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Dissertation

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Arabista a stát: Výuka arabského jazyka a profesionalizace blízkovýchodní expertízy ve státní sféře

The Arabist and the State: Arabic Language Instruction and the Professionalisation of the Governmental Expertise in the Middle Eastern Affairs

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I hereby declare that I have written this dissertation independently, using only the mentioned and duly cited sources and literature, and that the work has not been used in another university study programme or to obtain the same or another academic title.

In Prague on February 1, 2023 Mgr. Jan Lochovský v. r.

Abstrakt

Disertační práce se zaměřuje na fenomén „státních Arabistů“, tedy zaměstnanců státu, civilních i těch v ozbrojených silách, kteří byli systematicky směřováni ke kariérám vyžadujícím vysokou úroveň znalosti arabského jazyka. Autor tuto specifickou skupinu zkoumá ve Spojených státech amerických, Spojeném království a v Izraeli mezi koncem 2. světové války a událostmi tzv. arabského jara. Analýza je vedena ve dvou stěžejních směrech. První je komparativní historie institucí, které se dlouhodobě zaměřovaly na výuku arabského jazyka a byly zřizovány přímo těmito státy. Druhým tématem jsou samotné vzdělávací programy uskutečňované těmito institucemi. Autor se zaměřuje především na ideologické faktory v jejich prezentaci arabského jazyka, „jinakosti“ arabsky hovořícího světa a v extrémních případech na sentiment arabštiny coby „jazyka nepřítele“. Obě linie jsou volně ukotveny v kontextu tzv. „critical junctures“ a referují dopady obecných dějin na tak specifický jev výkonu státní moci, jakým je jazyková výuka. Zaměření analýzy na souběh velkých událostí 20. a počátku 21. století se změnami ve výuce arabštiny nakonec odhaluje značné rozdíly mezi civilními a vojenskými institucemi. Především diplomatické sbory budovaly svou arabistickou expertizu systematicky a dlouhodobě, zatímco ozbrojené síly inklinovaly spíše k reaktivnímu přístupu. V rovině samotné výuky arabského jazyka je pak patrné, že faktory geografické vzdálenosti a každodenní interakce s arabsky hovořícím obyvatelstvem nemusí být nutně reflektovány měrou institucionalizované odměřenosti od tohoto prostředí a jeho negativním vnímáním.

Klíčová slova: výuka arabštiny; státní zaměstnanci; diplomacie; ozbrojené síly; Spojené státy; Velká Británie, Izrael; kurikula

Abstract

The dissertation focuses on a phenomenon of "state-Arabists", i.e., a group of state employees, both civil servants and members of armed forces, who have been systematically directed towards careers requiring proficiency in the Arabic language. The author observes this specific group in the United States, United Kingdom, and Israel between the end of the Second World War and the so-called Arab Spring. The focus of the analysis is twofold. The first is a comparative history of institutions tasked with the Arabic language instruction established directly by the three countries. The second theme are the instructional programmes conducted by these institutions. The author focuses mainly on the ideological factors in their presentation of the Arabic language, the "Otherness" of the Arabic speaking world, and, in most extreme cases, the sentiment of Arabic as a "language of the enemy". Both lines of inquiry are anchored within the context of "critical junctures", thus reflecting the impact of the general history on such a specific instance of exertion of state power as the instruction of a language. The analytical focus on the concurrence of large-scale events of the 20th and early 21st centuries eventually reveals noticeable differences between the civilian and military institutions. The diplomatic services in particular have been building their Arabist expertise systematically and on a long-term basis, while the armed forces leaned towards a more reactive approach. In terms of the Arabic language instruction itself, the factors of geographic distance and everyday interaction with the Arabic speaking population seem not to have been necessarily reflected by an institutionalized "dissociation" from such environment, and its negative reflection.

Keywords: Arabic language instruction; civil servants; diplomacy; armed forces; United States; United Kingdom; Israel; curricula

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Transliteration of Arabic and Hebrew

The presented dissertation frequently quotes both literature and sources written in Arabic or Hebrew, which have already been transliterated into English. In such cases, I follow the standard of transliteration utilized in the original material. These exceptions are signified in a footnote.

For transliteration of a text written originally in Arabic script, I utilize the standard of the *American Library Association – Library of Congress* (ALA-LC) with certain distinctions (*tāʾ marbūṭa* is transliterated as "-a" instead of "-ah", and sun letters are assimilated when transliterating the definite article).

For transliteration of the Hebrew script, I use the *Hebrew Academy 2006* standard. One of its specifics is the lack of "-h" when transliterating the letter "hei" in the singular feminine ending of adjectives.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ALW	Arabic Language Wing – Army School in Beaconsfield (UK)
ASTP	Army Specialized Training Program (US)
CASOC	California-Arabian Standard Oil Company (US)
CALSAP	Command Arabic Language School – Arabian Peninsula (UK)
DLI	Defense Language Institute (US)
DLIFLC	Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Centre (US)
FSI	Foreign Service Institute (US)
IDF	Israel Defense Forces
INALCO	Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales
MEAP	Middle East Area Program (US)
MECAS	Middle East Centre for Arab Studies (UK)
MSA	Modern Standard Arabic
NDEA	National Defense Education Act (US)
NSEP	National Security Education Program (US)
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
SHIFʿAT	Ha-Yeḥida le-Ḳidum ha-Safa ha-ʿAravit ve-Tarbuta (*Unit for the Improvement of the Arabic Language and Culture* - Israel)
SOAS	School of Oriental and African Studies (UK)
TELEM	Ṭipuaḥ Limudei Mizraḥanut (*Unit for the Encouragement of Oriental Studies* - Israel)

1. Introduction

"By the end of the First World War, there was a realization that not only was war too dangerous a business to be left to the generals but that the Arab world was too complex for the British Government to rely on amateurs."[1]

The situation described by the British Arabist Leslie McLoughlin has become a significant intellectual and organizational challenge to practically all state actors involved in the Arab world,[2] both in peacetime and at war. As various Arabic speaking countries became a nexus of political, economic, and security interests of a truly global nature throughout the second half of the 20th and especially the early 21st century, career military officers and professional diplomats could have found the region perplexing and divergent from their generalist training. Simultaneously, both self-taught and academically trained Arabists have struggled with the inherent intricacies of statecraft, which frequently required a skillset achievable only within the governmental domain. To address this issue, various governments have had a choice between two general approaches. They could either incorporate an already developed academic expertise into governmental affairs by consulting or contracting academics, or they could choose to train their military officers and civil administrators in the Arabic language and understanding the region, its history and culture.

[1] Leslie J. McLoughlin, *In a Sea of Knowledge: British Arabists in the Twentieth Century* (Reading, UK: Ithaca Press, 2002), 70. The dissertation is written in British English, using CMOS 17th ed. as a standard for referencing. This naturally creates certain conflicts with quotations marks and terminology. Therefore, I apply the American English style of quotation marks when using the CMOS (mainly footnotes). In all other cases, the British standard is applied. In terms of the titles of discussed institutions, I use a spelling native to the countries of their establishment, i.e., the British spelling for British institutions and the American spelling for US institutions. The Israeli standard of English translation is usually based on the American spelling, yet I always aim to follow the spelling of the official sources (such as the English language versions of the discussed websites and translated literature).

[2] I use the terms "Arabic speaking world", "Arab world", "Middle East", and even "the region" interchangeably. While a variety of regional descriptions ranging from MENA to MENAP, Greater Middle East, etc., has been in use and the terminology is constantly redefined, a singular definition could not cover all the cases discussed in this dissertation. Therefore, all the descriptors above are used to broadly refer to the region where the graduates of the analysed institutions were expected to perform tasks requiring the use of the Arabic language, with specific definitions depending on the individual institution.

In this dissertation, I aim to analyse the latter approach, i.e., the training of state-employed Arabists whose expertise has been tangibly tied to the needs of their governments.[3] The first approach, i.e., hiring, contracting, or consulting experts mainly from the world of academia, has already been discussed thoroughly, especially with regard to the establishment of Middle Eastern studies as a dedicated academic discipline in the United States.[4] The predominant focus of scholarly writing on the interaction between academic expertise in Middle Eastern affairs and governmental requirements of such expertise is understandable, as it has frequently stemmed from the personal experience of various academics with governments, both positive and negative. Furthermore, the world of academia has been barred from reflecting upon governmental approaches to teaching languages due to the inherent secrecy associated mainly with the domain of the armed forces. I believe that any debate on the governmental understanding of the Arab world has been and will remain imbalanced unless the training of "state-Arabists"[5] is also considered. Therefore, this dissertation is conceived as an introductory historical probe into state-organized Arabic instruction in order to enable a more informed debate between academia and the state sector.

This dissertation focuses on institutions established by state actors that aim to teach the Arabic language to men and, more recently, women who are already employees of a state or are on track to assume such positions. The graduates of these institutions are Arabists by profession in the same sense as military officers were understood as professionals by Samuel Huntington in his famous treatise on civil-military relations, *The Soldier and the State* – by sharing expertise, responsibility, and corporateness.[6] Historically, the term Arabist has mainly been associated with the world of academia and a deep, linguistically-oriented knowledge of the language. While various governments train their employees in Arabic for very practical and often immediate purposes, the quality of instruction at governmental institutions

[3] Given the focus on institutions organized exclusively as sub-units to central governments, I use the terms "government" and "state" interchangeably. The same applies to "government-organized" and "state-organized" institutions. The few exceptions to this rule, such as collaboration between the state and a private enterprise or an individual, are always noted in the text.

[4] For a basic reference, see Zachary Lockman, *Contending Visions of the Middle East: The History and Politics of Orientalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). Other works are discussed in more detail below in the literature review.

[5] I utilize the term "state-Arabists" to refer to the specific group of state employees defined in the paragraph above throughout the entire dissertation. Given its noticeable presence on the following pages, I refrain from further use of quotation marks to highlight the term.

[6] Samuel Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (New Year: Belknap Press, 1981), 8-10. Huntington understands *expertise* as "specialized knowledge and skill (…) acquired only by prolonged education and experience"; *responsibility* as "working in a social context (…) essential to the functioning of society"; and *corporateness* as "(...) a sense of organic unity and consciousness as a group of themselves apart of laymen."

is not inherently inferior to that of the academic sphere, but merely oriented in a different direction. Therefore, I use the term "Arabist" in reference to any person with some knowledge of Arabic as a second language who utilizes this skill in a professional environment, e.g., for translation, interpreting, instruction, or compilation of curricula, regardless of how he or she gained the knowledge.

To facilitate a thorough analysis of these governmental institutions, I propose a research question encompassing both the issue of intent and execution: Why and how do state actors teach the Arabic language? To address the issue of intent, I further ask: What have been the driving forces in the establishment and development of institutions tasked with the instruction of the Arabic language, which have been created and maintained since the Second World War, and how have the events of both international and domestic politics affected the existence of these institutions? To address the issue of execution of governmental Arabic language instruction, I analyse the curricula utilized and produced by these institutions. Because Arabic language curricula have not existed in a vacuum, the question of how the general approach of various state actors towards the Arabic speaking world and associated normative agendas have affected the design of the curricula at the respective institutions should not be neglected.

It would be difficult to find a country that has no political, economic, security, or other interest in today's Arabic speaking world. The number of governments that have institutionalized the instruction of Arabic for their own employees is noticeably lower, yet it still includes a large majority of the "Western" world, the Russian Federation, but also many newcomers to the Middle East, including the People's Republic of China. A thorough analysis of state-run institutions tasked with Arabic instruction in all these countries would undoubtedly be beneficial; however, this would reach far beyond the scope of a dissertation. Therefore, I propose an analysis of the institutions of three state-actors: the United States, the United Kingdom, and the State of Israel. Such a selection follows the logic of three varying approaches to the instruction of the Arabic language, with the US' focus on strong institutionalization, in which Arabic is taught among many other languages; the British approach favouring the operation of smaller institutions focused exclusively on one language

and region; and the unique Israeli case of gradually tightening cooperation between security and educational domains in the instruction of Arabic at the high-school level.[7]

Even though the US, UK, and Israel are certainly not the only countries that have significantly invested in the institutionalization of Arabic instruction outside the traditional academic domain, they represent three very different approaches to this specific kind of Arabic teaching. Other countries with a significant historical presence in the Middle East have maintained a solid network of civilian Arabic teaching institutions that have helped to staff various governmental positions, but they have almost exclusively maintained the institutional status of universities or research institutes.[8] This does not rule out the possibility that other countries have established robust dedicated educational programs focused on the Arabic language. However, the existence or mode of operation of such institutions has not been made public, therefore preventing the possibility of a scholarly analysis. It should be noted that the case of Israel is truly unique on a global scale for several reasons: First, a significant part of its Arabic teaching efforts is directed at high-school students, yet this effort is to a large extent organized and even executed by the military; second, even though the high-school Arabic instruction of Jewish pupils is organized *de-facto* as the teaching of Arabic as a foreign language, Arabic was *de-jure* an official language alongside Hebrew until 2018;[9] and third, Israel is a part of the Middle East from a geographical perspective and its incentives to educate its civil servants in Arabic are therefore significantly more immediate than the ones of the US or UK. Furthermore, while most UK and US institutions discussed in this dissertation teach the Arabic language for external purposes, such as for diplomacy and warfighting, the Israeli

[7] The organization of the secular Jewish Israeli educational system is discussed in greater detail in the chapter focused on Israel. Throughout its history, the study of the Arabic language in the Jewish Israeli compulsory education has mainly taken place in grades 7-12 (pupils aged 12-18), which are usually referred to as "Junior High School" and "Senior High School".

[8] A typical example is the French *Institut national des langues et civilisations orientales* (INALCO). Despite its independent status as a research institute, INALCO has supplied a steady stream of graduates to the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This was enabled mainly through the "Orient entrance examination", which allowed the MFA to recruit applicants with a deep knowledge of at least one oriental language, thus bypassing a much more competitive general entrance exam. Throughout the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, a large majority of those who entered the French MFA through the "Oriental examination" studied at INALCO. See Christian Lequesnea and Jean Heilbronn, "Senior Diplomats in the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs: When an Entrance Exam Still Determines the Career," *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy* 7, no. 3 (2012): 277f.

[9] Arabic was already declared an official language of Mandate Palestine in 1922 together with Hebrew and English. It remained such even after 1948 until 2018, when its status was amended by the *Basic Law: Israel as the Nation-State of the Jewish People*, which gave Arabic a "special status" alongside Hebrew as the State language. See George V of the United Kingdom, *The Palestine Order in Council* (London, August 10, 1922), https://ecf.org.il/media_items/1468; and *Basic Law: Israel as the Nation-State of the Jewish People*, trans. Susan Hattis Rolef (Jerusalem, adopted July 19, 2018), "Language" section 4 paragraphs (a) and (b), https://main.knesset.gov.il/EN/activity/Documents/BasicLawsPDF/BasicLawNationState.pdf.

motivation for educating state-Arabists is both external and internal given its large Arabic speaking population.

Even though the "Western" interest in the "Orient" and its institutionalized efforts to study its cultures and languages have a much deeper history, this dissertation focuses exclusively on the period roughly defined as between the end of the Second World War and 2011. These junctures are not merely incidental. Most of the analysed institutions were founded almost immediately after the end of the Second World War or during the war and significantly reformed thereafter. This naturally also applies to Israel, which was officially founded in 1948; nonetheless, its proponents had already realized the need for institutions focused on teaching Arabic years earlier.[10] The subsequent Cold War period also marked an ever-increasing level of the US' incursion into the Middle East, be it in diplomatic, economic, security, or military domains. These events unfolded in parallel with the British disengagement that took place after decades of dominance and active administration of many parts of the Middle East. Such changes in both countries' foreign policies towards the Middle East have had a profound impact on their governments' understanding of what the education of state-Arabists should aim for.

On the other end of the chronological spectrum lies the year 2011, which had an immediate effect on the rationale behind the instruction of the Arabic language organized by the US and British Governments. In the military domain, conventional armed forces withdrew from Iraq, thus discontinuing the main driving force for Arabic instruction that had been in place for almost a decade. Simultaneously, a new chapter for the Arab world unfolded as the events known as the "Arab Spring" took centre stage. This revolutionary period not only left the US and UK perplexed, but also impacted the Israeli perception of its surroundings, including the carefully maintained *status quo* with Hosni Mubarak's Egypt and the Alawite regime in Syria. These events, together with a seeming period of calm between the 2008-2009 Gaza War and the 2012 Gaza operation referred to by Israel as *Operation Pillar of Defense*, constituted a period in which the states reaped the benefits of decades of entanglement between the military and Arabic instruction. The selected chronological boundaries for my analysis do not suggest that the discussed states lost a need for Arabists in their official ranks after 2011. However, at the time this dissertation was being written,

[10] For instance, *Palmaḥ* organized dedicated Arabic courses for predecessors of the *Mistaʿarvim* units as early as 1943. This is discussed in greater detail in the chapter devoted to Israel.

the second decade of the 21st century was still in recent memory, and sources unveiling state-organized Arabic language instruction have not yet been made public in a scope allowing for a thorough analysis.

Having established a geographical and chronological framework, the definition of "Arabic language instruction organized by state actors" needs to be clarified. For the sake of clarity, I propose a set of criteria to delineate which institutions fit the scope of this research. As already foreshadowed, students who receive training in the Arabic language by the presented institutions are exclusively state employees – either public servants or members of the armed forces. This dramatically alters their incentives to study the Arabic (or any other) language, which might revolve less around intellectual curiosity and more around material gains such as possible promotion, transfer, or an interesting overseas deployment. In some cases, the incentive to study the Arabic language might not be personal at all, as the student might simply be ordered to study the language. The direct link between the student and the institution requesting the education of an Arabist also significantly affects the way the training is organized. The beneficiary can dictate specifically what kind of Arabic is required and what purpose the curriculum is to serve, as well as what the timeframe, costs, and the appropriate number of students should be. This presents a noticeable difference from the instruction of the Arabic language within the confines of academia not only in terms of practical execution, but also from a normative standpoint.

The case of Israel is noticeably different from the UK and US in terms of the organization of its education of state-Arabists, yet it shares many similarities in terms of its pool for recruitment and the incentives to study Arabic. Even though other countries have opted to sponsor the academic instruction of foreign languages for "strategic purposes" – the most prominent being the United States with its 1958 *National Defense Education Act*[11] – Israel has taken this approach several steps further. Throughout the decades, it has gradually securitized the instruction of the Arabic language at the high school level, granting the Israel Defense Forces control of both curriculum design and occasionally the instruction itself. Furthermore, the entire system has always operated alongside compulsory military service as an inherent part of Israeli society, meaning that students who have opted to study Arabic at high-school will inevitably become state-Arabists as soon as they are drafted into the

[11] Legal act stipulating financial assistance to encourage the study of certain sciences and foreign languages following the Soviet launch of Sputnik. A larger narrative of the impact of the Act is discussed in the chapter devoted to the United States.

military.[12] Finally, the Israeli Ministry of Defense has systematically promoted the study of the Arabic language among high-school students by highlighting the plethora of benefits it brings, such as better career prospects both during and after military service, yet frequently overlooking the notion of students merely taking an interest in the Arabic language and culture itself.[13] Therefore, the Israeli system of state-organized education in the Arabic language shares many similar traits with much smaller institutions in the UK and US, i.e., incentives that go beyond only an intellectual interest in the Arabic language; the direct link between the pragmatic interest of the state and the student through dedicated curricula; and ultimately even the status of pre-graduation high-school students as soon-to-be drafted members of the armed forces, whose devotion to the study of the Arabic language would be utilized by the state, frequently regardless of their personal preference.

With the research framework outlined above in mind, I propose a multidisciplinary approach anchored mainly in comparative history, with the individual cases defined on a geographical basis as nation-states.[14] Even though comparative history offers a solid methodological toolset on its own, I believe the utilization of other concepts from different disciplines could help to clarify the presented narrative of the education of state-Arabists. Therefore, I selectively employ several concepts stemming mainly from historical institutionalism and security studies, but do not fully utilize their theoretical and methodological depth. Indeed, the subject matter could certainly be discussed through a variety of approaches associated with security studies (and perhaps even more fittingly through their critical branch), as well as didactics, linguistics, and other disciplines. However, such approaches would constitute an entirely different research agenda. Therefore, I approach the individual cases mainly as self-contained institutional histories with the comparison

[12] After a series of education reforms, Arabic is now considered a second compulsory foreign language (the other one being French; the first compulsory language is always English) between grades 7-9 (approximately ages 12-14) with three weekly hours of instruction. See Michal Belikoff, *The Study of Arabic in Jewish Schools: From Barriers to Opportunities – Policy Paper No. 6* (Haifa - Jerusalem: Sikkuy - The Association for the Advancement of Civic Equality, 2018), https://www.sikkuy.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2018/07.

[13] For a thorough critical analysis of the entire system, see Yonatan Mendel, *The Creation of Israeli Arabic: Political and Security Consideration in the Making of Arabic Language Studies in Israel* (Cambridge: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014).

[14] I mainly follow the methodological approach of Miroslav Hroch in terms of case selection and their comparability. The choice of nation-states as individual cases does not infer that they represent the only type of comparable entity as opposed to defining the subjects of comparison either socially or longitudinally. Instead, I understand nation-states as a natural point of reference, as they are the main organizing unit of the analysed *governmental* institutions. See Miroslav Hroch, "Komparativní metoda v marxistické historiografii: Možnosti a meze jejího využití," *Československý časopis historický* 20 (1972): 639; Hartmut Kaelble, *Der Historische Vergleich*, *Eine Einführung zum 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt a. M., New York: Campus Verlag, 1999); also, James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, eds., *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 14.

stopping short of proposing a "general theory of government-organized language training". Nonetheless, I do aim to infer the generalized principles of the education of state-Arabists vis-à-vis external incentives. An important factor I observe is whether the decision-makers utilized the analysed institutions merely in a reactive manner and supported them only at times of crisis, or whether they manage to use them proactively for the systemic development of linguistic expertise among public servants and members of the armed forces.[15]

To allow for a comparison between the institutions tasked with educating the state-Arabists in three countries, I propose three basic categories of reference[16]: the institutional setup; financing; and personnel allocations. The institutional setup can be understood as the establishment, abolition, or reform of the analysed institution. Financing refers to either allocation or cuts in financial resources allocated to the institutions. This can happen for a variety of reasons, but since the analysed institutions teach a language intended to be utilized mainly abroad, we can assume that their financing depends to a large extent on incentives happening outside the nation-state's own territory (the case of Israel being once again specific due to its large Arab population). Finally, the personnel allocations refer to variances in the numbers of students, instructors, and administrators of the analysed institutions. I understand this category both quantitatively and qualitatively, observing how the state-actor incentivized the study of Arabic to potential students (e.g., by promising faster career advancement or financial bonuses), as well as how it managed to utilize the newly acquired proficiency in Arabic among the institutions' graduates.[17]

To highlight the causal inference affecting these categories and the curricula, I propose the utilization of the concept of "critical junctures", which stems mainly from historical institutionalism.[18] Critical junctures can be defined as "*relatively* short periods of time during

[15] I have previously discussed the issue of proactivity vs. reactivity in teaching the Arabic language to the US and UK armed forces in Jan Lochovský, "Arabština pro potřeby ozbrojených sil ve Spojených státech a Spojeném království," *Vojenské rozhledy* 28, no. 2 (2019), https://www.vojenskerozhledy.cz/kategorie-clanku/vzdelavani-a-vycvik/arabstina-ozbrojenych-sil.

[16] Categories are defined based on Hroch, i.e., as phenomena applicable to all the analysed cases. See Hroch, "Komparativní Metoda," 639.

[17] Even though the comparable categories of financial and personnel affairs could be understood as variables with the possibility of quantitative operationalization, this would not fit the research framework for two main reasons: first, each nation-state in question has followed a different logic when evaluating its own need for the state-Arabists; and second, the hypothetical dependent variable of a successful educational program is definable neither qualitatively nor quantitatively, as the metric for "success" has varied significantly between various institutions, ranging from creating a "pool" of Arabic speakers to satisfy potential needs of the given government to developing a specialized technical vocabulary in a specific Arabic dialect.

[18] Given the scope of historical institutionalism and the variety of approaches, I mainly refer to James Mahoney and Kathleen Thelen as some of its representatives. Regarding the critical junctures, see Kathleen Thelen, "How Institutions Evolve: Insights from Comparative Historical Analysis," in *Comparative Historical Analysis*

which there is a *substantially* heightened probability that agents' choices will affect the outcome of interest."[19] This also implies that critical junctures are somehow different from the chronological periods that have taken place before and after the junctures, thus resulting in institutional histories that are dualistic in nature, alternating between the periods of critical junctures and periods in-between. As noted by Giovanni Capoccia and Daniel Kelemen, "the key point here is that a historical moment that constitutes a critical juncture with respect to one institution may not constitute a critical juncture with respect to another."[20] Therefore, a significant event could have had a profound effect on one institution while being less relevant to another due to a variety of reasons, hypothetically including the truly proactive nature of the education of state-Arabists at the given institution.

To allow for a cross-national comparison, I propose defining the following events as "triggers for critical junctures": the end of World War II; the 1956 Suez Crisis; the 1967 Six-Day War; the 1973 Yom Kippur/October War and associated oil crisis; the late 1970s rewriting of the political order in the Middle East; the late-1980s and early 1990s rise of terrorism directed against "the distant enemy" and Western military re-engagement in the Middle East; the September 11, 2001 attacks and their implications; and the post-2008 US disengagement from the Middle East.

In practice, I aim to analyse whether and how these critical junctures in the form of large-scale events of international prominence affected the institutions at an observable level, which is defined mainly by the following categories: institutional setup; budgetary allocations; and availability of personnel. The causal inference of the critical junctures into the curricula can be both direct and indirect. The direct impact can be observed in a sudden change of the underlying purpose of the curricula, which can range from variances such as "general Arabic for everyday diplomatic conversation"; "Arabic for diplomatic conduct"; "Arabic for territorial administration"; "Arabic for population control"; and all the way to "Arabic for kinetic warfighting". Another instance can be the sudden change in preference for a specific Arabic dialect as dictated by the geographical area in which the high-impact event potentially

in the Social Sciences, ed. James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 220.

[19] Giovanni Capoccia and R. Daniel Kelemen, "The Study of Critical Junctures: Theory, Narrative and Counterfactuals in Historical Institutionalism," *World Politics* 59, no. 3 (2007): 348.

[20] Capoccia and Kelemen, 349.

constituting the critical juncture is taking place.[21] In the case of indirect inference, the curricula are affected indirectly through alterations in the institutional setup, financing, and/or personnel allocations (see a representation of the analysed causal cascade in Fig. I below).

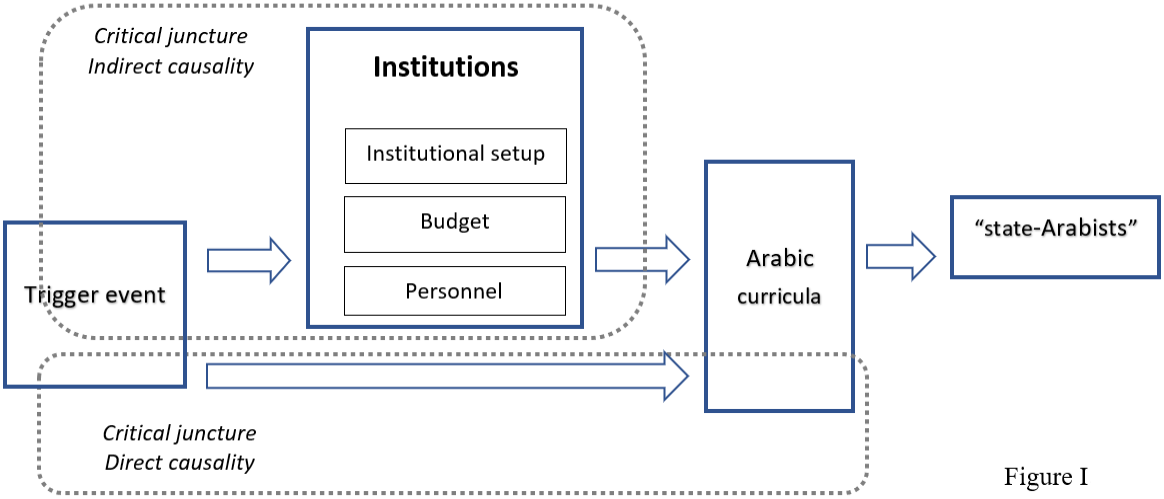

Figure I

In addition to the "critical junctures", another utilized concept is "securitization". I use the term "securitization" with only a partial reference to the famous international relations theory.[22] Given my focus on educational institutions, I do not inquire into the inter-subjective securitization act itself, as it is merely understood as a prerequisite for the establishment of the educational system for state-Arabists. Therefore, I assert that state actors can understand the "lack of knowledge of the Arabic language" as a stake worth securitizing. This can either be due to Arabic knowledge being understood as the "language of the enemy", or as a "tool in winning the hearts and minds of the local government and population".[23] Therefore, my line of inquiry begins only after the securitizing act has taken

[21] A typical example would be the overwhelming preference for the Iraqi Arabic dialect by the US Department of Defense after the outbreak of the 2003 Iraq War as opposed to the more frequently taught Modern Standard Arabic, Syrian, and Egyptian Arabic dialects.

[22] Securitization is mainly associated with the Copenhagen school of international relations and its constructivist securitization theory. It stipulates that under certain circumstances, an "actor" (here a government) can "securitize" a certain subject (such as a critical language), thus elevating it from other "ordinary issues" and invoking a series of "extraordinary measures" (in our case the establishment of an institution, budgetary influx, and allocation of personnel). The securitization act is purely inter-subjective (between the actor and audience – e.g., public, or a group of decision-makers) and does not necessarily react to an objective reality – here the actual importance of understanding Arabic. See Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Boulder, Colorado: Lynn Riennert Publishers, 1998).

[23] The latter case might prove important either during an exercise of population control, or in the course of a competition for a favourable position against a third-party (for instance a competition between US and Soviet diplomacies in the Middle East during the Cold War).

place, i.e., when the state actor's construction of "the lack of state-Arabists" as an existential threat is considered a *fait accompli*. I then focus on the actual implementation of the "extraordinary measure", i.e., the training of state-Arabists. Even though I occasionally discuss instances when various officers and administrators of the analysed institutions aimed to convince the decision-makers to reaffirm the importance of training state-Arabists, I refrain from doing so through the prism of securitization theory.

Finally, the discussed entanglement of governments, security, and the Arabic language naturally points to the matter of Orientalism and its critique.[24] Indeed, the governmental incursion into Arabic language instruction and Middle Eastern studies has frequently been viewed through a critical prism, especially after Edward Said's *Orientalism* became a public sensation. Rather surprisingly, while literature on the history of Middle Eastern studies as an academic discipline is abundant, the subject of training state-Arabists in the US and UK has almost entirely been omitted. An exception to this rule were cases in which the US government tended to directly influence and utilize academic expertise in Middle Eastern affairs.[25] Initiatives to closely intertwine academic knowledge with public service have become strongly criticized by established academic authorities on the grounds of breaching academic freedom or misusing academic expertise.[26] Other academics like Martin Kramer openly promoted closer ties between the US security apparatus and the academic sector, especially in debates surrounding the US response to the September 11 attacks. The main argument Kramer utilized was that Middle Eastern studies tended to become irrelevant to global affairs after Edward Said's *Orientalism* came into prominence.[27]

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[24] I am naturally referring to Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (Vintage; 1st Vintage Books, 1979).

[25] For example, Zachary Lockman discusses the Central Intelligence Agency's influence on Harvard University's Centre for Middle Eastern Studies, see Lockman, *Contending Visions of the Middle East*, 246. A similar matter was discussed in relation to the founding member of the Middle East Studies Association of America (MESA), Monroe Berger, see Timothy Mitchell, "The Middle East in the Past and Future of Social Science," in *The Politics of Knowledge: Area Studies and the Disciplines*, ed. David L. Szanton (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 11f.

[26] Perhaps the most public case in relation to Middle Eastern studies was the "Human Terrain System" initiative, which existed between 2007 and 2014. Within this initiative, the US Army aimed to utilize academic (mainly linguistic and anthropological) expertise by directly employing US academics and deploying them to conflict zones in Iraq and Afghanistan. The initiative sparked a significant backlash from the American Anthropological Association and even became the subject of a film. See "American Anthropological Association's Executive Board Statement on the Human Terrain System Project," American Anthropological Association, 2007, accessed January 26, 2023, http://s3.amazonaws.com/rdcms-aaa/files/production/public/FileDownloads/pdfs/pdf/EB_Resolution_110807.pdf; and James Der Derian and David Udris, *Human Terrain: War Becomes Academic* [film], 2007.

[27] See Martin Kramer, *Ivory Towers on Sand: The Failure of Middle Eastern Studies in America* (Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2001), https://martinkramer.files.wordpress.com/2010/10/ivorytowers.pdf. Kramer's views were eloquently confronted by Zachary Lockman. See Lockman, *Contending Visions of the Middle East*, 259-266.

While exposing the power-knowledge dynamics behind "Oriental" studies has made a noticeable contribution to the discipline, these debates are only marginally relevant to this dissertation, as it treats the governmental institutions tasked with the instruction of the Arabic language and certain area studies components as the natural instruments of states' execution of power. Although I aim to highlight certain normative agendas behind the design of curricula at the analysed institutions, I do not intend to defend or vilify the analysed state actors, nor accuse them of the possible distortion of the Arabic language and culture in favour of their own needs. In this perspective, training in the Arabic language is viewed merely as a means to an end, while evaluating the morality of the ultimate utilization of state-Arabists is a task vastly different from what this dissertation aims to accomplish.

The existing academic reflection of the historical phenomena pertaining to the education of state-Arabists can be divided into two generally defined groups. The first group represents narratives of power dynamics between various state actors in the Middle East, thus constituting a background on the rationale behind the establishment of the analysed institutions. These include the more traditional narratives of the British withdrawal from the Middle East vis-à-vis the American incursion into the region.[28] The narrative of a "swap of superpowers" has gradually been challenged by the notion of British "slow withdrawal" and continued British and American infighting over control of the region until the late 1960s.[29] On the Israeli side, the traditional narratives of a "triumphant" history have been challenged by the wave of "New Historians" since the 1980s, who opted for a re-evaluation of many critical events of Israel's history, including the 1948 War.[30]

The second widely defined group of studies focuses directly on the institutions tasked with the training of governmental linguists, among whom are the state-Arabists. Monographs

[28] As a source concerning the era of British dominance in the region, I am mainly referring to Alexander L. Macfie's 1996 study. The traditional narrative of British entrenchment and subsequent withdrawal from the Middle East has been presented by Sir James Barr. See Alexander Lyon Macfie, *Eastern Question 1774-1923* (Routledge, 1996); and James Barr, *A Line in the Sand: Britain, France and the Struggle that Shaped the Middle East* (United Kingdom: Simon & Schuster, 2012); and James Barr, *Lords of the Desert: The Battle between the United States and Great Britain for Supremacy in the Modern Middle East* (Basic Books, 2018).

[29] The narrative of "slow withdrawal" was presented by Simon C. Smith. The US' efforts to replace the British as the dominating regional power during and immediately after the Second World War was documented by Christopher O'Sullivan. A solid overview of the subsequent development of the US' interests in the region was presented by Kylie Baxter and Shahram Akbarzadeh. See Simon C. Smith, *Ending Empire in the Middle East: Britain, the United States and Post-war Decolonization, 1945-1973* (Routledge, 2001); and Christopher D. O'Sullivan, *FDR and the End of Empire: The Origins of American Power in the Middle East* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012); and Kylie Baxter and Shahram Akbarzadeh, *US Foreign Policy in the Middle East: The Roots of Anti-Americanism*, (Routledge, 2012).

[30] Some of these "New Historians" were Benny Morris, Avi Schlaim, and Ilan Pappé. I only list them for context as their works are referenced only briefly in this dissertation.

on this subject are rare. We can assume that the reasons why such institutions were largely omitted from academic literature are twofold: First, the internal procedures, issues, and indeed teaching materials have been the subject of classification or at least non-publication policies until quite recently.[31] Second, academic Middle Eastern studies may not have viewed these institutions as *worthy* of consideration, perhaps due to their absence in theoretical debates driving the advancement of area studies as an academic discipline.

As for the instruction of the Arabic language at US institutions, the secondary literature remains rather limited and frequently focuses on the presentation of individual personas rather than the systemic analysis of governmental Arabic expertise. A significant example of this approach is Robert Kaplan's critical study *The Arabists* published in 1993, which describes American Arabists in the interwar period as a tight-knit group of upper-class elites who became enchanted with the Arab world and worked relentlessly on improving ties between the US and Arabs in various capacities, to a large extent due to their personal convictions, including proselytizing zeal.[32] What could be considered a follow-up is Teresa Fava Thomas' 2016 study dealing with the professionalization and systematization of mainly the State Department's expertise in Arab affairs after the Second World War.[33] However, the focus of these studies revolves more around questions of "who" they were and "why and what" the American Arabists employed by the US Federal Government did rather than "how" they did it.

The limited literature on the internal workings of the discussed organizations usually attempts to capture the organization as a whole, thus offering rather limited insight into Arabic classrooms specifically. Such is the case of the *Defense Language Institute's* (DLI) history *Babel by the Bay* by Benjamin De Le Selva, *DLI Pictorial History* by Cameron Binkley, as well as the *Foreign Language Institute's* (FSI) history by Steven Alan Honley.[34]

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[31] For a definitive overview of the US security establishment's interaction with Middle Eastern studies at US universities and colleges, see Osamah F. Khalil, *America's Dream Palace: Middle East Expertise and the Rise of the National Security State* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2016).

[32] Robert D. Kaplan, *Arabists: The Romance of an American Elite* (Simon and Schuster, 1995), Kindle. Kaplan's work highlights the ever-present issue of the "Arabist mafias" that are present mainly in the "Western" ministries of foreign affairs. A typical trait of these "mafias" is a personal appreciation for the Arabic speaking world that frequently overshadows the principle of impartiality required by the diplomatic profession.

[33] See Teresa Fava Thomas, *American Arabists in the Cold War Middle East, 1946-75: From Orientalism to Professionalism* (New York: Anthem Press, 2016). Kindle.
See also Steven Alan Honley, "The Foreign Service Institute At 70: Recalling A Proud History," *American Foreign Service Association*, https://www.afsa.org/foreign-service-institute-70-recalling-proud-history; Benjamin De La Selva, *Babel by the Bay: My Three Decades with the Defense Language Institute* (Monterey, 2015); also Benjamin De La Selva, *The Defense Language Institute: The Defense Language Institute, Faculty, Students, and Languages* (USA: self-published, 2017); Cameron Binkley, *The Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center: A Pictorial History* (Monterey, California: Command History Office Defense

The fact that all these monographs were compiled within the last ten years by their former graduates and administrators speaks volumes about how much attention has been given to the discussed institutions. Another body of literature discusses early post-Second World War predecessors to DLI and FSI in detail, yet offers none to minimal focus on Arabic language instruction. The first important work of this type is Roger Dingman's history of Japanese language schools organized by the US military during the Second World War, which later served as the basis for the entire DLI.[35] The second significant monograph is Louis E. Keefer's history of the Army Specialized Training Program, a joint military-academic initiative during the Second World War, which prepared many future Arabists for careers in the State Department.[36]

In the case of British institutions, the history of the *Middle East Centre of Arab Studies* (MECAS) was covered by Sir James Craig in his 1998 institutional history and has since been the focus of several memoirs by its managers, instructors, and students such as Donald Maitland, Leslie McLoughlin, and Paul Tempest.[37] An important addition to the overall understanding of the history of British expertise in the Arabic language in both the governmental and academic domain is Leslie McLoughlin's 2002 monograph *In a Sea of Knowledge*.[38] This study also offers several glimpses into the histories of the *Arabic Language Wing* at the *Army School of Languages* in Beaconsfield and the *Command Arabic Language in School – Arabian Peninsula* (CALSAP), about which no dedicated monographs have been published.

Israeli academia has been continuously putting more and more effort into analysing its rich culture of Arabic education for security purposes. These works focus not so much on the institutions themselves but rather on the "special liaison" between the defence establishment and education sector. Allon J. Uhlmann, Meir Amots, and Gil Eyal

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Language Institute Foreign Language Center Presidio of Monterey, 2011), https://www.dliflc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/DLIFLC_PICT_HIST_web.pdf.

[35] See Roger Dingman, *Deciphering the Rising Sun: Navy and Marine Corps Codebreakers, Translators, and Interpreters in the Pacific War* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 2009).

[36] See Louis E. Keefer, *Scholars in Foxhole: The Story of the Army Specialized Training Program in World War II* (Virginia: COTU Publishing, 1988).

[37] James Craig, *Shemlan: A History of the Middle East Centre for Arab Studies* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 1998); Donald Maitland, James Craig, and Paul Tempest, *The Arabists of Shemlan: MECAS Memoirs 1944-78*, ed. Paul Tempest (London: Stacy International, 2006); Leslie McLoughlin, *A Nest of Spies* (London: Alhani International Books, 1994); and Leslie McLoughlin, *Confessions of an Arabic Interpreter: The Odyssey of an Arabist, 1959-2009* (Dubai: Motivate Publishing, 2013), Kindle.

[38] See McLoughlin, *In a Sea of Knowledge*.

have done a significant amount of research on the subject.[39] In terms of archival research, Yonatan Mendel's critical study *The Creation of Israeli Arabic* is perhaps the most comprehensive addition to the scholarship regarding the Israeli Defense Force's influence on Arabic language education at Israeli high schools.[40] "Security Arabic" in Israel remains a rather controversial issue due to an understanding that its instruction is aimed not only against the Arabs outside the country but also those living in Israel, thus associating the debate on Arabic teaching with the painful subject of Israeli-Palestinian relations.[41]

A noticeable feature of all the monographs is their overwhelming focus on institutional histories and the individuals driving them. The language instruction itself is discussed mainly at times of reforms enacted by these instructors and administrators. Analysis of the written part of the curricula (e.g., textbooks) has received relatively limited attention. This is unfortunate, as the study materials themselves constitute a significant point of contact between the students and the language, history, and culture of the Arab world, therefore directly influencing the graduates' understanding of the region. I believe the presented dissertation could help to partially fill this gap, mainly by offering a greater focus on the source material produced directly by the analysed institutions.

The primary sources utilized in this dissertation can be divided into three main categories. The first category consists of "policy papers", by which I refer to a broad selection of documents issued publicly or exchanged internally within the governmental domain at the policy-makers' level. These documents represent the state-actors' proclaimed need to expand their capabilities in linguistically oriented expertise in Middle Eastern affairs (i.e., the question of intent). Each analysed country employs a different system of preparing and enacting its policies through official documentation, with the US adhering to its relative "culture of openness"[42] on one hand, and Israeli opacity regarding any documentation dealing with issues considered relevant to national security on the other. The category of policy papers includes the following: investigatory documents into various (lack of-) regional expertise-

[39] See Eyal Gil, "Dangerous Liaisons between Military Intelligence and Middle Eastern Studies in Israel," *Theory and Society* 31, no. 5 (2002); Allon J. Uhlmann, "Arabic Instruction in Jewish Schools and in Universities in Israel: Contradictions, Subversion and the Politics of Pedagogy," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 42, no. 2 (2010); and Allon J. Uhlmann, *Arabic Instruction in Israel: Lessons in Conflict, Cognition and Failure* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2017).
[40] Mendel, *The Creation of Israeli Arabic.*
[41] The underlying focus on Israeli-Palestinian relations is also very prominent in Mendel, *The Creation of Israeli Arabic.*
[42] As characterized by James J. Wirtz, "The American Approach to Intelligence Studies," in *Handbook of Intelligence Studies*, ed. Loch K. Johnson (London: Routledge, 2009), 29.

related failures and legal reforms addressing these issues; the founding documents of relevant institutions; speeches and announcements of policy makers and relevant public servants; analyses by influential think-tanks; documents pertaining to budgetary allocations; and many others.[43]

The second category are documents published by the analysed institutions that do not constitute the body of Arabic language curricula (see below). These documents include official institutional histories, internally published magazines, announcements of social events, course catalogues, and other administrative aids. The third category of sources refers to the Arabic language curricula themselves. It is critical to note here that "curriculum" in this dissertation is not understood merely as the sum of what students should study and learn during their studies (for instance the total number of words an Arabic student should know after one-month of intensive study). Instead, I propose a wider definition adopted from A.V. Kelly, which considers curriculum to be "a totality of the experiences the pupil has as a result of the provision made."[44] Therefore, the shape of a curriculum in our case is fully affected by all the provisions the instructing institutions make, including physically moving the institution to the Middle East to allow for everyday contact with native speakers. Actual documentation of the curricula might therefore include general discussions on the coursework (division of courses, their focus and structure, amount of classwork, size of study groups, individual schooling, etc.), but also the employment of alternative techniques such as language labs, language immersion, related utilization of host families, etc. However, the most noticeable representation of curricula are still textbooks, which form the backbone of my analysis.

In the case of the United States, the first category of sources, i.e., policy papers, is readily available. However, the availability of internal documents and curricula reflects

[43] For instance, a noticeable number of policy papers also documenting failures relating to a lack of linguistic expertise before, during, and immediately after the September 11 attacks was published. See U.S. House of Representatives, "Joint Inquiry into Intelligence Community Activities Before and After the Terrorist Attacks of September 11, 2001: Report of the U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence and U.S. House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence together with Additional Views," 2002, accessed January 26, 2023, http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CRPT-107hrpt792/pdf/CRPT-107hrpt792.pdf; and *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States* (New York: Norton, 2004), http://www.9-11commission.gov/report/911Report.pdf.
See also a RAND study by Beth J. Asch and John D. Winkler, *Ensuring Language Capability in the Intelligence Community* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2013), https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/technical_reports/TR1200/TR1284/RAND_TR1284.pdf.

[44] A. V. Kelly, *The Curriculum: Theory and Practice* (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2009), 13.

alternating periods of opacity and the openness of the analysed institutions. To demonstrate using the case of the *Defense Language Institute*, sources on Arabic instruction in its early period (i.e., until the mid-1970s) are very limited – this might be partially attributed to the generally low importance attributed to Arabic studies at the time, but also to other factors, such as a different standard of classification. This situation changed profoundly by the end of 1970s and throughout the 1980s. For this period, the annual *Command Histories* of the DLI and its *Course Catalogues* have recently been made available together with its internally published *Globe* magazine.[45] Professional issues of language instruction have been discussed by the *Applied Language Learning* and *Dialog on Language Instruction.*[46] The 1980s also offer insight into the very core of Arabic instruction, as complete Arabic language courses including advanced textbooks on military affairs for that period have also been made available.[47] The scope of materials related to the organization, budgeting and personnel affairs of DLI continued to grow throughout the 1990s and 2000s, and the history of the Institute became gradually more centred around Arabic instruction due to US military involvement in the Middle East. However, no other Arabic curricula have yet been made public, the reason highly probably being their non-public status.

The internal documents pertaining to the history of British MECAS have been analysed by Sir James Craig in his history of the institution[48]. The full range of textbooks produced by MECAS is publicly available, thus offering a rather concrete view into the Centre's classrooms throughout its history.[49] The analysed institutions under the auspices of the British armed forces have been much more reluctant to discuss their history and involvement, not to mention their instructional methodology. This lack of available information is particularly noticeable in comparison with the United States. Regardless of this opacity, especially in certain periods, the available evidence gives us the opportunity to derive a solid

[45] GLOBE magazine was published monthly and later seasonally. All its issues since January 1990 are publicly available. See "Globe Magazine," Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Centre, accessed January 26, 2023, https://www.dliflc.edu/resources/publications/globe-magazines/.

[46] See the full list at "Dialog On Language Instruction," Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, accessed January 26, 2023, http://www.dliflc.edu/resources/publications/dialog-on-language-instruction/; and "Dialog On Language Instruction," Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Centre, accessed January 26, 2023, http://www.dliflc.edu/resources/publications/dialog-on-language-instruction/. These magazines have not been systematically included in the analysis of DLI curricula, as they mainly discuss a very narrow subject within the field of didactical linguistics.

[47] For a complete overview, see "Command History", Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Centre, accessed January 26, 2023, https://www.dliflc.edu/command-history; and "DLI Catalog," Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Centre, accessed January 26, 2023, https://www.dliflc.edu/dli-catalog/.

[48] See Craig, *Shemlan.*

[49] A large majority of MECAS textbooks utilized in this research was accessed at the Orient Institut-Beirut during the author's research stay in Beirut in 2019.

understanding of the institutional logic behind Arabic instruction, as well as to appreciate the intellectual labour behind its implementation.

The main part of this dissertation takes the form of several individual studies focused on the system of state-organized education in the Arabic language in a single country. Each chapter is chronologically organized and further divided into subchapters focused on the individual institutions. In the cases of the US and UK, the institutions are sorted based on their either civilian or military nature. In the UK, the presented institutions are the *Middle East Centre for Arab Studies* on the civilian side, and the *Arabic Language Wing* at the *Army School of Languages in Beaconsfield*, and the *Command Arabic Language School – Arabian Peninsula* on the side of the armed forces. In the US, the two main institutions are the civilian *Foreign Service Institute*, and the *Defense Language Institute* under the auspices of the US Department of Defense. The distinction between the civilian and military domains does not apply to Israel given the intertwined roles of the Ministry of Education and the Israel Defense Forces in Arabic language education. Therefore, I analyse the system as a whole while placing focus on each individual initiative ranging from the original *Oriental classes* programs to the state-of-the-art *Modiʿin ba-Ofeḳ* initiative.[50] Each institution or system is then analysed from two perspectives, each represented as another subsection. First, I discuss the institutional history and trace criteria such as the institutional setup, financing, and personnel affairs. Second, I follow the history of curriculum development as another category, reflecting upon findings from the institutional history.

Although the main part of this research begins during and immediately after the Second World War, a full chapter of the dissertation is dedicated to an introduction to the analysed institutions and their predecessors prior to the War, mainly to acquaint the reader with the circumstances surrounding the point of departure for the individual studies. This introductory chapter does not have any exploratory or analytical ambition and is based exclusively on secondary literature. Finally, the concluding chapter presents the results of the cross-national comparison between the individual cases.

[50] The initiative, translated as *Military Intelligence on the Horizon*, is a two-day event organized by the Israeli military that aims to promote the study of Arabic by offering high-school students a "simulation" of working in the Military Intelligence.

2. The Politics behind the Idea: Why Did the UK, US, and Israel Train State-Arabists?

The Middle East in general and the Arabic speaking world in particular have maintained a changing degree of importance in the UK, US, and Israel's foreign (and domestic) policies. Yet none of the analysed countries has ever developed an isolated policy for the region. Instead, their agendas regarding the Arabic speaking world existed on a background formed by the extensive processes that were framed by affairs of a truly global nature. For most of the second half of the 20th century, the Cold War with all its proxy conflicts was one of the key driving factors of international affairs. The aims of both superpowers, i.e., the US and USSR, to sway the emerging Arab countries towards their worldviews have led to moments of peace frequently interrupted by numerous conflicts, which I mainly conceptualize at critical junctures. Still, the effects of the Cold War coexisted with other structural factors. The processes of decolonization, Arab nationalism, and Zionism created a power vacuum that the superpowers emerging from the ashes of the Second World War could readily enter. Whereas the Middle Eastern theatre during the Cold War was merely one of many for the US and the UK as they attempted to find steady footing in the new world order, the Cold War dynamics in the Middle East were an existential issue for the newly established State of Israel as well as displaced Palestinians. Regardless of their positions in the international order, the fact that all three analysed countries opted to create a highly specialized group of state employees, i.e., state-Arabists, speaks volumes about the importance attributed to the Middle East after the Second World War.

Embedded within various foreign policies, the education of state-Arabists has always been an expensive endeavour – both in terms of establishing the required institutions, designing and teaching the curricula, and maintaining the state-Arabists' language proficiency levels. Furthermore, with the complexities involved in learning the Arabic language, the return on the states' investment was never immediate, with numerous occurrences of students dropping out of their language studies to pursue other careers, or to focus on different regions. Although all the analysed countries eventually developed a methodology for assessing aptitude for language learning and created incentives for the state-Arabists to stay in careers related to the Arabic speaking world, an occasional leap of faith on the part of the policy-makers, as well as high-level administrators, was required to develop a functional system.

Having already discussed what critical junctures are, this chapter will aim to put them into the wider perspective of the US, UK, and Israel's foreign policies after the Second World War. With an immense chronological and geographical scope in mind, the purpose of this chapter is not to offer a comprehensive history of the Middle East from either an external or internal perspective. Instead, I aim to conceptualise the analysed countries' endeavours to produce state-Arabists within the larger framework created by their long-term political agendas, and to highlight their formative critical junctures. I also introduce the principal institutors of the analysed institutions and their role in both forming and executing the national policies towards the Arabic speaking world. A note should be made here that foreign policies are rarely a product of an individual mastermind or even one institution. The same can be said about what a *foreign policy* means, or how power can be exerted internationally. Considering the traditional theory of soft and hard power in international politics[51], we can see that the state-Arabists have been involved on both ends of the spectrum – from fostering cultural exchange to kinetic warfighting. To maintain clarity, I mainly discuss the development of foreign and defence ministries of the analysed countries which, to a varying degree, bore the bulk of the institutionalized production of state-Arabists in the post-Second World War era.

The narrative of gradual British disengagement from the region is a common one and has been challenged repeatedly. In terms of their efforts to maintain Arabist expertise, we should consider the argument that the British did not give up their control over the Middle East completely willingly, as various authors stress the factors of US-British competition and the pace of the eventual British withdrawal.[52] As presented by British historian James Barr, the rationale for British interest in controlling the Middle East changed considerably during the interwar period, the Second World War, and after the declaration of Indian independence in 1947. What was originally seen as a strategic route between Europe and India, the cornerstone of British overseas colonial presence, suddenly became the world's largest discovered reserve of a commodity that was instrumental in industrial development – oil.[53] As the importance of this "black gold" became apparent to the United States in the interwar period and during the Second World War, so did the nature of the British influence on Middle

[51] The concepts of soft and hard power, popularized by Joseph S. Nye, refer to states' ability to co-opt other state actors via means of attraction (soft power), rather than coerce them via means of coercion (hard power typically including economic sanctions and the threat of use of force). See Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, (New York: Public Affairs, 2009).
[52] For a commentary on the pace of British withdrawal, see note 29 in the Introduction.
[53] Barr, *Lords of the Desert*, no pagination.

Eastern territories. It was seen as ineffective and directly opposed to the will of the local populations, a fact the British continuously attempted to hide in their propagandistic efforts during the Second World War.[54]

Still, if the British administrators "committed catastrophic errors that led to their displacement by Washington",[55] the American ability to assess the situation in the Arabic speaking world was hindered by a severe lack of hands-on experience. Until the 1940s, the ties between the United States and the Middle East were based on limited philanthropic, missionary, and exploratory activities, with oil-related business gradually gaining in prominence during the 1930s.[56] This completely different approach to the Middle East not only had a significant impact on the way both countries went about educating their state-Arabists, but also charted a vastly different course for developing their post-Second World War foreign policies. The role the US aspired to attain in the Middle East was what historian Christopher O'Sullivan described as a "benevolent hegemony", a relationship not based on the control of subjugated territories, but rather "commercial ties, political leadership, economic and developmental assistance and military alliances".[57] In other words, the colonial and in some aspects racist ideology empowering the British to become a regional hegemon was soon to be replaced by another – one Washington believed would be preferable to the awakening Arab nations.[58]

The Second World War provided the US with the necessary impetus to deploy the first "boots on the ground" in the region. Besides limited advisory efforts to the Allied campaigns in Africa and Iran, the main point of entry was found on the Arabian Peninsula. The origin of the special relations between the US and the House of Saud dates to the early 1930s, when the *California-Arabian Standard Oil Company*[59] acquired a concession to explore oil in Saudi Arabia, eventually striking a well in Dhahran. Even though oil revenues from the well were unsatisfactory at first, the US administration foresaw the prominence of Saudi reserves during the Second World War. Culminating in a 1945 meeting between US President Franklin D. Roosevelt and king Abdul Aziz al Saud aboard the USS Quincy, the American side gradually

[54] O'Sullivan, *FDR and the End of Empire*, 3.
[55] O'Sullivan, 150.
[56] O'Sullivan, 8.
[57] O'Sullivan, 9.
[58] O'Sullivan, 150.
[59] CASOC was a subsidiary to the Standard Oil Company of California, one of the predecessors to today's Chevron Corporation. CASOC later developed into the Saudi Aramco.

strengthened its relations with Saudi Arabia to the dismay of the British.[60] The commercial ties were soon followed by the US military presence in the Kingdom, leading to the establishment of the Dhahran Air Base (today King Abdulaziz Air Base) in 1946 and a steady stream of US Air Force personnel.[61]

The special Saudi-US relationship was strained repeatedly, mainly after the signing of the so-called Baghdad Pact of 1955, which marked closer relationships between the USA, UK, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey – most of them regional rivals of the Saudi kingdom. As a sign of protest, Saudi Arabia suspended US presence on its soil and signed a defence pact with the pro-Moscow Egyptian regime of Gamal Abdel Nasser. Even though this stark deterioration of US-Saudi relations saw a certain level of reconciliation after the 1956 Suez Crisis, the 1958 merger of Egypt and Syria into the United Arab Republic forced the Saudis (at least overtly) to minimize the US footprint on their soil. Therefore, the lease of the soil where Dharam Airbase was located was not renewed, and the US presence in Saudi Arabia remained almost symbolic until 1990.[62] The 1973-1974 Saudi oil embargo in reaction to US support for Israel during the October War clearly highlighted the importance of Saudi oil on global energy markets, urging Washington to carefully consider any future steps that might be met with anger in Riyadh. Still, however, the relationship remained half-hearted until the late 1980s. This changed in 1990 with the military encounter between the coalition forces of 35 nations, which was spearheaded by the US, and Saddam Hussein's Iraqi regime in response to its annexation of Kuwait. The first defensive phase of the operation known as Desert Shield aimed at defending the Saudi border with a substantial military build-up of coalition forces.[63] Still, the subsequent improvement of Saudi-US relations was constantly hindered by the US alliance with Israel. The events of September 11, 2001 posed another challenge to the special relationship, with many policymakers and members of the public questioning the red lines that the US should not have crossed in its support of the House of Saud.[64]

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[60] O'Sullivan, *FDR and the End of Empire*, 147f.
[61] See Josh Pollack, "Saudi Arabia and the United States 1931-2002," *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 6, no. 3 (September 2002): 79, http://www-personal.umich.edu/~twod/oil-ns/articles/research-07/research-saudi/pollack.pdf.
[62] Pollack, 79f. The US Military Training Mission kept an uninterrupted presence since 1953.
[63] Desert Shield took place between 2 August 1990 and 17 January 1991. The subsequent Operation Desert Storm was the combat phase on Kuwaiti and Iraqi soil between 17 January 1991 and 28 February 1991. For the purpose of clarity, I refer to operations Desert Storm and Desert Shield jointly as the "First Gulf War", and to the 2003 Operation Iraqi Freedom as the "Second Gulf War".
[64] Pollack, "Saudi Arabia," 85-90.

The Saudi episode only complements the larger picture of the US' physical presence in the region, and especially its gradual militarization. Even though Washington played an important role during the 1949 Syrian coup d'état and the 1953 coup in Iran, these events were achieved by a more subtle US involvement than the US military could provide.[65] Likewise, the increasing diplomatic and commercial presence of the US in the Arabic speaking world was associated mainly with civilian structures such as the State Department. However, this situation shifted gradually between the mid-1970s and mid-1980s, when terrorism in the MENA region became a defence priority based on several incidents directed against US military personnel stationed abroad. In October 1983, two truck bombs exploded in Beirut, killing 307 people, among them 241 US members of the present peacekeeping force.[66] Another significant incident was the April 1986 bombing of the *La Belle* discothèque in West Berlin, which was frequented by US soldiers. The attack was later linked to the Libyan regime of Colonel Muammar Gaddafi.[67] In the 1990s, the US embassies, businesses and military installations throughout the Middle East became targets of Islamist groups of various affiliations,[68] ultimately culminating in the 9/11 attacks and subsequent massive US military involvement in the Middle East, Central and South Asia as part of the so-called Global War on Terror. The two military operations against the regime of Saddam Hussain in Iraq and subsequent attempts at post-war reconstruction have been among the most visible and controversial aspects of US foreign policy in the last decades. However, the scope of the US overt and covert involvement in the region has been much larger and not limited to mere kinetic warfighting and "state-building". The conflicting nature of US foreign policy

65 For reference to the US footprint in the 1949 coup in Syria, see Hugh Wilford, *America's Great Game: The CIA's Secret Arabists and the Making of the Modern Middle East* (Basic Books, 2013). For the 1953 coup in Iran, see Ervand Avrahamian, *The Coup: 1953, the CIA, and the Roots of Modern U.S.-Iranian Relations* (The New Press, 2013).

66 The Multinational Force in Lebanon is an international peacekeeping force manned by the US, UK, France and Italy. It was stationed in Lebanon after the withdrawal of the Palestine Liberation Organization from the region following the Israeli 1982 invasion of Lebanon. The Islamic Jihad organization claimed responsibility for the attack. However, the identity of the actual perpetrators remains a matter of discussion, with some blaming "proto-Hizballah" or similar foreign-backed structures.

67 See Steven Erlanger, "4 Guilty In Fatal 1986 Berlin Disco Bombing Linked To Libya," *The New York Times*, November 14, 2001, https://www.nytimes.com/2001/11/14/world/4-guilty-in-fatal-1986-berlin-disco-bombing-linked-to-libya.html.

68 For reference, on 25 June 1996, the Khobar Tower Complex in Dhahran, near both King Abdulaziz Air Base and the local headquarters of Saudi Aramco, was attacked by a truck bomb. The US attributed the attack to Hezbollah Al-Hejaz. On August 7, 1998, the US embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam were attacked using truck bombs by affiliates of Egyptian Islamic Jihad and al-Qaeda. On 12 October 2000, the guided missile destroyer USS Cole was bombed by Al-Qaeda while refuelling in Aden. For a solid overview of the investigation of the events, see Lawrence Wright, *The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11* (Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2006).

in the region was fittingly described by O'Sullivan: "blunt quasi-imperial objectives related to oil, regime change, and hegemony have been pursued alongside more reform-minded rhetoric about democracy promotion, nation building, and economic development."[69]

Two federal departments planned most of the US foreign and defence policy after the Second World War, and therefore provided a necessary institutional bridge between the training of state-Arabists and their employment – these were the *Department of Defense* and the *State Department*. From a military perspective, the overarching institution is the Department of Defense, which currently employs more than 730,000 civilian employees, 1 300,000 active-duty military personnel, and more than 820,000 National Guard and reserve personnel.[70] These massive numbers are distributed both on US soil and abroad, including as many as 15 large-scale US military installations in Arabic speaking countries in 2020.[71] This number does not include significant numbers of various smaller bases that have been established on an ad-hoc basis to serve the more short-term needs of the US military presence in the region.[72] The already significant numbers of armed forces personnel assigned to these installations are further increased by representatives of the *Defense Attaché System*, who are mainly posted at the US diplomatic missions throughout the region and conduct military diplomacy on behalf of the Department of Defense. While the exact numbers of Arabic speakers posted at these installations remain unknown, the sheer scope of the global US presence has always necessitated a complex system of linguistic education targeted specifically at members of the US Armed Forces. The *Defense Language Institute* (DLI), which was established in 1954[73], fulfils this function for all institutions, be it the armed forces or non-uniformed agencies under the auspices of the US Department of Defense.

On the civilian side, the State Department is the principal institution tasked with the conduct of foreign policy through diplomatic means. Established in 1789 as an institution

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[69] O'Sullivan, *FDR and the End of Empire*, 153.
[70] See "About Department of Defense: Our Story," Department of Defense, accessed January 26, 2023, https://www.defense.gov/our-story/.
[71] See Nick Turse, "Pentagon's Own Map Of U.S. Bases in Africa Contradicts Its Claim of "Light" Footprint," *The Intercept*, February 27, 2020, https://theintercept.com/2020/02/27/africa-us-military-bases-africom/ for Africa; and Alia Chughtai, "US Military Presence in the Middle East and Afghanistan," *Al Jazeera*, January 13, 2020, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/01/13/us-military-presence-in-the-middle-east-and-afghanistan/ for the Levant and eastward. These numbers do not include a significant number of bases in Afghanistan and Turkey, which are also involved in military activities tightly connected to the Arabic speaking world.
[72] AKA a "Non-Enduring" basis, see Nick Turse, "Pentagon's Own Map."
[73] The English language section aimed at teaching English to members of foreign armed forces as part of US military diplomacy was established in 1954; the Foreign Language Center focusing on the teaching of foreign languages to members of the US Armed Forces and various DoD agencies was only inaugurated in 1963.

with many domestic tasks such as tax collection, the State Department gradually evolved into an organization similar to the ministries of foreign affairs in other countries. Until the early 20th century, the State Department strictly distinguished between its consular tasks and diplomatic affairs. In 1924, the system was overhauled by the Rogers Act, and the professional *Foreign Service* was created. This professionalization also eventually led to the regional specialization of various departments, including the main section of the US State Department that deals with the Arabic speaking world – the *Bureau of Near East Affairs*. This hub acts as a conduit for the US State Department's policies towards the region within the regular boundaries defined as MENA, i.e., from Morocco to Iran, including the Levant, Arabian Peninsula, Israel and the Palestinian Territories,[74] but excluding Turkey and Cyprus, which are administered by the *Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs*.[75] The regional specialization of various offices within the State Department has also led to the necessity to educate Foreign Service Officers, which is the official designation for US diplomats, in various skills and also foreign languages, including Arabic. Thus, the *Foreign Service Institute* as the States Department's sole training institution was founded in 1947.

Although London was less than enthusiastic about the US incursion into the Middle East during the 1940s, the British Government also understood the pivotal role that Washington would play in the emerging world order. On a global scale, the US was seen as an ally in resisting the expansion of the USSR.[76] Within the region, the British also hoped for US support in tackling two growing phenomena – the rise of Arab nationalism and Zionism.[77] Today, this strategy seems obviously flawed, but in 1945, the British did not have the luxury of hindsight. London's assessment that the US might stand opposed to Zionist ambitions was supported by the personnel make-up of the US administration dealing with the Middle East at the time, mainly within the State Department. President Truman's decision to recognize the newly proclaimed State of Israel in 1948 came as a shock to most Middle Eastern experts

[74] Surprisingly enough, the Bureau has not changed its name until today regardless of the peculiarities connected with designating the region as the "Near East", "Middle East" or "MENA".
[75] See "Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs," U.S. Department of State, accessed January 26, 2023, https://www.state.gov/bureaus-offices/under-secretary-for-political-affairs/bureau-of-near-eastern-affairs/.
For the countries administered by the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, see "Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs," U.S. Department of State, accessed January 26, 2023, https://www.state.gov/bureaus-offices/under-secretary-for-political-affairs/bureau-of-european-and-eurasian-affairs/.
[76] Barr, *Lords of the Desert*, no pagination.
[77] Barr, no pagination.

(many of them Arabists) in the US administration,[78] a fact that dramatically altered not only the future of US state-Arabists, but also the nature of US-British encounters in the region.

From a military perspective, the British withdrawal from the region was apparent in the steady stream of cargo ships and aeroplanes marked with the Union Jack leaving regional ports, be it from Israel in 1948, Libya in late 1951, or Sudan in 1955. Simultaneously, the British forces would begin their lengthy withdrawal from Egypt in 1954 following the signing of the Anglo-Egyptian Agreement with the military clique that came to power during the 1952 coup.[79] A true test of British-American relations came with the events of the so-called Suez Crisis of 1956, which highlighted the degree to which Washington was willing to protect its interest in the Arabic speaking world. Regardless of the strong ties that Gamal Abdel Nasser established with the US even before the 1952 coup, Egypt in the early 1950s refused to become the cornerstone of the *Middle East Defense Organization* – a US proposal for a defence alliance against the Soviets in the Middle East. Instead, Nasser sought to utilize the newfound American influence in the Middle East to further undermine the British position.[80] The US-Egyptian courtship suffered a serious blow in 1955 when Egypt signed an arms-import treaty with communist Czechoslovakia, a move Nasser saw necessary to counteract French arms shipments to his archenemy, the State of Israel. Failing to convince Nasser to participate in a peace process and – in his view – to undermine his position as a rising leader of the Arab world, the US refused any further financial support for the construction of the critical Aswan High Dam as well as any further developmental aid.[81]

Nasser's response, i.e., the nationalization of the Suez Canal and naval blockade of the Straits of Tiran and Gulf of Aqaba on 26 July 1956 were unexpected developments, which London saw as a direct threat to its economic and military interests in the region. Even though Washington proposed several initiatives to reduce the tension, the British, French, and Israelis only showed diplomatic interest in order to buy more time to prepare the trilateral military action secretly codified in the Protocol of Sévres.[82] Despite the military success of the operation, the Anglo-French-Israeli action proved to be a diplomatic disaster

[78] Kaplan, *Arabists*, no pagination.
[79] Craig, *Shemlan*, 147.
[80] See M. T. Thorhill, "Britain, the United States and the Rise of an Egyptian Leader: The Politics and Diplomacy of Nasser's Consolidation of Power, 1952-4," *English Historical Review* 119, no. 483 (September 2004): 899; and John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (Oxford University Press, 1998), 169.
[81] Gaddis, We know now,171f.
[82] Thomas Risse-Kappen, *Cooperation among Democracies: The European Influence on U.S. Foreign Policy*, 2nd ed. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997), 86.

and a turning point for US-British relations in the Middle East. Washington, still aiming for the role of a "benevolent hegemon" in regional affairs and a protector of the Arab world from communist influence, could not have supported an invasion of Egypt by its former colonial overlords while simultaneously criticizing the Soviet intervention in rebelling Hungary.[83] The US pressure on Britain to end the hostilities came through several channels, including a resolution by the UN Security Council (naturally vetoed by Britain and France), but most importantly severe economic pressure. The threat of lack of oil, devaluation of the pound sterling, and other economic impacts forced British Prime Minister Anthony Eden to reconsider his position and unilaterally withdraw from the attack on Egypt. Even though Eden's successor Harold MacMillan managed to mend damaged special relations with the US in the following years,[84] the British interests in the Middle East became limited to "East of the Suez".

After the withdrawal from Egypt and Palestine, the main theatres for British military involvement in the Middle East after 1950 were Yemen and Oman. In the south of today's Yemen, the British controlled the port of Aden and the adjacent areas since the mid-19th century as an administrative part of British India, with the surrounding hinterlands being administered as the Aden Protectorate. In 1937, the city of Aden became a separate Colony and played a role as the hub of British power among several tribal states. In 1959, the Aden Colony fortified its principal role as it became a signing place for a treaty leading to the creation of the Federation of Emirates of South Arabia, a British protectorate initially consisting of six and later expanding to fifteen local states. In 1962, the Federation of Emirates of South Arabia adopted the title of Federation of South Arabia and was joined by the State of Aden, a successor to the Aden Colony, in 1963. While Aden was utilized as a base for a dedicated Arabic school, the *Command Arabic Language School – Arabian Peninsula* (CALSAP), the situation after 1963 clearly showed that the British military needed Arabic speakers not only for administration but warfighting as well. The so-called Aden Emergency was a protracted anti-colonial conflict between the British Armed Forces and local insurgents inspired by the Nasserist regime in Egypt. The British forces eventually evacuated southern Yemen in November 1967, giving space to the eventual establishment of the Arab-socialist

[83] Donald Neff, *Warriors at Suez: Eisenhower Takes America into the Middle-East* (New York City: Simon and Schuster, 1981), 391.
[84] Risse-Kappen, *Cooperation among Democracies*, 99.

People's Democratic Republic of Yemen.[85] In the north of today's Yemen, the British covertly supported the royalist forces of the Mutawakkilite Kingdom of Yemen during the 1962-1970 civil war against republicans and Egyptian forces provided by President Nasser. The British supply effort lasted from 1962 to 1965, with the conventional British military presence being completely absent due to its covert nature.[86] The UK later openly supported the Yemen Arab Republic (successor to the Mutawakkilite Kingdom) during its armed conflicts with the southern Arab-socialist People's Democratic Republic of Yemen in 1972 and 1979.

The Sultanate of Muscat and Oman and since 1970 the Sultanate of Oman[87] hosted a major British military presence since the mid-1950s. The Omani forces were organized by British colonel David Smiley (1916-2009) and tested in the Jebel Akhdar War of 1954-1957, in which they faced the forces of the Imamate of Oman supported by Saudi Arabia. During the Dhofar Rebellion in 1963 and 1976, British special forces assisted the Sultanate in engaging separatists who wished to establish an independent state in the Dhofar Governorate. Over the course of the campaign, the ruling Sultan Said bin Taimur was deposed in favour of his UK-educated son Qaboos bin Said. Sultan Qaboos brought Oman closer to the UK during his subsequent modernization efforts. In 1986, the UK and Oman organized the first of several joint military exercises titled *Sayf Sarīʿ* (Arabic for Swift Sword), which included the largest deployment of UK forces to the Middle East since the Suez Crisis.[88] This situation has remained until today, with at least 90 British military personnel posted permanently in Oman and two large British military bases in Oman operating on a rotational basis.[89] Ultimately, the British and US diplomatic, military and developmental activities in the Arabic speaking world were re-joined during the First and Second Gulf Wars.

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[85] The PDRY existed until the 1990 unification with its northern neighbour, the Yemen Arab Republic. However, the union was very fragile, as the conflict known as the "Yemen Unification War" erupted again in 1994 between pro-unification forces in the north and separatist forces in the south.

[86] The main British efforts were organized by ex-Special Air Service Colonel Jim Johnson. See Duff Hart-Davis, *The War That Never Was* (Manassas: Century, 2011).

[87] The original Sultanate of Muscat and Oman consisted of the territory of the present-day Sultanate of Oman, parts of the UAE and the port of Gwadar in today's Pakistan. This entity was partitioned from Zanzibar in 1856. Part of the territory received limited independence as the theocratic Imamate of Oman through the Treaty of Saeeb in 1920.

[88] See information about the exercise provided during a UK Parliament Hearing. See "Sultan Of Oman: HC DEB 15 December 1986 Vol. 107 Cc371-2W," UK Parliament, accessed January 26, 2023, https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/written-answers/1986/dec/15/sultan-of-oman.

[89] Louisa Brooke-Holland, "UK Forces in the Middle East Region: Research Hearing No. 08794," House of Commons Library on January 14 2020, accessed January 26, 2023, https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-8794/. The *UK Joint Logistics Support Base* in the Al Duqm port of Oman was opened in 2018; the Omani-British Joint Training Area was established in 2019. See Michael Fallon, "Multi-Million Pound Joint Venture Announced Between Britain And Oman," *Gov.uk*, March 30 2016, https://www.gov.uk/government/news/multi-million-pound-joint-venture-announced-between-

Like the United States, two overarching institutions have been responsible for the planning of the UK's foreign policy. On the civilian side, the British *Foreign Office* was formed in 1782 and has changed its title and scope of tasks several times since then. In 1968, the Foreign Office merged with the short-lived *Commonwealth Office* (established in 1966 during a merger of the Commonwealth Relations Office and Colonial Office). The resulting *Foreign and Commonwealth Offices* then coordinated most aspects of the UK's foreign policy, regardless of whether they applied to other Commonwealth states or countries without any special relations with Britain aside from diplomatic ones.[90] In September 2020, the *Foreign and Commonwealth Office* merged with the *Department for International Development*, thus forming the *Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office*.[91] Despite changes in its title, the Foreign Office has always maintained a department focused specifically on the Middle East in various regional definitions.[92] In terms of developing linguistic expertise among British diplomats, the Personnel Department, currently headed by the "Chief People Officer", has played a prominent role. In terms of the creation of a professional group of state-Arabists, perhaps the most significant institution was the Middle East Centre for Arab Studies until its closure in 1978. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office's capability to teach foreign languages was then re-developed with the opening of the *FCO Language Centre* in 2013.[93]

On the military side, the UK did not have an overarching institution tasked with national defence until 1964, when the separate *Admiralty*, *War Office*, *Air Ministry*, and *Ministry of Aviation* merged into the *Ministry of Defence*.[94] The current language education

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britain-and-oman; and Jonathan Campbell James, "Britain In Oman: Washington's Strategic Partner," *Washington Institute For Near East Policy: Policy Watch*, no. 3380, September 18, 2020, https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/britain-oman-washingtons-strategic-partner.

[90] For further reference on the changes in the organization of the Foreign Office, see David Alan, "The Foreign and Commonwealth Office: 'Flexible, Responsive and Proactive?'," in *Foreign Ministries, Change and Adaptation*, ed. Brian Hocking, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), 207 and 211f.

[91] For the sake of clarity, I use the term *Foreign Office* when describing the institution until 1968, and *Foreign and Commonwealth Office* when referring to the following years. The 2020 merger is not factored into the presented analysis.

[92] By 2020, the FCDO maintained "DG for MENA, Pakistan and Afghanistan", see *FCDO Annual Report & Accounts: 2020-21: Annual Report Presented to Parliament Pursuant to Section 1 of the International Development (Reporting and Transparency) Act 2006* (London: HH Global Limited Group, 2021), https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1019938/FCDO_annual_report_and_accounts_2020_to_2021_accessible.pdf. See page 12 for a full organizational chart of the FCDO.

[93] See Anna Codrea-Rado, "Foreign Office Beefs Up Diplomats' Language Training," *The Guardian*, 30 September 2013, https://www.theguardian.com/education/2013/sep/30/foreign-office-opens-language-centre.

[94] Before the Second World War, the Committee of Imperial Defence was responsible for coordination between various armed forces. In 1940, Winston Churchill personally assumed the role of the coordinator with the title of Ministry of Defence. The predecessor to the modern UK's MOD was a coordinating organ of the same name that existed from 1947 to 1964. The Defence (Transfer of Functions) Act 1964 reformed the entire system and solidified the position of a separate Ministry of Defence head by the Secretary of State for Defence.

in the UK defence sector stems from a tradition that was developed in Beaconsfield by the *Army School of Languages* and later the *Defence School of Languages* since the 1950s. The school in Beaconsfield was closed in 2013, passing its language instruction capacity to the *UK Defence Academy* headquartered in Shrivenham, which has been serving as the nexus for officers' training, including education in some foreign languages, since 2002. The *Defence Centre for Languages and Culture – Foreign Language Wing* at the *Defence Language Academy* in Shrivenham took over the tradition of language instruction from the institutions in Beaconsfield, thus filling a gap in the Arabic language education of the British Armed Forces.[95]

Given the history of Mandatory Palestine, the matter of Zionism, and since 1948 the State of Israel has been a topic under constant consideration by the United Kingdom and the United States. As the training of state-Arabists is the subject of this dissertation, a brief history of Arab-Israeli relations presents a natural point of departure towards the narrower issue of the Jewish Israeli affinity towards the study of the "language of the enemy". Naturally, the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict is well known. Therefore, I will only offer a general overview to highlight some of the events I consider to be critical junctures with a significant impact on the policy development leading to the creation of Israeli state-Arabists.[96] Unlike Britain and especially the US, Jews have maintained a presence in the Levant for most of its recorded history, with their numbers fluctuating throughout the centuries. In regard to the modern State of Israel, its history has traditionally been traced to the history of the Zionist movement. The initial waves of Jewish immigration to Palestine, traditionally called *ʿAliya* (Hebrew for Ascent), radically altered the structure of society in Palestine.[97] The events of the Second World War in Europe, the Holocaust, and the handling of the new situation by the British authorities in Mandatory Palestine dramatically increased the tension between

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[95] "Servicemen Bid Farewell to Beaconsfield Military Institution," *Bucks Free Press*, 18 September 2013, https://www.bucksfreepress.co.uk/news/10680181.servicemen-bid-farewell-to-beaconsfield-military-institution/; For remarks about its Arabic program, see "Value of Languages: Ideas for a UK Strategy for Languages," *Cambridge Public Policy SRI* (blog), 2015, accessed January 26, 2023, https://www.languagesciences.cam.ac.uk/system/files/documents/report-the-value-of-languages.pdf.

[96] For a general overview of the Arab-Israel conflict, see Martin Gilbert, *Israel: A History* (Indiana University: Doubleday, 1998).

[97] The First ʿAliya took place from 1882 to 1903, Second ʿAliya from 1904 to 1914, Third ʿAliya from 1919 to 1923, Fourth ʿAliya from 1924 to 1929, and Fifth ʿAliya from 1929 to 1938. The percentage of the Jewish population in Palestine increased from 8% in 1882 to 30% in 1946. See "Jewish & Non-Jewish Population of Israel/Palestine (1517 - Present)," Jewish Virtual Library, accessed January 26, 2023, https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jewish-and-non-jewish-population-of-israel-palestine-1517-present.
In most English language literature on the subject, the term "*ʿAliya*" is written with "h" at the end. I refrain from this traditional transcription to maintain consistent transcription of Hebrew throughout the dissertation.

Jewish and Arab neighbours. Several individuals and organizations, which would later become instrumental in developing a state-organized system for training Jewish Israeli state-Arabists, came into the spotlight during the years before May 1948. The most prominent one was *Ha-Hagana* (Hebrew for The Defence), the official paramilitary organization of the *Jewish Agency*, which became the inner core of the *Israel Defense Forces* once the State of Israel was established.[98]

The prominent role of Israel's defence establishment became one of the defining features of Arab-Israeli relations after May 1948. The events of the immediate armed conflict between the newly established state and its Arab neighbours resulted in a complete makeover of the demographic structure of Palestine. With a significant part of the native Palestinian population displaced in what became known as *An-Nakba* (Arabic for The Catastrophe), Jews suddenly formed up to 82% of the population of Israel.[99] With such dramatic alterations instituted by warfare, it comes as no surprise that episodic military encounters during the all-encompassing Arab-Israeli conflict became a defining feature of the periodization of the modern Levant's history. At the same time, the events of 1948 have repeatedly become a subject of debate usually associated with the Israeli "New Historians" and their opponents. The process of declassifying many archival sources during the 1980s allowed for new perspectives on the conflict, mainly by shifting the traditional understanding of the roles of the warring sides and providing much greater agency to the departing British administration and that of Hashemite King Abdullah of Transjordan.[100]

The Suez Crisis of 1956, usually referred to as *Milḥamat Sinai* (Hebrew for Sinai War) by the Jewish Israelis and *Al-ʿUdwān ath-Thulāthī* (Arabic for Tripartite Aggression) by the Arabs, once again brought Israeli military capability into the spotlight. Its military superiority was confirmed by a successful pre-emptive/preventive (depending on the perspective) strike against the Egyptian Air Force on June 5, 1967. The swift military defeat of the combined Arab armies in what became known as the Six-Day War (Hebrew: *Milḥamat Sheshet ha-Yamim*)

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[98] Ha-Hagana evolved from its predecessor Ha-Shomer (Hebrew: The Watchman), a popular paramilitary organization established upon the principle of Socialist Zionism in 1909. Its precursor was the Jewish self-defence organization Bar-Giora founded during the Second Aliya. See "Jewish Defense Organizations: Hashomer," Jewish Virtual Library, accessed January 26, 2023, https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/hashomer.

[99] With the subsequent immigration of large numbers of Jews from Arab countries such as Yemen or Iraq, the percentage kept increasing to almost 89% by the end of the 1960s. See "Jewish & Non-Jewish Population of Israel/Palestine (1517 - Present)."

[100] For a summary of the stances of the "New Historians" on this subject, refer to Benny Morris' rebuttal of a critique of the movement made by Ephraim Karsh. See Benny Morris, "Refabricating 1948," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 27, no. 2 (1998).

in Israel and the Setback (Arabic: *An-Naksa*) in the Arab World led to the dramatic expansion of Israel's territory via the capture of the Gaza Strip, Sinai Peninsula, Golan Heights, and West Bank.[101] The political backlash by the Arab League was formalized in the 1967 Khartoum Resolution and the policy of "Three Nos" – no recognition, no peace, and no negations with the State of Israel.

In addition to the traditional military and diplomatic channels, the unconventional tactics of the *Palestine Liberation Organization* (hereinafter PLO) became another front of the Arab-Israeli conflict since PLO's establishment in 1964.[102] Over the course of its intense participation in the War of Attrition lasting until 1970, the PLO became locked in perpetual violence with the IDF across the Israel-Jordan border. Following the Battle of Karameh between the IDF and combined PLO and Jordanian Armed Forces in 1968, after which both sides declared themselves victorious, the PLO in Jordan grew more confident and eventually threatened the Hashemite regime itself. The subsequent internal conflict and removal of PLO fighters from Jordan in the events known as the Black September of 1970 gradually led to the entrenchment of the PLO in southern Lebanon. Their presence there acted as one of the sparks igniting the Lebanese Civil War in 1975, and provided a pretext for the Israeli incursion into Lebanon during the 1978 *Operation Litani* and ultimately all the way to Beirut during its 1982 invasion. Shattered southern Lebanon would later provide a breeding ground for the Hezbollah movement, with confrontation policies with Israel as one of its main creeds. Years later, in 2006, the clashes between Hezbollah and IDF led to another large-scale military encounter, with the situation along the Israeli-Lebanese border remaining tense until today.

If the unconventional tactics of PLO and later Hezbollah presented Israel's defence establishment with an ongoing challenge of adaptation, the 1973 October War (called the Yom Kippur War in Israel and Ramadan War in Arab countries) was a clear show of Israel's lack of anticipation of a bold Egyptian and Syrian action. Even though Israel eventually secured the battlefield, its initial retreat during the surprise attack of Arab countries marred the projected image of Israel's absolute military superiority in the Middle East. Furthermore, the October War was one of the most significant instances of a proxy conflict between the US and USSR, and as such brought Israel much closer to the US. This directly led to the oil embargo by Arab exporters against the US and the much more prominent role of oil

[101] Israeli forces withdrew from the Sinai Peninsula in 1979-1982 as part of its normalization of relations with Egypt.
[102] The PLO was founded during the first summit of the Arab League in Cairo in 1964.

in international affairs. At the same time, the October War was the last full-scale conflict between Israel and most of the Arab world. The 1978 *Camp David Accords*, which were followed by a peace treaty between Israel and Egypt, and the 1994 *Israel-Jordan Peace Treaty*, ended the state of perpetual interstate conflicts with some of Israel's neighbours. Perhaps the most important diplomatic breakthrough came years later with the so-called *Abraham Accords* of the early 2020s and the normalization of relations with Arab countries mainly in the Gulf Area.[103] The matter of the Palestinian population, the return to its ancestral homeland, and its political representation remains unresolved and, together with the emergence of Iran, has remained one of the driving forces of Israeli security policy over the last 30 years. The violent uprising known as the *First Intifada* of 1987 highlighted the issue of Palestinian aspirations. The signing of the *Oslo Accords* in 1993 and 1995 legitimized the PLO as an official representative of the Palestinians and opened the door for dialogue about a possible two-state solution but did not prevent further bloodshed, as evidenced by the 2000 *Al-Aqsa Intifada*. After Israel's unilateral withdrawal from the Gaza Strip in 2005 and its seizure by Hamas in June 2007, three violent encounters between the IDF and Hamas took place in 2008-2009, 2012 and 2014.

The heavy emphasis on defence and security vis-à-vis Arab nations in both the domestic and foreign policies of the State of Israel had two immediate effects. First, the role and training of state Arabists became a matter of state-wide systemic discussion. Second, the relative position of security and defence-oriented institutions within Israel's administration became much more prominent than that of Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Hebrew: *Misrad ha-Ḥuts*).[104] Even though Israel's first Minister of Foreign Affairs Moshe Sharett was a vocal supporter of a greater emphasis on teaching the Arabic language to Jews before 1948,[105] the Ministry of Defence and the IDF would eventually become the largest requestor and benefactor of such policies. Israel's Ministry of Defense (Hebrew: *Misrad ha-Biṭaḥon*, lit. Ministry of Security) is the overarching structure responsible for the internal and external security of the State of Israel. In addition to its administration

[103] The term Abraham Accords refers specifically to the normalization of relations between the State of Israel and the United Arab Emirates based on an agreement signed by both sides in August 2020, with the subsequent agreement between Israel and Bahrain usually referred to under the same title. The subsequent wave of normalization agreements with Israel included Morocco and to a certain extent Sudan. As of January 2022, talks between Israel and Oman are also taking place.

[104] For a complex analysis of systemic factors, see Aharon Klieman, "Succumbing to Foreign Ministry Declinism," in *Foreign Ministries, Change and Adaptation*, ed. Brian Hocking (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), 86.

[105] Mendel, *The Creation of Israeli Arabic*, 28.

of the IDF, it also manages and coordinates parts of Israel's extensive defence technology industry.[106] The IDF itself consists of almost 170,000 active and 465,000 reserve personnel with an annual expenditure of 5.2% of Israel's GDP.[107] With compulsory military service for both men and women and significant influence on Israeli political culture, the IDF remains a significant player in domestic security and foreign policy, including the matter of the instruction of the Arabic language. Having evolved directly from *Ha-Hagana*, the combat section of IDF is divided on a regional and functional basis.[108] *Military Intelligence* (Hebrew: *Agaf ha-Modiʿin*; the MI), which is separate from the regional commands, is embedded within the structure of the General Staff. As we shall see in greater detail in a separate chapter, due to the perpetual state of conflict between Israel and Arabic speaking countries, the MI would eventually become the key governmental faction in designing and implementing the national policies pertaining to the creation of Jewish Israeli state-Arabists.

The case of Israel was unique in many respects. Yet, as we have seen during the 1956 Suez Crisis, despite entirely different points of departure, the policies of the three analysed countries towards the Middle East have frequently arrived at a crossroads. Whether it was the lure of natural resources, the power dynamics associated with the Cold War, the need to address the perceived point of origin for international security issues, or the notion of rebuilding an ancient homeland, the three countries have been irresistibly drawn to the Arabic speaking world. The briefly sketched histories of peace and conflict have had an immense impact on the material and intellectual resources dedicated to the creation of three professional groups of state-Arabists. Their education, utilization, and preservation have to a large extent depended on the current policies of their countries towards the region. As the nature of the institution analysed in the following chapters suggests, the logic behind the creation of this unique group at the very basic level has been twofold: military and diplomatic. Yet, despite this dualistic nature of motivation, the actual employment of state-Arabists throughout the past 70 years has remained colourful and far surpassed the usual images associated with the two professions.

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[106] See the organigram at "About us," Ministry of Defense, accessed January 26, 2023, https://english.mod.gov.il/About/Pages/Ministry_of_Defense.aspx.

[107] See International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 2021*, (London: Routledge, 2021), 344; and Tian Nan et al., *Trends in World Military Expenditure. 2021* (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2022), https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2022-04/fs_2204_milex_2021_0.pdf.

[108] Four regional commands (Northern, Central, Southern, Home Front) and four functional arms (Ground, Air, Space, and Navy Arm) are further divided into divisions based on specific tasks.

3. Arabic Language Instruction Organized by the Government of the United Kingdom

Any attempt to thoroughly analyse Arabic language instruction within the British Governmental domain after the Second World War inevitably runs into an obstacle unique to the United Kingdom. While many other traditional powers and emerging superpowers had an opportunity to approach the Arabic speaking world with a fresh perspective, the UK government[109] had an inverted perspective – one of gradual disengagement from territories it had formerly ruled or administered. Naturally, a historical process of such magnitude directly impacted many tasks associated with the administration of the Empire, with the instruction and utilization of the Arabic language being among them. The gradual withdrawal of the UK from its former domains left many of those involved in Arabic instruction perplexed about the future of their task. Would there still be a need for Arabic speakers in the civil service and armed forces should the UK lose its physical presence in the region?

The general uncertainty about the future purpose of (not only) Arabic language knowledge was seconded by questions of an organizational nature, which had to be dealt with by the British civil service and military structures: How would the gradual disengagement from British overseas domains affect the internal makeup of its institutions responsible for administering the Empire? How exactly would the need for Arabic speakers be understood after the completion of several mergers of old colonial institutions into more centralized ones, such as the Foreign Office and later the Foreign and Commonwealth Office? And, should the British Government decide to maintain its Arabic expertise, who would be its torchbearer – the armed forces, the civil service, or perhaps the academic domain?

The British Empire built a significant and intertwined diplomatic, military, and security presence throughout the Middle East already during the First World War and the interwar period. However, the personnel maintaining the British presence in the region were hardly systematically prepared in a linguistic sense, especially when it came to local languages. Such a political and intellectual environment presented ample opportunities for a limited number of Arabists. Many of them acquired their expertise either in the academic environment or during their extended stays within the Arabic speaking world. This separation

[109] I do not use the official term "His/Her Majesty's Government" or "HMG". The terms "British Government" and "UK government" are used interchangeably.

from the central institutions of the British Empire occasionally led to a disregard of London's policies; instead, these remarkable individuals set up their own agendas and priorities. Indeed, British policy circles have had their share of experience with figures such as John/Abdullah Philby, who was brilliant yet difficult to control and frequently in disagreement with London's interests in the region.[110] To remedy this apparent divergence between the policy makers in London and Arabists on the ground in the Middle East, an original notion within the British civil service and armed forces began to take shape during the Second World War – a "caste" of professional Arabists should exist within the governmental domain.

This chapter attempts to capture the UK Government's answer to this conundrum in both the civilian and military domain. In this process, I present a system of Arabic language education widely defined by three institutions: the dedicated *Middle East Centre for Arab Studies* (MECAS; 1944-1978), later suppressed by the centralized *Foreign and Commonwealth Office Language School*, which has functioned under various titles. On the military side, I briefly discuss the history of the *Command Arabic Language School – Arabian Peninsula* (CALSAP; 1959-1962), and the *Arabic Language Wing of the Army/Defence School of Languages in Beaconsfield* (functioning between 1960 and 2013). In terms of the scope dedicated to each of the institutions, MECAS receives the most attention. This is partially due to a relative lack of both primary and secondary sources devoted to the other discussed institutions, but mainly because of the prominent role MECAS played as a "hub" of Arabic teaching efforts within the UK. Unlike the other institutions, MECAS taught Arabic not only to British military officers and diplomatic personnel, but also to their counterparts from many countries around the world. Furthermore, it offered its expertise to various corporations and even supported the study of Arabic languages by academics. Even though this research generally aims to abstain from delving into the intricacies of Arabic and Middle Eastern studies at various British universities, this chapter also briefly mentions the occasional encounters between British academia and institutions such as MECAS in the instruction of the Arabic language.

The very fact that two out of the four discussed institutions were established exclusively for the instruction of the Arabic language speaks volumes not only about the importance given to this language by the British Government, but also about the specific manner in which

[110] Abdullah Philby (1885-1960) was a well-known British Arabist and official in several Middle Eastern countries. He became a confidante and advisor to King Ibn Saud and was forced to resign from his official duties as he openly advised Ibn Saud against British interests.

the British conceived and organized language instruction in general. While the Americans or Russians would invest in education in a specific language only within the confines of much larger institutions, the British did not hesitate to create agile, *ad-hoc* institutions in a very straightforward manner and continuously re-evaluate their benefit to British foreign policy. It comes as no surprise that, during the Cold War, Arabic was not the only language that received such prominent treatment – Russian was also taught at the dedicated *Joint Services School for Linguists* during the 1950s.[111]

3.1. The Middle East Centre for Arab Studies 1942-1947: From an Idea to a Course

In many ways, the history of the famed Middle East Centre for Arab Studies, which lasted from 1944 to 1978, represents a downscaled model of the British withdrawal from the Middle East. At the same time, it remains a history of one of the most progressive Arabic teaching institutions set up by any government in the 20th century. It should be noted that unlike many other institutions presented in this dissertation, MECAS focused solely on the Arabic language and did so despite the truly global scope of interests of its sponsoring nation. To illustrate the Centre's unique history, I divided its history into three larger narratives: First, I follow the initial inception of the idea of establishing such a training facility during the Second World War and trace MECAS' initial years in Jerusalem and Jordanian Zarqa until its relocation to Lebanese Shemlan in 1947; the second section offers an analysis of the history of MECAS in Lebanon with a focus on institutional, financial and personnel affairs; and the third section devotes its attention solely to MECAS' Arabic language curriculum, which brought the Centre to the forefront of government organized Arabic teaching in the "Western" world until its closure in 1978.

The original conception of ideas that eventually led to the creation of MECAS remains shrouded in hardly verifiable claims. Virtually all monographs about MECAS refer to the 1947 autobiography *Nomad* by Robin Maugham as one of the primary sources on the early history of MECAS. This is no surprise, as Maugham claimed to have been the original mastermind

[111] See Geoffrey Elliot and Harold Shukman, *Secret Classrooms: An Untold Story of the Cold War* (London: St Ermin's Press, 2003).

behind the Centre. A certain obsession with Maugham and his somewhat romanticized narrative of the Centre's origins is understandable, as it fits perfectly into the popular narrative of great British Arabists opposing bureaucratic structures in London. However, while most authors agree that Maugham was "somehow" involved in the creation of MECAS, the credibility of Maugham's presentation of his own role in the establishment of MECAS is problematic and deserves further inquiry. Furthermore, Maugham's account of the original purpose of MECAS differs significantly from the final institution. Throughout the following paragraphs, I argue that early MECAS was more of a bureaucratically conceived product of several individuals rather than a substantiation of one man's wartime idea, and that Maugham's initial proposals might have had only little influence on this bureaucratic process.

Robin Maugham was a wartime British officer posted in the North African theatre, who later became a successful author. He was born into an affluent and influential family, and studied at Eton College and Cambridge to become a barrister like his father. Instead, however, he opted for a more adventurous life and joined a tank regiment bound for the North African battlefields as an ordinary infantryman. Having sustained a severe injury during the Battle of Gazala in the early summer of 1942, he was recalled from frontline duty and instead became an unofficial liaison officer between John Bagot Glubb (often titled Glubb Pasha), the head of the Transjordan (and later Jordan) Arab Legion between 1939 and 1956, and Winston Churchill.[112]

In his 1947 novel *Nomad*, Maugham stressed his role in promoting an idea for a special training initiative for British officers, who would purposely be left behind enemy lines should the British military be forced by the Afrika Korps to retreat. These individuals would then organize local groups of Arabs to conduct guerrilla-style operations.[113] Such an idea, clearly inspired by the Arab insurgency organized by T.E. Lawrence during the preceding Great War, would hardly have been considered were it not for Maugham's connections to some of the highest-ranking British officers in the Middle Eastern theatre. Both of the most frequently cited historians on MECAS, Sir James Craig and Leslie McLoughlin, suggest that it was the scope of Maugham's connections among the critical political and military movers and shakers that allowed him to promote his radical ideas.[114]

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[112] Craig, *Shemlan*, 2. Craig based his analysis on Robin Maugham, *Nomad* (UK: Chapman and Hall, 1947).
[113] Craig, *Shemlan*, 2.
[114] Craig, 7 and McLoughlin, *In a Sea of Knowledge*, 118. Craig perhaps more critically suggested that Maugham's merit might have primarily been in his presentation of other officers' ideas to the "higher-ups", including Churchill.

Contrary to Maugham's autobiographical narrative, available historical sources, mainly the *Foundation of the Middle East Centre for Arab Studies* produced by the Middle East section of the Research Department at the Foreign Office in June 1974, make no reference to Maugham whatsoever. However, they do stress the critical role of Richard Casey, an influential Australian military and political figure who served as Australian Ambassador to the United States until 1942. Churchill then appointed him to the post of Minister Resident in the Middle East, a role that allowed Casey to "translate" initiatives originating in Cairo to Churchill's war cabinet. The aforementioned *Foundation of MECAS* document mentions Casey as the official who "revived the proposal for an Arab Centre and in May 1943 submitted a note to the War Cabinet Office proposing the establishment of a Centre of Arab Studies in a suitable place in the Middle East".[115] The same document also mentions Brigadier Iltyd Clayton, the head of the *Middle East Intelligence Centre*[116], as a supporter of the idea, and British diplomat and explorer Bertram Thomas as a potential first director of the Centre.[117]

A meticulous probe into the Foreign Office's internal documents conducted by James Craig also highlights the potential role of other officials who claimed to have been involved in the creation of the Centre. In 1943, Bertram Thomas sent a memo to Charles Baxter, then the head of the *Middle East Department* at the Foreign Office. As the memo circulated through the Foreign Office, the notion of MECAS garnered attention. Among the other interesting replies and comments to Thomas' memo, Edwin Chapman Andrews of the *Foreign Office Personnel Department* took some merit for conceiving the idea of the Centre: "The idea of forming a Centre in the Middle East first occurred to Captain Foster, the Head of the Middle East Intelligence Centre, Cairo, in September 1941. I was working at the Centre at that time and Foster and I worked out an outline of a scheme which I am pleased to see has remained practically unchanged. It is a pity it has taken more than two years to get the Centre approved."[118]

As mentioned earlier, Robin Maugham's original idea of MECAS related to more of a "stay-behind guerrilla force" than a world-class linguistically oriented facility. Despite the wartime origins of the initial proposals, a brief analysis of ideas coming

[115] Quoted here from Craig, *Shemlan*, 7.
[116] A joint effort between several branches of the British Armed Forces focused on providing timely intelligence to the British war efforts.
[117] Craig, *Shemlan*, 7. It should be noted that according to Maugham's narrative, he had been in occasional contact with Clayton since 1942 – see Craig, *Shemlan*, 3.
[118] Foreign Office Document 366_1248 of 1943, quoted here from Craig, *Shemlan*, 7.

from the proponents of establishing the Centre suggests a scope of approaches rather different than those of Maugham. Central to these approaches was the notion of the post-war administration of the Levant after a decisive victory of the Allied Forces. The way Maugham refers to this development in his novel *Nomad* further problematizes his account of MECAS' conception. Later in *Nomad*, Maugham described a new idea he shared with John Bagot Glubb that significantly differed from the previous militaristic notion of a "guerrilla force". A new proposal described in *Nomad* revolved around a three-month course for junior officers, who would be trained in rudimentary Arabic, Arab history, politics, religions, customs, and geography.[119] Maugham's sudden departure from the militaristic concept in favour of a military-organized "Middle Eastern studies" program might be explained by Maugham's desire to preserve his public role as the true mastermind behind MECAS, regardless of which concept the early MECAS actually adopted. In a report on his daring adventures in the Middle East at the end of 1946, Maugham somewhat disappointedly noted that "the Centre (now under control of the Foreign Office) has been changed into a language school."[120] Since the novel *Nomad* was first published in 1947, we should not exclude the idea that although Maugham (perhaps together with Glubb Pasha) might have been involved in the conception of the original "guerrilla-style MECAS", he only retrospectively inserted himself into the narrative of early MECAS based on his observation of the Centre in 1946, when it had already existed for more than two years.

This would explain why the latter Foreign Office documents contain no remarks of Maugham. In other words, the guerrilla-style MECAS, which never came into being, might have indeed been an idea conceived by Maugham. However, it never had the chance to become a reality, as the Allied Forces became victorious in the Second Battle of El Alamein in November 1942, effectively stopping the Axis' advance towards Egypt and rendering the idea of "left-behind guerrillas" irrelevant. In this respect, the conceptual documentation regarding the goals of MECAS as provided by the Foreign Office's figures seems a more reliable source on the Centre's early history than Maugham's novel. Another look at the *Foundation of MECAS* allows us to observe a notion very different from Maugham's original wartime militaristic concept and far more in accordance with the potential post-war needs of the Foreign Office. In a 1943 proposal to the War Cabinet compiled by Richard Casey (and later quoted in the *Foundation of MECAS)*, the goal of the future MECAS was described

[119] Maugham, *Nomad*, 100f, quoted here from Craig, *Shemlan*, 4.
[120] Maugham, *Nomad*, 239, quoted here from Craig, *Shemlan*, 5.

as to provide "a body of young men with some knowledge of the Arabic language and an adequate background of Arabic, Islamic and Middle East history as well as of the problems with which HMG is faced now in the Middle East and which will become more acute in the future (…) These officers, when trained, will provide a pool from which military, diplomatic and administrative demands for personnel may be met."[121]

Considering the later development of MECAS and its eventual formation as a training ground for British diplomats and other civil servants destined to work in the Arab world, the last sentence of Casey's memo proves very insightful, as it directly suggests that graduates of the Centre, though still military officers, might eventually hold positions in the Foreign Office. This notion was supported by Bertram Thomas in his 1943 memo to the head of the *Foreign Office Middle East Department*. Thomas suggested six to eight young officers who should be transferred to the Centre, as they had the prerequisites for possible work for the Foreign Office after the war.[122] Despite being merely conceptual at that time, this shift in the understanding of MECAS' function would prove critical years later, when MECAS became the backbone for teaching the Arabic language to British *civil servants* (and on many occasions even *civilians*), while the military followed a different path with its own dedicated institutions.

The aforementioned *Foundation of MECAS* (1974) further underlines the issue "for whom" the Centre was to be created and operated. While Casey's general idea of a "pool of officers"[123] was accepted, their eventual utilization was still a matter of discussion. This ambiguity proved helpful during negotiations with the Colonial Office, which in January 1944 finally agreed to the establishment of the Centre in Jerusalem. The final agreement was based on a notion that MECAS' graduates could be used for political liaison with various Arab (para)military outfits in the region.[124] Bertram Thomas was appointed the Centre's first director and by June 1944 the Centre opened its first class of twenty students at the Austrian Hospice

[121] Quoted here from Craig, *Shemlan*, 7. The same source material is also quoted in McLoughlin, *A Nest of Spies*, 44f.
[122] *Foundation of the Middle East Centre for Arab Studies.* 1974*,* quoted here from Craig, *Shemlan*, 7f. The original document was not available to the author of this dissertation. It remains unclear whether Thomas had specific officers in mind whom he might have met during his career. However, remarks by Brian Walford about his participation in the first MECAS course in 1944 do not suggest any previous encounter between himself and Bertram Thomas. Nineteen students finished the first course in Jerusalem, and some of them might have been personally selected by Thomas. See Brian Walford, "Jerusalem with Spitfires 1944-45," in *The Arabists of Shemlan*.
[123] *Foundation of the Middle East Centre for Arab Studies*. Quoted here from Craig, *Shemlan*, 10.
[124] Craig, 11.

in Jerusalem. The way the Centre was initially administered offers an insight into the delicate nature of the wartime nexus of the British Empire's colonial, military, and diplomatic machinery. As Craig illustrates, "neither the Foreign Office, nor the Treasury were happy with the financial aspect of the scheme. The centre was to be run by the army on Colonial Office territory, answerable to the Resident Minister's Office (as it now was) in Cairo and paid for by the Foreign Office."[125] This problem was remedied by 1947, when MECAS came under the full management of the Foreign Office.[126]

In all the initial MECAS proposals, the idea of creating a "pool of Arabists" from military officers resonated the most. Therefore, the first class consisted of fourteen officers from the army and six from the *Royal Air Force* (RAF).[127] As the situation in Mandatory Palestine grew direr with almost daily skirmishes between the Jewish resistance, the British, and the Arabs, the Centre's administration began looking into other possible locations. With the evacuation of all non-essential British citizens from Palestine in early 1947, the course continued in Zarqa, Jordan. Eventually, MECAS was reopened in October 1947 in the village of Shemlan east of Beirut.[128]

Any assessment of the impact of large-scale political events on the institutional setup of early MECAS depends largely on our understanding of available sources. The notion of a dramatic shift from Robin Maugham's romanticized idea of a guerrilla training camp to an educational centre for post-war administrators depends on the full acceptance of Maugham's original narrative in the 1947 novel *Nomad*, which is hardly reinforced by subsequent official documentation. This does not necessarily imply that Maugham fabricated the entire story about the discussions of MECAS as a "training camp for left-behind guerrillas"; however, the strategic development in the North African campaign soon rendered the entire concept unnecessary. In fact, if Maugham had begun contemplating his original idea after being wounded in the Battle of Gazala, which took place mainly in June 1942 before the Allied forces successfully stopped Afrika Korps' advance at El Alamein by November 1942, the entire concept would have been strategically relevant for only several months. However, since the available sources mention that Richard Casey "revived" the idea for MECAS, albeit in a different form, it would be unfair to completely rule out the possibility

[125] Craig, 12.
[126] McLoughlin, *In a Sea of Knowledge*, 134.
[127] Craig, *Shemlan*, 19. No list has been preserved, the data was compiled by Craig based on available records and interviews.
[128] Craig, 23.

that Maugham might have provided some inspiration, which was later passed on to Richard Casey by some of his counterparts. This would also make chronological sense, as approximately one year between Maugham's injury at Gazala and Casey's letter to the War Cabinet would have given the idea enough time to merge with other proposals, mature, and adapt to the new strategic circumstances.

The Foreign Office's archival materials offer a relatively sound depiction of the birth of MECAS as a training institution for officers with the potential to become future administrators in the Middle East. As such, the available sources suggest that serious discussions about establishing such a centre only took place after significant Allied successes in the North African campaign, when a need for future administrators of the MENA region became much more likely. In institutional terms, perhaps the most important event in early MECAS history was its 1947 reassignment under the control of the British Foreign Office. This indeed coincided with the victory of the Allied Forces in the Second World War, subsequent British military disengagement and gradual re-consideration of its diplomatic efforts towards the region.

3.2. The Middle East Centre for Arab Studies in Shemlan 1947-1978

Having traced the origins of MECAS and its eventual migration to the village of Shemlan in the vicinity of Beirut, this section addresses several areas of interest. I begin with the ongoing discussion within the British Foreign Office about the general need for Arabists as a specific "cadre" of civil servants, especially within the context of the gradual redefinition of Britain's role in the Middle East after the Second World War. This factor was closely connected to the issue of financial constraints and various efforts to make MECAS more financially viable – either by outsourcing some of its activities to other institutions, or by diversifying its clientele and therefore sources of income. The last and perhaps most important factor were the large-scale political events that directly impacted MECAS and impeded its development. It should be noted here that as I trace certain factors in the Centre's existence (such as financing), I shall occasionally abandon the strictly chronological line of inquiry to better illustrate certain intertwined processes.

Before the "golden age" of MECAS, i.e., approximately between the late 1950s and mid-1960s, could begin, the transitional period between roughly 1948 and 1956 was marked by a gradual adjustment to the post-war period rather than a sudden dramatic shift in MECAS' policies and curriculum. In regard to the development of the British position as a global power, the transfer of control over the Centre from the military to the Foreign Office proved to be a well-justified course of action. As Craig pointed out, the need for *military* personnel tasked with administering imperial domains (as previously suggested by Richard Casey) would slowly diminish with the British withdrawal from the newly established independent states – be it the State of Israel in 1948, Libya in late 1951, or Sudan in 1955.[129]

The departure of the British Armed Forces from the Arabic speaking world did not in any way diminish the need for Arabic speakers within the ranks of the British Government. Subsequently, the Foreign Office and eventually private enterprises would play the leading role in interaction between the British and the Middle Eastern domain.[130] The critical role of Arabic knowledge for British foreign interests would not come into question throughout the history of MECAS. One notable exception was a campaign spearheaded by Anthony Parsons, an Oxford educated Arabist and Foreign Office veteran who opened up a debate about the general value of Arabists in the early 1970s. Parsons argued that "Britain's special position in the Middle East had gone; we (the British) no longer needed detailed intelligence on local affairs; (and…) the knowledge of English and French was spreading fast among Arabs."[131] However, Parsons' call for fewer Arabists within the civil service was not heeded, and he himself later acknowledged that the idea was "heretical".[132] However, Parsons' self-depreciating admission of his "heresy" does raise the question of the organizational culture of the Foreign Office in relation to its own Arabic instruction. Most debates surrounding the Centre were indeed focused on the matter of "how", i.e., effective and frugal management of MECAS, instead of questions concerning "why", i.e., evaluation of the role of Arabists within British foreign policy.

Inside the Foreign Office, one of the key managers dealing with the practical aspects of Arabic instruction was John Henniker-Major, who headed the Personnel Department between 1953 and 1960. According to Donald Maitland, who was MECAS Director

[129] Craig, *Shemlan*, 147. It should be noted that the British military presence in Aden until the late 1960s played a role in preventing the military from giving up on Arabic completely.
[130] Craig, *Shemlan*, 147f.
[131] Craig, 92.
[132] Craig, 92.

in the mid-1950s, Henniker-Major formulated two goals with regard to Arabic teaching within the Foreign Office: "To raise the standard of Arabic training and, secondly, to 'normalise' Arabic by persuading members of the Service as a whole that specialization of Arab affairs was no different from other specialisms and did not close the door to other types of work or to the most senior posts."[133] Having served in the Diplomatic Service since 1938, Henniker-Major had support from other senior members of the Foreign Office in this rather ambitious endeavour.[134] While the first task was eventually accomplished via the mid-1950s MECAS curriculum reform, the latter proved quite challenging. The general understanding in the mid-1950s Foreign Office was that a specialization in "hard languages" would restrict one's career to a very limited selection of available posts.[135] Even though Henniker-Major aimed to change this paradigm, many diplomats who graduated from MECAS indeed dedicated their careers to the Arab world, and occasionally were "forcefully" dispatched to other parts of the world to prevent them from "going native".[136] However, their life-long attachment to the Arabic speaking world was frequently a matter of personal affinity to the region, rather than a bureaucratic construct that Henniker-Major aimed to dismantle.

Another incentive to study at MECAS came in the form of allowances for the knowledge of "hard languages". Change came in the early 1950s, when the official examinations of the *Civil Service Commissioners*[137] replaced the previous internal standard of MECAS. This systemization allowed MECAS graduates to be guaranteed language allowances within the civil service and armed forces. In 1955, the incentives to study Arabic became even higher, as the lack of Arabists forced the Foreign Office to increase the allowance for the top level of language knowledge to 200 GBP per year.[138] Such an incentive was not to be taken lightly, as the average yearly salary in the UK in the 1950s was roughly 100 GBP.[139]

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[133] Donald Maitland, "A New Curriculum and New Premises 1956-60," in *The Arabists of Shemlan*, 100f.
[134] Donald Maitland, "From Colonialism to Friendship in the Middle East," in *The Arabists of Shemlan*, 22.
[135] Patrick Wright, "Storm, an Earthquake, and Bombs," in *The Arabists of Shemlan*, 90.
[136] In many paradoxical cases, the bureaucratic constraints of the Foreign Office (later the Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and similar institutions in other Commonwealth states would lead to fresh MECAS graduates being sent to diplomatic posts in Tokyo, Ottawa, or Geneva, i.e., as far from the Middle East as physically possible. See Brian Stewart, "Storms, an Earthquake and Bombs 1956," in *The Arabists of Shemlan*, 222.
[137] The examination had two standards: *Lower and Higher for the Foreign Office* and the *Second Class and First Class Interpreterships* for the armed forces. See Craig, *Shemlan*, 49.
[138] Craig, *Shemlan*, 49f.
[139] "Facts about Britain at Work in the Fifties," *The Independent*, March 10, 2011, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/tvandradio/8374130/Facts-about-Britain-at-work-in-the-Fifties.html.
The Foreign Office's pay standard was naturally much higher, as most of Britain's population still worked as unqualified labour.

Even though the post-war Foreign Office shared an understanding that Arabic speakers within its ranks were desirable, not everyone within the British Government saw MECAS as the most effective tool in educating them. The late 1940s and early 1950s reports about the quality of Arabic language instruction by the Centre strengthened this argument. Some graduates of the early courses in Shemlan described the language-oriented parts of the course as "pathetic".[140] Others suggested that possible improvements in Arabic proficiency very much depended on the students' own initiative. However, those less interested in the language could fulfil the requirements of the course without dedicating much effort.[141] A grim picture of the situation was presented to the Foreign Office by Terence Brennan, who replaced Bertram Thomas as the Director of MECAS in 1948. Unlike Thomas, Brennan did not speak Arabic at all, but was a veteran of the *Levant Consular Service* in Persia (and to a small extent in Damascus, Tunis, and Rabat).[142] This naturally made him more skilled in dealing with the bureaucratic aspects of his newly acquired positions. In his 1949 *Annual Report* and associated meetings, Brennan pinpointed several issues the Centre was facing. One was that "the standard of Arabic could be higher". A surprising point was that he considered the social environment of the Centre inadequate to its goals. Since he later suggested possible migration of the entire institution to Damascus, Alexandria, or Mansoura, we can assume that by "the un-Arab nature of the milieu",[143] Brennan mostly meant the majority Druze population of Shemlan that the students interacted with – regardless of the fact that their native language was Arabic. In the end, the proposed migration of the Centre did not take place. However, Brennan's presentation of MECAS' status would lead to the significant decision to "outsource" part of MECAS' Arabic instruction to SOAS in London.

Even though the systemic governmental support of "Oriental" studies is not the focus of this dissertation, the wider history of entanglement between the British Government, certain universities and MECAS deserves further attention. In 1945, Oxford graduate of Oriental Languages, the Earl of Scarborough Anthony Eden, who would later succeed Churchill as British Prime Minister, compiled the *Scarborough Report*, which recommended the allocation of additional funds to support the teaching of non-standard languages

[140] Craig, *Shemlan*, 31.
[141] Antony Cawston, "A Runaway Camel 1953-55," in *The Arabists of Shemlan*, 75f.
[142] Craig, *Shemlan*, 41 and 43.
[143] Quoted from Craig, *Shemlan*, 43. As for the original source material, Craig refers to "minutes" from the meeting with MECAS users, i.e., the Admiralty, War Office, Air Ministry, British Council, and the Sudan Government plus the Treasury).

such as Arabic at British universities.[144] Just as in the case of MECAS, the recommendation was clearly pragmatically oriented towards enhancing British international presence. Both academic institutions that would later closely collaborate with MECAS, i.e., SOAS and Durham, used these funds to improve their Arabic programs. Durham went even further and was the first British university to organize courses in Modern Arabic language and literature.[145]

The exact motivation for outsourcing part of MECAS' Arabic instruction to SOAS once again illustrates the somewhat convoluted multitude of interests within the British Government. Brennan himself argued that a preliminary Arabic course in London would deter some students of lower quality and motivation from expensive travel to Lebanon while allowing MECAS to focus on more advanced studies.[146] The British *Treasury* (Ministry of Finance) held the view that the entire notion of sending students to a remote location was all but frugal – the Government could have either hired personnel already proficient in the language or taught them in London, preferably in evening classes after their regular day-jobs.[147] Another view of the problem (which James Craig could not resist calling "perverted") was suggested by the *Air Ministry*: "Time saved on study abroad would increase by the amount of the period of overseas service for which an officer was available after the course."[148] Despite completely different views on practicality of the preparatory course at SOAS, the proposal was adopted and remained implemented until 1957.[149] The resulting course at SOAS lasted three months,[150] after which the students were dispatched to Shemlan. Some students who had already been serving in the Middle East prior to their admission to MECAS spent this time in an *ad-hoc* course in Shemlan, as it would make no sense financially to send them to London and then back to Lebanon. Needless to say, those who had a chance to study in an Arabic speaking environment came out much better than their counterparts from SOAS in London.[151]

The preparatory course at SOAS was not the only outsourcing solution "forced" upon MECAS due to financial constraints. In 1960, only three years after the SOAS course was abolished, the Ministry of Defence decided to partially abandon the MECAS course structure

[144] McLoughlin, *In a Sea of Knowledge*, 129.
[145] McLoughlin, *In a Sea of Knowledge*, 129.
[146] Craig, *Shemlan*, 44.
[147] Craig, 7.
[148] Craig, 44.
[149] Craig, 44 and 63.
[150] Cawston, "A Runaway Camel 1953-55," 75.
[151] Craig, *Shemlan*, 44.

and educate their Arabists at other institutions instead. Prospective Arabists would first be sent to a one-year-long Arabic course at the University of Durham, only so they could finish their education with a subsequent six-month course in Shemlan.[152] This solution was hardly systemic, as it only affected the students professionally affiliated with the Ministry of Defence, and therefore created a discrepancy between the proficiency levels of prospective military Arabists and MECAS students coming from the Foreign Office and other institutions. However, from a strictly military perspective, the "special liaison" between Durham University and the Ministry of Defence proved vital to the establishment and operation of the "Command Arabic Language School – Arabian Peninsula (CALSAP)", an important Arabic teaching institution that will be discussed separately.

The scenario of MECAS' entanglement with British universities due to financial constrains was repeated in 1970, when a Conservative cabinet headed by Prime Minister Edward Heath conducted a government-wide audit. One of its results was the recommendation to dramatically reduce the costs of maintaining MECAS. James Craig compiled conjectures on how the consultations between then Director of MECAS, D. C. Carden, and Foreign and Commonwealth Office officials might have proceeded.[153] Four scenarios for the future of MECAS were discussed: 1) "mini-MECAS", i.e., a radical reduction of MECAS' activities, reduction of the number of students and transfer of financial aspects of administration directly to the British Embassy in Beirut;[154] 2) closure of MECAS and transfer of all students to the *Army School of Languages in Beaconsfield*; 3) closure of MECAS and transfer of students to Cambridge University; 4) the so-called "Hourani scheme" (named after Albert Hourani), which would combine the Arabic teaching capacities of several British universities into an "Inter-Universities First Year Centre", where students would gain a common, solid foundation of Arabic, only to be sent back to proper undergraduate study at a British university.[155]

[152] Craig, 71.
[153] Craig, 89f.
[154] Such a notion was already considered during the 1961 George Blake affair discussed in more detail below in this chapter. One of several reasons this proposal was rejected was the increased risk to MECAS students. While many students of MECAS were British diplomats, they were not official British representatives to Lebanon and therefore did not enjoy diplomatic immunity. Attaching MECAS to the British Embassy in Beirut would therefore send mixed signals to the host country. Moreover, many students in 1970 were not employed by the British civil service or not British nationals at all.
[155] Craig, *Shemlan*, 90.

Even though the hypothesized Inter-Universities First Year Centre never came into being as several universities refused to participate in the project, the surrounding debate gives us the approximate costs of "educating an Arabist" in the 1970s. The general belief and strong argument for cost reduction achievable through the Hourani Scheme was that a year of language courses at MECAS cost approximately 6,000 GBP, while the Inter-Universities centre would do the same task for 2,000 GBP.[156] Craig's own calculation based on records of the Foreign Office Finance Department came to significantly different numbers. A one-year education of a student from the Diplomatic Service (i.e., one whose education would be completely sponsored by the Government) at the beginning of the 1970s cost approximately 3,200 GBP.[157] A general evaluation of MECAS conducted in 1971 by the Foreign Office Training Department calculated that with an enrolment of 8.5 prospective Arabists from the Foreign Office a year, the yearly per-capita price of their education would be approximately 4,000 GBP.[158]

Bearing these limitations in mind, an alternative source of financing partially alleviated MECAS' financial issues over the years. Even though MECAS originated as a military institution and was later reorganized as a Foreign Office training centre, British diplomats and officers represented only a part of its student body. From MECAS' early existence, other British institutions more or less loosely tied to the government, as well as British businesses of global importance, would send their employees to MECAS to achieve working levels of Arabic language. These included students from the *British Council* (from 1949)[159], *Shell*, *British Petrol*, *British Bank of Middle East*, *Iraq Petroleum Company*, or *Kuwait Petroleum Company* (from 1950).[160] MECAS' appeal to various businesses and non-diplomatic institutions rose with the 1958 introduction of *background courses*, which omitted Arabic language studies and instead fully focused on the history, society and culture of the Arab Middle East.

In addition to representatives from British businesses, a significant number of foreign diplomats attended MECAS language courses. They originally included members of diplomatic services from other Commonwealth countries.[161] From 1961, students from

[156] Craig, 91.
[157] Craig, 91.
[158] Craig, 92.
[159] Craig, 46.
[160] Craig, 49.
[161] Craig, 68.

Japan began to arrive in constantly increasing numbers. Some of them came from the Japanese Foreign Ministry and eventually became important facilitators of Japanese foreign policy in the Middle East.[162] Japanese diplomats were soon followed by other civil servants, as well as businessmen.[163] In 1970, West German diplomats recognized the superiority of the MECAS course in comparison to their own and began sending their staff.[164] Until the closure of MECAS in the late 1970s, up to twenty foreign governments sent their officials to MECAS to improve their proficiency in Arabic.[165]

American students formed a rather specific group of foreign visitors to MECAS. Occasional consultations between the *Foreign Service Institute* school in Beirut regarding curricula and other matters had already been taking place from 1960.[166] In 1973, the director of the FSI School in Beirut, Dr James R. Frith, approached the Foreign Office and inquired about the possibility of sending FSI students to MECAS. His main argument for such a course of action revolved around the rising costs of his own school.[167] However, despite efforts from both sides, the FSI – MECAS cooperation never reached the level of a standardized exchange agreement. Therefore, the largest influx of US students came through the *National Undergraduate Program of Overseas Study of Arabic* (NUPOSA), which was organized by Princeton University since the early 1960s. These were undergraduate students with a knowledge of Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) equivalent to two years of undergraduate-level studies, accompanied by an intensive summer course before their departure to Lebanon.[168] As Benjamin Forster, graduate of the 1965-1966 NUPOSA course noted, the NUPOSA courses came as a useful addition to nationwide US efforts to promote the study of strategic and less common languages including Arabic as stipulated by the 1958 *National Defense Education Act*.[169] The sudden influx of federal funds into such programs also allowed for scholarships (albeit still highly competitive) to be granted, enabling American

[162] Craig, 73. Such was the case of Kunio Katakura, who later became Japanese ambassador to UAE, Iraq, Egypt, as well as an influential author and commentator on relations between Japan and the Middle East.
[163] Craig, *Shemlan*, 96.
[164] Craig, 92.
[165] Craig, 159.
[166] Craig, 70. FSI is the main US training institution for public servants involved in foreign affairs, mainly employees of the US Department of State.
[167] Craig, 118. It should be noted that some US Foreign Service officers who attended both MECAS and FSI school eventually argued that the quality of instruction at MECAS was simply superior to the FSI School in Beirut. See Craig, *Shemlan*, 159.
[168] Craig, 178, also Benjamin Foster, "The NUPOSA Programme for US Undergraduates 1956-66," in *The Arabists of Shemlan*, 185.
[169] Foster, "The NUPOSA Programme," 186.

students of Arabic to travel to elite and far-flung institutions such as MECAS.[170] Indeed, the immediate post-NDEA (*National Defense Education Act*) era proved very financially advantageous to the ever-frugal MECAS, as it (albeit indirectly) brought US federal funds to Shemlan.

So far, we have seen the occasional outsourcing of MECAS' Arabic instruction to other institutions due to financial constraints, military planning, and even didactic purposes. On many occasions, however, the main motivation would arise from events far beyond the control of the Foreign Office or other British institutions. While a brief overview of Lebanese history might suggest so, it would be mistaken to assert that the whole Lebanese environment was hostile to the presence of the British training centre. From the very beginning, occasional arrests of students traveling to surrounding countries took place, based on the assumption that they were British spies.[171] However, the main episodes of open hostility against MECAS would often exclusively coincide with global affairs, mainly various conflicts in the Middle East and the overarching narrative of the Cold War.

When the Suez Crisis erupted in the autumn of 1956, some army officers studying at MECAS were forced to travel to their respective units, only to return after a short campaign.[172] At the same time, the students who remained in Shemlan were targeted by a bomb attack, which led to no fatalities and only light injuries.[173] While none of the perpetrators issued any statement, the timing of the attack was clearly linked to the British intervention in Suez and, as such, highlighted the understanding of MECAS as a British "imperialist" institution among some locals. In 1958, Kemal Jumblatt's Druze forces attacked MECAS again, forcing the school to evacuate to Beirut.[174]

Jumblatt's incursion to MECAS was merely one of the many chapters of the 1958 Lebanese crisis, which saw a domestic conflict between Christian president Camille Chamoun, whose orientation clearly leaned towards the United States, and Arab-nationalist elements, one of whom was Kemal Jumblatt. Yet another incident tainted the picture of MECAS during the 1958 insurrection. Having heard of the unfolding events of the 14 July revolution in Iraq,

[170] The amount of scholarship funds was, along with other factors, determined by the amount the respective students' families could provide towards their course at MECAS. Craig, *Shemlan*, 179.
[171] See Peter Clayton, "Under Arrest in Syria 1953," in *The Arabists of Shemlan*, 74.
[172] Archie Lamb, "The Suez Crisis 1956," in *The Arabists of Shemlan*, 87.
[173] Wright, *The Arabists of Shemlan*, 92.
[174] Brian Pridham, "The MECAS Home Guard 1958," in *The Arabists of Shemlan*, 120.

President Chamoun requested US military assistance from President Eisenhower. Over the course of the subsequent US Marine Corps landing (Operation Blue Bat), the military attaché at the British Embassy in Beirut decided to arm present MECAS students and ordered them to defend the Embassy should an act of revenge against the British occur.[175] Although no violent clash between Embassy staff and protesters took place, this instance was a clear sign that MECAS students would occasionally be dragged into larger conflicts taking place in the region.

The perilous understanding of MECAS as a "forward operating base" to British interests became much more prominent during the 1961 "spy school" crisis. George Blake, a Secret Intelligence Service officer and double agent secretly working for the Soviet KGB was one of the students of the 1960-61 course. The story of his involuntary return to the UK, subsequent arrest and trial is fascinating on its own. However, the impact of Blake's highly publicized trial on the attitude towards MECAS in Beirut was devastating. Kemal Jumblatt, now Lebanese Minister of Education, resumed his attack on the British presence and suggested closing the Centre, arguing that it had become clear that MECAS was a "centre for British espionage".[176] MECAS was eventually saved, partially due to the ongoing support of Lebanese President Fuad Chehab.[177] According to McLoughlin, one particular approach to dispelling rumours about MECAS' "spying" nature was a policy of absolute openness, especially towards the local media. In one instance, the Lebanese reporters visiting the Centre accidentally ran into a newly arriving group of Japanese students. The resulting newspaper piece "British imperialists recruit their agents even in China" was a fitting representation of the Lebanese public's understanding of MECAS' role in the early 1960s.[178]

If the 1961 "spy school affair" had proven difficult to solve by diplomatic means and public-relations efforts, the 1967 crisis caused by yet another episode in the lengthy Arab-Israeli conflict had to be resolved using much more drastic measures. Israel's attack caused a region-wide violent backlash against British and American institutions, which were considered complicit in Israeli actions. In MECAS' case, the deterioration of the situation only added to years of thinly veiled hostility from some parts of Lebanese society, among them

[175] Pridham, 120f.
[176] Craig, *Shemlan*, 74.
[177] Craig, 74. British Ambassador Sir Ponsonby Moore-Crosthwaite was also heavily involved, as his embassy had to constantly struggle towards a positive image of the UK in Lebanon.
[178] McLoughlin, *Confessions of an Arabic Interpreter*, 80. Article title quoted from McLoughlin, the original source is unknown.

supporters of Kemal Jumblatt, who himself was a major ally of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and a bitter opponent of Israel. Both preparations and the immediate response to hostilities were coordinated between the Centre's Director Robert Walmsley and the British embassy in Beirut, which found itself under attack as well.[179] On June 7, 1967, MECAS' students and personnel were moved to Beirut to await further instruction.[180] Even though the Lebanese government expelled both British and American ambassadors and sales of Lebanese oil to the USA and Britain were halted, the Lebanese did not officially break relations with Britain.[181] Regardless, London decided to evacuate the students from Lebanon altogether and assign them to a course organized by the *Royal Army Education Corps* at the *Army School of Languages in Beaconsfield*.[182] Despite vast differences between the cultures of both institutions, the Arabic instruction at Beaconsfield, which was assisted by Leslie McLoughlin and David Cowan (the latter of whom came from SOAS), was very effective, and the evacuated students were able to return to Shemlan in September 1967 to continue their studies.[183]

In February 1970, a home-made bomb was found near the MECAS Director's house.[184] Regardless of this incident, the following years were relatively calm in Shemlan despite the relocation of vast numbers of PLO fighters to southern Lebanon after the events of so-called Black September in Jordan in 1970. Even the 1973 October/Yom Kippur war did not have a tangible impact on Shemlan, partially because the Lebanese government did not officially join the war against Israel, mainly due to its small number of armed forces and ongoing infighting between various group in Lebanon. An exception, albeit not sanctioned by Beirut, were the attempts made by Palestinian fighters to launch cross-border operations from southern Lebanon into Israel, which, however, were not met with a strong military response by the Israeli Armed Forces. Severe deterioration of the security situation began to take shape in 1975. The sectarian violence between *Phalange*, Kemal Jumblatt's *Lebanese National Movement*, and Palestinian militias soon spilled over into the outskirts of Beirut and effectively severed connection between the Lebanese capital and Shemlan.[185] With the situation growing direr every day, the Foreign Office heeded a recommendation

[179] Robert Walmsley, "Defending the School 1967," in *The Arabists of Shemlan*.
[180] Walmsley, 197.
[181] Walmsley, 198.
[182] Craig, *Shemlan*, 84.
[183] Craig, 85. The entire episode in Beaconsfield was also humorously illustrated by Paul Tempest, see Paul Tempest, "A Summer with the Military 1967," in *The Arabists of Shemlan*.
[184] Craig, *Shemlan*, 89.
[185] Craig, 99.

by the British Embassy in Beirut and decided to close MECAS. Some students continued on in their studies privately in Amman, but most returned to Britain. The *Army School of Languages in Beaconsfield* and SOAS were utilized as temporary replacements for Shemlan.[186] In Autumn 1977, MECAS was reopened in Shemlan with strict security precautions in place – travel from the village was restricted, and most activities were organized inside the Centre's premises.[187] At the same time, heated discussions were taking place in London about the possible future of the Centre, which seemed dim in the context of the events unfolding in Lebanon. The international but Syria-controlled *Arab Deterrent Force* had become entangled in constant armed skirmishes against the Maronites during the so-called "Hundred Days' War". In March 1978, Israel invaded South Lebanon in an incursion known as *Operation Litani*, which aimed to destroy Palestinian bases in Lebanon from which the PLO coordinated its attacks on Israeli territory.[188]

On October 23, 1978, a confidential telegram from the Foreign Office was sent to several British Embassies around the world, informing of a decision to evacuate MECAS as soon as possible. The telegram specifically stated that the "decision to close for good has been taken(…)",[189] effectively extinguishing hopes for reopening the Centre in the foreseeable future. Whether the sudden closure and evacuation of MECAS was well timed and deserved given the circumstances has been elaborated upon in a detail by James Craig.[190] With the luxury of hindsight and knowledge that the bloody civil war in Lebanon lasted until 1990 and became one of the most brutal episodes in the modern history of the Levant, we can consider the Foreign Office's decision to evacuate and close the Centre for good as nothing but prudent.

The previous pages might have presented MECAS as an institution constantly scourged by a lack of support from the Foreign Office, crippling financial constraints, and an increasingly hostile environment. Nonetheless, MECAS is still seen to have been one of the most successful Arabic teaching institutions of all time within the governmental domain. As has been foreshadowed several times, the main impetus for this privileged position came in the mid-1950s with the arrival of several professional Arabists in managerial positions and the subsequent reform of the curriculum. Therefore, the following pages observe

[186] Craig,102f.
[187] Craig, 106.
[188] The immediate cause was the 11 March 1978 incident known as the Coastal Road Massacre, during which eleven Fatah members hijacked two buses between Tel Aviv and Haifa, with 38 Israeli civilians killed and 76 wounded in the subsequent shootout with Israeli security forces.
[189] Craig, *Shemlan*, 108.
[190] Craig, 106-111.

and analyse the genesis and evolution of MECAS' curricula while keeping the external factors described above in consideration.

3.3. The Middle East Centre for Arab Studies: Arabic Language Curricula

Having established a general narrative of how various political, financial, and personal factors resulted in the establishment, operation, and eventual closure of MECAS as an institution, it is now time to turn our attention to how these and other factors affected the Centre's curricula. Furthermore, I will pay special attention to several topics frequently associated with the design of language teaching curricula for a governmental institution. These include the preference of a formal or colloquial variant of the taught language, the concept of the course's practicality in various competencies such as reading, listening, or even interpreting, and characteristics of the target vocabulary.

This section is not entirely chronological and is divided into three parts. The first one gives an overview of how teaching at MECAS was organized until the mid-1950s reform organized by Donald Maitland, James Craig and further developed by Leslie McLoughlin. The second part deals exclusively with the teaching materials produced by this trio, with a special focus on their political and ideological dimension. The final section then presents the organization of the courses, their division, and the role of both intra- and extracurricular activities. It should be noted that I dedicate most of this subchapter to the reformist efforts by Maitland, Craig, and McLoughlin. This is not due to a lack of professionalism or interesting ideas to improve MECAS on the part of other principal instructors involved in MECAS curriculum design, but rather the fact that most written materials in the MECAS curricula between the 1950s and late 1970s were produced by this trio.

To start, let us first examine the general ideas behind the Arabic instruction in the early years of MECAS. A record of the 1944 syllabus by MECAS' first director Bertram Thomas suggests an initial intent to focus on a variant of the Arabic language defined as the following: "We are here concerned primarily with the street; the sound of the language, the idiom,

the current cliché are more vital than the current theory."[191] Whether the reference to "the street" meant colloquial Arabic is not certain. Structured courses in colloquial Arabic (regardless of the dialect) were not yet available in the mid-1940s, although attempts were made to make acquiring basic language competency by various means more achievable. None of these non-academic approaches were utilized by MECAS, perhaps due to their lesser academic standard, which did not fare well with its university-educated Principal Instructors. In 1915, Alec Cury, a military officer serving in Egypt, compiled *Arabic Without a Teacher* – a dictionary consisting of both vocabulary and full sentences covering various subjects including *love and marriage, military terms, oil industry*, etc.[192] During the Second World War, emergency crash courses in various oriental languages were set up at various universities and military bases. However, they only provided a basic overview of grammar and very specialised, mainly military, technical vocabulary.[193] Yet these efforts did not lead to organized courses of a dialect, i.e., a colloquial variant of the language, and instead focused on a simplification of acquiring MSA – the language of the Arab media and newspapers.

This focus became apparent with the arrival of Audrey Eban, a Cambridge graduate in Oriental Studies, former *Special Operations Executive*[194] officer, an ardent Zionist, and future Foreign Minister of Israel, who was dispatched to MECAS in 1944 to oversee its Arabic instruction and maintained the position of Principal Instructor until 1946. Eban designed a program that aimed to enable students to "acquire a full reading and listening knowledge of newspaper and radio Arabic within a year."[195] As per Craig's review, this endeavour had not proven entirely successful, as the resulting curriculum focused heavily on the grammar of formal Arabic and left it up to the students to figure out the intricacies of the colloquial language on their own.[196]

Despite all the efforts, the official history of MECAS compiled by Craig suggests that "the quality of (Arabic) instruction was poor and the results mediocre".[197] This was to some extent caused by the personnel makeup of MECAS, as Aubrey Eban resigned from his position

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[191] McLoughlin, *In a Sea of Knowledge*, 120f. The original syllabus by Thomas not available, only referenced by McLoughlin.
[192] See Alec R. Cury, *Arabic Without a Teacher* (Cairo, 1915).
[193] Maitland, Craig, and Tempest, *The Arabists of Shemlan*, 1f. Surprisingly, Craig was ordered to study Japanese in one such course before becoming a well-known Arabist.
[194] A British wartime para-military organization tasked with conducting espionage, sabotage, and reconnaissance against the Axis forces.
[195] Abba Eban, *An Autobiography* (London: Random House, 1977), 151. Quoted here from Craig, *Shemlan*, 17.
[196] Craig, *Shemlan*, 22.
[197] Craig, 148.

as early as in 1946 to participate in the Zionist efforts. He was replaced by George Kirk, an academic historian who had been in charge of the *background studies* module, which referred to the non-linguistically oriented part of the course.[198] Kirk was assisted by Pastor Nielsen, a Danish missionary, and several Palestinian native speakers. Kirk's previous managerial position was highlighted by the fact that he knew no Arabic at all, while Pastor Nielsen lacked an academic background although his Arabic was superb.[199]

The personalities and academic backgrounds of instructors directly affected the teaching materials used in the Arabic curriculum. Therefore, regardless of the Director's and Principal Instructor's intentions, the resulting curriculum varied between memorizing formal grammatical structures and the somewhat disorganized instruction provided by the native speakers. Until the reform of the curriculum in the mid-1950s, the main source for grammar was the *Arabic Grammar of the Written Language* by G.W. Thatcher, which was occasionally complemented by *Arabic Language and Grammar* by Jochanan Kapliwatzky. The dictionaries used were the then-standard *Modern Dictionary of English-Arabic* by Elias A. Elias and *Arabic English Dictionary* by J. G. Hava.[200] While a part of the syllabus was based on classical works meticulously prepared within the confines of British academia, the local instructors often utilized storybooks for young Arab children.[201]

Throughout the entire initial period of MECAS in Shemlan, Norman Lewis was its Principal Instructor (his predecessor George Kirk had left the Centre in 1947 after only one year there). Originally trained as a geographer, Lewis travelled throughout Syria during the Second World War and taught himself colloquial Arabic. Appointed as Principal Instructor in 1948, his original task was mainly to coordinate the *background studies*, i.e., the non-linguistic part of the curriculum. However, due to a personnel crisis on the part of the British staff, he also became deeply involved in language instruction despite having no formal education in Arabic at all.[202] It was rather natural that when Lewis decided to resign from his position in 1955, he recommended his successor should be a university-educated Arabist. This person turned out to be James Craig, previously a lecturer of Arabic at Durham University.[203] Fittingly, his position at Durham was a result of the aforementioned *Scarborough*

[198] Craig, 17.
[199] Craig, 148, and Donald Maitland, "From the Austrian Hospice to Zerqa and Shemlan," in *The Arabists of Shemlan*, 40.
[200] Craig, *Shemlan*, 148.
[201] Maitland, "From the Austrian Hospice to Zerqa and Shemlan," 40.
[202] Craig, *Shemlan*, 42.
[203] Craig, 52. Craig graduated from the Oriental Studies programme at Oxford.

Report, which called for more intensive instruction of "hard languages".[204] Only a few months later, in early 1956, Donald Maitland, a former graduate of the 1947 course[205] and a career diplomat, arrived at Shemlan. Maitland was chosen by the head of the Foreign Office Personnel Department John-Henniker Major with the clear view that MECAS had to be "re-launched".[206]

After their arrival to Shemlan, Maitland and Craig immediately began to work on the reform. Even before Maitland's arrival, Craig recognized that the practically oriented study of Arabic should be largely focused on vocabulary. This encompassed two questions – how many words the students should know and what kind of vocabulary they should study. The goal of the Centre was to acquaint students with Arabic within ten months in such a way that they could "understand newspapers, wireless bulletins and business letters, to conduct a sensible and fluent conversation and to interpret at a moderately high level".[207] Three thousand words were selected as the target knowledge. They were divided into ten sections of three hundred words. Students were expected to memorize roughly twenty words a day, thus reaching the target vocabulary knowledge in five months. A rather unique feature of this approach was that after mastering the vocabulary midway through the course, no new words would be added and the students would only work with the vocabulary they already knew.[208]

Another issue was the selection of the words. Quoting the foreword of the *Selected Word List of Modern Literary Arabic*, which was published as a result of Craig and Maitland's intellectual labour, gives us an insight into the logic of word selection: "In some cases these lists (compiled by traditional learners of Arabic; author's note) run into several thousands of words, many of which inevitably are of little practical use to the diplomat, the oil company official or the business man in his day-to-day work and, in trying to absorb them, he wastes time which should be devoted to the assimilation of essential words. It was in order to prevent this wastage of effort and to enable the students at this Centre to derive the utmost profit from their studies that we compiled this Word List."[209]

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[204] McLoughlin, *In a Sea of Knowledge*, 130.
[205] For his account see Maitland, "From the Austria Hospice to Zerqa and Shemlan."
[206] Donald Maitland, "A New Curriculum and New Premises 1956-60," in *The Arabists of Shemlan*, 102.
[207] Craig, *Shemlan*, 55.
[208] Craig, 55. Also Maitland, "A New Curriculum and New Premises 1956-60," 105f.
[209] MECAS, *Selected Word List of Modern Literary Arabic* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub Press, 1959), Preface. All MECAS books referenced in this dissertation were kindly provided by the Orient-Institute in Beirut during the author's study stay there in November 2018.

In order to encourage usage of the *Word List*, Craig compiled a new reader titled *A Way Prepared – A Reading Book in Modern Arabic*, which exclusively used vocabulary from the *Word List.* The shift towards practicality becomes, once again, clear from the preface: "The second important feature of this book (the first one being its interconnectedness with the Word List; author's note) is that it is practical. It is designed for students who are going to use Arabic in their work: in offices, in diplomatic missions, in the correspondence and personal contacts of business and commerce. It is not designed for the university student who wants an introduction to the classics of Arabic literature. It follows that these passages are not necessarily elegant in style. Nor will they all appeal to the purist who looks with understandable regret on the many striking changes which Arabic is undergoing today. But they are written in the style which is used throughout the Arab world in newspapers and magazines and on the wireless, the style to which, for better or for worse, the student of Arabic must accustom himself if he is to understand and be understood by the inhabitants of modern Cairo, Beirut, Baghdad, and Casablanca."[210]

A general overview of the *Word List* might give us better insight into the declared notion of the "practicality" of the newly introduced teaching materials. Still, however, an evaluation of the exact Arabic-related "needs" of the British Government as a whole is imprecise at best and arbitrary at worst. For example, an overview of military related terminology from Sections 7 to 10 of the *Word List* (with a total count of 900 "most advanced" Arabic words) gives the impression that Craig and Maitland intended first to acquaint students with very basic terminology such as weapon (*silāḥ*), commander (*amīr*), headquarters (*maqarr*), to fight/wage war (*ḥāraba*)[211]. By the conclusion of the first half of the course represented by the final 10th section of the *Word List*, students would build upon this basis by learning much more specific military terminology, including submarine (*ghawwāṣa*), armoured (*mudarraʿ*), bomber aircraft (*qaazfa*), fighter aircraft (*muqātila*), guided missile (*qazeefa*), artillery (*midfaʿīya*), infantry (*mushā*), or parachute (*miẓalla*). However, this can hardly be understood as a symptom of MECAS' leaning towards the "militarization" of its curriculum, even with the Ministry of Defence among its important clients. Even though terms such as "guided missile" or "parachute" might sound highly militaristic to a 21st century non-military student of Arabic, we should keep in mind that the *Word List* was composed in the period roughly between the Suez Crisis and the region-wide violent events of 1958.

[210] MECAS, *A Way Prepared: A Reading Book in Modern Arabic* (Beirut: Dar Al-Kutub, 1958), Preface.
[211] MECAS, *Selected Word List of Modern Literary Arabic*, section 7.

Military affairs and related technology were certainly not exclusively the domain of military professionals, but rather a topic of everyday social exchanges in cafés around Beirut.

Compared to military terminology, the one of diplomacy was slightly more pronounced in its knowledge of target vocabulary. Given the multitude of topics British diplomats were tasked to deal with, we can hardly define specifically "diplomatic" terms within the general structure of the course. Also, there does not seem to be the same level of progression and concretization as with e.g., terms for weaponry. For example, Section 8 introduces terms such as Zionism (*ṣahyūnīya*), legislation (*tashrīʿa*), to terminate the appointment of (*āqāla*); Section 9 - sovereign (*ʿāhil*), chief/president (*naqīb*); and Section 10 truce (*muhādana*), tyranny (*ṭuqhyān*). Even though all these terms have a political dimension, a linguistic progression as is the case with the military terminology is nowhere to be found. To compensate for this lack of progression, Craig and Maitland introduced specific Appendices dealing with purely diplomatic affairs. Appendix B deals exclusively with administrative terms and includes a wide variety of vocabulary – from ministries to company positions and ranks.[212] Appendix C offers a detailed list of various political parties in Lebanon and beyond.[213] Appendix D concludes this diplomatic array with a list of titles, both originally European (Excellency of Prime Minister – *dawla;* Monsieur – *al-misiyū*) and "Oriental", such as *Pasha* or *Bey*.[214] A quick overview of other appendices proves that the *Word List* was not *exclusively* diplomatic – for example Appendix G focuses on flora[215] and fauna and Appendix J on religious terms.[216]

In conclusion, while the authors of both the *Word List* and *Way Prepared* openly stated that their students were most likely to be diplomats or businessmen in the oil industry (and on an undeclared note, military figures), the resulting vocabulary-oriented teaching materials were not constructed as highly specialized topical guides. Instead, they aimed to provide students with a vocabulary range wide enough to be able to understand and comment on a wide variety of topics – a foundation upon which the graduates could build further in their respective professions. In this respect, the 1950s reform of MECAS managed to attain the practical linguistic standard that MECAS' original instructors, especially Bertram Thomas and Audrey/Abba Eban, had wished for.[217]

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[212] MECAS, *Selected Word List*, 113f.
[213] MECAS, *Selected Word List*, 116-118.
[214] MECAS, *Selected Word List*, 119.
[215] MECAS, *Selected Word List*, 125f
[216] MECAS, *Selected Word List*, 130-132.
[217] By the mid-1950s, Abba Eban had already been serving as Israeli Ambassador to the United States for several years.

The *Word List* remained in use until the last days of MECAS in Shemlan in 1978. In the meantime, it was reinforced by one of the most prominent MECAS Principal Instructors, Leslie McLoughlin, a graduate of Arabic studies at the University of Durham, during his second tenure at MECAS, which began in 1970 and lasted five years. McLoughlin utilized his vast experience with Arabic instruction[218] and introduced a separate extension of the Word List called *File 40*, which aimed to reinforce students' knowledge of the presented vocabulary within the correct context.[219] An American coursebook entitled *Elementary Modern Standard Arabic*, which was first published in 1968 in Michigan, was introduced to MECAS in 1973 as a primer on MSA for newcomers to Shemlan, who used it for three months before moving onto the internally produced course materials.[220]

To complement the vocabulary-oriented part of the MSA course, Craig and Maitland compiled a new overview of Modern Standard Arabic grammar. The one used previously, as was the case of MECAS but also generations of British Arabists, was *An Arabic Grammar of the Written Language* by G. W. Thatcher.[221] In order to create the MECAS-specific Arabic Grammar, Craig needed to adapt the outdated exercises in Arabic grammar to the *Word List* and make it more relevant to the practically oriented aims of the Centre.[222] Craig finished the grammar by the end of his tour in 1958 and named it *Thatcher Revised* in appreciation of its "template". The textbook was then typed and reproduced within MECAS by its secretary.[223] *Thatcher Revised* went through several improvements and was finally printed in 1965 by Khayat Press in Beirut as *The MECAS Grammar of Modern Literary Arabic.*[224] Although the preface to the 1965 edition clearly states that it is "a fourth recension of a text-book that has been used in the Centre for several years", thus paying homage to the original *Thatcher Revised*, it does not refer to Thatcher's famous Arabic grammar specifically.[225] Instead, the 1965 MECAS openly distinguishes itself from two other Modern Standard Arabic

[218] After graduating from Durham, McLoughlin studied at MECAS, then taught Arabic at CALSAP in Aden. He summarized his experience in an autobiography. See McLoughlin, *Confessions of an Arabic Interpreter.*
[219] Craig, *Shemlan*, 93.
[220] Craig, 93. See also Peter F. Abboud, *Elementary Modern Standard Arabic* (Michigan: Inter-University Committee for Near Eastern Languages, 1968).
[221] Craig, *Shemlan*, 59.
[222] Craig, 59.
[223] Craig, 60. Unfortunately, I was not able to acquire a copy of the original *Thatcher Revised*. Therefore, this subsequent analysis is based on the 1965 1st ed. of revised grammar.
[224] MECAS, *The M.E.C.A.S. Grammar of Modern Literary Arabic: Compiled by the Middle East Centre for Arab Studies* (Shemlan, Beirut: Khayats, 1965). Copied during the 2018 study stay at the Orient-Institute Beirut. The first edition printed in 1965 should have differed greatly from the one originally produced by Craig. However, slight adjustments beyond the knowledge of the author of this dissertation might have occurred since the grammar was first compiled in 1958.
[225] MECAS, *The M.E.C.A.S. Grammar of Modern Literary Arabic*, Preface, V.

courses that were compiled in the exact same years as Craig's *Thatcher Revised*. These were *Modern Literary Arabic* by famous British Arabist David Cowan, and *An Introduction to Modern Arabic* by Farhat J. Ziadeh and R. Bayly Winder.[226] The reliance of *Thatcher Revised* on the *Word List* and *Way Prepared* is listed as the main reason for not utilizing more contemporary textbooks. The authors also state that a "traditional method of learning Arabic grammar", i.e., initial presentation of grammatical rules followed by practice of their usage, is quicker than the "inductive method", which first provides examples and teaches grammatical rules with their subsequent analysis. Indeed, this neglected "inductive method" was dominant especially in Ziadeh and Winder's *Introduction to Modern Arabic*.[227]

The continuously repeated aim for practicality especially in diplomatic and business-oriented domains is clearly visible in the latter sections of the 1965 MECAS grammar. Instead of nonsensical sentences intended merely to demonstrate grammatical rules, the MECAS grammar combines exercises in grammatical structure with practical vocabulary. For example, the exercise for chapter XVI titled "The Sisters of 'iina ; Sequence of Tenses; The La of Categorical Negation" begins with Arabic translation of "It is understood here from official sources that with effect from the first part of next year there will be diplomatic representation between the Iraqi Republic and Kuwait. It was alleged in the Chamber of Deputies yesterday by the former President of the Republic that our propaganda in the Middle East is useless."[228] However, it would be faulty to assume that the MECAS grammar completely avoided examples that show a certain preference for illustrating grammatical structures over their lexical content. Therefore, later in the same chapter, a diligent student would have had a chance to practice with sentences such as "There is no doubt that the artificial moon will be of great advantage to man".[229]

Another task that the masterminds of the mid-1950s reform had to address was the re-evaluation of the MECAS-old question of which Arabic dialect the Centre aimed to teach. When Bertram Thomas put forth his ideas for the Arabic teaching component of the Centre in 1944, one of his objectives was to teach the "language of the street",[230] but did not explain what exactly the "language of the street" meant. Therefore, the instruction in the subsequent

[226] See Farhat J. Ziadeh and R. Bayly Winder, *An Introduction to Modern Arabic* (US: Princeton University Press, 1957) and David Cowan, *Modern Literary Arabic* (UK: Cambridge University Press, 1958).
[227] Ziadeh and Winder, *An Introduction to Modern Arabic*.
[228] MECAS, *The M.E.C.A.S. Grammar of Modern Literary Arabic*, 93-94.
[229] MECAS, *The M.E.C.A.S. Grammar of Modern Literary Arabic*, 95.
[230] McLoughlin, *In a Sea of Knowledge*, 120f.

years was marked by an inclination to either colloquial or highly formal Arabic based on the previous personal experience of the tutors, either native speakers or university educated Arabists. To remedy this situation, Craig worked with Wadi' Khoury, a Palestinian by origin, on converting a readily available *Egyptian Colloquial Arabic* course by the accomplished British missionary and orientalist William Henry Temple Gairdner into the Lebanese dialect.[231] In December 1956, *A Conversation Grammar of Colloquial Arabic* would be available to MECAS students. The resulting language would later be described by Craig as "a modified colloquial", i.e., a Levantine dialect "with the extreme local peculiarities removed".[232] On a didactic level, this was a logical choice, as it allowed students to practice a significant portion of acquired vocabulary in everyday contact with local Arabic speakers, especially once they progressed into the latter sections of the program. However, the inclination towards one specific dialect would eventually prove difficult on a professional level, as MECAS graduates were posted in various Arabic speaking countries speaking different dialects than the Lebanese one. Furthermore, since the colloquial Arabic taught at the Centre was to a large extent an artificial construct, its speakers would frequently be recognized immediately as graduates of MECAS.[233]

Craig's remark about a "modified colloquial (Arabic; author's note)" requires further explanation. As we have seen, Craig and Maitland's reform utilized several classical textbooks aimed at teaching Modern Literary / Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). While general similarities exist between MSA and the Levantine dialect, differences are apparent in both vocabulary and grammar. A quick review of *The MECAS Grammar of Modern Literary Arabic* clearly shows that the main grammar the students were taught was that of MSA.[234] Therefore, the colloquial dimension in the general course based around *The Word List* was mainly of a lexical nature. In this respect, the separate colloquial courses were most likely compiled as a supplement to the general course.

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[231] Craig, *Shemlan*, 60. The first edition of Gairdner's *Egyptian Colloquial Arabic* was published in 1917 while its author worked with the Church Missionary Society in Cairo, a British mission working with Anglican Communion and Protestant Christians in Egypt. See W. H. T. Gardner, *Egyptian Colloquial Arabic: A Conversation Grammar,* B. A. Oxon: Church Missionary Society, Egypt. Superintendent of Arabic Studies at the Cairo Study Centre, Assisted by Sheikh Kurayyim Sallam (Cambridge: W. Hefer and Sons Ltd., 1917).
[232] Maitland, Craig and Tempest, *The Arabists of Shemlan*, 6.
[233] Craig, *Shemlan*, 61.
[234] For example, the conjugation of "shariba" – to drink – in the MECAS colloquial language is clearly presented as in most MSA textbooks. See MECAS, *The M.E.C.A.S. Grammar of Modern Literary Arabic*, 6f.

The colloquial Arabic textbook produced by Craig and Khoury would eventually be replaced by *A Course in Colloquial Arabic* compiled by Craig's successor Leslie McLoughlin during his second tenure as MECAS Principal Instructor in 1974.[235] As per McLoughlin's description, this book was a "complete 'programmed' course (…)" that needed to be used with recordings. Despite McLoughlin's academic background, he asserted that his course provided an explanation of syntax and lexis "from a point of view of a teacher, not of a linguist or even in many cases an Orientalist with a background of classical Arabic".[236] Further in the book, McLoughlin gave a thorough explanation of the "kind of Arabic" his course aimed to teach. Firstly, he described the language as both "not artificial", as it reproduced a "spoken Arabic the author has heard and used throughout Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan, and which he has spoken with educated native Arabic speakers from most Arabic countries (…)".[237] At the same time, he described the Arabic in question as "artificial", as it offered complete dialogues without the surrounding "cultural traits" such as "gesture, facial expression and other paralinguistic devices (…). phrases, proverbs, and religious sayings. Finally, he clearly described the language as "not classical Arabic".[238]

In practical terms, McLoughlin provided clear instructions on how to use the course. These suggest several things: the course was clearly designed to be conducted with the supervision of an instructor, it involved the usage of recordings, and a constant repetition of previously learned vocabulary.[239] Furthermore, the course did not use Arabic script, working strictly with transliteration into English.[240] This would naturally speed up the process of learning a dialect, although by the time students started with conversational colloquial Arabic, the MECAS student would already be able to read written Arabic with considerable ease.

On an ideological level, McLoughlin's colloquial course was not as "politically practical" as *The Way Prepared* and *The Word List*. Instead, it resembled a much more

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[235] Leslie J. McLoughlin, *A Course in Colloquial Arabic* (Beirut: Dar al-Qalam Press, 1974). In the preface to this textbook, McLoughlin references *The Spoken Arabic of the Levant* produced by MECAS in 1959. At that time, the Principal Instructor was either William Elliott Norwood Kensdale or David Cowan. At the same time, McLoughlin references a 1966 MECAS-produced compilation of fourty situational dialogues written in 1966, which he re-edited and included in his course. See McLoughlin, *A Course in Colloquial Arabic*, 7f.
[236] McLoughlin, *A Course in Colloquial Arabic*, 8.
[237] McLoughlin, *A Course in Colloquial Arabic*, 8f.
[238] McLoughlin, *A Course in Colloquial Arabic*, 9.
[239] McLoughlin, *A Course in Colloquial Arabic*, 11.
[240] This practical aspect was emphasized by McLoughlin's recommendation of twelve English courses in colloquial Arabic that did not presume knowledge of the Arabic script. McLoughlin, *A Course in Colloquial Arabic*, 132.

traditional course thematically centred around students' interactions with the Arabic speaking world.[241] As the student progressed, the conversations in colloquial Arabic would become more and more complex, yet still revolve around the study of Arabic at MECAS, life in broader Beirut area, and travel. The course never delved into highly specialized political, military, or business-oriented topics. This ideological deviation from the "core" course might be explained by both the introductory nature of McLoughlin's colloquial course, as well as the fact that it seems more centred around grammatical structures of colloquial Levantine Arabic than vocabulary itself. As such, the last standard chapter of the course ends with an explanation of the peculiarities of Levantine usage of the Arabic imperfect, which is then demonstrated in rather basic sentences revolving around the study of Arab history and Islam.[242] Notably, McLoughlin also compiled *A Further Course in Colloquial Arabic* published in Beirut 1979, i.e., one year after the closure of MECAS and four years after McLoughlin's second and final tenure as the Principal Instructor.[243]

An analysis of the MECAS curriculum and associated teaching materials indicates that the mid-1950s reform was driven by a need for "practicality" in certain elements of British external power – diplomacy, businesses, and military. A natural explanation would be that MECAS was a governmental institution and, therefore, any systematic attempt at teaching Arabic should have been clearly practically oriented. However, as we have seen during the previous ten years of MECAS, the teaching activities of the Centre were frequently executed in accordance with the backgrounds, agendas, and ambitions of its managerial and teaching staff rather than top-down instructions from the military or the Foreign Office. Therefore, I propose that the success of the 1950s reform can be seen mainly as a success of human resources management, mainly on the part of the Foreign Office Personnel Department and its head John-Henniker Major.

Placing Maitland and Craig in the Centre's top positions was certainly not an accidental choice. Maitland was a professional diplomat involved in Middle Eastern affairs and therefore clearly understood the needs of the British Government in general and the Foreign Office in particular. Furthermore, since he was a MECAS-educated Arabist himself, he could have been directly involved in formulating the curriculum, thus directly channelling the Foreign

[241] McLoughlin's experience from designing a MECAS course would later become useful as he compiled a Routledge-published self-study Colloquial Levantine Arabic textbook. See Leslie J. McLoughlin, *Colloquial Arabic (Levantine)* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982).
[242] McLoughlin, *A Course in Colloquial Arabic*, 114f.
[243] See Leslie J. McLoughlin, *A Further Course in Colloquial Arabic* (Beirut: Libraire du Liban, 1979).

Office's needs and agendas into its final form. The choice of James Craig as the Principal Instructor was also more than sensible. First, even though he was an Oxford graduate, his teaching experience at Durham University led him further away from the traditional "Victorian" method of teaching Arabic.[244] Finally, both Maitland and Craig were fairly young when they arrived to Shemlan (Craig was 31 and Maitland 34 years old). Such youth not only provided them with a natural desire to change and reform the current situation, but also prevented them from having too much "baggage" and a deeply rooted belief that things ought to be done in a certain – and well-proven – way. The success of Craig, Maitland and subsequently McLoughlin's reformist efforts can be illustrated by the fact that the general curriculum they introduced lasted until the very last days of MECAS.

Having presented the core materials used to relay the Arabic language to students, a presentation of the non-textual aspects of the MECAS curriculum is in order. This includes a general division between various courses, organization of students into groups based on the general goals of the courses and their proficiency in the Arabic language, and a plethora of extracurricular activities connected to the study of the Arabic language.

Since MECAS catered to a wide spectrum of clients, both women and men, ranging from the British Armed Forces, the diplomatic staff of several nations, oil and finance executives, academics, and many others, it eventually developed a range of courses to suit the varying needs of students and their sponsoring organizations. From the early years of MECAS in Jerusalem, the core of its mission was centred around the "ordinary" course, which was officially renamed the "Long Course" in early 1954.[245] The Long Course usually lasted ten months[246] and aimed to develop Arabic proficiency along the lines of the *Word List* and associated curriculum. The Long Courses were supplemented by "Short Courses", which lasted six months and were organized twice a year.[247]

In 1954, an experimental "Advanced Course" was introduced for the most successful graduates of the Long Course, who themselves or following a decision made by their

[244] Craig himself half-jokingly remembered his "suffering" from encounters with young Arabs whenever he would try to use Oxfordian archaisms in spoken interaction. See Craig, *Shemlan*, 55.
[245] Craig, *Shemlan*, 49.
[246] The original ordinary course lasted ten months and was shortened during Maitland's reform. See Craig, *Shemlan*, 63.
[247] The Winter Short Course lasted between October and March, and the Summer Short Course between March and September. See Craig, *Shemlan*, 78.

sponsoring organizations wished to achieve a higher proficiency in Arabic.[248] In 1958, Donald Maitland introduced a "Background Course", which diverged from the linguistic orientation of the Centre and instead focused on history, economics, culture, and other aspects of the Middle East. These courses lasted only one week and gained immense popularity.[249] Shortly after, dedicated six-month courses were introduced for banks and oil companies.[250] The mid-1960s then saw the introduction of the NUPOSA courses for American students. Three-month long Beginners' Courses were introduced in the early 1970s, as well as a six-week course for undergraduates of the University of St Andrews. This course took place in the summer before the four-week Vacation Course for students from other universities.[251]

The next several paragraphs will focus almost exclusively on the organization of the Long and Advanced Courses. This is not to suggest that e.g., the "Background Courses" were unimportant in the organization and especially the financing of MECAS, or that their organization was not recorded and available.[252] However, the core Arabic-language courses were what brought MECAS to the forefront of government-organized Arabic teaching institutions in the "Western world" and, as such, are what makes the Centre comparable to other institutions analysed in this treatise.

After their arrival to MECAS, newcomers were divided into "syndicates" made up of three students who studied together. Once a student proved to be somewhat stronger than the rest of his group during rigorous testing, he would be moved upwards to a stronger group.[253] This system, combined with public grading, led to a competition that was quite natural to the British higher education system. The pace of the Long Course was nothing short of brutal. On the first day, students were introduced to the writing system of Arabic, which they were already expected to be able to use the following day.[254] This was the case only after the introduction of the *Word List* during Maitland and Craig's reform and did not necessarily apply to students who took their preparatory course at SOAS. To keep their marks up and keep pace with the vicious progression of the course centred around the *Word List*, students

[248] Craig, 78.
[249] Craig, 78.
[250] Craig, 78. *The Petroleum Executive Courses* were dissolved in the early 1970s due to a lack of interest; see also Craig, *Shemlan,* 94.
[251] Craig, 94.
[252] For a full syllabus of the "Tenth Background Course", see APPENDIX J in Craig, *Shemlan*, 175.
[253] Frank Jungers, "Thirty New Words a Day 1962," in *The Arabists of Shemlan*, 168.
[254] Louis Wesseling, "The Network – A Sense of Belonging 1959-60," in *The Arabists of Shemlan*, 157.

constantly used provided flipcards with vocabulary, which they carried everywhere they went.[255] Providing students with pre-printed flipcards as opposed to improvised ones was something of a novelty in the mid-1950s.

As demonstrated by virtually all memoirs and histories of MECAS, a highlight for most of its students was the "language break", which was already introduced along with the first course in Jerusalem. After completing half of the course, students were given an allowance to travel the Arab world for six weeks, trying to utilize their newly acquired Arabic skills.[256] Even though the recollections of their language breaks and early-MECAS students imply many anecdotal adventures, the early form of this concept lacked a clear vision leading towards a genuine improvement of their knowledge of Arabic. Therefore, Maitland and Craig began searching for more host families, where students would be forced to interact on a daily basis. According to Craig, it was rather challenging "(…) for social and cultural reasons, to find billets where single young men could be received, and the more liberal households which were willing to take male strangers into their bosoms tended to be fluent in English and eager to practise it."[257] It ought to be noted here that while Maitland and Craig certainly aimed to improve how students would be assigned to their host families, the system existed even before the mid-1950s reform, as evidenced by experiences of some MECAS graduates. One of them was Ben Strachan, who studied at MECAS in 1952 and 1953. His experience was rather unique, as he requested and was approved for a language break with the Lebanese Army instead of a civilian host family.[258]

Before the language break, students engaged in a plethora of intra- and extracurricular activities aimed at improving their Arabic. These included "Colloquial Fortnight", a preparation for their language break with a greater focus on spoken Arabic in classes, as well as regular screenings of Arab movies, lectures on Arab customs, etc.[259] To further systematize the concept, the students were later instructed to write reports about their language break.[260] More rules followed in the 1970s, as students were now forbidden to travel in pairs, while the break itself was shortened to as little as two weeks.[261] Naturally, language breaks

[255] Jungers, "Thirty New Words a Day 1962," 169.
[256] Craig, *Shemlan*, 22.
[257] Craig, *Shemlan*, 62.
[258] Ben Strachnan, "The Lebanese Army 1952-53," in *The Arabists of Shemlan*, 71.
[259] Craig, *Shemlan*, 62f. The concept was introduced during Maitland and Craig's reform.
[260] Craig, 81.
[261] Craig, 94.

in Lebanon were impossible during the time of the crisis shortly before the final evacuation of the Centre in 1978.

3.4. CALSAP and the Arabic Language Wing at the Army School of Languages in Beaconsfield

With MECAS gradually turning into a civilian institution after its relocation to Shemlan, British military circles found themselves lacking an institution dedicated to Arabic instruction for military purposes. A mission of such scope was to be noticeably different from that of MECAS. While the school in Shemlan aimed to provide the linguistic and cultural training necessary to transform the British involvement in the region from "administration" to "diplomacy", the military, on the contrary, remained with British "boots on the ground" and tasks very similar to those previously performed in UK-administrated overseas territories. These included anything from kinetic warfighting to the security of supply lines, training of allied military forces, military diplomacy, and many other tasks. Even after the Indian declaration of independence from Britain in 1947, the ports and trading routes in today's Oman and Yemen remained one of the backbones of British presence in the Middle East. The British pivot to the "East of Suez" after the diplomatic disaster known as the Suez Crisis of 1956 further highlighted the importance of the UK's military positions in the Arabian Peninsula. Whereas MECAS provided linguistic expertise to British diplomats traveling to all corners of the Arabic speaking world, the institutions tied to the British Armed Forces catered specifically to the British servicemen deployed to specific locations.

The first military Arabic school with a clear focus on Yemen and Oman was the *Command Arabic Language School – Arabian Peninsula* (CALSAP). CALSAP, located in Waterloo Lines in Aden was established in 1959 and provided Arabic language instruction to British servicemen posted to the Gulf Area. These included Army and RAF officers, some of whom were managing the "Trucial Oman Scouts", a paramilitary force operating in the area of the Trucial States since 1971 in the United Arab Emirates.[262]

[262] McLoughlin, *Confessions of an Arabic Interpreter*, 53. For the history of the Trucial Oman Scouts, see Antony Cawston and Michael Curtis, *Arabian Days: The Memoirs of Two Trucial Oman Scouts*, 2nd ed. (first published 2010) (Michael Curtis, 2011). After the formation of the United Arab Emirates, the Trucial Oman Scouts were gradually incorporated into the UAE Armed Forces.

Only little is known about the Arabic language curricula at CALSAP. By 1962, Leslie McLoughlin arrived from MECAS in Shemlan, where he had been studying Arabic, and was tasked with improving the CALSAP curriculum, which lasted 12 weeks and included some elements of area studies.[263] The classes of approximately 20 students started early in the morning and lasted until lunchtime. After that, the students were driven back to their hostel and tasked with memorizing 25 new words printed on flashcards in transliterated Arabic.[264] Such an approach to instruction could have only provided a limited knowledge of the language. This suggests that CALSAP, unlike MECAS, was aimed mainly at the usage of the Arabic language on a tactical level for British forces arriving to tackle the growing unrest on the Peninsula.

The practical dimension of this approach became apparent in 1962, when the North Yemen Civil War erupted and led to the amassing of troops in the area. CALSAP commander James Lunt issued an order that all Arabic language students should practice their language skills with Arab soldiers in the border areas around the newly proclaimed Yemen Arab Republic – a country that openly saw Britain as its archenemy.[265] CALSAP eventually saw the gradual disengagement of British forces from Aden – a series of events widely known as the "Aden Emergency" or "14 October Revolution", a date referring to an incident in which local protesters threw stones at British officials at the local airport in 1963. Eventually, British rule ended in 1967 with the withdrawal and establishment of a socialist People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (colloquially known as South Yemen). CALSAP was closed, and the remaining students considered to be in need of further instruction were transferred to Beaconsfield.[266]

So far, I have only discussed the *Army School of Languages in Beaconsfield* and its occasional interactions with MECAS students. Despite the lesser coverage it has received in media and literature, it would be wrong to assume that this military installation played a minor role compared to its counterpart in Lebanese Shemlan. However, the intentional obscurity on the part of the British military installations presents us with limited evidence and only allows us to make informed assumptions. The following paragraphs, therefore,

[263] McLoughlin, *Confessions of an Arabic* Interpreter, 54. McLoughlin left Aden to become Principal Instructor at MECAS by 1965. Owen Taylor and Bernard Smith then became teachers of Arabic at CALSAP. See Cawston and Curtis, *Arabian Days*, 101.
[264] Cawston and Curtis, *Arabian Days*, 101.
[265] McLoughlin, *Confessions of an Arabic Interpreter*, 54.
[266] McLoughlin, 143.

represent a mere overview of the institutional history and analysis of one of its curricula developed in the late 1980s.

The Wilton Park Estate near Beaconsfield in Buckinghamshire has been utilized by the War Office since the beginning of the Second World War as a secret interrogation facility. As the war concluded and the steady stream of incoming German prisoners of war ceased, the Foreign Office briefly took control of the complex and operated a de-Nazification facility there. In April 1950, the Army School of Education moved to Beaconsfield and gradually established three language wings.[267] The school also taught English to the representatives of foreign militaries. In 1960, Arabic language instruction was introduced and eventually gained enough prominence to require a dedicated *Arabic Language Wing*.[268] By 1970, the language wings merged into the *Army School of Languages*, and the institution was repurposed as the *Defence School of Languages* in January 1985, newly serving the Army, Navy, and Royal Air Force.[269] The school gained much prominence while teaching Arabic to British servicemen deployed to the First and Second Gulf Wars.[270] However, it was closed in 2013, passing its language instruction capacity to the *Defence Centre for Languages and Culture – Foreign Language Wing* at the *Defence Language Academy* at Shrivenham.[271]

The scope of British military involvement in Yemen and Oman suggests that the Arabic Language Wing in Beaconsfield focused mainly on Peninsular Arabic. While the existence of any Beaconsfield-produced course aimed specifically at Yemeni or Dhofari Arabic remains obscured, the 1990/1991 *Arabic Colloquial Course* clearly shows a long and dedicated tradition of teaching military-oriented Omani Arabic to British servicemen. The course is not openly authored by any individual, and the only personal reference can be found on the backside of its *Introduction to Reading Arabic Script*, which mentions the names "Steve" and "Muhamad" in small and nearly hidden Arabic print.[272] The entire course consists of ten

[267] Nick Catford, "Wilton Park Eastern Command War Headquarters and Armed Forces HQ 5," *Subterranea Britannica*, March 8, 2005, https://www.subbrit.org.uk/sites/wilton-park-eastern-comman-war-headquarters-and-armed-forces-hq-5/.
[268] McLoughlin, *Confessions of an Arabic Interpreter*, 56. Available sources do not mention a specific time when the Arabic Language Wing was established. It must have already been in operation for some time by the late 1980s, as evidenced by the colloquial Arabic curriculum discussed further on in this chapter.
[269] Catford, "Wilton Park."
[270] Clare Rudebeck, "Charm Offensive: The Army's Secret Weapon in the Battle for Iraqi Hearts," *The Independent*, October 23, 2013, https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/charm-offensive-the-armys-secret-weapon-in-the-battle-for-iraqi-hearts-89541.html.
[271] "Servicemen Bid Farewell to Beaconsfield Military Institution."
[272] *Arabic Colloquial Course: An Introduction to Reading Arabic Script* (Beaconsfield: Defence School of Languages – Arabic Language Wing, 1990/1991), back cover.

units (one per week) and auxiliary materials: in addition to the aforementioned *Introduction to Reading,* these include a reader, a manual to progress through the course, two dictionaries, and *Al Huruuf Al Arabiya – Duruus wa Tamriin* (Arabic Script – Lessons and Exercise).[273] The ten main units are organized according to the stories of three British military personnel during their stay in Oman – captain Alan, warrant officer Jones, and weapons instructor sergeant Brown – who interact with a variety of Omani characters, most of them hailing from the Sultanate's armed forces. Not only the main characters, but also the vocabulary and phrases show a very practical orientation towards military affairs. Even though the student receives an introduction into basic vocabulary pertaining to everyday life, family, customs, hobbies, and health, comparatively larger sections are dedicated to military vocabulary. As early as in units two and three, students would learn Arabic terms for military ranks and even a basic description of the new American M-1 tank.[274]

Significant sections of the entire course are focused on conversation and interpreting exercises, with interpreting becoming more prominent towards the end of the course, with the tenth and final unit focusing on various interpreting techniques. The interpreting exercises present specific scenarios related to British military activity in Oman. For instance, unit five presents a scenario of preparing for a joint exercise *Munaawaraat il-Maydaan il-Kibeer* involving both British and Omani soldiers.[275] The relationship between the British visitors and their Omani counterparts is presented as collegial, without any references to the superiority or inferiority of either side. The textbooks are also carefully apolitical in terms of referring to the British and Sultanate's position in the broader Middle East. This sentiment is only interrupted in several instances. In unit seven, a fictional Omani major Ibraheem discusses the wonderful time he had in the Armoured Corps School in Egypt ("*ana darast dawra 9askariyaa fee miSr li-muddat ίashar shuhoor fee madrasat al-mudarraa9at*").[276] The same unit also presents several maps of the Middle East. Israel is shown as a distinct country without the West Bank, which is presented as an integral part of Jordan. Furthermore, the map still acknowledges the existence of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, suggesting the utilized maps were not completely up to date (provided we accept 1991 as the year of the textbooks' publication). A rather peculiar phenomenon appears in unit nine,

[273] *Al Huruuf Al Arabiya – Duruus Wa Tamriin*, (Beaconsfield: Defence School of Languages - Arabic Language Wing, 1990). The transcribed Arabic is in the original title, and, therefore, is not transcribed into this dissertation's standard.
[274] *Arabic Colloquial Course,* unit three, 36
[275] *Arabic Colloquial Course*, unit five, 26. I use the Arabic transcription used in the original textbook here.
[276] *Arabic Colloquial Course,* unit seven, 9. I also use the Arabic transcription used in the original textbook here.

which presents several Arab caricatures of stereotypical Zionists influencing world affairs – for example by whispering into the ears of "Uncle Sam".[277] The auxiliary textbook *Al Huruuf Al Arabiya – Duruus wa Tamriin* also introduces Arab caricatures, some referring to Zionist machinations, others commenting on the Lebanese Civil War and general lack of unity among Arabs.[278] Surprisingly, neither textbook explains the inclusion of these caricatures or their content within any context. We can assume they were discussed by the instructors in a classroom with no ideological guideline given the by the curriculum's creators.

The apparent lack of an "area studies" component in the curricula is directly connected to their immense practicality. CALSAP and Beaconsfield were not preparing British servicemen for "some" conflict involving "some" Arabic speaking country in the future, nor for a multifaceted debate native to diplomatic conduct. Instead, they worked with a clear notion of what their graduates would use their Arabic skills for – to liaise with allied Arabic speaking armed forces in a somewhat controlled Yemeni and Omani environment, where they would need to handle clearly defined tasks. This naturally called for courses in a specific colloquial dialect with a strong focus on interpreting skills, as the graduates would frequently be required to enable some understanding between non-linguistically oriented British and local officers. While little information on the nature of the courses after the Cold War has been made public, the rare reports on linguistic preparation before British deployments to the Second Gulf War suggest that the ten-week format of the curriculum remained practically unchanged until the closure of the Beaconsfield school in 2013.[279]

3.5. Conclusions: Education of British State-Arabists

The governmental institutions focused on Arabic instruction in post-war Britain shared a similar burden of reacting to a world in which Britain's role was rapidly changing. This was most apparent in the case of MECAS, which was frequently uncertain about its own role in Middle Eastern affairs, which led to constant struggles in defining its scope and focus,

[277] *Arabic Colloquial Course,* unit nine, 16-20. The caricature discussed is on page 18.
[278] *Al Huruuf Al Arabiya*, 60 and 63f. Caricatures referring to a lack of Arab unity are on pages 59, 61, 66, and 70.
[279] Rudebeck, "Charm Offensive."

as well as securing financing and political support. Despite initial failures to compile and especially deliver a sound Arabic language curriculum, MECAS eventually became a world-renowned institution at least on par with giants such as the US Foreign Service Institute.

The available literature on the history of MECAS has often presented its beginnings in terms of a somewhat militaristic institution as idealized by Robert Maugham. In the first part of this chapter, I have challenged this notion by suggesting that the concept of a guerrilla-like MECAS never had the chance to materialize and, moreover, was probably never truly considered by the decision makers involved. I have attributed this change of institutional concept to the sudden shift in the North African war theatre after the Second Battle of El Alamein, which might have caused British policy makers to start considering the post-war administration of the Levant rather than day-to-day military operations there.

The 1947 handover of MECAS from the British Armed Forces to the Foreign Office's administration was identified as yet another critical factor in the Centre's evolution. It brought it much closer to the needs of post-war diplomacy in the Middle East and allowed MECAS to open its gates to significant numbers of diplomats, career military officers, businessmen, and academics, both British and foreign. The reduction of the Centre's entanglement with the military has also had a tangible impact on the British Armed Forces, which began to dedicate more capacities to the development of their own institutions focused on teaching Arabic (among other languages). As we have seen throughout this chapter, the students at MECAS were often forced to follow either the expertise of instructors coming from these military institutions (such as McLoughlin from CALSAP in Aden) or even accept their hospitality when they had to evacuate MECAS and study at the Army School of Languages at Beaconsfield. Indeed, it was this military school that became the principal torchbearer of government organized Arabic instruction in Britain after the final closure of MECAS in 1978.

On the other hand, the military institutions – CALSAP and the Arabic Language Wing of the Army/Defence School of Languages in Beaconsfield, were more representative of the continuity of the British presence in the region, mainly due to their practical, mission-oriented approach. The tasks associated with the continuous British military presence in Yemen and Oman were very reminiscent of those required before the British Empire began to crumble. Therefore, neither CALSAP, nor the school in Beaconsfield had to search

for a mission; instead, they merely focused on the task at hand – developing an Arabic curriculum for servicemen posted in the Arabian Peninsula and later Iraq.

Especially in the case of MECAS, the question arises as to how much its institutional nature manifested itself in the instruction of Arabic. Could an outside observer say that the analysed institutions were a governmental institution by a mere overview of its curricula? The answer would certainly be negative during the Centre's early years, when curricula were organized in a tutor-centric rather than student-centric manner. This changed profoundly during the mid-1950s reform organized by Donald Maitland and James Craig. who introduced a clearly designed curriculum that was utilized, albeit in heavily modified form, until the very last days of MECAS. The part of it that focused on Modern Standard Arabic was certainly organized to be practical mostly to students coming from "Western" countries and with careers in the foreign service or oil business. Thus, to answer the initial question: Yes, the curriculum had a noticeably "official" flair. However, the presented range of topics was so wide that it would have offered a chance to develop a solid understanding of MSA even for students with a lesser interest in political affairs. Given their mission-oriented practical nature, the curricula at the Arabic Language Wing in Beaconsfield were unmistakeably products of the military and could hardly have been utilized in any other domain.

We ought to ask here: Was MECAS an ideological institution in a way that it presented a certain, perhaps "imperialistic", worldview to its students? This picture, presented together with stories of MECAS being a "nest of spies" to the Lebanese public by some of the Centre's most bitter opponents, was indeed understandable given the Centre's wartime origins and role in the British foreign policy system. A possible, albeit strongly interpretative answer would be that MECAS' ideology stemmed from its declared practicality. A need to turn non-Arabists into eloquent Arabists in ten months forced the Centre to focus on brutal effectiveness in achieving the highest possible fluency among its students. This naturally led to "purging" the language of some its religious and thus cultural traits, presenting it rather as a tool than an artefact. While this impartial practicality might have been seen as non-ideological to the students, the locals and especially those for whom Arabic was a liturgical language might have seen it as a manifestation of Western ideological disdainfulness.

Despite all the issues of both a conceptual and practical nature, MECAS, perhaps unintentionally, became an extremely important aspect of British soft power throughout

the entire world. While significant numbers of its graduates climbed the professional ranks of the British Foreign Office, Army, Royal Air Force, oil companies, or the Bank of England, they maintained their personal connections with graduates from many other countries. Some, such as Japanese Foreign Ministry official Kunio Katakura, would later become ambassadors to several Arab countries and would even come to be known as the "architects" of their respected governments' foreign policies towards the Middle East. Even though MECAS became famous at the twilight of the British empire, to have such an impact on the lives and careers of important officials in such far-away countries as Japan was indeed an achievement of imperial significance.

4. Arabic Language Instruction Organized by the United States Federal Government

This chapter presents an overview of the United States Federal Government's activities related to Arabic language instruction between the Second World War and the early 2000s. Compared to the case of the United Kingdom, the US government has followed a significantly different logic when considering its need for Arabic speakers. Whereas the colonial presence of the UK throughout the Arabic speaking world slowly diminished after the Second World War, the US found itself increasingly entangled in Middle Eastern affairs. Furthermore, the Middle East soon became one of the proxy battlefields of the Cold War – a battlefield to which the Soviet Union had more tangible historical ties than the US and to which the Soviets dedicated a significant amount of intellectual vigour.

This broadly defined position of the United States within the newly emerging bipolar world order posed a unique challenge, but also provided an unparalleled opportunity to those who saw the knowledge of foreign languages as a strategic asset in the upcoming global conflict. The inherent discord stemming from an understanding of linguistic knowledge as a comparative advantage in the pragmatic world of international politics as opposed to an academic tradition based on intellectual curiosity has been the subject of several treatises mapping the post-Second World War history of Middle Eastern studies in the United States.[280] The strategic consideration on the part of the US Government has become very apparent in the debate surrounding the enactment and further development of the 1958 *National Defense Education Act* (NDEA). In essence, this Department of Defense initiative openly defined knowledge of some foreign languages, including Arabic, as a strategic interest directly related to US national security and thus irreversibly tied together the worlds of academia, security, and international politics. Therefore, the impact of the NDEA will at least have to be outlined.[281]

In addition to strategic initiatives with federal outreach, this chapter deals with two main governmental institutions tasked with the instruction of foreign languages

[280] See e.g., Zachary Lockman, *Contending Visions of the Middle East.*
[281] "National Defense Education Act: Public Law 85-864," US Government Information, accessed January 26, 2023, https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/STATUTE-72/pdf/STATUTE-72-Pg1580.pdf.

and specifically their departments focused on Arabic. The *Defense Language Institute* (DLI) is the premier US institution tasked with language instruction of the US Armed Forces and Department of Defense personnel, while the *Foreign Service Institute* (FSI) and more specifically its *School of Language Studies* caters to civilian efforts within the US' foreign affairs community, mainly *State Department* personnel. Both institutions are known for the production of their own curricula including specialized courses on various subjects in several Arabic dialects.

Once the instruction of strategic languages within the American Armed Forces and civil service took an institutionalized form such as the FSI and DLI, the significant changes in global affairs throughout the 20th and early 21st century never resulted in their complete abolishment. Even without a thorough analysis, we can readily identify two underlying reasons for such stability. First, despite many occasional drawbacks, the United States has maintained its status of global superpower in terms of both soft and hard power. In other words, the need for the knowledge of foreign languages among American civil servants and the armed forces, both present and future, could hardly be disputed. Second, the fact that Arabic is merely one language among many taught at the analysed institutions has fostered a sense of institutional continuity. Even if the US suddenly lost all interest in the Middle East or, more specifically, the Arabic speaking world, the institutional resources would likely only be redirected to another language. Therefore, many requisites, including the physical infrastructure and lines of communication with overseeing institutions[282] would remain virtually untouched, making the Arabic language programs dormant rather than completely abolished. This situation stands in stark contrast to the case of British MECAS, where the instruction of a single language was firmly connected to a single institution, rendering the program highly effective and targeted but also prone to disturbances by both internal and external factors, ultimately leading to its closure without a viable alternative in place.

This difference between the American and British system of training state-Arabists is also reflected in the structure of this chapter. The analysed institutions (FSI, DLI) and institutional frameworks (NDEA 1958 and its successors) have had the instruction or support of the Arabic language as merely one of their many components. As this dissertation deals predominantly with one language, a complete presentation of the institutional history of the FSI and DLI (and the overarching State Department and Department of Defense) would

[282] The State Department in the case of the FSI, the Department of Defense in the case of the DLI.

be far beyond its scope. However, as we cannot simply dissociate the Arabic language sections from the rest of the FSI and DLI and analyse them separately from their respective institutions, I propose a hybrid approach. The Arabic language programs, including the evolution of their curricula, will be analysed vis-à-vis their institutional histories. To reflect the significant differences in the realities of the Cold War and post-Cold War eras, both the institutional and curricular histories of the FSI and DLI are divided by the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s. Such periodisation is even more strongly applicable to Arabic language instruction as opposed to other languages because of the sudden rise of its importance during the First Gulf War of 1990 and 1991.

One of the specifics of the US Federal Government's support of Arabic language instruction, both in the form of funding and establishing specialized centres, has been the remarkable stability of the entire system since its establishment. Having been amended on several occasions, the NDEA of 1958 withstood the test of time and various surrounding controversies. Instead of being abolished completely after the conclusion of the Cold War, it served as a basis for several post-Cold War programs and initiatives aimed at fostering knowledge of strategic foreign languages among the American public.[283] Due to the immense complexity of the debate leading up to the NDEA as well as its impact, several pages of the introduction to this chapter are dedicated to the original 1958 Act, as well as its subsequent reforms. However, since investigation into the reaction of the world of academia to the NDEA would surpass the scope of this dissertation, I focus broadly on the logic of implementing the NDEA on the part of the US Government, and specifically on its interaction with Arabic language instruction within the framework of US foreign policy after the Second World War.

4.1. National Defense Security Act of 1958 and Subsequent Federal Initiatives

The overarching federal support for the study of foreign (and what might be considered strategic) languages in the United States is rooted in the late 1950s as part of the Cold War race between the US and USSR. First, the Soviets successfully launched Sputnik in 1957, convincingly claiming primacy in the space race and associated programs of developing greater

[283] See "National Security Education Program: History," NSEP.gov, accessed January 26, 2023, https://www.nsep.gov/content/history.

and greater numbers of capable ballistic missiles. In addition to strategic implications, Soviet achievement elicited fear of Soviet intellectual and scientific primacy. This sentiment was further solidified by the novel *The Ugly American* by Eugene Burdick and William Lederer, which was first published in 1958 and delivered a severe blow to the public perception of the State Department's ability to conduct foreign policy outside of the Anglosphere. The main narrative of the book describes US Foreign Service officers losing a battle with Soviet diplomats over the hearts and minds of the local population in a fictional Southeast Asian country. The American failure was caused partially by arrogance, and partially by a complete lack of understanding of the local culture and especially *the language*. The book became a sensation and warranted a deep review of not only the conduct of American foreign policy, but also the capacity of the US educational system to develop expertise in languages.[284]

A remarkable expression of this general feeling of intellectual inferiority to the Soviets was the passing of the *National Defense Education Act* of 1958[285], which aimed "to provide substantial assistance in various forms to individuals and to States and their subdivisions, in order to ensure trained manpower of sufficient quality and quantity to meet the national defense needs of the United States."[286] Specifically, the Act focused on providing loans to students and institutions studying and teaching science, mathematics and modern foreign languages. [287] The resulting system of financial support allowed college and university students to participate in intensive Arabic studies both at home and abroad. For instance, the Inter-University Program summer language courses as well as intensive summer programs of Arabic at the American University of Cairo were among many initiatives supported by NDEA funding. It is thus safe to quote the well-established Arabist Ernest McCarus, who in 1987 summarized that "there is probably no aspect of Arabic studies that has not been supported by Title VI of the National Defense Education Act."[288] Provisions regarding area

[284] Liz Dee, "Sputnik, the Ugly American, and the Push to Improve FSI Language Training," *Association for Diplomatic Studies & Training*, July 12, 2016, https://adst.org/2016/07/sputnik-ugly-american-push-improve-fsi-language-training/. For the work of fiction, see William J. Lederer and Eugene Burdick, *The Ugly American* (NYC: Norton, 1958).

[285] Throughout this section, I use the terms Bill and Act interchangeably. In the US legislative process, an Act of Congress refers to a legal regulation that has been approved by both chambers of the US Congress (i.e., House of Representatives and Senate) and signed by the US president, or if the presidential veto was overridden. A Bill refers to an Act during the legislative process, i.e., before its final approval.

[286] "National Defense Education Act: Public Law 85-864," Section 101.

[287] "National Defense Education Act," Section 301.

[288] Ernest N. McCarus, "The Study of Arabic in the United States: A History of its Development," *Al-'Arabiyya* 20, no. 1 (1987): 20. Title VI of the NDEA referred directly to the support of "area centres" dealing with various regions in the world and is closely connected to the general rise of area studies as an academic discipline in the United States. To be fair, NDEA was not the only program that significantly supported Arabic studies. It coexisted with a variety of other private academic grants, such as the Fulbright Fellowship or Carnegie Foundation-funded

and language studies were further embedded in the US educational system by the *Higher Education Act of 1965*, which further specified funding mechanisms delineated by the original NDEA.[289]

The logic of the NDEA was closely followed by the post-Cold War *National Security Education Program* established in 1991, which followed very similar administrative procedures and focused exclusively on supporting the study of foreign languages and cultures.[290] In order to consolidate existing programs, then Democratic Representative Leon Panetta proposed the *Federal Foreign Language Institute Consolidation Act* of 1993, which aimed to establish the DLI as the sole institution tasked with supporting the study of languages and their instruction for federal employees and armed forces.[291] The bill did not pass, as Panetta moved on to another political post. However, a very similar approach promoting the role of the DLI was discussed in 2001 after the September 11 attacks, as linguistic expertise once again became a hot topic of political discussions.[292]

In early 2003, the *International Studies in Higher Education Act* (H.R. 3007) was presented to the House of Representatives, proposing amendments to several previous acts but most importantly seeking to reform the provisions of Title VI of the NDEA and the *Higher Education Act of 1965*, which defined financial support to "area centers" teaching area studies and foreign languages. In very general terms, H.R. 3077 aimed at establishing a mechanism that would link financial incentives to study foreign languages with American national security

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"National Undergraduate Program for Overseas Study of Arabic (NUPOSA)", which provided funding and administrative support to American students heading to British MECAS in Lebanese Shemlan. See McCarus, "The Study of Arabic," 20.

[289] "An Act to Strengthen the Educational Resources of our Colleges and Universities and to Provide Financial Assistance for Students in Postsecondary and Higher Education: Public Law 89-329 (1965)," US Government, accessed January 26, 2023, https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/STATUTE-79/pdf/STATUTE-79-Pg1219.pdf. See especially section VI, 1261f.

[290] "Mission and Objectives", National Security Education Act (US Government), accessed January 26, 2023, https://www.nsep.gov/content/mission-and-objectives.

[291] James C. McNaughton, *Annual Command History 1992* (Presidio of Monterey, California: Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, January 1995), 5, https://www.dliflc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/1992ACH.pdf, and Stephen M. Payne, *Annual Command History 1993* (Presidio of Monterey, California: Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, June 1996), 7, https://www.dliflc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/1993ACH.pdf.

[292] The discussion took place before the Intelligence Authorization Bill HR 2883 was passed. Republican Representative Sam Farr then stated: "(…) in the wake of the Sept. 11 attacks, it has become pretty obvious that our intelligence organizations need to do a better job, and that is what this bill addresses." "One of the things this bill calls for," continued Farr, "is a dedicated language school that would enhance the unique foreign language skills of people who are trained to work in intelligence agencies. It is important for the nation to realize that such a school already exists right in Monterey, California. There is no need to reinvent the wheel, all we need to do is enhance the mission of the Defense Language Institute." Quoted here from Cameron Binkley, *Command History, 2001-2003*, ed. Stephen M. Payne (Presidio of Monterey, California: Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, June 17, 2010), https://www.dliflc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/1993ACH.pdf. 25.

interests. To facilitate this, the bill proposed establishing the *International Higher Education Advisory Board*, which was to advise the US Congress and Secretary of Education on how to utilize programs sponsored under Title VI in favour of US foreign and national security policy.[293] In practice, the passing of this bill would have meant that whoever received federal funding to study foreign languages, area studies or other subjects relevant to US governmental interests after September 11 would now be required to provide his or her academic expertise in support of foreign and national security policy needs under threat of having to repay the federal funding if he or she refused. In other words, while the NDEA sought to somewhat passively reap the benefits of a population versed in foreign affairs, the 2003 Act aimed to actively utilise it. Indeed, the bill sparked significant controversy[294] and was never enacted. However, the surrounding discussion clearly pointed to the limited options of enforcing the original NDEA provisions.

To further stimulate the national security-academic partnership in language education, US president George Bush Jr.'s administration introduced the *National Security Language Initiative* under the direction of the President, Secretaries of State, Education and Defense, and Director of National Intelligence in 2006. Its primary goal was to "dramatically increase the number of Americans learning critical need foreign languages such as Arabic, Chinese, Russian, Hindi, Farsi, and others through new and expanded programs from kindergarten through university and into the workforce."[295] One of the principal overseers of this agenda today is the *Defense Language and National Security Education Office* under the auspices of the US Department of Defense which, among many other agendas, cooperates with schools, universities and federal training institutions in order to provide a ready pool of US citizens with critical language skills.[296]

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[293] See "An Act to Amend Title VI of the Higher Education Act of 1965 to Enhance International Education Programs: H.R. 3077 (2003)," Congress.gov, accessed January 26, 2023, https://www.congress.gov/108/bills/hr3077/BILLS-108hr3077rfs.pdf.

[294] See Martin Kramer, "Can Congress Fix Middle Eastern Studies?," *Martin Kramer on the Middle East*, November 20, 2003, https://martinkramer.org/2003/11/20/can-congress-fix-middle-eastern-studies/. It ought to be noted that Martin Kramer was very supportive of the Bill, as it *de-jure* followed the recommendation set forth in his previous monograph *Ivory Towers.*

[295] See "National Security Language Initiative: Briefing by Dina Powell, Assistant Secretary of State for Education and Cultural Affairs and Barry Lowenkron, Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor," US State Department," accessed January 26, 2023, https://web.archive.org/web/20080306151344/http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2006/58733.htm.

[296] See "Mission & Priorities," The Defense Language and National Security Education Office, accessed January 26, 2023, https://dlnseo.org/About/Mission-and-Priorities.

The controversy of the *Human Terrain System* initiative can hardly be avoided when discussing the entanglement of academic area studies and the US security and defence establishment. The US Army-funded program existed roughly between 2007 and 2014 and aimed to improve the soft aspects of the counter-insurgency doctrine employed in Iraq and Afghanistan by co-joining the experience of mainly combat military personnel and academics, who would conduct field research on the local population, its customs, tribal issues, etc. One of the initial proposals for the creation of the program came from an academic (who, however, worked for the US Office of Naval Research), Montgomery McFate, who advocated the need for social and cultural knowledge under an agenda of "knowing your enemy".[297] While the scope of this dissertation does not make it possible to capture the complexity of the entire venture, the implementation of this idea revolved around the creation and deployment of "Human Terrain Teams", which would have been composed of several academics-social scientists: a team leader, cultural analyst, regional studies expert, research manager, and human terrain analyst. Specific qualifications and skill sets were required for each position, such as a background in anthropology or sociology, and fluency in the local language in the case of the cultural analysts.[298] However, the demand for linguistic proficiency in particular was next to impossible to fulfill even with the direct deployment of academics, and the teams had to conduct their field research with the assistance of local interpreters, whose allegiances and local ties might have often skewed the research in various directions.[299]

Initially, the initiative won appreciation, especially from military personnel, who were, after all, its main benefactors.[300] However, a backlash from academia soon became the defining feature of the public debate on the Human Terrain System. The American Anthropological Association emerged as the main adversary of the initiative. Having established an *Ad hoc Commission on the Engagement of Anthropology with the U.S. National Security and Intelligence Communities*, the AAA published a report condemning academics' involvement in the Human Terrain Systems mainly on ethical grounds, suggesting that "(...) its use of anthropologists poses a danger to both other anthropologists and persons other

[297] See Montgomery McFate, "The Military Utility of Understanding Adversary Culture," *Small Wars Journal*, no. 38, https://smallwarsjournal.com/documents/mcfate2.pdf, 1.
[298] See Christopher J. Sims, *The Human Terrain System: Operationally Relevant Social Science Research in Iraq and Afghanistan* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute and U.S. Army War College Press, 2015), 28.
[299] Sims, *The Human Terrain System*, 342-328.
[300] See David Rohde, "Army Enlists Anthropology in War Zones," *New York Times*, October 5, 2007, http://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/05/world/asia/05afghan.html?incamp=article_popular_4&pagewanted=all.

anthropologists study," and that "in the context of a war that is widely recognized as a denial of human rights and based on faulty intelligence and undemocratic principles, the (AAA's) Executive Board sees the HTS project as a problematic application of anthropological expertise, most specifically on ethical grounds."[301] In the following years, several monographs and even a movie discussing the program were released,[302] only for the initiative to slowly disappear from the public consciousness and be shut down by the end of 2014.[303]

In most instances, systematic federal support, mainly through the funding of area studies and related disciplines, reacted to historic events such as the launch of Sputnik, the end of the Cold War and the First Gulf War, the September 11 attacks, and subsequent military incursions into the Middle East. Almost immediate adoption of various initiatives focusing on the promotion of Middle Eastern studies in the form of scholarships, training programs and even direct deployment of academic staff into combat zones points to the importance that has been given to academic Middle Eastern studies by the US Federal Government, especially in the past two decades. Whether this will remain the case with the gradual disengagement of the US from the Middle East remains to be seen. However, the generalist nature of NDEA and other discussed programs, which supported area studies as a whole and only diverted resources to specific languages and regional programs based on current demand, suggests a considerable survivability of these initiatives regardless of the United States' current foreign and security policy priorities. This characteristic has indeed been inherent to both the FSI and DLI, which did not prioritize the instruction of the Arabic language during the many years of their initial existence.

4.2. Foreign Service Institute: Institutional History

The Foreign Service Institute, founded in 1947, is the US State Department's primary institution for the training of US Foreign Service officers[304], as well as employees of other US

[301] See *American Anthropological Association's Executive Board Statement on the Human Terrain System Project*.
[302] See Der Derian and Udris, *Human Terrain: War Becomes Academic (film)*.
[303] Whitney Kassel, "The Army Needs Anthropologists," *Foreign Policy*, July 28, 2015, http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/07/28/the-army-needs-anthropologists-iraq-afghanistan-human-terrain/.
[304] "Foreign Service Officer" is an official term for an employee of the US State Department eligible for a diplomatic rank while serving at a foreign posting such as a US embassy or consulate. I use the term interchangeably with "US diplomat".

federal agencies and bureaus, in various tasks associated with US foreign affairs. According to official FSI figures, the instruction of approximately 65 languages, including Arabic, to various degrees of proficiency is among the principal goals of the FSI.[305] To achieve this, the FSI employs around 1,500 employees and spends a yearly budget of over 100 million USD.[306] As such, together with the Defense Language Institute, the FSI is one of two main institutions that US civil servants (and members of the armed forces in the case of the DLI) can utilize in order to achieve a working proficiency in the Arabic language. Even though the State Department's *Bureau of Near East Affairs* is currently not directly involved in the systematic training of its diplomats in the Arabic language, it has had an enormous impact on the formation of the FSI Arabic language programs, especially during their formation period in the late 1940s. As we will see, the turbulent personnel situation within the *Bureau* during the interwar period and the Second World War was the main driving force behind the US Government's need to provide Arabic language training to its Foreign Service officers in the first place.

In terms of regional expertise, the US' interwar position within the region was significantly impeded by the small number of specialists affiliated with the US Government who possessed at least some experience from the Middle East. Throughout the interwar period, these early American "Orientalists" served as the torchbearers of US expertise in Arab affairs. A typical "Orientalist" working at the State Department before the formation of the FSI was characterized by Theresa Fava Thomas as "born in the nineteenth century (…), saw the US as different from the colonial powers in the region (…) – a disinterested arbiter with no colonial ambitions. That philosophy fit perfectly with the obligation of public service inherent in the missionary community and their sense of noblesse oblige".[307] Many of them hailed from families with missionary backgrounds in the Middle East or had acquired some limited Arabic language knowledge through ties to emerging oil companies.[308] Also, "none of them had academic training in modern political history of the region and their policy positions often followed their personal experience

[305] "Foreign Language Training," US Department of State, accessed January 26, 2023, https://www.state.gov/foreign-language-training/.
[306] "Inspection of the Foreign Service Institute," Office of Inspector General, accessed January 26, 2023, https://oig.state.gov/system/files/209366.pdf is quoted here. The latest available inspection report of the Department for the fiscal year 2019 does not list a specific budget for the FSI.
[307] See Thomas, *American Arabists*, 20f. Another characterization was offered by Kaplan, *Arabists.*
[308] Thomas, *American Arabists*, 19. Perhaps the most famous example of such a character was William A. Eddy, son of a Christian missionary born in Lebanon who worked closely with F. D. Roosevelt's administration, was actively involved in US diplomatic and intelligence efforts in the Middle East (especially Saudi Arabia) and worked as a principal consultant for ARAMCO.

and investment in the region".[309] This zeal would eventually prove fatal to their official careers, as they strongly (and rather non-diplomatically) opposed the Truman administration's support of Zionism, which eventually led to their repudiation and dismissal from the ranks of the State Department after the Second World War.[310]

To compensate for the resulting lack of Arabists in the ranks of the *Bureau of Near East Affairs*, the US State Department had to train its own cadres in both the Arabic language and regional expertise. The first steps in this endeavour were already taken during the interwar period and thus ran simultaneously alongside the reign of the "old-school Orientalists" described above. The training of the new experts ran side by side for almost two decades. One of the first attempts at systemic training in the Arabic language began in the 1930s, when the State Department dispatched several of its officers to *L'Ecole des Langues Orientales Vivantes* in Paris, where they spent three years trying to learn Arabic. Aside from the very few exceptional students who invested significant time and effort into their Arabic studies outside of the classroom, the program in Paris did not prove very successful and was later abolished.[311] According to the State Department's historian Steven Alan Honley, by 1941 "fifty-five officers had completed special training at FSOTS (Foreign Service Officers' Training School; author's note) in Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Russian, Turkish and other languages."[312] How many graduates of these programs studied Arabic remains unknown, as does the proficiency in the Arabic language they might have achieved. However, it would be safe to assume that the participants of the program in Paris were included among those 55 graduates. Any potential for improvement of the US-French collaboration in the education of Arabists remained unfulfilled, as the State Department shut down all its training programs in 1941 as the United States entered the Second World War.[313]

With educational activities organized by the State Department suspended, the US military took charge of the instruction of languages. This might seem surprising at first

[309] Thomas, *American Arabists*, 27.
[310] Thomas, *American Arabists*, 28.
[311] Thomas, 30. The institution was renamed and became the famous INALCO in 1971. Thomas also lists a rather peculiar attempt by the US consul general in Algiers, William Shaler, who suggested that the State Department should send an American child to the consulate so it could be raised as a native speaker. Naturally, the State Department refused. See Thomas, *American Arabists*, 48.
[312] See Honley, *The Foreign Service Institute at 70*, no pagination. Honley quotes an unspecified 1941 article from the *State Magazine*. The FSTOS was one of several training institutions within the State Department before the outbreak of the Second World War – others included the *Consular School of Application* (founded 1907), the *Wilson Diplomatic School* (1909), the *Foreign Service School* (1924), the *Foreign Service Officers' Training School* (1931).
[313] Honley, *The Foreign Service Institute at 70*, no pagination.

due to the relatively limited American involvement in the Middle Eastern and North African war theatre.[314] Nonetheless, the unprecedented investment of US federal funds into its warfighting capability on both material and intellectual grounds bore fruit in terms of both the wartime and post-war influx of Arabic speakers into the armed forces and later the civil service. This was mainly achieved by the *Army Specialized Training Program* (ASTP), which was adopted in late 1942 and aimed at producing enlisted personnel as well as officers equipped with critical skills in the areas of engineering, medicine, and foreign languages. Enlisted military personnel and roughly 400,000 civilians were pre-tested for participation in the program via a standardized IQ test and occasionally some additional requirements.[315] Roughly 200,000 selected soldier-scholars remained in uniform but, instead of European and Pacific battlefields, they were sent to 227 participating American campuses, where they drilled the subjects required by the Army.[316]

The Arabic language was included in the ASTP's courses, and these focused mainly on Moroccan and Syrian dialects[317], to a large extent depending on the location of the individual ASTP courses. For instance, the ASTP Arabic program at Princeton University was developed by the founding figure of US Arabic studies, Philip K. Hitti. The Princeton program comprised area studies elements, and its language classes "consisted of six hours of class work and ten hours of conversation per week"[318]. According to one of the ASTP Arabic course's participants, the original Arabic ASTP course was designed by then-recent graduate of Oriental Studies at the University of Pennsylvania and later a prominent Arabist, Charles Ferguson.[319] His Arabic course favoured a "bottom-up" approach to the study of Arabic, which meant putting a great focus on the correct pronunciation of especially those phonemes that were not to be found in English.[320] Despite significant demand for Arabic linguists, the peculiar system of personnel management within the US Army diverted many talented students and graduates

[314] A very limited presence was managed by the US Army Forces in the Middle East (USAFIME) mission, a liaison office set up in 1942 in Cairo.
[315] V. R. Cardozier, *Colleges and Universities in World War II* (Westport: Praeger, 1993), 22. A brilliant and complex analysis, however not mainly focused on Arabic, was offered in Keefer, *Scholars in Foxholes.*
[316] Thomas, *American Arabists*, 33.
[317] Thomas, 33. For reference on the instruction of Syrian Arabic, see Keefer, *Scholars in Foxholes*.
[318] See Khalil, *America's Dream Palace*, 45.
[319] Thomas, *American Arabists*, 33. For more on Dr Ferguson, see "Our Founder: Charles Albert Ferguson, PhD," Center for Applied Linguistics, accessed January 26, 2023, https://www.cal.org/who-we-are/our-founder.
[320] Thomas, *American Arabists*, 34. For an extended narrative of the peculiarities of the program in the Moroccan dialect, see Curtis F. Jones, "The Army Specialized Training Program: Gateway to the Foreign Service," *American Diplomacy: Insight and Analysis from Foreign Affairs Practitioners and Scholars*, January 1998, http://americandiplomacy.web.unc.edu/1998/01/the-army-specialized-training-program-gateway-to-the-foreign-service/.

of the Arabic programs to postings that were completely irrelevant for trained military Arabists, such as New Mexico and subsequently the Pacific.[321] This might have been caused by a general lack of understanding of the goals of the ASTP by the upper echelons of the US Army command, and also by a general lack of manpower deployed to both the Pacific and European war theatres.[322]

Despite the poor personnel management on the part of the US Army, the ASTP managed to develop some knowledge of the Arabic language among many of its students and, more importantly, infuse them with a genuine interest in the Arab world. Thus, after the end of the war, many of the ASTP participants took advantage of the benefits of the *Servicemen's Readjustment Act* of 1944 (colloquially known as the "GI Bill"), which allowed them to continue their college or university education after the war under less stressful circumstances. Both former staff and pupils of the ASTP provided a pool of highly desirable candidates for employment within the State Department, which began the long overdue reform of its internal education system immediately after the war. As the war ended, the ASTP was abolished. The suspended training programs for future diplomats working for the State Department were reopened and incorporated into the new *Division of Training Services* formed in April 1945. The Division was only short-lived and was replaced by the *Foreign Service Institute* in March 1947.[323] One of two principle parts of the newly established FSI, the *School of Languages and Linguistics*, was quickly staffed by instructors who had accumulated experience in the ASTP, including its former Director Henry Lee Smith Jr., or the already seasoned instructor Charles Ferguson.[324] In 1947, Henry Lee Smith, a linguistics-generalist, was put in charge of curriculum development for all FSI language courses and given a great deal of autonomy in executing his vision. He enjoyed this privilege mainly due to the highly public profile he maintained during the Second World War by hosting the immensely popular radio program "Where Are You From", in which he applied contemporary linguistics in a popularized manner. The FSI benefited immensely from his

[321] Thomas, *American Arabists*, 34. See also Jones, "The Army Specialized Training Program."
[322] Curtis F. Jones even suspected that one of the main purposes of the ASTP might have been "to keep the American college and university system from going under during wartime." See Jones, "The Army Specialized Training Program." It should also be noted here that the US Navy operated a very similar wartime initiative called the V-12 College Training Program, which also offered instruction in foreign languages. See Cardozier, *Colleges and Universities in World War II*, 6–8. However, I was unable to find any evidence suggesting that the Arabic language belonged among them.
[323] See William G. Leary, "Studies in Language and Culture in the Training of Foreign Service Personnel: The School of Languages and Linguistics of the United States Department of State," *Etc: A Review of General Semantics* 9, no. 3 (1952): 193.
[324] Leary, "Studies in Language and Culture," 193 and 196.

linguistic expertise and immediately incorporated some of his ideas into a newly developed *Middle East Area Program* that prepared Foreign Service officers for careers with the *Bureau of Near East Affairs*.[325]

In a rare concurrence, the new approach on the part of the FSI's language instructors was matched by an eager new generation of students. According to an outstanding analysis by Theresa Fava Thomas, both the instructors and graduates of the ASTP and subsequently the *Middle East Area Program* were rather different from many other Foreign Service officers.[326] Unlike the old upper-class elites, the new Middle Eastern specialists often originated from middle-class environments, had military experience, backgrounds in political science, languages, or history, only a limited knowledge of the Middle East, and a strong careerist drive.[327] The training they received in the *Middle East Area Program* was also revolutionary, as it connected the modern linguistic approach introduced, among others, by some of the former ASTP instructors, while "its area studies component was taught, for the most part, by academics from outside the State Department".[328]

The early post-war State Department offered an ample opportunity for them to move through the ranks quickly, as many new US Embassies were being opened throughout the post-war Middle East, Arabists were few in number, and the traditional Foreign Service elites were more interested in prestigious European postings.[329] The multitude of available postings in Arabic speaking countries also distinguished Arabic studies from other "hard languages" such as Chinese and Japanese, where available embassy posts were limited to one or two countries per language.[330] The potential benefits of an expedited career and very realistic chances of acquiring ambassadorship[331] outweighed the difficulty of the rigorous study of Arabic and a subsequent string of deployments to "hardship posts".[332] While the ratio of careerist drive and genuine interest in Middle Eastern affairs among early FSI Arabic students certainly varied greatly, the significance of pragmatism when choosing Arabic-related

[325] Thomas, *American Arabists*, 33f.
[326] Thomas, *American Arabists,* 33f.
[327] Thomas, 67. According to Theresa F. Thomas, this image is very different from the more traditional depiction of the elitist Foreign Service "Orientalist" famously presented by Robert Kaplan in his work *The Arabists*.
[328] Thomas, *American Arabists*, 70.
[329] Thomas, 68.
[330] Thomas, 98.
[331] One of the first graduates of the Middle East Area Program, Hermann Eilts was granted ambassadorship in Saudi Arabia at the age of 33, making him the youngest ambassador in the Foreign Service. See Thomas, *American Arabists*, 98.
[332] Thomas, 98. "Hardship posts" refer to foreign postings with significantly reduced quality of living conditions or even potential risks to life or health.

career paths clearly separated the post-war Foreign Service officers from their "Orientalist" predecessors. The increased focus on language education in the late 1940s coincided with yet another revolution in the State Department's personnel affairs – an increasing appreciation for regional specialists as opposed to generalists.[333] This transition proved necessary, as many senior US diplomats holding Middle Eastern posts might have had a deep understanding of the intricacies of US foreign policy, yet their regional and especially linguistic knowledge was rather limited.[334] Even some senior officers who experienced the courses in Paris during the interwar period deemed it unachievable to acquire a fluency of the Arabic language sufficient for conducting diplomacy or even saw it as a waste of Foreign Service officers' time and taxpayers' money.[335]

To overcome these limitations, a new Arabic program was prepared by Charles Ferguson, who applied the experience in curriculum design that he had accumulated in the ASTP. In late 1946, he and two Foreign Service officers were dispatched to Lebanon,[336] where they "established and directed the *Foreign Service Institute Area and Language School* attached to the American Embassy, Beirut".[337] Initially lasting a mere six-months, the offered Arabic course was too short, lacked a clear focus, and the entire program was underfunded. This was particularly woeful in comparison to the Soviets, whom the State Department was supposed to compete against in the Arab world. Soviet diplomats, whose training and careers were meticulously planned from an early age, were superior in terms of classroom hours and years they had spent learning the language.[338]

The lacking linguistic proficiency of State Department personnel was among the subjects criticized by then president of Brown University Henry M. Wriston, who chaired a committee tasked by the Secretary of State John F. Dulles to review the State Departments' personnel and training procedures. The results of the investigation published in the 1954 *Wriston Report* called for a larger intake of new employees, improvement in principles of rotation and communication between foreign postings and the Washington D.C.

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[333] Thomas, 69.
[334] Thomas, 58.
[335] Jones, "The Army Specialized Training Program," 18f.
[336] Thomas, *American Arabists*, 47.
[337] See "Memorial Resolution: Charles A. Ferguson," *Stanford University Report*, May 19, 1999, https://news.stanford.edu/news/1999/may19/memferguson-519.html. Ferguson remained in Beirut until 1954. After his resignation, he became an instructor at the *Center for Middle East Studies* at Harvard University, see Thomas, *American Arabists*, 21.
[338] Thomas, *American Arabists*, 95.

headquarters, and, most importantly, a much larger focus on regional specialization. This process became known as "Wristonization" and led to a significant increase in the numbers of State Department employees (from around 1,500 to 3,436 by the end of 1957).[339] To facilitate further transition towards regional specialization, the State Department began to promote "Language-Designated Posts", which required knowledge of a certain foreign language. In terms of Arabic, 231 Arabists were required to fill these posts by 1959, yet "at the time they only had 39 (Arabists) at 'working' proficiency, 16 in training, and therefore a shortfall of 159".[340]

To facilitate changes recommended by the Wriston Comittee, State Secretary Dulles appointed Harold B. Hoskins as the new FSI director in 1955. Hopkins was an Arabist and an avid supporter of developing a deep regional knowledge among US diplomats.[341] Even with the process of "Wristonization" underway, the real impetus for improving regional expertise within the State Department came from the outside. A short while after the Soviets successfully launched Sputnik in 1957, prompting a stronger focus on language education in the US enabled by the NDEA, the novel *The Ugly American* and its commentary on American inaptitude in conducting foreign policy sparked further scrutiny of the State Department's personnel and training procedures. As a result, the FSI Beirut School quadrupled in size after 1957,[342] and the length of the program tripled, eventually reaching 21 months. Ernest McCarus became the new director of the *Middle East Area Program*, which aimed to combine the linguistic and area studies element while utilizing the staff and library of the American University in Beirut.[343] The new setup allowed the FSI students to take morning language classes at the US embassy and then take part in area studies courses during the afternoon hours.[344] In the spirit of impartiality, the area studies component of the Beirut course aimed to introduce the entire Middle East, not only the Arabic speaking world. This was especially important with regard to Israel, which has always remained a controversial issue. Therefore, the students were routinely sent to Israel either as part of the program or were strongly encouraged to visit Israel in their free time.[345] This aspect of the course, as well as routine rotations of State Department Arabists to Israeli postings, might have been one

[339] See "A Short History of the Department of State: Wristonization," US Department of State, accessed January 26, 2023, https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/short-history/wristonization.
[340] Thomas, *American Arabists*, 107f.
[341] Thomas, 108.
[342] Thomas, 90.
[343] Thomas, 120.
[344] Thomas, 126.
[345] Thomas, 17.

of the factors preventing the gradual entrenchment of the "Arabist-mafia" within the State Department.

According to Teresa Fava Thomas, the complexity of the program's area studies component frequently put its graduates in professional opposition to other civil servants in Washington D.C. who simply understood Middle Eastern affairs as an extension of the global conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union.[346] This both ideological and intellectual divergence occasionally resulted in the rejection of some of the political reporting carried out by the Beirut program graduates, as their analyses of the regional situation appeared too complicated to the decision makers. The Beirut School graduates were frequently overlooked by the highest echelons of US foreign policy circles, including Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, and occasionally replaced in ambassadorial posts by generalist foreign service officers who would readily cater to policy makers' bipolar views.[347]

The faltering interest in truly specialized regional reporting in the 1960s and 1970s was only one of two reasons junior foreign service officers choosing a specialization in Arabic were becoming obsolete. With many embassies in Arab countries being closed or downsized by the late-1960s, Arabic did not have the same appeal to those in search of a fast-track career. Furthermore, those attracted by a sense of adventure frequently gave preference to the study of Vietnamese and a subsequent guaranteed tour to war-ridden South East Asia.[348] The general lack of interest in Arabic studies among younger officers also meant that certain mid-level Middle Eastern posts remained devoid of Arabists, as the first generations of Beirut graduates had already reached senior positions within State Department structures,[349] while mid-career officers might have been discouraged by the lack of interest from Washington and increasingly hostile conditions within the Arab world.

By the late-1960s and early 1970s, the gradual decline of interest in Arabic studies was also noted by the *Office of the Comptroller General of the United States*, which in 1973 issued a report to the US Congress assessing the quality of the US Federal Government language programs.[350] Among many other subjects, the report reveals that the possible closure

[346] Thomas, entire chapter "The Golden Era: Area Studies at Beirut, 1957-75."
[347] Thomas, 140.
[348] See Hume A. Horan, "Plea to Arabists," *Foreign Service Journal*, May 1973, 42.
[349] Horan, Plea to Arabists," 42.
[350] See *Need to Improve Language Training Programs and Assignments for U.S. Government Personnel Overseas: Report to the Congress* (Washington D.C.: U.S. General Accounting Office, 1973).

of the Beirut program was discussed in FSI circles in Washington D.C. by the early 1970s.[351] Utilization of other language centres was discussed as a possible replacement for the Beirut FSI school, among them MECAS (however, the report later acknowledged that a merger of the programs would not be feasible).[352] In 1975, the FSI school in Beirut was finally closed by its last director James A. Snow in 1975, mainly due to the deteriorating security situation in Beirut. Eventually, the remains of the program were moved to Cairo and significantly reduced in size,[353] only to be finally relocated to Tunis, where the FSI Arabic school remained until 2012.[354] In retrospect, the closure was a timely manoeuvre, as the thorough downfall into violence in Beirut culminated during the Lebanese Civil War after the mid-1970s. In 1976, the US ambassador to Beirut was assassinated. In April 1983, 63 of the US Embassy personnel died during a bombing and, only months later, 241 US servicemen suffered the same fate during an explosion at their Beirut headquarters. Shortly after, renowned political scientist Malcolm Kerr, one of the key figures in the organization of the area studies component of the Beirut School, was murdered on the grounds of the American University in Beirut.[355]

To complement the outline of the institutional history of the FSI Beirut program, it would be suitable here to describe the degree of effectiveness of Arabic language instruction in Beirut. By the mid-1970s, the State Department adhered to a four-level system to determine fluency in speaking and reading a foreign language, with S-1/R-1 being the lowest and S-4/R-4 the highest (the system was later expanded to five levels). In late 1960, several State Department Arabists criticized the Beirut program for a lack of efficiency, claiming that "of approximately 120 officers trained by FSI in Arabic since the early 1950s, only 10 of us have test rated at the S-4/R-4 level, only 7 at the 4 levels in one or the other; and only 33 even at the 3-3 level – a total of 50 out of 120 who have ever reached or exceeded the minimum level of usable language competence."[356] Official numbers in the following years, however, presented a slightly different picture of linguistic achievement. The 1973 *Comptroller Report* aimed to quantify the performance of all the FSI Field Language Schools – the Arabic school in Beirut; Chinese school in Taichung, Taiwan; and Japanese School in Yokohama, Japan. In the case of Beirut, 44 students were reported to have attended the full-time course

[351] *Need to Improve Language Training Programs*, 60.
[352] *Need to Improve Language Training Programs*, 60-62.
[353] Thomas, *American Arabists*, 153.
[354] "Inspection of the Foreign Service Institute", Office of Inspector General, March 2013, accessed January 26, 2023, https://oig.state.gov/system/files/209366.pdf.
[355] Thomas, *American Arabists*, 30.
[356] Richard Dawson, Hume Horan, William Crawford, Geroge Lane et. al., *Memo from Arabic-trained Foreign Service Officers to the Department of State*. Quoted here from Thomas, *American Arabists*, note 39.

between 1965 and 1970, with a failure rate of only 18 percent (i.e., eight students), while six students out of 44 reached the highest possible rating for speaking/reading.[357]

In addition to the program in Beirut, the FSI set up another Arabic language school as part of its *North African Arabic Language Program* after the US Consulate General was (re-)opened in Moroccan Tangier in 1961. The FSI Tangier school functioned between 1962 and 1968, thus continuing the legacy of the wartime ASTP program in Moroccan Arabic.[358] A rather peculiar lack of available primary sources on the institutional history of the FSI program in Tangier also applies to the Arabic Field School in Tunisia, which has not yet become the subject of scholarly work. The Tunisian school was located in the suburb of *Sidi Bou Said* and operated without significant difficulty until the events of the Arab Spring.[359] Unlike the case of DLI, the impact of the First Gulf War on Arabic instruction in the State Department was negligible, as the long-term presence of the US State Department in the Arabic speaking world prevented a sudden spike in the necessity to train more diplomats-Arabists.

The events of 9/11 and the subsequent build-up of US diplomatic presence in the Middle East as part of the "Global War on Terror" resulted in a significant increase in the number of enrolees in the FSI's Arabic programs – from 109 in 2001 to 454 in 2006. These numbers include students of additional forms of language instruction in addition to the FSI Arabic Field School in Tunis, such as online courses and *Early Morning Arabic Programs*.[360] Such programs aimed at developing Arabic language proficiency to the third level (S-3/R-3) in a proficiency system of five levels, which meant borderline fluency.[361] The FSI introduced a pilot program of *Beyond 3* in the mid-2000s. Enrolees were considered for up to a year of full-time study in an Arab country "at such institutions as the *American*

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[357] *Need To Improve Language Training*, 58. The report also discusses the cost of training one student in Beirut, which reached 56,000 USD for a 21-month course, excluding the student's salary. See page 57.

[358] See Gerald Loftus, "Deciphering Moroccan Arabic, 1911-2011," *TALIM Director's Blog: Behind the scenes at the Tangier American Legation Institute for Moroccan Studies*, 2011, accessed January 26, 2023, https://avuncularamerican.typepad.com/talimblog/2011/07/deciphering-moroccan-arabic-1911-2011.html. See also "FSI Tangier School," *Department of State Newsletter*, no. 129 (1972): 57.

[359] Beth Robinson, "Post of the Month: Tunis," *State Magazine*, April 2002, 9, https://2009-2017.state.gov/documents/organization/191211.pdf.

[360] "Statement by Ambassador Patterson in Reply to Question by Dr Snyder. Contracting for the Iraqi Security Forces: Hearing Before the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee of the Committee on Armed Services," US House of Representatives, hearing held on April 25, 2007, accessed January 26, 2023, https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-110hhrg37889/html/CHRG-110hhrg37889.htm.

[361] Jennifer Bremer, "Our Diplomats' Arabic Handicap," *The Washington Post*, October 16, 2005, https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/2005/10/16/our-diplomats-arabic-handicap/aa296f5e-0081-4cf4-888f-2a5e55d99112/.

University of Cairo, the *University of Damascus* or the *Arab Academy for Banking and Financial Sciences* in Amman, Jordan."[362] Despite the lack of official numbers, it would be no surprise that since the *Beyond 3* program was aimed mainly at senior diplomats deemed for senior positions at the State Department, the number of US diplomats willing to sacrifice a year to study at the peak of their careers must have been rather limited. Furthermore, even though the option of attending these institutions in Cairo, Damascus, and Amman existed, the concerns over the personal security of US diplomats rendered the notion of a lone US diplomat frequenting an academic institution in these countries very unlikely, especially after the events of the "Arab Spring".

In summary, the FSI was well suited to provide high-quality Arabic language instruction after the Second World War. Only limited initiatives to provide such training existed throughout the interwar period, and so did the physical presence of US diplomacy in the Arabic speaking world. With the luxury of hindsight, it could be said that the provisional freeze of all training activities within the State Department during the Second World War allowed for a reform, effectively replacing the old cadres of self-taught Arabist-Orientalists who *lived* the Middle East with career-oriented professionals who *worked* the region. This approach was further highlighted by the noticeable impact of the emerging Cold War and associated reforms in the State Department commonly referred to as "Wristonization" in the late 1950s, which embraced the logic of the language training of US diplomats as a direct manifestation of the intellectual war against the Soviets. This understanding of language and area studies certainly helped to maintain the Arabic programs both in Beirut and Tunisia, yet hindered the appreciation of Arabists' expertise in the US foreign policy circles that frequently preferred a globalist perspective over a regionalist one. Even though the end of the Cold War and subsequent US military incursions into the Middle East before and during the so-called Global War on Terror highlighted a constant need for Arabists within the US State Department, it also signalled a significantly more pressing necessity for their employment within the military and security domain as opposed to the diplomatic one.

[362] "Introducing the Language Continuum Concept: A Strategic Plan and National Roadmap for Foreign Language Learning and Use: Remarks by Ambassador Michael Lemmon Dean of the School of Language Studies Foreign Service Institute Department of State", Interagency Language Roundtable, accessed January 26, 2023, https://www.govtilr.org/Publications/ILRContinuumSpeech.htm.

4.3. Foreign Service Institute: Arabic Language Curricula

The enthusiasm for the specialization and mass recruitment of wartime ASTP graduates was a considerable success on the part of the State Department in the late 1940s and early 1950s. However, while many newly hired Foreign Service officers had a careerist ambition and professional *esprit de corps*, they frequently lacked the considerable knowledge of the Arabic language and Middle Eastern affairs shared among the pre-war "Orientalist-Arabists". As discussed above, despite various shortcomings and pitfalls, the FSI eventually managed to fix this shortcoming on an institutional level by establishing a specialized *Arabic Language and Area Studies School* in Beirut. A critical question was *how* the linguistic knowledge should be passed on to the new recruits and *to whom* their training should be entrusted. In both cases, the FSI followed a similar approach as the entire State Department and heavily utilized the expertise generated during the wartime ASTP. This meant both employing the former ASTP instructors and adapting ASTP methodology for the Cold War era.

As the director of the ASTP and later the FSI *School of Languages and Linguistics*, Henry Lee Smith revolutionised the use of recordings in an "audio-lingual method", which introduced the constant repetition of phrases pronounced by native speakers.[363] The primacy of this approach was warranted by two factors. First, the wartime ASTP courses already used this method to a certain degree, and therefore it was simply adapted for the FSI with an influx of former ASTP instructors. Second, the philosophy of the early FSI language instruction was clearly communication-oriented, which favoured a focus on spoken language.[364] This dominant approach was combined with what one of the State Department's proponents of this methodology William Leary described as a "linguistic analysis-approach" and "culture-and-language-approach", which dealt mainly with the role of language in a society and culture, as well as the latest developments in the field of linguistics.[365]

The initial six-month version of the Arabic course was organized by Charles Ferguson in Beirut and, given this short time span, could hardly produce full-fledged Arabists.[366]

[363] Thomas, *American Arabists*, 49.
[364] See *The Foreign Service Institute: Catalog and General Information: Department and Foreign Service Series* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1949). See also Leary, "Studies in Language and Culture," 195.
[365] Leary, "Studies in Language and Culture," 196-198.
[366] Thomas, *American Arabists*, 47.

Keeping in line with the ASTP legacy as well as Lee Smith's educational viewpoints, Ferguson utilized native speakers as language instructors.[367] A large majority of them shared the same characteristics: "second generation Arab-Americans or Arab graduate students in Washington area universities (…) most often in their 20s or early 30s, military veterans, born in the United States and skilled in languages."[368] The strong focus on spoken language via repetition was critical to the audio-lingual approach. However, it had considerable limitations, as it could only bring students to a certain level in their ability to speak Arabic, while their reading ability was rather limited.[369] One graduate of the 1948 FSI course in Beirut recalled that the Arabic he had acquired was so colloquial that he was advised by an official interpreter from Damascene diplomatic circles not to speak Arabic until he improved his accent to a more formal standard.[370]

The overall quality of the program improved significantly in the mid-1950s with the extension of the course to two years. Many of the graduates of the original six-month course realized that their fluency in Arabic was lacking and returned to Beirut after their first or second Middle Eastern posting to improve their Arabic.[371] The return of some of the graduates to Beirut was also critical in terms of expanding the scope of dialects they would have to tackle in various postings across the Arabic speaking world. In terms of the dialect taught, American diplomats graduating from the FSI course in Beirut faced a similar issue as MECAS students – the distinctive nature of Lebanese Arabic in its colloquial form.[372] Initially, the traditional materials utilized by MECAS, which stemmed from British academic circles and focused on both classical Arabic and MSA, as well as the specific "MECAS Arabic" (i.e., Modern Standard Arabic "enhanced" by several Lebanese colloquialisms), allowed the British students to maintain a solid knowledge of MSA, even if they studied close to Beirut. This was not necessarily the case for the initial FSI graduates, whose colloquial Lebanese dialect not only prevented them from engaging in official MSA discourse, but also hampered their linguistic usability outside of the Levant.

Having replaced Charles Ferguson as the head of the Beirut program in the mid-1950s, Ernest McCarus shared many similarities with his predecessor, including a history

[367] Thomas, 103. The FSI used the term "native informants" for native speakers.
[368] Thomas, 103.
[369] Thomas, 49.
[370] Thomas. 50.
[371] Thomas, 106.
[372] Thomas, 93.

of involvement in the wartime ASTP and a linguistic background that extended beyond Arabic.[373] McCarus gave preference to the instruction of MSA over the Lebanese dialect, partially due to his conviction that MSA was more practical as the *lingua franca* of the Arab world, and perhaps also due to the rising importance of MSA as the language of Nasserist pan-Arabist discourse.[374] However, the FSI later realized the issues inherent in the considerable differences between MSA and certain Arabic dialects, such as the Moroccan "Darija", which was a considerable factor in the 1962-1968 provisional operation of the FSI Field School in Tangier. Even in the Western frontier of the Arabic speaking world, the graduates of the newly established school faced issues similar to their counterparts in Lebanon. Indeed, as T. F. Thomas aptly observed, if Lebanese colloquial Arabic was not of much use outside of the Levant, "Tangerine Arabic was useless outside Morocco."[375]

The internal discord between the structured approach to the study of Arabic and the FSI's initial preference for its informal and dialectical form also manifested itself in the gradual development of the FSI's courses. These almost without exception combined written textbooks and audio-recordings, as called for by Henry Lee Smith's audio-lingual method. In the late 1940s, the focus on spoken language prevented the utilization of written courses, as none were available and their codification would have taken years. Therefore, the first head of the FSI school in Beirut Charles Ferguson focused on the study of Arabic proverbs, which not only offered a partial explanation of the structure of the language, but were also thought to provide insight into Arab history and culture, thus substituting for the lacking area studies component.[376] By 1952 and with a gradual appreciation for the MSA, the FSI published its first dedicated Arabic textbook – *Classical Arabic – The Writing System* compiled by FSI Instructor Frank A. Rice.[377] The mere fact that a somewhat improvised introduction into the Arabic writing system was only published eight years after the establishment of the Beirut School poses the question of what textbook the students had been using before 1952. The standard textbook at that time was

[373] Thomas, 123. McCarus' original linguistic focus was Japanese.
[374] Thomas, 123f. According to T. F. Thomas, it was McCarus's predecessor Charles Ferguson who edited some of the first studies of "radio Arabic", i.e., the MSA as used by Nasser's Egypt. See Richard S. Harrel, "A Linguistic Analysis of Egyptian Radio Arabic," in *Contribution to Arabic Linguistics: Harvard Middle Eastern Monographs III*, Charles A. Ferguson (MA: Centre for Middle East Studies of Harvard University, 1964). Quoted here from Thomas, *American Arabists*, chapter 3, note 15.
[375] Thomas, *American Arabists*, 50.
[376] Thomas, 126.
[377] See Frank A. Rice, *Classical Arabic - The Writing System* (Washington D.C.: Department of State, Foreign Service Institute, 1952). The textbook was reprinted in 1954 and 1959.

Thatcher's Arabic Grammar, which might have been used by the FSI, as it was simultaneously utilized by MECAS. This does not suggest that the FSI adopted Thatcher's entire course, which, with its complex explanation of grammatical structures, presented a complete opposite to the "audio-lingual" approach. However, the program might have utilized certain parts of *Thatcher's Arabic Grammar* until a more structured course was introduced.[378]

According to the last director of the FSI school in Beirut, James A. Snow, the discord between the focus on colloquial language and MSA eventually found its way into the stable curriculum. By the early 1970s, students were first exposed to spoken Arabic and were not taught how to work with Arabic writing until the latter stage of their training.[379] In terms of textbooks and associated recordings, it remains apparent that MSA (i.e., Modern Written Arabic) was eventually codified to a larger extent, while the colloquial form must have been introduced mainly through exposure to native-speaker teachers. Efforts to provide a specialized MSA course began with Charles Ferguson and later Ernest McCarus, who first compiled a dedicated Arabic course throughout the 1950s as an internal FSI project. This initial curriculum was published in 1968 as *Elementary Modern Standard Arabic* in cooperation with Peter Abboud from the *Centre for Middle Eastern and North African Studies* at the University of Michigan in 1968.[380] Although the preface to the 1968 textbook does not make any reference to its FSI origins, it does mention the original seminar at which the idea for its publication was conceived and which was chaired by none other than Charles Ferguson, the original director of the Beirut School.[381] The reason why reference to the FSI-produced volume was omitted as well as any remarks on Ferguson and McCarus' role with the State Department remains unclear, as the FSI's drive to teach the US Foreign Service officers Arabic had been a publicly acknowledged objective from the very beginning. Furthermore, McCarus' critical role in the FSI Beirut School was acknowledged in a preface to another textbook

[378] According to T. F. Thomas' account, the early FSI students were certainly aware that the British at MECAS utilized Thatcher's grammar. See Thomas, *American Arabists*, 105.
[379] James A. Snow, *Levantine Arabic – Introduction to Pronunciation* (Beirut: Foreign Service Institute, 1971), viii.
[380] See Roger Allan, "Teaching Arabic in the US," in *The Arabic Language in America*, ed. Aleya Rouchdy (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1992), 222-250; Quoted here from Thomas, *American Arabists*, chapter "Landfall: Language Training in Beirut, 1946," note 32. For the course itself, see Abboud, *Elementary Modern Standard Arabic*. The same group of Arabists later published the Intermediate Modern Standard Arabic (1971), which was also utilized by the DLI until the introduction of dedicated DLI Arabic courses in the late 1970s and 1980s.
[381] Quoted from Peter F. Abboud and Ernest McCarus, *Elementary Modern Standard Arabic* (Cambridge University Press, 1983), Preface iii.

published by the University of Michigan several years earlier.[382] Perhaps the lack of reference to the FSI was a matter of possible copyright dispute, which all parties intended to avoid. Regardless, the textbook itself follows a standardized structure of 30 lessons divided into "Basic Texts" introducing vocabulary and grammatical phenomena, followed by "Comprehension Passages" and "General Drills".

The textbook itself is not what one might call "a dedicated diplomatic course". While some texts and drills refer to conducting diplomacy, they appear as mere inserts into a larger introduction to varied vocabulary and grammar. For instance, the fairly topical sentence: "There is no doubt that the United Nations has helped to solve many political problems (…)", is immediately followed by a rather artificial sentence that one might expect to find in *Thatcher's Arabic Grammar*: "It is as though the red-coloured hotel which stands near the canal commands (controls) the entire area, and its various inhabitants include an engineer, a doctor and two princes."[383] One of the most politically (or rather diplomatically) oriented sections appears towards the conclusion of the course and discusses the arrival of a new American Ambassador to Lebanon as he proceeds to the presidential palace, where he "encountered the warmest of welcomes". [384] This section could also be understood as a hint to the FSI origins of the textbook during the 1950s, during which US-Lebanese relations blossomed, rather than to 1968 (when it was published), when the then US Ambassador to Lebanon Dwight J. Porter had to manage the difficult US position during the Six-Day War between Israel and Arab countries.

Within the FSI *Arabic Language and Area School* in Beirut, the manuscript of the MSA course, which was published as the *Elementary Modern Standard Arabic* in 1968, must have been used for at least ten years while another textbook was in preparation. In 1969, the *Modern Written Arabic Vol. I.* compiled by Harlie L. Smith J.R. was released, marking a seeming departure from the colloquial orientation of the FSI Arabic programs. Using the term "Modern Written Arabic" as opposed to MSA or "Modern Literary Arabic", the author distinctively aimed "to represent the written language (rather than a combination of written

[382] See an excerpt from Ernest McCarus and Adil I. Yacoub, *Contemporary Arabic Reader I: Newspaper Arabic* (University of Michigan and the United States Office of Education, 1962), Preface, iii: "Professor McCarus, while serving as Director of the Foreign Service Institute Field School of Arabic Language and Area Study at Beirut Lebanon (1958-1960), had ample opportunity to observe the abilities of Mr A. I. Yacoub, then on the staff of the Beirut School (…)".
[383] Abboud and McCarus, *Elementary Modern Standard Arabic*, 1983, 263.
[384] Abboud and McCarus, 263.

and oral) (…)"[385] Furthermore, he insisted that by the date of publication, "Modern Written Arabic" had "no native speakers" and was an artificial construct with a grammatical structure distinct from the colloquial language.[386] Therefore, the goal of the textbook was to teach students how to read Arabic for information, including excerpts from newspapers and books.[387] While such an approach varied significantly from the initial didactic philosophy of the FSI (focus on spoken interaction), it still partially adhered to the repetition-based audio-lingual approach, as the students were expected to combine the textbook with constant listening to the accompanying audio tape.

The original *Modern Written Arabic* was expanded with *Volume II*, which was compiled by FSI instructor A. Nashat Naja and the last Beirut School director James A. Snow. Published in 1974, it followed the plan set forth by *Volume I*, thus aiming mainly at acquainting students with Arabic newspapers and even handwriting.[388] The series was concluded by *Volume III*, which was compiled solely by A. Nashat Naja and published in 1978. Due to the closure of the Beirut School, the final preparations for the textbook's release already took place at the new FSI field school location in Tunis. As foreshadowed in the introductions to *Volumes I* and *II*, the students were already expected to be able to read Arabic newspapers, with this last volume preparing them to tackle complex Arabic prose.[389] This continuity of the three volumes was reflected by a standardized structure of the total sum of 96 lessons at almost 1,500 pages of Arabic and English print. Each lesson consisted of "basic sentences, supplementary sentences, drills, notes, and vocabulary",[390] with the initial lessons containing considerably more explanatory sections in English and the last lesson almost entirely written in Arabic.

Throughout *Volume I* of *Modern Written Arabic*, it becomes apparent that the FSI produced a clearly diplomacy-oriented course. As soon as the student grasped the basic vocabulary, specialized terminology relevant for statecraft was introduced. Lesson 19 included remarks on Zionism (*ṣahyūnīya*), nationalism (*qawmīya*), and communism (*šuyūʿīya*);[391]

[385] Harlie L. Smith Jr., *Modern Written Arabic. Volume I* (Washington D.C.: Foreign Service Institute, 1969), vii.
[386] Smith Jr., *Modern Written Arabic*, viii.
[387] Smith Jr., *Modern Written Arabic*, ix.
[388] Nashat A. Naja and James A. Snow, *Modern Written Arabic. Volume II* (Washington D.C.: Foreign Service Institute, 1974), viii.
[389] Nashat A. Naja, *Modern Written Arabic. Volume III* (Washington D.C.: Foreign Service Institute, 1978), Preface and VII.
[390] Smith Jr., *Modern Written Arabic. Volume I*, x.
[391] Smith Jr., *Modern Written Arabic*, 219.

lesson 23 on current affairs in Moscow via the perspective of a visiting Arab gentleman – the enigmatic Mr. Hassoun (*ziyārat as-sayyid Ḥassūn fī Mūskū*), who inquiries about the nature of communism in the Soviet Union.[392] The last chapter of *Volume I* introduces more complex statecraft-related vocabulary, yet completely abandons the Middle Eastern affairs to comment on the situation in the Congo (*al-waḍʿa fī Kūnghū*).[393] Even though *Volume II* consists mainly of excerpts from various Arab newspapers, the covered topics are not necessarily related to the Arab world and were clearly selected to introduce vocabulary pertaining to a wide range of global affairs. Unlike the initial lesson *Volume I*, which aimed to familiarize the students with Arabic grammar via somewhat artificial sentences, *Volume II* is clearly "statecraft" oriented from the very beginning, and none of the presented articles diverts from this task. While it would be interesting to determine exactly which Arab newspapers were utilized for this textbook, the authors do not offer references or quotations. However, given the significant number of remarks about Lebanese politics and the physical location of the Beirut School, we can safely assume that *Volume II* is based mainly on Lebanese newspapers published approximately in the late 1960s and early 1970s (i.e., between the printing of Volumes I and II). Even though *Volume III* aims to present Arabic prose, it does not delve into the realm of fiction and follows the "practical" approach of the previous volumes, i.e., acquainting its readers with additional topics related to concepts of statecraft, commerce, history and religion in linguistically complex exercises.[394]

Unlike the FSI manuscript, which later evolved into the *Elementary Modern Standard Arabic* of 1968, *Modern Written Arabic* was clearly conceived as a course aimed at preparing the students for one of the principal tasks of modern diplomacy – the analysis of local written sources for diplomatic reporting. In other words, the authors refrained from an ambition to produce an all-in-one course and, therefore, must have considered the necessity to combine *Modern Written Arabic* with other materials and instruction to produce an Arabist able to conduct a full spectrum of diplomatic tasks – including spoken interaction with the local population and administration. This gap was filled in 1971 with James A. Snow's *Levantine Arabic – Introduction to Pronunciation*. A rather short textbook of approximately 100 pages accompanied by tape recordings was designed "to teach the student to recognize the major

[392] Smith Jr., *Modern Written Arabic*, 265.
[393] Smith Jr., *Modern Written Arabic*, 379.
[394] For instance, lesson 69 titled "Geography and History" (*Jughrāfiyā wa tārīkh*) aims to present the history of early humanity, naturally through the perspective of Abrahamic religions. See Naja, *Modern Written Arabic. Volume III*, 52.

points of phonological interference between Levantine Arabic and (…) American English (…) and to provide the student a model for mimicry."[395] With the clear appreciation for the original audio-lingual method and its main principle of constant repetition, the textbook instructs the students to "hear the sound or contrast first, and then to give him an opportunity to mimic it."[396]

In summary, by the time the FSI students were being evacuated from Beirut, they had been exposed to a course structure that would bring them from having no prior knowledge of Arabic in either colloquial or literary form to being able to converse in the Lebanese dialect and conduct advanced reading and political reporting based on MSA. Despite the indisputable importance of the Levant region for US foreign policy, the FSI also aimed to prepare its personnel for service in the Maghreb. The *Tunisian Arabic* textbook by prominent scholar of Islam, Thomas Ballantyne Irving was published in 1961. This short course of roughly 100 pages aimed to bring students to the lowest acceptable standard of speaking within the FSI – the S1.[397] Since the textbook was published in Tunis years before the FSI opened its Tunisian Field School and T.P. Irving had already compiled another textbook on Tunisian Arabic several years before,[398] the FSI course was likely a one-time attempt to familiarize the US Embassy staff with a specific Arabic dialect and not part of a larger educational framework. Regardless, the textbook served as the basis for a Peace Corps Tunisian Arabic course published five years later.[399]

Another instance of the FSI's interest in the North African region was Harlie L. Smith and Mohammed Allal Senhadji's *Moroccan Arabic Introductory Course*, which was published in two volumes in 1969,[400] one year after the FSI Field School in Tangier was shut down by FSI. In 1974, a unique FSI course titled *From Eastern to Western Arabic* was compiled by Margaret K. Omar. The short textbook (47 pages) was intended for Americans fluent in "Eastern Arabic", i.e., the Levantine Dialect wishing to transition to the Moroccan dialect. Given the critical role of the FSI Beirut School, it is no wonder that Dr Omar referred to "the Levantine dialect as our 'base' (with reference to other Eastern dialects

[395] See Snow, *Levantine Arabic – Introduction to Pronunciation*, vii.
[396] Snow, *Levantine Arabic*, vii.
[397] Thomas Ballantyne Irving, *Tunisian Arabic* (Tunis: Foreign Service Institute, 1961), Introduction.
[398] Thomas Ballantyne Irving, *Conversational Practice in Tunisian Arabic* (Austin, 1959).
[399] Toufiq Abida, *Spoken Tunisian Arabic* (The Intensive Language Center, Indiana University, 1966), 4, https://fsi-languages.yojik.eu/languages/PeaceCorps/Arabic-Tunisian/ED294424.pdf.
[400] See Harlie L. Smith and Mohammed A. Senhadji, *Moroccan Arabic Introductory Course* (Foreign Service Institute, 1969).

when appropriate)".[401] Margaret K. Omar previously utilized the same approach with the 1969 work *Levantine and Egyptian Arabic*: *Comparative Study*.[402] Given their introductory or comparative nature, these courses are mainly philologically focused and do not concentrate on cultural and social issues.

Arabic dialects of the Maghreb region were a mere part of Margaret K. Omar's professional interest. As the US State Department became increasingly invested in the Arabian Peninsula in the 1970s, Omar prepared the almost 300-page long *Saudi Arabic Basic Course (Urban Hijazi Dialect)*. Published in 1975, the textbook aimed at helping the US diplomatic offensive in Saudi Arabia[403] as the Kingdom's relations with the US were becoming increasingly strained due to US support for Israel. The course itself focused on the Arabic dialect spoken in Jidda and aimed to develop fluency up to the level of S-2 (intermediate).[404] In 50 lessons, the course follows a standardized structure of reading, grammar, vocabulary, drills, situations, and cultural notes.[405] Regardless of the didactic structure, it is very apparent that the course follows specific objectives and adheres to the pressing issues of the decade it was conceived in. From lesson 29 onward, the course gradually introduces more vocabulary and drills aimed specifically at statecraft, such as the emir's office (*maktab al-amiir*), various ministerial departments, etc., yet still discusses topics such as cuisine and education.[406]

This gradual inclination towards political topics culminates in the last five lessons of the textbook. Lesson 46 discusses various political regimes, including those in the US, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan. An interesting reference is made to the Egyptian regime: "But Egypt is a republic. (…). Yes, it has ('in it') a socialist system. (*laakin maṣur jumhuuriyya.* (…) *iiwa, fiiha niẓaaam ištiraaki*)."[407] In this case, the choice of Saudi Arabia and Jordan as Arab monarchies and Egypt as an Arab socialist republic might be a reference to the "Arab Cold War", which culminated during King Faisal's reign. A rather value-rich statement follows: "The Arab governments are against Zionism (*al-Hukuumaat al-9arabiyya ḍidd*

[401] Margaret K. Omar, *From Eastern to Western Arabic* (Washington D.C.: Foreign Service Institute, 1974), Preface, Introduction.
[402] Margaret K. Omar, *Levantine and Egyptian Arabic: Comparative Study* (Foreign Service Institute, 1969).
[403] P Margaret K. Omar, *Saudi Arabic Basic Course: Urban Hijazi Dialect* (Washington D.C.: Foreign Service Institute, 1975), Preface by James R. Frith, Dean of SLS FSI.
[404] According to Margaret K. Omar, three main dialect groups are spoken in Saudi Arabia – Hijazi (which includes the vernaculars of Jidda, Taif, Mecca and Medina), Najdi (used in Riyadh and the northern part of the country), and Shargi (spoken in the east). See Omar, *Saudi Arabic Basic Course*, Introduction, v.
[405] Omar, *Saudi Arabic Basic Course*, vi.
[406] Omar, *Saudi Arabic Basic Course*, 148f. I use the original transcription standard utilized in the textbook. This applies to all transcriptions from this textbook.
[407] Omar, *Saudi Arabic Basic Course*, 220.

aṣ-ṣahyuuniyya),"[408] foreshadowing a dedicated lesson on Arab-Israeli relations. Lesson 48 focuses on the oil-based economy of Saudi Arabia, including a reference to the oil embargo after the Ramadan War in 1972 ("*man9 al-baṭrool ṣaar ba9d Harb Ramaḍaan sanat inteen wu sab9iin*")[409]. The next lesson fully delves into the painful issue of Arab-Israeli relations, not shying away from the statement that "They say that there may be ('arise') another war between the Arabs and Israel (*yiguulu innu mumkin tiguum Harb taanya been al-9arab w israe'iil)*", and preparing a student for a possible Saudi answer: "Or at least, the feyadeen will fight until Israel withdraws from the occupied territories (*aw 9ala l-agall, al-fidaa'iyiin yiHaaribu ileen isra'iil tinsaHib min al-araaḍi l-muHtalla*)."[410] Indeed, the "Cultural Notes" section of this lesson concludes that the subject of Israel is controversial and should be avoided by foreigners – a statement reflected by a suggested sentence to accompany such a discussion: "Keep that between me and you (*xalli haada beeni wu beenak*)".[411]

As hinted previously, a dedicated area studies component was almost entirely lacking during the first years of the *FSI Arabic Language and Area School* in Beirut. This changed profoundly after 1957 over the course of the program's expansion,[412] which was aimed at bridging the Cold War linguistic gap between the US and USSR. Even though this dissertation predominantly discusses the instruction of the Arabic language, the area studies component deserves brief attention for two main reasons: First, it became an integral part of the entire Arabic course and as such took a significant amount of time (i.e., most afternoons) that the students might have otherwise dedicated to their language studies. Second, even though the textbooks might have instilled certain agendas into the US diplomatic service, lectures on history, culture, religions, and indeed politics must have certainly had a much more direct impact on their understanding of the Middle East. Since the FSI Beirut School outsourced its area studies component to the American University of Beirut, the US diplomats had an opportunity to interact with a variety of Arab professors, most of whom were proponents of conservative Arab nationalism.[413] FSI students would choose courses according to their own interests by selecting subjects such as the history of Islam, the history of the Ottoman Empire, and many others. All courses were designed

[408] Omar, *Saudi Arabic Basic Course*, 220.
[409] Omar, *Saudi Arabic Basic Course*, 231.
[410] Both sentences in Omar, *Saudi Arabic Basic Course*, 234.
[411] Omar, *Saudi Arabic Basic Course*, 234 and 237.
[412] Thomas, *American Arabists*, 90f.
[413] Thomas, 136. Most of the professors had previously studied in the US and were used to the American approach to university-level instruction. The professors included Malcolm Kerr, Zeine N. Zeine, Nicola Ziadeh, Nabih Faris, and Constantin Zurayk.

to share the task of introducing the concepts of modern politics as applied to the history of the Middle East.[414] A certain exception to the Arab lecturers was American professor Michael Kerr, who introduced subjects from the field of political science and provided an academic point of contact by which FSI students could discuss their own foreign policy opinions on the Arab world.[415]

Whether the academic discussions with Michael Kerr and other Arab intellectuals shaped the FSI students' views of US foreign policy towards the region is a question each one would have to be asked on an individual basis. As T. F. Thomas observed, FSI students and graduates were professional diplomats who would not dare to openly criticize US foreign policy.[416] However, Thomas argues that the lack of appreciation in Washington D.C.'s policy circles did not discourage graduates of the FSI Arabic and area studies programs from providing a specialized regionalist assessment. They have seen themselves as "professionals (…) committed to protecting America's vital national interests"[417] by utilizing their dispassionate expertise. In this sense, the Beirut program certainly succeeded in instilling a "tribal" mentality of "us" (the professional FSI Arabists) as opposed to "them" (the ideological Washington D.C. globalists).

With the establishment of *FSI Arabic Language and Area Studies* in Beirut, the FSI neared the British Foreign Office and its MECAS in terms of its students' linguistic exposure and surpassed it in regard to institutional anchoring, which became especially apparent as the field school (unlike MECAS) survived its expulsion from Beirut. A significant part of this success can be attributed to the gradual distribution of several dialects of Arabic language as opposed to the creation of a single "MECAS Arabic" (i.e., a mixture of Levantine Arabic and MSA) by the British. By separating MSA and the colloquial component, the FSI could later encourage a transition between dialects as distant as the Moroccan *Darija* and the *Hejazi* Arabic in Saudi Arabia.

[414] Thomas, 137.
[415] Thomas, 144.
[416] Thomas, 145.
[417] Thomas, 327.

4.4. The Defense Language Institute and its Predecessors 1941-1990

The Defense Language Institute (DLI) was established in 1954,[418] and serves this function for all institutions, be they the armed forces or non-uniformed agencies, under the auspices of the US Department of Defense.[419] Therefore, all active US military personnel as well as the National Guard make up more than 2 million potential students. These massive numbers of potential students are reflected by the staffing of the DLI – even though the number of employees and contractors has not been made public, the institution's LinkedIn profile lists between 5,001 and 10,000 employees.[420] The DLI is currently divided into two large sections: the *English Language Center*, which mainly teaches English to international guests, and the *Foreign Language Center* (DLIFLC), which we will discuss from here forth. The DLI *Foreign Language Center* currently teaches 13 foreign languages, among them Arabic as MSA and three dialects (Egyptian, Levantine, and Iraqi). The standard Arabic course lasts 64 weeks and is therefore considered to be among the most difficult languages the Institute teaches, together with Mandarin Chinese, Korean, Japanese, and Pashto.[421]

Considering that the DLI is an institution controlled by the US Department of Defense and as such caters mainly to its short-term and long-term needs, the Arabic language has not always been among the US defence establishment's priorities, especially compared to its prominence during the 21st century. Before the Second World War, the US defence establishment had not organized any dedicated language training system and, given the relatively limited footprint of the US Armed Forces in the Middle East during the war, the projected need for Arabic speakers for the war effort was catered to by the newly set-up ASTP courses organized by the Army in close cooperation with several colleges and universities. In linguistic terms, the US Armed Forces and specifically the Navy had its

[418] The English language section aimed at teaching English to members of foreign armed forces as part of US military diplomacy was established in 1954; the Foreign Language Center aimed at teaching foreign languages to members of the US Armed Forces and various DoD agencies was inaugurated in 1963.
[419] See "About Department of Defense: Our Story."
[420] "Defense Language Institute (LinkedIn Page)," LinkedIn, accessed January 26, 2023, https://www.linkedin.com/school/defense-language-institute. It should be noted that LinkedIn does not make a distinction between military staff and civilian administrators and instructors. According to the 2008-2010 Command History, the number of civilian language instructors reached 1,100 at that time.
[421] See "Languages Offered," Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, accessed January 26, 2023, https://www.dliflc.edu/about/languages-at-dliflc/. The DLIFLC lists MSA and three dialects as four different languages and therefore offers four separate courses.

sights set on an enemy whose attack on Pearl Harbour on September 7, 1941 had caught the United States by surprise. Even before the attack, various branches of the US Armed Forces were fully aware of a potential need to tackle the linguistic obstacles associated with understanding the Empire of Japan. When Japan joined the so-called Tripartite Pact together with Nazi Germany and Italy in September 1940[422] and thus further formalized its membership in the Axis, various parts of the US defence establishment immediately realized that they were ill-equipped to perform any tasks associated with knowledge of the Japanese language.[423]

The initial approach to fix this shortcoming was not dissimilar to the organization of language courses within the ASTP. Representatives of the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps were meeting with their counterparts from academia between 1940 and 1942 and discussing how US academic expertise in the Japanese language could be of service to the immediate needs of the war effort. The results were mostly disappointing for both parties, as academic philological expertise was found ill-suited for translating and interpreting the contemporary Japanese used by the Japanese Imperial forces.[424] The underlying issue was that the defence establishment suddenly approached academia at a moment when the target language was already understood as the language of the enemy.[425] This understanding was not only philosophically different from the academic one, which carried a certain appreciation for the language within a cultural context out of intellectual curiosity, but also brought with it practical constraints, as academia had only minimal experience, if any, with the kind of source material that the defence establishment sought to translate and interpret. These included intercepts, handwritten notes, official paperwork and even prisoners of war, whose vocabulary was abundant with militaristic terminology unknown to civilian staff not only in Japanese, but most likely in English as well. Furthermore, the academic environment had only limited experience with teaching a language at the pace required for the rapid deployment of American forces during a looming all-out war.

The rift between academia and the defence establishment was to be addressed by the 1958 National Defense Education Act, but the wartime situation called for an immediate

[422] The Tripartite Pact served as a de facto defence alliance between the three powers.
[423] Dingman, *Deciphering the Rising Sun,* 1.
[424] Dingman, 13. During meetings with academics from Cornell University in the spring of 1941, the attending representative of the US Army lost his temper and informed the academic staff that they could be of no use to the US Government.
[425] Representatives of the US Armed Forces referred to the Japanese as such during their search for Japanese linguistic expertise. See Dingman, *Deciphering the Rising Sun,* 1.

solution. Therefore, the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps gave up on partnership with academia and instead opted for self-organized courses for future Japanese linguists. The first question to tackle was whom to teach, as the pool of suitable candidates with a proven aptitude for language study was limited, and the number of Americans with a pre-existing knowledge of some Japanese was even more so.[426] Therefore, the various branches of the US Armed Forces not only competed against the looming Japanese threat, but also against each other in the acquisition of suitable students, instructors and funding.[427] The *nisei*, second-generation US citizens born to Japanese immigrants to the United States became the backbone for both the student body and faculty in these efforts, despite the omnipresent mistrust from other parts of the defence establishment based on their perceived Japanese nationality.[428]

The US Navy launched its accelerated Japanese language learning program called the *Navy Japanese Language School* within the campus of the University of Colorado in Boulder in late 1941.[429] In November 1941, the US Army began its own Japanese courses as part of the newly established *Fourth U.S. Army Intelligence School* in San Francisco. The school was later moved to Camp Savage in Minnesota and continued its educational efforts under the auspices of the War Department. This was mainly due to the mass expulsion of the *nisei* from the US West Coast and their subsequent confinement in internment camps.[430] The school also adopted a new designation – the *Military Intelligence Service Language School*. In 1944, the program was relocated again to Fort Snelling, Minnesota. In 1945, Korean and Chinese courses were incorporated and, by 1946, the school comprised around 160 instructors and 3,000 students.[431] In June 1946, the school was closed in Minnesota and the next reopened at the Presidio of Monterey in California as the *U.S. Army Language School.*[432] Within several years after the conclusion of the war, more language divisions

[426] These events were taking place in 1941, i.e., before the ASTP test battery was incorporated.
[427] Dingman, *Deciphering the Rising Sun,* 9.
[428] James C. McNaughton, *Nisei Linguists: Japanese Americans in the Military Intelligence Service During World War II* (Washington D.C.: Department of the Army, 2006), 96, https://history.army.mil/html/books/nisei_linguists/CMH_70-99-1.pdf.
[429] See "Navy Japanese Language School", Densho Encyclopedia, accessed January 26, 2023, http://encyclopedia.densho.org/Navy%20Japanese%20Language%20School/.
[430] "Navy Japanese Language School", Executive order 9066 was issued by US president F. D. Roosevelt on February 19, 1942, as part of the US response to the Pearl Harbor attack. The order lasted until March 1946 and affected roughly 120,000 people of Japanese origin, around 80,000 of whom were *nisei* with US citizenship by birth.
[431] See "Navy Japanese Language School."
[432] See Binkley, *The Defense Language Institute*, 72.

and specialized courses were added to the Army Language School, which finally included Arabic, Turkish, and Persian in 1947.[433]

Simultaneously with its counterpart from the Army, the Navy Japanese program continued until 1946 and was later transferred under the *Language Department of the Naval Intelligence School*. Eventually, the language programs administered by the Army, Navy, and Air Force were integrated into the newly founded *Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center* in 1963 under the auspices of the US Department of Defense and the command of the Army. The *Language Department of the Naval Intelligence School* did retain some distinction even after its incorporation into the DLI – while the Army Language School was transformed into the *DLI West Coast Branch*, the Navy facilities constituted the *DLI East Coast Branch*. [434] In 1974, the *DLI West Coast* absorbed the *DLI East Coast*, thus resulting in one all-encompassing instruction residing in the Presidio of Monterey.[435] Only a small DLI office remained in Washington D.C., mainly to provide administrative support to students formally enlisted in the DLI but taught in the FSI courses.[436]

The early stages of Arabic language instruction at the *Army School of Languages* and the DLI until the 1970s remain somewhat shrouded. One of the few references to Arabic courses taught at the *Army School of Languages* before its incorporation into the DLI in 1963 is a caption under an archival photograph of a class of two students and their instructor Bishara Lawrence from 1952 in the official pictorial history of the DLI.[437] The first post-1963 evidence of Arabic courses appears in the same publication with a description of a 1965 photograph of professor George M. Jubran, who taught Arabic at the DLI East Coast branch (and therefore most likely to have taught students coming from the Navy).[438] Another piece

[433] Binkley, *The Defense Language Institute*, 74.
[434] Binkley, *The Defense Language Institute*, 96. A DLI section dedicated to Vietnamese instruction during the US incursion into Vietnam was functional between 1966 and 1973. It was usually referred to as the "Southwest Branch.". See *DLI Catalogue of Resident Courses 1978-79* (Presidio of Monterey - California: Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center), 9.
[435] Binkley, *The Defense Language Institute*, 121.
[436] James C, McNaughton, *Annual Command History 1986* (Presidio of Monterey, California: Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, August 1988), 8 and 20, https://www.dliflc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/1986ACH.pdf.
[437] Binkley, *The Defense Language Institute*, 74.
[438] Binkley, *The Defense Language Institute*, 98.

of evidence is a remark about Jawdat Y. Yonan, who served as an Arabic instructor in the 1960s before becoming the director of the *School of East European Studies*.[439]

The 1978-79 *Catalog of Resident Courses* offers an overview of the entire organizational structure of the DLI in the late 1970s with the Arabic language, along with Albanian, Hebrew, Hungarian, Persian, Romanian, Turkish, and Urdu listed as part of the "Middle Eastern/South European Group" of the "DLI Directorate of Training" .[440] Even though this organizational chart refers to a period after two significant organizational changes (the 1963 establishment of the DLI Foreign Language Center and the 1974 merger of DLI West Coast and DLI East Coast), we can assume similar organizational structures were already in place by the end of the 1940s. This is mainly due to archival evidence that Greek was introduced around 1947 together with Arabic, Persian, and Turkish instruction due to an increasing need for Greek speakers as the Greek Civil War neared its conclusion in 1949[441] and the United States became increasingly worried about communist influence in South-Eastern Europe.

A relative lack of evidence about the institutionalization of Arabic language instruction between 1947 and 1974 can be partially explained by the limited physical presence of the US Armed Forces in the Middle East, with the exception of several military installations, such as the Dhahran Air Base. In the meantime, the growing commercial and political ties between the US and the region were mainly catered to by the State Department and via expansion of the FSI. However, this situation was to change gradually between the mid-1970s and mid-1980s. Critical challenges included the rise of international terrorism originating from MENA, the prevention and investigation of which gave prominence to Arabic linguists trained by the DLI, who were increasingly absorbed by the *National Security Agency*, one of the principal US bodies tasked with obtaining signals intelligence.[442]

In organizational terms, the gradual improvement of Arabic instruction was initially impeded by a significant change in the organization of the entire scope of the US Army's training system. In 1973, the *US Army Training and Doctrine Command* (often abbreviated as TRADOC) was introduced and given complete control over all army schools and training

[439] McNaughton, *Annual Command History 1986*, 42.
[440] *DLI Catalog of Resident Courses 1978-79*, 4.
[441] Binkley, *The Defense Language Institute*, 74. A similar situation applies to the instruction of the Romanian language documented in 1952, see Binkley, 76.
[442] McNaughton, *Annual Command History 1986*, 3 and 5-7.

centres, including the DLI. This led to an immediate but futile protest by the DLI, which understood this new structure as a potential obstacle in communication with its clients in other branches of the US Armed Forces as well as the Department of Defense.[443] In 1981, another structural element – the *General Officer Steering Committee* – was placed between TRADOC and the DLI leadership to overcome this obstacle and streamline communication between the institute and some of its clients. Despite initial mistrust, the system proved rather effective and provided a stable platform on which the role of the DLI within the entire US defence community could be discussed.[444]

Throughout the 1980s, significant improvements were achieved within the ranks of teaching staff and their interaction with students. The commandants, i.e., the supreme directors of the entire DLI, played a critical role in this development. First was colonel David N. McNerney, who held the post between 1981 and 1985. With his background in logistics, military construction, budgeting, and manpower, he set to bring order into the organizationally intertwined yet practically disparate world of military administrators and civilian language instructors. He created an entirely new position of "Military Language Instructors", who now worked side by side with resident civilian instructors, thus gaining active teaching experience while also improving their own linguistic expertise.[445] Furthermore, McNerney worked towards standardizing a contract system for civilian employees, who were often temporary hires and thus had limited prospects of pay raises. This reform was finalized by McNerney's successor, Colonel Monte Bullard, who became DLI Commandant in August 1985. Having spent much of his previous career as a Chinese Foreign Area Officer originally trained by the DLI in the Chinese language in 1959, Bullard understood the value of civilian teachers.[446] He introduced the standardized *General Schedule* pay scale, which provided a deeper sense of organizational culture, job security, and prospects of advancement to the language instructors.[447] Both McNerney and Bullard also sought

[443] McNaughton, *Annual Command History 1986*, 7.
[444] McNaughton, *Annual Command History 1986*, 13.
[445] La Selva, *Babel by the Bay*, chapter "The McNerney Years (1981-1985) – A Time to Build at DLIFLC," section "Military Professional Development."
[446] La Selva, *Babel by the Bay*, section "Civilian personnel," and chapter "The Evolution of Team Teaching at DLI (1985-2005)."
[447] La Selva, *Babel by the Bay*, Chapter "The Evolution," also, McNaughton, *Annual Command History 1986*, 13-15.

to increase the instructor-per-student ratio, which had originally been 1.43 instructors per 10 students to almost 2 instructors per 10 students.[448]

All the factors mentioned above had a direct impact on Arabic instruction at the DLI, even though the projected numbers of Arabic students did not constantly increase. To illustrate this fact, the total number of DLI students per year steadily rose from around 3,400 by the mid-1970s to roughly 5,200 students by the mid-1980s.[449] Among them, a total of 329 students enrolled in the Arabic program in 1977, dropping to 198 students in 1980, increasing to 390 students in 1983, 590 students in 1985, and dropping to 463 students a year later.[450] Even an official conceptual communiqué by Commandant Bullard produced in 1986 acknowledged that fluctuation in student enrolment was highly problematic and, apart from understandable developments in global political affairs, might be caused by "poor identification of requirements by the Services and the lack of an institutionalized mechanism to smooth out the wide load swings from year to year."[451] An overview of the numbers of Arabic students presented above supports this argument and points to a system of a reactive nature, as evidenced by the sudden increase (and subsequent decline) in Arabic students following the 1983 Beirut bombing. However, it ought to be noted that by the mid-1980s, Arabic was among the most widely taught languages at the DLI together with Russian, Spanish, German, and Korean.[452] To facilitate such a scope of Arabic instruction, the DLI employed 75 Arabic instructors in 1987 and 85 instructors a year later.[453] These figures suggest a roughly 6:1 student-instructor ratio, thus nearing the ratio required by both of the DLI Commandants of the 1980s.

Nearing the end of the 1980s, events in the Middle East once again prompted an increase in the numbers of Arabic linguists produced by the DLI. The 1988 DLI Command History stressed the need for Arabic speakers due to the First Palestinian Intifada, which erupted in December 1987, the deteriorating situation in Lebanon, and the conclusion

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[448] La Selva, *Babel by The Bay*, chapter "The McNerney Years (1981-1985) – A Time to Build at DLIFLC," section "Academic initiatives;" also McNaughton, *Annual Command History 1986*, 14.
[449] McNaughton, *Annual Command History 1986*, 1.
[450] McNaughton, *Annual Command History 1986*, 24. The 1987 Command History records a further 22% drop in Arabic students, see James C, McNaughton, *Annual Command History 1987* (Presidio of Monterey, California: Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, June 1989), 33, https://www.dliflc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/1987ACH.pdf.
[451] Quoted here from McNaughton, *Annual Command History 1986*, 24.
[452] McNaughton, *Annual Command History 1986*, 24.
[453] McNaughton, *Annual Command History 1987*, 30; Also James C, McNaughton, *Annual Command History 1988* (Presidio of Monterey, California: Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, October 1990), 34, https://www.dliflc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/1988ACH.pdf.

of the Iran-Iraq war.[454] Even before the first incursion into Iraq, the US' "boots on the ground" were gaining further prominence. In early 1989, a special video training program was prepared for 250 US soldiers preparing for deployment to the *Multinational Force and Observers* peacekeeping mission in the Sinai Peninsula.[455] A 40-hour country-specific regional orientation program was also prepared for servicemen deploying to Egypt.[456] In summary, by the end of the 1980s, the DLI had become a well-organized institution with a clearly defined place within the US establishment. From the very beginning, its linguistic focus was dictated by external factors such as US military campaigns, both existing and projected. This affected the scope of DLI Arabic language programs, which only gained prominence with the global events of the 1980s but were still far from the main focus of the institute. This situation would change significantly due to later events both in the Middle East and on US soil, which catalysed the Middle Eastern campaigns of the 1990s and 2000s.

4.5. The Army Language School and Early DLI: Arabic Language Curricula

The aforementioned lack of details surrounding the early DLI Arabic programs until the late 1970s limits our understanding of what the curricula might have looked like. To partially overcome this lack of evidence, I propose an extrapolation of available information from programs aimed at the instruction of other more documented languages in the 1941-1963 era, and its comparison with remarks about the past Arabic programs from the post-1970 Arabic curricula, as well as some points about the foundational logic of DLI language instruction. While this approach will not allow us to analyse certain elements of the curricula – such as the "language of the enemy" sentiment – with great precision, it will provide us with an ample understanding of how the logic behind the Arabic courses evolved

[454] McNaughton, *Annual Command History 1988*, 33.
[455] James C, McNaughton, *Annual Command History 1989* (Presidio of Monterey, California: Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, September 1991), 40, https://www.dliflc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/1989ACH.pdf. The MFO is a peacekeeping mission safeguarding the provisions of the 1979 Egypt Israel Peace Treaty. The peacekeeping mission was founded and continues to operate outside the framework of the UN due to the historic threat of a USSR veto (at the request of Syria) to an UN-sanctioned peacekeeping force.
[456] McNaughton, *Annual Command History 1989*, 35.

in the initial decades of the DLI's history and how it translated into its more contemporary period.

Since the DLI carried the legacy of the Army School of Languages and before it the Army and Navy's specialized Japanese courses, it is worth noting how Japanese courses were organized on a structural level. The first class of the Fourth U.S. Army Intelligence School, which was inaugurated in November 1941, consisted of 58 Japanese-American *nisei* and two *non-nisei* servicemen who already had prior knowledge of the Japanese language.[457] However, most of the participants were completely unfamiliar with Japanese military terminology. The course lasted for 5-6 months, 10 hours a day, with an additional workload requiring the students to study until late at night. The curriculum included all the traditional disciplines – reading, writing, listening and additional regional knowledge. Given the military nature of the course, the students also focused on techniques associated with wartime activity, such as communication interception, interrogation of Japanese prisoners of war, etc.[458] As the war neared its conclusion, the Japanese language curricula were reoriented towards tasks required by the prospects of the post-war administration of surrendered Japan.[459]

The extensive employment of native speakers (in this case *nisei*¸ i.e., native speakers of Japanese) who were US citizens at the same time became a general trademark for most DLI language programs. A significant difference between wartime Japanese programs and later instruction was the makeup of students. As the wartime program aimed to prepare students for immediate deployment to the Pacific theatre and their rapid employment in more demanding linguistic tasks such as interpreting, selecting students from among the Japanese speaking *nisei* was a natural choice. The lack of open conflict during the Cold War allowed the institute to focus on students with no prior knowledge of the language under the condition that they would perform linguistically oriented tasks after their graduation.[460] With non-native speakers as students, the programs also boosted their cultural immersion aspect, following the logic that no language exists in a cultural vacuum. Therefore, besides the military aspects associated with kinetic warfighting, the programs

[457] Arnold T. Hiura, "John Alfred Burden: Plantation Doctor Pioneered MIS Efforts in the Pacific and Asia," *The Hawaii Herald*, July 2, 1993, quoted here from Kelli Y. Nakamura, "Military Intelligence Service Language School," online, Densho Encyclopedia, accessed January 26, 2023, https://encyclopedia.densho.org/Military_Intelligence_Service_Language_School/.
[458] See Yuki Kikuchi and Yoko Hayashi Horiuchi, *The Pacific War of the Nisei in Hawaii* (Hawaii: Pearl City, 1999), 79.
[459] Nakamura, "Military Intelligence Service Language School."
[460] See "Educational Philosophy and Purpose" in *DLI Catalog of Resident Courses 1978-79*, 9.

increasingly focused on the cultural, political, economic, and social spheres of the countries where the instructed languages were spoken.[461]

The immense difficulty of attaining a working knowledge of the language was a noticeable factor linking Japanese and Arabic instruction throughout the institute's history. Both languages, together with Chinese and Korean, have always been listed in Category IV, i.e., the most difficult languages for a native-English speaker to learn. By the end of the 1970s, most students went through the *Basic Course*, which in the case of MSA lasted 36 weeks; in the case of the Egyptian, Iraqi, and Syrian dialect, it lasted 46 weeks.[462] Students who returned to the DLI after completing the *Basic Course* (for example due to overseas deployment) had a chance to follow up with the *Intermediary Course*, which, in the case of Arabic, was only offered in the Egyptian and Syrian dialect and lasted 36 weeks.[463] *Advanced courses* were also offered for graduates heading for supervisory positions in cryptological agencies, with a 32-week course on the Egyptian dialect being the only advanced Arabic program on offer.[464] The only other two languages offered at this level were Chinese-Mandarin and Russian,[465] which speaks volumes about the importance that the US defence establishment awarded to Egyptian Arabic in the years of the Camp David Accords and the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty. A specialized eight-week course on Saudi Arabic was also offered on an individual basis.[466]

According to Benjamin De La Selva's account of reforms made by Commandant McNerney in the early 1980s, the Arabic course was the only Category IV language that won the approval to be extended to 63 weeks despite strong objections from the Air Force and Navy.[467] The course was now divided into 47 weeks of MSA instruction, followed by 16 weeks of dedicated dialect instruction (*extension*). This scheme was updated in 1989, when the basic MSA course and its extension were merged into 63 weeks of continuous instruction "using a dialect 'flavour' instead of a separate extension course for the spoken Egyptian and Syrian dialects the cryptologic user agencies overwhelmingly preferred."[468] While this alteration might seem minuscule at first glance, it must have had a significant impact

[461] *DLI Catalog of Resident Courses 1978-79*, 11.
[462] *DLI Catalog of Resident Courses 1978-79*, 28.
[463] *DLI Catalog of Resident Courses 1978-79*, 33.
[464] *DLI Catalog of Resident Courses 1978-79*, 34.
[465] *DLI Catalog of Resident Courses 1978-79*, 34.
[466] *DLI Catalog of Resident Courses 1978-79*, 32.
[467] La Selva, *Babel by the Bay*, chapter "The McNerney Years (1981-1985)," section "Academic initiatives."
[468] McNaughton, *Annual Command History 1989*, 31.

on the numbers of resident students, as all Arabic students now received the full 63 weeks of instruction. Furthermore, the 63-week course became the "golden standard" for all Category IV language courses and remains so until the present day. Certain dialects were omitted and added to the course offering throughout the years. For example, while Saudi Arabic was only offered as a specialized course in the late 1970s, it was completely removed from the course catalogue in 1986, then added as a full dialect with the same properties as Egyptian, Iraqi, and Syrian Arabic by the end of 1980s. In the 1992-1993 catalogue, Saudi and Iraqi Arabic courses were replaced with *Gulf Arabic*.[469] Partnership with the FSI in Washington D.C. was utilized by offering a 44-week basic course on Maghrebi Arabic.[470]

When studying the specifics of Arabic language instruction, the apparent issue that the DLI had to face was the lack of a standardized language course, especially with regard to the militaristic aspect of the course. While employment of Arab-American tutors might have worked rather well in terms of passing on individual knowledge of the language, the standardization, evaluation, and other organizational tasks so inherent to virtually any military in the world were rather difficult to achieve with such an individualistic approach. Furthermore, the wartime origins of DLI's predecessors allowed for a certain organizational leeway in favour of swift results and their application in action. However, this would have certainly proven problematic in a larger, more bureaucratically burdened structure that had to continuously present its effectiveness without an ongoing military encounter. Until at least 1975, the MSA textbooks *Elementary Modern Standard Arabic* (1968) and *Intermediate Modern Standard Arabic* (1971) compiled by Peter F. Abboud and Ernest N. McCarus were utilized in the DLI Modern Standard Arabic courses. As discussed previously, the 1968 publication had originated in the FSI school in Beirut and later became the basis for a collaboration between several American Arabic teachers, which began around 1966 during an Arabic Teachers' Workshop at Columbia University.[471]

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[469] *DLI Catalog of Resident Courses 1978-79*, 32; *General Catalog 1986* (Presidio of Monterey, California: Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, 1986), 40, https://www.dliflc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/DLIcatalog1986.pdf; *General Catalog 1989-1990* (Presidio of Monterey, California: Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, 1989), 37, https://www.dliflc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/DLIcatalog1989-1990.pdf; *General Catalog 1992-1993* (Presidio of Monterey, California: Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, 1992), 29, https://www.dliflc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/DLIcatalog1992-1993.pdf.

[470] *DLI Catalog of Resident Courses 1978-79*, 29. The Catalog does not mention which specific Maghrebi dialect was offered, but given the FSI's long-lasting focus on Darija, we can assume it was this highly specific Moroccan form of the language.

[471] Abboud and McCarus, *Elementary Modern Standard Arabic*; and Peter F. Abboud and Ernest McCarus, *Intermediate Modern Standard Arabic* (Ann Harbor, Michigan, 1971), reference to the earlier workshop on page iii.

The acknowledgements at the beginning of the 1971 textbook make no reference to the Department of Defense and, while acknowledging that the course was developed under a contract from the U.S. Office of Education, they subsequently state that the course does not necessarily reflect the policy of this office, and no official endorsement should be inferred.[472] The content of the textbook indeed follows what we might call standard civilian discourse (i.e., notes on travel, Arabic traditions, Arabic poetry, etc.) and offers no relevance to any subject associated with the military, national security, or any form of statecraft.

By 1975, Arabic courses were being developed inside the DLI. The first available textbook was the 1975 *Modern Standard Arabic: Basic Course* and associated *Glossary.*[473] The preface to the textbook offers no explanation of the circumstances leading to its creation. However, the overall description of the course clearly follows all the aforementioned traits the DLI courses have shared. The course consists of 18 volumes and was designed for a full-time resident in Monterey who was to dedicate all his work hours to the language study. Furthermore, the course was supposed to be taught by "qualified instructors who are educated speakers of Modern Standard Arabic".[474] The overall structure of the introductory course textbook was more oriented towards the grammatical structure of Modern Standard Arabic and did not project a very significant focus on military affairs. However, the militaristic orientation of the course was quite apparent in the associated *Glossary,* which was ordered alphabetically. The selection of terms that a graduate of a basic MSA course was to learn included terms such as control towers (*abrāj al-murāqaba*, p. 2)*;* branches of armed forces (*asliḥa*, p. 14); to launch a rocket/to bombard (*ʻiitlaq sārūkh*, p. 16); interference in a radio signal (*tashwīsh*, p. 44); signal forces (*silāḥ al-ishāra*, p. 76); or artillery branch (*silāḥ al-midfaʿīya*, p. 77).

This leaning towards militaristic vocabulary is the only giveaway that the course was produced by the DLI and its recipients were members of the US Armed Forces and the Department of Defense agencies. This is in stark contrast with textbooks produced in later years, especially those concerned with various Arabic dialects. A possible explanation might be twofold: First, the course was mainly derived from existing civilian textbooks, and the militaristic aspect was supplemented in class by native instructors.

[472] Peter F. Abboud and Ernest McCarus, *Intermediate Modern Standard Arabic*, title page.
[473] *Modern Standard Arabic Basic Course* (Presidio of Monterey, California: Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, 1975 (revised 1981).
[474] *Modern Standard Arabic Basic Course*, ii.

According to pictorial evidence, such instruction was already taking place in 1952, only five years after the Arabic courses were first introduced. The photograph in the official DLI pictorial history shows two students practising Arabic military vocabulary over a mock-up phone in a simulated field exercise.[475] A second possible explanation might be that the instructors behind the course understood that MSA is in a way an artificial product and for many students only a springboard toward the future study of one of the Arabic dialects. Therefore, the MSA course might have been intentionally organized in a very formalistic manner, while the cultural immersion, practical exercises, etc., were to be introduced during subsequent dialect courses.

Beginning in the early 1980s, textbooks for 14-week supplemental courses for Arabic dialects were gradually introduced. Between 1981 and 1986, the first edition of the Egyptian Arabic Course divided into 12 modules was gradually introduced. The first four modules consisting of 16 lessons took students from *greetings, introduction, asking for time and directions*, and culminated in a combined exercise focused on *travel around Egypt*.[476] With modules 5 to 8, militaristic terminology was rather bluntly introduced with lessons 17 to 32, which focus on the following subjects: *Army Organization Part I; Army Organization Part II; Air Force; Navy; Military Training and Services; Ground Force Activity; Air Field Activity; Port Activity; Radio Communications; Map Reading; Interrogation; Liaison Officer; Military Uniforms and Equipment; Heavy Weapons and Vehicles; Combat and Transport Aircraft;* and *Warships and Submarines.*[477] Modules 9 to 12 then returned to more "civilian" topics, covering *Geography; Government; History; Religion; Customs; Family Structure; Income and Standard of Living; The Press; Broadcasting; Literature; Performing Arts; Internal Security; Financial Affairs; Public Service – Part A; Public Service – Part B.*[478] This or at least a very similar order of lesson subjects seems to have become a template for other dialects as well, with the Syrian Arabic course being almost identically organized.[479] A possible, albeit undocumented explanation might be that the course designers understood the undeniable desire of their students, who came from all parts of the US defence establishment, to delve into the topics of their "professional concern" as soon as possible. At the same time, the civilian instructors might have followed their expertise, which defined

[475] Binkley, *The Defense Language Institute*, 74.
[476] *DLI Egyptian Arabic Course. Module I* (Presidio of Monterey, California: Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, 1981); Module II published in 1982, Module III in 1982, Module IV in 1982.
[477] *DLI Egyptian Arabic Course*. *Modules V-VIII* published 1982-1983. Objectives on page 1 in every module.
[478] *DLI Egyptian Arabic Course*. *Modules IX-XII* published 1983-1986.
[479] See *DLI Syrian Arabic Course. Modules I-XII* (Presidio of Monterey, California: Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, 1983-1985).

the range of topics that a fluent language speaker should be able to cover in terms of vocabulary. Therefore, the resulting scope and order of topics discussed in the dialect courses might have been a matter of compromise between the professional orientation of DLI as a military school and the proven method of teaching a language.

Because the dialect courses were aimed at students with a developed knowledge of MSA, i.e., graduates of 47 weeks of 30-hour-a-week instruction, they followed a standardized structure without the need for introductory parts such as reading and writing Arabic script. For example, each lesson of Modules 1 to 7 of the Egyptian Arabic course began with a demonstration of grammatical features unique to the dialect, followed by *Communicative Exchanges* and associated *Explanatory Notes*, a set of *Classroom Exercises, Homework, Summary, Reference Grammar*, *Evaluation, Enrichment* (further explanation of vocabulary pertaining to the given subject), and *Vocabulary.* In latter modules, this structure was simplified by omitting the section on grammar.[480] In terms of understanding the logic behind the courses, perhaps the most telling sections are the *Explanatory Notes*, especially those in the section on military affairs and advanced topics such as *Government, Financial Affairs*, etc. To begin with, Lesson 17 on the Egyptian military explains that even though "the Egyptian Army is not equivalent to that of the US Army, this lesson (and the following lessons: author's note) will present the Arabic words for these components."[481] This was understandable, as this lesson was intended to be the students' first exposure to the organization system of an Arab military; therefore, introduction via the US military structure (ranks, insignia, etc.) must have been much smoother.

By the 1980s, the United States enjoyed somewhat stable relations with the Egyptian regime, which was fortified by blossoming military cooperation. Therefore, the content of some *Communicative Exercises, Drills, Classroom Exercises,* and *Explanatory Notes* reflects this spirit of cooperation. In one classroom exercise of Lesson 17, students were supposed to role-play situations such as hitching a ride with an Egyptian captain, meeting other Egyptian *counterparts*, interacting with their Egyptian secretary, and even visiting an Egyptian army base.[482] In Module 7, students were supposed to discuss a visit from American General Steve Anderson to the Al Nasr Camp.[483] Even the dialogue

[480] *DLI Egyptian Arabic Course*. *Modules I-XII*, section "Contents."
[481] *DLI Egyptian Arabic Course*. *Module V*, 7.
[482] *DLI Egyptian Arabic Course*, 27.
[483] *DLI Egyptian Arabic Course*, 128.

in Module 10 on the subject of *Religion* shows a friendly exchange between US Sergeant Robert George and his Egyptian *friend* Samir in Cairo.[484] It ought to be noted that especially in lessons focused on military terminology, most dialogues, drills, etc., take place *within* the Egyptian military and are therefore more focused on Egyptian internal affairs than US-Egyptian relations. The same applies to a general lack of references to Egypt's standing vis-à-vis the surrounding countries. Even exercises focused directly on various aspects of warfighting in Modules 5-8 usually refer to a vaguely defined "enemy" without clearly stating who this adversary might be. For instance, in Lesson 27, which is focused on *Interrogation*, an exercise is presented in which "Colonel Hasan" interrogates the captured "commander of enemy Battalion 107". Over the course of the conversation, neither the nationality of Colonel Hasan nor the captured *enemy* is ever revealed. The *enemy's* affiliation is only referred to as "your forces" (*alqiadat bitaeatikum*). In a rather "Oriental" turn of events, Col. Hasan swears he will do anything to pry the information out of his prisoner, who in reply reminds him that he should not be tortured given his status as a prisoner of war.[485]

The first edition of the Syrian Arabic course organized into 12 modules was gradually released between 1983 and 1985. Following roughly the same structure as the Egyptian course, the regional focus was placed on Syria and Lebanon. This duality allowed the curriculum to partially bypass the fact that the Syrian regime was seen as adversarial to the United States.[486] Therefore, the drills and role-playing of Lesson 17 on *Army Organization* present a US serviceman visiting a Lebanese, not Syrian base[487], which would have been impossible by the time the course was introduced. Besides these nuances, however, the Egyptian and Syrian courses were practically identical. In Lesson 37, which is focused on the subject of religion, American *Danny* discusses the region with his Syrian friend *Adnan*, who patiently explains religious plurality in Syria.[488] Similarly to the Egyptian course, the nature of the "enemy" in lessons dealing with warfighting is never explored, and various lessons are situated within the ranks of both the Lebanese and Syrian military.

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[484] *DLI Egyptian Arabic Course*. *Module X*, 5.
[485] *DLI Egyptian Arabic Course*. *Module VII*, 83f. See also Fig. V.
[486] Officially speaking, Syria has been on the US' State Sponsors of Terrorism list since the list's inception in 1979 "because of its continued support of terrorism and terrorist groups, its former occupation of Lebanon, its pursuit of weapons of mass destruction and missile programs and use of chemical weapons, and its ongoing efforts to undermine U.S. and international stabilization activities in Iraq and Syria." See "U.S. Relations With Syria: Bilateral Relations Fact Sheet," U.S. Department of State: Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, January 20, 2021, accessed January 23, 2023, https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-syria/#:~:text=The%20United%20States%20established%20diplomatic,of%20the%20Arab%2DIsraeli%20War.
[487] *DLI Syrian Arabic Course*. *Module V*, 29.
[488] *DLI Syrian Arabic Course*. *Module X*, 13.

A direct comparison of the Egyptian and Syrian Arabic courses offers several insights. First, it is rather apparent that they follow a very similar, if not the same template. This also suggests that the team that prepared the courses on a structural level (i.e., not the vocabulary, etc.) might have been very similar in terms of its personal composition. The courses follow an identical structure, and even the dialogues, whether on interrogation or religion, are very similar. In light of the situation between the US and Egypt in the 1980s, more information seems to be given about the Egyptian Army than the Lebanese and Syrian ones. Even though the Syrian Arabic course does not present any interaction between the US and Syrian military, it does follow the Egyptian template by showing friendly interaction between Americans and Syrians in a civilian setting. Neither course presents the Arab armies as adversarial to the United States. On the contrary, the Egyptian and Lebanese army are shown as partners to the US military. Despite the international situation between the US and Syria by the time of the course's release, neither the Syrian army nor the regime are discussed as enemies of the United States.

On the other hand, the fact that the dialect courses offered a truly deep insight into the internal functioning of several Arab armies, including their command structure, technology, and modes of communication, suggests a significant level of pragmatism on the part of those who compiled the curricula. It would seem that they did not aim at all to instil a notion of an Arab nation as an enemy to the DLI students. However, they certainly provided a sufficient toolkit to utilize the Arabic language should the necessity to wage war alongside or against an Arab military arise. Another course focused on the Iraqi dialect was first released in September 1983. At the time this dissertation was written, I was only able to identify the first module, which consists of four lessons. This introduction follows the exact same structure and topical focus of the Egyptian and Syrian Arabic courses.[489] The compilation of the Iraqi dialectical course was most likely enabled by the gradually warming relations between the United States and Iraq during the 1980s.[490] However, the most significant utilization of the course by far only occurred almost a decade later during the First Gulf War.

The way courses were organized in the DLI classrooms continued to change throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Perhaps the most significant alteration was the gradual implementation

[489] *DLI Iraqi Arabic* (Presidio of Monterey, California: Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, 1983).

[490] In 1982, the US removed Iraq from the list of countries supporting terrorism. This allowed economic interchange, as well as the gradual opening of diplomatic relations. One of the underlying reasons was US covert assistance to Iraq during the Iran-Iraq war. These cordial relations ceased in 1990 as the First Gulf War began.

of *team teaching* by the mid-1980s. The concept was developed by Commandant Bullard and provost (i.e., chief civilian instructor) Dr Ray Clifford. In their own words, "the concept is based on a commitment at all levels of the organization to build trust and a sense of personal involvement among faculty and staff, and thereby, to create an environment in which teachers are allowed to reach their full professional potential".[491] In practice, the concept meant "fixing a ratio of six teachers for every three ten-student sections (…), which would allow for sharing of administrative duties, coaching, and substitutions to cover for illnesses and other absences."[492] Team teaching was first tested in the Czech and Arabic Departments and was immensely successful, resulting in significant improvement of student test scores.[493] An understandable benefit of this organization was the fostering of personal attachments between the students and a multitude of instructors, as well as the development of mutual trust between the faculty. Alternating between several native instructors of one language or even dialect also exposed students to a range of voices and possible pronunciations of individual phrases. To maintain a basic measure of quality, all Arabic courses were accompanied by audio recordings of all lessons in the written material. In 1987, the Arabic Department also tried to modernize the MSA course by introducing the commercially produced teaching material "Gulf to Ocean", which utilized then very modern video discs.[494]

In summarizing the establishment and eventual development of the DLI and its predecessors during the Cold War, it is safe to assume that Arabic language instruction was initially understood as one of the less critical tasks of the institutions. On a political level, this was mainly caused by a small number of "boots on the ground" in the Arabic speaking world. Although Arabic courses were introduced into the *Army Language School* at a relatively early stage, Arabic language instruction fully blossomed only from the mid-1970s and reached its peak during the reforms of the 1980s. This development coincided first with the increasing interest of the United States in transnational affairs originating from the Middle East and later with the increasing numbers of US servicemen stationed directly in the region, frequently in liaison with Arabic speaking host countries. As we have seen, the impetus behind boosting the Arabic language program frequently came in response to a significant historical event rather than long-term planning on the part of US defence policy-makers. Nonetheless, the gradual

[491] McNaughton, *Annual Command History* 1987, 20.
[492] McNaughton, *Annual Command History* 1987, 20.
[493] McNaughton, *Annual Command History* 1987, 20.
[494] McNaughton, *Annual Command History* 1987, 26.

improvements in Arabic programs throughout the 1980s made the US defence establishment linguistically better prepared for the events that would arise in the early 1990s.

4.6. Defense Language Institute after the Cold War

Intensive language instruction within the military domain was one of many manifestations of the pervasive Cold War. From the United States' perspective, the "enemy" was clearly defined in both ideological and geographical terms: proponents of communism as presented by the USSR, and the geographical area of the Soviet Union, including its satellite and proxy countries. Therefore, Arabic language instruction was to a large extent determined by Soviet presence in Arabic speaking proxy states, as well as the US' long-term commitment to the containment strategy, which aimed at developing cordial relations with Arab allies. It is safe to assume that this underlying logic for the substantial and long-term investment into linguistic proficiency within the US defence establishment would have been challenged if the end of the Cold War presented a Fukuyama-esque "end of history".[495]

In terms of Arabic language instruction at the DLI, nothing could have been further from the truth. The institute's Commandant Donald C. Fischer, who assumed command in 1989, called 1990 "year one of the post-Cold War era, the year of Desert Shield".[496] Indeed, the First Gulf War between August 1990 and February 1991 presented an unparalleled opportunity for DLI Arabic programs by "thrusting the Middle East School onto centre stage".[497] Simultaneously, such a large-scale deployment of DLI Arabists highlighted a multitude of issues of both a practical and conceptual nature. As the First Gulf War was waged, the DLI pledged to provide large quantities of Arabic language training materials to any interested party, as well as to provide refresher courses to the deploying servicemen with a pre-existing knowledge of Arabic.[498] These efforts were not confined to Monterey. A language-assessment team consisting of DLI staff was sent to Saudi Arabia

[495] I am of course referring Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (Free Press, 1992), which presented Western liberal democracy as the ultimate form of government.
[496] James C. McNaughton, *Annual Command History 1990* (Presidio of Monterey, California: Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, January 1992), Introduction, https://www.dliflc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/1990ACH.pdf.
[497] McNaughton, *Annual Command History 1990*, 23.
[498] McNaughton, *Annual Command History 1990*, 8.

in November 1990 and reported an urgent need for more textbooks, tapes, and additional instruction.[499] Special introductory MSA courses for personnel with knowledge of other foreign languages and a high aptitude for language learning were introduced in various locations in the US and Europe – among them the British Army School of Languages in Beaconsfield.[500] Paradoxically, the war ended before most of these courses could reach their conclusion.[501]

To further compensate for the sudden lack of Arabic speakers, the Army opted for the short-term employment of native-language speakers, mainly Kuwaiti nationals studying at US colleges and universities.[502] The expedited hiring of native-Kuwaiti speakers highlights another element of the personnel issue the DLI had to address during the First Gulf War and immediately afterwards. A large majority of DLI-trained linguists had no exposure to the distinct dialects of Iraq, Kuwait, or Saudi Arabia. Even though the courses in MSA, Levantine, and Syrian dialects had undisputable value, they couldn't provide a linguistic background solid enough to successfully tackle a new Arabic dialect in the short timeframe provided by the conflict.[503] This obstacle became so significant that it even caught the attention of the commander of the international coalition during the Gulf War, Norman Schwarzkopf, whose criticism of the insufficient knowledge of the Iraqi dialect among military linguists was so factual that it was not even disputed by DLI leadership.[504] The only excuse the institute could provide was the completely inadequacy of "band-aid" solutions to sudden outbreaks of military conflicts in linguistically distinct regions.[505]

Lessons learned during the First Gulf War signified a need for reform not only in Arabic language instruction on a day-to-day basis, but also a deeper systemic correction of the linguistic elements of the US defence establishment. Clear communication between the upper echelons of the US Army, client agencies such as the National Security Agency,

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[499] McNaughton, *Annual Command History 1990*, 21.
[500] McNaughton, *Annual Command History 1990*, 8. The "lessons learned" after the few months of US deployment to the Gulf were thoroughly discussed in Benjamin De La Selva, "The Defense Language Institute Responds to Operation Desert Shield Linguistic Needs," *Globe* 13, no. 17 (September 28, 1990): 5-6, https://www.dliflc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/1990September.pdf.
[501] James C. McNaughton, *Annual Command History 1991* (Presidio of Monterey, California: Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, August 1992), 6, https://www.dliflc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/1991ACH.pdf.
[502] McNaughton, *Annual Command History 1990*, 11.
[503] McNaughton, *Annual Command History 1990*, 8.
[504] McNaughton, *Annual Command History 1991*, 1.
[505] James C. McNaughton, *Annual Command History 1992* (Presidio of Monterey, California: Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, January 1995), 3 and 84, https://www.dliflc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/1992ACH.pdf.

and the DLI became an urgent need. The introduction of the *Language Priority List* in 1992 was among the first steps to address this issue, with Arabic, Spanish, Mandarin, and Korean remaining at the very top. [506] In 1994, the *General Officer Steering Committee* was disbanded[507], thus providing a more direct line of communication between the DLI and its client organizations within the US defence establishment. The generally understood need for Arabic linguists was mirrored by the internal setup of the DLI, which decided to split its *Middle East School* in 1992. The newly established *Middle East School I* taught Arabic, Greek, Hebrew, and Turkish, while the *Middle East School II* taught Arabic and Farsi.[508] The rationale behind the decision to establish a second Arabic school was likely an expected spike in the number of enrolees.

Throughout the initial years of the post-Cold War era, the personnel changes on the part of the staff, instructors, and students followed the newfound need for linguists. Compared to the 1980s, the DLI's top military managers, i.e., commandants rotated significantly quicker. Commandant Donald C. Fischer, who guided the institute through its transition from the Cold War reality, retired in 1993 and was replaced by Col. Vladimir Sobichevsky,[509] who commanded the school until December 1995. He was then replaced by Col. Daniel D. Devlin.[510] On the contrary, the academic management remained more stable, with Dr Ray Clifford maintaining his position as provost (in 2001 reclassified to *Chancelor and Senior Language Authority*) until 2005, when he was succeeded by returning Donald C. Fischer.[511] During its transformation in the 1990s, the *Middle East Schools* were commanded by dean Benjamin de La Selva.[512] One of La Selva's most significant achievements was hiring a significant number of Arabic instructors. In the aftermath of 1991, the ranks of Arabic instructors were broadened to include 25 newcomers, expanding the Arabic programs' faculty to 112 members.

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[506] McNaughton, *Annual Command History 1992*, 10.
[507] Steven R. Solomon and Jay M. Price, *Command History 1994-1995* (Presidio of Monterey, California: Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, May 1999), 3, https://www.dliflc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/1994-1995ACH.pdf.
[508] Steven M. Payne, *Annual Command History 1993* (Presidio of Monterey, California: Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, June 1996), 40, https://www.dliflc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/1993ACH.pdf.
[509] *Annual Command History 1993*, Preface.
[510] Solomon and Price, *Command History 1994-1995*, 22f.
[511] Stephen M. Payne and Cameron Binkley, *Command History 2001-2003* (Presidio of Monterey, California: Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, June 2010), 81, https://www.dliflc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/DLI.pdf; and also Cameron Binkley, *Command History 2006-2007* (Presidio of Monterey, California: Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, March 2013), 37, https://www.dliflc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/2006_2007_DLIFLC_Command_History2.pdf.
[512] McNaughton, *Annual Command History 1992*, 54.

Improvements in the organization did not necessarily manifest themselves in students' achievements. Already in 1993, a significant drop in proficiency test results was noted and attributed to "no urgent need to study" after the First Gulf War.[513] Such a lack of motivation was understandable from an individual perspective, yet it presented a significant issue in the organization of the Arabic programs, as it led to a significant discrepancy between the number of enrolees and graduates. To illustrate, 409 students enrolled in Arabic classes in 1991[514], 801 students in 1994, 689 students in 1995, 843 students in 1996, and 704 students in 2000.[515] However, an average of a mere 369 students graduated annually between 1994 and 2000.[516] With the luxury of hindsight, members of the *Joint Inquiry into Intelligence Community Activities* acknowledged the lack of Arabic linguists in the US intelligence community prior to the September 11 attacks as a worrisome factor.[517] Arguably, however, the efforts on the part of the defence establishment were far from sufficient to make the study of the Arabic language before September 2001 an attractive asset in an enrolee's career path. One year before the September 11 attacks, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Christopher Mellon argued that "in the changing environment, the levels of language expertise that were adequate in years past don't cut it today."[518] His claim was to be confirmed at the dawn of the new millennium.

Along with virtually every aspect of global affairs, September 11 had a significant impact on Arabic language instruction in the DLI. However, the expected spike in the intake of Arabic language students did not occur immediately. On the contrary, the numbers of enrolees and graduates between 2001 and 2003 were slightly yet noticeably declining.[519] Two phenomena tightly connected with this seeming stagnation deserve attention. The first was a much deeper discussion focused on profound systemic alterations of the linguistic elements of the US defence and security establishments, which resulted

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[513] McNaughton, *Annual Command History 1991*, 64.
[514] McNaughton, *Annual Command History 1991*, 37.
[515] See Cameron Binkley, Stephen M. Payne, and Clifford Porter, *Command History 1996-2000* (Presidio of Monterey, California: Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, August 2009), 4, https://www.dliflc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/DLI-History1996-2000.pdf.
[516] Binkley, Payne, and Porter, *Command History 1996-2000*, 72.
[517] Joint Inquiry into Intelligence Community Activities, 343f.
[518] "National Briefing on Language and National Security," a conference sponsored by the National Foreign Language Center and the National Security Education Centre and held at the National Press Club, 16 January 2002, transcript by Federal News Service, Washington, D.C. Quoted here from Binkley and Payne, *Command History 2001-2003*, 7.
[519] 585 enrolees and 398 graduates in 2001, 517 enrolees and 365 graduates in 2002, 481 enrolees and 354 graduates in 2003, see "Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, Fiscal Year 2003 Accomplishments: Executive Summary," Executive summary of DLIFLC APR, 2-3 March 2004, by Dr Harold Raugh. Quoted here from Binkley and Payne, *Command History 2001-2003*, 79f.

in the introduction of the *National Security Education Program* and other federal initiatives. The second phenomenon was the realization especially on the part of the National Security Agency that the standards of Arabic language fluency achieved by graduates of the DLI were not sufficient for the upcoming Global War on Terror. According to Gen. Michael Hayden, then serving as Agency Director, "Level 2 (the linguistic standard for DLI graduates until the early-21st century), which implies comprehension of factual, straightforward language, (was) no longer sufficient to prosecute our targets, who communicate in a free-flow, colloquial speech through a variety of 21st century technologies. Level 3 (the newly proposed linguistic standards for DLI graduates), which implies understanding 'between the lines' represents our 21st century challenge."[520]

On the surface, the aim for systemic reform and a general increase in the standard of linguistic expertise represented a significant development from the shock of the First Gulf War. The advanced warning during the build-up towards the Second Gulf War[521], as well as experience from the First Gulf War, allowed the institute under the command of Col. Kevin M. Rice to prepare more thoroughly. In organizational terms, the Greek and Turkish language programs were moved from the *Middle East School I* to the *European and Latin American School*. Furthermore, *Middle East School III* was inaugurated in December 2003.[522] Both changes led to a further focus on Arabic language instruction in line with the war effort. However, unlike the 1990-1991 war, DLI Commandant Michael R. Simone[523] had to comply with the linguistic demands of a conflict that was far from the head-to-head encounter the US defence establishment was prepared for. After a swift victory in a conventional war with Iraqi forces, the international coalition found itself bogged down in a stabilization operation ruptured by frequent insurgent attacks. One of the many successes the insurgency achieved was dissuading locals, including much needed Iraqi interpreters, from cooperating with invading forces,[524] thus rendering a higher need for Arabic linguists.

[520] Binkley and Payne, *Command History 2001-2003*, 15.
[521] Otherwise known as the Second Iraq War, Operation Iraqi Freedom officially lasted between 20 March 2003 and 18 December 2011.
[522] See Binkley and Payne, *Command History 2001-2003,* 87f. Greek and Turkish courses were originally in a "mixed" Middle Eastern/South-East European School.
[523] Simone assumed command in June 2004. See Cameron Binkley and Stephen M. Payne, *Command History 2004-2005*, (Presidio of Monterey, California: Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, November 2010), Preface, https://www.dliflc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/CH2004-2005MASTER29Nov2010.pdf.
[524] Binkley and Payne, *Command History 2004-2005*, 3f.

The prospects of a long war in Iraq once again highlighted the issue of a lack of linguists to an extent noticed by the Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. By mid-2004, he tasked his Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness Dr David Chu to provide a thorough assessment of foreign language training in the US military. To a certain extent, Rumsfeld was aware of the delicate nature of training full-fledged linguists. Therefore, he initially approached the issue at hand from the opposite direction by asking Chu to evaluate options for short Arabic courses lasting approximately one month.[525] After extended discussions between David Chu and DLI Commandant Michael Simone, a *white paper* was compiled and directed towards the senior leadership of the defence establishment, openly downplaying the possibility of an effective 3–4-week Arabic training course. In Simone's own words: "We made a case very well that with mobile training teams you have to be very realistic in your expectations of what young soldiers will get with say a three-to-four-week course of Arabic. They are not going to be conversant in Arabic even at the end of two months. They might know how to be polite and avoid (…) terrible social and political faux pas but they're not really a substitute for having fully trained units."[526]

While the notion of a short crash-course might have been damaging to the DLI as it would divert precious resources from its standard courses, another initiative by Donald Rumsfeld was more in line with systemic attempts to adjust the training of linguists in a long-term perspective. A strategic document entitled *Defense Language Transformation Roadmap* was published in January 2005 and openly acknowledged many pressing issues discussed within the DLI and its client organizations for years, among which was the need to "create foundational language and regional area expertise, create the capacity to surge, establish a cadre of language professionals possessing (…) proficiency of 3/3/3 (i.e., those who Michael Hayden referred to as Level 3 several years prior; author's note) (and) establish a process to track the accession, separation, and promotion rates of military personnel with language skills and foreign area officers."[527] Even though the impact of the Roadmap was limited in practical terms, it provided "political" support for the further development of the DLI.

[525] Binkley and Payne, *Command History 2004-2005*, 5f.
[526] Binkley and Payne, *Command History 2004-2005*, 43f.
[527] *Defense Language Transformation Roadmap* (Washington D.C.: Deputy Secretary of Defense, January 2005), 1, https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/b313370.pdf.

The challenge of implementing the *Roadmap's* recommendations fell upon the shoulders of the new DLI Commandant Col. Tucker B. Mansager, who took up the position in August 2005.[528] Among the most pressing challenges he had to address during his tenure was the 2007 *surge* of US troops to the Iraqi theatre. The concept advocated by a group of military intellectuals around General David H. Petraeus (who later took active command of the operation in Iraq) stipulated the need to provide more than 20,000 additional US servicemen to Iraq, where they were expected to win Iraqi "hearts and minds" in an unprecedented counterinsurgency operation.[529] As the counterinsurgency campaign required frequent contact between the US Armed Forces and the local population, the demand for Arabic linguists immediately skyrocketed despite the fact that their ranks were already stretched thin. The US Army aimed to partially address this issue by contracting thousands of civilian linguists, anthropologists, regional experts, and many other academics to directly assist US forces in the war zones. In addition to sparking a significant controversy, the program known as Human Terrain System did not completely alleviate the insufficient linguistic element of the counterinsurgency campaign, as the participants themselves often had to rely on local interpreters, whose allegiances were unclear at best.[530]

Commandant Mansager was replaced at the head of the DLI by Col. Sue Ann Sandusky on October 2007 during the *Iraqi Surge*.[531] Perhaps contrary to her expectations, the rest of her tenure was marked by the gradual disengagement of coalition and subsequently US forces from Iraq, thus granting her more time to focus on curricular reforms discussed in greater detail below. The final disengagement of US forces from Iraq in December 2011 might have been a reason for many to celebrate, but it also marked a new set of challenges for the DLI. For the first time in a decade, the institute found itself in a warless situation, which had an immediate effect on its funding and personnel allocation.

Budgetary provisions and the resulting increase in DLI staffing were among the long-term impacts of the *Global War on Terror.* Unlike the early 1990s, when the wider

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[528] Binkley, *Command History 2006-2007*, 35.
[529] For an overview of the "new" concept of counterinsurgency, see *Counterinsurgency: Field Manual No. 3-24* (Washington D.C.: Department of the Army, December 2006). A solid introduction to the history of the concept was presented in Fred Kaplan, *The Insurgents: David Petraeus and the Plot to Change the American Way of War* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2013).
[530] See Sims, *The Human Terrain System*, 342-348.
[531] Cameron Binkley and Stephen M. Payne, *Command History 2008-2010* (Presidio of Monterey, California: Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, February 2015), 6, https://www.dliflc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/2008_2010_COMMAND_HISTORY.pdf.

defence establishment remained rather sluggish in its reaction to the post-Cold War reality,[532] the funding after the September 11 attacks, the outbreak of the war in Afghanistan and especially the Second Gulf War brought about a series of swift measures in the area of language instruction. In 2003, the US Congress received a recommendation by the Secretary of Defense to increase DLI Foreign Language Center funding by 35 million USD annually between 2004 and 2009, which was an enormous increase from the originally proposed additional 25 million USD each fiscal year.[533] The incremental curve of the DLI's budget was by no means linear. Between 2002 and 2003, the institute's operating budget was increased by a mere 3 million USD to a total figure of 75.5 million USD. However, increased attention to language training by Donald Rumsfeld and his undersecretary David Chu led to previously unfathomed spikes in funding between 2004 and 2005 – from 103 million to 153 million USD dollars. This influx of additional funds remained in place until 2010, leading to a yearly budget of well over 300 million USD by the end of the first decade of the 21st century.[534]

The seemingly never-ending surge of additional funding was to cease during the tenure of Danial D. Pick, who held the position of DLI Commandant for an unusually long period by post-September 11 standards – four years between April 2010 and 2014. As a DLI graduate and speaker of Arabic, Farsi, Dari, and Assyrian,[535] Pick was expected to provide an unprecedented insight into DLI's academic affairs. However, perhaps the most significant issue he had to tend to was ensuring the continuity of DLI programs in an era of severe budget cuts to the entire Department of Defense. In August 2011, President Obama signed the Congressional *Budget Control Act of 2011*, which required the Department to cut almost half a trillion USD in spending over the next ten years.[536] For an institution dependent on staff made up almost entirely of civilian instructors, the most significant manifestation of these budgetary cuts was the immediate freeze on hiring civilians announced by the Department of Defense in January 2013.[537] Since enacting such a decision would have had a potentially

[532] The DLI managed to remain fully funded in the 1991 fiscal year, but subsequent deep cuts in military language training reduced its student enrolment by almost a third in 1992. See McNaughton, *Annual Command History 1991*, 25; and McNaughton, *Annual Command History 1992*, 6.
[533] Binkley and Payne, *Command History 2001-2003*, 32.
[534] Binkley and Payne, *Command History 2004-2005*, 14. Also Binkley and Payne, *Command History 2008-2010*, 14. It should be noted that estimates in the yearly increase of DLI funding vary. This might be attributed to differences in calculation, i.e., comparison between budgetary allocations for each fiscal year as approved by the US Congress or yearly operating budgets controlled by the Department of Defense.
[535] Cameron Binkley, *Command History 2011-2013* (Presidio of Monterey, California: Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, May 2017), 13, https://www.dliflc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/2011-2013-COMMAND-HISTORY.pdf.
[536] Binkley, *Command History 2011-2013*, 2.
[537] Binkley, *Command History 2011-2013*, 22.

destructive impact on the quality of education, Commandant Pick managed to secure an exception from the hiring freeze for two subsequent years. However, this lenience on the side of the Department of Defense was bartered with expanded oversight from Washington D.C., including a review of the DLI's academic programs and thorough manpower analysis.[538] The resulting report did not request a reduction of the student-instructor ratio (at that time six students per teacher) dreaded by DLI leadership, as it would have had a significant impact on the quality of instruction. However, the total number of civilian personnel at the DLI Foreign Language Center was set to 2,153 for the 2014 fiscal year and further reduced to 2,090 a year later.[539]

The number of civilian instructors highlights the evolution that the DLI witnessed between the First Gulf War and the period shortly after the US withdrawal from Iraq in 2011. The entire institute was staffed by a civilian workforce of 1,171 in 1991.[540] After the budgetary cuts in the mid-1990s and subsequent surge in funding after the September 11 attacks, the DLI workforce was as strong as 2,800 employees in 2007, including approximately 1,700 native speakers.[541] At this historical climax of efforts in Arabic language instruction, 577 students graduated from the Arabic program, a noticeable increase from an annual average of 360 graduates in the first two years after the September 11 attacks.[542] However, the presented increase in the number of native speakers who worked as teachers did not by itself lead to an improvement in the quality of instruction. This was especially apparent in Arabic programs for which many native speakers with no prior teaching experience were hired to accommodate the ever-increasing demand for Arabists.[543]

Maintaining motivation for Arabic language learners at the DLI throughout the 2000s was a delicate task of intertwined economic, linguistic, and psychological aspects. After the generally heeded call from the Director of the National Security Agency for greater linguistic proficiency (Level 3), the courses became academically more demanding. To further motivate students, the Army raised the financial incentive to score well on the *Defense Language Proficiency Test.* From August 2005 onward, US soldiers with sufficiently rated knowledge of two foreign languages were to be awarded an extra

[538] Binkley, *Command History 2011-2013*, 24.
[539] Binkley, *Command History 2011-2013*, 27f.
[540] McNaughton, *Annual Command History 1991*, 25.
[541] Binkley, *Command History 2006-2007*, 1.
[542] For 2001-2003 figures, see Binkley and Payne, *Command History 2001-2003*. 79f. For 2007, see Binkley, *Command History 2006-2007*, 78.
[543] Binkley, *Command History 2006-2007*, 48.

1,000 USD a month.[544] Maintaining such a high linguistic standard was difficult not only in academic terms, but also due to the many organizational mishaps inflicted upon DLI graduates. These included their underutilization, deployment to countries and regions where their linguistic expertise could not be practically applied, and mismatching the level of their linguistic expertise with completely inappropriate tasks.[545] Ultimately, the army was not exerting enough effort in convincing prospective linguists of the perks of this career path in the long-term perspective. Undersecretary David Chu, who spearheaded the transformation of language training within the defence establishment in the mid-2000s, openly complained that very few linguists advanced in their careers beyond the rank of lieutenant colonel.[546] Those linguists who decided to delve deeper into a respective language then frequently found their career options limited by the specific dialect they had chosen or were assigned.[547]

4.7. The Defense Language Institute after the Cold War: Arabic Language Curricula

The DLI Middle East School entered the post-Cold War era with relatively well-developed curricula for Arabic language instruction. By 1989, a gradual transition from a long MSA course followed by a supplemental dialect course into a full 63-week long course of MSA with a "dialect flavour" was being experimented with, much to the delight of DLI clientele, especially the National Security Agency. The dialects for which full courses were developed also respected the preferences of the main employers of DLI graduates, and thus the Egyptian and Syrian (or more widely defined Levantine) dialects were in high demand. Naturally, the 1990 incursion of Iraqi forces into Kuwait and the subsequent First Gulf War had a profound impact on this paradigm. Contrary to various sources of critique on the institute's lack of preparedness to instruct US servicemen in the Iraqi dialect, the DLI had already produced a dedicated course on the Iraqi dialect in 1983.[548] However, the course still followed the structure of 47 weeks of MSA, followed by 16 weeks of dialect taught

[544] Binkley and Payne, *Command History 2004-2005*, 31.
[545] Binkley, *Command History 2011-2013*, 16.
[546] Binkley and Payne, *Command History 2004-2005*, 21.
[547] Binkley, *Command History 2011-2013*, 86.
[548] See *DLI Iraqi Arabic.*

in Washington D.C.[549] Such organization presented two issues in terms of the linguistic proficiency of the Iraqi courses' graduates. First, the courses' venue in Washington signifies that the numbers of students were rather limited, and that the Iraqi dialect courses were most likely not receiving the same academic attention as those in Syrian or Egyptian Arabic. Second, a 16-week course in a dialect should have theoretically provided students with a linguistic standard that they were expected to further enhance during their professional duties. With overall preference given to the Syrian and Egyptian dialect, former graduates of the Iraqi dialect course might have had little opportunity for further practice, while new graduates were still acquainted with the language of the Washington classroom, not the late 20th century battlefield.

The "band-aid" approach to the lack of speakers of the Iraqi dialect in the US Armed Forces also led to the incorporation of new forms of courses. While various crash courses were rejected for further development after the First Gulf War, initiatives for specialized dedicated courses, such as those intended solely for special forces, were considered successful.[550] The sense of wartime urgency also stimulated new approaches to the overall organization of language study. Every hour a student spent in a classroom had to be considered more productive than the same amount of time he would spend deployed. To translate this notion into practice, Commandant Fischer implemented the "Learner Focused Instructional Day", where new concepts in teaching languages to adults were discussed.[551] Because the DLI could not accommodate all the linguistic requirements of the war effort in Monterey and much less so in Washington D.C., the First Gulf War also served as a catalyst for the expedited development of technology-based distance learning. Experimental crash courses of the Iraqi dialect were taught from Monterey to clients across the United States through video teletraining – a two-way TV feed transmitted via satellite.[552]

The limitations of the 47-week MSA Basic Arabic course followed by a 16-week Iraqi Arabic module were addressed immediately after the war by the adoption of the full 63-week "dialect-flavoured" course in *Gulf Arabic* for 1992 and 1993.[553] This solution, which finally placed the Iraqi dialect on the same level as the Egyptian and Syrian ones, was only short-lived,

[549] McNaughton, *Annual Command History 1990*, 4, also *DLI Catalog 1989-1990*, 37.
[550] McNaughton, *Annual Command History 1991*, 21.
[551] McNaughton, *Annual Command History 1991*, 18f.
[552] McNaughton, *Annual Command History 1990*, 8; and McNaughton, *Annual Command History 1991*, 19.
[553] *DLI Course Catalogue 1992-93*, 29.

as the internal review process of curricula proposed a complete revamp of the Arabic Basic Course structure, opting for a "multi-dialect strand". The new concept was implemented as early as December 1994[554] and remained in place for years to come,[555] i.e., until the mid-2000s, when an overwhelming preference was to be given to the Iraqi dialect. By the mid-1990s, the DLI Arabic courses from the early 1980s were still being used, but were constantly being updated with newly introduced modules, such as the 1996 "Sound and Script Introduction" to the Basic Course.[556] Courses were further accompanied by experimental activities outside the classroom. In 1997, Arabic students began participating in a voice-driven computer program developed under a Department of Defense contract, which allowed them to practice the interrogation of several computerized characters in MSA or the Iraqi dialect.[557] However, true immersion training in either computer-generated environment or real-life scenarios would only become a standard part of DLI courses after 2001.

The evolution of Arabic courses at the DLI after September 11 revolved mainly around updating aging curricula and reflecting requirements for a generally higher standard of Arabic expertise among graduates. Outdated textbooks, some up to 27 years old, needed to be updated to reflect both changes in global affairs and advancements in teaching methodology. In November 2001, the *Curriculum Development Department* of the DLI delved into the preparation of completely new courses for the Egyptian, Levantine, and Iraqi dialects. Newly developed curricula were presented in 2003,[558] and yet another curriculum for the Arabic Basic Course was introduced in 2007.[559] At the time this dissertation was written, both 2003 and 2007 Arabic courses were still considered internal material and therefore

[554] Solomon and Price, *Command History 1994-1995*, 44.
[555] For reference, see *General Catalog 1996* (Presidio of Monterey, California: Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, 1996), 33, https://www.dliflc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/DLIcatalog1996.pdf; *General Catalog 2003* (Presidio of Monterey, California: Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, 2003), 42, https://www.dliflc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/DLICatalog2003.pdf; *General Catalog 2006-2007* (Presidio of Monterey, California: Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, 2006), 39, https://www.dliflc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/DLIFLCcatalog2006-07.pdf. In 2009-2010, 6 to 16-week dedicated Egyptian and Iraqi dialect courses were reintroduced. See *General Catalog 2009-2010* (Presidio of Monterey, California: Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, 2009), https://www.dliflc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/DLIFLC_Catalog_2009-2010.pdf. The multi-dialect strand option has recently been adopted by popular civilian Arabic courses such as the 3rd edition of the *Al-Kitaab* series produced by Georgetown University.
[556] Solomon and Price, *Command History 1994-1995*, 72f.
[557] Binkley, Payne, and Porter. *Command History 1996-2000*, 104.
[558] S. Koppany, "Curriculum Development," info paper in DLIFLC Annual Program Review 2002; quoted here from Binkley and Payne, *Command History 2001-2003*, 116-118.
[559] Binkley, *Command History 2006-2007*, 85.

not publicly available. Nonetheless, careful observations can be made about their structure and content. First, as the underlying logic behind their creation was to update the socio-cultural aspects of specific Arab countries, it is safe to assume that they covered almost 30 years of political, social, economic, and cultural developments in Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and the wider Gulf region. Second, their politically determined perspective might have been altered profoundly due to the significant development of the United States' relations not only with the countries they presented, but also the wider Middle East. In other words, the shift from global affairs from bipolar to multipolar might have altered the underlying logic for the US' need for Arabic linguists. Even though the DLI itself understood the rising significance of insurgent groups in the Middle East during the 1980s, Arab countries were still primarily considered proxies in the great showdown of two superpowers. This system of allegiances had changed profoundly during the 1990s and was to be reflected by the new curricula.

From linguistic and didactical perspectives, the implementation of a multi-dialect strand system might have an impact on the organization of Arabic courses, theoretically leading to more graduates with greater universal linguistic insight. However, as the implementation of new curricula coincided with outbreak of the Second Gulf War in 2003, an overwhelming preference was given to the Iraqi dialect. Another incentive behind the tendency to specialize in a single dialect were increasing demands on the linguistic standards of DLI graduates. Based on a recommendation from the Director of the National Security Agency Michael Hayden, the Army Headquarters tasked the DLI with creating a new concept for transitioning from Level 2 to Level 3 in January 2003 at the latest.[560] Even though any attempt to quantify this decision in terms of the increased difficulty of studying Arabic would be imprecise at best, Hayden's requirement to ensure that Level 3 linguists would be able "to read between the lines"[561] implies a significant leap forward. To facilitate this transition, the National Security Agency sponsored a thirteen-week program that followed the MSA course at the DLI. Given the rediscovered interest in the Iraqi dialect in 2003, the course was divided into two parts – in the first six weeks, the students mainly studied MSA with limited attention to the Iraqi dialect, while during the second six weeks, they focused

[560] Binkley and Payne, *Command History 2001-2003*, 15.
[561] Binkley and Payne, *Command History 2001-2003*, 15

mostly on the Iraqi dialect, devoting only about 20 percent of classroom hours to MSA. The last week was then devoted solely to testing.[562]

The debate about the usability of MSA vis-à-vis the Iraqi dialect became a public affair in late 2004 and early 2005, after a DLI trained interpreter and Arabic linguist Sergeant Cari Anni Gasiewicz was killed in a convoy bombing in Iraq.[563] Through considerable media coverage of her story, the difficulties Arabic linguists faced when arriving to Iraq armed with a solid knowledge of MSA but very limited ability to speak the Iraqi dialect became widely known to the American public.[564] In an article in *The New Republic* magazine, Middle East analyst Joseph Braude highlighted the paradoxical situation in which the US Government promoted democracy and its public image via MSA while a significant number of Arabs did not fully comprehend it.[565] The resulting public debate forced the DLI to confess in front of Donald Rumsfeld that the institute did not employ enough staff to focus exclusively on the Iraqi dialect. Furthermore, MSA was still necessary for reading, and therefore it was considered sensible to begin Arabic curricula with MSA instruction and only later transition to dialect.[566]

Throughout the second half of the 2000s, ongoing pressure from the National Security Agency prompted the DLI to incline its multi-dialect strand Basic Arabic Courses towards dialects. Following the success of the Basic Arabic Iraqi course, a Basic Arabic Levantine Course was planned for 2010.[567] By the end of the first decade, new pilot curricula were beginning to take shape, which gave more attention to the dialects.[568] The National Security Agency was directly involved in curricular development, leading to courses teaching dialect from the very beginning of the 64-week long courses. MSA was now being introduced

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[562] Binkley and Payne, *Command History 2001-2003*, 19.
[563] See James Barron, "Sergeant Killed in Convoy on Way Home from Iraq," *The New York Times*, December 14, 2004, https://www.nytimes.com/2004/12/14/nyregion/sergeant-killed-in-convoy-on-way-home-from-iraq.html.
[564] Binkley and Payne, *Command History 2004-2005*, 53.
Joseph Braude, "Language Barrier: The Problem with Using Arabic to Reach Arab Audiences," *The New Republic*, February 22, 2005; quoted here from commentary in Binkley and Payne, *Command History 2004-2005*, 55.
[566] Binkley and Payne, *Command History 2004-2005*, 55.
[567] Binkley and Payne, *Command History 2008-2010*, 10.
[568] "Middle East School II (MEII), 2009-2010" PowerPoint presentation, no date, in DLIFLC CH files (2008-2010), DDA. Not publicly available, quoted from Binkley and Payne, *Command History 2008-2010*, 78. Among these new curricula was the "New Arabic Curriculum" produced by Middle East School II, which was completely digitalized.

later during the course, including vocabulary and written script.[569] The first students of the standardized non-pilot Iraqi dialect course that adopted this methodology graduated in March 2011 after 64 weeks of "six hours a day, five days a week, with homework and/or study hall normally lasting two to three hours per night."[570] The overwhelming preference to focus on Iraqi Arabic as opposed to MSA was rather significant, as it opposed the "golden standard" of Arabic instruction at many institutions, i.e., beginning with MSA and concluding with a dialect.

Due to the widely expressed interest in producing Arabic linguists with hands-on experience, the DLI ramped up its Arabic immersion activities. After 2004, all the DLI Middle East schools included off-site activities, which included Arabic interactions with hired actors in real-life scenarios, such as airports.[571] In 2006, the institute successfully deployed its first two students to the *International Language Institute* in Egypt for a several-week long immersion course.[572] More locations were selected during a trip by several DLI officials to Egypt and Tunisia in 2009. Tunisia was selected as a host site for immersion courses beginning in March 2011.[573] Two months before their commencement, the immersion courses were cancelled due to the outbreak of the so-called "Arab Spring". Instead, several students were sent to four-week immersion courses in Morocco.[574] Among significant contributions to the "immersion ethos" was the introduction of the "Arabic Only Pledge", by which DLI faculty members agreed only to interact with students in Arabic every Friday, even outside the classrooms.[575] This pledge was indeed a mere variation of the more famous "Language Pledge" made by students at the *Middlebury Language School*, which allows them only to use the language they study during all their spoken interaction under threat of expulsion.[576]

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[569] Natela Cutter, "NSA's Gen. Keith Alexander Observes Levantine Course," *Globe* 34, no. 1 (2011): 3, https://www.dliflc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Globe_Winter_10_11.pdf. Also in Binkley, *Command History 2011-2013*, 38f.
[570] Binkley, *Command History 2011-2013*, 86f.
[571] Binkley and Payne, *Command History 2004-2005*, 90.
[572] Binkley, *Command History 2006-2007*, 85.
[573] Binkley, *Command History 2008-2010*, 78.
[574] Binkley, *Command History 2011-2013*, 93.
[575] Binkley and Payne, *Command History 2008-2010*, 80.
[576] "Language Pledge," Middlebury Language Schools, accessed January 26, 2023, https://www.middlebury.edu/language-schools/how-it-works/language-pledge.

4.8. Conclusions: The Education of the US' State-Arabists

By reiterating the statement from the introduction to this chapter, we can conclude that the establishment of the government-organized instruction of the Arabic language was closely linked to the gradual emergence of the US' role in the Middle East after the Second World War. This process was by no means linear, and its intensity was modulated not only by external factors such as the Cold War or US military incursions in the 1990s and 2000s, but also by internal organizational constraints within both civilian and military circles. Arabic instruction within the governmental framework was presented within three institutional frameworks – the National Defense Education Act, the Foreign Service Institute, and the Defense Language Institute. The term *framework* is rather fitting here, as none of these initiatives focused exclusively on the Arabic language. On the contrary, Arabic was considered an important but less than critical language throughout the Cold War, only to be brought into the spotlight during the First Gulf War. In organizational terms, such flexibility and multilingual focus were enabled by the US' role as one of the two Cold War superpowers and a dominant global actor after 1990. As a result and despite various systemic shortcomings, the State Department, the Department of Defense, and – through these two institutions – the larger part of the US system for the education of state-Arabists were continuously preparing for scenarios in which the Arabic language, just like Czech, Thai, or Burmese might become necessary strategic assets in global affairs.

In several aspects, the FSI was well suited to provide Arabic language instruction after the Second World War. Limited initiatives to provide such training existed throughout the interwar period, as did the physical presence of US diplomacy in the Arabic speaking world. With the luxury of hindsight, it could be said that the provisional freeze of all training activities within the State Department during the Second World War allowed for a reform, effectively replacing the old cadres of self-taught Arabists who "lived" the Middle East with career-oriented professionals who "worked" the region. By establishing a professional language program in Beirut, the FSI neared the British MECAS in terms of the organizational linguistic exposure of its graduates and surpassed it in terms of institutional anchoring. While the British Foreign Office aimed to normalize the British diplomatic presence after gradual disengagement from its colonial domain, the US aimed to become a respected power in the region, therefore necessitating a long-term investment in linguistic and area

knowledge among its diplomats. This approach was further highlighted by the impact of *The Ugly American* and subsequent reforms in the State Department commonly referred to as *Wristonization* in the late 1950s, which embraced the logic of the language training of US diplomats as a direct manifestation of the intellectual war against the Soviets.

The need for Arabic language instruction in the US defense establishment was initially much less prominent than in civilian diplomacy. The initial lack of US military installations and "boots on the ground" during the interwar period and largely during the Second World War resulted in an overwhelming focus on organized language instruction towards different linguistic domains – mainly the Japanese language. However, the institutional framework created as part of the organization of US Army and US Navy wartime Japanese courses provided the foundations for the later establishment of the US Army Language School and finally the establishment of the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center in 1963. Compared to the FSI, the impetus to teach the Arabic language was initially much lower, as the US Armed Forces were still searching for their role in the Middle East. This paradigm gradually began to change throughout the 1970s and 1980s, when new alliances were forged, such as the unprecedented US military assistance to Egypt, promoting a significant need for Arabists in the US defence establishment. The factor of promoting partnerships with Arab countries was supplemented by the adversarial postures of Syria, Libya and the rise of terrorism, which prompted one of the largest DLI client organizations, the National Security Agency, to openly express requests for more Arabists.

The DLI Middle East School tasked with Arabic language instruction became the Institute's focal point with the outbreak of the First Gulf War, again after the September 11 attacks and the Second Gulf War, and has remained such until the end of the analysed period. The very fact that Arabic language instruction would only enter the spotlight after a significant historical event brings our attention to another important aspect of the DLI. Despite the notable institutional anchoring within the US defense establishment, it was still a *reactive* organization in nature. Despite the long-term nature of training Arabists and the significant costs of knowledge retention, the DLI always had to repel the frequently political requests to train thousands of Arabists within a short time frame when they were needed due to a military incursion or terrorist attack. The politically determined tendency to overlook long-term preparedness and aim for "band-aid" solutions has become one of the main narratives of the Institute's contemporary history. For the past 30 years, Arabic instruction has been

an experimental ground for this sentiment, and we have yet to see how the withdrawal of US forces from Iraq will impact the willingness of the US defence establishment to maintain its Arabic expertise.

The interaction between the US defence establishment and the academic sector in Arabic language instruction is not the focus of this dissertation and was discussed only briefly. Still, the US' systemic inclination towards these ad hoc solutions has also manifested itself in various defence and security-related initiatives promoting the study of strategic languages, with Arabic among them. Indeed, the NDEA of 1958 *reacted* to the launch of Sputnik, just as the *National Security Education Program* of 1991 reacted to the end of Cold War and, at the same time, the First Gulf War. The same logic applied to countless initiatives that came *after* the September 11 attacks. An important consideration of these initiatives was their placement within the larger system of linguistic education for pragmatic purposes such as defence and security. This discussion has always been complex and revolved around three general points: First, why should the US Federal Government maintain its own language training programs if subsidized academic education can also produce the required linguists? Second, are the linguists produced by academia suited for defence-related tasks without a significant amount of additional language training? And, finally, should academia-produced linguists feel any obligation to actively participate in US defence and security affairs solely because the federal government financially supported their studies? The academic backlash against the original 1958 NDEA and lately the discussion about the implications of the proposed *International Studies in Higher Education Act* of 2003 has shown that, almost 60 years after the launch of Sputnik and the officially sanctioned securitization of linguistic education in the United States, these questions and the very purpose of this system remain open for discussion.

In terms of the execution of Arabic language instruction, both FSI and DLI utilized their military origins. The initial FSI Arabic courses utilized the experience of their creators, especially Dr Charles Ferguson, from the wartime Army Specialized Training Courses. Typical traits of these courses included significant time donation, strong application of the audio-lingual method, and development of area knowledge among the students. Perhaps most surprising was the utmost dedication to spoken Arabic to a degree that might have been considered inappropriate for diplomatic circles.

The early DLI Arabic curricula remain shrouded by a lack of accessible archival evidence. Based on curricula for other languages at the *US Army Language School* and early DLI, especially those focused on Japanese, we can assume that, following the introduction to MSA, certain military elements manifested themselves especially in practical exercises. By the mid-1970s, the DLI Arabic section was still utilizing civilian MSA courses, which were gradually replaced by the late 1970s and 1980s. Before the adoption of the full 63-week "dialect-flavoured" MSA courses by the early 1990s, the Egyptian, Levantine, and to a lesser extent Iraqi dialect courses were considered an addition to the standard MSA course. Surprisingly, however, the basic MSA developed by the DLI did not lean extensively towards militaristic vocabulary, which became a noticeable feature of the mid-section of the dialect courses. The reading sections and practical exercises have shown considerable focus on the militaries of Arab states, yet never presented them openly as *enemies* of the United States. Even in subjects such as the interrogation of prisoners of war, the interaction between Arab armies was always presented as an Egyptian or Lebanese (i.e., a state cooperating with the US) encounter with a non-descript enemy. This approach indeed only illustrates how carefully crafted the dialect courses were, not their underlying objectives. Furthermore, it is safe to assume that an Arabic course for a professional military linguist did not need to contain a strong ideological focus within the confines of a "language of the enemy" sentiment, as the Arabic language students were already in a top-down command structure and did not require much convincing on *why* they should study a certain language.

From a curricular perspective, a significant alteration in the post-September 11 era were the generally higher demands on the qualification of DLI graduates and the resulting increase in workload during the courses. Furthermore, the gradually increasing focus on Arabic dialects (especially the Iraqi one) had led to the creation of a linguist workforce that might have been considered very effective in one specific military campaign but would require retraining if deployed to a different part of the Arab world. The focus on the Iraqi dialect during the late 2000s and early 2010s might be considered yet another example of a "band-aid" solution without sufficient consideration given to the long-term utility of DLI graduates. Indeed, only the coming years will tell how effective the significant investment into Iraqi-Arabic linguists was shortly before the final disengagement from the Iraqi theater.

This chapter concludes just short of analyzing the second tenure of US President Barack Obama, Donald Trump, and Joe Biden administration's impact on the need for Arabic language instruction within US civilian diplomacy and the US defense establishment. At the time of writing this dissertation, the United States remains a significant actor in the Middle East both in civilian and military terms. The unparalleled focus on Arabic teaching has given the FSI and DLI the time and resources needed to develop curricula suitable for the 21st first century and experiment with new methods of language instruction. Even though the US has not been in an open conflict with an Arabic speaking country for more than ten years, the scope of its interests in the region certainly necessitates a significant number of Arabic linguists and as such calls for future inquiry into the subject.

5. Arabic Language Instruction Organized by the Government of the State of Israel

A mere glimpse at a map of the Levant clearly suggests that the role of state-Arabists in Israel differs profoundly from the cases of the USA and UK. Since even before its establishment in May 1948, the land that was to become the State of Israel has been physically located in an Arabic speaking environment, thus blurring the lines between a "domestic" and "foreign" understanding of the language. After all, Arabic became the official language of Mandatory Palestine already in 1922 together with Hebrew and English.[577] After a significant part of the Mandate's legal provisions was adopted by the newly founded State of Israel, English was side-tracked by a court ruling in 1948, rendering all the previous provisions stipulating the official use of English idle.[578] However, Arabic remained an official language from 1948 until 2018[579], and its status has been the subject of a number of analyses, some of which present this development as a pragmatic move by the Israeli authorities and others as a sign of "Israel's liberal approach towards its Palestinian citizens."[580]

This chapter traces the history of Arabic language instruction among the Jewish Israeli population of Israel. Given the position of Israel within an otherwise Arabic speaking region, the term "population" is critical for our understanding of Israel's perceived pragmatic need for knowledge of the Arabic language. The requirements for Arabic speakers on the part of US and UK foreign policy and defence establishments remained similar, regardless of different points of embarkation, i.e. administration of a foreign colonial domain or occupied territory, diplomacy, warfare, or business. However, the Jewish Israeli motives for understanding Arabic have been much more diverse thanks to the factor of day-to-day coexistence. Combined with a compulsory three-year (two-year for women) military service focused not only on warfighting but to a large extent also on population control and interaction with the Arabic speaking population, the impetus for acquainting the Jewish Israeli population with the Arabic language becomes apparent.

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[577] See George V, *Palestine Order in Council*, article 82.
[578] "Languages in Israel," *JYAN Blog*, Berkley Center for Peace &World Affairs, April 27, 2014, accessed January 26, 2023, https://berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/posts/language-in-israel.
[579] See note 3 of this dissertation.
[580] Alexander Yakobson and Ammon Rubinstein, *Israel and the Family of Nations: The Jewish Nation-State and Human Rights* (Milton Park: Routledge, 2008); also, Muhammad Amara and Abd al-Rahman Mari, *The Policy of Language Education towards the Arab Citizens in Israel* (in Arabic) (Beit Berl: Markaz Dirasat al-Adab al-Arabi, 2004), quoted here from Mendel, *The Creation of Israeli Arabic*, 43f.

Similarly to previous chapters, my primary focus here is on institutional setup and curricular development. However, the Israeli approach to the education of state-Arabists has differed noticeably from the case of the UK and USA and can be characterized as "population-centric" for a large part of the State of Israel's history. Its defining feature has been a perplexing marriage between the middle / high-school education system and the Israeli defence and security establishment.[581] To elaborate further, the structure of the education system in Israel deserves a brief description. The principal secular Jewish Israeli educational stream (Hebrew: *mamlakhti*), in which the main medium of instruction is Hebrew, consists of twelve grades following a scheme of "Primary School" (Hebrew: *Beit Sefer Yesodi*, grades 1-6, approximately ages 6-12), "Junior High School" (Hebrew: *Chativat Beinayim*, grades 7-9, approximately ages 12-15), and "Senior High School" (Hebrew: *Chativa Elyona* or *Beit Sefer Tichon*, grades 9-12, approximately ages 15-18).[582] The Arabic-language education discussed in this chapter is aimed primarily at pupils of middle and high schools, although certain experimental excursions from this rule have occurred. Arabic language instruction aimed at Jewish Israeli audiences represents only a part of institutionalized language education in Israel. The Israeli Ministry of Education also manages a separate stream of schools aimed at the Arab Israeli population[583]. Their medium of instruction is Arabic, as is the case in schools organized by the Palestinian Authority's own Ministry of Education.[584] Although all these educational streams undoubtedly deserve thorough evaluation, they do not fit the research framework, as they do not teach Arabic as a second or foreign language and therefore do not in any way aim to educate state-Arabists.

A general analysis of the graduates of the secular Jewish Israeli education system and others has clearly demonstrated that the entire enterprise of Arabic language education in Jewish Israeli schools has to a large extent been controlled by elements of the defence

[581] Gil Eyal, Allon Uhlmann, and especially Yonatan Mendel have carried out trailblazing and highly critically oriented work on this subject based on archival research. See Gil Eyal, *The Disenchantment of the Orient Expertise in Arab Affairs and the Israeli State* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2006); Uhlmann, *Arabic Instruction in Israel: Lessons in Conflict, Cognition and Failure*; Uhlmann, "*Arabic Instruction in Jewish Schools and in Universities in Israel*;" Mendel, *The Creation of Israeli Arabic.*

[582] Ministry of Aliyah and Integration, *Education*, 8th ed. (Jerusalem: Ministry of Aliyah and Integration - The Publications Department, 2019), https://www.gov.il/BlobFolder/generalpage/education_guides/en/edu_en.pdf.

[583] The population of Palestinian descent with Israeli citizenship whose native language is Arabic. For a general reference, see Alexander Bligh, *The Israeli Palestinians: An Arab Minority in the Jewish State* (London: Routledge, 2003).

[584] Other streams are represented by dedicated Druze schools and the "National Religious Stream", which caters to Orthodox Jews. See Allon J. Uhlmann, "Arabic Instruction in Jewish Schools and in Universities in Israel," 291. The Palestinian Authority's Ministry of Education was founded in 1994 following the Oslo Accords. See Ismael Abu Saad and Duane Champagne, "A Historical Context of Palestinian Arab Education", *American Behavioral Scientist* 49, no. 8 (2006): 1045.

establishment, a fact that I will reiterate below. These elements, represented mainly by the IDF's Military Intelligence Directorate (*Agaf ha-Modiʿin*, hereinafter MI), have been aiming to utilize the graduates of the general Jewish Israeli education stream as state-Arabists during and possibly after their compulsory service in the IDF. Therefore, the first subchapter dedicates significant attention to the interaction between the Israeli Ministry of Education and the IDF. This unique cooperation is not the only venue where Israel has been educating its state-Arabists. However, unlike the United States, the Israel defence establishment has remained remarkably opaque regarding its internal language training programs, a fact that strikingly contrasts to the enthusiastic openness it shows when encouraging young Israelis to study Arabic in middle and high school. As both primary and secondary sources on internal forms of education provided by the IDF are limited, I merely attempt to present the instruction of the Arabic language within the Jewish Israeli secular education stream as a critically important but not sole initiative in developing Israeli state-Arabists. Likewise, while acknowledging the immense impact that Israel's academia has had on the study of the Arabic language from all possible perspectives, I tend to avoid its analysis with the exception of cases in which academia has directly affected the aforementioned defence-educational nexus.

The subject of securitizing or even weaponizing the Arabic language towards what could be described as "population control" within the context of the unresolved Israeli-Palestinian conflict is naturally a painful one. The issue of the misuse of Arabic language knowledge by the IDF has been repeatedly raised by the Palestinians, against whom this knowledge is commonly utilized, but also by IDF Arabists themselves.[585] With impartiality being an unachievable ideal, the following paragraphs are presented from a Jewish Israeli perspective in the sense that they discuss an institutional setup that is exclusively Jewish at all imaginable levels – from management to teachers and audiences. Furthermore, in most cases the discussed institutional logic is distinctly focused on the "Arab Other", thus clearly positioning itself on one side of the struggle. The absence of Israeli Arabs teaching their native language at Jewish Israeli educational institutions is a clear symptom of such one-sidedness. And even though the entire system of Arabic language education within the secular Jewish Israeli educational stream could be hastily described as a mere tool

[585] The most notable occasion was the protest of 43 veterans of the IDF's eavesdropping unit 8200 in 2015, who described the systematic harassment of monitored Palestinians. For an overview, see Meron Rapoport, "The Disturbing Story from Within," *The Middle East Eye*, 2015, accessed January 26, 2023, https://www.middleeasteye.net/fr/columns/disturbing-story-within-95030742.

of occupation, I attempt instead to pinpoint the systemic issues that ultimately make the system ineffective at what it aims to achieve – the production of Jewish Israeli state-Arabists before their conscription into the IDF.

To achieve this goal, I once again begin the analysis with a probe into the institutional development of the foreshadowed defence-education nexus. This includes several initiatives focused on promoting the study of the Arabic language among Jewish Israeli pupils before May 1948. I highlight the role of critical junctures such as the wars of 1948, 1967, and 1973, and the 1982 incursion into Lebanon in these efforts, which culminated in the 1988 provisions making the Arabic language a compulsory subject at Jewish Israeli high schools. In the second subchapter, I first present an overview of the cooperation between the IDF and the Ministry of Education in curricular development. I also highlight the role of educational institutions such as *Givʿat Ḥaviva* and *Ulpan ʿAḳiva*, which have existed outside the framework that has gradually developed between the IDF and the Ministry of Education but have still maintained an important role in the overall formulation of Arabic language curricula for the Jewish Israeli secular education stream. Special attention is then given to the publication of Arabic textbooks and the introduction of new initiatives around critical junctures. Finally, I analyse several textbooks, tracing the sentiment of the "language of the enemy" vis-à-vis historical developments in Israel-Arab relations.

5.1. Interaction between Israel's Defence Establishment and Secular Jewish Israeli General Education: Institutional History

As this dissertation focuses on the creation of state-Arabists, the history of the Jewish population of Palestine before May 1948 presents a conundrum, as no Jewish state existed at the time. However, several noticeable steps leading towards the "marriage" of Arabic language studies and Zionist ideals were taken decades before the State of Israel was founded. Since the Arabic language was the *lingua franca* for many Jews living in Palestine during Arab, Ottoman, and even British colonial rule, the following paragraphs mainly discuss the initial attempts to institutionalize Arabic language instruction in connection with Zionist state-building efforts. Yonatan Mendel points out somewhat contradicting sentiments among the settlers coming to Palestine during the First Aliya (ca. 1881-1903) and emphasises

the unorthodox variant of "Orientalist" thought that could be attributed to the early Jewish immigrants, who on one hand romanticized the local Arabs but, on the other, aimed eventually to replace them.[586] This was mainly noticeable among the *Billu*, Ashkenazi Russian Zionists, who interacted with local Arabs on a daily basis and eventually comprised the majority of the paramilitary *Ha-Shomer* movement founded in 1909.[587] Therefore, it comes as no surprise that knowledge of the Arabic language (together with horsemanship and marksmanship) was one of the prerequisites for joining the movement.[588]

Truly systemic attempts to evaluate the need for the Arabic language came much later, with the memorandum compiled by Avinoʿam Yellin, an influential member of the *Jerusalem Committee for the Teaching of Arabic* in 1935. In the memorandum, Yellin understood knowledge of Arabic as necessary for everyday interaction with local Arabs, as well as the agent of a rich Arab cultural legacy that deserved to be carried forth.[589] In his 1938 assessment of Yellin's memorandum, Moshe Sharett, then in the early stages of his political career as the director of the *Political Department of the Jewish Agency in Palestine*, criticized the small number of students of the Arabic language and, with a clear political agenda, asserted that "Arabic has become more than a regular school subject in light of the conflict in Palestine".[590] In the following years, Sharrett and his *Political Department* launched a number of initiatives aimed at both the instruction and utilization of Arabic. At the instructional level, a new initiative fittingly named Arabic Teaching at the Border Villages (Hebrew: *Limudʿ Aravit ba-Neḳudot*) aimed mainly at easing tensions between Jewish settlers and their Arab neighbours. Other initiatives were oriented towards the realm of intelligence and propaganda. The Courses for Jewish Mukhtars (Hebrew: *Ha-Ḳurs le-Hakhsharat Muḥtarim)* were mainly aimed at information-gathering among the Arab population.[591] A similar program was the Good Neighbour Committees (Hebrew: *Vaʿadot le-Shipur Yaḥasei Shkhenim)* operated by the Arabic SHAI – a *de facto* security agency of the Arabic Branch of Hagana Intelligence established in 1940.[592]

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[586] Mendel, *The Creation of Israeli Arabic*, 22f.
[587] Mendel, 21f. Not to be confused with the *Ha-Shomer ha-Tsaʿir* movement that originated in Galicia in 1913.
[588] Gerson Gera, *The Ha-Shomer Book* (In Hebrew) (Tel Aviv: Israel Ministry of Defence, 1985), 20; quoted here from Mendel, *The Creation of Israeli Arabic*, 22.
[589] Mendel, 27f. Mendel refers to the *Takir Yellin* as the last non-political argument for the study of the Arabic language, which sparked a discussion in the highest echelons of Jewish Zionist circles.
[590] Mendel, *The Creation of Israeli Arabic*, 28.
[591] Mendel, 31f. *Mukhtar* was a designation for a village chief dating back to the Ottoman times.
[592] SHAI (abbreviation for *Sherut Yediʿot*) was established in 1940 as the intelligence arm of *Hagana*. For reference to the course of Jewish Mukhtars, see 'Odeda Ya'ari, *Contour Lines: The Story of Deni Agmon, the Commander of the Mistaʿaravim Unit* (in Hebrew) (Tel Aviv: Beit ha-Palmach, 2006). For the SHAI course,

Since 1943, dedicated Arabic courses were also produced for the purposes of the Mistaʿarvim units,[593] in which Jews disguised as Arabs conducted military operations within Arab population centres.[594]

These limited efforts to acquaint specific audiences with the Arabic language were important yet inadequate for the needs of the Israeli state after its establishment in 1948. Since the early 20th century, the notion of practical Arabic for everyday purposes prompted many Jewish schools to introduce Arabic into their curricula.[595] However, their numbers decreased steadily with the strengthening of nationalist fervour, which culminated in the months and years following May 1948. While this lack of a positive attitude towards Arabic language studies might be attributed solely to ideological reasons, practical considerations were also at play. Large numbers of Palestinian Arabs (up to 725,000[596]) fled Israel during or following the 1948 war, and many remaining Arabs remained segregated under the control of the military government, thus making the notion of "Arabic for everyday interaction" obsolete. The discrepancy between public calls for downsizing Arabic language instruction at Jewish Israeli high schools and the need on the part of the military and public sector to strengthen it manifested itself vividly immediately after the 1948 war. The Ministry of Education's Hours Committee (Hebrew: *Vaʿad ha-Shaʿot*) tasked with allocating hours of instruction to individual school subjects was less than enthusiastic about Arabic language studies, and instead recommended making English the first mandatory foreign language and Arabic merely a second elective one (together with French).[597]

From the pragmatic perspective of the public sector and especially the military, the perceived numbers of required state-Arabists skyrocketed almost overnight, as former Arab neighbours suddenly represented a population that was to be "administered". To some extent, the thirst for expertise in the Arabic language and culture was initially quelled by the large-scale immigration of Jews from Arab countries (commonly referred

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see Gil Eyal, "Between East and West: Discourse about the Arab Village in Israel," *Teoria Ve-Bikoret* [Theory and Criticism] (In Hebrew) no. 3 (Winter 1993): 49. Both quoted from Mendel, *The Creation of Israeli Arabic*, 31f.

[593] Mendel, *The Creation of Israeli Arabic*, 32.

[594] Various mistaʿarvim units were active throughout Israel's history. They recently captivated the popular imagination in the fictional Netflix series *Fauda* (Season 1 February 2015).

[595] Mendel, *The Creation of Israeli Arabic*, 27.

[596] David McDowall, *The Palestinians: Minority Rights Group International Report* (UK: Minority Right Group, 1998), 5, https://minorityrights.org/wp-content/uploads/old-site-downloads/download-867-Download-full-report.pdf.

[597] Bernard Spolsky and Elana Goldberg Shohamy, *Languages of Israel: Policy, Ideology, and Practice* (Cambridge: Multilingual Matters, 1999), 142.

to as *Mizraḥim*), which brought many native Arabic speakers to Israel. According to Mendel, the *Mizraḥim* in their attempts to quickly assimilate into newfound Israeli society frequently utilized their native Arabic for political and security purposes, expressing a sentiment of the "language of the enemy in the service of the state".[598]

A counteraction to the declining public interest in the study of the Arabic language came directly from the Prime Minister's Office in what became known as the Oriental Course of Study *(*Hebrew: *Ha-Megama ha-Mizraḥanit*). The idea was conceived by the Prime Minister's Advisor on Arab Affairs Yehoshua Palmon in the late 1940s or early 1950s. Palmon argued that the newly founded State of Israel needed professionals to administer its Arab population. To achieve this, he suggested selecting pupils from 10th to 12th grades (i.e., the three final years of the general course of the Jewish Israeli educational stream) and providing them with an accelerated course in the Arabic language and some elements of Middle Eastern area studies. Upon graduation, they were to serve as Hebrew teachers in Arab schools, thus further acquainting themselves with Arab culture and language, only to join the military or civilian branches of the government dealing with Arabs.[599] By 1951, other institutions became involved in the preparation of the programme (mainly the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Middle Eastern Department, the Ministry of Education, the IDF, security agencies, and several universities and schools. The programme officially took off in 1954 under the management of Meʾir Kisṭer. The courses were initially held at the *Hebrew Reali School* in Haifa, which was soon joined by *ʿIroni* Alef and *ʿIroni Dalet* in Tel Aviv.[600]

An important remark made by Mendel should be mentioned here – the program produced IDF officers who were then frequently put in charge of evaluating the program.[601] Such an approach was symptomatic for many other initiatives discussed below, which created a cadre of state-Arabists who primarily managed, evaluated, and advocated the same or similar programs that their expertise was forged in, thus instituting a significant groupthink.[602]

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[598] Mendel, *The Creation of Israeli Arabic,* 126.
[599] See Yonatan Mendel, "A Sentiment-Free Arabic: On the Creation of the Israeli Accelerated Arabic Language Studies Programme," *Middle Eastern Studies* 49, no. 3 (2013). Quoted here from Mendel, *The Creation of Israeli Arabic*, 66. The term *Ha-Megama ha-Mizraḥanit* was interchangeable with *Ha-Kita ha-Mizrahanit* (Oriental Class).
[600] Mendel, *The Creation of Israeli Arabic*, 69-71.
[601] Mendel, 79.
[602] Groupthink refers to a "mode of thinking in which individual members of small cohesive groups tend to accept a viewpoint or conclusion that represents a perceived group consensus, whether the group members believe it to be valid, correct, or optimal. Groupthink reduces the efficiency of collective problem solving within such

Interestingly, Mendel's archival research makes no remark about the program's reaction to the 1956 Suez Crisis, in which Israel was deeply involved. This stands in stark contradiction to the far-reaching systemic reactions of Arabic language education in Israel to the 1967 and 1973 conflicts. A possible explanation might be that the 1956 incursion into Egypt was understood as an external affair and therefore disconnected from the original notion of administering Israel's own Arab population, a task the IDF was also deeply involved in and for which the Oriental Classes were initially conceived. Furthermore, *Operation Kadesh* was deemed to be a short-term military operation, far from the seemingly never-ending task of maintaining both domestic and cross-border security. The Oriental classes programme was active until the late 1960s and always remained limited in scope. By May 1967, only 115 pupils from the 12th grade were enrolled. Even though it fulfilled some if its initial goals, it was overshadowed by the far-reaching transformation of high-school level Arabic language studies in Israel after the 1967 conflict.[603]

As was discussed previously, the general education stream for Jewish Israeli schools until 1967 was largely devoid of significant Arabic language teaching efforts. The public and subsequently political resentment towards Arabic language instruction culminated in 1957, when the Ministry of Education proposed completely abolishing its instruction in Jewish Israeli schools.[604] Although the proposal was not adopted, Arabic language studies continued to diminish. In February 1964, the Ministry of Education proposed a seemingly less radical step, which suggested removing the possibility of graduating from high school with the Arabic language as a subject of the final exam (Hebrew: *Bagrut*).[605] However, such an alteration would have diminished the status of Arabic language studies dramatically by rendering them not only politically controversial but also unnecessary from an educational perspective. The IDF (represented mainly by figures from the MI) and the Prime Minister's Office stepped in and not only stopped the initiative but also secured funding and political support to launch a public promotional campaign (Hebrew: *hasbara*[606]) aimed at motivating young pupils to study the language.[607] The counteroffensive on the part of the IDF and Prime Minister's

groups." See Anna Schmidt, "Groupthink," Britannica, accessed January 26, 2023, https://www.britannica.com/science/groupthink.

[603] Mendel, *The Creation of Israeli Arabic*, 96.

[604] Mendel, 52.

[605] Mendel, 56.

[606] The term *hasbara* translates as "explaining" (from *lehasbir* – to explain). The Israeli government often utilizes the term to describe its public diplomacy efforts, while others stress its negative connotation, dubbing it "propaganda" instead.

[607] Mendel, *The Creation of Israeli Arabic*, 57f.

Office went even further, prompting a debate on whether the Arabic language should be made a compulsory subject. In January 1967, just months before the war, a high-level meeting between the Ministry of Education and MI representatives took place. It was one of the last instances in which the IDF did not call for Arabic to be compulsory, and instead proposed an even stronger *hasbara* campaign directed at the head teachers of individual Jewish Israeli schools, hoping to convince them to incorporate Arabic language instruction into their curricula.[608]

By the end of the 1967 War, Israel was a different country in terms of geography, population, and international standing. With control over the Sinai Peninsula, Gaza Strip, West Bank, and the Golan Heights, the Arabic speaking population under Israeli control expanded dramatically despite the displacement of some 300,000 Palestinians.[609] Therefore, it comes as no surprise that, for Israeli officials, the knowledge of the Arabic language became a "national mission" almost overnight.[610] On 29 June 1967, the Ministry of Education published a statement in the national newspaper: "The Ministry of Education is calling on all high school head teachers whose schools are not teaching Arabic to systematically increase efforts to teach the language during the next school year (…)! There is no doubt the need for people with general education in and proper knowledge of Arabic is now of paramount importance!"[611] The subsequent promotional campaign was considered a success, with the Ministry of Education reporting that by 1969 the number of Jewish Israeli schools teaching Arabic had almost doubled.[612]

The IDF and more specifically the MI was still not satisfied with the number of pupils studying Arabic and shifted its pre-war stance towards making the Arabic language a compulsory subject. The Ministry of Education naturally preferred a less directive approach, opting instead for another promotional campaign that would gradually increase the number of schools choosing to include the Arabic language in their curricula.[613] The difference in opinion between the IDF and the Ministry of Education was to be settled in early 1973 by the Shoḥaṭ Committee headed by Avraham Shoḥaṭ, then the head of the Ministry of Education's Pedagogical Secretariat and consisting of Ministry personnel, scholars, and IDF

[608] Mendel, 64. Mendel refers to the summary of the meeting in Avraham Sharoni's letter from January 1967.
[609] See Robert Bowker, *Palestinian Refugees: Mythology, Identity, and the Search for Peace* (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003), 81.
[610] Mendel, *The Creation of Israeli Arabic*, 99.
[611] Mendel, 98f.
[612] Mendel, 104.
[613] Mendel, 104.

representatives.[614] The Committee recommended a halfway solution of making the Arabic language a compulsory subject from 5th to 9th grade over the course of six to eight years.[615] While this would have been an astounding achievement for the IDF several years before, military circles were dissatisfied with the final recommendation. Instead, they supported making Arabic language studies compulsory all the way to the 12th grade.[616] Ultimately, however, the Shoḥaṭ Committee recommendation was completely ignored by the Ministry of Education and the provisions were never implemented.[617]

The 1973 October War marked the beginning of what was to become the definitive takeover of Arabic language studies at Jewish Israeli schools by the military. As Mendel reviewed in great detail, even the unclassified parts of the report of the Agranat Commission[618] investigating the military and intelligence failures leading to the 1973 War clearly mentioned that senior Israeli intelligence officials' command of the Arabic language was insufficient. In some cases, regional desks were managed by officers with no knowledge of Arabic at all.[619] Following the resignation of MI's head Eli Zeiʿra, his newly appointed successor Shlomo Gazit made the expansion of Arabic language studies in Israeli general education one of his priorities.

In institutional terms, this shift was marked by the eventual establishment of three distinct programs throughout the 1970s. The first one was the TELEM unit (abbreviation of *Ṭipuaḥ Limudei Mizraḥanut* – Unit for the Encouragement of Oriental Studies). Founded in 1974 and headed by Ephraim Lapid, the unit is still active today. TELEM was later advertised by its commander as "a special team of dedicated and visionary officers (…) established to navigate the activities of Military Intelligence towards the fostering of Arabic and Oriental studies (…)."[620] TELEM was complemented by the Oriental Youth Battalions

[614] Mendel, 107.
[615] Mendel, 107.
[616] Mendel, 107. The MI argued that continuous Arabic language studies were critical "to prevent a situation of forgetfulness". Mendel cites correspondence from Maj. Aharon Hadar to Shoḥaṭ, 4 March 1973, ISA/GL-13111/7.
[617] Uhlmann, "Arabic Instruction in Jewish Schools and in Universities in Israel," 296.
[618] The Agranat Commission (headed by Shim'on Agranat, Chief Justice of Israel's Supreme Court) was established to investigate the military and intelligence failures leading to the October War. The investigations led to the resignation of Chief of Staff David Elʿazar, Chief of Intelligence Eli Zeiʿra, and the Commander of the Southern Command Shmu'el Gonen.
[619] Mendel, *The Creation of Israeli Arabic*, 110. Mendel refers to testimony before the Agranat Commission from 5 December 1973.
[620] Mendel, 113 and 118. Mendel refers to the so-called Lapid Report, i.e., "The Status of Arabic Teaching in the Education System: The Point of View of Military Intelligence – A Headquarters Proposal for the Minister of Education".

(Hebrew: *Gadnaʿ Mizraḥanim*), which were founded roughly at the same time.[621] This ongoing programme is intended to acquaint Jewish Israeli high school pupils studying the Arabic language with the work of the MI, thus stimulating pragmatic interest in the language.[622] It would seem that while *GaDNaʿ Mizraḥanim* was more in line with the previous *hasbara* efforts aimed at "convincing" pupils to take up Arabic as an elective subject, TELEM aimed at assuring that young Arabic language students would not give up between grades 10 and 12. The third important initiative that brought the MI and pupils much closer together was *Morot-Hayalot* (Women Soldier-Teachers), which was launched by the MI in 1978 with the aim of addressing the pressing shortage of Arabic language teachers.[623] The program handpicked young female soldiers during their compulsory military service and provided them with 8-12 months of language training at Ulpan ʿAḳiva or Beit-Berl College and then sent them to teach Arabic at Jewish Israeli high schools.[624]

How successful were these initiatives in terms of the number of pupils studying Arabic? According to Mendel, some 6,900 pupils were studying Arabic in Jewish Israeli schools in 1969, and these numbers grew to 41,800 pupils in 1975. The number of schools teaching Arabic in the same period jumped from 80 to 265.[625] However, such an increase was still not considered sufficient by both professional spheres represented mainly by the MI and certain political echelons, which repeatedly continued to raise the subject of making the study of Arabic compulsory. Such was the case of the 1976 initiative by Knesset member Nuzhat (Darwish) Katsav, who stressed the need to encourage the study of Arabic for security reasons while using a peculiar argument – she pointed out that some Arab countries were teaching "securitized" Hebrew to be used against Israel.[626] A real breakthrough came a year later. In June 1977, the *High Committee for the Assessment of the Needs of Military Intelligence*

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[621] Mendel, *The Creation of Israeli Arabic*, 113f and 134. Mendel refers to *Gadna' Mizrahanim*, which was founded either already in 1973 or later from 1975 to 1976 (discussed further in this chapter). The project was mentioned by Ephraim Lapid, in "The Status of Arabic Teaching in the Education System" following his remarks about the actions taken to encourage Arabic language studies in January 1975. Therefore, it is likely that the program began in early 1975.

[622] Mendel, *The Creation of Israeli Arabic*, 134 and 115f. This might be supported by the November 1974 correspondence between Shlomo Gazit and the Minister of Education, in which Gazit stressed the importance of "forcing" the students to continue their studies until the 12th grade.

[623] Mendel, 144.

[624] Mendel, note 32. *Ulpan ʿAḳiva* was originally a dedicated Hebrew language school for adults, which only later became heavily involved in Arabic instruction. Another institution indirectly involved in the *Morot-Ḥayalot* program was *Levinsky College of Education*, which closely cooperated with *Ulpan ʿAḳiva* by providing its expertise in pedagogy. See Mendel, *The Creation of Israeli Arabic*, 215.

[625] Mendel, 124.

[626] Mendel, 122f.

chaired by a renowned Hebrew University Arabist Moshe Piamenta brought about a *Five-Year Plan* to improve the status of Arabic language studies in Israel. Although certain Israeli media outlets reported this to be a push to make Arabic compulsory,[627] the Ministry of Education merely aimed "to double the number of Arabic pupils, from 100,000 to 200,000 within five years (…)".[628] The plan fell short of these projections by a large margin, as it failed to reach even 160,000 pupils in 1982.[629] Despite this failure, the Piamenta Committee had an important impact on the status of Colloquial Arabic[630] in Jewish Israeli schools, which will be discussed in the next subchapter.

The security establishment's long-term goal of making the Arabic language a compulsory subject materialized after a significant political shift at the Ministry of Education after the 1984 elections. Yitzhak Navon, a graduate of Islamic Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and an Arabist himself,[631] turned down a second term as President of Israel and became the Minister of Education. He appointed Colonel Nissim ʿAtsmon as the Supervisor of the Arabic Programme at the Ministry of Education. ʿAtsmon, who had previously served as the director of the *IDF Schools of Arabic Studies*[632] and was one of the masterminds of TELEM, soon called for Arabic to be made compulsory from 7th to 12th grade within eight years.[633] Only months later, in December 1985, member of Knesset Abba Eban (formerly known as Audrey Eban, the Zionist-leaning Principal Instructor at British MECAS during its Jerusalem years) proposed a dedicated bill titled *Arabic Language Studies*, which called for the expansion of Arabic language instruction without utilizing the prevailing security connotations.[634] As Mendel documents, the overwhelming support for the proposal came mainly from the IDF, regardless of its non-militaristic wording. In terms of the systemic utilization of the Arabic language, perhaps the most interesting point

[627] "Israeli Schools Will Teach Arabic," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency Daily Newsletter* 60, no. 240 (December 22, 1977), https://www.jta.org/archive/israeli-schools-will-teach-arabic.
[628] Mendel, *The Creation of Israeli Arabic*, 140f.
[629] Mendel. 145. Mendel refers to a letter sent by the supervisor (of the Arabic studies at the Ministry of Education) to Y. Cohen, the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Education, 5 August 1981.
[630] "Colloquial Arabic" usually refers to an umbrella term for various vernaculars throughout the Arabic speaking world and as such is usually written with a lowercase 'C'. However, in most cases, the Israeli establishment referred to one specific vernacular, i.e., "Palestinian Arabic". Therefore, the term Colloquial Arabic is capitalized within this context.
[631] See Greer Fay Cashman, "Remembering Yitzhak Navon, Israel's Fifth President," *The Jerusalem Post*, November 8, 2015, https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/remembering-yitzhak-navon-israels-fifth-president-432351.
[632] A school that was run directly by the IDF, thus operating independently of the general Jewish Israeli education stream.
[633] Mendel, *The Creation of Israeli Arabic*, 152.
[634] Mendel, 154f.

was made by Ephraim Lapid, former head of TELEM and now a general, who argued that IDF draftees without previous exposure to Arabic, who then needed to be schooled solely by the IDF, usually lost their interest in the language once they concluded their compulsory service. The state would then lose Arabists, as they ceased to cultivate their knowledge in diplomacy, academia, or media.[635] The Knesset Education Committee eventually recommended making Arabic compulsory from 7th to 12th grade.[636] ʿAtsmon compiled the recommendations into an action plan, which was subsequently implemented by Yitzhak Navon in 1988.[637]

Navon's decision made the study of the Arabic language *de jure* compulsory in Israeli schools. In practice, however, the implementation of the Ministry of Education's regulation was limited at best and was frequently "subverted, or severely diluted, at the local level of schools".[638] General unwillingness to study Arabic throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s among the Jewish population was mirrored by Education Minister Zevelun Hammer, who once again "downgraded" the status of the Arabic language studies in Jewish Israeli schools by making them compulsory only from 7th to 10th grade as a second foreign language after English.[639] According to Allon Uhlmann, the inability of the Ministry of Education to enforce its own decisions concerning Arabic language instruction manifested itself again in 2003, when the upper echelons of the Ministry aimed to strengthen the status of Arabic by including a compulsory test as part of the matriculation examination (*Bagrut*). However, the initiative almost never reached the individual schools.[640] This trend has become symptomatic of the efforts to institutionalize the compulsory study of the Arabic language and has remained prevalent, developing until the end of the analysed period. In 2014, the study of Arabic in 10th grade became elective, leading to a further drop in the number of Jewish Israeli students of the language.[641] The narrative of the lack of public and political support for the study of Arabic manifested itself once again in 2020, when the Ministry of Education introduced an initiative called *Yā Salām*, which was aimed at making Arabic compulsory

[635] Mendel, 160 based on the minutes of the meeting on 22 January 1986.
[636] Mendel, 163 and 170.
[637] Uhlmann, "Arabic Instruction in Jewish Schools and in Universities in Israel," 296.
[638] Uhlmann, "Arabic Instruction in Jewish Schools and in Universities in Israel," 296.
[639] Belikoff, *The Study of Arabic in Jewish Schools*, 3.
[640] Uhlmann, "Arabic Instruction in Jewish Schools and in Universities in Israel," 299.
[641] Belikoff, *The Study of Arabic in Jewish Schools*, 4.

for the 5th grade in 170 schools in northern Israel.[642] Needless to say, the initiative never materialized due to a lack of interest among students.

Although Navon's decision to make Arabic language studies compulsory changed only little in terms of the public perception of the Arabic language, it provided the IDF with the impetus for perhaps the most ambitious initiative yet in "managing" its instruction in the Jewish Israeli education system. In 1986, the Unit for the Improvement of the Arabic Language and Culture (Hebrew: *Ha-Yeḥida le-Ḳidum ha-Safa ha-ʿAravit ve-Tarbuta*; abbreviated as Shifʿat) was introduced under the direct command of Nissim ʿAtsmon. Unlike its predecessors, who focused mainly on the promotion of Arabic language studies, Shifʿat worked directly within the structures of the Ministry of Education, focusing on the development of textbooks and curricula.[643] Originally consisting of twenty officers, the unit later expanded to forty active duty personnel with a yearly budget of roughly 4 million US dollars by 2000.[644] The unit was suddenly disbanded by the General Director of the Ministry of Education Ronit Tirosh (herself a former Arabic teacher) in 2001 – according to Mendel, this was due to internal political disagreements.[645]

The surviving initiatives resulting from the unique relationship between the Ministry of Education and the defence establishment are mainly the Oriental Youth Battalions and the TELEM unit. In the late 1990s, TELEM introduced two short term programs focused on the promotion of Arabic language studies among middle and high-school pupils. The first is *Modiʿin ba-Ofeḳ* (Military Intelligence on the Horizon), which aims to provide a "simulation" of MI work for 11th grade students of the Arabic language. The second is *Maḳne Daʿat*, which encourages 7th to 12th grade students to study Arabic.[646] An interesting departure from the secular Jewish Israeli education stream is the *Mekhina* program in Rosh Pina in northern Israel. Founded during the 1990s, this religious pre-army school caters to recent graduates of *yeshivot* (religious schools) and offers a year of intensive Arabic language studies.[647]

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[642] See "Arabic to Become Compulsory in Israeli Schools," *BBC News*, 24 August 2010, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-11075326.
[643] Mendel, *The Creation of Israeli Arabic,* 170. Specific curricula developed by Shifʿat are discussed in the next subchapter.
[644] Mendel, 170. Estimates of figures based on Mendel's interview with ʿAtsmon.
[645] Mendel, 174.
[646] Mendel. 175f. The specific content of the seminars is discussed in the following subchapter.
[647] Mendel. 173.

The certain perceivable shift in dependence on accelerated Arabic programs is symptomatic of what Allon Uhlmann describes as a general understanding that Israel's defence establishment "cannot rely on schools and will be obliged to continue training its recruits to make up for the gap in their Arabic proficiency (…). The military thus becomes the major venue for the postsecondary acquisition of proficiency through training, most effectively through active service, where Jews have the opportunity to use Arabic."[648] Almost no information about these courses or their institutional background is publicly available. The same applies to other governmental bodies that might require a knowledge of Arabic, including the rest of the security establishment and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[649] However, the dominant role of the IDF in the production of state-Arabists for other institutions remains apparent, as the former head of TELEM Ephraim Lapid noted in the discussions that led Arabic language studies to become compulsory.[650]

In summary, we can identify two long-term narratives in the education of Jewish Israeli state-Arabists. The first, which has been deeply explored by Yonatan Mendel, is the gradual takeover of Arabic language studies in the civilian educational domain by the IDF and the resulting transformation of language education to accommodate security and defence needs. From as early as the 1940s, both the pre-state security and civilian education establishments have shared a common understanding of the critical role of knowledge of the Arabic language among the Jewish Israeli population and supported its place in Jewish Israeli public education. The main opposing force to such sentiment until the present has been a general lack of interest in Arabic language studies among the Jewish Israeli public. To overcome public outcry, Israel's security establishment repeatedly called for the Arabic language to be a compulsory school subject. Despite the eventual adoption of such legal regulations, the actual institution of the Arabic language in the Jewish Israeli education system has remained limited at best.

The second narrative was one of "securitization", i.e., it highlighted the role of Arabic language studies as a critical asset to Israel's national security (and the lack thereof as a critical

[648] Uhlmann, "Arabic Instruction in Jewish Schools and in Universities in Israel," 297f.
[649] For instance, former directors of Shin Bet (*Sherut ha-Bitahon*, Israel's Internal Security Agency) Ya'akov Peri and Yuval Diskin briefly discussed a very thorough Arabic language and culture course they received in 1966 and 1978. The course was called a "Language Lab", and focused on both Colloquial and Literary Arabic, as well as an introduction to culture, Islam, and other elements of Middle Eastern Studies. See Dror Moreh, *The Gatekeepers: Inside Israel's Internal Security Agency* (New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2015), ch. Ya'akov Peri and Yuval Diskin, Kindle.
[650] Mendel, *The Creation of Israeli Arabic*, 160.

security threat). This has proven especially noticeable around two critical junctures – the 1967 and especially the 1973 War, which eventually led to the public promulgation of the study of the Arabic language as a national priority. The institutional setup within the IDF (or more specifically the MI) was very much in service of this securitizing drive. From the very beginning, financing the educational programs was not an issue. Instead, the security establishment found it challenging to convince potential students of the perks of studying the language. Therefore, most personnel and funds were allocated to *hasbara* – promotional efforts. Only around 1988, along with Yitzhak Navon's decision to make Arabic compulsory from 7th to 12th grade, was the IDF able to shift some efforts from promotion to execution, as evidenced by the establishment of the *Shifʿat* unit and the gradual expansion of the *Morot-Ḥayalot* program.

However, later developments proved that the opposition from the Jewish Israeli public towards learning Arabic could not be overcome by executive decisions. In fact, the post-1973 conflicts Israel has taken part in either externally (the 1982 and 2006 Lebanon Wars) or internally (the 1987-1993 and 2000-2005 Intifadas) seem to have had very little effect on the *hasbara* efforts in the promotion of Arabic language studies at Jewish Israeli schools. In similar terms, the 2014 "downgrade" of the status of Arabic language studies came after three wars in the Gaza Strip (2008-2009; 2012, and 2014). A possible explanation, albeit not supported by archival evidence, is that after the 1973 war no other conflict was understood as an existential threat by the Jewish Israeli public, thus not necessitating the sentiment of "Arabic for survival". Therefore, Allon Uhlmann's assessment that, post-1980s, the bulk of Arabic language instruction was provided internally by the defence establishment is very likely. Whether this was truly the case remains to be determined once further archival evidence becomes available.

5.2. Interaction between Israel's Defence Establishment and the Secular Jewish Israeli General Education Stream: Curricula

With the implementation of the 1988 educational reform resulting in Arabic language instruction becoming a compulsory part of the Jewish Israeli secular educational stream, the IDF achieved one of its long-term goals of "pre-training" Jewish Israeli pupils even

before their conscription into the military. However, the institutional setup between the IDF and the Ministry of Education would not have achieved the desired "utility" of Arabic language knowledge among draftees if it were not for the insertion of overarching *biṭḥoni* (security-focused) sentiments into the curricula. In the following paragraphs, I focus almost exclusively on the curricula produced by this defence-education nexus. The reasons for this are threefold. First, even though military service plays an important part in the overall existence of Israeli society and the general level of understanding of how the army works is comparatively higher than in many other countries, the presumably large body of study materials produced internally by the IDF and other security bodies still remains inaccessible to external researchers. Second, certain institutions tasked with instruction of the Arabic language have existed within vaguely defined boundaries between the defence and education sectors, thus providing a glimpse into the past and present of tailor-made Arabic language courses utilized directly by the IDF. These include the long defunct *Ha-Megama ha-Mizraḥanit* (commonly referred to as "Oriental Classes" program), *Givʿat Ḥaviva*, *Ulpan ʿAḳiva,* religious *Mekhina,* and several programs within the *Levinski College of Education*. Finally, the previously discussed IDF initiatives such as the *Shifʿat* unit directly participated in the formulation of Arabic language curricula for Jewish Israeli high schools within the structures of the Ministry of Education, thus blurring the user-educator dichotomy of the IDF even further.

Since one of the general themes of this dissertation is the impact of certain critical junctions – in this case mainly various episodes of the Arab-Israeli conflict – on institutions and the curricula they produce and utilize in the training of state-Arabists, it ought to be noted that research with a similar focus was conducted by Dana Elazar-Halevy in 2009.[651] Elazar-Halevy performed a discourse analysis of Arabic language textbooks aimed at Jewish Israeli high school students approximately between the foundation of the State of Israel and the late 1980s, searching for traces of nationalistic and militaristic attitudes. In this section, I aim to situate Elazar-Halevy's valuable findings within the larger framework of the institutional development presented on the previous pages while also expanding the timeframe to include a more recent past, thus making it possible to accommodate the contemporary Arabic language textbooks used in Israel as well as several *hasbara*-oriented

[651] See Dana Elazar-Halevy, "Ruḥot Leʾumiyut u-Tfisot Miliṭarisṭiyot be-Limudei ʿAravit be-Yisraʾel [Nationalistic Spirits and Militaristic Perceptions in Arabic Studies in Israel] (in Hebrew)," *Dor le-Dor: Journal for the Studies in the History of Jewish Education in Israel*, no. 34 (2009): 7-32.

initiatives of the IDF. Simultaneously, I analyse the impact of the IDF's initiatives on the instruction of the local vernacular, i.e., Palestinian Arabic, as opposed to MSA / Literary Arabic, which remains both the official and preferred version of the language taught at Jewish Israeli high schools.

A noticeable paradox naturally foreshadows any analysis of Arabic language curricula aimed at educating state-Arabists in Israel. In a country with almost 21% of its citizens identifying as Arabs by 2019,[652] only 12% of Arabic teachers in the Jewish Israeli general education system are Arabs.[653] According to Mendel, the institutional barrier to their employment goes all the way back to the pre-state period. In 1946, the first full-time supervisor of Arabic language studies in the Jewish school system, Dr Yisraʾel Ben Zeʾev, clearly pointed out that all Arabic teachers at Jewish high schools were supposed to be Jewish because they were required to know Hebrew as the medium of instruction, and "they also need(ed) to have the proper training for teaching as is customary in European schools."[654] Furthermore, Ben Ze'ev deemed the "Arabs' teaching methods (…) not appropriate for the nature and cultural level of our pupils (i.e., Jewish Israelis; author's note)."[655] While this argument does not necessarily carry a direct connotation with requirements for the politically, militarily, or security-oriented instruction of Arabic, it implies a clear preference for European and therefore Ashkenazi didactic expertise. In terms of Arabic language instruction, a glimpse of the looming dominance of Europe-educated Orientalists in the educational domain was evident in the formulation of the 1944 curricula for the *Courses for Jewish Mukhtars*. Although the initiative was aimed at Jews interacting with Arabs daily and presumably in a local dialect, the principal figure in its creation was influential academic Arabist Shelomo Dov Goitein, who received his doctorate in Oriental studies from the University of Frankfurt.[656]

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[652] *Hodaʿa le-tikshoret: Yom ha-ʿAtsmaʾut 5779* [Press Release: Independence Day 2019] (In Hebrew) (Central Bureau of Statistics - Israel, 2019), https://www.cbs.gov.il/he/mediarelease/DocLib/2019/134/11_19_134b.pdf.
[653] Or Kashti, "Know Your Enemy: How Arabic is Taught in Israel's Jewish High Schools," *Haaretz*, 8 September 2015, updated 10 April 2018, https://www.haaretz.com/.premium-know-your-enemy-how-arabic-is-taught-in-israel-s-jewish-high-schools-1.5396250. Based on an MoE statistic produced in 2015, the article highlights the total number of 1,317 Arabic teachers; however, only 167 (12%) of them were Arabs. This is still an improvement from 2010, when the figure was only around 5%. See Uhlmann, "Arabic Instruction in Jewish Schools and in Universities in Israel," 303. Moreover, the 2015 MoE statistic does not include the ad-hoc initiative *Yā Salām* in northern Israel, which apparently shifted larger numbers of teachers of Arab origin into classrooms.
[654] Yisraʾel Ben Zeʾev, "Report on Arabic Studies (1946), Quoted here from Mendel, *The Creation of Israeli Arabic*, 29.
[655] Mendel, 29.
[656] Mendel, 34. Goitein became the first professor of Islamic studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Perhaps his greatest academic achievement was a six-volume series *A Mediterranean Society: The Jewish*

Another didactic argument against the employment of Arab teachers in Jewish Israeli schools revolved around the difficulty of teaching one's native language as a second language to Jewish Israeli pupils.[657] As Allon Uhlmann thoroughly analysed, such an explanation hardly stands up to comparison with the instruction of English and French in Israel, where native speakers are overwhelmingly preferred. Therefore, a greater importance can be attributed to other arguments, such as the societal notion of Jewish Israeli principals and parents simply preferring their children not to be taught by the "Other", security considerations by the military-education nexus not to "invest in the enemy", and the socioeconomic factor of maintaining vacancies for Jewish Arabic language educators.[658] These non-didactic factors were historically overcome by the employment of the *Mizraḥim*, i.e., Jewish immigrants from Arab countries who considered Arabic, albeit in dialects often distant from the Levantine/Palestinian one, to be their native language and whose social and security profile was deemed more acceptable than that of Palestinian Arabs.[659] However, the two waves of *Mizraḥi* immigration to Israel took place following the events of 1948 and 1956, after which the Jewish population in Arab countries effectively ceased to exist. Therefore, the Jewish Israeli school system's direct utilization of their natively acquired linguistic expertise was limited only to a certain period.[660]

The very issue of the personal closeness to the Palestinian population in Arabic language instruction reminds us of Gil Eyal's observations of the dissent between the *mistaʿarvim* (Arabists)[661] of the Mandate Period, who grew up among Palestinians and served in various paramilitary units as the first generation of Israeli state-Arabists, and the *mizraḥanim* (Orientalists), whose authority in Arab affairs was based on scientific method imported from European universities.[662] Eyal's analysis suggests that hands-on oriented "Arabists" were considered a critical part of the pre-state security-intelligence apparatus until the late 1940s, when their expertise in Jewish-Arab relations on a local level

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Communities
of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza (1967-1993).
[657] Uhlmann, "Arabic Instruction in Jewish Schools and in Universities in Israel," 303.
[658] Uhlmann, "Arabic Instruction in Jewish Schools and in Universities in Israel," 303.
[659] Uhlmann, "Arabic Instruction in Jewish Schools and in Universities in Israel," 303.
[660] In individual instances, the *Mizrahi* immigrants were employed as Arabic language teachers in Jewish high schools even before 1948. For instance, in a 1939 Arabic Teachers Committee session, S.D. Goitein mentioned 18 Sephardic teachers and 11 Jewish Iraqi teachers. See Mendel, *The Creation of Israeli Arabic*, 29.
[661] The meaning of *mistaʿarvim* in Eyal's analysis is different from the previously discussed one, i.e., the IDF special forces. However, the notion of a certain level of immersion in the Palestinian population remains similar to both groups.
[662] Eyal, "Dangerous Liaisons," 660f.

and control over networks of Arab informers gradually ceased to be relevant to the newly established Israeli state.[663] The active marginalization of *mistaʿarvim* took place in parallel to the insertion of the academic Orientalists' expertise especially into the security apparatus, a process culminating in 1953 with the creation of the central research office within the Military Intelligence. This process significantly diminished the prestige of the "Arabists" and brought academic Orientalists in much closer proximity to policymakers,[664] thus further reducing Israeli political leadership's indirect contact with the Palestinian population.

The notion of gradually distancing Jewish Israeli "Oriental" expertise from the everyday reality of Arabs living in Israel, Palestinian territories, and surrounding countries manifested itself perhaps most profoundly in the overwhelming preference for MSA over any other specific form of the Arabic language in textbooks intended for Jewish high-school students.[665] While I found it impossible to pinpoint the exact period when MSA came to be considered a standard target language for Jewish Israeli pupils learning Arabic, indirect evidence suggests that diversely defined Literary Arabic was preferred over the vernacular even during the pre-state period. For instance, Yisraʾel Ben Zeʾev mentioned the inclusion of Colloquial Arabic into the curricula in Jewish schools by 1940, but only as a supplement to the ongoing instruction of Literary Arabic.[666] The vernacular also found its way into the early curricula of the Oriental classes programme, which in 1956 offered "extensive studies of Colloquial Arabic, Modern Standard Arabic and Classical Arabic" combined with a strong Middle Eastern studies element.[667]

The inclusion of vernacular into the Oriental Classes programme was characteristic of initiatives existing outside the general stream of Jewish Israeli secular education and therefore was not overseen by the Ministry of Education, such as *Ulpan ʿAḳiva* and *Givʿat Ḥaviva*. The former was founded in 1951 in Nahariya as one of Israel's first *ulpanim*, accelerated Hebrew language schools aimed at the integration of adult immigrants to Israel. In 1967, *Ulpan ʿAḳiva* introduced a unique language program focused on Colloquial Arabic

[663] Eyal, "Dangerous Liaisons," 661
[664] Eyal, "Dangerous Liaisons," 672-674.
[665] Alon Fragman, "Summarizing and Translation in Teaching Arabic Reading Comprehension in Israel," *Al-Arabiyya*, no. 32 (1999): 65-86, quoted here from Iair G. Or and Elana Shohamy, "Contrasting Arabic and Hebrew Textbooks in Israel: A Focus on Culture," in *Language, Ideology and Education: The Politics of Textbooks in Language Education*, ed. Xiao Lan Curdt-Christiansen and Csilla Weninger (New York, 2015), 111.
[666] Memorandum "Teaching Arabic in the Jewish National Council's Institutions in 1945-1946," CZA/J1/5853. Quoted here from Mendel, *The Creation of Israeli Arabic*, 33.
[667] Mendel, *The Creation of Israeli Arabic*, 75.

to facilitate everyday communication with Palestinians.[668] From its very inception, the IDF took interest in the Ulpan's focus on the vernacular due to its sudden need to administer the newly occupied territories. At least ten IDF officers who were expecting deployment to the Gaza Strip were to be enrolled in each Colloquial Arabic course.[669] The continued cooperation with the IDF resulted in the 1975 introduction of an initiative called *ʿAravit ke-Rosh Gesher* (Arabic as a Bridgehead), which "brought Jewish Israeli and Palestinian pupils from Israel and the Occupied Territories together for (…) usually a week and, during this period, Jewish Israelis learned Colloquial Arabic and Palestinian pupils learned Hebrew."[670]

A similar concept of close interaction between Palestinians and Jewish Israelis has been at the core of the *Institute of Arabic Studies* at *Givʿat Ḥaviva*, which was established in 1963.[671] It is unclear to what extent Colloquial Arabic was taught vis-à-vis MSA at the Institute's *Ha-Kita ha-Mizraḥanit* (Oriental Class; despite the same title, it was a different programme from the initiative run by the Prime Minister's office and the Ministry of Education since 1954). However, the IDF must have valued *Givʿat Ḥaviva's* expertise in teaching the vernacular, as it strongly supported and utilized its dedicated 1987 Lebanese dialect course for the *IDF South Lebanon Liaison Unit*.[672] Even today, *Givʿat Ḥaviva* remains one of the most prominent Israeli institutions in this area, offering courses in both Spoken and Literary Arabic (*meduberet* and *sifrutit*) to the Israeli and international public and specific clientele.[673]

Unlike the institutions operating independently of the Ministry of Education, the instruction of Colloquial Arabic within the general stream of Jewish Israeli education was

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[668] Mendel, 207. The Ulpan itself as well as the Arabic programme were the brainchild of Shulamit Katznelson, the mastermind behind the concept of the *intensive immersion* method around which most *ulpanim* still revolve today. See Rabinovich, Aviva. "Shulamith Katznelson: August 17, 1919–1999," *Shalvi/Hyman Encyclopedia of Jewish Women: Jewish Women's Archive*, 31 December 1999, accessed January 26, 2023, https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/katznelson-shulamith.

[669] Mendel, *The Creation of Israeli Arabic*, 207f.

[670] Mendel, 210.

[671] *Givʿat Ḥaviva* itself was established in 1949, its name commemorating Ḥaviva Reik (1914-1944), a female Jewish paratrooper from pre-state Palestine. Ḥaviva Reik was a member of *Ha-Shomer ha-Tsaʿir*, a Zionist youth movement with which *Givʿat Ḥaviva* was closely associated. See "Haviva Reik (Emma) 1914-1944," Givat Haviva, accessed January 26, 2023, http://www.givathaviva.org/Haviva-Reik-Emma-1914-1944.

[672] Mendel, *The Creation of Israeli Arabic*, 198. Operating under the acronym YAKAL until the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000, the unit was primarily responsible for liaising with the Lebanese-Christian South Lebanon Army. See Times of Israel Staff, "At Syrian Border, IDF Seeks Closer Contact with Civilians on Other Side," *Times Of Israel*, 29 May 2016, https://www.timesofisrael.com/on-syrian-border-idf-sets-up-unit-that-will-work-with-syrian-civilians/.

[673] For basic reference, see e.g. "Hishtalmut be-ʿAravit Meduberet Mukheret le-Gmol ha-Ovdot ve-Ovdim Sotsiʾaliim," [Advanced Training in Spoken Arabic is Known as a Reward for Women and Men in Social Work] (in Hebrew) Givat Haviva, accessed January 26, 2023, https://www.givathaviva.org.il/social.

frequently subjected to heated debates by both experts and politicians. For instance, the 1977 report by the Piamenta Committee recommended that pupils be taught Colloquial Arabic between grades 4 to 6 and then continue their studies in Literary Arabic until grade 9, a move that was subsequently approved by the Ministry of Education.[674] However, the decision to begin language instruction with the vernacular soon proved controversial. According to Bernard Spolsky and Elana Shohamy, the dedicated Colloquial Arabic courses became part of curricula in about forty elementary schools (grades 5-6) in the Tel Aviv area. However, instruction was abolished in the late 1980s after the publication of research highlighting the poor quality of pupils' skills in the Arabic language and the incompatibility of the vernacular taught at lower grades with MSA taught at the high school level.[675] Besides the practical didactic limitations of combining Colloquial and Literary Arabic / MSA, Mendel also points out that the decision to include the vernacular in the curricula approved by the Ministry of Education might have been closely connected to Moshe Piamenta's own academic interest in the subject, as well as Military Intelligence's potential need for speakers of Colloquial Arabic. Piamenta, a renowned professor of Arabic at Hebrew University, has previously written several textbooks on Colloquial Arabic, the first of which – *Lashon ʿAravi: ha-ʿAravit Meduberet be-Pei ha-ʿAm* (Arabic Language: Arabic Spoken by the People) was published as early as 1946.[676]

The matter of the instruction of Colloquial Arabic also became the subject of debates preceding Yitzhak Navon's educational reforms of the late-1980s, which eventually resulted in legalizing the Arabic language as a compulsory subject at Jewish Israeli high schools. With Military Intelligence having an important word in the matter, Col. Benny Gilʿad, then the head of the *IDF School of Arabic*, voiced a rather perplexing opinion. Although he believed that Colloquial Arabic should be taught before delving into MSA,

[674] Mendel, *The Creation of Israeli Arabic*, 136.
[675] Spolsky and Shohamy, *Languages of Israel*, 146.
[676] Moshe Piamenta and Shimon Landman, *Lashon ʿAravi: ha-ʿAravit Meduberet be-Pei ha-ʿAm* [Arabic Language: Arabic Spoken by the People] (in Hebrew and Arabic) (Jerusalem: Hu:g Da'-'Arav Publications, 1946). Piamenta later published two more textbooks focused on the vernacular. First was an introduction to Colloquial Arabic *Daber ʿAravit!* [Speak Arabic!] (in Hebrew and Arabic) (Tel Aviv: Maʿariv Library Publications, 1968); reprinted in 1969 and 1975. His latest addition was *ʿAravit Meduberet le-Matḥilim* [Spoken Arabic for Beginners] (in Hebrew and Arabic), (Tel Aviv: Maʿariv Library Publications, 1973). For a list of all Piamenta's works on both Colloquial and Literary Arabic, see Judith Rosenhouse and Ami Elad-Bouskila, *Linguistic and Cultural Studies on Arabic and Hebrew: Essays Presented to Professor Moshe Piamenta for His Eightieth Birthday* (Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, 2001). In addition to professor Piamenta's works, Mendel also highlights a similar textbook by Avraham Hakim, which was published with a foreword by then Chief of IDF MI Shlomo Gazit. Avraham Hakim, *ʿAravit Meduberet Erets Yisraʾeli* [Colloquial Eretz-Israeli Arabic] (in Hebrew and Arabic) (Tel Aviv: Maʿarachot, Israel Ministry of Defence, 1976).

he highlighted the critical role of MSA / Literary Arabic and even Classical Arabic in instilling correct grammar, syntax and reading skills in (military) students, who could then utilize this general knowledge in their study of various dialects.[677] It remains unclear whether it was due to the influence of the IDF or the Ministry of Education that Navon's subsequent educational reform entrenched the favourable position of the MSA as a compulsory subject in Jewish Israeli high schools as opposed to the vernacular. An alternative explanation might be that throughout the 1980s, the IDF desperately sought expertise in the Lebanese dialect with all its similarities but also differences from the Palestinian vernacular. Perhaps this was why the IDF turned to *Givʿat Ḥaviva* for Lebanese dialect instruction as early as 1987, thus evading the need for further discussion with the Ministry of Education about the possibilities of teaching the Lebanese vernacular. Implementation of yet another dialect into a nationwide system that overwhelmingly favoured MSA would have been cumbersome at best, whereas *Givʿat Ḥaviva* offered a much more flexible solution.

The absence of the IDF's support for the instruction of Colloquial Arabic in Jewish Israeli schools after the 1980s did not terminate the surrounding debate entirely. Arguments for the usefulness of MSA (which provides access to media from the entire Arab world), difficulties with transcribing the vernacular into Hebrew due to a lack of standardized orthographic expression of the spoken language, and the universal usability of MSA as a starting point for the study of dialects have repeatedly been voiced in support of continued focus on MSA.[678] Or Kashti suggests yet another possible factor regarding why the preference for MSA resonates so strongly with Jewish Israeli audiences, i.e., only a few non-native teachers are able to speak the vernacular, yet alone other dialects, in a way that would allow for classroom instruction in Colloquial Arabic.[679] At the same time, MSA's lack of practicality in everyday interaction with Palestinians has repeatedly been highlighted as one of the main reasons why many Jewish students refuse to study Arabic in the first place.[680] In other words, many young Jewish Israelis have found it meaningless to study a language they would not be able to use on a daily basis unless they opted for careers as state-Arabists, during which their interactions with Arabs (not just Palestinians) would be controlled by the specific and ever-changing agendas of their employers.

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[677] Mendel, *The Creation of Israeli Arabic*, 167. Mendel quotes from the minutes of the meeting called by Yitzhak Navon on January 28, 1986.
[678] See Smadar Donitsa-Schmidt, Ofra Inbar, and Elana Shohamy, "The Effects of Teaching Spoken Arabic on Students' Attitudes and Motivation in Israel," *The Modern Language Journal*, no. 88 (2004): 200.
[679] Kashti, "Know Your Enemy."
[680] Donitsa-Schmidt, Inbar, and Shohamy, "The Effects of Teaching Spoken Arabic," 220 and 226.

The notion of the absence of interaction between Jewish students and Arabs, as well as efforts to maintain stringent rules in such encounters, goes far beyond the dichotomy between dialect and MSA. For instance, during the initial runs of the *Ha-Megama ha-Mizraḥanit* program in the mid-1950s, selected students were sent on "excursions" to the Druze village Peki'in and later to the mostly Arab-populated Nazareth. Besides a carefully designed itinerary, one of the great worries of the organizers was that the pupils would form a sort of emotional connection with the Arabs they were visiting.[681] Similarly, even though the *ʿAravit ke-Rosh Gesher* program organized by *Ulpan ʿAḳiva* in the 1970s encouraged a linguistic exchange between Jews and Palestinians, it was done in a controlled setting during the very short timeframe of one week. Furthermore, when the *Shifʿat* unit within the Ministry of Education organized field trips for Arabic language learners in the late 1980s and early 1990s, they almost exclusively travelled to "friendly" Arab countries such as Egypt, Morocco, and Jordan while avoiding the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and cities with an Arab Israeli majority.[682] As presented by Iiar Or and Elana Shohamy in their study on present-day Arabic language textbooks in Israel, the practice of carefully avoiding the subject of Israeli Arabs and Palestinians has translated thoroughly to the Jewish Israeli classrooms of today: "It is important to note that there are no references to Palestine or Palestinians, either as a political entity (the Palestinian Authority) or the national identity of Arabs in Israel and/or in the Occupied Territories, in any of the textbooks. While all the books mention neighbouring Arab countries such as Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon, as well as some Arab cities and villages in Israel, the national identity of Israeli Arabs is minimized or avoided, and the presence of Palestinians within or outside Israel is simply ignored."[683]

Regardless of whether Jewish Israeli students began their studies while motivated by a desire for peaceful coexistence or maintaining the internal or external security of the State of Israel,[684] their understanding of Arabs must have, to some extent, been formed

[681] Mendel, *The Creation of Israeli Arabic*, 78f.
[682] Mendel, 170.
[683] Or and Shohamy, "Contrasting Arabic and Hebrew Textbooks," 116.
[684] The dichotomy of Arabic for peace and Arabic for security utilized by Mendel comes from many historical examples pertaining to the policy development and involvement of the IDF. In these examples, terminology of this kind was utilized by IDF and MoE officials, other significant political and academic figures such as Moshe Piamenta, and also Abba Eban despite him distancing himself from the dichotomy (see Mendel, *The Creation of Israeli Arabic*, 100; 136; 154f). However, a 1999 quantitative study of the perception of Arabic language studies in Tel Aviv area high schools discovered that the motivations for studying the Arabic language by pupils (and their parents) were far more diverse, including "being surrounded by Arabs; need to communicate; promotion of peace and cultural exchange between Jews and Arabs; pragmatic motivations; and the sentiments revolving

by the curricula themselves. If the previous paragraphs have presented the curricular development of Arabic language instruction in Israel as a process of distancing, the question remains: Who then are "the Arabs" presented to Jewish high school students via textbooks and other activities? And is there any noticeable distinction between "the Arabs" and the Palestinians? Utilizing Dana Eleazar-Halevy's research on militaristic tendencies in Arabic-language curricula, we can observe dramatic changes in the representation of Arabs, Arab countries, Islam, and the Arab-Israeli conflict. Several textbooks widely distributed before the establishment of the Israeli state were mostly void of militaristic and nationalistic tendencies. Such was the case of Yosef J. Rivlin's *Ḥoveret le-limudei ha-ḳriya ha-ʿAravit* (Booklet for the Study of Arabic Reading) published in the early 1930s.[685] The booklet circumvented any controversial subjects by simply avoiding present-day issues and focusing instead on the historical narratives of Arab nations, mainly those associated with the early Islamic period.[686]

Gradually though, uncontroversial excerpts from the Arab press were slowly included in the textbooks. According to Elazar-Halevi, the logic behind the editorial decision to bring students closer to current affairs was to increase their motivation to study the Arabic language.[687] Through these works, occasional references to the political reality began to shine through. For instance, the 1936 *Ha-Safa ha-ʿAravit va-Diḳduḳa* (Arabic Language and its Grammar) written by Yoḥanan Kaplivecki presented students with an excerpt presenting how the head of the Jewish Agency congratulated the Egyptian Prime Minister on the occasion of Egypt becoming a member of the League of Nations.[688] The selection of such excerpts at this specific period might not have only echoed the notion of the "Arabic for peace" sentiment by highlighting an instance of positive relations between pre-1948 Jewish

around the concept of the 'language of the enemy'". However, the study was conducted on 4th to 6th grade students, i.e., those aged 9-11 (and their parents), with the experimental group at high schools where Colloquial Arabic was instructed. Rather surprisingly, the "militaristic/language of the enemy" factor scored very low compared to other motivations. See Donitsa-Schmidt, Inbar and Shohamy, "The Effects of Teaching Spoken Arabic," 221 and 224. As interesting as the results are, they cannot be used as a measure of the success of the *hasbara*-based activities of the IDF, which are usually targeted at older audiences (grades 7-12). However, they do offer an interesting glimpse into the challenges to the pre-existing motivations that the IDF tends to either support or dissuade.

[685] Yosef J. Rivlin, *Ḥoveret le-limudei ha-ḳriya ha-ʿAravit* [Booklet for the Study of Arabic Reading] (in Hebrew and Arabic) (Tel Aviv, 1932/33). Quoted here from Elazar-Halevy, "Ruḥot Leʾumiyut," 18.

[686] Elazar-Halevy, "Ruḥot Leʾumiyut," 19.

[687] Elazar-Halevy, "Ruḥot Leʾumiyut," 19f. Based on a preface to Miḥal Dana and Aviva Torovski-Landman, *Mevaḥer me-ha-ʿItonut ha-ʿAravit* [Selection from Arabic Press] (In Hebrew and Arabic) (Tel Aviv, 1946/7).

[688] Yoḥanan Kaplivecki, *Ha-Safa ha-ʿAravit va-Diḳduḳa. Sefer Sheni* [Arabic Language and its Grammar. Book Two] (In Hebrew and Arabic) (Tel Aviv, 1936). Quoted here from Elazar-Halevy, "Ruḥot Leʾumiyut," 20.

representatives and Arab countries, but also the early efforts to "politicize" the instruction of the Arabic language in Mandatory Palestine.[689] This sentiment, however, was not universally present in curricula even in the final years before 1948, as evidenced in the textbook by Eliyahu Ḥabuba, which resorted to general remarks about the life of unspecified Arabs/Bedouins without any relevance to current affairs.[690]

The establishment of the Israeli state and the violent reality of the 1948 Arab-Israeli War did not seem to manifest itself profoundly in the Arabic language textbooks distributed to Jewish schools. The textbook *Ha-Diḳduḳ ha-ʿAraravi ha-Maʿasi* (Practical Arabic Grammar) by Eliyahu Burke published in late 1948 presented the narrative of Jews and Arabs coexisting peacefully.[691] Limited remarks with militaristic undertones such as "the army entered the city as a victor"[692] were present in this and several other textbooks. However, the authors referenced the May 1948 situation in Palestine in a carefully subdued manner and did not name the specific warring sides of the conflict.[693] This might have been due to the particular situation of the Arabists who accumulated at least some of their knowledge in Mandatory Palestine and were not necessarily a part of the military-security establishment. Regardless of their personal opinions, they might have opted for a more careful approach to presenting nationalistic or even militaristic attitudes. Furthermore, the institutionalisation of the training of state-Arabists was in its infancy (with the first "Oriental classes" being introduced in 1954) and, except for several selected high schools, it existed outside of the larger framework of Jewish Israeli secular education.

Only the 1967 Arab-Israeli War was followed by textbooks such as *Shiʿurim ba-Safa ha-ʿAravit* (Lessons in the Arabic language) by R. Rajvan, which were highly militaristic and propagandistic in nature. The author did not shy away from statements such as "the Israeli Army is strong; Israel has a powerful fleet; the enemy army is beaten; the enemy has left two broken cannons in the field", etc., as well as photos and drawings of military equipment.[694]

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[689] Kaplivecki's book was released only two years before Moshe Sharrett, then the head of the Political Department of the Jewish Agency, began to actively promote the study of Arabic for political reasons.
[690] Eliyahu Ḥabuba, *Sefer Limud ha-ʿAravi. Ḥelek Sheni: Murḥevet va-Metuḳenet* [Arabic Study Book. Extended and Revised Second Part] (in Hebrew and Arabic) (Haifa, 1946/47). Quoted from Elazar-Halevy, "Ruḥot Leʾumiyut," 22.
[691] Eliyahu S. Burke, *Ha-Diḳduḳ ha-ʿAravi ha-Maʿasi. Ḥelek Rishon* [Practical Arabic Grammar. Part One] (in Hebrew and Arabic) (Jerusalem, 1948). Quoted from Elazar-Halevy, "Ruḥot Leʾumiyut," 23.
[692] Elazar-Halevy, "Ruḥot Leʾumiyut," 23.
[693] Elazar-Halevy, "Ruḥot Leʾumiyut," 23.
[694] R. Rajwan, *Shiʿurim ba-Safa ha-ʿAravit* [Lessons in the Arabic Language] (In Hebrew and Arabic) (Jerusalem: IDF Publisher, 1968). Quoted from Elazar-Halevy, "Ruḥot Leʾumiyut," 23f.

However, the book was published directly by the IDF and the level of its utilization in the majority of Jewish Israeli high schools remains unclear.[695] The propagandistic nature of the textbook is also highlighted by its relatively swift publication after the 1967 war, and numerous remarks are made specifically about this conflict, thus echoing the triumphant nature of debates on Arabic language instruction in Israel during the late 1960s.

While most Arabic language textbooks published after 1967 did not share such a militaristically triumphant sentiment, the reflection of the current reality became more pronounced. For instance, the textbook *Targilei Diḳduḳ ba-ʿAravit* (Grammar Exercises in Arabic) published in 1970 makes reference to the post-1967 expansion of Israel: "These are the soldiers who returned from the villages near Jordan."[696] At the same time, the textbook still maintained the notion of peaceful coexistence between Jews and Arabs, presenting students with statements such as "Here in our country the Arabs are learning Hebrew and the Jews are learning Arabic."[697] It should be noted that *Targilei Diḳduḳ ba-ʿAravit* was written by Arabic teachers from the Reali School in Haifa, i.e., the first institution that previously participated in an initiative run by the Prime Minister's Office and the IDF – *Ha-Megama ha-Mizraḥanit*, although this accelerated learning program was no longer active in the early 1970s. Only a year before the events of 1973, the Bureau of the Councillor for Arab Affairs within the Prime Minister's Office, the institution responsible for *Ha-Megama ha-Mizraḥanit*, also published its own two readers of Arabic press.[698] We can carefully assume that the institutional framework behind the *Ha-Megama ha-Mizraḥanit* maintained a network of Arabists who produced at least some of the textbooks utilized in the emerging military-education nexus.

The curricular development following the 1973 October War mirrored the intensity with which the military-security establishment promoted the study of the Arabic language. In the 1976 textbook *Ha-Lashon ha-ʿaravit ha-Sifrutit* (Literary Arabic) by Ḥ. Dahan and Sh. Alon, the militaristic leaning was already very pronounced. The textbook offered many explanations of the inner workings of the IDF, including remarks on the various branches

[695] Elazar-Halevy points out that Rajwan's textbook was mentioned in a list of textbooks recommended for use in Hebrew Schools in Israel. See Elazar-Halevy, "Ruḥot Leʾumiyut," 24.
[696] See Ruḥama Avni and Aviva Landman, *Targilei Diḳduḳ ba-ʿAravit. Shalav Alef* [Grammar Exercises in Arabic. Stage One] (in Hebrew and Arabic) (Haifa, 1970). Quoted from Elazar-Halevy, "Ruḥot Leʾumiyut," 23f.
[697] Avni and Landman, *Targilei Diḳduḳ ba-ʿAravit*. Quoted from Elazar-Halevy, "Ruḥot Leʾumiyut," 23f.
[698] See Eyal J. Landau, *An Introduction to the Arabic Press and Broadcasting* (In Hebrew) (Jerusalem: The Bureau of the Councillor for Arab Affairs, The Prime Minister's Office, 1973). Quoted from Elazar-Halevy, "Ruḥot Leʾumiyut," 24f.

(Air Force, pilot school, etc.), as well as excerpts from an unspecified Arab newspaper commenting on military relations between the USSR and Iraq. The "new threat" of terrorism was also presented via comments on aircraft hijacking, including a picture of an Arab woman in a *niqāb* holding a handgun.[699] The textbooks published after the mid-1970s existed at a time when the IDF was already actively involved in Arabic language studies at Jewish Israeli high schools, either by promoting the study of the language through its TELEM unit or, after 1978, even actively teaching in classrooms via uniformed officers participating in the *Morot-Ḥayalot* programme. As Elazar-Halevi pointed out, the inclination towards militarism was not universal, and some Arabic language textbooks still offered a seemingly impartial view that was reminiscent of the pre-1967 period. However, scattered remarks about the IDF remained almost omnipresent, as evidenced by the 1982 textbook by Yosef Moran and Muḥammad Ḥabīb Allāh. Despite most of the textbook remaining "civilian" in nature, students would still learn about the insignia on IDF uniforms.[700] The new textbooks were supported by the 1978 release of the *Sharoni Arabic-Hebrew Dictionary*, which was published directly by the Ministry of Defence to be used in conjunction with new initiatives promoting the study of the Arabic language.[701] It comes as no surprise that Avraham Sharoni was an influential MI Arabist and one of the masterminds of previous efforts to educate more Israeli state-Arabists.

One might expect the inception of the IDF *Shifʿat* unit, which operated within the structure of the Ministry of Education, to have had a noticeable impact on the agenda presented in Arabic language textbooks after 1986. This was not necessarily the case. The most widely distributed series developed directly by the Ministry of Education from the early 1980s was *Al-ʿArabīya li-as-Sufūf al-Iʿdādīya* (Arabic for Intermediate Classes), which was repeatedly published between the early 1990s and 2000s.[702] The series not only avoided

[699] See Ḥ. Dahan and Sh. Alon, *Ha-Lashon ha-ʿAravit ha-Sifrutit. Ḥelek Sheni* [Literary Arabic Language. Second Part] (in Hebrew and Arabic) (Jerusalem, 1976). Quoted here from Elazar-Halevi, "Ruḥot Leʾumiyut," 27. The third part of the textbook was published later in 1988. For additional releases, see Rosenhouse and Elad-Bouskila, *Linguistic and Cultural Studies on Arabic and Hebrew*, 18. See also Fig. VI.

[700] See Yosef Moran and Muḥammad Ḥabīb Allāh, *ʿAravit Sifrutit: Sefer Limudei le-Matḥilim* [Literary Arabic: Textbook for Beginners] (in Hebrew and Arabic) (Tel Aviv, 1982). Quoted from Elazar-Halevi, "Ruḥot Leʾumiyut," 28.

[701] Mendel, *The Creation of Israeli Arabic*, 113f. The dictionary was based on a previously non-public military dictionary and is still widely used in the Israeli educational system.

[702] See R. Avni, L. Yisraeli, and A. Landmann, *Al-ʿArabīya li-as-Sufūf al-Iʿdādīya. Al-Kitāb al-Awwal* [Arabic for Intermediate Classes. Part I] (in Hebrew and Arabic) (Jerusalem: Israel's Ministry of Education, The Pedagogical Wing, The Teaching Programme Department; Maʿalot Publishing House, 1990). The textbook was followed by Part II and Part III published in 1992 and 1994. Part I was reprinted 2002. For remarks about the scope of distribution, see Or and Shohamy, "Contrasting Arabic and Hebrew Textbooks in Israel," 113f.

militaristic attitudes but also references to current affairs in Israel. In the spirit of many pre-1967 textbooks, it instead presented Arabs in a way that Elama Shohamy and Iair Or referred to as "extremely Orientalistic, objectifying the culture of the other by portraying it as belonging to a traditional, conservative rural society, far removed from the modern globalized urban culture that actually exists in many parts of Arab society".[703] In the late 1980s and early 1990s, several guidebooks for Arabic language teachers at Jewish high schools were prepared and widely distributed.[704]

A more contemporary textbook series includes *Al-Lugha bāb al-ḥaḍāra: Safa Mesaperet Tarbut (*Language as a Door to Culture), first published in 2001; the *Mumtāz* (Excellent) series published since 2009; and *Lomdim ʿaravit*: *Nadrusu al-ʿarabīya* (We Learn Arabic), published since 2012.[705] Out of the three, the *Mumtāz* series is the only one with a militaristic focus and frequent references to military affairs. At the same time, remarks about Arabs are very general and never refer to Palestine, Palestinians, or Arab Israelis.[706] With the exception of the *Mumtāz* series, missing reflections on the IDF are surprising considering the multitude of military encounters that the Israeli military has been involved in since 2001, including the Second Intifada, the 2006 Lebanon War, and the 2008 and 2012 wars in Gaza. From an institutional perspective, a possible explanation might be that the *Shifʿat* unit was disbanded in 2001, thus limiting the IDF's input into the curricula authorized by the Ministry of Education. Another factor might have been the somewhat controversial nature of these conflicts, which frequently revolved around combating domestic popular uprising, insurgency, and para-military force, rendering their presentation in textbooks intended for teenagers more difficult than in the case of military encounters between two nation-states.

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[703] Or and Shohamy, "Contrasting Arabic and Hebrew Textbooks in Israel," 114.
[704] These included H. Brosh's 1998 work Classroom Discourse: 1000 Arabic Phrases and Terms for Teachers and Pupils and O. Ben-Eliezer's Maʻan Yahdav: *A Series for Teaching Arabic Language and Culture* published between 1993 and 1994. Other works are listed in Rosenhouse and Elad-Bouskila.
[705] See E. Velstra, *Al-Lugha bāb al-ḥaḍāra: Safa Mesaperet Tarbut. Sefer Alef* [Language as a Door to Culture: Volume One] (in Hebrew and Arabic), 2nd ed., (Raʿanana: Studio Effectiv, 2010); R. Nissimi, Mumtaz [Excellent] (In Hebrew And Arabic), (Even Yehuda: Reḥes, 2009); H. Rosh, *Lomdim ʿaravit. Sefer Alef: Nadrusu al-ʿarabīya. Al-Kitāb al-Awwal* [We Learn Arabic. Book One] (In Hebrew and Arabic) (Tel Aviv: The Centre for Educational Technology, 2012).
List based on Or and Shohamy, "Contrasting Arabic and Hebrew Textbooks in Israel," 114.
[706] Or and Shohamy, "Contrasting Arabic and Hebrew Textbooks in Israel," 114 and 116.

5.3. Conclusions: Alternatives to the "Language of the Enemy" in Israel

While the aforementioned factors might have played a role in the "demilitarization" of Arabic-language curricula, perhaps the most prominent reason has been the gradual dissociation of the IDF from the actual teaching of the Arabic language in the general Jewish Israeli education stream as discussed in the previous subchapter. In fact, it would seem that the departure of the IDF from the curricular design, its renewed focus on *hasbara* via the TELEM unit, and its short-term activities such as *Gadnaʿ ha-Mizraḥanim* allowed the defence establishment to be more open about its objectives than a carefully measured intrusion of militaristic sentiments into high-school curricula ever could. A 2015 article in the Israeli daily *Haaretz* offers a glimpse into such activity organized by TELEM for eighth to ninth-grade Arabic-language students. The "linguistic exercise" is organized around the narrative of foiling a terrorist attack, during which the students are tasked with "discovering the location of the terror attack through a crossword puzzle (…), obtaining information on the terrorist ('who has a moustache, black hair and is serious looking')." Finally, they are supposed to "decipher a conversation in Arabic about the transfer of weapons, and (…) uncover the timing of the attack."[707] More advanced students can then study specific stories documenting the successes of the IDF and other Israeli security bodies, including the assassination of Fatah co-founder Abu Jihad in 1988, as well as complex narratives such as "the impact of Islamic thought on the activities of Hamas and ISIS".[708]

At their core, the activities organized by TELEM are naturally not aimed at teaching the Arabic language itself, although they might expand the pupils' defence and security-related vocabulary. At the same time, such lessons are not aimed to be linguistically authentic – after all, they are focused on MSA/Literary Arabic instead of the vernacular that Abu Jihad certainly preferred. Instead, they aim to promote a sense of the importance of Arabic language knowledge, thus securitizing it not only in the eyes of pupils, but most likely in the eyes of their parents as well. Therefore, the effect is not didactic but motivational, as it prompts students to maintain their interest in the study of the Arabic language until the end of high school, i.e., until the moment the defence establishment takes over and internally completes the students' language training to the desired proficiency. In specific cases, such as recent

[707] Kashti, "Know your enemy."
[708] Kashti, "Know your enemy."

immigrants who have not had the opportunity to learn Arabic through the Jewish Israeli secular education system in Israel, or those who simply aim to enter their compulsory service with a higher proficiency, additional institutions beyond the structures of the Ministry of Education such as *Givʿat Ḥaviva* are utilized. As foreshadowed by Allon Uhlmann,[709] the Ministry of Education and the defence establishment are two separate entities, and they approach the didactics of instructing the Arabic language from different perspectives. However, they remain closely ideologically intertwined, with the defence establishment utilizing Jewish Israeli high schools as a pool of human resources rather than the sole source of state-Arabists.

The presented duality of Israel's defence-education nexus leads to the question of whether this educational practice, which borders between language education and a recruitment tool, affected *what* Arabic the Jewish Israeli students are taught, and indirectly *how* the "Arab Other" is presented to them. As evidenced above, the answer is twofold. In terms of linguistic knowledge, attempts have been made especially between the 1967 war and the mid-1980s to directly link the study of the Arabic language at the high school level with subsequent conscription into the IDF, thus creating a class of state-Arabists prior to the commencement of their military service. The reflection of these efforts in curricular development roughly correlated with the development of institutionalized cooperation between the Israeli Ministry of Education and the IDF, with the 1967 and 1973 Arab-Israeli conflicts being the most impactful critical junctures. The lesser militarization and politicization of Arabic-language curricula after 1948 might be attributed to the continually present sentiment that the study of Arabic might foster the day-to-day coexistence between Jews and Arabs, an idea that had not yet been challenged by the still developing IDF-Ministry of Education nexus. At the other end of the analysed timeframe, the post-1980s era was stricken with the gradual dissociation of IDF Military Intelligence from the Arabic-language curricula approved by the Ministry of Education. This is rather surprising given the 1986 insertion of the IDF's *Shifʿat* unit into the Ministry's structures and its aim to actively partake in curricular development. Therefore, it remains unclear whether *Shifʿat* was given a much smaller role than originally anticipated, or if its activities were subdued by design and aimed mainly towards preserving Arabic-language instruction in Jewish Israeli high schools rather than its continued militarization.

[709] See Uhlmann, "Arabic Instruction in Jewish Schools and in Universities in Israel," 297f.

The second and arguably more profound impact of the Israeli defence establishment's intrusion into the development of Arabic language curricula was the gradual disassociation of the future state-Arabists from the "Arabs", particularly the Palestinians. The most striking examples were the almost universal removal of colloquial Arabic from classrooms, as well as the general objectification of Arabs and the focus on distant Arab countries or generalized Arab history rather than Israel's own Arab population. This process is very reminiscent of the gradual triumph of the Jewish Israeli *mizraḥanim* over the *mistaʿarvim* as analysed by Gil Eyal, i.e., a more removed "Orientalist" tradition of study within the confines of academia as compared to the personal immersion of Jews among Arabs. Even though a radical breakthrough in Israeli-Palestinian relations is unlikely to occur in the foreseeable future, perhaps the gradual, albeit pragmatic improvement of relations between Israel and some Arab countries following the signing of the so-called Abraham Accords might lead to the rebirth of a non-security related interest in the present-day Arabic speaking world among Jewish Israeli pupils.

6. Conclusions

The title of this dissertation – *The Arabist and the State* – is a clear allusion to Samuel Huntington's treatise on the professionalisation of a certain "caste" of society – the military. Even though state-Arabists in the analysed countries make up a much more specific professional group than the armed forces, I believe that the preceding chapters have shown them to be an influential force in the Middle Eastern affairs of the past 80 years. The mere fact that the governments of three countries, some more remote from the region than others, dedicated significant financial, intellectual, and even political resources to stimulate the growth of such a highly specialized group speaks volumes about the benefits state-Arabists have been thought to provide in (re)forming the relations of the US, UK, and Israel with the Arabic speaking world. Whereas *The Soldier and the State* mainly analysed the military from the perspective of its relations with the civilian domain, I opted for a more grassroots approach, focusing on the *formation* of the profession of state-Arabist and specifically on their education and training.

The presented research revealed a wide spectrum of approaches, both institutional and didactic, not only to how the language instruction of state-Arabists can be organized, but also the plethora of motivations and goals their governments might pursue. Even though I opted for a broad definition of the term Arabist as "any person with some knowledge of Arabic as a second language who utilizes this skill in a professional environment, regardless of how he or she gained the knowledge", the nature of the Arabists' relationship to a *state* has proven to be a complex issue. A variety of approaches emerged to show how states themselves have dedicated their resources to the instruction of the Arabic language. To untangle this conundrum, I opted for an analysis guided by several categories of reference, namely institutional setup, financing, and personnel allocations. Beyond these categories, I also observed the impact of certain critical junctures – mainly military engagements of the analysed countries in the Middle East – and their impact on both the institutions and the Arabic language curricula they produced.

Perhaps more than any other category, the institutional setup presents us with a distinct typology of approaches adopted by the analysed countries in organizing their efforts in Arabic language instruction. In general, three basic approaches to the institutionalization of training

state-Arabists have emerged. The first category encompasses large-scale institutions that focused on the instruction of multiple languages, with Arabic being just one of many. Such an institutional setup was heavily utilized primarily by the militaries of the US and UK, where Arabic has been taught and viewed with increasing importance since the mid-1980s. This approach was mainly apparent at the *Defense Language Institute* in Monterey and the *Army School of Languages* in Beaconsfield until its fragmentation into other units in 2014. The *Foreign Service Institute* under the auspices of the US Department of State is a civilian institution of a similar nature, which has placed a strong emphasis on the training of future diplomats in the Arabic language since the late 1940s. The very beginnings of military and civilian approaches to teaching the Arabic language in the US public sector were intertwined, as the FSI's own program in Arabic language studies utilized the expertise of graduates of the *Army Specialized Training Program*, which first introduced the Arabic language to many US servicemen during the Second World War.

Another emerging approach in institutional setup was a smaller-scale school physically located in the Arabic speaking world. The British Foreign Office's *Middle East Centre of Arab Studies* in Shemlan near Beirut was perhaps the most famous governmental institution dedicated solely to the instruction of the Arabic language. Its dedicated budget, necessary immersion in the local language and culture, as well as the rather unique relationship with other governmental offices and business influenced scores of diplomats, oil executives, and bankers from the UK and many other countries for decades. Perhaps it comes as no surprise that even though the FSI has always been a large-scale institution, its Arabic language program was centred around the *Foreign Service Institute Area and Language School* in Beirut until 1975. In the military domain, a similar approach of a dedicated in-area school was adopted by the British *Command Arabic Language School – Arabian Peninsula* (1959-1964).

It remains disputable whether the instruction of the Arabic language in Israel could fall into this category of "in-area language schools". On one hand, the geographical location of the country and its significant Arab population living next to the Jews could have allowed for an immersive experience similar to those that FSI and MECAS aimed for. On the other hand, as we have seen, efforts to teach the Arabic language to Jewish Israeli students have frequently maintained a surprising level of separation from the Palestinian population, thus rendering the opportunities for cultural and linguistic immersion limited. For instance, the 1950s field trips to the areas inhabited by the Palestinians were tightly

controlled to reduce any unscripted interaction between Jewish Israeli pupils and the Arabic speaking population. Exceptions to this approach, i.e., the Arabic language sections of *Ulpan ʿAḳiva* and especially *Givʿat Ḥaviva*, have long advertised the lack of boundaries between their Jewish Israeli students and Arabs, while simultaneously actively participating in the education of Israeli state-Arabists.

The institutional setup utilized by Israel to a varying degree since the early 1950s could be dubbed the "security-education nexus". In general terms, this model utilized close interaction between the national security and/or defence establishment and the education sector at either the high-school or university level. While all three analysed countries at least experimented with such an approach, the scope of the IDF's gradual takeover of Arabic language studies in Jewish Israeli high schools is beyond comparison. However, this setup was only enabled by a unique set of circumstances. With the Arabic language understood as a critical asset by the masterminds behind Israeli national security, repeated stimuli for such an understanding in the form of the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict, and a steady supply of potential state-Arabists provided by compulsory military service, the defence establishment developed an influence on the public education system that is incomparable to the USA and UK. Nonetheless, many US state-Arabists developed their interest in the Arabic language by utilizing scholarships provided by the 1958 *National Defense Education* Act and its successor, the 1991 *National Security Education Program*. As generously funded as they were, these initiatives were far less targeted than their Israeli counterpart, mainly due to the fact that Arabic was merely one of many sponsored languages and areas of interest. Furthermore, the lack of general conscription[710] meant that not all recipients of NDEA and NSEP funding would eventually pursue careers as state-Arabists. Finally, the UK favoured an inverted and rather small-scale approach to this institutional model by frequently utilizing career academics as managers, instructors, and curriculum compilers at MECAS, where the Arabic language was taught to already active employees of the British Government. Unlike the US and its federal initiatives, the British Government opted for limited and focused cooperation between the FCO and some British universities, especially Durham.

How did these institutional models fare vis-à-vis the observed critical junctures? In general terms, two factors played a significant role – the geographical location of the institution and whether it was of a civilian or military nature. The placement

[710] USA instituted a fully voluntary military in 1973.

of the institutions in the Middle East directly affected whether the Arabic language classes could have even been taught given the circumstances in the region. This became quite apparent with MECAS, CALSAP and the FSI School in Beirut, which existentially relied on the relative stability in the Levant or Arabian Peninsula. It comes as no surprise that both MECAS and the FSI Beirut School were closed due to the protracted Lebanese Civil War, just as CALSAP had to be shut down along with the British withdrawal from Aden. Especially MECAS was affected significantly by other critical junctures, be it the 1956 Suez Crisis or the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, which frequently necessitated the evacuation and subsequent return of its students. A similar case is found in the temporary closure of the FSI Arabic School in Tunis as the events of the so-called Arab Spring unfolded.

Critical junctures have not only continued to affect the in-area schools situated directly in the Middle East, repeatedly leading to their closure and reopening. These significant historic events also impacted the large-scale institutions maintained by the defence establishments on the domestic soil of the three analysed countries. For instance, the DLI truly ramped up its efforts in teaching the Arabic language by the mid-1980s with the increased presence of US "boots on the ground" in the MENA region, a process which culminated in the First and Second Iraq Wars in 1991 and 2003, as well as the all-encompassing "Global War on Terror". Similarly, the successful efforts of the IDF to exert influence on Arabic language instruction at Jewish Israeli high schools were to a large extent results of international military encounters such as the wars of 1967 and 1973. Naturally, these critical junctures mainly influenced the general willingness on the part of policymakers and administrators to prioritize the teaching of the Arabic language and much less so the effectiveness of its instruction, often resulting in "band-aid" solutions and general bafflement upon the realization that reaching fluency in a foreign language takes longer than adopting basic combat skills. As such, the military institutions had to constantly justify their efforts to produce state-Arabists for "conflicts that might occur" even in times of peace. This phenomenon was not only observable in the pre-1991 DLI, but even in otherwise vigilant Israel in the years leading up to major military encounters.

On the other side of the spectrum, civilian institutions such as the FSI and MECAS were much less influenced by the analysed critical junctures and had a much more proactive mandate, teaching the Arabic language to maintain and develop the US and UK's diplomatic and commercial presence in the MENA region. This notion was upheld even when their

in-area schools were evacuated, as they were able to continue instruction on their home soil. However, it should be noted that the continued efforts of the US and UK's civilian institutions were not merely a result of continued national interests in the Arabic speaking world, but more of a manifestation of their ambitions as global powers. As such, the rise and decline of MECAS could be understood as a testament to Britain's historical embedment in the Middle East, while the significant role awarded to the Arabic-language studies inside the FSI could be seen as the proclamation of the US' long-term diplomatic incursion into the region after the Second World War.

Regardless of the historical interpretation, the presented notion of military institutions towards "reactivity" and the opposed "proactive" approach of civilian institutions had a noticeable impact on other analysed categories of reference. In terms of financing, the large and mainly military institutions such as the DLI in the US and the *Army School of Languages* in Beaconsfield in the UK have always been more than financially secure. However, regarding the instruction of state-Arabists, the allocation of financial resources to Arabic as merely one of the many languages taught was frequently a painstaking matter of both internal discussion and lamentation among policymakers. Keeping the reactive nature of institutions affiliated with defence establishments in mind, the impact of analysed critical junctures in allocating resources to the instruction of the Arabic language proved to be crucial.

The single language institutions like MECAS and somewhat independently operating language centres within larger institutions such as the FSI Beirut School were – in financial and existential terms – dependent on political decision making. The core question has been whether or not the instituting government decided that it required a continuous influx of state-Arabists and stuck to such a decision. For instance, the US State Department continuously supported the concept of a single-language in-area school and, although the FSI Beirut School was closed in the 1970s due to security concerns, the entire enterprise was briskly moved to a new location in Tunisia. On the other hand, the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office did not replace MECAS with another institution of the same nature, relying instead on academia, military schools, and only later on its own Diplomatic Academy, which has never reached the scope of the Arabic language instruction offered by MECAS. Still, MECAS struggled to maintain a sufficient budget even during its golden age in the 1960s and came up with various ways to alleviate financial issues, including course offerings to the private sector, academia, and even the diplomatic services of other countries.

The issue of single-language vs. large-scale institutions has to some extent affected the financial affairs of the third type of institutional setup – the nexus of the education domain and defence establishment. Here, a stark contrast between the Israeli government's support for Arabic language studies among the Jewish Israeli youth and the US' initiatives of NDEA and NSEP becomes apparent. Despite the similar underlying principle, i.e., a government investing significant financial resources to promote and execute the study of a foreign language, the Israeli initiative was focused solely on the Arabic language, while the NDEA and NSEP gave support to a wide variety of subjects deemed to be "of strategic importance". Furthermore, the Israeli model aimed at high-school students before the IDF draft assured an early return on the investment. At the same time, the lack of popularity of Arabic language studies among Israeli high-school students and their parents and its overt connection to military service might have eventually reduced the "state-Arabists'" desire to maintain their interest in Arab affairs after the conclusion of their compulsory military service. The US approach of providing scholarships to college and university students opting to study the Arabic language on their own initiative might have resulted in their faithfulness to this subject area for a much longer period, if not entire career. Therefore, even if the financial logic of the NDEA and NSEP might not have been as clearly outlined as in the Israeli system, it certainly had long-term benefits in providing financial support to at least some potential state-Arabists.

The states' ability to fund their own Arabic language programs has directly influenced yet another category of reference – personnel allocation, i.e., how the analysed state-actors incentivized the study of the Arabic language, as well as how they managed to utilize the newly acquired proficiency in Arabic among the institutions' graduates. The pre-Second World War history of physical presence in the region seems to have played an important role in finding the necessary experts to organize and execute Arabic language curricula. In this respect, both the UK and Israel could have drawn not only from Arabists with expertise gained directly from the region, but also from academics who studied the language, history, and culture from afar. Efforts to include both groups in some early efforts to institutionalize Arabic language instruction frequently highlighted their advantages and deficiencies, such as the knowledge and ability to teach formal grammatical structures on the part of the academics, whose lack of knowledge of vernacular and the general inability to *speak* the language was counteracted by Arabists with hands-on experience from the region.

Unlike the UK and Israel, the US' physical presence in the region, as well as the history of academic "Oriental studies", was somewhat limited on the eve of the Second World War. With a pressing need for interpreters and translators during wartime, the US military instead turned to general linguists, who largely disregarded the tradition of European Oriental studies. In place of this, they leveraged their expertise to bring forth several new concepts in language instruction such as the audio-lingual method and language immersion. Gradually, however, positions of Arabic language instructors in the US were filled by native speakers, utilizing the omnipresent concept of the American "melting-pot". At the same time, both the US and the UK employed the readily available number of local language teachers at their in-area schools. Paradoxically, the Israeli system consciously decided to ignore its large populace of native speakers. The semi-official "security argument" not only barred Palestinians from Jewish Israeli classrooms, but eventually led to a noticeable dissociation of Arabic language instruction from the Arabs living in Israel. While this might have been – for a limited period – technically overcome by employing the first generation of Jewish *Mizraḥim* arriving from Arabic speaking countries after 1948, the execution of Arabic language studies without actual Arabs pointed to much deeper issues in Israel's society.

The impact of some critical junctures on interest in the Arabic language was also noticeable among *potential* state-Arabists, i.e., either members of the public whose future professional choices would inextricably be tied to the state, for instance, due to compulsory military service in Israel, or public servants with career options related to the Middle East, such as members of the diplomatic servives. On an ideological level, events with a direct impact on the domestic soil of the analysed countries attracted most future state-Arabists. In the case of Israel, these events mainly included large-scale military conflicts such as those in 1967 and 1973. Even though I could not find a quantitative correlation between the numbers of Arabic language students in response to the increase in terrorism-related incidents since the 1990s, the continuous utilization of the "counter-terrorism narrative" in the promotional events organized by the TELEM unit, which aims to encourage Jewish Israeli pupils to study the Arabic language before their enlistment into the military, suggests that this might have also been a successful way to achieve this objective. Likewise, the September 11 terrorist attacks on the US have not only ramped up the funding of Arabic studies within the public service and the military, but also added to the gradual securitization of the knowledge of Arabic

as a national security asset. Interestingly, however, I was not able to identify such strongly resonating incidents in the UK.[711]

All the analysed countries also utilized material incentives such as an increase in salary or enticing career options to promote the study of the Arabic language. Perhaps the most prominent case were the "Middle Eastern hands", i.e., the US Foreign Service officers of the late 1940s and 1950s who were incentivized to study the Arabic language and focus on the region due to the unparalleled opportunities in professional growth connected to the opening of many US' diplomatic outposts thorough the Middle East. As the UK already maintained a robust diplomatic presence, the incentives to its career diplomats to learn the Arabic language were to a large extent financial and were offered in the form of a significant increase in yearly bonuses for the knowledge of "hard languages". Finally, in Israel, multiple material incentives were placed before Jewish Israeli youth considering an increased focus on the study of the Arabic language. First, the almost guaranteed service in the IDF Military Intelligence would enable them to network with the future upper echelons of Israeli entrepreneurial and political domains.[712] Second, a career in MI would remove them from harm's way associated with service in combat units, an argument which undoubtedly resonated especially with the parents of Jewish Israeli pupils.

These understandable considerations were only implicit and as such were not overtly presented in the promotional material produced by the TELEM unit which, in conformity with the "heroic" narrative usually utilized by militaries all over the world, relied mainly on presenting the knowledge of the Arabic language as a critical asset to national security and defence. This points to the larger phenomenon of the "securitization" of Arabic language knowledge, especially in post-9/11 USA and post-1948 Israel. In other words, despite the obvious material benefits of becoming a state-Arabist, such a career path was promoted to the members of the public mainly by presenting the lack of state-Arabists as an existential

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[711] The 7 July 2005 London bombings are an event on UK soil most frequently likened to the September 11 attacks. Compared to the US' response to the September 11 attacks, the UK's investigatory committee reviewing the possible security and intelligence failures leading to the London bombing made no remarks about a lack of linguistic proficiency in British security structures. With regard to this dissertation, even if such remarks were made, they would have likely focused on knowledge of *Urdu* rather than *Arabic*, as three of four of the attackers were of British-Pakistani origin and trained in Pakistan. See *Could 7/7 Have Been Prevented? Review of the Intelligence on The London Terrorist Attacks On 7 July 2005* (London: Presented to Parliament by the Prime Minister by Command of Her Majesty, May 2009) https://irp.fas.org/world/uk/july7review.pdf.

[712] The well-known narrative of interconnectedness between compulsory military service and economic success was famously summarised in Dan Senor and Saul Singer, *Start-Up Nation: The Story Of Israel's Economic Miracle* (Grand Central Publishing, 2011).

threat. Especially in Israel, the entire process of making the Arabic language a compulsory subject at Jewish Israeli high schools could be understood as a two-step process of securitization. First, the tight-knit group of security and defence officials – i.e., the securitizing actor – convinced the rest of the civil service – the audience – that the knowledge of the Arabic language was a matter of national security, thus eventually instituting its study as compulsory. In a second, this time unsuccessful attempt at securitization, the public, which consisted of pupils, parents, and principals of individual Jewish Israeli schools (i.e., the audience), was not convinced of the necessity to study the Arabic language. To the best of my knowledge, these efforts to securitize the knowledge of the Arabic language in Israel were unparalleled in comparison to the role of Arabic language studies in any other country.

The previous paragraphs asserted that the selected critical junctures certainly affected the analysed institutions. The question then remains whether or not their impact was also noticeable in the curricula that these institutions produced and adhered to in their Arabic language instruction. Apart from the immediate reaction to current events, the curricula also reflected some of the long-term policies of the UK, USA, and Israel towards the Arabic speaking world. For instance, between the early 1940s and mid-1950s, the original understanding of MECAS' purpose – i.e., a wartime "guerrilla school" aimed at fighting the Afrika Korps – shifted completely towards a language school catering to the "post-colonial administration" of former British dominions. The process of curricular reform was then continuous and clearly reflected the changing needs of British foreign policy towards the Middle East, including a newfound focus on linguistic support for British businesses and cultural institutions. These changes were gradual and, in addition to Britain's changing role in the region, were affected by both the personnel policies of the *Foreign Office* as well as the ideas and beliefs of MECAS' Principal Instructors. Nonetheless, the overarching notion of "practicality" still remained unchanged throughout MECAS' history. Therefore, the instructed vocabulary was mainly oriented towards the diplomatic and, by extension, economic affairs of the Middle East. In terms of dialect selection, the UK's civilian-diplomatic domain seems to have gradually adopted a "hybridized" approach of focusing on the instruction of MSA and incorporating some elements of the local dialect. The most famous example of this was "MECAS Arabic", a hybrid between MSA and the Lebanese vernacular. While such an approach might have been logical for the UK's Middle East generalists

and diplomats posted throughout the Levant, its usefulness in other parts of the Arabic speaking world such as Morocco or some Gulf countries was disputable at best.

The curricula at the British military institutions – CALSAP and the Arabic wing of the *Army School of Languages* in Beaconsfield – have been affected by a "mission-oriented" approach and focused almost exclusively on the language spoken in countries with a large British military presence, i.e., mainly in the eastern part of the Arabian Peninsula. This was reflected in the choice of dialect. For instance, the dominant variant of Arabic taught by the *Army School of Languages* in Beaconsfield until the early 1990s was the Omani dialect, a natural choice considering the significant British military presence in the Sultanate. The nature of both institutions was reflected in the selected vocabulary and even the narrative the student was presented with, whether they included the logistics of arriving at a military outpost in Oman, liaising with local officers, or organizing a combat exercise. Despite the militaristic outline, the textbooks did not portray the Arabs as enemies, and thus refrained from presenting Arabic as "the language of the enemy". Instead, the vernacular was presented as a medium for communication with Britain's allies. While it would be interesting to see whether this notion translated to the post-1991 period, the British military curricula for this period have not yet been made public. Only a qualified assumption inferred from the US' case can be made that their predominant focus was Iraqi Arabic.

Unlike Britain, with its historic presence in the Arabic speaking world and a tradition of "Oriental" studies by academia, the US had to adopt a radically different approach in designing its curricula. In the post-war diplomatic domain, the FSI had to cater to the US diplomatic offensive in the Middle East. The weapon of choice was the audio-lingual method – an overwhelming preference for listening and speaking over reading and writing. The prevalence of this approach, together with the critical role of the FSI School in Beirut, inclined language learners towards the Lebanese vernacular. The language that the American diplomats eventually learned was so remote from the MSA used in media and official correspondence that even some of their Arab counterparts considered FSI Arabic "pedestrian". Since the 1960s, perhaps also due to the slowing down of the diplomatic offensive, MSA gained a much more prominent role in the FSI, with dialects such as Tunisian, Moroccan, or Hijaz being taught only as a supplement. An interesting side effect of the initial orientation on the vernacular was the rather non-diplomatic flair given to some of the later FSI Arabic

textbooks, which remained noticeably "civilian" in their selection of vocabulary, while others adhered more closely to the task of diplomatic reporting. In this respect, it does not come as a surprise that, despite its origins in the FSI Beirut Schools, the 1968 *Elementary Modern Standard Arabic* by Peter Abboud and Ernest McCarus became a widely circulated textbook even outside governmental circles. [713]

The impact of critical junctures on DLI curricula was most noticeable in their rather late development by the 1980s. The main cause seems to have been the "reactive" nature of the defence-oriented institution. Unlike the State Department's wave of opening US Embassies and Consulates in the Arabic speaking world, the presence of the US Department of Defense, and consequently, the US military in the Arabic speaking Middle East was limited until the late 1970s, with the Dhahran Airbase being a noticeable exception. The selection of dialects was broadened mainly throughout the 1980s with the increasing numbers US Armed Forces personnel deployed throughout the Middle East, be it in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, or eventually Iraq. When designing its Arabic language curricula, the DLI then adopted a more structured approach than its civilian counterpart, opting for a "base-layer" of MSA courses upon which knowledge of individual dialects would be developed. The supplemental courses focused on dialects were highly specialized and had a clear focus on various kinds of warfare, as well as logistical issues that US servicemen might face in the region. Still, all the presented material pertained mainly to liaising with US partners in various Arab armies. In this respect, the analysed textbooks went to great lengths to keep the nature of the "enemies" ambiguous, never revealing whether they are an insurgency or the military of a non-allied state. The Iraq wars of 1991 and 2003 naturally had a great impact on the production of further DLI curricula. The surrounding discussions reveal that post-2003 curricula focused predominantly on the Iraqi dialect, even disregarding other dialects and thus once again revealing the militaristic notion of adjusting the general focus of curricula to the presence of "boots on the ground". However, the post-2003 DLI textbooks have not yet been released to the public, thus limiting the possibility of analysing their depiction of "the Arabs".

The events of 1967 and 1973 had a most noticeable impact on Arabic language curricula in the Jewish Israeli secular education stream. Despite the well-documented efforts to "securitize" instruction of the Arabic language in the public education system almost

[713] See footnotes 380 and 381 for further reference on the textbook.

immediately after the establishment of the State of Israel, the initial textbooks were devoid of significant connotations of agendas such as security, defence, or any hostility towards Arab countries. Themes such as the vilification of surrounding Arab nations and the heroization of the IDF only became a standard feature of the Arabic language textbooks produced for Jewish Israeli high schools after the wars of 1967 and 1973. Even though this sentiment largely disappeared from textbooks published since the 1990s, the vilification of Arabs remained very much present in the in-class activities of the IDF's TELEM unit. TELEM's presentation of the Arabic language as a requirement for combating Palestinian terrorism then gives a clear indication of both understanding and utilizing Arabic as the "language of the enemy".

The TELEM unit's clear and undeniable negative focus on the Palestinian vernacular was in stark contrast to the representation of Palestinians in textbooks for Jewish Israeli pupils. Whether the pupils were to learn to appreciate the Arabs between 1948 and 1967 and later after 1990, or dislike them after 1967 and especially 1973, they were predominantly presented not with an image of their Palestinian neighbours, but rather with generic "Arabs", members of a non-descript, traditional society of desert-dwelling people presented via symbols such as pyramids, camels, and less frequently the religion of Islam. In other words, the continuous process of separation between Jewish Israelis and Palestinians, regardless of whether they lived in otherwise predominantly Jewish areas or in cities and villages with a Palestinian majority, became a defining feature of Arabic language curricula in Jewish Israeli high schools. Notwithstanding a limited number of initiatives aimed at bridging the cultural and linguistic gap between Jewish Israelis and Palestinians in high-school Arabic language classrooms such as *Yā Salām*, the analysis of the curricula in the Jewish Israeli secular education stream leaves us with a paradox. On one hand, some security-oriented Israeli elites (*biṭḥonim*) called for making the study of the Arabic language at Jewish Israeli high schools compulsory to satisfy the IDF's requirements for Arabic speakers. At the same time, the continuous process of separation between the Jewish Israelis and Palestinians practically removed the vernacular from the classrooms, giving way to an overwhelming preference for MSA taught by Jewish Israeli instructors. The resulting system of the compulsory study of the Arabic language has been met with disdain from the Jewish Israeli public, while its results – a limited knowledge of MSA by IDF conscripts – are seen as insufficient by the IDF, which commissioned it in the first place.

A cross-national comparison of the interplay of several critical junctions with the analysed curricula leaves us with several findings. As one might expect, the curricula produced by institutions operated by the defence establishment, such as the DLI or Army School of Languages in Beaconsfield, were much more specific in terms of vocabulary than their civilian counterparts. Their militaristic leaning was not only apparent in the selection of vocabulary, but also in the organization of textbooks, i.e., various narratives aimed at acquainting students with the new vocabulary and grammar. To a large extent, these narratives revolved around purely defence-related affairs such as the organization of various militaries, military logistics, communications, and even kinetic warfighting. On the other hand, civilian curricula such as those of the FSI or MECAS provided students with less specialized vocabulary, ranging from subjects such as literature and dining to those more commonly associated with statecraft, such as politics or economics. In some cases, the textbooks in civilian institutions were accessible enough to be later utilized as teaching material for the public. This clear distinction was apparent among all the analysed countries. In terms of the selected vocabulary, a clear distinction could be observed between the textbooks produced by the Ministry of Education – despite the political influence of the IDF – and directly by the IDF, such as the 1968 *Shiʿurim ba-Safa ha-ʿAravit* by R. Rajvan, which seemed very reminiscent of the textbooks produced for military institutions in the UK and USA.

The curricula produced by and for the defence establishment were also more responsive to the critical junctures, and this was especially so in the US and Israel. Even though the same statement could be inferred for the UK's military institutions, such findings would have to be confirmed in the future once more materials have been made public. In general terms, the responsiveness of the military institutions can be attributed to their previously discussed "reactive" nature and a general affinity for "band-aid" solutions as opposed to long-term capacity building in the civilian-diplomatic domain. In practical terms, this reactivity was mainly noticeable in preferences for a particular Arabic dialect, which would frequently mirror the dialect of a location to which the analysed countries were currently deploying their militaries. The choice of dialects in all the analysed countries was also reflective of their ambitions, with the USA gradually developing curricula for a wide variety of Arabic language dialects in both the civilian-diplomatic and military domains. The British approach to the selection of instructed dialects was not as broad and originally reflected the uncertain role the UK would have in the Middle East after the Second World War and during the process generally known as decolonization.

Compared to the UK and US, the Israeli approach to the selection of a dialect remains, once again, somewhat paradoxical. Even though the entire system of the defence establishment's support of Arabic language studies at Jewish Israeli high schools was, among other goals, aimed at producing state-Arabists tasked with the control of the Palestinian population (and after 1967 also the population of Sinai), that same system has shown a predominant focus on MSA, which is usually referred to in Israel as Literary Arabic (*ha-ʿaravit ha-sifrutit).* Some reasons for such unexpected development were practical and included a near-total lack of Palestinian Arabic language teachers in Jewish Israeli classrooms and the dominance of classical linguists of Ashkenazi origin involved in curricular design, whose exposure to the Palestinian vernacular varied widely. However, the underlying reason for all these practical considerations seems to have been of an *ideological* nature – the ever-increasing *disassociation* between Jewish Israelis and Palestinians following 1948.

Even though the "Israeli paradox" could provide a fitting conclusion to the comparison between Arabic language instruction in the three countries, it also highlights several constraints of this research, the knowledge of which might benefit future researchers. Regardless of the selection of the criteria for the comparison and timeframe, their comparability was still affected by the available body of material. With the cultures of openness and affinity for declassification varying widely, especially in terms of military curricula, the presented findings might certainly be richly supplemented if reviewed after several years or even decades as more curricula become available to the public. Regardless of this fact, this research might highlight certain patterns in the state-organized instruction of the Arabic language in other countries as well. As such, the sheer geographical and chronological scope of the institutions and curricula discussed in this dissertation have revealed several basic models of Arabic language instruction to future state-Arabists. Whether these models are general enough to be applied not only to the instruction of the Arabic language in other countries but also to the teaching of other languages deemed critical by various state actors would certainly deserve further inquiry.

The analysis of the Israeli case also revealed some unforeseen considerations of the instruction of a language seen as foreign by much of the population of a single country, yet as native by many of its inhabitants. It also suggested that while "hard" criteria such as institutional considerations, financing, personnel allocations, and international politics are of great importance when teaching the languages of far-flung regions, ideological factors

become more critical when dealing with the production of specialized linguists expected to address domestic affairs. We should not forget that the peculiar foreign-domestic role of the Arabic language in Israel has also fuelled the ongoing discussion on the importance of its study. This was not necessarily the case with more remote countries such as the US and UK, where the production of Arabists frequently depended on the current international situation. With this reactivity in mind, we should not ignore the very likely possibility that the increased focus on Arabic studies might not persist, as the US and British military presence in the Middle East might be reduced due to various factors including the US' "pivot to East Asia" and the deteriorating security situation in Eastern Europe.

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