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ARABIC INSTRUCTION IN JEWISH SCHOOLS
AND IN UNIVERSITIES IN ISRAEL:
CONTRADICTIONS, SUBVERSION,
AND THE POLITICS OF PEDAGOGY

Teaching is never merely a technical, pedagogical issue. This is especially true of Arabic teaching in Israel. Two related factors have conditioned the evolution of Arabic instruction in Israel in various, often contradictory ways. One is the Zionist modernist project of inventing a Jewish nation by bracketing off Jews from gentiles and reconstituting them as a distinct Hebraic ethno-linguistic community. The other is the project of securing historic Palestine as an exclusive national homeland for this newly invented nation and the consequent ambivalence toward Arab existence in historic Palestine.¹ Both make up what I term Zionist sectarianism, and their influence on Arabic pedagogy has been decisive and pervasive, yet contradictory and unpredictable, demonstrating that although practice is always political, it is never mechanically reducible to its political underpinnings.

The Israeli public school system is divided into different streams with separate administrations within the Ministry of Education. The most elementary division is between the Hebrew-language streams, which cater predominantly to Israel's dominant Jewish population, and the Arabic-language streams, which cater to Israel's Palestinian citizens and residents.² Israel's tertiary education system is tiered, with universities forming the top tier, and colleges—mostly teacher colleges—forming the second tier. The universities and most colleges teach in Hebrew, while a few teacher colleges that specialize in training Arab teachers for the Arab school sector carry out instruction in Arabic.³

This paper focuses on the teaching of Arabic in the mainstream Jewish educational trajectory, that is, in Hebrew (i.e., Jewish) state schools, and in the academic system, especially universities, where Jewish and Arab educational trajectories typically overlap. English teaching is used as a comparative backdrop to help highlight pedagogical choices in Arabic instruction. After identifying some differences in the ways English and Arabic are taught in Israel, the notion of cultural capital is used to outline the systemic significance of these differences. I then rely on Bourdieu's conceptualization of "field" to explain the systemic logic of Arabic instruction in Jewish schools. This

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analytic approach aims not only to describe the way the field works but also to account for the intractability of some of its features and the way the complex realities of the field impose themselves on participants in the field thereby determining the range and limits of stakeholders' possible action.

This paper is the culmination of a long process, moving from observant participation in Israel's mainstream educational trajectory (as a student) to participant observation (as an anthropologist engaged in formal research). Although not an auto-ethnography by any means, my personal experience in the 1970s and 1980s as a high school student majoring in Arabic, and subsequently as a student at Tel Aviv University, has been critical to this study. It shaped my general sense of the field and left me with an enduring sense of frustration at the missed opportunity to master the Arabic language. This frustration has been an important motivation to pursue the current research.

The formal research that informs this paper includes two periods of research in Israel. From 2004 to 2005 I spent twenty months in Jerusalem, affiliated with the Hebrew University. During that period I interviewed inspectors and leading bureaucrats at the Ministry of Education, academics teaching Arabic at both universities and teacher colleges, Arabic and English teachers at Jewish schools, and both Arab and Jewish university students. I also consulted and analyzed curricular material and textbooks, attended a national conference of Arabic teachers at Haifa University, and observed Arabic classes in schools and universities. In 2007 I spent a semester at Haifa University, during which I observed Arabic-grammar classes in various institutions and interviewed additional academics, university students, and Arabic schoolteachers. In addition, I interviewed people involved in military Arabic instruction, Arab intellectuals and educators, and pupils, parents, and principals in both the Jewish and Arab school streams.

The research for this paper blurred not only the lines between participant and researcher but also the lines among data collection, analysis, and dissemination, as well as the distinction between research subjects and intellectual community. As a consequence, informal conversations and formal paper presentations in academic circles served to subject my thoughts to the critique of research subjects and were no less revealing than formal interviews and ethnographic observations. In what follows I have taken particular care to protect the identity of my informants while allowing the reader enough detail to evaluate particular informants' position in the field.

LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION IN ISRAEL—ENGLISH VERSUS ARABIC

Pedagogical choices in equivalent conjunctures in the teaching of English and Arabic as foreign languages can serve to highlight both underlying ideological processes and powerful constraints on language pedagogy. Although English is taught as a living second language in Israel, Arabic is Latinized. It is generally taught in the Hebrew sector as if it were a textually bound, dead language, one to be decoded and interpreted rather than creatively used for communicative purposes.

Thus, Arabic classes are taught in Hebrew. In fact, most of the schoolteachers of Arabic in the Jewish sector, and a substantial number of university lecturers in Arabic, are not sufficiently proficient to teach Arabic classes in Arabic.⁴ By contrast, schoolteachers and university lecturers of English are usually fluent speakers of English, many are native

speakers, and teaching is generally conducted in English. In many schools, English teachers have a policy of speaking only English with students, even outside of class, although this is by no means universal.⁵

Arabic instruction is focused on Modern Standard Arabic for reasons that will be discussed. This is not an aspect of the Latinization I am discussing here. Unlike Latin, Standard Arabic is a living linguistic register, the proficient mastery of which requires the full set of linguistic skills, both receptive and creative. My point is rather that the pedagogical approach to teaching Standard Arabic that is, in fact, adopted neglects creative participatory skills in favor of nonparticipatory receptivity and decoding. This is facilitated by the way Arabic's diglossia is often interpreted sociolinguistically.⁶ It is easy to slip into the misconception of Standard Arabic as a purely textual language and ascribe its Latinization to its linguistic nature. But the notion of Standard Arabic as the language of reading and writing and colloquial Arabic as the language of speech is misleading for two reasons. First, writing and reading are integral living aspects of the linguistic lives of contemporary Arabic speakers. Second, neither the registers nor their contextual use are clearly demarcated in practice. Modern Standard Arabic is used throughout the Arab world in speech in many living contexts, and likewise, colloquial Arabic is integrated into many texts for various reasons. In fact, all linguistic events draw to some extent on both registers even in the minimal situation when only one register is used. For instance, in a literary text or a speech delivered entirely in Standard Arabic the distance between chosen turns of phrase and their colloquial equivalents are crucial in making expressions highfalutin and arcane or straightforward and plain. Ultimately, a full proficiency in Arabic is predicated not only on the mastery of both registers (or rather, both families of registers) but also on their integration.⁷ As will become more clear, diglossia is merely a partial alibi for Latinization—not its cause.

English classes emphasize creative usage and cultural competency through such assignments as compositions and conversational exercises in order to develop and enhance the capacity of pupils to express themselves in the language. By comparison, both instruction and matriculation examinations in Arabic emphasize passive understanding and overvalue grammatical skills such as the conjugation of verbs and desinential inflection while undervaluing the capacity to construct meaningful sentences and express ideas.⁸

This duality carries into university instruction too. A comparison of departments of English language and literature with departments of Arabic language and literature is revealing. Nominally, both sets of departments assume that the students have largely mastered the target language before enrolment. However, advanced English instruction at university assumes a much higher level of mastery than does advanced Arabic instruction. Students report that the amount of reading, writing, and spoken presentation required of Arabic students is substantially less than that required of English students in the respective departments.

This state of affairs is remarkable, given Israel's linguistic demography. More Israeli citizens and residents speak Arabic than English—mostly Palestinian Arabs but also autochthonous and immigrant Jews from the Arab world.⁹ There is therefore a large enough pool of potential teachers who are proficient in Arabic and who can sustain the instruction of Arabic as a living language. Moreover, university standards for Arabic proficiency need not be less than for English. The number of Israelis whose mother

tongue is Arabic and who could sustain an Arabic-saturated university program is greater than those whose mother tongue is English. But crucially, the former are predominantly non-Jewish Arabs, and the latter are predominantly Jews.

In addition to the curricular choices, the different value attached to the two foreign languages is made clear by the extent of their instruction as students progress through the school system. At Hebrew schools, English is taught as a compulsory subject from primary school, normally third grade. It is usually only at seventh grade that Arabic is introduced into Jewish schools, when pupils are given the choice between Arabic and French as a second foreign language. English is a compulsory subject for matriculation and is taught at a level equivalent to a major or near major at those high schools that follow the matriculation curriculum.¹⁰ By contrast, the second foreign language is typically taught from seventh to only ninth or tenth grade. It is not, at least in practice, a required matriculation subject, though it is available for matriculation both as a major and as an elective.

School practices further reflect the stark difference between the value of English and Arabic instruction. Schools invest considerably in maintaining and supporting immigrant English-speaking students' native knowledge. Many schools run special classes for English speakers or, at the very least, support English speakers with special assignments. By contrast, knowledge of Arabic from home meets with no support in Jewish schools.¹¹

In brief, there is a marked difference in the standards and approach to language and its pedagogy between English instruction and Arabic instruction. English is prioritized in the allocation of curricular and instructional resources, intensely promoted, and taught as a vibrant, vital skill. By contrast, Arabic is of greatly reduced urgency and is inculcated as a set of passive, receptive skills rather than a crucial communicational asset. This difference runs through all levels of instruction in the Jewish sector and at universities in Israel.

LANGUAGE AS CULTURAL CAPITAL

Language proficiency is an element of what Bourdieu has dubbed *cultural capital*, that is, knowledge, skills, and dispositions that are acquired through social interactions.¹² These are conceptualized as capital because they carry with them value, which is ultimately interchangeable with other forms of capital.

Pedagogical policy and practice carry profound implications for the differential valuations of literacy and fluency. In the case of Arabic in Israel, educational practice devalues native knowledge of the language while native fluency in English is highly valued. Moreover, university departments of Arabic language and literature carry out instruction primarily in Hebrew,¹³ thereby creating a strong overvaluation of Hebrew proficiency as against Arabic proficiency. In fact, the capacity to speak Hebrew and the capacity to write English are the two verifiable linguistic requirements for appointments and promotion within university departments of Arabic. Command of Arabic is neither essential nor regularly demonstrable because Arabic language and literature lecturers are not normally called upon to communicate in Arabic. There are no proficiency tests for graduates or faculty in university departments of Arabic nor for Arabic schoolteachers. Departmental business, seminars, and conferences are usually conducted in Hebrew and English. Although there is some variation depending on the preference and capacity of

the instructor, and on the student composition of the class, teaching of Arabic classes is conducted overwhelmingly in Hebrew. I have observed instructors employing slow and simple Standard Arabic interspersed with Hebrew summaries and other situations of formal speech in an intermediate register that combines colloquial and Standard Arabic. In one instance, Jewish students in a mixed (Jewish and Arab) class protested as a group against the instructor's adoption of Standard Arabic for instruction and succeeded in restoring instruction to Hebrew. Such sporadic exceptions notwithstanding, Arabic use in instruction remains rare and mostly confined to instructors whose native tongue is Arabic.¹⁴

In this way not only is the native knowledge of Arabs devalued but so also is the diasporic knowledge of Arab Jews¹⁵ in contrast with the equivalent diasporic knowledge of substantial groups of European Jews. This reflects two processes. One is that the global political economy of language is such that European languages, and English in particular, are highly valued. They are the international languages of commerce, technology, science, and power more generally.¹⁶ Thus, even though Arabic is nominally an official language, English has a greater currency than Arabic does. This strictly economic imperative is amplified by the segregation of Israeli society and by the work of bureaucracies with an exclusive Jewish outlook. The segregation of Israeli society is such that very few Jews have the opportunity to interact with Arabic speakers beyond superficial, laconic exchanges.¹⁷ The moment they operate outside the narrow confines of Arab society, Arabs, too, normally use Hebrew. The forces of the linguistic market are further reinforced by bureaucratic imperatives. In calculating university-entrance scores, universities add bonus points for preferred matriculation subjects such as English. Arabic attracts no bonus.¹⁸ This means that Arabic is of greatly reduced value as cultural capital, a vicarious measure of the marginalization of Arabs in the Jewish state.

The second process is the broader project of de-Arabizing Arab Jews. Core to this process is what Yasir Suleiman calls language subtraction.¹⁹ Suleiman suggests that the subtraction of Arabic was strongly motivated by the European outlook of the early Zionist elite, coupled with the existential conflict with Palestine's non-Jewish majority. But I believe language subtraction and cultural differentiation are even more fundamental than that, as demonstrated by the collapse of some other diasporic languages such as German. The urgency of language subtraction stems from the ideological void left by Zionism's radical secularism and its rejection of diasporic religiosity as a basis for national identity. The newly constituted Jewish nation was left without a positive definition or a shared, common identity. The reconstitution of Jewishness as a secular ethno-linguistic identity required the immediate establishment of Hebrew as the exclusive language in conjunction with secularization, modernization, and separation from both the gentile and the diasporic religious environments—hence the urgent and radical nature of the de-Arabization of autochthonous Middle Eastern Jews and hence the absence of any assimilation or “civilizing” interest in Palestinians.²⁰ De-Arabization has been further reinforced by some oppositional trends and moods in the Arab world that embrace Zionism's basic dichotomous distinction between Arab and Jew, all but eliminating the place of the Jewish Arab.²¹

The revaluation of cultural capital reproduces in the realm of linguistic proficiency the social structure and the hegemonic self-image—that is, the dominant vision of social division—of Israeli society. It is a Zionist self-image of a distinctly Western and modern,

Hebrew-speaking, Jewish, Israeli nation, an image that reduces Jewish Arabs and Israeli Palestinians to oxymorons.²²

THE FIELD OF ARABIC EDUCATIONAL POLICY AND PRACTICE

The prevailing social order greatly conditions the place of Arabic and the patterns of its instruction, but it does not determine these patterns. To account for the systemic nature of the seemingly fluctuating yet little changing practice of Arabic instruction I will incorporate Bourdieu's notion of field, a heuristic device aimed at identifying the specific dynamics that shape particular segments of social reality.²³ Being a relatively distinct area of practice, Arabic instruction lends itself to the application of the concept of field. Its beginning can be traced back to the period of autonomous Jewish schooling in Mandatory Palestine. In fact, most of the contours of the field had been established by the 1940s and have held relatively constant regardless of policy initiatives.²⁴

Spolsky and Shohamy's comprehensive review describes much of this reality without, however, accounting for its intractability. Although highlighting the major deficiencies in Arabic instruction, they do not account for the systemic compulsions and constraints that have shaped this field independently of the volition of any of the stakeholders and that have made such deficiencies intractable.²⁵

A definitive analysis of the field of Arabic instruction is well beyond the scope of this paper. Here I offer a general sketch in order to capture the dynamics that shape the field.

The Politics of Schooling

One originary trait of the field is the subversion of official policy at the local level of practice. For instance, there seems to have always been a general consensus among policymakers that Arabic should be made compulsory for Hebrew-speaking students and that Arabic is best taught at school in Arabic.²⁶ But no less remarkable than this ongoing consensus is its failure to materialize in practice. Such policies are repeatedly subverted at various levels. Thus a 1976 decision by a Knesset committee to make Arabic compulsory throughout high school was ignored, and then a 1988 policy decision by Minister of Education Yitzhak Navon to make Arabic universally compulsory from the seventh through the twelfth grades was not acted upon by his own ministry. When policy steps are, in fact, adopted by the ministry, they are subsequently subverted, or severely diluted, at the local level of schools.²⁷ Policymakers have so far been unwilling or unable to force the issue.

This state of affairs is remarkable given the impressive weight of the forces that push for the expansion of Arabic instruction. These have included academics, professionals involved in teaching Arabic, such as supervisors at the Ministry of Education and Arabic teachers, and some sympathetic ministers of education. In this they are allied with the very powerful security apparatus—most importantly, Military Intelligence—with its enormous resources and insatiable need for loyal, that is, Jewish, Arabic speakers.

The Intelligence Takeover of Arabic Instruction

Military Intelligence is probably the most powerful driving force in the promotion of Arabic instruction in Jewish schools. Military representatives have participated in virtually all commissions of inquiry into Arabic since the 1960s. The military is also

represented on the Arabic Language Subject Committee, which steers Arabic instruction within the Ministry of Education.²⁸

The rationale provided by Military Intelligence for the promotion of Arabic in schools is straightforward: Israel needs Jews who understand Arabic to help protect the Jewish state from the Arab threat and also to facilitate at the national level a strategic engagement with the peoples of the region. This need is particularly acute now that the generation of Jews who immigrated from Arabic-speaking countries is retiring or dying out and is not being replenished.

Military Intelligence is involved not only at the level of policymaking and implementation but also with the actual teaching of Arabic in Israeli schools. This involvement has taken various forms, including the creation in 1986 of *shif'at*, a unit within the Ministry of Education staffed by military personnel and headed by a senior intelligence officer, Nissim Atzmon, who had previously played a critical role in developing the military's in-house Arabic training apparatus. *Shif'at* was charged with improving and broadening Arabic instruction and also administered the national-testing scheme of Arabic at Jewish schools. Military Intelligence also provides special educational camps and intelligence paramilitary training to young cadets, puts suitable high school pupils in touch with intelligence units that seek to select future conscripts, and provides a whole array of speakers, teaching aids, and other material to support Arabic instruction. Promising pupils might be invited to summer camps and other activities of the *Gadna' Mizrahanim* (literally, Youth Brigades of Orientalists). Arabic instruction in school also includes such activities as excursions to the National Memorial for the Commemoration of the Fallen Members of the Intelligence Community and motivational talks by intelligence officers.²⁹ Military Intelligence also funds educational development and endorses instructional material such as textbooks and dictionaries that are used in schools. Furthermore, the military provides some schools, usually junior-high schools in peripheral towns, with conscripts who are trained to teach Arabic.³⁰

The open involvement of Military Intelligence in Arabic instruction in Jewish schools helps lift the status of the subject. Much of the informal curriculum, and a substantial part of the formal curriculum, revolves around preparing Jewish students for their impending military service. Building up the military significance of Arabic is thus a critical aspect of promoting a positive attitude among students toward the subject, lifting its prestige, and attracting academically successful students to it. Teachers, for their part, actively seek military involvement in their classes as an effective means of raising the motivation of Arabic students.

The formation of *shif'at* under Minister of Education Yitshak Navon marked the culmination of a takeover by Military Intelligence of Arabic instruction at the high school level.³¹ Arabic education in Jewish schools came under the effective direction of Military Intelligence in partnership with the Ministry of Education. The school and military Arabic curricula became coordinated into an integrated whole. But with all the efforts that Military Intelligence puts into promoting Arabic, the results remain unsatisfactory from an intelligence perspective.³² *Shif'at* was disbanded in 2001, and although Military Intelligence continues to dominate Arabic instruction at schools, there is a general sense that the intelligence community cannot rely on schools and will be obliged to continue training its recruits to make up the gap in their Arabic proficiency. The emergent symbiotic relationship is such that schools focus their teaching on passive comprehension of Modern Standard Arabic. Military Intelligence then uses this

knowledge base to further train its recruits in advanced Standard Arabic and colloquial Arabic.

The military thus becomes the major venue for postsecondary acquisition of proficiency through training, most effectively through active service, where Jews have the opportunity to use Arabic. With very few exceptions, Jews who have achieved a measure of command of Arabic within the Israeli education system are graduates of Military Intelligence Arabic training.

Odd Coalitions

The Israeli security apparatus is not alone in promoting Arabic instruction. It is the autonomous nature of the field that allows for contradictory social forces to come together, and, in this case, military efforts are reinforced by radical Israeli Arab political leaders who are greatly concerned about improving the status of Arabic in Jewish schools. In the report of the Knesset (Parliament) Education Committee investigation into the teaching of Arabic, Arab Communist member of Knesset Tawfiq Tubi outdid his colleagues by issuing a minority recommendation to effectively make the teaching of Arabic compulsory throughout the education system.³³ Other educational initiatives come from liberal Jewish and radical Arab-Jewish nongovernmental organizations that seek to promote coexistence, such as the Abraham Fund's attempt to reinstate colloquial Arabic instruction in primary schools (an early practice that dwindled over the years and was finally abandoned in the late 1980s), or Hand in Hand's recent initiation of private bilingual schools.³⁴

More remarkable than the constellation of forces that militates in favor of deepening and broadening the instruction of Arabic at schools is the fact that it has so far been singularly unsuccessful. Subversion from below restricts the breadth of Arabic instruction, while other players in the field (especially universities and teachers) restrict its depth.

Subversion from Below

Initiatives from above are thwarted from below by pupils, parents, and principals. The critical areas where decisions are subverted are the prioritization of resource allocation in schools and, more significantly, the local action of teaching staff and students. For their part, principals direct teaching resources (teaching time and budgets) to subjects that are tested at the matriculation level and away from non-examined subjects even in contravention of explicit policy. This is sometimes achieved by highly irregular means. At least one principal has gone so far as to hand out fictitious term grades to students after canceling the compulsory Arabic instruction at his schools. The supervisory staff at the Ministry of Education generally turn a blind eye to such practices, which were revealed to me by one of the inspectors at the Ministry of Education. The state comptroller reports on other techniques of reducing Arabic class sizes, including exempting weak students from Arabic classes so that they can focus on more central subjects.³⁵

The ministry's quiescence is a recognition of two main facts. One is that a full implementation of all official curricular policies is unrealistic given the resources available at the local level. Official policy is seen, at best, as a wish list or, at worst, as a cynical political statement for the record or for public consumption. The other fact is the limit

of the supervisory powers to confront a coalition of principals and parents. There is a diffuse concern that in such situations, being too dogmatic may end up in a political blowout. Moreover, there is a split within the ministry between those functionaries who are in charge of ensuring the smooth operation of schools—by making realistic compromises—and the subject inspectors who act as advocates for their own particular subjects. It is actually the negotiations between these two sets of midlevel functionaries that shape many of the pragmatic compromises.

The inability to formulate coherent policy, and to enforce existing policy, is often camouflaged by intentional vagueness and ambiguity in policy statements, leaving much scope for midlevel machinations. In 2003, for example, internal correspondence from the ministry to principals stated that a policy decision had been made to reiterate Arabic's compulsory status in Hebrew schools from the seventh through the tenth grades and to include a compulsory Arabic test in the matriculation examinations at the minimal level of one unit. These policies had been decided at the ministerial level but were progressively diluted down the rungs of the bureaucratic ladder all the way to the classroom. In most nonreligious, public Hebrew schools Arabic generally continues to be offered as an optional second foreign language between the seventh grade and the ninth grade and is often not offered at all in tenth grade.³⁶ There was never an enforcement of the compulsory inclusion of Arabic in the matriculation examinations. Indeed, it appears the policy decision has never been made public and was subsequently abandoned. In other words, effective policy—the policy of enforcement and provision of resources—failed to support the articulated policy of Arabic instruction, reflecting a deep level of indecision and ambiguity at the top echelons of the Ministry of Education.

For their part, parents and pupils generally support the principals' concentration of resources on "important" subjects. In fact, many pupils resort to additional means to avoid wasting energy on subjects that are not examined at the matriculation level. In the last three decades, many students have been taking advantage of a mushrooming private market in educational psychology, where one can effectively buy certified exemptions on the grounds of learning disability from the study of a second foreign language.

To further understand the motivations of parents and pupils, we must consider the political economy of foreign-language literacy and especially the previously discussed devaluation of Arabic as against the revaluation of English. The devaluation of Arabic and revaluation of English affect the way both are articulated to the personal and national interest. Learning English is motivated by personal interest, that is, by the benefits such knowledge bestows upon its bearer as an individual. It is taught in order to help pupils in their later years. A good mastery of English is a prerequisite for entry into university and is a highly valued skill in the labor market. It is deemed essential for professional, financial, and personal success.

Learning Arabic is not of personal value as such but rather of national (i.e., sectarian) significance. Its benefits lie not in immediate palpable personal gain but rather within the national interest, that is, the Zionist project. Maintaining a reservoir of Jews who can understand Arabic is deemed to serve this interest. Although majoring in Arabic may lead one to a lucrative career with the security apparatus or diplomatic service, it makes little utilitarian sense to study Arabic for any other reason.³⁷

This explains how social agents who share ideological dispositions may come to adopt contradictory positions in the field. Official policymakers, as guardians of the national

(i.e., sectarian) interest, are motivated by the existential conflict with and permanent suspicion of Arabs to strengthen Arabic instruction. The very same fear and loathing of Arabs leads parents, children, and principals who have little to gain from knowledge of Arabic to identify Arabic with Arabs and to consequently adopt contradictory strategies and practices and resist Arabic instruction emotionally, aesthetically, and practically.³⁸ One Jewish teacher of Arabic recounted how after a suicide attack in the center of Israel, she came into her tenth-grade classroom to find “Death to Arabs” written across the blackboard. This was not unusual. Several teachers and supervisors observed that the continuing conflict creates a mental block in some students toward Arabic in particular and Middle East studies in general.

These classroom hostilities toward Arabs and Arabic echo some broad contemporary political trends in Israel. Quite recently there have been numerous attempts, motivated by a blend of populist opportunism and sectarian chauvinism, to eliminate or reduce Arabic’s special status. These include legislative attempts to scrap the status of Arabic as an official language,³⁹ government regulation to eliminate Arabic place names from road signs,⁴⁰ and policy attempts to remove Arabic from the compulsory core of school instruction.⁴¹

This clash between different interests—all motivated in various ways by an underlying sectarian imperative—exemplifies that social and political practice is always mediated through a field of practice. The same sectarian outlook thus produces mutually antagonistic positions toward Arabic instruction. Similarly, opposed imperatives that are embodied on the one hand by the security establishments and on the other hand by an Arab Communist member of Knesset can produce a shared agenda of deepening and broadening Arabic instruction.

The Role of Universities

Along with Military Intelligence, the other major institutional framework that critically affects Arabic instruction is the set of university departments of Arabic language and literature. Universities play a central role in cementing the status quo and preventing schools from emphasizing creative language skills in Arabic instruction.

Academia influences school education in various ways. The Subject Committee in the Ministry of Education is charged with curricular development and determines such issues as textbook selection and the like. It is dominated by academics and is chaired by a professor, invariably of the Hebrew University. Moreover, the bulk of Arabic teachers—and especially the leading ones—are trained at universities.⁴² Even those who have been trained at colleges will find themselves at universities once they rise through the ranks and require an advanced degree.

But it is not only that teachers are trained at universities. One of the major targets that shape curricular development at school is university-entrance exams and curricula. Ideally, graduates of the school system should be able to perform well at universities. This imposes a requirement on both schools and universities to ensure that their curricula are compatible. The domination of the ministerial Subject Committee by academics ensures that this happens.

The intellectual and institutional orientation of academic teaching and research in Arabic is crucial. Israeli academia has always seen itself as part of the Western academic

world. Arabic instruction in Israeli academia was initiated by European-trained scholars in the various fields of Orientalist scholarship and has formed an organic and integrated part of European Orientalist scholarship ever since.⁴³ The rejection of Israeli academia and scholarship by Arab academia reinforces this position.

The Orientalist heritage includes an aloof philological approach, one that positions itself as a nonparticipatory observer of Arabic usage. It emphasizes passive decoding rather than creative mastery of the language and treats its subject matter rather like classics departments treat theirs. A common motto attributed to legendary Professor Meir Kister of the Hebrew University runs: "If you wish to learn to speak Arabic, go to Berlitz."

Of significance, university departments of Arabic language and literature, like university departments of other major foreign languages and literature (e.g., English), are not strictly teacher-training programs, and the function of teacher training does not top their curricular priorities. Moreover, they nominally assume that students are proficient in the target language. What makes Arabic departments different, then, is not that they do not emphasize proficiency in the various language skills but rather that they tolerate its absence.

The philological approach was instrumental in fixing the language of instruction in departments of Arabic as Hebrew (in sharp contrast with departments of English) and in devaluing Arabic proficiency in instruction and appointments. As a consequence, university students complete their academic studies of Arabic without developing a balanced Arabic proficiency. By proficiency I mean the full set of linguistic skills, namely, reading, writing, listening comprehension, and speaking and ideally appropriate paralinguistic performance and cultural proficiency. Many of these university graduates subsequently become nonproficient teachers, who teach a school curriculum that does not produce proficient graduates. These nonproficient high school graduates then join the universities from which they graduate without proficiency to make up the next round of nonproficient teachers (and even academics). Thus emerges a sustained cycle of nonproficiency.

The majority of academics in Arabic language and literature departments, nonnative speaking Jews who have graduated from the Israeli education system, have an inevitable stake in the status quo whether they choose to support it or not. Changing the language of Arabic instruction in universities to Arabic will necessarily come up against the fact that a significant proportion of the lecturers are not sufficiently proficient to deliver instruction in Arabic and may not be able to compete with academically trained Arabs. One such person I encountered during my fieldwork was a tenured senior lecturer who specialized in medieval Arabic manuscripts. He freely conceded his limited proficiency and claimed that my research inspired him to begin reading Arabic translations of European novels he had already read (e.g., by Dickens) in order to improve his mastery of contemporary Arabic. When I asked why he did not read novels by Arabs, he replied that he was not interested in Arabic literature, which he considered inferior. He did not pursue his reading of Arabic translations for long. Otherwise, he communicated with his Arab students and colleagues exclusively in Hebrew and had no opportunity or reason to communicate in Arabic either verbally or in writing. This particular academic is an extreme example but demonstrates how unessential Arabic proficiency is for an academic career in Arabic.

The overlay of sectarian and personal politics, rarely explicit yet always present, accentuates the problem. This was brought home to me following a presentation I gave in Arabic at a departmental seminar. Mine was the only paper delivered in Arabic that semester. My forty-five minutes or so of presentation were followed by questions and answers in Arabic. Later that day, in a private conversation, one of the Arab adjunct instructors pointed out to me, in a gloating tone, that none of the Jews asked a question. He explained that they could not really speak Arabic and were too scared to do so. I responded that I must have made a considerable number of mistakes myself, to which he laughed and responded, “*Ghaḥḥat al-jāhil baṣīṭa, wa-ghaḥḥat al-‘ālim faḍīḥa*” (roughly meaning that the mistake of the uneducated is not serious, but the mistake of the learned is scandalous). Although the broad generalization about the Jewish academics in the department was exaggerated—at least a few are fully proficient in Arabic—Arabic proficiency is clearly embroiled in a sectarian personal politics.

In addition to the sectarian-*cum*-personal politics of intellectual authority, the fact that Jewish schools produce nonproficient graduates would put these students at a disadvantage if they had to undergo academic instruction in Arabic. There is thus a pervasive concern that a shift to instruction in Arabic would reduce the interest of Jewish students in the subject and result in Arabs dominating the ranks of both students and academic staff in Arabic departments (a process that may be under way at Haifa University, where the relative value of Arabic proficiency in the curriculum is higher than it is at other universities and where Arabs are the overwhelming majority of students of Arabic). This concern was communicated to me, explicitly off the record, by one senior academic. It was couched not in anti-Arab sentiments as such but rather in a concern for the survival and administrative well-being of a department that is stigmatized by the university and the public as composed of and catering to Arabs. In many ways, then, the fact of Arab superiority in Arabic proficiency retards the use of Arabic and the acquisition of Arabic proficiency by Jewish scholars and students.

The cycle of nonproficiency is particularly stable due to a lack of alternative sources of proficient teachers. Those Jews who have been trained by the security apparatus in Arabic are quite likely to have reached some level of proficiency; however, they are unlikely to join the teaching force because their career choices within the security and bureaucratic apparatus are much more attractive. The generation of proficient Jewish immigrants, mostly from Iraq, which once accounted for a large number of Arabic teachers in Jewish schools and for leading Jewish scholars and writers of Arabic (e.g., Samir Naqash, Shimon Ballas, Sasson Somekh, Shmuel Moreh) is now largely retired.

Segregation, Teacher Proficiency, and the Limits of Action in the Field

The scope of possible action within the field—that is, its autonomy—and the limits on it are themselves negotiated in practice. Attempts to improve Arabic instruction by dealing with the lack of proficient teachers demonstrate some limits on action within the field. One seemingly straightforward way to overcome the paucity of proficient Arabic teachers is the integration of Arab teachers of Arabic into Jewish schools. But the segregation of the teaching force persists in line with the sectarian segregation of Israeli society in general.

Officially, there is no policy of segregating the teaching force. Yet today Arabs account for a meager portion of Arabic teachers in the Jewish sector. The figure that is usually bantered around is “fewer than five percent” (roughly 50 of 1,200 teachers). However in a recent representative survey of Arabic instruction that was cosponsored by the ministry, only 1.7 percent of responding teachers at the junior-high schools were Arab, and not a single Arab teacher was found in the high school sample.⁴⁴

When I questioned them on the subject, ministerial administrators offered two kinds of explanation for the paucity of Arab teachers. One doubted the compatibility of Arab teachers to teach Arabic in the Jewish sector. Such explanations highlight, for instance, difficulties that face native speakers who teach their own mother tongue as a second language.⁴⁵ Such difficulties may apply to individual teachers but do not account for the broad phenomenon. Native speakers of English are the preferred teachers of English in the Jewish schools, and likewise, native French speakers are the preferred teachers of French. There is no inherent reason why the same should not apply to Arabic. Furthermore, the first few decades of Arabic instruction in the Jewish sector following the proclamation of the State of Israel were marked by the integration of Arab Jews, mostly Iraqi Jews, into the teaching force. To the extent that Modern Standard Arabic is acquired by native Arabic speakers as a mother tongue, these teachers were effectively teaching their mother tongue to nonnative speakers as a second language (without, however, reducing the curricular “Latinization” of Arabic).

Moreover, Modern Standard Arabic—the core of Arabic instruction in the Jewish sector—is not quite a mother tongue. It is the colloquial Arabic dialects that are acquired the “natural” way by Arabs. Standard Arabic is acquired in part through formal instruction, although this acquisition is backed up by passive exposure in daily life and by the commonalities with colloquial Arabic. This further detracts from the credibility of ascribing the paucity of Arab teachers in the Jewish sector to some general difficulties in teaching one’s mother tongue as a second language.

Another set of explanations, though, seems to account more directly for the lack of integration of Arab teachers into Jewish schools, and that is the resistance of Jewish principals, parents, and teachers. This takes essentially two forms: one is a refusal on the part of principals to deploy Arab teachers; the other is the continued harassment of employed Arab teachers by students, parents, and staff. Such local interactions are critical in shaping, reproducing, and changing the field.

An experimental program to train Arab teachers of Arabic for Hebrew schools was abandoned in the 1990s, after it became clear that virtually all of its graduates failed to integrate into Jewish schools.⁴⁶ A senior supervisor who is closely familiar with this aborted initiative insists that Arabic is the toughest subject for an Arab teacher to teach in a Jewish school. The topic is emotionally charged and confounds attitudes toward Arabs with attitudes toward Arabic, profoundly straining the classroom interaction for Arab teachers of Arabic to Jews. The subject, in fact, invites resistance and hostility from students and colleagues. By contrast, Arab teachers of “neutral” subjects such as mathematics integrate much more smoothly into Jewish schools.

Furthermore, Jewish resistance to Arab teachers of Arabic can be further aggravated by vested interests. When I raised the question of integrating Arab teachers into the Jewish sector with one Jewish teacher, her first response was that this would deprive the Jewish Arabic teachers of work. She then added that it may also not be a good idea “for

security considerations.” She could not expand on what kind of security breach such a scenario would entail other than the general sense that it would be simpler, safer, and less worrisome if Arab teachers were kept away from Jewish children.

A related problem is that Military Intelligence’s domination of Arabic instruction makes it hard to integrate Arab teachers, especially into high schools. Arabs—especially educated ones—are security risks that Military Intelligence prefers to avoid, potentially depriving such teachers of much of the educational and curricular support that Military Intelligence provides. Moreover, a significant role of high school instruction for Jews in Israel is preparation for military service (see previous). By virtue of their very being, Arabs cannot be part of this. They are considered integral elements of the existential security threat and therefore excluded from service. Ultimately, the entire security rationale of Arabic instruction would fall flat if delivered by an Arab.

The ministerial professionals who ran the aborted teaching program for Arab teachers in Jewish schools came crashing against the field’s limits. With few exceptions, Arab teachers of Arabic remain excluded from Jewish secondary schools. Subsequently, this program’s professional staff moved to redirect their efforts toward increasing Arabic proficiency among the Jewish teachers already in the system. They and others have turned to trying to ameliorate the Arabic proficiency of Jewish Arabic teachers through in-service training—with limited success. This suboptimal option seemed more realistic than integrating fully proficient Arabs. Such pragmatic compromises are forced by the overarching segregation of Israeli society even as they reproduce and reinforce it.

Ongoing Contestation within the Field

The administrators and Arab teachers that I mentioned previously came to discover some of the limits of the field, at least as they currently stand. But there are ongoing struggles and negotiations that are actively playing themselves out in the field (albeit with little change in practice). One of the most contentious issues has to do with the choice of register and level of Arabic to be taught in Jewish schools. Currently the concentration in instruction is on Modern Standard Arabic—and especially journalistic prose—with an emphasis on passive comprehension and the inculcation of formal rules of syntax and grammar. Students who specialize in Arabic may elect to undertake an additional unit of colloquial Arabic, but this is taught at a very rudimentary level and remains marginal to the Arabic major.

Two challenges to the Latinized approach are currently circulating in the field. One calls for the greater integration of colloquial Arabic, with the rationale of promoting verbal communication skills among students and enabling them to communicate with Arabs in the normal quotidian language. The other seeks to enhance the focus on Standard Arabic but move beyond decoding journalistic prose and into the realm of aesthetics, creative writing, and personal expression in Modern Standard Arabic. The idea here is to enhance creative proficiencies along with cultural understanding and empathy among students, thereby enabling them to meaningfully engage with Arab culture.

The peculiarity of Arabic diglossia pits these two challenges against one another. Arabic poetry and the bulk of creative writing are expressed through Standard Arabic, which is removed from the colloquial varieties. Thus, the promoters of cultural empathy and literary self-expression find themselves opposed to those seeking to promote

verbal communication skills through refocusing the instruction on colloquial Arabic, even though both seek to replace the pedagogically alienating Latinization of Arabic.

There is an underlying sociological and institutional rationale to the different positions. The argument for shifting toward poetry and expressive literature emanates from elite circles of Arabic linguists and Arabic educators. The call for a shift to a focus on colloquial Arabic has a higher currency with sociologists and educationalists (not necessarily proficient in Arabic) and in the general public with support from students, parents, and principals who are frustrated by students' lack of effective Arabic communication skills in spite of years of Arabic education.⁴⁷ Proponents of colloquial Arabic suspect that Arabic communication skills elude students because of an excessive preoccupation with Standard Arabic, which they often (wrongly) perceive to be an essentially dead and irrelevant language, an impression sustained by the prevalent classroom practices they encounter. A common image of Arabs as essentially illiterate further detracts, in the eyes of some Jewish parents and teachers, from the value of Standard Arabic.

By contrast, academics in university departments of Arabic who are involved in classroom teaching of Arabic remain committed to an instructional concentration on Standard Arabic. Their position is sustained by reasons well beyond Eurocentric philological prejudice. Contrary to a common perception, the devaluation of colloquial Arabic is not a product of Western approaches but rather an integral part of language ideology among educated Arabs. In fact, Western dialectology accords colloquial Arabic more academic respect than do most traditional and contemporary mainstream Arab scholars.

It is not only the ideological framing of Arabic diglossia that supports the contemporary concentration on Standard Arabic in instruction but also the structure of the language. The morphology and syntax of Standard Arabic is more stable and regular than the colloquial, making the former easier to teach and learn (at least to Hebrew speakers). In fact, a good grounding in Standard Arabic facilitates the acquisition of a dialect but not necessarily vice versa.⁴⁸ Once a student has command of Standard Arabic, s/he requires relatively few rules of transformation to work through the bulk of the complications added by Palestinian dialects to the morphology and syntax of Standard Arabic.

Furthermore, the surrounding context does not provide for exposure to colloquial Arabic and thus does not support its acquisition. The segregation of Israeli society is such that when Jews communicate with Arabs it is virtually invariably in Hebrew, making it unlikely for ordinary Jews to find much opportunity to interact in Arabic. By contrast, print and electronic media are easily available to support the instruction of Modern Standard Arabic on a continuous, long-term basis.

Finally, Jewish Arabic teachers, the vast majority of whom have not been taught colloquial Arabic, are even less proficient in colloquial than in Modern Standard Arabic, such that when they do try to teach colloquial Arabic, they all too often create an unidiomatic variant that does not conform to any given dialect.⁴⁹ It is therefore a combination of the position of prominent academics in Arabic, the structure of the language (the relative regularity of Modern Standard Arabic), the segregation of Israeli society, and the distribution of knowledge of Arabic among Jewish teachers that make it highly unlikely that the curricular focus on Standard Arabic will be displaced or substantially weakened.

Some of the same issues would impede the greater emphasis on creative literature and none more so than the limits of the linguistic and cultural proficiency of teachers. The semiofficial *Journal of the Teachers of Arabic in Hebrew-Speaking Schools* published a series of poems and short stories that were translated and analyzed, but the limits on teachers' mastery of the language hinders such developments and, ipso facto, the effective instruction of the culturally appropriate integration of colloquial and Standard registers.⁵⁰ Moreover, the militarist ethos of Arabic instruction is ideologically and emotionally discordant with attempts to turn Arabic instruction into an exercise of empathy with Arabs.

The general irrelevance of another curricular contestation—namely, the emphasis on Arabic as a Jewish-heritage language by highlighting medieval Jewish-Arabic literature (texts written by Jews in Arabic typically with Hebrew characters) and modern Jewish dialects—serves to further delineate the limits of the possible and probable within the field. Jewish dialects are not integrated into instruction, even in areas dominated by Jewish immigrants from particular Arab countries. When colloquial Arabic is taught, it is invariably a Palestinian dialect. Medieval Jewish Arabic is appended as a few brief snippets in selections from classical Arabic literature without a systematic discussion of the linguistic reality in which they emerged. The practice of Arabic instruction constitutes Arabic as a non-Jewish language that is largely irrelevant to the historic Jewish experience.

This is clearly not an imposition from above. Medieval Jewish Arabic texts and Jewish dialects continue to be a major interest of Israeli academia. But efforts to raise teachers' awareness of the possible significance of these studies⁵¹ have failed to breach the wall of academic irrelevance and do not seem to have had a palpable effect in the classroom. The non-Arabness of Jews has become axiomatic in Israeli society. Thus, in a recent survey teachers thought the new curriculum must focus on improving student motivation to learn Arabic, yet they were disinclined to emphasize the link between Arabic on the one hand and Hebrew and Jewish heritage on the other hand.⁵²

CONCLUSION

This paper has raised some themes that are relevant well beyond the narrow context of Arabic instruction in Israeli schools. First and foremost, it demonstrated that the technical is always political. Pedagogical choices such as the language register that is focused upon, the language in which instruction is carried out, and the standards of teacher selection and training, cannot be understood independently of their political context, even though they cannot be mechanically reduced to particular political positions. The Zionist project of Jewish hegemony in Palestine conditions the field of Arabic instruction. But it is a measure of the autonomy of the field that the influence of Zionism is contradictory. We see how a single political imperative can inspire the adoption of contradictory positions, while conflicting imperatives may lead to practical cooperation. The threat to the Zionist project that is imposed by the very Arab existence in Israel both motivates and retards Arabic instruction. Similarly, conflicting agendas—those of the militarist and of the radical communist Palestinian—can motivate similar positions, in this case in favor of deepening Arabic instruction to Jews.

Arabic instruction forms, then, a relatively autonomous field of social practice, with its unique dynamics. These dynamics are conditioned by other fields of practice and by powerful institutional agents whose positions regarding Arabic instruction are part of broader agendas. These include the critical influence of the political economy of linguistic proficiency (part of the process of anglophone globalization), the strong involvement of Military Intelligence, and the profound influence of academia.

Although the field remains dynamic, its fundamental contours do not seem to be changing much. Rather, the *modus vivendi* that was achieved at a very early stage seems stable and fits the subject matter quite well. This is notwithstanding profound historical transformations in the country and the political economy as well as in conditions of Arabic instruction, such as the availability of Arab Jews beginning in the 1950s and later the availability of Israeli Palestinian teachers. No one professes to be satisfied with the current state of affairs in the field, but most stakeholders seem to have learned to live with it. So, for the time being, Arabic proficiency seems set to remain elusive to most Jews in Israel, at least to those who seek it through formal education, with the partial exception of those who are absorbed into the security and Arab-management apparatus.

NOTES

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¹Cf. Gil Eyal, *Hasarat ha-Kesem min ha-Mizrah* (Jerusalem: Van Leer Jerusalem Institute, 2005).

²Druze schools are administered separately from other Arab schools. Jewish schools comprise the National Stream and the National Religious Stream as well as the autonomous/independent ultraorthodox stream.

³Muhammad Hasan Amara and Abd Al-Rhman Mar'i, *Language Education Policy: The Arab Minority in Israel* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2002).

⁴Adva Hayam-Yonas and Shira Malka, *Likra't Patuah Takhnit Limudim be-⁵Aravit le-Hativat ha-Benayim ve-la-Hativa ha-⁶Elyona ba-Migzar ha-Yehudi: Mehkar Ha'arakha* (Jerusalem: Henrietta Szold Institute, 2006); Hezi Brosh, "Aravit le-Dovre 'Ivrit be-Yisra'el—'Safah Shniyah' O 'Safah Zarah,'" *Helkat Lashon* 23 (1997): 111–31; Ran Lustigman, "Hora'at ha-Safah ha-⁷Aravit be-Bate Sefer 'Ivriyim,'" *Shishim Shenot Hinukh be-Yisra'el* (Jerusalem, 2008), 174; Bernard Spolsky and Elana Shohamy, *The Languages of Israel: Policy, Ideology and Practice* (Clevedon, U.K.: Multilingual Matters, 1999), 128, 144–49; Bernard Spolsky, Elana Shohamy, and Smadar Donitsa-Schmit, *Hinukh Leshoni be-Yisra'el: Profil le-Hora'at ha-Safah ha-⁸Aravit be-Vate Sefer 'Ivriyim* (Dec. 1995); report submitted to the Ministry of Education, www.biu.ac.il/hu/lpcr/home/ARAFHEB.htm (accessed 5 October 2007), 23–25.

⁵Spolsky and Shohamy, *The Languages of Israel*, 22ff., chap. 7; cf. Bernard Spolsky, Elana Shohamy, and Sarit Wald, *Hinukh Leshoni be-Yisra'el: Profil le-Hora'at ha-Safah ha-Anglit* (Dec. 1995), report submitted to the Ministry of Education, <http://www.biu.ac.il/hu/lpcr/home/ENGLISH.htm> (accessed 5 October 2007). Reliable estimates of the ratio of native-speaking English teachers is hard to make. In a well-supported study in the mid-1990s, Spolsky and his colleagues put the figure at forty percent for Jewish high schools. This varies widely by region and the socioeconomic standing of the catchment areas.

⁶Cf. Charles A. Ferguson, "Diglossia," *Word* 15 (1959): 325–40.

⁷Charles A. Ferguson, "Problems of Teaching Languages with Diglossia," *Georgetown University Monograph Series* 15 (1963): 165–77. Incidentally, colloquial Arabic can also be (and often is) "Latinized" in instruction.

⁸Brosh "Aravit le-Dovre 'Ivrit," 117–21. See also the discussion of the curricular shift to communicative competence in English instruction during the 1970s in Spolsky and Shohamy, *The Languages of Israel*, 174ff.

⁹Amara and Mar'zi, *Language Education Policy*; Spolsky and Shohamy, *The Languages of Israel*, 140–42. Although currently the ratio of school-age Jews who speak Arabic at home is small, the educational situation was not substantially different a generation or two ago, when the ratio was much higher.

¹⁰The matriculation certificate is a qualification that is normally awarded upon completion of high school to qualifying students and is essential for enrollment at university. The grades are calculated based on the performance in national standardized tests for different subjects and the grades obtained at school. To be awarded a certificate students need to complete a minimum number of units, some of which are compulsory and others of which are electives that make up a major, or specialization area.

¹¹Spolsky and Shohamy, *The Languages of Israel*, 140, 151ff.

¹²Pierre Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital," in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. John G. Richardson (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986).

¹³Cf. Spolsky and Shohamy, *The Languages of Israel*, 128, 144–49; Spolsky, Shohamy, and Donitsa-Schmit, *Profil le-Hora'at ha-Safah ha-'Aravit*, 23–25.

¹⁴The language of instruction can be contentious among Arabs too. One Arab instructor who insists on the exclusive use of Standard Arabic in class recounted that a female Arab student once informed him that she did not feel comfortable speaking Standard Arabic and would not participate if he insisted on her sticking to the Standard register. He said that she kept silent in class throughout the semester.

¹⁵By Arab Jews I mean Jews from the Arab world. I prefer this to the term Mizrahi Jews, which includes Jews from non-Arab countries, and use it as an equivalent to the Hebrew *yehude 'arav*. I am not implying here a meaningful category of self-identity, even though some people do identify as Arab Jews or Jewish Arabs.

¹⁶Cf. Joshua A. Fishman, Robert L. Cooper, and Andrew W. Conrad, *The Spread of English* (Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House, 1977).

¹⁷Spolsky and Shohamy, *The Languages of Israel*; Brosh, "'Aravit le-Dovre 'Ivrit,'" Lustigman, "Hora'at ha-Safah ha-'Aravit be-vate Sefer 'Ivriyim."

¹⁸Amara and Mar'zi, *Language Education Policy*, 83.

¹⁹Yasir Suleiman, "Charting the Nation: Arabic and the Politics of Identity," *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* 26 (2006): 125–48.

²⁰Jew and Arab as national or ethnic categories have been bureaucratically reified through a system that defines a person as Jew or Arab explicitly (through the population registry) and effectively (through the differential deployment of law and bureaucracy) so that nearly all in Israel (with but a handful of exceptions) know their "place" regardless of whether they agree with it or like it. Moreover, this invention has been largely successful, as demonstrated by the active popular participation of Jews in Zionist sectarianism.

²¹Hezi Brosh and Eliezer Ben-Rafael, "Mediniyut Leshonit mul Metsi'ut Hevratit: ha-'Aravit be-Veit ha-Sefer ha-'Ivri,'" *Iyunim be-Hinukh* 59–60 (1994): 333–51; cf. Ella Shohat, "The Invention of the Mizrahim," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 29 (1999): 5–20; Yehouda Shenhav, *Ha-Yehudim ha-'Aravim: Le'umiyut, Dav ve-'Etniyut* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 2003); Reuven Snir, *'Arviyut, Yahadut, Tsiyonut: Ma'avak Zehuyot be-Yetsirotehem shel Yehude 'Irak* (Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute, 2005).

²²Cf. Eyal, *Hasarat ha-Kesem*.

²³For example, Pierre Bourdieu, "The Genesis of the Concept of Habitus and Field," *Sociocriticism* 2 (1985): 11–24.

²⁴Cf. the early items in both Yosef Yonai, ed., *'Aravit be-Vatei Sefer 'Ivriyim* (Jerusalem: Ministry of Education and Culture, Branch of History of Education and Culture, 1992) and Jacob M. Landau, ed., *Hora'at ha-'Aravit ke-Lashon Zarah: Leket Ma'amarim* (Jerusalem: School of Education of the Hebrew University and the Ministry of Education and Culture, 1962).

²⁵Spolsky and Shohamy, *The Languages of Israel*.

²⁶See the collection of policy documents and pedagogical debates in Yonai, *'Aravit*, and Landau, *Hora'at ha-'Aravit ke-Lashon Zarah*.

²⁷State Comptroller, "Hora'at ha-Safah ha-'Aravit be-Vate ha-Sefer ha-'Ivriyim," in *Doh Shnati 46: Lishnat 1995 U-le-Heshbonot Shnat Haksafim 1994* (Jerusalem: State Comptroller, 1996), 367–78; cf. Hayam-Yonas and Malka, *Likrat Pituah Takhnit Limudim be-'Aravit*, chap. 1.

²⁸See Military Intelligence, *Tippuah Limudie Mizrahanut* (Section on Development of the Study of Orientalism), <http://www1.idf.il/aman/Site/EnterTelem/EnterTelem.asp> (accessed 5 February 2004). As an indication of the hegemonic domination of the military in this area, one might also note that the state comptroller's staff, in formulating its report on Arabic instruction, consulted the military and dedicated much space to the military's need for Arabic speakers. No other body outside the Ministry of Education and the teaching force

was consulted. The report formulators do not feel the need to justify this reliance on the military at a time when academic departments and other stakeholders were not consulted and their interests in school education were not explicitly considered. The central position of the military in the area of Arabic instruction is taken for granted. See State Comptroller, "Hora³at ha-Safah Ha-⁶Aravit."

²⁹For example, see a report on one such visit in the *Journal of Teachers of Arabic in Hebrew-Speaking Schools* 5 (2000): 59.

³⁰Military Intelligence, *Tippuah Limudie Mizrahanut*; State Comptroller, "Hora³at ha-Safah ha-⁶Aravit"; Lustigman, "Hora³at ha-Safah ha-⁶Aravit be-Vate Sefer 'Ivriyim," 170–71.

³¹State Comptroller, "Hora³at ha-Safah ha-⁶Aravit," 374; Lustigman, "Hora³at ha-Safah ha-⁶Aravit be-Vate Sefer 'Ivriyim," 174.

³²State Comptroller, "Hora³at ha-Safah ha-⁶Aravit," 367–78; Lustigman, "Hora³at ha-Safah ha-⁶Aravit be-Vatei Sefer 'Ivriyim," 172.

³³Knesset, 1986, "Duah Va³adat ha-Hinukh shel ha-Kneset," in *'Aravit be-Vate Sefer 'Ivriyim*, ed. Yosef Yonai (Jerusalem: Ministry of Education and Culture, Branch of History of Education and Culture, 1992), 174–80.

³⁴Abraham Fund, <http://www.abrahamfund.org/> (accessed 7 June 2008); Hand in Hand, <http://www.handinhandk12.org> (accessed 14 December 2009).

³⁵State Comptroller, "Hora³at ha-Safah ha-⁶Aravit," 372.

³⁶Hayam-Yonas and Malka, *Likrat Patuah Takhnit Limudim be-⁶Aravit*.

³⁷Cf. Dan So³en and Edna Debby, "'Aravit—Lamah Mah?' 'Emdot Talmidim Klape ha-⁶Aravit u-Nekhonutam li-Lmod et ha-Safah," *Ha-Hinukh u-Svivo: Shnaton Seminar ha-Kibutsim* 28 (2006): 193–206.

³⁸See Brosh and Ben-Rafael, *Medinyut Leshonit mul Metsi³ut Hevratit*, 341–44; So³en and Debby "'Aravit—Lamah Mah?'"

³⁹Shahar Ilan, "Hatsa⁶at H³ok: 'Aravit Lo³ Tihyeh Safah Rishmit," *Haaretz Daily*, 19 May 2008.

⁴⁰Sharon Roffe-Offir, "Sar ha-Tahburah Isher Et Hahlafat ha-Shlatim be-⁶Aravit ve-Anglit le-Ta⁶atik 'Ivri Tahor," *Y Net*, 13 July 2009. <http://www.ynet.co.il/Ext/Comp/ArticleLayout/CdaArticlePrintPreview/1,2506,L-3745579,00.html> (accessed 13 July 2009)

⁴¹Or Qashti, "Misrad ha-Hinukh Hazar bo: ha-Safah ha-⁶Aravit Tisha³er be-Takhnit Halibah," *Haaretz Daily*, 14 April 2008.

⁴²Cf. Hayam-Yonas and Malka, *Likrat Patuah Takhnit Limudim be-⁶Aravit*, 46–81, 142–74.

⁴³Eyal, *Hasarat ha-Kesem*.

⁴⁴Hayam-Yonas and Malka, *Likrat Patuah Takhnit Limudim be-⁶Aravit*, 46–81, 142–74.

⁴⁵Such rationalizations are by no means new. For an early version see the 1946 background briefing by the supervisor of Arabic in the Education Department of the Jewish Assembly in Palestine. Israel Ben Zeev, "Hora³at ha-⁶Aravit be-Shnat 1946," in *'Aravit be-Vate Sefer 'Ivriyim*, ed. Yosef Yonai (Jerusalem: Ministry of Education and Culture, Branch of History of Education and Culture, 1992), 36–38.

⁴⁶The program was administered at Giv³at Haviva and has yet to be studied by independent scholars.

⁴⁷Much of the debate can be seen in contributions to the *Journal of the Teachers of Arabic in Hebrew Schools*, and echoes of it can be gleaned from the open comments made by principals and student that are cited by Hayam-Yonas and Malka, *Likrat Patuah Takhnit Limudim be-⁶Aravit*, chaps. 2–3.

⁴⁸Naomi Weisblatt, "Hora³at ha-⁶Aravit—Hirhurim Ve³etgarim," *Journal of the Teachers of Arabic in Hebrew-Speaking Schools* 29–30 (2003): 170–73; Aryeh Levin, "Hora³at ha-⁶Aravit—Neyyar 'Emdah," *Journal of the Teachers of Arabic in Hebrew-Speaking Schools*, 29–30 (2003): 174–77.

⁴⁹Cf. Brosh "'Aravit le-Dovre 'Ivrit," 121–23.

⁵⁰Ferguson, "Problems of Teaching."

⁵¹See, for example, *Journal of the Teachers of Arabic in Hebrew-Speaking Schools* 27 (2002): 35ff.

⁵²Hayam-Yonas and Malka, *Likrat Patuah Takhnit Limudim be-⁶Aravit*, 191.