

CHAPTER 24.

NEW WRITING IN AN OLD LAND

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This essay covers the history of academic writing development in Israel (vertically) and the landscape and diversity of the present programs (horizontally). It explains why Israel was slow in developing programs in either Hebrew or English, although there were academic institutions in the country even before the establishment of the State. It describes the foresight of our first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, in his realization that some students need extra support in order to succeed academically, the contribution of Eliezer Ben Yehudah in the development of the modern Hebrew language, and the insight of the sponsors of the Wolfson Family Charitable Trust in the need for scientists and social scientists to write for the global community. The picture is one of slow growth, recent innovations, attempts to develop programs in spite of budgetary cuts, and dreams for a better future. The establishment of IFAW, the Israel Forum for Academic Writing, and the attempts to connect with like-minded educators throughout the world through international conferences are bright spots on the horizon.

In preparation for the symposium at the 2007 EATAW conference, “Historical Roots of National Writing Cultures,” we began doing research on the state of academic writing and its history in the modern State of Israel. We were amazed, even then, about how many different programs exist in English and in Hebrew, and how little we knew about what other people were doing, even within the same institution. It was this situation that encouraged us to organize what has become IFAW, the Israel Forum for Academic Writing, and to continue our research in this area. The following profile essay is one result of these efforts.¹

THE BEGINNINGS: INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN ISRAEL

Israel is an old-new country. The history of Israel is at least 3,000 years old; on the other hand, the modern State of Israel was born only 63 years ago. Even before the State of Israel was established in 1948, three institutions of higher education had been founded: the Israeli Institute for Technology (the Technion) in 1914; the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 1925, and the Weizmann Institute of Science (then called the Daniel Sieff Research Institute) in 1934.

The first universities in modern Israel were based on European models, with the idea that the cultured, intellectual community should be able to learn and to spread knowledge to the masses throughout the nation and the world. There were very few books available in those days; so the system was based mainly on lectures and discussion, the professors being the privileged few who had already breathed the air of the European university tradition. In pre-state Israel and even after the establishment of the State, studying at a university was a privilege of the very few.

The Weizmann Institute of Science opened its doors in 1934. This was to be a different kind of academic institution, namely a research center for graduate students who would devote their lives to using science for the benefit of humanity. Scientists and professors were expected to publish the results of their research, and it was assumed that they knew how to do this. Many of them did.

Students who did enter Israeli universities were expected to know how to write academic papers without being trained and without getting feedback on their writing. It was assumed that if you were accepted to a university, then you knew how to write academic papers. Thus, Israeli universities never developed a tradition of Freshman Composition or Writing across the Curriculum, either in Hebrew or in English. It is only within the last few years that freshman composition courses have begun to appear in the universities, and that a greater concern about writing instruction in general has manifested itself among Israeli educators.

Today, there are numerous tertiary institutions in Israel. Four additional universities (Bar-Ilan University, 1955; Tel Aviv University, 1956-1963; University of Haifa, 1963; Ben-Gurion University, 1969) as well as the Open University began operating in Israel during the first decades of the State. In addition, private institutions such as IDC (the Herzliya Interdisciplinary Center) were established, and numerous colleges have been granted the right to issue bachelors' and masters' degrees by the Council of Higher Education. In the Palestinian Authority, twenty institutions of higher learning are listed on the Internet, all established since 1967. Bethlehem University, founded in 1973, the

first university established in the West Bank, can trace its roots to 1893, when the De La Salle Christian Brothers opened schools in Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Jaffa, and Nazareth, as well as in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, and Egypt.² Al-Quds University was established in 1984 with the purpose of providing education to Palestinian students from Jerusalem and other parts of Palestine. Since then, Al-Quds University has expanded to encompass 10 faculties and sixteen institutes and centers, and serves a student body of more than 5000.³

With such a wide range of tertiary institutions, it is very difficult to ascertain where there is any type of writing program and in what languages. We have begun our own mapping project, but it is incomplete. What is clear is that today's students in all institutions need professional guidance in order to cope with their writing tasks.

The remainder of this paper will trace the developments of writing instruction in Israel, according to the information we have been able to gather thus far, and will describe the directions and goals of the present programs as well as our hopes for the future.

Table 1: Chronology of Events Relevant to Academic Writing Instruction from Pre-State Israel until Today

Year	Event
1881	Arrival in Palestine of Ben-Yehuda, the founder of Modern Hebrew
1884	Publication of Hebrew language newspaper, "Hatzvi"
1890	Founding of the Hebrew Language Council (now the Hebrew Language Academy)
1893	Opening of the De La Salle Christian Brothers schools in Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Jaffa, Nazareth
1898	Establishment of six all-encompassing Hebrew schools and 14 part time Hebrew schools
1900	Publication of the first method book for teaching Hebrew
1906	Founding of the first Hebrew high school in Jaffa
1910	Publication of first six volumes of Ben-Yehuda's Hebrew language dictionary
1914	Beginning of classes at the Technion
1919	Laying of the cornerstone of the Hebrew University
1921	Recognition by the British Mandate Authority of Hebrew, as well as Arabic and English, as official languages
1925	Opening of classes at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem
1934	Opening of the Daniel Sieff Research Institute (Now the Weizmann Institute of Science)
1948	Establishment of the State of Israel

1955	Establishment of Bar-Ilan University
1956	Sponsoring of three Tel Aviv University Institutes by the City of Tel-Aviv
1959	Posthumous publication of the complete 17 volumes of Ben-Yehuda's Hebrew language dictionary by his 2 nd wife and son
1963	Opening of Tel-Aviv University as an independent institution
1963	Founding of University of Haifa
1968	Opening of the Center for Pre-Academic Studies, the preparatory program of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem; Requirement of "scientific" writing for all students
1969	Opening of Ben-Gurion University
1973	Founding of Bethlehem University, the first university established in the West Bank
1973	Founding of the Open University of Israel
The early 1980s	Introduction of first academic writing courses in EFL in Israel, but only for English majors
1984	Founding of Al-Quds University
1986	Beginning of the Wolfson Pilot Project
The 1990s	Introduction of Academic Writing in the Teachers' Colleges
1994	Opening of the IDC (Inter-Disciplinary Center of Herzliya)
1995	Opening of Sal'Or Writing Center—Kibbutzim College
2007	Founding of IFAW
2007	Beginning of IFAW Mapping Project
2007	Establishment of first "Freshman Hebrew" course required of all incoming humanities students at Hebrew University
2008	Hebrew University EAP Initiatives
2009-2010	Celebration of the Year of the Hebrew Language
2009-2010	Ministry of Education emphasis on Hebrew writing courses in K-12 system
2010	IFAW International Conference

A BIT OF A DIGRESSION: THE STRUGGLE FOR HEBREW

Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, the pioneer and prophet of the modern Hebrew language, was born in 1858 in Lithuania.⁴ Like most Jewish children of the time in Eastern Europe, he began learning Hebrew for prayer and Bible study at an early age in the hope that he would become a great rabbi; instead he became a product of the "Haskalah," the Enlightenment movement in Europe. Ben-Yehuda and many other promising young Jews of Eastern Europe at the time left the Talmudic academy and entered a Russian gymnasium and/or a European university.

Hebrew had been used throughout the ages for religious purposes—prayer and Bible study—especially by male Jews in Eastern Europe, North Africa, and Yemen. In addition, even as far back as the medieval period, secular literature in Hebrew, especially poetry and philosophy, existed. By the nineteenth century, there were also a number of Hebrew periodicals in Europe, and a few people were beginning to write poetry, short stories, and essays in the ancient tongue. Interestingly enough, during all this time, Hebrew was only a written language and not a spoken tongue. It was Ben-Yehuda's dream to make it a spoken language as well. Today the process is reversed. Almost everyone in Israel speaks and understands Hebrew. What is necessary is to educate people to write in Hebrew as well.

When Ben-Yehuda arrived in Palestine in 1881, he had already published his first article on the importance of reviving the Hebrew language. He immediately began work on his three-pronged plan of action: Hebrew in the Home; Hebrew in the School, and Hebrew for Adults. It was not an easy plan to carry through. Members of the religious community objected to using the holy tongue for secular purposes, and the Turks, who ruled the country at that time, objected to the official use of any language other than Turkish. In spite of many hardships, Ben-Yehuda and his supporters persisted and eventually succeeded in their goal.

In the Ben-Yehuda home, it was forbidden for children to hear any language other than Hebrew. Others followed his example. As a child, sixty years after Ben-Yehuda had arrived in the country, Amos Oz writes that his parents knew many different languages, but they taught him only Hebrew (Oz, 2004). This was the general trend for many immigrant families.

Ben Yehuda believed that in order for the younger generation to begin speaking Hebrew freely, it would be necessary to have Hebrew become the language of instruction in all Jewish schools in the country. This was not an easy task, as there were vested interests in maintaining instruction in French, German, English, and Yiddish. Ben Yehuda began by insisting that all kindergarten teachers learn Hebrew so that very quickly the children would become native speakers of Hebrew. By 1898, there were six all-encompassing Hebrew schools in the country, and fourteen part time Hebrew schools, with a total enrollment of 2,500 pupils. In 1900, the first method book for teaching Hebrew was published, and in 1906, the first Hebrew high school was founded in Jaffa (St. John, 1952; Cooper-Weill, 1998).

With the establishment of the Technion in 1913-14, the first major language war took place. The founders of the Technion from Germany insisted that it was logical for instruction to take place in German, since the language of science at the time was German and students needed to communicate with

the scientific community throughout the world. Many scientific and technical terms did not even exist in Hebrew at the time. However, the students and instructors went on strike and refused to return to classes unless Hebrew became the language of instruction. They won the battle: the language of instruction in all universities in the country was to be Hebrew. In 1921, the Mandate authority recognized Hebrew, as well as Arabic and English, as official languages (Bein, 1971; Spolsky and Shohamy, 1999).

Finally, Ben-Yehuda wanted the Hebrew language to permeate the entire society. He had begun publishing his own Hebrew newspaper, called “Hatzvi,” in 1884. Here, as well as in many speeches, discussions, and meetings, he propagandized for the use of Hebrew in the home, in schools, in the workplace, in the marketplace; in fact, all over. However, in a sense, the founders of the Technion were correct. Not only scientific terms, but also many modern concepts and ideas did not exist in nineteenth century Hebrew. Ben-Yehuda began introducing new words in his newspaper. By a careful study of ancient and medieval texts, he was able to coin new terms from the old roots and to spread his ideas and linguistic coinages to Hebrew readers throughout the world. The words he entered in his seventeen-volume dictionary, which was completed only after his death by his wife and son, followed strict philological rules. Ben-Yehuda founded the Hebrew Language Council in 1890, the forerunner of the present Hebrew Language Academy, which continues to introduce new words and concepts into modern spoken and written Hebrew, to solve various linguistic problems in the Hebrew language, and to set acceptable standards for the use of the language.

Ben-Yehuda and his followers succeeded in reviving the ancient Hebrew language into a vital, modern language in everyday use. There is no doubt that this is an impressive achievement. Unlike most countries, where monolingual policy originates and is enforced by powerful, political forces (Kibner, 2008), the Hebrew-only initiative was a grassroots movement, which, for many years, needed to struggle against the powers-that-be. Today, however, when the Hebrew language is clearly the lingua-franca of most Israelis, the necessity of insisting on Hebrew-only policies is questionable. Was it necessary, for instance, during 2009, designated by the Ministry of Education as the year for the Hebrew language, for the Ministry to instruct schools to begin playing only Hebrew songs during school recesses and in all school events and activities? Why did the President of the Hebrew Language Academy express such strong opposition concerning a proposed graduate course at the Technion to be conducted in English in order to attract foreign students? (How could this happen at the Technion, he wanted to know, where the first major battle in academia for the Hebrew language took place?)

According to some, the imposition of Hebrew only is a mixed blessing (Shohamy, 2009). We shall touch on this problem as we continue to discuss the development of writing programs in higher education in Israel today.

WRITING “A NATURAL PHENOMENON: NO NEED FOR INSTRUCTION”

Amos Oz states in his autobiography, “All Jerusalem, in my childhood, in the last years of British rule, sat at home and wrote. Hardly anyone had a radio in those days, and there was no television or video or compact disc player or Internet or e-mail, not even the telephone. But everyone had a pencil and a notebook” (Oz, 2004, p.285). Later, even when he moved to the kibbutz, he found that farmers devoted to manual labor often wrote modest articles and sometimes even poetry (Oz, 2004, p.468).

Perhaps one reason for the lack of attention to specific writing skills in Israel until recently, whether in the elementary and secondary grades or in the universities, was that writing seemed to be a natural phenomenon, like sleeping or breathing. Even though most people did not attend university, many people wrote. In those days, people wrote in many languages. However, their children, the second generation, wrote only in Hebrew. No matter what their occupation at the time, members of the first generation were, like Ben Yehuda himself, products of the “Haskalah” or “Enlightenment” movement. Others, who had not been exposed to European secular education, were, nevertheless, products of a literate tradition: the Bible, the Mishnah, etc. The style was argumentative and sometimes poetic, not the traditional Western, academic writing we know today. Nevertheless, if these people entered the university, they were able to survive without a freshman composition course.

What has happened since then to the culture of writing in Israel? We know that many of our students who enter institutions of higher education have difficulty writing, and some enter with writer's block. Is it because of the failure of the school system (large classes, discipline problems, matriculation exams, poor planning, too many subjects, poor teaching)? Is it the conditions of life today: technology, Internet, TV, many more activities and distractions?

We do know that higher education in Israel no longer belongs to the privileged few. More students come from non-academic backgrounds. Members of the Ethiopian and Bedouin communities come from oral-aural cultures where writing played no part. Students with learning differences are accepted into colleges and universities. In addition, for some students, Hebrew is a third or

fourth language, and English (which is a requirement for the Bachelors' degree) may be a fourth or fifth language.

It is true that professors throughout the ages have always complained that some of their students do not know how to write properly. But today's concern seems more acute, both about students writing in their native language, Hebrew, and certainly about their writing skills in English. Those of us who have worked with such students, whether at the beginning of their college career or at the post-graduate level, have long realized that those entering higher education are in need of professional guidance in order to cope with their writing tasks.

BEN-GURION AND THE PREPARATORY PROGRAMS (THE "MECHINOT")

The realization that some students needed additional support in order to succeed in higher education came from our first prime-minister, David Ben-Gurion. One of his dreams was to integrate the many non-Western immigrants into Israeli society as equal citizens. They, too, should have a chance in higher education, he believed. In order to do this, these students, who did not have the advantages of a European education or the educational background of their peers, needed extra preparation and support before they could enter the university. For this purpose, the first preparatory program was established at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. It was probably the first place in Israel where academic writing in Hebrew was taught. The Saltiel Center for Pre-Academic Studies continues to flourish to this day, as do many other preparatory programs throughout the country.

Among the required courses during this preparatory year, all students in the program take a course called "Scientific Writing." Depending on their level, students study writing four, six, or eight hours a week. The present student population is somewhat different from the original group of students in 1968. It consists both of very strong students who are interested in improving their matriculation grades so they can enter prestigious departments such as medicine, law, or psychology, and very weak students, some of whom come from an oral culture where they were never expected to write at all.

Some students at the Center know how to write, but not academically; some lack worldly knowledge. For some, it is an embarrassment to take writing courses in Hebrew, which is their mother tongue. The influence of culture on writing is also very strong. For example, it is very difficult for Arab students to write summaries without injecting an interpretation of their own.

In all courses, the connection between reading academic texts and academic writing is stressed, as the need is felt for students to broaden and deepen their knowledge before they begin to write. Organization strategies and thinking skills are taught. Students then study text types and the hierarchy structure within texts, and practice writing summaries. Before they write definitions of their own, they analyze different types of definition within texts. They must learn to give ideas their exact designation. Finally, they work on the development of their own ideas through paragraph structure and organization of larger texts. Later in the course, the use of sources is covered. As a final project, students from the higher levels in all divisions and all social science students are required to write a paper of about 3,000 words.

ADDITIONAL HEBREW WRITING PROGRAMS

Many colleges in Israel offer academic degrees today, and in so doing have attempted to develop academic writing programs in both Hebrew and English. Students preparing to become teachers are expected to do both conventional, academic writing and reflective writing within the framework of the academy. They are often confused when suddenly encouraged to express their own ideas and feelings and use the first person singular. They see the academic context and expectations of essay writing established within the wider institution as inhibiting their ability and willingness to reflect in writing (Zuckermann, 2007). In addition to these two different aspects of academic writing, future teachers must prepare themselves to teach their own pupils how to write. Even native speakers of a language may find these requirements formidable. For teachers college students who may be writing in a language that is not their mother tongue, the task is many times more difficult.

A varied number of programs have been developed in the teachers colleges. Some programs are similar to the skills-based program described in the university preparatory program above. Others, like the David Yellin College in Jerusalem, have developed experimental programs where students in each department of the college are required to take an introductory course in their discipline during their first year of studies. This course includes a unit on academic writing in that discipline, a kind of combination of WAC (Writing across the Curriculum) and WID (Writing in the Disciplines).

In another institution, the Kibbutzim College, a writing center has been successfully established in place of the Hebrew academic writing courses. As far as we know, this is the only fully-developed writing center in Israel in spite of many attempts to establish such a center in the universities. The SAL'OR Writ-

ing Center is one section of the three-tier complex of the alternative learning centers at Kibbutzim College. These are all housed together in one building, which contains a concentration of library activities and a counseling center. It is hoped that students will learn to use the facilities of the center as an aid in their academic work. SAL'OR and the other two centers in the building are part of the trend of "alternative learning" or mentoring systems for academic activities.

The first academic writing program at Kibbutzim College was a one-semester course for all students, which did not seem to be meeting the goals of having students properly prepared to do the writing they were expected to do at the college. In 1995, all academic writing courses at the college were cancelled, and the staff was moved to the new SAL'OR center.

The center is open five full days a week. Sessions last one half hour each; study sessions are arranged ahead of time. Students come on a voluntary basis as frequently or infrequently as they like. Some come because they feel a technical need to complete an assignment; some are completely overwhelmed by their assignments and don't know where to begin; some are more knowledgeable and want specific guidance. Students do not receive academic credit for attending sessions; nor is there any grade assessment given at the center for the completion of assignments: the grade is given by the course instructor. However, both oral and written formative assessment is given to the students on the process of their writing, and there is detailed record-keeping of each student's progress. All the mentors are experienced lecturers at the college, with knowledge and some training in academic literacy as well as expertise in at least one other subject. They receive salaries from the original budget allotted to the semester courses in academic literacy that were cancelled.

About 10 percent of the students in the regular four-year program come to the center voluntarily. In addition, special sessions are arranged for students from different language and cultural backgrounds and those with learning disabilities and other difficulties. Students in the English department also receive tutoring in English academic writing.

The staff of the center works to ensure contact with other staff members of the college. Department heads and lecturers are consulted to coordinate specific needs and norms of writing in their disciplines. Sometimes mentors from the center are invited by lecturers to give workshops to groups of students or an entire class. Often, some of these students arrive at the center afterwards for individual help. The center has also given courses to other members of the college staff who are interested.

A special project was conducted with experienced teachers in the field who returned to the college to earn a BEd or upgrade their education in some other way. Many of them felt overwhelmed by the many writing assignments they

received at the college. A combination of group mentoring and one-to-one tutoring was used. By the end of the course, most participants had become more confident about their writing and were very enthusiastic about the work at the center.

Colleges other than teachers colleges have also developed writing programs in recent years. In some cases, it has been difficult to obtain administrative support for these programs. In other cases, administrators have come to realize the importance of helping students professionally in their writing tasks and those they will face after leaving the academy.

THE WOLFSON PROJECT—ACADEMIC WRITING IN ENGLISH

In the early days of the State, students had to write seminar papers and theses, but mostly in Hebrew. Later students were being asked to publish in English for international journals during their graduate studies, especially in the sciences. The students, however, wrote only in Hebrew. As there were no courses in academic writing, PhD advisors were expected to teach their students how to write in English, how to publish, and how to enter the international scientific community.

We know of two courses in English composition, one at the Hebrew University, and the second at Tel-Aviv University (TAU). The Hebrew University course was taught gratis and served only faculty members, not students. The TAU course was funded directly from the Rector's office and served a handful of PhD students and some faculty members. Both of these courses were taught by teachers with no writing instruction background or experience and with little or no theoretical framework.

There were also composition courses in the English literature departments, but only for literature students whose native language, on the whole, was English. In the early 1980s, a "bridge course" was designed at TAU, the purpose of which was to help Israeli students improve their writing in English and eventually be accepted into the English Literature Department. This course ran for years and was actually one of the first English academic writing courses for foreign language students in Israel, but it served only literature and some linguistic students. Other Israelis who wished to publish in international journals generally hired English-speaking immigrants to translate and/or edit their work, a grueling but profitable task for the lucky British, Americans, or South Africans.

Soon after the establishment of the State, the teaching of English for Academic Purposes became an established field. However, the focus was primarily

on reading comprehension. By this time, there were more books imported from abroad available, and although courses were taught in Hebrew, students had to cope with bibliographies and textbooks that were written in English. The universities reluctantly took on some of the responsibility for helping students do so, but the dominant attitude was that students who couldn't cope with their reading assignments in English did not belong in the university. As to writing, it was assumed that if students could read in English, they could also write in English. Indeed, if people were studying at universities, they certainly knew how to write in Hebrew, the national language, and therefore, they could do so in English.

These were the dominant attitudes for many years by those who made pedagogical decisions. Then in 1986, the Wolfson Family Charitable Trust, which had previously given financial support in the sciences to institutions of higher education in Israel, approached the University Teachers of English Language in Israel (UTELI) and offered to sponsor a pilot project to teach Israeli PhD students to improve their writing in English. It seemed to the sponsors that Israeli academics were losing ground in the international scientific community.

In its earliest stage, the Wolfson Project consisted of three selected writing instructors who were to design their own syllabi and create their own instructional materials, with guidance from the project coordinator. The courses were originally designed for PhD and post-doctoral students, since undergraduate courses in Israel are taught in Hebrew. The major aim was to prepare students to write research papers and minimally to make conference presentations. The original project was extended to all the universities in Israel, following which most academic institutions agreed to support the teaching of writing in English and eventually to take over the financial support. Thus, the first generation of organized English academic writing courses in Israel was born.

The program was based, above all, on the principle of authenticity. Students used real data, no matter the discipline, in the main writing tasks they did. They wrote authentic abstracts for conferences and/or articles; grant proposals; parts of their thesis; book chapters; experimental research reports; conference papers; review articles; even academic correspondence . . . and CVs. Most courses were geared either to the biological sciences, exact sciences, humanities, or social sciences, but some were mixed. Although the graduate students in the project had to produce real-world texts, the process approach was used and criteria were developed for assessment and evaluation without using grades. The project coordinator and participating teachers insisted on individual student conferences and maintaining contact with subject specialists/PhD advisors. However, many university administrators were not willing to accept conferences as an integral part of the course syllabus, an issue of contention that remains.

Today's practices, based on the original Wolfson Project, reflect the development of academic writing research in the twenty-first century and vary somewhat in the different institutions throughout Israel. In general, although class size is no longer limited to twelve students, emphasis is still placed on one-to-one student-teacher conferences/tutorials and e-mail. E-learning and virtual courses have been developed. Today, program evaluation is more systematized and performed both during the courses and after they end. In addition to instructor assessment, peer review is encouraged, and criteria for judging written work are developed by both students and instructors. There is more refined emphasis on audience: readership of journals, members of academic committees, conference organizing committees, journal editors, etc. Students may choose their own scientific articles in their specific fields of research to be used as model texts. Many more genres are dealt with (e.g., grant proposals, thesis chapters, conference presentations, e-mail, letters to journal editors, CV writing, use of PowerPoint). Since conference presentations also involve oral presentation skills, students may participate in mini-conferences where they practice with PowerPoint and videos. Emphasis is placed on authentic texts based on actual data which students are intending to publish and on content-based courses with actual tasks students are required to complete for their subject courses. There is better contact with subject specialists, student advisors, and university administrators.

DEVELOPMENTS FROM 1990 TO THE PRESENT

Today there is greater recognition of the need for writing courses in Hebrew, as well as in English, throughout Israel. Composition courses for Arabic speakers writing in Arabic seem to be at a minimum, however. The attitude of administrators, including those in Arab colleges, seems to be that students will need to write in Hebrew in order to get along in Israeli society, and in English in order to publish internationally; so why waste precious resources on teaching Arab composition? In the Arab Institute of Beit Berl Academic College of Education, whereas Arabic as a first language is scheduled for up to six hours a week for all three-year BEd students, the emphasis is on reading comprehension, not writing. It will probably take a few more years to convince the policy makers that writing in the mother tongue is a necessary prerequisite to writing in other languages.

As far as Hebrew writing goes, the necessity for more concentrated instruction seems to have filtered down into the K-12 school system. Previously, writing was not mandated to be taught by the Ministry of Education until the eleventh

or twelfth grade. Creative writing was not included in the official curriculum at all. Of course there were some teachers who provided opportunities for written expression even in the elementary grades, but nothing was mandated officially.

Beginning in 2010, pupils in the seventh and eighth grades are given a subject called “Ivrit” (Hebrew) six hours a week, instead of the old language and written and oral expression courses which were taught two to three hours a week altogether. In our opinion, this is a positive development, showing an increased awareness of the need for developing writing skills as early as possible. There is still a long way to go, but this is a beginning, and we hope that our efforts on the tertiary level will eventually influence the elementary grades.

In regard to activity in Hebrew on the tertiary level, since 2007 freshmen in the humanities division of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem are required to take a course called “Introduction to Hebrew Composition.” In the Master’s Degree Program of the Hebrew University Nursing School of Hadassah Hospital, a Hebrew writing course has been operating since 2008. Other departments of the university, mainly in the social sciences, require some writing instruction. Many instructors help their students step-by-step in producing a project or a research paper, for instance.

The Rothberg School for International Students of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem offers a one-year preparatory program for non-native Israeli students. Since 2000, students in the two upper levels of their mandated Hebrew language courses are required to take a one-semester course in academic writing in conjunction with their mandatory history course. Because students are required to write a paper as a final project in history, they are motivated to learn the skills necessary for such an endeavor. The instructors in the academic writing courses are the history teachers who have been trained especially for this purpose.

Students in the lower levels of the Hebrew language courses also study history, but in their native languages. In 2006, academic writing was introduced as an accompaniment to the history course in these languages: Russian, Arabic, French, Spanish, or English, and taught by former immigrant instructors, PhD or post-doctoral students from the country of their origin. The final history paper is written in the language of the course. During the second semester, all students are required to write a paper in their field of specialty in Hebrew as well, and if they continue on in the Hebrew University in the humanities division, they will also take an academic writing course in Hebrew.

There are still some negative attitudes toward writing courses in Hebrew, as exemplified by one of the deans of Ben-Gurion University during our mapping project. When one of our members, a faculty member of the university, approached the dean in an attempt to find out what writing courses are given and in what languages, he answered, “Of course only in English. We do want

to encourage our students to do research and to publish internationally. Why would they need to write in Hebrew?”

There are courses in English composition and academic writing in English departments in colleges and universities throughout Israel, but because of budgetary cuts, some programs are becoming smaller. Today there is also some writing done in many EAP courses that have traditionally covered reading comprehension exclusively.

RECENT INNOVATIONS

Among recent innovations in various programs are the Technical Writing Course for the MSc in Engineering developed by Bella Rubin, and the Technical Writing Course for the PhD in Engineering developed by Prof. Reuven Boxman, both at Tel Aviv University; courses for biology students at the Weizman Research Institute taught by a PhD in biology who has also become an expert in academic writing, and a writing course for chemistry students at Weizman taught by a lecturer with a PhD in linguistics. At Haifa University, in an attempt to bridge the gap between the fields of composition studies and of EAP or EFL, an applied linguist, Dr. Hadara Perpignan, was recruited to guide the teaching of writing about literature to Arabic- and Hebrew-speaking English majors. At Bar Ilan, in addition to the PhD program, all masters degree students who do not show exemption mastery are required to take academic writing courses in English.

At the Technion, beginning in 2010, the Graduate School Dean has extended the PhD academic writing program to the master's level as well. This course is still an elective as students have to fulfill graduate English reading comprehension proficiency requirements as a prerequisite to the advanced course. For PhD students, the one-semester Academic Writing Course is a requirement as before. There is also a high level, undergraduate writing course titled Communication in English for Scientists and Engineers. This is an elective that focuses on both writing and presentation skills. It grew out of the specific request by the high-tech industry to offer a course at the Technion that would provide graduates with the skills they will need when they enter the professional world.

Since 2000, two graduate-level writing courses were offered by the Dept. of EFL at Ben-Gurion University at its two campuses in Beer-Sheva and Sde-Boqer. Students at Sde-Boqer—both Israeli (Jews and Arabs) and international (from Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Jordan) —study all their courses in English. Both academic writing courses were opened as a result of specific requests by the Faculty of Science and the Jacob Blaustein Institute for Desert Re-

search/Albert Katz International School for Desert Studies. Both courses were, in fact, open to all graduate students at BGU, regardless of faculty of study. In practice, most of the students came from the faculties of technology and social sciences in addition to the natural sciences, and rarely from humanities. There is also an undergraduate writing elective for business administration students, and the School of Business Administration is eager to train students in professional writing from early on. Unfortunately, because of budgetary cuts, the graduate course on the Beer Sheva campus did not open in 2010.

The administration of the Herzliya Interdisciplinary Center, a private institution which opened in 1994, has always paid serious attention to writing skills. Professor Reichman, the dean, expects law school graduates, for instance, to be able to write “decent and intelligible” formal legal letters and case notes (briefs), as well as mini-contracts, short wills, and a research paper, so that students can learn to utilize the language of law in English fully. Similarly, at the other Herzliya programs, the administration has supported programs in academic writing.

At the Ruppin Academic Center, Business English is a compulsory, semester (28-hour) course for undergraduate students of business administration in their third year of studies. It is also offered as an optional course for second- and third-year students of economics. The course was designed following consultation with the heads of the Departments of Business Administration and Economics. In accordance with their requirements, emphasis is placed on writing skills in general, and on written commercial correspondence in particular. The course is organized around two main threads, one relating to text types and the other relating to business content. With regard to major text types, students learn memos, formal letters, and e-mails, and practice these texts extensively. A wide range of genres that are most prevalent in the business world defines the content of the students’ writing. These include cover letters, requests and enquiries, notifying and informing, making and addressing complaints, organizing business trips, etc. Course requirements include participation in classroom and homework activities, a portfolio including drafts, final products, and reflection, a mid-term exam and a final exam. All course content and activities are on the e-learning platform, Moodle. Student feedback has revealed that the vast majority of participants believe that the course sets them in good stead for their future business careers.

RESPONDING TO BUDGETARY CHALLENGES

Private efforts have also pioneered new directions in business writing and writing for the high-tech sector. There is increased awareness that beyond the academy, students will need these skills.

Because of the present budgetary situation confronting all institutions of higher education in Israel, many official writing programs have been curtailed. In view of this situation and the continuing needs of the students, the present head of the EAP department of Hebrew University has initiated some voluntary activities. Her first step was to train all the instructors in the department to become writing instructors. She has developed a mini-library in the staff room with relevant journal articles and books, etc. She has initiated a series of workshops on teaching writing given by people with varied experience in the field. She has started a journal club in which teachers of the department, even those with no prior experience in the teaching of writing, are asked to present material from current journals on teaching writing. In addition, in order to get a feel for the needs of the students, teachers of the department give tutorials on a voluntary basis to PhD students in the social sciences.

Besides the individual tutorials, workshops in writing are available for interested students, during which both faculty members and peers have helped the students revise their work. In addition, two courses in writing are currently being taught by the EAP teachers.

The department has presented a proposal to the administration of the university to establish a formal writing center with the following possibilities for students: (a) workshops, (b) individual tutorials, (c) courses in specific kinds of writing, and (d) supervised group work experience in which a guide would work with the group, and the students would work together.

Table 2. A Sampling of Academic Writing Instruction Opportunities in Israel

Academic Writing in English

PhD + Faculty	Early days	Hebrew University	English composition
		Tel Aviv University	Academic Writing
BA	1980s until today	TAU and other universities	EFL Writing course for English majors only
PhD	From 1986 to the present	All major universities	Academic writing courses and teacher training in the teaching of writing established by the Wolfson Family Charitable Trust
MA	The 1980s to the present	Bar-Ilan University	1-3 semesters Academic writing for all non-exempt MA candidates
BA	1994	IDC—Interdisciplinary Center of Herzliya	Strong emphasis on writing for legal purposes in English for law students

BSc	From 2000	Technion—Israel Institute of Technology	Elective course in writing and presentation skills: “Communication in English for scientists and engineers”
MA/PhD	The late 1990s until today	Weizman Institute	Scientific writing courses taught by a teacher with a PhD in biology, as well as by teachers with linguistic training
Graduate and undergraduate students	From 2000	Ben-Gurion University	Writing courses in EFL for students whose main program is Hebrew and courses for Israelis and international students, whose main program is taught in English; Elective course in writing for business administration students
BA	2002-2006	University of Haifa	Addition of an applied linguistics component to the teaching of writing to English literature majors
MSc	2004	Tel Aviv University	Technical Writing course for engineering students
PhD and all other interested students	From 2008	Hebrew University EAP Department	Alternatives to writing courses sought in order to fill the gap created by budgetary cuts: workshops, tutorials
PhD	From 2008	Tel Aviv University	Required Academic Writing course for students at the Porter School of Environmental Studies
MA	2009	TechnionIsrael Institute of Technology	One semester elective in academic writing
BA		Ruppim Academy	Required Business English course with strong emphasis on writing for Business administration students using the e-learning platform Moodle for writing; Elective for Economics students

Academic Writing in Hebrew

Level	Approximate Date	Institution(s)	Description of program
Pre-academic	From 1968 until today	Center for Pre-Academic Studies, Hebrew University of Jerusalem	“Scientific Writing”—first Hebrew academic writing program in Israel
B.Ed	Early 1990s until today	Academic Teachers’ Colleges	One or two semester skills-based writing courses

B.Ed and up- grading teach- ing certificate	From 1995	Hakibbutzim Academic Teachers College	Cancellation of required writing courses: establishment of Sal'Or Writing Center Special group mentoring and one-to-one tutoring project and tailor-made courses for students and staff
B.Ed	From 1996	David Yellin Academic College of Education	Experimental writing programs, at first called "A Drop in the Sea," combining WAC and WID
Preparatory Program— Pre-Academic	From 2000	Rothberg Internation- al School—Hebrew University	Two-hour one semester course taught by the history instructors in conjunction with the history course to students in higher He- brew language levels
BA-incoming students	From 2007	Hebrew University Faculty of Humanities	Introduction to Hebrew composition
Master's De- gree Students	From 2008	Hebrew University Hadassah Nursing School	Writing course for nurses

Academic Writing in Other Languages

BA	From 2006	Rothberg Internation- al School—He- brew University of Jerusalem	Academic writing taught in the language of the immigrant stu- dent: courses in Russian, English, Arabic, Spanish, French, etc.
BA and above		Hebrew University German Department; Department of Ro- mance Languages	Academic writing taught in ad- vanced German language courses; Academic writing taught as one element in Spanish, French, and Italian language courses

IFAW AND BEYOND, INCLUDING OUR FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Inspired by the symposium at the 2007 EATAW conference, "Historical Roots of National Writing Cultures," we decided to establish an organization for people engaged in academic writing instruction. Its purpose was to share resources and insights and ultimately provide the best possible writing instruction for Israel's wide variety of students. We were encouraged by the fact that our first meeting at Tel Aviv University in November, 2007, was attended by about forty people from colleges and universities throughout Israel involved

in both English and Hebrew academic writing. It was decided at that meeting to meet several times a year face-to-face and to communicate by email as well. Since then, our organization has grown—we now have over 150 members on our mailing list. We have succeeded in establishing a communication network and made connections among people in our field. We have had five face-to-face meetings during each of the first two years of the organization—in 2010, we held only four as we had many more activities in preparation for our international conference in July. At our meetings, we have had workshops, visiting lecturers, research presentations, practical applications, and discussions, addressing such issues as responding to and assessing student writing, the use of technology in the teaching of writing, and how to gain administrative support for our programs. Members from all over the country, from colleges and universities, and from Hebrew, English, and German departments have attended. We have found a home for our organization, MOFET, the Institute of Research, Curriculum and Program Development for Teacher Education, an already existing and respected institution.

The first international conference on academic writing in Israel, “Academic Writing and Beyond in Multicultural Societies,” took place at the MOFET Institute in Tel-Aviv on July 28 and 29, 2010. Some 200 participants, from the US, Canada, the UK, Germany, Switzerland, Hungary, China, Russia, Italy, Turkey, and Cyprus, as well as from Israel attended the conference. One hundred twenty presentations were given in Hebrew and English and included panel discussions, workshops, and individual papers. Keynote speakers were John Harbord of the Central European University in Hungary, Chris Anson of North Carolina State University, Otto Kruse of the Zurich University of Applied Sciences, and Deborah Holdstein of Columbia College, Chicago. Topics covered included the development of writing centers, writing in the disciplines, writing across the curriculum, how to deal with plagiarism, bridging the gap between high school writing and writing in the university, the use of technology in teaching academic writing, giving feedback, and the connection between creativity and academic writing. For this first conference in Israel, we wanted to appeal to as wide an audience as possible. The conference succeeded in connecting us with like-minded educators throughout the world, and we hope that it widened the horizons of those of us engaged in the teaching and research of academic writing in Israel.

We hope that the conference will advance the goals of our organization. We have not yet succeeded in locating all the existing programs in academic writing in Israel. Nor have we arranged to publish a journal or set up a permanent internet site, both of which are included in our long term goals. We would also

like to initiate a national writing project in Israel together with the Ministry of Education and the Council for Higher Education. To the best of our knowledge, there has never been such a project, either for Hebrew or English or Arabic writing. Even at the universities, there has very rarely been central funding directly from the Rector's office. The trend has been to have individual faculties or departments (e.g., Humanities, Engineering) support writing courses in L1 or L2.

What we would like to see in all our institutions is a combination of writing courses, writing centers, and writing taught by all instructors according to the needs of their disciplines. Writing centers, such as the one at Kibbutzim College, are ideal, in that they meet the needs of the students as they perceive them, but if they meet the needs of only 10 per cent of the student body, what about the other 90 per cent? Similarly, setting standards in academic writing in the various languages we teach is important, but we must guard against standardization. Each group of students is different, and each institution should develop its own program.

Although the people of Israel are known as “the people of the Book,” and although many books and journal articles are published in Israel each year, we know that supporting student writers at all levels of study is still a pedagogical imperative. Beyond the academy, in today's world of research and globalization, writing skills are a necessity for all who wish to advance professionally. In the modern State of Israel, where academic writing is no longer the prerogative of the privileged few, we make it our purpose, by drawing on Israel's ancient roots, to empower all of its citizens to become fully accomplished people of the book.⁵

NOTES

1. Unfortunately, our dear friend and colleague, Hadara Perpignan, passed away on December 25, 2010, after a difficult illness. Hadara was senior lecturer in the department of English as a Foreign Language at Bar-Ilan University (Israel), where she taught writing for academic purposes to doctoral candidates. She developed writing programs at Bar-Ilan University and the University of Haifa, as well as at the Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Her research centered on teacher-written feedback to student writing, affective and social outcomes of writing instruction, and genre analysis of literary criticism. Hadara was an active member of our team in researching and writing this article, and we would like to dedicate it to her memory.

2. Retrieved from <http://www.bethlehem.edu/about/history/shtml>

3. Retrieved from <http://www.medea.be/?page=28> and <http://en.wikipedia.org/wik>

4. Sources for the life and influence of Ben-Yehuda include Bein, 1971; Cooper-Weill, 1998; Fellman, 1998; Lang, 2008; St. John, 1952; Weisgal, 1944, and Weizmann, 1949.
5. We wish to thank our colleagues at a range of Israeli institutions, among them Susan Holzman, Sharon Hirsch, Sara Hauptman, Yochi Wolfensberger; Ruwaida Aburass, Monica Broido, Michal Schleifer, Ilana Shilo, Dana Taube, Ruth Burstein, Elana Spector Cohen, Ziona Snir, and Tamar Weyl, for their input on this chapter.

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