



ARABIC LANGUAGE AND CULTURE CONFERENCE

PROMOTING THE TEACHING AND
LEARNING OF ARABIC IN THE UK

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FOREWORD

It is now 30 years since Sir Peter Parker's report highlighted the need for the UK to maintain and nurture the teaching and learning of oriental and African languages and associated area studies. A thorough grounding in such languages was deemed necessary in order to equip young people entering the governmental services, media and business with the linguistic and cultural skills to interact and engage successfully with foreign partners.

25 years later in 2011 the British Academy reiterated that same message in its report *Lost for Words* which concluded: "If steps are not taken to reverse the current declining trend in language skills, Britain may indeed be in danger of becoming 'lost for words'." It should be self-evident that in today's interconnected world young people in UK need to be learning a wider range of languages than they did before and while considerable attention has been focused recently on Mandarin Chinese, it is Arabic that is now coming to the fore. Recent research by British Council has shown that Arabic is the second most vital language to the UK over the next 20 years. A number of factors were used to rank the world's major languages including trade and business, diplomacy and security, prevalence on the internet and in global media and the British public's own language interests.

At the same time Arabic is one of the six official languages of the United Nations. It is spoken by 300 million people in the 23 countries of the Arab world. As the language of the Holy Quran and the seminal texts of the Muslim faith its sway extends far beyond its geographical and historic homeland. Arabic communities have settled in various parts of the UK and large numbers of Muslim children are also learning the classical form of the language. At the moment approximately four per cent of English secondary schools teach Arabic, often as an extra-curricular subject. It is widely taught in schools belonging to the Association of Muslim Schools and in the supplementary sector although of the 18,000 primary schools in England it is thought that not much more than a hundred are teaching Arabic. An updated version of Teresa Tinsley's report, *The teaching of Arabic language and culture in UK schools*, is available at this conference and gives full details of the current state of play. Arabic was first offered as a GCSE subject in 2002 with the number of entries rising by 82 per cent to 3,236 in 2012, making Arabic the eighth most popular language at GCSE. A-level Arabic was also introduced in 2002 and had 299 entries, rising to 604 in 2012, making Arabic the tenth most popular language at A-level.

It seems appropriate then that we should seek to support, expand and enhance the teaching of Arabic in British schools. There are a number of reasons for this. If real Arabic expertise is to be achieved learning the language must begin prior to university. Arabic is a difficult language and starting from scratch at the age of 18 means it is unlikely that a student will acquire full fluency by the time they have completed their degree. Learning a language like Arabic, with its Semitic structure, generation of vocabulary through patterns based on root letters, and sounds that do not exist in European languages also has cognitive advantages introducing learners to hitherto unexplored areas of linguistic possibility. The Arabic script is also a wonderfully artistic writing system which has been refined by master calligraphers over many centuries into one of the world's great art forms.

Learning Arabic enhances employment possibilities at a time when few non-natives can actually speak it well. British employers are becoming more and more vociferous about the need for graduates who speak non-European languages and growing trade, business and security connections with the countries of the Middle East and Arab World mean that speakers of the language are increasingly in demand. The 2009 Worton Report states that 15 per cent of employers are "looking for staff with Arabic language skills and an understanding of Arabic culture."

To bring a difficult and lesser taught language into the fold of mainstream education is not an easy task. We need well trained and qualified teachers, appropriate accreditation, materials and resources and underpinning research into learning and methodology. Head teachers must be comfortable that the expertise and support is there to justify the decision to introduce it in their schools and policy makers must provide the directive and political will that will allow and encourage Arabic to be learned. And the example and experiences of those schools that have set out along the way of Arabic must be shared and celebrated.

I am delighted to welcome you who are the members of the Arabic teaching community to this conference. I wish you well in your deliberations and every success in your efforts to make Arabic a viable and popular foreign language option in British Schools.

Sir Vernon Ellis

Chair of the Board of Trustees of the British Council

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

This report was commissioned by the Arabic language and culture partnership in order to map out the current state of play with regard to Arabic language and culture in the UK and to assess the opportunities for extending the teaching of Arabic to more schools and learners. It is understood that the findings will inform a strategy and a programme of activity to promote the teaching of Arabic.

PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Only a very few state primary schools report teaching Arabic, and those that do appear often to be doing so in very light touch ways, introducing children to the sounds of the language and some basic vocabulary, without following a formal programme. Where primary schools adopt 'language awareness' approaches, pupils who speak Arabic at home – and sometimes their parents – may be encouraged to present spoken or written Arabic to the rest of the class. Following a local authority-led initiative to introduce the teaching of Arabic in a cluster of 6 primary schools in Bradford, only 2 continue to teach Arabic in the curriculum, 2 continue to offer Arabic as an after school option, and the other 2 have ceased to teach the subject. Arabic is taught most intensively in independent Muslim primary schools, of which there are 84 in the UK.

SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Around 4 per cent of state secondary schools, and 9 per cent of independent secondary schools, are thought to be offering some Arabic teaching. However, Arabic is more likely to be offered as an enrichment or extra option than as a subject on the main timetable.

Schools where Arabic is compulsory for all students are all Muslim faith schools. However, there are two maintained non-Muslim schools where Arabic is compulsory for some students. There is also a group of independent non-faith schools where Arabic is optional either for all or some students. Of the schools which enter pupils for Arabic GCSE, only a small number actually teach the language and often only to those pupils deemed 'native speakers'. The rest simply act as exam centres for their own pupils, and sometimes those from surrounding schools, who learn the language in supplementary classes.

Schools currently have an incentive to enable pupils with skills in languages they have learned outside school to sit exams in them, as they contribute to school performance tables and the English Baccalaureate measure.

SUPPLEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Supplementary schools exist alongside mainstream schools and are run by community groups to provide supplementary tuition at weekends or after school. Arabic is the most commonly-offered language provided by such schools, which are extremely diverse. Some are predominantly religious in focus (madrassas), others provide more general educational input or support for newly arrived groups.

They serve a large variety of different communities from Muslim countries in North and East Africa, the Middle East and Asia. These schools appear to be in expansion, partly as a result of the growth in Arabic-speaking and Muslim communities in the UK. They prepare students for GCSE and A level exams.

HIGHER EDUCATION

In contrast to declining numbers taking degrees in modern languages, applications and acceptances for Modern Middle Eastern Studies in British universities are fairly stable. Arabic is a popular choice in Institution-Wide language courses offered by university language centres as an adjunct to students' main degree subject.

TRENDS IN EXAM ENTRIES

Over the 20 year period for which figures are available, the number of entries for Arabic has grown more than threefold from just over 1125 in 1995, to 3641 in 2014. Its evolution contrasts with the picture of decline generally in language subjects at GCSE. A level Arabic was introduced in 2002 and has more than doubled since then from around 300 entries to just over 600 in 2014. In the same period French declined by 30 per cent and German by 40 per cent.

FUTURE OF ARABIC GCSE AND A LEVEL EXAMS

New GCSE and A level courses are being introduced for French, German and Spanish in 2016, with the expectation that those for other languages will follow in 2017. However, exam boards are experiencing 'resourcing challenges' in relation to low entry subjects and one has announced that it will withdraw its A levels in 4 of the smaller languages. Arabic will need strong advocacy over the coming year both to retain the suite of exams available, and to ensure their suitability for a wide range of learners.

TEACHER TRAINING

The main provider of dedicated teacher training for Arabic, Goldsmith's College, has been forced to close its Flexible PGCE course. If head teachers are not confident of being able to find high quality teachers, this will be a disincentive to schools to offer the language.

MOTIVATIONS FOR LEARNING ARABIC

Learning Arabic is seen as a religious duty for the 70 per cent of British Muslims which are from a non-Arabic speaking background, and this lies behind the increase in numbers taking national exams. It seems likely that the vast majority of those already learning the language are Muslims, but not necessarily 'native speakers' of Arabic. Many students have been born in the UK or are from third countries with parents who have been internationally mobile with varying degrees of exposure to Arabic. In tandem with the religious motivation, parents and young people also see the practical economic dimension of learning Arabic, which gives them access to global Islamic culture and the chance to travel, study or work abroad in future. Head teachers think introducing Arabic to children of all faiths (and none) could potentially be a powerful way of breaking down prejudice and misconceptions; however some feel that negative attitudes towards Islam and Muslim culture would make this 'a step too far' in some areas.

CONCLUSIONS

The research identified the need for a more strategic, holistic approach to developing Arabic as a foreign language, to include action in the following areas:

- **Pedagogy:** Teacher training, expertise and supply. Networking and pedagogical research.
- **Resources:** Curriculum materials, teaching resources, partnerships to support Arabic.
- **Systems:** Accreditation systems, policy buy-in, continuity between key stages and phases of education.
- **Attitudes:** Challenging misconceptions in relation to Arabic on the part of learners, parents, school leaders and the general public.

Teresa Tinsley
Alcantara Communications

LEARNING ARABIC IN THE UK

Arabic is one of the world's great languages. Spoken by more than 400 million people and one of the official languages of the United Nations it is the vehicle of a great scientific and literary tradition.

From the earliest odes of the pre-Islamic poets through the cutting edge research of the philosophers and mathematicians of Islam's golden age to the novels of Nobel laureate Naguib Mahfouz, Arabic has been the vehicle of many significant contributions to the development of science and culture.

A study of Arabic opens up endless possibilities and opportunities for those who embark upon it. A rich and sophisticated language, spoken in many varieties throughout the Middle East and North Africa, learning it is both challenging and rewarding. A knowledge of Arabic is key to gaining a real understanding of the peoples, societies and politics of the Arab World and access to a range of employment opportunities in the Region's finance, media and commercial sectors. As its social, political and commercial importance increases demand to learn Arabic is set to grow.

Knowledge of Arabic among young people in the UK also brings wider benefits including a deeper mutual understanding between our communities and an erasing of the trust deficit that has been on the rise over the last decades as a result of political circumstance and military interventionism.

Those who learn Arabic will move beyond the shallow media stereotypes to a fuller more authentic awareness of the Arab World.

Traditionally Arabic language and culture has been taught in a relatively small number of UK schools and universities. Many of those who learned Arabic already had connections with the Arab World either through heritage or faith. The Arabic Language and Culture Pilot Project, launched in 2013 and jointly supported by Qatar Foundation, the British Council and Greater London Authority, has already brought more teachers into this network. The pilot, which also enjoys the backing of SOAS, Goldsmiths College and the University of Edinburgh, has been able to offer seed funding to clusters of schools in Blackburn and Belfast, Bradford, Sheffield, Manchester, London and Devon.

Modern methods of teaching Arabic communicatively are being employed, and learners are actually using the language in real situations and their motivation is strong.

So far over 50 schools have signed up to introduce or extend the teaching of Arabic to their pupils, each with their own Arabic language teacher or assistant.

As well as picking up the language they are becoming increasingly aware of Arab culture with its rich history and broad contribution to the development of modern civilisation. Moreover, 20 Arabic teachers have taken part in a teacher training course run in association with Goldsmiths College gaining their first professional teaching qualification and a stepping stone to a PGCE.

Research conducted by British Council suggests that a variety of stakeholders across the UK have an interest in developing Arabic provision. Schools, teachers and academics have responded positively to our calls to action. The success of the annual conference for practitioner's and supporters of the Arabic language convened for the last eight years by British Council and its partners ALL, Edinburgh University and Goldsmiths College, is testimony to the growing attention being paid to the teaching and learning of Arabic.

This year's conference, as well as bringing together the longstanding network of Arabic stakeholders to discuss topical issues in Arabic teaching, will be a marvellous opportunity to celebrate some of the successes of the Arabic language and culture pilot by including the practitioners who are actually engaged in the project.

It will offer a forum for sharing the experience of introducing Arabic as well as lessons learnt; it will also look at ways of engaging policy makers and decision makers who can implement the changes that will lead to Arabic being offered more widely in British schools.

A major aim of the conference therefore is to engage the right people in the debate and provide them with the information they need to take action. Decision makers such as head teachers should be persuaded to introduce Arabic into the curriculum (and ensure that they have the teachers and resources to do so) while policy makers will learn about the value and potential in learning Arabic. The conference, together with other elements of the project such as the Arabic Language and Culture Pack, will present Arabic as an attractive and viable foreign language option for head teachers and education leaders.

In this way the conference will contribute to and reinforce the long-term objectives of the project: increasing appreciation of Arabic language and culture in the UK, increasing the number of schools teaching Arabic, the number of pupils learning Arabic, and the number of GCSEs and other exams taken annually.

Tony Calderbank
British Council Country Director Bahrain

PROGRAMME

Time	Activity
09.00	Registration and networking
10.00	<p>Welcome</p> <p>Professor Richard Black, Pro-Director, SOAS Mark Herbert, Head of Schools, British Council</p>
10.15	<p>Opening remarks</p> <p>Prof Hugh Kennedy, SOAS</p>
10.30	<p>Panel discussion</p> <p>A number of guest speakers discuss the importance of Arabic, the case for learning and teaching the language and the challenges that face its introduction in schools</p> <p>Dr Elisabeth Kendall, University of Oxford Dr Mahmoud Al Batal, The University of Texas, Austin Dr Carine Allaf, Qatar Foundation International Nasser Al Khori, Qatar Foundation/Qatar Foundation International</p>
11.30	<p>Main Hall</p> <p>Session 1 Research projects into learning and teaching Arabic as a second/foreign language</p> <p>Prof James Dickins, University of Leeds Dr Rasha Soliman, University of Manchester Yehia Mohamed, Georgetown Research Project Rahaf Alabar, Goldsmiths</p> <p>Room 1</p> <p>Session 2 Offering Arabic as a modern foreign language in your school: Why and How?</p> <p>Samia Earle, Former Director SSAT Karen Michael, Manchester Grammar School Haroon Asghar, Brook House Primary School Saleh Patel, Horton Park Primary School Paul Porter and Rym Azkhonzada, Belfast Royal Academy</p> <p>Room 2</p> <p>Session 3 Professional development</p> <p>Dr Jim Anderson, Goldsmiths College Sawsan Haffar-Saffaf, Goldsmiths Luma Hameed, Goldsmiths Dr. Mahmoud Al Batal, University of Texas, Austin/Qatar Foundation International Ilham Salimane, SOAS Language Centre</p>

Time	Activity
11.30	<p>Room 3</p> <p>Session 4 Learner centred and communicative learning: putting into practice with Arabic</p> <p>Jonathan Featherstone, Edinburgh University Mourad Diouri, Edinburgh University Fadi Abughoush, Lindblom Math and Science Academy</p>
13.00	Lunch
14.15	<p>Session 5 Resources and materials, digital and print, textbooks, readers, dictionaries</p> <p>Jane Wightwick, Author of Mastering Arabic Tressy Arts, Oxford Arabic Dictionary Munir Shaikh (Classroad) Fadi Abughoush, Lindblom Math and Science Academy</p> <p>Session 6 Innovative approaches to teaching Arabic</p> <p>Dr Zainab Ibrahim, Carnegie Mellon University, Qatar Taufiq Cherkaoui, Belle Vue Girls School Fatima Abdel Kazem, Arabic Teacher in Tuscon Unified School District</p> <p>Session 7 Literacy and reading</p> <p>Dr Sue Bodman, Institute of Education Farida El Keiy, Cambridge University</p> <p>Session 8 Teaching Arabic culture (science geography history) in the classroom</p> <p>Elly Cohen, University of Minnesota Lucy Thiboutot, Al-Masdar Muntasir Fayez Al Hamad, Qatar University Dr Abdullah Abdul Rahman Ahmed, Qatar University</p>
15.45	Break
16.15	<p>Vicky Gough, British Council The language landscape: current language policy in UK and its significance for Arabic</p>
16.40	<p>Stephen Hull, British Council Sharing good practice and lessons learnt from the QF/BC Arabic language project (Video clips, student/teacher testimonials)</p>
17.00	Closing remarks by partners

SPEAKERS

Dr. Carine Allaf, Director of Programs, Qatar Foundation International: Carine Allaf has over ten years of experience in education and development as a teacher, scholar, and practitioner in the United States and the Arab world. As a full time lecturer in Teachers College, Columbia University's International Education Development program from 2010 to 2013, Carine's courses centered on women in the Arab world, education in conflict and emergency settings, strategic planning in international settings, and international development.

These courses were an outgrowth of her research agenda that looks at women's positioning in development specifically in the Arab world and on education in conflict and post conflict situations. Carine has also worked at the American Community School in Beirut, Lebanon; for the Center for International Development and Education (CIDE) at UCLA; Save the Children in Iraq; and UNICEF in Jordan, Sudan, and Palestine. She has also served as a consultant for the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) on a variety of projects. Carine obtained her Ph.D. in Comparative and International Education from the University of California, Los Angeles. Carine also has a Master's degree in Elementary Education from the Department of Curriculum and Teaching at Teachers College, Columbia University.

Dr Elisabeth Kendall is Senior Research Fellow in Arabic and Islamic Studies at Pembroke College, Oxford University. Her current work examines links between cultural production in Arabic and political/militant movements, particularly in Yemen and Egypt. Her books include *Twenty-First Century Jihad* (ed. with Ewan Stein), *Literature, Journalism and the Avant-Garde: Intersection in Egypt and Media Arabic*. Previously, she worked at the Universities of Edinburgh, Oxford and Harvard as well as serving as Director of the Centre for the Advanced Study of the Arab World, a UK government sponsored initiative aimed at building Arabic language-based research expertise.

Elisheva Cohen, doctoral student at University of Minnesota (former director of the Middle East Center at Portland State University): Elisheva Cohen is a PhD student at the University of Minnesota studying Comparative and International Development Education with a focus on migration and education in the Middle East. Prior to beginning her degree, she served as Outreach Coordinator for the Middle East Studies Center at Portland State University supporting education about the Middle East at the K-12 level. She holds a Master's degree and Bachelor's from Columbia University in International Educational Development and Middle Eastern Studies respectively. Elisheva has lived, worked, studied and traveled through much of the Arab world including Morocco, Jordan, and Egypt.

Fadi Abughoush, Arabic Teacher, Lindblom Math and Science Academy, Chicago, IL: Since 2008, Fadi Abughoush has been teaching Arabic as a foreign language to students from grades 8 through 12 at Lindblom Math and Science Academy in Chicago. Through his role at Lindblom, he develops and implements an Arabic language curriculum and also takes pride in incorporating aspects of Arab culture (including music, art, film, poetry, literature, and cuisine) throughout his teaching and work with students. At Lindblom, Fadi helped establish Chicago's first Arabic V course (during 2014-15 school year). In March 2014, he led Lindblom's Arabic debate team to the International Schools Arabic Debate Championship Competition in Doha, Qatar. Currently, he serves as a member of the Teacher Advisory Board for Qatar Foundation International's project, Al-Masdar.

Farida El Keiy, is a Language Teaching Officer in Arabic at the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Cambridge. Farida comes with over 25 years of experience in the field of teaching and training, a holder of a BA degree in Psychology granted by the University of Alexandria, a TAFAL Certificate for teaching Arabic as a foreign Language grade (A) from the International Language Institute, an affiliate to the International House in London, she is also accredited as an Advanced Certified International Trainer by the Management Institute of Canada – Montreal. Farida has attended and conducted many courses in the field of teaching and training. Furthermore, she has developed and tailored syllabuses, course structure and materials to cater for clients' needs from International universities, various organizations, embassies and multinational companies.

In 2013, Farida was appointed as a Teaching Fellow in Arabic at the University of Edinburgh, prior to that she served as a professional Arabic Instructor at the American University in Cairo, School of Humanities and Social Studies. Farida started her career with the International Language Institute in Cairo, where she taught Arabic as a Foreign Language, and then she advanced with her career at the British Council, Cairo from 1992 until 2003 heading the Arabic department from 2000 until 2003. Then she established "Kalimat Language and Cultural Centre", which was shortly recognised as one of the leading Arabic Language Institutes in Cairo. On the social level, Farida designed a literacy project to combat illiteracy in Egypt. She trained volunteers in this aspect. This project took place on the pavements and streets of Cairo. Farida also participated in campaigns for raising awareness against women's harassment among the Egyptian society.

Fatima Abdulkadhem: As International Consultant for the Arabic Language and Culture Kit outreach program at the University of Arizona, she interacted with teachers and students from around Tucson schools and sensed the critical need of integrating Arabic language and culture into the mainstream k-12 curriculum and not just providing it as an addition to it. She is currently teaching Arabic for the Middle Year Program in Safford k-8 IB school. She holds a BA in Elementary Education and a MA in Children's Literature with focus on Inquiry from the University of Arizona. With the support of QFI, she and her colleague Nour Jandali work hand in hand to nurture and develop the Arabic program in the Tucson Unified School District and develop Arabic inquiry units and innovations. To check a work made possible through the support of QFI check: My Name and Beyond, Al-Masdar along with The Arabic Alphabet Q-Wheel.

Haroon Asghar is a well-seasoned teacher and senior leader, who possesses a wealth of experience gained from delivering high impact improvements to teaching and learning across the Primary range. As an experienced leader of Foreign Languages, he is well-versed with managing all aspects of language development throughout school – particularly inter-cultural understanding which he believes to be the backbone of foreign language acquisition. Haroon currently manages the Arabic Language and Culture pilot at Brookhouse Primary School in Blackburn which has proven to be extremely successful at sparking a love of languages amongst children at several other schools within the borough.

Prof Hugh Kennedy, SOAS

Ilham Salimane, SOAS Language Centre

Prof James Dickins, Professor of Arabic at the University of Leeds, United Kingdom. James is a specialist in Arabic/English Translation, Sudanese Arabic, and (axiomatic-) functionalist linguistics. He has written numerous articles on these subjects, as well as the following books: *Extended Axiomatic Linguistics* (1998), *Standard Arabic: An Advanced Course* (with Janet Watson; 1999), *Thinking Arabic Translation* (with Sandor Hervey and Ian Higgins, 2002), and *Sudanese Arabic: Phonematics and Syllable Structure* (2007). He was Executive Director of the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies (BRISMES) from 2010 to 2014. His webpage is: http://www.leeds.ac.uk/arts/profile/20051/479/james_dickins.

Jane Wightwick, Partner, g-and-w publishing, Oxford. Jane Wightwick graduated from Cambridge University in Arabic and Middle Eastern studies and has trained and worked as a teacher of English and Arabic as a Foreign Language in both the UK and the Arab world. Jane is also a highly experienced educational publisher, with a background as an editor for Macmillan Education and Head of Language Publishing for Berlitz Publishing. Together with Mahmoud Gaafar, Jane now runs g-and-w publishing and has produced a range of educational material, with the emphasis on resources for teaching Arabic. Amongst the best known are the popular *Mastering Arabic* series and the beginner course *Read and Speak Arabic*. The full list of publications can be found on their website: www.g-and-w.co.uk.

Dr Jim Anderson is Senior Lecturer in Languages in Education with particular interest in: theories and methods of second language learning, including Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL); multilingualism and new literacies; and language policy. He led the introduction of the Secondary PGCE in Arabic, Bengali, Mandarin, Panjabi and Urdu at Goldsmiths and was coordinator of this course until 2014. He now teaches mainly on the department's MA in Culture, Language and Identity leading a module on 'Teaching Language in Multilingual Contexts' and contributing to the module on 'Bilingualism and Biculturalism in Education'. He also supervises students pursuing higher degrees and works on certificate courses for teachers of Arabic and Chinese under the Teacher Centre.

Jonathan Featherstone is the Senior Teaching Fellow of Arabic at the University of Edinburgh. Jonathan has designed and delivers a highly innovative two-year intensive course of Arabic using the Integrated Approach whereby Spoken Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic are taught simultaneously, side by side. Jonathan is also a teacher trainer, having delivered workshops and courses in London, Dubai, Edinburgh and the University of Cornell in Edinburgh. Prior to Edinburgh, Jonathan had previously taught Arabic at the Defence School of Languages in Beaconsfield and then move to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to become Senior Lecturer in Arabic. Jonathan has published BBC Talk Arabic, which is a very popular self-study pack for beginners.

Karen Michael BSc. (Hons), MA Ed. (Distinction) is currently a Teacher of Physics at The Manchester Grammar School (MGS), a prestigious independent boys' school. As part of her MA in Education, Karen, with the help of funding from The British Council, led a successful collaborative Arabic teaching project which embraces a range of schools in state and private sector across primary and secondary education. In her five years at MGS she has also set-up an online radio station which is currently working on the widely acclaimed BBC News School Report. She is hoping to pilot a School BBC World Broadcast in Arabic. Prior to teaching Karen enjoyed a successful film and television career. Originally one of the first female BBC trained broadcast engineers, she has worked around the world as a BBC Sound Recordist, and is a Royal Television Society nominated Documentary Director. She has worked with multi-award winning filmmaker Ken Loach on some of his most iconic feature films and brings this creative experience to her work in education. She lives in Manchester with her husband and three children.

Lucy Thiboutot: Lucy is a high school Arabic teacher located in Massachusetts. While spending time raising her young son, she is the part-time editor of the NCLRC@GW Arabic K-12 Bulletin, a biweekly resource for over 1000 educators and administrators interested in the field of Arabic K-12 teaching in the U.S. She founded the Arabic program at the Loomis Chaffee School, a boarding and day school in Windsor, Connecticut, where she taught for three years. She holds a Bachelor's of Arts from Williams College in Comparative Literature, Francophone concentration, and a Master of Arts in Arab Studies from Georgetown University, where she was a student assistant to the Director of Educational Outreach. She has spent several years in the Arab world, teaching pre-kindergarten at the American Community School in Beirut, Lebanon, and doing intensive Arabic study in the CASA program in Damascus, Syria, as well as the ISLI program for high school Arabic teachers in Alexandria, Egypt.

Luma Hameed, BEd. MA is an Associate Lecturer at Goldsmiths, University of London where she obtained her MA degree in Education: Culture, Language and Identity. She is a qualified teacher with a degree in English language and literature from Baghdad University and has PGCE in Arabic and German languages from Goldsmiths, University of London. She started teaching at complimentary and private schools and then worked for six years at Sarah Bonnell High School in East London as head of Arabic and German languages. She has taken part in various projects, in collaboration with Goldsmiths, to develop creative and innovative ways in teaching and learning languages and she is now teaching on the Certificate in the Teaching of Arabic in schools. In addition, Luma works with the CIE (Cambridge International Examination) as an exam moderator and setter for Arabic language examination papers. She is also working as a teaching consultant, offering teachers mentoring and guidance needed for their professional development.

Dr. Mahmoud Al Batal is associate professor of Arabic in the Department of Middle Eastern Studies and director of the Center for Arabic Study Abroad (CASA) at The University of Texas at Austin. CASA is a consortium of 29 American universities that provides advanced training in Arabic language and culture at the American University in Cairo, Egypt, and at the University of Damascus, Syria. Al-Batal also serves as associate director and chair of the Arabic Board of the National Middle East Language Resource Center (NMEELRC). Currently, he is involved in developing “Aswaat Arabiyya,” a Web-based project for Arabic listening materials.

He is also the coauthor of the “Al-Kitaab” Arabic textbook series (with Kristen Brustad and Abbas Al-Tonsi) and has written a number of articles on aspects of teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language. Al-Batal previously served as CASA executive director in Cairo (1985-1987), as director of the Arabic School at Middlebury College (1991-1998) and as director of the Emory College Language Center (2000-2004). He holds a B.A. in Arabic language and literature from the Lebanese University, and an M.A. and Ph.D. in Arabic linguistics from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

Mark Herbert, Head of Schools,
British Council

Sheikh Mohammad Saleh is the Deputy Principal of Abu Hurairah Academy (supplementary school) and Modern Foreign Language Co-ordinator at Horton Park Primary School in Bradford. He is a Islamic scholar who holds a B.A in Islamic Sciences and Arabic literature from Jameah Taleemul Islaam, Dewsbury UK, M.A in Islamic studies from Markfield university Leicestershire and also holds a B.A in Islamic finance and inheritance.

Dr Sue Bodman, Insitute of Education

Mourad Diouri, University of Edinburgh

Munir Shaikh, Classroad, serves as Director of Online Education at classroad.com. He is responsible for conceptualizing online courses, developing learning management system (LMS) features and user interface elements, implementing pedagogy through online learning, recruiting instructors and content developers, training educators/presenters, and strategic planning and marketing of Classroad resources. He is a nonprofit executive, educator, writer/editor and organizational consultant with long-term experience in scholarly public education, learning standards and world history. He holds a M.A. in Islamic Studies from UCLA, earned a certificate in advanced Arabic from Al-Azhar University in Cairo in 2006, and received an NEH Fellowship to participate in the 2008 Mediterranean Seminar in Barcelona.

Mr Paul Porter, Head of Modern Foreign Languages, Belfast Royal Academy, BELFAST, Northern Ireland. He earned an honours degree French and Anthropology at The National University of Ireland. He also holds a degree in Theology and Philosophy from The Pontifical University. He achieved a Post Graduate Diploma in Pastoral Theology from The Pontifical University and completed his PGCE with John Moore’s University (JMU), Liverpool. He is currently teaching French to GCE A level as well as beginners German, Spanish and Latin.

Rahaf Alabar, doctoral researcher at Goldsmiths, University of London. I am in my third year of PhD in Arabic language proficiency testing based in the department of Educational studies. I was a lecturer at Damascus University from 2009-2011, teaching Arabic linguistics for undergraduate students.

I also joined the higher language institute in Damascus in 2008, where I taught Arabic as a foreign language for 3 years. I earned an M.A. in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) from the University of St Mark & St John in 2012. I hold a bachelor in Arabic language and literature, and a diploma in Arabic linguistics both from Damascus University.

Dr Rasha Soliman is a Senior Language Tutor in Arabic at the University of Manchester. Her career in Teaching Arabic as a Second Language began in 1995 in Egypt. She holds an MA in Applied Linguistics from the University of Southern Queensland in Australia and recently completed her PhD in Arabic Applied Linguistics at the University of Leeds. She presented academic papers at a number of conferences in the UK, Spain, USA, Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Her website is: <https://manchester.academia.edu/RashaSoliman>

Professor Richard Black, Pro-Director (Research and Enterprise) at SOAS, University of London. After studying the geography of the Middle East at the University of Oxford in the 1980s, Richard branched out first to Portugal for his PhD (at Royal Holloway, University of London, on agrarian change) and then various parts of Africa (especially the Lusophone and Francophone parts), the Balkans, and more recently Bangladesh.

His research has focused on refugees, forced migrants, and over the past decade, the relationship between migration and poverty, and between migration and climate change. He has been at SOAS since 2013, before which he was founding Head of the School of Global Studies at the University of Sussex.

Rym Akhonzada, founder and director of Interlingua Language Solutions, a language service provider in Northern Ireland. Rym has graduated from the University of Tunis with a degree in English language and linguistics. She started her professional career as an interpreter and translator. She then worked in academia as a researcher in the School of Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work, Queen's University Belfast and she published a number of academic papers. Rym has recently developed an innovative online business Arabic course which aims to simplify Arabic language learning. Rym has taught languages, mainly French and Arabic for the past 11 years and is currently working on other innovative language projects.

Samia Earle has been a language teacher for 35 years and has taught four languages: French, Arabic, Spanish and EFL in three different countries, including Algeria, her initial home where she lectured at the University of Algiers. Her background is in applied linguistics and her interest is to research the best methods for teaching languages. She has been a Head of Department, Director of a specialist language college in Berkshire and Lead Teacher for Wokingham.

In September 2006 she was appointed to lead and support all specialist language colleges for the SSAT, running a network of European and world languages, showcasing excellent practice, delivering CPD for senior leaders in schools as well as supporting and guiding departments in maintaining their school and community targets.

She has delivered in school support for a range of languages departments. Between 2008 and 2010, she managed the development of 25 training modules for the DfE funded Links into Languages national core CPD for primary, secondary and post 16 teachers.

She has helped plan and deliver for the Arabic conferences over 8 years in conjunction with The British Council and other keystakeholders. She is a TEEP (Teachers Effectiveness Enhancement Programme) trainer for the Schools network and an independent Languages consultant since 2012. She recently trained as a CAB assessor.

Sawsan Haffar-Saffaf works as an Arabic language teacher and consultant for Cambridge, Westminster and Goldsmiths Universities also the chair of examiners for International GCSE. And International Classical Arabic. She has about 20 years teaching experience in different sectors (private, main-stream, supplementary, primary, Secondary) teaching Arabic as a second language as well as first language. During teaching years she became Head of Arabic Department and assistant Head of Languages Department, also worked on different national and international projects that ranged from designing curriculums to writing assessment papers and providing teacher training and mentoring.

Taoufiq Cherkaoui is a Lead Practitioner and teacher of Modern languages and Religious Studies. He is also an Arabic Language Advisor to the British Council and a Principal Examiner for Edexcel Pearson Exam Board. Cherkaoui works as Education Consultant and bilingual teacher trainer for Cambridge International Examinations (CIE). He is involved with training teachers at Nazabayev Intellectual Schools (NIS) in Kazakhstan and Nile Egyptian Schools (NES) in Egypt. Cherkaoui completed a Post Graduate Certificate in Education from Leeds Metropolitan University. He has also earned a Postgraduate Degree in Innovation in Education from the University of Warwick (PGCIE). He also holds an M.A. in Education from Edge Hill University. He is now hoping to start his PhD in Education in the near future where he aims to look at the achievement between students from traditionally poor backgrounds and their better-off peers www.arabalicious.com

Tressy Arts is the Chief Editor of the Oxford Arabic Dictionary, a truly modern English-Arabic and Arabic-English dictionary, available in print and online (www.oxforddictionaries.com/arabic), which contains over 26,000 entries on either side, clearly disambiguated and with many clarifying examples. It has been launched to critical acclaim on 28 August 2014. Previously, she has worked on the Oxford Essential Arabic dictionary and the Dutch-Arabic and Arabic-Dutch translation dictionaries by Hoogland (2003). She has a degree in Arabic linguistics and translation from Radboud University Nijmegen, the Netherlands.

Sir Vernon Ellis is Chair of the British Council, the UK's International Cultural Relations Organisation. Prior to taking up this appointment in 2010, he was at Accenture for 40 years where he was International Chairman. He is very much involved in the arts, particularly music. He was Chairman of the English National Opera and is now its President. He is also the Chairman of the National Opera Studio and was a Trustee of the Royal College of Music for six years.

Through the work of his own Foundation, he supports a wide range of arts organisations and hosts around 90 concerts a year at his home in London. He is also Chairman of Martin Randall Travel and of One Medical Group, and is a Non-Executive Director of FTI Consulting Inc. He was knighted in 2011 for services to music and in 2012 was appointed Chairman of the Arts and Media Honours Committee.

Dr. Yehia A. Mohamed, Assistant Professor at Georgetown University, Qatar: Yehia A. Mohamed is Assistant Professor at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service in Qatar. He has a Ph.D. (2008) Arabic and Semitic languages from Cairo University, where he earned an M.A. and B.A. in Semitic Linguistics. Mohamed has served as a lecturer in Arabic programs at Georgetown University's main campus, the Middle East Institute, Johns Hopkins University, the University of Maryland, and George Washington University. In addition, he participated in various projects at Multilingual Solutions and the Center for Applied Linguistics (also based in Washington D.C.

His research interests include phonology, comparative dialectology, applied linguistics, teaching Arabic as a foreign language. His experience includes familiarity with ACTFL proficiency testing, teaching all Arabic proficiency levels in courses for conversation, media, literature, Islamic culture, and material development.

Dr. Zeinab Ibrahim, Professor of Arabic Studies at Carnegie Mellon University, Qatar: Zeinab Ibrahim is a Teaching Professor of Arabic Studies at Carnegie Mellon University, Qatar (CMUQ). She is a sociolinguist of Arabic who earned her Ph.D. from Georgetown University, Washington, D.C. She holds an M.A. in Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language (TAFL) and another in Communication, both from the American University in Cairo.

She has many published books and articles investigating various aspects of Arabic applied, theoretical and sociolinguistics. She was the President of the American Association of Teachers of Arabic (AATA), Executive Director of CASA (Center for Arabic Study Abroad) and several other administrative positions. She has organized several international conferences. Her website is: <https://www.qatar.cmu.edu/~zeinab/>

