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

Arabic instruction in Israel's Jewish sector fails to meet the desires and expectations of educators and other stakeholders. Too few study Arabic, and their subsequent command of the language is poor. This is notwithstanding the high national priority that is accorded to Arabic instruction. The article reviews the educational policies and practices that produce this result and the dynamics that make them intractable. Arabic instruction is approached as a social field of practice. The sectarian nature of Zionism—especially the de-Arabization of Jews and the pervasive segregation between Jews and Arabs—proves decisive, although contradictory and unpredictable, in shaping the field. This influence is mediated through the practice of such stakeholders as Military Intelligence, universities, teachers, parents, pupils, and principals. Also crucial are the different economic and cultural valuations of languages, the bureaucratic/institutional structure of the field, and the effects of the very structure of the Arabic language.