

The Role of the Hebrew Language for the Jewish Communal Professional

Ruth Cassuto

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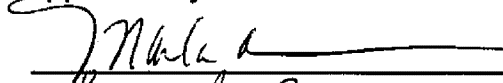

Advisors: Marla Abraham and Sarah Benor

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Approved By:

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MAJCS Thesis

The knowledge of the Hebrew language is considered a significant part of Jewish identity among American Jews. This study aims to explore the current level of Hebrew knowledge among Jewish communal professionals and to examine the perceived usefulness of the Hebrew language in their daily work. In addition, the study examines the correlation of Hebrew knowledge and attitude toward Hebrew with several variables such as age, gender, Jewish communal services studies, duration of stay in Israel, job position, and organizational affiliation.

An on-line survey was compiled and broadcast to alumni of various programs of Jewish Communal Service in the United-States. In addition, responses from professionals who are not graduates of Jewish communal service programs were solicited. 278 respondents with varied personal and professional profiles offered a profound and insightful view into the researched questions.

The study provides interesting characterizations of Hebrew knowledge and perception across the Jewish community professional spectrum. The groups that enjoy the best Hebrew abilities are the younger professionals, the ones that hold Jewish communal graduate degrees and, not surprisingly, those that stayed longer in Israel. Noteworthy differences were observed between employees of congregational/religious organizations to those whose practice is of a more secular nature. One surprising finding of the study is a non-trivial link between Hebrew skills and the perception of the importance of Hebrew. Many professionals with low degrees of Hebrew knowledge ranked it as highly important. This fact suggests that the importance of the Hebrew language to American Jewish life stretches far beyond its practical application.

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Table of Contents

	Page(s)
Introduction	3
Literature Review	4 - 29
Methodology	30 - 32
Findings	33- 62
Conclusion: Discussion, Implications, and Recommendations	63 - 71
Appendix 1: Cover Letter	72
Appendix 2: Online Questionnaire	73 - 77
Bibliography	78 - 81

Introduction

Knowledge of the Hebrew language is considered a significant part of Jewish identity among American Jews. Hebrew has the potential to be a useful tool in the professional Jewish community. And indeed, several schools of Jewish communal service incorporate Hebrew studies as part of their degree requirements. The link between Jewish communal service and Hebrew therefore exists; however, for a real understanding of that link the following question must be posed: how important is Hebrew in the professional and personal lives of Jewish communal professionals? This question has remained hitherto unexplored.

This study aims to explore the current level of Hebrew knowledge among Jewish communal professionals and the perceived usefulness of Hebrew in their daily work. In addition, the study examines the correlation of Hebrew knowledge and attitude toward Hebrew with several variables such as age, gender, Jewish communal service studies, duration of stay in Israel, job position, and organizational affiliation.

Following a review of the current literature and the description of the research results, the author suggests practical implications regarding the use of Hebrew in the professional Jewish community.

Literature Review

The following section will review current literature regarding language and its relationship with culture and ethnicity, Hebrew and American Jewish identity, Hebrew learning, and Hebrew and the Jewish communal professional.

Language culture, and ethnicity:

“Every great people, since the dawn of history, was born at one and the same time as its language” (Fishman, 1996, p. 233). The language and its historically associated community are often viewed as inseparable and as deeply involved in each other’s creation and existence. According to Fishman (1996), a language can be seen as a true reflection of its community, and as the foundation for the people’s uniqueness.

Language can serve a variety of functions in a society. It fulfills social functions by helping people to communicate with each other, and it serves “indirect roles as identifiers, excluders, political causes, expressions of hope in the future, expression of survival, expressions of continuity with the past, and as shelters of retreats from the present” (Seliger, 1986, p. 29). Language enables communities to assert their separateness and identity.

Language is “a people’s most powerful means of cultural integration and communal expression” (Morahg, 1993, p. 201). Shohamy (1999) adds that “language is one of the most important indicators of individual and group identity

as language often serves to create identity as well as to reflect it" (Shohamy, 1999, p. 79). In addition, language serves a boundary-maintenance function. This is an important part of group identity because it sets the group off from others (Waxman, 1999).

According to Lipstadt (1993), having a common language is an essential element of belonging to a people and of sharing a common culture and tradition. Language is the basis of an identity, and it enables people to fully understand a culture and to be a part of that culture.

Waxman (1999) agrees that language has long been recognized as related to group identity. For example, in a Midrash on Shemot (Exodus), Rav Huna stated in the name of Bar Kapara that one of the four things that kept the Jews together and thus earned their redemption from Egypt was that they did not change their language. Therefore, in addition to its religious holiness as "lashon kodesh" ("holy tongue"), Hebrew was viewed as having a practical sociological function in maintaining of Jewish identity and identification (Waxman, 1999).

Morahg (1999-2000) claims that people's sense of affinity with other members of any large community is basically an act of imagination, following Anderson's (1983) concept of "imagined communities". The Jewish people constitute such an imagined community, in which Jews in distant areas of the world feel connected to one another. Anderson identifies language as the primary

binding force of all imagined communities, which connects past, present, and future, and has a capacity for building solidarity.

According to Gudykunst and Schmidt (1987), language plays a major role in the development of social identity and ethnic identity. "The language or dialect speakers use provides cues that allow others to determine if speakers are members of an in-group or an out-group" (Gudykunst & Schmidt, 1987, p. 157). Segall (1981) agrees that language maintenance leads to group consciousness and identity. However, ethnicity can not be characterized by any single characteristic; it must be described by a group of different features, which include language oriented as well as non-language oriented criteria. This mixture of features forms a network that differentiates one ethnic group from another (Haarmann, 1986). Therefore, language is an important but not necessary element of ethnicity. This is in accord with Edwards (1985), who claims that while language is held as a highly important or essential component of group identity, it is not necessary to retain the original language in order to maintain a sense of groupness.

According to Edwards (1985), the value of language as a symbol for minority groups can remain even in the absence of the communication function. Private and symbolic ethnic markers continue to exist because they promote the continuation of group boundaries without impeding social mobility and access. This is in accord with Segall's (1981) findings, in which Jews who were higher in

ethnic self-identity were found to employ a private language (other than English) in public settings as a public act of group identity.

Domb (2000) mentions that in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in Europe, the concept of the modern nation-state had emerged. "The association of linguistic distinctiveness with national culture became very strong in Europe during the nineteenth century, when it was realized that there was a strong link between cultural renaissance and political developments" (Domb, 2000, p. 76-7). Language played an important role in this rise of European nationalisms.

Religion and ethnicity are often intimately related and intertwined. Judaism, like most of the oldest religions, are of this joint ethno-religious type, in which the religious and the ethnic boundaries were initially intertwined (Fishman, 1996). Ellenson (1979) agrees that Judaism is an ethnic religion, and that it is impossible to distinguish between Jewish religion and Jewish ethnicity.

According to Schiff (1996), "there has been a special relationship between the Jewish people and their ancestral language from the time the first Jew, Abraham, according to Jewish rabbinic tradition, spoke in the language of the bible" (p. 7). Hebrew is an integral part of cultural heritage and an intimate element of ethnic identity. "If the Jews are to survive as a cohesive entity in this country they will do so not as a religious group but as a multifaceted ethnic community" (Morahg, 1993, p. 190).

Imbens-Bailey (1996) researches Armenian-American children and adolescents, and some of her findings are relevant to this thesis. She found that language is crucial for membership in a cultural group. Acquiring the ancestral language in addition to English is important in shaping the American-born child's sense of ethnic group membership, and it leads to greater affinity with the Armenian-American community. Therefore, the study found that there are personal advantages for being bilingual in terms of evaluating positively the ethnicity.

Various socio-psychological studies have shown that "an individual successfully acquiring a second language gradually adopts various aspects of behavior that characterize members of another linguistic-cultural group" (Morahg, 1993, p. 195). Therefore, by acquiring Hebrew the American Jew could gradually start behaving in more ways related to Judaism.

Stolovitsky (1989) discusses the issue of student motivation, in which the desire of the student to be like other members of his community who speak the second language motivates him or her. Moreover, one's proficiency will be enhanced if a language is considered practical and necessary. This is in accord with Edwards (1985), who states that despite the fact that positive attitudes are likely to facilitate second-language acquisition, feelings of necessity are the most crucial for learning. Therefore, when Hebrew is perceived as having a practical value students have higher motivation to learn.

Hebrew:

Seliger (1986) analyzes the role of Hebrew in the Jewish Diaspora up through the middle ages. He claims that an examination of the history of the role of Hebrew can provide insights into the present situation.

Diaspora Jews have always been a minority. Therefore, they had to be bilingual and Hebrew always co-existed together with other languages. In some cases Hebrew was given a major role while in others it was given a rather insignificant role. "For centuries a condition of coterritorial multilingualism existed, and to some extent nearly every individual knew both languages. With some, Hebrew was still the spontaneous language in the family and among neighbors, although one could also communicate in Aramaic. With others, Aramaic had already become the everyday language (or the easiest and most frequently used language), but Hebrew was still in use, not only in prayer, but also in communicating with the elderly, with villagers, and so on" (Weinreich, 1980, p. 57). Traditional Jewish ritual and Jewish religious literature provide evidence that Hebrew bilingualism cannot be taken for granted. As a matter of fact, the status of Hebrew was and still is a problem in Jewish Diaspora (Seliger, 1986).

Each generation of Jews defined its own relationship to the Hebrew language differently and the functions it should fulfill. According to Seliger

(1986), the importance given to knowledge of Hebrew in the Diaspora was a function of three factors:

1. The relationship and orientation of the Jewish community to the larger society in which it lives. "Does the Jewish community see itself as part of the greater non-Jewish society or as an alienated and isolated part of it?" (Seliger, 1986, p. 28).
2. The relationship of the Jews to their own culture and religion - to Judaism and Jewish identification.
3. The attitude toward Israel and Zionism.

According to Seliger (1986), Jewish survival in the Diaspora was not dependent on knowledge of Hebrew, and lack of Hebrew knowledge itself was not necessarily connected to assimilation or lack of commitment to Jewish culture. Jewish culture and religion still thrived even in societies in which knowledge of Hebrew was diminishing. For example, written and spoken Hebrew bilingualism began to disappear in the period of the Second Temple (between 100 BCE and the third or fourth centuries CE). Despite extensive schooling and importance placed on reading, many Jews could not read or even understand Hebrew. A similar example comes from Medieval Spain, in which the fact that Jews did not know Hebrew did not prevent them from becoming knowledgeable at some level in Jewish sources (Seliger, 1986).

There is an assumed relationship between one's knowledge of Hebrew and the relationship to the Jewish people, culture, and religion. Lack of Hebrew knowledge is commonly believed to lead to assimilation, intermarriage and the disappearance of the Jewish people. Seliger (1986), however, claims otherwise. He stated that throughout history, ignorance of Hebrew did not lead to the dissolution of the Jewish community, because Jewish cultural and religious expression continued in the non-Jewish local language. Waxman (1999) agrees that as early as the days of Ezra, Babylonian Jewry used Aramaic translations of the Torah. However, Aramaic was always considered subordinate to Hebrew.

By the second century C.E., spoken Hebrew had died, but Hebrew remained the holy tongue for the next 2,000 years. Jews continued to study Hebrew, teach it to their children, and use it in the synagogues and houses of study. "Hebrew remained alive, widely known and used for a wide range of important functions, throughout the centuries that followed its loss of native speakers" (Spolsky, 1991, p. 138). Although the common men and women could read and partly understand their daily prayers, the local Gentile languages, spoken in a unique Jewish way, were most dominant (Glinert, 1992).

As Jews lived in different countries around the world, their ancestral language was influenced by different languages, such as German and Spanish, and it led to regional differences in the use of the Hebrew language. Schiff (1996) adds that "the role of Hebrew as the Jewish national language was challenged

throughout Jewish history" (p. 12). Nevertheless, Hebrew maintained some degree of uniformity throughout different areas. After Hebrew stopped being the spoken language, it became the language of prayer and the spirit. Diaspora Jews were forced to learn the languages of the lands in which they lived, but the ethno-national language of the entire people, the link that united and maintained the existence of the people as a collective, was Hebrew (Fishman, 1996).

In the nineteenth century, Jews started gaining gradual admittance into European society, but they were forced to pay the price of abandoning their autonomous lifestyle. "They were pressured to abandon the old full-time all-Hebrew religious schools and devote many hours to secular studies designed to make them economically more useful to the state" (Glinert, 1992, p. 6). Many Jews were pleased with this transition, and Hebrew was left to the synagogue and religious practice. This started a steady decline of Hebrew literacy, as well as other Jewish languages, amongst Diaspora Jewry.

The development of Jewish national identity at the end of the nineteenth century in Europe was closely connected to the revival of the Hebrew language. "Zionism was defined, to a large extent, in linguistic terms through the revival and transformation of Hebrew – an ancestral language – from a written to a vernacular language" (Shohamy, 1999, p. 81). Hebrew was promoted by Zionist movements as a symbol of the new Jewish identity, and it assumed a universal role as the language of the Jews. "It was believed that Hebrew could unify and

standardize all segments of Jews, under one common roof with one common identity" (Shohamy, 1999, p. 82). Eliezer Ben Yehudah held this belief when he wrote an article in 1879 that "advanced the idea that the national renaissance in Palestine had to be accompanied by a linguistic one: the revival of Hebrew as a vernacular for the Jewish people" (Weinberg, 1993, p. 39).

"Russian Zionism, in its desperate attempt to save the Jews from persecution or assimilation, had the almost inconceivable idea of restoring Hebrew as a spoken language in the Holy Land – and succeeded" (Glinert, 1992, p. 6). "The reconstitution of Hebrew as a living language proved to be one of the most powerful means of realizing the evolving goals of the Jewish national agenda, which culminated in the establishment of a Hebrew-speaking Jewish state" (Morahg, 1993, p. 187). This revival of the Hebrew language in Israel had succeeded thanks to several factors: a few hundred idealists, led by Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, determined to set up a revolutionary Hebrew school system; the need of the Jewish population to find a lingua franca to bridge the different languages spoken by Jews; a few intellectuals who had already been experimenting for decades with modernizing Hebrew for science and the humanities; and a generation of Jews, both Ashkenazi and Sephardic, who went through Hebrew schooling and had linguistic capabilities to use the language (Glinert, 1992).

In contrast to Russian Jews in the 1880s and 1890s who led the Hebrew revival, contemporary American Jews can become equal and fully integrated

members of their society while maintaining their separate Jewish identity. It is important to consider the role of the Hebrew language in this process.

Glinert (1992) states that Hebrew was reborn as the spoken language of Israel, and when Jews of different backgrounds from around the world came together, Hebrew was increasingly used as a lingua franca. "Before the first decade of the twentieth century ended, Hebrew became the language of the schools, the second language in many homes and – most importantly – the native language of a new generation of children. By the time the state of Israel was founded, there already existed second and third generations of native Hebrew speakers" (Weinberg, 1993, p. 41). A short while after spoken Hebrew was revived in Palestine, similar endeavors began in many countries of the Jewish Diaspora. However, Modern Hebrew has remained a foreign language in the Jewish Diaspora. The hope that Modern Hebrew will become the new universal Jewish language have vanished, and American Jews communicate among themselves in English. And yet, a taste of Hebrew lives in the Diaspora, thanks to the revival of traditional Judaism and Jewish learning (Glinert, 1992).

Language revitalization depends greatly on the decision of parents and caretakers to speak a language to young children. In addition, "the possibility of successful language revitalization is to be found partly in previous knowledge of the language by the adult sources, partly in the social factors which account for their attitudes and the children's attitudes, and partly in the resulting exposure of

the children, in formal and informal circumstances, to the language" (Spolsky, 1991, p. 139). Limitations in fluency on the part of parents or teachers will hamper revitalization. When considering the status of Hebrew in the United States, most Jewish parents and teachers are not fluent in Hebrew, which can impede the Hebrew learning of their children. Two types of social factors lead to language revitalization: the practical or instrumental and the ideological or integrative. In other words, an individual chooses to use a language either because it is useful or because he or she values it for social, cultural, or religious reasons. Hebrew "was the language of the new nationalist movement, a language with a noble literature, the language that embodied the national spirit. It had therefore strong ideological support, especially among the settlers who had chosen to come to Palestine for nationalist reasons" (Spolsky, 1991, p. 142). This ideological support, more than practical incentives, led to motivation that accounts for the initial success of Hebrew revitalization.

Hebrew and cultural pluralism in the United States:

According to Ellenson (1979), in the first half of the 20th century American Jews were torn between two poles:

The first was universalistic and both affirmed the American dream and celebrated the melting pot. The second, however, demonstrated that the American Jew, in spite of his ignorance of traditional Jewish learning and

his failure to observe traditional Jewish religious rituals, remained comfortably ensconced within his own Jewish community (p. 52).

Today, despite the ever increasing degree of participation in American cultural and social life, and unlike their elders, American Jews are proud in their particular ethnic heritage. This is a reflection of the larger trend in American society toward a multi-cultural, pluralistic societal model. Segall (1981) agreed that the past several decades have been witness to a re-emergence of racial and ethnic minority group consciousness. Ellenson (1979) claims that American Jews, especially during the 1970s, approach their past and search for roots not because of a deep appreciation of their people's culture, but due to their sense of dissatisfaction from the general cultural scene. However, this dissatisfaction led many young American Jews to gain a growing appreciation for the wisdom of Judaism and a feeling of self-confidence and legitimacy about their own Jewish past. This contemporary Jew "is thoroughly American and has entered the Jewish world because he affirms the legitimacy of his cultural past among the many that comprise the variety in the United States" (Ellenson, 1979, p. 54). Therefore, modern Jews seek and assert their personal identities within the context of the larger society.

Morahg (1993) agrees that the new social and ideological attitudes toward ethnicity and the general trend toward cultural pluralism in America enable Jews

to expand and enrich their own cultural expression by reclaiming their heritage and identity.

Zisenwine and Levy-Keren (1999) explains that "the universalistic ideology of America came under attack in the 70s and 80s. Regarded as a way of eradicating the rich variety of human experience and imposing a form of cultural imperialism on a complex society, the 'melting pot' was replaced by a call for diversity" (p. 128). The United States is "a complex society of distinctive groups protected by the constitutional right to be different"... "The multi-culturalism of the 80s and 90s came at a time when second and third generation American Jews began to experience more and more movement into the greater culture, a loss of their heritage language, and a weakening of ties to their respective homeland" (Zisenwine & Levy-Keren, 1999, p. 129). Today American Jews can choose to teach and learn about their heritage, while enjoying a collective American culture with the greater society.

According to Waxman (1999), although there is a contemporary political-cultural emphasis on multiculturalism, the melting pot is still very significant in the United States. Today, ethnicity, including language, has decreased in its significance and it transformed into a personal and voluntary issue. This trend also affects American Jews, in which a waning social structural significance of Judaism and Jewishness is evident. Fewer and fewer American Jews are literate in a Jewish language, either Hebrew, Yiddish, or Ladino, and only a minority

learns Hebrew. Segall (1981) stresses that the assimilation for which the American Jew had striven is now viewed as having a price of the loss of Jewish identity. Waxman (1999) claims that the reason is that the United States is open and Jews are relatively affluent and comfortable. Intensive Jewish socialization of linguistic competency, Jewish knowledge, norms and values are of greatest importance in increasing the probabilities of Jewish continuity.

Hebrew and Jewish identity in contemporary United States:

Domb (2000) claims that there is an intimate link between the Hebrew language and the identity of the Jewish people. The question is whether a shared knowledge of Hebrew, at varying degrees of competence, contributes to the strengthening of Jewish identity, to the unity and continuity of the American Jewish community, and to its affinity with the entire Jewish people (Morahg, 1999-2000). According to Morahg (1999-2000), little attention is being paid to the Hebrew language in the various policy committees and community programs designed to enhance American Jewish continuity, as well as in the growing literature on American Jewish identity.

Morahg (1999-2000) states that learning a language can serve a multitude of human purposes, none of which are necessarily exclusive of the others. One of the commonly stated reasons given for Hebrew's learning is its importance in continuing the Jewish tradition and transmitting its culture through the study of its

central texts. However, this is not a convincing enough argument because the vast majority of Hebrew learners will never obtain the competence for engaging texts at the level necessary for continuing the tradition or transmitting the culture (Morahg, 1999-2000).

A more compelling argument stresses the connection between Hebrew and Jewish identity. The Jews are "a people, with all the richness and diversity that this concept entails. There are many Judaisms and many variants of Jewish culture, but there is only one Jewish people" (Morahg, 1999-2000, p. 10). Hebrew is a crucial element that unites and binds these different Judaisms. It is one of the primary defenses against the fragmentation and dissolution of the Jewish people (Morahg, 1999-2000). Lipstadt (1993) agrees that Hebrew is the only language that all Jews share, unlike other Jewish languages such as Yiddish or Ladino. "Hebrew, the historic language of the Jewish people, has been a major force for Jewish continuity" (Schiff, 1996, p. 115). Hebrew is the language of the bible, the language that has unified the Jewish people worldwide through prayer and study, and the language of national rebirth.

Lipstadt (1993) mentions that knowledge of Hebrew provides a critical link to Israeli life and culture, but this is not the only reason it is important. Limiting its significance to the relationship with the modern state of Israel makes its importance easier to dismiss. Rather, Lipstadt (1993) stresses that Hebrew is

also the starting point for an authentic understanding of Jewish tradition, and it is part of Jewish cultural identity.

Morahg (1999-2000) mentions some essential functions Hebrew can have for American Jews. A basic knowledge of Hebrew can sustain the vital connection to Israel and to Jews in other parts of the world. In addition, it can enable an active engagement in the Jewish cultural and religious heritage, and it can serve to transmit this heritage to future generations.

Jewish culture is transmitted and kept alive through its texts. In order to maintain a connection with this culture there is a need to maintain a direct and authentic connection with these Jewish texts. This is possible only through knowledge of the primary language of these texts, which is Hebrew (Morahg, 1993). Waxman (1999) agrees that in order to capture the essence of a culture one must know its language and not rely on translations.

Waxman (1999) states that those who are more knowledgeable in Hebrew are more identified Jewishly. However, the causal relationship is unknown (whether knowledge of Hebrew leads to more intensive and extensive Jewish involvement, or vice versa). Nevertheless, a study of American Jewish college students found that there is a strong correlation between advanced Hebrew study and commitment to Jewish activism. The students indicated that they anticipated using Hebrew later in their life in three main areas: travel to Israel, educating their

children, and in religious services (Morahg, 1993). They captured the essential functions of Hebrew for American Jews.

Fishman (1972) mentions the term *Diglossia*. It can be useful for our discussion about the relationship between Hebrew and English for the American Jew. Diglossia occurs in a community that recognizes two languages for intra-societal communication. Each language has distinct functions:

Whereas one set of behaviors, attitudes, and values supported, and was expressed in one language, another set of behaviors, attitudes, and values supported and was expressed in the other. Both sets of behaviors, attitudes, and values were fully accepted as culturally legitimate and complementary, and indeed little if any conflict between them was possible in view of the functional separation between them (Fishman, 1972, p. 92).

Therefore, Hebrew can be seen as functional for the religious aspect, whereas English can be seen as functional for everyday living.

According to Shohamy (1999), American Jews continue to preserve multiple identities; a local ethnic Jewish identity, an American national identity, and a maintenance of their earlier European identity, in the case of Ashkenazi Jews. Contemporary American Jews acquired the local language, but they failed to acquire or maintain other Jewish languages, such as Hebrew or Yiddish. Therefore, the role of Hebrew in maintaining identity is minimal and it is

decreasing rapidly. Hebrew in the Diaspora did not become the language of communication, but just one symbol, among many, of Jewish identity. Today most American Jews, even those with strong Jewish identity, have a common Jewish language only in regards to prayer.

Shohamy (1999) gives five reasons why Hebrew does not play a significant role for American Jews:

1. Living in accepting societies. American Jews are living in a tolerant and accepting society. The direct outcome is fast assimilation into the main culture and loss of Jewish identity and language.
2. The relationship between Israel and Diaspora. Hebrew was adopted as the language to be taught in Diaspora Jewish schools due to the identification with Zionism, which reflected the centrality of Israel in Jewish communities around the world. While the relationship between Israel and Diaspora communities was strong at the time of the establishment of the state, this relationship is changing and weakening drastically.
3. Hebrew is not a heritage language like Yiddish, which was the language spoken in Ashkenazic Jewish homes. Hebrew had no relationship to parents or grandparents, except people in Israel, far away from the everyday reality of the Jewish child.
4. Poor quality of Hebrew teaching.

5. No enforcing institutions. Hebrew is dependent on the good will and motivation of local communities and agencies. There are no central agencies that are responsible for Hebrew, and there are no clear policies and goals.

Zisenwine and Levy-Keren (1999) studied Jewish day school students and found that they viewed Hebrew as vital to their identity, but they perceived English as the central language in their lives. This shows a willingness to incorporate heritage language into their lives without excluding or competing with the language and culture of the greater society. They concluded that Hebrew is not only a rich, cultural, and personal tool for these students, but also a practical tool for saying who they are in the social context of America.

Schiff (1996) states that nowadays the increased number of English translations of Hebraic sources challenges the current role of Hebrew in the United States. An individual can study the bible, the Talmud, and many commentaries and post-biblical medieval and contemporary Judaic sources without knowing one word of Hebrew.

The failure to learn Hebrew must be viewed as an integral part of the rapid rate of assimilation and the loss of Jewish identity among American Jews because language is a reflection of the society (Shohamy, 1999). Schiff (1996) agrees that the Jewish people's strong relationship with Hebrew had declined. There is a significant increase in assimilation and intermarriage among American Jews that parallels the growing abandonment of Judaic-Hebrew heritage by the majority of

American Jews. In the Diaspora, "Hebrew could be viewed as a vehicle to stabilize Jewish communities and to strengthen Judaism" (Haarmann, 1986, p. 62). According to Schiff (1996), the challenge of assimilation and inter-marriage in the United States can be addressed in two ways - by the state of Israel and by the Hebrew language. Integrating them into the daily life of American Jews can help guarantee Jewish continuity in America.

Hebrew learning:

Shohamy (1999) states that the connection between Hebrew and identity is unique, because unlike other ethnicities, most Jewish parents and grandparents outside of Israel do not speak Hebrew at home to their children. Hebrew is not their native language, and it is usually learned as a second or third language. Therefore, it assumes "the role of language broadly defined to include the transmission of cultural norms and communal ideals" (Stolovitsky, 1989, p. 27).

Over the last three decades, both the number and the size of modern Hebrew language courses in American colleges, as well as the enrollment in Jewish day schools, have increased dramatically. Morahg (1993) claims that the study of Hebrew on campus is the most powerful way to enhance Jewish identity among Jewish college students. However, only a small number of Jewish students study Hebrew in college, and only a minority of these continues beyond the first two or three semesters. The reason is the gap between the stated

objectives of Hebrew programs in secular institutions of higher education and the implicit motivations that are shared by most of the students and the teachers.

Hebrew is presented as:

A foreign language that is spoken in Israel and is useful for anyone who intends to visit the country or to become familiar with its culture. But for most students and teachers of modern Hebrew in American colleges Hebrew is not the language of a foreign country but rather the language of a people of which they are a part (Morahg, 1993, p. 188).

This shows the suppression of the deep cultural connection between the Hebrew language and its American Jewish learners; the mistaken separation of the teaching of modern Hebrew in America from the quest for a Jewish identity. It is important to note that not all Hebrew courses share this separation, but according to Morahg (1993), the majority of them do.

Stolovitsky (1989) claims that in Jewish day schools, the various philosophical, religious, cultural, and nationalistic ideologies determine the approach a specific school will have toward the Hebrew language. "Not only do schools have a stated educational policy, they also reflect the personal viewpoints of either the founders, the parents, the supporters, the boards of directors, the administration or the staff" (Stolovitsky, 1989, p. 28).

Berkofsky (2002) reports about the 1,550 free classes the National Jewish Outreach Program sponsored in fall 2002 at 735 sites across North America. The

classes were aimed at 15,000 adult students as part of the Read Hebrew America/Canada campaign, which took place for several years. They tried to motivate unaffiliated and marginally involved Jews to reconnect with their heritage through Hebrew literacy. The idea was that knowledge of Hebrew gives Jews a sense of confidence and comfort with their Judaism and encourages their Jewish involvement. Moreover, Berkofsky (2002) states that Read Hebrew America/Canada had a cost of only \$16.60 per person. Therefore, focusing on the teaching of Hebrew could be a cost-effective outreach tool.

According to Bekerman (1987), a high level of fluency in Hebrew, in which the speaking of Hebrew becomes the means of self-expression, defines the speaker as belonging to a certain culture. Unfortunately, the teaching of Hebrew in the United States can be seen as a partial failure. Regardless of the different measures and approaches toward Hebrew education, "there must be advocacy to promote the idea of Hebrew language education and to insure sufficient communal support for Hebrew language education" (Schiff, 1996, p. 118). Therefore, changing the climate in the American Jewish community regarding the Hebrew language is an essential Jewish communal need. It must be emphasized that the study of Hebrew language and Hebrew culture provide an enriching and enhancing Jewish experience. It serves both the needs of individuals and of the Jewish community, and it fulfills societal goals by creating new communal, regional, and international realities.

Schiff (1996) states that the most successful method of creating an understanding and maintenance of Hebraic culture is to use it in real life situations. Hebrew should become a part of an overall Jewish educational outreach approach to the Jewish community, such as integrating Hebrew in bible study, Jewish learning, the life cycle, the Jewish home, and the Hebrew calendar. This is in accord with Spolsky (1991), who states that "successful language revitalization involves providing the learners with sufficient exposure to the language, both in formal language teaching and in informal language use, to make learning possible" (p. 140).

"The importance of Hebrew language as the link to the Jewish past and to Israel, and as a unifying force in Jewish life has been underscored by Jewish leaders and scholars in every generation of Jewish history" (Schiff, 1996, p. 143). Teaching Hebrew is vital for Jewish continuity and for strengthening the relationship between American Jewry and Israel.

Hebrew and the Jewish communal professional:

"We are people of the book who cannot read the book in its original language" (Lipstadt, 1993, p. 309). With the exception of Rabbis and some of those with an Orthodox background, the number of nationally known Jewish communal leaders who know Hebrew is extremely small. This lack of knowledge of the Hebrew language is only one component of a big educational deficit on the

part of most Jewish communal leaders. Jewish learning and knowledge of Hebrew does not guarantee a good leader, but it can certainly contribute to better leadership (Lipstadt, 1993).

Lipstadt (1993) claims that Jewish communal leaders should have several Hebrew language learning goals. These include textual ability, conversational modern Hebrew, reading knowledge for use in synagogue and Jewish religious celebrations, and a familiarity with certain terms and phrases that are connected to Jewish ritual, life-cycle calendar, and Jewish values.

It is useful at this point to mention Weinreich's (1980) important distinction between two types of Hebrew: Whole Hebrew and Merged Hebrew. Whole Hebrew is the language used in Jewish rituals such as prayer and learning. Merged Hebrew contains the Hebrew words that are integrated and used in everyday language. Like Jews throughout the world, American Jews use both types of Hebrew.

During the past few decades there has been a serious organizational and communal commitment to Jewish learning, together with a widespread understanding that knowledge of Jewish sources does not belong exclusively to rabbis and scholars. "The same communal circles which but a few decades earlier had sought to stress the community's integration into the broader American society now celebrate its differences through study" (Lipstadt, 1993, p. 311). However, the study of Hebrew was neglected, and "most Jewish leaders not

only do not know Hebrew but do not see a lack of knowledge of Hebrew as a serious shortcoming" (Lipstadt, 1993, p. 311). Another reason for this situation is that successful professionals are being recruited to work in the Jewish community because of their skills and accomplishments in the non-Jewish community, and not because of their Judaic knowledge. These professionals can not constitute educational role models, and Hebrew is just one small piece of their general educational shortcoming.

The people who are responsible for developing and supporting Jewish communal programs and institutions are also often the products of the same failed Hebrew learning system. "As long as so many community members are deprived of a sufficient Hebrew education there is every reason to believe that they will continue to discount the value of Hebrew learning and continue to be lax in instilling it in their children" (Morahg, 1993, p. 203). Therefore, this study, which focuses on Jewish leaders, can be highly effective in addressing communal attitudes toward Hebrew.

As was stated above, the current level of Hebrew knowledge among Jewish communal professionals and the perceived usefulness of the Hebrew language in their daily work remain largely unexplored. This study aims to examine the role of Hebrew for the Jewish communal professional.

Research questions and methodology

The study explores the following three research questions:

1. What is the level of Hebrew knowledge among Jewish communal professionals?
2. How useful/important is Hebrew in the daily work and life of the Jewish communal professional?
3. What is the relationship between tested demographic variables and attitude toward and knowledge of Hebrew? Among the variables tested are age, gender, Jewish communal service studies, job position and employer, length of stay in Israel and others.

For the purpose of this study the term "Jewish communal professional" refers to individuals who define themselves as such, either because they graduated from a Jewish communal service program or because they are currently working in the Jewish community. The on-line survey was broadcast to alumni of various programs of Jewish communal service in the United-States through alumni e-mail lists. In addition, the respondents were encouraged to forward the survey to their colleagues in order to elicit responses from professionals who are not graduates of Jewish communal service programs but work in the Jewish community. 278 respondents completed the survey during January and February of 2005. All respondents except one were Jewish.

The use of an on-line survey allowed the researcher to reach Jewish communal professionals who are scattered throughout North America in a simple and efficient way. The design of the survey as a concise and short questionnaire helped maximize the number of completed responses. The circulation methods, though effective, also imposed some limitations on the study: Jewish communal professionals must have had an electronic mail address and access to the Internet in order to participate in the study. This, however, is a reasonable restriction on the sample, as Internet access is almost universal. Another limitation is that the Jewish communal professional must have been either a graduate of a school of Jewish communal studies or in a network with someone who went to a school of Jewish communal studies in order to be included in the sample.

The questionnaire (see appendix 2) consisted of 20 questions about demographic information (such as age and gender), knowledge of the Hebrew language, and beliefs and attitudes toward the language. The questionnaire included a combination of multiple-choice questions, scales, and open-ended questions. The results of the questionnaire were analyzed statistically using Chi Square Tests. The Hebrew skills described in this study were self-reported by the respondents, and may be different from their actual Hebrew levels.

This research started with several hypotheses:

1. There is a correlation between personal attitudes toward Hebrew and the amount of Hebrew used in the daily professional work.
2. Jewish communal professionals who graduated from a Jewish communal service program have stronger Hebrew skills and more positive attitudes toward Hebrew.
3. The longer the duration of stay in Israel has been will equate with better Hebrew skills and more positive attitudes toward Hebrew.
4. Younger professionals have better Hebrew skills and more positive attitudes toward Hebrew than older professionals.
5. The Hebrew language is more useful in some types of Jewish organizations and less useful in others.

We will now move to the findings section in order to examine these hypotheses.

Findings

The results are presented in table format. Shaded columns contain responses that represent lower degrees of Hebrew knowledge or less positive attitudes towards the Hebrew language.

As can be seen in table 1, between a third and two thirds of all respondents reported good or very good Hebrew abilities. The highest ability reported (69%) was in Hebrew reading abilities related to prayer. In general, reported reading skills are the strongest, followed by comprehension abilities, and speaking skills are the weakest (46% of the respondents reported none or very basic Hebrew speaking abilities).

Table 1: Reported good or very good abilities

Comprehension of Hebrew from the prayer book	Reading ability in Hebrew from the prayer book	Reading ability in modern Hebrew	Comprehension of modern Hebrew	Hebrew speaking ability
45%	69%	53%	41%	33%

In examining table 2, the vast differences between Hebrew use in professional settings and Hebrew use in personal everyday speech can be observed. This is related to Weinreich's (1980) distinction between Whole Hebrew and Merged Hebrew as previously mentioned. Whole Hebrew is the

language used in Jewish rituals such as prayer and learning; Merged Hebrew contains the Hebrew words that are integrated and used in everyday language. According to table 2, a high percentage of the respondents reported never speaking, reading, or writing in Hebrew in their professional work, whereas only a minority reported never using Hebrew words in their everyday English speech. Accordingly, only a minority of the respondents reported using Hebrew often in their professional work, whereas a majority reported extensive Hebrew use in their everyday English speech. Therefore, it seems that both Whole Hebrew and Merged Hebrew do not tend to be practical in many job settings, or at least not necessary. This comes in contrast to the prevalent penetration of Merged Hebrew words into the English language, which indicates the widespread influence of Hebrew in American Jewish culture.

Table 2: Comparison of reported Hebrew use in professional work and in everyday speech

	Never	Several times a week or every day
Use of Hebrew in professional work	40.8%	18.7%
Use of Hebrew in everyday English speech	11.2%	54.7%

Table 3 demonstrates that respondents reported using Hebrew in various situations - both personal and professional. Most respondents reported using

Hebrew in more than one situation, and some reported using Hebrew in all the situations mentioned in table 3. The most common use of Hebrew, in a great margin over other situations, is during prayer.

Table 3: Reported situations of Hebrew use

During prayer	86.0%
Naming opportunities (naming of programs, events, etc)	55.0%
Familial or social relationships with Israel/Israelis	50.2%
Professional relationships with Israel/Israelis	46.1%
When learning or taking a class in Judaism or Hebrew	43.5%
Professional work, including when teaching Hebrew or Judaism	35.1%
Lay relationships with Israel/Israelis	33.2%
In organizing, taking, or leading missions to Israel	28.0%
When helping one's own children in their Hebrew studies or in familial or social relationships with non-Israelis	25.5%

According to table 4 below, only a very small minority believe that Hebrew is not important. Moreover, only 1.5%, which represents just 4 respondents, believe that Hebrew knowledge should not be important for the Jewish communal professional. However, we can see differences between the respondents' personal attitudes regarding the usefulness of Hebrew and their beliefs about how useful it should be for the Jewish communal professional in general. More respondents feel that Hebrew is 'very important' for them personally, whereas more respondents believe that Hebrew should be 'somewhat important' for the Jewish communal professional. The reason may be that most

benefits from knowing Hebrew are personal; for example, it allows a person to participate in a personal spiritual experience of prayer, which is the most common Hebrew use (see table 3), and to interact with Israelis. On the other hand, Hebrew may not be seen as very practical to the daily work of the Jewish communal professional, but as having more symbolic connotations. Therefore, a majority of respondents believe it is only 'somewhat important'. In order to check this idea we will move on to examine the question regarding the reasons Hebrew is important.

Table 4: perceived Hebrew importance

	Hebrew is not important/useful	Hebrew is somewhat important/useful	Hebrew is very important/useful
To what degree Hebrew knowledge is important/useful for you	5.4%	32.9%	46.9%
How important/useful should Hebrew knowledge be for the Jewish communal professional	1.5%	58.2%	28.0%

A vast majority (85.4%) of the respondents believe that Hebrew is important for both its practical and symbolic uses. 3.3% believe that Hebrew is important for only its practical use and 11.3% believe Hebrew is important for

only its symbolic use. Therefore, the symbolic significance of Hebrew is greater than the practical one, even though most respondents believe that it is both practical and symbolic.

In order to further grasp the respondents' attitudes toward Hebrew, the answers to the open question, in which the respondents were asked to describe their personal attitude toward the Hebrew language, will be examined. The analysis of the answers reveals several central themes that were mentioned repeatedly. They will be detailed in a decreasing order:

1. The issue that was mentioned most often is the importance of Hebrew because of the connection to Judaism, Israel, Jewish identity, history, culture, and continuity. This issue describes the personal and spiritual dimension of Hebrew; respondents indicate that every Jew, regardless of his or her profession, should have at least basic Hebrew knowledge.
2. The next theme to be mentioned was combined from the desire to become more fluent in Hebrew, regrets for not studying it more, and a sense of embarrassment due to lack of knowledge. Some stated that there is an expectation that all Jewish professionals will know Hebrew and those who do not know feel excluded and inferior in the Jewish communal world.
3. Following immediately after was the belief that Hebrew should be required and have a greater role in Jewish communal service education as well as in communal service jobs. Some stated that Jewish communal leaders should set

a personal example as role models to their staff and lay persons, but that in today's reality conversational Hebrew is largely absent from the Jewish communal world.

4. Other issues mentioned were the difficulties in learning the language, the lack of time to study, and most of all, the lack of opportunities for practice and use.
5. An opposite opinion that was mentioned was that Hebrew is not useful in the workplace and that the lack of Hebrew knowledge does not make a difference in a professional setting. Some mentioned that for their daily job other languages, such as Spanish, Yiddish, or Russian, would be more useful.
6. Some stated their Israeli background and family as an influential factor in valuing Hebrew. Others believe that living or studying in Israel and learning Hebrew as a "living language" is essential for mastering the language.

Many of the respondents value Hebrew for its personal and spiritual Jewish meaning. The debate is over the importance or the lack thereof of Hebrew in the Jewish communal world. The different opinions may reflect different job settings; some positions and Jewish organizations require more Hebrew use than others. For example, a professional who leads missions to Israel will have the opportunity to use Hebrew more than a professional who works with Russian immigrants in Los Angeles. Further in this study, the influence of the type of Jewish organization on the Hebrew knowledge and attitudes of its employees will be examined.

Following is a comparison of the Hebrew knowledge and attitudes of respondents according to various variables. For every independent variable, it is first tabulated as to how respondents are distributed with respect to this variable. That will be followed by the distributions of the dependent variables (that relate to Hebrew knowledge/attitudes) as a function of these tested variables.

Jewish communal service education

Table 5 indicates that approximately 65% of respondents are graduates of JCS programs. This may be due to the use of alumni lists as the primary circulation method of the survey. Another reason may be the professionalism of the field in which a majority of the Jewish communal professionals have specialized training. Nevertheless, about third of the respondents did not study in JCS programs, which is in accord with the known fact that JCS education is not the only determining factor in pursuing a career in the field of Jewish communal service.

Table 5: Percentage of respondents with and without formal JCS education

Formal Jewish communal service education	64.4%
No formal Jewish communal service education	35.6%

Tables 6 and 7 below indicate that respondents who do not have formal JCS education report lower Hebrew abilities than those with JCS education; those without such education more often report a complete absence of skills. However, in reporting 'good' or 'very good' abilities, no significant differences were found between the groups. One can infer from these findings that JCS education likely contributes to the basic knowledge of Hebrew. However, good Hebrew abilities may also be obtained independently of the JCS education, such as through a stay in Israel, Israeli friends, childhood Hebrew education, or adult education classes, and they can lead one to JCS training.

Table 6: Reported prayer-book Hebrew abilities by JCS education

	*No comprehension	Good comprehension	*No reading abilities	Good reading abilities
With formal JCS education	7.9%	23.7%	1.7%	29.0%
Without formal JCS education	17.4%	16.3%	10.4%	26.0%

* $p \leq 0.01$. The distribution is significant.

Table 7: Reported modern Hebrew abilities by JCS education

	*No comprehension	Good or very good comprehension	*No speaking abilities	Good or very good speaking abilities	*No reading abilities	Good or very good reading abilities
With formal JCS education	9.7%	41.7%	10.2%	31.6%	5.2%	55.2%
Without formal JCS education	22.7%	37.1%	25.3%	31.6%	18.6%	50.5%

* $p \leq 0.01$. The distribution is significant

As table 8 indicates, those without formal JCS education reported using Hebrew less often in their professional life, but the difference is not statistically significant. Perhaps the reason for this difference is that the job setting is more influential in determining the use of Hebrew than the JCS education. In addition, those without JCS education were more likely to report never using Hebrew words in their everyday English speech, and this difference is statistically significant. The reason may be either that those who are more Hebraically oriented tend to pursue JCS studies, or that the JCS studies influence the graduates in adopting more Jewish behavior than those with no such experience by their acculturation into the norms of the field.

Table 8: Reported Hebrew use by JCS education

	Never use Hebrew in professional work	Use Hebrew in professional work several times a week	*Never use Hebrew words in everyday English speech	Use Hebrew words in everyday English speech several times a week
With formal JCS education	36.2%	14.4%	7.9%	28.7%
Without formal JCS education	48.0%	8.2%	17.4%	21.4%

* $p \leq 0.01$. The distribution is significant

According to table 9, more respondents with formal JCS education feel that knowledge of Hebrew is important/useful for them and that it should be important/useful for the Jewish communal professional. These positive feelings regarding Hebrew knowledge agree with the thesis's hypothesis; graduates of JCS programs have more positive attitudes toward the importance of Hebrew. The reasons may be, as we have already conjectured, either the positive influence of the JCS programs on attitudes toward Hebrew, or a bias in the attraction of such programs for individuals with stronger links to Judaism and/or Israel. In addition, Jewish communal leaders with formal JCS education may recognize that as role models in their communities Hebrew should be important for them.

Table 9: perceived Hebrew importance by JCS education

	*Hebrew knowledge is not important/ useful for me	*Hebrew is somewhat or very important/ useful for me	*Hebrew knowledge should not be important/ useful for the Jewish communal professional	*Hebrew knowledge should be somewhat or very important/ useful for the Jewish communal professional
With formal JCS education	3.4%	83.4%	0.0%	89.7%
Without formal JCS education	9.2%	73.5%	4.0%	79.8%

* $p \leq 0.01$. The distribution is significant

Current job: Jewish community or not

Table 10 below indicates that the majority of the survey's respondents work in the Jewish community. This gap validates that the study's circulation method, through alumni lists, was indeed an effective way of sampling Jewish Communal professionals.

Table 10: Percentage of respondents working or not in the Jewish community

Working in the Jewish community	84.7%
Not working in the Jewish community	15.3%

There are no significant differences in Hebrew skills based upon whether or not a person works in the Jewish community. Thus, employment within the Jewish community does not reflect special Hebrew skills compared to non-Jewish

employment. Nor are Hebrew skills regarded as an important determinant of hiring decisions.

As we might expect, those employed outside the Jewish community reported much more frequently that they never use Hebrew in their professional work and in their everyday English speech (table 11). The greater Hebrew use by the Jewish community employees may reflect prevalent norms in the field that value the use of merged Hebrew in the everyday English language. Another possible reason is that people who are more Jewish oriented choose to work in a Jewish environment.

Table 11: Reported Hebrew use by employment in the Jewish community

	*Never use Hebrew in professional work	Use Hebrew in professional work several times a week or everyday	*Never use Hebrew words in everyday English speech	Use Hebrew words in everyday English speech several times a week or everyday
Jewish community employment	35.9%	19.2%	10.7%	56.0%
No Jewish community employment	69.2%	15.4%	45.9%	47.7%

* $p \leq 0.01$. The distribution is significant

As can be expected, those who do not work in the Jewish community tend to use Hebrew in more personal situations (during prayer, in familial or social

relationships with Israelis, when helping their own children in their Hebrew studies, in familial/social relationships with non-Israelis, or when learning or taking a class in Judaism or Hebrew), whereas those who work in the Jewish community tend to use Hebrew in more professional situations (in organizing or leading missions to Israel, in professional relationships with Israel/Israelis, in their professional work including when teaching Hebrew or Judaism, or in naming opportunities).

Gender

The higher percentage of female respondents (table 12) seems to be representative of the demographic reality of the gender balance in the field even though it may not be reflective of the situation at the executive leadership level.

Table 12: Percentage of respondents by gender

Females	78.1%
Males	21.9%

More females use Hebrew during prayer, in familial or social relationships with Israel/Israelis, when learning or taking a class in Judaism or Hebrew, and in naming opportunities. More males use Hebrew in organizing, taking, or leading missions to Israel, in professional relationships with Israel/Israelis, in lay relationships with Israel/Israelis, in their professional work, or when teaching

Hebrew or Judaism. Thus, females tend to use Hebrew more often in personal situations and males tend to use Hebrew more often in professional situations. The reason may be that females have a more personal connection to the language whereas males have a more practical approach toward Hebrew. Perhaps we can connect this to the finding that more females (12.4%) than males (6.6%) believe that Hebrew is important for its symbolic use. Even though this difference is not significant, it may suggest the more personal and symbolic attitudes of the female respondents.

Table 13 shows the significant difference between males and females in the perceived importance of Hebrew for the Jewish communal professional. Significantly more males feel that Hebrew should be very important/useful for the Jewish communal professional, perhaps because they have a practical orientation and they use Hebrew more in professional situations.

Table 13: perceived Hebrew importance by gender

	Hebrew knowledge is very important/ useful for me	*Hebrew knowledge should be very important/ useful for the Jewish communal professional
Females	46.1%	24.9%
Males	49.2%	37.9%

* $p \leq 0.01$. The distribution is significant

Age

As can be seen in table 14, a majority of the respondents were younger than age 40. There are several possible explanations for this over-representation of this cohort. Perhaps the younger respondents have more inclination to respond to an on-line survey, are in lower ranks and therefore have more available time, or are more willing to participate in research because they remember their own recent graduate research projects.

Table 14: Percentage of respondents by age

21-40 years old	66.2%
41-60 years old	29.5%
61+ years old	4.3%

According to tables 15 and 16, the younger the respondents are, the better skills they report in both prayer-book Hebrew and modern Hebrew. Probable reasons are that in recent years day school attendance is on the rise, and more and more Hebrew classes are offered in high schools and colleges throughout the United States. Another possible explanation is that younger respondents may be more exposed to Israel through the current preponderance of Israel experiences.

Table 15: Reported prayer-book Hebrew abilities by age

	Very good reading ability	Very good comprehension
21-40	43.4%	26.8%
41-60	38.3%	21.7%
61+	33.3%	8.3%

Table 16: Reported modern Hebrew abilities by age

	Very good comprehension	Very good speaking ability	Very good reading ability
21-40	24.7%	19.7%	30.0%
41-60	14.8%	13.8%	13.9%
61+	0.0%	8.3%	8.3%

As described in table 17, the older the respondents are, the less likely they are to use Hebrew in their professional lives. However, the middle group (ages 41-60) reported using Hebrew the most often in their professional work as well as in their everyday English speech. This is interesting because this group reported weaker Hebrew skills than the youngest group. This fact implies that even moderate knowledge of Hebrew endows its bearer with the ability to use it in an effective way.

Table 17: Reported Hebrew use by age

	Never use Hebrew in professional work	Use Hebrew in professional work several times a week or every day	Never use Hebrew words in everyday English speech	Use Hebrew words in everyday English speech several times a week or everyday
21-40	35.0%	16.7%	10.3%	26.6%
41-60	49.4%	24.1%	10.8%	34.9%
61+	58.3%	8.3%	25.0%	8.3%

Examining the situations in which respondents use Hebrew provides a mixed picture. The two younger groups use Hebrew more often than the oldest group in organizing, taking, or leading missions to Israel and in professional relationships with Israel/Israelis. The reason may be that younger respondents have visited Israel more frequently and have stronger connections with Israel. Collected data was used to check this idea and to help explain the superior (reported) Hebrew skills of young respondents. An obvious catalyst to improved Hebrew knowledge is a long stay in Israel; hence one needs to examine the connection between the age of the respondents and the time they spent in Israel. Table 18 indicates that the younger the respondents are, the more time they have spent in Israel. This factor can explain the better Hebrew skills and more positive attitudes of younger respondents.

Table 18: Israel stay by age

Age	0-1 month in Israel	1-12 months in Israel	12+ months in Israel
21-40	28.9%	39.5%	31.6%
41-60	48.8%	20.7%	30.5%
61+	100%	0.0%	0.0%

The middle group (41-60 years old) reported using Hebrew more than the other groups when helping their own children in their Hebrew studies. This makes sense as the middle group is most likely to have school-age children. The oldest group uses Hebrew more often than the other groups when learning or taking a class in Judaism or Hebrew and in naming opportunities. Plausible reasons may be that the oldest group has more time to invest in taking adult education classes, and/or they may have higher professional positions that provide them with more opportunities to name programs and events.

Table 19 demonstrates further the correlation between the respondents' age and their attitude toward Hebrew. The younger the respondents are, the more they report that Hebrew is important/useful for them personally. These data can be explained by the reasons mentioned above as leading to their reported better Hebrew skill levels. Moreover, higher level Hebrew skills allow them to use Hebrew in a practical way in their daily work.

Examining the question of how much the knowledge of Hebrew should be important/useful for the Jewish communal professional (table 19), the differences between the groups were found to be insignificant. Therefore, even though the

oldest age group feels that Hebrew is not very important for them personally, they do feel that it should be important for the Jewish communal professional. This suggests that the importance of the Hebrew language to American Jewish life and to the role modeling of Jewish communal professionals stretches far beyond its practical applications.

Table 19: perceived Hebrew importance by age

	Hebrew knowledge is somewhat or very important/ useful for me	Hebrew knowledge should be somewhat or very important/ useful for the Jewish communal professional
21-40	82.4%	86.8%
41-60	79.3%	84.0%
61+	41.7%	83.3%

Job position

Table 20: Percentage of respondents by job position

Executive management	20.7%
Middle management	28.9%
Professional staff	50.4%

The higher the position, the more Hebrew use in professional work is reported. However, middle managers reported using Hebrew words more often in their everyday English speech (table 21). The reason for this different Hebrew use is unclear, but a possible explanation may be that professional posturing and leadership position of the middle managers lead to higher Hebrew use. The use of

Merged Hebrew can be a technique of the middle managers to assert their relatively new leadership positions. Next, the perceived Hebrew importance of the different job positions will be examined.

Table 21: Reported Hebrew use by job position

	Use Hebrew in professional work several times a week or every day	Use Hebrew words in everyday English speech several times a week or everyday
Executive management	23.5%	54.0%
Middle management	18.6%	61.4%
Professional staff	14.6%	47.2%

According to table 22, respondents with higher positions consider knowledge of Hebrew less important/useful for them personally. However, more respondents with higher positions feel that knowledge of Hebrew should be important/useful for the Jewish communal professional. Thus, even though Hebrew is not very important personally for many of those holding higher positions, they feel more than others that Hebrew should be important for the Jewish communal professional.

Table 22: perceived Hebrew importance by job position

	The knowledge of Hebrew is very important/ useful for me	Hebrew knowledge should be very important/ useful for the Jewish communal professional
Executive management	38.0%	32.0%
Middle management	44.9%	27.9%
Professional staff	47.5%	23.0%

Time spent in Israel

Table 23 indicates that the respondents varied in regard to the time they had spent in Israel, but the distribution between the different lengths of stay is uniform.

Table 23: Percentage of respondents by time spent in Israel

0-1 month	37.4%
1-12 months	32.4%
Over 12 months	30.2%

As tables 24 and 25 below point out very clearly, and as can be expected, the longer the stay in Israel, the higher the prayer book and modern Hebrew abilities of the respondents.

Table 24: Reported prayer-book Hebrew abilities by time spent in Israel

	Very good comprehension	Very good reading abilities
0-1 month	11.2%	25.0%
1-12 months	20.9%	41.8%
Over 12 months	44.1%	61.9%

Table 25: Reported modern Hebrew abilities by time spent in Israel

	Very good comprehension	Very good speaking abilities	Very good reading abilities
0-1 month	4.8%	5.8%	9.6%
1-12 months	14.3%	9.9%	22.0%
Over 12 months	47.0%	39.3%	45.8%

Respondents who had stayed longer in Israel use Hebrew more often in their professional lives and in their everyday English speech (table 26). The reason may be that their reported good Hebrew skills that allow them to use the language in an effective way. The long stay(s) in Israel may have shaped their attitudes regarding Hebrew as well as provided them with personal connections there that remained active later in their professional and personal lives.

Table 26: Reported Hebrew use by time spent in Israel

	Use Hebrew in professional work several times a week or every day	Use Hebrew words in everyday English speech several times a week or everyday
0-1 month	7.5%	42.6%
1-12 months	14.6%	50.6%
Over 12 months	36.1%	73.8%

Considering the situations in which the respondents use Hebrew, those who stayed in Israel 0-1 month reported using Hebrew the most during prayer, when learning or taking a class in Judaism or Hebrew, and in naming opportunities. Thus, they use mainly prayer-book Hebrew. Respondents who

stayed in Israel 1-12 months and over 12 months reported using Hebrew in professional and lay relationships with Israel/Israelis and in familial or social relationships with Israel/Israelis. Thus, those who stayed longer in Israel have personal and professional relationships that help them sustain their ongoing connection to Hebrew, especially to modern Hebrew.

As can be expected, respondents who stayed longer in Israel are more likely to feel that Hebrew is important for them personally and that knowledge of Hebrew should be important/useful for the Jewish communal professional (table 27). The only respondents who feel that Hebrew should not be important at all for the Jewish communal professional are those who stayed in Israel less than a month.

Table 27: perceived Hebrew importance by time spent in Israel

	Hebrew knowledge is very important/ useful for me	Hebrew knowledge should be very important/ useful for the Jewish communal professional
0-1 month	29.3%	21.5%
1-12 months	40.7%	24.4%
Over 12 months	74.7%	40.2%

Type of Jewish organization

Table 28 below details the various Jewish organizations in which the respondents of the survey work.

Table 28: Percentage of respondents by type of Jewish organization

Jewish federations	33.7%
Education, both formal and informal settings	19.3%
Synagogues	14.2%
Social services	9.6%
JCCs	9.2%
Community relations/ advocacy organizations	6.4%
National agencies	4.4%
Political organizations	2.0%
Hillel	1.2%

Tables 29 and 30 demonstrate that employees of synagogues, education, JCCs, political organizations, and national agencies reported the highest Hebrew abilities. The employees of other organizations reported, on average, either medium or low Hebrew skills. In tables 29 and 30, as well as from other findings to follow, Synagogue and education organizations' employees stand out as having the strongest Hebrew abilities. A significant portion of Jewish education is either the Hebrew language itself or Judaic studies that involve terminology that originates from Hebrew. Similarly, synagogue practice and the synagogue environment offer access to Hebrew texts from the prayer book and to sermons embedded with Hebrew terms and quotations.

Table 29: Reported prayer-book Hebrew abilities of the three organizations with the highest abilities

Good or very good comprehension	Good or very good reading abilities
Synagogues (74.3%)	Synagogues (91.7%)
JCCs (71.4%)	Education (89.9%)
Education (56.3%)	National agencies (81.8%)

Table 30: Reported modern Hebrew abilities of the three organizations with the highest abilities

Good or very good comprehension	Good or very good speaking abilities	Good or very good reading abilities
Political organizations (60.0%)	Education (45.8%)	Education (75.0%)
Education (57.4%)	National agencies (45.5%)	National agencies (72.7%)
Synagogues (51.4%)	JCCs (41.1%)	Synagogues (70.6%)

More respondents who work in synagogues, education, and JCCs, which are “whole” environments, reported using Hebrew very often in their professional lives, whereas more of those who work in Hillel, community relations/ advocacy organizations, and social services organizations, which are more “office” environments, reported never using Hebrew in their professional lives (table 31). Therefore, the cultural norms of a “whole” environment may foster a more extensive Hebrew use.

More respondents who work in synagogues, education, and political organizations reported using Hebrew words very often in their everyday English speech, whereas more of those who work in political organizations, JCCs, and social services reported never using Hebrew words in their everyday English speech (table 31).

Table 31: Reported Hebrew use of the three organizations with the least and most Hebrew use

Never use Hebrew in professional work	Use Hebrew in professional work several times a week or every day	Never use Hebrew words in everyday English speech	Use Hebrew words in everyday English speech several times a week or everyday
Hillel (66.7%)	Synagogues (38.9%)	Political organizations (20.0%)	Synagogues (77.1%)
Community relations/ advocacy organizations (62.5%)	Education (33.3%)	JCCs (16.7%)	Education (72.9%)
Social services (60.9%)	JCCs (29.0%)	Social services (16.0%)	Political organizations (60.0%)

According to table 32, the respondents who work in synagogues reported using Hebrew in the most situations. The reasons may be their better Hebrew knowledge and skills (see tables 29 and 30) and the intrinsic and symbolic connection of Hebrew within the synagogue setting. Another interesting finding is that those who work in social services organizations reported using Hebrew more than employees of other organizations in personal situations such as prayer and social relationships with Israelis. We can infer from this that Hebrew is by no means central in the social services field, but it is central to their personal identity. This claim is also expressed in table 31 where high percentages of social services employees report never using Hebrew in their professional work. This finding can be justified by the fact that contrary to other organization types which are

typically sectarian, social services organizations within the Jewish communal field tend to be non-sectarian while utilizing values and heritage in defining their Jewish character.

Further examining table 32, one can notice that the employees of almost all the Jewish organizations use Hebrew both in professional and in personal situations. The only exceptions are the employees of Jewish federations and political organizations that were found, more than other respondents, to report using Hebrew only in work-related situations. One particular work-related use of Hebrew, mentioned by Jewish federation employees, was in missions to Israel. Thus, we may infer that in the environment of Jewish federations in the United States, Hebrew is in general not very useful or highly valued. In order to check this conclusion, the perceived usefulness of Hebrew will be considered.

Table 32: Most frequent circumstances of Hebrew use (each Hebrew use is listed under the three organizations that reported it most frequently)

Jewish federations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In organizing, taking, or leading missions to Israel
Education, formal and informal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In lay relationships with Israel/Israelis • In professional work
Synagogues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During prayer • In lay relationships with Israel/Israelis • When helping their own children in their Hebrew studies • In familial/social relationship with non-Israelis • When learning or taking a class in Judaism or Hebrew • In naming opportunities
Social services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During prayer

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In familial or social relationships with Israel/Israelis • When learning or taking a class in Judaism or Hebrew • In naming opportunities
JCCs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In professional relationships with Israel/Israelis • When helping their own children in their Hebrew studies • In familial/social relationships with non-Israelis • When learning or taking a class in Judaism or Hebrew
Community relations/advocacy organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In lay relationships with Israel/Israelis • When helping their own children in their Hebrew studies • In familial or social relationships with non-Israelis • In naming opportunities
National agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In familial or social relationships with Israel/Israelis • In professional work
Political organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In organizing, taking, or leading missions to Israel • In professional relationships with Israel/Israelis • In professional work
Hillel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During prayer • In organizing, taking, or leading missions to Israel • In professional, familial, or social relationships with Israel/Israelis.

Table 33 marks very clearly the Jewish communal service organizations that perceive Hebrew as very important (synagogues and education services) and not important (JCCs and social services), according to their employees. This correlates well with the weak Hebrew skills and rare use of the language social services employees reported in table 31. However, given the good Hebrew and frequent use of the language by the JCC employees, it is surprising that relatively many of them believe that Hebrew is not important. A plausible explanation for this discrepancy is that JCC employees do find Hebrew beneficial to their profession, but they do not regard their job as a typical Jewish communal work

because JCC are non-sectarian and have higher percentages of non-Jewish members. Thus, they may think that their perceived usefulness of Hebrew may not generalize to other types of Jewish organizations.

Table 33: Perceived Hebrew importance of the two Jewish organizations with the highest percentages

Hebrew knowledge is not important/ useful for me	Hebrew knowledge is very important/ useful for me	Hebrew knowledge should not be important/ useful for the Jewish communal professional	Hebrew knowledge should be very important/ useful for the Jewish communal professional
JCCs (29.0%)	Synagogues (65.7%)	JCCs (21.7%)	Synagogues (45.7%)
Social services (12.5%)	Education (62.5%)	Social services (4.2%)	Education (34.0%)

Additional demographic information:

A variety of demographic information about the survey respondents was detailed above. The backgrounds and characteristics of the Jewish communal professionals who agreed to participate in the study will now be explored in greater depth, through the respondents Jewish education and in particular, their Jewish communal service graduate education.

Examining the respondents' Jewish education background, only 4% reported to have had no Jewish education. A majority of the respondents attended

religious school as children (68.3%) and took college or graduate level courses (71.6%) or adult education classes (51.1%).

Most respondents (75.2%) reported a master's degree as their highest degree earned. Those who studied in a Jewish Communal Service program (64.4% of the respondents) graduated from the following institutions:

Table 34: Institute of JCS education

Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion	46.7%
Jewish Theological Seminary	15.2%
Brandeis University	9.2%
University of Michigan	9.2%
Yeshiva University	8.2%
Gratz College	6.5%
Baltimore Hebrew University / Baltimore Institute for Jewish Communal Service	3.8%
University of Judaism	3.3%

Table 34 indicates that nearly half of respondents are graduates of HUC-JIR. It is unclear whether the overrepresentation of HUC graduates is due to the high number of graduates (over 650), or that they were more inclined to respond to a (future) fellow alumna.

Conclusion: Discussion, Implications, and Recommendations

In table 1, we saw that at least two thirds of the respondents reported some functional Hebrew abilities. This high number suggests that Hebrew is an available tool of the Jewish communal professional. However, a high percentage of the respondents (40.8%) reported never speaking, reading, or writing in Hebrew in their professional work, and only 18.7% of the respondents reported using Hebrew often in their professional work. Therefore, it seems that Hebrew is not practical, useful, or valued in many work settings. The literature reviewed in this study demonstrated the importance of Hebrew in Jewish identity. Hebrew can fulfill a much more important and influential role in the Jewish community in general, and for the Jewish communal professional in particular than it does now. Stolovitsky (1989) and Edwards (1985) state that a learner's abilities will be enhanced if a language is considered practical and necessary. Therefore, Hebrew needs to be perceived as having practical value in order to motivate Jewish communal leaders to learn. As Lipstadt (1993) states, Jewish learning and knowledge of Hebrew does not guarantee good leaders, but it can definitely contribute to better leadership.

A majority (54.7%) of the respondents reported extensive use of Hebrew words in their everyday English speech. Therefore, they have an inclination towards Hebrew use in their personal lives if not in their professional lives. This is in accord with Zisenwine and Levy-Keren's (1999) findings of a willingness

among Jewish day school students to incorporate heritage language into their lives without excluding or competing with the language and culture of the greater society. Jewish organizations can encourage this positive inclination to influence more Hebrew use in the work place.

It is helpful to mention Lipstadt's (1993) four possible successive levels of Hebrew knowledge for Jewish communal professionals. These levels can help Jewish leaders in establishing realistic goals for Hebrew learning in their organizations:

1. Decoding. Training of Jewish communal leaders to "decode" Hebrew, so they feel comfortable at the synagogue and find their way in the *siddur* (prayer book). It would enable them to have a sense of inclusion and affinity, despite poor speaking and comprehension skills.
2. *Elef Milim*. (Literal meaning: a thousand words). Teaching Jewish communal leaders a set of Hebrew concepts and terms that includes phrases and terms related to Jewish ritual, life-cycle calendar, and basic Jewish concepts.
3. Conversation. Having the ability to conduct a conversation in Hebrew.
4. Access to sophisticated texts, which is the highest level of Hebrew knowledge.

Lipstadt (1993) stresses that before any of these levels can be attained on a wide communal basis, support must be gained for the very idea that Hebrew should be part of the communal agenda. It is unrealistic to ask the current

generation of Jewish leaders to attain a higher level of Hebrew abilities, but they can play an important role in changing communal attitudes by supporting the establishment of communal programs so that future generations will have the option of becoming Hebrew literate. Lipstadt (1993) suggests three steps to follow:

1. Promoting awareness – building a communal rational for Hebrew knowledge.

Jewish communal leaders must understand the importance of knowing Hebrew. They should “instill a recognition of the centrality of Hebrew in Judaic tradition, history, and culture and foster a feeling that Hebrew, together with a broad range of practices and beliefs, is something that helps define who and what we are as a people and a community” (Lipstadt, 1993, p. 316). For example, adult education classes often use text translations; teachers should demonstrate that while the text can be studied in any language available, the original text allows special insights and understanding. Promoting this awareness and raising the Hebrew consciousness can be done by making Hebrew a natural part of community life. Hebrew terminology should be adopted at as many different events, celebrations, and gatherings as possible.

2. Providing opportunities. Special Hebrew-learning programs geared toward working people should be established. Currently, most communities do not have the facilities for an adult who wishes to engage in serious study of Hebrew.

3. Offering incentives. Incentives, such as grants, special awards, and trips to Israel, would generate desire and excitement among potential students, teachers, and organizations. With the understanding of the importance of Hebrew, the financial commitment and engagement to fund these incentives will happen.

Adding to Lipstadt's (1993) suggestions, following are some additional practical recommendations to enhance extensive Hebrew use in Jewish organizations, based upon this study's literature review and findings. It is important to note that modern Hebrew and biblical/ prayer-book Hebrew are not identical, but the following suggestions apply to both kinds of Hebrew:

- The most successful method of creating an understanding and maintenance of Hebrew is to experience it and use it in real life situations (Schiff, 1996). Therefore, Hebrew should be integrated into a variety of activities within the Jewish communal realm, such as text study, Jewish learning, the life cycle, the Jewish home, and the Hebrew calendar.
- Weinreich's (1980) differentiates between two types of Hebrew: Whole Hebrew, which is the language used in Jewish rituals such as prayer and learning, and Merged Hebrew that contains the Hebrew words that are integrated and used in everyday language. Merged Hebrew is central to professional role modeling in shaping institutional cultural norms of Hebrew

use. Moreover, it implies that the knowledge of several Hebrew words can be sufficient in order to encourage a meaningful use of the language.

- A positive connection was found between being a graduate of a Jewish communal service program and having better Hebrew skills, using Hebrew words more often in everyday English speech, and holding a more positive attitude toward the importance and usefulness of Hebrew. Therefore, professionalism of the Jewish communal field will likely lead to an increased use of Hebrew and more positive attitude toward it in the workplace. Moreover, deepening the Hebrew study segments and making them an integral part of all Jewish communal service graduate programs will have a positive impact on Hebrew use in the workplace.
- Despite the fact that those who work in the Jewish community use Hebrew more often in their professional work and personal life than those who work elsewhere, no clear differences in Hebrew knowledge and skills were found between the two groups. Jewish organizations can enhance the knowledge of their employees by providing Hebrew language classes and workshops in the workplace. Accessible classes that take place as part of the work day can motivate professionals to strengthen their Hebrew knowledge.
- Another option is to incorporate Hebrew, especially Merged Hebrew, in as many work situations as possible - for example, in staff meetings, in supervision, in the organization newsletter, and on the billboard. As Lipstadt

(1993) stated, having more opportunities to use the language together with special incentives will excite and motivate professionals toward Hebrew learning. In addition, it will create a general positive environment for Hebrew use. It is important, however, not to exclude those who do not know Hebrew and are not interested in learning it. Therefore, every spoken or written Hebrew word should be followed by an English translation, together with attempts to accommodate Hebrew use for every level of interest apparent in the organization.

- Because many respondents believe that Hebrew is not only practical but also has a symbolic meaning, measures should be taken to advance the symbolic manifestation of the language. For example, text studies and learning of Jewish values can be utilized as part of monthly staff meetings in order to deepen the connection to the Hebrew language.
- We saw in table 3 that about a quarter of all respondents use Hebrew when they help their own children in their Hebrew studies; these professionals will appreciate some facilitated guidance in this subject. Jewish organizations that wish to enhance the Hebrew knowledge and use of their employees can plan special activities and events that address this need. For example, workshops for the employees and their children in which Hebrew will be learned around different themes such as holidays, a weekend Hebrew retreat for the entire

family, or Hebrew trainings in the workplace that focus on teaching employees the terminology that their children learn in Hebrew school.

- One of the situations that were often mentioned with regard to Hebrew use was in organizing and leading missions to Israel. This could be a great opportunity to incorporate Hebrew learning as part of the preparations toward the journey to Israel. For example, a pre-mission retreat that focuses on learning functional Hebrew can be incorporated as part of the mission, alongside with post-mission meetings to practice and reinforce the learning gained.
- More of the executive managers reported using Hebrew often in their professional lives, and they consider the knowledge of Hebrew as important/useful for the Jewish communal professional. Therefore, they can use their leadership positions to urge their staff toward greater Hebrew use. This can be done with training, retreats, personal role modeling, extensive Hebrew use – especially Merged Hebrew, and incorporation of Hebrew into the daily life of the organization.
- The longer the duration of stay in Israel was, the more the respondents reported good Hebrew skills, extensive Hebrew use, and positive attitudes toward Hebrew. Therefore, visits to Israel should be encouraged in the form of study-trips, encounters with Israeli colleagues, conferences, retreats, and sabbaticals.
- Noteworthy differences were observed between employees of congregational/religious organizations to those whose area of professional

practice is of a more secular nature. In secular organizations where Hebrew is not useful in daily work, a special effort can be made to facilitate further use by emphasizing personal meanings of Judaism. Examples include focusing on the Jewish calendar, the holidays, and life cycle events of the employees or their families (weddings, Bar-Mitzvah, etc.), in order to equip them with the appropriate Hebrew terminology. This will lead in an indirect way to greater Hebrew exposure in the workplace.

- According to Berkofsky (2002), focusing on the teaching of Hebrew could be a cost-effective outreach tool. Nevertheless, all the initiatives mentioned above require special funding. A Prerequisite for the allocation of resources for Hebrew programs is a communal support for the importance of Hebrew, as Lipstadt (1993) suggests. After this support will be gained, funds can be obtained from the Jewish Agency for Israel, Israel-based organizations, as well as personal and familial foundations.

This study begins to scratch the surface of the weighty issue of Hebrew use in American Jewish communal work. Nevertheless, to the researcher's knowledge, it is the first empirical study to provide both qualitative and quantitative data on the importance of Hebrew for the Jewish communal professional. As such, its results are noteworthy in three different manners. First, it validates facts that one might expect or presume true from familiarity with the

field of Jewish communal service and its personnel. (i.e., that higher Jewish communal service education is equated with greater Hebrew knowledge and positive attitudes). Second, it contains findings that are surprising and counter-intuitive. An example was seen in the many professionals with low degrees of Hebrew knowledge who ranked it as highly important. By proposing meaningful explanations to those findings, new insights can be obtained. Third, and no less important, the study includes findings which did not suggest even reasonable explanations, such as the differences in Hebrew use among different job positions. Such findings can serve as a basis for future study as well as issues not explored by this study. For example, the actual Hebrew level of the respondents in contrast to their reported Hebrew level can be examined. Moreover, personal interviews can be utilized in order to obtain greater insight into the Hebrew attitudes of Jewish communal professionals.

Extensive Hebrew use can impact positively the identity formation of Jewish communal leaders and their communities. Additionally, it can lead to stronger group cohesiveness within and amongst Jewish organizations. It is hoped that the list of recommendations provided will help in fostering more use and more positive attitudes toward the unfading, irreplaceable, and beautiful language of Hebrew.

Appendix 1: Cover Letter

Dear Jewish communal professional.

My name is Ruth Cassuto and I am a second-year graduate student. I am studying towards a Master of Arts in Jewish Communal Service at the Hebrew Union College and a Master of Social Work at the University of Southern California. As part of my studies I am writing a thesis about the role of the Hebrew language for the Jewish communal professional.

Completing the following online questionnaire will take you approximately 10 minutes. It would be very helpful if you could fill it out as soon as possible, no later than January 28, 2005.

I would also appreciate your forwarding this e-mail to any Jewish Communal Professional you know. By doing this and by filling out the questionnaire, you are contributing to the professional development of the field of Jewish communal service.

The questionnaires are anonymous, and all answers will remain confidential and will be used only for quantitative analysis.

Thank you very much for your cooperation,

Ruth Cassuto
MSW/MAJCS student
USC/HUC
ruthiebac@yahoo.com

Appendix 2: Online Questionnaire

Please circle the answer that is most true for you:

1. How old are you?
 - a. 21-30
 - b. 31-40
 - c. 41-50
 - d. 51-60
 - e. 61-70
 - f. other: _____
2. What is your gender?
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
3. Are you
 - a. Jewish
 - b. Non-Jewish
 - c. Other: _____
4. How much time have you spent in Israel?
 - a. I have never visited or lived in Israel
 - b. I have visited for short periods of time, but I have never lived in Israel for more than a month
 - c. I lived in Israel for 1- 6 months
 - d. I lived in Israel for 6-12 months
 - e. I lived in Israel for 1-2 years
 - f. I lived in Israel for more than 2 years

5. What kind of Jewish education did you have (check all that applies for you)?
- a. None
 - b. Religion school as a child
 - c. Jewish Day School, up to Bar/Bat Mitzvah
 - d. Jewish Day School, beyond Bar/Bat Mitzvah
 - e. College level courses
 - f. Adult education classes
 - g. Other: _____
6. What is the highest degree you earned?
- a. High School diploma
 - b. Bachelors
 - c. Masters
 - d. Doctoral
 - e. Other: _____
7. Did you have any formal education in Jewish communal service?
- a. No
 - b. Yes
8. If yes, where did you study?
- a. Hebrew Union College
 - b. University of Judaism
 - c. Jewish Theological Seminary
 - d. Brandeis University
 - e. Yeshiva University
 - f. University of Michigan
 - g. Gratz College
 - h. The Baltimore Institute for Jewish Communal Service
 - i. Other: _____

9. Are you currently working in the Jewish Community?

- a. Yes
- b. No

10. If yes, in which type of organization do you work?

- a. Jewish Federation
- b. Jewish Community Center
- c. Synagogue
- d. Social Services
- e. Education
- f. Jewish Community Relations Council
- g. Political organization
- h. Other: _____

11. What type of position do you hold?

- a. Executive management
- b. Middle management
- c. Professional staff
- d. Other: _____

12. Please rate yourself on the Hebrew Knowledge Scale:

	None	Very basic	Medium	Good	Very good
Comprehension of Hebrew from a prayer book					
Comprehension of modern Hebrew					

Hebrew speaking ability					
Reading ability in Hebrew from a prayer book					
Reading ability in modern Hebrew					

13. How often do you [speak, read, or write in] Hebrew in your professional work?

- a. Never
- b. Only when I have a project related to Israel
- c. Several times a year
- d. Several times a month
- e. Several times a week
- f. Everyday

14. How often do you use Hebrew words in your everyday English speech?

- a. Never
- b. Several times a year
- c. Several times a month
- d. Several times a week
- e. Everyday

15. In what situations do you use Hebrew, either full sentences in Hebrew or some Hebrew words mixed into English (check all that apply to you)?

- a. During prayer
- b. In organizing, taking, or leading missions to Israel
- c. In professional relationships with Israel / Israelis
- d. In lay relationships with Israel / Israelis
- e. In familial or social relationships with Israel / Israelis

- f. In my everyday work; staff meetings
- g. When helping my own children in their Hebrew studies
- h. When taking a class in Judaism / Hebrew
- i. In naming opportunities, such as naming of programs, events, etc.
- j. other: _____

16. To what degree is knowledge of Hebrew important / useful for you?

- a. Not at all
- b. Not so much
- c. Somewhat important
- d. Very important

17. How much knowledge of Hebrew should be important / useful for the Jewish communal professional?

- a. Not at all
- b. Not so much
- c. Somewhat important
- d. Very important

18. Hebrew is important for

- a. its practical use
- b. its symbolic use
- c. both its practical and symbolic uses
- d. Hebrew is not important

19. Describe your personal attitude toward the Hebrew language:

20. Will you be willing to give your personal contact information for future follow-up questions?

- a. My name: _____
- b. My e-mail address: _____

Thank you very much!

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