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The Motivations and Experiences of
Jewish Students of Arabic at Israeli Universities
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<td>COGAT</td>
<td>Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories</td>
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INTRODUCTION

On an unbearably hot afternoon in July, two Palestinian women enter a Jewish-owned dress shop for modest clothing in South Jerusalem. The women look around for a few moments, and approach a sales clerk for assistance. Their attempt at speaking Hebrew is evidently futile, as the sales clerk looks up in disarray and calls to the others in the store for help. “Yesh mishehu shemidaber ‘aravit?” she shouts, “Does anyone speak Arabic?” Her call elicits no responses but a few curious glances and helpless shrugs. The women subsequently continue to peruse through the dresses and eventually leave the store bare-handed. After bearing witness to this linguistically sparse exchange, I wondered what might enable a store full of Jewish Israeli adults to have little-to-no grasp of the Arabic language? Moreover, given the poor knowledge of Arabic amongst most Jewish Israeli adults, what would motivate a Jewish Israeli to study Arabic at an Israeli university? What in that person’s experience with the Arabic language in adolescence and young adulthood may have differed from childhood exposure to the language? Can a person’s motivation to study Arabic shift as a result of new experiences with the language, and when might those motivational shifts occur? What sort of a role do these evolving experiences with Arabic have in informing official Israeli Language Policy and Language Education Policy?

In this study I aim to identify the motivations of Jewish university students in Arabic language programs today, and how their interests in learning the language are influenced by previous exposure to the language, in formal educational settings, military service, and familial contexts. More specifically, I would like to examine whether students’ motivations to learn Arabic shift when entering the university or after some time learning in the university environment. I also seek to understand how students perceive and or value the pedagogical goals
of their respective university’s Arabic program, and how the students’ impressions and value-judgements affect their experience and language ideologies. I contend that Israeli university students who are choosing to continue Arabic studies on the university level have had diverse means of exposure to the language, and that the plausibility of motivational shifts in language learning is tied to a variety of formative experiences with the language, and in interactions with native speakers, fellow language learners, and teachers.

The concept or trend of shifts in motivation to learn Arabic between previous learning experiences and Arabic studies in universities is important considering the geopolitical events to which most of these students have borne witness. Granted that the age range of university students in Israel is exceptionally wide due to cultural-educational norms, most of these students (~22-30) remember and or have been significantly affected by the Intifadas (Palestinian uprisings; 1987-1993 and 2000-2004, respectively), the rise and fall of the Oslo Peace Process, as well as the wars in Lebanon and Gaza. The consequent security considerations have further divided the Jewish and Arab populations, thus imposing a sort of skepticism around dialogue and the use of language as a means of bridging the gap of understanding between the communities. Interest in Arabic has fluctuated in reaction to the geopolitical reality. The language is often perceived by Israeli Jews as threatening, mysterious, and remarkably foreign, regardless of its deep linguistic similarity to Hebrew as another semitic language. Despite pressure to learn the language for the sake of the security of the country, some Israeli Jews feel compelled to learn Arabic for the sake of either normalizing the language, as a means of responsibility as a citizen of the Middle East at-large, or to support effective inter-communal/interfaith dialogue and educational initiatives. This subset of Arabic learners are frequently pushing back against an
educational and military establishment as well as a broad societal gaze toward Arabic as “Other” and as that which must be deciphered for Israel’s security.

The military incentive to study Arabic thoroughly crosses ethnic lines in Jewish Israeli society since there is a mandatory draft at age 18 for all Jewish citizens of the State. Arabic must be offered (in accordance with a rather unenforced language education policy), if not mandatory, from grades 7 through 10, so teachers often remind students that success in Arabic can ensure positions in the military intelligence. The intelligence division scouts out students who major in Arabic in high school. In Israeli society, prestigious military rank ensures socioeconomic mobility. In his book titled “The Creation of Israeli Arabic”, Yonatan Mendel describes the inextricably entwined nature of the relationship between the school system and the Israeli military, and how Arabic education in Israel has become somewhat of a closed circuit of those who are part of the security apparatus. Since very few Arabs are in teaching positions in Jewish schools and universities, most Arabic teachers are Jews who have served in military intelligence units and may or may not have continued Arabic studies on the university level. The Arabic that is taught in Israeli high schools is usually Modern Standard/Literary Arabic as opposed to the Spoken Palestinian Dialect (with certain exceptions), an educational practice that promotes “sentiment-free”, non-communicative/affiliative language acquisition.¹

Aside from security-related events, the status of Mizrahim in Israel today has permitted the slow re-emergence of Judeo-Arabic and Arab-Jewish culture through music, television, etc. The third generation of Mizrahim in Israel today spans the wide political and economic spectrum.

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(although still socioeconomically stagnant by about 30% to Ashkenazi peers\textsuperscript{2}), and may relate to Arabic on a variety of levels. Like many immigrant groups, third generation Mizrahim are more likely to see the Arabic of their patrimony as a vital language, and many individuals have chosen to learn the language for the purpose of reclaiming lost culture, communication with family members, or to protest the suppression of Arabic in the Israeli public sphere. According to Sami Shalom Chetrit’s theory of the “New Mizrahim,” Mizrahim on the political left are trying to reclaim elements of Mizrahi identity, language, and culture, therefore redressing grievances toward institutionalized racism in an unprecedented way.\textsuperscript{3}

**IMPACT**

Although there is a growing literature on Arabic education in Israel, there has been virtually no inquiry into the motivations and experiences of adults studying Arabic in university settings. I hope that the outcomes of this study contribute significantly to creating a more complete picture of Arabic study in Israel, beyond the existing canon on learners at the high school level and younger. This study may have critical implications for the ways in which universities can better accommodate the needs and interests of Arabic students, but may likewise have weight in reevaluating approaches to Language Education Policy (LEP) in Israel more generally. The results of this research are intended to represent a broad spectrum of students who have benefited from multiple segments of Arabic education in the State of Israel. However, considering the small sample size, I can only truly generalize the concept of motivational shifts


in Arabic education to those who were not included in the study but have similar Arabic learning trajectories to those included in the study (those who have chosen to study Arabic on the university level, but have likely formally studied Arabic prior to the university). The Israeli government and local municipalities have played an incredible role in both promoting and devaluing Arabic education. Knesset Member Oren Hazan recently put forth legislation requiring Spoken Arabic studies from first through twelfth grade, which was both accepted and rejected by different sectors of Israeli society. Similarly, following an arson attack on the Max Rayne Hand in Hand School in Jerusalem, there has been an increase in demand for bilingual education, but the school system has been denied the right to open high schools in addition to their lower and middle schools with the exception of the branch in Jerusalem (I will expand on this issue in the chapter on Language Education Policy). Additionally, this study is important in gauging the relationship between Mizrahi identity and the Arabic language in this generation of young adults. The results of this research will also give concrete examples of how the role of Arabic in military settings contributes to the academic study of Arabic, or if it in fact contributes in any significant way at all. Lastly, turning to politics, the motivation of students to learn Arabic for the sake of dialogue and understanding may serve to undermine the viewpoint of Palestinian activists who see engaging in an open discourse with Israelis to be a means of normalizing the occupation.

**LANGUAGE ATTITUDES AND MOTIVATION**

In the chapter of language attitudes and motivation, I aim to outline the key concepts on Sociolinguistics and Linguistic Anthropology that comprise the theoretical tenets of this study, but also will give the reader the empirical vocabulary to better understand my thesis on language
learning motivation. The section will cover the inherent ties and distinction between attitudes and motivations, and how the construction of an Israeli national identity has formed with the enthnolinguistic backdrop of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict. This backdrop informs Jewish Israelis’ perceptions and expectations of Arabic language use and its local and regional native speakers (Palestinian citizens of Israel/Israeli Arabs⁴, Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Druze, Circassians, and the Arab World at-large). The terminology and theories I will include will strengthen and lay the foundation for my claims regarding shifts in language learning motivations.

**METHODOLOGY**

In order to conduct this study, I have interviewed and surveyed Jewish students of Arabic at Israeli universities. The surveys and interviews include in-depth questions regarding various experiences interacting with and formally learning the Arabic language, and how schooling, the military, and family multilingualism figure into their studies. I have inquired about the subjects’ political involvement and understanding, and what their views are on the role of Arabic in Israel today. To recruit students for participation, I reached out to various students through email and social media outlets. The bulk of in-person interviews materialized as a result of my visit to a Middle Eastern Studies Masters Seminar at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Other contacts came from one participant who kindly shared information regarding my study on her facebook

⁴ Although the terms “Israeli-Arab” and “Palestinian Citizens of Israel” refer to the same population, I will respect the rising trend in these communities to be referred to by the latter term. This term is gaining popularity as it shifts focus to disparities of civil rights under the responsibility and accountability of the Israeli government, while still maintaining deference to Palestinian peoplehood.
I likewise posted a link to my survey on the facebook pages of student groups relating to Middle Eastern Studies, and Arabic Language and Literature.

I interviewed nine students, most of whom are students at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and have received seventeen responses to my online survey. For these students, Arabic remains a multi-faceted and highly emotional language, which brought many of them to cite particular reactions they have had to the language, and formative points at which those reactions and motivations to study the language have changed. There is a tangible split between those who have continued to study the language for security-oriented purposes and those who are invested in language as a means of conflict resolution and coexistence. Some of the students bridge the binary, which is a trend that mirrors the complex political reality in which these students live. Some students whose political understanding has changed, or whose political activity has intensified, stated that their Arabic studies are inextricably tied to these personal developments. A minority of the students I have interviewed identify as Mizrahim or Arab-Jews, yet those who do identify as such find some correlation between their exposure to Arabic in their family experiences and or childhoods to their current desire to study the language; whether that be out of identification with Israeli Arabs and Palestinians, or as a means of redressing grievances of a historically repressed Mizrahi subculture in Israel.

WHY THIS PARTICULAR DEMOGRAPHIC?

At the inception of this project, I was intending to interview Jewish Israeli high school students of Arabic, looking at the correlation of political orientation and ethnic self-identification in language learning motivation. Due to changes in policy of the Israeli Ministry of Education, I
could not pursue that study as I could not obtain permits to enter public schools (which comprise about 70% of schools in Israel). I ultimately decided to alter the focus of my question to inquire about motivational shifts in Jewish students studying Arabic at Israeli universities, therefore accommodating bureaucratic challenges as well as the difficulty in accessing high school students once the semester ended. This change is arguably for the best as university students are better able to articulate their language ideologies, have had more formative life experiences, and tend to take more agency in their educational decisions. Additionally, as I mentioned earlier, there has been little interest and therefore sparse research done on the motivations and experiences of adults who are studying Arabic in university settings. But why not focus on all adult Jewish Arabic learners at various types of learning centers in Israel? Isn’t there a merit to looking at heritage dialect programs or informal classes in cafes and community centers? Yes, there is an undoubtable value to such a study and to examining the proliferation of Arabic study beyond the classroom (proper), yet I am most intrigued by the high level of academic and or job-centered commitment that is more relevant in university settings compared to informal settings.

While restructuring the project, I had the privilege of meeting many professors, students, and professionals who are knowledgeable on this field of inquiry in various respects. The most notable are the following: Zvi Bekerman, a professor Education at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Mandel Center for Educational Leadership; Elana Shohamy, a professor of Language Education Policy and Linguistic Landscape at Tel Aviv University; Yonatan Mendel, author of “The Creation of Israeli Arabic” and Head of Manarat: The Van Leer Center for Jewish-Arab Relations and co-editor of the book review section of the Journal of Levantine
Studies (JLS); and Hillel Cohen, a professor of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Professor Cohen gave me the opportunity to facilitate a discussion with students in his M.A. seminar, which although not formally recorded, was incredibly helpful to my understanding of the motivations and interests of this sample of students who have studied Arabic at the university.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In order to conduct this study successfully and cover the costs of my travels to and throughout Israel, I was funded by the Eizenstat Travel Grant and the Provost’s Undergraduate Research Fund. I thank Ambassador Eizenstat for his generosity, as well as the Brandeis University donors who supported me through the Provost’s URF. I am so grateful to have been given the opportunity to pursue field research, as I would never have been able to have gained such an accurate understanding of the reality on the ground had I remained in the United States during this process. The Crown Center for Middle Eastern Studies funded my Spoken Arabic course at The Polis Institute in Jerusalem, which gave me critical insight into alternative Arabic learning centers in Israel and allowed me to improve my own Arabic skills while pursuing my research.

I owe a tremendous thank you to my primary thesis advisor, Yehudah Mirsky, and my readers, Ilana Szobel and Liora Halperin, for guiding me throughout this process, and offering wisdom, encouragement, and necessary critiques. I also sincerely appreciate the insights and advice of Liora Norwich, who talked me through my initial thoughts on this project and related questions of ethnic identity and mobilization in Israel. I also must recognize the Israeli scholars
who helped me restructure my project and think critically about Arabic education in Israel in ways I could not have from afar. These scholars include Zvi Bekerman, Hillel Cohen, Yonatan Mendel, Iair Or, and Elana Shohamy. This is the short list of the many individuals who have weighed in on my research in various capacities, and have directed me to scholars, literature, and programming that continue to be relevant and enriching to my work and growth as a scholar.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge the encouragement and patience of my family and friends, who have been incredibly supportive during the most challenging and uplifting parts of the research and writing process. I cannot extend enough gratitude to my parents, who have given me the privilege of studying at Brandeis University. With the completion of this major project, I know they are most keenly aware that the fruits of their labor have in fact paid off. On that note, I am thoroughly excited to share my findings and, I hope, contribute to the intersection of the fields of Sociolinguistics, Educational Linguistics, and Israel Studies.
KEY TERMS IN SOCIOLINGUISTICS AND LINGUISTIC ETHNOGRAPHY

“Perhaps the greatest of all pedagogical fallacies is the notion that a person learns only the particular things he is studying at the time. Collateral learning in the way of formation of enduring attitudes, of like and dislikes...the most important attitude that can be formed is that of desire to go on learning. ”

- John Dewey

Dewey, an American philosopher and education reformer, used the term “Collateral Learning” to apply a more expansive lens to understanding the learner’s experiences and how the learner integrates information from educational experiences over time, both inside and outside the classroom. Although this study has a heavy emphasis on in-class educational encounters, I have attempted to account for all segments of the students’ exposure to Arabic language, in order to paint a more complete picture of the longitudinal, comprehensive relationship the student has with the subject matter. As a means of understanding student motivation in language education, I have conducted an ethnographic study examining the ways and contexts in which Jewish university students have previously encountered Arabic (including educational and home environments, as well as in the public sphere), and how these students interact with the language in their respective speech communities. This study follows the “Social Treatment Approach”, which entails that the research is focused on participant observation and ethnography, and is a qualitative study that involves the inferring of attitudes based on behaviors. This method

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unfortunately cannot guarantee that overt verbal statements of a subject actually represent his or her underlying disposition. However, monitoring behavior and conversational pragmatics in interviews can be a fairly telling procedure. The online survey responses are less comprehensive, also do not incorporate the same elements of response bias that occur during in-person interviews.

**Key Terms**

I will use the following paragraphs to explain key terms that lay the groundwork for my understanding of motivational shifts in language learning, and will later apply these terms to this specific case, relating sociolinguistic concepts to Arabic language education in Israel.

A **speech community** is a group of individuals who share rules, varieties, and expectations of language use. The boundaries of language use are inherently tied to language habits, ideologies, and attitudes. A student’s motivation to study a language is often related to a desire to increase communication efficiency, thereby achieving a degree of social approval and acceptance. Gardner (1985) claims that “attitudes to learning the language and the second language group are features influencing learners’ orientations in second language learning, which in turn guide their motivation towards certain goals such as instrumental (e.g. getting a better

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job) or integrative (e.g. interacting with member of the second language community). This theory essentially establishes a correlation between a learner’s goals and the learner’s perceptions of the status of the language and its speakers. Attitudes are nurtured and transmitted to children in speech communities by way of language socialization. This process takes place in the home, schools, as well as various community establishments and social settings. Ochs and Schieffelin expand upon notions of language socialization as follows:

“When children acquire the languages of their speech communities, the languages come packaged with these evocations. And not just languages: particular dialects, registers, styles, genres, conversational moves and sequences, grammatical and lexical forms, as well as written, spoken, and other communicative modes are saturated with sociocultural contextual significance.”

Peter Garrett approaches attitudes as a critical internal factor in second language (L2) motivation. Attitudes serve as a mediating factor between the learner and the language. That is to say that a learner activates reasons for valuing/devaluing a language when learning the language. Garrett quotes D. Sarnoff’s definition of attitudes as “a disposition to react favourably or unfavourably to a class of objects.” For the purpose of this study, language attitudes thoroughly determine the degree to which a student is motivated to learn a given language, and the stability of the preset dispositions dictates the degree to which a motivating factor is subject to change. Attitudes are notably affective, as they impact the language’s perception in a broader social

context. Examining attitudes is a rather difficult task, since they tend to be abstract constructs unless they are “admitted” by the individual who holds the attitude, or demonstrated by an overt action. In this study, the operationalized metric is the reaction of the student to hegemonic language ideologies and the contexts in which they have interacted with the language.

When discussing stability in attitudes, it must consider the applicability of the term “attitude” to this project at large. The antonym, a “non(attitude),” is an unstable, unreinforced conviction that may reflect the novelty and complexity for the subject. Discourse around Arabic study and ethnolinguistic nationalism are deeply rooted in mainstream Israeli society, and opinion of Israelis thereon are usually based in a long-standing conception of the geo/socio-political reality. Therefore, I employ the term attitude as a feeder to motivation in L2 learning. Spolsky and Shohamy (1996), point to the four prototypical layers of the importance of Arabic study as outlined by a 1996 policy paper of the Israeli Ministry of Education. These four categories include political, egalitarian, cultural, and pragmatic motivations. The political category entails that Arabic is crucial for Israel as a peace-oriented country, the egalitarian component assumes a responsibility to study the language out of deference to Israeli Arabs who study Hebrew, the cultural subset promotes Arabic as a heritage language of about half of Israeli Jews, and the pragmatic element values Arabic as a means of normalizing economic and cultural relations with neighboring Arab countries. Although this prescribed set of motivations does complicate the instrumental-integrative binary mentioned earlier, and does represent a great deal of the motivations claimed by the students I interviewed and surveyed, it fails to gauge the

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omnipresent military-oriented facets to Arabic study in Israel, and how the conflict in effect devalues the study of Arabic or applies localized value in the context of the security apparatus. The perception of the value of a language lies in an individual’s or speech community’s language ideologies.

Language ideologies are a set of attitudes and beliefs about language, which are determined by cultural and social sensibilities. Such ideologies are employed to both reify and justify existing social institutions and habits.\(^\text{13}\) Israel remains a phenomenal test case in studying language revitalization, language contact, language policy formation, and most importantly, the origins and evolution of language ideologies. As a culturally and linguistically diverse nascent immigrant state, as well as an established ethnic nation state with minority groups, language holds a tremendous amount of social power. Both Hebrew and Arabic are official languages of the State of Israel, yet Israel models a functionally monolingual ideology.\(^\text{14}\) The presence of Arabic in the public sphere, both with respect to public speech and linguistic landscape, have historically been minimized by efforts to bolster the status of Hebrew (see more in chapter on Mizrahiyut and Arabic).\(^\text{15}\) English is not an official language, yet it is valued tremendously by both Jewish and Arab sectors of Israeli society for the social capital it carries in social media, travel, and numerous industries in Israel and beyond. English therefore is given greater emphasis than Arabic in Hebrew-medium schools, and steadfastness toward learning English contributes to some anxieties about enforcing serious Arabic study.


The phenomenon at hand is one of Ethnolinguistic Vitality (EV), which refers to the metric of the security of one language community within a larger linguistic ecosystem. EV marks the level of distinctiveness one group displays in intergroup settings, contributing to a sense of stability and survival within the context of the collective. According to Howard Giles, “this is the case where accent, dialect, and language not only provide important cues for the categorization of speakers, but also serve as salient dimensions of ethnic identity.”\textsuperscript{16} The entry further gives three dimensions of socio-structural variables that impact Ethnolinguistic Vitality, which include demographic, institutional support, and status. Demography in this context is demonstrated by the sheer number of speakers of a given language. If a language is of high Ethnolinguistic Vitality within a given speech community, it will likewise be supported by the three factors above. In the Israeli context, Hebrew and English are recursively supported by demography, institutional support (funding in schools and language immersion programs, signage, etc.), and status, marking high EV. Arabic on the other hand is of low EV in Jewish Israeli communities, and thereby maintains a generally low status. Amara (2006) describes Arabic as a degraded language in the Jewish sector in Israel as EV is correlated with the socioeconomic status of a language’s learners, the social status (prestige value) of a language, and a language’s symbolic status. Israel’s primary Arabic speakers are Arab citizens of the state, who comprise about 20\% of Israel’s population. In 2014, 52.6 \% of Arab citizens of Israel were under the poverty line.\textsuperscript{17} Arabs in Israel are often feared to be the “fifth column”, and therefore are often conflated with the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza, as well as hostile neighboring Arab states.

Disregarding the symbolic power Arabic has amassed as a Jewish language, simply hearing Arabic arouses deep fear in many Jewish Israelis due to feelings of insecurity and danger, which gives the language the symbolic power of representing terror and violence in Israel on the part of Israeli Arabs and Palestinians. The lack of basic comprehension of the language and legitimate trauma from recent Israeli history has reified those fears. With these considerations at play, Arabic is not reputed as a language with high EV, but rather one which must be decoded or erased. The hegemonic language ideologies of Jewish Israelis have deemed it only normal and sensible to study Arabic for the purpose of thwarting future violence directed toward Israel, as opposed to studying for the purpose of speaking with Arab peers in an affiliative setting. This set of ideologies deeply influences the way Israelis relate to Arabic in the public sphere and in educational institutions, even prior to having sophisticated understandings of the geo-socio-political landscape in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Motivation in language learning is likewise critical for **interpellation**, the positioning of oneself in relation to an ideology.\(^{18}\) This contextualizes the symbolic power wielded by language learning. Of the aforementioned prescribed categories of motivation, some promote asymmetrical relations between the native speaker and the language learner, whereas others attempt to create a more equal power dynamic between the native speaker and the learner. The more asymmetrical relations tend to refer to language acquisition for the purpose of controlling the subordinate native population, as in the case of those learning Arabic for military or security-related means. Those who fit into the latter subset of language learners who are attempting to balance the power scale by way of acquisition, would easily be described by Janet Thomas, Linda, Ishtla Singh, and Jean Stilwell. Peccei. *Language, Society and Power: An Introduction*. London: Routledge, 2004. Print. PP. 17-18
McIntosh as displaying acts of “Linguistic Atonement”. She defines this term as “a stance in which language enthusiasms and longings are enacted through linguistic behavior as well as metalinguistically performed, in hopes that such attitudes might mitigate a history of colonial discrimination.” She employs this term to speak of language learners who are “atoning” for previous political, social, and linguistic oppression of a subordinate group by learning to communicate with members of that group in their native language. The case she is looking at is the outgrowth of colonialism in Kenya, as she describes the linguistic facets of reconciliation between White and Black Kenyans. The stark point of difference between her case and this study is that White Kenyans tend to learn the more informal register, focusing on slang. Jewish Israelis on the other hand have formally implemented a system that has created a “sentiment-free” (non-expressive), formal register of Arabic, with efforts to institutionalize and prioritize the acquisition of informal registers as the undercurrent and reaction to the former (the establishment). This therefore keeps Arabic education in Jewish schools under the purview of the privileged class. McIntosh highlights a similar issue of unintentional power wielded by the privileged class even when speaking the language of the native group. White Kenyan settlers create a semblance of what McIntosh terms “Moral Nationalism”; there is a certain degree to which they care for the wellbeing of the Kenyan people and are interested in being good citizens, just as long as they maintain their level of comfort and integration. McIntosh notes that white Kenyans work toward “locating their comfort zone- that mode of moral consciousness in which white Kenyans use their own yardstick- [which] requires particular blind spots and particular

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ideas of the good.” This case matches the Moral Nationalism present in the Israeli political center and left. There is a tremendous amount of lip service done by Jewish Israeli politicians and to correcting the wrongs of the occupation, the Nakba, and lack of equal rights and opportunities, but Palestinian citizens of Israel and Israeli Jews on the far left question the degree to which the Jewish Israeli society would be willing to compromise their own comfort to redress Palestinian grievances. In the context of Arabic education, studying Arabic for the purpose of impending peace perhaps is a manifestation of Moral Nationalism; most Israeli Jews, even those who speak Arabic, do not have meaningful, affiliative interactions with Palestinians. In terms of Arabic-speaking Israeli Jews, this might be an outgrowth of studying Arabic in environments that did not promote conversational skills or Spoken Arabic altogether. Some of the subjects in this study reported being presented with opportunities to speak Arabic with Palestinians and simply could not follow through due to lack of confidence and proficiency. However, the majority of the subjects asserted that there is some sort of imperative to study Arabic as an Israeli Jew. Arabic study thus becomes some sort of corrective mechanism in a functionally monolingual country that often forgets it is situated in the Middle East.

The Role of Diglossia in the Symbolic Power of Language Learning

Like many other languages, Arabic is a diglossic language. According to the Encyclopedia Brittanica, Diglossia entails “the coexistence of two varieties of the same language throughout a speech community. Often, one form is the literary or prestige dialect, and the other

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is a common dialect spoken by most of the population.”

The formal register is known as Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), Literary Arabic, or Fusha, which is the lingua franca of the Arab world, and is basically consistent with the language of the Quran and other Islamic texts. This register is the language of the news, the radio, signage, and transportation systems, as well as in religious practice, literature, and other cultural forms. ‘āmmiyya, or the dialect or colloquial form(s), varies from one region to another. Palestinian (or Levantine) Arabic is thus spoken by local and diasporic Palestinians (including Palestinian citizens of Israel). ‘āmmiyya is used in casual speech, whereas MSA is reserved for the schools, media, mosques and churches. Arabic speakers usually perceive the use of the inappropriate register to be bizarre, foreign, or rude. In this case, Israelis or other foreigners who use MSA in informal environments may come off as pretentious or impersonal, therefore causing difficulty in communication and misunderstanding of pragmatic fine lines. I will expand on this significantly in my discussion of Language Education Policy (LEP), but it is important to note that Arabic studies in Israel have increasingly focused on MSA as opposed to Palestinian Arabic. This primary focus is as such since proficiency in MSA would enable comprehension of news media, Islamic texts, and literary works, which are more beneficial for furthering the purposes of Israeli security, whereas acquisition of Palestinian Arabic would enable an individual to function amongst and communicate with Palestinian and Israeli-Arab peers. This brief analysis is simplistic and not universally applicable, but it lays the groundwork for understanding motives in language learning. In this study, and in other previous analyses of Arabic education, the register that the student chooses to learn can may say a lot about their assessment of linguistic necessity. By the

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same token, if an institution offers a course in ʿāmmiyya, it may also index a certain degree of
deferece to local native Arabic speakers. I mistakenly did not build in a specific question
regarding exposure to and or study of ʿāmmiyya, yet most subjects reflected on this issue in some
capacity without a formal prompt.

The question of which form of Arabic must be taught has consistently been central to the
discourse around Arabic language education in Israel. This issue is tied in heavily with what
teachers are equipped to teach, how the military establishment weighs in on the issue with
respect to its own needs, and to what specific communities and schools choose to prioritize. I
will continue to discuss the educational landscape and the implications of Language Education
Policy in the following chapter.
Language Education Policy and Arabic Education in Israel

Language Policy and Language Education Policy

According to Silver and Lwin (2004), Language Policy “includes a community’s linguistic practices and beliefs as well as interventions to plan/change those practices or beliefs.”

In Israel today, Language Policy takes hold in governmental procedures, legal settings and codes, and in the linguistic landscape. As previously mentioned, Israel’s official languages are Hebrew and Arabic, with English ever-present as a de-facto third official language. This linguistic status quo has been maintained since the pre-state period, and has not significantly been modified in any legal document since that period. Uhlmann (2011) notes that the static nature of Language Policy at large has stymied any sort of progress regarding Arabic education.

I will expand on the correlation between the linguistic status quo and Arabic studies in my discussion of the educational landscape on page 32. Silver and Lwin continue to describe Language Policy by delineating two systems by which such policies are codified. De facto Language Policies are pre-existing norms and expectations regarding language use, which have the effect of policy. De jure Language Policies, on the other hand, are norms and expectations regarding language use that are regulated by legal codes or documents. The pervasive role of English perfectly exemplifies a de facto policy, whereas the extensive policies regarding signage, language rights, and educational requirements are de jure Language Policies. The Israeli debates

on linguistic pluralism are significantly represented in the series of bills that have been presented to the Knesset speaker and ministers regarding Israel’s official languages, languages of instruction, and language rights of minorities in Israel. In 2014, MK Shimon Ohayon of the Yisrael Beiteinu party, along with a number of other MKs from his party as well as members of the Likkud party, presented a bill that would limit the scope of the status of Arabic in Israel. They proposed that with the exception of intercity directional signage, Israel no longer would need to be accountable for providing civic documents and public information/signage in Arabic, overturning a policy that has required Arabic in all of those contexts since the mandatory period. They asserted that in most states, language policies are contingent on the language of the majority of the population. The bill did not pass, and neither did previous iterations of the same bill that were proposed in 2008 and 2011. The efforts to reinforce the solely Jewish character of the state was met with great rebuke, including criticism by Reuven Rivlin, Israel’s president. Liora Halperin describes the bill as part of a larger project of “enshrining Jewishness into Israel’s basic laws.” However, although this did not pass on a state level, a number of private institutions make a point of excluding Arabic from signage, as Arabs are not expected or welcomed visitors in such environments (most notably, Ir David’s Visitor Center and exhibits, which are operated by Elad). Individuals have likewise engaged in vandalism of signs with

26 Elad is an organization that determines to gain authority and custody over Jewish religious and historical sites in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. With a particularly right-wing, Religious Zionist orientation, Elad is interested in framing their sites under an exclusively Jewish lens and for a Jewish (or explicitly non-Arab/Palestinian) audience.
Language Policy can be easily understood by examining the following three subsets of planning mechanisms: Corpus Planning, Status Planning, and Acquisition Planning. Corpus Planning refers to the process of standardization of a language, including its grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, etc. This subset furthers the goals and interests of a prescriptivist language planning agenda, as opposed to descriptivist (true-to-life) approach. Status Planning accounts for the positioning of languages in society. Acquisition Planning refers to resource allocation for the study of a given language, and support networks for language educators. The profound effect of intentional, and often prescriptive planning broadens the study of Language Policy to rather be called Language Policy and Planning, or LPP.

**Fig. 1  Social Scales for LPP**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supra-/International Organizations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National/Regional Governments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Groups (NGOs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social/Religious institutions; Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9.1 from Silver and Lwin (2004)\(^{28}\)

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Silver and Lwin employ this diagram as a means of representing an established hierarchy of entities enforcing or reshaping LPs. Shohamy (2006) clarifies that individuals may play a greater role than this ordering may suggest. Individuals often have the autonomy to interpret policies in their respective contexts to greater or lesser extents. This perhaps is the crux of the policy-oriented elements of this study. By looking at the motivations and experiences of those who have advanced and or will advance through Arabic education in the Jewish sector, it is opportune to capitalize on their understanding of the means by which Arabic education can and must improve, and what role the language should play in Israel today. As rising academics, teachers, security officials, and leaders in civil society, examining personal, evolving relationships with Arabic may likewise be formative as enactors of language policy and its symbolic entailments. The interesting phenomenon at play here is these individuals’ capacities to determine and transform implementational spaces. Hornberger (2002) coined the term to describe “areas in language policies that can be leveraged or exploited to promote multilingual education.” Lwin and Silver (2004) bring an example from Compton (2010), in which Compton demonstrated that individuals on the lower tiers (i.e. more local and small scale) of the LPP scale all incorporated their beliefs about deafness and ASL to expand the implementational space in American Sign Language education in their school system. This comparatively occurs in relation to beliefs about Arabic and Arab-speaking people in Arabic education in the Jewish sector. I will elaborate further on this issue in my discussion of teacher bias and encouragement on page 81.

In order to focus on the particulars of this study, I am less interested in LPP in a broad sense, but am more interested in its manifestation in Language Education Policy (LEP). LEP is far more explicit and directed toward pedagogical change and curriculum development. The International Network for Language Education Policy Studies (INLEPS) defines Language Education Policy as “the process through which the ideals, goals, and contents of a language policy can be realized in education practices.” It is worth noting that one aspect of Language Education Policy is understanding the failure of certain educational institutions to implement a given policy within particular school systems or individual schools. Although a policy may be clearly articulated in a document or publication, teachers and administrators may “normalize behaviors around language education [that] run counter to published, overt policies.” These normalized behaviors, as in the case of de facto LPs, become the unchanging reality of educational institutions.

The Evolution of Arabic Education in Israel

When it comes to Arabic education in Israeli Jewish schools, policy is both top-down and bottom-up. Modeling a top-down method of LEP, governmental and military needs dictate curricula and reinforce the military’s entanglement in Arabic studies in Jewish schools. In 1976, in response to military encouragement (see page 42) after the Yom Kippur War, Arabic was proposed to be a compulsory subject in grades 9-12 by a Knesset Committee. Col. Atzmon urged

the Minister of Education at the time, Yitzchak Navon, that Arabic be a compulsory subject from grades 7-12. Both of these initiatives were thoroughly ignored. Even when initiatives are supported or enacted by the Ministry of Education, implementation is subverted or “diluted” on the local level (in schools and municipalities).

In 1986, the Shif’at Unit was established as a joint project of the Ministry of Education and the Military Intelligence, and was initiated to work closely with the existing TELEM unit. Its purpose was to focus more on Arabic from a “civilian perspective”. In 2001, the program was disbanded by the General Director of the Ministry of Education, Ronit Tirosh. Tirosh may have shut down the program due to budget cuts, but she admitted that she found obligating students to study Arabic against their will did not serve the interests of Israeli security needs.33

The Ministry of Education released a revised curriculum, prioritizing the study of Modern Standard Arabic, with options for the study of Spoken Arabic in the 12th grade. The outlined goals of the program include mastery of Arabic grammar, being able to speak Spoken Arabic, familiarity with Arabic history and culture, and listening comprehension. As enshrined by the creation of the 1995-1996 Public Education Law34, and enacted in the fall of 1996, The Ministry of Education has made the study of a third language (English being the second) compulsory between grades 7-10. Since then, the Ministry has placed heavy emphasis on Arabic studies over the alternative languages offered (usually French), yet there are ways in which students often dodge the Arabic requirement, particularly after 9th grade. These requirements are still in effect today. The Ḥok L’Ḥayim Meshutafim (“Law for Shared Lives/Shared Society”, in

translation) passed in 2000 in response to the impending violence of the Second Intifada, emphasized the study of Arabic for the following reasons: “...to know the language, the culture, the history, the heritage and the unique tradition of the Arab population and other population groups in Israel, and to recognize the equal rights of all citizens of Israel.” The most recent discourse surrounding statewide Arabic LEP has concerned the Arabic Language Bill, which MK Oren Hazan presented in the Knesset in the Fall of 2015. The bill passed in the Knesset in late October 2015, aiming to implement Arabic education programs beginning in the first grade at all Jewish schools in Israel. Although the bill proved to be enormously successful in terms of number of votes in the Knesset, MK Hazan has since been expelled from all Knesset committees due to chronic absence at Knesset votes and a reputation write the with drug and sex-related scandals. The bill has not led to any serious changes in policy on the ground, but has the potential to develop given the support of the Ministry of Education and subsets of the Israeli populus.

Reflecting a grassroots, bottom-up model, families and communities are and have historically been vocal about what sort of programs they would or would not support at their children’s schools. In the early 1990s parents in the Tel Aviv area rallied around a campaign to bring Spoken Arabic in their children’s schools, thus leveraging the local schools and Ministry of Education.

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Education to pilot a new program in Spoken Arabic. In contrast to the efforts based in the state schools, the NGO-sector has been a foreground of development in formal Arabic language education. Founded by Amin Khalaf and Lee Gordon in 1997, The Hand in Hand Center for Jewish-Arab Education in Israel serves to forge a shared society between Jews and Arabs in Israel on the basis of bilingual and bicultural education, as well as community organizing and engagement. The system currently operates schools in six cities, reaching a total 1,320 students.38

Aside from the growth the system has achieved in just under twenty years, the school received a boost in support (both in Israel and from diaspora communities) following the 2014 arson attack on the Max Rayne Hand in Hand School in Jerusalem. Proponents of the system argue that they have created genuine integration in a unique and an unprecedented, affiliative language learning environment. Currently there are groups of families in Be’er Sheva and the Tel Aviv-Jaffa area who demand permission to open Hebrew-Arabic bilingual high schools to supplement the Hand-in-Hand primary and middle schools in each of these cities.39 Their advocacy efforts have largely failed, as the municipalities have cited that intergroup relationships beyond early childhood are unproductive and threatening, and those concerns supersede the interests of the parents in bilingual and bicultural education.40 The issue of family interest around Arabic study will resurface in my results and discussion, in which the subjects assert whether they find it important that their children (either in the future or present) learn Arabic, and whether they would be investing in teaching them in the home at all.

Arabic in the Israeli Educational Landscape- A Current Snapshot

The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) reports that in 2011, there were approximately 141,000 students in the Hebrew education system who were enrolled in Arabic courses. The MFA also found that only 25% of students in tenth grade study Arabic, which is the likely result of schools that do not enforce the language requirement beyond ninth grade (despite the maintenance of the requirements in grades 7-10 from the 1995-1996 Public Education Law). Arabic studies are not required in the eleventh and twelfth grades, yet students who wish to continue Arabic studies can elect the program in Arabic/Middle Eastern Studies for their major and matriculation exams if the school offers such a program. This is the suggested track for those interested in placement in the military intelligence, and is the trajectory taken by many of the subjects in this study.

The MFA asserted that 9.5% of Jewish Israelis are conversationally fluent in Arabic, while Yehouda Shenhav counters those figures in his recent study presented on Arabic language education at Tel Aviv University (December 2015). He found that although 10% of Israeli Jews claimed “good knowledge of Arabic”, 6% stated that they can recognize the letters of the Arabic alphabet, and only 1.5% indicated that they could read and write in Arabic. The low levels of proficiency reported have been linked to the insufficient amount of time devoted to Arabic studies (optional two hours for grades 5-7, 3 mandatory hours for grades 7-10, and 3-8 hours for

grades 11-12), under-qualified and under-supported teachers and professors, and generally low levels of motivation to study the language (as discussed previously in relation to Ethnolinguistic Vitality and Arabic’s perceived importance in Jewish Israeli society). From the perspective of language acquisition, providing minimal time for studying a foreign language, especially when the learner has only begun to learn at/immediately preceding/following puberty, can only result in grim prospects for proficiency or fluency. This issue is further exacerbated when language instructors are products of the same language learning system.

On Gilad Halpern’s TLV1 podcast episode titled “Foul Language: The Politicization of Arabic Teaching in Israeli Schools”, Yonatan Mendel recounted the trifecta of the Arabic education system in Israel, comprising Arabic programs at Jewish schools, the military, and the universities. He told of a cyclical mechanism that comprises Jewish Israeli students who progress to positions in the security apparatus and then resort to teaching Arabic to replenish the supply of Israeli Arabic speakers. As the cycle regenerates and creates a routinized system of non-proficient Israeli Arabic speakers, the language education cannot improve. He implores Arabic language programs to step away from the security-based rhetoric and curricula, as it is a clear impediment to acquisition of critical language skills. Mendel is likewise skeptical of the widespread fear of native Arabic-speakers as teachers in Jewish schools (Palestinian citizens of Israel, Druze, etc.). Their absence from Arabic programs in Jewish schools, according to Mendel and Donitsa-Schmidt, Inbar, and Shohamy (2004), is rather ludicrous. The state boasts a whopping 21% Arab population, and yet the number of Arab Arabic teachers in Jewish schools

is under 5% of total Arabic teachers (closer to 1.7%). Donitsa-Schmidt, Inbar, and Shohamy describe how Arabic has ironically become the subject area with the fewest Arab teachers in Jewish schools; since it is not taught in a “neutral” (non-militaristic) method, it is difficult to retain Arab teachers in these settings even if the school hires them. An effort by the Ministry of Education to integrate Arab Arabic teachers in the 1990s was wildly unsuccessful and subsequently disbanded. They also raise the issue of Jewish Arabic teachers who are not interested in raising the percentage of Arabic speakers. They claims that they fear that Arabs will detract from the curriculum, and pose a threat to their livelihoods (their teaching positions). The Abraham Fund Initiative’s *Ya Salaam* program was created as a corrective mechanism to a stagnant, underdeveloped Arabic language pedagogy in Jewish schools; its successful, expansive, and yet limited scope will be discussed below. Uhlmann (2011) recommends that prospective Arabic teachers, both Jews and non-Jews, complete their teaching certificates at Arab colleges (immersive settings with fluent Arabic speaking students and instructors), therefore breaking the cycle of mediocrity and non-proficiency.

Although there is rather sparse data on Arabic studies on the university level, Uhlmann, Soen (2010), and Donitsa-Schmidt, Inbar, and Shohamy create an account of the demographics of teachers and students, and what sorts of challenges arise in these settings. Uhlmann focuses on how academics are largely influential forces in the Ministry of Education’s Arabic Subject Committee, yet there is no connection drawn between the limited skill set of high school graduates and the skill set of students entering Arabic language and Arabic language instruction

programs on the university level. He succinctly sums up the grim reality of academic Arabic studies as follows:

“The language ideology of academic Arabic instruction, is, thus, critical to the formation of the language ideology that pervades Arabic instruction in the Jewish sector. Academia accentuates the Latinization of Arabic instruction and enforces a self-perpetuating cycle of non-proficiency. Non-proficient academics at university departments that do not require proficiency in Arabic produce non-proficient graduates who become school teachers and implement a curriculum that itself does not encourage proficiency and that produces non-proficient graduates, who then enroll at the university departments where they do not acquire proficiency and subsequently make up the next round of non-proficient teachers and academics.”

Uhlmann elaborates on this issue by adding that teachers and professors tend not to use Arabic outside of the classroom, whether that be in their personal interactions or in preferred literature, music, etc. For him, this marks a strange ingenuousness or paradox modeled in the classroom. If the teacher does not use Arabic outside of the classroom, and perhaps is not proficient enough to do so, how can the teacher expect the students to use Arabic expressively in non-curricular settings?

Despite a stagnant situation in Jewish schools, various universities are increasing the presence of Arab instructors and administrators, who are working toward shifting the reality in these settings. It is too soon to evaluate the effects of this demographic change on the culture and success of graduating students. An increase in both Arab and Mizrahi students and faculty may

have the capacity to reframe Arab-ness in these settings as positive social capital. The results remain to be seen.

**Ya Salaam: TAFI’s Expansive Intervention**

The Abraham Fund Initiatives (Yozmot Keren Avraham) has likewise been a formative voice in Arabic education in Israel. In 2005, TAFI introduced a program titled “Language as a Cultural Bridge” (“Hasafah K’gesher Tarbuti”), in order to bolster Arabic language programming in Jewish schools, and Hebrew language programming at Arab schools. In developing Arabic language programming, TAFI has determined that teachers must be native Arabic speakers, who are given the opportunity for teacher development through the fund. The Arabic curriculum, *Ya Salaam*, has a strict focus on culture and colloquial speech, thereby allowing students to translate their skills into productive “Partner School Encounters” (Arab and Jewish schools are partnered for encounters or *mifgashim*). The program began at in the fifth and sixth grades in fifteen schools in Haifa and Karmiel, and now has expanded to about two hundred schools (most of which are located in Northern Israel). The program works in conjunction with the Ministry of Education and its Arabic language division, yet the organization itself operates independently of the government (as do other NGOs). It is noteworthy that TAFI seeks Arabic programming and bilingual education more broadly as a means of brokering tolerance downplaying Jewish stereotypes of Arab citizens in Israel, and is explicitly disdaining of military-oriented Arabic curricula and pedagogy. According to an evaluation of the program,

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completed by The Henrietta Szold Institute, alumni of the program “showed less biased attitudes concerning stereotypes attributed to either group (Jewish or Arab). More students in the experimental group than in the comparison group (students who did not participate in the program) perceived both peoples as honest, modest, and brave – and as arrogant, violent, and warmongering – in the same degree.”

The report also demonstrated that in a majority of graduates, there was a tangible increase in academic achievement in Arabic studies, greater mastery of MSA, and more positive views of Arabs, Arabic language, and Arabic culture. Graduates of the program claimed that the experience caused them to espouse more peaceful or at least civil associations with the language as compared to the more violent associations they had at the onset of the program. These testimonies closely resemble those of some of the subjects of this study, although the subjects are too old to have been a part of this specific program.

TAFI has also been a huge proponent of the 2015 Arabic language bill, about which the organization wrote the following in a press release:

“The organization continues to call upon the government to continue with the positive steps to strengthening education for shared lives of Jews and Arabs in Israel, including the installation of encounters of Jewish and Arab children from kindergarten and for the duration of their years of study; cross-sector integration of teachers on a large scale, also in subject areas that are unrelated to language; [and] broadening the study of civics and the establishment of the bilingual educational track (u’mayasdo shel zerem chinuchi du-l’shoni).”


The Role of Academic and Research Institutions

The last and arguably most relevant facets of activism in Israel on issues of Arabic education (as well as multilingual and multicultural education in a wider scope) are academic and research institutions. The previously mentioned comprehensive report of Ya Salaam released by The Henrietta Szold Institute is evidence of just one example of a number of institutions that have taken interest in the development and improvement of Arabic curricula and pedagogy. Over the past year, The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute held a working group titled “Multilingualism in Israeli Society: Language, Memory, and Ethics”, which focused primarily on the confounding relationship of various languages in day-to-day Israeli culture, as well as raising awareness of the occurrences of multilingualism and the challenges those incidents pose for constructing national identity. In addition to these opportunities for theoretical discussions on issues of Arabic education, Elana Shohamy, along with other scholars of language acquisition and LEP, has organized a number of conferences to facilitate an innovative discourse on language testing and pedagogical methods. These conferences engage both academics, school administrators, and language educators as a means of creating impact on all levels of policy implementation.

Failures in Implementation: The Limits of Language Education Policy

As I mentioned earlier, the existence of specific policies does not ensure its implementation. One prominent aspect of policy that is poorly implemented is the enforcement of Arabic studies in tenth grade in schools across the state, and moreover in the schools that do not offer Arabic programming altogether (namely religious schools and low-achieving schools in
the periphery). Another instance of policy gone awry can relate to content of Arabic curricula.

On March 10th, 2016, Sue Surkes from the Times of Israel reported that a Jewish Arabic teacher had been accused of “educating for hatred” by the Ministry of Education. The teacher had allegedly presented students with explicitly anti-Jewish Quranic and contemporary texts in order to persuade the students of the ill-will of Moslems. MK Ayelet Nahmias-Verbin wrote the following to the Minister of Education, Naftali Bennet, in the hopes that he would seriously discipline this teacher:

“Rather than educating for coexistence through the study of Israel’s second official language, the teacher is educating to hate Arabs...particularly today, special emphasis should be placed on education for coexistence and prevention of any attempts by a teacher to incite students against an entire population.”

According to the article, the teacher expressed regret, but that is the extent to which the disciplinary process took place. One student responded to this event on Facebook, condemning the intentions of and assertions made by the teacher. Granted that this story is an extreme portrayal of security-centered (and fear-mongering) Arabic studies, the content is not a far stretch from any Arabic class that is focused on engaging students in the language for military purposes. Teachers’ motivations and language ideologies are tantamount to student motivations in these settings, if the teacher is transparent about their expectations for language use. I will return to this issue as I examine students’ perceptions of teacher motivation, and whether teachers overtly transmitted any sort of language learning “agenda” onto the students.

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As evident by this story, there is no prescribed method of quelling violent attitudes towards Muslims and Arabs; however some teachers use the Arabic classroom to facilitate affiliative interactions with Arabic language and culture. One teacher I met described a common trope of entering a classroom, noticing that her students had written “mavet la’aravim” or “Death to Arabs” on the blackboard. After she questioned their actions, they explained that they simply did not want to be studying Arabic. They proclaimed that Arabs did not and do not make any positive contributions to society, and that they are violent and backward. The teacher subsequently wrote the word “Algebra” on the board, and demonstrated that word, along with the field of study, in fact originate in the Arab world. She then pulled up a picture of Maimonides, the great medieval Jewish scholar. Once they recognized his image, she told them that most of his writings were initially in Arabic, and were only later translated into Hebrew. Although this group of students were behaviorally challenging, they toned down their racist rhetoric from that point onward.

Uhlmann (2011) illustrates the dismal future of Arabic studies considering the host of geopolitical considerations that devalue the field, but the teacher’s anecdote above models the possibilities that arise when teachers maximize their implementational space. However, undermining the racist undertones (or overtones) of security-based curricula remains to be a challenge, which I will elaborate on in the following chapter on the lasting entanglement of the military in Arabic education in Israel.
“Know Thy Enemy”: The Educational Landscape and Early Exposure to Arabic in a Conflict Zone

Early Debates on Arabic Studies

The military has been a ubiquitous and pervasive force in Arabic education, even preceding Israeli statehood. Gil Eyal, in his book titled “The Disenchantment of the Orient”, describes the initial attempts of Jewish security officials in Mandatory Palestine to commandeer Arabic education in Jewish schools and at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The academics hailed from the Orientalist tradition (“Mizraḥanut”), trying to understand the habits and culture of their Arab neighbors by learning the language and examining their texts. Their guise toward the Arab population was both aspirational and paternalistic; they had much to learn from the lifestyle of the native people, but did not want to internalize what they perceived to be the “backwardness” of Arabs. Although wanting to blend into the ways of the land, they did not want to incorporate Arabs into the Arabic education programs at Jewish schools. This decision marked the inception of the Askenazation of Arabic pedagogy in Jewish Israeli society; this established a hierarchy that devalued and distrusted the native speakers and their capacity to enrich Arabic education. The academics considered themselves to be “Arabists”, who could successfully use Arabic to sustain peaceful neighborly relations and securely establish an

uncompromised Jewish national identity. They studied the language in what became known as the “Kisterian method”- named for Meir J. Kister of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, who brought serious philological study of Arabic to the university (which only recently transitioned to more modern, acquisition-based methods of language learning).

The Military Entanglement in Arabic Education in Israel

The military establishment increased its influence over time, subverting the interests of the academics in distancing the military from the education system. Yonatan Mendel, author of “The Creation of Israeli Arabic”, traces the militarization of Arabic in Israel. He thoroughly elaborates throughout his book on the pressure mechanisms military officials put on the Ministry of Education, and how the ministry and the military discovered that creating a critical mass of Arabic speaking Jewish was of mutual self-interest. Since the 1960s, military representatives have served on all inquiry committees relating to Arabic language education through the Ministry of Education. The military focus became a dramatically more effective tool in garnering student motivation following 1967, when Israel captured the West Bank (as well as Gaza, the Sinai, and the Golan Heights). Not only did the outcome of the Six-Day War highlight the might and prestige of the IDF (Israel Defense Forces) and its intelligence capacities, but likewise gave the opportunity for Israelis to enter Palestinian communities and cities in the West Bank and have gainful interactions with the population of Arabic speakers. The latter point is especially poignant considering that Israel’s Arab population had been under military rule from early statehood until November of 1966, as they were considered to be a threatening “fifth column” in the new Jewish state; therefore, Israeli Jews had no means of understanding the critical mass of
Arabic speakers who dwelled in their midst. There likewise was a sudden, sharp increase in Palestinian workers at Israeli businesses, which also contributed to the higher frequency of interaction between Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabic speakers. Moreover, following the tragedy and major losses of the Yom Kippur War (1973) in the Israeli collective experience, the military intelligence established the TELEM unit to prevent future attacks of that magnitude. TELEM is an acronym for “Tipuaḥ Limudei Aravit u’Mizraḥanut”, which translates to “fostering Arabic and Oriental/Middle Eastern Studies”. The unit was created as a preparatory mechanism for students entering the ranks of the military intelligence, especially Unit 8200 (SIGINT). The program, which is featured in Jewish high schools across the country, is structured so that students learn to decode Arabic-language materials in order to thwart potential terror attacks. If students successfully thwart an imaginary attack, they are told that they have saved a great number of students at their school from alleged imminent danger. Or Kashti cites that lesson plans end with the following byline: “The Arabic language is essential for existence and coexistence in the State of Israel.” 52

The program is far more expansive than Arabic studies in the school setting, allowing students to take part in extracurricular seminars ( Modi’in Ba’ofek, or “Intelligence on the Horizon”) and pre-army training programs (Gadna Mizra anim, or the “Oriental Class/Battalion”), as well as conferences for program participants and a national Arabic competition. These comprehensive activities give high-achieving Arabic students the chance to develop their language skills and hear from experts in the various subdivisions of Military Intelligence in Israel. An Arabic teacher who is involved in the program told Kashti that young,

attractive and articulate soldiers run these seminars, modeling a high degree of prestige for aspiring intelligence corps members. On TELEM’s website, it is written that participation in these programs and studying five units of Arabic (the highest level on the matriculation exams) distinguishes these students as candidates for the intelligence units that employ the use of Arabic.

The Irony of Security-Oriented Arabic in Coexistence NGOs

One complex phenomenon that I will examine further in the results and discussion sections connects to the outcome of motivational shifts- specifically the shift from a security motive to a peace-oriented one. Uhlmann (2011) confirms that generally speaking, Jews who are proficient in Arabic gained their skills while in the security apparatus. He uses this point to direct attention toward the prospect of including these talented individuals as part of the Arabic education system at Jewish schools, whereas I would like to redirect attention toward those individuals who gain proficiency in the security apparatus and subsequently choose to work at peace-oriented NGOs. There is a terrible irony when individuals “shift gears” and use Arabic learned in military settings for the advancement of peace through interfaith work and Palestinian solidarity initiatives. However, saying that individuals “shift gears” (i.e. motivations) for Arabic learning and use is perhaps an oversimplification in this case, as young students may be invested in these causes but simply became a part of the security apparatus or military Arabic due to the conscription process or through normative high school Arabic curricula. When I return to this phenomenon in my results and discussion, I will focus on two subjects who speak eloquently about how they explain their impressive Arabic to the Palestinians with whom they work. One
subject gained her skills in Unit 8200 of the military intelligence, while the other did not serve in
the military, but was first exposed to military-oriented Arabic in middle school.

Mendel also accounts for the unique case of Giv’at Ḥavivah. Giv’at Ḥavivah is a
coeexistence learning center in the center of Israel, which is run by the Hashomer Hatza’ir youth
movement. They have created notorious immersive Arabic programs, which serve Israelis and
Internationals, but notably host a number of programs for current and aspiring intelligence corps
members and officers. Programs such as The Oriental Classes, Soldier-Teachers, and Intelligence
on the Horizon have historically taken place at Giv’at Ḥavivah, utilizing materials printed with
the IDF letterhead. The dynamic that ensues by running such militaristic programs at a
coeexistence center is far from easy to grasp. The center has received numerous prizes for their
“humanist Zionism” and work toward a shared society (including the UNESCO Prize for Peace
Education in 2001), despite the pervasive presence of people in uniform.53

Now that I have thoroughly worked through two salient experiences that shape students
attitudes toward and motivations for studying Arabic, I will now turn to the impact of Mizrahi
identity on students’ motivations and experiences in Arabic studies. The next chapter will not
only add a layer on top of the previous educational and military experiences of the students, but
will also delve into the ways in which Jewish interactions with Arab-ness extend beyond the
Ashkenazi-normative discourse of the Arab as the “Other.”

53 Mendel, Yonatan. The Creation of Israeli Arabic: Security and Politics in Arabic Studies in
Mizrahi Identity and Arabic Language Use

“We Look Like the Enemy”: The Great Aliyah and De-arabization Efforts⁵⁴

In this chapter I am interested in constructing and deconstructing an account of Mizrahi identity in the larger discourse on Jewish ethnic identity in Israel. The connection between Arabic learning and Arabic-speaking heritage is deeply entangled in Ashkenazi-normative positions on Arabic (as the language of the “Other”), but is infinitely more complex. Before discussing the evolution and importance of Mizrahi identity, I must explain the precarious nature of terminology on this subject. I am intentionally choosing to use the term “Mizrahi” as opposed to “Arab-Jew” or “Sepharadi”, despite their interchangeability in limited contexts. The term “Mizrahi”, as employed in sociological literature applies specifically to the ethnic identity of Jewish individuals whose families originate in the Arab and Moslem world. “Mizrahi” is the more widely used term by Israelis who hail from those regions, as “Sepharadi” more often is used in reference to a religious rite, and Arab-Jew is only used by a small minority who are willing to directly index Arab-ness as a primary marker of their identity. The use of “Mizrahi” is also rife with a number of problematics. It is an umbrella term that essentializes the identities of Jews from a wide swath of communities from the Middle East and N. Africa, who had no relation to one another before arrival in the State of Israel. Additionally, the term in translation means “Eastern”, which exudes an orientalist approach toward ethnic understanding, and

strangely includes Jews who come from areas to the west of Israel (the Maghreb). This implies that “Mizrahi” is a term that positions this ethnic group relative to Europe and as a requisite contrast to Ashkenazi-ness at-large.55

The Israeli dichotomization of Arabic as the language of the Arabs (whether that be Palestinians citizens of Israel, Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Druze, Circassians, or speakers in the Arab world and beyond), or as a heritage language of a large sector of the Jewish population in Israel emerged prior to the founding of the State of Israel, but was deeply exacerbated with the Great Aliyah (1948-1952). During that period, approximately 800,000 Mizrahim, Jews from the Middle East and North Africa, immigrated to the new state of Israel. Upon arrival, many Mizrahim underwent a process of de-Arabization in order to integrate into society and bear less resemblance to their Israeli-Arab and Palestinian neighbors and enemies. Linguistically, this not only entailed the repression of numerous Judeo-Arabic dialects, but also the shaming of the lingering “Mizrahi accent” in Hebrew speech (a number of guttural phonemes and Arabic-inflected intonation)56. The number of Arabic-speaking Jews dropped drastically between the generation of immigrants to their children and grandchildren. A large number of Mizrahim, particularly of Iraqi origin, were enlisted in the army’s intelligence units and were employed as Arabic teachers at Jewish schools. Yet since the generation of native Arabic-speaking Jews began to age out of these school-based positions, Arabic pedagogy declined in quality, as Israeli Jews hold reservations regarding Arab teachers in their school

56 Although to a lesser extent, Hebrew with Ashkenazi/Yiddish-inflection was also stigmatized. It is plausible that the stigma of Ashkenazi-inflected Hebrew is now less acceptable in mainstream, secular Israeli society, considering that the phonology of Modern Israeli Hebrew more deeply reflects historically Sephardic pronunciations.
systems. Curricula were designed to prepare students for use in the military, consequently attracting students to the language for the purpose of opportunities in the military. Since Arabic was being presented as the key to understanding the enemy, many second generation Mizrahi Jews resisted or never fully acquired their parents’ Arabic.

**Language Attrition and Erasure**

Second generation Mizrahi Israelis grew up in a social culture that was hostile and xenophobic toward Mizrahim, and Arabic language and culture. Thus, the use of Arabic was largely shamed in the public sphere, contributing to the lack of transmission of the respective Arabic dialects to younger generations. According to Ella Shohat, “Zionism obliged Arab Jews to redefine themselves in relation to new ideological polarities, thus provoking the aporias of an identity constituted out of its own ruins.”

Lital Levy aptly describes the process of language attrition and the creation of new language ideologies and attitudes within Arabic-heritage Mizrahi communities as follows:

“Arabic, the language of the recent and almost tangible Arab-Jewish past, is a minefield of contradictions. It is at once intimate and forbidden, known and unknown, remembered and forgotten. It is consciously rejected, even disparaged, by some; nostalgically romanticized and at times “Orientalized” by others. Apart from the dwindling remnant who reached maturity in Arab countries, Jews no longer have access to Arabic in an unmediated, unselfconscious way. To speak it, or to speak of it, is to have a position on it.”

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The previously described dichotomization of Arabic as the language of the Arab-Jews or the language of Arab non-Jews has largely subverted the former. In his book on Language Education in Israel, Eliezer Ben-Rafael traces Israeli discourse on Arabic studies, and how those who determined curricula at the government and military level precluded the preeminence of heritage speaking families and their interests from the policy debate and discussion overall.59

3G Mizrahi Israelis

Following a somewhat typified immigrant trajectory, third generation Mizrahim have demonstrated a greater affinity toward their families’ history, culture, and language (both collectively, and individually) than did their parents’ generation. A segment of third generation Mizrahim have taken interest in resurfacing Arabic language and culture in explicitly Jewish Israeli settings, while others see a common history and culture with the Arabs as an opportunity to create a shared society and restore relations between Israel and Middle Eastern countries. Israeli Jews whose families immigrated from the Middle East and North Africa now comprise about fifty-one percent of the Jewish population in Israel. What was previously perceived to be a marginalized minority is now a slim majority, which significantly changes the visibility and acceptability of individuals from Mizrahi-heritage families. More notable, however, is the astounding figure of mixed Ashkenazi-Mizrahi families, which now stand at twenty percent of Jewish Israelis. One of every five Jewish Israelis comes from a mixed family, which likewise complicates and shifts the discourse around a binary discussion of intra-Jewish ethnic questions and the Ashkenazi-Mizrahi social cleavage. Out of the children of these mixed families, Talia

Sagiv notes a current trend of identifying with one ethnicity or the other as opposed to some amalgam of the two. The subjects in Sagiv’s study choose which persona would be most beneficial for their own personal success, largely internalizing biases and perceptions of prototypical Ashkenazim and Mizrahim that they have been exposed to in family, schooling, or other social environments, and through overt and subliminal messaging in the media.

Yet, there are many Israelis with Mizrahi heritage, from mixed or entirely Mizrahi-heritage families, who downplay the need to ethnically self-identify as Mizrahim. They either find it to be reminiscent of an irrelevant, antiquated, outdated discourse, or perhaps that identifying as a Mizrahi would entail discriminatory or subpar treatment by Ashkenazi peers, bosses, etc. Although the Ashkenazi-Mizrahi divide in Israel has lessened, Shem-Ṭov and Shemu’elof argue that the rifts still dictate a great deal of social and cultural interactions and assumptions in Israel today.

In “Tehudot Zehut; Dor Shlishi Kotev Mizrahit”, a collection of short stories and memoirs of third generation Mizrahi-identifying Israelis, the writers delve into deep, anecdotal analysis of structural racism and inclusion/exclusion in various Israeli spaces and contexts. The compilation aims to represent the plethora of subjectivities and identity politics of third generation Mizrahim. Shem-Ṭov and Shemu’elof opens the introduction to the series of memoirs by explaining that the Ashkenazi-Mizrahi rift is most definitely still alive and well in Israel, even if it does not manifest in the same intentionally destructive ways as it did for earlier generations of Mizrahim. Various writers respectively describe the experience of being banned from a nightclub on the basis of ethnicity, watching self-destructive behavior in children in Mizrahi

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enclaves in the periphery, and the uncanny internalization of peers’ disparagement of the Arabness of Arab waiters on travels in the Arab world. Lastly, one writer recalls when she found traditional Sephardic Jewish music discs sold in a market in Turkey, which made her resolve to unearth her own Mizrahi-ness.\(^{61}\)

Third generation Israelis with Mizrahi heritage are increasingly engaged in various cultural, religious, and social renewal organizations directed toward Mizrahi Jews, following trends typical of other third generation immigrant groups. Young adults, including a number of those survey and interviewed, are active in such institutions, and are interested in resurfacing an Arabic-speaking and culturally Arab past that has been thoroughly repressed as a consequence of years of Ashkenazic hegemony in Israel and previous generations’ failure to embrace their ethnolinguistic distinctiveness.\(^{62}\) This cultural, religious, and social renaissance is bolstered by the mild acceptance or at least awareness of Mizrahi culture and music, as well as Sephardic ritual practice, into mainstream Israeli society, music, and media. In a candor similar to “Tehudot Zehut”, “Nevi’im”, is a youtube docu-short series featuring Mizrahi civil society activists, each of whom share the empirical, structural, and personal obstacles they observe in their own experiences and in those of individuals in the communities in which they work and reside. The docu-shorts serve to literally divert the gaze of Ashkenazi viewers into Mizrahi spaces, to overcome the dominant, essentialized representations of Mizrahim as lazy, flippant, fascist/anti-Arab, religious, superstitious, decadent, hyper-orientalized, blue-collar criminals. The filmography zooms in and out of Mizrahi neighborhoods and homes, duelly humanizing and


exposing a somewhat desperate reality in disparate areas. The writers and speakers express the multi-faceted fabric of their respective communities’ and experiences as a means of undoing years of structural damage to and over-essentialization of a broad swath of Mizrahi identities. The protagonists locate their literary voice somewhere in the liminal space between the mainstream and the margins, and explore the gradient of marked and unmarked ethnic spaces in Israeli society. The preeminent theme across both “Nevi’im” and “Tehudot Zehut” is the concept of Mizrahi existence and culture taking place “out of sight and out of mind” of the Israeli mainstream consciousness. What does enter the mainstream is a gross appropriation of what takes place in the periphery, particularly with respect to the so-called habits of members of these respective communities. Bourdieu, a French sociologist, coined the term “habitus” to describe the process of nurturing, improvising, and adapting socio-cultural habits and interests within the confines of a community or family unit. This term applies to this discussion of the bounds or fluidity of Mizrahi identity, as it elevates the notion that different individuals and families have not made use of Arabic in a way that is unique and subjective. Not all Mizrahi Jews have Arabic as a heritage language (some other heritage languages include Berber, Ladino, Turkish, Farsi, French, Italian, etc.), although the amalgamation of all possible Mizrahi heritage backgrounds has lent itself to the inaccurate assumption that all Mizrahi Jews rejected Arabic. This clarification furthers the idea that attempting to paint a singular image of Mizrahi life and language use is therefore glaringly futile.

“Ha’am Doresh Ketzev Mizrahi”: Cultural Representations of Appeals to Middle Eastern Heritage and Regional Normalcy

In Lior Narkis and Omer Adam’s 2014 pop sensation titled “Mahapecha Shel Simcha”, the chorus chimes in mid-song with the chant “Ha’am doresh ketzev mizrahi”, meaning “the nation demands a Mizrahi beat”. Playing off of the 2011 tent protests’ refrain “Ha’am doresh tzedek chevrati”, or “the nation demands social justice”, the song effectively serves as a commentary on the housing equality movement, which by and large was an exclusively Ashkenazi, middle-class effort-- and thusly did not speak to the needs of the Mizrahi population, who represent a much greater percentage of those under the poverty line. In tandem with the overwhelming plausibility of such commentary on economic immobility and lasting ethnic rifts, the line succinctly points to the success of Mizrahi music in infiltrating mainstream Israeli society. The generation of young Israeli adults grew up hearing hits from Sarit Hadad, Ofra Haza, Bo’az Sharabi, Eyal Golan, and numerous other Israeli singers who proudly flaunted their Arabic-inflected Hebrew and Mizrahi musical heritage. Groups like the Idan Raichel Project and A-WA have tactfully fused Arabic language and sounds of the Arab world into their popular music. A-WA, a trio of Yemenite Israeli sisters, have popularized several songs in the Jewish dialect of Gulf Arabic. The degree to which A-WA’s music has been accepted in the Arab world has surfaced a critical discourse on the use of the Arabic and Judeo-Arabic pasts to bridge the hostile gap between Israeli Jews and the Arab world. Ars Poetica is yet another example of a

cultural group that seeks to disrupt the hegemonic, Ashkenazi-dominated cultural scene. Keissar, the founder of this female-run poetry collective, formed the group in response to a deep feeling of exclusion; growing up, she perceived poetry to be “elitist and unrelated” to her since all of the poetry she learned in school was by Ashkenazi men. Ars Poetica significantly features Mizrahi and Palestinian poets, making a statement about unapologetic inclusivity. Yonit Naaman, a fellow poet, claims that Ars Poetica “incited a cultural war.” She continues by saying that “you can hear the hegemony crashing...many people who belong to the hegemony feel attacked and marginalized by this Mizrahi awakening.” The project is aggressively creative and positive, as Keissar aptly calls each of their performances a “hafla”, the Arabic word for party.

These cultural developments have not only materialized in secular settings, but also in explicitly religious settings, employing religious texts. Piyyutim are liturgical compositions or poems that have been a part of Jewish religious practice since the fourth or fifth century B.C.E.. These religious texts have been thoroughly integrated into the prayer liturgy of many Jewish communities around the world. Piyyutim are an important fixture even outside of standard prayer services in various Sephardic and Mizrahi traditions, and were often written in Judeo-Arabic. Mizrahi Israelis have begun to raise the profile of Piyyutim in the public sphere with various initiatives such as “Pashut Sharim” through Hillel at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and a number of local community-based performances and public singing opportunities. Websites such as “Hazmana L’Piyyut” (“An Invitation to Piyyut”) provide texts and resources for those interested in learning about this rich textual and musical tradition. Piyyutim have likewise entered mainstream Israeli music culture through the music of pop singer Gad Elbaz, who

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released an album of Moroccan Jewish liturgical music. Victoria Hanna, the daughter of an Ultra Orthodox Rabbi of Egyptian descent, and an Iranian mother, melds traditional liturgical and Kabbalistic pieces with a modern musical spin. She highlights both her traditional, Middle Eastern pronunciation of the Hebrew and Aramaic words in her videos, while also giving a voice to her notorious stutter. The entrance of Piyyutim to the purview of secular Israeli society also brings the unique voice of traditional, “Mesorati” Judaism into the binary religious-secular discourse in Israel today; the presence of traditionalism with a secular appearance does justice to an increasingly ubiquitous form of religious practice.

**Educational Disparities**

Mizrahi culture cannot be defined monolithically, but the economic and educational disparities between Ashkenazim and Mizrahim are still astounding. The social norms that reinforce those disparities, or habits, as Bourdieu would assess, are both top-down and bottom-up processes. Students at schools in the periphery are often encouraged to enroll in a vocational track in high school, which makes them unqualified to take the national matriculation exams. The government invests very little in these schools, and effectively creates a constant source of low-skilled workers. According to the 2013 Taub Center report (“State of the Nation”), Israel is one of the smallest developed countries to have created a periphery of “working poor” in

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70 Shas has likewise played an incredible role in the political and religious mobilization of Mizrahi Israelis. However, since Shas seemingly did/does not have a direct influence on these particular students in this study, I will not go into further detail on this issue.

distances from metropoli that in other countries are considered “suburbs.” The report illuminates that the poor/low education levels in these areas coupled with the insufficient opportunities for low-skill workers are prime components contributing to Israel’s high poverty and unemployment rates. Although many vocational training programs were eliminated in the 1980s, there are still a plethora of schools, particularly in the periphery, which maintain that dual-track system. In the “OECD Review of Vocational Education and Training: A Skills Beyond School Commentary on Israel” (2012), Field and Kuczera claim that although effective reforms have taken place through coordination with the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor (MOITAL), who administer exams for graduates of vocational programs, graduates of certain programs have to repeat courses on entry to Bachelor’s programs. There is also a discrepancy between level of instruction versus developments and updates in the field, which is one of the results of insufficient funding. Lastly, they contend that “navigating through post-secondary courses and career paths will often require more accessible and effective guidance than is currently available.” This claim points to the lasting system of stratification that still disproportionately affects the Mizrahi community.

Meir Cohen, who was a mayor of a development town and involved in the debate around vocational education and the advancement of Mizrahim, added:

"Why do only 1% of the soldiers in information technology units come from the periphery? Simply because they aren't trained for it. If more technological and scientific

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education was made available in the periphery, it would produce more doctors, scientists and soldiers serving in [the elite technology unit] 8200.”

Cohen’s reference to Unit 8200 ties lack of access to scientific and technological education to the placement patterns of students from the periphery in various army units. This however can also be tied in with access to Arabic education. As I discuss in greater detail in the section on methodology and profiles of the subjects, intensive Arabic programs are generally found at higher achieving schools, with have forged strong relationships with the military.

Itamar Tubi, one of the speakers in “Nevi’im”, highlights the educational issue as one of a complex and regenerative manner. Quoting Aziza Khazzoum, he claims that the low confidence of students from the periphery can be steadily derived from the representation of Mizrahim in popular culture. Mizrahim are never the bosses, professors, CEOs, teachers, etc.--they are the janitors, crooks, and policemen (reflecting an ironic reality created by the Ashkenazi establishment to quell crime and violence in the Mizrahi sector). While many Mizrahim are given a lot of grief about low academic ambition, students internalize the racism that is directed toward them, and therefore do not pursue higher education. Tubi even goes as far as explaining how Palestinian citizens of Israel are far more likely to reach universities since in their separate schooling system, these students receive positive reinforcement for achievement without microaggressive racialization of the academic space.

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Over the past decade or so, Israeli universities have begun a policy of affirmative action for students from the periphery to ensure that they too can have access to higher levels of education previously only available to the elites of society (namely the Ashkenazim). In a Haaretz article from November of 2009, Ofri Ilani reports that at that point, 2,000 Israelis had been admitted to universities through this admission process.\textsuperscript{77} Researchers presenting at a conference at the Hebrew University noted that there was little to no difference in academic success of students from the periphery versus those admitted traditionally, indicating a certain success in the program and that perhaps it should be expanded (this of course is subject to the caveats pertaining to affirmative action elsewhere and whether the programs address structural injustices).\textsuperscript{78}

The discourse on Jewish ethnic identity in Israel lays the foreground for understanding the backgrounds of a number of students in the study. The means by which they reconcile Mizrahi-ness, Arab-ness, and Jewish-ness bring a degree of unique complexity to their experiences with studying the Arabic language.


Recruitment and Data Collection

I conducted a majority of the interviews in the Summer of 2015 in various Israeli cities, namely Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. I met those who I interviewed in-person in cafe and office settings, offset from the main campuses in accordance with the allowances of my IRB approval. I interviewed a total of nine subjects, seven of whom were in-person, while the other two were interviewed on Skype. Seventeen individuals responded to my online survey. I recruited subjects for both the interviews and surveys over facebook, email, and in-person at relevant events. These events included Beit Prat Jerusalem’s series on the status of Mizrahim in Israeli society, titled “Ha’iru Pnei Hamizrach” or “Light Up the Face of the East” in translation), the annual conference of the Israeli Association for the Study of Language and Society, and a public panel in Jerusalem’s Mahane Yehuda Market held by the Forum for Regional Thought.

All of the subjects are either currently learning Arabic at the university level, or have finished their studies within the past five years. The lowest number of required courses in Arabic to qualify for the study was a total of one course, but most of the subjects are working towards or have finished either a Bachelors of Arts or a more advanced degree in either Middle Eastern Studies (or some variant thereof) or Arabic Language and Literature. A majority of the students interviewed in-person were enrolled in a course with Professor Hillel Cohen on Palestinian Memoirs, which was taught in Hebrew but whose written materials were presented in Arabic. The professor allowed me to informally observe this seminar and pose a few of my key research
questions to the students, who were all qualified for participation in the study. Although I could not record the conversation as I had not received IRB approval yet, the students gave thoughtful and relevant responses regarding the evolution of their relationships with the Arabic language. One recent graduate of a Masters program at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, who is now a journalist on Arab affairs for Israeli and European media outlets, insisted that he was disqualified for the study since he did not take a course that focused on Arabic language skills, but did take courses that used Arabic materials. He, and other students like himself (who evidently excelled in high school and the military), are exceptional cases considering the downfalls of the Arabic education system. It would be interesting in a future study to revisit this participant and others like himself, who surely can bring an important voice to policy issues on Arabic Language Education Policy in Israel.

The participants had few hesitations regarding participation, with the exception of concerns regarding time commitment. However, one participant aptly noted that she (and other participants with similar political orientations to her own) would have felt uncomfortable sharing her thoughts on language and politics in a public setting just one summer earlier-- during the Gaza War of 2014. She admitted that she was still feeling paranoid about what others might hear her say in the cafe where we were sitting.

Although most, if not all students were highly proficient in English, I chose to conduct all interviews and surveys solely in Hebrew. The decision was partially aimed at establishing validity amongst the subjects, and likewise to ensure that the subjects would be more true to themselves and confident in their responses. Only one subject tried to switch to English in the middle of the interview as she had noticed that I stumbled over a word in my prompt and wished
to make my job easier. I also asked very open-ended questions in order to allow the subjects to elaborate freely and thoroughly. This was especially important considering the omnipresent discourse around Arabic in Israel, and the likelihood that these individuals had engaged in conversation with other Israelis at length on this issue. Participants shared openly with respect to why Israelis may or may not gravitate toward Arabic, but varied in their interest to delve into their own motivational patterns and shifts therein. Students who identified with right wing political orientations and security-driven motivations tended to be more reluctant to draw connections between their politics and their Arabic studies.

In order to place this study in a real-time context, I need to reiterate the distinctions between the subject groups that I alluded to before. It is important to note significant changes in the political climate between the time period of the first seven interviews and those that followed. Since September 2015, there has been a serious escalation of violence on both the Israeli and Palestinian sides. Palestinians (largely youth from Jerusalem and the West Bank) have been engaging in stabbings of Israeli Jews, which has been largely responded to by the Israeli Defense Forces in an increase in arrests, and a more liberal approach to use by the police, soldiers, and security guards of gun violence in seizing suspects. The Israeli government, along with the municipality of Jerusalem and other cities, have taken steps to restrict the movement of Palestinians (whether they be citizens of Israel or not).

Additionally, it is crucial to note that another variable of the latter group (those who were interviewed or surveyed during the most recent wave of escalated violence) is that they also have been interviewed or surveyed while the Israeli Knesset members were evaluating and voting on MK Oren Hazan’s proposal to make Arabic studies mandatory from first grade onward. Thus,
the individuals from this later group did at times reference MK Hazan’s bill, and it is possible to posit the bill’s implicit impact on the discourse around Arabic education based on the policy-oriented responses toward the end of the interviews and surveys.

Disclaimers and Obstacles

As this is a qualitative study, the number of subjects is rather small, so any statistical significance may not be generalizable. However, I am interested in the subjective trajectories of the motivational shifts of the students whom I was able to reach, as well as their reactions to their peers’, educators’, families’ relationships with Arabic. Another issue that may affect the generalizability is the potential homogeneity of the subjects with respect to educational and military experience, as well as socioeconomic background. Although I did not ask about the socioeconomic conditions of the subjects, and various students may have received assistance and may hold multiple jobs, yet since all of the subjects attended the primary Israeli universities and not any of the numerous, proliferating colleges\textsuperscript{79}, it is plausible to assume that these students previously attended schools that sufficiently prepared them for the matriculation examinations and (for many of the participants) were in direct communication with the Military Intelligence for recruitment purposes. It seems safe to assume that even if students were not in contact with the Military Intelligence, they are from the same pool as the recruits.

One of the preeminent obstacles I faced while attempting to conduct research in Israel included the implementation of a new policy in the Ministry of Education as of a short time

\textsuperscript{79} Previously, students needed to gain entrance to one of the few, selective universities in Israel to receive an accredited academic degree. In order to make tertiary education more accessible, the number of colleges in Israel has significantly increased in the past couple decades.
following the induction of the new Minister of Education, Naftali Bennet. The policy forbids a researcher from a foreign institution from attaining the necessary permits from the Chief Scientist of the Ministry in order to conduct research in Israeli public schools. I had initially been interested in interviewing Mizrahi-identifying high school students about their motivations to study Arabic, and whether their ethnic identity and language heritage inform or complicate their decision to study Arabic. This policy was arguably instituted as part of a series of proposals to keep “internationals” and “leftists” (NGOs specifically) out of Israeli institutions.

By the end of an extensive meeting with Zvi Bekerman, a professor of Education at the Mandel Leadership Institute and The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, I concluded that I would write about university students, therefore working in accordance with the new policy and bypassing the need for parental consent. Besides, I am pretty well connected into different circles of university students who fit the bill and have already been incredibly helpful in a number of ways. The demographic shift is probably for the benefit of the project since university students are far more in control of their educational decisions, and can articulate both their rationales for studying the language amongst other experiences that have shaped their language ideologies. Additionally, as expressed in the section on Arabic in high schools, there is already a significant breadth of research on the motivations of high school students, which reflects a rather un-nuanced, binary approach to motivation; either students are driven to gain placement in the

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Military Intelligence, or they hope to use Arabic to create a more peaceful discourse in this conflict region. One participant echoed my point regarding the incidental asset of this novel study, as she frankly stated that she is still in the process of forming her relationship with Arabic, and that it has not been static after high school.

Through the process of reconstructing my project, I had to alter the questions to both reflect the simplicity and directness of the questions that were geared toward high school students, while trying to extend the scope of the questions to better apply to adults who have mostly had more formative experiences with the language and the discourse around Arabic in Israel. The means by which I edited the surveys and questionnaires was largely based on my conversations with students, Arabic teachers, and professors of Education, Language Acquisition, Linguistic Landscape, and Middle Eastern Studies, as well as my own observations while spending time on the campuses of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv University. The ethnographic element further encompassed basic interactions like the anecdote I recalled in my introduction to this study, in addition to the unsolicited advice of curious individuals I met in various social, religious, and familial settings in Israel (a country where people are never shy about expressing their opinions).
Chapter V: RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

A Profile of the Subjects

In order to gauge the backgrounds and identities of the subjects, I asked a series of questions regarding age, ethnic background and self-identification, as well as the linguistic environments in which these students have operated or currently operate. As previously mentioned, one of the most salient and complex elements of identity in Arabic language learning is ethnic self-identification. The means by which these students understand their ethnic identity is inherently different from previous generations, reflecting multi-valent shifts in ethnic relations in Israel today. The ethnic options I gave the participants to choose from on the survey and interview include “Ashkenazi”, “Mizrahi”, “Sephardi”, “Arab-Jew”, “Ethiopian”, and “Other”. As I briefly discussed in my chapter on Mizrahi identity, not all subjects with Mizrahi heritage chose to identify as Mizrahim when asked. In addition to classic responses to the stigmas (not identifying a stigmatized group), participants added new categories to better reflect their backgrounds, such as “Persian”, “Tzabar” (i.e. “Sabra” or native-born Israeli), “Israeli of Mizrahi Descent”, and “Just Israeli”. These categories not only add nuance to the nuance of ethnic self-understanding, but also effectively move away from the preeminent binary approach (Ashkenazi-Mizrahi). The more ethnically-neutral titles listed by the subjects likewise provide a larger commentary on the evolution of ethnic identity and perception of its importance. These titles demonstrate a concerted effort to reconstruct a long-lost ethos of oneness of Israeli identity. Though resembling a previous ethos, the governing ideals of the founding Ashkenazi elite and its
political expression, their ethos notably precluded the Mizrahim, and was far from a colorblind society when it came to cultural and social integration. This new neutralization can be considered to be corrective, pushing back against the exclusive “Israeliness” of yore.82

To account for the subtle divergences in responses to the question on ethnic self-identification, I have created four categories to which I will reference throughout the analysis and discussion sections. These categories also respect the distinctions that the subjects have made, as opposed to applying terms that more aptly describe the subjects’ family heritage. I employ the label “Just Israeli” to encompass any and all similar variants. Another permutation under that label included “Israeli of Mizrahi Origin”, which attests to the margin of small differences between these labels. Carmi has one parent of Turkish descent, and another parent of Algerian descent, yet sees himself as “Just Israeli”. He contends that since he is the third generation, and thusly more Israeli than previous generations, he cannot fathom that his children would identify as Mizrahim. Zohar elaborated on the question of ethnicity but saying that he is Israeli of a non-Ashkenazi background. He claims that he isn’t Mizrahi as he considers himself culturally “Western”.

Apropos Talia Sagiv’s argument about a liminal MI identity, Gal has both Ashkenazi and Mizrahi heritage, yet he identifies as Ashkenazi. He emphasized that his family is very Israeli, but keenly aware of a Mizrahi past.

In terms of the ages of the subjects, I am examining the results of the surveys and interviews separately. Perhaps as a consequence of my recruitment mechanisms, the interviewed subjects were not significantly older than the surveyed subjects, yet a majority of the interviewed subjects were working towards or had recently finished advanced degrees, whereas a large majority of the surveyed subjects were working on or had just finished their first academic degree. One of the interviewed subjects and ten of the surveyed subjects were between the ages of twenty-two to twenty-five. Seven of the surveyed subjects and seven of the interviewed subjects were between the ages of twenty-six to thirty. Only one of the interviewed subjects, and none of the surveyed subjects, were above the age of thirty.

**Language Use at Home and in Schools**

All subjects in both the surveys and interviews listed Hebrew as their primary native language. There were many instances of home multilingualism in both data sets, only three of which included Arabic spoken amongst parents of the participants. Other subjects included
Arabic as a language spoken “at home”, but it referred to the speech habits of grandparents who may or may not have lived in the homes of the subjects.

The primary language aside from Hebrew spoken in the subjects’ homes was English (8). Experiences with English ranged from fully bilingual families, English-speaking grandparents, studying abroad at an English-language university, and the prevalence of anglophone peers and house guests. Gal mentioned that growing up in the Baka neighborhood of Jerusalem, most of his peers came from anglophone families, and so did many of his parents’ friends and business-related visitors.

There was a sprinkling of other languages, which were Russian, Turkish, French, Italian, Spanish, Kurdish, with varying levels of proficiency therein. Leah claimed that she only speaks Hebrew at home, but that she grew up learning Yiddish curse words.

Tracing the subjects’ linguistic histories, I then asked them to speak of the languages currently spoken in their homes, and to what degree they understand those languages. This follow-up question is critical as many, if not all of the subjects are no longer living at home, and are potentially living with spouses, children, and roommates who may vary in linguistic background. All of the subjects in both the surveys and interviews indicated that Hebrew is spoken in their respective homes. In order of recurrence, English, Russian, Arabic, and Kurdish account for additional languages spoken at home. Yaffa stated that bringing Farsi, her heritage language, into her current home is a goal of hers.

Yaffa and Gal each mentioned that they speak to their respective spouses in Arabic. An interesting contrast between the two couples’ linguistic practice is that Yaffa and her husband intend to speak Arabic to their children, whereas Gal and his wife plan to speak Arabic so that
their children will not understand. I will discuss the concept of introducing Arabic into the
subjects’ homes in greater detail on page 94.

**Initial Exposure to Arabic and Arabic Studies**

To gain a fuller context for the subject’s earliest exposure to Arabic, I asked the subjects
to describe their relationship with Arabic prior to formally studying the language, as well as what
role Arabic played in their lives at the time. A major theme in the responses was a tangible
curiosity toward the language, ranging from memories of visceral negative reactions to a less
politically-charged, affiliative sense of mystery when hearing the language in the public sphere.
The most jarring example of the fear-based association with Arabic was an anecdote by Eden
. She recalls recurring nightmares from her childhood of Palestinian snipers firing at her home in
Gilo. She looked visibly distraught as she told this piece of her narrative, stating that she still
experiences these nightmares from time to time, resurfacing trauma from her childhood during
the Second Intifada. Carmi, who grew up in a similar time, recounts hearing Arabic and wanting
to decipher what he perceived to be simply a string of curses (“retzef shel klalot”). On the
contrary, a surveyed subject remembers hearing Arabic used in day-to-day interactions in her
youth in the North of Israel, which to this day is known for unique instances of Arab-Jewish
coexistence.

Six of the subjects noted that Arabic was a present feature in their homes to varying
degrees. AI subjects claimed either a distant history of a relative who interacted with or in the
language in the mixed Arab-Jewish cities (Jaffa, Haifa, etc.), or the prevalence of
Arabic-speaking relatives who acquired Arabic skills in the military or in formal schooling. Two
of the respondents to the online survey, who also were Ashkenazi-Identifying, wrote that they were unsure whether Arabic played a role in their families’ or communities’ experiences. MI, MIX, and JI subjects also described a plethora of familial connections to Arabic. 

Carmi told of the complicated position of Arabic in his home. His parents had effectively repressed the language and were not supportive of his choice to study Arabic, yet it was perfectly “normal” that his grandmother spoke Arabic. I will come back to his reflection on familial Arabic use as a motivation in the section of family encouragement.

Yaffa refers to the role of Arabic in her parents’ experiences in Iran before they immigrated to Israel. Her father attended a state school, at which he learned to chant the Quran in Arabic. He likewise had great exposure to Judeo-Arabic through traditional Piyyutim and ritual practice. Yaffa is currently a leader in a number of Piyyutim-centered organizations. Aside from positive classroom experiences, she attributes her love for Arabic to her father’s affinity for Piyyutim.

Linor spoke of her mother, who grew up in Katamon during the 1960s-1970s, a time when many Mizrahi immigrants located to the neighborhood. She claims of her mother that “ethnicity doesn’t exist in her mind”; Arabic was part of the slang and Jerusalemite culture of the time. Her mother’s childhood was different than Ashkenazim who grew up elsewhere; she was deeply exposed to a culture with a strong Iraqi influence. Zohar recalls wanting to understand well-known songs in Arabic, although most people who know the songs don’t know the language.

The subjects report levels of early exposure to Arabic in familial contexts and in the public sphere. Due to the contentious position of emotionally-charged Arabic exposure in the
public sphere, I cannot ascertain greater or lesser impact to one form of early language exposure or another.

**Educational Background**

In the next section, I asked the participants to outline different stages in their Arabic education, focusing on when and why they began their formal studies, how difficult they found the language to be, and if they had found it difficult to learn, whether and from whom they received help with their studies. One of the salient aspects of language ideologies lies in the perception of difficulty and foreignness of a language. Granted that some students may be more gifted language learners or more diligent students than the other, probing perceived difficulty of the language is telling of the learner familiarity with or affinity toward the language. A total of thirteen subjects (both surveyed and interviewed) find the language difficult to learn, while thirteen subjects do not find the language difficult to learn. Subjects cited that they find the syntax to be difficult, namely in terms of the sheer number of verb forms, and the discrepancies and contrasts between MSA and the dialects. Other subjects noted the rich vocabulary as a point of difficulty, whereas others claimed that the similarity and overlap between Hebrew and Arabic made learning significantly easier. Linor clarified that in her view, Arabic isn’t difficult to learn, but is rather hard to master. She likewise said that in her experience studying at Oxford, she noticed that the English-speaking students struggled more than her Hebrew-speaking peers who were familiar with semitic languages. She continued to describe how she taught herself Spoken Arabic (in this case, the Palestinian dialect), and turned to Palestinian colleagues for practice with her conversational skills.
Another aspect I wanted to gauge was investment in learning the language. Was the subject interested in seeking out help if they found the language to be challenging? Would they engage with a native speaker when seeking assistance, or would they look for help from non-native speakers? I had only asked the interviewed subjects to elaborate on these questions, but gave the opportunity for both subject pools to comment on their interactions with native and non-native Arabic speakers when discussing the social impact of Arabic language learning. Three of the interviewed subjects have received help with their studies, while six have not received help. The sources of help that these subjects have sought out included an old high school teacher, a language exchange with Arab Christians (who were tutored in Hebrew), a group organized by a professor, a Syrian friend, siblings, and peers who have had the same academic and military training.

Fig. 3 Starting Point of Arabic Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Institution</th>
<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Surveys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary School</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year of Service</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Service</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military Service</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No formal studies prior to university courses</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1 (private lessons)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These data account for the university at which subjects earned their most recent or advanced degree. As previously mentioned, since the interviewed subjects were largely more advanced in their academic careers, they likewise had studied at a greater variety of institutions prior to their most recent degree program. The interviewed subjects additionally received degrees from Tel Aviv University, Herzog, a religious academic college in the Etzion Bloc\textsuperscript{83}, and from Oxford University.

\textsuperscript{83} To clarify, only two subjects incorporated details about their religious observance, otherwise discussion of religious practice was not of issue in this study. The two religious subjects did not answer in any particularly distinctive way, and their respective answers differed greatly from one another, although they grew up in similar educational environments to one another (Religious Zionist institutions). It would be quite interesting to probe the question of language learning motivations accounting for issues of the intersection of religion and politics.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies (some universities include African Studies)</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>17</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arabic Language and Literature</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict Management</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Relations</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business or Management Studies</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As a complement to questions regarding degrees earned by the subjects and elements of multilingualism at home, I asked whether they are studying other languages or taking courses with instruction in languages aside from Hebrew and Arabic. A number of university programs require studies in more than one language pertaining to the region of study, if relevant. Their responses (both the survey and interviews) included English, French, Turkish, Farsi, German, Ladino, and Italian, in order of recurrence. In order to be accepted to most university programs, a student must be able to demonstrate a certain level of proficiency in English. Although most if not all of the subjects are indeed highly proficient in English, they may not have needed to take
courses in English on the university level, or did not consider courses taught in English or with solely English materials to be a foreign language course of the same ilk as the other languages they named. There are many interesting elements to the study of Farsi, as it is yet another example of the intersection of a Jewish heritage language and Israeli national security needs, considering the consistent threats and tension between Israel and Iran (and between Iran and the West, more broadly).

Army Service and Use of Arabic in Military Settings

Service in the Israel Defense Forces is an important point of exposure to the Arabic language and its speakers. This linguistic exposure may take many forms, ranging from formal studies and opportunities to demonstrate proficiency to basic rote memorized phrases/commands or simply having a presence in Palestinian areas. The former, more extensive exposure takes place in a number of different settings, namely under the auspices of the Military Intelligence and COGAT (The Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories), as well as in urban anti-terror combat units such as Kfir and Duvdevan. The subjects in this study all served in the IDF, with the exception of one who refused out of conscience, and did an extra year of national service instead. Subjects held positions in the intelligence for the Israeli Air Force, Navy, and Army (Unit 8200\textsuperscript{84}, field intelligence and observers), foot soldiers, combat engineering, the paratroopers, and the Operations Directorate. When I asked subjects whether Arabic had a part in their army service, a total of fourteen subjects said no, while twelve said yes. There was no consistent pattern regarding which divisions entailed Arabic use, with the exception of those who

\textsuperscript{84} Elite Signals Unit.
served in Unit 8200, who all indicated that Arabic use was a part of their experience. Unit 8200 is responsible for collecting and decoding signals and materials for the intelligence corps, which explains the uniformity in response regarding Arabic use.

Yaffa, who served in Unit 8200, wrote that she had the opportunity to learn more Arabic as she went through her service. She used her proficiency in Arabic for translation and “similar things”. “It’s hard for me in retrospect,” she noted regarding her current affinity toward interfaith peacework and left-wing political beliefs, “everyone who learns [Arabic] is recruited and can’t think about it until after.” The aspect that she is referring to as only plausibly being thought about “until after” army service are the implications of the orders she was carrying out, and what sort of impact they had on other human beings.

Gal provides an example of a less intensive encounter with Arabic. He was given the opportunity to learn some Arabic as a part of the officer’s training course in which he participated. He described learning in a Hesder Yeshiva prior to the beginning of his army service, where he used no Arabic whatsoever. Zohar claimed that he did not use Arabic in his army service, but tells a story of an encounter with a new Druze soldier on his army base. He needed to instruct the soldier, and eventually “found the right way” to do so. This sort of minor encounter with Arabic speakers and the Arabic language likely accounts for some of the respondents who claimed that Arabic was not part of their army experience.

Although a little under half of the subjects claim that Arabic played a role in their military service, an overwhelming majority of subjects cite exposure to a military or security-oriented Arabic curriculum at some point over the course of their studies. However, subjects who indicated that Arabic did play a role in the military service, describe a multitude of
contexts in which Arabic appeared. Some of these subjects internalized the threatening nature of the Arabic language input with which they worked or simply encountered, while others chose to disregard the connotations of and experiences with Arabic under the auspices of the security apparatus post-service.

**Identifying Motivating Factors**

The analysis of this study is both synchronic and diachronic. I am trying to capture a present moment in time, while demonstrating that there can be many levels of evolution in motivation to study language over time. I am therefore beginning with the students’ reflections on their motivations and experiences in each identifiable step in their language learning journey. I began this segment of the interview and survey by asking the subjects to recall their initial motivations to study the language, and whether the choice to study Arabic or not was in fact their decision at all. Fourteen of seventeen of the surveyed subjects indicated that it was their decision, and for some, their “first choice” in academic settings that did not allow all students to determine their course load and subject matter. The three outliers did not initially choose Arabic, but did decide to pursue the language following a career change or after studying another language (in this case, French). In contrast to the surveyed subjects, all of the interviewed subjects state that it was initially their decision to study Arabic. For some it was required in middle school, yet most of those individuals continued to study throughout high school, which was not required. Maayan proudly stated that although it was a requirement in her university studies, she exceeded the number of required courses.
Fig. 6 Initial Motivations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason Given</th>
<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Surveys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Important as a heritage language</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important for academic development and interest</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important for living in the region- for peace</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important for living in the region- security and national benefit</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important for living in the region- neutral*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important as a language of knowledge and a rich culture</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic requirement</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General interest and enjoyment of the language</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* This category represents any responses that do not explicitly state a security or peace-oriented motive. This category is more applicable in the surveyed group as many subjects gave terse and cryptic answers to questions about motivation. The disparity between the surveyed and interviewed subjects that is reflected in this category may likely be a result of the specificity and clarity that becomes possible in interview settings. While coding even the open-ended responses to this question, the surveyed subjects who fit into this neutral category simply did not convey anything beyond generic responses such as “because I am an Israeli/I live in the Middle East/I need to understand my surroundings.”

Although four subjects cited that they started studying for the purpose of requirements, all subsequently took on other reasons for studying that sustained their interest in the language. I will delve further into the evolution of their motivations shortly, but at this point I should add that one of the secondary reasons the subjects decided to continue studying Arabic is that they
academically excelled in the subject, and received positive reinforcement for their diligence in their studies and proclivity toward the language.

Following Donitsa-Shmidt, Inbar, and Shohamy’s (2004) theory regarding the heightened perceived importance of Arabic once studying the language\textsuperscript{85}, one of the surveyed subjects claimed that they did not “automatically” choose Arabic, but rather studying Arabic made the subject realize the importance of knowing the language. Linor answered the question regarding the initial motivation as pertaining to her university experience. Prior to the university, Arabic had been mandatory. Her answer was unique in that she decided to study Middle Eastern Studies to enable herself to study Arabic.

I explicitly asked about family and teacher impact, which elicited idiosyncratic answers amongst the subjects. Regarding family input on Arabic studies, some subjects reported encouragement, while others remarked that their families thought that the students ought to consider more useful subject areas (i.e. economics). By contrast, one of the surveyed subjects said that his parents dissuaded him from studying French as it was unnecessary (“meyutar”) whereas Arabic was definitively more practical. Two of the surveyed subjects reported that they were positively influenced by teachers, while the other fifteen said that their teachers didn’t influence them. Eden attributed a lot of influence to her family, since her two older brothers had similarly taken Arabic, excelled, and entered the military intelligence. Subject #26 (a surveyed subject) said “the fact that my grandparents, may their memories be for a blessing, spoke Arabic influenced my will to acquaint myself with the Arabic language.”

Carmi chose to begin Arabic studies as he found that he had a proclivity toward Arabic, and excelled in his Arabic studies at school. His teacher was especially good, and brought it various speakers to his classes. His grandmother spoke Libyan Arabic with her sister, and he was curious to understand the language-- partially as that of his grandmother, and partially as the language of the enemy. His parents speak Arabic amongst themselves as well, but “repressed the language” and did not transmit it. It was however “normal” that his grandmother spoke Arabic. In his time in the army, he established that Arabic was a definite interest he wished to pursue.

Linor was interested in studying Arabic, so she began in middle school. She remarked that the framing of the language was largely political, and she didn’t really understand the other concept of security/army-related arabic. As previously mentioned, she did not ultimately serve in the army. By contrast, an interviewed subject said that the language was a subject area of interest, but also that he wanted to contribute to the state ("litrom la’mdinah"). In his later responses, he refers to service in the military intelligence and his security-centric guise toward the language. He wrote that he always wanted to learn and understand, but needed the tools ("hakeilim").

Yaffa asserts that her affinity toward the language began even before her formal studies in Arabic, as she remembers how much she enjoyed learning to count in Arabic and participating in the other Arabic additions her first grade homeroom teacher would make to the main Hebrew games in class. She studied Arabic as a required subject in seventh and eighth grade, and was taken with it from her first lesson. She recalls that the first word she learned was “qalam”, meaning “pen”. She developed a love for reading Arabic. She fondly told of her positive associations of finding cognates between Hebrew and Arabic. Her seventh grade Arabic teacher
was also her grammar teacher, and integrated elements of Hebrew and Arabic. The teacher was a peer of her father’s and also a Persian Israeli; the similarity of the teacher’s background to her own made her feel very close to the teacher. She liked some subsequent teachers in high school, but none of them had the same impact as her first Arabic teacher.

The most glaring pattern here in the responses of both the surveyed and interviewed subjects is that these subjects acquired greater meaning and intention in their study of Arabic as they progressed in their studies. Either their previous perceptions of why they should value the language were confirmed or deepened, or they gained additional reasons for studying the language based on their reactions to teachers, family members, and pedagogical framing.

**Further Reflections on Teacher Bias**

Harkening back to my earlier discussion of the importance of teacher motivation and language ideologies in student motivation and experience, I asked the subjects to reflect on whether their teachers (from all stages of their studies) seemed to have specific expectations for the purposes for which the students should be using the Arabic skills they were gaining. Six of the surveyed subjects said that the expectations were clear and three subjects stated that the expectations were not clear, whereas eight subjects believe that their teachers did not have specific expectations for purposes of Arabic use. Seven out of the nine interviewed subjects claimed that their teachers did have overt expectations, which ranged from success on the Bagrut (matriculation) exam, simply meeting basic requirements, being acquainted with Arab culture, and a military focus. These subjects likewise made a clear distinction between their university instructors/professors and previous teachers. In their view, university instructors/professors
tended to solely expect students to be able to use Arabic for academic purposes (namely research), and less so for access to various workplaces, positions in the security apparatus, etc.

Gal said that “some expect that I use it [Arabic] for intelligence and military purposes. Some expect that I use it for purposes of social activism, peace, and dialogue. I learned from both. From all of my studies I have been enlightened. And from my students [I learned] more than all of them (my Arab students to whom I was teaching Hebrew taught me the most compared to all of my teachers).” Linor drew a contrast between the expectations she noticed from professors in Israel compared to those in the United Kingdom. At Oxford, the focus was on an “international perspective”, whereas in Israel the teachers were not focused on creating a shared society, and were somewhat orientalist and media-centric. Linor found the focus at Oxford to be more appealing, but she noted that it was a politically “radical” (left-wing) environment “for the better and for the worse” (although she identifies as “radical” herself, the political atmosphere at European universities such as Oxford is rather hostile to Israel and the Zionist project).

Relating to Arabic at Present

After tracing the linguistic histories and initial motivations driving these subjects to begin and continue their Arabic studies, I honed in on what exactly is bringing them to study Arabic as adults (if they did not begin as adults), and asked them to think about any changes in their motivations to study the language or shifting perceptions of the language and its speakers.

Similar to the contrasts in the results of the surveyed versus interviewed subjects, many of the surveyed subjects gave far more generic or undirected answers to the question of the
current role of Arabic in the subject’s life than did the interviewed subjects. Three of the
surveyed subjects focused solely on the presence of Arabic in their lives in a purely academic
sense. One surveyed subject expressed a desire to go beyond the Modern Standard Arabic she is
learning for her degree by learning Spoken Arabic and knowing how to use it in her daily life.
Another surveyed subject said the role of Arabic in his life has become more “positive”;
although Arabic does not play a role in his life beyond his studies, he claims that the language
“connects to a full, multi-faceted culture, to the Quran, and to foreign and fascinating traditions.”

Gal notes that Arabic has become a work tool and a hobby. “I try to learn it and enjoy,”
he says. He is also writing his thesis on a Muslim Arab community, and works for the
advancement of the Arab minority, both of which make his knowledge of Arabic not only useful
but crucial. For the same reasons as I explained earlier about my choices to conduct interviews in
Hebrew (establishing trust, eliciting more sincere answers, etc.), he expresses the importance of
conducting his research in Arabic. He hopes to open an Arabic class (“chug”) in his
neighborhood so others can learn as well.

Maayan values her knowledge of Arabic as it is immediately practical for her doctoral
work on the Arab world. She likes being able to use sources in their original language (Arabic).
She also uses Arabic with native Arabic speakers who live with her in the university dormitories.
Maayan also claims that Arabic has helped her better understand news media, and that she has
begun to learn Spoken Arabic within the past year.

Eden emphasizes that Arabic is very important to know, as it provides her with a certain
degree of personal security. She says that she is “enveloped in the language.” She finds the
language pretty to hear, and she appreciates that she is familiar with the culture. Oftentimes she overhears Arab workers beside her house, and she laughs at their jokes.

Keren has experienced personal difficulties while studying Arabic since she suffers from Dyslexia. Once she passed the university requirement exams, she discontinued her studies. Arabic still interests her, although she claims to lack confidence for both reading and writing in the language. Linor struggles to speak confidently in Arabic, since she is embarrassed to make mistakes. Because of her job, she has frequent interaction with Palestinian society. However, she claims that her appearance doesn’t exude knowledge of Arabic either. “I’m so white,” she says, “they don’t think I know [Arabic].” Regardless of these challenges, Arabic plays a significant role in her life, and interests her enough that she plans on completing a doctorate in Arabic studies.

The relevance of Arabic in the subjects’ lives also varies from subject to subject, yet a majority relate to Arabic at present as a multi-purpose language, citing combinations of different variables. For some subjects, Arabic plays a sizeable role in their careers, studies, and social interactions, while for a few, Arabic is solely relevant for larger security concerns and or for formal university studies.

Motivational shifts

Once the subjects discussed how the role of Arabic might have changed or remained the same since during the duration of their studies, I inquired about the prevalence and contexts of motivational shifts in their experiences. Out of the survey respondents, fifteen subjects said that the same motivations they had initially still hold today, while only two subjects claimed that their
motivations had changed. From the two subjects who elaborated on their allegedly static motivations, one subject identified his motivation as the pleasure of learning the language, while the other subject’s motivation was tied to a desire to learn for “efficient use.” The one subject who stated that his motivations had changed indicated that the effort to learn the language simply was no longer paying off— in other words, their previous motivation to study the language at all simply no longer exists. Based on the limited nature of the responses to this question on the survey, I am presuming that the subjects may have understood the question differently than I had intended as at various points the surveyed subjects did largely express changes and or intensifications in their respective relationships with the language.

On the other hand, eight of the interviewed subjects noted that their motivations had shifted over the course of their Arabic education or had at least been affected by the environments in which they were learning the language. While explaining my original intention to interview high school students, Maayan reassured me that I had made the right decision to change my demographic to university students. She asserted that in high school, motivations are more binary (either for security or for peace), and would not fully capture the processes that people go through when learning the language over an extended period of time. “In every step of the way,” she continued, “I went through a different step of the process in how I relate to the language.”

Gal ranked his current motivations by importance, showing that he is now more focused on the language itself as opposed to simply knowing the “Other”. “. . . The main motivation,” he proclaims, “is simply in the language and the culture. After that, the issue with my neighbors and
the nation that resides here beside us, and after that, the faith that mutual understanding will contribute to bettering the [political] situation (not exactly peace, but at least understanding).”

Linor claimed that her motivations have changed since she first started learning Arabic six years ago. Her views changed (she being politically more left-wing) and she works in an NGO called “Lochamim L’Shalom” (or “Combatants for Peace”). She knows that her curiosity toward the language still holds, while she admits feeling very secure with knowledge of the language. Zohar asserted “I look at it in a more mature way,” in that it is now less centered around passing the next test, but more so about understanding and “entering” the language. Carmi said that he initially began to study the language because of his Arabic-speaking grandmother, but now his studies are more of a tool for work, and are associated with the security apparatus. He is considering teaching the language, and is learning basic Spoken Arabic through a language learning center called Minerva outside of his coursework.

Eden did not claim that her motivations changed, but rather that she now recognizes the “tools” she has as an Arabic speaker, and would like for her children to be able to speak Arabic as well.

Amongst the interviewed subjects, there is a clear pattern of motivational shifts that lies in the development of more mature, thoughtful perspectives on the conflict, the language and its speakers. Not all subjects who indicate motivational shifts “jump” from one category of motivation to another, but rather progressively add new forms of meaning to a part of their studies and personal lives that was largely initially uni-dimensional. I will address the glaringly bleak numbers of surveyed respondents whose motivations allegedly did not shift in my discussion section on page 102.
Continuing Arabic Studies

As I described in the opening section on language attitudes and motivations, the most salient marker of the strength of a particular motivation is its longevity. Although my general claim is that motivation is tightly connected to formative experiences that shape their relationship with Arabic and Arabic speakers, the majority of the subjects maintain an interest to continue studying the language-- regardless of even turbulent motivational shifts. Sixteen of the seventeen surveyed subjects intend to continue Arabic studies, while one subject does not intend to continue Arabic studies in the future. All of the interviewed subjects are interested in continuing studies in Arabic. However, since many of the interviewed subjects are completing or have recently completed advanced degrees, “studying Arabic” means pursuing less conventional methods of learning, such as concerted efforts to read Arabic books and news, increasing interactions with native Arabic speakers, informal classes, etc. For the subjects who are still at the beginning of their degrees, continuing studies in Arabic may entail makeup prerequisites ("hashlamot") and required courses, electives in Spoken Arabic, or courses taught in Hebrew with Arabic-language materials.

Interacting with Non-Native Arabic Speaking Peers

For this segment, I asked the subjects to react about their Arabic-learning peers’ interests and motivations. Do these subjects speak with their classmates and peers in Arabic if they are both non-native? Which elements of social pressure and social awareness are at play or subverted in describing interactions with non-native Arabic speakers? Do the subjects objectify their
motivations for studying the language, and do their peers do the same in turn? Three of the
surveyed subjects said that they speak Arabic with non-native peers who have the same
motivations for language study, while six indicated that they speak Arabic with non-native peers
who have different motivations for language study. The remaining eight of the surveyed subjects
do not interact with non-native speakers in Arabic. Eight of the nine interviewed subjects have a
times spoken Arabic with non-native peers, ranging from spouses, classmates, and family
members.

Maayan compared the interactions she has had in various university settings, and how
student motivation varies in tow. She is currently taking Spoken Arabic as part of her doctoral
work, and is in classes with mostly B.A. students at University of Haifa. She claims that her
classmates are slightly racist, and are driven to learn Arabic for the purpose of understanding the
enemy. This was a new concept for her. At Tel Aviv University, where she had completed her
first two degrees, the students loved the language and did not have “the same racist motivations”
as the University of Haifa students-- some perhaps were just there because of the requirement.
Linor said that her peers had different motivations from her own. They were interested in or
affiliated with the Shabak and the Mossad\textsuperscript{86}, were simply curious, job-centric, or desired
speaking to their Mizrahi grandparents, respectively. She posited that at Oxford the Arabic
students were more radical, “for better or for worse.”

Amused by the commodifying elements of this question, Carmi said that he had met
some of all of the “types” of Arabic learners. The one unifying factor is that they all “find Arabic
to be attractive in their eyes,” for whichever reason is most relevant.

\textsuperscript{86} The domestic and foreign branches of the Israeli national security apparatus.
Students have a wide variety of experiences with non-native Arabic speakers, which is largely contingent on the respective environments in which these students study. One of the elements that the subjects’ testimonies reveal is which population is drawn to Arabic studies at a given institution. Although universities are the point of convergence of learners with different motives, certain institutions, departments, and programs have and or foster a normative set of language attitudes that are meant to drive student motivation.

**Interacting with Native Speakers of Arabic**

In this question, I was curious at to whether the students have contact with native arabic speakers, and if so, whether they choose to speak to these individuals in Arabic. On the survey, nine subjects indicated that they speak Arabic with native speakers, while eight indicated that they do not. The surveyed subjects who do interact with native speakers of Arabic clarified that the speakers are friends, peers, and classmates who are “Arab” (and not Arab-Jews). In the interviewed set, six subjects answered in the affirmative, while only three claimed they did not speak Arabic with native speakers. Of those who do not speak Arabic with native Arabic speakers, Zohar frankly noted that he “cannot do that” (speak with native speakers) as he only has background in Modern Standard Arabic. He added that Arabs speak to him in Hebrew since they assume that he cannot understand Arabic. Of those who do speak Arabic with native speakers, two interact with native speakers in the workplace and in interfaith encounters, two have been a part of language exchanges (in which they teach Hebrew to Arab students), and the remainder speak with Arab students in classes (both Arabic language classes and others) and in university dormitories.
The subjects point to rather sparse opportunities to speak Arabic with native speakers, unless they engage with native speakers in work or university environments. Subjects largely find interacting with native speakers to be both helpful and meaningful, but simultaneously recognize their shyness, hesitation, and at times, halting, non-proficient speech.

**Positions on Arabic Use in Israel Today**

As a means of shifting the discourse on Arabic education from the personal and theoretical to the policy level, I gave the subjects an opportunity to discuss why they value knowledge of Arabic by expounding on potential benefits of Arabic proficiency as Israelis and the role Arabic ought to play in Israeli society. These questions allowed for a more applied approach of language motivation and ideology that the subjects may choose (or have chosen) to enact in their respective careers, activism, and personal lives.

**Benefits of Being an Arabic Speaker**

In order to determine what the subjects value in their knowledge of Arabic, I asked the subjects about what they perceived to be the benefits of being an Israeli adult who speaks Arabic. Zohar claims that in having a command over the language, the biggest benefit is understanding conversations that are going around. He sees an imperative for Israelis to understand and have a mutual language with the Palestinians and the Arab world; he prefers “not to wait until they learn Hebrew,” representing a common security-based fear that Israelis might be taking a backseat as Palestinians are mastering the ins and outs of Israeli society. He elaborated on that point, saying that it would be an active approach to life that he does not expect of the Palestinians and the
Arab world regardless as “they have a lot on their minds.” He clarifies that they may want to learn Hebrew, but might not have teachers, or are not learning for the “right reasons”. This of course presents a remarkably ironic foil to the security-oriented Arabic so common to the Israeli education system, and also counters a common Israeli trope that entails that Jewish Israelis are absolved from any responsibility to learn Arabic until the Arabs seriously engage in Hebrew study.

Linor says that knowing Arabic lets her know her surroundings in a particular way, and makes her less noticeably less fearful. She likewise acknowledges that she is working toward leveling the playing field between herself and her Palestinian peers; by speaking Arabic, she is demonstrating her effort toward reducing the power dynamic. She also finds Judeo-Arabic (particularly from the Middle Ages) to be really intriguing as it gives her access to an “erased world”. She clarifies that her grandfather’s Yiddish was also erased by the “Zionist ethos.”

Overall, most of the subjects (both in the surveys and interviews) said that the benefits of being an Arabic speaker in Israel today include being able to better understand surroundings in both Israel and the broader Middle East and feeling safer with that knowledge. The second most common response represented McIntosh’s concept of Moral Nationalism, as the subjects claimed that learning Arabic makes you a more responsible and thoughtful citizen of Israel. The subjects who feel moral accomplishment for learning Arabic do not all express interest in using Arabic toward any means of integration. The last three notable benefits the subjects attributed to knowledge of Arabic include use of the language as a work skill, for academic achievement, and for the sake of learning (an intrinsic value, or “lishmah” in Hebrew). Arabic for academic purposes is a relevant benefit to all those who are still in academic programs or plan to pursue
careers in academia. Those who find Arabic to be useful for work purposes range from those who plan to re-enter the security apparatus after they finish their degree to those who work in civil society in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Lastly, the intrinsic benefit was particularly prominent in the survey responses. Three subjects asserted that the benefit is that of simply knowing another language- which seemingly runs contrary to even the most marginally emotional responses on the survey (even from the same subjects). I will take a step back from my surprise and skepticism of the simplicity of that recurring response, and note that there is a growing body of literature in both academic and popular Psychology (namely in Language Acquisition and Psycholinguistics) that puts a great deal of emphasis on the cognitive benefits of multilingualism. This may contribute to why a subject might respond as such.

**Role of Arabic in Israeli Society**

Playing off of the concept of personal benefit of Arabic knowledge and redirecting attention to Arabic in the public sphere, I asked subjects what they the role of Arabic in Israeli society should be. Maayan suggests that Arabic must play important role, and that students should learn Arabic from kindergarten onward (“gan”). She notes that the demography is pretty clear; Israelis live in close proximity to a growing minority of Arabic speakers, and in the midst of numerous Arabic-speaking countries. She says “it’s important to understand who we’re living with... this is the path to peace, by speech... language turns enemies into friends and curses into unifying words (milim shemekarvot).”

Keren likewise asserts that Arabic must be mandatory in elementary school. She points out that under current circumstances, it is very easy to give up on ensuring students take the
matriculation exams in Arabic. She says that students should work on basic reading, and not being afraid of the letters (the complex orthography). Keren also believes that it is equally important that Hebrew be taken seriously in the Arab sector, but acknowledges that they (Palestinians citizens of Israel) have made serious strides toward improving Hebrew programs.

Linor also feels strongly that students should be learning Arabic from first grade onward, but is pessimistic since the Ministry of Education seems to be moving in the opposite direction and any positive change appears to be in the distant future. She says that since Israelis have access to existing texts and living culture, there is no reason not to try to engage with the language. She recalls however that the state plays a serious role in determining official policy, and that advancing Arabic is not one of the government’s priorities. Linor also states that Arabic has enriched her Hebrew, as these semitic languages have a great deal in common.

Eden asserts that everyone should have the foundations of the Arabic language, and that Arabic studies should be mandatory (she didn’t explicitly cite for which grades). Towing the same line as Zohar above, she says that “we need to match the level at which they (Palestinian citizens of Israel) understand our Hebrew…” She continues to say that when people live together, “it will advance us to the next level..not like when little and scared.” She once again references her childhood trauma from the terribly violent Second Intifada, and insists that learning Arabic will reduce the deep-seated paranoia and fear of the “Other”.

Most subjects advocate for a greater presence of Arabic in Israeli society, and see it as some sort of bridge of communication- whether that be in the context of security or the context of peaceful encounters or integrated living. Few subjects express disinterest in expanding the role
of Arabic in Israel beyond the current status quo. Those subjects do still state that Arabic 
language education ought to be taken more seriously. An overwhelming majority of subjects in 
both the surveys and interviews suggest that Arabic language should be mandatory from 
elementary school, particularly from the first grade onward. It was striking at first that the 
subjects’ replies were so uniform on this issue, but I must clarify that the discourse around 
Arabic education has shifted to a point that focuses on first grade as the outset of Arabic studies. 
This discourse of course has been influenced by Oren Hazan’s bill, and through the advocacy of 
different organizations and educators who see the inherent value of beginning foreign language 
education significantly prior to puberty, and additionally before students can fully grasp the 
complexity of their geopolitical situation.

**Family Language Choices and Desires for Children to Speak Arabic**

After asking the subjects to describe what the role of Arabic ought to be in Israel today, a 
majority of the subjects described the need for expansive educational programming. When I 
asked whether they would want their children (either children that they now have or may have in 
the future) to study Arabic, all but one affirmed that they would. However, when asking whether 
they would like to teach their children themselves or speak to their children in Arabic, the 
responses were largely negative. Subjects mostly fear that they are not proficient enough at 
speaking or are not confident enough to be able to transmit the language. As I mentioned above, 
Yaffa and her spouse would like to speak Arabic to their children so that they will learn the 
language, whereas Gal and his spouse would like to keep the language amongst themselves so 
that their children will not understand. None of the other subjects have children or are expecting
children in the imminent future, but most would prefer to rely on a more accountable Arabic education system in Jewish schools. Carmi would like Arabic to be a part of his children’s education, but would not want to supplant their knowledge of or studies in English. Leah thinks that it is critical that her children learn Arabic, but expresses that it best not be learned at home with the exception of a tiny bit. She doesn’t want to “mix up” her kids.”

On this question, the most interesting element is the disparity between the desire of these subjects to have Arabic-speaking children, and their disinterest in taking a part in their Arabic education. This is especially confusing in the cases of those who are studying for certificates in Arabic language teaching, although it would be an unrealistic for me to assume that language education practitioners bring language education into their homes by default.

**Relationships between Arabic Studies and Political Activity**

As previously discussed, Arabic studies are far from a “neutral” venture. I first asked the participants whether they were politically active, and if so, whether there is a correlation between their political orientation/activity and their Arabic studies.

**Fig. 7 Connection between political orientation and Arabic Studies**

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<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Surveys</th>
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<td>Not politically active</td>
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<td>Mildly politically active-connection</td>
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<td>Very politically active-connection</td>
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<td>Total: 9</td>
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On the survey, subjects indicated whether they were either mildly politically active, very politically active, or not politically active, whereas in the interviews the responses were far less formulaic, but still mapped onto the categories in this diagram. In the comment section, two surveyed subjects added their political orientation (one wrote “rightist”, while the other wrote “the answer is left”), as if the labels they provided were self-explanatory in terms of the security-peace binary. The labels are not entirely comprehensive in scope. The Israeli left arguably also values security, while the right may value positive interaction with Palestinians even if peace is not an imminent prospect.

Yaffa reflected on how meeting Palestinians and growing to understand their worldviews drastically changed her own worldview. “There is a connection...I understood how they understand the situation here…” she said as she described what she considered to be a very hard process which exceeded the language barriers, and extended to her studies at large, encounters with Palestinians-- both related to coursework and beyond. For her master’s thesis, she read a lot of books and saw “really harsh things” in the archives of the state about the Israeli-Palestinian
conflict and the Mizrahi issue (namely the kidnappings and dispersions of Yemenite children by government agencies). She concluded by noting that “altogether, say seven years ago, it dramatically affected the way I see the whole state… the state opinion is very far from this [political sensitivity and awareness]. It’s sad.”

As a professional in the NGO sector, Linor clearly stated that her work is inherently political. Her circle both at work and in other parts of her life are “radical left” spaces. Regarding demonstrations (“hafganot”), she said “it’s just what I do.” She would really like to stay in Israel, and very much enjoys where she lives and is very connected. For her there is a “clear connection” between her political activity and her studies; the Arabic she learns is directly applicable to day-to-day interactions. She emphasized that she’s not entirely immersed in Arabic, but she does have an outlet for speaking the language. She added that “not just the speaking of the language is political, but speaking about the language is political as well”; as mentioned in the methodology section, she was concerned about strangers overhearing her analysis of the role of Arabic during a tense period in Israel.

Eden said that she was marginally more politically involved around the elections in 2015. In her view, there is a connection, as she sees Arabic as a “political tool from a security perspective.” Carmi on the other hand claimed that he did not believe that there is a connection between his studies and his political views. He did however qualify that statement by saying that he is politically right-wing, and that studying Middle Eastern Studies allows him to reinforce (“lehāded”) his political opinions. In a similar vein, one surveyed subject wrote that understanding Arabic opened up his understanding of regional politics; he cannot imagine being able to reach the same level of comprehension without a command of Arabic.
The subjects may not universally attribute their political dispositions to be a driving force of their Arabic studies, but they generally claim that Arabic enhances, reinforces and shapes their perception of the political reality. This perhaps points to a subliminal relationship between political orientation and political studies, one that subjects choose to ignore despite the centrality of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict on discourse around Arabic education.

Reactions of Family and Peers

Lastly, one point of interest is how family and friends react to the Arabic studies of the subjects. The reported reactions reflect a deeper reality in which these subjects operate, and perhaps demonstrate how subjects interact with and perhaps play a role in shaping the hegemonic language ideologies. The overarching trend in both the surveys and interviews is that subjects receive a variety of different responses, yet mostly positive reactions. Subjects reporting positive reactions said that their families and peers seem excited, encouraging, jealous, and or amazed. Only two subjects received solely negative or quizzical reactions. Subjects reporting negative reactions said that their family members or peers were surprised, “raised an eyebrow”, or did not understand the value of studying the language. However, the recurring trope of those recording mixed or positive reactions is a certain jealousy on the part of peers and family members who are not proficient in Arabic. Multiple subjects in both the survey and interview emphasized that their peers and family members wish to have had learned Arabic when they were younger and regret that they made other choices or simply did not have the opportunity. The subjects with jealous peers and family members often are asked to translate various things in Arabic as they appear in the public sphere or in the media.
Carmi noted that in high school, Arabic studies were pretty “materialistic” and grade-centric (he did not comment on whether this was also true of other subject areas). The other students would often make fun of him. He declared that “all those who made fun of me now tell me how good of a decision it was.” Eden said that her friends and family members are “mitpalim” or amazed, and “say wow.” Leah described similar sentiments, as her friends often congratulate her for how hard it is to master Arabic, and ask her to teach them the language.

Linor has often been asked to translate for her friends, but sometimes cannot answer as she is unfamiliar with slang or complex Literary Arabic. She also spoke of one scenario in which a friend asked her to translate a word that he perceived to be a curse. When she has been asked and has not known the answer, she has usually turned to a friend who is a Sudanese refugee living in Israel.

Two subjects (Yaffa and one of the surveyed subjects) drew the focus of their answers to the tendency of peers, family members, and complete strangers to expect and or try to convince the subjects to use their Arabic skills for military and security contexts. The surveyed subject said that “people who know me well are very supportive; strangers on the street immediately take it to the security/military context, and tell me that I need to work for the Shabak.”

One critical dimension of peer reactions is located in the interactions between the Jewish Israeli Arabic speakers and local native non-Jewish Arabic speakers. Three of the interviewed subjects explicitly discuss how their knowledge of Arabic from military contexts figures into conversations with those who reject or are disillusioned with the military establishment’s pervasive presence in Israel and the Palestinian Territories. Yaffa describes a certain awkwardness that ensues when the West Bank Palestinians she was researching for her degree
discovered that she honed her Arabic skills in the military. She told of one instance, in which the awkwardness was somewhat diffused by the Palestinian family’s positive response to her Iranian heritage. By virtue of her appearance and alleged closeness of affiliation with the Arab and Moslem world, she was able to gain a certain degree of approval and welcomeness in their home.

One crucial clarification I would like to make is that although students receive generally positive or curious responses to their Arabic studies, they do not necessarily receive the same reactions to the motivations with which they study the language. I did not probe this question in this study, but it would be fascinating to ask students who claim that their motivations have shifted to elaborate on how reactions to their Arabic studies might have changed as a result. This issue goes deeper into the interactions of different language ideologies within one particular speech community, or perhaps challenges the notion of whether Jewish Israelis can all be considered a part of the same speech community at all.
Conclusion

Previous literature on the topic of motivation in Arabic education was wedded to a binary view of motivation, namely that students study Arabic either for security purposes or for peace, and that those motivations are relatively static. Contrary to these previous conclusions, I have demonstrated that students who study Arabic into adulthood (or solely in adulthood) do in fact express shifts in their motivations to study the language, based on different, varying experiences that the students have in relation to the language prior to and over the course of their studies. It is also evident based on my analysis of the data sets that students often adapt their motivations to study Arabic based on their current understanding of the geopolitical reality. As I expected, the preeminent points of contact that the subjects had with Arabic are family environments, army service, and formal studies. Each of the subjects had unique and subjective trajectories regarding the “how” and “when” of motivational shifts, but subjects did distinguish between impactful and unremarkable means of exposure to Arabic. Before I discuss the trends in response to these points of contact with the language, I must reiterate that none of the contributing factors to motivation should be actually considered in isolation; the interplay between the aforementioned environments is arguably more important than finding a single trend that captures the experiences of all participants.

However, the most consistent turning point in students’ relationships with Arabic took place in relation to military service (n.b. not specifically during service). Although not all
students formally encountered Arabic in the military, many reported an increase or change in awareness of the geopolitical reality, which therefore impacted their relationship with Arabic and its speakers. Some subjects claimed that their affinity toward Arabic was accentuated in the military, which prompted them to choose formally to continue Arabic studies on the university level.

Overall, students found their relationship with the language to deepen in some capacity, and has become a certain marker of their identity-- particularly in social settings. The students who still consider Arabic to be peripheral component in their lives are those who generally espouse themselves to instrumental (and generally academic) uses of the language. The majority of subjects who feel compelled to study Arabic on the basis of academic advancement and opportunity were from the surveyed data set. Interviewed subjects who highlighted academic pursuits also claimed other motivations for studying the language beyond the confines of the university setting.

The cryptic, terse responses I received to questions regarding motivation made me realize a pitfall in the study, which may indicate a cause for further inquiry into the topic of motivation or simply may highlight a structural issue of the survey I distributed. I assume that sparse answers are the consequence of the open-ended nature of the questions, or perhaps point to a lack of directed motivation to study Arabic beyond degree requirements. Yet I must not dismiss those for whom encounters with Arabic have been unremarkable or not explicitly emotionally-charged for two reasons. Firstly, it is possible that students did not understand that my target answers might be extrapolations of a basic desire to study the language. Even the most simplistic answers such as “I study Arabic because I enjoy it” (and “I still like it” as a response to motivational
shifts) are sufficiently descriptive that they neither contradict my thesis, nor contribute to it in a meaningful way. Secondly, I at times found it difficult to receive profound responses to questions of motivation until the end of the interview, or once the formal questions had been exhausted. For some of the participants, I needed to gain trust before they expounded on or objectified a fluidity in motivation to study Arabic. The politically liberal subjects were more willing to cite a shift in motivation, while politically conservative subjects tended to be more cryptic and unwilling to entertain the idea of a multiplicity of motivations for their studies.

The university setting proved to be an interesting unifier amongst subjects, beyond the obvious fact that all subjects have learned Arabic at a university within the past five years. The university serves to be the point of convergence of multiple conflicting learning motivations and language ideologies; a speech and learning community is somehow formed in a way that is quite unique. It is a barely coherent juxtaposition of the materials, professors and instructors, and students, each of which make language learning more complex and nuanced. Subjects reflect positively on being in learning environments that allow for a plurality in approaches to Arabic learning, while engaging in commonplace metalinguistic conversations. Although subjects claimed that many of their language instructors had overt biases and expectations for their language use, this was not said to be true of university professors and Arabic instructors. The subjects emphasized the seeming neutrality of their university-level language instructors and professors, which they perceived to be as a requirement-centric or literature-focused approach.

As Yonatan Mendel urges listeners of the TLV1 podcast, there is a tremendous benefit to sidelining military influences in the classroom. Many of the interviewed subjects reflect positively on the prospect of giving students more autonomy with regard to their attitudes toward
the language and motivations to continue Arabic studies. Without an imposed military lens, students can learn the value of learning the language as a tool of expression, as opposed to the pervasive, decoding-centric “sentiment-free” Arabic. Most crucially, all of the subjects who identified motivational shifts claimed that they moved from a more hawkish and fearful approach to a more affiliative, peace-oriented one. Not a single subject reported the opposite, making this a unidirectional trend within at least my finite data set. This isn’t to say that all who study Arabic for extended periods of time have definitive shifts in motivation. Those in this study who did not claim to have experienced motivational shifts (and gave thoughtful reasons as to why they didn’t) asserted that continuing Arabic studies reinforced their prior dispositions. Interestingly, one subject noted that her political disposition wavers all the time, and is contingent on the momentary political climate, but by contrast, her motivations to study Arabic remain the same. She is fiercely devoted to Arabic as a tool for creating bridges between between communities, even when the reality is too grim to support any promise of peace and unity. This leads me to believe that Arabic studies do cause a certain degree of political moderation or fear-reduction in those who are seriously exposed to non-military-oriented Arabic learning environments. This accounts for the unmistakably unidirectional results above. The pattern may not be as such if students were to have experienced a demilitarized curriculum as children, and were subsequently exposed to security-oriented content in the military or in a job related to the security apparatus. This surely could be the case of an Israeli who attended one of the bilingual schools and used Arabic in purely affiliative settings until their army conscription. This of course would not shield an individual of any acknowledgement of security-oriented Arabic, considering how ubiquitous those connotations of the language are even beyond the context of the Arabic classroom.
The last truly crucial area, that both confirmed my assumptions and endlessly surprised me, was the saliency of ethnic identity—both with respect to the blurry lines between various Jewish ethnic identities, and the somewhat more defined boundaries between “Arab-ness” and “Jewish-ness”. In terms of the evolution of Mizrahi identity/ies in Israel, I was not expecting the degree to which the label “Mizrahi” was rejected by subjects, despite serious engagement in “Mizrahi” social, political, religious, and cultural institutions. Like Ella Shohat so aptly describes in “The Invention of the Mizrahim”, the overall sentiment from Mizrahi-heritage subjects was that there was something inauthentic about the label, as it essentializes and commodifies so many different subjectivities into a repressed Israeli underclass. When one subject negated his Mizrahi-ness by saying he was culturally “Western”, he likewise extrapolated upon interesting distinctions that would deem a university student who operates in dominantly eurocentric spaces not truly “Mizrahi”. I was however expecting that Mizrahi-heritage subjects would be more motivated to learn Arabic for the purpose of reclaiming it as a heritage language, when to a certain extent it was a rather peripheral response in the students for whom this applies (even if some variety of Arabic was their family’s heritage language). The standard conflict-based categories of motivation seem to supersede heritage-based motivations, even if the subjects are deeply involved in heritage-centered activities.

The element of ethnic identity that was precisely as expected was the prominent question of physical appearance as a marker of ethnic identity, and how language use often serves as a foil or addition to what a physical appearance might exude. When asking the subjects about ethnic self-identification, many of the AI students were surprised I was even asking this question, since
I should have been able to presume Ashkenazi-ness based on their appearance. A few looked at me quite quizzically, and one said, “no really, don’t you see me?” Only one MI subject addressed the issue of physical appearance explicitly. This subject (Yaffa) tells stories of being mistaken for an Arab on campus due to her complexion and features; people often think she is a worker as opposed to a student at the university (a frequent experience of Arab students). Her perceived Arab-ness is further driven by her Arabic skills, which bodes well for her in her interfaith work and research in Palestinian communities. As a child, her peers thought she had morphed into an Arab when she took on the “proper” accent. The comical contrast is the story of Linor, who noted that her “whiteness” prevents her Arab co-workers from truly believing she is an Arabic-speaker. This points at the rather complex and prominent concept of physicality in ethnic self/public identification. Due to ebbing and flowing periods of tension in Israel, paranoia and suspicion of Arab-like passersby is a common trope, but the testimonies of these subjects deconstruct the inflexibility of ethnolinguistic boundaries as defined by hegemonic language ideologies in Israel today.

**Goals and Impact**

The results of this project have effectively demonstrated that discourse on motivation in Arabic education are not only more complex than the confines of the security-peace binary, but also bring into question the possibility of having static, unchanging language ideologies. Subjects described a certain relief when in non-explicitly framed Arabic learning environments, and varying degrees of willingness to internalize the attitudes of their peers, educators, and families toward the Arabic language. I hope that bringing the notion of fluidity in language learning
motivation to the forefront of discourse on Arabic education in Israel will give educators and administrators the opportunity to reevaluate their programs in light of other language learning institutions and experiences in which students might take part. Echoing Dewey’s point on Collateral Learning, I recapitulate that highlighting the experiences and suggestions of students with diverse approaches to Arabic language learning has only the capacity to reinvigorate language learning spaces and the speech communities affected in the process. Many of these subjects are entering fields that involve Arabic use, and are therefore uniquely positioned to influence discourse and policy on Arabic language education, whether that be on the government level or as a parent of a Jewish Israeli schoolchild.

**Suggestions for Further Inquiry**

Moving forward, I would be interested in further parsing out some of the key questions that were not comprehensively addressed in this study about the boundaries of speech communities and ethnic groups in Israel. Firstly, I only chose to focus on formal environments of Arabic study, understanding that there must be a profound effect of participation in short-term Arabic programs, even in non-conventional learning environments (informal education in the fullest sense). These environments include Palestinian Arabic and heritage dialect programs (namely Iraqi and Moroccan) at community and language learning centers, seminars and classes at cafes, etc. The recent initiative by Tag Meir called “Yalla, Nedaber ʿAravit Barakevet Hakallah” (“Let’s go speak Arabic on the Light Rail) has brought Jews and Arabs to speak Arabic together in the public sphere. It would be fascinating to see if this initiative or similar ones begin to proliferate after this current, halting wave of violent tension in Israel. The prospect
of proactively bringing affiliative Arabic into the public sphere would definitively be a corrective mechanism to the general fear directed toward Arabic and Arabic-speakers in public venues. I suggest that these informal language learning environments would give ample space for new inquiry on language learning motivation, and how adults choose to navigate those spaces with respect to their previous Arabic education or lack thereof.

Other pertinent areas of inquiry following this study include a necessary assessment of the impact of the 2015 Arabic language bill, continued (perhaps longitudinal) studies of the development of Ya Salaam and the Hand in Hand schools. The question of attitudes and motivational shifts will only continue to be increasingly relevant in these respective environments as political discourse in Israel on issues of peace and security intensifies.
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_____________________________________________________________________________________________

Appendix

Consent Form (English)

Dear Participant,

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this research study. As part of the study, you will be answering questions regarding your experience learning Arabic and exposure to its use in Israel today. The goal of the study is to better understand what is driving Jewish students to participate in Arabic language programs. If you have any questions regarding the study, you are entitled to
I will do everything in my power to ensure that your information will remain confidential, and that your identity will not be disclosed in any future presentations.

By signing below, you are giving your consent to be part of the study.

Name ___________________________

Signature ________________________

Date __________

Do you consent to having your interview recorded via audio recording?

___ YES

___ NO

Consent Form (Hebrew)
טופס הסכמה מועד (למשתתפים בין גיל 18+)

תודה שהסכמת להיות חלק מהמחקר הזה. כל כלום מפורק, ואית/ת נהנה/י של שאלות על벵ו ו rốiיקת ברכך לשפת העברית ו Phonetic לשיפור השפה הערבית. המטרה של המחבר היא להבין יותר את הנובאים והنموذج שה.chk נגלה במדינת ישראל וorskתם בשפה הערבית. לא יש כל שאלות על פרו המחבר, והינו الحكم על השאלות לעתיד, במטרה ששמלנאות ינеча ואחריינו.

אפילו זה מחקר סיכון מינימלי (לא הער inval שור תחתית, בולוניה, vb), המה מוחלטת לשאלת פעמים דואל.emic.

ומשפחתיים, ומתרחשים, ישכלות ליהודים מחוז רגועיה.

א preparedStatement את כל השבבים והשכרים של לשון ערבי מודרני, שיתוך אול שיתוך מוגן בעברית.

אם ת_HINT, ואית/ת רושט לעתיד של כל מחבר.

שם ——————————
חתימה —————————
תעריך ————————–

את/ה נותן/ת את רשותך להקליט את הראיון בהקלטת שמע?
Recruitment Materials

Email Form Letter/ Form Script (English)

Dear __________,

My name is Hannah Kober, and I am an undergraduate student at Brandeis University. I am researching the motivations and experiences of Jewish university students in Israel who study Arabic. My intended audience is students who are learning or have learned Arabic on the university level as part of their academic studies. Kindly respond with your preferred contact information if you qualify for this study, and if you know anyone who qualifies for this study, include their information as well. Please let me know whether you are interested to interview in-person or over Skype, and or fill out the survey at the bottom of the message (it will take about 10-15 minutes). Thank you so much. I really appreciate your time and contributions to the study.

Email Form Letter/ Form Script (Hebrew)
שלום לך,

קרואים תל"ע חנה קובר, ואינני סטודנטית תואר ראשון באוניברסיטת ברנדייס. אני חוקרת את המוטיבציות של הסטודנטיםopardיים שלומדים ערבית במכללות וביוניברסיטאות בישראל היום. הקהל הינו הסטודנטים באוניברסיטאות (או במכללות) שלומדים או למדו ערבית בלחנים שלומדים ברמה זו. אם את/ה מתאימים למחקר, אנא כתבו לי באימייל עם הדרך הכי ייעילה ליצור קשר איתנו או אם ידעת/י מי(si) מתאימים למחקר. אנא הודיעו/ית אם את/ה מעוניינים להתראיין פנים–אל–פנים או דרך סקיープ, או תשלימו את השאלון שנמצא בtheduide (זה ייקח בערך 15 דקות). תודה רבה! אני מאוד מעריכה את עזרתכם וזמנכם היקר!

חנה קובר

ehannahko@brandeis.edu

Study Instruments

Survey/Interview Guide (English)

1. Please write your name below.
2. Email Address
3. Where do you live?
4. Where do you study?

5. Which degree are you working towards and what are your areas of study?

6. With which ethnic identities do you identify? Check as many as apply.
   a. Ashkenazi
   b. Mizrahi
   c. Sephardic
   d. Arab-Jew
   e. Ethiopian
   f. Other:

7. Please select your age.
   a. 18-21
   b. 22-25
   c. 26-30
   d. 31+

8. What is your native language?
   a. Hebrew
   b. Arabic
   c. English
   d. French
   e. Other: _________

9. Do you take any courses at your university in any language aside Hebrew and Arabic?
a. Hebrew
b. Arabic
c. English
d. French
e. Other: ________

10. Which languages were spoken in your home? Did you understand and or could you speak all of the languages?

   a. Hebrew
   b. Arabic
   c. English
   d. French
e. Spanish
f. Amharic
g. Farsi
h. Russian
i. Other: ______

11. Which languages are spoken in your current home environment? Do you understand and or can you speak all of the languages?

   a. Hebrew
   b. Arabic
   c. English
d. French
12. Did you study Arabic before you started university? If so, when and in which contexts?

   a. Elementary school
   b. Middle school
   c. High School
   d. Year of Service
   e. Mechina
   f. Army
   g. Other:

13. Did you serve in the IDF? If so, in which unit?

14. Did Arabic play a role in your army service? If so, then how?

15. Do you find Arabic to be a difficult language to study? Elaborate.

16. Why did you choose to study Arabic? Was it initially your choice?

17. Have your teachers influenced your decision to study Arabic? If so, then how?

18. Have your family members influenced your decision? If so, then how?
19. How did you perceive the Arabic language before you began studying it? What role did it play in your own life?

20. Did Arabic play a role in your family and community? If so, does it still? How?

21. How you perceive Arabic now?

22. Are you still interested in learning Arabic for the same reasons as when you began studying the language?

23. Do you sense a particular goal that your teacher(s) may have in the classroom?
   For what purpose do they expect you to use your Arabic skills?

24. What do you think you can gain as an adult in Israel who speaks Arabic?

25. What role do you think the Arabic language should play in Israeli society?

26. Do you plan on continuing Arabic studies in the future? Why?

27. Do you have peers with whom you speak Arabic? If so, do you think that they study the language for the same reasons you previously stated regarding your own motivations?

28. Do you speak Arabic with a native speaker either in or outside of the class?

29. If you have children, or choose to have children in the future, is it important to you that they learn Arabic as well? Elaborate.

30. Do you engage with Israeli politics at all? If so, does your political position relate to your Arabic studies at all? How?

31. What sort of responses do you get from peers, family members, and or community members regarding your Arabic studies?
Thank you so much for your participation in this study. I really appreciate your time and assistance. For further information, questions, and details regarding the study, please contact Hannah Kober at hannahko@brandeis.edu.

Survey/Interview Guide (Hebrew)

1. נשארכו/약/תק/שפי
2. באיזו עיר את/ה נגר/ה?
3. איפס את/ה לולע/ה?
4. לקראת אתו/אתה نحوדה את/ה?
5. הצז את/ה מודעה אתונה? סמן את הכל אופציותיה/הו/יו/ים.
   a. אשכנזי/ה
   b. מזרחי/ה
   c. ספרדי/ה
   d. יהודי/ה—ערבי/ה
   e. אתיופי/ת
   f. אחר:
6. סמן/ת את niênך
   a. 18–21
   b. 22–25
   c. 26–30
   d. +31
7. מהי שפת אם שלך?
   a. עברית
   b. ערבית
   c. אנגלית
   d. צרפתית
   e. שפה אחרת

8. האם את/ה לומד בקורסים בשפות אחרות מחוץ לעברית וערבית?
   a. אנגלית
   b. צרפתית
   c. שפות אחרות

9. אילו שפות מדברות בבייתך בעברית?
   a. עברית
   b. ערבית
   c. אנגלית
   d. צרפתית
   e. שפה אחרת

10. האם את/ה מברי/ה או מדבר את השפות dialekt?
11. אילו שפות מדברות בבייתך בעברית? האם את/ה מברי/ה או מדבר את השפות dialekt?
12. האם למדת ערבית לפני שהגעת לאוניברסיטה? אם כן, אז מתי ובאילו קונייכסיים/מוסדות לימוד?

13. האם שרתת בצה''ל? אם כן, באיזו יחידה/פלוגה?

14. האם הערבית היתה חלק משירותך בצה''ל? אם כן, איך?

15. האם את/ה חושב/ת שהערבית היא שפה קשה ללמוד? אם כן, איך?

16. האם יש לך מישהו שעוזר לך עם הלימודים?

17. لماذا בחרת ללמוד ערבית? האם זאת היתה הבחירה שלך בראשונה?

18. האם המורים שלך השפיעו על הבחירה ללמוד ערבית? אם כן, איך?

19. האם בני משפחתך השפיעו על הבחירה? אם כן, אז איך?

20. كيف התיחסת לערבית לפני שהתחלת ללמוד אותה?

21. האם היתה לערבית תפקיד בחזויות של בני משפחתך וקהילתך? האם יש תפקיד לערבית בחזיותם היום?

22. איך אתה/ה מתיחספס/ת לערבית اليوم? מהו תפקיד ערבית сегодня?
23. האם אתה使者ביטוות שגרתיות ברכות להיות עם אחרים היום? 

24. האם אתה/from/who ש出し לפורים של על-בריכת מוסיפים מטר? לאו מטרים מוספים מטרות שטוחים/י

25. באיזו תורנות ש notícia/ה לך/was בוגר ביביאן שדיבור ערבית?

26. מנהプリיה להוראות של הערביות בחברה והישראליות המית?

27. האם/from/who מתנו להמשיכך את למידך/בבריכת ביניים? לעת?

d to hannahko@brandeis.edu

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