

Teaching English in multilingual Israel: Who teaches whom and how. A review of recent research 2014–2020

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Abstract

This article presents research on teaching English in Israel, a vibrant multilingual country, in the period between 2014 and 2020. After a brief introduction to the current approach to English language teaching around the world, it outlines the studies investigating: (a) learners of English, (b) English teachers, and (c) methods that are used in the country for teaching English. We explore how various student populations, Arabs, Bedouins, Circassians, Druze, Charedi (ultra-orthodox Jews), Jews, and foreign students, are taught English as well as their attitudes to this language. Then, we discuss research investigating different categories of English teachers in Israel, including teachers in Arab and Jewish sectors, the teachers labeled as 'native speakers', and also teacher trainers and teacher-training principles. We look at secondary and high school students, including those in special education, as well as those who take English courses in tertiary educational institutions. Finally, we are interested in whether innovative teaching methods compete with the conventional ones and which groups of learners have access to the former. Throughout the article, we aim to show to what extent practitioners and researchers are aware of the present-day realities of the interconnectedness of 'teacher, student, and method' elements and the impact of multilingualism on English teaching in Israel. This Country in Focus report also considers the current holistic perspective on English language teaching. This language should not be taught in isolation but work in concert with other contact languages.

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