Modern Hebrew
Conflict and Military Terminology

The Language of the Israel Defense Forces

Cato Hemmingby

Master's thesis
Department of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages

University of Oslo

Autumn 2011

II

Modern Hebrew Conflict and Military Terminology

The Language of the Israel Defense Forces

Cato Hemmingby

IV

Acknowledgements

Summary

This thesis is examining Modern Hebrew conflict and military terminology – the language of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). Described by many Israelis as "a language within the language", it must necessarily possess an identity of its own through special characteristics. On this basis, the major ambition of this thesis has been to identify the special "fingerprint" of the army speak in Israel – both in regard to technical or grammatical aspects, as well as the practical use of the language. The reader also gets an insight in other various aspects of the language within the military establishment and the security and intelligence community. This includes the current status of the professional language in the armed forces, in regard to efforts made to establish a common strategic, operational and tactical language.

The language of the IDF and its predecessors has developed under almost continuous armed conflicts, starting during the first waves of Jewish immigrants over a century ago. The focus on Hebrew education has been strong due to operational factors, but it has also been a central pillar in the civil-military relations for decades. With limited influence from other languages, the language of the IDF has developed characteristics of its own, compared to the daily Hebrew used in the civil society. The major characteristics found are the extensive use of acronyms, a generous use of slang and, to a less degree, the integration of loanwords. Additionally, there are minor factors, like IDF's traditional use of numbers and naming of military material.

This thesis claims that the IDF experienced problems with the implementation of a common professional language in the post-modern period of RMA, EBO and network-centric warfare. A part of the reason is the IDF officer education, their non-academic approach in general and dislike of learning material not found in Hebrew. An imprecise and unclear language has led to poor performance in the field, as in the Second Lebanon war in 2006. Today, the IDF have initiated efforts to meet the problems identified. In some areas, like the use of a clear language when issuing orders and coordination between different arms, there are indicators of improvement. In other areas, like the establishment of a common professional language within the IDF, it is far too early to make conclusions, as it is likely to require continuous efforts over a long period of time.

Table of contents

x

1   Introduction

1.1 Transcription

In this thesis, the following system of transcription is used:

Sign	Name, Hebrew	Name, English	Phonetic value (modern)	Numerical value
א	אלף	’alef	’	1
ב	בית	bet (hard)	b	2
ב	בית	vet (soft)	v	
ג	גימל	gimel	g	3
'ג	גימל	gimel	dj	
ד	דלת	dalet	d	4
ה	הא	he’	h	5
ו	וו	vav	v	6
ז	זין	zayin	z	7
ח	חית	xet	x	8
ט	טית	tet	t	9
י	יוד	yod	i / y	10
כ	כף	kaf (hard)	k	20
כ	כף	khaf (soft)	kh	
ך	כף	word-final	kh	
ל	למד	lamed	l	30
מ	מם	mem	m	40
ם	מם	word-final	m	
נ	נון	nun	n	50

ן	נון	word-final	n	
ס	סמך	samekh	s	60
ע	עין	ʻayin	ʻ	70
פ	פא	pe' (hard)	p	80
פ	פא	fe' (soft)	f	
ף	פא	word-final	f	
צ	צדי	tsadi	ts	90
ץ	צדי	word-final	ts	
'צ	צדי	tsadi	tch	
ק	קוף	qof	q	100
ר	ריש	resh	r	200
ש	שין	shin	sh	300
ש֗	שין	sin	s	
ת	תו	tav	t	400

Regarding the quality of vowels, o is pronounced as in *malon*, meaning "hotel"; u is pronounced as in ʻ*uga*, meaning "cake". Prefixes, the definite article, the conjunction ve-/va-, as well as mono-consonantal prepositions are separated by a hyphen.

1.2 Definition of terms

As some prefer to make a distinction between *Modern Hebrew* and *Israeli Hebrew*, I will first of all emphasize that in this thesis no such distinction is made, and Modern Hebrew is used exclusively.

Regarding the definition of military terminology, The Concise Oxford English Dictionary may constitute a suitable approach. The adjective *military* is defined as; *relating to or characteristic of soldiers or armed forces*. The word *terminology* is defined as; *the body of terms used in a subject of study, profession etc.*[1] By melting these two terms together, and thus adapting the definition of military terminology accordingly, the result is a wide-ranging group of terms. To give an example the Joint publication 1-02 *Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* by the US Department of Defense is consisting of nearly 600 pages of relevant terms.[2]

Additionally, the title of this thesis is Modern Hebrew Conflict and Military Terminology, and the observant reader will notice that the term *conflict* is added. This is done in order to obtain the possibility to bring in non-military terms within security policy, civil-military relations, decision-making processes and negotiations, as these are subjects that almost with no exception appear in the context of any military conflict.

1.3 Studying "a language within the language"

For anyone monitoring the ongoing conflicts in the Middle East in general, or the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) in particular, knowledge of Modern Hebrew is of great value, as it clearly increases the possibility to benefit from first-hand, original sources in Israel, in whatever form they may occur. This includes human sources, professional literature, research reports, military magazines, internet resources, central archives and Israeli media. However, every foreign Hebrew-speaker will sooner or later experience that the Hebrew army speak, or the military vocabulary in general, is what the Israelis themselves characterize as "a language within the language". Many Israelis will claim that a non-native will have great difficulties understanding this part of Modern Hebrew, especially due to the extensive use of slang, and even be of the opinion that you actually have to do service in the IDF, in order to get a grip of

---

[1] *The Concise Oxford English Dictionary* (2006), pages 905 and 1487.
[2] Joint publication 1-02 *Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, DoD, 08.11.2010.

it. For most non-natives this is neither possible nor desirable, and the obvious solution is to search for accessible learning material covering the military sphere.

The IDF do have learning material they use internally, in order to educate their soldiers with no or poor Hebrew knowledge, but this material is not publicly accessible. In addition to this, there is very little academic learning material to find regarding Modern Hebrew military speak and terminology. Regarding slang and informal language there are bits and pieces on the internet, but the quality is rarely satisfactory. This fact actually triggered an interest of looking closer at the language of the Israel Defense Forces and it culminated in this thesis, where the primary question to be answered is; what are the special characteristics of Modern Hebrew military terminology and army-speak? This approach is based on the simple assumption that any "language within a language", must necessarily possess some major characteristics that create a noticeable distinction versus the normal, established language in a society.

Inevitably, this work also leads to secondary findings of interest. One is an insight in the historical development of the language of the Jewish armed forces from 1900 and until the present day. Likewise, it is important to look at the status of the language through the decades, in regard to degree of attention, resources and the primary motives for this. Very interesting is also the current trends of the professional language within the IDF, for example in regard to a common and clear language in the chain of command, on all levels. This is in fact a critical issue, because it may have a direct impact on the performance of the troops during operations. As a whole, it is therefore appropriate to emphasize that this thesis is not, in a linguistic perspective, technically based, but rather focused on identifying the distinctiveness of the Hebrew military language and the practical use of it.

1.4 The basic structure of this thesis

There are a lot of different factors affecting the development of a specific language thorough a century or more. Regarding Modern Hebrew and the Jews, factors like multi-ethnic backgrounds, several waves of immigration, influence from other states, continuously conflicts, as well as the modern development in general, are just some examples on factors that have played a significant role. Accordingly, these are all elements that have made an impact on the professional language of the Israel Defense Forces.

4

Regarding the structure of this thesis, I have chosen to include an introductory part, covering the general history of the pre-1948 Jewish armed forces and the IDF, as this knowledge is useful in order to understand under which circumstances the military language has developed. This is taken further in the next chapter, where it is described how the military language evolved, and also how the IDF focused on learning Hebrew to new immigrants enrolled in the military organization. Both operational or tactical aspects, as well as civil-military relations, are essential factors in this context, and they also represent areas that have changed noticeably from the early days of the IDF and until today.

The identified, major characteristics of the army-speak and the military language of the IDF, which is the outspoken core of this thesis, are presented in a chapter of its own. The use of acronyms is disclosed in a comparative study of military and ordinary literature. Furthermore, a study of articles in the IDF-magazine *Ba-maxane* (In the camp) has been used to categorize the military acronyms, in order to identify areas where acronyms are used with a high frequency, in contradiction to other areas. A look into the field of intelligence, and more specifically a wordlist from the official website of Mossad, puts the tradition of foreign loanwords in focus, before the tradition of slang within the ranks of the army is examined. In addition to these subjects, certain other minor aspects have been included like the use of spelling alphabets, numeric values, naming of military material and identification of IDF vehicles.

The professional language of the IDF is an interesting topic and certainly not a subject without problems. It is important in regard to the function of the whole institution and crucial in the area of command and control. As this thesis will disclose, their general attitude towards Hebrew versus foreign influences is also playing a part concerning this area. Since this thesis covers the military area, I also found it relevant to make a note of Hebrew as a language in the region as a whole, as the neighboring countries, militant organizations and terrorists have an increasingly focus on Hebrew. But for the ordinary Palestinians, the Hebrew language is also almost a necessity in their daily communication with the Israeli security forces and police.

Finally, a military word list is included, in order to present a selection of Hebrew military terminology used within the different levels and parts of the Israeli Defense Forces.

1.5 A variety of sources

To perform a linguistic research in a professional environment that is rather closed for non-natives represents an attractive challenge. Regarding the language of the IDF, this is especially the case when it comes to the spoken word, and even more so in regard to informal speech, which represents a major element in this context. In this area, human sources have been most important, and this includes both linguistic and military expertise. Within the linguistic field this has included Hebrew and Semitic experts at different universities in Norway and Israel. Regarding the military field, Norwegian military institutions have been helpful regarding to obtain necessary general military knowledge and understanding. Concerning the IDF, both institutions inside the IDF, former-IDF personnel and Israeli researchers and their institutions have been of great value. In this context, several field-trips to Israel, visiting institutions and meeting people of different military and academic background, have been important. Due to limitations in time, extensiveness and frequency, the research-material based on human sources is clearly of a qualitative character.

Regarding written material there is not so much to find about linguistic aspects of the Modern Hebrew military language, but on military literature in general there is a variety of relevant material in different forms. Here, the challenge may rather be to collect an adequate and appropriate specter of material, as it should represent and reflect the language in the different levels and branches of the Israeli military community. In this work both books, research reports, military magazines and newspaper articles have been essential and here also, the field-trips have contributed to the obtaining of Hebrew material that is not available outside Israel. Another source of information is the websites of the IDF, other related services and research centers that can give insight in the formal military language. In addition to this, there are private sites and blogs that may be useful in regard to the informal speech, although they demand thorough cross-checking with acknowledged sources. Finally, to disclose the special characteristics of Modern Hebrew conflict and military terminology, the research material must include standard Hebrew literature in order to execute comparative studies.

As a whole, the gathering of relevant material to a thesis about the military language of the Israel Defense Forces, the greatest challenge is related to the spoken word, and in particular slang. On the other hand, the access to all types of written material is very good and here it is most important to make an appropriate selection, based on the chosen subject of the thesis.

2 The History of the IDF

Everyone involved in studies related to the Israeli army, should be familiar with the background and fundament for the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). This is also important when the language of the IDF shall be viewed in a historical context, in order to understand under which circumstances the language has developed. However, in order to obtain a more complete picture it is natural to begin with the *First Aliya,* taking place from 1882 to 1904, when the first wave of Jewish immigrants came from Eastern Europe to Palestine. They created the infrastructure for the new Jewish settlement in Palestine, known as the *yishuv*, with a population rising in the period from 25 000 to 55 000 Jews (Goldstein 1998: 8). Many immigrants came motivated to cultivate the land and established small villages, called *moshavot,* where each farmer cultivated his piece of land. The culture clash was unavoidable as the Jews were accustomed to land ownership with clear boundaries, while their Arab neighbors used any terrain not cultivated - in addition to the general hostility against what they saw as intruders on their land. The security situation was bad, the Ottoman rulers could not offer protection for settlements, and potential Jewish help was too far away. The consequence of this was that every *moshav* by itself had to establish security arrangements.

After a while the protection of the villages came under the aegis of Baron Rotschild, based on dialogue with the Ottoman rulers. The arrangement was not ideal, and many places local Arabs, Bedouins and Circassians performed the guard duty. Major trouble was avoided, but theft and quarrels occurred (Goldstein 1998: 11). When Rotschild transferred his interests in the *moshavot* to the *Jewish Colonization Association* (JCA) under Baron Hirsch, the security situation deteriorated. The Jewish settlers were often forced to negotiate local solutions, and this led to the revitalization of old ideas on how to arm and train the Jewish settlers, in order to achieve satisfactory protection.

2.1 Pre-1948: The forerunners of the IDF

During the *Second aliya* from 1904 to 1914, as 40 000 new Jewish immigrants entered Palestine, a significant change took place regarding the security for the settlers. During the biblical holiday *Sukkot* in September 1907, an organization aimed at the rise of a Jewish nation, cultivation of land and self-protection was established in Jaffa. The clandestine movement was given the name *Bar-Giora*, after the Jewish leader from the First Jewish-

Roman War that took place year 66-70 BC, and they operated primarily in the Galilee region. After a while someone thought, including some of the founders of Bar-Giora, that the concept of security and defense should be expanded to all Jewish communities in Palestine. At the same time the Young Turk revolution of July 24th 1908 and other outside factors changed the general situation in the Ottoman Empire. Ultimately three major factors led to the transition from Bar-Giora to the foundation of *Hashomer*, meaning "the watchman", in 1909. These were the ideological stance of Poale Zion party, increasing Arab nationalism and that the tension between Arabs and Jews increased. Finally, the success of Bar-Giora's clandestine activity led to the efforts for a legal organization with greater opportunities (Goldstein 1998: 34). Most members of Bar-Giora were absorbed by the new organization.

2.1.1 The development of Hashomer

Hashomer developed successfully the first few years and operated in other districts, as well as Galilee, protecting *moshavot* with Jewish guards. The rules of admittance of new members led to an elitist profile of the organization, which solved the manpower problem by employing paid guards. In the peak years of 1912-1913 the members of Hashomer commanded hundreds of employees. But the costs were high and some *moshavot* went back to Arab guarding or used local Jewish men. In addition to this, a few and often short-lived organizations surfaced outside Hashomer, as *Hanoter* and *Hamagen.* Hashomer was not spared for internal disputes and this weakened the organization (Goldstein 1998: 42-47). During WWI many were sent to Anatolia by the Ottoman rulers and the elitist profile of the organization, secrecy, funding methods and party affiliation again boosted the fractioning within Hashomer.

The fall of the Ottoman Empire in WWI resulted in a Middle-East divided between the British and the French. The British Mandate of Palestine was formally confirmed by the League of Nations on July 24th 1922.[3] For 25 years the British were to experience that the Middle-East is as difficult to handle for outsiders, as it is for insiders.

2.1.2 Haganah becoming the major defense establishment

In 1920 it was decided to establish *Haganah* as the major defense establishment with national goals. The Jewish leadership saw a rising need for a large, well-organized force in order to

---

[3] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/League_of_Nations. Read 22.02.2011.

protect the increasing Jewish population and settlements, and after the Arab riots in 1920 few thought the British would confront the Arab gangs adequately. During the 1920s Haganah's central authority was limited, but this changed with the Palestine riots in 1929, and from then Haganah expanded vastly in size. The organization required weapons locally and from abroad, and the transition from a loosely organized militia to an underground army was a fact. Increasing political control and focus on self-defense and constraint in regard to counter-attacks against the Arabs, led to an outbreak in 1931 with the formation of *Etzel* (also called *Irgun*), but Haganah's position as the primary Jewish defense force was never threatened.

During the Arab revolt from 1936 to 1939 Haganah supported the British forces. The British never formally acknowledged the organization, but they cooperated with it. They also established Jewish police units and the Special Night Squads, led by the eccentric Colonel Orde Wingate, even admired by Winston Churchill (Bierman, Smith 2001: 135).

In 1941 Haganah established the elite fighting unit *Palmax*, a Hebrew acronym for *plugot maxats*, meaning "strike force". The unit strengthened Haganah's operational capacity, as well as the Jewish national culture and ethos. During WWII many Jews served with the Allied forces, like the Jewish Brigade in the British Army, established in 1944. The Jewish armed organizations profited greatly from this later.

2.2 Post 1948: The Israel Defense Forces

After the declaration of the State of Israel on May 12th 1948, Prime Minister Ben Gurion ordered the establishment of the Israel Defense Forces. This happened on May 26th and the leadership from Haganah and Palmax moved over (Cohen 202: 164). Minor groups, as Lexi and Etzel, were integrated, although incidents in the past strained on the relationship between the former Haganah-leadership and Etzel.[4] This culminated in the *Altalena affair* in June, when the ship *Altalena* was shelled by the Israeli army outside Tel Aviv, as those aboard refused to hand the weapons over to the IDF. 16 Etzel-fighters and 3 IDF-soldiers died, and this is still a dark episode in Israel's history.

---

[4] *Lexi* is the Hebrew acronym for the *Fighters for the Freedom of Israel*, also called *the Stern-gang,* after their leader Avraham Stern, who was shot dead by the British Mandate police in 1942. Lexi was commonly regarded as the most extreme Jewish underground group.

The War of Independence began November 1947 after the UN partition plan for Palestine. The fighting with the Palestinians intensified during the winter, and after the declaration of the State of Israel in may 1948 the Arab states immediately attacked. The Israeli army stood against the immediate pressure and after some major offensive IDF-operations, in October and December 1948, the Arab countries signed Armistice agreements in January 1949. About 6000 Israelis lost their lives in the War of Independence, making it the most costly war in Israel's history, regarding human losses.[5] For the Palestinians the war was a catastrophe, and instead of a nation, they ended up with the giant Palestinian refugee problem, known as the *Nakba,* meaning disaster. The number of refugees was about 700 000, and the refugee problem continues to be a key issue in the Israel-Palestinian conflict (Morris 2004: 604).

The War of independence was succeeded by troubles along the perimeters of the new state. Illegal border-crossings were a result of the Palestinian refugee-problem, although most did not have a militant character (Kimmerling, Migdal 2003: 177). From 1949 to 1952 the militant infiltrations became more extensive and soon represented Israel's primary security concern. In July 1953 IDF established Unit 101, led by Ariel Sharon, in order to conduct retaliation-operations and with soldiers like Meir Har-Zion, named as Israel's finest elite soldier by Moshe Dayan, the unit achieved a legendary status.[6] But after the Qibya-massacre in Jordan in 1953, Unit 101 was integrated into the 890th parachute battalion. The retaliations did not stop the border-crossings, but the policy succeeded to a certain degree, until President Nasser's Egypt grew stronger (Shimshoni 1988: 225). After IDF's operation in Gaza February 28th 1955, the tension between Israel and Egypt increased. After the Sinai-campaign in 1956, the *fedayeen* kept away from Gaza, and the other borders became quiet. Israel, with a growing number of causalities, concluded that large scale-operations were not cost-effective and ended this strategy (Morris 2005: 198). After the Suez-crisis in 1956, where Israel, Great Britain and France, tried to coordinate a beneficial outcome behind the back of Washington through *Operation Musketeer*, the situation became status quo.

2.2.1 A pro-active attack against Egypt, 1967

The Six-Day War took place between June 5th and June 10th 1967, after a period of escalating tension between Israel and Egypt, Syria and Jordan. The war started as the Israel Air Force

---

[5] Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, http://www.mfa.gov.il. Retrieved 03.02.2011.
[6] Har-Zion is well described in *Follow Me* (Katz) and *Israel's Border Wars* (Morris).

(IAF) executed a preemptive strike against Egypt, destroying their counterpart's forces still on the ground. With Israeli air superiority, neither Syria's or Jordan's involvement could change the outcome. The Egyptians had massive losses in the Sinai Peninsula and the Syrians were pushed back after fierce battles on the Golan Heights. Israel gained total control of the Gaza Strip, the Sinai Peninsula, the Golan Heights, the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Yet again had the Jews access to the holy Western Wall – the invaluable link to the Second Temple. The Arab unity and *nasserism* collapsed, their military machinery was crushed and the financial situation was catastrophic. The war created a new wave of Palestinian refugees to the Arab states, and the victorious Israelis got a boost of self-confidence and feeling of superiority - not to be exceeded ever since. After the Six-Day War, the War of Attrition between Egypt and Israel came into being. It was dominated by artillery shelling, small incursions and retaliatory air force strikes, but the hostilities ceased in 1970, after President Sadat's take-over.

Israel was taken by surprise when the Arab coalition led by Egypt and Syria, attacked October 6th 1973, during the Jewish holy day, Yom Kippur. The Egyptians crossed the Suez Canal and fortified their positions on the Suez Peninsula, while the Syrians confronted the outnumbered Israelis on the Golan Heights. The Israelis were pressured through the first week, but managed to initiate an offensive against the Syrians. This forced the Egyptians to move, creating openings for an Israeli counterattack, going deep into Egypt. The Superpower interest in the region led to the ending of the war on October 25th. Due to the success early in the campaign, the Arab states restored their dignity to a certain degree, while the Israelis were reminded that they were not invincible, although the efforts of the IDF had been impressive.

The 1970s were affected by the Palestinians' resort to terrorism, but the relations to Egypt improved after the peace agreement between the two countries. The situation in the north was unstable due to the Palestinians in South-Lebanon, and in 1978 the IDF pushed the PLO back in South-Lebanon with *Operation Litani*. The south of Lebanon became UN-controlled area, with deployment of the UNIFIL (United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon).

In June 1982, the IDF initiated *Operation Peace for Galilee* and invaded South-Lebanon, as a response to Palestinian terrorism and militant activity against Israel. The IAF destroyed the Syrian Air Force completely in a legendary manner, and gained total air superiority. The IDF planned to push PLO 40 km back from the Israeli border, but the ground forces went all the way to Beirut. The *Sabra* and *Chatila* incidents, where over 800 Palestinians were killed by Lebanese Christian militia, upset the whole world. The PLO was forced to relocate its fighters

to different countries, and Yassir Arafat and the leadership went to exile in Tunisia. The IDF established a security zone in the south, where they remained until May 2000. The majority of the Israeli population and many military officers supported the act when it took place, but the hasty retreat gave an impression that Israel left with the tail between her legs. This weakened the reputation, moral and pride of the IDF as Hezbollah could claim their first major victory.[7]

2.2.2 The Palestinian uprisings

The first *Intifada*, the uprising starting in 1987 in the Gaza Strip, quickly expanded to the West Bank and East-Jerusalem. It was initially a popular and unorganized resistance against the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories, as a result of the political stalemate between Israel and the PLO, combined with the Palestinians' lack of trust in the PLO-leadership in exile and general despair. The period was dominated by the popular non-violent disobedience, armed resistance against Israel and intra-Palestinian violence. About 1100 Palestinians were killed by IDF, 164 Israelis were killed by the Palestinians, and about 1000 Palestinians were killed by Palestinian militants as collaborators.[8] The uprising came as a surprise on Israel and was to have great impact on the IDF for decades to come. They now had to use great resources on the Palestinian problem, and restructure from conventional warfare to Low-Intensity Conflict (LIC). The violent resistance dominated until 1991, but ceased after the Oslo Accord in 1993.

The Second Intifada began late September 2000, ignited by Ariel Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount. However, the deeper reasons were probably the failure of the Camp David Summit in July 2000, Yassir Arafat's postponing of a unilateral declaration of an independent Palestinian state and the ever-present economic and social problems for the population. From 2001 to 2003 Israel suffered a wave of terrorist attacks inside its borders, and started the construction of the so-called Security fence (partially concrete wall). This was accompanied by curfew regulations, numerous checkpoints, targeted killings, and military and political pressure on the Palestinian Authority (PA). From 2004, the Palestinian attacks inside Israel decreased dramatically and in 2005 Ariel Sharon pulled Israel out of the Gaza Strip. In January 2006 Hamas came to power on the Gaza Strip and the internal fight between the PA and Hamas has

---

[7] *Israel still paying for Lebanon pull-out*, Yaakov Katz, Jerusalem Post. Retrieved 25.05.2010.
[8] http://www.phrmg.org/monitor2001/oct2001- collaborators.htm. Retrieved 02.02.2011.

dominated the intra-Palestinian scene since. In Israel, the situation normalized the next few years, and there has never been an exact date for the ending of the Second Intifada.

2.2.3 The war leading to a renewed IDF

The withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000 did not end the conflict with Hezbollah, who continued to attack across the borders. The Second Lebanon war started on July 12, 2006, as Hezbollah fired rockets as a diversion and simultaneously attacked an IDF-patrol inside Israel, abducting two IDF-soldiers. An immediate rescue attempt resulted in more dead Israeli soldiers and Israel initiated shelling and air strikes, destroying Lebanon's infrastructure, before a broader ground operation was initiated. Hezbollah gave the Israelis unexpectedly hard resistance and managed to keep up the short-range rocket attacks on Northern Israel. Ultimately, IDF pushed Hezbollah on to the defensive and after 34 days, an UN-brokered cease-fire went into effect. The Lebanese Army took control of the border-area against Israel, combined with UN-forces. The IDF's performance during the war, examined by the Winograd-commission, disclosed serious political and military weaknesses. Chief of Staff (CGS) Dan Halutz and Minister of Defense Peretz had to leave office, the standard of the IDF was questioned and the moral among the forces got slammed. In this respect, Israel's major outcome from the war was the following restructuring and up-grading of its forces, under the command of the new CGS Gabi Ashkenazi. The IDF's underlying need to prove its capabilities in combat again, was redeemed two and a half years later against Hamas.

Autumn 2008 the frequency of rocket attacks from the Gaza Strip into Israel increased, escalating the conflict between Israel and Hamas. 27 December 2008 IDF launched *Operation Cast Lead*, starting with air strikes and artillery shelling, followed by a ground invasion 3 January 2009. The ground forces were well-prepared and the infantry, engineers and tanks operated in an integrated manner, advancing slowly and controlled – meeting only limited resistance from Hamas. The fighting soon reached dense populated areas, but the Israeli government decided not to go deeper into the Gaza Strip and ended the operation January 18, after a unilateral Israeli cease fire. IDF left 600-700 dead Hamas fighters behind, while only 13 IDF soldiers fell – 4 of them due to friendly fire.[9] The high number of Palestinian civilian casualties and the massive destruction of infrastructure and populated areas, led to harsh international criticism against Israel.

---

[9] *Hamas admits losing more than 600 men*, Haaretz, 01.11.2010. Retrieved 17.01.2011.

The Israel Defense Forces learned an important lesson during the Second Lebanon war, and that was that the IDF must be ready for the whole specter of threats and enemies. Opponents can appear in form of a state, a non-state actor with state-like military capacity, militant movements, terrorist groups or popular movements of a civilian character. This means the IDF has to master different scenarios, as conventional warfare, hybrid warfare, low-intensity conflicts, counter-terrorism and policing. This demands a dynamic organization with adequate manpower, which is well-equipped, regularly trained and, most of all, well-coordinated in operations. During *Operation Cast Lead* it was possible to observe indicators that the IDF had succeeded with some of the adjustments made after 2006, like the coordination between the ground forces and the air force.[10] However, in a strictly operational context, the character of the conflict, the capacity of the enemy and the short duration, makes it difficult to draw definitive conclusions, in regard to the current operational standard of the IDF.

When it comes to civil-military relations the IDF differs from most NATO- and EU-forces. The links to the civil society are still strong, much thanks to the general conscription and length of service. If we look at the shift of paradigm, where European forces after the Cold War have left the *Napoleonic paradigm* and gone into the *New paradigm*, it can be argued that the IDF has a foot in both.[11] However, it is a fact that Israeli army faces many civil-military challenges on a number of subjects, like the political influence of the military, the system of conscription, the length and character of reserve duty, women career opportunities, sexual harassment, homosexuals in the army, religious issues and so on.[12]

The current situation in the Middle East is not likely to lead to any major changes in regard to Israel's strategic military thinking and security policy. The basic idea of security and deterrence through superior military power will remain, and the present uncertainty in the whole region may actually provide the Israeli leadership with stronger legitimacy, if they decide to make the IDF even stronger than they are today. Iran continues to represent the highest existential threat, but lately, the ambivalent relationship to Turkey and the regional disturbances in Egypt, Syria and elsewhere, have stressed the importance for Israel to keep the guard up, due to the fact that today's friendly neighbors might be gone tomorrow.

---

[10] Based on own observations on location, during the first days of the ground operation.
[11] Interviews with Sverre Diesen, Stuart A. Cohen and Yehuda Ben-Meir, November 2010.
[12] Stuart A. Cohen covers these issues excellent in *Israel and its Army* (2006).

14

3   Modern Hebrew in the armed forces

This chapter illustrates the development of Modern Hebrew in the armed forces. This includes the pre-state period from 1900 to 1948, and the following decades with the Israel Defense Forces until today.

3.1 Influence during the British Mandate period

In the pre-state period, the Jews of Palestine did not have a regular army, although the Haganah was state-like in its appearance late in the period. As described earlier, the first armed Jewish forces were established in order to protect agricultural settlements, first and foremost thorough the organizations Bar-Giora and Hashomer. These were, however, small in size and they were basically not large enough to possess a type of military language that differed from ordinary Modern Hebrew, used by the civilians in the daily life. As such, the focus has to be turned to the general development, when it comes to the first part of the period.

During the First Aliyah, taking place from about 1881 to 1903, the revival of spoken Hebrew was a major issue. Initially though, it should be pointed out that *Mendele Mokher Sefarim*, living in Eastern Europe, by many is regarded to be the creator of Modern Hebrew. But he saw his development of Hebrew as a literary medium only, and was not interested in the revival of Hebrew as a spoken language (Kutscher 1982: 192). Instead, different societies with that as a declared goal came into being in Eastern Europe at the end of the nineteenth century. That said, these were never close to succeed into making Hebrew a spoken language in Europe, but in Palestine the conditions were better in order to achieve such an ambitious goal, and that was to be the lifework of Eliezer Ben Yehuda and his associates. The expertise involved was well aware that Sephardim's basic Hebrew was not sufficiently developed, and so the Hebrew Language Committee was established in 1889, as a supreme advisory body. It would work after the following basic principles (Kutscher 1982: 194):

1. To search diligently among the Hebrew sources – BH, MH, Piyyutim and Medieval scientific and translation Hebrew.
2. To fill the void by creating new words.
3. To have recourse also to Aramaic and where necessary, to other Semitic languages, especially Arabic.

These principles were according to the views of Eliezer Ben Yehuda and his circle, and slowly the persistent work started to show results. During the Second Aliyah the language was used more consequent in public and official settings, including by distinguished persons, as David Ben Gurion. It became clear that Hebrew as a common, spoken language was a realistic goal and the immigrants played an important role in consolidating this. According to Kutscher, 25 000 of the 85 000 Jews living in Palestine in 1914, spoke Hebrew. In places with many immigrants, as in towns and agricultural settlements, 75% were Hebrew speakers, but in cities dominated by old Yishuv inhabitants the percentage numbered only 5%. Note also that 60% of the inhabitants of Ashkenazi origin and more than 60% of Yemenite origin spoke Hebrew. For other Sephardic communities the percentage was much lower, as they preferred Ladino and Arabic (Kutscher 1982: 266).

When the British Mandate Period was a fact, Modern Hebrew was established as the main language among the Jews in Palestine, both in spoken and written form. It was strengthened further through the official status during the British Mandate, even though it took years to put this into practice in the bureaucracy (Kutscher 1982: 266). At the same time it surfaced a pressure among the Jews themselves, to use Hebrew on the streets.[13] Several movements and organizations engaged themselves in activities that strengthened the Hebrew skills of the population, and both Hebrew high-schools and the Hebrew University were established in this period.

The British presence in Palestine, from the First World War until 1948, had a direct influence on the Hebrew language itself, and especially through single-word adaption from British English and slang expressions. Regarding the first category, the English word *mess-tin*, represents a peculiar example.[14] It was taken into Hebrew as a foreign loanword, as many other terms, but for an unknown reason the letter *gimel* was added at the end. So in Hebrew, the word mess-tin became מסטינג (*mestin*). To illustrate an example within the slang-category, and also related to army-speak, we can look at the expression שאלת קיטבג (*sh'elat qit beg*), which derives from the English word "kit bag" (an army bag for clothes and equipment) and the Hebrew word for question.[15] It is used to describe an unnecessary question, most often with a negative or destructive consequence. Like a soldier asking his commander if he have to

---

[13] http://en.wikipedia.org Revival of the Hebrew language. Retrieved 09.03.2011
[14] Professor Ora Schwarzwald, interview 16 November 2010.
[15] A well-known slang expression in the IDF. Rosenthal 2006, s.v. שאלת קיטבג

16

carry his heavy, personal kit (as a "kit bag") during a change of position on foot. First of all, it is obvious that he shall do so, and secondly, if the commander did not think of it in the first place, the soldier reminds him.

3.1.1 The Jewish underground with impact

In the 1930s and 1940s, the Jewish underground forces, represented by Haganah and Palmax, became stronger. They involved thousands of people and began to have an impact on the Hebrew language, when it comes to military terminology. Palmach inductees from difficult backgrounds would often lack basic education, but they were given Hebrew lessons, like at the summer camp for recruits at Kibbutz Ayelet Hashachar (Drory 2005: 213).

In addition to broaden the military vocabulary of Modern Hebrew, the Jewish underground forces introduced some loanwords into the language. A good example is the introduction of Arabic loanwords by Palmax. This unit, which sometimes operated under disguise, was in frequent contact with Bedouins and it became fashionable for their members to imitate the Arabs, and that is the reason why often-used Arabic terms found their way into Modern Hebrew (Kutscher 1982: 210). One example is פינג'אן (*pindjan*), meaning "coffeepot" (Rosenthal 2006: 302). Another is צ'זבאת (*tchizbat*), meaning "tall tale", as Bedouins practiced around their camp fire at the time (Kutscher 1982: 210).

A factor worth mentioning in regard to the consolidation of Modern Hebrew among the Jews in Palestine is the printed word. The Israelis have always been fond of literature and culture in general, and they also have an impressive tradition of running military magazines. This fact has surely contributed to improving the military terminology among soldiers and others, from the beginning in the 1930s and until the present. In 1934, Haganah started publishing the underground magazine *Ba-maxane* (eng. in the camp) which has been published weekly ever since. It is the soldiers' magazine, with news and short stories, covering different topics and units. Published in Hebrew, it has always strengthened the Hebrew skills among the soldiers with poor Hebrew knowledge. Among the famous writers of the magazine we find former Prime Minister Ehud Olmert.[16]

---

[16] http://he.wikipedia.org – *Ba-Maxane*, retrieved 09.03.2011.

3.2 The IDF teaching Hebrew from the start

At the end of May 1948, Israel formally established the Israel Defense Forces. In these troubled times the Jewish armed forces continued to consist of personnel well established in Palestine, as well as immigrants from different parts of the world. Many of them did not speak Hebrew, and the new military organization acknowledged from the start that efforts had to be made to address the problem. The overall motivation for this can be seen in two contexts (Drory 2005: 213).

- *The nation-building role of the IDF*. The Israel Defense Forces was from the very beginning a central pillar of the newborn state, and contributed in many ways concerning civil-military relations. The organization absorbed most of the new immigrants and prepared them in many ways for the civil society. Teaching them Hebrew was essential in this context.

- *The tactical and operational aspect*. As a military organization, it was of crucial importance that the soldiers understood and spoke Hebrew fairly well, in order to function properly during peacetime and war.

In order to get the resources needed and achieve good results concerning matters of national importance, it is most often a condition that efforts are deeply rooted on the highest political echelon. That was definitely the case regarding Hebrew teaching in the Israel Defense Forces.

Any study of the IDF in the nation-builder role could probably begin with the influence of the undisputed leader and first prime minister of the State of Israel, David Ben-Gurion. This is also the case regarding Hebrew in the IDF, because the statesman's interest in Hebrew did not come overnight, but was indeed founded in his own background. Young David was introduced to Zionism, as well as Hebrew, during his childhood in Plonsk in Polish Russia. It was a small Jewish community and Ben-Gurions grandfather, Zvi Aryeh Gruen, happened to be a pious man with a special interest in languages. He spoke Hebrew, German, Polish and Russian, with a special affection for the first mentioned. A natural consequence was that Ben-Gurion's father, Avigdor Gruen, also became a skilled Hebrew speaker and little David could therefore learn the language on the lap of at least two very qualified sources.

"It was from my father that I inherited my love for the Land of Israel… and for the Hebrew language" (Bar-Zohar 2003: 3).

As a youth David also engaged himself in the Ezra Society which spread spoken Hebrew, and he also became an active Zionist. The love for Hebrew followed David Ben-Gurion to Palestine and author Bar-Zohar actually calls him a "fanatical Hebraist" (Bar-Zohar 2003: 18). In short, the statesman understood the potential in promoting Hebrew as a great identity-factor for the Jewish people and as a nation-binder. This anchoring on the highest political echelon in Israel did probably have a huge impact.

3.2.1 Hebrew classes, military magazines and army radio

The first years after the establishment of the State of Israel represented a great challenge for the political leadership, both practically and socially. The first three-and-a-half years 700 000 immigrants came to Israel, and with them a variety of traditions, culture and languages (Drory 2005: 138). The only common factor was their Jewish identity, and for those of a certain age, the Israeli army became their school of life in the Middle East. Unnecessary to point out, the situation during the War of Independence was periodically critical and unstable, and thus it was difficult to facilitate organized Hebrew-classes. However, the intention was nevertheless present. David Ben-Gurion noted in his diary August 30, 1948:

"The Labor Ministry has hired 250 teachers to teach Hebrew to soldiers. After the summer vacation, a unit for this purpose must be mobilized. There are tens of thousands soldiers who are in need of Hebrew lessons".

Due to the challenging conditions at the time, the IDF experienced a lot of difficulties and in March 1949 the army came up with an alternative and less ambitious plan, called Operation Hebrew. The intention of this was that each man and woman without any knowledge of Hebrew, in a short time, should learn a defined, short list of Hebrew terminology – approximately 1500 words. The responsibility was given to the unit commanders, with orders that everyone should get at least six hours a week, while the overall responsibility for the operation was held by the Educational Department of the Cultural Service (Drory 2005: 214). The department sent out personnel to the brigades and independent units in order to achieve the results wanted, and the teaching was organized in different ways in the field – probably due to the shifting conditions the troops experienced. In some units the Hebrew teaching was

implemented into the daily training schedule, while others chose to run more concentrated courses. From an educational point of view, it is interesting to note that the latter model was more successful, compared to the first one (Drory 2005: 215).

The military magazines have been previously mentioned as an important source regarding expanding the soldier's military vocabulary, and they continued to be so from the start of the IDF. In fact, the IDF commanders were issued a standing order to read selected passages from *Bamahane* to the soldier once a week, and the squad leaders were to read articles from the newspaper Omer, a vocalized easy-read paper, on a daily basis (Drory 2005: 201). However, in 1950 another great resource for Hebrew learning appeared, namely the Israeli army radio. Both the pre-state Jewish underground forces and the IDF in its first two years had used radio broadcasting in their propaganda activity, but many wanted an independent army broadcasting unit, and teaching Hebrew to the soldiers was one aspect, among many others (Drory 2005: 207). Their wish came through on 24 September 1950, when *Galei Tsahal* (IDF Wavelengths) started broadcasting. Together with Voice of Israel it was to be the only Hebrew-based radio station in most part of the 1950s. A proud Prime Minister Ben-Gurion stated at the opening of Galei Tsahal;

> …it has the additional purpose of providing the army with a tool for educating youth and the nation and a cultural means for absorbing immigrants, helping them learn Hebrew, providing them with knowledge of the geography and history of the country…[17]

3.2.2 Lack of knowledge of Hebrew as an operational risk in combat

The efforts to learn immigrants and others Hebrew in the army were not only a part of the IDF's role as a main contributor to the civil society and Israel as a nation, but were also based on operational reasons. The commanders of combat units were focused on Hebrew skills due to tactical and operational reasons, because they experienced practical problems on a daily basis. Immigrant soldiers with no or limited Hebrew knowledge had problems understanding instructions and orders, communicating with fellow soldiers in combat situations and talking to civilians they encountered. It is an undisputed fact that IDF units on several occasions performed poorly due to problems with the language. This was especially the case from 1948

---

[17] As quoted in Haaretz, 25 September 1950.

and through the 1950s. Colonel Yehuda Wallach, commander of the Givati brigade, has expressed that at the time, it was problematic to brief and issue instructions for squad commanders since 30, 40 or 50 per cent did not have a complete grip on the Hebrew (Drory 2005: 213). I will suggest that the situation in fact could be even worse at the time on the lowest level, since soldiers with no or poor Hebrew skills did not easily get staff assignments or officer positions at all, but this is described later in this chapter,

As described above, both the political elite and the top military leaders were positively committed and engaged regarding the teaching of Hebrew in the IDF. It was to be a central pillar in the civil-military relations between the military community and the rest of the Israeli society for decades, and was especially essential in the 1950s. The transit camp period from 1950 to 1954 represented a particular challenge, due to the stream of immigrants and the living facilities. The more permanent transit camps, in Hebrew called מעברות (*ma'barot*), were worst, as the immigrants had to organize food and income for themselves, and they soon became small villages (Stein 2009: 100).

In 1953 the Israeli government established The Academy of the Hebrew Language as a replacement for The Hebrew Language Committee, founded in 1890, but the task was more or less the same and it should be the supreme institution for scholarship on the Hebrew language. The institution was to concentrate on the scholarly historical study of the Hebrew language and activity in the public realm, as in supervising the direction of Hebrew's development as a living language.[18] In the context of this thesis however, it must be pointed out that the academy from the beginning in the 1950s had an advisory role and it did not participate actively in teaching Hebrew to immigrants in the IDF or other institutions.[19]

3.2.3 Hebrew knowledge as a potential nation divider

According to the Declaration of Independence, Israel was to be open to Jewish immigration and the ingathering of the exiles. In 1948 the number of Jews present was 650 000 and four years later the number had doubled. Half of them had their origins from Europe, while the other half arrived from North Africa and the Middle East (Stein 2009: 84). This fact leads us into an interesting discussion, namely the question whether Ashkenazi immigrants were given

---

[18] The Academy of the Hebrew Language.,http://hebrew-academy.huji.ac.il. Retrieved 16.03.2011.
[19] Professor Ora Schwarzwald, interview November 2010.

better opportunities than the Sephardic immigrants, and if this was done according to a deliberate strategy for gaining a monopoly for the Ashkenazi Jews in the military and political leadership as well.[20] Alon Peled's research, *The Politics of Language in Multiethnic Militaries: The Case of Oriental Jews in the Israel Defense Forces, 1950-1959*, made interesting findings.[21] He found that the IDF classification system for conscription in the 1950's practically excluded the Oriental conscripts because the tests were performed in Hebrew, which very few of them mastered. The poor results were taken as a sign of widespread illiteracy among the Oriental Jews, which again led to low-prestige assignments and few representatives in the officers' corps and elite units. According to Peled, Ben-Gurion did not intrude on the autonomy of the IDF leadership in this matter, which found it easy and convenient to use fluent Hebrew speakers in key positions.

Protests made by Oriental Jews in 1959 got Ben-Gurion's attention, but efforts made in order to increase the rate of Oriental Jews in the officer's corps, had limited success. It was first after the Yom Kippur-War in 1973, following the decision to triple the size of the IDF that Oriental Jews came in a somewhat better position.[22] Nonetheless a full integration of non-Ashkenazi Jews still took time, and even though Moshe Levy became the first non-Ashkenazi Chief of General Staff in 1983, the problem continued to exist for years to come. Studies based on French-speaking soldiers in Canada and the Oriental Jews in the IDF, suggests that a linguistic status quo within any military community is likely to endure as long as the military leadership is not actively pressing on to change it.[23]

3.2.4 The 1960s became years of consolidation

The 1960s was a decade when Hebrew continued to develop itself further as the primary language of the Israelis. Children of the well-established Yishuv Jews, as well as the more recently arrived immigrants, were raised with Hebrew as their native tongue. In other words, any foreign language rooted in their family's history ceased to be an alternative as their principal language. As such, Modern Hebrew was established as the natural language in every

---

[20] I have here defined Sephardic Jews in a broader sense, and as such the Mizrahi (Oriental) Jews are included.
[21] Alon Peled (2000): *The Politics of Language in Multiethnic Militaries: The Case of Oriental Jews in the Israel Defense Forces, 1950-1959*. Armed Forces and Society, Vol.26, No.4, Summer 2000, pp.587-605.
[22] Peled (2000): 601.
[23] Peled (2000): 602.

respect - both in the institutions and the bureaucracy of the state, as well as in the daily life of its citizens. The Academy of the Hebrew Language continued to exercise a major influence on the main development, and so Modern Hebrew continued to be under strong influence of normative trends during the first three decades of the State of Israel.[24]

During and after the 1970s, Modern Hebrew was increasingly influenced by American English, and this has been the most noticeable foreign impact on Modern Hebrew since the establishment of the State of Israel.[25] One major factor was the general development with increasingly closer political and cultural links to the United States. However, in a strictly military context an important change came in June 1967 with the Six-day War, when France imposed an arms embargo on Israel, and thus eliminated the Franco-Israeli defense cooperation from the 1950s (Yezid, Shlaim 2003: 163).

The French exit became a window of opportunity for the White House and the Americans quickly became the dominant military alliance partner for Israel, supplying the Israelis with modern equipment and weapons. With *Operation Nickel Grass* during the Yom Kippur war in 1973, the Americans delivered *F4 Phantom II* and *A-4E Skyhawk* planes, *M60* tanks, as well as *TOW* and *Maverick* missiles.[26] The close links between the countries' military communities in general, and the absorbing of US military weapons and equipment into the IDF, did make an impact on the military language of the Israelis. Most significantly, this development boosted the presence of American English loanwords into the Hebrew vocabulary. On the other hand, it must be mentioned that the Israelis have a tradition of giving Hebrew names to foreign weapons and equipment as well, and this is still a fact. For example, the nickname *Zelda* is slang for the *M113 APC* and *Sufa*, meaning "storm", is the fighter plane *F16I*.

The IDF continued to possess an important role concerning general education of new immigrants during the 1970s and the 1980s (Drory 2005: 222). Although Hebrew-education was still a part of the civil-military relations, the extensiveness was reduced compared to the 1950s, due to the reduction of immigrants. The situation changed again when the communist states of Eastern and Central Europe collapsed in the end of the 1980s - culminating with the fall of the USSR in 1990-1991. Jews from the former Soviet Union rushed to Israel, and again IDF had to absorb thousands of immigrants with no or limited knowledge of Hebrew,

---

[24] Professor Ora Schwarzwald, interview 16 November 2010.
[25] Ibid.
[26] *Operation Nickel Grass*, Capt Chris J. Krisinger, Airpower Journal, Spring 1989.

although this time public and private *ulpan programs* contributed to certain degree.[27] After a few years the situation normalized, and today it is the children of the Russian immigrants that enter service in the IDF, and with few exceptions they speak Hebrew fluently.

Another major change taking place in the 1990s was the technological evolution, and the appearance of Internet. In a socio-cultural context the Internet opened a new gateway in the global infrastructure of communication. This has made an impact on most languages and especially so when it comes to the influence of English loanwords, and also as a great resource for learning languages. Generally, the military technological development has for the last decades been the source of a lot of new words and expressions in the English military language. This is particularly the case within areas as data technology, weapon technology and construction, and most of it has its origin from American English (Ark, ed. 2002: 11).

3.2.5 Hebrew teaching is not a central pillar anymore

At the present time, IDF's role as a national institution for Hebrew-teaching, to the benefit for the whole society, is minimalistic compared to the 1950s. Rightly, the IDF still plays a nation-building role in many regards, in contrast to the European NATO-forces who now are more state-interest oriented, but the language factor is no longer a significant part of it. Expert linguistics and researchers on civil-military relations agree on this matter, and points out that almost all enlisted personnel in the IDF today have a sufficient level of Hebrew language skills from day one of the national service.[28] However, there are a few exceptions with Israeli citizens as well. An article in Jerusalem Post from 2009 describes how Beduin IDF-soldiers with literacy are given a three-month course in order to build their Hebrew knowledge, in addition to general education – a program running since the early 1990s.[29] For a few, this have even led to commander's course and opened possibilities for a successful career in the army.[30]

As mentioned, most Israelis showing up for pre-military service-testing speak Hebrew fluently. When conscripts are tested in Hebrew skills at the recruiting centers today, they are

---

[27] An ulpan is a teaching institution offering Hebrew courses.
[28] Stuart A.Cohen, Ora Schwarzwald, interviews November 2010.
[29] *IDF reaches out to Arab combat soldiers with Hebrew literacy, military values*, Brenda Gazzar, Jerusalem Post www.jpost.com 03.05.2009. Retrieved 31.01.2011.
[30] Ibid.

measured on a detonation scale if 2 to 9 (best). An overview from the IDF shows that Israeli-born recruits normally achieve an average between 7 and 9, while the immigrants are between 2 and 6.[31] However, the number of immigrants is limited and do not represent a huge challenge for the military organization. On the other side, it is one negative trend concerning Israeli-born recruits, as they score lower today compared to earlier years, and this has led to some counter-measures to be mentioned in the chapter about the professional language of the IDF.[32]

If we leave the arena of IDF contributions to the civil society and yet again concentrate on the military language in the operational sphere, the changes from the 1950s to the present is just as great. Compared to the 1950s, when language problems were a serious operational dilemma demanding special attention, this is a limited problem today. Occasionally though, the aspect of tactical or operational problems due to lack of Hebrew knowledge appears. These cases are often related to Jews coming from abroad, in order to serve in the IDF for shortened term - from months to a year. Normally, Jews with limited Hebrew knowledge are given a three week or three month pre-service course, but this is not enough to fully master the language and from time to time serious problems arise - particularly in combat units, where hundreds of Jews living outside Israel serves annually. The language problems may have different characters, but do all represent a security threat to fellow soldiers, opponents and civilians alike. This fact is well illustrated in the article *Hundreds of immigrants without Hebrew in combat units* by Anshel Pfeffer, published in Haaretz, November 2009: [33]

> "These are very motivated soldiers," an infantry brigade commander said. "But we've had quite a few cases of safety issues when they did not hear the command to cease fire and had a bullet in the chamber because they thought that was the order."
>
> "We went out on ambush with a soldier who hardly spoke Hebrew," a soldier in a combat unit said. "When we got back, we discovered he had been walking behind us with a loaded machine gun. He could have sprayed us at any moment. He simply didn't understand the order," the soldier said.

---

[31] *IDF sets out to improve soldiers' Hebrew*, Yossi Yehoshua, www.ynet.com, 08.06.2009, retrieved 26.04.2011.

[32] Ibid.

[33] *Hundreds of immigrants without Hebrew in combat units*, Anshel Pfeffer, Haaretz, 24.11.09. Retrieved 29.11.11.

To summon up the present situation, it seems clear that the extensiveness of Hebrew education of immigrants are limited compared to earlier times, based on the simple fact that the numbers of conscripts with no or little Hebrew knowledge are relatively low. As such, Hebrew education is no longer a central pillar in the civil-military relations between the IDF and the Israeli society. Nonetheless, there are occasional problems due to lack of Hebrew-knowledge, and in combat units this may cause dangerous situations. Currently, the Israeli-born conscripts have shown a slightly negative development in pre-service Hebrew test-results. This is a fact that worries the IDF and campaigns have been launched in order to address the problem, but it remains to be seen whether this will be able to alter the negative development.

4 Characteristics of Hebrew military terminology

Most Israelis regard the language of the IDF as "a language within the language". It is in fact regarded as so different from the ordinary, daily Hebrew that Israelis without military background, and non-native speakers, are expected to have significant difficulties understanding anything more than basic army–speak. So what are the special characteristics of the military language of Modern Hebrew?

Two distinctions that immediately surfaces, when the nature of military Hebrew is discussed, are the extensive use of acronyms and slang. Furthermore, it is interesting to look at the influence of foreign loanwords and the extensiveness of technical terms. Most professions and working environments have a magazine of technical terms, but as a very large institution there will be differences, like the influence of technological and academic terms. Likewise, the use of numbers and the numeral use of letters in the Israel Defense Forces are of interest. Aspects that are related to how the language is being used, is covered elsewhere.

4.1 Acronyms: Everywhere - all the time

The word *acronym* derives from the Greek words *akron* (end) and *onoma* (name) An acronym is a word based on the first-letters (or several of the first letters) in several words following each other (Berulfsen, Gundersen 2000: 13). For example, the Hebrew acronym for *Bible* is תנ"ך (*tanakh*), based on the words תורה (*tora)* meaning "the oral law - Talmud", *נביאים (nevi'im)* meaning "the prophets" and כתובים *(ketuvim)* meaning "the scriptures". In Modern Hebrew acronyms, ראשי תיבות (*ra'she tevot*), literally "heads of written words", are given limited attention in a linguistic context, but they are very much represented in the military vocabulary.

There is no general and absolute fixed structure which applies to how every acronym is constructed in Hebrew, but most of them can be placed in different sub-categories. But first of all, let it be mentioned that the field of acronyms is not without controversies and debates. For instance, linguistics look differently on *initialism* (or *alphabetism*), where an abbreviation is based on a string of initials, and whether this should be a part of the world of acronyms or not. For example, Outi Bat-El claims that acronyms based on institutional names, like *CIA* and

FBI, are acronyms without any adjusted acronym words, and he therefore sets a distinctive difference between *acronyms* and *acronym-words* (Bat-el 1994:1). On the other side, linguists like Coffin and Bolozky, minimize this partition by including *initialism* into a total overview of both acronyms and acronym-words (Bolozky, Coffin 2007: 155).

4.1.1 General comments on acronyms

In Hebrew acronyms can be recognized by the special "- punctuation called *gershayim* (גרש"ם), placed between the second-last and the last letter of the non-inflected form of the acronym.[34] This is to achieve a vocalization that makes the pronunciation of the word easier. If we look at the acronym נגמ"ש (*nagmash*), it derives from the words נוסע גייסות משוריין (*nosea' giyasot meshuryan*) meaning transfer, forces, armored, in order to create the term for armored personnel carrier (APC). The consonants are *nun, gimel, mem* and *shin*, but they would by themselves only become נגמש (*nagmsh*). By adding the vocal *a,* the word becomes נגמ"ש (*nagmash)*, which is easier to pronounce.

Most often the sound of *a* is implemented, but there are exceptions. If an acronym has the letter *vav* or *yod*, they can be pronounced with *u/o* or *i*-sound. Some examples with different vocalizations are:

Acronym	Transcription	Description	Transcription	English
מכ"ם	*makam*	מגלה כיוון מקום	*megale kivun maqom*	Radar
רמטכ"ל	*ramatkal*	ראש מטה כללי	*rosh mate klali*	Chief of General Staff
נאט"ו	*na'to*	ארגון האמנה הצפון-אטלנטית	*'irgun ha-'amana ha-tsafon-'atlantit*	NATO
אצ"ל	*'etsel*	הארגון הצבאי הלאומי בארץ ישראל	*ha-'irgun ha-tseva'i ha-leum'i be-'erets yisra'el*	ETZEL

---

[34] Academy of the Hebrew Language. http://hebrewacademy.huji.ac.il Retrieved 27.12.2010.

Regarding stress patterns acronyms keep their patterns when inflectional suffixes are added, while with typical Hebrew words the stress normally shifts to the inflectional suffix:

Ordinary word	Policeman	שוטר	*shotér*	שוטרים	*shotrím*
Acronym	Drone	מזל"ת	*mazlát*	מזל"תים	*mazlátim*

As every Hebrew-speaker knows, there are some letters that always change character in the end of a word. These are כ מ נ פ צ, which goes to be ך ם ן ף ץ at the end of words. This is usually not the case with acronyms, simply because the last letter of the acronym often is the first letter of the last word the acronym is based upon. For example will the acronym for platoon commander, מפקד מחלקה (*mefaqed maxlaqa*), be מ"מ and not מ"ם.

Hebrew acronyms can also have dual meanings. The acronym מ"מ can mean *platoon commander*, but it can also mean *millimeter*, like when the caliber of a weapon is discussed. However, the nature of the context will normally immediately lead us to the right interpretation of the acronym.

4.1.2 Acronyms and the variety of forms

As mentioned there is no single dominant and fixed structure which covers all acronyms, so they appear in a variety of different forms and also in combination with each others. Some are based on first-letters and spoken as a word, others are containing more than the first-letters in order to create a word and sometimes the letters must be fully spoken. The possibility of different combinations broadens the range significantly. Some acronyms have letters that must be fully spoken, plus a word, like CD-Rom. Others combine letters, numbers and words, as the military acronym C4ISTAR, based on the terms *Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition* and *Reconnaissance.* We can also notice acronyms based on letters or figures with short-cuts, like AAA (Anti-aircraft artillery), which is spoken as *triple-A*, or 3M (*thri em*), based on the abbreviation for Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Company.

Nevertheless, if we follow the approach of Bolozky and Coffin we may sub-categorize the acronyms into *orthographic acronyms*, *letter acronyms* and *pronounceable acronyms*. These acronym-forms are not a special characteristic for Modern Hebrew itself, but to be found in most modern languages as seen in this table:

Type acronym	Language	Acronym	Full text
Orthographic	Hebrew	**אחה"צ**	**אחרי הצהרים** (afternoon)
Orthographic	English	WW II	Second World War
Orthographic	German	MWSt	Mehrwertsteuer
Letter	Hebrew	**א"ב**	The Hebrew alphabete (Alef Bet)
Letter	English	MG	Machine gun
Letter	German	GSG-9	Grenzschutzgruppe-9
Pronounceable	Hebrew	**מכ"ם**	**מגלה כיוון מקום** (radar)
Pronounceable	English	Radar	Radio detection and ranging
Pronounceable	German	StOvWa (*shtovauwa*)	Stellvertretender Offizier vom Wachtdienst

4.1.3 The main categories of acronyms

As described the traditional use of *gershayim* in order to insert vocal sounds in an acronym in Hebrew is something that separates it from most other languages. In English each letter is often pronounced individually. So following the English pattern in Hebrew, the Israeli Security Agency (**שירות הבטחון הכללי**) could naturally be called *Shin Bet Kaf* (and it has actually been called Shin Bet), but instead it is vocalized as **שב"כ** (*shabak*). This phenomenon of making words out of initials very much explains why letter acronyms are used to a lesser degree in Hebrew compared to other languages, as in English. In other words, potential letter acronyms will normally fall under the category of orthographic or pronounceable acronyms instead.

Letter acronyms

In appearance letter acronyms, where each letter is pronounced in full, will mainly consist of two-letter acronyms, as in:

Acronym	Transcription	Description	Transcription	English
מ"פ	*mem-pei*	מפקד פלוגה	*mefaqed pluga*	Company commander
מ"מ	*mem-mem*	מפקד מחלקה	*mefaqed maxlaqa*	Platoon commander

Orthographic acronyms

What characterizes orthographic acronyms is that they never can be expressed in short form, but have to be said in full. They do appear quite often, although not as often as the pronounceable acronyms. Examples of orthographic acronyms:

Acronym	Description	Transcription	English
מו"מ	משא ומתן	*masa' u-matan*	Negotiations
ארה"ב	ארצות הברית	*'artsot ha-brit*	USA

Pronounceable acronyms

This category has a certain complexity and surfaces in various forms. Root-acronyms, where the first consonant of each word is used in order to construct a pronounceable word, are very common. In Hebrew a root-structure will often consist of three consonants, but acronyms with additional consonants are also common. An acronym based on three consonants (CaCaC-structure) is צה"ל (acronym for *TSeva' Hagana Le-yisra'el)*, meaning "Israel Defense Forces". An acronym based on four consonants (CaCCaC-structure) can be exemplified with נגמ"ש (*NaGMaSh*), the common term for *armored personnel carrier* (APC). You can even find longer structures, such as רמטכ"ל (*RaMaTKaL*), which is the acronym for Chief of General Staff. It is not any upper limits for the number of consonants an acronym can consist of.

Acronyms can just as well be based on a loanword or a foreign language term. Likewise, it is not unusual to construct acronyms that sounds like or plays on the meaning of an already existing word. The purpose is to create a certain association, this be political, religious or in

any other possible way. An example that symbolizes both a political and a religious aspect is the use of ישע (*YeShaA*), which originally means *rescue* or rebirth. Years ago Jewish settlers in the occupied Palestinian territories, deliberately mixing the religious term with their political agenda, constructed a homophonic acronym based on the words; *Judea*, *Shomron* and *Aza*, as in Judea, Samaria and Gaza (Ravid 1990: 312). This demonstrated creative use of the Hebrew language, but the acronym clearly suffered a blow when Ariel Sharon pulled Israel out of the Gaza Strip in 2005 with the result that *Aza* disappeared.

The deliberate use of an acronym term or terms in order to promote a message is well-known. The Norwegian army's acronym for the army's rapid reaction force was FIST (fist), short for Forsvarets InnsatsSTyrke). It is a powerful English word symbolizing *force*, and it was probably a successful acronym as most Norwegians know their English good enough to catch the meaning. At the same time the acronym obviously functions in an international context.

Acronyms can also be used to create positive associations. An example is from the now dismantled IDF Woman's Corps. It was named חיל נשים (*xel nasim*) and the acronym became ח"ן (*xen*), which is pronounced exactly like the Hebrew word for *grace*; חן (*xen*).

4.1.4 Acronyms essential in military terminology

Even though acronyms are used in many areas of Modern Hebrew, the use in a military context is far more extensive than any other. As such, it is a distinctive feature of the military language, and this follows the pattern from other languages.[35] In order to substantiate this, one may compare the frequency of acronyms in almost any "civilian" book to military literature. I have undertaken a study of the books *Sayeret Matkal* (סיירת מטכ"ל) by Moshe Zonder and the political biography *Obama* (אובמה) by Orly Azoulay in order to illustrate this. The first is a historical book about the General Staff elite unit under the Intelligence directorate and the second is a political documentary about president Obama's rise to power in the United States. Both publications have approximately the same number of words pr page and the study is based on the first 50 pages of both, including the introductions.

The overview shows the number of acronyms per page. Below the table are the details of acronyms found, as well as the frequency of each one.

---

[35] Edzard 2011: *Compund nominals*.

Results from Sayeret Matkal (סיירת מטכ"ל), pages 9-59

Page	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Acronyms	10	3	5		5		2	1	13	4	2	3	1	8	6	5	2
Pages	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42
Acronyms	8	5	9	2	5	4	4	8	4	5	5	4	3	1	1	3	2
Pages	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59
Acronyms	3	2	2		2	5	2	1	2	10	1	4	5	6	3	3	3

Acronyms:

61 x מטכ"ל (*matkal*) General staff

28 x צה"ל (*tsahal*) IDF

9 x תא"ל (*ta'al*) Brigadier

7 פלמ"ח (*palmax*) Palmax

3 x חרמ"ש (*xarmash*) Motorized infantry

2 x חפ"ק (*xapaq*) Command post

2 x חי"ר (*xel raglayim*) Infantry

1 x צל"ש (*tsalash*) Summons

1 x שב"כ (*shabak*) Security Service

1 x דו"ח (*duax*) Report

1 x דפ"ר (*dafar*) Psych. assessment

1 x רס"ן (*rasan*) Major

1 x רא"ל (*ra'al*) Lieutenant general

1 x פק"ם (*paqam*) Southern command

31 x אמ"ן (*'aman*) Military intelligence

12 x רמטכ"ל (*ramatkal*) Chief of General Staff

8 x סא"ל (*sa'al*) Lieutenant Colonel

4 x אל"ם (*'alam*) Colonel

2 x נ"ט (*nun-tet*) Anti-tank

2 x בה"ד (*bahad*) Military training base

2 x מח"ט (*maxat*) Brigade commander

1 x ק"מ (*qilometer*) Kilometer

1 x שפ"ן (*shafan*) Here lies… (grave)

1 x אג"ם (*'agam*) Ops branch in staff

1 x רס"פ (*rasaf*) Staff sergeant

1 x מג"ד (*magad*) Battalion commander

1 x מ"מ (*mem-mem*) Platoon commander

1 x סג"מ (*sagam*) Second lieutenant

9 x Non-military acronyms

33

Results from Obama (אובמה), pages 12-62

Pages	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Acronyms			1				1	1					1	1			
Pages	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
Acronyms														1			
Pages	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62
Acronyms					1		1										

Acronyms:

3 x אר"ה (*'artsot ha-brit*)   USA   2 x תנ"ך (*tanakh*)   The Bible

1x מנכ"ל (*mankal*)   Director, president   1 x דו"ח (*duax*)   Report

1 x ז"ל   (*zikhrono livrakha*) In memory of… (diseased)

The results are one-sided. Even though the military unit's name, Sayeret Matkal, includes an acronym in itself, is it far more acronyms in the military book, compared to the other one. This strengthens the assertion that acronyms fill a significantly larger role in the military language, than in the daily speech of Modern Hebrew.

4.1.5 Higher frequency of acronyms in specific areas

As a high frequency of acronyms is a characteristic feature of the Israeli military-speak, it is interesting to see if the use of acronyms are more frequent within specific areas, compared to others. In a minor study I have looked at three articles from the IDF weekly magazine *Ba-maxane* (In the camp), nr. 2-2009, published during the Gaza-operation in 2008-2009.

Article 1. P. 16-21). חיבוק אחרון ותפילה   (Covering IDF ground forces in Gaza)

Article 2. P. 26-30. פורשים כנפ"ם   (Covering IAF activity over Gaza)

Article 3. P. 40-43. זה כל הקסאם   (Covering Hamas' different rocket types)

In order to systemize the findings the acronyms were placed in one of the seven sub-categories: A. Units and institutions, B. Position and rank, C. Transport vehicles, D. Weapons and equipment, E. Technical terms and measurement, F. Operational terms and G. Others.

The following table illustrates the number of different acronyms from the specific categories. As the frequency of each acronym depends on type of article and subject, this is not listed, but it is instead listed in the detailed overview after the table.

Results article 1. חיבוק אחרון ותפילה

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
2	9		1		3	

סא"ל x 5	(*sa'al*)	Lieutenant Colonel	רב"ת x 2	(*rabat*) Corporal	
אל"מ x 2	('*alam*)	Colonel	סמ"ר x 2	(*samar*) Staff Sergeant	
מח"ט x 2	(*maxat*)	Brigade commander	צה"ל x 1	(*tsahal*) IDF	
רס"ל x 1	(*rasal*)	Sergeant-Major	רס"ר x 1	(*rasar*) 1 Srg-Major	
תרג"ד x 1	(*targad*)	Battalion exercise	לוט"ר x 1	(*lotar*) Terror warfare	
מס"פ x 1	(*masap*)	Sapper	פצמ"ר x 1	(*patsmar*)Mortar shell	
ש"ג x 1	(*shomer gvul*)	Border guard	ת"ש x 1	(*tash*) Welfare duty	
בא"ח x 1	(*ba'ax*)	Brigade training base			

Results article 2. פורשים כנפ"ם

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
2	1	1			2	

רס"ן x 10	(*rasan*)	Major	מסק"ר x 5	(*masqar)*	Combat helicopter
סד"כ x 2	(*sadak*)	Order of Battle	חי"ר x 1	(*xel raglayim*)	Infantry
צה"ל x 1	(*tsahal*)	IDF	ת"מ x 1	(*tatspit matara*)	Target observation

Results article 3. זה כל הקסאם

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1		1	2	4		1

11 x מ"מ   (*milimeter*) Millimeter   6 x ק"ג   (*qilogram*)   Kilogram

4 x פצמ"ר (*patsmar*) Mortar shell   3 x אמל"ח   (*'amlax*)   Weapon (mil.)

3 x ס"מ   (*sentimeter*)Centimeter   3 x ק"מ   (*qilometer*)   Kilometer

1 x מ"ד   (*mi-dafim*) Page reference   1 x ש"ב   (*sherut bitaxon*) Security service

1 x רק"ם   (*raqam*)   Armored combat vehicle

The dispersion of the acronyms from all three articles is as follows:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
5	10	2	3	4	5	1

Acronyms in Category A (units and institutions) and Category B (positions and rank) are frequently represented and seen in all three articles, in contradiction to other categories of acronyms. If we look at the detailed overviews that show how many times the same acronym is seen in the article, the acronyms of rank are ever-present. Category E (technical terms) is a more specialized category which very much relies on the type of content. If the subject is not technical it is often non-existent, but if it is, the frequency can be very high. Category F (operative terms) and G (others) might be big boxes of general terms in the military vocabulary, but they include only a small amount of acronyms.

As a whole, this study has shown that acronyms are more frequently represented within certain areas, and especially related to terminology related to units, institutions, positions and rank.

4.2 Loanwords: An unwanted guest?

Loanwords have a lexical influence in Modern Hebrew and even though the phenomenon may not be an essential part of the military professional language of the IDF, they do often appear, as in daily Hebrew. Typically this can be related to areas such as informal speech, slang and technological language. The use of loanwords in Modern Hebrew was an integrated part of the revival of the language, and Eliezer Ben Yehuda and his fellow linguistics early recognized the importance of Hebrew in a Jewish cultural and social context, and developed ideas in regard to how to make this a reality. The overall strategy, which covered most aspects of the language, included the use of loanwords. Ben Yehuda acknowledged that Hebrew lacked terms needed in a modern society, like within the subjects of medicine, animal life and nature, clothing, household, modern equipment, culture, politics and military matters. This was complemented with the obvious need for new verbs, adjectives, derived nouns and additional, general words.

Regarding the making of new words of different categories, Ben Yehuda and others made a statement in the *Plain Language Society* established in 1889, were the protocols say;

> "3. The Literature committee will search in the records of all of Hebrew
>
> Literature and extract all the Hebrew words…and will publish them, so
>
> that they will be known to everyone. The Committee will also create new
>
> words and will contact the best grammarians and authors in our language
>
> to reach agreement on them." (Fellman 1973: 46)

4.2.1 The making of new words

There were different devices used by Hebrew scholars in the making of new words, like direct transliteration from a foreign language to Hebrew, construction of Hebrew phrases corresponding to the meaning of a single foreign word and the employment of "flowery" language form the Bible. However, Ben Yehuda felt strongly that Modern Hebrew was to be a *pure, simple* and *clean* language. He preferred that each foreign word should be replaced by a single Hebrew word and in general, foreign loanwords were to be discarded.

In the periods of Biblical (BH) and Mishnaic Hebrew (MH) foreign loanwords came from Akkadian, Aramaic, Greek, Latin, Persian and other languages. Many loanwords were

automatically adapted into Modern Hebrew and in addition to this almost all the Standard Biblical Hebrew (SBH) vocabulary was assimilated into Modern Hebrew (Kutscher 1982: 197). Ben Yehuda's and the Language Council's (the forerunner of the Academy of Hebrew Language) devices can be summoned as follows; the first place to search for a suitable phrase or word would be within Classical Hebrew, which they found closest to Modern Hebrew. If they found words not in general use for the time being, the word would be given a new meaning. They also extracted roots from Classical Hebrew, Biblical Aramaic, Tarumic Aramaic and Talmudic Aramaic. Then the Hebrew scholars created new Modern Hebrew words based on them, often according to a common Hebrew word pattern (Fellman 1973: 66).

If it was not possible to find the term through the prior mentioned process, the next step was to create a new word, based on another Semitic language, and Arabic was to be the primary source in this regard – if necessary with appropriate sound changes (Fellman 1973: 60). Arabic was the largest Semitic and dominant language in Palestine at the time, and Ben Yehuda had particularly good knowledge of Arabic from his time in Algiers (Fellman 1973: 23). Arabic loanwords in Modern Hebrew derive from different areas and dialects, but they can be divided into two main categories; those words that have been introduced naturally through literature and the spoken language, and those Arabic words that have been a part of Modern Hebrew due to a planned process (Geva-Kleinberger 2006: 461-462). Ben Yehuda was a representative for the latter category, but other scholars have also been central in regard to introducing Arabic words to Modern Hebrew. For example did Ben Amotz, cover subjects like military terms, street language and cursing (Geva-Kleinberger 2006: 463). The use of loanwords from Arabic is especially significant among young Israelis, just as the use of slang.

4.2.2 Examples of loanwords in Modern Hebrew

There are many Arabic loanwords in Hebrew. One example is the Arabic word *adiib*, which means *polite*. In Modern Hebrew the word אדיב (*'adiv*) has the exact same meaning (Kutscher 1982: 209). Another example from Arabic is the word for store, מחסן (*maxsan*), which was integrated on the basis of semantic proximity to Hebrew (Saenz-Badillos 2004: 271). As previously noted, it is also interesting that Haganah's strike force Palmax, before and during the World War II introduced Arabic loanwords into Modern Hebrew.

Aramaic has had quite an impact on the Hebrew language and is probably the most important non-Hebrew source to Modern Hebrew (Saenz-Badillos 2004: 200). This can be illustrated with words related to parenthood and family. The words for father and mother are of Aramaic origin; respectively אבא *('aba')* and אמא *('ima')*. This is also the case concerning grandfather and grandmother, סבא *(saba')* and סבתא *(savta')* (Kutscher 1982: 207). An example with relevance to the military forces is the word for rank; דרגה *(darga)* (Cohen 1992: 261).

If no acceptable words could be found among the Semitic languages, the scholars of Modern Hebrew could turn to European languages - primarily Greek and Latin. The first mentioned is to a larger degree represented in Modern Hebrew. Examples of Greek loanwords in Modern Hebrew are the words basis, air and pair, respectively בסיס *(basis)*, אויר *('avir)* and זוג *(zug)*, which are used widely in both a civilian and military context (Kutschner 1982: 138). Another example is אמבטיה *('ambatiya)*, which is the term for bathroom (Cohen 1992: 261).

Latin is to a less degree represented in Modern Hebrew, but one example is the word לגיון *(legion)*, from the Latin word *legio* (Saenz-Badillos 2004: 201). In a military setting it is my experience that this is seldom used today, due to the fact that the current organizational structure of the IDF, as well as the armies of the Arab states in the region, do not include legions as an official formation. It is primarily used when foreign military forces are commented, like the *French Foreign Legion*. However, the word appears in a historical context, since old enemies of the Jewish people have used legions. The Romans is one ancient example and Jordan's Arabic Legion is a modern one.

4.2.3 A study of Mossad's _*milon munaxim*_

In order to examine the use of loanwords in a specific context I have looked at the intelligence wordlist published at the official website of Israel's intelligence service Mossad - The Institute for Intelligence and Special Operations.[36] The ambition was to identify the loanwords used, their origin and the rate of appearance. Special attention was also given to the influence of English – often the working language within the international intelligence community in Western-Europe.

---

[36]Mossad: www.mossad.gov.il/about/dictionary.aspx Retrieved 15.01.2010

The study also discloses use of normal nouns, which have been given other meanings, in addition to the original ones. Furthermore, it seems that some words in the wordlist currently are rarely or never used, and on some occasions I will suggest more common and up-to-date terms. The Hebrew word of the list is presented exactly as in the wordlist of the Mossad, but acronyms may be fully transcribed when necessary.

Word	*Transcription*	*Hebrew*
Object	*'obyeqt*	אובייקט
Enemy	*'oyev*	אויב
Aiming (at an object or target)	*'ikun*	איכון
Verification of information	*'imut meda'*	אימות מידע
IMINT - Imagery intelligence Intelligence derived from imagery acquired by sensors which can be ground based, sea borne or carried by air or space platforms.	*'imint*	אימינט
Collection / gathering (of intelligence)	*'isuf*	איסוף
Open source intelligence Intelligence derived from publicly available sources of information, as well as other unclassified sources that have limited public distribution or access.	*'isuf galuy*	איסוף גלוי
Covert gathering/collection Intelligence gathering from non-open sources	*'isuf xasha'i*	איסוף חשאי
The opposite, likely to turn out the other way	*'ipkha' mistabra'*	איפכא מסתברא
ELINT – Electronic intelligence Intelligence derived from electromagnetic non-communications transmissions by other than intended recipients or users.	*'elint*	אלינט
Intelligence gathering process prior to a specific operation (IPB: Intelligence Preparation for Battlespace).	*'amlam;' isuf modi'in le-mivtsa'*	אמל"מ
AMAN The Military intelligence service, IDF.	*'aman*	אמ"ן
ACINT – Acoustical intelligence Intelligence derived from the collection and processing of acoustic phenomena.	*'aqint*	אקינט
Systematic research after persons (to be recruited at an object or a location in support for own forces).	*'atira*	אתירה
Potential suspect	*beduqa'i*	בדוקאי
Source protection (security)	*bitaxon meqorot*	בטחון מקורות

Communication security	*bitaxon qesher*	בטחון קשר
Field security	*bitaxon sade*	בטחון שדה
Network expertise	*bina rishtit*	בינה רשתית
Operation (information) security or Data communications and network security	*bitaxon ma'arakhot meda'* or *bitaxon meda' me-muxshav*	במ"מ
Arms control	*baqarat nesheq*	בק"ן
Mobilization	*giyum*	גיום
Quiet (discrete) search	*domemim, xipus be-*	דוממים, חיפוש ב-
To leak	*dalaf*	דלף
The level the acticvity is aimed at	*dereg kavenot*	דרג כוונות
Eavesdropping, tapping, monitoring	*ha'azana*	האזנה
Leak (of information)	*hadlafa*	הדלפה
Simulation, notion	*hadmaya*	הדמיה
Deceit, fraud, deception	*hona'a*	הונאה
Insertion, infiltration	*haxdara*	החדרה
The gathering purpose	*ha-kavanat 'isuf*	הכוונת איסוף
"Washing" of information (according to compartmentalization / need to know-principle).	*halbana, halbanat meda'*	הלבנה | הלבנת מידע
Working theory / - hypothesis	*hanaxat 'avoda*	הנחת עבודה
Information- / knowledge estimate	*ha-'arakhat yedi'ot*	הערכת ידיעות
Estimate of the potential for succeeding	*ha-'arakhat yekholot*	הערכת יכולות
Intelligence estimate	*ha-'arakhat modi'in*	הערכת מודיעין
Situation estimate	*ha-'arakhat matsav*	הערכת מצב
Source estimate	*ha-'arakhat meqorot*	הערכת מקורות
Damage estimate	*ha-'arakhat nezaqim*	הערכת נזקים
Field (operative) estimate	*ha-'arakhat sade*	הערכת שדה
Activation, guiding, running (of an agent or collaborator)	*hafa'la*	הפעלה
Distribution or spreading (of information in Mossad's possession through systems or staff).	*hafatsa*	הפצה
Sign, signal, mark	*hatsba'a*	הצבעה
Cross-check, hybridization	*hatslava*	הצלבה
Encryption, coding	*hatspana*	הצפנה
Establishment of contact	*haqamat maga'*	הקמת מגע
Assumption, hypothese	*hash'ara*	השערה
Alert, warning	*hatra'a*	התרעה
War alert, warning	*hatra'a milxama*	התרעה מלחמה
Warning / pre-warning of hostile, damaging activity	*hatra'at pe'ilut xablanit 'oyenet*	התרעת פח"ע
VISINT – Visual intelligence	*vizint*	ויזינט

Secret Services Heads Committee Meets on a regular basis. Heads of Mossad, GSS/Shabak, Aman and the military secretary for the Prime Minister.	*varash; va'adat rashe sherutim*	ור"ש
Info leaking out of electronic machines	*zliga*	זליגה
A: Interrogator, B: Intelligence analyst	*xoqer*	חוקר
Rescue, extraction, pull-out	*xiluts*	חילוץ
War room, situation center	*xadar milxama*	חמ"ל
Personnel in preventive or thwarting intelligence activity	*xameshet hamodi'in mesakel*	חמשת ה- מ"ממים
Tactical HQ (in the area of operations)	*xavurat piqud qidmi*	חפ"ק
General, real-time overview of the situation Normally conducted during large-scale operations or after operations.	*xitukh matsav*	חתמ"צ
Surface to Surface missile	*til qarq'a qarq'a*	טק"ק
Knowledge – Intelligence knowledge	*yedi'a – yedi'at modi'in*	ידיעה|ידיעת מודיעין
Knowledge, "know-how"	*yed'a*	ידע
HUMINT – Human intelligence Intelligence derived from information collected and provided from human sources.	*yumint*	יומינט
Basic cover	*kisuy besisi*	כס"ב
Report	*katava*	כתבה
Psychological warfare	*loxma psikhologit*	ל"פ/לח"פ
Intelligence collection	*leqet modi'in*	לקט מודיעין
Located place or position of potential Humint-interest	*me'ater*	מאתר
Source The primary origin of the information.	*mabu'a*	מבוע
Pattern or routine For the conduct of an activity that are common or repeating itself	*midpam*	מדפם
Reliability of information	*mehemanut yedi'a*	מהימנות ידיעה
Modus operandi	*modus 'operandi*	מודוס אופרנדי
Intelligence	*modi'in*	מודיעין
Model	*model*	מודל
Basic intelligence	*modi'in besisi*	מודיעין בסיסי
Research, study (intelligence-)	*mexqar (modi'in-)*	מחקר (מודיעין)
Basic researc, study	*mexqar besisi*	מחקר בסיסי
Staff – the staff (HQ)	*mate – ha-mate*	מטה | המטה
Compartmentalization Divide or limit information for personnel according to regulations.	*midur*	מידור

Information (intelligence-)	*meda'* (*modi'in*)	מידע (מודיעין)
Operational intelligence	*modi'in le-mivtsa'*	מל"מ
Preventive, interceptive intelligence	*modi'in mesakel*	ממ"ס
Source The origin of the information.	*maqor*	מקור
Acts / patterns of reaction	*teguvot miqrim*	מקת"ג | מקתג"ם
Accessibility (grade of-)	*negishut*	נגישות
Data communications (from phone, fax, e-mail)	*netuney tiqshoret*	נתק"ש
Area (for an operation)	*sviva*	סביבה
Agent	*sokhen*	סוכן
SIGINT – Signal intelligence Intelligence derived from the Electromagnetic Spectrum (EMS). The generic term used to describe COMINT and ELINT when there is no requirement to differentiate between these.	*sigint*	סיגינט
Prevention	*sikul*	סיכול
Following, tailing Surveillance activity of an object	*'iquv*	עיקוב
Clandestine activities	*pe'ilut xasha'it*	פ"ח
Hostile, damaging activities	*pe'ilut xavlanit 'oyenet*	פח"ע
Hostile, damaging activities, abroad	*pe'ilut xavlanit 'oyenet xuts la-'arets*	פח"ע חו"ל
Operational command, leadership	*pequdat mivtsa'*	פק"מ
Demilitarization, disarmament	*peruz nesheq*	פר"ן
Important marks, facts or indicators	*tsiun yedi'ot xiuniu*	צי"ח
Special orders from a higher echelon containing important marks, facts or indicators (see also קברניטים)	*tsiyun yedit xiunitu qabarnit*	צי"ח קברניט
Photography, taken clandestinely	*tsilum samui*	צילום סמוי
User, consumer	*tsarkhan*	צרכן
Security officer	*qatsin bitaxon*	קב"ט
Operation security officer	*qatsin bitaxon mivtsa'im*	קב"מ
Officer, network knowledge	*qatsin bina rishtit*	קב"ר
Literarily "captains" (navy), but here: codename for special orders from the highest echelon	*qabarnitim*	קברניטים
Intelligence community	*qehilat ha-modi'in*	קהילת המודיעין
COMINT – Communication intelligence	*qumint*	קומינט
Concept	*qonseptsia*	קונספציה
Intelligence officer	*qatsin modi'in*	קמ"ן

Collection officer	*qatsin 'isuf*	קצ"א
Eksternal contact (liason activity)	*qashrey xuts*	קש"ח
Counter intelligence	*rigul negdi*	ריגול נגדי
Bordercontrol registration	*rishum biqoret gvulot*	רשב"ג
Network, chain, (spy)ring	*reshet*	רשת
Secret partner	*shutaf sod*	שותף סוד
Security service	*sherut bitaxon*	שירות בטחון
Foreign service (intelligence- or security-)	*sherut zar*	שירות זר
Allied foreign service	*sherut 'amit*	שירות עמית
Coordinated operational activity	*shituf pe'ula mivts'ai*	שיתוף פעולה מבצעי
Coordinated intelligence activity	*shituf pe'ula modi'in*	שיתוף פעולה מודיעין
Datacommunication	*tiqshoret netunim*	תיק"ן
Debriefing	*tixqur*	תחקור
Endbrief	*tixqur tamim*	תחקור תמים
Investigation, debriefing	*taxaqir*	תחקיר
Aerial photography	*tatslum 'aviri*	תצ"א
Satellite photography	*tatslum lavyani*	תצ"ל
Landbased photography	*tatslum qarq'ai*	תצ"ק

The origins and frequency of loanwords in the wordlist

The result of the study of the wordlist in regard to the origins and frequency of loanwords are quite distinctive. There are no loanwords of Arabic origin here, although it must be mentioned that they generally exist to a large degree in Modern Hebrew. It is found one expression of Aramaic origin and also one expression of Latin origin. There are also found two expressions from Greek. On the other hand there are ten loanwords from English. This indicates that the use of loanwords of English origin has a particular influence on the Hebrew language within the Israeli intelligence community, and that is not surprising, as it corresponds with the professional language of most Western services of this kind, where certain technical terms are almost standardized. In the following I give a more detailed presentation of the results.

The expression איפכא מסתברא (*'ipkha' mistabra'*) is from Aramaic and means the opposite, in the context that things turn out the opposite way than one might think. Currently this is not a common expression, but the Latin expression מודוס אופרנדי (*modus 'operandi*), which means method of operation, is well known term in many languages. The Greek language is represented two places in the wordlist with the adjective בסיסי (*basisi*). Here the adjective is present with the terms basic intelligence and basic research or study; respectively מודיעין בסיסי

44

(*modi'in besisi*) and מחקר בסיסי (*mexqar besisi*). It can also be noted that the term for captains, קברניתים (*qabarnitim*), derives from the Greek word for shipmaster; *kybernetes.*[37]

As mentioned previously the frequency of English loanwords is significant in the wordlist compared to other foreign languages, with ten words in all. I regard three words as ordinary terms in Modern Hebrew; אובייקט (*'obyeqt),* מודל (*model*) and קונספציה (*qonseptsia*), which respectively means object, model and concept. In the context of the language of the Israeli intelligence community they have no secondary meaning. The other seven words are; אימינט, קומינט (*'imint),* אלינט (*'elint),* אקינט (*'aqint)* ויזינט (*vizint*) יומינט (*yumint*), סיגינט (*sigint*) and קומינט (*qumint*). These words respectively mean IMINT (imagery intelligence), ELINT (electronic intelligence), ACINT (acoustical intelligence), VISINT (visual intelligence), HUMINT (human intelligence), SIGINT (signal intelligence) and COMINT (communication intelligence). They are all related to the professional language of the intelligence services, and the same acronyms are widely used by the intelligence communities in the Western World. The fact that the foreign loanwords are listed, but *not* the alternatives in Hebrew, indicates that the loanwords are well-integrated into the professional language, but it also has to be mentioned that there might be widely used alternatives in Hebrew.

Supplementary findings with comments

The study has disclosed certain additional aspects worth mentioning in order to get a more complementary understanding of the list. First, the wordlist is limited in regard to the selection of words and the extensiveness. However, I find this reasonable if the main intention is to introduce the reader to basic terms in order to understand the content of the site. On the other hand, there are quite a few words and expressions that are rarely used. Some of them could be replaced with others that are more common in daily speech, which represents the natural choice of expression when certain subjects are discussed.

Some words and expressions on the list have the same meaning, whereas at least one of them often are rarely used and could be skipped. An example is the expressions that both describe "washing" of information or compartmentalization: הלבנת מידע (*halbanat meda '*) הלבנה, (*halbana*) and מידור (*midur*). Here the latter is in extensive use and recognizable even for native speakers outside the professional environment, while the first ones are rarely used. The same phenomena apply for the term for acts or patterns of reaction, or standard operation

---

[37] ASC (2010): *Foundations and definitions.* Retrieved 02.06.2010

procedures. In the list we find מדפם (*midpam*), but under normal circumstances the expression התגלגלות אירועים (*hitgalgelut 'iru'im*) is more commonly used to describe a standard reaction to certain acts or incidents.

There are also expressions consisting of several words that in fact are more common in a shorter version and even rarely used in its full length, but rather as an acronym. A relevant example is the expression for coordinated operational activity; שיתוף פעולה מבצעי (*shituf pe'ula mivtsa'i*). In daily speech the word *operational* would be skipped and typically a native speaker would use the acronym שת"פ (*shataf*).

Another interesting find is the use of certain nouns in a new and internal context. It can be illustrated with the word for captains; קברניתים (*qabarnitim*). In Modern Hebrew it is a standard navy expression, but in the Israeli intelligence community it is a codeword for special orders given from the highest echelon of the Israeli decision makers, i.e. from the government to the Mossad.

Conclusions

Loanwords in general have been implemented into the different types of Hebrew, from ancient times and until today. In Modern Hebrew, Eliezer Ben Yehuda and other scholars had a strategy on how to find new words and loanwords. Ben Yehuda primarily preferred to use old sources, as Classical Hebrew and other Semitic languages like Aramaic and Arabic, in order to find suitable words needed in the modern society. In addition to this, Greek and Latin also became represented to a certain degree.

Moreover, the study of the wordlist has shown that there are few foreign loanwords and expressions from other Semitic languages present. On the other hand, there are found quite a few loanwords from English and they are mostly intelligence-related terms, used in the intelligence communities of the Western world. These findings are not surprising considered Israel's geopolitical position and the fact that the intelligence and security services of Israel work closely with the same type of agencies in the Western world.

The basic wordlist published is limited in regard to the potential extensiveness of the existing professional vocabulary, and the primary intention seems to be to help the reader to understand the information presented. Furthermore, it is pointed out that some words and expressions on the list are rarely used, and in some cases more adequate alternatives could

substitute them. It is also shown that some ordinary nouns from Modern Hebrew have been given a new meaning inside the Intelligence community. Overall it might be reasonable to say that the language of the Israeli Intelligence community has some noteworthy characteristics, and this study of their wordlist has disclosed some of them.

4.2.4 Hebrew exported

After looking at the use of loanwords, one might raise the question whether Hebrew has exported words and terms that have set foot on the international linguistic scene, like the words *ombudsman* (parliamentary commissioner) and *quisling* (traitor) have their origin from Norwegian. The *Ombudsman* is well known in Israel through the State Comptroller and Ombudsman – a position with a considerably amount of authority.[38] Hebrew is, like Norwegian, a minor language in number of users, and therefore it is not many such words to find, but one word found is partly relevant to this thesis. In the Bible, Book of Judges 12: 5-6, we read:

> The Gileadites captured the fords of the Jordan leading to Ephraim. Whenever a fugitive from Ephraim said, "Let me cross over," the Gileadites asked him, "Are you an Ephraimite?" If he answered, "No," they told him, "Please say Shibboleth." If he said, "Sibboleth," because he could not pronounce it correctly, they seized him and killed him at the fords of the Jordan. At that time, 42,000 from Ephraim died.

As described, the pronounciation of the word *shibboleth* (current, stream) was used by the Gileadites to classify the ethnical or social identity of those wanting to cross the river Jordan. [39] However, this test of a person's social or regional origin, where the pronounciation of a specific word is the indicator, is called *shibboleth*, and the term is well-known in different languages, like English. In modern usage shibboleth-tests may also be based on a wider spectre of indicators, including jargon, customs, traditions and cultural characteristics. Well known examples of shibboleth from WWII are American soldiers using knowledge of baseball in order to locate infiltrators, and the use by the Dutch of the city-name *Scheveningen*

---

[38] www.mevaker.gov.il, retrieved 01.05.2011
[39] For a phonological analysis of this episode cf. Rendsburg (1997)

to tell Germans from the Dutch, as the Germans could not pronounce the initial Sch-sound correctly.[40]

Another expression we know from Israel is *the kitchen cabinet*, which describes the phenomen from Golda Meir's time, when she informally gathered her inner circle of advisors in her home during critical decision-making processes, like the Yom Kippur War. However, first of all is this originally an American expression, appearing as early as 1831 and used by opponents of President Andrew Jackson.[41] Secondly, the word *kitchen* is somewhat imprecise, as Meir's "kichen cabinet" just as often used the living-room or other rooms suitable.[42]

4.2.5 New mix: English inserts into written Modern Hebrew

A modern phenomenon to notice in military magazines and literature today is the element of foreign names, words or expressions, inserted in written Hebrew texts with its original Latin letters. This concerns often English model terms, company names and abbreviations, and it is typically seen in articles or books related to technological or scientific subjects. I conducted a minor study of the IDF army magazine *Ba-maxane* issue 43, November 2010 and the *IAF magazine* issue 195, October 2010. Note that appearances of internet references and advertising are excluded.

In *Ba-maxane* the appearance of words or expressions based on Latin letters were limited. There were 16 words or expressions found, divided on five articles. Six of them appeared in an article about a technological PALM, while five of them were in an article about a music-artist with English titles. So it appears that Latin letters in Hebrew texts appear in a significantly limited degree, in an ordinary military context.

In the *IAF magazine*, the same phenomenon was more common. Here a total of 28 words appeared in 15 articles, and here is not the specific model name of different aircrafts (F-16I, F-35 etc) included. In the Air force magazine most of the words and terms found are related to technological equipment, company names and weapons. The latter can typically be names of missiles used on fighter planes, like GBU, JDAM, AMRAAM, ASRAAM and Sidewinder.

---

[40] www.wikipedia.org – Shibboleth. Retrieved 20.02.2011.
[41] www.wikipedia.org – Kichen Cabinet. Retrieved 21.11.2010.
[42] Former Director AMAN (1974-1978) Shlomo Gazit, interview 14 November 2010.

This leads us into the fact that there are different policies among the newspapers and magazines for how to spell names of aircrafts, missiles and other. For example, the Air force magazine consequently uses Latin letters for plane models, so they write F-35. Others use the full Hebrew version, like אף-35 (*'ef-35*). Likewise, the AIF magazine writes the Sidewinder-missile as *Sidewinder*, while others use the Hebrew translation סיידווינדר (*saydwaynder*) instead (Shalom 2005: 44). It is not all about policies though, because the phenomenon itself has surfaced as a direct result of modern technology. Before, type-writers and printing assets had the Latin style set or the Hebrew set – not both. Today one can change between the two of them in seconds and it is likely that we will see more of this mix in the future.

4.2.6 Imprecise interpretations and translations

It is a common risk that the original meaning of a word is given a less precise or accurate meaning, when translated from one language to another. Often these cases are due to mistakes or limited quality control, and there is no need to go deeper into this. However, in this essay's context it is interesting to register a special phenomen related to the National Security Staff in Israel. The original name of this forum, established in 1999, was the National Security Council, in Hebrew המועצה לביטחון לאומי (*ha-moʻatsa le-vitaxon le'umi*). During 2008 it changed name to the National Security Staff, in Hebrew המטה לביטחון לאומי (*ha-mate le-vitaxon le'umi*). This was done in order to emphasize the body's advisory role towards the Prime Minister and thus signal an increasing influence in the decision-making hierarchy.[43] However, if we look at the official homepage of the National Security Staff, as well as the English edition of the National Security Council Act from 2008, it has been chosen not to alter the English name – it still uses the National Security Council name.[44] It is difficult to find a proper explanation for this, but concerning the Hebrew name-adjustment this could even be done without changing the acronym (המל"ל), since both *council* and *staff* begins with the letter *mem* in Hebrew. Altering the English version of the name would be more demanding, and as of now it seems the English internet version is exactly as before.

---

[43] Yehuda Ben-Meir, interview 14 November 2010.
[44] NSC homepage, www.nsc.gov.il, retrieved 06.03.2011.

4.3 Slang: Difficult to learn for outsiders

According to the *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* (2006), slang is "informal language that is more common in speech than in writing and is typically restricted to a particular context or group". It is generally not considered standard in the dialect or language, but used by people of all social classes and age-spectres, although young people traditionally are the primary representatives and developers of this phenomenon. Slang can be regional, but just as often it is related to a certain group of the society or subculture – sometimes to be assimilated into the ordinary language after some time. Likewise, the word or expression can disappear after a period of use and possibly also replaced by newer and more attractive expressions.

Slang develops naturally in any language, although Modern Hebrew scholars, teachers and writers have traditionally been quite adamant in their opposition to slang. At the beginning of the revival of Hebrew, everything which did not come from classical sources was met with scepticism. One major reason for this can be connected to the fact that many slang words and expressions originally derives from foreign loanwords, and many purists saw this as a threat to the establishment and the consolidation of Modern Hebrew as the primary language for the Jews in Palestine. This attitude lasted for decades and an indicator on that fact is that slang was left out of Hebrew dictionaries until late in the 1960s (Sappan 1969: 75-80).

However, the purist's reservation concerning slang, limiting its appearance in certain areas, did not prevent the verbal use and development of the phenomena. David Ben-Gurion, a great supporter of the Hebrew language himself, used slang expression as everyone else did, and he is even considered to be the original source of some slang terms himself. A famous political-influenced expression came from Ben-Gurion in 1955, namely אום שמום (*'um shmum*), which means; the UN is worthless (Rosenthal 2006: 7). It presented Israel's strong man's view on the international organization at the time and may in fact still be used by many Israeli officials today (Harel, Issacharoff 2008: 112). This expression also illustrates the link between German-Yiddish words that begin with *schm-* and Modern Hebrew slang.[45] Such slang terms do usually represent connotations, as in *schmuck.* The original (vulgar) Yiddish meaning is penis, but today it is often used to characterize an obnoxious or contemptible person.[46]

---

[45] For the phonology of shm-reduplication cf. Nevins and Vaux (2003)
[46] http://dictionary.reference.com, retrieved 25.01.2011

50

During the 1960s and the 1970s the attitude towards slang changed and the purists became fewer. This can be related to several reasons, but Raphael Sappan has stressed the fact that the number of principal Hebrew-speakers went from 25% in 1914 to 75% in 1954, and the generations of Israelis born in Israel grew up and strengthened the platform of the Hebrew language. They became confident in the language and in fact many foreign loanwords were to be replaced by Hebrew terms. This development has continued, just like Sappan foresaw when he wrote about slang in Hebrew in 1969 (Sappan 1969: 75-80). An example of this is the word מסטינג (*mesting*) from the British English term *mess-tin* or *mess-kit*. It came in use during the British Mandate period, but is no longer used.[47]

This development, as the chapter about the professional language in the IDF will show, corresponds with the fact that IDF-officers today clearly prefer Hebrew as working language in a broader professional setting, and are relatively reluctant to foreign influence, like teaching material and documentation in English. This is also due to the fact the English skills are very variable among the soldiers and officers of the IDF.

Today slang is used extensively in Modern Hebrew and together with the use of acronyms it is probably the most characteristic feature of the language of the IDF. It is also the most inaccessible part for the outsider to learn, since it is very much a verbal tradition within the ranks of a rather closed community. Taking into consideration the fact that the Israeli army is a large professional and social society, heavily influenced by youths of both sexes over a long period of time, it becomes clear that the foundation for development of slang is good and ever-present. In addition to this the soldiers, when the period of the military service is over, return to the civil society with a luggage of slang for future use.

4.3.1 Slang in various forms

Slang words and phrases themselves have their origin from various processes, like abbreviations, emphasis, the use of euphemism and foreign loanwords (Kutscher 1982: 263). They can also have several meanings and at the same time be based on almost all the different processes mentioned above. To illustrate this fact we can look at the word נמר (*namer*), which can show up under a number of circumstances in the military vocabulary. First of all the word means "leopard" and it is now the model-name of a relatively new Merkava-based APC in the

---

[47] Professor Ora Schwarzwald, interview 16 November 2010.

IDF, symbolizing and emphasising strength and decisiveness in the name itself. As slang the word can also reflect both a positive and a negative meaning. It can be used to describe a skilled and energetic combat soldier with reference to the character of a forcefull cat animal or it can characterize a nuisance of first-class, in which case *namer* will be an abbreviation based on נודיק ממדרגה ראשונה (*nudniq mi-madraga rishona*) (Rosenthal 2006: 246). Slang expressions that characterize the personality of personnel in a positive or negative manner are very common and also slang that is related to time - as length of service. Examples:[48]

Word	Transcription	Meaning	Literally meaning
ותיק	*vatiq*	Soldier with long time in service - veteran	Senior / experienced
צעיר	*tsa'ir*	Soldier new in the service	Young
שקל – שועל קרבות לוחם	*shaqel – shu'al qravot loxem*	Very experienced and good soldier	Battle fighting fox
תותח	*totax*	Very good soldier	Cannon
סמרטוט	*smartut*	A weak or lazy soldier	Rag
קציס – קצין צעיר	*qatsis – qatsin tsa'ir*	"Green" officer, often an annoying 2nd Lt.	Young officer

In addition to characteristics, slang will often describe a situation, general condition or express a personal feeling for the time being. In relation to leave, the word רגילה (*regila*) means the ordinary week-long leave soldiers get every four month, while מיוחדת (*miyuxedet)* is the term for special leave due to special needs as funerals, and finally sick-leave at home is called the letter *G* in plural; גימלים *(gimelim)*. A good example of a rather moody expression is שביזות יום אלף (*shvizut yom 'alef*)[49] and it describes the feeling of coming back to base the first day after a weekend leave, i.e. similar to the *Monday blues*-expression.

Euphemism is a common part of Hebrew military slang. During the Gaza war in 2009 I experienced an example when I visited some friends in Migdal. I told them I had been close to the Gaza-border watching the artillery shelling and that lot of smoke was going up.

[48] www.military-quotes.com, by "Sherman", retrieved 28.01.2009.
[49] Judith Moy, interview 1 April 2010. Also found in Rosenthal 2006: 359.

One of the men present called such smoke עשן ישראלי ('*ashan yisra'eli*), meaning "Israeli smoke". To IDF-soldiers the expression *Israeli smoke* reflects a more or less positive affiliation since it is caused by "friendly fire", in vast contrast to smoke as a result from hostile shelling. For outsiders, smoke from any shelling will normally be affiliated with the potential of death and destruction, because there is such no thing as "friendly fire". Another interesting aspect that can be illustrated with this example is that a lot of slang does not appear in any books, not even in such book as Ruvik Rosenthal's *Dictionary of Israeli Slang*. The reasons for this can many, but often it is because they are too new or too local.

As previously mentioned in this chapter, the foreign influence in Modern Hebrew is noticeable and this is also the case regarding slang. At the revival of the Hebrew language, Hebrew lacked a lot of terms and this, combined with the close relationship with other languages, prepared the ground for foreign influence. Arabic and English, due to the Mandate period, dominated the first decades. Clearly, the minds of many of the Jewish immigrants to Palestine were dominated by other languages for years, even after Hebrew became their daily language (Sappan 1969: 75-80).

Foreign influences in slang can have a direct approach, like the loanword קילר (*killer*) from English, in order to describe a very good fighter or combatant. But in addition to the direct borrowings from foreign languages, there are also a lot of *calques*, where words or terms are modelled after foreign words, but made of the speech material in the language concerned. In a military context this can be exemplified with the expression *fresh meat* in the meaning of a new recruit or rookie, which in Hebrew is בשר טרי (*basar tari*). A special characteristic for Hebrew related to slang in this context is also the addition of agent suffixes like -*ist*, -*niq* and -*tchiq*. Examples:

Word	Transcription	English
טנקיסט	*tanqist*	Member of tank crew
מילואימניק	*milu'imniq*	Reservist
ג'ובניק	*jobniq*	A soldier doing service with fixed days and hours, as in a civilian job.
קטנצ'יק	*qatantchiq*	Little boy

4.3.2 Slang and taboo

Slang has traditionally covered fields of languages not considered to be appropriate in official use and even regarded as taboo. However, is anything considered taboo in Modern Hebrew slang today? In order to elaborate on this we can look into slang concerning the Holocaust and Nazi-Germany, as it definitely still is an emotional and soar topic for many Israelis. Professor *Yeshayahu Leibowitz* (1903-1994), an Israeli philosopher and scientist, initiated a public outcry when he during the first Lebanon war labeled IDF's activity on foreign soil "Judeo-Nazism". The public reactions then confirmed that he indeed had touched a taboo, and the average Israeli citizen would never make a comparison of the Jews during Holocaust and the Palestinians in the occupied territories. However, in 1989 the current IDF spokesman Avi Benayahu reported in the paper *Al-Hamishmar* about a group of IDF-soldiers in Ramallah that used the expression "the Mengele squad" about themselves, and thereby constructed a comparison between the IDF and Nazi-Germany. This time the taboo-expression came from within the ranks of the IDF and it became problematic to handle for the leadership. The investigation did not find out who leaked the information, but the army responded with an educational seminar and tour to the Yad Vashem (Holocaust) museum for the whole unit concerned.[50]

There are several other examples of this kind of taboo slang. A company in an armoured division was called the *Auschwitz Company* or the *demanjuks* during the first Intifada, and in earlier years a parachute training facility used to learn the soldiers to handle jolt of straps during the parachute-opening was called *Eichmann*. According to Shiri Tsur in Haaretz, the Holocaust terminology from the first Intifada represented a type of black or underground humour, and that it was brought to the surface during the second Intifada and later. This said, slang-researcher Ruvik Rosenthal is actually surprised that so few slang expressions in a military context derive from the Holocaust, and he sees this as a proof that socialization and taboo processes still play a role. He even suggests that the Holocaust taboo can have been further strengthened during the first part of the Yom Kippur war in 1973, when the soldiers felt helpless.[51]

---

[50] *The Mengele Squad"* by Shiri Tsur, Haaretz, 01.10.2010. Retrieved 15.01.2011.
[51] Ibid.

4.3.3 Conclusions on slang

Slang definitely represents one of the major characteristics of the language of the IDF, and is likely to include thousands of words and expressions. As described it is also the most difficult part to learn for any Hebrew student as it is very much a verbal tradition, used in a rather (for outsiders) autonom community. The young age of the IDF-conscripts combined with the long service duration lays an excellent foundation for the development of slang. It appears in various forms and in almost every aspect of the language, to such a degree that outsiders will have problems of fully understanding the content in the different contexts. As shown there are very few taboos in slang, but Holocaust and Nazi-related terms are still problematic.

Finally, it should be mentioned that informal language and slang is recognized as a natural part of Modern Hebrew, also inside the IDF. The higher echelon of the Israeli armed forces has on several occasions, when addressing indicators of poor Hebrew among soldiers and launching efforts to meet this problem, declared that slang shall continue to remain a part of the military language without interference.[52]

---

[52] *IDF sets out to improve soldiers' Hebrew*, Y. Yehoshua, www.ynet.com, retrieved 26.04.2011.

4.4 Spelling alphabets and numeric values

From NATO we know *the spelling alphabet* (also called *the NATO* or *ICAO phonetic alphabet*), which is an approved list of words used to identify letters in messages transmitted verbally, like over radio or telephone. Such spelling alphabets also exist in Israel, and they may be used in different professional environments. A common edition is this:[53]

Transcription	Word	Letter	Transcription	Word	Letter
le'a	לאה	ל	'alef	אלף	א
moshe	משה	מ	bo'az	בועז	ב
nesher	נשר	נ	gimel	גימל	ג
samekh	סמך	ס	david	דוד	ד
'ayin	עין	ע	hagar	הגר	ה
pesel	פסל	פ	vav	וו	ו
tsipor	ציפור	צ	ze'ev	זאב	ז
qorax	קורח	ק	xava	חווה	ח
rut	רות	ר	tiax	טיח	ט
shamir	שמיר	ש	yona	יונה	י
telem	תלם	ת	karmel	כרמל	כ

However, in a military context sources within the IDF comments that this kind of fixed spelling alphabet is rarely or never actually used during service and operations.[54] If the personnel have to spell letters when transmitting messages over radio or speaking in a cellular phone, they will often randomly find names starting with the letter in question.

Example: In order to spell the letter ק (*qof)*, they would most likely not use קורח (qorax), meaning beam/crossbar, but maybe the Hebrew word for a rhino, קרנף (*qarnaf). On the other hand, in intelligence activity and special operations the use of code-words is far more relevant than spelling alphabets. They are established as a routine part of the specific planning process, and can bear all kinds of meanings – sometimes with a touch of symbolism and other times randomly chosen, with no obvious link whatsoever.

---

[53] From http://he.wikipedia.org, retrieved 15.01.2011
[54] Confirmed by IDF-personnel that remained anonymous.

A famous example from the intelligence community is the code-word Nasser's son-in-law, Marwan Ashraf, passed on to Mossad just before the Yom Kippur war. The night of 5th October 1973 the case-officer from Mossad simply received the code-word צנון (*tsnon*), meaning "radish", and the term meant that an Arab attack on Israel was imminent (Kahana 2006: 326).

Another phenomenon to be noticed in regard to the Israeli intelligence and security community, and their relation to the public sphere, is the naming of senior officers by a single letter. Most often this appears when the Israeli media is covering topics related to the services, and a specific person on a high level in the organization is in focus and must be specified. As an example, the current director of Mossad, Tamir Pardo, was known as "T" in Israeli media as long as he was the former-director Meir Dagan's deputy.[55] This tradition is well illustrated in literature about the secret services of Israel, as in *Mossad* by Bar-Zohar and Mishal where head of *Qisariya* (section of special operations) is called B and head of *Neviot* (technological section) is called D (Bar-Zohar, Mishal 2010: 231-232).

4.4.1 The numeric value of letters

Since we now have been looking at the single letters from the alphabet, it is appropriate to move on to the numeric value these letters represent in Modern Hebrew. They are used in a variety of routine settings in the daily life of the Israelis, for example to indicate days of the week, dates or priority on a list. The numeric values are as follows:

100	ק	70	ע	20	כ	6	ו	1	א
200	ר	80	פ	30	ל	7	ז	2	ב
300	ש	90	צ	40	מ	8	ח	3	ג
400	ת			50	נ	9	ט	4	ד
				60	ס	10	י	5	ה

In a military context the numeric value is also of special interest in different settings. One such example is the marking on IDF-vehicles, which tells us which unit the specific vehicle and its crew is attached to. This is especially the case when it comes to armoured vehicles and

MBTs (Main Battle Tank). Example: If a Merkava MBT has **ב2** on the turret, **V** on the side-skirt and **three circles** on the gun-barrel, it indicates that the tank is MBT number 2 in 2nd platoon, 1st company, 3rd battalion.

Use and misuse of numbers in the IDF

IDF is an institution that uses numbers in a lot of different circumstances and they have an old tradition of naming units and schools with numbers. Some examples of this are the elite Unit 101 from the 1950s, the AMAN signal intelligence unit 8200 and the naval commandos, Flotila 13. Schools are often callad *Bahad* + number, and Bahad nr.1 is the Officers School, while Bahad nr. 13 is the Military Police School.

Also, an interesting phenomenon in the Israeli army is the almost constant neglection of Modern Hebrew grammar when it comes to numbers, in a verbal setting. Normatively, one will say, according to grammar, five thousand soldiers as חמשת אלפים חיילים *(xameshet 'alafim xayalim).* However, in IDF one will say חמש אלף חיילים (*xamesh 'elef xayalim*). This is a variation that seems to be a deliberate tradition.[56]

---

[56] Interview Judit Moy, 1 April 2010.

5   The professional military language

This chapter covers aspects related to the professional language within the Israel Defense Forces. First of all it is worth looking at how the professional language may differ horizontally, as well as vertically, in any military organization. This to underline the necessity of such an organization to establish a single, common professional language that everyone is confident with. Furthermore, it is critical that a direct and uncomplicated language is used when issuing plans and orders in the chain of command. This is equally important at the strategic, operational and tactical level, in order to exploit the full potential and capacity of the whole organization. Additionally, this chapter covers a few other special subjects concerning the professional language of the IDF, like the general attitude among IDF officers towards academic education and their preference of Hebrew material in educational processes.

5.1   The grunt and the scientist

Technical terminology is specialized vocabulary of any field and with this definition military terminology itself represents a field of technical terminology. On the other hand, it is not hard to imagine the lexical differences that exist horizontally between the many branches of the IDF.

Undoubtedly, certain branches of the armed forces use a higher degree of technological or academic language with advanced terms and expressions, in contrast to others. This is a natural consequence, following both the professional environment in which they work on a daily basis, and the educational level of the personnel in the branch in question. Even though such linguistic differences between branches are complicated to measure, it is not difficult to imagine that the language among infantry troops in the Golani brigade differs from the spoken word among scientists at the Dimona nuclear research facility. In fact, if we pin this further down to slang and the informal language, it may even be possible to observe such differences between larger units of the same type. A slang expression in Northern Command's Golani brigade may not exist in the Southern Command's Givati brigade, and they are both mechanized infantry brigades in the same army.

There are probably many ways to illustrate the different horizontal levels that exist between the branches in the IDF organization, in the context of the professional language. Here is one example, where the differences between branches are illustrated with a four level-model.

1. Branches with a low amount of technical and/or scientific language, typically administrative personnel, infantry, military police and the home guard.

2. Branches with a medium amount of technical and/or scientific language, typically weapon system-operators, instructors and technical maintenance personnel.

3. Branches with a high amount of technical and/or scientific language, typically technical intelligence personnel, pilots and doctors.

4. Branches with an extraordinary amount of technical and scientific language, typically engineers, scientists and researchers.

Although lexical differences are likely to remain excisting in the future, the language in most positions and levels is getting more technological. It is an undeniable fact that ground troops in 2011 use advanced technological equipment to a large degree, compared to ground forces just a few decades ago. Advanced weapons, night-vision equipment, laser guidance equipment and encrypted satellite communications systems with live camera possibilities are just some examples.

Regarding a tactical language, a challenge may surface when significant different branches are performing joint operations. This is partially illustrated later in this chapter with the Second Lebanon War, but as of today it seems that the issue has got attention from the IDF leadership. A good example was the concept of close air support during *Operation Cast Lead* in 2008-2009, where the IAF and ground forces developed a common tactical language. This was strengthened by the fact that *Forward Air Controller* (FAC) officers were integrated among the ground troops.[57] The FAC-officer integrated in a specific ground unit could then, in an understanding with the unit commander, direct maximum air support when necessary. This improved the overall safety, made it possible to use air-power very close to own forces and kept response time for air support to a minimum.

---

[57] Matt: M. Matthews (2009): *The Israel Defense Forces response to the 2006 war with Hezbollah*, Military Review, July-August 2009.

5.2 The general and the field-commander

The Israel Defense Forces has, like any other national military organization, a chain of command with the Chief of General Staff (CGS) at the top and the private soldier at the bottom of the hierarchy. How far the distance is between the top brass and the executing soldiers varies a lot, depending on factors like the type of assignment, units involved, the tactical or strategic importance of the operation and general circumstances. For example may the chain of command be significantly short regarding high-priority operations executed by the Special Forces on a strategic level, namely *Sayeret Matkal* (General Staff), the *Shaldag Unit* (IAF) and *Flotilla 13* (Navy). On the other hand, minor assignments may have a longer way to go, when these are implemented in the organization on an operational or tactical level.

Whether the chain of command is long or short, it is essential that the communication between the different levels is of high quality, in the sense that plans and orders issued arrive in a clear language that cannot be misunderstood or subject of interpretation on a lower level. Without doubt, this can very much inflict on the outcome of battles and campaigns alike. This is an interesting subject and the Second Lebanon War in 2006 makes a good case-study, as the clarity of language between the levels of command became a point of criticism in the evaluation of the IDF and the Israeli government after war.

The unclassified part of the Winograd-commission's report after the Second Lebanon War in 2006 criticized the top-level decision-making trio of PM Olmert, MoD Peretz and CGS Halutz on several accounts. But more interesting in our context is the criticism that suggested that top IDF-officers spoke different languages, a fact that can be exemplified with the dialogue between CGS Dan Halutz and commander of the Northern Command Maj.-Gen. Udi Adam (Harel, Issacharoff 2008: 125). Likewise, Adam and the Galilee-division's commander Brig.-Gen. Hirsh did not get along and the latter has also been accused of using a difficult and unclear language when issuing orders. This was confirmed by Major-Gen. (ret.) Yoram Yair, who investigated the Galilee division's performances during the war in 2006. He personally expressed that he was in need for a dictionary when deciphering orders, given by Brig.-Gen. Gal Hirsh.[58]

---

[58] *Better tactical language needed,* Yaakov Katz, www.jpost.com, 20.12.2006. Retrieved 11.12.2010.

Following up on this, the general vocabulary on the top-level was colored by many technical expressions from modern doctrines and strategies, coming along with phenomenon like the Revolution of Military Affairs (RMA) and Effect Based Operations (EBO). This type of warfare is very much based on high-technology, top quality intelligence, Precision-Guided Munitions (PGMs) and air superiority - with less focus on ground forces in a large scale. Not without controversies, the IDF adapted such an "advanced" operational doctrine in 2005. The terminology used here confused the IDF commanders and staff officers, and Brig.-Gen. Hirsh' choice of imprecise expressions like *shock and awe effect* and *swarm infiltration* had been taken uncritically from an US Army operational doctrine, and were not understood among the IDF personnel - in particular the veteran units.[59]

An example from the period just before the Hezbollah attack in 2006 illustrates a lack of common understanding between the higher level and the tactical level. Brig.-Gen. Hirsh ordered his troops to deploy "30% in the front and 70% in the back" in the border area, due to the kidnapping-threat in his sector, meaning staying clear of high ground areas. The troops however, interpreted this to mean that they should spend 30% of their time on operations and 70% to rest.[60] This may have been a very comfortable interpretation of Hirsh' orders by a commander of questionable quality on the lower level, but generally the Winograd-commission concluded in its interim report that the new operational lexicon had done more harm than good, and thus created communication breakdowns, and the commission added; "we have to point out that clarity of orders is a vital component of combat effectiveness".[61] Professor Stuart A. Cohen makes a good analysis when he points out that the combination of frequent organizational changes towards a smaller and a smarter IDF, and the linguistic confusion that followed these changes, ended up as "a witches' brew" (Cohen 2008: 106).

In the same context, we can look closer at the language used during the Second Lebanon War, regarding definitions. This because some IDF commanders had generously used expressions, which according to their definitions, did not correspond with the reality. That is why the head of IDF's Operational Theory Research Institute (OTRI), Brig.-Gen. Itai Brun, in December 2006 called for the creation of new a tactical language in the IDF. As examples, he pointed out that the expression *guerilla fighting* had been used, even though it was not guerilla

---

[59] Raanan Lipshitz (2007): *Paradigms and Mindfulness in Decision Making: Why the IDF failed in the Second Lebanon War*, University of Haifa.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Winograd Commission Interim Report (2007): 59.

62

fighting in the traditional sense, and likewise he disliked the phrase that IAF should *wipe out* Hezbollah, as this is difficult in that sort of warfare.[62] Here though, it must be mentioned that debates on definitions was not totally new in the IDF. One officer, who was eager to establish correct terms according to the reality the soldiers were operating in, and who succeeded into making a debate on the issue for several years, was Colonel Shemuel Nir. He served as an intelligence officer in Northern Command in the 1990s and at the time, the IDFs campaigns against irregular forces were called *current security*. However, Nir proposed that *the limited conflict* (*ha-ʿimut ha-mugbal*) was more appropriate – also covering the term *asymmetric warfare*, used by many forces internationally (Cohen 2008: 48). Today, it seems Nir was ahead of his time on this issue, and in many ways the war in 2006 spoke his case.

But Brig-Geb.Itai Brun was in fact a little bit late on the scene of definitions and a clear language, and also in some ways sitting in a glasshouse, as State Comptroller Micha Lindenstrauss just a month before, in November 2006, in a report had warned of the creation of several conflicting military languages. OTRI recieved harsh criticism because the institute, which shall develop and write operational commands and methods, had not published a report in large scale military tactics for the last 12 years prior to the State Comptroller's inspection. [63] According to Lindenstrauss, this created a risk of preventing the creation of a common professional military language, needed to manage and command large IDF frameworks, in both peace and war.

All in all, based on the experiences during the Second Lebanon War and the following investigations by the Winograd-commission and other research institutions, it seems fair to conclude that the IDF did not succeed in establishing a common professional language within the military organization in the period of transformation from a modern to a post-modern army, where RMA, EBO and network based-approaches became central elements. In the next section, I will point at two main reasons for this failure, namely IDF-officers' traditional non-academic approach, and their reluctance towards foreign influence and learning material that is not available in Hebrew.

---

[62] *Better tactical language needed,* Yaakov Katz, www.jpost.com, 20.12.2006. Retrieved 11.12.2010.
[63] Ibid.

5.3 Preferring the field and Hebrew

In many ways the IDF breeds soldiers and officers with a passion for the operational part of the profession. An IDF-officer is undergoing the same basic training and field service as the ordinary soldier, and is expected to be in the front leading the troops. In an army that has experienced almost continous conflicts since its establishment, it is not surprising that such a culture, where combat experience is a must in order to advance to the top of the organization, is setting anchor – partially on behalf of a more academic approach. The IDF has, to put it mildly, no tradition for an officer-education like the US Military Academy at West Point, and most senior IDF-officers have in fact never studied at the National Defense College.[64]

In the late 1970s Colonel Yaakov Chisday at the Officers' training school warned that the IDF ignored strategic concepts and military history, and true enough, Israel's best military historians and strategic theorists have come from the universities – not the IDF (Cohen 2008: 101). Efforts done to implement military theory and history into different officers' courses have had minor effect, and the practical approach and experience have always been regarded as top priority at the IDF teaching facilities. According to Stuart A. Cohen, there have only been two major (rather unsuccessful) efforts in the period 1980-2006 to improve the awareness for military theory, and on the senior level in the IDF, frequent command rotations have been the key to promotion – quite undisturbed by academic or intellectual factors (Cohen 2008: 102). The bottom line is that the IDF did too little, too late on the educational side, in order to prepare itself for the post-modern technological revolution that had to come, and that had to make an impact on the whole organization - sooner or later.

What is interesting in a linguistic context regarding the IDF-officers' limited interest in academic or theoretical approach, is also their apparent dislike of written material that is not composed in Hebrew. IDF-officers tend to disparage abstract doctrines, and especially if they are not in Hebrew (Cohen 2008: 102). This general assumption can also be taken into the learning institutions of the IDF, like the Tactical Command College. Here it seems that texts not available in Hebrew are removed from the reading list, and teams of assistants are helping the class with their papers (Cohen 2008: 104). For one, attitudes like this have not helped the IDF as they have tried to implement doctrines with origin from the USA, and secondly it has not been helping the efforts of creating a common professional language in the IDF.

---

[64] *Lt.Gen. Gabi Ashkenazi: A Balance Sheet*, Prof. Avi Kober, BESA Perspectives No. 129, February 13, 2011.

Finally, it must be pointed out that the current IDF leadership seems to be interested in keeping a high-standard Hebrew in the IDF. They have lately experienced that the level of Hebrew-skills among the Israeli-born conscripts are a bit lower today than before. During the pre-service tests Israeli-born conscripts traditionally score between 7 and 9 (top), but lately the number towards seven is increasing.[65] This indicates a poor-level Hebrew (for natives) and therefore the IDF Personnel Directorate launched a campaign in 2009, headed by top linguist Avshalom Kor, where the goal is to fortify the use of correct grammar. To achieve this, special focus is given to senior officers, including visits to the Academy of Hebrew Language.[66] At the same time slang is not to be a part of this, since it is a natural part of the language.

5.4 Cultivating Hebrew with pride

Even though I have presented several negative factors in regard to the low interest of academic education, and a dislike of using other languages than Hebrew, it is just to remark that the Israelis are also good at cultivating their Hebrew with pride. One example of this, is that they often tend to prefer the Hebrew term instead of a foreign loanword, like the word for (a military) division. This can be said as a loanword with דיביזיה (*divizia*) or the Hebrew word אוגדה (*'ugda*). Today, even though both variations will be understood, the Hebrew term is preferred in regard to the IDF units, while the loanword may be used every now and then, like when describing foreign military forces. Another example is the tradition the IDF has of naming military weapons and equipment with Hebrew names, instead of using the American model names. For an example, in IAF the F-16I is called *Sufa,* meaning *"*storm", and a multi-purpose armoured vehicle from Rafael is named *Ze'ev*, meaning "wolf".

Another interesting theme in the context of naming is the Israeli tradition in regard to codenames and names for their intelligence and military operations. Often armies and decision-makers will claim that such names are picked at random, but by taking a closer look at the subject one will find that such names most often are chosen carefully, with a touch of symbolism. This may be linked to patriotism, nationalism or religion, and Israel has used them all.

---

[65] *IDF sets out to improve soldiers' Hebrew*, Yossi Yehoshua, www.ynet.com, 08.06.2009, retrieved 26.04.2011.
[66] Ibid*.*

The Noah's Ark operation was a codename for Mossad's "theft" of five missile boats from Cherbourg in 1969 (with assistance from the Norwegian Aker-director Ole-Martin Siem), and illustrates a Biblical connection.[67] The same is clear in Mossad operations like *Wrath of God* after the Munich massacre in 1972, and *Operation Moses* and *Operation Joshua* in Sudan 1984-1985, extracting Ethiopian Jews and bringing them to Israel (Kahana 2006: 187). However, when looking into names of operations, one must be aware that there might be a difference in regard to the real name of the operation, and more popular naming of the same operation. Examples are *Operation Peace for Galilee* that was named *Mivtsaʿ Sheleg* (Operation Snow) by the Israeli army, and *Operation Yonathan* that became the name for the Entebbe-raid *after* the mission was over, due to the death of the *Sayeret Matkal*-commander Yonathan Netanyahu (Netanyahu 2002). In this respect, one can register an element of propaganda based on nationalism and patriotism in this area.

Finally, it must be mentioned that *Operation Cast Lead* constitutes a special case, because the name in itself was to represent a direct meaning of taking action through massive shelling (as they initiated the operation), and an underlaying fact in regard to time. The name derives from the poem *For Xanuka* by Chaim Nachman Bialik, telling about a boy playing with a *dreidel* (children's toy) made of *ʿoferet yetsuga*, cast lead.[68] This is a tradition on *Xanuka*, and *Operation Cast Lead* actually began on the last day of this religious celebration. By adapting the other meaning of the word *cast*, from "formed" to "throw", the IDF had an illustrating word play, that also included the time aspect, and that is rather remarkable.

5.5 Euphemism: A favorite of the elite

Euphemism, the substitution of words in order to make something appear less unpleasant or embarrassing, is an integrated part of most languages and does often surface within the areas of politics, security policy and military matters – and increasingly so for the last decades. But as professor Ora Schwarzwald at Bar-Ilan University correctly points out, it is important to remember that euphemism is first and foremost politically motivated.[69] Euphemism appears everywhere. In Norway the debate whether the Norwegian ISAF-forces in Afghanistan is at war or just participating in a peace-enforcing operation is typical, but underneath the choice of

---

[67] The Norwegian involvement is covered in Ulateig (1998): I hellig tjeneste
[68] www.neshama.net Operation Cast Lead. Retrieved 11.05.2011
[69] Professor Ora Schwarzwald, interview 16 November 2010.

terms there are political and juridical aspects the government considers closely. Likewise, if we look at the latest conflict with Hamas in Gaza in 2008-2009, the IDF called this *Operation Cast Lead*. But regardless of the fact that the IDF called the intervention an operation, a significant part of the international community called it for *The Gaza war*. In a meeting the author had with IDF Spokesperson Lt. Colonel Avital Leibowitz, she emphasized that the campaign was an operation and not a war.[70]

The list of euphemism related to war is long, and some common examples are; *Collateral damage* is often used to describe devastating damages (including dead civilians), *friendly fire* (as there exist such a thing) is described when soldiers are shot by their own forces and *neutralize* is often used instead of kill or assassinate. Likewise, choice of terms may depend upon a political stand or which side you would like to express sympathy to. Here the *terrorist* or *freedom fighter* choice is classical. Altogether, it is adequate here to conclude that the Israeli political and military leaders use euphemism just as much as their colleagues in other countries, in the context of armed conflicts.

5.6 Still a way to go

To summon up, it seems likely that the non-academic traditions of the IDF officer corps, and the general dislike of material not available in Hebrew, are two central factors that made it difficult for the IDF to prepare for technology-based post-modern warfare. As a result of this, it also became far more difficult to establish a common professional language within the IDF, even though this was greatly needed in order to obtain an efficient organization and clear command and control-functions.

The failure to implement a common professional language in the IDF was disclosed with the Second Lebanon War, where the lack of a common language and unclear orders led to poor performance on the ground. The IDF took the language criticism after the 2006 war seriously and the organization has taken steps to improve the professional language, especially relating to the command and control procedures. Before Operation Cast Lead in 2008-2009, the IDF officers were reminded on keeping a clear language when discussing plans and issuing orders, and it has not surfaced noticeable criticism on this area after the operation.[71] There were also

---

[70] IDF Spokesperson Lt.Col. Avital Leibowitz, interview 15 November 2010.
[71] Unidentified IDF officers to the author during *Operation Cast Lead*, January 2009.

new efforts made in order to improve the communication and coordination between the different IDF units, like the cooperation between the ground forces and the IAF during Operation Cast Lead. On the basis of this it is reasonable to conclude that the IDF has improved the language related to command and control, and the communication in general between the different branches of the IDF. On the other hand, the low interest of academic approaches and scholaring in the army, combined with their reluctance of using material in foreign languages, makes it difficult to establish a common professional language understood by everyone. At the present time it is too early to register improving results in this area.

6 Hebrew on the other side

Foreign language skills have always been an invaluable resource in a military context, in order to understand the enemy. As Sun Zi says in *Art of war* from 6th century BC;

> Thus, what enables the wise sovereign and the good general to strike and conquer, and achieve things beyond the reach of ordinary men, is foreknowledge. Now, this foreknowledge cannot be elicited from spirits, it cannot be obtained inductively from experience, nor by any deductive calculation. Knowledge of the enemy's dispositions can only be obtained from other men.

Regarding obtaining information about the other side in a conflict, special language skills have first and foremost been knitted to the field of intelligence. The first centuries this was exploited within the area we today call HUMINT, which means obtaining information by human resources. In a modern context we can add the vital importance of foreign language skills in other fields, like SIGINT (signal intelligence), which is covering COMINT (communication intelligence) and ELINT (electronic intelligence). Of course, foreign language skills are also useful in routine liaison activity between security and intelligence services across the borders, as they are meeting, exchanging information or executing joint operations. Let us neither forget the field of counter-intelligence, since intelligence services from hostile states, as well as so-called friendly states, are representing a potential threat. In 1987 US Naval Intelligence-officer Jonathan Pollard was convicted to life imprisonment for spying for Israel over a number of years. As an Israeli intelligence officers with acquaintances in US intelligence community once stated; "When I am sitting with my friend, he's not sitting with *his* friend" (Ostrovsky, Hoy 1990: 86).

In an operational context there are times when foreign language skills are used on enemy territory, ranging from intelligence operations lasting years, or undercover strikes lasting just minutes or hours. A common factor on such occasions is that the verbal skills have to be fluent. Each term must be learnt according to the locals, and this leads to challenges, especially if the mother tongue and the specific foreign language are very different. The number of phonological differences varies from language to language, and if you don't master these to the full, the pronunciation will not be good enough. Phonetic details have undoubtedly taken many lives during history and look no further than to the example of *shibboleth*, described in chapter 4.

If we go from intelligence to a regular military context, it has been a development the last decades, in the sense of an increasing understanding for the need for foreign language skills. I will suggest that this evolution is linked to the development of today's modern armies, and the shift of paradigms most NATO- and EU-military forces have gone through the last twenty years. With the development of modern warfare in the post-cold war period, the non-combat skills and socio-cultural aspects have gained more focus and priority – including language skills. *The Napoleonic paradigm* was very much based on national existence, a total war scenario with conventional warfare, involving a large number of soldiers and fully involving the civil society, often in well-known territory and environment. In the *New paradigm* however, the conflicts are primarily based on state-interest, taking place far away from home, and being more limited and with lower intensity.[72] Low Intensity Conflict (LIC) and hybrid-warfare are normally demanding a longer time-perspective, with a limited number of troops, which in addition to overcome an enemy, also are supposed to possess a nation-building capability.

The latter form of warfare increases the need for local language skills significantly. Intelligence is certainly still a major factor, but in addition to this the daily communication with the local population for practical, social and political reasons are just as essential. The forces may also perform training and joint operations with local forces. In other words, today foreign language skills are closely integrated into intelligence, traditional military activity, socio-cultural relations and politics. However, it must be stressed that IDF not yet have gone from the Napoleonic paradigm to the New paradigm, but has a foothold in both of them - depending on the subject discussed.[73] To give an example it can be said that IDF the last 25 years has primarily exercised LIC- and hybrid-warfare, but on the other side Israel has no tradition for nation-building activity on the soil of other Arab states.

If we focus on the linguistic perspective, the IDF and the secret services have a well-developed capacity of foreign language skills. Arabic holds a unique position in regard to focus and capacity, but in addition to this we shouldn't forget the advantage Israel has with Jews on every continent, as well as immigrants from all over the world. Through at least one these channels, Israel is likely to find persons covering almost all kind of languages if the

---

[72] Former Chief of Defense Sverre Diesen, interview 3 November 2010.

[73] Own assessments, based on interviews with Palle Ydstebø, Sverre Diesen, Stuart A. Cohen and Yehuda Ben-Meir in October-November 2010.

need arises, and the state and its services has in this context a linguistic readiness resource few other states can match.

Just as Israel needs capacities on foreign languages, the Arab states and certain non-state actors need Hebrew-speakers. The amount of focus and resources on Hebrew varies, but the neighboring states and non-state actors, such as Hezbollah and Hamas, have a minimum need for their military intelligence apparatus. This is the case with Syria, although the capacity may be rather limited, since they use their proxies in Lebanon to act against Israel. Another point to remember is that in non-democratic Arab states, like Syria, security and intelligence services are very much politically focused. The primary task for these services is to secure and consolidate the current regime leadership.[74] In other words, they concentrate most of their resources towards their own citizens and the focus on foreign languages is more reduced. A few Arab states, like Egypt, have a broader military need and also a civil marked for Hebrew-speakers.

6.1 The Palestinians – Hebrew as a necessity

Initially it is appropriate to turn the focus towards the Palestinians and their close relationship with Hebrew. Many Palestinians, in particular those living in East-Jerusalem and the West Bank, need or profit considerably from a basic knowledge of Hebrew in the daily life. For over 70 000 Palestinians this is a fact due to their work inside Israel or in the settlements on the West Bank - including both legal and illegal workers.[75] One thing is that they may need to speak Hebrew in their work, but just as much, Hebrew knowledge is an advantage as they pass through check-points, on their way in and out of Israel. No or limited Hebrew knowledge can certainly be an obstacle in the precise meaning of the word. As Israeli author *Etgar Keret* describes, a soldier's bad mood can inflict that those who don't speak Hebrew are denied entering Israel. If the message is "speak Hebrew or shut-up" often enough, some Palestinians will learn Hebrew just to avoid such incidents.[76] Following up on this, it is not hard to imagine that the ability to communicate with IDF-soldiers in Hebrew during controls, confrontations or operations in the occupied territories, is an advantage.

---

[74] Former Director of AMAN Shlomo Gazit, 14 November 2010.
[75] *Palestinians working in Israel hurting own economy*, Moti Bassok, Haaretz, 01.04.2010.
[76] *Speak Hebrew or shut* up, Etgar Keret, The Guardian, 11.08.2004.

On the political arena, it's obvious that the Palestinians need Hebrew-speakers in the continuous political and diplomatic process with their Israeli counterparts. Likewise it is clear that the security forces of the Palestinian Authority (PA) and Israel have established an increasingly stronger cooperation, when it comes to fight Hamas and other Islamic militant groups in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

Another interesting subject is the use of the counterpart's language in campaigns, aimed at informing or pass influence on the population of the other side. In 2008 the Palestinian Authority bought advertisements in Israeli newspapers in order to promote an Arab peace plan, first launched in 2002. The ads, in Hebrew, aimed at informing the Israeli public about the initiative. The Israelis themselves made an extensive use of You Tube-videos in Arabic, to spread their views on the subject.[77] Of course, this is political or diplomatic craftsmanship with clear resemblance to military psychological operations.

A more peaceful phenomenon is when Hebrew poems and literature is translated to Arabic, and vica versa. The idea that such cultural exchange may create a deeper understanding among the two sides is not new, but in earlier times this was too often destroyed due to misuse of the other party's literature, with incorrect translations and interpretation, as a part of propaganda warfare. In the case of Arab writers, which live in Israel and write in Hebrew, they have traditionally also been met with great skepticism from the Arab population outside Israel.[78] *Anton Shammas* is an example of a writer of poems and essays, who has promoted both Arabic and Hebrew material. The recent years the skepticism has decreased to a certain degree, and there are now several writers on both sides of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, that are getting their writings published in both Arabic and Hebrew. The previously mentioned Etkar Keret is such an author and he has also published writings, cooperating with Palestinian writers. This was the case in the book *Gaza Blues*, which he made with Samir El-Yousseff.

6.2 The Egyptians also commercially motivated

In Egypt's case, the interest of Hebrew is not new. The Egyptian army, as well as its intelligence agencies, has always recognized a need for Hebrew skills due to their conflicts

---

[77] *When Israelis speak in Arabic and Palestinians in Hebrew*, Menassat, 21.11.2008.
[78] *Arabs dancing in a new light of Arabesques*, Mahmoud Kayyal, Middle Eastern literature, vol.2, no.1, April 2008, Routledge.

with Israel. Gathering intelligence has been priority number one, so most students who studied Hebrew before, did so in order to qualify for this line of work.

However, according to *Munir Mahmoud*, a Hebrew teacher in Egypt, president Sadat's visit to Jerusalem in 1977 changed and broadened the focus on Hebrew among the Egyptians.[79] The reason for this was the cultural and academic exchange both parts sought to establish following the peace agreement, and the potential prospect of doing commercial business across the borders. Today the interest is still growing among young Egyptians and every year about 2000 students enroll in Hebrew courses, with some 500 graduates annually, from one of the eight universities teaching Hebrew.[80] The possibility for professional employment is no longer limited to the diplomacy, army or intelligence and security services, even though their need is still the same. However, today Hebrew language knowledge can also lead to jobs in the media-branch, telephone services serving Israeli customers, translation-companies and research centers.

6.3 The Israel-Iran conflict

The most serious security-threat facing Israel today is the one with Iran, due to their nuclear research program. The Israelis have a large portion of their total intelligence capabilities aimed towards the regime in Teheran and this also requires competence in Farsi. But like the Israeli intelligence community needs employees with skills in Farsi, the Iranians are eager to recruit Hebrew-speakers. The constant work for strengthening their language-proficiency has been going on for a long time on both sides, but has undoubtedly been intensified the last few years. The Iranians seems to have focused on recruiting Palestinian students living outside of Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories. This is an easier and more secure approach, since it is out of the domain for the Israeli security services. However, other groups exposed to the Iranian recruiters are Israeli Arabs living in Israel and Palestinian militants undergoing military training in Iran or Lebanon.[81]

On the other side, Israel has recruited Farsi-speakers, but primarily on their own ground. Rightly, it is a Jewish minority in Iran consisting of about 25 000-35 000 persons, but they are

---

[79] *Hebrew has never been so popular in Egypt*, Yoav Stern, Haaretz, 15.11.2007.
[80] Ibid.
[81] *Iranian intelligence recruiting Hebrew speakers*, Bergman, Ynetnews.com, 31.07.07, retrieved 15.10.2010.

highly likely under strict surveillance from the Iranian security services and with travel limitations. However, there are from time to time both refugees and defectors of Jewish origin coming to Israel, and they are potentially first-class material regarding Farsi-skills. As a clear sign of the Israeli focus, the Mossad even advertise after farsi-speakers. In 2007 Mossad advertized in Israeli newspapers, inviting Farsi speakers to apply for positions within the service.[82] Relevant assignments for such linguistic experts can include almost everything, from monitoring Iranian transmissions, following Iranian news, translating documents, giving operational support or conduct Humint-operations.

6.4 Hezbollah taking Hebrew lessons

Hezbollah has for years recognized the benefits from Hebrew knowledge and educated selected personnel, probably with help from the Iranians. *al-Dahiya al-Janubiya*, the southern suburb of Beirut, is the Shiite Muslim and Hezbollah district of Beirut, and in the middle of it is the Embassy of Iran. According to Ronan Bergman in the Israeli newspaper *Yediot Ahronot*, the embassy has for years offered education in Islamic culture, and members of Hezbollah have studied Hebrew there. At the embassy they have Israeli newspapers and books in Hebrew, including child books with vocal-marking, and therefore easier to read for new students of Hebrew. [83]

Both before and after the Israeli unilateral withdrawal from Southern Lebanon in 2000, ordered by Prime Minister Ehud Barak, Hezbollah has focused on intelligence-gathering concerning the IDF. As the Israelis left Lebanon, Hezbollah had to start to focus more on intelligence activity inside Israel, but still the major field of interest was limited to the northern areas of the Jewish state and its military forces. From 2002-2003 Hezbollah started to both expand the geographical arena to more southern parts of the country, and the conceptual sphere. No longer was local, tactical information on the IDF the only priority, but just as well topics concerning national politics, the Israeli mindset, Israel-Arab relations and social issues. Also in this regard, the Shiite movement needed Hebrew skills as they sought relevant books and periodicals covering these subjects.[84]

---

[82] Ibid.
[83] Ibid.
[84]*Hizbollah espionage against Israel*, Amir Kulick, Strategic Assessment, November 2009.

It is of course difficult to estimate exactly how much Hezbollah's intelligence efforts contributed to the achievements of the movement during the Second Lebanon war, but that it was an important part of it seems clear. In the years after the confrontation, Hezbollah's intelligence activities have continued to develop to a higher standard, not far from reaching the quality delivered by national services within the field.

6.5 Conclusion: Learning for different reasons

In this chapter I have argued that there is a variety of interest in Hebrew in the Middle East, outside Israel's border. There are both state and none-state actors, as Iran, Syria, Hezbollah and Hamas, who have an interest in Hebrew skills due to the different conflicts with Israel they are involved in. Their motives for obtaining Hebrew speakers are then primarily related to military or intelligence matters. Israel and Iran are currently very much focused on recruiting foreign-language specialists useful in the current conflict. In the case of Egypt however, there is also a commercial marked for civilians mastering Hebrew – developed after the peace-agreement with Israel.

In addition to this, it has been described how both sides of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, have been using their counterparts' languages politically, in order to promote or pass influence on the population of the other side. This is also a developing trend in regard to the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah, in times of both peace and war. Finally, but nevertheless important, thousands of Palestinians working in Israel or the settlements profit from Hebrew-knowledge, both in regard to their work, as well as in their daily life encounters with IDF-soldiers or socializing Israeli civilians. In a cultural context writers on both sides have increasingly contributed to insight into the opposite side. However, the cultural arena will not play a major part in a possible future solution of the conflict.

7 Military terminology wordlist

Word or expression	Transcription	Hebrew
Politics and negotiations		
67 lines	*qave 67*	קווי 67
Accusation	*ha'ashama*	האשמה
Agenda	*seder*	סדר
Aggressor, attacker	*toqfan*	תוקפן
Agreement	*'isqa*	עסקה
Alternative	*brera*	ברירה
AMAN - Military intelligence (service)	*'agaf modi'in – 'aman*	אגף מודיעין – אמ"ן
Arms race	*merots ximush*	מירוץ חימוש
Authorities	*shiltonot*	שילטונות
Axis	*tsir*	ציר
Battle doctrine (of the IDF)	*torat lexima*	תורת לחימה
Bilateral	*du- tsedadi*	דו-צדדי
Border Police	*mishmar ha-gvul*	משמר הגבול
Cabinet	*qabinet*	קבינט
Charter (org. scripture roll)	*megila*	מגילה
Civil war	*milxemet 'ezraxim*	מלחמת אזרחים
Civilians	*'ezraxim*	אזרחים
Coalition	*hit'axdut*	התאחדות
Command	*pequda*	פקודה
Commission of inquiry	*va'adat xaqira*	ועדת חקירה
Communique	*hoda'a rishmit*	הודעה רשמית
Compromise	*pshara*	פשרה
Conflict	*sikhsukh - qonfliqt*	סכסוך - קונפליקט
Decision	*haxlata*	החלטה
Decision-making	*qabalat ha-haxlatot*	קבלת ההחלטות
Demand / condition	*tna'i*	תנאי
Deterrence	*harta'a*	הרתעה
Doctrine	*doqtrina*	דוקטרינה
Election	*bexirot*	בחירות
Election campaign	*masa' bexirot*	מסע בחירות
Enemy	*'oyev*	אויב
EU	*ha-'ixud ha-'eropi*	האיחוד האירופי
Extreme groupes	*qvutsot qitsoniyot*	קבוצות קיצוניות
Fatah	*fatax*	פתח
Forces	*koxot*	כוחות
Frame	*misgeret*	מיסגרת

Freedom	*xofesh*	חופש
Genocide	*retsax ʿam*	רצח עם
Government	*memshala*	ממשלה
Hamas	*xamas*	חמאס
Hamas delegation	*mishlaxat xamas*	משלחת חמאס
Hezbollah	*xizbola*	חיזבאללה
Human rights	*zekhuyot ha-ʾadam*	זכויות האדם
Implement	*le-yasem*	ליישם
Intiative	*yozma*	יוזמה
In return, in compensation	*be-tmura*	בתמורה
Intelligence	*modiʿin*	מודיעין
Intention	*kavana*	כוונה
Interest	*ʿinyan*	עניין
Israel Defense Forces	*tsevaʾ hagana le-yisraʾel*	צבא הגנה לישראל
Israeli demands	*tnaʾim yisreʾelim*	תנאים ישראלים
Israel Security Agency (ISA) - Shabak	*sherut ha-bitaxon ha-klali - shabak*	שירות הביטחון הכללי – שב"כ
Israeli sources	*goremim yisreʾelim*	גורמים ישראלים
Lasting peace	*shalom qevaʿ*	שלום קבע
Leader	*manhig*	מנהיג
Leadership	*manhigut*	מנהיגות
Mediator	*metavekh*	מתווך
Member of Knesset	*xaver kneset*	חבר כנסת
Military activities	*peʿulot tsevaʾiyot*	פעולות צבאיות
Minister	*sar*	שר
Minister of Defense (lit. security)	*sar ha-bitaxon*	שר הביטחון
Ministry	*misrad*	משרד
Mission of the IDF	*yiud tsahal*	ייעוד צה"ל
Mobilization	*gius*	גיוס
MOSSAD - Israel Secret Intelligence Service	*musad*	מוסד
Nationalism	*leʾuminut*	לאומינות
Nationalistic	*leʾumani*	לאומני
NATO	*naʾto*	נאטו
Negotiations (giving and taking)	*masaʾ u-matan*	משא ומתן
Outcome, result	*totsaʾa*	תוצאה
Palestinian Islamic Holy War	*jihad ha-ʾislamiya be-falestin*	גיהאד האסלמיה בפלסטין
PLO (Palestinian Liberation Organization)	*ʾashaf*	אש"פ
Party	*miflaga*	מפלגה
Peace agreement	*heskem shalom*	הסכם שלום

Peace initiative	*yozmat shalom*	יוזמת שלום
Peacekeeping forces	*koxot shalom*	כוחות שלום
Peace process	*tahalikh shalom*	תהליך שלום
Plan	*tokhnit*	תוכנית
Politics	*politiqa*	פוליטיקה
Postponement	*dexiya*	דחיה
Pressure	*laxats*	לחץ
Prime minister	*rosh ha-memshala*	ראש הממשלה
Process	*tahalikh*	תהליך
Proposal	*hatsa'a*	הצעה
Provocation	*hitgarut*	התגרות
Realistic	*metsi'uti*	מציאותי
Relations	*yaxasim*	יחסים
Release	*shixrur*	שחרור
Representative	*natsig*	נציג
Reserve forces	*koxot milu'im*	כוחות מילואים
Sanctions	*'itsumim*	עיצומים
Scenario	*tasrit*	תסריט
Security	*bitaxon*	בטחון
Security Council (UN)	*mo'etset ha-bitaxon*	מועצת הביטחון
Sign	*laxtom*	לחתום
Society	*xevra*	חברה
Solution	*pitron*	פיתרון
Spirits of the IDF (Code of ethics)	*ruax tsahal*	רוח צה"ל
Standing forces	*koxot 'omdot*	כוחות עמדות
Strategy	*'astrategia*	אסטרטגיה
Strategic	*'astrategi*	אסטרטגי
Successor	*yoresh*	יורש
Summit	*pisga*	פיסגה
Support	*tomekh*	תומך
Terrorism	*terror*	טרור
The National Security Staff	*ha-mate le-bitaxon le'umi*	המטה לביטחון לאומי
The Palestinian Authority – P.A.	*ha-rashut*	הרשות
Top meeting	*v'idat pisga*	ועידת פיסגה
Unilateral	*xad-tsedadi*	חד-צדדי
United Nations	*ha-'umot ha-mu'xadot - ha-'um*	האומות המאוחדות האו"ם
War	*milxama*	מלחמה
War crime	*pesha' milxama*	פשע מלחמה
Warfare	*loxma*	לחמה
Worst-case scenario (lit. all-out case)	*miqre ha-kol*	מקרה הכל

IDF organization structure		
The General Staff of the IDF	*ha-mate ha-klali shel tsahal – ha-matkal*	המטה הכללי של צה"ל – המטכ"ל
Chief of General Staff	*ramatkal*	רמטכ"ל
Deputy Chief of General Staff	*segan ha-ramatkal*	סגן הרמטכ"ל
Coordinating Staff (General Staff)	*ha-mate ha-meta'em*	המטה המתאם
Professional Staff (General Staff)	*ha-mate ha-miqtso'i*	המטה המקצועי
Ha Kiriya. IDF Headquarters in Tel Aviv	*ha-qiriya*	הקרייה
Army	*tsava'*	צבא
Airforce	*xel 'avir*	חיל אוויר
Navy	*xel yam*	חיל ים
Directorates and departments		
Computer services directorate (ATAK)	*'agaf taqshuv*	אגף תקשוב
Directorates (under the General Staff)	*'agafim*	אגפים
Intelligence directorate (AMAN)	*'agaf modi'in*	אגף מודיעין
Manpower directorate (AKA)	*'agaf koax 'adam*	אגף כוח אדם
Operations directorate (AMATS)	*'agaf mivtsa'im*	אגף מבצעים
Planning directorate (AGAT)	*'agaf tokhnit*	אגף תכנית
Technological and Logistics Directorate (ATAL)	*'agaf tekhnologia ve-logistiqa*	אגף טכנולוגיה ולוגיסטיקה
Additional units		
Financial advisory to the Chief of Staff	*ha-yo'ets ha-kaspi la-ramatkal*	היועץ הכספי לרמטכ"ל
Governmental activity coordinator for the occupied territories	*meta'em pe'ulot ha-memshala be-shtaxim*	מתאם פעולות הממשלה בשטחים
Head (officer) of the reserve forces	*qatsin ha-milu'im ha-rashi*	קצין המילואים הראשי
Military academy, command and below	*ha-mikhlala la-piqud ve-la-mata*	המכללה לפיקוד ולמטה
Military advocate general	*ha-praqlitut ha-tseva'it*	הפרקליטות הצבאית
Military courts unit	*bate ha-din ha-bats'am*	בתי הדין הבצא"ם
(Upper) arms		
Air- and Space forces	*zeroa' ha-'avir ve-ha-xalal*	זרוע האוויר והחלל
Land forces	*zeroa' ha-yabasha*	זרוע היבשה
Navy forces	*zeroa' ha-yam*	זרוע הים

Commands and ground forces headquarter		
Northern Command	*piqud ha-tsafon – patsan*	פקוד הצפון - פצ"ן
Central Command	*piqud ha-merkazi – paqmaz*	פקוד המרכזי - פקמ"ז
Southern Command	*piqud ha-darom – padam*	פקוד הדרום - פד"ם
Home Front Command	*piqud ha-ʻoref*	פקוד העורף
Ground Forces Headquarters - Mazi	*mifqedet zeroʻot ha-yabasha - mazi*	מפקדת זרועות היבשה – מז"
Branches, formations and units		
Armored corps	*xel shiryon*	חיל שריון
Artillery corps	*xel totxanim*	חיל תותחנים
Compucation/teleprocessing corps	*xel tiqshuv*	חיל תקשוב
Engineering corps	*xel handasa*	חיל הנדסה
Field Intelligence corps	*xel modiʻin ha-sade*	חיל מודיעין השדה
Infantry corps	*xel raglayim*	חיל רגלים
Intelligence corps	*xel modiʻin*	חיל מודיעין
Logistics corps	*xel logistiqa*	חיל לוגיסטיקה
Medical corps	*xel refuʼa*	חיל רפואה
Parachute corps	*xel tsanxanim*	חיל צנחנים
Formations		
Division	*ʼugda*	אוגדה
Brigade	*xativa*	חטיבה
Battalion	*gdud*	גדוד
Company	*pluga*	פלוגה
Platoon	*maxlaqa*	מחלקה
Squad 3x3	*kita*	כיתה
Patrol, fire team, unit	*xulya, yexida*	חוליה, יחידה
Battery unit (artillery)	*solela*	סוללה
Air force squadron	*tayeset*	טייסת
Crew	*tsevet*	צוות
Sniper team (crew)	*tsevet tsalafim*	צוות צלפים
Rank and positions		
Rank	*darga*	דרגה
Lieutenant General (CGS)	*rav ʼaluf*	רב אלוף
Major General (Directorates + command level)	*ʼaluf*	אלוף
Brigader General (Div + corps level)	*tat ʼaluf*	תת אלוף

Colonel	*'aluf mishne – 'alam*	אלוף משנה – אל"ם
Lieutenant Colonel	*segan 'aluf*	סגן אלוף
Major	*rav segen - rasan*	רב סרן – רס"ן
Captain	*seren*	סרן
Lieutenant	*segen*	סגן
Second Lieutenant	*segen mishne -segum*	סגן משנה – סג"ם
Master Sergeant	*rav samal rishon - rasar*	רב סמל ראשון – רס"ר
Sergeant First Class	*rav samal - ras*	רב סמל – ר"ס
Staff Sergeant	*samal rishon - samar*	סמל ראשון – סמ"ר
Sergeant	*samal*	סמל
Corporal	*rav tura'i - rabat*	רב טוראי – רב"ט
Vice Corporal	*tura'i rishon*	טוראי ראשון
Private	*tura'i*	טוראי
Commanders		
Supreme commander	*mefaqed 'elyon*	מפקד עליון
Commander	*mefaqed*	מפקד
Second in command	*sgan mefaqed-samekh*	סגן מפקד - סמך
Staff	*mate*	מטה
Divison commander	*mefaqed 'ugda*	מפקד אוגדה
Brigade commander	*mefaqed xativa - magax*	מפקד חטיבה – מג"ח
Battalion commander	*mefaqed gdud - magad*	מפקד גדוד – מג"ד
Company commander	*mefaqed pluga, mem-pe'*	מפקד פלוגה – מ"פ
Platoon commander	*mefaqed maxlaqa, mem-mem*	מפקד מחלקה – מ"מ
Squad leader	*mefaqed kita – mem-kaf*	מפקד כיתה – מ"כ
Positions and categories		
Bomb-disposal expert, sapper	*xablan*	חבלן
Combatant	*qravi*	קרבי
Commando (soldier)	*komando*	קומנדו
Diver	*tsolel*	צולל
Driver	*nehag*	נהג
Expert, specialist	*mumxe*	מומחה
Frogman	*'ish tsefardea'*	איש צפרדע
Gunner, artillery	*totxan*	תותחן

82

Mental health officer	*qaban*	קב"ן
Military analysist	*parshan tseva'i*	פרשן צבאי
Military Police	*mishtara tseva'it*	משטרה צבאית
Missing in action – MIA	*ne'edar*	נעדר
Navigator	*navat*	נווט
Non-combatant	*lo' qravi*	לא קרבי
Observation soldier	*tatspitniyot*	תצפתניות
Officer	*qatsin*	קצין
Parachutist	*tsanxan*	צנחן
Pilot	*tayas*	טייס
Prisoner of war – POW	*shavuy*	שבוי
Radar operator	*mokem*	מוכם
Scout	*sayer*	סייר
Sentry	*zaqif*	זקיף
Sniper	*tsalaf*	צלף
Spokesman	*dover*	דובר
Spotter, observer (for a sniper)	*tatspitan*	תצפיתן
Soldier	*xayal*	חייל
Soldier, reserve	*mili*	מילי
Teacher, instructor	*more, madrikh*	מורה, מדריך
Translator	*metargem*	מתרגם
Warrior, fighter	*loxem*	לוחם

Strategic assets

Nuclear, biological and chemical warfare

Biological warfare	*loxma biologit*	לוחמה ביולוגית
Chemical warfare	*loxma kimit*	לוחמה כימית
Nuclear	*gar'ini*	גרעיני
Nuclear bomb	*ptsatsa gar'init*	פצצה גרעינית
Nuclear reactor	*kur 'atomi*	כור אטומי
Nuclear waste	*psolet gar'init*	פסולת גרעיני
Radioactive	*radio'aqtivi*	רדיואקטיבי

Space and satellites

Amos (communications satellite)	*'amos*	עמוס
Communications satellites	*lavyane tiqshoret*	לוויני תקשורת
Data (pl.)	*'otot*	אותות
Eros (civilian photo satellite)	*'eros*	ארוס
Generation	*dor*	דור
Launching	*shigur*	שיגור
Launching site	*'atar shigur*	אתר שיגור
Microsatellite	*miqros'at*	מיקרוסאט

Ofek (series of spy satellites)	*'ofeq*	אופק
Photo satellites	*lavyane tsilum*	לוויני צילום
Resolution (of images)	*hafrada*	הפרדה
Satellite	*lavyan*	לווין
Shavit (rocket, launching satellites)	*shavit*	שביט
Space	*xalal*	חלל
Signal	*'itut*	איתות
Spy satellites	*lavyane rigul*	לוויני ריגול
Tekhsar (advanced intelligence satellite)	*tekhsar*	טכסאר
Special forces		
Special Forces. Flotilla 13. Naval commandos.	*shayetet shaloshesre*	שייטת 13
Special Forces. General Staff recon unit.	*sayeret matkal*	סיירת מטכ"ל
Special Forces. Shaldag unit. Unit 5101, IAF	*yexidat shaldag*	יחידת שלדג
HQ, bases and camp facilities		
Airfield	*sde te'ufa*	שדה תעופה
Airforce base	*basis xel 'avir*	בסיס חיל-אוויר
Airfield	*sde te'ufa*	שדה תעופה
Army base	*basis tseva'i*	בסיס צבאי
Bunker	*bunqer*	בונקר
Camp	*maxane*	מחנה
Command post	*mutsav piqud*	מוצב פקוד
Control center	*merkaz baqara*	מרכז בקרה
Fortified targets	*matarot mevutsarot*	מטרות מבוצרות
Forward observation post	*mutsav qidmi*	מוצב קדמי
Headquarters	*mifqada*	מפקדה
Institute, base	*makhon*	מכון
Military position / post	*mutsav*	מוצב
Missile base	*basis tilim*	בסיס טילים
Nuclear facility (pl.)	*matqane ha-gar'in*	מתקני הגרעין
Observation post	*mutsav tatspit*	מוצב תצפית
Shelter	*miqlat*	מקלט
Shooting range	*mitvax*	מטווח
Weapons storage place	*nashaqiya*	נשקייה
ID, uniforms and equipment		
Base and field uniform	*madim bet*	מדים בת
Beret	*kumta*	כומתה
Binocular	*mishqefet*	משקפת
Canned beef, combat rations	*luf*	לוף

Card with POW information	*pinqas shevi*	פנקס שבי
Combat rations	*menot qrav*	מנות קרב
Combat uniforms	*made qrav*	מדי קרב
Combat vest	*'efod*	אפוד
Decoration	*'itur*	עיטור
Dog	*kelev*	כלב
Dog tag	*disqit*	דיסקית
Dressed in plainclothes	*bi-levush 'ezraxi*	בלבוש אזרחי
Flag	*degel*	דגל
Helmet	*qasda*	קסדה
ID	*zehut*	זהות
Kafiyah	*kafiya*	כאפייה
Kayak	*qayaq*	קייק
Ladder	*sulam*	סולם
Map and compass	*mapa ve-matspen*	מפה ומצפן
Mitsnefet (helmet cloth)	*mitsnefet*	מצנפת
Pack (backpack)	*tarmil*	תרמיל
Parachute	*matsneax*	מצנח
Second-hand, recycled, used	*pe' bet*	פ"ב
Service uniform	*madim 'alef*	מדים אלף
Sketch	*reshomet*	רשומת
Ski	*sqi*	סקי
Sleeping bag	*saq shena - saqash*	שק שנה – שק"ש
Snow shoes	*na'al sheleg*	נעל שלג
Soldiers ID card	*pinqas hoger*	פנקס הוגר
Stretcher	*'alunka*	אלונקה
Telescope	*telesqop*	טלסקופ
Tent	*'ohel*	אוהל
Uniform	*madim*	מדים
Water bottles	*memiyot*	מימיות

Weapons and related terms

Aiming device	*kavenet*	כוונת
Air to Air	*'avir 'avir*	אוויר אוויר
Air to Air missiles	*tile 'avir 'avir*	טילי א"א
Air to Ground	*'avir qarqa'*	אוויר קרקע
Air attack	*hatqafa 'avir*	התקפה אווירית
Airspace	*merxav 'aviri*	מרחב אווירי
All-purpose	*rav takhliti*	רב תכליתי
Ammunition	*taxmoshet*	תחמושת
Anti-aircraft	*neged metosim*	נגד מטוסים
Anti-mine	*neged moqshim*	נגד מוקשים

Anti-personnel	*neged 'adam*	נגד אדם
Armed, cocked	*ta'un*	טעון
Arming	*ximush*	חימוש
Artillery	*'artileriya*	ארטלריה
Artillery shell	*pagaz*	פגז
Ballistic missile	*til balisti*	טיל בליסתי
Bayonet	*kidon*	כידון
Bazooka	*bazuqa*	בזוקה
Blank	*kadur sraq*	כדור סרק
Bomb	*ptsatsa*	פצצה
Bomb disposal	*siluq ptsatsaot*	סילוק פצצות
Boobytrap	*mit'an memulqad*	מטען ממולקד
Bullets	*qli'im*	קליעים
Bunker bombs "nut crackers"	*maftsexot bunqerim*	מפצחות בונקרים
Caliber	*qaliber*	קליבר
Cannon, artillery	*totax*	תותח
Clusterbomb	*ptstatsat mitsrar*	פצצת מצרר
Delay mechanism	*manganon hashhaya*	מנגנון השהיה
Detonator	*napats*	נפץ
Explosives	*xomer nefets*	חומר נפץ
Flare	*ziquq*	זיקוק
Fragmentbomb	*ptsatsat reses*	פצצת רסס
Grenade	*rimon*	רמון
Grenade launcher	*mashger tilim*	משגר טילים
Guided missile	*til munxe*	טיל מונחה
Handgrenade	*rimon yad*	רמון יד
Kassam rockets	*raqetot qasam*	רקטות קסאם
Knife	*sakin*	סכין
Landmine	*moqesh yabashti*	מוקש יבשתי
Magazine	*maxsanit*	מחסנית
Magnet mine	*moqesh magneti*	מוקש מגנטי
Malfunction	*taqala*	תקלה
MG (Machine Gun)	*miqla'*	מקלע
Mine	*moqesh*	מוקש
Missfire (vådeskudd)	*'iyor*	איור
Missil	*til*	טיל
Molotov cocktail	*baqbuq tav'era*	בקבוק תבערה
Mortar	*margema*	מרגמה
Phosphorus	*zarxan*	זרחן
Pistol	*'eqdax*	אקדח
Revolver (Tønne-)	*'eqdax tupi*	אקדח תופי
Rifle	*rove*	רובה

English	Transliteration	Hebrew
Rifle scope, telescope	*telesqop*	טלסקופ
Roadmine	*mit'an moqesh*	מטען מוקש
Roadside	*mit'an tsad*	מטען צד
Rocket	*raqeta*	רקטה
Semi-automat	*xatsi-'otomati*	חצי-אוטומטי
Shotgun	*rove tsayid*	רובה ציד
Silencer	*mashqet*	משקט
Small arms	*nesheq qal*	נשק קל
Smoke grenade	*rimon 'ashan*	רמון עשן
Sniper rifle	*rove tsalafim*	רובה צלפים
Submachine gun	*tat miqla'*	תת מקלע
Tear gas	*gaz madmia'*	גז מדמיע
Tracer bullet	*kadur notev*	כדור נותב
Trigger	*hedeq*	הדק
Warhead	*rosh qravi*	ראש קרבי
Weapon	*nesheq*	נשק
Vehicles, planes and boats		
Ground forces		
Jeep	*djip*	ג'יפ
Kasman M113 anti-riot APC	*qasman*	קסמן
Merkava, MBT	*merkava*	מרכבה
Nagman M113 with turret APC	*nagman*	נגמן
Namer (leopard), Merkava-based APC	*namer*	נמר
Tank – Main Battle Tank (MBT)	*tanq*	טנק
Sofa, patrol vehicle, Landrover type	*sufa*	סופה
Zelda M113 APC	*zelda*	זלדה
Air force		
Airplane	*matos*	מטוס
Apache AH-64 A Peten (Cobra)	*peten*	פתן
Apache AH-64 D Saraf (Angel)	*saraf*	שרף
Bomber (aircraft)	*maftsits*	מפציץ
F-15 A/B/C/D Baz (falk)	*baz*	בז
F-15I Ra'am (thunder)	*ra'am*	רעם
F-16 A/B Nets (hawk)	*nets*	נץ
F-16 C/D Barak (lightening)	*baraq*	ברק
F-16 I Sufa (storm)	*sufa*	סופה
Helicopter	*masoq*	מסוק
Kfir C2/TC-2/C7/TC7 (young lion)	*kfir*	כפיר
Mini-UAV, drone	*matos za'ir le-lo' tayas - mazlat*	מטוס זעיר ללא טייס - מזל"ט

Nesher, multi-role fighter (vulture)	*nesher*	נשר
Transport	*tovala*	תובלה
Type aircraft	*sug ha-matos*	סוג המוס
Type helicopter	*sug ha-masoq*	סוג המסוק
Navy		
Aircraft carrier	*noset metosim*	נושאת מטוסים
Destroyer	*mashxetet*	משחתת
Dolphin (submarines)	*dolfin*	דולפין
Landing craft	*naxetet*	נחתת
Protector (unmanned, small boats)	*proteqtor*	פרוטקטור
Sa'ar (missile boats)	*sa'ar*	סער
Speedboat	*sirat manoa'*	סירת מנוע
Submarine	*tsolelet*	צוללת
Super Dvora (boat)	*super dvora*	סופר דבורה
Planning, training and operations		
Activity	*pe'ula*	פעולה
Acts/patterns of reaction	*hitgalgelut miqrim*	התגלגלות מקרים
Air reconassaince	*siyur 'aviri*	סיור אווירי
Alert, readiness	*konenut*	כוננות
Ambush	*ma'arav*	מארב
Attack – assault	*tqifa - hatqafa*	תקיפה – התקפה
Attention	*tesomet lev*	תשומת לב
Basic training	*tironut*	טירונות
Battle	*ma'avaq*	מאבק
Battle, campaign	*ma'arakha*	מערכה
Battlefield	*sde qrav*	שדה קרב
Battlefield	*sde ma'arakha*	שדה מערכה
Bombardment	*hafgaza*	הפגזה
Briefing	*tidrukh*	תדרוך
Briefing	*tadrikh*	תדריך
Briefing room	*xadar ha-tadrikhim*	חדר התדריכים
Cease-fire	*hafsaqat 'esh*	הפסקת אש
Combat	*qrav*	קרב
Command, control	*shlita*	שליטה
Confrontation	*'imut*	עימות
Control	*baqara*	בקרה
Countdown	*sfira le-'axor*	ספירה לאחור
Curfew	*'otser*	עוצר
Cover (for protection)	*maxase*	מחסה
Covering fire	*'esh mexapa*	אש מחפה

Danger	*sakana*	סכנה
Debrief	*tixqer*	תחקר
Debriefing	*tixqur*	תחקור
Direct hit	*pgi'a yeshira*	פגיעה ישירה
Disiplin	*mishma'at*	משמעת
Distraction (manoeuver)	*hasaxat da'at*	הסחת דעת
Exercise	*'imun*	אמון
Failed	*koshel*	כושל
Fire and movement	*'esh ve-tnua'*	אש ותנועה
Fire support	*siyua' 'esh*	סיוע אש
Flying, flight	*tisa*	טיסה
From house to house	*mi-bayit le-bayit*	מבית לבית
From door to door	*mi-delet le-delet*	מדלת לדלת
Frontline (first-)	*qav ha-rishon*	קו הראשון
Frontline	*qav xazit*	קו חזית
Guard duty	*shmira*	שמירה
Hostile	*'oyen*	עוין
Idea	*musag*	מושג
Impact, effect	*hitnagshut*	התנגשות
Improvisation	*'iltur*	אלתור
Inaccurate	*lo' meduyaq*	לא מדויק
Incident	*taqrit*	תקרית
Infiltration	*histanenut*	הסתננות
Inspection, control	*bediqa*	בדיקה
Intention, purpose	*kavana*	כוונה
Invasion	*plisha*	פלישה
Joint operations (involving different services)	*shituf pe'ula - shataf*	שיתוף פעולה – שת"פ
Landing	*nexita*	נחיתה
Line of fire	*qav ha-'esh*	קו האש
Maintainence	*tixzuq*	תחזוק
Manoeuvre	*timron*	תימרון
Mined	*memuqash*	ממוקש
Minefield	*sde moqshim*	שדה מוקשים
Miss	*haxta'a*	החטאה
Model	*model*	מודל
Observation	*tatspit*	תצפית
Occupation (military)	*kibush*	כיבוש
Offensive	*hatqafa*	התקפה
Operation	*mivtsa'*	מבצע
Operational	*mivtsa'i*	מבצעי
Orders	*pequda*	פקודה

Plan	*tokhnit*	תוכנית
Postponement	*'arka*	ארכה
Precision	*dayqanut*	דייקנות
Psychological warfare	*loxma psikologit*	לוחמה פסיכולוגית
Raid	*pshita*	פשיטה
Rapid reaction unit	*yexidat konenut*	יחידת כוננות
Rear unit	*me'asef*	מאסף
Reconaissance	*siyur*	סיור
Reinforcements	*tigboret*	תגבורת
Rescue	*xiluts*	חילוץ
Reserve duty	*milu'im*	מלואים
Resistance	*hitnagdut*	התנגדות
Risk	*sikun*	סיכון
Sabotage	*xabala*	חבלה
Sailing, cruise	*haflaga*	הפלגה
Screw-up	*fashla*	פאשלה
Scenario	*tasrit*	תסריט
Siege	*matsor*	מצור
Signal, sign	*'itut*	איתות
Situation	*matsav*	מצב
Sortie, air-op	*gixa*	גיחה
Strong-hold	*ma'oz*	מעוז
Supply line	*qav ha-'aspaqa*	קו האספקה
Tactics	*takhsis - taqtiqa*	תכסיס – טקטיקה
Tactical	*taqti*	טקטי
Take-off	*hamra'a*	המראה
Target (for the operation)	*matara*	מטרה
Task	*mesima*	משימה
Task force	*koax mesima*	כוחה משימה
Test (march)	*masa'*	מסע
The violent confrontations	*ha-'imutim ha-'alimim*	העימותים האלימים
"Timing"	*tizmun*	תזמון
Training	*'imun*	אימון
Trap	*malkodet*	מלכודת
Two and two, as pairs	*be-zugot*	בזוגות
Under fire	*taxat yeriyot*	תחת יריות
Violent	*'alim*	אלים
Warning, alarming	*hatra'a*	התרעה
Withdrawal	*meshikha*	משיכה

Intelligence and security		
Allied foreign service	*sherut 'amit*	שירות עמית
Aerial photography	*tatslum 'aviri*	תצלום אוירי
Arms control	*baqarat nesheq - baqan*	בקרת נשק - בק"ן
Assumption, hypothese	*hash'ara*	השערה
Baloon	*balon*	בלון
Basic intelligence	*modi'in besisi*	מודיעין בסיסי
Bribe	*shoxad*	שוחד
Carbomb	*mekhonit tofet*	מכונית תופת
Clan	*xamula*	חמולה
Clandestine activities	*pe'ilut xasha'it*	פעילות חשאית
Code	*qod*	קוד
Codename	*shem tsofen*	שם צופן
Collection / gathering (of intelligence)	*'isuf*	איסוף
Collection officer	*qatsin 'isuf*	קצין איסוף
COMINT – Communication intelligence	*qumint*	קומינט
Communication security	*bitaxon qesher*	בטחון קשר
Confession	*hitvadut*	התוודות
Coordinated operational activity	*shituf pe'ula mivtsa'i*	שיתוף פעולה מבצעי
Coordinated intelligence activity	*shituf pe'ula modi'in*	שיתוף פעולה מודיעין
Counter intelligence	*rigul negdi*	ריגול נגדי
Cover story	*sipur kisuy*	סיפור כיסוי
Covert gathering/collection	*'isuf xasha'i*	איסוף חשאי
Custody	*hashgaxa*	השגחה
Debriefing	*tixqur*	תחקור
Deceit, fraud, deception	*hona'a*	הונאה
Defector	*'ariq*	עריק
Demilitarization, disarmament	*peruz nesheq*	פרוז נשק
Distribution	*hafatsa*	הפצה
Document	*mismakh*	מסמך
Double-agent	*sokhen kaful*	סוכן כפול
Early Warning	*'atra'a muqdemet*	אתראה מוקדמת
Eavesdropping, tapping, monitoring	*ha'azana*	האזנה
Effort	*ma'amats*	מאמץ
ELINT – Electronic intelligence	*'elint*	אלינט
Endbrief	*tixqur tamim*	תחקור תמים
Espionage	*rigul*	ריגול
Estimate of the potential for succeeding	*ha'arakhat yekholot*	הערכת יכולות
Evaluation, assessment	*ha'arakha*	הערכה

False alarm	*'az'aqat shav'*	אזעקת שוא
Field security	*bitaxon sade*	בטחון שדה
Following, tailing (of an object)	*'iquv*	עיקוב
Foreign service (intelligence- or security-)	*sherut zar*	שירות זר
General, real-time overview of the situation	*xitukh matsav*	חיתוך מצב
Supporters	*tomkhim*	תומכים
Hide out	*mistor*	מסתור
Hint	*remez*	רמז
Hostage	*ben 'aruba*	בן ערובה
HUMINT – Human intelligence	*yumint*	יומינט
IMINT - Imagery intelligence	*'imint*	אימינט
Important marks, facts or indicators	*tsiyun yedi'ot xiyuni*	ציון ידיעות חיוני
Infiltrator, agent	*sokhen samuy*	דוכן סמוי
Informant, snitch	*modia'*	מודיע
Informant	*malshin*	מלשין
Information	*meda'*	מידע
Information (intelligence-)	*meda' (modi'in)*	מידע (מודיעין)
Information- / knowledge estimate	*ha'arakhat yedi'ot*	הערכת ידיעות
Innocent	*xaf*	חף
Insertion, infiltration	*haxdara*	החדרה
Intelligence bodies	*gufe modi'in*	גופי מודיעין
Intelligence community	*qehilat ha-modi'in*	קהילת המודיעין
Intelligence estimate	*ha'arakhat modi'in*	הערכת מודיעין
Intelligence gathering process prior to a specific operation (IPB: Intelligence Preparation for Battlespace).	*isuf modi'in le-mivtsa'- 'amlam*	איסוף מודיעין למבצה - אמל"מ
Intelligence officer	*qatsin modi'in*	קצין מודיעין
Intelligence service	*sherut modi'in*	שרות מודיעין
Interrogation	*tish'ul*	תשאול
Interrogator or intelligence analyst	*xoqer*	חוקר
Investigation, debriefing	*taxaqir*	תחקיר
Killing, assassination	*retsax*	רצח
Landbased photography	*tatslum qarqa'i*	תצלום קרקעי
Leak (of information)	*hadlafa*	הדלפה
Letterbomb	*ma'atefet nefets*	מעטפת נפץ
Liedetector	*mekhonat 'emet*	מכונת אמת
Manhunt	*matsod*	מצוד
Member / friend	*xaver*	חבר
Microfilm	*seret zi'ur*	סרט זיעור
Network, chain, (spy)ring	*reshet*	רשת
Object	*'obyeqt*	אובייקט
Open source intelligence	*'isuf galuy*	איסוף גלוי

Operational intelligence	*modiʿin le-mivtsaʿ*	מודיעין למבצע
Password	*sisma*	סיסמה
Photo, picture	*tatslum - tmuna*	תצלום – תמונה
Photography, taken clandestinely	*tsilum samui*	צילום סמוי
Poison	*raʿal*	רעל
Police	*mishtara*	משטרה
Polygraf	*galaʾi sheqer*	גלאי שקר
Potential suspect	*beduqaʾi*	בדוקאי
Prevention	*sikul*	סיכול
Preventive / interceptive intelligence	*modiʿin mesakel*	מודיעין מסכל
Prewarning	*ʾazhara me-rosh*	אזהרה מראש
Prisoners	*ʾasirim*	אסירים
Readiness, alertness, full alert, red	*konenut*	כוננות
Refugee	*palit*	פליט
Release	*shixrur*	שחרור
Reliability of information	*nehemanut yediʿa*	נהימנות ידיעה
Report	*katava*	כתבה
Rescue, extraction, pull-out	*xiluts*	חילוץ
Reward	*pras*	פרס
Rumour	*shmuʿa*	שמועה
Safety (security)	*betixut*	בטיחות
Safehouse	*bet ha-mistor*	בית המסתור
Satellite photography	*tatslum lavyani*	תצלום לויני
Secret (a)	*sod*	סוד
Secret	*sodi*	סודי
Security precautions	*ʾemtsaʿi bitaxon*	אמצעי בטחון
Security service	*sherut bitaxon*	שירות בטחון
SIGINT – Signal intelligence	*sigint*	סיגינט
Sign, signal, mark	*hatsbaʿa*	הצבעה
Situation estimate	*haʿarakhat matsav*	הערכת מצב
Situation overview	*tmunat matsav*	תמונת מצב
Source	*maqor*	מקור
Source protection (security)	*bitaxon meqorot*	בטחון מקורות
Spy	*meragel*	מרגל
Study, research	*mexqar*	מחקר
Supporter	*tomekh*	תומך
Surveillance	*maʿaqav*	מעקב
Surveillance balloon	*balon tatspit*	בלון תצפית
Tactical HQ (in the area of operations)	*xavurat piqud qidmi*	חבורת פקוד קידמי
Terrorattack, bomb	*piguaʿ*	פיגוע
Terrorist	*mexabel*	מחבל
Terrorist	*terorist*	טרוריסט

English	Transliteration	Hebrew
Terrorist, bomber	*mefagea'*	מפגע
Timedeviced bomb	*ptsatsat zman*	פצצת זמן
Top Secret	*sodi be-yoter*	סודי ביותר
Torture	*'inuy*	עינוי
Traitor, colloberator (acronym)	*mashtam*	משת"מ
Treason	*begida*	בגידה
Verification of information	*'imut meda'*	אימות מידע
VISINT – Visual intelligence	*vizint*	ויזינט
Wanted (person)	*mevuqash*	מבוקש
War alert, warning	*hatra'at milxama*	התרעה מלחמה
War room, situation center	*xadar milxama*	חדר מלחמה
Warning	*'atra'a*	אתראה
Witness	*'ed*	עד
Communication and technology		
Computer and communications		
Antenna	*'antena*	אנטנה
Blog	*blog*	בלוג
Cabel	*kevel*	כבל
Calibration	*kiyul*	כיול
Call-sign	*'ot zihuy*	אות זיהוי
Channel	*te'ala*	תעלה
Communications	*tiqshoret*	תקשורת
Computer-/ data communication	*tiqshoret netunim - taqshan*	תקשורת נתונים – תקש"ן
Deciphering	*pi'nut*	פיענות
Eavesdropping, monitoring	*tsitut*	ציתות
Electronics	*'eleqtroni*	אלקטרוני
Forum	*forum*	פורום
Frequency	*tekhifut*	תכיפות
High frequency	*be-tedirut gevoha*	בתדירות גבוהה
Infrared	*'infra' 'adom*	אינפרא אדום
Internet	*'internet*	אינטרנט
Intranet	*'intranet*	אינטרנט
Internet site	*'atar*	אתר
Laser	*leyzer*	ליזר
Microphone	*miqrofon*	מיקרופון
Modem	*modem*	מודם
Morse	*mors*	מורס
Password	*sisma*	סיסמה
PC	*maxshev*	מחשב
Printer	*madpis*	מדפוס

English	Transliteration	Hebrew
Radar (acronym)	*makam*	מכ"מ
Recorder	*reshamqol*	רשמקול
Remote-control	*shlat-raxoq*	שלט-רחוק
Scanner	*soreq*	סורק
Sensor	*xishan*	חישן
System	*ma'arekhet*	מערכת
Techni(cal)	*tekhni*	טכני
Transmission	*sheder*	שדר
Transmitter	*mashder*	משדר
Volume	*nefax*	נפח
Xerox machine	*mekhonat tsilum*	מכונת צילום
Technical terms (transport)		
Altitude	*rom*	רום
Armament	*ximush*	חימוש
Armoured	*meshoryan*	משוריין
Capacity	*tefusa*	תפוסה
Climbing rate	*shi'ur nesiqa*	שיעור נסיקה
Country of origin (production)	*'erets ha-motsa'*	ארץ המוצא
Diameter	*qoter*	קוטר
Dimensions	*mimdim*	מימדים
Foot	*regel*	רגל
Gas	*deleq*	דלק
Height	*gova*	גובה
Instruments	*makhshirim*	מכשירים
Jet	*silon*	סילון
Length	*'orekh*	אורך
Motorized	*memuna'*	ממונע
Radius	*radius*	רדיוס
Range (operational)	*tvax*	טווח
Long-range	*'arokh tvax*	ארוך-טווח
Mach	*makh*	מאך
Maximum range	*maqsimum merxaq*	מקסימום מרחק
Maximum speed	*mehirut merabit*	מהירות מירבית
Maximum weight	*mishqal merabi*	משקל מירבי
Motor, engine	*manoa'*	מנוע
Oil	*neft*	נפט
Refueling	*tadluq*	תדלוק
Restriction (maximum) altitude	*seyag rom*	סייג רום
Sample	*midgam*	מדגם
Size	*godel*	גודל
Speed	*mehirut*	מהירות

Total weight	*mishqal kolel*	משקל כולל
Type, model, edition	*sug*	סוג
Weight empty	*mishqal req*	משקל ריק
Width (surface)	*shetax*	שטח
Wing	*kanaf*	כנף
Capacity (output of a machine/engine)	*bitsu'im*	ביצועים

Medical terms

Bleeding	*dimum*	דימום
Blood	*dam*	דם
Bloodshed	*merxats damim*	מרחץ דמים
Canon fodder	*basar totxanim*	בשר תותחנים
Casualties	*'aveydot – nifga'im*	אבידות - ניפגעים
Corpse	*geviya*	גוויה
Dead, killed	*met*	מת
Fever	*xom*	חום
First aid	*'ezra rishona*	עזרה ראשונה
Killed	*harug*	הרוג
Lethal	*qatlani*	קטלני
Loss, wounded	*nifga'*	נפגע
Medicine	*trufa*	תרופה
Mouth to mouth	*mi-pe le-pe*	מפה לפה
Shock	*za'azua'*	זעזוע
Shock, trauma	*helem*	הלם
Treatment	*tipul*	טיפול
Victim	*qorban*	קורבן
Wounded	*patsua'*	פצוע
Wound	*petsi'a*	פציעה

Geography, topography and infrastructure

Region, countries and areas		
Area	*shetax*	שטח
Border	*gvul*	גבול
Egypt	*mitsrayim*	מצריים
Erez crossing	*ma'avar 'erez*	מעבר ארז
Gaza	*'aza*	עזה
Gaza Strip	*retzu'at 'aza*	רצועת עזה
Iran	*'iran*	אירן
Iraq	*'iraq*	עירק
Israel	*yisra'el*	ישראל

Jordan	*yarden*	ירדן
Kerni crossing	*ma'avar qerni*	מעבר קרני
Lebanon	*levanon*	לבנון
Rafah crossing	*ma'avar rafiax*	מעבר רפיח
Region, zone	*'ezor*	איזור
Sector	*gizra*	גיזרה
Syria	*suriya*	סורייה
Territory, land	*'arets*	ארץ
The Mediterrian	*yam ha-tikhon*	ים התיכון
The Middle East	*ha-mizrax ha-tikhon*	המזרח התיכון
Turkey	*turqiya*	תורקיה
USA	*'artsot ha-brit*	ארצות הברית
West Bank	*ha-gada ha-ma'aravit*	הגדה המערבית
West Bank, acronym for Judea and Samaria	*yosh*	יו"ש
Directions		
East	*mizrax*	מזרח
North	*tsafon*	צפון
South	*darom*	דרום
West	*ma'arav*	מערב
Infrastructure, constructions and facilities		
Airport	*namel te'ufa*	נמל תעופה
Barbed wire	*gader ta'il*	גדר טאיל
Bridge	*gesher*	גשר
Building	*binyan*	בניין
Built up areas	*shetax banuy*	שטח בנוי
Cemetery	*bet qvarot*	בית-קברות
Centre, center	*merkaz*	מרכז
Church	*knesiya*	כנסייה
City hall	*bet ha-'iriya*	בית העירייה
Concrete	*beton*	בטון
Dam	*sekher*	סכר
Electricity	*xashmal*	חשמל
Fabric	*bet xaroshet*	בית חרושת
Facility, plant	*yakholet*	יכולת
Fence	*gader*	גדר
Harbor, port	*hanamel*	הנמל
Highway (no pedestrians)	*kvish*	כביש
Hospital	*bet xolim*	בית חולים
Infrastructure	*tashtit*	תשתית
Junction	*xibur - tsomet*	חיבור - צומת

Magazine	*maxsan*	מחסן
Market	*shuq*	שוק
Mosque	*misgad*	מסגד
Obstacle, roadblock	*maxsom*	מחסום
Police station	*taxanat mishtara*	תחנת משטרה
Power plant	*taxanat koax*	תחנת כוח
Prison	*bet sohar*	בית סוהר
Prison	*kele'*	כלא
Refugee camp	*maxane plitim*	מחנה פליטים
Road	*derekh*	דרך
Roadblock	*maxasom derekh*	מחסום דרך
Sandbag	*saq xol*	שק חול
School	*bet sefer*	בית-ספר
Security fence	*gader bitaxon*	גדר בטחון
Shelter, cover (built-up)	*miqlat*	מקלט
Shop	*xanut*	חנות
Street	*rexov*	רחוב
Synagogue	*bet kneset*	בית כנסת
Tower	*migdal*	מגדל
University	*'universita*	אוניברסיטה
Urban	*'ironi*	עירוני
Urban areas	*meqomot 'ironim*	מקומות עירונים
Tunnel	*niqba*	נקבה
Tunnel	*minhara*	מנהרה
Wall, barrier	*xoma*	חומה
Topography and nature		
Bush	*siax*	שיח
Coast, beach	*xof*	חוף
Crater	*makhtesh*	מכתש
Current, flow	*zerem*	זרם
Desert	*midbar*	מדבר
Field	*sade*	שדה
Forest	*ya'ar*	יער
High tide	*shi' govah ha-mayim*	שיא גובה המיים
Hill	*giv'a*	גבעה
Landscape, view	*nof*	נוף
Low tide	*shefel*	שפל
Mountain	*har*	הר
Mountainous border area	*ha-sfar ha-harari*	הספר ההררי
Mud, muddy	*bots*	בוץ
Nature	*teva'*	טבע

Plateau	*rama*	רמה
River	*nahar*	נהר
Sand	*xol*	חול
Sea	*yam*	ים
Slope	*shipua'*	שיפוע
Star	*kokhav*	כוכב
Stone	*'even*	אבן
Terrain	*shetax*	שטח
Tree	*'ets*	עץ
Valley	*'emeq*	עמק
Vegetation	*tsimxiya*	צמחייה
Wave	*gal*	גל
Weather conditions and seasons		
Autumn	*stav*	סתיו
Cloud	*'anan*	ענן
Clouded	*me'unan*	מעונן
Dark	*xoshekh*	חושך
Dawn	*shaxar*	שחר
Degrees	*ma'alot*	מעלות
Fog	*'arafel*	ערפל
Heatwave	*gal xom*	גל חום
Ice	*qerax*	קרח
Light, illumination	*he'ara*	הארה
Lightning	*baraq*	ברק
Moon	*yareax*	ירח
Moonlight	*'or ha-yareax*	אור הירח
Rain	*geshem*	גשם
Shade	*tsel*	צל
Shadow	*tslalit*	צללית
Sky	*shamayim*	שמיים
Snow	*sheleg*	שלג
Spring	*'aviv*	אביב
Storm	*sufa*	סופה
Summer	*qayts*	קיץ
Sun	*shemesh*	שמש
Temperatur	*temperatura*	טמפרטורה
Thunder	*ra'am*	רעם
Weather	*mezeg 'avir*	מזג אוויר
Weather forecast	*taxazit mezeg 'avir*	תחזית מזג אוויר
Wind	*ruax*	רוח
Winter	*xoref*	חורף

Selection of verbs		
To adjust, accommodate, improve (gear, weapon)	*le-shaftser*	לשפצר
To aim (at)	*le-kaven*	לכוון
To arrest (or halt, stop)	*la-'atsor*	לעצור
To assasinate	*le-hitnaqesh*	להתנקש
To attack	*le-hatqif*	להתקיף
To attack	*li-tqof*	לתקוף
To demonstrate	*le-hafgin*	להפגין
To fight	*li-lxom*	ללחום
To hide	*le-histater*	להסתתר
To improve	*le-shaper*	לשפר
To keep away from	*le-hitraxeq mi*	להתרחק מ
To kill	*la-harog*	להרוג
To leak	*li-dlof*	לדלוף
To mediate	*le-tavekh*	לתווך
To miss (a target)	*le-haxtia'*	להחטיא
To neutralize	*le-natrel*	לנטרל
To open fire	*li-ftoax be-'esh*	לפתוח באש
To produce	*le-yatser*	לייצר
To protect / defend	*le-hagen*	להגן
To retreat (military)	*le-hasig*	להסיג
To shoot	*li-rot*	לירות
To shoot down (aircraft)	*le-hapil*	להפיל
To support	*li-tmokh*	לתמוך
Military slang		
A soldier doing service with fixed days and hours, as in a civilian job.	*jobniq*	ג'ובניק
A soldier new in service	*tsa'ir*	צעיר
A soldier with long time in service - veteran	*vatiq*	ותיק
Bullet with your name on	*qadur toran*	קדור תורן
Cannon; a very good soldier	*totax*	תותח
Combat fighting fox; an experienced and good soldier	*shaqel –* *shu'al qravot loxem*	שקל - שועל קרבות לוחם
Describes the feeling of coming back to base the first day after a weekend leave	*shvizut yom 'alef*	שביזות יום אלף
Green officer; often an annoying 2nd Lt.	*qatsis –* *qatsin tsa'ir*	קציס - קצין צעיר
Israeli smoke; smoke from shelling or bombing	*'ashen yisra'eli*	עשן ישראלי
Killer; a very good fighter/soldier	*qiler*	קילר
Lazy soldier or a soldier taking no responsibility	*xapshan - xayal pashut*	חפשן – חייל פשוט

Leopard; a skilled and energic soldier or an annoying soldier of first class (also an APC model)	*namer, or as abbrivation: nudniq mi-madraga rishona*	נמר – נודניק ממדרגה ראשונה
List of rules a soldier has to carry in his or hers pockets all the time	*paqal – pequdot qeva' la-xayal*	פק"ל – פקודות קבע לחייל
Member of tank crew	*tanqist*	טנקיסט
Ordinary leave	*regila*	רגילה
"Poisoned"; soldiers possessed with military life or combat	*mural*	מורל
Rag; a weak or lazy soldier	*smartut*	סמרטוט
Reservist	*milu'imniq*	מילואימניק
Rookie, new recruit; lit. fresh meat	*basar tari*	בשר טרי
Russian mafia; describes Russian-speaking soldiers who only hang around with each other	*mafras – mafiya rusit*	מפר"ס – מפיה רוסית
"Shit", crisis	*xerbon*	חרבון
Sick leave	*gimelim*	גימלים
Special leave; for funerals and special occasions	*miyuxedet*	מיוחדת
The letter 'ח is used as a term for half-circle - used in lecture situations	*xet*	'ח
The Red Army; the Givati Brigade at the time the unit had a lot of soldiers of Russian origin	*ha-tsava' ha-'adom*	הצבא האדום
Whipped cream; Special Forces	*qatsefet*	קצפת
Yellow; a very strict person, often a NCO	*tsahov*	צהוב

8 Conclusion

8.1 A language formed by a century conflicts

As the history of the pre-1948 Jewish armed forces and the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) shows, the language of the IDF has been formed by a century of conflicts and wars. The actual impact this fact has had on the language itself may not be overestimated, but it has certainly contributed to shape the IDF personnel today, and also much of the culture of the officers' corps. In turn, this has led to a noticeable impact on the professional language of the IDF at the present time, and this will be addressed later in this conclusion.

In a linguistic context, the first Jewish armed forces were too small to have any noticeably influence on Hebrew in general, and certainly not the potential of creating a broad military or professional language within its ranks. However, with the almost constant arrival of Jewish immigrants to Palestine, the public need for Hebrew education was definitely there on a broad basis. The situation regarding the armed forces changed after the Arab riots in 1929 and the Haganah grew in size and became more state-like in its appereance. As a consequence of this, the military language typical for any national army came more into use. At the same time, words created or used by Haganah or their elite unit Palmach, found their way into ordinary Hebrew, and this has been exemplified in this thesis with some Arabic loanwords. Haganah did also arrange internal Hebrew-classes, and at the time they actually walked up a new path that was to become important, in regard to the civil-military relations between the IDF and the Israeli society for decades to come.

When the State of Israel established the Israel Defense Forces in 1948, the focus on Hebrew education inside the ranks was anchored on the highest political echelon, by Prime Minister Ben-Gurion himself. With the high number of immigrants pouring into the new Jewish state and the IDF, he did not only recognize the need for Hebrew teaching due to strictly military reasons, but just as much because the army could make a significant contribution to the nation as a whole. This way, Hebrew education in the IDF became one of the central pillars in the civil-military relations for years to come, especially in the period from 1948 and into the 1960s, until most Jews entering service mastered Hebrew satisfactory. On the other hand, this thesis has also illustrated how lack of Hebrew knowledge was a serious obstacle in regard to achieve key-positions and officer education in the military organization, especially concerning

Oriental Jews in the 1950s. Some have even suggested that this was a deliberate policy from elite Ashkenazis, as it made it difficult for non-Ashkenazis to climb the socio-political ladder in the Israeli society. After the Yom Kippur War, an improvement started to show, as new generations of native-born Orientals did not accept inequality based on differences in their ethnical or cultural backgrounds.

Waves of Russian immigrants after the fall of the USSR again actualized the role of the IDF as an educational institution of Hebrew, but after absorbing these, the situation normalized. Currently, the IDF still organize Hebrew courses for immigrants and natives with a lack of Hebrew knowledge, like Bedouin Arabs, but the extensiveness of this is small, compared to the situation in the 1950s. As a whole, it is clear that Hebrew education no longer is a central pillar in regard to the civil-military relations between the IDF and the Israeli society.

8.2 A world of acronyms and slang

Grammatically, this thesis has substantiated the general impression that acronyms and slang represent major characteristics of the language of the IDF. A comparative study shows that the frequency of acronyms is overwhelming in literature of military character, compared to civil literature. Furthermore, the study of articles in the IDF magazine *Bamahane* disclosed that military acronyms appear frequently in specific categories. Positions and ranks, as well as commands, units and institutions, will normally involve a high number of acronyms. Additionally, in Hebrew it is usually a clear overweight of pronounceable acronyms, and to a lesser degree orthographic and letter acronyms. One explanation, in regard to why the amount of letter acronyms is low in Modern Hebrew compared to English, is the tradition of making pronouncable words out of initials, like names of institutions and companies.

Slang is a natural and essential part of the military language in Israel, and it is the most difficult part to understand and learn for anyone outside the IDF establishment. It develops continousely, shifting with the current trends in almost all areas, and can be both of a very local character, or used in the whole organization. The young age of the IDF conscripts and the long service duration are two central factors that provide an excellent foundation for the development of slang. As described in this thesis, there are very few taboos in regard to slang, although words and expressions connected to Holocaust and Nazi-Germany are still problematic. It should also be noted that the IDF leadership has on several occasions, when

addressing indicators of poor Hebrew among soldiers, declared that slang shall continue to be a part of the military language without interference.

The use of foreign loanwords occurs in the military language, as in ordinary daily Hebrew, and this is not remarkable. In some areas though, like in technological and intelligence contextes, the occurrence of English loanwords is more noticeable than others. This must be regarded as natural, especially taking into account the general influence from USA the modern world in general is experiencing, the close military relationship that exists between Israel and the United States of America, and the tight cooperation taking place between the intelligence and security services of the Western world.

In addition to the above mentioned, this thesis has commented on other minor aspects regarding the language of the IDF, like spelling alphabets and the tradition of using numbers and Hebrew names and nicknames on training schools, institutions and units.

8.3 In need for a common professional language

Historically, it took a while before the Jewish armed forces in Palestine took a form and size large enough to establish a typical state-like military language, but it came during the periode of Haganah. The first following decades, with many immigrants who lacked Hebrew knowledge, the highest priority was to adjust this fact and make sure Hebrew was understood on the operational scene, and Hebrew education inside IDF was also to become a central pillar in the civil-military relationship.

However, this thesis has described that the IDF did not succeed to establish a common professional language on all levels of the IDF, in the period of transformation from the modern to the post-modern military era. As expected, Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA), Effect-Based Operations (EBO) and network-centric warfare entered the arena of the IDF, like any other modern army. Clearly the organization possessed the necessary intentions and tools, but new doctrines and a more technological professional language following this, was not thoroughly implemented into all levels of the IDF. This became obvious during the Second Lebanon War in 2006, where unclear language in orders and high-ranking officers not speaking the same type of military language, led to poor performance in the field. The problem was addressed by the Winograd-commission and a number of researchers at different think-tanks and institutions.

In this thesis it is shown that one relevant factor for the IDF's failure to implement a common professional language in the new, post-modern era, is the general non-academic approach of most IDF officers, who prefer a more traditional and practical approach in the operational arena. This has been further strengthened by the common dislike of doctrines and learning material that are not in Hebrew – at large it seems to be ignored. But still the IDF as an organization must bear the main responsibility of letting this happen, with their career-ladder, based on experience from operational command postings, without proper attention on higher education and academic skills. This is partially illustrated by the fact that only a few senior IDF commanders have a solid education from the National Defense College or other higher-learning institutions.

The IDF General Staff has addressed the mentioned problems that were disclosed during the Second Lebanon War. After *Operation Cast Lead* in 2008-2009 it seems that the clearity of language regarding orders, as well as operational communication and coordination between the different arms of the IDF, has improved. When it comes to the ambition of establishing a common professional language, absorbed by the whole organization, it is far too early to make any conclusions. Most likely, this will take a long time and here the development of suitable doctrines, as well as a new approach in regard to the IDF officers' theoretical education, is of great importance. But no matter how many excessive efforts the IDF General Staff launches regarding this issue, the main challenge will be to change the rooted culture of each IDF officer, who still must master the battlefield, but for the future also the classroom.

Bibliography

Primary sources

Azoulay, Orly (2009): *Obama* (Hebrew). Yedioth Ahronoth Books and Chemed Books.
Tel Aviv.

Cohen, Stuart A. (2008): *Israel and its Army*. Routledge. Oxford.

Drory, Ze'ev (2005): The *Israel Defense Forces and the Foundation of Israel.*
Routledgen Curzon. London.

Goldstein, Yaacov N. (1998): *From Fighters to Soldiers*. Sussex Academic Press.
Brighton

Israel Air Force (2010): *Israel Air Force Magazine* (Hebrew) Issue 195, 2010. Israel
Defense Forces. Tel Aviv.

Israel Defense Forces (2009-2010): *Ba-maxane – IDF weekly magazine* (Hebrew). Issues
2009: 1-2, 9-15, 17-20, 22-23. Issues 2010: 21, 43. IDF. Tel Aviv.

Israel Defense Forces (2008-2009): *Maarachot* (Hebrew). Issues 417/2008, 419/2008,
423/2009. IDF. Tel Aviv.

Israel Intelligence Heritage & Commemoration Center (2005-2008): *Insight of the
Heritage Intelligence Center* (Hebrew). Issues 41/2005, 45/2006, 49/2007,
50/2007, 52/2008. I.I.C.C. Ramat Hasharon.

Peled, Alon (2000): The Politics of Language in Multiethnic Militaries: The Case of Oriental
Jews in the Israel Defense Forces, 1950-1959. *Armed Forces and Society*, Vol.
26, No.4, Summer 2000, pp. 587-605.

The Armored Corps Association (2006-2008): *Armor* (Hebrew). Issues: 24/2006,
28/2008. A.C.A. Latrun.

Winograd Commission (2007): *The Prelimenary Report* (Hebrew).

Winograd Commission (2008): *The Final Report* (Hebrew).

Zonder, Moshe (2000): *Sayeret Matkal* (Hebrew). Keter Publishing House. Jerusalem.

Dictionaries / wordlists

Alcalay, Reuben (2000): *The Complete English-Hebrew Dictionary*. Hemed Books. Tel Aviv.

Alcalay, Reuben (2000): *The Complete Hebrew-English Dictionary*. Hemed Books. Tel Aviv.

Ark, Olav I. (2002): *Engelsk – norsk militær ordbok*. Cappelen. Oslo.

Bowyer, Richard (2004): *Dictionary of Military Terms*. Bloomsbury. London.

Levy, Ya'acov, ed. (1994): *Oxford English-Hebrew Hebrew-English*. Kernerman
        Publishing Ltd. & Lonnie Kahn Publishing Ltd. Tel Aviv

Rosenthal, Ruvik (2006): *Dictionary of Israeli Slang* (Hebrew). Keter Books. Jerusalem.

Soanes, Catherine and Stevenson, Angus (2006): *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*. Oxford
        University Press. Oxford.

US Department of Defense (2010): Joint publication 1-02: *Dictionary of Military and
        Associated Terms*. November 2010.

Secondary sources

Bar-Zohar, Michael (2003): *Ben-Gurion*. Magal Books. Tel Aviv.

Bar-Zohar, Michael, Mishal, Nissim (2010): *Mossad* (Hebrew). Y.A. & Chemed. Tel Aviv.

Baruch Kimmerling, Joel S. Migdal (2003): *The Palestinian People*. Harvard
        University Press. London.

Bat-El, Outi (1994): *The Optimal Acronym Word in Hebrew*. Tel Aviv
        University. Tel Aviv.

Bergman, Ronen (2007): *Iranian intelligence recruiting Hebrew speakers*, Yediot
        Ahronot, 31.07.2007.

Bibelen – Guds ord (1997). Bibelforlaget. Nesbyen.

Bierman, John and Smith, Colin (2001): *Fire in the Night*. Pan Books. London.

Black, Ian & Morris, Benny (1991): *Israel's Secret Wars. A History of Israel's
        Intelligence Services.* Grove Press. New York.

Cohen, Eliot A. (2002): *Supreme Command – Soldiers, Statesmen and Leadership in
        Wartime*. Anchor Books. New York.

Cohen, Mazal (1992): *Hebrew – What a Language!* Academon. Jerusalem.

Coffin, Edna Amir, Bolozky,Shmuel (2007): *A Reference Grammar of Modern Hebrew*.
        Cambridge University Press. Cambridge.

Edzard, Lutz Eberhard (2011): *Compound Nominals*, to appear in: Geoffrey Khan (ed.):
        Encyclopedia of Hebrew Languages and Linguistics.

Edzard, Lutz Eberhard (2011): *Emphatic Consonants*, to appear in: Geoffrey Khan (ed.):
        Encyclopedia of Hebrew Languages and Linguistics.

Efrat, Michal (2010): *Hebrew and Close Relations* (Hebrew). Neologism of Jonathan
        Ratush and military heresy, pages 45-53. University of Haifa. Haifa.

Fellman, Jack (1973): *The Revival of a Classical Tongue. Eliezer Ben Yehuda and the Modern Hebrew Language.* Mouton. Paris

Geva-Kleinberger, Aharon (2006): *Arabic Loanwords in Ivrit.* New Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Literature, volume 2, pp. 461-464. Leiden.

Halevy, Efraim (2006): *Man in the Shadows*. Weidenfeld & Nicolson. London.

Harel, Amos and Issacharoff, Avi (2008): *34 days – Israel, Hezbollah and the war in Lebanon.* Palgrave Macmillan. New York.

Hoy, Claire and Ostrovsky, Victor (1990): *By Way of Deception*. St. Martin's Press. New York.

Katz, Samuel M. (1989): *Follow Me – A History of Israel's Military Elite*. Arms and Armour Press. London.

Katz, Yaakov (2010): *Israel still paying for Lebanon pull-out*, Jerusalem Post, 25.05.2010.

Khan, Geoffrey, ed. (2009): EHHL style sheet, *Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics*, 1-6, innd 3-6.

Kahana, Ephraim (2006): *Historical Dictionary of Israeli Intelligence*. The Scarecrow Press. Oxford.

Kayyal, Mahmoud (2008): *Arabs dancing in a new light of Arabesques*, Middle Eastern Literature. Vol.2, no.1, April 2008. Routledge.

Kober, Avi (2011): *Lt.Gen. Gabi Ashkenazi: A Balance Sheet*, BESA Perspectives No. 129.

Krisinger, Capt. Chris J. (1989): *Operation Nickel Grass*. Airpower Journal, Spring 1989.

Kulick, Amir (2009): *Hizbollah espionage against Israel*. INSS Strategic Assessment, volume 12, no.3.

Kutscher, Eduard Yechezkel (1982): *A History of the Hebrew Language*. The Magnes Press. Jerusalem.

Lipshitz, Raanan (2007): *Paradigms and Mindfullness in Decision Making: Why the Israel Defense Forces (I.D.F.) failed in the Second Lebanon War.* The University of Haifa. Haifa.

Matthews, Matt M. (2009): *The Israel Defense Forces response to the 2006 war with Hezbollah*, Military Review, July-August 2009.

Morris, Benny (2005): *Israel's Border Wars, 1949-1956*. Oxford University Press. Oxford.

Morris, Benny (2004): *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited.* Cambridge University Press. Cambridge.

Netanyahu, Iddo (2002): *Yoni's Last Battle*. Gefen Publishing House. Jerusalem.

Nevins, Andrew and Vaux, Bert (2003): *Metalinguistic, shmetalinguistic: the phonology of shm-reduplication*. MIT and Harvard University.

Olive, Ronald J. (2006): *Capturing Jonathan Pollard*. Naval Institute Press. Annapolis.

Pedahzur, Ami (2009): *The Israeli Secret Services & the Struggle against Terrorism*. Colombia University Press. New York.

Peri, Yoram (2006): *Generals in the Cabinet Room*. US Institute of Peace Press. Washington.

Rapoport, Amir (2010): *The IDF and the Lessons of the Second Lebanon War*. Mideast Security and Policy Studies No.85. BESA. Bar-Ilan University.

Ravid, Dorit (1990): Internal structure constraints on new word formation devices in Modern Hebrew. *Folia Linguistica* 24: 289–347

Rendsburg, Gary A. (1997): *Ancient Hebrew Phonology* 69-70, Phonologies of Asia and Africa (ed. Alan, Kaye). Eisenbrauns. Winona Lake.

Saenz-Badillos, Angel (2004): *A History of the Hebrew Language*. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge.

Sappan, Raphael (1969): *Hebrew Slang and Foreign Loanwords*, Ariel vol.25 pp.75-80.

Shalom, Danny (2005): *Israeli Air Force Aircraft* (Hebrew). Bavir. Rishon Le-Zion.

Shimshoni, Jonathan (1988): *Israel and conventional deterrence*. Cornell. Ithaca.

Stein, Leslie (2009): *The Making of Modern Israel 1948-1967*. Polity Press. Cambridge.

Stern, Yoav (2007): *Hebrew has never been so popular in Egypt*. Haaretz, 15.11.2007.

Sun Zi (1999): *Art of War – after Sun Zi*. Gyldendal. Oslo.

The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, ed. (1996): *Evolution and Renewal – Trends in the Development of the Hebrew Language*. Jerusalem.

Thomas, Gordon (1999): *Gideon's Spies – The Secret History of the Mossad*. St. Martin's Griffin. New York.

Tsur, Shiri (2010): *The Mengele Squad*. Haaretz, 01.10.2010.

Ulateig, Egil (1998): *I hellig tjeneste*. Metope forlag.

Wege, Carl Anthony (2008): *The Hizballah Security Apparatus*, Perspectives on Terrorism II, issue 7.

Yezid, Sayigh and Shlaim, Avi (2003): *The Cold War and the Middle East*. Clarendon Press. Oxford.

110

Internet sources

Academy of the Hebrew Language (2010): Website: http://hebrewacademy.huji.ac.il.
Gershayim. Retrieved 27.12.2010.

American Society for Cybernetics (2010): Website: http://www.asc-
cybernetics.org. *Foundations and definitions.* Retrieved 02.06.2010.

Ben-Yishai, Ron (2010): *Who will replace Dagan*? Website: www.ynet.com,
27.06.2010. Retrieved 11.05.2011.

Fisk, Robert (2009): *What's in a name?* The Independent Website: www.independent.co.uk,
03.01.2009, retrieved: 10.05.2011.

Gazzar, Brenda (2011): *IDF reaches out to Arab combat soldiers with Hebrew literacy,
military values*. Website: www.jpost.com, 03.05.2009. Retrieved 29.03.2011.

Haaretz Service (2010): *Hamas admits for the first time loosing more than 600 men in the
Gaza War*. Website: www.haaretz.com 01.11.2010. Retrieved 17.01.2011 .

Institute for National Security Studies – INSS (2010/2011): Website: www.inss.org.il

Israel Defense Forces (2010-2011): Website: www.idf.il

Israel Secret Intelligence Service – Mossad (2010): Website: www.mossad.gov.il
About/Dictionary.aspx Retrieved 15.01.2010.

Israel Security Agency – Shabak (2010-2011): Website: www.shabak.gov.il

Katz, Yaakov (2006): *Better tactical language needed*. Website: www.jpost.com, 20.12.2006.
Retrieved 11.12.2010.

Krisinger, Capt. Chris J (1989): *Operation Nickel Grass*. Website: http://www.au.af.mil
Retrieved 17.01.2011

Military quotes (2009): *Quotes by "Sherman".* Website: www.military-quotes.com
Retrieved 28.01.09.

Palestinian Human Rights Monitor (2001): Website:
www.phrmg.org/monitor2001/oct2001collaborators.htm Retrieved 02.02.2011.

The Neshama Center (2008): *Operation Cast Lead*. Website: www.neshama.net 12.2008,
retrieved 11.05.2011.

Wikipedia (2011): www.wikipedia.org. *Duvdevan Unit*, retrieved 10.01.2011, *Kitchen
Cabinet*, retrieved 21.22.2011. *League of Nations*, retrieved 17.01.2011.
Shibbolet, retrieved 20.02.2011, *Spelling Alphabets*, retrieved 15.01.2011.

Yehoshua, Yossi (2009): *IDF sets out to improve soldiers' Hebrew.* Website: www.ynet.com.
Retrieved 26.04.2011.