my interview techniques. As a result certain questions were added or eliminated from the interview guide.

5.8. Documents and text collection

Although documentary discourse analysis is not the main approach in this study, published texts were used mainly as supportive data. The documents under study were: newspaper articles, a position paper on EYL, and various memos. These texts were analysed using the same tools of analysis as the oral discourse (see chapter 7).

The main intent of the collection of such data and the analysis thereof was to see to what extent and in which ways discourses circulating in written texts are similar or different to the discourses identified in the interviews. Another purpose was to critically study, examine and analyse printed texts for uncovering types of EYL discourses which have been naturalised in the media.

5.8.1. Research journal

At the outset of the research project and at the stage of the pilot, I began a research journal, which I kept throughout the data collection process. The journal served as an audit trail (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of my intentions, thoughts, dilemmas and decisions during the research process. In this journal I documented my continuous insights, questions, uncertainties and emerging issues of particular interest. At the end of each interview I used the research journal to summarise my first reaction and reflections on the dominant issues brought up in the interview. The journal was a resource to which I returned later, when dealing with the transcripts and translations of the interviews.

5.9. Trustworthiness of the research

5.9.1. Validity, objectivity and reliability

The nature of this study is complicated and presents methodological challenges. The endeavour of applying a discourse analysis method to oral discourse produced in interviews poses questions in terms of validity, objectivity and reliability of data and analysis. The choice to use discourse analysis needs to be justified against the research questions and the methods chosen. Moreover, there is a need to ensure that the study is actually doing what it has set out to do. Thus, the concept of validity originally refers to the matching between research instruments and what they purport to measure. As stated by Kvale (1996: 238): “Validity pertains to the degree that a method investigates what it is intended to investigate”.

Similarly, Perakyla (2002: 207) notes: “The validity of research concerns the interpretation of observations: whether or not ‘the researcher is calling what is measured by the right name’ (Kirk and Miller, 1986: 69; cf. Altheide and Johnson, 1994; Silverman, 1993: 149-66)”. In this research, validity is related to my ability as a researcher to correctly identify, label and describe dominant circulating D/discourses on the basis of the samples provided in the data.

5.9.1.1. Validity of interviews

Holstein & Gubrium (1997) note that in traditional approaches to interviews “subjects are basically conceived as passive *vessels of answers* for experiential questions” or “repositories of facts and the related details of experience” (p.116). The research interview in this study is treated not simply as a situation of data collection but as a situation of a complex social and interactional nature.

Holstein & Gubrium (1997) assert that, according to traditional approaches to interviews, the aim of the research interview is to “formulate questions and provide an atmosphere conducive to open and undistorted communication between the interviewer and the respondent” (p. 116). Thus, from a traditional viewpoint, provided that the interviewer implements neutral, unbiased practices, it is expected that valid data will thereby be produced. Holstein & Gubrium (1997) argue that according to this viewpoint, validity of the research interview is achieved by following the ‘correct’ procedures of inquiry and getting ‘correct’ answers. “Validity results from the successful application of the procedures” (p. 116). However, taking the “active interview” (p. 116) standpoint, the interviewee is viewed as an activated subject who constructively interacts while assembling his/her answers, drawing on past and present experiences.

From this standpoint, different issues of validity apply. It cannot be expected that if the interviewer implements neutral, unbiased practices this will inevitably provide valid data. Similarly, responses in one interview cannot be expected to be accurately reproduced in another interview because, although the topic of the interview may be the same, each interview takes place in a different ‘situated context’ using a different ‘situated language’. Thus, as Holstein & Gubrium (1997) argue:

“The validity of answers derives not from their correspondence to meanings held within the respondent, but from their ability to convey situated experiential realities in terms that are locally comprehensible” (p. 116).

Along similar lines, Cameron (2001) asserts that researchers using discourse analysis as a method “would be more likely to spend time talking in depth to a sample of the people s/he is interested in, encouraging them to explore the subject in their own way and in their own words” (p. 14). On the one hand, Cameron (2001) acknowledges the arguments that criticise face-to-face interviews for the danger of them being subjective. Subjects “may be telling the researcher what they think s/he wants them to hear or what they would like her/him to believe” (p. 14).

On the other hand, Cameron states that this criticism pertains to an unavoidable issue present in all communicative acts. Indeed, people always answer questions considering “who is asking and why” (p. 14) and therefore answers are always affected by the context, the situation and the person asking the questions. Thus, discourse analysis using face-to-face interviews as an instrument of data collection is “less about collecting facts than about studying interpretive processes” (p. 14).

In an effort to achieve trustworthiness of data, additional issues of objectivity are addressed.

5.9.1.2. Objectivity

“Objectivity is often defined as giving equal weight to all the information one gathers, or as having no point of view when one undertakes research” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998: 228). With regard to interviews, the position taken in this study is that the qualitative research interview is neither a subjective nor an objective method but rather an intersubjective interaction (Kvale, 1996).

Intersubjectivity relates to a dialogical argumentation, conversation and negotiation of meaning between the interviewer and the interviewees. In this study, interviews are used with the aim of producing systematic, cross-checked data while producing reliable and controlled knowledge.

5.9.1.3. Generalisability

The issue of generalisability in this study should be treated with caution. As a study of D/discourse analysis it sets out to describe, interpret and explain the EYL phenomenon rather than claim generalisations about it. Whilst this study follows a systematic process of analysis (see chapter 6) it is based on my (the researcher's) interpretation of the data. Therefore, it seems hard to make claims to generalisations on the basis of interpretive analyses. Discourse analysis has the role to uncover social realities and examine them.

5.10. Ethical considerations

“An interview inquiry is a moral enterprise: the personal interaction in the interview affects the interviewee, and the knowledge produced by the interview affects our understanding of the human situation” (Kvale, 1996: 109).

Discourse analysis using interviews involves a number of ethical issues. These are related to the type of data collected, the means by which they are collected, the human factor and the role of the researcher, the context of the research and the publication of the results. As the interviewer I juggle between the various ethical, professional, social and interpersonal concerns involved in the complexity of interviews. According to Kvale (1996), the researcher has to be familiar with ethical guidelines and value issues concerning three key topics: scientific responsibility, relationship with the interviewees, and his/her own independence as a researcher.

5.10.1. Scientific responsibility

Scientific responsibility pertains to the researcher's aim as an interviewer to obtain relevant, controlled and verified knowledge. Sometimes the researcher approaches the interview taking on different positions or 'roles', for example, the role of a colleague or a counsellor. In this study I was the sole researcher. In addition to the role of researcher, my personal expertise consists of my past role as an English teacher and my present roles as an English teachers' counsellor and a teacher trainer.

It could be argued that my expertise can be seen as an advantage to this study rather than a weakness because I am constantly in contact with schools, teachers, pupils, parents and position-holders. Furthermore, I have gained knowledge in the field of EYL due to my

experience in teaching English as a foreign language to young children for 15 years. Indeed, for the purpose of this study I was conscious of the need to maintain a distinctive separation between my conduct and responsibilities as a teacher trainer and a counsellor, versus my conduct and responsibilities as a researcher.

5.10.1.1. Relationship with the interviewees

Relationship with the interviewees relates to the danger of over-identification with the subjects or alternatively not keeping the necessary professional distance during the interview. There could be other personal or professional difficulties which may appear in the course of an interview. For example, I was apprehensive regarding the interview with Gila, the English teacher (all names have been changed, see section 10.1.4), whom I have known from previous occasions. I was concerned that, due to our past acquaintance, she would be inhibited from opening up and expressing her opinions and thoughts candidly. However, bearing this in mind, I made a concerted effort to put her at ease during the interview.

5.10.1.2. Independence of research

The issue of independence of research pertains to the danger of either over-emphasising or ignoring particular findings against others. The researcher may be influenced by either the funding body or the participants' body, which can obstruct or interfere with the ethical guidelines or the outcomes of the interview.

In the present research I acted as an individual researcher conducting interviews for the purpose of a PhD research study. This was presented to all participants prior to and during the data collection process. Similarly, the stance taken was one of respect towards the interviewees as people and not only as research objects or suppliers of information (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Thus, the following measures were taken to address each participant's privacy, confidentiality and anonymity.

5.10.1.3. Informed consent/ Promise of confidentiality

Informed consent means receiving consent by subjects to take part in the study after having informed them about it. Although a feeling of mutual trust and cooperation seemed to have been established during the course of the research, I decided to take

measures and prepare to obtain subjects' written consent to participate in this study (Appendix 3 and 8).

Particular care was given to receive the appropriate formal approvals for classroom observations and for conducting interviews with young schoolchildren (Appendices 1 and 2). The law in Israel requires formal written consent for minors' participation in interviews and/or classroom observations. Therefore, the Ministry of Education provided me with formal written consent for classroom observations and for conducting interviews with children (Appendices 1 and 2). The principal of the school gave her oral consent for such observations and for obtaining the personal telephone numbers of parents and teachers.

At the start of each interview all participants were presented with a letter which included an overview of the purpose of the study and the main features of the research design (interviews, classroom observations). The letter, addressed to the participants, involved obtaining participants' consent to participate in the study as interviewees on a voluntary basis with the right to change their minds or withdraw from the interview at any point or time. This introductory part of the interview involved a careful balance between providing information about the study, while at the same time not overemphasising particular issues regarding it. Similarly, letters were sent to children's parents to obtain their consent for their children to be interviewed.

5.10.1.4. Right to privacy

The right to privacy protects the participants from disclosing their identity and provides the assurance of confidentiality. Consequently, names of participants (see chapter 7) were changed. Following conventional practice and ethical codes, the above letter served as a safeguard in protecting participants' privacy in the following ways: identities of individuals, locations and the data collected were anonymous and kept confidential throughout the research process, the published results and analyses (with the exception of the interview with the Chief Inspector for English Studies). In addition, I was careful to preserve the identity of each interviewee from becoming known, directly or indirectly, to other interviewees. Thus, confidentiality was assured amongst the participants themselves. The list of participants was not disclosed and, therefore, parents did not know the identities of the other parents taking part in the research.

5.10.1.5. Protection from harm

Additional ethical considerations relate to the protection from embarrassment and unexpected, circumstantial or emotional harm. Consequently, the following safeguards were taken: pupils were interviewed in school with the help and assistance of their teachers; adults were interviewed at their convenience and at their preferred place (in the school or in their homes).

5.11. Transcriptions and translations

5.11.1. Transcriptions

The issue of transcriptions is important in discourse analysis. It has been suggested that, using the latest technology, it is possible to get detailed recordings and transcriptions of speech. However, it is impossible to repeat the actual or 'pure' situation that has taken place in the interview through transcriptions. How does the analyst decide what will be included in the transcripts and what will not? The issue gets even more complicated when an additional process of translation is involved.

According to Gee (2005), the decision as to what is included or excluded in the transcripts is a theoretical one and depends on the analyst's theoretical judgment.

"Such judgments of relevance (of what goes into the transcripts and what does not) are ultimately theoretical judgments, that is, based on the analyst's theories of how language, situations, and interactions work in general and in the specific situation being analysed. In this sense, a transcript is a theoretical entity. It does not stand outside an analysis, but, rather, is part of it" (p. 106).

The complex role of transcription has been previously addressed by different researchers concerned with the study of language and social life. In their commentary on transcriptions Green *et al.*, (1997) argue:

"Transcribing is a situated act within a study or program of research embedded in a conceptual ecology of a discipline (Green *et al.*, 1996; Toulmin, 1990; Van Dijk, 1985). Transcribing, therefore, is a political act that reflects a discipline's conventions as well as a researcher's conceptualisation of phenomenon, purposes

for research, theories guiding the data collection and analysis, and the programmatic goals (Edwards, 1993; Ochs, 1979)” (p. 172).

A transcription is a text that ‘re’-presents an event and therefore it is not and cannot ever be the event itself. The transcription is therefore an analytical tool constructed by the researcher for a particular purpose for particular data. It is an interpretive process, carried out from a particular point of view.

As an interpretive, political act, a transcription is influenced by the researcher’s assumptions, knowledge and beliefs, and cultural understandings of the discourse practices. The researcher, who is often the transcriber and the analyst (as is the case in this study), brings his or her own language ideologies to the task and is confronted with complex questions such as what will be represented and what will not? What level of contextual information will be provided? How can participants be exposed to the interpretive process? Thus, the politics of transcription relates to the tension between accuracy, readability and representation. This tension becomes a challenge for the transcribers aiming for accurate and readable representations.

“The challenge for the transcriber is to produce transcriptions that are accurate and readable but that are also reflexive in how they make explicit to the reader the constructed nature of written talk and so the problematic nature of accuracy and readability” (Roberts, 1997: 168)

These issues raise ethical concerns as well as concerns regarding consistency and rigour. Researchers using transcriptions need to be reflexive about the process and remember that “...we are transcribing people when we are transcribing talk” (Roberts, 1997: 170).

Being the sole researcher performing the transcriptions by myself, I needed to make decisions, which pertain to accuracy of words as they were used in the context and paralinguistic features of spoken language such as tone and intonation. Attention was paid to code-switching (from Hebrew into English and vice versa), fluency, register, the use of slang, metaphoric language, pauses, emphasis and actions. Since I was dealing with a large quantity of data, I only paid detailed attention to phonology when it seemed relevant.

All the interviews were audio-taped and transcribed in the original language (Hebrew) and were then translated into English. This decision was made based on my belief that, working as closely as possible with the original texts, allows maximum representation of the 'whole social person'. The intention was to preserve the authenticity of the situation in the event of returning to the transcripts for further analyses.

In the process of the translation into English, I decided to leave colloquial words or phrases in the original Hebrew. This served an important purpose of accuracy and reflexivity. On returning to the translated texts after a period of time, having the Hebrew colloquial words or phrases available, enabled me to check and fine-tune the analyses.

Transcriptions can be 'narrow' i.e. very detailed or 'broad', i.e. less detailed. According to Gee (2005), it is up to the analyst to decide how detailed the transcripts need to be. He says:

"The validity of an analysis is not a matter of how detailed one's transcript is. It is a matter of how the transcripts work together with all the other elements of the analysis to create a 'trustworthy analysis'" (p. 106).

Bearing this in mind I had chosen to carry out 'broad' transcriptions of most of the interviews but offered a more detailed system with a few of them. This decision was made based on my aim for the transcript to be readable as well as accurate.

5.11.2. Presentation of transcripts in this study

The transcript excerpts in chapter 7 are presented in the following ways:

Participants' speech is presented in *italics*.

Participant's use of 'voice' is presented in '***bold and in italics***' with single speech marks.

When participants stress a word or phrase these are presented in **CAPITAL LETTERS**.

Repeated words and phrases which are significant in any particular way are **highlighted** in grey.

When referring to, or quoting, participant's speech within the analysis and explanation, double speech marks are used in addition to them being in "*italics*".

When participants do something physical, such as get up, move or bring something it is stated (in brackets).

The transcript excerpts of published texts are presented in the following ways:

Excerpts are presented in *italics*.

When excerpts include direct quotes from different people, these are presented in “***bold with double speech marks***”.

5.11.3. Translation from Hebrew to English

In the case of translations, these too cannot be totally ‘pure’ and are already part of the interpretation. Being bilingual in Hebrew and English, I believe I was able to achieve relatively accurate translations. For the purposes of maintaining the tension between accuracy, readability and representation, I carried out my own translations and transcriptions while simultaneously hiring professional guidance. I employed the help of two professional, bilingual translators/transcribers who reviewed and commented on my work and vice versa. The following example shows a common translation error, which was avoided due to the measures taken.

Subtle nuances spoken in Hebrew could be missed in the English translation.

Parent: “*English is the dominant language, isn’t it*”?

The subtle addition of “*isn’t it?*” is significant as it implies that the speaker thinks that this is an obvious fact. Everyone knows English is the dominant language. As there is no direct translation for “*isn’t it?*” as it is used in Hebrew, it could have been easily omitted from the English translation altogether.

The stance taken in this study is that issues of transcription and translation are an integral part of the theoretical framework I draw on and the conceptual framework I wish to develop. In practice, I listened to the voices behind the tones while paying attention to subtle nuances. I enabled the interviewees to continue speaking longer stretches of talk on the issues they found important. I continuously monitored the Hebrew when making interpretations based on the translation.

5.11.4. Generating and reducing the data

The research interviews, following transcriptions and translations generated a large amount of data. One of the major concerns in this regard related to managing and treating the data: working closely with the transcripts involved choosing to include certain parts while at the same time excluding others. For the purpose of organisation and reduction of the data a computer programme called “Narraliser” (developed and produced in Israel for the purpose of managing qualitative research data) was used. The programme was particularly useful for the process of chunking segments of texts from a range of transcripts, retrieving texts and using both Hebrew and English.

At the initial stage transcripts were reread carefully (including notes taken during the interviews) in their entirety a number of times whilst listening to the recording of the interviews. Repeated perusals of the transcripts were carried out. This was done by reading each one word-by-word on the one hand, while taking care not to lose sense of the whole picture on the other. This recursive procedure enabled the classification of themes emerging from the data.

In the second stage data was categorised into themes and topics. For each of the themes the categories consisted of chunking segments of transcripts into files (or groups) whilst sorting and grouping related categories. At this stage all the transcripts were examined simultaneously. The categories were scrutinised (and varied if necessary) repeatedly until final categories were defined.

The third stage consisted of rereading the data as was categorised and drawing representative samples which would be good, demonstrative examples of the data set and the themes which emerged. This was not a simple endeavour as only a relatively small portion of the data could be used in the analysis. Simultaneously, the samples were re-examined so as to ensure their relevancy. By using the ‘Narraliser’ software it was possible to constantly refer back to the original text from which the representative samples had been extracted, thereby regularly checking the data in its original context.

5.12. Limitations of methods

The issue of generalisability is one of the main limitations of the methods chosen for this study. Although measures were taken to interview participants from different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, the fact that this school is located in one geographical location and the interviews were conducted with subjects living in one geographical area might constrain the ability to generalise from this study. Similarly, although participants were chosen to represent the different sectors of the society in Israel, the study did not cover all sectors of education, such as the ultra-religious or the Arab sectors.

The second limitation is the absence of natural discourse (ordinary conversations) in the data set. Although public texts (newspaper articles and documents) were collected and analysed, they constitute a minor part, the main data set is discourse produced in interviews. As the study intends to uncover naturalised discourses and reveal taken-for-granted social practices this poses a limitation. In chapter 8 (the discussion) additional limitations of this study, and the data from which it is drawn, will be presented.

5.13. Summary

In this chapter I presented the paradigm, approach and method that have been chosen for this research and related them to the conceptual and contextual framework of critical discourse analysis. I presented the theoretical foundations of critical social research and linked them to critical discourse analysis used as method in critical, qualitative, social research in education. I presented and described the research design and the data collection process which was carried out mainly by means of research interviews. The reasons for choosing interviews (over other possibilities) and the ways they are used in this study were discussed. The chapter concluded by addressing issues of trustworthiness of the research and methods in addition to questions concerning transcriptions and translations.

Prior to presenting the data findings and the analysis process, I present and explain the particular tools of analysis offered by Gee (2005), which form the basic tools for the analysis and interpretation of the data collected in this study. This is needed in order to clarify the necessary connections between critical discourse analysis as the theoretical

framework presented and discussed in chapter 4 on the one hand, and critical discourse analysis as a tool with which analyses are conducted on the other hand. These are presented in the following chapter (Chapter 6).

Chapter 6

Analytical Processes

6.1. Introduction

In chapter 4 I argued that discourse analysis approaches enable researchers to examine ways in which knowledge, social relations and identity are discursively constructed. Studying discursive activities allows researchers to attain new insights into the complex and dynamic relationships between D/discourse construction, social practices and socio-cultural phenomena. More specifically, critical discourse analysis provides understanding of the ways in which knowledge constructed by discourse shapes, and is shaped by, the discursive activity and social practices of the people involved. Using discourse analysis as a tool to address and examine social, cultural or educational issues, makes visible the ways language both constructs and represents the social world.

6.1.1. The goal of this chapter

The goal of this chapter is to present and illustrate the analytical tools and processes used for the analysis and interpretation of the data. This will be achieved by clarifying the tools of inquiry offered by Gee (2005) for the purpose of establishing the means for a clear and coherent analysis. The analysis itself is presented in chapter 7.

6.2. Conducting D/discourse analysis

Discourse analysis is a two-way process of movement from context to language and from language to context. Gee (2005) notes:

“Discourse analysis is a reciprocal and cyclical process in which we shuttle back and forth between structure (form, design) of a piece of language and the situated meaning it is attempting to build about the world, identities, and relationships in specific context” (p.118).

I consider the particular method of analysis used in this study suitable within the theoretical framework and the principles of critical discourse analysis because it reveals a): people’s beliefs and ideologies as illustrated and manifested in discursive situations (interviews); b): dominant D/discourses mobilised by the actors involved; and

c): construction of knowledge, identity and social relations created by and through participants' D/discourses.

6.2.1. What guides the analysis?

The analysis in chapter 7 pertains (for the most part) to the data collected via research interviews. Oral discourse produced in interviews (as opposed to discourse produced in naturally occurring data, such as in conversations or meetings), have certain limitations with regard to the various ways in which the questions are asked, the interviewer's personality, the context and other details, which may affect the interview situation and the type of talk mobilised (see also section 5.9.1.1. and 5.9.1.2. in chapter 5 on limitations of validity and generalisability). However, bearing in mind such possible limitations, the questions aimed at generating oral discourse for the purpose of examining and studying interpretive processes people construe on the topic of EYL. Oral discourse produced in the interviews is rich, descriptive and relevant and therefore suitable for reaching this aim.

Gee (2005) does not suggest a "lock-step" method (p. 137) for conducting discourse analysis. He asserts that the model he offers is not an ideal model, but a selection of tools acting as "thinking devices" (p. 9) to be implemented within a range of data. Gee (2005) recommends beginning analysis by asking questions about the texts with regard to the seven building tasks. For example, How and what different things mean? What significance are they given? What identities, roles and positions are constructed or transformed in this situation? How does the speaker position him/herself (or is positioned by others) against the topic? Whose interest is being served and why?

In addition, analysis includes looking closely at parts of the data which seem to illuminate issues pertaining to the questions guiding this study. It includes paying attention to language, which sounds different, unusual or contentious. This approach to discourse analysis allows me to be open and responsive to the data and let the data 'speak'. Indeed, as Gee & Green (1998: 161) note: "To use a consistent set, selected on an *a priori* basis, would require that we impose a logic on the data rather than constructing one in response to the type of data under examination".

Analysis has to be systematic. In other words, consistent linguistic patterns existing in the text should be examined for the ways in which they provide recurring evidence of the discourses mobilised. Thus, in chapter 7, I will point to configurations of words, phrases, grammatical structures and other linguistic features (little ‘d’ discourses) which do the work to make up the ‘Discourses’ (with capital ‘D’). I will employ language-context analysis, which enables a closer look at the ways in which patterns of language are used and at the communicative function they serve within a more specific situated meaning.

The reciprocal process between linguistic features and context adds to the validity of the analysis. Furthermore, this enables me to argue that the communicative functions uncovered in the analyses are connected to linguistic devices that manifestly intentionally serve these functions.

6.3. Building tasks and tools of inquiry as interconnected frameworks

6.3.1. Seven building tasks

Seven building tasks are “seven areas of reality” (Gee, 2005: 11), composing a discourse situation in which people use language in particular forms and ways to construe D/discourses. These are: ‘significance’, ‘activity’, ‘identity’, ‘relationship’, ‘connections’, ‘power relations’ and ‘sign systems and knowledge’(concepts which were presented in chapter 4). They are intertwined and connected to each other to form systems and are related to other past or previous situations. Language use builds these seven things, and we can analyse how the talk achieves these building tasks by making use of the six tools. Thus, analyses are conducted with the aid of, and in full integration with, the six tools of inquiry. Figure 6.1. is a graphic representation of Gee’s interconnected framework.

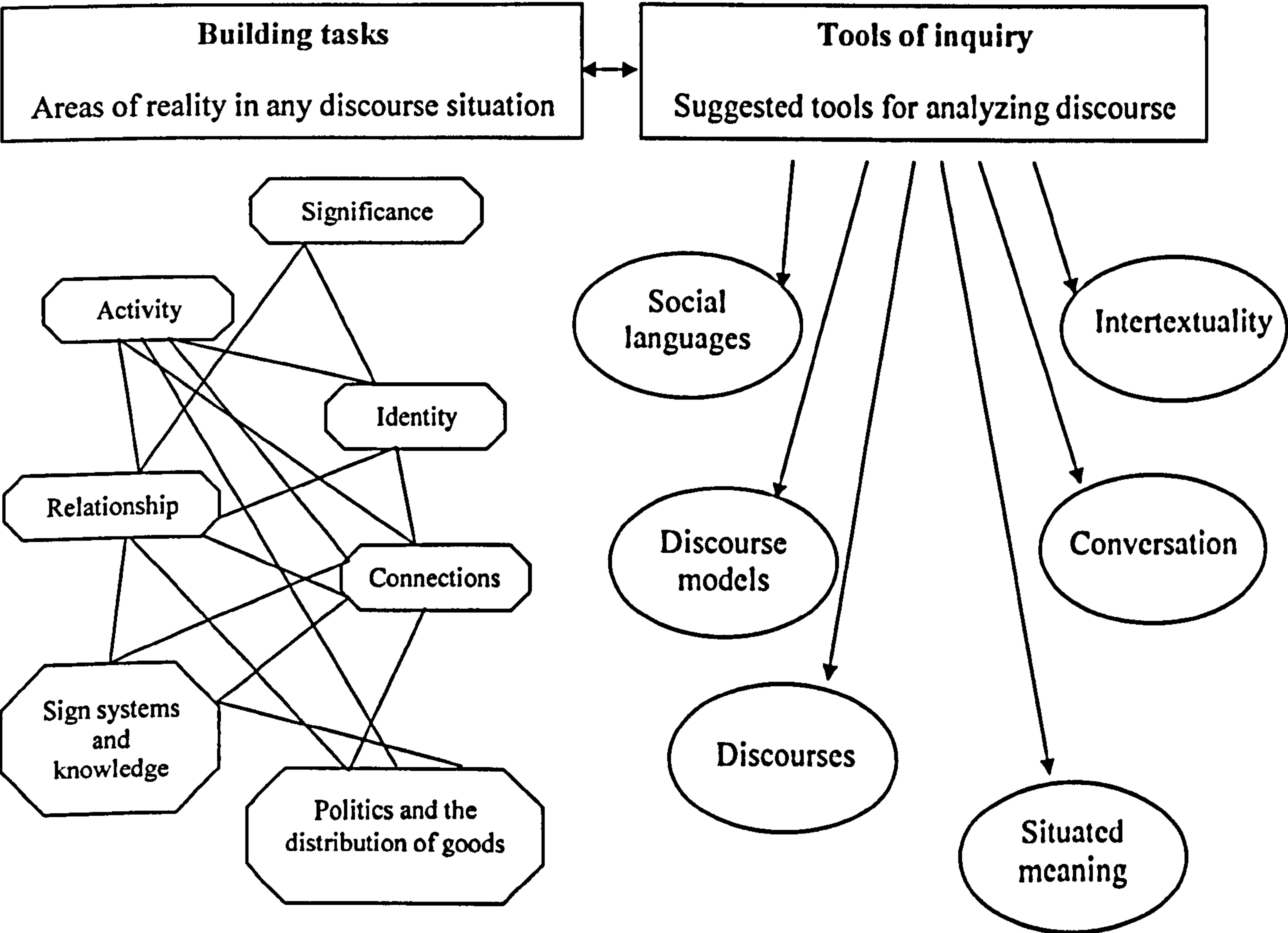
6.3.2. Tools of inquiry

Tools of inquiry are suggested tools used to analyse the workings of the above-mentioned building tasks in specific instances of language-in-use. These are: ‘social languages’, ‘situated meanings’, ‘Discourses’, ‘intertextuality’, ‘Discourse models’ and ‘Conversations’. They can assist in understanding which building tasks are built, how language is used to build them and what could be some of the social, political or ideological consequences.

Each tool can be used to inform others; thus, interpretive remarks made with regard to ‘social languages’ will be informed by ‘Discourse models’, ‘situated meaning’ and ‘Discourses’ which work together as a network in conducting the analyses. The tools will be used to make visible the ways in which participants engage in a range of construction processes (to build the seven building tasks) and on the ways they carry them out.

In the analysis (chapter 7), I will focus on particular tools of analysis at a time for the purpose of the detailed illustrations. The bigger picture will emerge after having provided examples across different analyses. Thus, the seven building tasks and the tools of analysis constitute a mutually supportive system within which each of the components gives meaning to all the others and obtains meaning from them like “interconnected threads” (Gee, 2005:103). Analysis in this study primarily uses four out of the six tools, namely, ‘Discourses’, ‘Discourse/cultural models’, ‘situated meanings’ and ‘social languages’.

Figure 6.1. Interconnected Frameworks (Gee 2005)



6.3.2.1. Discourse/s as a tool of inquiry

This study aims to uncover dominant Discourses in which participants are members. Thus, the notion of Discourses, their construction and the means by which they can be recognised is central in the analysis and has two functions. First, in the tradition of Gee (2005), it means ways to be recognised as a certain person (ways of speaking, acting, valuing, and being). Second, as a tool of inquiry, it is used to explain and understand the discursive situation. This can be achieved by examining the interview data as the primary focus for both what participants say whilst using different discourses (ways of representing), as well as for what they say they do (clues to other aspects of Discourse).

The analyses, presented in chapter 7, seek to make visible Discourses people “pull off” (Gee, 2005: 30) while being and acting as ‘an Israeli parent’, ‘an Israeli teacher’, an ‘Israeli seven-year old pupil’, an ‘Israeli school principal’, when they talk about EYL issues. Thus, the process of identifying Discourses includes both the examination of language (little ‘d’ discourse’) as well as other aspects people bring with them (big ‘D’ Discourses) to the discursive event: their thoughts, beliefs, histories, experiences, actions and more. In the analysis I will be foregrounding the Discourses participants “pull off” (who they are speaking as) as much as what they say about EYL.

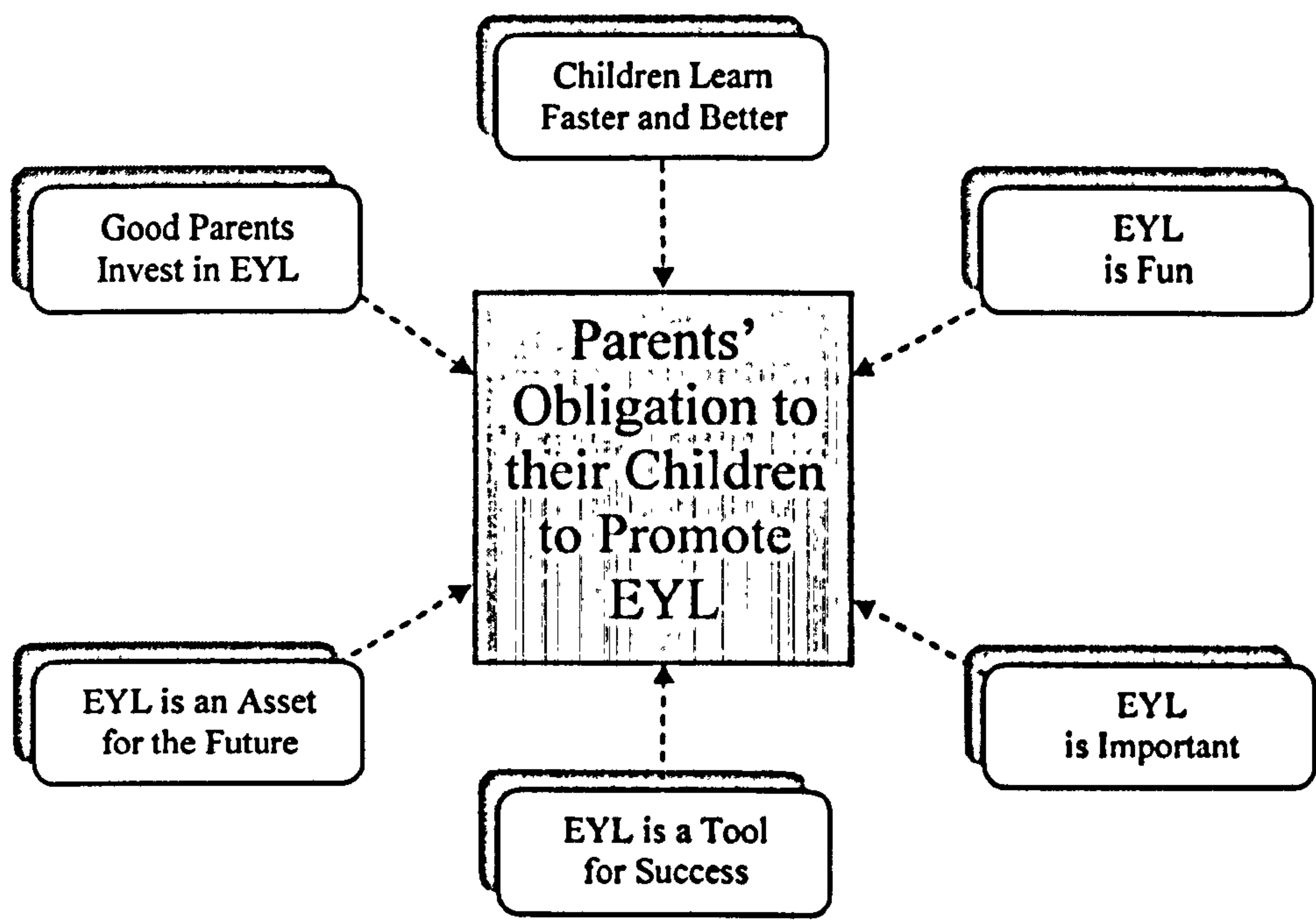
Additionally, I will distinguish and make visible the hybrid nature of Discourses by showing the linguistic ways participants perform, negotiate and get recognised for the Discourses they enact. To achieve this I will be looking at more extended extracts of speech from the data. This will illuminate the ways in which participants knit together parts from different discourses and combine them to build hybrid Discourses and or Discourse models (DM) for themselves. Interpretations, explanations and understandings of the Discourses will be presented while bearing in mind that these interpretations and understandings are always relative to each other and to the larger social context within which the Discourses exist.

6.3.1.2. Discourse models (DM) as a tool of inquiry

In the tradition of Gee (1999, 2005), DM are also cultural models (CM). As was presented and discussed in chapter 4, they are theories that help us decide what is typical and normal within a particular Discourse and include the beliefs, values and attitudes we hold in our minds informing the ways we act and interact.

However, Gee (2005) argues that DM do not just exist in people’s heads but rather, they are construed (or shared) in the process of interaction with other people, media or texts. People appropriate the information available to them through interactions which, in turn, often become their taken-for-granted social practices. DM act as an important tool of inquiry in discourse analysis because by recognising them we can identify people’s attitudes, view-points, beliefs and values.

Figure 6.2: An example of a discourse model (DM): Parents’ obligation to their children



6.3.1.3. Situated meaning as a tool of inquiry

Situated meaning is an image or a pattern people assemble on the spot, as they communicate in a given context, based on a combination of previous experiences and the 'here and now' context. Situated meanings do not just exist in people's minds but rather are negotiated by people through interaction and communication in everyday social practices. Thus, people assemble situated meanings based on context, but they also interpret the context based on the situated meaning they assemble.

For example, the phrase "EYL is important" could have different meanings, depending on the particular situation, the type of communication, the way people understand that context to be and their past experiences. When this phrase is used by the teacher in a classroom it may imply 'take English seriously and do your homework'. When used by a principal in a meeting it may imply that he/she has decided to add extra budget for English, initiate new policy, or that English is important but Hebrew or Arabic are not as important. When used by a parent it may imply 'English is important so I pay for my child's English lessons'.

As a tool of inquiry situated meaning helps in making visible the meaning given to language in the context within which it is used. In Gee's (1999, 2005) tradition it means looking explicitly at the data and at the context for examples of situated meanings at work. Similarly, we look closely at the text (language), which, in turn, helps to create the context. The interview situations thus served as a framework, a lens through which participants' knowledge, beliefs, understandings and ways of being (regarding the topic under study) are activated and implicated.

6.3.1.4. Conversations (with a capital 'C') as tools of inquiry

The term Conversations (with a capital 'C') is used by Gee (1999, 2005) to explain certain topics, issues or debates in society, recognised by a large number of people as controversial or important. These may include: violence in schools, classroom initiatives and more. The significance of Conversations as a tool in discourse analysis lies in that they include people's beliefs, ideologies, values, personal histories, situated identities and DM which network together and play an important role in forming opinions.

In line with this theorisation, EYL can be framed as a ‘Conversation’ (see chapter 1 section 1.2). As a tool of inquiry, the ‘Conversation’ of EYL will be examined by analysing participant’s views, beliefs, ideologies and personal histories. To facilitate a better understanding of the analysis process, it is necessary to elaborate on the notion of **social languages** for the ways in which language works in construing Discourses.

6.3.1.5. Social languages as tools of inquiry

Social languages pertain to “forms of language” (Gee, 2005: 38), or kinds of language, people use to express their activities and construe Discourses. Social languages are not ‘pure’ and have no strict boundaries. Indeed, people mix different forms of language in complex ways for specific purposes and functions. It is important to recognise these diverse forms, identify how they work and what they accomplish within interactions. In order to achieve a better understanding of the EYL phenomenon it is important to identify the “forms of language” participants employ in their speech.

Thus, in the analysis I will examine particular linguistic patterns and point out the ways language is employed to give emphasis to, stress and highlight particular issues so as to make them significant. I will draw attention to repetitions, use of particular words and phrases, metaphors, figurative language, use of voices, intertextuality and other linguistic features.

All social languages contain clues and cues which mark out, grammatically, syntactically and otherwise, distinctions between the different forms of language people use. Identifying patterns in language is but a first step in the analysis. We then need to ask what communicative functions these linguistic patterns serve in the discursive situation (situated meaning), what meaning do they have and how they (amongst other things) help to construct the Discourse of EYL.

Thus, the linguistic patterns (parts of speech, nouns, verbs, clauses, phrases) act as guidelines for understanding, explaining and interpreting the situated meaning these words have and the “meaning potential or meaning range” (Gee, 2005: 56) which can be attributed to the texts.

6.4. Social languages at work

In this section I focus on this particular tool for the purpose of illustrating the various forms of language participants used in their talk. I provide examples for the ways linguistic patterns constitute the systematic analysis provided in chapter 7. The excerpts are all examples taken from the data set.

6.4.1. Grammar

Grammar has a significant role in the examination of texts. Looking closely at uses of grammar informs us about the ways in which meanings are built, designed or shaped in communication. The following are examples of grammatical devices which we will meet in the data in chapter 7.

6.4.1.1. Pronouns

Participants use inclusive plural pronouns such as ‘we’, ‘us’, ‘you’, ‘they’ etc and shift to use the exclusive singular pronoun such as ‘I’, ‘my’, ‘in my opinion’. The way pronouns are used and processed in Hebrew is the same way as it works in English. The following examples illustrate the shifting use of pronouns.

David, father:

*Because **we** are brought up from a very young age that **we** need to be strong and rich and successful and well known and since early babyhood **you** are exposed to films in English.*

*English is very significant to **our** lives. It's important to **me** that **my** child should have all the possible conditions. **I** will do everything to provide **my** child with possibilities.*

Meital, teacher:

***Everybody** feels like... **our** country is getting too small for **us**. People have already understood what is happening here.*

The extensive use of plural pronouns (“everybody”, “us”) and the recurrent shifts to the personal pronoun “me” or “I”, generates the sense of shared opinions, shared identity

and a sense of solidarity with others. It creates the feeling that, although participants are speaking as individuals, in fact, they see themselves as representing him/herself as well as other people in society.

6.4.1. 2. I-statements

“I-statements” (Gee, 2005: 141) can be categorised according to the verb which follows the pronoun ‘I’. Cognitive I-statements are statements made about thinking and knowing, such as ‘I think’ or ‘I know’. State and action I-statements are statements made about actions taken or planned such as: ‘I will invest’, ‘I will do’, ‘I explicitly plan to’, ‘I will send’. These statements illustrate a person’s ‘state’ or his/her actions *vis-à-vis* EYL. State or action I-statements tell us more about being and acting as Israeli people.

Achievement I-statements are statements made about activities and desires such as ‘I plan to’ or ‘I want’. Cognitive I-statements such as ‘I think’ or ‘I find that’ (versus affective I-statements such as ‘I like’ or ‘I want’) symbolise general social claims or truth claims emphasising true reality and the way things are, as the following example illustrates:

David: *But I think that in the Western countries at least, this is the language.*

Bari, mother:

I think it comes from the need people have to communicate with each other.

6.4.1.3. Vague references

When we examine the data we will notice extensive use of vague references (Gee, 2005). These are words and phrases, such as ‘people’, ‘everyone’, ‘the world’, ‘Western countries’ ‘everybody’, which signal an informal social language and achieve solidarity as the following excerpts demonstrate.

David: *The only language everyone speaks, known to everybody, or that everyone understands, at least, is English. So A: in order to manage in the world and B: because it is the language most used in the world, in my opinion.*

We are all a herd we want our children to learn English. It is part of the imperviousness in the society.

David's language shifts from using vague references, such as "everyone", "everybody", "the world", to using personal reference such as "in my opinion". This may imply a shifting position (identity) from local to global back and forth. The use of "we" ("we have a society") includes all other personal pronouns (he, she, it) and serves to generalise stereotypes that apply to a whole group of persons ("we are all a herd").

David uses I-statements, inclusive/exclusive pronouns and vague references which all pattern together to signal a shifting global/local identity. He generalises his opinion using "everybody", "they", "people" in order to achieve solidarity with others, who perhaps hold similar opinions.

The use of plural/singular pronouns (section 6.5.1.1) and vague references is explicated also in the following example.

Bari: *It's like asking someone 'why do you want to have dollars...' I mean, one needs a language which is an international language which is useful when one needs it. It will be always helpful if you have it*

Bari uses vague references such as "a language" and "one" coupled with I-statements such as "I mean" and plural pronouns "you" in the same sentence. These pattern together to signal that, while she distances herself, she may be referring to herself as well and that, in fact, she values EYL as much as having dollars. We can presume that perhaps Bari avoids a personal tone and prefers to use the vague reference "someone" because this is an obvious issue to her. Alternatively, she may be self-conscious about stating her beliefs explicitly (using the personal pronoun 'I' or 'me'), in which case using a vague reference feels more legitimate, reassuring and comforting. In her speech, Bari constructs her identity (her position toward EYL) and builds connections between English, knowing English, EYL, and having money.

6.4.1.4. Reported speech

The use of reported speech serves as supporting evidence for participants' opinions and views. When participants retell situations and experiences they make the message

conveyed seem clear and authentic. Reported speech serves as confirmation that the information conveyed is authentic and true, as the following example illustrates.

Bari: *Already in kindergarten, before 1st Grade, my friend enrolled her son to learn English. She said it was fantastic, and that they use a certain method, she told me the name. The child understands 'the English' really well.*

6.4.1.5. Informal language

Impersonal epistemic expressions such as “of course” and the informal parenthetical device “you know” (Gee, 2005: 42) function as informal, casual statements which carry reassurance and achieve solidarity with the speaker. They stress social and affective involvement and co-operation in meaning making.

Bari: *Of course I have encountered it (EYL). Now, we are really in times of progress where English is necessary. You know, today, there are more computers, more learning, these are the circumstances. There is progress.*

David: *It's like the Jewish mother you know, a lawyer and a doctor.*

6.4.2. Lexicalisation

6.4.2.1. Content words

“Content words” (Gee 2005: 119) are nouns, verbs and adjectives which are “informationally salient” (Gee, 2005:121) and carry meaning (relative to the context). Content words, as opposed to function words such as pronouns, determiners or quantifiers, carry more meaning.

In the data we will notice that participants choose to use particular content words more frequently than others. Some examples are: “provide”, “important”, “private lessons”, “invest”, “western world” “global language”. The choice made by participants to use these particular lexical items acts as evidence of the significance they attach to them as the following example demonstrates.

David: *It is a type of ... every good parent wants to provide this to his child.*

*Again, to succeed is the style of the **Western world**. It means to have knowledge, to be tough. Not to be different, not to be weak.*

*I explicitly plan to teach her (daughter) English in **private lessons**. Whatever is necessary. To be able to succeed in terms of the **western world***

6.4.2.2. Repetitions

Repetitions of words and phrases or using similar lexical tokens in an unexpectedly wide range, make particular words, expressions or ideas significant (building significance). Furthermore, repetitions serve as evidence to support participants' beliefs, opinions and the message conveyed. When participants wish to emphasise issues they hold as important, they repeat them or use similar words to re-emphasise them, as the following example illustrates.

David: *From **Western countries**, with a **Western mentality**, together with a **Western culture**.*

*Or if you wish to copy the **West**.*

*At the same time there is this image that the **West is IT**.*

The phrases “*Western culture*”, “*Western mentality*”, “*Western countries*”, “*The West is IT*” are repeated and re-emphasised as David makes connections between English, EYL and the “*Western culture*”. This serves as indication that in his opinion the influence of The West and the Western mentality is of significance in the promotion of EYL in Israel.

6.4.2.3. Absence of agency

Another linguistic feature to be found in the data is “absence of agency” (Gee, 2005: 42). This feature pertains to a style of language whereby there is no mention of who does the associated action. The exclusion of the social agent obfuscates the action and the responsibility for that action. The use of this linguistic feature implies one (or more) of the following possibilities:

A: when the person speaking does not want to be identified as a performer of the action, especially when he/she does not want to draw attention to him/herself in particular;

B: the person speaking decides (consciously or subconsciously) there is no need to identify him/herself as the performer of the action because it is obvious from the context;

C: when the speaker may want to avoid particularising something very common when trying to be objective like in science;

D: when the speaker wants to avoid a personal tone.

Whilst participants speak in this manner (using vague references, omitting the agency or not taking responsibility for the action), they reveal conscious or subconscious theories they hold on particular issues. These may serve as evidence to support the Discourse models (DM) which inform their beliefs.

In the transcripts we will find instances where the use of agency is unclear and the responsibility of the action is vague. The following excerpts are examples of the way absence of agency is used and the way it works as a tool in building a variety of building tasks. I have included questions which point out the vague references David makes in his speech.

David: *It's all an issue of demand. Issue of rating* (Who demands? from whom?)

Yes, it is the statistics that are brainwashing our brains on a daily basis. (Who is responsible for the statistics?)

When you don't really believe in yourself and want to copy and be like the other. (Which other?)

At the same time there is this image that the West is IT (What image? Who creates this image?)

David avoids a personal tone and excludes himself or any other subjects from his speech. Plural pronouns such as “you” and “our”, coupled with vague references such as “*there is this image*”, pattern together to signal generalisations. Signalling a vague position and avoiding a personal tone David detaches himself from Israeli society, its practice and norms.

6.4.2.4. Voices

In the tradition of Gee (2005), social languages include the notion of the changing voices participants put-on, use or speak through in their speech. Employing someone's voice in speech adds to the authenticity of the message or the idea being conveyed. In addition to

the text being more vivid, it is more convincing as being a true and real representation of possible Discourse models, thoughts and beliefs.

The employment of different voices reflects possible discursive resources participants draw on and/or larger possible Discourses circulating in society. This can serve as a tool to illustrate the connections participants build between their personal histories, discursive resources and their understanding of EYL. Furthermore, the act of speaking through different voices allows individuals to take up and manipulate different positions for the purpose of self representation within a particular context.

The following excerpt provides an example of different voices David uses on different occasions in his transcripts.

David: *I'm really generalising here but I think that we, as a nation, believe what people say about us, Jews, in the world: 'The Jew is this or that'. It's like when a parent tells his child again and again that he is worthless, 'nothing will come of you'.*

First, David takes up the voice of 'people in the world' criticising Jews, "*The Jew is this and that*". He then also speaks through an Israeli parents' voice, adopting the particular tone of an over-protective or over-achieving parent reprimanding his child, "*nothing will come of you*".

6.4.3. Nominalisation

"Nominalisation" (Gee 2005:43) is another linguistic feature we will encounter in the data. The term refers to a "compound noun" (Gee, 2005: 43), a noun which contains a lot of information and is compacted into a compound word or phrase. Such a phrase can include a verb changed into a noun, for example, 'a need', or simply a "whole sentence worth of information" (p. 43). In the context of this study, the word 'investment', for example, may mean to invest time in learning English, to invest money in English lessons, or both depending on the context and the situated meaning in which the particular language is being used. The following examples exemplify nominalisations at work.

David: *English means to have the knowledge.*

The verb 'know' is reframed and used as a noun "*knowledge*" to mean one of the following possibilities: knowledge of English, knowledge of the English culture, knowledge of reading English and more.

David: *This could be the case of EYL, and we all live with this thing and accept it as a need, as a golden rule, as a must, and perhaps it is a silly thing to do.*

The word "*need*" is also a verb normally associated with a noun. In this case it is used as a noun and can have a variety of meanings (a need = a prerequisite, a necessity) or can raise questions (a need for what? What type of a need?). Similarly, the modal "*must*" is used as a noun ("*a must*": "*accept it as a must*") thereby giving the physical value of an object. This may imply that EYL is a necessity, an obligation or a requirement. More examples from the data are needed to uncover the explicit situated meaning of the word 'must' amongst the many possible alternatives.

6.4.4. Figurative language and metaphors

Participants' language is laced with "figurative language and metaphors" (Gee, 2005: 83-84). These are a major source of creativity in everyday use of language and construct more specific, concrete meanings out of more abstract general topics. Thus, when using metaphors, participants draw on their conscious or subconscious theories and understanding of the world (Lakoff 1987; Lakoff and Johnson 1980). They draw on particular discursive resources while incorporating both knowledge and culture in their speech.

Using metaphors in their speech, people exemplify their own conceptual structures deriving from their experiences and process of socialisation. Thus, examining metaphoric language can uncover the beliefs and DM they hold. The process of examining metaphors has important implications for the consideration of the relationship between language and ideology.

In the following example David uses the symbol “a gift” to describe EYL: “*It is a **gift** and I would like her (his daughter) to have **this gift***”. David’s words imply that he believes EYL is special and as worthy as a gift.

6.4.5. Intertextuality

The interview situation and the space given for participants to speak about EYL trigger the application of particular words, phrases and expressions ‘borrowed’ from different sources and/or other contexts. Often the borrowing of words and phrases become generic and extensively used as exemplars of people’s particular social language. In these instances it is useful to examine the re-formulated words and phrases, for a better understanding of the functions they carry.

Intertextual work is accomplished in the way particular words and phrases allude to other texts, and/or borrow terminology from other sources, as such, they achieve a degree of solidarity. Listeners get the impression that participants are authoritative and knowledgeable because they support their arguments with language from various fields.

Intertextual work points towards some possible cultural/Discourse models participants draw on, out of which hybrid Discourses are constructed. In the following excerpt Meital uses the term ‘melting pot’ to describe the nature of the Israeli people and culture. The term is ‘borrowed’ from its use in the Israeli media, where it refers to outcomes of immigration in Israeli society (and before that to immigration in the USA). She uses the term to explain the idea that the Israeli people are of hybrid cultures and different backgrounds.

Meital, (teacher):

*Yes, it is something Israeli. But again I say, examining it, I think it all comes from the **‘melting pot’** situation and the exposure to multiple cultures.*

6.5. Summary

The above examples complement each other. In other words, participants mix them in hybrid ways to articulate their beliefs and opinions. Additionally, these examples constitute all the linguistic features which will be examined in the analysis (chapter 7). As presented in figure 6.1, the tools of analysis and the seven building tasks work

together as interconnected frameworks and constitute a mutually supportive system within which each of the components gives meaning to all the others and obtains meaning from them. These will be used in the analysis of the data collected for this study. In Chapter 7 I will present the findings and conduct a close analysis of excerpts from the data using these tools.

Chapter 7

Findings, analysis and interpretation

7.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter I presented and illustrated as interconnected frameworks the building tasks and tools of inquiry, which will be used in conducting the analysis. Guided by the tools, in this chapter I present the findings, the analysis and interpretation of data.

7.1.1. The goal of this chapter

Inspired by the work of Gee (2004, 2005) on discourse theory and discourse analysis, my goal in this chapter is to propose a systematic analysis of the data by following the theoretical concepts and tools of analysis he offers. Thus, Gee's (2005) approach of discourse analysis is used to explore, understand, explain and interpret the data collected on the topic of EYL in grades 1 and 2.

Analyses in this chapter are divided into two sections. The first and major section pertains to explanation and interpretation of transcripts of oral discourse (including field notes) obtained via the tool of interviews, conducted specifically for the purposes of this research. The second section, a relatively minor part of the corpus, pertains to explanation and interpretation of publicly available texts (documents and newspaper articles).

As it is not possible during analysis to consider all the data simultaneously, I will present them as separate themes for the purpose of the detailed analyses and heuristics. Therefore, I will focus on one particular aspect at a time while backgrounding others. The intention is that by dealing in some detail with each aspect separately and across different analyses, ultimately, a broader picture will be developed. The complete analyses will be achieved when the particular aspects which have been broken down will be pulled together and rebuilt.

7.1.2. The organisation of this chapter

In this chapter I offer a three-stage heuristic procedure of arriving at understandings, explanations and interpretations of the data. In the initial stage of the analysis I present and discuss seven major themes which have emerged from the data. The themes that emerged are not congruent with the D/discourses but rather represent semiotic dimensions across which the D/discourses are constructed. This could be achieved by examining the whole corpus of the data set, looking at key motifs that run through each interview (Gee, 2005) and at what they can tell us about participants' D/discourses. I re-read all the interview transcripts (in their Hebrew original) and identified themes according to the motifs that appear in all.

The second stage included a close analysis of samples taken from the data. I examined words, phrases, grammatical, syntactical and other linguistic features (little d discourse), by which certain issues or ideas are foregrounded while others are not. Similarly, I look at more extended pieces of text and longer stretches of talk for the way in which participants articulate their everyday actions and for how they enact the big 'D' Discourse. I will point out how they make connections across segments of talk, and how they pull different discourses together (creating hybrid texts) in the process of construing Discourses and enacting their identity.

This has been achieved by repeatedly reading the interview transcripts and listening to the original Hebrew audio-tapes. Such close attention to the details and the process of constantly re-reading the data has made it familiar. Such familiarity is crucial for a meaningful interpretation and analysis.

Thereafter, in the third stage, I suggest explanations and interpretations of the data. I will illuminate the main points and issues while emphasising their meaning in the context of the study. These interpretations and understandings are always relative to each other and to the larger social context within which the discourses exist.

It is important to note that since D/discourse analysis is a reciprocal, cyclical process, the second and third stages of the analysis appear in direct connection to each other. Thus, explanations and interpretations entail moving back and forth between structure (little d

discourse) and the situated meanings they attempt to build (large D Discourse). This will lead to the discussion of the findings which is presented in chapter 8. In the discussion I evaluate the extent to which the findings and the analyses have addressed the research questions which provided the motivation for this study.

I begin the analysis with the first stage by presenting the 7 themes which emerged from the data. Some of the themes include topics, which overlap or contain common characteristics (such as identity, good parenting, globalisation, the commodification of English and more). These will become clearer as more examples of the data are presented.

7.2. Themes

7.2.1. The theme of ‘Parenting’

‘Good’ parents raising young children are in continuous pursuit of their well-being. Indeed, they embrace sets of principles of practice for defining and shaping what counts as caring for their children. These principles of practice guide ‘good’ parents in taking action with regard to their children’s education in general and with regard to issues pertaining to EYL in particular. Similarly, these principles explain their actions and beliefs in terms of the values they hold, Discourse models (DM) they adopt and/or operate with, discursive resources they draw on and the Discourses they construe, to which they wish to belong.

Participants articulate their beliefs and practices of their role as good parents in ways that can be recognised by others. Part of ‘being’ and ‘acting’ as good parents means that parents ‘invest’ in their children’s educational resources in general and in EYL in particular. Thus, ‘good’ parents are determined to provide their children with the opportunity to learn the English language both to enjoy the advantage of knowing the international language as well as to spare them the difficulties they (themselves) had experienced due to their lack of knowledge of English.

Being recognised as good parents includes adopting particular discourses to enact the ‘good Jewish/Israeli- parent’ Discourse which parents associate themselves with or wish to belong to. They exemplify the well-respected good-parenting practices in their speech

as well as in their social practices. Indeed, parents will invest financial and/or other resources to provide EYL for their children. Similarly, they will actively promote EYL in schools, buy extra books, send their children to private lessons etc., all of which contribute to building significance for EYL, building their position (identity) *vis-à-vis* EYL, and thus building politics, sign systems and knowledge.

Close examination of participants' language is required in order to uncover what they construct (building blocks), how they view their actions, the actions of others and how they use language to participate in socially appropriate ways as 'good parents' in their society. This will be specified in stages 2 and 3 of the analysis in this chapter.

7.2.2. The theme of 'Language Learning'

'The younger the better' (TYTB) is a popular axiom, mostly associated with learning in general and with learning languages in particular. It represents the commonly-held belief that younger children learn languages faster and better than older people (or older children). Therefore, it is better to commence the teaching or learning of a foreign language (for example, English) at a young age, or better still, at the youngest age possible. TYTB notion is contested amongst educators and laymen alike, and thus, there are opponents and proponents to this belief (see chapter 3). When asked about the axiom, with the exception of two English teachers, all parents and home-room teachers supported it.

In-depth close analysis is needed to illustrate the ways in which 'TYTB discourse', 'common-sense discourse' and 'SLA discourse' are often interwoven and can be recognised in the 'good/Jewish parents' Discourse'. This will serve as evidence for the ways in which D/discourses have a regulating effect on the promotion of EYL in schools, on the growing popularity and status of EYL, and on the distribution of goods in society with regard to EYL.

7.2.3. The theme of ‘commodification’

This theme encompasses three elements which are interrelated in different ways. I present them in turn and highlight the main issues pertaining to each one.

7.2.3.1. ‘Consumerism’ (Fairclough, 2001), ‘New Capitalism’ and the new work order (Gee, 1996)

‘Consumerism’ is a term used to show how the work of discourse builds an image of a particular product and the way it constructs subject positions for the people involved as the consumers of such a product. The notion of consumerism in modern societies grows out of particular economic, technological and cultural conditions (Fairclough, 2001). It is further related to the notion of ‘New Capitalism’ and ‘the new work order’ (Gee, 1996), which is characterised by ‘hyper-competition’, ‘privatisation’ and ‘customisation’ in modern society (Gee, 1996).

Participants seem to draw on the language of ‘New Capitalism’ and use political, institutional, commercial, media, globalisation, high-tech, consumerism and other socially and politically produced discourses. They articulate and re-formulate these concepts in their daily discourses (everyday speech). Using metaphors, comparisons, axioms and other linguistic features, participants construct their understandings of socio-cultural, educational and other phenomena, all of which can be traced to the theme of New Capitalism and consumerism, and locate themselves within them as consumers. Close investigation of such language is needed to understand the implications thereof on everyday life.

7.2.3.2. The commodification of EYL

Participants accept the logic of a globalising, knowledge-driven economy and an ‘anglophone’ world where English is the dominant language, and associate the notion of EYL with economic welfare, framing it as a commodity (the commodification of EYL). Furthermore, the outstanding advancement in computers and high technology is associated with knowing and using English. It is also assumed that younger children are more technical, that they learn faster and therefore learning English at a young age will contribute to their needs. Thus, participants exemplify their desire for EYL by framing it as if it were a desired commodity. The idea of EYL as a desired commodity, as part of

the education system, or as a social practice, has become standardised, normal and a taken for granted item amongst parents, teachers and position-holders alike. This naturalised reality has been made obvious as ‘the ways things are’. A closer examination of such discourses is needed to uncover their implications for daily life.

7.2.3.3. EYL as cultural capital

The subject of EYL is equated with gaining cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1977, 1982, 1991). Indeed, English, knowing English and EYL are considered by participants as having a high social, cultural and economic value. Participants consider English and EYL as “*important*”, “*a status symbol*” and “*the dominant language*” which turns language learning into a desired commodity and EYL into linguistic capital. This notion is based on the assumption that if children learn English at a younger age they will have a longer period of time to learn and will know English better. Children will consequently be equipped with “*knowing English*” equated with “*linguistic*” or “*cultural capital*”. They will thus possess “*a tool*”, “*a key*”, “*a gift*” or “*the power*” for achieving better and higher opportunities in life. Equipped with the knowledge of English, they will have better chances in ‘New Capitalism’ or in the ‘the new work order’. Participants wish to increase the value of their children’s cultural/linguistic capital and take actions in the promotion of EYL for their own children.

Close study of people’s discourses can make visible the ways in which participants associate the notion of EYL as investment in cultural capital with the idea of being and acting as good parents. Thus, they believe that, by actively investing in EYL (as cultural capital), they are fulfilling their responsibility as good parents as they do so for the benefit of their children.

7.2.4. The theme of EYL and identity

Participants’ identity construction is illustrated in their language. Participants take up (or have imposed upon them) different subject positions such as weak versus strong, success and achievement versus failure and disappointment and other identity markers they align themselves with. Subject positions with regard to EYL require examination in the context of the status and the proposed privileges associated with assuming a relatively more powerful (strong) subject position. Indeed, knowing English is associated with having a

superior identity while, by contrast, not knowing English is associated with an inferior identity.

Participants explicitly align themselves with the notion of EYL and having personal self-confidence (self-esteem). EYL is associated with a strong identity and high self-esteem, it is further associated with achieving a goal of becoming a successful person. Thus, EYL becomes a bid for future success.

Participants' identity construction is also illustrated by the discourse of English as a global language and local/global binaries. Thus, the 'strong' subject position (taking the form of knowing English and EYL) is strongly associated with 'being' and 'acting' as a global worldly person. By contrast, a 'weak' subject position (in the form of not knowing English and lack of EYL) is strongly associated with being and acting as a local Israeli person, unable to communicate in the 'global community'.

7.2.5. The theme of EYL and globalisation

Participants indicate that learning English at a young age extends beyond the geographical and socio-cultural boundaries of Israel: learning English earlier on in life means having the possibility of a better life and better opportunities in a global sense. They have the image of a successful English-speaking, international, global person doing business or travelling around the world. Likewise, they strongly identify with that aspired model despite the fact that their local everyday life and work environment does not necessarily call for the use of English on a regular basis.

Thus, a paradox can be identified. On the one hand participants explicitly draw on words and phrases commonly associated with globalisation and internationalism thus emphasising the important role English assumes in everyday life, signalling their aspiration and desire to be part of the global world. They happily embrace the global, western English speaking influence on the local Israeli society and culture. Furthermore, participants believe that EYL is an important tool to obtain in order to access the desired global community ("*The country is getting too small for us*"). However, on the other hand, participants report that, in actual fact, their travelling abroad is limited to holidays (if at all) and their work opportunities are mostly local rather than global.

People in Israel view English as the desired international language, representing commonality and neutrality. It is considered a positive force and is therefore advantageous and beneficial to them and their children. Global changes, international technology and the growing popularity of EYL are considered intrinsically good for them as possible actors in the global world. Exploring participants' language will reveal dominant D/discourses pertaining to the effects of globalisation forces on the topic of EYL.

7.2.6. The theme of Arabic - the undesired language

Participants convey negative attitudes towards Arabic in general and learning Arabic in schools in particular. This observation is significant as well as alarming, particularly in view of the growing popularity and active promotion of EYL. Indeed, it seems that the popularity and improvement in status of EYL grows in correlation with the decline and lack of interest in Arabic. These negative attitudes revealed by participants are all the more significant in view of the ways in which they initiate and bring up the topic for discussion when compared with the English language and EYL. All the more so in view of the connections they make between Arab people, Arabic, political issues and their position as Israelis.

Attitudes toward Arabic are connected with the political context. Participants associate the Arabic language with "*the enemy*" and the English language with the "*American ally*". Furthermore, they associate Arabic with local middle-eastern culture whereas they relate the English language with the global, popular, attractive "*western culture*", of which they think they are part, or to which they wish to belong. The unattractive status of Arabic is clearly explicated in participants' discourse. Indeed, they disclose their negative feelings towards the language and towards what it represents to them as Jews living in Israel, a modern, western country.

For the participants, representatives of the Jewish majority in Israel, the Arabic language and the Arab people associated with it, raise serious issues about their identity. Indeed, Arabs, Palestinians and their language are viewed by the Israeli Jews as threats to their nationalism. Ideological issues pertaining to their place as Israeli Jews in Israel, their possibilities for personal growth and prosperity are manifested in their discourse

expressing negative attitudes towards the Arabic language and culture and positive attitudes towards the English language. Participants' discourse reveals that, whilst they acknowledge the political benefits of learning and knowing Arabic, they admit to avoiding it and present various reasons for preferring the English language over it.

7.2.7. The theme of EYL and socio-economic factors

A combination of worldwide global forces and special local conditions has resulted in the issue of EYL becoming a socio-economic divider between different socio-economic sectors in Israeli society, between 'the haves' and the 'haves not' in Israeli society.

One of the declared objectives behind the EYL in grades 1 and 2 nationwide recommendation was to introduce the beginning of English learning to all sectors of Israeli society at the same starting point, namely, grade 1. However, given the autonomous environment of school management, in practice, schools differ in the ways they choose to implement the recommendation. Thus, one will find schools that elect not to begin any learning of English in grade 1 at all, others that provide the bare minimum, whilst other schools invest considerable financial or other resources in the promotion of EYL in grades 1 and 2. Therefore, whilst the recommendation intended to create a similar starting point for all pupils, in effect a gap creating inequality between different schools in different socio-economic sectors in society is already evident in grade 1.

Participants' discourse indicates that EYL is associated with financial capabilities. In other words, participants believe that the possession of financial resources will enable them (as good, caring parents) to provide their children with private EYL lessons in order to promote their children's knowledge of English. On the other hand, those who cannot afford private tuition will not be able to provide EYL to their children and will generally be found on the lower end of the social ladder (or fear that they will). Thus, one of the outcomes of the EYL phenomenon, may it be a result of top-down populist recommendation or a bottom-up initiative (parental pressure), is that in addition to it being a popular trend, EYL is considered a desired commodity and, as such, it becomes something some people can afford and others cannot.

So far I have provided an overview of the themes and motifs that emerged from the data: these point towards existing dominant Discourses in which participants are members. A close analysis is needed to examine how and where Discourses insinuate themselves in the minute details of discourse.

7.3. Analysis and interpretation - Themes and discourses

In what follows I re-visit the seven themes presented in the above section. For each theme I present the language used by participants (whilst conducting a close examination thereof), by which they make visible the different discourses they employ in the construction of Discourses ('ways of being'). The picture will be completed when a variety of D/discourses are identified, presented and discussed for each of the themes. The linguistic analyses and interpretations act as evidence for the D/discourses formed by the actors involved.

7.3.1. The theme of 'Parenting'

7.3.1.1. 'Good Jewish/Israeli Parents' D/discourse'

'Good Jewish/Israeli parents' D/discourse' includes a variety of educational issues parents consider most important when bringing up their children. These comprise matters, such as parental obligations to children, investment in children's education, preparation for the future and more. These topics are interwoven with other issues, such as: success, achievement, the younger the better (TYTB) and others, all of which are used by participants interchangeably and seem to fit happily side by side.

Parents' words

'Good Jewish/Israeli parents Discourse' can be recognised in parents' language as they put together, repeat and emphasise particular content words such as "*provide*", "*important*", "*private lessons*" and "*invest*". Furthermore, they use phrases such as: "*make an effort*", "*will give him the opportunity*", "*good parents*", "*whatever is necessary*" and often refer explicitly to the term "*Jewish mother*".

In the following examples we can see how the use of linguistic devices, such as repetition of particular words and phrases and the use of a wide range of similar lexical tokens (over-lexicalisation) give these words significance. For the purpose of fluency and

readability, I present these excerpts excluding some of my comments as interviewer. The rest of the transcripts as translated from Hebrew are left intact.

Olivia (mother):

I sent her to an English study group, when she was 3... and she was doing well.

Rivi: Why did you send her?

Olivia: *I think that English is very important, and I think that at an early age you get it better than at an older age. The younger you are, the better your capability for learning is. It wasn't a large class. It was a very small group, and it was something I WANTED her to go to. Not only because it was popular, **I wanted** to send her.*

*Look, I **invest** in them (her children).*

*I **bought** them all the tapes and DVDs and an English kit, 'my first dictionary', they have **everything**. The basics we have at home, worksheets for practice and stuff.*

*I thought that it's **important** to **invest** and **buy** this stuff.*

*It (the English kit) comes in a set with 10 tapes and books. I **invest in what's important**, whatever I think is important*

(Olivia gets up, goes to the children's room and shows me the kit).

In this excerpt, the word “invest” is repeated in association with the words “buy” and “bought”, which represent similar lexical tokens for the same notion “I thought that it's important to invest and buy this stuff”. An explicit link is textured between the notions of investment, money and buying, signalling that Olivia believes that the act of buying books and aids are part of her investment.

Olivia repeats the word “important” in association with “investment” and with buying the English kit which she describes in great detail and actually gets up to show, “I invest

in what's important". Her claim indicates that EYL (and all that it entails) is indeed part of what she, as a mother, considers important for her children. Therefore, the investment in English books and lessons is part of acting and being a good parent for which she wishes to be recognised. We also get the feeling that although Olivia believes her act is important for the benefit of her children, in fact, she may be doing this for her own benefit as a 'good, Jewish mother'.

The use of content verbs such as "*I want*", "*I invest*" act as evidence for the way Olivia positions herself as a good and responsible Jewish mother. As such, she is not only aware (wanting, thinking, believing etc) of the important issues in her children's education but acts on her beliefs and takes steps to implement them in everyday practices.

The abovementioned words and phrases seem to be typical of parents' language, repeated and re-emphasised in different combinations. The following two excerpts show the ways in which parents' language and actions are interrelated in the creation of the 'good Jewish parents' Discourse.

Smadar (mother):

I will make an effort, and I will also save up or even take private lessons and I will give him (her son) the opportunity to succeed.

Smadar uses I-action statements repeatedly. She clearly articulates her actions as to what she is prepared to do ("*I will make an effort*"; "*I will save up*" etc) to promote EYL in her family and thus, we can get a picture of how she enacts her role as a mother. Furthermore, her manner of speech achieves solidarity with her I action-statements because, although we do not know exactly how much she is willing to save up for private lessons, nor exactly the type of private lessons she has in mind (after-school group sessions, personal tutoring or other), we do get the feeling that she is self-assured and clear about her actions. We understand that providing private lessons is a possible action she is considering taking as a means of giving her son "*the opportunity to succeed*".

Similarly, although the word "*succeed*" is vague (succeed in what? by whose standards?), Smadar makes a clear connection between the way she perceives her role

(and obligation) as a mother, her son learning English, private English lessons and his possible opportunities for success.

Efrat (mother):

***I 'drip' it in.** I sit with the kids when they watch cartoons, they ask me: 'what did he say, what did he do?', etc., or through computer games which have written messages, **I tell them or ask them:** 'what is written there, what did he say?' So there is a connection between what happens in class and what happens at home 'Ah, yes, there it is, it's true. The teacher was right'.*

***I explain things** to them in general, concerning books and studies, why they are needed in daily life. Because, you know, they ask.*

***I intend to send** them to English lessons, as an extra-curricular activity, not as studies.*

*Secondly, I do think, OK **the child can be pushed to excellence** but the means do not justify the end. That is to say, you don't have to **'commit suicide' for the subject**.*

That's how I am in general. I don't say 'Why didn't you get 10? Why did you get only 8?' I am not like that, because I think that everything has to be in proportion.

Using figurative language: "I drip it in", "'commit suicide' for the subject", voices, "I ask them: what did he say? What did he do?", and many I-action statements, "I explain", "I ask", "I intend to", Efrat expresses her thoughts, opinions and her actions. Her speech is live with examples of activities and everyday practices she carries out with her children with regard to school-work in general and EYL in particular. At home she asks them questions, explains, tells, shows and even 'teaches', all of which add up together to offer a full and clear picture of a good, Jewish/Israeli mother in her daily actions.

Contradictions in Efrat's speech illuminate a few interesting points about her beliefs and actions: whilst watching cartoons she teaches her children English because "*they ask*". She intends to send them to private English lessons, but "*not as studies*". She believes children can be "*pushed to excellence*" but says "*you don't have to 'commit suicide' for the subject*". Efrat mocks the 'over-achieving mother' and puts on the actual voice: "*I don't say 'Why didn't you get 10?'*". Contradictions and double messages work to conceal her high aspirations which are well hidden in her articulated explanations of the good parent for which she wishes to be recognised.

The next examples are excerpts taken from interviews with four parents and a teacher. They highlight the ways in which participants repeatedly use the terms "*invest*", "*private lessons*", "*advance*", "*benefit*", "*provide*", "*prepare*", "*enable*", "*reinforce*" etc in association with EYL as a means to carry out their wish to provide their children with better opportunities in life. I argue that by repeatedly using these words (and associating them with the notion of a better life) participants (parents in particular) make these issues significant. Similarly, they make connections between the notion of investment, the act of providing, the notion of EYL and being and acting as good parents.

Mr. Koren (father):

Sure I will invest (in English). I will send him to private lessons and buy books. I will do everything possible. Yes, in order to provide him with a higher step in life. I want to prepare him better for life.

The action I-statements such as – "*I will invest*", "*I will do*", "*I will send*", "*I want to*" – create the image of a father who actively takes responsibility for his beliefs with regard to better preparing his son for life, or preparing his son for a better life. These statements tell us more about Mr. Koren's particular social practices and about the social practices of a 'good, Israeli parent Discourse' of which he is a part.

Galit (mother):

As a mother I will do everything in my power to help my daughter advance in English.

Dudu (father):

Look, I think about it as a father, when Bar (daughter) began to learn English, it was very nice.

I certainly want her to know, to learn English. In any case, I am planning next year to have her study English at home.

Rivi: Why?

Dudu: *Because I think that it is very important to speak another language, again, it is options for work in the future; it will give her an advantage over all the other children who don't speak English. Sometimes it is even pleasant, this whole thing. It will let her feel a little bit stronger, that she speaks another language, English in this case. It's important.*

Rivi: Ehhmmm

Dudu: *The fact that she is learning the language will also enable her, will reinforce her, to know that she is capable to do things, to learn things, it's very important.*

Rivi: What is your plan then?

Dudu: *I explicitly plan to teach her English in private lessons. Whatever is necessary.*

Dudu's cognitive I-statements such as "I think it is very important to speak another language" or "I think about it as a father" provide information about his beliefs and experiences regarding the issue of EYL. His opinions reflect the theories (Discourse models) he is using to enact the caring, good, Israeli parent identity. One of Dudu's possible theories is that good parents want their children to have an advantage over other children. Another possible theory is that good parents take actions to improve their children's life. Furthermore, actively promoting EYL is considered (by him) to be one of the means by which he can enact his good parent identity.

Dudu refers to learning EYL as “*pleasant*”. Indeed, his explanations and varied choice of similar words for the same purpose (“*stronger*”, “*advantage*”, “*enable*”) clarify that it is pleasant for his daughter to feel stronger because of the power English and knowing English gives her.

Smadar (mother):

It's pushy parents and I also think it is related more with first-time mothers and with having a first child. They want their kids to be better at everything.

Rivi: Where does this come from?

Smadar: *Wanting to give the best to your child.*

Irit (teacher):

Sometimes I'm surprised at how much parents are involved in what happens in school. There are many of them who are pushing English.

Smadar, Dudu, Irit, Galit and Mr. Koren use and repeat key words and phrases, which appear to indicate that good parents take actions to promote EYL in order to ensure one or more of the following: better opportunities for their children, empower them with the power of English, provide them with an advantage over other children, a personal parental drive for success to be fulfilled via their children.

In the following example David and Paz (husband and wife) speak interchangeably whilst taking up different voices as they speak. Other linguistic features such as repetitions, I-statements and nominalisations are used as well as voices to enact their ‘good Jewish/Israeli parents’ identity.

David and Paz (father and mother)

Rivi: Why do you think parents promote EYL?

David: *It's like the Jewish mother, you know, a lawyer and a doctor...*

Paz: *It's like the mother who wanted to dance but sends her daughter to ballet lessons instead.*

David: *According to what is being written today and coming from the 'herd culture' we have, we feel, 'lets provide our children with the potential or the best possibilities to know the language'*

Rivi: Ehmm...

David: *It is a type of ... every good parent wants to provide this (EYL) to his child. He says, 'OK, I will grant my child the maximum I can within my knowledge and my possibilities'. And if people say that the best time to learn English is up until the age of five, then I will make an effort, and I will also save up, or even take private lessons and I will give her the opportunity to succeed.. Again, to succeed is the style of the Western world. It means to have knowledge, to be tough. Not to be different, not to be weak.*

Rivi: Ehmmm... I see.

David: *Again, this is due to the fact that it is important to me that my child should have all the possible conditions eh... not to be different....*

David's first phrase "*Jewish mother*", coupled with the informal parenthetical device (Gee, 2005) "*you know*", pattern together to signal an informal statement which may be clear to David, but vague to the listener. We get the feeling that David expects me to know the attributes of the term 'Jewish mother'- including the many things it represents (a mother who wishes her children to be either a doctor or a lawyer- is one of many possibilities). We are thus left to speculate what the exact characteristics of 'the Jewish mother' are, and what are not, an issue which is clarified shortly afterwards by Paz's explanation.

Figurative language and metaphors used by David and Paz in this excerpt serve as powerful representations of possible DM they use. Paz's vivid metaphorical interpolation explains her view which draws on her DM of what a Jewish mother represents, namely, a mother who pushes her child towards something she herself desires but cannot have

"It's like the mother who wanted to dance but sends her daughter to ballet lessons instead".

Following Paz's remark, David takes on the actual voice of the Jewish mother. He begins with a plural voice, referring to himself in the plural (perhaps including Paz in this voice) using *"lets"*, *"our"* and *"children"*, thus achieving a sense of generalisation and solidarity with other people's views. We get the feeling that all parents want to provide their children with the best possibilities to know English.

He then stops the voice by providing an explanation to his theory *"It's a type of..."*. He continues by changing it to speak through a private, personal voice of a caring parent who in fact *"provides"*, *"makes an effort"* and *"gives opportunities to succeed"*. The use of voice coupled with action verbs such as *"to provide"*, *"to make"* and *"to give"*, and achievement I-statements such as *"I will grant my child the maximum I can"* is a vivid demonstration of an acting father, taking steps toward achieving his parental obligations. Indeed, employing some other voice in his speech adds to the authenticity and generalisability of David's message and to the ideas he conveys.

David provides us with a clear picture of himself as he is adopting the voice of a caretaker, a provider, a good Jewish/Israeli father. He is demonstrating his position with regard to EYL including the financial and other efforts he is willing to make, *"I will also save up, or even take private lessons and I will give her (child) the opportunity to succeed"*. David is using financial discourse, as well as a kind of discourse of commitment (his declarations about what he will do for his children's future) to enact his 'good Jewish/Israeli parent' identity.

Thus far we have seen examples of the ways in which parents have made the 'good Jewish/Israeli parents' Discourse recognisable. To enhance validity I present examples of teachers' words which offer supplementary evidence for the 'Jewish/Israeli parents' Discourse. This will shed additional light on the 'Jewish/Israeli Discourse' from the teachers' perspective.

Teachers' words

The teachers, the principal and the inspector have been interviewed on account of the position they hold within the school and the profession. Nevertheless, in the interviews,

they also speak as everyday people, as parents or grandparents to children, thus indicating their shifting identities.

A closer look at samples of their discourse reflects the repeated use of linguistic features, such as reported speech, voices, nominalisations, figurative language and the particular extensive use of the word “*push*” (“*parents push their children*”). Using rich descriptions and personal examples they reflect both their professional and personal position, shifting between these positions throughout the interviews. Thus, although they are interviewed in this study in their professional capacity, they also use language which makes visible the Jewish/Israeli parents Discourse in which they, in addition, seem to be members.

Ravit (English teacher):

Prior to this excerpt Ravit speaks about the different grade 1 and 2 programmes with which she is familiar as a teacher and as a mother and says: “*I’m in the know*”. The way in which Ravit co-constructs an account of parents’ position and her own shifting positions as a teacher and a mother are readily apparent in her remarks.

Rivi: When you say, you’re in ‘the know’ what do you mean?

Ravit: *It means that I am exposed to information.*

Rivi: What information?

Ravit: *I’m exposed to information about what is happening in the schools, from the aspect of English. Because I am both a mother and an English teacher, so **they** talk to me, ask me, consult with me. There are parents who, when I meet them at the parents’ meeting, ask me **‘why we don’t start English in 1st grade?’***

Rivi: Ehhhem.....

Ravit: *For instance, parents’ family trips on weekends. Parents in 1st grade come to me and say, ‘why is there no English in first grade...?’*

Rivi: Which parents?

Ravit: *In the school where my children learn. In RG (name of city.) Yes. And there, they ask me why they don't start English in 1st grade. (mimics with intonation) 'Why only in 3rd grade? why only in 2nd grade? In 2nd grade it's not good enough. Why not in 1st grade? Why only two hours? and why only one hour a week in 2nd grade'. So I find myself defending the education system, or prosecuting. It depends.*

Rivi: Why do parents say this?

Ravit: *Parents want their kids to learn English. They **instil** it in their kids.*

Rivi: What do they instil?

Ravit: *That it's is important to learn English. 'Oh great, you are going to learn English, wonderful, English is very important'.*

First, Ravit clearly co-constructs her shifting position as a mother and a teacher by stating her status explicitly using informal language, “*I'm in the know*”, accompanied by the word “*information*”. From both positions, she presents herself as an authoritative figure with whom parents consult, “*so they talk to me, ask me, consult with me*”. Ravit includes reported speech to explain her personal interaction with parents in her son's school. This serves as supporting evidence for her authoritative position which represents parents' growing demand for EYL in grade 1. Additionally it serves as supporting evidence that the information she conveys is indeed authentic and true.

Ravit then speaks through the parents' voice, “*Why is there no English in first grade? Why only in 3rd grade? etc*”, which makes their concern more vivid and gives evidence to her claim. Furthermore, she uses the plural pronoun “*they*” which implies that indeed, this is a sweeping demand, made by many people. She uses the powerful word “*instil*”, “*They **instil** it in their kids*”, accompanied by parents' actual voices which pattern together to signal parents' strong favourable position toward EYL.

At different points in the interview Ravit re-articulates: *"I know what's going on"*. Additionally apparent in Ravit's words is her evident confidence and the personal responsibility she takes for her views which are reflected in the many I-statements she makes: *"I know"*, *"I meet"*, *"I hear"*. The self-assured I-statements, the use of parents' voices and reported speech pattern together to signal Ravit's authoritative position on the issues involved. She positions herself as reliable and trustworthy both as a parent and as a teacher. We can imagine the actual situation in which parents approach Ravit asking such questions.

In this example we can note the ways in which Ravit builds relationships between the message as expressed by parents and her own interpretations. The good Jewish/Israeli parents' Discourse is strongly implicated in this excerpt in the way Ravit uses both her personal life and professional position coupled with particular linguistic features to explicate parents' attitude towards EYL. Furthermore, by giving advice, evaluating, and acting as the knowledgeable teacher, she is enacting the teachers' identity and construing the teachers' Discourse.

Ravit is drawing on parents' informal and formal meetings, her children's class-friends and their families and her professional experience as a teacher to articulate her position. These probably feed into her own conscious or subconscious theories as she applies her own DM to the explanation.

Indeed, various DM are apparent in her remarks. One possible model is that parents believe English is very important. Another possible model is that parents want their children to learn English from grade 1 because, as good Jewish/Israeli parents they wish to promote their children in what they consider important. Additionally, EYL is beneficial for their children.

Other teachers explain that one of the reasons for parents' active promotion of EYL is their own desire to provide their children with *"a higher step in life"*. Teachers seem to base this opinion (of parents) on their own personal histories and experiences which often point towards DM relevant to both teachers and parents. The following excerpts show the 'good Jewish/Israeli parents' Discourse as made visible by teachers.

Irit (English teacher):

On Friday I was at a party, I was standing with some grandparents, their 2½ year old grandson was jumping around and fell on his bottom, he said 'Oh, shit'. I asked him, 'Where do you know English from?' He doesn't speak Hebrew well. So he said, 'I am learning in kindergarten'. I asked, 'What are you learning in kindergarten?' So he says, 'One, two, three, four, five to ten'. And then I asked him, 'What else did you learn in kindergarten?' And he said, 'This is blue', and pointed to the blue chair.

Rivi: A 2½ year old child?

Irit: *Yes. The question is, is this child, this tiny child, who doesn't yet know all the words in HEBREW, is this the time to teach him, 'Oh, shit'? The point is, he was VERY proud, because his grandparents are proud and encourage him. He heard it, he absorbed it. And he also knows that it's in English. He said, 'I know English'.*

Irit's personal story is alive with the use of voices which reveal a clear picture of the 'proud Jewish grandparents'. While she criticises the phenomenon, "*is this the time to teach him Oh, shit?*", and employs a cynical tone by implying that he was taught the words "*oh shit*", she acknowledges the enthusiasm in the grandchild's behaviour.

Her account highlights an additional element prevalent in the Jewish parents' Discourse, namely, the notion of pride. Irit's story exemplifies that the learning of EYL provides a source of pride for Israeli/Jewish parents or grandparents. Thus, parents invest in EYL saying that it benefits their children. However, they do so also for the sense of pride that is attached with it.

Mira (teacher):

As I said, the reason is that parents want their children to have... In order to provide them with a higher step in life. To better prepare them for life.

Mira uses particular verbs to describe parents' actions in the promotion of EYL. Verbs such as "*to provide*" and "*to prepare*" in association with the noun "*life*" ("*prepare them*

for life”) create the feeling that Mira includes many possible actions in each of these verbs. On the one hand, the verbs “*to provide*” and “*to prepare*” give a clear picture of the action but on the other hand, when attached to the vague references “*them*”, “*life*” or “*higher step in life*” we are left uncertain as to what she actually means. Despite this uncertainty we can presume this statement represents a hope and desire (‘wishful thinking’) for something that is assumed to be better for the children’s future.

The next excerpt exemplifies Mira’s interchangeable conflicting discourses as she expresses personal versus professional views.

Mira (teacher):

For instance, my son had private English lessons...I took a teacher who came to our home, from kindergarten age. I asked her to work, not seriously, on words, for him to acquire confidence. But in the classroom situation I don’t think it’ll work. One on one, that’s something else. ...Early age, the earlier they begin they absorb better

Rivi: Where does this come from?

Mira: *Wanting to give the best to your child. You see parents pushing their children. I think they’re pushing them too much.*

Shifts and contradictions in Mira’s words demonstrate her shifting identities and overlapping hybrid discourses. From a mother’s position, Mira uses I-statements with an action verb “*I took*”, “*I asked*” to describe her actions and social practices in promoting EYL with her own son. However, from the teacher’s subject position she uses negative I-statements to explain her reservations regarding EYL, “*but in the classroom situation, I don’t think it’ll work*”. This is followed by an additional shift (contradiction): “*early age, the earlier they begin, they absorb better*”.

As a teacher, Mira disapproves of EYL within the classroom framework. She evaluates the programme, gives advice and criticises. Conversely, as a parent, she approves of private “*one on one*” lessons, which according to her are beneficial. Indeed, Mira’s discourse includes unresolved binary positions typical to both parents and teachers.

Mira's words include the verb "*push/pushing*". Although we can assume that parents do not mean it in a physical sense, it does illuminate their active promotion of EYL. Orna also uses the word "*push*" when speaking of one of the girls in her class, as the following excerpt depicts.

Orna (teacher):

*One of the girls in my class, her parents are **pushing** her forward. They are **preparing** her, preparing the ground in English. As I said, preparing her in the language, that it should be easier for her.*

Rivi: Do they want this as a preventive measure, or as enrichment?

Orna: *It seems to me, in their case, it is preventive measure, but in my opinion, I think they're **pushing** her too much.*

The phrase "*pushing her forward*" is used by Orna to describe one example of parents' common social practices such as sending their children to extra private lessons. Orna clarifies the connection she believes exists between the act of pushing and parents' desire to provide their children with an advantage and a head start in life.

A critical tone is implied in Orna's language with regard to parents' social practices. She associates the notion of private lessons, which is apparently connected to what good parents do, with the phrase "*pushing her forward*" which could carry a negative connotation. While she acknowledges the desire parents have to prepare their children and give them a head start in English, her critical tone is apparent when she says: "*I think they're pushing her **too much***", thus, criticising the parents for pushing their child to private lessons.

The word "*push*" is often used interchangeably with the word "*pressure*" as the following example illustrates. Gila, one of the three English teachers shares the following observation.

Gila (English teacher):

*Look, she (a pupil in grade 2) is happy, she enjoys the class activities very much.
Her parents **pressure** her a bit.*

Rivi: What do you mean?

Gila: *I think kids get **pressure** from their parents. They tell them: 'It is an international language, and when you grow up, and you will need it...' and so on. I don't know to what extent THEY really want it.... but it (English) is important for them because their parents say so, and what they understand in general is... that English is an international language, and they are exposed a lot. Like, I hear them (children) talking.... not children's language, it's like something they **hear from parents** and then they repeat again.*

The word “pressure” is used both as a verb (“Her parents pressure her a bit”) and as a noun (“kids get pressure from their parents”) in association with EYL. Extensive use of plural pronouns (“they”, “them”), vague references (“parents”, “children”) and the use of actual parents’ voice (“They tell them: ‘it is an international language...’”) work together to signal Gila’s authoritative position that parents “push” their children for EYL.

We can assume that one of Gila’s DM is the belief that Israeli parents place pressure (“kids get pressure from parents”) on their children to learn English because English is an international language and therefore important. In turn, children comply and reiterate their parents’ claims. Gila, (similar to Mira in the earlier excerpt) is critical of parents’ social practices. Use of reported speech serves as evidence for what she hears children say: “I hear them talking”.

A similar argument is re-emphasised in the following excerpt. Smadar’s words below reveal that social pressure is manifested in parents’ actions and in fact, parents desire EYL more than the children themselves.

Smadar (mother):

*When they were in nursery school, there was this sudden **social pressure** that EVERYONE was going to English lessons. This was when Ron (son) was in nursery school, about 4 years ago. He didn't want to go.*

The above examples reveal that whilst teachers criticise parents' active promotion of EYL, they uphold similar views. Although the verb “push” mainly represents social practices such as taking private lessons, it carries a negative implication. This negative connotation becomes associated with positive actions when participants highlight their good intentions, promoting EYL for the benefit of their children. The series of actions and social practices participants engage in become naturalised in their everyday talk.

Principal's words

The principal's perspective sheds additional light on the 'good Jewish/Israeli parents' Discourse. At the outset, the principal states that parents have long requested that English be taught and learnt from grade 1 and 2. The decision to begin EYL that year was hers, based on the innovative programme in grades 1 and 2 to be taught by home-room teachers. In the following excerpt, parents' requests for EYL are reported by Alice, the principal. To allow the transcription to be readable and clear I have omitted my comments but left the transcript otherwise intact.

Alice:

*There was never a school-year without **that** question (mimics): 'Why don't we begin to learn English in grade '1? I encounter this question each and every year.*

*I have a presentation about the school and at these talks, on a regular basis, there is not one year when parents **don't ask me why**. I don't know how many parents, but there was never a year without a request. There was ALWAYS a question on this issue, in my interaction with the parents.*

The principal brings up the issue of parents' request for EYL. She refers to **that** question (use of direct reference, thus referring to something which has been mentioned once before). She then mimics the actual voice of request presented by parents. The voice itself includes the pronoun “we” (“Why don't **we** begin to learn English...”) which

stresses parents' involvement and inclusion in their children's learning. They do not use the word 'our children' or 'kids' in the context of learning English, which would have been much more appropriate. Conversely, they choose to include themselves in the learning, "we".

Similarly, Alice uses the negative form ("why **don't** we...") which suggests a complaint rather than a request. The critical tone implied in the parents' tone is understandable in view of the fact that they have requested EYL in the past and been turned down until that year. Thus we can assume that different parents each year repeatedly request EYL in grade 1 and 2 and that Alice's decision to introduce EYL that year was also affected by their on-going requests (or complaints) which she no longer wished to refuse. This serves as evidence for the effectiveness of parents' 'pressure' on the principal and her educational (or other) decisions.

Children's words

Children's participation in the construction of Discourses should not be underestimated. Rich discussions generated out of pupil group-interviews, and individual interviews reveal similar attitudes with variation occurring in emphasis rather than degree. Indeed, pupils seem to reiterate parents' enthusiasm towards English in various ways, thus sharing the discursive resources they are exposed to at home and at school. Using their own child-like words, pupils are very straightforward about their attitude toward English. They employ superlative words and phrases such as "*I love it*", "*it's fun*", "*it's great*" to express their high motivation and excitement towards the new language.

Similarly, their remarks draw heavily on those of adults by reiterating commonly used phrases such as: "**they** say *English is important*". They boast about learning English and feel grown up and important for learning "*English, the 'international language'*".

Naïvely, they presume they will be able to converse in English within a few weeks of learning English and feel disappointed as they reply "*I don't remember*" to questions pertaining to content they learn in the English lesson. Indeed, transcripts reveal very low attainment and despite their high motivation and eagerness, pupils show very little progress in English. The following excerpts have been chosen out of children's

transcripts to exemplify the good Jewish/Israeli parents Discourse as is re-formulated by pupils' language.

Tal (girl):

It's so much fun to study English.

Rivi: Why?

Tal: *Coz we play afterwards*

Shiran (girl)

I have to learn English.

Rivi: Why?

Shiran: *Because I have to. My parents say so. I have to learn English because when I'll travel, and let's say I don't know where to go, I'll ask in English.*

Dean (boy):

I want to read and write in English. My parents tell me English is important.

Rivi: You say you go to afternoon English classes.

Hen: *Yes, I used to go last year too.*

Rivi: You did. Why?

Hen: *Because I want to continue learning English. Even though we have English in school, this way I'll learn more. My parents send me. Yes, they say it's good.*

Dana (girl):

I'm starting to learn reading and writing in English at home. I have workbooks and I'm working in them.

Rivi: Who gives you the workbooks?

Dana: *Mom. She sits with me and shows me what to do.*

7.3.1.2 Summary

To this point I have shown the way ‘good Jewish/Israeli parents’ Discourse is construed by parents, teachers, the principal and pupils. We can note that parents make connections between a variety of issues: between being and acting as good parents and investment in EYL, between the notion of investment and actively promoting EYL as a social practice, between EYL and providing their children with a head start, between EYL and children’s ability to learn English.

The ‘commonsense’ view, actively articulated by parents, is that promoting EYL in or out of school is the parents’ obligation to their children. Parents who actively promote EYL are thereby enacting their good parent identity, or speaking from the good parent Discourse with which they wish to be identified. This Discourse is pervasive and seems to dominate educational decisions regarding EYL programmes. The topic of EYL, investment and good parenting are in alignment with each other.

Teachers’ discourse includes both personal and professional discourse, some of which is critical of EYL and of over-ambitious, ‘pushy’ parents. Similarly, the hybrid nature of Discourses includes ‘pushy parents’, ‘investment’ and ‘good parents’ which are interwoven to construe the ‘good/Jewish parents’ Discourse.

7.3.2. The theme of ‘Language Learning’

TYTB popular axiom represents the common belief that younger children learn languages faster and better than older people (or older children). Therefore, it is better to commence the learning of a foreign language (for example, English) at the youngest age possible.

In this section I demonstrate how particular words and phrases are used to create folk-political, common-sense, folk psychology, TYTB or SLA discourses, often interwoven with each other. The ‘good/Jewish parents’ Discourse draws on the above discourses in its enactment.

7.3.2.1 TYTB and SLA discourses

Participants make explicit efforts to explain and argue their opinions and beliefs in order to clarify their position. Cognitive I-statements such as “*I think*”, “*I mean*” or “*In my opinion*” are used as explanatory or argumentative claims to re-contextualise these discourses within their everyday life. In what follows I present excerpts from parents’ transcripts which serve to illustrate the ways in which they appropriate the TYTB axiom and co-construct their understandings of early language learning using SLA discourse and other discursive resources.

Following that, I present and analyse excerpts from Judy’s (the inspector) and Alice’s (principal) transcripts, in which they vividly explain what they believe to be parents’ motivation behind the promotion of EYL. This will help illuminate SLA and TYTB discourses as perceived by them. I will consider the possible DM participants draw on which play a significant role in construing Discourses.

The following five excerpts reflect typical statements made by parents and thus, are a good example for a close analysis.

Parents’ words

Rivi: What do you think of the expression ‘the younger the better’?

Galit (mother):

I think the saying is definitely true. The younger the better, the younger you start the better you absorb.

Paz (mother):

The younger the better, sure. First, because you accumulate more years of knowledge. And I think their learning is clearer. Their minds are less occupied.

Sarit (mother):

I think it's good. The younger you are, the more you will internalise the language, more than when you are an adult. Just like with computers. Kids, at an early age, they are exposed, and they are faster, and yes it's important.

Olivia (mother):

Look young children, at first grade or kindergarten, they have amazing ability to absorb. At the early ages... I mean, it doesn't get mixed up with other things, like I mean, he learns things and they become part of his life.

Nancy (mother):

I DO think it is important for the kids to learn English. And the kids are thirsty to know the language. They really are. So I really think the younger the better. They suck it up easier and faster when they are younger. They are like sponges, I really feel that. I see little kids in G 1. Yea, the younger the better, for sure.

Galit, Paz, Sarit, Nancy and Olivia support TYTB axiom. In this regard, they position themselves as 'knowers' and 'claimers', providing ample information about young children learning English, all of which sounds convincing and true. This is achieved by using particular words, verbs and phrases as illustrated below.

The repeated reference to self, such as "I" and "me", cognitive or action I-statements such as: "the way I see it", "I mean", "I really think", and affective I-statements such as "I really feel that", which are statements expressing opinions and desires, present these mothers as authoritative and reliable. I-statements such as "So I really think the younger the better" (Nancy) and "I think it's good" (Sarit) are independent clauses, which represent a claim, an assertion or an opinion. Coupled with reassurance words and phrases such as "as I said" (Sarit), "sure" (Paz), "first" (Paz), "look" (Olivia), "the saying is definitely true" (Galit), "they really are", "for sure" (Nancy), their statements lead us to believe that they are confident in their views which, in fact, gives us a strong basis to accept their arguments as true. Their arguments sound logical and convincing.

Galit, Paz, Sarit, Nancy and Olivia use plural pronouns, "you", "they", when referring to young learners. This accomplishes a few things; first, it conveys a generalisation - that

their statements are true for all children. Listeners feel they can relate to their own children learning English. Second, it contributes to making their arguments persuasive, and demonstrates how they position themselves as knowledgeable people: “*the younger you start the better you absorb*” (Galit), “*The younger you are, the more you will internalise the language*” (Sarit), “*they suck it up faster*” (Nancy).

Similarly, Olivia’s explanation begins with a generalisation about children’s learning ability, “*young children have amazing ability to absorb*”. She then continues with a personal example, “*like, I mean...*”, for which she uses the pronoun “*he*” and “*his*”, evidently referring to her own son. This personal reference serves as anecdotal reference which achieves solidarity with other children.

Galit, Paz, Sarit, Nancy and Olivia employ a variety of images to explain their beliefs. “*They are like sponges*” (Nancy) creates a figurative image of a child absorbing or sucking up English like a sponge. “*Their minds are less occupied*” (Paz) creates the image of a ‘full’ (or ‘busy’) versus an ‘empty’ mind. “*Just like computers*” (Sarit) compares children’s computer skills with SLA skills. “*They accumulate more years of knowledge*” (Paz) creates the image of English words piling up over years of learning. “*Internalise the language*” (Sarit) creates the image of physical effort engaged in learning. These serve as convincing arguments in favour of SLA and provide credibility for TYTB axiom.

When parents choose to use words such as “*internalise*”, “*acquire*” or “*accumulate*”, commonly associated with SLA discourse, they assume the role of knowledgeable people or professional experts. Although most parents are not professional English learning specialists, and may not be updated with the pros and cons of SLA, they hereby construe their version of SLA discourse in which they are members and for which they wish to be recognised. This type of discourse makes visible their position in favour of EYL thus marking it significant and beneficial.

In what follows I make use of extended excerpts which lend themselves to analysis which illustrate how participants make connections across whole segments of talk. The analysis will show how participants weave several discourses together (such as EYL, language learning, SLA, TYTB) some of which are conflicting or contradictory.

Bari's words

Rivi: English is now taught in grade 1 and 2. What do you think are the reasons for this?

Bari (mother):

I don't really know what the reasons are. Look, the way I see it, it's all about making an impression. Because there are so many things going on in Grade 1. Children are learning to read and write in Hebrew and they are making many mistakes especially in spelling. I think that first of all we have to instil the Hebrew.

To begin in Grade 1.... when it interferes with reading and writing Hebrew, there is a transition stage from kindergarten, there's no need to bring in another language to mix the children up. Unless it is introduced at the age of three, when people say that children learn best. I don't know what their incentives are but it seems to me the issue here is all about the style of the school. Not focusing on the learning goals or on the child but to show-off the level of the school, that it is a better school, better standards.

Bari makes connections (and disconnections) between the following things: EYL in grades 1 and 2 and social/educational trends (“*It is all about the style of the school*”); between the notion of EYL and it acting as means for success and achievement and a source of competition between schools (“*to show-off the level of the school...*”); between the notion of EYL and it being a status symbol (“*It's all about making an impression*”) and between learning EYL in grade 1 and learning Hebrew (“*when it interferes with reading and writing Hebrew*”).

Cohesive devices, such as “*look*”, “*unless*”, “*because*”, and mitigators such as “*I think that*”, “*it seems to me*”, “*the way I see it*”, are used a few times throughout the text and signal the connections Bari builds while she assembles her viewpoints. She moves backwards and forwards expressing contradictory arguments. For example, EYL in grade 1 interferes with Hebrew, “*unless*” it is introduced at the age of 3, which is when children “*learn best*”.

Bari's first statement *"I don't know..."* signals her uncertain opinion or, alternatively, that she is thinking and formulating an opinion as she speaks. Action I-statements (*"I think that"*) followed by an explanation (*"there is no need to bring in another language to mix the children up"*) position her as a 'knower'. The conjunction *"unless"* signals a change in her opinion and indeed seems like an afterthought (*"unless it is introduced at the age of three"*) which indicates uncertainty.

Bari weaves together a few discourses in her speech. She uses the discourse of SLA when she points out the English interference with Hebrew (SLA theories). She uses the discourse of f TYTB when drawing on DM and discursive resources regarding what people say about EYL (*"when people say that children learn best"*). She also employs the discourse of consumerism which pertains to framing EYL as a prestigious commodity used for boasting about the level of the school *"to show-off the level of the school"*.

In the next example David and Paz weave together their own version of SLA and TYTB discourse by repeating and re-emphasising certain words. They do this based on discursive resources they draw on (*"it said in the newspaper"*) and based on possible DM they use to explain their opinion.

David: *Up until the age of five a child learns language most effectively. Up until the age of FIVE... it said in the newspaper.*

Rivi: ... ehmm, I saw the article.

David: *You get it? Up until the age of five the child's brain acquires languages in the best way. In other words people who are over five.... We are already falling behind... For the regular person, of course it is always better to learn English at a young age.*

Paz: *First, because you accumulate more years of knowledge. And I think their learning is clearer. Their minds are less occupied.*

David: *From an early age, because then **they** are capable of absorbing languages in particular, much more easily”.*

Words such as “acquire”, “accumulate”, “absorb” coupled with impersonal epistemic expressions such as “**of course**” pattern together to present TYTB axiom as a natural assertion or an obvious assumption. David and Paz are hereby creating an additional life world commonsense discourse of language politics.

The repeated use of plural pronouns “they” or “their” (“I think **their learning** is clearer”) in association with the informal parenthetical device “you get it?” and a humouristic tone, “**We** are already falling behind...”, pattern together to create an informal social language in which TYTB, SLA and common-sense discourses are represented as broadly shared social opinions and thus signal the ways in which they have become naturalised and accepted amongst people.

Similarly, the following example from Dudu’s transcript illustrates how participants use their common sense to make connections between learning Hebrew, learning English, language attainment, motivation and other associations. For the purpose of readability I have omitted my responses and left Dudu’s words intact.

Rivi: There is a decision to begin learning English in 1st grade and 2nd grade. What do you think of that?

Dudu: *It can be perfectly alright, in my opinion, if children would learn English in grade 1. First of all I think it would be better if they had many more hours of English.*

From an early age, because then they are capable of absorbing languages in particular, much more easily.

*You can teach them English as **something new**, just like everything new they learn. It’s easier for them to **take it in**.*

For them, as children, it is easier to learn English because it is something new that interests them. [I- ehmmmm] Children are clever. They do a lot of things, so I don't know, I think it's a matter of wanting English, the learning is a matter of will, some children do amazing things, connected to the Internet, to the computer, whatever interests them.

The younger they are, the easier they will learn, in my opinion. They will have more time to learn, more time to practice. When they learn young, begin young, it's something fun, something new. When they start learning in 4th or 5th grade, it becomes like a chore they have to confront. When they're young they don't understand it's a chore.

Bar (his daughter) came and told me what she learned in English, names of dogs and cats, and stuff like that, and it's excellent, because she gets excited about it. I know that the son of a friend of mine, who is in 5th grade, doesn't like it any more. He doesn't like English.

In this excerpt, Dudu accomplishes several things. First, he supports the TYTB axiom by making connections between EYL and fun things such as “computers” and the “Internet”, as opposed to “a chore which they have to confront”. Second, he associates EYL with a novelty, “something new”, and with children’s good learning abilities, “Children are clever”. Third, he highlights the benefits of EYL by using words which emphasise children’s love for English such as “fun” and “excitement”.

One of the DM that seem significant to Dudu is that young children are better at learning English because it is new and exciting for them, “as children, it is easier to learn English because it is something new that interests them”. Along with that model, Dudu holds the DM that young children will have more time to learn thus ensuring more knowledge and better achievements, “more time to learn, more time to practice”.

Dudu appears to have an optimistic picture in his mind that it is easy (as well as fun) for young children to learn English, “The younger they are the easier they will learn”. Conversely, his commonsense view is that older children find learning English difficult or dislike it. Thus, EYL must be promoted.

To represent the DM relevant to him, Dudu uses reported speech to describe his daughter's positive learning experience as opposed to older children's negative experience, "*Bar came and told me what she learned in English...*". The personal example is authentic, persuasive and serves as evidence for his claims.

By placing children's interests foremost, Dudu and other parents become members of the good-parents' Discourse (theme number 1). As such they enact their good, caring-parent identity actively involved in the pursuit for their children's welfare and happiness, EYL being an essential part thereof.

Dudu has emphasised young children's love for English. Indeed, this is another means parents achieve solidarity in order to create social and pedagogical changes in schools. This notion is further explicated in the following section.

Inspector's words

Judy, the school's inspector for English studies, explains her understanding of parents' TYTB and SLA discourse. Close examination of her words makes visible Judy's possible DM at work with regard to parents' beliefs and social practices and the different subject positions she assumes vis-à-vis parents' discourse. For the purpose of achieving fluency I have omitted my comments from the interview and left Judy's speech intact.

Judy: *They say that, internationally there are three reasons for starting English at an early age, the three P's: Parents, Politics and Principals*

Rivi: Why is that? Is it because of the belief that "the younger the better"?

*The younger the better, yes, sounds good. They (parents) think it's good they're (the children) starting early... [I think] that parents believe, they have this **folk psychology kind of thing**, their English isn't that great, they understand what **the need** is, they're **petrified** that their kids are going to turn out like they are, and they're not going to know (English). So just like... [unclear], if you start early, it sounds good, right? It sounds good to the parent. They start early then they're going to have more time to learn more, OK? For a person who doesn't understand... it makes sense.*

*Not only that, in some families, once you're officially, officially studying at school, then it's 'private lesson time', because even in 2nd-3rd grade **you don't want your kid to fall behind**. So the kids who had it got it even more, the gap grew more and more. **I would love to see** that money be spent instead on those kids who, after 4th grade, who don't know how to read or write, to give THEM the extra hours. That would be closing the gap, but **I don't really believe** that by starting earlier you're going to have it. Not only that. We saw that in schools, junior high schools, the schools are fed in by different elementary schools. She (teacher) just could not make any differentiation whatsoever between those schools that started early and those schools that didn't. You know, and you would expect, you're starting early, right? So it brings up a lot of questions.*

***I have my own** educational philosophy, where **I believe** that kids in elementary school should be getting things that they're not going to be getting later on, they should be getting music, and gym, and nature, and,...*

*Em... so, **may I say**, not as an English Inspector, but as an educator, **I think** that kids in elementary school should be getting other things. Parents want their kids to know English, and rightfully so.*

Judy uses the word “petrified” to describe parents’ position, “they’re **petrified** that their kids are going to turn out like they are, and they’re not going to know”. This is an extreme choice of word for describing parents’ viewpoints on this educational issue. However, besides achieving great impact, it vividly describes the inferior and insecure subject position parents hold, as well as the emotional drive behind their desire to promote EYL. The word “petrified”, coupled with Judy’s detailed explanation about the ways parents think, believe and act with regard to EYL, help us hypothesise the DM out of which TYTB discourse, SLA discourse, inferior versus superior discourse, folk linguistics discourse or other discourses are woven together in the construction of parents’ situated identities.

Judy uses syntactically complex sentences such as “but **I don't really believe** that...” (negative- affective statements), “**I would love to see**” (positive affective sentences) and “**may I say**?” on the one hand, and clear authoritative I-statements such as “I believe” or

"I think" on the other. In using I-statements she assumes the role of the English Inspector, a professional figure in the field of English within the Ministry of Education. However, in using affective statements, *"I would love to see"*, or proposing a recommendation, *"may I say?"* she is either shifting to a personal tone of voice, simply abiding by parents' wishes, or both.

We get the impression that, although Judy's position is not favourable to EYL, and in fact she is quite against it (*"as much as I was against it"*), she has been placed in a position in which she has accepted it against her will. These apparent shifts signal the subordination of her private identity to her institutional identity. This observation is reconfirmed in additional parts of the transcripts. Here is a short excerpt to complete the picture which emerges as described above.

Judy: *A little bit of background. When I was **MADE** quotation marks, (demonstrates the quotation marks with her hands) to do it, it was the Director General's decision. As much as I was against it, being a civil servant, I had two options. To quit, to say: 'I don't want to do it', or to do it.*

We can hypothesise that Judy has two main conflicting DM at work with regard to parents' position on EYL. One DM Judy holds is that most Israeli parents do not know English and therefore wish to promote EYL with their children so as to allow more English learning time which will in turn guarantee their children's knowledge of English in the long run. Along with that DM, Judy holds a contradictory DM (*"I have my own educational philosophy..."*) that young children (in grades 1 and 2) should not learn English but should rather learn other things such as music, gym and nature etc. Unfortunately, EYL sounds good to parents who do not really understand language learning theories and practice.

Thus, Judy believes that parents are activated by common-sense, or folk linguistics as found in the TYTB axiom. She criticises them for that (*"for a person who doesn't understand... it makes sense"*) while at the same time acknowledging their desire for improving their children's knowledge of English and says: *"Parents want their kids to know English, and rightfully so"*.

Whilst Judy does not believe that EYL is good for the educational system or for the children, she also knows that parents are right (or have the right) in their wish for their children to know English. However, she rejects the view that EYL improves (or will improve) results, as is indeed expected by parents, by the system or by other stakeholders (*"you would expect"*). Her belief that money and extra hours (distribution of goods) should be spent on English literacy for older children seems strong and probably influences her position against EYL.

Furthermore, she brings in evidence from the field to prove her view that indeed, EYL does not improve results, *"she (teacher) just could not make any differentiation whatsoever between those schools that started early and those schools that didn't"*. Thus, the main DM which seems to run in Judy's mind is that EYL sounds good to parents who do not understand, but it does not and will not help in closing gaps amongst learners or in improving English results. Understanding Judy's DM helps in making visible parent's discourse, their social practices, and how, in turn, parent's social practices shape Judy's understanding of what EYL means to them.

In the next section I discuss teachers' arguments for and against TYTB and EYL. There appears to be a clear distinction between home-room teachers and English teachers' opinions on TYTB issue. Home-room teachers present a favourable position toward EYL in grades 1 and 2 while professional English teachers present a rather sceptical or negative position thereto.

Teachers' words: - for and against EYL

Home-room teachers hold a favourable position towards TYTB axiom. However, they do not want to teach English themselves. Amongst the three English teachers, Gila, the teacher who actually teaches grade 2, supports it, whereas Ravit and Irit, the two English teachers, disapprove of EYL as the following excerpts show.

For

Rivi: What do you think of TYTB axiom?

Orna (home-room teacher):

I think their capacity to absorb at an early age, their memory at an early age, is better. I haven't read any studies on the subject, but I have the feeling that children... their memory at an early age... their memory is healthy.

The younger the better, sure, that's why I do it with my son. I asked Gila (the English teacher) for the book in order to sit with him.

Gila (English teacher - grade 2):

I think that English is very important, and I think that at an early age you get it better than at an older age. The younger you are, the better your capability for learning is

Meital (home-room teacher):

I think that when they (children) are young they absorb faster they do things faster, perhaps they want it more.

Mira (home-room teacher - grade 2):

If studies show that at an earlier age attainment is better, then it is even MORE reason to begin English at a younger age. I also think that they absorb better.

Arguments in favour of EYL use comparative adjectives extensively. These emphasise the added value of EYL and the advantages thereto in comparison to older learners. Some examples are: "*they absorb better*", *attainment is better*".

Against

Ravit (English teacher):

I think the system is wrong the younger the better a false theory, a wrong assumption.

Irit (English teacher):

The way the system works here, the younger the better is wrong. First, there are 40 kids in class, right? You cannot reach it's impossible.

It can cause damage to the children. If they feel they can't cope or something

If you want to make it fun, if you want to have the exposure to the language effectively, it cannot be done when you have 40 kids, 40 minutes, once a week.

Arguments against EYL focus on the practical problems of classroom implementations, large classes and the potential “*damage*”. As clear and true as these arguments may seem, they remain unnoticed.

Children's words

Children's words reinforce the emerging picture with regard to their expressed love for English lessons. In addition, they echo words and phrases associated with the benefits of learning at a young age which they often hear from different adults who surround them.

Tom: *I like English. It's fun. It's also important to learn when you are young because you can learn more.*

Rivi: Do you think it is good to learn English in grades 1 and 2?

Boys: (together) Yes.

Ran: *Better to learn it at a young age rather than when you are older. You suddenly find out that you don't know English and then it will be difficult to learn it.*

Roi: *Yes, and you would have to go and study English with little kids.*

Ran: *First of all it's fun to know different new things, and if we start early, every year there will be something new to learn.*

Gal: *The older person already knows many things and it is difficult for him to add the English. He is learning English 'on top' of other things. This is something even harder. Say, here in the school there are older kids who are learning Arabic.*

Rivi: Does anyone here want to learn Arabic?

Boys: (together) *No, thanks. (giggle)*

7.3.2.2. Summary

The TYTB axiom is contested. English teaching professionals argue against it whilst everyone else seems to be in favour of it. However, participants' discourse reveals that this contestation is irrelevant. The main issue is that parents, home room teachers and pupils alike believe it to be beneficial (makes good common sense) and therefore speak about and take actions for the promotion thereof.

By relating EYL to TYTB axiom or to SLA discourse (by which the advantages of EYL are stressed) participants make connections between EYL and good parenting and construct a caring parents position for themselves. Associating EYL with something educational, rather than commercial (see theme 3) or fashionable turns the promotion of EYL into a more positive and justifiable act.

Data indicate that TYTB discourse intersects with other discourses in two main ways. The first is the popular folk linguistics domain pertaining to the life-world, common-sense discourse people draw on and use to make sense of TYTB axiom. For example: *"The younger the better, sure, I believe in that", "Of course it's always better to learn English at a young age"*

The second is the technical SLA discourse, which pertains to the theories and ideologies (DM) people draw on and use regarding learning languages. For example: *"They absorb better", "Their minds are less occupied".*

In the next section I re-visit the third theme which emerged from the data namely, the theme of commodification. Four main analytical tools will be used for the analysis in this section: social language, DM, Discourses and intertextuality.

7.3.3. The theme of ‘Commodification’

7.3.3.1. The discourse of consumerism

Looking across the interview data we can identify prevalent linguistic features which illustrate the discourse of consumerism within which EYL is represented as a desired commodity. Similarly, participants build connections between EYL and material objects such as a gift, a key, a business card and more, thereby assuming the identity of consumers by buying, gifting or negotiating EYL.

Participants associate EYL with cultural capital, thereby granting EYL a high social, cultural and economic value (building significance). They consider EYL as “*a status symbol*”, “*a powerful tool*”, and “*an asset*”, thus associating the notion with a commodity which can be bought and which, in turn, will provide them with “*knowledge*” and “*power*” (building power relations and the distribution of goods). Participants build sign systems and knowledge in labelling EYL a desired commodity rather than an educational initiative.

Prior to proceeding with the examples that illustrate this in the data, I draw attention to the pronoun “*it*” and the role it takes on in this context. Coupled with additional words and phrases, I show the situated meaning these features represent in this context.

7.3.3.2. Equating (re-formulating) EYL with material objects

Participants use the pronoun “*it*” repeatedly to mean one or all of the following: knowing English, learning English at a young age, the English language, or the notion of EYL. Referring to the abstract notion of EYL as the pronoun “*it*” (for example, “*we need to have it*”) makes the abstract notion seem real and tangible, a commodity rather than an educational programme or a linguistic system with its strong cultural associations.

Similarly, participants re-formulate (or equate) the notion of English, EYL, or knowing English with material things such as money, a key, a tool, a gift, a business card, and often specifically use the word a commodity, or an asset to describe EYL. Consciously or subconsciously, participants borrow words, phrases and terminology from other sources and insert them in their speech. In this case, the terms “*asset*”, “*a tool*” “*a key*” and “*a*

business card” are all technical terms taken from and strongly associated with the business industry, the world of commerce, consumerism, finance and technology.

The following excerpts typically represent the ways in which participants use the form “it” or “have it”, alongside other words and phrases and take on a particular situated meaning of a commodity.

Meital (teacher):

IT (English) is a type of tool for you. English comes into everything...people really want it. I think it is a very important asset. It is everywhere... You cannot manage without it.

Galit (mother):

Children are interested in learning English. It is a very desired commodity in the world. You have to have it. It's a tool for communication.

Bari (mother):

It is the only language which you can use to communicate with people. You say: 'I have English – It's good that I have it'. I tell them (children) now that it is worth their while to have English because it is their business card to the world.

Ina (mother):

Most of the communication is in English and if you don't have it you can't be there. I think it is a key to the outside world. It is a very important key. In MY opinion it is simply a necessity.

David (father):

It is a gift. It (EYL) is a gift, and I would like her to have this gift.

It is very much connected to money, to material things, that's how I see it... Because the U.S.A means success, money, economy, all sorts of things we look up to...size, power and more”. And WE ALL live with this thing and accept it as a need, as a golden rule as a must and perhaps it is a silly thing to do.

I will now look at these excerpts in more detail.

The situated meaning of the word “it” represents the notion of EYL. Galit says: “*You have to have it*”. Bari says: “*It’s good that I have it*”. Merav says: “*You cannot manage without it*”. Thus, the above sentences mean: “*It is good to have EYL*”, “*You have to have EYL*” and “*I cannot manage without EYL*”. When different participants use the pronoun “it” in close association with the verb “have” (“have it”), we get the feeling that “it” (or alternatively, EYL) could be replaced with any other commodity such as a digital camera, a computer or any fashionable goods suitable for young children.

7.3.3.3. EYL as a tool, a key or a gift

Participants express their views making connections between the notion of EYL and different types of commodities. Some examples are: “*It’s a tool for communication*” (Galit) and “*It’s a business card to the world*” (Bari). Likewise, participants explicitly use the terms “commodity” (Galit: “*It’s a very desired commodity in the world*”) and “asset” (Smadar: “*I think it is a very important asset*”). These words have a significant role in their function as well in their form as they are coupled with the verb “have” (“*You have to have it*”) or the verb “bring” (“*bring it in*”).

Participants’ choice of particular verbs such as “have”, “want”, “bring” coupled with words such as “a tool”, “an asset”, “a gift” makes visible the ways in which EYL is turned into a commodity in order to ‘have it’, to ‘invest in it’ or to ‘want it’. Speaking of EYL as a desired commodity is similar to placing a price tag on it. It has become one of the many other desired commodities or popular culture goods which some people can afford and others cannot (see theme 7 in this chapter).

To continue with this line of analysis, Ina employs figurative language and says: “*I think it is a key to the outside world*”. The notion of EYL is compared to a key, a tangible object used as practical means by which to open doors and obtain something. It may be possible that Ina borrows the term key from the metaphoric world or from one of her conscious/subconscious DM. A possible DM is that EYL is one of the means by which she finds it possible to reach or connect to the outside world.

David's words in the above transcript vividly show the construction of the 'discourse of consumerism' and its hybrid varieties. His language illuminates his actions *vis-à-vis* EYL framed as a commodity. He not only articulates his beliefs but elaborates on his actions (what he does) as an Israeli parent. David re-formulates EYL as a gift given from the parent to a child, "*It is a gift, and I would like her to have this gift*". This belief may be informed by the DM that EYL is as valuable as if it were a gift. As such, gifting EYL to his daughter is part of being a good parent (the 'good, Jewish parents' Discourse). Indeed, if we look at what David says preceding this sentence, a clearer picture of the relevant DM emerges.

David: *I explicitly plan to teach her (his daughter) English in private lessons. Whatever is necessary. Again, this is due to the fact that it important to me that my child should have all the possible conditions eh... not to be different, to be able to communicate, to feel... . It is a gift. It is a gift, and I would like her to have this gift.*

David clarifies his position and the actions he takes with regard to EYL, "*I explicitly plan to teach her English*". Similarly, in the previous excerpt he makes connections between the notion of EYL and material things. Words such as "*success*", "*power*", "*money*" and "*size*" are configured into a single dimension to represent the notion of EYL. By drawing correspondence between them David turns an educational initiative (EYL) into an economic, politically- determined brand-name (a trade-name, a label given to a product, for example, Adidas).

Another connection he makes is between the local personal matter, namely, his daughter learning English and the "*USA*", where English is not only the dominant language but "*means success, money, economy, all sorts of things we look up to...size, power and more*". The use of plural pronouns in this context ("*we* all live with this thing and accept it") signals the association of a local educational innovation with global, economic and social trends. This turns EYL into a global issue, representing life-style, economical decisions and capitalism (see also themes 3 and 4 in this chapter).

Along similar lines, Somech expresses her belief regarding the appropriate age for the introduction of English and says that in her opinion English can be introduced as early as

in kindergarten (ages 3-5). She uses the term **'bring it in'** to describe the introduction of an English programme.

Somech (mother):

*English is a universal language. Everywhere you go people speak it and it's important that kids will **have it** from a young age.*

Rivi: When you say young age, what do you mean?

Somech:

*In my opinion you can **'bring it in'** in kindergarten.*

In the above excerpt, the association which comes to mind is that we can replace EYL with bringing in another toy, a game, or a pet for the kindergarten. Somech is not referring to EYL as an English teaching programme (which will include a teacher and a syllabus), rather, the notion of EYL is being commodified and treated as a product. Somech wishes to “bring in” EYL to the kindergarten. This linguistic feature signals her DM that EYL can be brought in to the kindergarten as another object for the children’s benefit. This DM is based on her experience as a parent of three children, or based on her professional beliefs as a kindergarten teacher, or both.

It can be noted that Somech, and other parents, specifically bring up ‘having EYL’ whilst no other subject learned in grades 1 & 2 (such as mathematics or science) is brought up in the same context.

7.3.3.4. Folk discourse of language politics

Folk discourse of language politics is built out of various linguistic building blocks, which include every-day notions of oppositions between weak and strong, inferiority and superiority, localisation and globalisation and locate English and EYL along the winning ends of these oppositions – and thus Arabic (and maybe also Hebrew) at the other end. Folk discourse of language politics includes the notion of EYL as a form of investment in cultural capital (see chapter 4) and involves participants drawing on financial, political and globalisation discourses.

EYL as cultural capital

Participants' discourse reveals that EYL is believed to be a commodity attached to status and prestige, success and achievements and is generally associated with 'being strong' versus 'being weak'. These notions, when associated with EYL, increase its value thus translating it into a form of cultural capital.

The data I use here derive from all participants in the study. I draw attention to particular features participants employ in their speech such as figurative language, metaphors, symbolism, clichés and grammatical structures. These signal implicit or explicit theories they hold indicating possible DM they apply.

EYL as a status symbol and prestige

Smadar, mother:

It is obvious to me that it (EYL) is a status symbol.

Bari (mother):

I want to tell you that someone who knows English is considered smarter than one who doesn't know English.

Here in Israel, someone who knows English gives the impression of being smarter. It's like Doctors' profession which is considered of higher status than a nurse. In other words, there is a norm, or a stereotype which says that: 'he who knows English- he is of a high status. He who doesn't know - less'.

Rivi: What do you think of this norm?

Bari:

I think there is something in it. Really, it may be so. D'you know something? I think that a person who knows English well makes a better impression than a person who knows math well. It makes a better impression. When someone is an English-speaker, I look-up to him, like...I admire him.

Bari and Smadar make explicit connections between knowing English and high status. This is accomplished through various means. First, Bari uses metaphoric language and compares the gap in status between "a doctor" and "a nurse" thus equating it with

knowing English versus the lack thereof. Second, she speaks of an existing “*norm*” or a “*stereotype*” in Israeli society by taking up the Israeli society’s voice, through which she states her belief connecting the knowledge of English and higher social and academic status, “*he who knows English- he is of a high status. He who doesn’t know –less”.*

Third, she uses verbs which have a semiotic meaning, such as “*look- up to*” and cognitive I-statements such as “*I think*”, which signal an authoritative and persuasive style of speech. Similarly, she compares English with math, pointing out that English is on the winning end of this equation.

EYL, knowledge and power

Additional comparisons are textured between knowing English, EYL and the notion of power as the following transcripts illustrate.

Merav (mother):

Look, knowledge is power. This is a very true sentence and I believe in that. English is knowledge and knowledge is power. It’s true at any age, even when the child is young, he hears, he reads and he gains more confidence, it gives the child more confidence.

Nancy (mother):

Knowledge is power and if you don’t have this language, which many people speak and know, you are an outsider, out of touch with what’s happening.

Merav and Nancy make explicit connections between EYL, knowledge thereof and power (“*Look, knowledge is power*”) thus associating EYL with gaining cultural capital and power. In addition, they point out that in fact, power and knowledge equip people (and children) with high personal self confidence (“*it gives the child more confidence*”) and therefore EYL is the means by which children gain self confidence (building identity). This illuminates the psychology of power as an affective state. Associating EYL with knowledge and power empowers children, and therefore is an important asset in their everyday life.

7.3.3.5. Summary

Participants construct their understandings of EYL as being one of the many desired commodities their children need in the capitalistic world. The extensive use of the pronoun “*it*” accompanied with verbs such as “*have it*”, “*bring it*” or “*need it*” highlight the materialistic value attached to EYL, which is, in fact, a pedagogical concern.

Rich metaphorical language such as “*a key*”, “*a tool*” and “*gift*” has become standardised discourse typically used by participants to describe the notion of EYL. Uncovering these naturalised discourses reveal that participants are influenced by globalisation discourse, discourse of New Capitalism and consumerism and thus adopt them in order to assume the position of global consumers for which they wish to be recognised.

7.3.4. The theme of EYL and identity

Inferiority, superiority, self-esteem and other markers of identity are brought up prevalently in the data. Knowing English is associated with superiority and with having self confidence and the means for achievement, while not knowing English is associated with inferiority, lack of self confidence and failure. The implication of this for EYL is the commonsense assumption that active promotion of EYL will naturally result in knowing English (and high self-esteem) whereas the lack of EYL will result in not knowing English (and low self-esteem). These identity distinctions are constructed out of participants’ personal histories and experiences and are exemplified in their discourse. They are construed in response to or to comply with social forces and popular trends. Numerous examples in the data attest to the following identity markers.

7.3.4.1. The discourse of inferiority versus superiority (strong versus weak)

Much of participants’ speech is laced with emotions and feelings. Similarly, their language includes figurative language, metaphors and symbolisms which pattern together to construe a vivid representation of their position *vis-à-vis* EYL.

Paz (mother):

I know that due to my barrier in English I feel stuck. I feel REALLY stuck.

Orna (teacher):

*Because there are a few (parents) like that who experienced the **difficulty** (with English) and to this day, English for them is an obstacle, and a barrier, they feel that it **keeps them back**, and I understand their concerns and their ...eh....., they don't want the young generation to experience the same things in person.*

Ina (mother):

*I felt that I had some kind of **blockage** **an obstacle**, not knowing English.*

Smadar (mother):

*I think that in some aspects English is connected not only with success but with **survival**. Because whoever **cannot be there... will not BE at all**.*

Dudu (father):

*It (not knowing English) disturbs me a great deal personally. **It holds me back**. I think it doesn't represent me correctly. It represents me perhaps on a lower standard than I should be. My English is not good enough... it **detracts** from me.*

***We don't feel good** when we don't know English or have to use it and don't know it. It is an **uncomfortable feeling, you feel inferior**.*

Identity markers in the form of symbolisms such as “you feel inferior” (Dudu), “I feel stuck” (Paz), “I felt that I had some kind of blockage, an obstacle” (Ina), “keeps them back” (Orna), magnify the effect of personal histories and experiences on participants' everyday discourse. Using rich figurative language and metaphors participants position themselves as vulnerable and weak in view of their lack of English knowledge. Thus, not knowing English becomes synonymous with failure, inferiority or weakness.

Referring to his anecdotal experience, Dudu candidly says: “It disturbs me a great deal personally”. He then changes the personal tone to use the plural pronoun “you” (“you feel inferior”) to describe his personal feeling vis-à-vis lack of knowledge of English. In using the plural pronoun “you” instead of “I” his claim achieves a degree of generalisability. It implies that he feels uncomfortable with this feeling. We can assume that Dudu wishes to share his feeling of inferiority (or the negative connotation attached

to people who don't know English) and thus uses the plural pronoun "you". Similarly, the message we get is that he is not the only one placed in this inferior position and that more people are included in the word "you".

Thus, we can presume that Dudu's inferiority feeling *vis-à-vis* lack of English knowledge is, in fact, the important drive behind his SLA and TYTB discourse presented in themes 1 & 2 above. He re-formulates his weakness into the 'good, Jewish parents' Discourse in which he wishes to belong, which is indeed a more effective way of achieving recognition.

The following excerpt reflects David's DM on the reasons behind the desire for EYL. For him the wish for EYL is a complicated matter, deeply rooted in issues of identity, nationhood, lack of solidarity and the aspiration to resemble America, Israel's strong ally.

David (father):

It is a type of a desire to be something else, to do with identity, with self flagellation, with the fact we feel that we're being persecuted We feel weak, not strong in our own right. As a result of all the things we carry with us. America seems strong to us, English seems to be THE language.

David uses powerful words such as "desire", "identity", "persecuted", "weak", "strong", "self flagellation" to draw a particular profile of what he perceives to be typical of Israeli people (building identity). Using plural pronouns "we" and "us" he makes a distinction between a weak versus a strong identity ["We feel weak, not strong"], associating the weak identity with Israelis whilst associating the strong identity with America and Americans. Along similar lines, Paz subscribes to a discourse of weakness as is depicted in the following excerpt.

Paz (mother):

Rivi: How is your English?

Paz: *Not very good.*

Rivi: ...ahhaa.

Paz: *It is **a handicap**.*

Rivi: A handicap...?

Paz: ***A real handicap. A total handicap.** It is very difficult, but I have learned to manage with this **handicap** like **you** learn to live with a **wheelchair**. I apologise that my English is not wonderful. I manage, like **handicaps** manage. You know... here in Israel, in the Israeli society if YOU don't know English it is very strange. It is like 'wow, how can that be?' You are so **embarrassed** to speak and you stop yourself.*

Distinctive linguistic features in Paz's language make visible the particular weak identity she enacts as an Israeli who does not know English. Using a metaphor she compares herself to a handicapped person in a wheelchair. The association is made more vivid when accompanied by descriptive adjectives, and verbs such as "*embarrassed to speak*", "*you stop yourself*", "*I apologise*".

Shifts between personal and plural pronouns ("you" – "I") generate the sense of shared identity. The listener feels automatically included in the situation, "***you** are so **embarrassed** to speak and you stop **yourself***". Such shifts create the sense that although Paz speaks of her own embarrassing experiences, in fact she represents a society in which not knowing English is associated with feeling inferior (and weak) and, in opposition, knowing English is associated with feeling superior (and strong). Paz positions herself as part of a group which may imply that indeed, more people share the inferior feeling. Furthermore, when assuming an inferior position it is perhaps more reassuring or comforting to speak in the plural.

The Israeli society's voice through which Paz speaks ("*It is like 'wow, how can that be?'*") contributes to understanding her weak position. She feels criticised by the society of which she is part which expects people to know English. Thus, we can assume that Paz wishes to invest in EYL with the hope and desire that this would provide herself (and her child) an upgraded identity by which to avoid the embarrassment not knowing English entails.

7.3.4.2. The discourse of success, achievement and empowerment

Ravit, (English teacher):

Rivi: What do you think is the reason for the introduction of English in grades 1 and 2?

Ravit: *Panic, panic, hysteria, I think it's become. Look, it is very understandable, the issue of English today. Because whenever you open (sic) the TV, the ads are in English. What is 'Escape' telephones? (a name of a local cellular phone company) What is 'Must' chewing gum? Or 'Orange' ? (a name of a cellular phone company) It's all English. It's us. There's nothing we can do about this. And the feeling is that if you don't know English you can't succeed in life. You can't get along here without knowing English, which is true by the way.*

I accept the fact that if you have English, it can, you know, get you places, it opens doors That's a fact. You have to accept it. On the academic level, you can't get along without English. All the articles you read, you must know English.

Two types of repeated words and phrases work together in construing the discourse of success, achievement and empowerment. The first kind is the abundance of English brand names and labels such as “Must” (chewing gum) “Escape” and “Orange” (local cellular phone companies) used repeatedly and in a wide range. She draws connections between these words and the media, TV and advertisements, thus indicating that the promotion of EYL in grades 1 and 2 is mainly as a result of the impact of ads, the media and television, “Because whenever you open (sic) the TV, the ads are in English”.

This serves as evidence for the connections made between the broad exposure of English in the media, the important role it assumes in everyday life and obtaining better opportunities (“gets you places”), success and empowerment (“opens doors”). Through and by repetition, we understand that EYL symbolises success and knowing English empowers people to “get places”.

Ravit, an English teacher, positions herself as ‘a knower’ and as such, her social language is authoritative and convincing. Words such as “Look!”, “That’s a fact” or “You know, that’s what I say”, coupled with other grammatical features such as plural pronouns and

vague references “you”, the informal parenthetical device “you know”, pattern together to make visible the opinionated position Ravit assumes in this situation.

Bari (mother):

It (EYL) opens up possibilities, for sure. I told you about my friend who is looking for a job. If she doesn't have English she can't get ahead. So it is connected to success.

It is an issue of being successful. If someone has succeeded in English, he probably has ambition to be successful with other things as well.

Look, when I came to work here, I had to learn all my professional stuff in English. You have to think about it beforehand, because you can't learn a language in a month. You need to plan. It's like you want to prevent an illness. You won't step out into the snow with wet hair and catch a cold. Now, language is more serious then catching a cold. You will eventually come across English and so you have to think about it a few years beforehand.

Bari construes the discourse of success and empowerment by using the word “success” in different grammatical forms. She uses it as a nominalisation (“connected to success”), as an adjective (“being successful”) and as a verb (“If someone has succeeded in English”). It is further emphasised by associating the knowledge of English with having what she considers successful jobs (“If she doesn't have English she can't get ahead”).

Bari uses figurative language to make connections between EYL, future success and long term planning. Words and phrases such as “you need to plan” and “beforehand” act as evidence to her belief that success (or leading a successful life) is not easily achieved and needs to be carefully planned (“You have to think about it beforehand”). Thus, EYL becomes one of the planning measures taken in order to reach the final goal of success.

Furthermore, EYL is also framed as the preventive measure Bari wishes to take in order to ensure a successful life for her children. Indeed, the word “prevent” is used in a metaphor (“you want to prevent an illness”) which creates a clearer picture of the ways

in which the Discourse of EYL is interwoven in the day to day planning of life and also signals the ‘good, Jewish parents’ Discourse with which she wants to be identified.

7.3.4.3. Summary

Participants’ words illuminate their social and ideological understanding pertaining to the knowledge of English and EYL. They draw upon personal histories and experiences to associate such knowledge with enjoying a strong, successful subject position and the lack thereof with a weak and inferior position. EYL represents the means to enable parents to prevent such undesired results in their children’s lives. It therefore becomes a desired tool for success.

In the following section I re-visit the theme of EYL and globalisation. The context of globalisation evokes different discourses associating EYL with “*the global world*” and “*the western culture*” as illustrated bellow.

7.3.5. The theme of EYL and globalisation

7.3.5.1. The discourse of globalisation

Local/global binaries

Participants view EYL as the key to the desired gate into the “*western world*” and global village. They feel that although they physically live in Israel, a small country in the Middle East, English is the means by which the non-physical boundaries of the country can be transcended. Thus, they believe the global village existing beyond the Israeli boundaries awaits them with many opportunities and English is one of the keys or tools they can acquire with which to communicate, do business and interact outside the confines of their locality. However, a close examination of their account shows that their social practices and work environment do not necessarily call for the use of English on a regular basis.

Indeed, out of the sixteen parents interviewed, none of them report holding a work position which involves regular interaction or communication with other countries, excluding David, who is a singer. Furthermore, all four home-room teachers, whilst speaking of EYL as an important global language and a useful tool in everyday life, refused to teach English in their grade 1 and 2 classes (as was planned in the school’s

original programme) mainly due to the fact that their level of English was not “good enough”. Although this seems an apparent valid reason for their support of EYL, their everyday practices, however, stand in contradiction to their discourse of globalisation, which highlights the global uses and requirements of English.

Participants draw on and use globalisation discursive resources such as “international language”, “globalisation”, “the outside”, “the global village” and the prevalent use of metaphoric language. Galit and Nancy’s words exemplify this.

Galit (mother):

We have to communicate in English. It’s like a second language. Hebrew works in Israel only, English works all over the world. So it’s sort of a connection to anything out of this country.

In the future I hope there will be good tourism here, or international trade, or jobs with the outside. Everything is in English. English is the dominant language isn’t it?

Action verbs “we have to”, “Hebrew works”, “English works”, “communicate”, in addition to repetitions of similar lexical tokens such as “the outside”, “all over the world” and “international”, are used effectively in creating a local/global binary as exemplified in Galit’s speech. Her opening statement, “We have to communicate in English”, using the verb “have to” clarifies the important role she assigns to English in everyday life, making it a compulsory part of it. Her particular choice of grammar (tag question “Isn’t it?”) in the statement “English is the dominant language, isn’t it?” serves as evidence for her belief that English is the dominant language, is an obvious fact. This further emphasises the power English has over her personal everyday life.

Nancy (mother):

Look, you know, I think it’s an international language, and, so you won’t feel stuck within the little borders of Israel which are really small. You know, I’m not saying that you have to live somewhere else, but if you need to, if you want to travel, if you want to do work outside, you need to have English, I think. All the music comes from America comes from England.

Clear global/local binaries are visible in Nancy's figurative language. Symbolisms such as "*feel stuck*", "*little borders of Israel*" and "*really small*" create a visual image of Israeli people living in Israel, a small country and speaking Hebrew, the local language, versus the big image of the outside world symbolised by "*America*" and "*England*".

Local limitations – global opportunities

Participants feel that the Hebrew language is insufficient and limiting. Meital, one of the home-room teachers who refused to teach EYL in her grade 2 class, highlights the local/global binaries she believes exist. In her view, Hebrew represents confinements whilst English represents global possibilities.

Meital (teacher):

If you don't know English you feel out of touch with what's happening in the world...I think that everybody feels like ...that our country is getting too small for us.

No, Hebrew is not sufficient. I think it comes from the need people have to communicate with each other, for business for travelling.

Rivi: But in Israel we communicate in Hebrew.

Meital: *No, like I said, it's not enough. It's the curiosity as well. I mean, you've understood what's happening around YOUR part of the world and you want to meet people and see other places. This becomes a tool for you.*

I think... the ambition and success mentality comes from the west. ... They represent success... I don't think it is overpowering. People here have accepted it with a welcome, they accept it they want it.

Western culture is good for us... it is perceived as the 'next thing', the 'good thing', that we can learn from them ... from this position the need to resemble them it is developed. Perhaps it's from this place. They represent success.

Meital's metaphoric language (*"our country is getting too small for us"*) represents a vivid image of Israel, a small country, aspiring to grow and expand its boundaries. Similarly, we get a picture of Israeli people living in Israel welcoming western culture with open arms and content, stretching the boundaries in order to grow, *"Western culture is good for us"*, *"People here have accepted it with a welcome"*.

Meital emphasises personal and global affiliation using plural pronouns such as *"your"* and *"other"*, and words such as *"here"* and *"there"*. Hebrew represents familiarity, but also elements of confinement (*"you've understood what's happening around YOUR part of the world"*). By contrast, English represents the rest of the world and Western culture in particular: power, size, excitement and novelty, *"you want to meet people and see other places"*.

Nominalisations such as *"the need"*, *"the curiosity"*, *"success mentality"*, coupled with vague references such as *"people"*, *"everybody"*, *"not enough"* and *"other places"* signal the conceptual global world existing in Meital's mind to which she wishes to belong, as opposed to the concrete world she lives in as a teacher in Israel. She beautifies the conceptual Western culture by using superlatives (*"the next thing"*, *"the good thing"*) and by attaching positive associations thereto, *"we can learn from them"*, *"they represent success"*.

Meital's language points to the discursive resources she draws on, out of which she construes her version of the discourse of globalisation. People around her say English is needed for travelling and business, *"the need people have to communicate with each other, for business for travelling"*. Additionally, people around her are curious and want to use the English language to *"meet people and see other places"*. Thus English becomes a tool for communication, *"This becomes a tool for you"*.

Ina's words in the excerpt below re-emphasise the limits of Hebrew versus the broad possibilities of English. The phrase *"connection to the outside"*, typically used by Ina and other participants in various forms, specifically associates the knowledge of English with children's possibilities to communicate with people beyond Israel's boundaries. The lack of knowledge of English is associated with being *"stuck"* (*"so that they are not stuck with*

Hebrew only”) and EYL becomes the means with which to avoid this undesirable situation.

Ina (mother):

*As I said, for kids, their computer games, they are all in English. That is some connection to the **outside**. I mean, so that they are **not stuck** with Hebrew only, which is not a prevalent language, and they don't have to depend on it.*

Along similar lines, Smadar explicitly draws on globalisation discursive resources to construe her version of discourse, “That is all a part of the globalisation which people talk about”. Her repeated use of words and phrases such as “communication”, “high-tech”, “globalisation”, “e-mail” and action verbs such as “connect” signal the importance she assigns to learning and knowing English for the local Israeli person.

Smadar (mother):

*It is impossible without communication and all the communication is in English, all in the e-mail. That is all a part of the **globalisation** which people talk about. It doesn't matter which countries you have contacts with, most of the communication is in English, and **if you don't have it, you can't be there**, and not only in high tech. Today this is true in all the fields. It (English) is the language which connects the **whole world**.*

In addition to the discourse of globalisation of which she is part, Smadar associates English with basic existence, thus building her local Israeli identity as a global person who needs English to exist in a global world, “if you don't have it, you can't be there”.

Building global/local identity

Global/local binaries reflect an existing gap between the local Israeli person who does not know English and the global person who does know English. Thus, the terms “the Western world” or “the West is IT” typically used by participants, represent their hope and desire rather than their actual daily lives. Participants construe a conceptual global world (where English is used) to which they wish to belong.

The following excerpts are examples of the ways in which various linguistic features work together to illustrate the local/global binaries.

David (father):

*For those of us who are looking up towards **the West** all the time and not necessarily to the place we live in ...from this position English is important....the **West is IT**. We are disconnected. We are not really in the **Middle-East**.*

Nancy (mother):

*The curiosity of **the West** and the soul of the East. I think that's true about Israel because it's got a Western culture and an Eastern culture together.*

Alice (principal):

*Today, without English one cannot get by in the world. One feels disconnected. **It connects us to the world**. You hear that phrase a great deal, both with parents and with teachers.*

Participants refer to learning English and EYL as a means of survival in the world. Alice says: "Today, without English one cannot get by in the world". Similarly, Smadar says: "if you don't have it, you can't be **there**". Whilst global/local binaries are implied by using the words "there" (to represent the West) and "here" (to represent Israel), participants wish to view Israel as part of the West: "we are not really in the Middle – East" (David). They acknowledge the western world existing outside the local borders of Israel while at the same time they support (encourage) the notion that Israel is indeed part of that global world. This is made visible through their use of figurative language to explain the expanding borders of the world and the enhancement of English.

Smadar (mother):

*I find that today the environment and society gives English a lot of **power** and that helps a lot. The borders of the world have crushed down, **globalisation** the Internet, films, people's jobs. Because the **global world today**, the world's **globalisation today**, contributes greatly to the enhancement of English in Israel.*

Bari (mother):

It's like asking someone 'why do you want to have dollars...' I mean, you need a language which is an international language which is useful when you need it. It will be always helpful if you have it. My biggest wish is to know English, more than Arabic, more than Russian, despite the large Russian immigration.

Olivia (mother):

You have to drink water in order to live, and you have to speak English in order to communicate

Discourse models

Figurative language and metaphors such as “having dollars” (Bari), “water to drink” (Olivia), “borders of the world have crushed down” (Smadar) help in making visible possible DM operating in participants’ minds while construing global/local identities. Bari equates the issue of EYL with dollars, thus assigning it capital value. She believes that EYL is as useful as having dollars, the American currency, directly associated with America, Israel’s strongest ally in the western world (as opposed to simply having ‘money’). Although, in actual fact, the American dollar is losing value against the European euro or the British pound, Bari assigns it great value. Furthermore, it will be noted that in fact, dollars can only be used out of Israel, and are quite useless in everyday life in Israel.

Olivia also draws similarities between drinking water in order to live and speaking English in order to communicate. Bari and Olivia hold a DM that EYL is associated with basic needs of everyday life such as money and water.

Smadar emphasises the impact of the global spread of English on everyday life in Israel (“the world’s globalisation today”). Thus she holds a DM whereby English as a global language influences the high status and demand it has in Israel.

In what follows we will note the associations participants make with symbols they believe represent the global world. These include symbols of modernisation, success, power and fashionable trends.

7.3.5.2. The discourse of EYL as a fashion and a trend

Participants' language reveals claims which signal that, amongst other things they do and say, they are following a socio-cultural trend and a fashion. They specifically say that "EYL is very 'in' today" and often insert many international or English words into their speech, thus stressing the popularity of English in Israel.

Following a fashionable trend is considered by participants to be a positive thing. Indeed, a sense of pride can be noted for identifying and following an educational trend such as EYL rather than other trends (such as brand-names, popular music, television and more), not commonly associated with education. The following excerpts are examples which illustrate this point.

Ravit (teacher):

*First of all it's unmistakably a social factor **a trend**. EYL is very **'in'** today.*

Efrat (mother):

*Learning English is also a **social, trendy thing**. I guess, it's a **good trendy thing**. Not only about learning English, I wanted my daughter to be with her friends in the extra curricular activities. There was an added value –the social element and the desire for them to be exposed to English.*

The inspector's words below highlight the notion of EYL as a trend alongside issues of political decisions *vis-à-vis* parental power and pressure in educational reforms and/or systems.

Judy (inspector):

*It's not a passing **trend** because of the parents. **Its' political** in terms of doing things the **public like**. It's an issue of **demand and issue of rating**.*

On the other hand, a critical tone is noted in David's words as he uses the 'herd' metaphor to describe this popular trend as the following excerpt shows.

David (father):

*It is a type of, you know, the **herd mentality**. However, according to what is being written today and coming from the **herd culture** we have, we feel...we all want our children to know English. This is **very superficial**.*

David makes a connection between the word “herd” (“we are all a “herd”) and people in Israel “we” (including himself), thus drawing relationship between the symbolic notion of people following a leader (perhaps blindly) and people following a trend. David implies that with regard to the issue of EYL, people in Israel are following a fashionable trend rather than engaging in an educational act.

Pupils’ words:

Local/global binaries are also evident in pupil’s discourse. Children’s social language includes many words and phrases which can be identified as language ‘imported’ from adults’ discourse. Pupils draw on globalisation discursive resources available to them such as their parents’ and teachers’ discourse, television and computers, friends and classmates. They re-formulate words and phrases and create their own version of the discourse of globalisation as the following excerpts illustrate.

Or (boy):

*I have an uncle who **was in America for 5 years** and I want **to know English** as well as he does. So that in a few years’ time, when my father will take me to America, I will know English same as he... And ALSO, ALSO... it’s not fair that the whole world speaks in English and I don’t understand what they are saying.*

Ron (boy):

*It’s better to learn English coz... eh... it’s an **international language** and if I go to another country and I don’t know the language there -I will be able to speak English to them..*

Tal (girl):

We have to start right from the beginning because we have to learn a lot. If I fly overseas, and they speak Spanish there, and I don’t know Spanish. But I don’t

have to speak Spanish with them. I can speak English with them, and then they understand me and I understand them.

Roi (boy):

*My grandmother was almost **all over the world**. Almost all my family is in **England or in America**.*

*My uncle and my aunt and I have distant grandmothers ...emmm and **I want to communicate** with them because they only know English and a little bit of Hebrew.*

Ran (boy):

*I want very much to learn to read and write (English) because **we have family in America** and this way I will be able to **communicate** with them and send them emails.*

Children's language reveals typical words and phrases such as "English is important" (Paz), "English is the international language" (Ron), thus stressing the need for communication. Vague references such as "the whole world speaks in English", "if I go to another country" and "to communicate with them", coupled with many I-statements such as "I can speak English with them" "I want" signal children's strong desire to learn English. Indeed, pupils seem to believe in the effectiveness and usefulness of English and are able to explain in details the ways in which they would use English once they learn it.

Local/global binaries are evident when children reiterate adults' words and present unrealistic outcomes from their short English experience. They wish to learn English in order to maintain contact with their family overseas given the opportunity to travel abroad. Naïvely, they believe that they will be able to communicate fluently after a short period of learning English and that the study of English is a simple and fast task. Indeed, pupils convey the feeling that learning English will instantly result in knowing English and the ability to communicate with the "family in America".

7.3.5.3. Summary

The discourse of globalisation includes a variety of nuances actively placing English as the desired language of communication with the outside world for people living in Israel.

The commonsense view presented by participants is that EYL is a tool for establishing global contact, hence an important factor for society in general and the individual in particular. EYL becomes a ticket to personal success, liberation and empowerment in modern society.

The high regard participants have for English and EYL draws attention to the low regard participants have for the Arabic language and/or learning Arabic in school. This poses several questions regarding Arabic, the answers for which can be found by examining and interpreting participants' discourse *vis-à-vis* this language.

7.3.6. The theme of Arabic – the undesired language

Participants convey negative attitudes towards the Arabic language in general and towards learning Arabic in particular. This observation is significant in view of the growing popularity and active promotion of EYL. Indeed, it seems that the popularity and improvement in status of EYL grows in opposite correlation with the decline and lack of interest in Arabic. These negative attitudes revealed by participants are all the more disturbing in view of the ways in which they initiate and bring up Arabic for discussion when compared with the English language and EYL. All the more, in view of the connections they make between Arab people, the Arabic language and their own position as Israelis.

7.3.6.1. Discourse models

The tool of DM is used here to help make visible and understand participants' negative attitudes and actions towards Arabic. Closer study of participants' language reveals that participants associate themselves with Western mentality and with the American culture in particular, America being Israel's best ally and supporter on the global scene. Conversely, they associate the Arabic language with "*the enemy*". Thus, these ideological beliefs and values in favour of the Western culture as opposed to Arabic being "*the enemy's*" language and culture represent possible existing conscious or subconscious theories they hold.

Gee (2005) suggests that the process of adopting a DM is like being "colonised" (p. 82) by a particular model and that people easily get "colonised" (ibid) by pervasive,

sometimes tacit DM which are accessible to them without considering whether they are suitable or unsuitable to them. Thus, two main DM seem to be at work here. One DM is that participants hold negative stereotypes for the Arabic language and its speakers. The other DM is the failure to see any use for the language which is prevalent only in the Middle-East and not in the western world.

Indeed, the logic of Arabic being “*the enemy’s*” language carries various implications. Participants’ words take on different meanings to construe an ‘Anti-Arabic discourse’. Such discourse includes nuances participants wish to highlight in order to rationalise their ideologies and beliefs. The following excerpts provide indications of the different shades of this discourse.

Meital (teacher):

*We spoke before about Arabic. They are our **enemies** and we don’t want to learn the language of the **enemy**.*

Ivanof (father):

*Arabic and English? It’s like comparing **heaven and earth**. **English is necessary**.*

Mr. Koren (father):

*Arabic **is unpopular**. It might be due to some ‘anti’ feelings or some kind of **antagonism**. Maybe. But on the other hand we consider ourselves a western country and if we look at **other countries**, where else do they learn Arabic?*

Merav (mother):

*We are surrounded by countries with which we have no contact. **Our enemies**. It’s not like I ever went to visit there or that I listen to shows in Arabic or anything like that.*

In the above excerpts we can note the use of words such as “*enemy*” (Meital and Merav), “*antagonism*”, “*anti feeling*” (Mr. Koren) which make visible the direct connections textured between anti-Arabic attitudes, the Arabic language and the enemy. Meital, Ivanof, Mr. Koren and Merav do not differentiate between the Arabic language and the Arab countries or people as a whole. They believe that the Arabic language represents the

Arab people at large (without distinguishing between Israeli Arabs and Palestinians), and since Israel is still considered to be in a position of war with most of the Arab countries, the Arabic language is equated with the enemy and therefore is unpopular and disliked.

Participants speak using plural pronouns such as “*we*”, “*our*” coupled with the vague reference “*western country*” creating the feeling of generalisation. They present themselves as people living in a western society and view Israel as part of the western culture rather than part of the Middle–East, “*we consider ourselves a western country*”.

They take up a plural rather than a singular position and speak as representatives of the Israeli people. As such, they generalise theories, build myths around them, or stereotype them. They believe that learning Arabic is irrelevant and unnecessary to them as Israelis living in Israel, a western, modern country. Furthermore, Israeli Arabs speak Hebrew and thus, they do not see the need for Arabic. In fact, they believe that English is the most important language, the international language and is the means by which they can communicate with non-Hebrew speaking Arabs as well as other people in the world, as explicated in the excerpts below.

Merav (mother):

*Arabic? What are you talking about? The Middle-East? What... **are we riding camels here?** Our culture is **completely western**, totally.*

Somech (mother):

*Yes **we** are in the Middle-East but the question is how we perceive ourselves in the cultural sense. What is the big deal if **you** know Arabic? Besides **them** being **our** neighbours? What good will it do **us**? What helps **us** more, English or Arabic?*

Merav and Somech emphasise the cultural gaps they believe exist between Israelis and Arabs, and thus between the need for the Arabic language versus the need for English - representing the western culture. Merav’s figurative language (“*What... are we riding camels here?*”) highlights the patronising tone typically used by participants in order to actively and verbally detach themselves from the Arab culture and language. Similarly, Somech begins her argument by raising cultural perspectives of speaking and learning

Arabic (“*but the question is how we perceive ourselves in the cultural sense*”), yet she soon shifts to discuss practical issues pertaining to the two languages, showing clearly that English wins by a long way “*What helps us more, English or Arabic?*”.

Participants seem to rationalise their anti-Arabic Discourse by highlighting the importance of English versus the lack of interest and use of Arabic in their everyday life. The following excerpts illustrate this point further.

Galit (mother):

English is much more in' than Arabic. It's also more needed. I mean, we Israelis, when we travel we don't travel in the Arab countries where we would need Arabic. We meet them here don't we? And we can speak English to them.

Smadar (mother):

English will be useful for me with the Arabs in general and with the Arabs who don't know Hebrew and also with the rest of the world, generally.

Rivi: So, what about learning Arabic?

Smadar: *It's irrelevant. What can I say? As unpleasant as it may sound, that's the way it is, facts of life.*

Dudu (father):

I speak Hebrew to the Arabs here, so I don't have a need for Arabic, it's not a tool for me, it's not useful for me. English is the tool I need. Too bad... Arabic is not popular

In what follows, Mira, a home-room teacher goes through a lengthy description of the socio-cultural and socio-political position of Arabic and the reasons it has become an undesired language. Whilst it is actually ‘called for’ to learn and teach Arabic in Israel, there seem to be many reasons as to why it is strongly avoided by the Israeli people.

Mira (teacher):

I think they tried to teach Arabic, it didn't work.

Rivi: Why?

Mira: *Because of the political situation.*

Rivi: What do you mean?

Mira: *Em... Arabic was...also...em...like it was called for, (obvious) and I think many schools taught Arabic. Today much less.*

Rivi: When you say it was called for, what do you mean?

Mira: *Because the immigration to the country, because the Iraqis, they are Arabic speakers, some of the Moroccans too.*

*I know and speak Arabic, my grandfather also spoke Arabic so it **was called** for to teach Arabic as it passes from one generation to the other, but... em ..emm... some kind of feeling of **disgust** has been formed towards Arabic because of the political situation, eh... **the hostility** between the Jews and the Arabs, that you don't want to take any part in it, and speak **their language**, and all kinds of things like that. Some kind of , eh... hostility which you feel in the homes, in the community, in the society, on TV, in the media, everywhere you feel this... and... eh...and I think from this position less people want to learn and little by little it is fading away. And I know that there are some schools that teach Spanish and others that teach French... and other schools have dropped it (Arabic). I have two friends that studied eh... Arabic eh...in the teacher training College, they learn... to become Arabic teachers... and... eh.... I'm telling you! How people reacted... how they responded when they heard THAT! They were in complete shock like, 'why on EARTH would you go and learn THEIR language...and why would you want to teach it?' It has become so irrelevant. Why would you want to teach other people this language?*

In the above excerpt we can note a few linguistic features at work in the construction of the 'anti-Arabic discourse' and the ways in which it is interwoven with other dominant discourses mentioned above. Similarly, Mira's DM can be recognised as she explicitly

draws on discursive resources such as “*the community*”, “*the society*”, “ **TV**”. Additionally, her use of reported speech vividly depicts her personal experience, her interaction with colleagues and people in society, “*how they responded when they heard THAT!*”. Furthermore, her use of voice to describe the reaction of her colleagues (“*They were in complete shock like, ‘why on EARTH would you go and learn THEIR language...?’*”), illustrates people’s negative position towards the Arabic language and/or teaching it.

Figurative language and particular content words such as “*disgust*”, “*hostility*”, and “*enemy*” create a strong impact of the hostile feelings and attitude existing towards Arabic. Plural pronouns such as “*their*” and “*our*”, used prevalently throughout her speech, pattern together to emphasise the Arab/Jewish binary existing in her speech and signal a widespread feeling evident in Israeli society. The nature of the Arabic problem and the anti-Arabic Discourse is further explicated in David’s words:

David: *But we are disconnected. We are not REALLY in the Middle-East. Like I said the Arabic is more important in my opinion. Here we are surrounded by neighbours and people, and we are getting addicted to their mentality. If you look at the Arab Palestinians, they all speak Hebrew perfectly. They **know us** inside-out and that’s why they are able to hurt us exactly where it hurts. So this means that language is the critical means of communication. If we alienate ourselves to their language in other words, we say in advance, before we even begin any negotiation: ‘We don’t want to speak with you. If you wish to speak with us- you learn our language. Your language doesn’t count. It is inferior’. They are a minority in our country, but a majority in our region. This is a very significant issue. For some reason, **Arabic seems inferior to us... unimportant**, despite the fact that it is such a rich language. I studied extensive Arabic in high school and I know it is a beautiful, rich and wonderful language. Despite that, **I myself, I don’t want to be self-righteous**, I **don’t use Arabic**. All my environment is English. I don’t use the Arabic.*

David’s words clearly represent the complexity of the anti-Arabic discourse mobilised by people in Israeli society. His words are particularly vivid as he uses the voice of a patronising Hebrew-speaking Israeli who alienates himself from the Arab-speaking

minority. He uses affective, evaluative adjectives such as “*inferior*”, “*unimportant*” to describe the undesired position of the Arabic language and the “*inferior*” position of the Arab people who speak the language or that are associated with it.

He uses plural pronouns such as “*we*” (“*We* are not *REALLY* in the Middle-East”) coupled with I-statements such as “*I said*” and thus achieves generalisations. This also signals an authoritative position whereby David speaks for himself and as an unofficial representative of society at large. Thus David builds the problematic identity of the Jewish Israeli against the Arab Israeli and/or Palestinian. We/they binaries are evident as he uses many plural pronouns to represent the Arab people – “*they*”, versus the Jewish people – “*us*” or “*our*”, “*They* are a minority in *our* country”.

David builds connections between the low socio-cultural, socio-political position of Arabic and the growing high position of English in Israeli society. He connects between language, communication and politics in Israel. He refers to his own personal life, a living example of an Israeli, who on the one hand appreciates the Arabic language yet, on the other hand, admits to the lack of use for it and its inferior position. Sharing his personal beliefs on these ideological issues uncovers many ideological dilemmas existing in Israeli society and the people.

Pupils' words:

Whist nothing is said about other languages, such as Russian (used by immigrants) or Spanish (popular amongst youngsters who watch Spanish soap operas on T.V), pupils do not exclude themselves from the ‘anti-Arabic discourse’. They also clearly express their unfavourable attitudes as the following examples depict.

Rivi: Anyone here wants to learn Arabic?

Boys: (together) *No Thanks. (giggle)*

Ran: *No thanks.*

Roi: *No, with the Arabs... I don't have... I'm not their friend. I don't have to know their language.*

Rivi: Do you want to learn Arabic? (asking Gal)

Gal: *I don't. But say when I grow up and would want to be a spy with the Arabs, let's say, then maybe. Emm... so I would have to know Arabic for that.*

Ina: (mother speaking about children):

I think that, as far as the kids are concerned, they have the whole thing about the Arabs being their enemies and not liking it.

7.3.6.2. Summary

The attitude of disrespect and contempt towards the Arabic language highlights the desire participants have for the English language. Participants prefer to be associated with western world values and be part of western society rather than admit to the fact that, as people living in the Middle-East, they are, in fact, an inseparable part thereof, including its culture and languages.

This emphasises the ways in which socio-linguistic practices are inextricably tied to the political situation in Israel. Indeed, participants' words clearly show that anti-Arab discourse is closely tied to political developments in the region. Thus, the present situation in which Israel is seen as being in a state of war with most of the Arab nations, has a substantial influence on the status of Arabic in Israel and on the construction of the dominant 'anti-Arabic discourse'.

7.3.7. The theme of EYL and socio-economic factors

Certain local conditions in Israel have resulted in EYL becoming a socio-economic factor identified both in the private and the public domains. In the public domain one of the declared objectives behind the EYL in grades 1 and 2 nationwide recommendation was to introduce the beginning of English learning to all sectors of Israeli society at the same starting point, namely, grade 1. However, since the introduction of school based management in the 1990s, in practice, schools differ in the ways they choose to implement the recommendation.

Thus, one will find schools that elect not to begin any learning of English in grade 1 at all, others that provide the bare minimum, whilst some schools invest considerable financial and other resources in the promotion of EYL. Therefore, whilst the recommendation was intended to enable a similar starting point for all pupils, in effect a gap forming inequality between different schools in different socio-economic sectors in society is evident already in grade 1.

In the private domain it is apparent that, regardless of official educational recommendations, as discussed above, there are parents who take the initiative to ensure that their children are exposed to EYL in grade 1 (or even earlier), by sending them to private lessons, personally funded by them. Therefore, the economic factor regarding the differences between families that can afford private English lessons and those that cannot is identified as having a socio-economic effect, thus contributing to the creation of inequality.

Participants draw on discursive resources such as the media, newspapers and everyday communication with family and friends and point towards EYL as being a socio-economic factor. Participants use existing or evolving DM to support their beliefs that EYL is indeed associated with financial capabilities.

Circulating discourses whereby the topic of EYL is attached to economic value intersect some of the discourses discussed in previous sections. Indeed, participants' language reveals explicit words and phrases referring openly to EYL in association with money and financial resources thereby posing danger of creating inequalities in society.

Thus, whilst previously mentioned discourses only imply possible associations between EYL and socio-economic issues, words and phrases identified below illuminate this association explicitly.

7.3.7.1. The discourse of the privileged versus the underprivileged

Participants believe that the possession of financial resources enables people to provide EYL to their children, while lack thereof results in the inability to provide their children accordingly. Furthermore, participants believe that this is particularly true in certain

areas, commonly known to be populated with people of low socio-economic status, mostly in the southern part of the country as this excerpt illustrates.

Irit (teacher):

I don't believe it works in the same way in other areas in the country, because it is a function of money. In some schools and kindergartens in certain part of the country, there are private English courses that the parents pay for. In Ofakim parents will not pay for English in kindergarten or in grade 1 because it is a function of money and they don't have the money.

A number of linguistic features pattern together to illustrate Irit's authoritative position on this matter. Negative 'I/they/we-statements such as "*I don't believe*"; "*parents will not pay*" and positive 'be' sentences such as "*these are private courses*"; "*It is a function of money*" are used by Irit as she describes the socio-economic gaps in society *vis-à-vis* EYL. Similarly, Irit explicitly uses and repeats the word "*money*" in direct association with English lessons, thereby drawing connections between the possession of money and the ability to pay for EYL classes.

Irit repeats the term "it's a function of money" several times. She specifically points out the name of the city, Ofakim (an underprivileged city situated in the south of the country) which conveys her opinion is based on facts. We get the feeling that she has researched the issue and is using Ofakim as a living example of the phenomenon she has identified. Irit does not say 'I think that in Ofakim parents will not pay', which signals possibility: rather, she says: "*In Ofakim parents will not pay for English*", which signals a fact.

Her words also imply that, given appropriate financial capabilities, parents in Ofakim would be willing to pay for EYL lessons. Thus, the lack of EYL can only be as a result of insufficient financial resources. The words "*because it is a function of money and they don't have the money*" create the feeling that, indeed, people in Ofakim deem EYL important, just as other people living in other areas in the country, however, because they "*don't have the money*" they can't afford English lessons and are underprivileged in this respect.

Similarly, in the following excerpt, Mr. and Mrs. Koren (father and mother) make a connection between EYL and people's financial status. They refer to socio-economic gaps intentionally created by the education system. Mr. and Mrs. Koren are critical of the education system which they believe encourages inequality, a phenomenon of which they disapprove.

Mr. Koren (father):

*The thing is, maybe, there are families who **can't afford it**. Not in our case, but I know there are such families. Then a gap is created, and THAT, in my opinion, is very unjust. On the one hand they say there is a free educational system for everyone, but already we get, there are cases in which **some get and some don't**. That's why I think it can't happen. Parents don't have to pay for English lessons. They should object to it, and that's it.*

Mrs. Koren (mother):

*It may give a feeling that, for those who **can't afford it**, that they will **be second class, second rate**. And in principle, especially concerning the children, it is a very undesirable situation, and I wouldn't like it to happen.*

Mr. Koren:

*The answer is negative. I don't think parents should pay for English lessons in grade 1 because of the thought that **some** will be able **to pay** and some won't. Not because it is not important, but because of this situation. It will create a situation of inequality.*

Mr. and Mrs. Koren's words highlight two major issues. First, is the existing gap between people who can afford to pay for EYL lessons in grade 1 and those who cannot. This creates a situation whereby some children get EYL and others do not, "**some get and some don't**"

Second, they make a clear association between people "who can't afford" EYL and those suffering from a low status in comparison to other people who can pay for EYL. The apparent association marks "those who can't afford it" as "second rate" and thus underprivileged.

In addition to the above issues, Mr. and Mrs. Koren overtly criticise the education system. They do not believe parents should be asked to pay for EYL in grades 1 and 2 (a common situation existing in many primary schools, due to the financial autonomy granted to schools), which, by definition creates unnecessary gaps. Indeed, they express disappointment at the system (“*some get and some don’t*”).

Linguistic markers such as plural pronouns coupled with vague references (“*there are families*”, “*some*”, “*everyone*”) illustrate that, on a personal level, Mr. Koren distances himself from ‘those’ people who cannot afford EYL. He specifically says, “*Not in our case...*”, thus clarifying his personal status as belonging to the ‘privileged’ group. However, he speaks passionately against socio-economic gaps created as a result of EYL in schools and believes it to be unfair, “*THAT, in my opinion, is very unjust*”. His words and strong conviction against the gaps indicate his emotional and social involvement in social and educational issues.

We can also presume that Mr. Koren, being a new immigrant from the former USSR, is drawing on familiar experience, past or personal history to construe the DM relevant to him. One possible DM is that parents should not have to pay for their children’s education. If conditions request them to do that, they should object. Another possible DM is that the situation of inequality in education is an undesirable one.

Mrs. Koren’s words, “*they will be second-rate, second class*”, add significance to the ‘weak’ subject position taken up, or imposed upon, the ‘underprivileged’ people who cannot pay for EYL. This element in her language intersects with the ‘weak versus strong’ discourse (see section 4.4.1, p 186) construed by participants as they typically associate EYL with being ‘strong’ and the lack of EYL with being ‘weak’. Mrs. Koren’s words explicitly associate the underprivileged with being weak. Thus, EYL becomes a divider between the weak and the strong, the ‘haves’ and ‘have nots’ in society.

In the following excerpt, the relationship between geographical position and financial capabilities is re-emphasised.

Olivia: *When I lived in Raanana, at that time, I also had the money, so I had no problem sending her (daughter) to extra lessons from which I thought she would benefit.*

Olivia draws on her own personal past, when she lived in Raanana (a city situated north of Tel- Aviv, associated with a large population of speakers of English) and “*had the money*”. Her words indicate that in the past she had the money; however, living where she does now, she does not have the money for EYL.

In the following excerpt, Judy, the inspector, wishes to highlight parents’ content with the EYL in grades 1 and 2 innovation recently introduced in many schools country-wide. However, additional significant issues can be recognised in her words.

Judy: *People down south, for example, parents who would never have money to send their kids to private lessons, they’re thrilled that their kids are learning English, right?*

Judy points out “*people down south*” as such that “*would never have the money*” for private EYL lessons. Judy believes that there is a relationship between “*people down south*” and their low economic status and inability to afford EYL. She may be drawing on DM in which people living in the southern part of Israel are generally poorer than those who live in other places in the country. Another possible DM is that people who live in the south, who are poor and cannot afford to pay for EYL, are underprivileged in comparison with people who live elsewhere, are able to afford EYL and are therefore ‘privileged’. This statement emphasises further the connection between EYL and financial factors.

The above excerpts point to three factors pertaining to the larger social context which may have contributed to the emergence of the discourse of the ‘privileged versus the unprivileged’. One factor is the existence of a common axiom that people in the south are poorer than people in the north, centre, or in other areas. A second, related, factor is that EYL is associated with private means of financial investment. The third related factor pertains to the notion that the existing situation whereby some people in the country pay for EYL and some cannot pay is unjust, causing a situation of inequality.

7.3.7.2. Awareness versus ignorance

Participants distinguish between different levels of awareness in Israeli society regarding the importance of EYL and connect between such levels and the socio-economic factor.

The socio-economic factor is not only represented by people's financial resources but also by the geographic areas they live in (south versus north or centre).

Participants refer to the fact that people in the centre of the country who are placed, on average, higher on the economic ladder, are better equipped and more aware of the importance of providing EYL for their children and therefore draw on their financial resources to promote it. At the same time they refer to other parts of Israeli society, located on the periphery, where people are found, on average, on a lower step of the financial ladder and therefore are ignorant of the importance of EYL for their children. The following excerpt illustrates this point.

Meital (teacher):

*Emm... not everyone pushes for English. I think ...only in certain areas. Like, it depends on the **socio-economic** level of the people and the **area**. In areas where the socio-economic level is higher, I think there is **more awareness** and there is more pressure. Because in other areas I'm not sure they are interested. It seems that way.*

*There are gaps regarding the needs for English and also gaps in the level of the command of the language. It's my feeling that in the **lower socio-economic** neighbourhoods there is **less awareness** for English ... **less use** of computers, less use of the language, less travelling, less of everything so the need for the language is less.*

*In higher socio-economic areas where the parents know the language eh... and eh...they have the **awareness** and know the **importance** of the language, they will **push** their children more to get ...em...more English.*

Meital's words accomplish several things. First, she makes sweeping generalisations and compares between the ways people enact their situated identity (*vis-à-vis* EYL) in low socio-economic areas versus the ways people enact their situated identity in higher socio-economic areas. In doing this, she repeatedly uses nominalisations, (**'awareness'**), in combination with particular words and phrases such as "more awareness" versus "less awareness" to formulate her views, "it's my feeling". These construe a particular Discourse for which she wishes to be recognised. Meital, a teacher (in the centre as

opposed to on the periphery) wishes to be recognised as belonging to the social group identified with having “*more awareness*” of the importance of EYL.

Second, although not stated explicitly, Meital implies that people in the “*lower socio-economic neighbourhoods*” are ignorant. This connection is accomplished by her repeated use of the word “*less*”, for example; “*less use of computers, less use of the language, less travelling, less of everything*”. Meital is thus suggesting that only parents who are aware of the importance of English (as ‘cultural capital’, as the international language’ etc) are able to act on this awareness and “*push*” their children to obtain EYL. Meital is not associating parents’ actions directly with their financial ability, but rather with their socio-cultural sensitivity, awareness and status.

In the following excerpt we can note the way Galit shifts from one topic to another, thus knitting together pieces of information and using them to build connections between a variety of issues. These shifts serve as evidence to the hybrid nature of the EYL Discourse.

Galit (mother):

*You know what, now that I think about it... My sister lives in a relatively **well to do luxurious area**, and there, in first grade they started with English lessons. It's this special program where **you pay extra**. So there you go! the parents were willing to invest. But not everywhere the **parents have the means**, or the desire to **invest in extras**. So I do think it has some connection to prestige. Definitely. And it is also connected to status. In a more **well-to-do area**, naturally these areas have **more educated people**, and they use **English more naturally**, so they see the importance of it.*

*First of all I am assuming that these people who don't know English at all, didn't finish 12 years of school, I am guessing even much less, and definitely haven't got a high school diploma. It's usually, in my opinion, typical of **poor neighbourhoods**, families from **low socio-economic status**.*

*It is also connected with **poverty in education**, the parents are pre-occupied with other things, and the kids grow up by themselves, there is no attention paid to*

their education, no attention paid to the personal education either, so English is part of it.

Galit's words accomplish a few things: first, she defines a direct connection between one's educational history and the awareness of the need and the importance of EYL. She argues that less-educated people find EYL less important, and vice versa, *"More educated people, use English more naturally, so they see the importance of it"*.

She then goes on to link the chances for a better education amongst neighbourhoods of people who are better off financially, *"Well-to-do luxurious area...the parents were willing to invest"*. Moreover, she makes a further connection to the fact that people who are better-off, who have the resources for EYL and would therefore have a better education, are the people who would in life require the need to speak English, *"More educated people, use English more naturally"*.

Conversely, people with lesser financial means, with poorer education (*"definitely haven't got a high school diploma"*) and typical of poor neighbourhoods, cannot, by definition invest in EYL, because they do not have the time and awareness of the importance of EYL.

In the following excerpt, Efrat holds the view that the Ministry of Education's policy on EYL in grades 1 and 2 is intentionally skewed in favour of higher socio-economic areas. Thus, a more complete picture of EYL as a socio-economic factor can be recognised in both the private and the public domains.

Efrat (mother):

In my opinion, the Ministry of Education initiated EYL in grades 1 and 2, Of course. Maybe it comes from considering different standards of children in various sectors in society. That is to say, in G. T (name of a city) I know the standard is high. If we go south I presume that they don't start with English in the first and second grades. That's what I think. Maybe they start from 4th grade, or 3rd.

7.3.7.3. Summary

Participants' discourse indicates that although EYL is an educational initiative, to be practiced and implemented in schools, it has become a socio-economic factor extending beyond the schools or classroom practices. Data reflect existing (or emerging) socio-economical and socio-cultural dividers in Israeli society. Participants wish to take up the identity of privileged citizens versus unprivileged ones. The EYL innovation, introduced and practiced specifically in 'this school' had provided them with a high social status, strong identity and confidence which they embrace and for which they wish to be recognised.

In the following section I present the findings and analysis of samples from published texts, collected from January December 2003 to date. These include official letters, newspaper articles and summaries of meetings, all of which pertain specifically to issues concerning EYL.

7.4. Findings and analysis of published texts

The data that follow compose a minor part of the data set. The excerpts and the analysis thereof provide complementary evidence for themes emerging from the oral discourse collected via interviews which was presented and analysed above. I will re-visit the themes while discussing additional or supportive issues that have emerged in the texts.

7.4.1. The theme of 'Parenting'

The texts show that various issues are interwoven together in the construction of the 'good/Jewish parents' discourse. Rich, figurative language, the use of people's voices, quotes, and detailed descriptions of actions create a realistic picture of parents' opinion. One of the dominant issues is the strong conviction parents uphold that the knowledge of English can promote the child and grant him/her advantages in life. Indeed, as good parents they put their belief into practice and promote EYL. This strong conviction attributed to parents is conveyed in the following excerpt taken from an article in Israel's largest newspaper "Yediot Achronot".

*Many parents are **convinced** that the knowledge of English **can promote the** child and **grant him advantages in the future**. Therefore, they send their young children to learn English. **However, according to experts,** better to begin learning a second language only after the first language has been established, namely after*

the age of 8. All attempts to begin too early, they warn, may cause emotional damage to the child (Sela, 2006).

The choice of the verb “*convinced*” highlights parents’ determination and emphasises their favourable position on this controversial topic. Parents’ firm confidence creates more impact in the light of experts’ opinions to the contrary “*However, according to experts...may cause emotional damage to the child*”).

The following different excerpts illustrate a variety of actions parents perform to promote EYL. Their actions, coupled with their strong verbal conviction constructs a reality whereby schools, local educational authorities and other institutions are recruited to support the phenomenon and introduce EYL in school at an earlier grade level.

Dr. Smadar Donitza Shmidt, head of the English department in the Kibbutzim College of Education says she regularly receives calls from parents in search for a private English teacher for their 2 or 3 year old child (Sela, 2006).

The Ministry of Education is currently reviewing the possibility to lower the age for the beginning of English studies in grades 1 and 2 especially in light of pressure applied by parents (Rotem, 2003).

The avocado is green; sing pupils in grade 1

The Ministry of Education points to growing numbers of schools which have introduced EYL already in grades 1 & 2. A few years ago only schools with strong pushy parents, who exerted pressure on the principals had EYL in grades 1. Now approx. 1/3 of the schools in the Jewish sector teach EYL in grades 1. (Chrumnchenko, 2006)

Indeed, parents are referred to as being “strong and “pushy”. The word “pressure”, used as a noun, a verb and an adjective, is commonly associated with parents’ actions in connection with the promotion of EYL. Parents not only believe that EYL can promote their children but are prepared to invest time, financial resources and “exert pressure” for carrying out their conviction. Thus, the ‘good, Jewish parents’ discourse includes the element of pressure parents try to conceal as they emphasise the many benefits of EYL.

One such benefit is exemplified in the phrase “*the kids love English*”, typically used by parents and some teachers (proponents of EYL). Similarly parents argue that EYL is “*important for the child*”. In the following excerpt children’s voices, calling out joyful remarks, highlight a significant additional component in the ‘good Jewish parents’ Discourse, namely, EYL being a source of fun the children wish for.

“But we don’t have English in the timetable”, says one worried blond-haired girl in the first row. After a satisfactory explanation, she is appeased, and a large smile lights up her face. “Yes!” she says, and the other children join in: “Yes, yes, yes!!” No doubt about it, the kids love English (Chrumnchenko, 2006).

7.4.2. The theme of ‘Language Learning’

TYTB axiom and the controversies associated with it are clearly evident in published texts. Whilst opponents acknowledge the popularity of EYL, they provide solid arguments against it. Indeed, the opposition and proposition stances are explicitly presented as the following excerpts prove.

*Olshtain objects: Elite Olshtain, professor of teaching language education at the Hebrew University, is one of the well-known **objectors** to learning English in 1st grade. Olshtain explains that, contrary to the myth, children do not acquire the language better when they are young, and the early age provides no advantage in acquiring a foreign language. Olshtain, who was involved in the past in outlining the Ministry’s policy, is convinced that learning English at the stage when the child is just acquiring reading skills, might be **detrimental** to his learning of Hebrew. At the same time, she is aware of the fact that this is a popular movement which nobody can stop.*

Bejerano Supports: Dr. Yael Bejerano, lecturer on teaching English at the Open University, who developed the ‘English Adventure’ programme for teaching English to toddlers, has been energetically active in recent years in advocating the study of English at an early age in the educational system, despite pockets of objection to the idea. “Parents want English”, says Bejerano (Rotem, 2003).

Dr. Smadar Donitza Shmidt, the head of the English department at the Kibbutzim teachers' College is against the idea: "The fact that English is absorbed easily by young children is true only when it is learned as a regular part of the child's everyday life, but false when it is learned as a foreign language, once or twice a week", she says.

Dr. Anita Rom a lecturer on the subject of language acquisition in Kibbutzim College: "The myth whereby children easily acquire languages is correct but only with regard to their mother tongue and not when a second language is concerned" (Sela, 2006).

The above excerpts include elements of SLA discourse and arguments for and against EYL, where issues of children's attainment, aptitude, psychological, mental and emotional issues come into the picture. Words such as "absorbed", "mother tongue", "establish", "acquire" etc make visible the discursive resources people draw on when they articulate their professional or laymen opinions on the topic. This is demonstrated in the above mentioned texts regarding Bejerano and Olshtain from Ha'aretz newspaper and in the text below:

*For years researchers have been saying that first the **mother tongue** must be established and only then should another language be taught (Rotem, 2003).*

Despite academic SLA discourse frequently found in public texts, the folk psychology, popular, folk-linguistic discourse has 'overtaken' all others. Commonsense discourse expressed by different people in society, sounds logical and convincing. Coupled with parents' evident actions in the promotion of EYL it has become most prevalent and dominant. Such discourse represents society's values as is pointed out by Prof. Elana Shohamy in the following excerpt.

The People Decide: Prof. Elana Shohamy, expert on language policy at the Tel Aviv University, is unsure whether teaching English to toddlers is effective, but she argues that education at an early age always reflected social values.

The next excerpt, taken from a memo summing up a meeting on EYL dated 28.11.2004 (at which 15 professionals and position holders were present) in the Local Education

Authority (LEA) in Tel Aviv, serves as a good example for the ways dominant discourses such as TYTB has a regulating effect on social practices and other official policy decisions. The memo, quoting the directors' words, whereby he expresses his determination to promote EYL in the city, serves as evidence for the importance attributed to the issue.

Rami Hochman, director of the LEA, emphasised the importance of teaching English in grades 1 and 2 and concluded that, in view of the strong belief that young children learn faster, EYL should be enhanced. Therefore the EYL program in the city should be planned for the year 2005. 'We wish to create a 'break-through' in the educational system in the city', he said (Summary of Tel Aviv LEA meeting re: English for young learners, 28.11.2004).

It is evident that TYTB claim, as re-formulated in this document ("young children learn faster"), sounds logical, convincing thus providing readers a strong reason to believe it to be true. In the next excerpt we note how TYTB discourse is intersected (hybridised) with particular words and phrases making connections between EYL, ambitious parents and the latter providing better possibilities for their children's future.

*The assumption that a foreign language is easily absorbed by young children coupled with parents' desire to equip their children with as many skills as possible thus providing them an advantage over others, result in younger children being sent to learn English in special enrichment courses. This can be the result of our **competitive** world in which one cannot progress without English (Sela, 2006).*

Connections are made between EYL as a socio-cultural phenomenon and it being part of the "competitive", global world. This highlights the notion of EYL being framed as a popular trend, a fashion, a status symbol and primarily a desired commodity.

7.4.3. The theme of 'consumerism'

The notion of EYL is connected to it being a status symbol and prestige, cultural capital and a commodity. Parents and pupils alike act as consumers of EYL. The following excerpts illustrate different aspects related to this point.

Status Symbol: The learning of English at an early age seems to have become a prestigious educational symbol among the heads of local authorities. If at one time the motto was 'a computer for every child', nowadays English is the new hope.

It was decided to teach English in 6th grade in Israel, but the schools gradually began to lower the starting age, in many cases for considerations of prestige (Rotem, 2003).

The above excerpts confirm that EYL is not simply a language to be taught but has become a product to be consumed. Similarities are textured between introducing computers to classes and introducing EYL, the new innovation. Similarly, the EYL programme, framed as the new, updated, fashionable commodity, is associated with social and educational prestige.

Similar linguistics terms are found in both published texts and oral discourses. For example the term “to *bring it in to* the kindergarten” used by Somech to explain the recommended age for the beginning of teaching and learning English, is used in this excerpt as well, to describe the following situation:

According to Lydia Fishman, teaching English in grade 1 in Beer-Sheva, in the last parents' school meeting she sat as proud as a peacock and enjoyed the compliments given to her by the parents for the songs the children 'bring' home (Chrumnchenko, 2006).

Here, too, the issue of EYL is referred to more as a product than as an educational programme or a sociocultural practice. The notion of children ‘bringing home’ English songs can be associated with any other product, purchased or consumed.

Published texts presented above include statements made by professional people from the field of EYL such as teachers and academics. This adds significance to the subject matter and provides a sense of authority and authenticity to the texts.

7.4.4. The theme of identity

Whilst many markers of identity (such as self-esteem, inferiority versus superiority, weak versus strong) have surfaced in the oral discourse collected via interviews, the published texts comprise of just a few such markers. One possible interpretation of this difference is that interviews generally lend themselves to a more communicative interaction whereby participants can express their personal beliefs and share their histories. Published texts on EYL tend to deal more with policies and trends rather than personal issues.

However, in the following excerpt we can note the connection made between the EYL programme, pupils' high self-esteem, high expectations and parents' sense of pride.

*“We have chosen to invest in a program that will lead pupils to a **high self-esteem**, that **parents will be proud of**”, says Yardena Cohen, in charge of primary schools in ‘Leyadda school’ in Jerusalem. She is certain that this investment will be reflected in the future national examinations (Rotem, 2003).*

Similarly, the following excerpt provides further support for the connection made between EYL and gaining a superior subject position, success and academic achievements. (By contrast, lack of EYL is associated with an inferior subject position).

Parents and family members associate learning English at a young age with being successful and with achieving academic or international positions (MOFET Institute, 2004).

In the excerpt below the explicit notion of the knowledge of English is re-formulated using the word “*control*” (“*the control of English*”). This highlights the connections textured between EYL and assuming position of power and control.

*Many parents in Israel, who associate the **control** of the English language with success, decide to exploit the ‘golden period’, namely the young age, in order to teach their toddlers the English language (Bahur-Nir, 2006).*

Here too, the notion of knowing a language is equated with having control over it. Readers can imply that learning English at a young age is the means by which one can achieve a power and control.

7.4.5. The theme of ‘globalisation’

Many of the printed texts refer to the Internet, computers and television as the main discursive resources young children are exposed to in their daily lives. One gets an impression that the mere existence of these resources in children’s environment provides, in itself, the basic knowledge of English. Furthermore, it seems that the natural, logical assumption to this is that EYL should be promoted in schools.

Dr. Anita Romm points out that children are in any event exposed to expressions and words in the English language on a regular basis through the use of expressions from the computer world such as ‘delete’, ‘CD’, ‘Enter’, ‘Disc’, or simply by watching television (Sela, 2006).

This point is further emphasised in the following excerpt: English is perceived as an inseparable part of forces of globalisation, contributing to the promotion of EYL in schools.

The English language, which at the times of the mandate did not affect the Hebrew language, has become the leading language in the past 30 years and the reasons are clear, Says the journalist Rubic Rosental. English is the global language and Israelis are widely exposed to it via Internet, TV, films and music (Traubman, 2005).

Similarly, in the excerpt below Prof. Spolsky highlights the role of English as a global instrument for using the computer, which conducts itself in the English language. In his opinion, this acts as a main requirement for learning English.

“In the past, knowledge of the language was perceived as knowledge of its culture and literature”, says Prof. Spolsky. “The present requirement is for a

more instrumental English, suited to a person's needs, for instance - working on the computer” (Rotem, 2003).

Published texts stress the important contribution of English in everyday life. As can be noted from the oral texts analysed above (section 7.1- 7.3), there is an evident requirement for English in the course of one's life. The following excerpt, quoting the words of a father to a young child, emphasises this point. Here too, the word 'need' is reformulated vis-à-vis the notion of EYL.

‘It is important to our child’, says Maxim Briskin, age 35: ‘we feel the enormous need for the knowledge of English in the course of one's life’ (Bahur-Nir, 2006).

7.4.6. The theme of Arabic- the undesired language

Negative attitudes towards the Arabic language are associated with the Intifada (meaning 'civil- up-rise' in Arabic) and with the enemy. Newspapers report declining numbers of schools in which Arabic is taught. This fact can be identified as a consequence of political developments in the region which have contributed to the unpopularity of the Arabic language, associated with the enemy, and the growing fashion for the study of foreign languages in general and English in particular. This is illustrated in the following excerpt:

Dr. Muhamad Amara from Bar-Ilan University is well aware of the decline of Arabic language learning in primary schools since the start of the Intifada. Only 1700 pupils in approximately 50 classes (in primary schools) studied the Arabic language in 2004, albeit in view of the recent, fashionable educational approaches enhancing early foreign language learning in schools.

“Generally”, says Amara, “in Jewish schools today, Arabic is perceived as the language of the enemy”. Although in 1986, the Minister of Education, Mr. Ytzhak Navon, declared that the Arabic language is a compulsory language in Junior-high schools in Israel, both the chairman of the pedagogical secretariat and the chief inspector for Arabic, acknowledge that schools disregard this policy (Chromchenko, 2004).

Notwithstanding the anti-Arabic attitude, efforts are being made to present the Arabic language as one needed for daily communication. Indeed, as the following excerpt illustrates, efforts are being made by the Ministry of Education to introduce programmes promoting the learning of Arabic over the Internet, thus striving to make it more attractive.

New programs promoting the learning of Arabic in primary schools, funded by Abraham Fund, will commence next year in the Haifa and the central region and will emphasise 'communicative Arabic', the kind of Arabic used mainly in the media and T.V. The new program, catered for pupils in grades 4-6 will "seek to develop positive attitudes towards the Arabic language, work with the Internet, and integrate basic reading skills with spoken Arabic" says Mrs. Naomi Weiseblatt, the Chief Inspector for Arab studies (Chromchenko, 2004).

The anti-Arabic discourse seems to go deeper than mere educational policies or programmes. Weiseblatt's words in the article quoted below point to the notion in Israeli society, whereby it seems Israelis believe there is no need, at all, for the study of Arabic. Therefore, efforts to promote Arabic, have no bearing on people's attitudes and social practices towards this language.

According to her, despite these efforts, the basic attitude of the Jewish pupil and his parents against the Arabic language is far from changing. "None of the pupils think that living in Israel without knowing Arabic is a problem" says Weiseblatt (Chromchenko, 2004).

7.4.7. The theme of EYL and socio-economic factors

Published texts (newspapers in particular) highlight the notion of EYL in grades 1 and 2 as one of the issues signalling the gaps between the south and other parts of the country. It is the common belief that the south is poorer and underprivileged in comparison with the centre. As a result, the emerging picture is that the EYL in grades 1 and 2 initiative, led by the Ministry, was most popular in the south, as can be noted in the following excerpt:

Surprisingly, EYL in grade 1 is most popular in the southern region totalling 83% in the secular schools and 67% in the religious schools. The reason for this is a local initiative for the promotion of EYL by Amira Haim, the Chief Inspector in the region and deputy general manager in the Ministry of Education. The aim was to instil English in grade 1 and ease the way for the pupils in the south to achieve the 'Bagrut' (final matriculation exams) in English. "The kids will know English better and will get more confidence in their speech. It will also enhance their work with computers" says Amira Haim (Traubman, 2004).

Efforts are indeed made by the Ministry to narrow the gaps between the south and other more privileged parts in Israel. Indeed, the introduction of EYL in grade 1 is conceived as considerably contributing to achieving better results in English for people living in the south.

This argument is repeated in the extract below by the explicit reference to the gaps existing between the financially privileged and underprivileged people in society (*"reduce the gaps"*). The intention is that EYL, perceived as an expensive commodity affordable by some (the privileged) and not by others (the underprivileged), will be 'equally accessible' to all schools as a result of the introduction of EYL in grades 1 and 2.

*The argument in favour of introducing the learning English in the lower classes is based on **socio-economic factors**. Access to the language for all children will **reduce the gaps** between those whose parents provide them with private lessons and computers, and those from the weaker population, in the periphery who lack exposure to English (Traubman, 2004).*

However, Olshtain, one of the experts in the field, warns against this move which she calls, (as shown in the excerpt below), *"a populist step"*. Indeed, as one of the opponents of EYL, she advises against it, and argues that EYL will neither narrow the socio-economic gaps nor improve pupils' results.

Olshtain maintains the opinion that reducing the age for learning English is a populist step. 'The hope of improving students' achievements by learning

English in the lower classes is exaggerated', she says. "They should invest these hours in Hebrew literacy". As for matriculation, "more hours should be given for English in the higher classes" (Rotem, 2003).

A different angle to the socio-economic gap problem is reflected in the following extract quoting a senior professional:

Judy Yaron, a lecturer in the English Teaching department at the Levinsky College and Hemdat Hadarom (a religious girls college near Netivot), who was in charge of teaching English in Netivot for six years, adds that in the south of the country there is a severe shortage of English teachers. It is a vicious circle. "The local population does not generate English teaching manpower, because the majority of its adults are not at the required standard. The teachers in the schools are weak, and do not speak the language, or else expensive teachers are brought in who are not prepared to teach on a daily basis, and therefore the study is not continuous. There is no exposure to English in the home and the motivation is lower, as well. That is how the gaps are formed". Her statements correspond with the 'GEMS' figures of 2002, according to which 28% of the students in Israel got very low grades in the exam (0 - 60) (Rotem, 2003).

This text highlights the deeper roots of the problem. Gaps are formed as a result of the lack of highly qualified English teachers in the periphery who would be able to teach EYL in practice, on the one hand, and the low socio-economic level of the population, lack of motivation and exposure to English on the other. Therefore, the EYL recommendation seems to contribute to further inequalities in society rather than narrowing them.

7.5. Summary

In this chapter I followed a three-stage analysis procedure for the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the data. Seven major themes were identified in both the oral and the published texts. In the oral data I have shown the ways participants construe discourses, which are interwoven and interrelated in the process of constructing the Discourse of EYL. Additionally, the analyses have shown the ways participants draw on a variety of

discourses to enact their situated identity given the opportunity to speak about issues pertaining to EYL.

Guided by the analyses and findings I will now address the research questions which provided the motivation for this study. This will be carried out in the next chapter (chapter 8) where I discuss the findings, analyses and their implications.

Chapter 8

Discussion

8.1. Introduction

In chapter 7 I conducted a three-stage procedure of analysis, presenting the themes that emerged from the data along with a close analysis of samples taken from the data set. In this chapter I discuss the meaning and implications of the findings while providing an interpretive-conceptual framework for the analysis. I evaluate the extent to which the findings and analysis have addressed the research questions of this study. This will be achieved by presenting each of the questions and providing their answers.

Prior to relating to the questions I wish to make a preliminary comment. Research of EYL, particularly in the area of age and SLA/FLA, is extensive. However, to my knowledge, no study has investigated oral discourse on the topic. The overview of the literature provided in chapter 3, coupled with anecdotal personal evidence, highlights the absence of research that sets out to examine the topic of EYL framed as a socio-cultural phenomenon. Missing in the literature is the type of research, in which socio-cultural, ideological and discursive aspects of EYL are foregrounded and critically examined from a social and discursive perspective.

No empirical study to date has collected oral discourse (by means of interviews) from a variety of participants for the purpose of conducting a critical analysis of EYL. This decision was made in view of the need to obtain a better understanding of the implicit and explicit discourses and theories used to construe the Discourse of EYL through which the people involved enact their identity.

Thus, in this study, the main overarching question was: **what are the driving forces behind the demand for EYL in grades 1 and 2 in Israel.** In the attempt to answer this question I drew on Foucault's (1972) theory of discourse (see chapter 4). Foucault's (1972) theory of discourse places the notion of discourse as systematically organised sets of meanings, used and manipulated to construct knowledge, identity and social relations. From this viewpoint, 'orders of discourses' act as forces regulating the ways people talk, what they talk about, what is true and what is not, at any given time in society. Discourse

has a regulating effect on social practices and everyday life. Similarly, discourse defines, constructs and positions human subjects.

Accordingly, a discourse analysis paradigm was chosen as the preferred research approach to uncover and explain the EYL phenomenon. A critical approach to discourse analysis has been adopted in order to analyse naturalised, everyday talk on the topic.

Guided by the literature review, the research questions, data collection in the form of both in-depth interviews and published texts and analysis thereof, I discuss the findings and analysis which were presented in chapter 7. The discussion in this chapter begins with re-visiting each of the research questions.

8.2. Research questions

The overarching question is:

What are the driving forces behind the demand for EYL in grades 1 and 2 in Israel?

Question 1

What are the circulating D/discourses mobilised by parents, teachers, pupils and position holders on the topic of EYL? What do the actors involved say or do in constructing the D/discourses?

Question 2

How are the identified D/discourses on the topic of EYL implicated in everyday life?

I begin by discussing the overarching question:

What are the driving forces behind the demand for EYL in grades 1 and 2 in Israel?

The driving forces behind the demand for EYL in grades 1 and 2 in Israel comprise the beliefs, ideologies actions, interactions feelings and 'ways of being' of parents, teachers and pupils, concerning the justification of promoting EYL in grades 1 and 2 in Israel.

Such forces construct a particular Discourse on the subject of EYL which I name the 'Discourse of EYL'.

Data and analysis indicate that the Discourse of EYL is a hybrid Discourse, consisting of a range of complex Discourses, to which the actors involved wish to belong and for which they wish to be recognised. Additionally, it is related to different discourses (words and phrases) the actors involved draw on in the process of construing the Discourse. Furthermore, the understanding of the hybrid Discourse of EYL cannot be divorced from the need firstly to understand the different and unique elements of the Israeli society (in which such Discourses occur), alongside recognising developing and changing socio-cultural trends in the local context, during the 56 years of Israel's existence.

In section 3.1 (and in answer to question 1 hereunder) I will discuss the Discourses comprising the Discourse of EYL, as they are set within the larger context of socio-linguistic, socio-cultural and political trends in Israeli society. I will then elaborate on the ways in which the actors involved enact their identity as particular people, who they wish to be recognised as, in the context of the topic of EYL.

In section 4.1 (and in answer to question 2 hereunder) I will discuss the ways, in which the constitutive Discourses are implicated in everyday life. I will begin the discussion by tracing some recent developments and trends in Israeli society and show how they relate to the Discourse of EYL in Israel.

8.2.1. Developing and changing socio-cultural trends in Israel

Israel has always been a small country in physical terms. However, in demographic and socio-cultural terms it is an immigrant society marked by social and cultural heterogeneity. Since Israel's independence in 1948, over five decades ago, its population has grown from 600,000 to over 6,000,000 inhabitants, including Arab and ethnic minorities and over a million new Jewish immigrants, mainly from former USSR. Regular dynamic flow of immigration from different countries is still taking place. This has turned Israel into a country, in which Israelis, born and raised in Israel, live together with new (and older) immigrants (Spolsky & Shohamy, 1999; Stavans & Narkiss, 2002).

As a result, a unique situation has taken place in Israeli society, whereby a large number of non-L 1 Hebrew speakers (over a million) learn and speak Hebrew along with their respective original ethnic languages, placing the subject of 'Language' (as a whole) in a central position and turning Israel into a "lingual-cultural laboratory" (Stavans & Narkiss, 2002:1). Furthermore, complex, changing and developing factors, trends and social practices have a significant effect on linguistic practices in Israel and on the ways in which people justify the promotion of EYL in grades 1 and 2.

Furthermore, the Jewish majority in Israel has an inseparable contact with the Jews living in the Diaspora. The most significant and influential part of Jewish Diaspora in recent decades lives in the United States and maintains a close link with the State of Israel in political, ideological, financial, social and cultural aspects of everyday life. Additionally, the United States is Israel's most important (and perhaps the only) ally on the political and international scene. Both these factors have contributed to the prominent role English plays and to the development of a process of Americanisation in the Israeli society. This represents the background for and explains the development of the 'Discourse of Americanisation' being one of the reasons for the promotion of EYL in grades 1 and 2 in Israel.

Additionally, over the last two decades many changes in global society can be attributed to developments of modern technology, the computer revolution, the growth of the high-tech industry and the birth of the Internet, all leading to the concept of the world being a 'global village'. Israel has not escaped this revolution. Unprecedented foreign investments in Israel have taken place, international corporations and global players have established premises locally and have created English-speaking employment opportunities for Israelis in the local market. At the same time, Israeli companies have ventured overseas creating re-allocation of English-speaking employment opportunities for Israelis abroad. This has all resulted in the commodification of English, having a substantial effect on the demand and promotion of EYL.

Moreover, modern life has enabled easier travel around the world, resulting in increased demand for foreign travel by Israelis. Easier access to travelling to and from Israel has highlighted the need to be able to converse in English both for business and pleasure. At the same time, the increased demand for English has stressed the decline and lack of

interest in the study of Arabic amongst Israelis. Although Arabic is one of the two official languages in Israel, it is associated with 'the enemy' and, therefore, disliked and unpopular. Jews in Israel express their sense of 'Anti Regionalism' (as opposed to their 'Pro-Western' sentiment) by being anti-Arabic, thus making the learning of Arabic not even a second choice, but actually a negative one.

In terms of linguistic developments, the legacy of the successful revival of Hebrew, the national, official language, has resulted in substantial changes in the society. In as much as Hebrew is learned and used by immigrants and local born Israelis alike, it seems that Jewish people's attitude towards the Hebrew language is ambivalent. On the one hand, the Hebrew language has continuously expanded over the years and has succeeded in unifying citizens, transforming groups of immigrants into Israelis living in Israel and speaking Hebrew (see chapter 2). On the other hand, the Hebrew language seems to be limited and insufficient in view of forces of globalisation, internationalisation, modern technology and Americanisation (Gee *et al.*, 1996).

People in Israel do not necessarily feel attached or connected to the Hebrew language. They rather emphasise the need for English (and EYL) as the 'means', 'the key' or the 'tool' to the outside world. Thus, multilingualism and pluralism (Olshtain & Kotik, 2000), with a major emphasis on the English language on the one hand and negative attitude towards the Arabic language on the other, are the evident language practices of people in modern Israel over the last decade.

In the next section I return to the two specific research questions and discuss how they have been answered by this study. This will illuminate additional acting forces behind the demand for EYL.

8.3. Answer to question 1

What are the circulating D/discourses mobilised by parents, teachers, pupils and position holders on the topic of EYL? What do the actors involved say or do in constructing the D/discourses?

8.3.1. The hybrid nature of the Discourse of EYL

Participants combine various discourses which construe a range of Discourses ('ways of being') on the topic of EYL. Contradictions and tensions in participants' language illustrate the complexity of the EYL Discourse and its hybrid nature. On the one hand, participants' language and discursive practices appear simple, commonsensical and natural; on the other hand, on close examination, complex, multifaceted discourses can be identified. Participants articulate and selectively draw on particular discourses while excluding others, thus highlighting the multiple ways in which discourses are interconnected with each other and exist side by side.

Participants make connections between topics, pull together words and phrases, repeat and emphasise ideas and articulate their beliefs using particular grammar, lexicalisation, descriptive language, metaphors and other linguistic markers (little 'd' discourse). Additionally, they draw on Discourse models (conscious or subconscious theories) they hold in the construction of the range of Discourses. These are interconnected with one or several of the seven building tasks, the components of every discourse situation (see chapter 4).

Data analysis indicates correlations between participant's discourse (in terms of language) and the ways they display and enact their identities (Discourses). However, due to the way data were collected (see constraints and limitations of interviews: chapter 9, section 9.6.1 p. 257), findings are limited to participant's oral accounts of their actions and 'ways of being' (i.e. what they say they do). Whilst extensive (or detailed) information regarding participants' non-linguistic practices is not available (due to the abovementioned reasons), I will point out and discuss data which contributes to the description of Discourses insofar as these will provide evidence for various elements that constitute Gee's (1996, 2005) notion of Discourses (believing, feelings, thinking, acting, valuing and ways of being).

8.3.1.1. The Discourse of EYL as 'ways of being'

Gee describes a Discourse as: "a sort of identity kit which comes complete with appropriate costume and instructions on how to act, talk and often write so as to take on a particular social role that others will recognise" (1996: 127). Indeed, participants in this

study weave together hybrid discourses in the form of ideologies, values, practices, behaviours, justifications and actions to signal their “ways of being” (Gee 1996: 127) so as to be recognised by other people as belonging to particular Discourses.

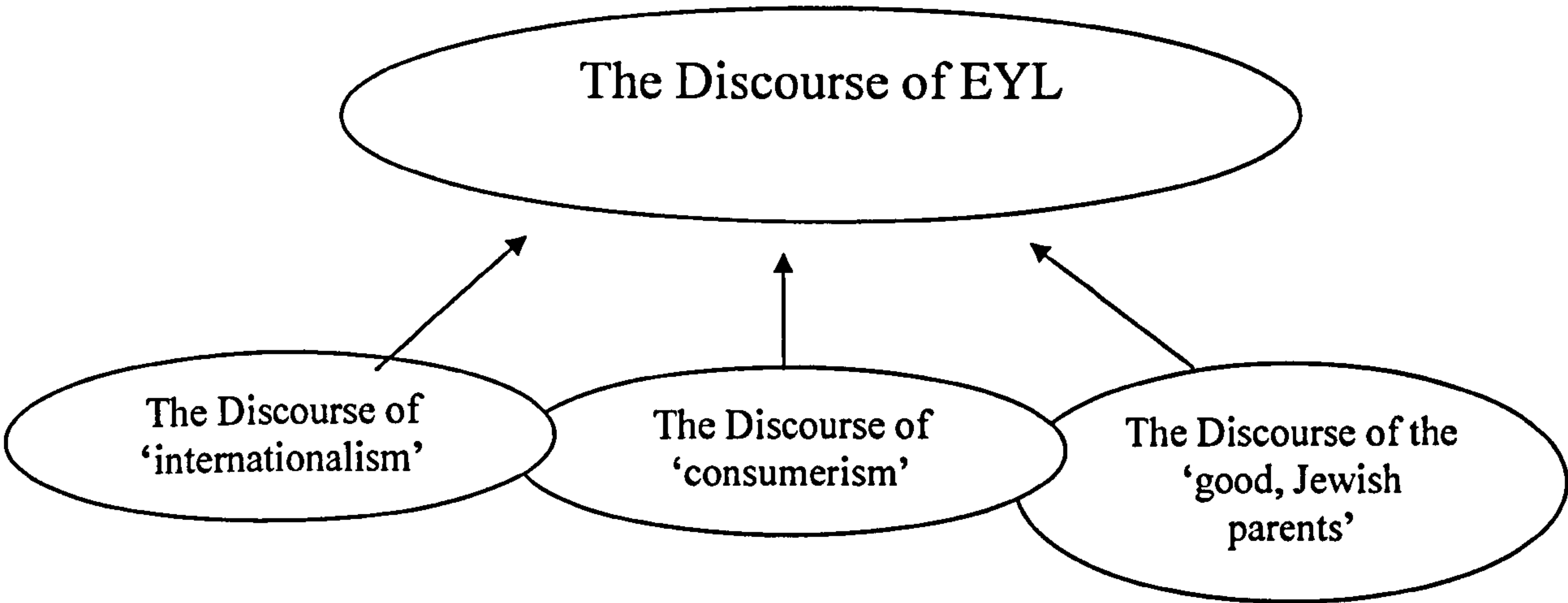
Data and findings show the ways D/discourses work together in providing participants with a particular subject position (different roles) as ‘knowers’, ‘educators’, ‘SLA experts’, ‘consumers’, ‘people who dislike the Arabic language’ and ‘good, caring parents’. Similarly, D/discourses work together to signal how participants are positioned by other members of society when they refer to English or to the notion of EYL (“*here, in Israel, if you don’t know English its like ‘Wow, how can that be?’*”).

In constructing the Discourse of EYL, participants selectively use particular discourses whilst excluding others. They emphasise TYTB, good-parenting, internationalism, success, and cultural capital discourses whilst excluding other, not less important, discourses such as discourse of equality, regional reconciliation, nationalism or the promotion of Hebrew. Such emphasised discourses become markers of Jewish/Israeli identity.

For example, Efrat’s daily actions with her children (“*I sit with the kids when they watch cartoons*”), and her intentions (“*I intend to send them to English lessons*”) work together in placing her as a recognised good parent actively seeking to increase her children’s cultural capital by ‘investing’ in EYL. Similarly, Koren candidly shares his plan of actions as a good parent (“*I will send him to private lessons and buy books*”) for which he wishes to be recognised. David includes his feelings (“*a kind of feeling of disgust*”), beliefs (“*hostility between the Jews and the Arabs*”) and social practices (“*you don’t want to take any part in it*”), to enact his identity as an ‘anti-Arabic Israeli’, rather than emphasising the need for promoting peace in the region.

I will now discuss the nature of three main Discourses comprising the Discourse of EYL, namely, the Discourse of ‘internationalism’, the Discourse of the ‘good, Jewish Parents’ and the Discourse of ‘consumers’ (see figure 8.1 below).

Figure 8.1: The Discourse of EYL



8.3.2. The Discourse of Americanisation and Internationalism

Spolsky & Shohamy (1999) argue that patterns of language practices in Israel are necessarily associated with socially driven values. Such values are closely intertwined with an accompanying set of attitudes, beliefs or ideologies of the people involved. Findings reveal the diasporic connections of the Jews in Israel with America. Participants strongly associate themselves explicitly with American culture, norms and symbols (as opposed to other English-speaking countries such as Britain, Australia or Canada). One possible explanation is that in addition to America being viewed as Israel’s political ally (perhaps personal or family connections as well), America represents a symbol of democracy, modernity, capitalism, success and power.

Conversely, Britain (for example) is largely associated with the years of the British Mandate over Palestine and therefore with colonialism, generally unfavourable times for the Jews in Palestine (Myhill, 2004). Participants’ preoccupation with the Western world in general and with America in particular, favours the Discourse of Internationalism and implies that they regard EYL as significant means of achieving international communication skills.

8.3.2.1. Ways of being global/international people

Influenced by the discourse of English as the international language, participants adapt, appropriate and use terms such as “*globalisation*”, “*international language*”, “*western world*” “*America is IT*”, typically associated with internationalisation and Americanisation. Such discourse indicates the tension existing between internationalisation and nationalism. Participants wish to assume the identity of ‘global citizens’ and speakers of English versus ‘local people’ and speakers of Hebrew. They prefer to position themselves and be recognised as ‘worldly’ or ‘international’ (and therefore strong, powerful and successful) as opposed to ‘local’ and ‘restricted’ (and therefore weak, inferior or handicapped). They aspire (and strive) to use English in a global or international sense for traveling, business or for gaining higher status.

The absence of nationalism and the desire to belong to the international global community points toward participants’ shifting national identities through the symbolic power they attach to EYL. Indeed, they wish their children to be privy to this process and enjoy the benefits offered by the ‘global world’. EYL is perceived as having a major contribution to make towards children’s possibilities for becoming part of international people, actors in the “*global village*”.

The common-sense view, actively reinforced in participants’ language, is that EYL empowers children enhancing, in turn their chances for communication with the rest of the world and is therefore good for the Israeli individual and society. EYL becomes a ticket to personal success, liberation, empowerment, employment and access to economic achievement, all of which are considered the foundations of a productive life as Israelis, living in Israel.

8.3.3. The Discourse of ‘Consumers’

Findings show the ways in which participants typically refer to EYL as “*it*”, or “*to have it*”, turning the learning of English into an asset or a material object. Participants speak of EYL as a symbol of commodity (instead of a symbol of community or identity), and associate it with a product they can obtain or purchase. In so doing, they employ words and phrases associated with the business or the commercial world such as “*It is a very desired commodity*; “*It is their business card*” to the world”.

The commodification of EYL affects people's motivation for learning English. EYL in grades 1 and 2 is considered to be a popular, beneficial and important commodity and, as such, more people are motivated to 'get it'. Along similar lines, it affects the choices made by institutions such as schools and local educational authorities (LEAs) with regard to distribution of educational or other resources. As a result, the commodification of EYL highlights the position of EYL as an economic divider stressing the potential growing gaps between the haves and the have nots in Israeli society.

8.3.3.1. Ways of being consumers

People assume the role of consumers when they draw on and use the discourse of commercialism or consumerism ("it is a **gift**", "a key" "an important **commodity**") and the discourse of fashion and trend ("English is **very in** today", "it's a **trendy** thing"). Such discourses are accompanied by their daily actions such as buying books and kits, paying for private lessons, boasting about them and generally seeing things like English language competencies as commodities which can be bought ("I **buy** the books and cassettes"). This highlights the evident contradictions between language as a mark of belonging or identity (for example, Hebrew) and language as a marketable commodity (English).

Findings indicate that EYL is attributed particular virtue in that it carries the type of cultural capital so highly valued in modern society and new capitalism (Gee *et al.*, 1996). In as much as the *investment* in the English language is mostly a personal one (Ben-Rafael, 1994), the investment in EYL (participants buy books, pay for lessons, 'sit' with their children, 'invest' in the language etc) becomes synonymous with prestige, and with gaining high status in society. This coincides with Myhill's (2004) assertion claiming that Jews typically embrace the new, prestigious language which appears in their environment (see chapter 2).

Indeed, participants employ the discourse of cultural capital and the discourse of success and achievement, by typically associating EYL with gaining '*knowledge*' and '*power*', maintaining that the knowledge of English equips people, young children in particular, with high personal self confidence. Therefore EYL is viewed as the means by which children can have an advantage over others. This illuminates the psychology of power as an affective state ("*Knowledge is power*"). Such frequent associations between EYL and

obtaining better opportunities in life (*"gets you places"; "opens doors"*), the connections made between the broad exposure of English in the media and the important role it assumes in everyday life act as significant elements in the construction of the Discourse internationalisation and consumerism.

With the focus on consumerism, being and acting superior (*"high status"*) entails financial privilege as well as other forms of social, international status (for example when EYL is equated with having dollars). EYL becomes more intentional (*"it is a tool for you"*) or calculated (*"you need to have it"*) than interpersonal or communicative, such as having communicative skills for social or interpersonal interaction within the local, Israeli, heterogeneous and multilingual society.

8.3.4. The Discourse of the 'good, Jewish parents'

The Discourse of the 'good, Jewish parents' is made up of different strands of interwoven discourses revealing that participants deem EYL to be a necessary and important aspect of their children's education. The promotion of EYL is considered by them to be an essential part of being and acting good, responsible, Jewish parents. Participants attach positive connotations to EYL whilst stressing the linguistic, social and general benefits thereof.

Findings indicate that popular opinion, such as TYTB, exert powerful influence over the demand for and promotion of EYL. Additionally, informants, parents in particular, often speak out of language-learning-expert Discourse whereby they employ professional terms pertaining to learning and acquisition. Such discourse, SLA, for example, is often interwoven with TYTB discourse and together they become dominant discourses constituting the Discourse of 'good, Jewish parents'.

Whilst TYTB notion is contested in academic literature (see chapter 3), the great majority of participants (all but two teachers and the chief English inspector) was in full support of it. Indeed, participants do not question this idea but rather accept it as an axiom, or believe it makes 'good common sense'. They maintain that in addition to TYTB axiom being true, taking actions to promote it further contributes to the investment in their children's future, serves as 'preventive medicine' (begin earlier – get more), provides

enjoyable learning time, and is an active step in gaining cultural capital, status and prestige.

The 'good, Jewish parents' Discourse reflects socio-cultural "*fashion*" and "*a trend*" in Israeli society. This allows common-sense explanations such as TYTB to co-exist with and support the discourses of good parenting, consumerism, cultural capital, SLA discourse and globalisation discourse.

8.3.4.1. Ways of being 'good, Jewish/Israeli Parents'

Amongst the attributes of belonging to the 'good, Jewish parent' group is expressing pride in children's achievements ("*the grandparents were very proud that he knows English*"), expressing commitment to the promotion of EYL ("*I will invest*"), showing expertise in the field of SLA ("*the younger the better*") and taking responsibility to promote it ("*I will do everything possible*"). Words and actions commonly associated with good parenting, work to conceal elements of competition and power. When parents re-formulate their beliefs and actions into positive concerns, they enact their caring parents' identity for which they prefer to be recognised. By attaching positive, educational value and linguistic capital to EYL parents obtain reinforcement for their good parenthood. Indeed, enacting the good parents' identity implies they gain positive reinforcement from their action as well as their children. This highlights the potential benefits of 'being and acting' good, Jewish parents.

8.3.4.2. Ways of being language experts

Participants (parents in particular) construct the identity of language experts for themselves by assuming position as educators (or 'experts') and by stressing the educational and linguistic values of EYL ("*they internalise better*", "*they absorb faster*"). Coupled with anecdotal evidence and personal experience in support of EYL, they try to convince listeners (i.e. me, the interviewer) of the potential benefits of EYL ("*more time for more acquisition*", "*their brains are freer*").

Similarly, parents are positioned as language experts by other people in society, such as by other parents, by teachers, by the principal and by the chief English inspector. Parents are attributed the position of 'language experts' in the field of EYL when their discourse of TYTB is accepted as true, commonsensical and unquestionable. For example the

principal's consent to introduce EYL in grades 1 & 2 and actually assigning a teacher to carry it out, serve as evidence to this effect. Additional confirmation is provided in the chief inspector's words (*"Parents rightfully think"*) as well as by the steadily growing number of schools introducing EYL in grades 1 & 2 in Israel (*"The Ministry of Education points to growing numbers of schools which have introduced EYL already in grades 1 & 2"*).

So far I have discussed the D/discourses which construe the hybrid Discourse of EYL as they have been identified in the data and analysis. I will now discuss the answer to question 2 and relate to the ways in which the varied constitutive Discourses are implicated in everyday life.

8.4. Answer to question 2

How are the identified D/discourses on the topic of EYL implicated in everyday life?

Findings bring to the fore central observations regarding the workings of the D/discourse of EYL in everyday life, shaping social practices while at the same time being shaped by them. The main issues are discussed below:

8.4.1. The Discourse of EYL and educational agendas

Dominant discourses, having become naturalised and accepted as realities or truths people abide by, marginalise or discount opinions or other discourses seen from other educational or academic perspectives. SLA, TYTB and common-sense discourses of language politics, construed by parents, children and teachers, are powerful in that they can initiate, promote and bring about changes in policy decisions, school curricula, social and educational agendas for the promotion of EYL (on account of other educational initiatives and/or needs), regardless of any educational or opposing discourses. Indeed, dominant discourses, mobilised by parents in particular, whilst not scientific, appear sensible and logical. They achieve public support which legitimises the desire for and the investment in EYL, thus turning it into a desired, positive educational practice.

The Discourse of EYL includes rich metaphoric language, logical argumentation, authoritative persuasive reasoning, anecdotal evidence and personal histories. Words and

phrases such as *“Children love English”*; *“The younger the better, for sure”* are powerful in that they are commonsensical, convincing and can affect others in the promotion of EYL. Data and findings of both interviews and published texts support a growing demand for EYL in grades 1 and 2, as expressed by participants, mainly due to parents’ pressure.

8.4.2. The Discourse of EYL and faithful consumers

Along with the growing popularity of and demand for English language learning world wide (see chapter 1, and 3), the notion of EYL coupled with the popular TYTB discourse, makes good common sense to ‘good Jewish parents’. As such, it has therefore recruited faithful supporters amongst different members of society who have steadily become regular consumers of EYL. Parents, teachers and pupils are keen to ‘have’ EYL and in turn to be recognised as consumers of a high valued commodity. When parents are enacting this discourse they are, in fact, taking on the role of consumers. Consequently, schools, teachers, principals and position-holders are becoming providers of services to these consumers. This trend has direct consequences for EYL teaching and learning insofar as it affects pedagogical initiatives, material development, possible methods of teaching EYL and the debate relating to who are considered best suited to teach EYL in grades 1 and 2: home-room teachers or English teachers (see chapter 2).

If the notion of consumerism becomes a dominant force in education, certain capitalistic ideologies, such as “the consumer is always right”, may be imported into schools and classroom practices. Thus, it can be argued that educational initiatives, classroom practices, teaching and learning may become more about providing commodities, fashionable trends and offering services to opinionated consumers, than about actual teaching and learning. Indeed, this trend is compatible with findings and analysis which reveal that participants enact their ‘consumers’ identity and associate EYL learning and teaching with purchasing a commodity.

8.4.3. The Discourse of EYL: International aspirations versus local limitations

Whilst emphasising the limitations of the Hebrew language (“No, Hebrew is not sufficient”), and rejecting the Arabic language (“a feeling of disgust”), participants admire, glorify and embrace EYL which represents the means with which to break the limitations and reach the desired western culture (“The Western culture is good for us”).

When Jews in Israel use globalisation discourse, they, in effect, display the ‘global citizens’ identity so as to be recognised as international, English speakers rather than local Israeli Hebrew or Arabic-speakers. This reflects gaps between local reality, in which people use Hebrew in their everyday life (as Israelis living in Israel) on the one hand, and international desires whereby people wish to know English, the ‘global language’, on the other. This highlights the ways in which the linguistic behaviour of Jews in Israel is a marker of their identity.

8.4.4. The power of EYL and potential threats

Whilst people in Israel embrace elements of Americanisation and internationalisation, they do not question the possible dangers of the power and hegemony of English and its potential threats to Israeli culture, society and everyday social or educational practices. One potential threat relates to EYL being attributed an economic value (and cultural capital) thus becoming a significant socio-economic factor as (“it is a function of money”). As such it poses a real danger of reinforcing inequalities in society. Participants typically refer to people who can afford EYL lessons for their children as privileged, whilst labelling those who cannot afford EYL as underprivileged.

Another potential threat relates to English dominance over Hebrew and together with Hebrew posing a threat to Arabic (Narkiss, 2002). This coincides with the anti-Arabic attitudes and the drop in the demand for Arabic lessons in school. This also concurs with critics of the global spread of English, who argue that EGL is part of dominant discourses of power and culture coming from the west and serve the interests of the institutions and governments that have promoted it (see chapter 3).

Additionally, many professionals and people in academia, view the EYL in grades 1 and 2 initiative as a populist decision following social trends and parental pressure. On the basis of this view, it is also argued that the promotion of EYL is therefore a matter of unfair distribution of resources in order to be popular among people in society (see chapter 3). However, the power of EYL is viewed by participants (all but two teachers and the Chief English inspector) as a positive thing, desired and valued by Israelis who embrace it for themselves and their children. Such possible threats are either ignored or discounted.

8.4.5. The Discourse of EYL and potential losers

Findings provide evidence pointing to potential winners and losers in the EYL field. Possible losers include any of the following groups of people: children of people living in the periphery (such as in Ofakim – a city in the southern part of the country, mentioned by the chief English inspector), new immigrants (from former USSR and Ethiopians), poor people (who cannot afford the costs of EYL), uneducated people (who do not use English or are “*not aware*” of its values), or pupils in schools that have not introduced EYL in grades 1 and 2.

In as much as resources are being diverted from other areas to support EYL in grades 1 and 2, and given that EYL may not actually improve the users (see chapter 2 and 3 and the low ‘GEMS’ test scores over recent years), it is likely that potential losers may fail to obtain good English skills. In terms of linguistic identity, and also in terms of linguistic capital, they are the losers. By contrast, the winners are the metropolitan élite, children of any of the following groups of people: People living in the ‘centre’, wealthy Jewish families, knowledgeable parents, effective consumers, people with global awareness and ‘pushy’ parents.

8.4.6. The Discourse of EYL and concealed discourses

Findings illustrate that particular linguistic features, such as metaphors and descriptive language, coupled with accounts of daily actions and practices, serve to conceal and naturalise dominant discourses. For example, by using a metaphor such as “*It’s like asking someone why do you want to have dollars*” to explain the significance of EYL, Bari does not explicitly equate EYL with money, although connection is apparent.

Similarly, associating EYL with a key (*"It's a **key** to the outside world"*) diverts away from explicitly relating EYL to cultural or linguistic capital or to the desire for higher self worth, position and status.

Thus, it can be argued that, by diverting away from explicit language and using figurative language instead, participants take on particular subject positions (such as 'knowers', 'good parents' 'consumers' and more) and get recognised for them. This serves their interests in the promotion of EYL. Through taking up and maintaining the role of good parents, for example, the explicit sources of the power of EYL Discourse can be concealed.

So far I have discussed the two research questions and the ways in which findings and analyses have provided answers thereto. In section 8.5 I will discuss the particular contribution provided by children's discourse.

8.5. Children's discourse

Children in grade 2 express great pleasure in learning English. They explicitly say: *"we love to learn English", "it's so much fun...", "it's important..." "we want to learn it"*. Similarly, they take pride in having private English lessons or in learning EYL in their school, typically using adjectives such as *"great", "wonderful", "very good", "happy"*, and discourse of internationalisation such as *"English is important"; "English is the international language"*. The source of such discourses may be the influence of adults' words to which they are exposed and which they reiterate. Other dominant elements in their daily lives such as the media, films, Internet, computer and video games could be additional sources they draw on.

Whilst they express excitement at having English lessons, children seem to be following or saying what is expected of them, namely, to be happy they are learning English - the desired language. A critical look at their discourse points to words and phrases children say which reveal the implicit pressure parents place on them with regard to English lessons (*"I have to learn English"* [Rivi- "Why?"] *"Because **I have to**. My parents say so"*; *"I want to read and write in English. My parents **tell** me English is important"*).

8.5.1. High expectations

Children naïvely believe that learning English in grades 1 or 2 will quickly and effortlessly equip them with ‘knowing English’. In practice, these high expectations (“*so I will be able to communicate and send emails*”, “*if someone speaks English I can understand*”) do not materialise. Affected by TYTB and SLA discourse children develop high and somewhat unrealistic expectations from their English lessons and consequently express disappointment at not remembering simple words in English (“*I don’t remember*”). Indeed, despite their high motivation and expectations, after a year or two of learning English they are able to produce little output and their comprehension is limited to single words such as colours, numbers and animals.

In as much as children say they love English, parents use this to their benefit. When parents enact the ‘good, Jewish parents D/discourse (for example), they, in effect, assume the position of good parents not only for providing children with English lessons and cultural capital, but for providing them with legitimate ‘fun’ and excitement’ which will, by the way, enhance their opportunities for a better and more successful life.

8.6. Summary

In this chapter I have discussed the research questions put forward in this study. Considering developing socio-cultural changes and trends in the Israeli society, three foci of discussion were included: 1: The profile of the Discourse of EYL as construed by parents, teachers, pupils and position-holders; 2: The enactment of the Discourses of EYL by the actors involved; and 3: Implications of the Discourse of EYL in everyday life in Israel.

Findings indicate that for Jews in Israel today, being ‘good parents’ is tied up with the power of English, with tacit or explicit theories they hold, with the commodification of EYL, fashionable trends and with forces of globalisation. Jews in Israel look to “the west” and to the American ally as the role model and as a source of material and psychological security. Finally, findings raise the crucial issue of the power of D/discourse. Naturalised through and by the habitual ways in which they are used, we can note the ways in which D/discourses have the power to change social practices through attraction rather than by coercion.

The discussion of the findings leads to the final and concluding chapter of the study. In chapter 9 I present the main conclusions of this research. Implications of the study for policy makers, principles, teachers and parents are presented alongside recommendations for further research.

Chapter 9

Conclusion

9.1. Introduction

In this chapter the main conclusions of the study will be reviewed. Bearing in mind the research questions and the motivation behind this study, I will summarise the choice of using a critical discourse research paradigm and highlight the significant issues which have emerged as a result of close analysis and interpretation of the data and findings. Finally, I will present possible limitations of the study, implications and suggestions for further research.

9.2. A critical discourse study

This study examined discourses of parents, teachers, pupils and position-holders on the topic of EYL for the ways in which they enact their identity ('ways of being') and construe the Discourse of EYL. The need for this study has arisen due to lack of research on socio-cultural perspectives concerning EYL in Israel. Indeed, the dominant role the English language assumes in the global and local scene, coupled with the growing popularity of EYL (which has resulted in an official recommendation for teaching EYL in grades 1 and 2 nationwide), have established the need for such research with the aim to examine naturalised, 'commonsense' discourses on the topic. Once examined, a better understanding of what is seemingly a good initiative, yet controversial and contested, could be revealed.

Data collection in the form of interviews enabled the collection of talk, which would have been difficult to obtain in any quantity via other means (such as in naturally occurring talk). Interview data illuminated people's opinions, ideologies, feelings, beliefs and 'ways of being'. Similarly, it enabled the representation of common discursive practices drawn in EYL, previously unnoticed or unrecognised.

Defining the research as a critical discourse study framed it within a methodological paradigm, which combined two strands of research: critical, social, qualitative

educational research and theories of D/discourse. It addressed the ways discourses of EYL function as an integral part of the patterns that organise and regulate people's social and linguistic practices in everyday life. Similarly, it addressed the ways external societal forces, such as the global and international spread of English, affect and regulate social practices in society. It enabled the bringing together of social theory and discourse analysis to describe, interpret and explain the ways in which the D/discourse of EYL constructs, becomes constructed by, represents and becomes represented by both the Israeli society and the international forces.

According to Gee (2005), the aim of critical approaches to discourse analysis is to "render 'familiar' or 'common-sense' discourses 'strange'" (p. 102). This entails uncovering tacit theories and revealing implicit discourses which are articulated in people's discourse. Such dominant discourses are often so deeply embedded in the ways people speak and act that we may have become unaware of their contribution.

In this study, critical discourse analysis was used as the theoretical framework and analytical tool with which to examine, analyse and interpret oral and published discourses on EYL. Critical discourse analysis enabled a systematic examination of language patterns employed by the actors involved on the one hand, while looking at the ways in which these are used to represent their beliefs and actions in everyday life vis-à-vis the topic, on the other. Additionally, critical discourse analysis provided the theory and tools needed in order to critique the EYL phenomenon in Israel.

9.3. Qualitative methods

In this study, a qualitative research paradigm was adopted. 33 semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted with 16 parents, seven teachers, two position-holders and eight pupils. In addition, published texts in the form of newspapers, documents and circulars were collected and analysed.

A qualitative approach, using interviews as the data collecting tool, is compatible with gaining in-depth data on participants' beliefs, ideologies, ways of being and acting on the topic of EYL. The research interviews allowed me to come close to the actors involved, probe for clarifications and then apply a critical perspective to the data. Analysing has

made it possible to explore the research questions and to arrive at novel extended conclusions which are presented in three main areas: 1: the profile of the hybrid Discourse of EYL; 2: the range of D/discourses that constitute it; and 3: implications for social and classroom practices.

9.4. The Discourse of EYL

9.4.1. The main conclusions

The main conclusion is that the Discourse of EYL is at the nexus of a range of Discourses participants construe out of hybrid combinations of a variety of D/discourses. For example, participants see the promotion of EYL as part of their obligation to their children, as 'good, Jewish/Israeli parents'. For Jews in Israel today, being and acting as 'good parents', is bound up with the power of English, the popularity of EYL and the ways in which they project themselves, with hopes and desire, into an idealised, abstract, global world in which EYL plays a major part.

Additionally, the Discourse of EYL is a hybrid Discourse constituted by creative combinations of a range of commonsense discourses people employ when speaking on the topic. It represents what people say (in terms of language) and 'other things' they bring with them to the talk such as their ideologies, actions, beliefs, theories values and more. The construction of the Discourse of EYL is achieved through organising and bringing together other D/discourses in which participants are members and through which they re-organise their individual and collective identities as 'good parents', 'consumers', 'knowers', 'educators', 'strong', 'weak', international' or 'local' citizens and more. Dominant discourses represent controversies which often become the basis for their overlapping and hybrid nature.

The significant conclusion about the Discourse of EYL is that pedagogical, SLA and language learning discourses form a relatively small part of it. Conversely, globalisation, consumerism, TYTB and good parenting discourses are more dominant. Additionally, the hybrid Discourse of EYL (and the discourses from which it is construed) seems to have a regulating effect on social, educational and daily decisions, schools' policy and classroom practices, people's everyday life and the distribution of goods in Israeli society and social systems.

9.4.2. Additional conclusions

The promotion of EYL in Israel extends further than possible everyday requirements, social or classroom practices. It does not stem from the actual need to interact with the diverse population living and working in Israel, such as the new immigrants, the Arabs or other non-Hebrew speakers. It is not much about the need for human everyday communication. Rather, it stems from a range of issues rooted in people's culture, identity, fears, beliefs, history, social and international trends. In general terms, the demand for EYL stems from the wish and desire people have to belong to an imagined 'international community' in which EYL is considered the means by which people can better fulfil the 'American' or the 'international' dream.

In specific terms, people equate EYL with having high status, a 'strong' identity and possessing cultural capital. As such, EYL is granted material and financial value and becomes a socio-economic divider between the haves and the have nots. Along similar lines, TYTB discourse makes good common sense and represents good intentions. People's good intentions and desire for a strong subject position (represented by knowing English and 'investing' in EYL) conceal their own inferior position as weak people (who do not know English) and highlight the high aspirations they have for their children (often represented by the term "push").

Alongside that, lack of nationalism and the desire for internationalism are represented in discourses which equate EYL with a material commodity, and present the actors involved as consumers of EYL in a 'virtual' international world. D/discourses of EYL have become a type of 'self colonisation' that tend to regard EYL and its popularity as natural, neutral and beneficial (Pennycook, 1994).

The significant conclusion is that the forces behind the promotion of EYL seem to be driven by social, ideological and political concerns rather than pedagogical ones. The topic of EYL is evidently much wider than issues pertaining to the pros and cons of EYL in terms of curriculum, attainment, acquisition, or who is best fitted to teach EYL: English teachers or home-room teachers. Engaging in the analysis of people's words, theories, actions and interactions are vital for a better understanding of the EYL trend.

Thus, placing the notion of the D/discourse of EYL as the focal point, has provided a critical viewpoint with which to examine the phenomenon.

The final conclusion pertains to the power of D/discourse as a means of regulation and control in social and educational practices (Fairclough 1992, 1995; Foucault, 1972; Gee, 1996, 1999, 2005; Rogers, 2004; Rogers *et al.*, 2005). Thus, it can be argued that opinions on EYL are formed through public discourse (such as the media, friends and work-places) mobilised and controlled by powerful groups (parents, position-holders) and promulgate dominant discourses (such as TYTB discourse, or globalisation discourse) which act as regulating forces in society.

The critical nature of this study has illuminated possible forces behind the promotion of EYL. Some of these forces are rooted in ideological assumptions and cognitive theories people hold (Discourse models), further enhanced by interaction and communication, to construe the Discourses of EYL. Explicit and implicit language highlighted the close connection existing between dominant D/discourses, socio-cultural concerns, trends and changes in the Israeli society. These work together in complex ways and affect educational decisions, classroom practices and matter of fact teaching and learning.

Social and educational implications of the findings are presented below together with suggestions for further research.

9.5. Implications of the study

1: The overall implication of this study is that the official recommendation for teaching EYL in grades 1 and 2 in Israel should be constantly re-examined by teachers, educators, policy-makers, stake-holders and people in academia. EYL teachers in particular, should reflect and take into account explicit and implicit expectations and desires of parents, teachers, pupils and principals as expressed by their discourse. The engagement in such reflections can aid educators in becoming better aware of their own personal, social and ideological positions concerning EYL in grades 1 and 2.

It is generally recommended that those people in the educational system, who are aware of the power of EYL discourse on the one hand, and its weak basis in educational and

second language acquisition principles on the other, engage in careful application of EYL in grades 1 and 2. Such engagement is particularly important in the light of parents' unawareness of both such power and weakness.

2: Curriculum changes should take into account the community and its people so as to accommodate the values, needs and expectations of the individuals and their resources of knowledge. This consideration is important not only in terms of the need to respond to parental pressure but to be able to address particular cultural, social and economic differences within the community and amongst the children.

3: Expertise deriving from outside a community may be lacking. Rather, a sense of partnership should be developed between local power represented by individuals in the community, such as parents, teachers and pupils, and outside experts such as academic professionals or policy makers. In other words, English teaching professionals involved in the implementation of EYL in grades 1 and 2 should be aware that assumptions about EYL in grades 1 and 2 and its teaching are not based on those of the dominant professional circles or communities. This development calls for English teaching professionals and policy-makers to address different questions and needs in the field while engaging in active negotiation with the local powers in the community.

4: The distribution of goods and allocation of teaching resources should be critically re-examined. This re-examination is called for in order to avoid the likelihood of EYL becoming a social, educational or economic divider.

9.5.1. Implications for teachers

1: Teachers should be critically aware of the hybrid discourses which construe the Discourse of EYL. Such awareness may equip them with tools to better define realistic and more appropriate expectations regarding EYL teaching and learning. This may empower them to choose and articulate their teaching practices while setting achievable teaching and learning goals in grades 1 and 2.

2: Understanding the Discourse of EYL would enable teachers to avoid possible clashes, conflicts or misunderstandings brought about as a result of gaps in expectations between

the actors involved in the system (parents, principals or position-holders). Parents' high hopes and somewhat unrealistic expectations regarding their children's learning should be considered in the implementation of EYL programmes.

9.5.2. Implications for parents and children

One of the important aspects in teaching EYL is that it should be a positive experience (see chapter 3). Negative experiences in learning English at the very beginning may cause the development of frustration at a very early age, resulting in a negative feeling towards the study of English at a later age, which may lead to unsatisfactory results along the years. Such frustration and lack of success may additionally cause a feeling of insecurity or inferiority affecting children's attitudes towards learning English later on in life.

Similarly, parents' beliefs, in the form of "*children love English*", "*It's fun for them*" and "*TYTB*" can be shattered as a result of their realisation that children at the age of 6-7 are, in fact, still struggling with acquiring literacy skills in their mother tongue and therefore find learning English difficult, demanding and laborious. This implication points towards a possible danger by which young children learning English might develop negative attitudes of failure which may be difficult to remedy later.

9.5.3. Implications for principals, teachers and policy-makers

The most significant implication for principals, teachers and policy-makers relates to their position as professionals in dealing with parental pressure and populist demands. In other words, professionals should not be pressured by parent's demands and commonsense argumentations, nor should they consent (against their professional judgement) to what seems to be natural parental enthusiasm. They should engage in careful negotiation with parents in order to be aware of and resist parental pressure and avoid victory for parents' power.

Additionally, any decision to introduce new educational programmes (taken by professionals) should take into consideration the potential winners or losers and what could be at stake for the pupils involved. Low 'GEMS' test results, children in the periphery, limited budget (as a result of constant cutbacks) and the shortage of English

teachers (see chapter 2) are only some of the factors influencing potential threats. It has become evident that the dominant forces behind the promotion of EYL do not stem from pedagogical reasons, but rather, are rooted in issues which place EYL as the key to success and provide logical answers to various problems in language education. Thus, this understanding should guide primary school principals, teachers and policy-makers in Israel to re-reconsider, re-evaluate or re-examine current controversial issues emerging from school reform agendas, educational innovations, popular trends or parental pressure.

9.6. Limitations of the study

Although the examination of D/discourse on the EYL phenomenon did illuminate important factors regarding the forces behind the promotion of EYL in grades 1 and 2 in Israel, this study, and the data from which it is drawn, has some limitations.

1: Data was collected from children, parents, teachers and the principal of one urban school, situated in a certain geographical area. This poses a limitation, namely, it may be possible that, had data been collected from a different school in a different area, it may have been somewhat different.

2: The issue of generalisability is one of the main limitations of the study. Although attention was given to obtaining data from different sectors of the neighbourhood, the fact that this school is located in one geographical area might constrain the ability to generalise from this research. Similarly, although participants were chosen to represent the different sectors of society in Israel, the study did not cover all sectors of education such as the ultra-religious or the Arab sectors.

3: Out of the 33 interviewees, only one principal and one inspector (the Chief Inspector of English) were interviewed. The relatively small number of position-holders interviewed, in comparison with the number of parents, poses a limitation.

9.6.1. Limitations of the interviews

Although an interview guide was used and additional questions were asked throughout, the interviews show some limitations.

1: A greater focus on children's everyday social practices would have allowed more insight on non-linguistic practices such as: how much and in what ways is their spare time devoted to English. What other English daily practices are they (or they would like to be) involved in or exposed to (TV programmes, video or computer games etc).

2: A greater focus on children's talk, produced in their home environment (where the interviews with their parents were conducted), may have provided me with the possibility to explore children's language produced in an additional setting. This may have provided the children with the opportunity to add to or expand on what they had said in school.

3: A greater focus on participants' personal stories, histories and experiences with regard to learning English, would have allowed in-depth descriptions which may have highlighted further the reasons for their beliefs and actions vis-à-vis the promotion of EYL. This would have included probing deeper and asking delicate questions such as: what it was like for them to learn English? How did they feel as children learning the English language ('privileged', 'excited', 'pushed') and how does their experience affect their current decisions vis-à-vis their children?

4: Interviews with parents and teachers in Ofakim, (mentioned as a disprivileged town in the south of Israel) for example, would have provided me with some information regarding their beliefs on EYL. These unanswered questions are limitations to the analysis and to the study.

5: Finally, my presence may have influenced participants' responses. My position as a researcher and as a professional, my reactions to the interviewees, emphasis I may have placed on particular issues, body language and other such details are important factors which may have influenced participants' responses.

9.7. Recommendations for further research

For further research, the following recommendations can be considered:

1: It is proposed that similar studies on EYL in grades 1 and 2 be repeated in additional schools in different geographical areas such as: Arab schools, Jewish orthodox or agricultural sectors. This would enable the collection of data from a wider, more varied population in the country.

2: It is proposed that collection of data in the form of classroom discourse will be carried out in further research of EYL in grades 1 and 2. This would enable the collection of naturally occurring talk within the classroom situation for the ways English is used, learned and appropriated by grade 1 and 2 learners and their teachers. The analysis of such discourse would provide different and additional insight to the EYL phenomenon.

3: It is proposed that involvement of pupils in grades 1 and 2 will be increased in further research. Investigating the learners directly or asking them what they feel and think has contributed greatly to the data in this study. It is therefore believed that providing pupils with significant opportunities to take part in further studies is highly important.

It is proposed that further research is conducted in the following areas:

1: Ethnographic studies of children learning EYL in grade 1 or 2 (over a period of a few years). Such studies would place emphasis on issues of identity, motivation, expectations, and the use of English in social and classroom practices.

2: Critical discourse analysis of oral discourse produced and obtained from natural talk, such as in conferences, symposiums, meetings and the like. This is important so as to allow EYL discourses to be examined from other directions.

3. Long term studies comparing the effect of starting at different ages on attainment in higher grades are recommended. Such studies may shed additional light on learners' attainment and may help in decisions pertaining to the distribution of resources and allocation of teaching hours in grades 1 and 2.

9.8. Summary

This study has approached the topic of EYL in grades 1 and 2 in Israel from a critical discourse perspective and is likely to provoke discussion in the EYL teaching community, amongst policy makers and academics interested in the field. Indeed, a range of pervasive, popular and influential D/discourses have apparently set the agenda on the promotion of EYL in Israel. Some of such D/discourses have been identified as social D/discourses such as the Discourse of 'globalisation' and 'internationalism' as well as other more personal D/discourses such as the good, Jewish/Israeli parents' Discourse, which mark the ways in which people enact their identity vis-à-vis EYL.

Using critical discourse analysis as the theoretical framework and tool of analysis enabled the investigation, exposure and means of critiquing the dominant D/discourses of EYL. This has provided a rich context for exploring further relevant issues on the topic and its application in schools. Furthermore, this study, having focused on the notion of D/discourse as affecting and reflecting people's identities, has provided readers with a theoretical and conceptual framework which can be used by them to re-consider their own positions on the subject and apply a more reflective and critical approach to the complex, socio-cultural issues of EYL in grades 1 and 2.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Letter of approval for conducting the research

TRANSLATION FROM HEBREW

**State of Israel
Ministry of Education
Office of the Chief Scientist**

**Jerusalem 15 March 2004
File K 10.32.99**

To: District Managers, Ministry of Education and Culture, Tel- Aviv

Dear Sirs,

Re: Research on the subject of “English for the Young Learner in Grades 1 and 2”

Mrs. Rivi Carmel is responsible for the execution of the above captioned research in the course of her studies for a PhD in the University of Leicester, England. The research is intended to review various controversial issues regarding the teaching of English in Grades 1 and 2 in Israel.

For the purpose of conducting the research the researcher intends to view lessons in English in Grades 1 and 2 and to record them using audio tape. In addition interviews are planned with a principal, English teachers, parents and pupils.

For your information, we do not object to collection of said data in government supervised schools only, subject to the following conditions:

1. The approval of the principal for collection of the data in his school and with prior coordination.
2. Approval of the teachers to participate in the research.
3. Research interviews will be conducted only with pupils whose parents have given in writing their consent for their child's interview.
4. Strict privilege regarding the identifying data collected during the research will be maintained.
5. The collected identifying data will be destroyed at the end of the study.

For the avoidance of doubt it will be pointed out that:

- A. This letter is not an opinion by the Chief Scientist's Office with regard to the quality of the research.
- B. The researcher or her representatives must provide this letter when contacting the principal.
- C. This letter is valid for the 2004 school year only.

Enclosures:

The researcher's letter to the teachers for receipt of their consent to participate in the research.

Researcher's letter to the children's parents for receipt of their consent for interviewing their children.

Yours faithfully,

Rena Osizon
Supervision and follow up Coordinator
Ministry of Education and Culture
Jerusalem

Cc: Rivi Carmel 43, Yehuda Hanasi St. 69391 Tel Aviv

Appendix 2: Letter of undertaking

TRANSLATION FROM HEBREW

**State of Israel
Ministry of Education and Culture
Office of the Chief Scientist**

**Letter of Undertaking to the Ministry of Education regarding the collection
of data/receipt of data/intervention by researchers operating outside of a
university body**

With regard to data concerning pupils, parents, position holders, institutions and/or towns (hereinafter: the "Data") I shall receive from the Ministry of Education and/or in respect of data collected under my responsibility and/or with regard to intervention carried out under my responsibility during the 2004 school year in the matter of: **English in Grades 1 and 2**; I hereby undertake:

1. To collect and analyse the Data and carry out the intervention in accordance with the work plan and tools attached and in accordance with the conditions determined by the Ministry of Education.
2. To preserve the law for the Protection of Privacy 1981 and its regulations in all matters regarding the execution of the research and its publication and to handle the collected Data in accordance with the guidelines specified in the above law.
3. To refrain from identifying or from returning identities to unidentified data provided to me by the Ministry of Education and/or collected by me during the research.
4. Not to provide Data, whether or not analysed, regarding the unit under inspection (pupils, parents, position holders, institutions, towns) whether anonymously or in a way enabling identification (hereinafter "Identified Data") to anybody without the prior written approval of the Office of the Chief Scientist.
5. Not to transfer, inform, provide or bring to the attention of any unauthorized person any information I shall receive during or in connection with the execution of the research without the prior written approval of the Office of the Chief Scientist.

6. To use the Identified and unidentified Data only for the purpose of conducting the present research.
7. To present or publish the data in hand in any form of presentation or publication whereby the identification of a pupil or position holder will not be possible.
8. To present or publish the data in hand in any form of presentation or publication whereby the identity of the institution or town will not be possible unless I will receive prior written approval from the Office of the Chief Scientist of the Ministry of Education for presentation or publication of such data in a manner enabling its identification. In such instance I undertake to act in accordance with the specific conditions provided in the approval.
9. To collect Identified Data regarding a pupil provided the pupil's parents have received a letter of request on my behalf, the contents of which will have been approved in advance and in writing by the authorized body at the Ministry of Education and provided that one of his parents has provided me with his consent for the collection of the Identified Data, in writing, in accordance with the form attached hereto Appendix "A".

To delete the identifying data regarding the pupil by 2005 being the period in respect of which I have given my undertaking to the parents.

10. Should the approval I shall receive from the Office for execution of the research be conditioned upon me enabling the parents of each child to express their objection for the participation of their son/daughter in the research, then I hereby undertake to provide the parents of each pupil a letter of approach on my behalf, the contents of which will be approved in advance and in writing by the authorized body at the Ministry. The letter will specify all the research goals. Furthermore it will explain in a detailed manner all the issues and topic carried out in its framework and all the actions in the context of which the pupil will be asked to participate in. In addition the letter will include details of additional points which, given their sensitivity, the authorizing department will demand be specified in the letter of approach to the parents.

I undertake to refrain from including in the research a child who one of his parents objected to his participation in writing, in accordance with the form attached hereto Appendix "3".

11. Not to demand the participation in the research of a pupil who has voiced his objection to his participation and to ensure that such a pupil will not be harmed as a result of his refusal.

12. To omit the identifying data regarding position holders, education institutions and towns immediately following the stage of work where such identification is required and in any event not later than 6 months following the collection of the data or submission of the report, whichever is the earlier.
13. Not to present to the public myself or any body working with me or on my behalf in the course of this research as a body operating on behalf of the Ministry. I further undertake not to present any action conducted in the framework of the research as being operated on behalf of the Ministry,
14. To furnish two copies of the final report regarding the conduct of the research and its conclusions to the authorizing body at its request.
15. I hereby confirm I am aware that failing to perform the provisions of this undertaking may result in breach of the law. I undertake to have the persons and bodies working and conducting the work, or any part thereof, on my behalf sign an undertaking confirming that they are aware of this letter of undertaking.
16. I am minded to the damage that may be sustained by the Ministry should I fail to conduct myself in accordance with the above requirements and I undertake to indemnify the Ministry for any damage that it may sustain as a result of a breach of this undertaking.
17. I accept the responsibility for any damage or loss sustained by the Ministry or the body and/or property of any other person, including people employed by me as a result of any act or omission on my part, on the part of my employees, representatives or anyone operating on my behalf, with regard to the collection/receipt of data. Should the State be ordered to pay any amount whatsoever as a result of an act or omission I am responsible for by any law I shall immediately indemnify the State in respect of any such amount.

Researcher's name: Rivi Carmel

Researcher's signature: (-)

Date: 17.2.2004

Appendix 3: Introductory Note for PhD Study for English for Young Learners in Grades 1 and 2

TRANSLATION FROM HEBREW

To all informants and participants in the study

The purpose of this PhD study is to unravel problematic, controversial, socio-cultural issues regarding English for Young Learners in grades 1 and 2 in Israel, and critically analyse the reasons for the growing demand and interest in the beginning of English instruction at such a young age, against the backdrop of substantial educational cutbacks.

I have personally initiated this study, under the auspices of the University of Leicester, England, and not for or by any official body or financial gain.

In this study I will be attending English lessons in grades 1 and 2, observing and taking field notes. Furthermore, I will interview the home-room teachers in grades 1 and 2, the English teachers in the school, the principal of the school and a number of pupils in grades 1 and 2. I will also interview children's parents. This will be done at their convenience. The study will not disturb the pupils' or teachers' daily routine in any way.

All the interviews with adults and children will be recorded using an audiotape and transcribed. The transcription will be sent to participants for further verification and consent.

The data collected i.e field notes, audiotapes and interviews may be published in academic journals as well as in the PhD itself (which will be publicly available to library users). The data will be used solely for the purposes of the study.

Confidentiality and anonymity of the participants will be preserved throughout the study as well as in the publications thereof.

The results and analysis of this study may contribute to a better understanding of the English for Young Learners phenomenon, against the increasing demand for English in Israel.

If at any point in time during the research you wish to change your mind or withdraw from the study, you may do so at your discretion. If you are a parent of a child who has been sampled out to be interviewed and wish your child not to participate in the study, you may advise me accordingly at any point and time.

Thank you for your cooperation,

Rivi Carmel

Appendix 4: Interview Guide for the Principal

TRANSLATION FROM HEBREW

Questions:

1. How long have you been a principal in the formal educational system?
2. How long have you been the principal of this school?
3. Tell me about the English programme in the school. When do pupils begin their English language lessons?
4. To your best knowledge, from what grade level are English lessons obligatory?
5. Are you aware of any recent changes regarding this?
6. If so, what are the changes? Who has informed you about them?
7. In your opinion, why have there been changes in English language learning/teaching?
8. How many hours a week are allotted for English lessons in each grade level in this school?
9. Are you content with this distribution of hours? If yes, explain. If not, explain why not. How would you alter it given optimal conditions?
10. How many English teachers are there in the school? Just as a comparison, how many mathematics teachers are there?
11. In relation to other subject-matters, where would you place English in order of importance?
12. Tell me about your decision to introduce English in Grades 1 and 2. Why did you decide to do it?
13. What is your 'gut feeling' about English in Grades 1 and 2?
14. What do you think about the idea of 'home-room teachers' teaching English in Grades 1 and 2?
15. Have there been any direct or indirect requests from parents as to when English language lessons should be introduced? Explain.
16. Have parents shown interest re English lessons in general? If yes, what kinds of issues do they bring up?
17. In your opinion, why are they interested? Explain.
18. Have you been offered other programmes or initiatives for English for Young Learners in the past? If yes, what were they?
19. How did you find out about this particular programme?

20. How did you come to the decision to take part in it? Was it your personal decision or did you involve other members of staff or parents? Explain.
21. Why have you decided to introduce English in Grade 1 and 2 this year?
22. What are your expectations from this?
23. What are your expectations from the home-room teachers? From the English teachers?
24. What are your expectations from the pupils?
25. Introducing this programme means that English is being taught to all the pupils in the school. What does this mean to you?
26. The programme is rather costly. How do you manage it, in view of the serious budget cut-backs in schools?
27. What is your personal position regarding English in grades 1 and 2? Do you think it is effective?
28. Do you think getting an early start in English is a good thing? Explain.
29. Do you think children benefit from learning English in grades 1 and 2? Explain.
30. What can you say about your own knowledge of English?
31. Has this had any affect on your decision to introduce EYL in grades 1 and 2 in the school?
32. What do you think are the reasons for the 'trend' for EYL? Explain.
33. What can you say about the study of Arabic in your school?
34. Would you promote the study of EYL with your own children?
35. Is there anything else you would like to add or say on the issues we have been discussing?

Thank you for your cooperation

Appendix 5: Interview guide for home-room teachers and English teachers

TRANSLATION FROM HEBREW

Questions:

1. Tell me a little about yourself: How long have you been a teacher? How many years in this school? Do you like your work? What subjects do you teach?
2. Generally speaking. What is your opinion regarding the English language? Explain.
3. Do you have any opportunity to use or speak English in your daily life? Explain. Give examples.
4. Do your own children learn English?
5. Do they use English in their daily life?
6. In what ways are they exposed to English? Explain.
7. As a parent, will you invest in any way, financially or otherwise, in promoting English with your children? Explain. Give examples.
8. Would you send your children to private English lessons? Why?
9. Do you think the children in your classes use English in their everyday life? In what circumstances? Do you think they are exposed to English? Where? How?
10. In your opinion, as a teacher, is it important to teach English in grades 1 and 2? Why?
11. Generally speaking, do you think the English language is important? Why? For whom? In what ways? Explain.
12. How would you define your own English language abilities? Good, fair, weak? Explain. How do you feel about it?
13. As a teacher, have you encountered a growing demand for learning English amongst your pupils and or their parents? If so give examples and explain.
14. If so, what do you think are the reasons for their demand? Where is this demand coming from?
15. What is the basis for your impression?
16. How did/do the parents in this school react to this innovation in their children's class?
17. What is your personal opinion of this initiative?

18. What do you think about the idea of home-room teachers teaching English to their pupils versus professionally trained English language teachers? Do you think it is better? Worse? Explain.
19. What, in your opinion, are the reasons for this new idea?
20. Now that you have become part of the programme, what are your reactions to this?
How do you feel about it?
21. How do you think the pupils feel?
22. Do you think that getting an early start in English, in grades 1 and 2, is a good thing? Explain.
23. The expression “the younger the better”: Do you agree? Disagree? What is your opinion? Explain?
24. If young children grow up knowing English, how would that benefit them?
25. Do you think there is social or other type of pressure for starting to learn English at a young age in schools? How does it take place?
26. If so, what type of pressure is it? Where does it come from? What are the reasons for this? What does it mean, in your opinion?
27. Do you think this initiative takes place in other schools? If so, where?
28. Do you think parents have influence over school decisions? If so in what ways?
29. Do you think they had influence over the decision to introduce EYL in this school?
30. Is there anything else you would like to add or say relating to the issues we have been discussing?

Thank you for your time and cooperation

Appendix 6: Interview guide for parents

TRANSLATION FROM HEBREW

Name:

Age:

Number of children and their ages:

Line of work:

Questions:

1. What is your opinion regarding the English language? Is it important? Why? For whom? Explain.
2. In order of preference, how important is the English language, in your opinion?
3. Will you invest in any way, financially or otherwise, in promoting English with your children? Why? Explain, Give examples.
4. Would you send your child to private English lessons? Why?
5. What do you think about the schools' new initiative to introduce EYL in grades 1 and 2? Explain.
6. Does your child use English in his daily life? If so, give examples.
7. Is your child exposed to English in everyday life? What kind of exposure? Give examples.
8. Do you use English in your everyday life or in your workplace? Explain, give examples.
9. What would you say about your own knowledge of the English language? Good? Fair? Etc.
10. Is the knowledge of the English language considered important in your family, in your society? Why?
11. Generally speaking, is it important to know English? Why? What are the reasons?
12. If your child could grow up knowing English, how would that benefit him/her?
13. Do you think there is social or any other pressure for learning English? How does it take place?
14. If so, what type of pressure is it? Where does it come from? What are the reasons for this? What does it mean, in your opinion?
15. In what ways is the English language related to people's lives?

16. Do you think there is a connection between knowing English, opportunities for young children to learn English and success in older life?
17. In your opinion, at what age do you think English should be taught in school? Why? Explain.
18. "The younger the better". Do you agree? Explain.
19. Do you think that if young children learn English in grades 1 and 2 their English knowledge will be better in the long-run? If so, in what ways? Explain.
20. Were you involved in the schools' decision to introduce English lessons in grades 1 and 2? If so in what ways?
21. Generally speaking, are you involved in your child's school work, lessons etc? Explain.
22. Do you think parents have influence over school decisions? If so, in what ways?
23. Now that your child is learning English in grade 2, what are your expectations?
24. In what ways do you think he/she will benefit from this?
25. Is there anything else you would like to add or say on the issues we have been discussing?

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Appendix 7: Interview guide for Inspector

Questions:

1. How long have you been the chief English inspector?
2. Could you share with me the development of EYL in the school system during the time that you have been chief inspector?
3. As far as I know, English is formally introduced in grade 4 but in practice many schools begin learning English much before that – in grades 1 or 2. How can you explain this phenomenon?
4. Can you or anyone else in the office provide any statistics (numbers) of schools in which English is learned in grades 1 or 2?
5. Are the numbers growing? If so, what are the reasons for this in your opinion?
6. It seems that there is a general growing trend and demand for EYL. What do you think are the reasons for this?
7. On what grounds do you base your arguments?
8. What is your personal position about EYL in grades 1 and 2?
9. What is your professional opinion about EYL in grades 1 and 2?
10. Is there an official policy regarding EYL in grades 1 and 2? If so, what is it? If not, why not?
11. The recommendation whereby EYL in grades 1 and 2 is taught by ‘home-room’ teachers versus professional English teachers is a new one. Who was the initiator behind this? How do you feel about it?
12. What are the advantages and disadvantages to this trend?
13. In what ways were you involved in the decision?
14. How is it implemented? Could you share some examples?
15. What could be some implications on the school system?
16. What could be some implications on the people in society?
17. What are your opinions regarding the ways in which the programme is implemented?
18. Tell me more about the content of the programme. What were the considerations?
19. Do you know of any other programmes in the market? If so, which ones?
20. What is your professional opinion about them?
21. Do you believe there is competition in the market? If so, what type of competition?

22. Is there a special committee or a professional body addressing the issue of EYL in grades 1 and 2? If so, could you tell me about it? Who is on the committee?
23. Now that the EYL in grades 1 and 2 programme is being implemented in schools, what issues, if any are of special concern to you, as the chief inspector?
24. Do you think these concerns represent other officials in the Ministry?
25. What other concerns are being voiced?
26. What are your personal concerns regarding the spread of EYL in Israel?
27. How would you describe the spread of EYL in grades 1 and 2 in the country?
28. In your opinion what are the reasons for the spread?
29. Are there political issues involved? If so what are they? Explain.
30. Do you think EYL in grades 1 and 2 is a passing trend? If so, why, or why not?
31. What do you think of the axiom: "the younger the better"? Do you agree? Do you disagree?
32. Many people believe in "the younger the better" with regard to learning English. What do you think they base their opinion on?
33. Is there anything else you would like to add or say on the issues we have been discussing?

Thank you for your time and cooperation

Appendix 8: Participation Form

TRANSLATION FROM HEBREW

LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT

TO:

Name of Researcher

Dear Sir,

Re: Letter of consent for the collection of identified data

WHEREAS you are conducting research (hereinafter: the "Research") on the subject of _____, and,

WHEREAS you have asked for my consent for the collection of identified data by you in the framework of the Research (hereinafter: the "Data") regarding my son/daughter _____ (name of son/daughter),

NOW THEREFORE:

1. I hereby declare as follows:
 - A. That you have provided me and explained to me the Research goals and the topics and issues to be reviewed therein.
 - B. That you have provided me and explained to me all the required issues in the contents of which my son/daughter will participate in the context of this Research.
 - C. That you have pointed out the date by which time the identity will be deleted from the data that will be collected.
 - D. That you have explained to me all the precautions you will take to ensure the confidentiality of the identified data until such time that they would be deleted.
 - E. That you have informed me of the manner the data will be published.

Having understood all the above I hereby grant my consent for the collection of the data by you.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF:

Date _____

Name of father/Mother/teacher

Signature

Appendix 9: Transcription of interview with David and Paz.

Translation from Hebrew

David is a singer and Paz is his manager. David is 39 years old. Paz is 36. They have 2 children. Yael, 7 years old and a pupil in 2nd grade and a baby, 18 months old.

The interview took place at their home.

David, Paz and I sat around the dinning-room table (part of the kitchen). Most of the interview was conducted with David. Paz joined in from time to time. I introduced myself and we chatted casually about the purpose of my interview. I showed them the letter of consent and they 'waved' their hand as to say it doesn't matter. I then began with the first question.

R: Do you think English language is important

P: Very very much. (giggling)

D: Yes

R: Why?

D: Many reasons. First of all in our line of work **we** travel a lot overseas and the only language everyone speaks, known to everybody, or that everyone understands, at least, is English. So A: in order to manage in the world and B: Because it is the language most used in the world, in my opinion, unless the Chinese. [I: mm hm] **They** are more because there is a milliard Chinese. **But** I think that in the Western countries at least, this is the language... it's means of communication with people who don't understand your language. I'm not sure that English is more important to us than the Arabic, being in the position we live in here, eh.... **But...** At least for those of us who are looking up towards the West all the time and not necessarily to the place we live, eh... so.. from this basic position English is important.

R: What do you mean by "looking up towards the West?"

D: Eh, there are many things. I think it stems from many reasons, not just one. In my opinion the first reason is the fact that a large part of the population originally came from Western countries, with a Western mentality, together with a Western culture. Eh ..eh and therefore, on the basis of past memories and history, one thinks that is the way, and this is the right thing. I can agree or disagree with this. From the same place the most

terrible thing in the world happened. Allegedly, during the richest cultural and musical period the Nazi Germany has developed. At the same time there is this image that the **West is IT** המערב הוא הנכון . But, by the way, life constantly teaches us the opposite. **I'm developing philosophy here and I'm not sure this is in line with your doctorate**, but I'll say what I think. Life constantly teaches us the opposite. The West, of 20 all places, דוקא with the competition, and eh..eh the type of mentality, the politeness and the decadency. In all of these there is something which destroys a person's soul. The exact opposite of what is taking place in what we can call the Eastern culture, where, generally speaking, we see a basis of a healthier spirit. In the Eastern culture we see the connection with one's spirit, 24 lesser competition, lesser struggle and lesser inner struggle. More accepting, more accepting ourselves as human beings and our weaknesses. Many times even worshipping our weaknesses, accepting them positively. Something which does not exist in Western society, where weakness is considered bad. To be weak is not a good thing. Nobody wants to be considered weak. Ask kids if they want to be weak and they will answer no. Eh...eh..

R: Do you include the U.S.A in the West?

D: The U.S.A is THE symbol of the West. הכי סמל של המערב . From our position as Israelis, me personally, talking about the West, I personally prefer Europe. However, eh... but the **U.S.A is our role model. I can say that wholeheartedly, to my regret**. I don't like what is happening there. Not at all.

R: How is the English language involved in this?

D: It is all from the perception that... **It is very much connected to money, to material things, that's how I see it. Because the U.S.A means success, money, economy, eh.. all sorts of things that we look 36 up to עינינו נשואות אליהם . Size, power, and more** Because we are brought up from a very young age that we need to be strong and rich and successful and well known and god knows what- a million other things, and since early babyhood you are exposed to films in English. Films in the video, from "Shrek" to "Cinderella" these are films in English. This is also the language of all the songs you hear on the radio and 90% of the music you **hear in Israel is IN ENGLISH** Not in French etc. This means that English is very significant to our lives. If you don't know English then you don't know many things that are happening. The computer. The language of the computer, the means of communication. It is the basics (the ABC) of communication. And so the importance of English, at least in our present times, it is very basic. It is the basics.

R: Despite the fact that we do live in the Middle –East.

D: But we are disconnected. We are not REALLY in the Middle-East. Like I said the Arabic is more important in my opinion. Here we are surrounded by neighbors and people, and we are getting addicted to their mentality. If you look at the Arab Palestinians, they all speak Hebrew perfectly. They know us inside-out and that's why they are able to hurt us exactly where it hurts. So this means that language is the critical means of communication. If we alienate ourselves to their language. In other words, if we say in advance, before we even begin any negotiation: *"We don't want to speak with you. If you wish to speak with us- you learn our language. Your language doesn't count. It is inferior"*. They are a minority in our country, but a majority in our region. This is a very significant issue. **For some reason, Arabic seems inferior to us... unimportant** despite the fact that it is such a rich language. I studied extensive Arabic In high school and I know it is a beautiful, rich and wonderful language. Despite that, I myself, I don't want to be self-righteous, I don't use Arabic. All my environment is English. I don't use the Arabic.

R: Why do you think this is happening?

D: It is all an issue of demand. Issue of rating.

R: Is the demand more towards English for the lower grades?

D: Yes, It is the statistics that are brainwashing our brains on a daily basis.

R: Which statistics are you talking about?

D: Recently, two weeks ago in the papers. Statistics that said that until the age of five, or is it even less? Up until the age of five a child learns language most effectively. Up until the age of five it said so in the newspaper. Yes.

R: Yes, I saw the article

D: You get it? Up until the age of five the child's brain acquires languages in the best way. In other words, people who are over five.... We are already falling behind. My daughter is seven, and she just started... we have to catch up with something (giggling). It is a type of, **you know**...the herd phenomenon תופעת העדר . When the media is directing us towards these types of research...it is very possible that in a few years' time a new research will completely out-rule this finding and conclude that children of 10 are more mature as language learners. I don't know. However, according to what is being written today and coming from the 'herd culture' we have, we feel, **"o.k, lets not miss out on anything", or at least, "lets provide our children with the potential or the best possibilities to know the language"** [I" mm hmm] It is a type of ... every good parent want to **provide this (EYL)** to his/her child. He/she says, *ok, I will grant my child the*

maximum I can within my knowledge and my possibilities. And if people say that the best time to learn English is up until the age of five, then I will make an effort, and I will also save up, or even take private lessons and I will give him the opportunity to succeed. Again, to succeed is the style of the Western world. It means to have knowledge, to be tough. Not to be different, not to be weak

R: What about yourself, are you investing in English?

D: Sure. First of all we have already started. I explicitly plan to teach her (daughter) English in private lessons. Whatever is necessary. Again, this is due to the fact that it is important to me that my child should have all the possible conditions eh... not to be different, to be able to communicate, to feel... . It is a gift. It, knowing English is a gift, and I would like her to have this gift.

R: Mmm hm, OK.

D: I can see with myself. Had I not known English many things wouldn't have been possible.

R: When did you begin your English studies?

D: Oh, I think we started in the 6th or 7th grade.

R: So in your case your Knowledge of English is not as a result of an early start.

D: I think this is a result of a few reasons. One reason is the issue of talent. In my opinion, language is related to a person's genes and particular talent, rhythm, tempo music etc. Like there is a talent for numbers and math. Things I personally find very difficult and for others they may be simple. Such is the case with languages. I think it is the composition of the brain. One can learn math, the easy or the tough way. In my case, thanks God, I'm good with languages. I hear it a few times and somehow it 'sticks'. That's why it was easy for me to learn English at school. I only learned English in school. Not in any private framework. I communicate very well in English. There's also the computer to correct spelling errors.

{At this point Paz, David's wife joined us at the table}

R: Paz, How is your English?

P: Not very good.

R: Why is that?

P: It is a handicap.

R: A handicap...

P: A real handicap. A total handicap

Yael, the 7 year old daughter joined us around the table. Listening to the conversation we had she interfered in the middle of her mothers' words.

Y: I have an uncle who was in America for 5 years and I want to know English as well as he does. So in a few years' time you (father) will take me to America so that I will know English same as he.

R: Why?

Y: Because. ככה. .. He can read books and watch films before they come out in their Hebrew translation. He also speaks well, he can communicate with everyone. And ALSO ALSO it's not fair that the whole world talks in English and I don't understand what they are saying.

R: So you want to learn English to find out all the secrets eh? Do you understand English?

Y: No. I understand only what Gila, the teacher says.

R: Does she speak slowly?

Y: No she speaks fast, but she explains in Hebrew.

D: I think this is a wonderful subject for a PhD.

R: Is that so, Why d'you think?

D: It's very deep. It's much deeper than what one thinks. I think It's a philosophical issue. It deals with so many issues and so many reasons. If we research and look back it could very well be that the reason we learn English is totally foolish. It's like you believe in an axiom which is an untrue axiom, on the basis of which you build a whole theory. It could be the case of English for young children and we all live with this thing and accept it as a need, as a golden rule as a must, and perhaps it is a silly thing to do.

R: Could be.

D: When you look deeper and peel of the layers it's fascinating to find out and understand: *"What is happening here? Why? What is the real reason? What is our real need? Why is the situation different in other countries? Why in France it (English) is so much less significant for example?"*. In France they don't know English. And in the Arab countries? I doubt that English is compulsory there.

R: In many countries the demand for English is growing...

D: It is symbolic of countries that really want to progress and don't really like themselves. It is a type of desire to be something or someone else. Instead of investing in our language, ours... a new language in a country that has just been born. Hebrew is continuously deteriorating, isn't it? The Hebrew language of the past is not the language

of today. The poor language we hear on the radio, on T.V, and in the literature, everywhere. It is not even an issue of slang. It is simply poor -quality Hebrew. Language which we cringe at. So, instead of investing in our own language, in the basics of our own. How about we make an effort to learn our own language properly?...em.. So no, we don't. Because we don't like ourselves. I think so, I'm not sure.

R: Where does it come from, in your opinion? What are the reasons?

D: Something to do with identity, with self flagellation, with the fact we feel that we're being persecuted. We feel weak, not strong in our own right. As a result of all the things we 'carry' with us **(our background). America seems strong to us, English seems to be THE language..**

R: I see what you're saying. I wonder where you are getting this?

D: I assume that this is the result of my understanding. I come from the musical world where everyone tries to imitate the West. This topic (English in grades 1 and 2) is also a question that comes from the same 'place'. Why do we do Rock'n roll in Israel? What have we in common with rock and roll? **Chippapapalupa...(demonstrates)** What's that got to do with us? What have we with American songs? Do you watch American idol ("A star is born" is the Hebrew program)...em em... . *Yea...yea...yea... What is yea...yea... yea... Did we ever have ye...ye...ye...in the פלמ"ח (army)* We didn't have these 'shticks' . שטיקים. Why don't we connect to 'desert- type songs'? or to the Mediterranean music? Or if you wish to copy the West, so go to the Italian music, with the mandolin? Why rock and roll? Why pop? Why do we connect with things that are totally 'not us'? Not suitable for our weather, not to our clubs and not our true nature/essence. לא המהות שלנו. Not suitable to our language. You sing rock and roll in Hebrew it sound silly whatever you do, however much you try.

R: Really?

D: Yes. You say: "I love you" it sounds fantastic. It sounds great. But, "אני אוהב אותך"... (says it in Hebrew) we have gotten used to it, but it doesn't sound good. Naomi Shemer (an Israeli national singer) doesn't have songs with **אני אוהב אותך** I love you in them. You find that in pop or rock music. A sub-genre of Israeli music is beginning to develop recently. You hear it with musician such as Etty Ankri, Shlomi Shabbat, Ehud Banai, (popular Israeli singers) which is a combination of oriental music and a bit of Western music. A kind of a mix which begins to represent America. This is because we don't have something which is truly ours. Something we can hold-on to. Also because we have no respect. We have no respect to our past nor to our roots. Nor to the things that

people have done before us. Going back to Eliezer Ben Yehuda (the founder of the modern Hebrew), 'till our present day... em... musicians who have passed their 50's or 60's... Sasha Argov who recently passed away hardly noticed. Ask a young singer to sing from Shoshana Damari, and she'll laugh to your face and say "*never*", "*what are you talking about*"? However, the country which we are trying really hard to imitate is the U.S.A of America. There, they show respect to their musicians, to their artists and generally they respect their origins, dating back to country music, which is broadcasted by 30 odd radio stations, moving on to Frank Sinatra, who up until the age of 89 was on stage with millions of fans watching him. Here, in Israel, everything is 'sort-of' כאילו . We can't even copy the U.S.A properly. It's not like we take the good and the bad from them. We take only the superficial things. We take what we see on the surface, the instant'.. And then we say "*It's us*". But it's bullshit, rubbish. חרטה .

R: And how do you connect all this with English for young children?

D: It is exactly the same.

R: Explain to me.

D: First of all the English which is learned is not in-depth, high-level, literature or British poetry type of English, which you can use for reading Shakespeare or academic English. It is everyday English, communicative English. The common language. So that's the first thing. Secondly, a language represents roots. It's memories, it's the essence of life, it is something you dream in, you write in, you create in, you connect to the phonetics, to the letters, to the music. We don't have the music in English because we all speak: "*VE VANT to take a cup of coffee in the restaurant.*" (taking on a common Israeli accent with the heavy 'R') You understand? In my opinion, you lose half the impact of the language in the way you pronounce it. When you learn English, you don't have lessons in pronunciation to really learn how to say the words properly. When we travel to America we sound pathetic with our language. Like, our English sounds ridiculous.

R: It seems though, that we have no problem with that.

D: No, we have no problem also with walking around in sandals and shouting in the middle of the Louver museum. It's a question of how we relate to ourselves and the respect we give ourselves and others. It is a situation which is in between a patronizing attitude and a crazy fear from the need to be different. It is something very strange that we, Israelis have invented. It is in between an inferiority complex and a patronizing attitude. And I think the two are close. There is a fine line between them. From an inferior position you develop a type of patronization.

R: Like in the situation of lack of confidence and over confidence.

D: The situation with English is the same as in music. We copy partially, 50% 60 % . We think we are doing 'rock and roll' but in fact we are not. As far as I know, no rock song from Israel has been a success in the world.

R: What do you mean by Israeli rock music?

D: From Hemi Rodner to Aviv Gefen. (local singers) Aviv has recently joined forces with a British musician, it was a clever move, and changed the style into something more authentic. He doesn't sing himself but lets the British singer sing and this sounds much better.

R: Is it broadcasted in the radio?

D: Here and there. However, in contrast, what had been successful worldwide is Ofra Haza with a Yemenite song. Totally Yemenite: IM NINALU. Had you offered an Israeli singer to sing this type of song, no one would have agreed to do it. When was her breakthrough in the global world? When she sang an authentic Yemenite song. Afterwards, when she sang in English, she failed.

R: Ehmm.

D: What do we do? We don't learn. We carry on with the same 'look' making the same mistakes over again. The solutions are here, they are being said all the time. We don't want to learn Arabic, we prefer to invest in English.

R: Could you just explain again what you meant regarding the level of English?

D: The level of English is for communication purposes only. Popular communication only. Not the level of English sufficient for a PhD, not the English you need to understand a play in English. Definitely not.

R: I see. The Ministry of education and the G.M recommend earlier beginning of English. How do you explain that?

D: It's a question of demand. The politicians are requested to fulfill the peoples' wishes.

They (politicians?) wish to be liked (to be favored) למצוא חן . They want to be elected.

This can't be helped. They notice the vibe, the vibration that passes We are all a 'herd'

we all want our children to know English. This is very superficial. "I will vote for her if

she (the Minister) will be very good for us if she will provide English in grade 1"; so she

will give our children English in G1 The facts don't change anything. The facts haven't

changed also regarding the fact that we have gone into Gaza a 100 times to 'clean out' the area, and on the 101 time bombs (kasamim) were still thrown into Sderot. We still go in.

R: I see.

D: How about investing in other important things? In anti violence projects, in sex education or in other terrible things that happen to young children. To invest in kindergartens, things to do with welfare. [I mmm hm] We are now dealing with food. There is a donor who actually donates food to schools for hungry children. There is no budget for food but there is budget for English. OK, so I, myself, like all the Israeli people, am very pleased with that, and I am happy that my daughter will learn to communicate in English. [I – nod] Again, I don't consider myself an exception to the rule. I'm part of the rule. As Paz said, not knowing English is a handicap. This is true. It is a type of handicap in communication. It is really terrible. She sits in dinners with people from all over the world, everyone is laughing and chatting having a wonderful time telling jokes and she cannot communicate because she doesn't speak English. .

R: Is this how you feel Paz? Please, come over.

D: But to say she is less liked by people because of it? or is she less successful in business because she doesn't know English? NO, really not, rubbish.

R: You say that she conducts an international business...

D: Yes, an international business with countries from all over the world, all over the world. Believe me. Many times it's for the best that her English is not good. First... it has some charm. Secondly, things are much clearer, simpler, and less complicated. In my case too, when a professional lawyer speaks to me in fluent professional English, I myself get mixed up and don't understand 50% of what he says to me. I leave him with the feeling that I have understood, so this ends up with complications or misunderstandings. If she wants to find out something in English, she calls her sister, or someone who knows English.

R: Does your sister know English well?

P: Yes, she studied and lived abroad. It (not knowing English) is a total handicap. It is very difficult, but I have learned to manage with this handicap, like you learn to live with a wheelchair. I apologize that my English is not wonderful. I manage, like handicaps manage

R: You seem to be doing better than simply managing. You are succeeding in running the business.

P: Yes, I am successful.

R: So perhaps you don't need English to be successful.

P: No, it's not true. It would be much much easier and much more helpful knowing English well, with full control.

D: (asking Paz) Do you think you would be more successful if your English was better?

P: I didn't say more successful, I said it would be easier. Instead of writing one letter for an hour, perhaps it would take me just a few minutes.

D: Let's not talk about the difficulty. Do you think you could have been more successful if you knew English better?

P: No. No

R: So, do you need English to be successful in life?

D: No, really not *ממש לא*

P: I tell you, I don't know. I think knowing English well actually really does help.

D: To be successful?

P: Yes, I think if a person has good English, it will be much easier for him to be successful in life. It is a very important addition. I know about myself that if I had known English really well, so...

R: So?

P: 'dannow'... I could probably be more successful. I think so. Look, I get by with the English I have. Many times it's a matter of chance (luck). Often it is due to his (David's) talent that people hear about him and are interested. But it is very possible that if I knew English at a good level it would have opened additional channels. I would initiate more things, I would have liked to communicate more. You know, this (not knowing English) doesn't put me in the mood to initiate things. I deal with things and do things but I think that YES, it does matter, I DO think it makes a difference

R: So in your opinion, what other things is knowing English connected with?

D: It is obvious to me that it is a status symbol.

P: Yes, there is something in that. But I think it is a local Israeli issue. Here in Israel, in the Israeli society if you don't know English it is very strange. It is like "wow, how can that be?"

R: There are many people who don't know English.

P: Yes, but it is very strange. There is another issue that blocks you up. If you are not excellent in English you are so embarrassed to speak and you stop yourself. That's what happened with me. So it's like a vicious circle. The issue is that you need to be excellent in English not just 'ok' in order to conduct good negotiations.

D: In computers all programs are in English. In 'Windows' for example, all the concepts are totally professional concepts in English. If you don't have English on a high level you can't understand. Now, for the computer-wiz teenagers, it is a very clear language. The 18, 19 year old generation is in full command of the computer, computer language which is all in English. Moreover, the language used in music studios is words in English.[I mm...hm...] There is lots of English coming into the Hebrew. In some cases you don't know the term to use in Hebrew, they are used only in English.

R: What do you think of the expression "The younger the better"?

P: I think it's individual. Some people have more talent and capabilities for languages. But basically, for the regular person, of course it is always better to learn English at a young age.

R: Are you just saying this because you hear it a lot?

P: No, really not. First, because you accumulate more years of knowledge. And I think their (children's) learning is clearer. Their minds are less occupied.

D: So why English, specifically?

P: Because I think it is very important. For me, it is THE MOST important. You know English and math are the most important.

D: It's like the Jewish mother, you know, a lawyer and a doctor..

P: It's like the mother who wanted to dance and sends her daughter to ballet lessons instead

D: Or the mother who wants to be a singer and sends her child to a singing contest, or festival. [I- nod mm hmm]. What happens in all the singing contests? 75% of the children, I feel sorry for them. They are not really involved. It's the mother who wants to be a singer.

R: Did your mother also want to be a singer? (asking David)

P: It seems so... (giggling)

D: SHE wanted to be famous, THAT'S for sure.

R: David, and what do you think? 'the younger the better'?

D: I am formulating this thought now as we are talking.

R: If the school would offer English in your daughter's class with additional payment from parents, would you agree?

D+ P: Yes, of course we would.

P: Especially if it is in the school and I don't have to drive her.... After school (Laugh and giggle).

D: I really think that regarding the children's education, I want to be able to offer them all the possibilities. The trend is to try and do everything... the trend is for everybody to do the same. [I mm...hm...]. I remember being really awful at Physics. It frustrated me to an unbelievable degree. Because everyone put pressure on me: "*How comes you don't excel in physics?*" My parent expected me to be excellent in physics and in math. However, I was great in music. But no one took any notice of this successful side. Why would anyone notice music in school? Music lessons in school are not considered important. I am good in languages, so why should I bother with math and physics? I don't use these subjects and haven't had any use for them. Truly, I haven't used any of these subjects so I don't remember any of it. You see that I have a talent for languages, teach me Italian and French. Enrich my world in these subjects. You see that a child has love for animals, foster and develop that love. Perhaps he will be a vet. But in our society we don't do that. We are like robots. Every one has to learn math, physics, Arabic, English, literature.

R: D'you know, recently there has been a request from the municipality in Tel-Aviv that all kindergartens should begin English lessons. What is your opinion?

D: It is part of the imperviousness in the society. The society is full of 'good people' I love the people. When you meet people they are really nice. But in general, we have a society which is not tightly-knit, which doesn't stand-up for its own rights, which is not open to different worlds. A society which doesn't look for alternative solutions.

R: Ehm. What do you mean?

D: In politics today there are people whom I would not choose to be educators of my children. Truly, I wouldn't. Some of them are people I would never vote for. Regardless of the political party they represent whether from the left or from the right. I'm not a political person. In politics today there are people who embarrass me with their behavior and definitely can't be a role model. They are not people I admire or value. Now, they have the power, eh... the....the union's mentality, which says that "the longer you have a 'chair', the stronger your position becomes". They have the connections as well as many things which come as a result of being a politician in this country. They are the ones who decide.

R: But you go along with some of these decisions, when it suits your needs, as in English for your daughter.

D: Excuse me. There is a huge difference. The Jewish nation, the Israeli people have gone through much worse situations. In our country we go through terrible times, accept

tough measures, earn little salaries, the minimum wages are insufficient to keep the minimum standard of living, we pay large percentage of taxes and we work long hours. There is no other place in the world in which the prices of cars or housing are so high. In America if petrol prices rise by a cent, no one buys. There is a sense of solidarity. Does our society say anything? Again, it is a 'herd' mentality. We have gotten used to bending over. It's in the genes. We get hit, so we bend over some more, we find 'deals' דילים, איך להסתדר find ways to 'get by'. This has been the history of our lives. Had we been a nation that stands up on its feet, stands up for its rights.... **I think it comes from the position of lack of self respect, lack of self esteem.** When you really value yourself you place clear boundaries. Not to be touched here or there. When you don't really love yourself. **When you don't really believe in yourself and want to copy and be like the other, and you don't think that what you are or what you have is good enough, you don't cultivate or cherish what you have to make it worthwhile for you.** [I – nod. Mm..hmm]. **I'm really generalizing here but I think that we, as a nation, believe what people say about us, Jews, in the world: "The Jew is this or that". It's like when a parent tells his child again and again that he is worthless: "nothing will come of you..."** At a certain point, even if he (the child) is not stupid, he begins to believe that he is. We, the Jewish, Israeli people are a bit like that. We don't really like what we are or what we have. We don't really believe in what we have here. We don't REALLY value what we have created here.

I'll give another example from the music field, I'm sorry, it's the field I know. I think it comes from the position of self respect, self esteem. When you really value yourself you can place clear boundaries.

R: OK

D: Let's say a singer comes to Israel from abroad. People will go out of their minds. Tel Aviv will 'shut down'. If a great Israeli singer will perform in Tel Aviv, will they close a shop for him? No. Why? How can you explain that? Does Madonna sing better than.... than... Ofra Haza? I don't think so. **We admire and respect the DIFFERENT culture.** A singer from Turkey or Spain- we admire him/her. The main reason is because he is different. He is not OURS. He is from overseas, so we admire him. **All the more so when it comes to things from America, the country we admire and worship.**

R: So are you saying the issue of English and English for young children is another symptom of this social situation.

D: Totally so. Another symptom we carry from the Diaspora.

R: So what is the parents' role in the promotion of English?

D: If the group of parents is large enough and loud enough, they can change many things. Unfortunately, in our country, we function in line with the media. פועלים על פי התקשורת. People want to look good in the media. They want to be perceived as good people in the media. Lets say I am Gadi Sukenik, (a popular T.V news reporter), together with the owners of "Keshet" (the T.V franchise) we produce a show on prime time. We approach the Mayor of the city and tell him about this T.V. show. We say that in this big T.V production we have 2 choices. One choice is to broadcast a program in prime time in which we can present a negative picture of him and his actions. The other option is: *"in response to your funding more hours of English lessons in schools we would present a positive wonderful picture of you and your accomplishments in the city"*. I'm giving this particular city as an example, but it could be any other city. So, I think that in this particular case, he will be anxious to cover his own 'ass'. So I think parents in schools is the same.

R: Do you think principals wish to please parents?

D: It depends on the principals' personal interest. What will he or she gain from it? I think strong pressure may bring about changes. However, it is difficult to get five people to cooperate and agree on one issue, let alone all the parents of the school. I can't see the people in this country joining forces for the sake of one cause. A school is an analogy. The people in high powerful position know that it is very very difficult to get a large group of people to join forces for the sake of one cause.

R: A question re your daughter Yael. Is she exposed to English in her daily life?

D: All the time. T. V, computer. She herself is very motivated. She has absorbed it form us. We expose her Computer games, TV, we buy books in English and we tell her its important. Is this what you had in mind? We drifted in different directions.

R: I have 25 questions. We related to most of them. Thank you very much. It was very interesting.

D: For me too.

Chit chat...

D: In France, 90% of the music is in French. Same in Italy. They don't go crazy over the English, as we do.

P: But these are counties with a lot of tourism. When you go there, you can't communicate because they don't speak English.

D: Does this mean they get less tourism? No!

P: They are not interested in speaking English.

D: We should develop our own 'specialty'.

Chit-chat and goodbyes

At the door after closure

D: I don't understand that... Not all the celebrities went to Sinai (governed by Egypt today) over the holidays, but anyway, why do people ask celebrities their opinions on general or political issues? Maya Buskila...(popular Israeli singer)... a lovely girl, a good singer. Is she philosopher? Is she *הוגה* national thinker? *דעות* , People ask her opinion about politics and all sorts of things. Why? Do people think that her opinions shape society? What is this trend of asking celebrities their opinion on everything: "*Should we leave Sinai*"? When I am asked about politics I say that I have my personal opinion and I am a singer, not a politician or a public leader. It's really silly. If a certain celebrity is involved as a volunteer or as an activist in something, then it's understandable.

Appendix 10: Table of participants in the study

Number of participant	Name	Position
1.	Alice	Principal of the school
2.	Bari	Mother
3.	Dana	Girl
4.	David	Father
5.	Dean	Boy
6.	Dudu	Father
7.	Efrat	Mother
8.	Gal	Boy
9.	Galit	Mother
10.	Gila	English teacher
11.	Hen	Boy
12.	Ina	Mother, Russian immigrant
13.	Irit	English teacher
14.	Ivanof	Mother, Russian immigrant
15.	Judy Steiner (Dr.)	The Inspector of English studies, the Ministry of Education and Culture, Israel
16.	Koren, Mr.	Father, Russian immigrant
17.	Koren, Mrs	Mother, Russian immigrant
18.	Meital	Home-Room teacher for grade 2
19.	Merav	Mother
20.	Mira	Home-room teacher for grade 2
21.	Nancy	Mother
22.	Olivia	Mother
23.	Orna	Home-Room teacher for grade 2
24.	Paz	Mother
25.	Ran	Boy
26.	Ravit	English teacher
27.	Roi	Boy
28.	Ron	Boy
29.	Sarit	Mother
30.	Shiran	Girl
31.	Smadar	Mother
32.	Somech	Mother
33.	Tal	Girl