A CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK FOR ARABIC IN THE FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING BAND

by

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THESIS

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PROMOTER: PROF HC GEYSER
CO-PROMOTERS: PROF JA NAUDE
   DR RP MULLER

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Preface

In completing this thesis I am deeply indebted to the following:

♦ The promoters, Prof HC Geyser, Prof JA Naude and Dr RP Muller who have guided the study throughout its tumultuous course of five years, giving the necessary direction and motivation.

♦ Dr Annette Lotter, the independent decoder, who served in an additional capacity as a source of inspiration, a guide and mentor.

♦ My wife Rookayya, who stood by patiently, giving me tons of encouragement whenever I was snowed under and on the verge of quitting. Her sacrifice, perseverance and commitment have contributed to the successful completion of this huge project, which would not have materialised otherwise.

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And finally my employer, the Gauteng Department of Education, who approved of study leave on a number of occasions, even when manpower was in short supply.

I thank you all.

A.M. Mahomed
1 September 1998
Summary

Arabic has been offered as a third language optional subject in secondary schools in South Africa for the past two decades. With the introduction of outcome-based education (OBE) and the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) in South Africa, it has become necessary to look afresh at the existing curriculum for Arabic and the possibilities that exist for its continued promotion.

The two key questions this study have answered are:

> What are the unique needs of South African learners studying Arabic?
> Based on the specific outcomes stated, what are the performance indicators and range statements for grades 10 to 12 in the South African context.

This information was obtained through focus group and individual interviews held with a number of stakeholders, which included learners, parents, teachers, community and non-governmental organisations, and the business, trade and foreign affairs sector.

The data obtained was analysed and fed into a suitable framework for a curriculum in the Further Education and Training (FET) band of the NQF. The components of the framework consisted of:

> A rationale for the study of Arabic.
> Specific outcomes for all language offerings in the South African school system.
> Performance indicators for the three grades, 10, 11 and 12.
> Range statements for each of the four linguistic skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing; and also for cultural understanding and the study of the classical language for religious and literary texts.
> Assessment guidelines.

The main finding of this study was that there should be a shift of focus from the reading/writing component to the oral component, bringing the curriculum in line with proficiency orientated modern foreign language programmes. This shift is also necessary because of the career related and other reasons cited by respondents as their primary need for the use of Arabic in the future.

The curriculum framework proposed is therefore communicative in its approach, using outcome-based principles and aiming for proficiency. The modular programme proposed would allow for greater flexibility both within the public school and independent school systems, and facilitate accreditation on the National Qualifications Framework by allowing schools and external service providers to deliver the curriculum concurrently.

Finally, the way forward suggested how the framework can materialise into a substantial and viable programme that could be offered if it has the support of a number of key stakeholders. The Arabic language will then not only survive but continue to prosper as a vital cultural resource, making South Africa a strategic player on the world stage.
Opsomming

Arabies is die afgelope twee dekades as 'n derde opsoniele taalvak in Suid-Afrikaanse sekondêre skole aangebied. Met die instelling van Uitkomsgebaseerde Onderwys (UGO) en die Nasionale Kwalifikasieraamwerk (NKR) in Suid-Afrika, het dit nodig geword om opnuut na die kurrikulum vir Arabies en die bestaande moontlikhede vir die voortgesette bevordering daarvan te kyk.

Die twee sleutelvrae wat hierdie studie beantwoord het is:

> Wat is die unieke behoeftes van Suid-Afrikaanse leerders in wat Arabies studeer?
> Wat is, volgens die gespesifiseerde uitkomste, die aanluidings van prestasie en die domeinstellings vir grade 10 to 12 in die Suid-Afrikaanse konteks?

Hierdie inligting is verkry deur middel van fokusgroep- en individuele onderhoude wat met aantal belanghebbendes, insluitende leerders, ouers, ondervywers, die gemeenskaps en nie regeringsorganisasies, en die sake-, handel- en buitelandesesake-sektor, gehou is.

Die verkrygte data is geanaliseer en in 'n toepaslike raamwerk vir kurrikulum in die Voortgesette-Onderwys-en Opleidingsbaan van die NKR gevoer. Die komponente van hierdie raamwerk het bestaan uit:

> 'n Rasionaal vir die studie van Arabies.
> Spesifieke uitkomstes vir alle taalaanbiedinge in die Suid-Afrikaanse skoolsisteem.
> Prestasie-aanduidings vir die drie grade, 10, 11 en 12.
> Domeinstellings vir elkeen van die vier linguistiese vaardighede, naamlik praat, luister, lees en skryf, en ook vir kulturele begrip en die studie van die klassieke taal vir godsdiensstige en literêre tekste.
> Assesseringsriglyne

Die hoofbevinding van hierdie studie was dat die fokus van die lees- / skryf-komponent na die mondelinge komponent moet verskuif om die kurrikulum in ooreenstemming te bring met bedrewenheidsgeorienteerde moderne vreemtalaal-programme. Hierdie verskuwing is ook nodig weens van die loopbaanverwante en ander redes wat deur respondente, as hulle primêre behoefte vir die gebruik van Arabies in die toekoms, genoem is.

Die voorgestelde kurrikulumraamwerk is derhalwe kommunikatief in sy benadering, met die gebruik van uitkomsgebaseerde beginsels en gerigheid op bedrewenheid. Die voorgestelde modulêre program sou groter buigsaamheid toelaat in die staatskool en in die onafhanklike skoolsisteme, en akkreditering by die Nasionale Kwalifikasieraamwerk fasiliteer deur skole en eksterne diensverskaffers toe te laat om die kurrikulum gelyktydig te lever.

Ten slotte, die pad vorentoe het voorgestel hoe die raamwerk kan ontwikkel in en lewensvatbare program wat aangebied kon word indien dit die ondersteuning van 'n aantal sleuteldeelhebbers het. Die Arabiese taal sal dan nie slegs oorleef nie, maar sal voortgaan om te floreer as belangrike kultuurbron, en daarmee Suid-Afrika 'n strategiese speler op die wêreldverhoog maak.
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<td>AATA</td>
<td>American Association for the Teachers of Arabic</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACTFL</td>
<td>American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages</td>
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<td>APT</td>
<td>Arabic Proficiency Test</td>
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<td>ASP</td>
<td>Arabic for Specific Purposes</td>
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<td>ASPLR</td>
<td>Australian Second Language Proficiency Ratings</td>
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<td>AST</td>
<td>Arabic Speaking Test</td>
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<td>BATA</td>
<td>British Association for the Teachers of Arabic</td>
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<td>CALL</td>
<td>Computer Assisted Language Learning</td>
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<td>CASA</td>
<td>Center for Arabic Studies Abroad</td>
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<td>CE</td>
<td>Christian Era</td>
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<td>CI</td>
<td>Classical Arabic</td>
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<td>Coll</td>
<td>Colloquial Arabic</td>
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<td>et al</td>
<td>and others</td>
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<tr>
<td>ETQA</td>
<td>Education and Training Quality Assurers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Focus (group interview)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FET</td>
<td>Further Education and Training (Levels 2, 3, and 4 of the NQF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLEX</td>
<td>Foreign Language Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSI</td>
<td>Foreign Service Institute (Washington)</td>
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<td>GET</td>
<td>General Education and Training (Level 1 of the NQF)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gr</td>
<td>Grade</td>
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<td>HET</td>
<td>Higher Education and Training (Levels 5 to 8 of the NQF)</td>
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<td>I</td>
<td>Individual (interview)</td>
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<td>same work, same page</td>
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<td>ie</td>
<td>that is</td>
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<td>ILR</td>
<td>Interagency Language Roundtable (a grouping of US government linguistic schools)</td>
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<td>ILR</td>
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<td>INSET</td>
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<td>LOTE</td>
<td>Languages Other Than English (Australian equivalent for Foreign Languages)</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organisation</td>
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<td>National Qualifications Framework</td>
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<td>OPI</td>
<td>Oral Proficiency Interview</td>
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<td>PI</td>
<td>Performance Indicators</td>
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<td>SAFCERT</td>
<td>South African Certification Council</td>
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<td>South African Foreign Trade Organisation</td>
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<td>Specific Outcomes</td>
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<td>SGB</td>
<td>School Governing Body</td>
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<td>Society for the Promotion of Arabic</td>
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<td>TAFL</td>
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<td>TELI</td>
<td>Technology Enhanced Learning Initiative</td>
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CHAPTER ONE
ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The one adequate method of understanding the Arabic language and culture is through being able to speak and read Arabic. Gerber (1954:137) expresses this viewpoint very well by saying "The individual idiom of a people is the index to its way of thinking, the barometer of its emotional and intellectual climate, the key to its symbols and myths. These are the mysteries all translators have difficulty transmitting from one language to another ....... It is through the language of a people that we really begin to understand how they think as well as what they think."

Arabic is studied not merely for its utility as a language, that is, as one additional means of communication, but for its ability to increase the cultural, political, social, and educational perspectives of its learners. In other words, the person who is more versatile linguistically is more advantaged than a monolingual or bilingual person. More vocational opportunities, both locally and abroad, also open up to the person who can be described as a multilingualist.

Arabic is the language of the sacred book of Islam, the Quran, and as such is known for liturgical or religious reasons to millions of Muslims throughout the world - even in the non-Arab regions where Muslims are located.

Western civilisation is greatly indebted to the Arabs, who, throughout the dark ages of western Europe, preserved Greek culture and added to it. They were, according to Cole (1959:151-153) not only disseminators of knowledge but in many fields made original contributions too.
1.2 Arabic as an international language

Arabic is the official language and mother tongue of more than 200 million Arabs in 21 countries, stretching from Morocco in the west to the borders of Iran in the east. Ryding (1994:23) states that it is the liturgical language of the world's Muslim population, which amounts to approximately 1 billion people. Furthermore it is a language with an extensive literary heritage, and was the most widely used mode of international scientific communication throughout the Middle Ages. Till today it is the main language for prayer and scholarly religious discourse.

Internationally Arabic ranks as the sixth fifth most important language in the world, after Mandarin, Hindi, Spanish, English and Bengali; and has about 225 million speakers (The World Almanac and Book of Facts, 1996:642). About one seventh of the world's countries have Arabic as their official language, and in many others it is a second language (Kholi, 1982:20).

Arabic is the third most prevalent language in Africa, superseded by Swahili and Hausa. Bahjat (1980:184) asserts that between 40 to 50 percent of the words in both Swahili and Hausa have Arabic origin. About one third of the inhabitants of Africa are Arabic speaking - with a concentration being in north and central Africa. Geographically, the Arab lands in Africa total about one third of the total land area of Africa, and politically, the Arabic speaking countries number one fifth of the total number of states in Africa, according to research done by Abdalla (1984).

Arabic is one of the official languages of a number of international organisations, like the United Nations Organisations (U.N.O.) and the Organisation of African Unity (O.A.U.).
1.3 The teaching of Arabic in South Africa

The Muslim communities in South Africa are primarily of Indian and Malaysian origin. The vast majority of Muslims who originate from India are in KwaZulu Natal, Gauteng, Northern province, Western Province and Mpumalanga. The Malays predominate in the western and eastern and northern Cape, as well as Gauteng. They number in total to about 500 000. There are also a few thousand Muslim converts from the other racial groups.

Arabic is not used as a home language by any of the communities in South Africa, but for religious purposes it is taught in afternoon schools called “madrassas”, where Muslims are taught to read the language, primarily to read the Quran, without necessarily understanding what has been read. In the former House of Delegates' and House of Representatives' schools, Arabic was offered as a third language optional subject, after English and Afrikaans, from standard two to standard ten. In the last decade, over thirty Muslim private schools have sprung up, all of whom offer Arabic from Grade 1 to Grade 12.

There are four universities that offer courses in Arabic at both under-graduate and post-graduate level. These are the University of South Africa, Rand Afrikaans University, University of Durban-Westville and the University of the Western Cape. There are also Darul Ulooms (Muslim seminaries) which concentrate on teaching Arabic for religious purposes. At the adult level, evening classes are held in Arabic, in which the emphasis may principally be on grammar, spoken Arabic, calligraphy, reading (the Quran in particular), or a combination of the above-mentioned.

1.4 Reasons why Arabic has been studied in South Africa

1.4.1 Religious and cultural reasons

The Quran (the divinely revealed book to the Prophet Muhammad on whom be peace) and Hadith (Sayings of the Prophet Muhammad on whom be peace) are in Arabic, and they are
the primary sources on which the Islamic religion is based. Within the Muslim community, the language of prayer is Arabic, and this is universally the case whether it be in a mosque in Tokyo or Timbuktu. Many everyday phrases used by Muslims are also in Arabic - like the greeting “As salamu 'alaikum”, meaning “Peace be upon you”. Arabic is therefore important for religious reasons, and will assist in awarding its learners a better grasp of Islam from its original sources.

1.4.2 Vocational
Arabic is recognised in South Africa as a subject which could be pursued up to matriculation level in schools. For a student who has studied Arabic as a subject, it could open up a number of diverse fields of study at tertiary level, be it locally or overseas. Additional job opportunities may be available, especially in the Middle East.

1.4.3 Commerce and trade
With sanctions a thing of the past, South Africa is on the threshold of major economic development, especially with the new markets opening up in the Arab Middle East. Companies dealing with import and export now have bigger markets to tap into.

1.4.4 Art and architecture
Calligraphy is used for decorative purposes in mosques, tombs, palaces and mansions, in for instance that of the Taj Mahal, and the Alhambra palace in Granada, Spain. These great masterpieces of Muslim architecture would be impoverished without the Arabic calligraphy adorning its walls. Calligraphy is also used in the frames that adorn walls in most Muslim homes. These frames contain verses from the Quran.

Arabesque is an extension of this art. Ceramics, pottery, metal ware, carpets, fabrics and jewellery all depend on calligraphy and arabesque.

These are some of the important reasons why Arabic is studied. Other reasons will be ascertained through the course of this study.
1.5 Language in Education Policy

Language plays a central role to all learning. It affects the learners’ sense of identity and self worth.

One of the aims of the language in education policy according to the Curriculum Development Working Group (1996:24) is to “support ... the teaching of and learning of all the languages required by learners or used by communities in South Africa, including languages used for religious purpose, and those used for international trade and communication”.

Languages could be taught either as subjects per se or as language for learning and teaching(op.cit.,p25). As subjects, learning a language implies the acquisition of skills like the ability to:

- Read and listen with understanding.
- Communicate intelligibly, both verbal and written.
- Utilise vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation and spelling correctly.
- Be familiar with the norms of politeness and social appropriateness.
- Recognise the discourse features of both the spoken and written genres.
- Understand cultural references and connotations of accent, style and register.
- Understand a cross section of the language’s corpus of literature.

Which of these components are necessary as a possible focus or foci of study will depend on the purpose for which the language is to be used. These could be, amongst others, to enable them to secure specific kind of employment, or to enable worshippers to read sacred or holy texts, or to expose learners to another culture or historically great language and tradition.
Languages of learning and teaching would be languages offered as medium of instruction. These are languages through which other subjects could be taught. In the case of Arabic, for South African citizens, this may not apply, but for Arabs resident here this could be a possibility.

1.6 Background to this study

At schools in South Africa, Arabic flourished for the past two decades as a third language and an optional subject. Since 1994, significant changes have occurred politically, impacting directly on education and schooling. The old ethnic departments of education have been merged, and each of the nine new provinces has its own regionalised and decentralised departments of education. Eleven languages have now been given official language status, and other European, Semitic and eastern languages may soon become marginalised. Arabic is one of these.

While the new constitution guarantees the promotion of all cultures and languages, the education departments have highlighted priority subjects which need to be taken cognisance of within the context of the greater good of society at large. These priority subjects are English as a second language, other official African languages, science and technology.

Secondly, there are new proposals to be introduced with the adoption of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) in South Africa. The entire system of education is being restructured as Outcome-based education (OBE), grouping all the traditional subjects into broader learning areas. The study of additional languages will now fall under the broad area of "Languages, Communication and Literacies" and specific modules for languages could soon be offered. It has therefore become necessary to work out the details concerning Arabic in this learning area in the FET band.
Thirdly, there is a sharp decline in student numbers, especially from grade 10 onwards, according to statistics published by the Society for the Promotion of Arabic (1993: No.6). Considering the above problem areas, it has become necessary to identify the unique needs of and justification for an Arabic curriculum at schools and consider a framework for the design of a relevant curriculum for schools.

1.7 Importance of this study

1.7.1 International trends

Some work in this field has been completed internationally. In the United Kingdom, the Schools' Arabic Project has been implemented in some British schools as a second language. In Australia, the Languages Other Than English (LOTE) programmes have catered for OBE in terms of additional languages that can be offered, which include Arabic. In Canada, the study of additional languages is also part of the national and provincial core curricula frameworks. In the United States of America, the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Proficiency Guidelines have identified the proficiency levels that students studying foreign languages in the United States have to aim for in order to attain credits or points for certification in schools and colleges. Most states in the US have also developed their own curriculum frameworks for foreign languages they offer. In Scotland, the Scottish Vocational Education Council (SCOTVEC) has completed a number of modules based on outcomes for all additional languages besides English. These include all other European languages, and could apply to Asian and Semitic languages as well. In the Netherlands, the National Institute for Curriculum Development for Modern Languages have worked on outcomes for languages other than Dutch. Much can be learnt from these projects and proposals from abroad, and can be applied to the situation in South Africa.
1.7.2 Value of the research

In previous studies completed by Khoury (1961), Hanna (1964), Kara (1976) and Jadwat (1987), the need for further research was highlighted in many areas related to learning and teaching of Arabic in English speaking environments. Very little work has been completed in terms of curriculum design for Arabic in South Africa. The researched findings of this study would therefore be an important source of information in planning and designing a suitable and relevant curriculum for schools both within South Africa and abroad.

In South Africa, this study would be a unique and pioneering endeavour in the field of Arabic curriculum design. All provinces will benefit from the results of this research, and could use the guidelines stated in designing a relevant and coherent Arabic curriculum for use in schools. The principles or framework given would be useful in some ways even in the design of other non-official language programmes within the South African context.

1.8 Statement of the problem

In 1993 there were over twenty secondary schools in the country that offered Arabic, five of which were in the Gauteng province, and since then there has been a sharp decline in student numbers of Arabic, especially in the further education and training band (Society for the Promotion of Arabic, 1993:No.6). This could be attributed to the fact that students needs are not being met, either partially or totally. Teachers, parents and other stakeholders also have specific interests concerning the study of Arabic, which need to be addressed.

The focus of this study will be on the FET band, as the greatest challenge for the survival of the language exists at the beginning of Grade 8 and Grade 10 levels when students choose from a host of optional subjects.

The general research questions that this study will attempt to answer are:
1) What are the needs for the study of Arabic in the FET band?
2) In line with the existing outcomes and the needs identified, what are the performance indicators and range statements that should be developed for the study of Arabic at the grades 10, 11 and 12 levels?
3) What will be a suitable curriculum framework for the Further Education and Training band.

1.9 Aims of this study

The aim of this study is to develop a definitive and usable curriculum framework which could be used for designing an outcomes or proficiency based curriculum for secondary schools. The specific aims of this study would be to:
1) identify the needs for the study of Arabic.
2) develop performance indicators and range statements by taking identified outcomes and needs into consideration.
3) develop a framework for the Arabic curriculum in the FET band.

1.10 Methodology

The study will incorporate a literature study on Arabic as a foreign language, a curriculum framework and research methodology. Qualitative research techniques in data gathering and analysis will be used.

This study will be essentially exploratory and descriptive in nature. According to Mouton and Marais (1988:45), it would be "exploratory" in that it would attempt to explore a terrain that is relatively unknown in order to gain new insights. This preliminary investigation would help determine priorities. The methods to conduct the exploratory research would include a relevant literature review, an analysis of what people have to say about their experiences as regards the problem under study through in-depth interviews, and an analysis of insight-stimulating examples like document analysis. The only document
available is the currently used Higher Grade syllabus (House of Delegates, 1987). The study would also be "descriptive" in that an in-depth description of the situation will be given, together with an analysis in narrative form of what individuals and groups have to say concerning the problem.

Focused group and individual interviews will be completed to determine the needs identified by a number of stakeholders. Emerging from these needs and the outcomes stated, appropriate performance indicators and range statements will be developed. Assessment guidelines will also be discussed.

The steps to be followed are:

**Step 1. Orientation to the study**
A background to Arabic both internationally and locally is given. The context to the problems pertaining to Arabic at schools is described, and the aims of this researched study stated in chapter one.

**Step 2. Arabic - Current thinking in TAFL**
A review of Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language (TAFL) and Outcome-based education (OBE) will be dealt with in chapter two.

**Step 3. Curriculum frameworks**
A literature study on curriculum frameworks will be undertaken in chapter three. This review will provide a contextual background for the framework which will follow in chapter six.

**Step 4. Research methodology**
A literature study on the quantitative and qualitative research paradigms will be focused on in chapter four, with particular emphasis on the methods to be used in this study.
Step 5. Data gathering
The target groups of respondents will be identified, and the interviews conducted and transcribed.

Step 6. Data analysis
The data will be analysed, various findings interpreted and conclusions will be drawn in chapter five.

Step 7. The curriculum framework
The framework for the design of an Arabic curriculum and the way forward will be described in chapter six and the way forward.

Graphically the study will be completed in the following sequence and appear as the chapters indicated:

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<td>The analysis of the data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>A framework for the Arabic curriculum</td>
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Table 1.1: The proposed study

1.11 Clarification of terms

Even though a detailed description of terms will be given in later chapters, it is necessary to give definitions of terms used in this chapter.

A curriculum framework is a set of broad guidelines that aid personnel in producing specific instructional plans. It establishes norms and standards for a specific subject or field of study, but does not prescribe content or methodological approaches.
The Further Education and Training Band (FET) corresponds with grades 10, 11 and 12 of schooling.

A performance indicator is a benchmark or indicator of progress which describes what learners know, can do and demonstrate.

Range statements are a further elaboration of performance indicators which give the broad spectrum within which learning occurs. All the four linguistic skills are covered.

Assessment is the collection of data about learner achievements using a variety of means and procedures. Evaluation is making judgements or decisions based on the data collected through the assessment process.

1.12 Summary and preview

In this chapter an overview was given of Arabic both internationally and within the South African context. The problem statement and aims for the study were stated and the methodology outlined.

In the following chapter the results of a literature study in the field of Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language (TAFL) and Outcome-based education (OBE) will be described.
CHAPTER 2
THE TEACHING OF ARABIC AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE
AND OUTCOME-BASED EDUCATION

2.1 Aim of the chapter

This chapter will cover a brief overview of Arabic in general followed by the Teaching of Arabic as a Foreign Language (TAFL) in particular. The aim of this chapter is to give an overview of developments in the field of TAFL, in particular over the last two decades. In order to do this a brief description will be given of the features of Arabic and the various kinds of Arabic used in the Arab world today. The diglossic nature of Arabic will be described as it impacts on all curriculum design into the teaching and learning of Arabic. The various approaches used in TAFL, which include linguistic and communicative competence, will be explained. The emergence of the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Proficiency Guidelines will be documented, Outcome-based Education (OBE) principles explained, and the similarities between the proficiency orientation and OBE stated. Finally the chapter ends on the importance of including culture in TAFL.

The elements described in this chapter will all impact directly on the curriculum framework to be proposed in chapter six.

2.2 Features of Arabic

Arabic belongs to the Semitic group of languages and uses a cursive script. The alphabet consists of 28 letters whose shapes vary depending on their position in a word. Short vowels are not normally written. Some letters have sounds like that of English consonants, but there are many with no English equivalent. The structure of Arabic is based on the trilateral root system, with each three-consonant root having a general meaning and which
can be expanded through inserting, prefixing or doubling of letters to give a further range of specific meanings.

Arabic literature begins with the poetry of the 6th century C.E. Prose works date from the early part of the 7th century, with that of the Quran and Hadith being the two primary sources. The 7th century also saw the rapid expansion of Islam, and with it the spread of Arabic to neighbouring territories, which in the east was the border of India and China, and in the west the entire north Africa and into Spain. The standard language is still predominant in poetry, novels, short stories, plays, essays and technical works, while the vernacular dialects have made inroads in drama, and the dialogue element in short stories and novels.

2.3 **Kinds of Arabic**

There are three main types: the standard language used for formal and literary purposes generally referred to as Quranic or classical (Cl), the modern standard (MS), and the localised dialects or Colloquial forms (Coll) used in the affairs of everyday life. There is a big gap between the “high-prestige” formal language (Cl and MS), which is uniform throughout the Arab world, and the vernacular or colloquial dialects (Coll) which vary from region to region.

The “fusha” is the “high-prestige” or “classical” (Cl) form learnt at schools, and the best educated is able to use this in unpremeditated speech. The language used today for intellectual discourse and for contacts between educated speakers with widely different vernaculars is a slightly modified and simplified form of the “high-prestige” language. It is also the Arabic in which modern books, periodicals and newspapers are written, and in which formal talks and lectures are given. This intermediate level, called “standard” or “modern literary” (or MS) by Haywood and Nahmad (1965:1), is found in both written and spoken form, and there is structurally very little difference between the “high-prestige” (Cl) and the “modern standard” (MS) version.
According to Anis (1980:13) the Arabic common to all parts of the Arab world at present is known as either “contemporary” (al-mu'asra), “modern literary” (al-adabiya), “modern standard” (al-namuzajiya al-'asriya), or “written” (al-maktuba) Arabic. All these terms refer to the “high-prestige” or MS form.

The dialects differ from region to region. They are limited linguistically and geographically in that they lack the vocabulary to discuss economic, political and cultural topics, and differ from one geographic area to the next. Haddad (1985:15-16) states that their intelligibility also does not usually go beyond the boundary of the country in which it is used. Geographically contiguous dialects (e.g., Lebanese and Cairene) have a great deal of inter-comprehensibility, while Iraqi and Moroccan on either periphery of the Arab world have less. The dialects are used for all non-formal situations, like at home, amongst colleagues at work, social occasions, etc. - all day to day activities (Abboud, 1983:42), and mainly for the skills of listening and speaking only.

2.3.1 The situation in Egypt

Badawi (1973) has described the linguistic situation in Egypt to consist of five divisions on a continuum. The two furthest points are Colloquial on the one hand, and Classical on the other. The five divisions as he described them are:

- Illiterate colloquial
- Educated colloquial
- Modern Formal Arabic
- Classical Arabic

\[
\text{Illiterate colloquial} \quad \text{Educated colloquial} \quad \text{Classical Arabic (Fusha al-Turath)}
\]

\[
\text{Col} \quad \text{Cl}
\]

\[
\text{Educated colloquial} \quad \text{Modern Formal Arabic (Fusha al-'Asr)}
\]

*Fig 2.1: The linguistic variations of Arabic in Egypt*
The Modern Formal Arabic variety is used in the Egyptian press, magazines, text books, short stories and other serious writing. It is also the variety used in political "read' speeches, as well as on the news for radio and television.

The Classical (or heritage) Arabic covers all aspects of Islamic religious literature, and it is distinguishable, according to Parkinson (1991:32), from the former type by its fine archaic style, heavy use of metaphor, some complexity and even convolutedness.

2.3.2 The situation in Jordan

In Jordan the colloquial dialects are of three varieties, the Bedouin, Fallahi and Madani. These reflect the three cultural types of the pastoral, rural and urban respectively. Each variety is appropriate for a set of situations, with specifically defined use.

The Modern Standard is highly valued, and colloquial has been regarded as a corruption of MS. The Classical form is the most highly valued, because of its perceived status of being the historical source of the colloquial, as well as its alleged sacredness (Hussein, 1989:39-40).

2.3.3 The rest of the Arab world and South Africa

Each of the larger countries in the Arabic speaking North Africa and Middle East have similar divisions, that is a variety of colloquial forms, MS and Classical Arabic.

In the Gulf region, both colloquial and MS are used. Colloquial is used at home and in informal situations, and MS at meetings and formal situations. In Egypt however, the colloquial is used in both formal and informal situations.
According to Heath (1990:48) a well-educated non-native learner of Arabic should ideally have control over three strains of the language, the classical (Cl), MS and a colloquial dialect (Coll). The classical and MS are very close, having the same grammatical structure.

Classical Arabic is the language of the Quran, and still the current written form of the language. The Classical is the ornate, elevated and inflected form of the language, while the colloquial is used in soap operas, cartoons and in everyday use.

In South Africa at the present, all three strands of the language are found. Most South African Muslims know how to read the Classical for the purposes of reading the Quran without necessarily understanding what they have read. There are some who have studied either Arabic or religious studies in various of the parts and Arab world and therefore know one or two varieties of a colloquial together with MS and/or classical. The growing numbers of the foreign Arab communities invariably speak colloquial among themselves, and code switch to MS when speaking to a South African who does not know the colloquial.

2.4 The main dialect regions of Arabic

Eiselle (1987:206-232) has done detailed areal studies of the Arabic dialects. He is of the opinion that there are seven principal dialects. These correspond roughly with the following areas:

1. Arabian peninsula (including Saudi Arabia and all the Gulf states, except Yemen)
2. Yemen
3. Mesopotamian (including Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Israel and Jordan)
4. Egypt
5. Sudan and Chad
7. Dialects on the periphery, which incorporate Cyprus, Malta and Central Asia.
More broadly speaking, the dialects could be divided into the four main regional areas, which are: Gulf and Arabian peninsula, Levantine (east of Mediterranean), Egyptian (which includes Libyan and Sudanese) and Maghrebi (Algerian, Mauritanian, Moroccan and Tunisian).

Figure 2.2: A map of the Arab world  
(Glasse, C 1991: 446)

2.5 The diglossic nature of Arabic

In Baghdad, according to Ferguson (1959:325), the Christian Arabs speak a “Christian Arabic” dialect when talking among themselves, but speak a general Baghdad “Muslim Arabic” dialect when talking to a mixed group. This phenomenon where two distinct varieties of a language exist side by side in a community, with each having a definite and distinct role to play, is what Ferguson called “diglossia”. Particular functions are assigned to each variety of the language - the most fundamental distinction between what may be called “High” and “Low” uses of the language. The “High” form is generally regarded as
superior to the "Low" form, and is compulsory for certain types of situations. The "High" form is used in religious sermons, parliament, university lectures, news and television broadcasts, newspapers and magazines, poetry and other literature. The "Low" form is used in the instructions to servants, labourers, waiters and clerks, in conversation with friends and family, radio and soap operas, folk literature, and captions for cartoons.

Diglossia is "bi-lingualness" within a language, where two distinct forms of speech are used concurrently within different contexts. The spoken vernaculars have evolved naturally, and adapted their own vocabulary, grammar rules and style, but are not suitable for written communication, and are therefore not written (Ryding, 1994:24). Modern Standard (MS) on the other hand, is mainly for reading and writing. The diglossic nature of the language has a direct impact on curriculum design, the methodology to be used and on materials production.

Native Arabs are able to "tailor" their language or to "code-switch" depending on the audience, sometimes even within a single sentence. This is called "register-shifting" (Allen, 1987b:7).

2.5.1 Some advantages of the Modern Standard (MS) over the colloquials

There are many advantages to having one standard language throughout the Arab world. The following have been stated by a number of scholars, who include Abboud (1989:374), Haddad (1985:15-16) and Heath (1990:40):

► It transcends the diversity of the colloquials.
► It is alleged that if a learner is equipped with MS, then he/she can easily pick up a colloquial later whenever it may be required.
► It is considered the linguistic ideal of the cultured elite of the Arab world. It is the correct and proper language, unlike the "vulgar, uncouth" colloquials of the uneducated (Heath, 1990: 40).
Since diplomats, scholars, journalists and businessmen deal with the educated elite, it is important to learn this elite form of Arabic.

The colloquials are substandard, and because they do not have a formal grammar, their study would not be regarded as a legitimate activity.

By learning MS, a student is trained in understanding the complex grammatical features which facilitates the acquisition of speaking skills, whether it be in MS or in a colloquial.

A thorough dialect study is only possible at bigger well resourced institutions, where they can employ native speakers to teach those segments of the course. Smaller institutions cannot offer the choices in dialects that may be required, and expect students to pick these up when they go to a specific country for further study.

If a learner has dialect knowledge only, then s/he will not be able to read and write the language.

MS grammar rules have been unchanged since the 7th century.

With the colloquial dialects, the further you travel away from that country, the less comprehensible you become. Also, Haddad (1985:15-16) states that the dialects are limited linguistically, making discussion on some economic, political and cultural topics difficult.

MS is the language of the Quran and the corpus of classical Arabic literature.

The project to dub the famous TV programme *Sesame Street* into Arabic was one of the largest projects of its kind in the early eighties. The committee led by Al-Dannan had to take key linguistic decisions for the 260 half-hour length programmes. They chose Simplified MS (*al-lugha al-'arabiyya al-muyassara* or *al-fusha al-muyassara*) for the following reasons:

1. Even though the Egyptian dialect was the most widely used and recognised dialect, the issue of intelligibility for 26 million pre-school children was of great concern.
2. If the programme had to be dubbed into the four main regional dialects, it would have resulted in serious cost implications and in linguistic fragmentation.
3. MS was found to be the most practical and desirable. Besides being the language of culture and education, it functioned as an important unifying agent among the Arabs. Since the main goal of the programme was to prepare children for school, the best way was to introduce them to the language of instruction used in schools.

Some of the questions raised at the time were, according to Abu-Absi (1991:111-112):

1. How well would children understand MS, since they will all have been brought up in homes where colloquial dialects were used all the time?
2. How natural would a primarily formal and written language like MS sound when used in informal situations?
3. Would children actors be able to perform easily and with grammatical accuracy?

In answer to the first question, two pilot studies were completed by al-Dannan (n.d.:1-5) and it was found that children in four major urban centres, Kuwait, Cairo, Amman and Tunis, were able to understand the content of the pilot programmes using MS easily. As for the other two concerns, one has just to view any of the programmes to realise that those were not issues at all.

2.5.2 Why is the study of a colloquial dialect important?

Many valid reasons have been cited for the study and mastery of a relevant colloquial dialect. These arguments can be summarised as follows:

➢ It is estimated by Heath (1990:41) that at least 90% of verbal transactions of the Arab world is in the colloquial, and from the remaining 10%, 90% is written.
➢ If only MS is used, then an unnatural communicative situation arises. If MS is taught for speaking, then a linguistic exception rather than the rule is chosen. It is tantamount to pedagogic subterfuge.
➢ MS as a spoken medium is the cherished ideal of many elite Arabs, but far from the reality of day to day usage in the Arab world.
To converse like a native Arab is one of the main aims of the proficiency movement.

By only teaching MS and formal grammar, potential students of Arabic get turned away because they find the language too difficult, according to Ryding (1990:227). This is a symptom of "monitor over-use" as explained by Krashen (1981:12-16) in which a strong initial conditioning which focuses on grammatical accuracy impacts negatively on the learner.

Colloquials are important for communicative competency and cultural proficiency (al-Batal, 1990:11).

The dialect has a political and cultural power in the country in which it is spoken, according to Allen (1987b:3). Amongst many Arabs there is a great deal of patriotism, and the dialect chosen is proof of loyalty and creates a sense of belonging.

Finally, the big question is which dialect should be chosen? Some say it should be Egyptian due to the large numbers of speakers, as well as because it is the Arab "Hollywood" for film and TV productions. Others say it should be Gulf Arabic, due to economic and financial reasons.

Which form of Arabic to choose?

Which version of the language to teach is a very sensitive issue. There are those that say that the standard or MS is more universal, versatile and useful; and through it the learner could acquire adequate knowledge of any localised dialect whenever the need may arise. As an example, Tawfiq Burj (1980:136) elaborated on his Arabic teaching experience while at the university in Hamburg in Germany. As a justification about which Arabic to teach, he stated that the "fusha" (CI or MS) is essentially written, while the "amiya" (Coll) is spoken. The "fusha" is easier since it is written, and therefore easier for foreigners. In addition to this, there are many books available in "fusha", and very few in "amiya". The dialects have been influenced a great deal by other languages such as French, Turkish and Persian, and are therefore not pure. There are also too many dialects. Since there is an incomplete vocalisation of the dialects, the dialects are more complicated.
because of their vague endings and inflections, which only a native speaker would understand with ease. He therefore says that the "fusha" is easier in terms of its structures and expressions, and should therefore be taught.

On the other hand, by studying MS only, it limits effective communication in natural Arab settings. The students would be "functionally deaf" (Heath, 1990:43). The objections to teaching dialects relate to the following issues:

1) Which dialect(s) should be taught and the justification for it (them)?
2) Why teach dialects that are regarded as "impoverished" or "low"?
3) There would be confusion by mixing MS and the colloquial - it is tantamount to teaching two languages in one.
4) MS has a universal linguistic foundation, which the colloquials do not have. In fact the colloquials have been influenced by other languages used in the respective countries, like Persian, Turkish and Berber (Younes, 1990:118).

As a response to the first question, the Egyptians have long regarded their country as not only the geographical but also political centre of the Arab world. Since Egypt is the most highly populous Arab country, with Egyptians working all over the world, and because the heart of the Arab film industry is in Cairo, the Egyptian dialect would be the most widely used of all Arab discourse in both formal and informal situations. The situation in the Gulf states is very different in that the colloquial is used informally, and MS is used in formal situations. If potential learners would like to work in the Gulf, then MS and Gulf Arabic is essential. If they would like to go to Egypt as a tourist, then the Egyptian dialect is essential. It is very unlikely that South Africans would work in Egypt, because of the low salaries they would earn there even if they found a job and because of the low standard of living there generally.
To obviate the problem of which language to teach, some scholars went further and even proposed a "middle language" (Allen, as quoted in Younes, 1990:107) which would be a blend of the spoken standard language with a number of lexical items culled from the dialects of various regions.

Middle Arabic is a functionally useful version of Arabic. It is the form chosen by the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) in Washington to train government personnel assigned to an Arab country. Granara (1988: 141-46) describes the course taught at FSI as being one in Middle Arabic, a blend of spoken standard (MS) and colloquial Levantine (Coll) to produce genuine proficiency (Allen, 1985:47). It incorporates the lexical and grammatical features shared by most colloquials, a kind of lingua franca among native Arabic speakers. This form, according to Ryding (1994: 24-25) is easily adaptable to specific dialects, and allows students to obtain basic proficiency in a form of the language not too distant from MS. The course also comprises of a segment on area studies, which is a series of lectures on the historical, political, social, cultural and economic aspects of the assigned country or region.

In opposition to this view, Parkinson (1992:129) states that while this form of Middle Arabic, also known as Educated Spoken Arabic, may be easy and practical, it is difficult to describe what it really is.

Even if it were possible to find some sort of a common mean between the dialects, it would not be accepted readily by the Arabs in whom a strong sense of nationalism prevails. Whether this solution is at all tenable is also very difficult to say. If three varieties of a language ruffle so may feathers, what would a fourth do?

Another solution proposed by Heath (1990:45) is to teach the three divergent strains of the language, a colloquial (Coll), the classical (Cl) and the modern standard (MS), through
designing an integrated and cohesive language programme. The various parts and levels should interact to fulfil the goals of competency and proficiency in the use of the language in its totality.

Finally, the needs analysis to be undertaken in this study will help clarify the route to take as regards which Arabic to teach in South Africa and for which purposes.

2.8 Teaching of Arabic as a Foreign Language (TAFL) options

There are a few options available as to which form of Arabic to teach:

1. **Teach a single variety**

Teaching a single variety, such as Classical, MS or colloquial, is an excellent option for specific purpose type courses where learners have little time available and specific needs are addressed immediately.

2. **Teach two varieties**

  > MS first followed by a colloquial. This is currently the case with many TAFL programmes. The advantage of this approach is that students acquire a strong grounding in the grammatical structure of the language, and then transfer this knowledge to the dialects. According to Mansoor (1960:95), if a student has a strong MS foundation, then the transition into any of the Arabic dialects is relatively easy. This view is supported by Al-Hamad (1983:95) who is of the opinion that students should be “taken to the peak of the mountain first” (through MS), and will then find it easier to “climb down one of the sides” (through a study of the colloquial). The disadvantages are that MS is used even in the skill of speaking, which is not the real situation in the Arab world. Also, by teaching MS and a spoken dialect separately, a certain amount of wasted effort is noticeable because items are presented twice. If
presented separately, the two varieties may be difficult to integrate, according to Younes (1990:112).

➢ Another option is to introduce MS and the Colloquials simultaneously, as in the Foreign Service Institute programme described above, as well as that proposed by Younes (1990: 233-255) in the course being offered at Cornell University. This simultaneous integrated approach consists of an integration of the skills of reading and writing from MS that build on vocabulary and topics by listening to and speaking a dialect. This approach is supported by Williams (1990:46) who says that "if variation is inherent in a language, it is perhaps less disconcerting for the student if s/he is introduced to variation earlier rather than later." In other words, students are being misled if they are presented with one variety knowing full well that a more widely used variety exists. Furthermore, the linguistic features shared by different varieties of Arabic can be explained through a limited set of rules, thus narrowing these gaps between the varieties. The bulk of the vocabulary, whose mastery is probably the most demanding part of the Arabic course according to Cádora (1976:253), is thus shared. The focus of such a course is on intelligibility rather than accuracy in the early stages. On the negative side, this approach also has its problems, the main ones being that the content can be overwhelming and confusing. It is almost like teaching two languages at once.

➢ Another alternative is to teach colloquial followed by MS. This system replicates the first language sequence acquisition by a native Arab. He/she speaks colloquial at home in spontaneous oral communication, and only after entering school does he/she learn the MS version.

With the first and third options above, the question about when is the opportune moment to start with the other has still not been answered. There has been much debate on this issue. As a general rule, one form is introduced at the lower level, and once learners are fairly proficient, then the other is introduced.
The answer as to which route should be followed in the South African school situation, would be based on answers to the following questions:

1. Why are students taking up Arabic, and what do they expect to do with it? In other words, what are their needs and expectations from the study of Arabic. Linked to this question is what type of Arabic should be taught, whether Classical, MS or colloquial. Should these be offered as single options, or as combinations of two of the three? Or should all three varieties be presented simultaneously.

2. What do teachers, parents and the society at large expect from students to achieve by doing it?

The answers to these questions have a direct bearing on the curriculum framework to be developed. Student needs and their expectations have to be matched with the realities of what is achievable within the constraints of the school situation.

2.9 Approaches to language teaching

The views about language and language teaching have changed radically over the past two decades. Alosh (1987:52-55) has divided the main views into two main groups, the linguistic and the communicative. According to those who held the linguistic view, language was studied as a form, or a system or object of study. By those who held the view that language was essentially for communication, that is as a medium through which meaning was conveyed, communication was most important. The two views could be characterised as being the "linguistic" and "communicative" respectively. The different approaches to teaching and pedagogy differed in relation to how the language was viewed.

2.9.1 The linguistic view

Those that subscribed to the linguistic view, taught learners about the language, using an academic or analytical approach, usually through the native language of the learner.
The kinds of language teaching approaches that developed from this view were the grammar-translation approach, which emphasised the role of reading and translation; the audio-lingual method which focused on the oral skill, still using the native language of the learner, the direct method which used the target language and cognitive code which evolved to promote reading ability only. The “traditional” approaches, according to Roberts (1982:98-109) have been tried and tested over time, having had various degrees of success.

These approaches were based on Wilkens’s (1976) "synthetic syllabus," where learning is viewed as a synthesis of discrete elements presented in a given context. Control of the language is based on vocabulary or grammatical structure. If a person learnt the constituent parts, he/she would then be competent in it and gain mastery of the language.

According to Chomsky (1965:14) linguistic competence is the ability to produce and understand an infinite number of grammatically well formed sentences as used by an ideal speaker or listener. In simpler terms, it is what one knows about the language, or the speaker or learner’s unconscious knowledge of the native language. Performance, on the other hand, is actual language output by real people, or what one actually does with the language. It is the actual use of the language in concrete situations.

2.9.2 The communicative approach

The communicative approach attempts to teach communicative competence, that is the ability to do things with the language. It is also called functional language proficiency, which includes the expression, interpretation and negotiation of meaning, either between persons, or between a person and a text. It encompasses the process of being able to interpret all the non-linguistic information that may be inherent in the text. These communicative approaches emerged as a reaction to some of the deficiencies of the traditional approaches to teaching languages.
Communicative competence, according to Savignon (1983) and Canale and Swain (1980), includes linguistic (grammatical) competence, and knowledge of when and to what extent the utterance is appropriate and relevant (the non-linguistic component). These would include style, register, formality, topic, age, status of participants in speech activities etc. These factors can be divided into strategic competence (strategies used to compensate for linguistic and non-linguistic limitations), sociolinguistic competences (knowledge of the social rules of the language) and discourse competence (recognition of theme or topic of communicative event).

The terms "proficiency" and "communicative concept" are often used interchangeably, both referring to the abilities required to use the language. Stern (1983) regards proficiency or competence as a goal of language learning and therefore it can be defined in terms of objectives through standards which serve as criteria to assess proficiencies.

As part of the communicative approach, there are syllabus designs that focus on specific grammatical structures and vocabulary in terms of the requirements of a situation or language function. Wilkins (1976) used the term "analytic" in which structural considerations are of secondary importance to the actual selection and control of the content. The situational, notional or functional syllabuses are examples of the analytic approaches. While situations can be used in a grammatical syllabus merely to conceptualise a grammatical point, this is not an analytic process. In a true situational syllabus as Morrow explained (1977:47), the situation is a means of generating appropriate language to be used, and the grammatical structure is merely used as a vehicle.

Wilkins' (1976) notional syllabus is made up of three parts:

1) Semantico-grammatical - the actual content of the language.
2) Modality - how learners use devices to express themselves.
3) Communicative function - the actual use to which language utterances are put.
The word "notional" is therefore an overarching term embracing "communicative" or "semantic."

Van Ek (1975) used the term "notional" to refer to notions of time, place, etc, while Wilkins called this dimension the "conceptual". The notions of language refer to what is it that we really mean, whereas functions are what we actually do.

In Arabic "competency" is a very wide term. Ryding describes (1990:225) spoken competency as covering the spectrum of social, cultural, and geographic variations. Listening comprehension is even wider because it encompasses the Classical, MS and colloquial. Reading and writing embraces the historical and stylistic spectra that ranges from the middle-ages to the present day. The term "performance" reflects how a native Arab would respond spontaneously to whatever dimension of speech situation required.

The teaching approaches that emerged from the communicative approach are the following. The two more widely used methods were the Situational method and the Functional-Notional approach. The other approaches which were also used but in limited settings were the “humanistic/psychological” or “whole-self engagement” (Savignon,1972; Allwright,1977; and Jakobovits and Gordon ,1974), Community Language Learning (Curran,1972), the Delayed Oral Response (Postovsky,1975), the Total Physical Response (Asher, 1966 and 1969) and Krashen’s Monitor Theory (Krashen, 1981).

When one studies the different approaches in detail there are distinct advantages and disadvantages to each approach. There is no one best method applicable to all purposes, students or teachers. One method can complement another.

According to Krashen (1982: 87) there is no one way to teach language, nor is there any method superior to other in terms of empirical research available. All satisfy some criteria at least. However, some methods are more effective than others in specific situations.
We cannot adopt all the methodological proposals of the 1970's and 1980's because many are in conflict with the rest, and we cannot adopt any one in toto because each is incomplete in some vital aspect or is unduly restricted to special situations or students. We need a broader overall frame of reference that would be valid, immaterial of teaching methodology (Lado, 1981:235).

The conclusion we derived from what has been discussed above is that there is no particular method or approach to teaching foreign languages that would be universally applicable in all situations. Therefore, it is advisable to select from the variety of approaches that which best achieves the desired aims, goals and objectives under given circumstances.

For the purposes of this study an eclectic approach will be followed, allowing teachers the scope to use the best approach that suits their circumstances.

2.10 Background to the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)

The "proficiency" movement in the United States of America grew out of a number of reports concerning the poor level of competence in most second language programmes during the seventies.

Government linguistic schools grouped as the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) and from academia at universities formed the Educational Testing Service, later called the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Language (ACTFL). In 1981 they received grants to prepare a set of Generic Guidelines, applicable to all languages, and a second grant to train language teachers to conduct the oral proficiency interview at government language schools.
In 1982 ACTFL guidelines were produced for French, Spanish, German, Russian, Chinese and Japanese. In 1984 a grant was given to the University of Pennsylvania to write Guidelines for Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) and a year later Provisional Guidelines were produced.

The ACTFL Provisional Guidelines aimed to describe language activities placed along a spectrum of two poles, zero (novice) to 5 (educated native speaker).

The proficiency guidelines are not necessarily goals, a curriculum or testing guidelines, but do have implications for all these. It is not an approach to language teaching, but a means to specifying the outcomes or desired proficiency level for each skill at each level. These guidelines covered the four skills and included culture which was later omitted from the generic guidelines but maintained for the Arabic guidelines.

The guidelines are adaptable for use in any setting, whether it be at school, university or adult class level. For readers and writers the guidelines apply to MS, whereas for speaking and listening one of the four main dialects (Cairene, Levantine, Gulf or Tunisian) could be chosen. For native speaker proficiency at least one dialect should be studied.

Allen (1984) defined proficiency as "the ability to communicate with the native speakers of the language" and the goals stated are milestones indicating what learners can or cannot do with the language. ACTFL identifies the specific goals for the four skills. Evaluation of these skills is based on the learner's ability to perform clearly stated tasks.

According to Higgs (1986:7), the "proficiency orientation" is in no way indicative of a particular method of teaching. A proficiency orientation focuses on the product of instruction, not on the process itself. It identifies a series of stages through which a learner will predictably pass, and thus make it possible for the learner and the teacher to keep track of the learners progress through the stages. These features are similar to that of outcome-based education.
Higgs (1986: 7-10) further described the three terms of "function" as the communicative task of the language learner, the "content/context" as the topic or situation being discussed, and "accuracy" as the global quality of the message being transmitted and its impact on the listener/reader. Therefore proficiency is not concerned with any particular textbook, method or with the pace of instruction.

In a vast majority of teaching situations the teacher decides which textbooks to use, the pace of instruction and sets tasks based on content. The evaluation done is on the ability to master a discrete and selective body of information. This approach is "achievement" oriented, rather than proficiency oriented, whereas the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines differs markedly from this approach. The framework to be proposed will encompass the desired or expected proficiency levels based on the needs of the learners and other stakeholders, as well as the anticipated outcomes or results for the study of Arabic.

2.11 The proficiency guidelines

In the United States during the 1950's, the government felt a need to equip their staff members of their embassies abroad to handle all aspects of the foreign language and culture. They came up with the ILR ratings, which rated a learner from zero to 5. Zero indicated no practical proficiency, and 5 that of an educated native speaker. The levels are described by Parkinson (1985:13-14) as:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 1</th>
<th>Speakers can handle basic survival situations in a minimal manner.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>Speakers can handle all survival and basic social needs relating to concrete topics that relate to daily life. Speakers at this level show signs of a dawning grammar, but use fractured syntax and do not have the vocabulary necessary to function with the language on a professional level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>Speakers are able to use language in all normal social circumstances and in their professional duties. They still have an accent and make grammatical errors, but not consistent ones, and these errors are much less as compared to level 2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4</td>
<td>Speakers function in all social and professional situations adequately, using vocabulary that native speakers would normally use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 5</td>
<td>Speakers at this level are indistinguishable from native speakers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 2.1: The ACTFL proficiency level descriptions*
When the ACTFL guidelines were drawn up, further gradations were made at the lower level, and higher levels merged for more accurate placement of learners. A comparison of the Inter Learner Ratings (ILR) and ACTFL is graphically illustrated below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ILR</th>
<th>ACTFL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0 (no ability whatsoever in the language)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Novice- low (Unable to function in the spoken language)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Novice- middle (Able to operate in only a very limited capacity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0+</td>
<td>Novice-high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Intermediate-low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intermediate-middle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1+</td>
<td>Intermediate-high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2+</td>
<td>Advanced-plus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Superior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.2: The ILR and ACTFL equivalence

Accurate descriptions were given for each skill (listening, writing, speaking, reading and culture) for each level (Novice - low, middle, high, etc). These descriptions are geared to the three concepts of function, concept and accuracy. Function includes the specific tasks a speaker at a certain level should be able to accomplish in the language. Content encompasses the subject matter he/she should be competent to deal with in performing these tasks. Accuracy would reflect how well or grammatically accurately he/she is performing these tasks. These descriptions came from a result of many empirical observations and studies of the stages that adult learners actually went through in acquiring a language. The proficiency goal would be to reach level 3 or the superior level, and this final outcome is worked towards in all proficiency based materials and courses.
2.12 Target vocabulary

In one of two comprehensive communicative based language courses offered at the Arabic Language Institute at King Saud University in Riyadh, the course texts used were the set of six books entitled "Al-Arabiyya linnashi'in" ("Arabic for Teenagers" by Seini, et al: 1984: 6 volumes)." This series of six books cover the four linguistic skills and a vocabulary base of approximately 4000 high frequency words, and was completed within 1200 contact hours on a full-time basis.

In the S.A. school situation only 360 contact hours is available in the three year period covering the Further Education and Training band. A curriculum having about 1200 high frequency words can be realistically achieved within a three-year period. Two studies on Arabic high frequency words have been completed, one on MS by Abduh (1979) and another on Quranic vocabulary by Abd al-Baqi (1981). These source books should be used in writing text materials for Arabic, or in selection of appropriate written materials for each stage.

2.13 Target Proficiency levels within time frame available

At the Foreign Service Institute program in Washington where a number of languages are taught, students are expected to achieve proficiency levels as indicated in the tables on p.36 as quoted by Liskin-Gasparro (1982) and cited by the South Carolina State Department of Education, (1992:49-50). The courses are offered for thirty hours per week, and learners have different aptitudes for language learning which have been classified as "minimum", "average" or "superior". The time periods indicated are a rough guide in setting realistic goals for any foreign language program. Two groups of languages are shown for comparison:

Table 2.3: The target proficiency levels for Group 1 languages on next page
Group 1: Afrikaans, Danish, Dutch, French, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weeks</th>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Superior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 or 1+</td>
<td>1+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>1 or 1+</td>
<td>1+</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>1+</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>720</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2+</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.3: The target proficiency levels for Group 1 languages

This group of languages is close to English and therefore easier to acquire by English speakers.

Group 4: Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Korean

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weeks</th>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Superior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0+</td>
<td>0+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>0+</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>720</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1+</td>
<td>1+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.4: The target proficiency levels for Group 4 languages

This group consists of the more "exotic" languages that differ markedly from English in terms of their script, direction of writing and sound system. More contact hours are therefore required for proficiency in these languages.

After 360 contact hours at school, the level of proficiency acquired by a learner with average aptitude would be about 0+. For Muslims who have some background to Arabic through reading and writing, it could go up to 1.

Table 2.5: The gradations in the ACTFL scale and their descriptions on the next page
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ILR/FSI</th>
<th>ACTFL scale</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Novice-low</td>
<td>No ability whatsoever</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Novice-middle</td>
<td>Unable to function in the spoken language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0+</td>
<td>Novice-high</td>
<td>Able to satisfy immediate needs with learned utterances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intermediate-low</td>
<td>Able to satisfy basic survival needs and minimum courtesy requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Intermediate-middle</td>
<td>Able to satisfy some survival needs and some limited social demands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1+</td>
<td>Intermediate-high</td>
<td>Able to satisfy most survival needs and limited social demands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>Able to satisfy routine social demands and limited work requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2+</td>
<td>Advanced plus</td>
<td>Able to satisfy most work requirements and show some ability to communicate on concrete topics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Superior</td>
<td>Able to speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4+</td>
<td>Native</td>
<td>Able to speak like an educated native speaker</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.5: The gradations in the ACTFL scale and their descriptions

The comprehensive descriptions for each of the skills at each level will be given in chapter 6 of this study where the proposed curriculum framework for S.A. will be explained in detail.

There is a great deal of similarity between the proficiency guidelines and Outcome-Based Education (OBE). Before embarking on a comparison it would be useful to explain what OBE is, how it differs from the past system of education, describe some of its features and relate it to Arabic.
2.14 Outcome-based education

2.14.1 The old and new paradigm

There has been a fundamental rethinking of education in South Africa. An Outcome-based education (OBE) model has been chosen which radically breaks away from past traditional practice. In the past, students were exposed to a specific piece of content through subjects which were studied over a fixed period of time. At the end of each term of each year an exam was administered, even though many learners did not master the material. The result was either a pass or fail, which meant promotion to the next class or a repeat of another year in the same class or grade.

Other features of the old system were that subjects were taught as academic disciplines, in self-contained classrooms during a calendar year of ten months. It was a textbook bound system which ultimately created two kinds of individuals, those who were “academically gifted” who could go on to further study at a tertiary institution, and others who fell by the wayside and had to acquire skills on their own in order to make a living.

In contrast to this content and time-based approach, OBE has been decided upon as the alternative in South Africa. The “outcomes” direct learning, and assessments will verify whether students are able to demonstrate the outcomes competently. These outcomes are derived from the state frameworks which have been widely discussed and consulted.

OBE focuses educational practice on ensuring that students master the outcomes, basing it on the fundamental premise that all students can succeed. In South Africa, the OBE route has been chosen, judged on its successful implementation in other countries like Canada, the United States, the Netherlands, Australia, New Zealand and Scotland.

The OBE approach is a major shift in moving away from mere coverage of content and rote learning to using content in a variety of interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary ways. The competence of the learner is in more than one area, and not skill specific within one
content area. There are also authentic contexts in which the learner will have to demonstrate performance.

OBE came into being to challenge the dominant paradigm and its prevalent practice. Schools were traditionally organised in terms of their curriculum planning, instruction, administrative arrangements, and student certification around the calendar and the clock (Spady, 1988:4). Schools were there to ensure student custody and administrative convenience, not for successful results. The emphasis was on the coverage, rather than student mastery, and teachers were "putting in time" and "covering material."

OBE has to do with why we should educate students, what they should learn, and how to specify and measure the transmission of cultural attitudes (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, (December 1993:7). It is an endeavour to help students acquire knowledge, skills and competencies to become successful and help define the outcomes students should be able to demonstrate as a result of instruction. It aims to providing information about what is worth knowing, and in so doing articulate the main purpose(s) of schooling. The bottom line, is that the product should define the process.

2.14.2 Defining Outcome-based education

Outcomes have been defined as "high quality culminating demonstrations of significant learning in context" (Spady, 1994c:18), or a "clear, observable demonstration of student learning that occurs at or after the end of a significant set of learning experiences" (Spady, 1996c:3). In these definitions the word demonstration implies outcome, not a score or grade, but the end product of a clearly defined process that the student can carry out. High quality implies something that is thorough and complete, and culminating means at the end or after the end, not during the experience. For significant learning to take place, significant content is essential. Content alone cannot be an outcome, as content is inert. The content is part of the performance setting, that is what students need to know or do or be like in order to succeed, which is quite apart from the cognitive, technical or
interpersonal nature of the task itself. Outcomes are not values, attitudes, feelings, beliefs, activities, assignments, goals, scores, grades or averages. Typically, they are demonstrations or performances which reflect three things:

1) what the learner knows
2) what the learner can actually do with what he/she knows.
3) the learner’s confidence and motivation in carrying out the demonstration.

Outcome-based education is “education” that is “based” on the “outcomes” that are intended or the learning results that are desired. OBE starts with a clear picture of learning and performance results that are targeted. Then the learning experiences and teaching strategies are planned that will help learners get there successfully (Spady, 1996b:2).

OBE is a means of organising for results. Practitioners determine the knowledge, competencies and qualities they want students to demonstrate when they finish school and face the challenges and opportunities of the adult world. OBE is not a “programme” but a way of designing, developing, delivering and documenting instruction in terms of its intended goals and outcomes (Spady, 1988:5).

According to O’Neil (1992:2-3), at the micro level decisions about curriculum and instruction should be driven by the outcomes that learners should display at the end of their educational experiences. At the macro level, policy makers talk about an OBE system that redefines traditional approaches to accountability. In other words, schools should be accountable for demonstrating that students have mastered important outcomes or the outputs.

2.14.3 The underlying principles behind OBE

The main underlying philosophy of OBE is success (Spady, 1996c:4), and there are three premises to it:

1) All learners can learn and succeed, but not on the same day and in the same way.
2) Successful learning promotes more successful learning.
3) Schools control the conditions that directly affect successful school learning.

The four principles on which OBE rest are:

1) *The clarity of focus on outcomes of significance.*
This principle clearly indicates that it is an open, “no surprises” philosophy. Learners are clear about what outcomes they have to strive to achieve, and know the criteria for assessment beforehand. They move from “daily” work to demonstrate complex abilities for career and life success (Spady, 1996e:41).

2) *Design back*
This principle is based on “design down from where you want students to successfully end up” (Spady, 1996b:15). Curriculum design begins from the predetermined outcomes of significance, and then you work backwards.

3) *High expectations*
In order to achieve high expectations, there has to be a high level of performance. The teachers establish clear “criterion-defined” or “substance-defined” standards of performance for students, and they expect all students to reach or exceed those standards before judging work to be complete. The grade standards usually given are A or B for quality work, or I for (Incomplete) or (Insufficient), or a N for (Not done yet), or (Not met standard yet).

There are three principles that are at play here:
➤ only high quality performance is regarded as finished or acceptable.
➤ quotas and bell curve assumptions about learners are eliminated.
➤ students access to high level challenging curriculum is expanded.

4) *Expanded opportunity principle*
This is a learner centred and success orientated principle. It is not about giving students all the time in the world to accomplish something, nor is it about giving the same test...
repeatedly until they come up with the right answers. There is therefore no “dumbing
down.”

In applying this principle, five realities about learners have to be taken cognisance of:

1) The rates of learning differ, as do their rates of learning different kinds of things.
   Time should be used flexibly.

2) The modalities or ways through which people learn vary. A multiple method
   approach would yield far better results.

3) Only a few learners learn well and permanently the first time. Multiple chances at
   learning, and more than one opportunity to demonstrate learning will allow all to
   succeed.

4) There are only good and bad learners when the standard for judging is
   comparative. Negative labels should be avoided, and one way of doing it is
   through criterion testing.

5) Learners need a clear path of what is expected from them, and what is important
   to learn.

The bottom line is that time and instructional methods should be used flexibly to meet
learner needs. This non-prescriptive approach is in line with the eclectic proposal made
earlier in 2.9.2.

2.14.4 Types of OBE

There are three types of OBE according to Spady (1996a:1) which are:

1) Traditional, which include specific content and skills developed in traditional
   subject matter areas, within the conventional age-grading and calendar year
   arrangement.

2) Transitional, which is characterised by school and districts to help develop
   complex competencies not limited to one subject domain only. Students are
   encouraged to deal with issues in a trans-disciplinary or inter-disciplinary way.
3) Transformational, which refers not only to the skills, competencies and knowledge but complex performance abilities to carry out the roles in the real and modern world of the future. The transformation is in the inflexible and limiting features of the present education system, and not a family’s, society’s or individual’s personal religious beliefs.

For the purposes of this study the transitional option has been chosen as a point of departure. After a few years of implementation, the higher level of OBE can be striven for once more clarity is available from the Education and Training Quality Assurers (ETQA) concerning the credits. More detail about this will be given in the next chapter.

The four manifestation of OBE deal with the following:

1) Classroom reform, in which teachers consistently apply the four principles.

2) Program alignment, in which the entire spectrum of the district’s curriculum instruction and assessment components are brought into line with the four principles.

3) External accountability. The state mandates for improved district performance, which involves explicit standards and state-wide tests, like a national examination.

4) System transformation. In this application of OBE the districts redirect and redefine the curriculum around complex performance abilities needed by students later in their adult lives.

The first three manifestation represent partial implementation of OBE principles, while the last one is real OBE in practice. These four faces of OBE correspond with what Spady also called “technical tinkering”, “segmental change”, “systemic change” and “paradigm change” respectively (Spady, nd.:1). The proposals for Arabic encompass the first three manifestation of OBE.
2.14.5 Advantages of OBE

According to McNier (1993:1-2), OBE has had increased attention due to its promise of delivering far reaching reform, its balance between school autonomy and accountability, and its good results. This has been proven in some of the schools studied by him in the United States.

Some of the advantages of OBE are: There is a clarity of focus on outcomes. Teachers know what to expect, and align their instruction with outcomes. Students also know what criteria are used to assess performance, where they stand in terms of goals achieved, and are more motivated. They are not merely covering ground, but ensuring success and mastery.

The real attraction of OBE is that it effectively couples control over the curriculum by experienced personnel both inside and outside education and at the same time gives autonomy to the teacher. The ends are set or defined, and the means to those ends have to be in the hands of teachers and schools. Schools have to effect exit outcomes and are responsible for producing results (King & Evans, 1991:73).

OBE is a process in which teaching and assessing have to be adjusted in order to accomplish what is expected. According to O'Neil (1994:6-7) decisions about the curriculum and instruction have to be driven by the outcomes that learners should display at the end of the educational experience. Well written outcomes must have four elements, content knowledge, competence (what student is or should be doing), setting (under what conditions the student is or should be performing) and attitudes.

In outcome-based learning, a learner’s progress is according to the measured against criteria rather than against the performance of other learners (Consultative Forum on Curriculum, 1995:39). This implies that formal assessment will employ criterion-
referencing, which is a much more transparent process than traditional norm-referenced assessment.

The implications of OBE for teacher development (op.cit.,40-41) are that they should be enabled to formulate holistic, process orientated learning outcomes rather than narrow behavioral objectives. They should also move from narrow subject-centred teaching approaches to more integrated ways of accessing knowledge with the learners in their programmes of instruction. Teachers should also move from a transmission, teacher orientated mode to more interactive learner centred modes. Assessment should be based on criterion referenced testing, and should be done on a continuous basis. Relevant materials have to be chosen or written, which should be informed by what they want learner outcomes to be.

2.14.6 Criticisms against OBE

The criticisms have levelled against OBE has come from various quarters. According to Chion-Kenney (1994:13), OBE is a “pre-packaged, one-size-fits-all, pie-in-the-sky, revenue-draining, unproven, experimental reform handed down by Big Brother Government.” The criticisms can be clustered into six groups (Spady, 1996c:7-13):

1) The nature of outcomes are said to be “fuzzy”, “nebulous”, “hard to measure” (Manuo, 1994:5) and focus on attitudes and values.

In response to this argument, well-written outcomes are usually written after thorough discussion with many roleplayers. They aim at critical knowledge and for it to be measurable, it should be clear, substantive, and indicating an observable process with specific criteria defined so that an objective assessment can be made. The measurement is not necessarily with marks or percentages.
While values are embedded in everything, people can still separate the desired outcome (which may include things from the affective and attitudinal areas) from the demonstrated competence.

2) **Control and accountability**

People have said that OBE will be used by government to impose a globalist perspective on students, and coerce them into a "politically correct" mode. Bonville (1996:20) also calls it social engineering and the New World order. There is also opposition from persons feeling that under OBE the child becomes the property of the state, and has to be moulded to serve state interests. This is not education but indoctrination.

Authentic OBE is always a local matter, and not a state matter. Paradoxically, it is the state that does not want to relinquish power by allowing anything other than its own credentialing system to operate, which is an obstacle facing OBE.

3) **Philosophy and world view**

A claim is made that OBE is a politically correct global New Age socialist philosophy that violates the belief and values of American families. There is a strong objection from religious organisations about the affective learning outcomes. These groups felt that the home should be the place to teach morals and values (Pliska, 1994:67).

OBE is not inherently anti-Christian or anti-Conservative; the content taught is what makes the difference. Real OBE does not specify content. Also, a Christian school can choose to have its own set of outcomes if it so decides.

Values, attitudes, beliefs, self-concepts are not really outcomes since these are not to do with demonstrating knowledge and competence. There are however civic values which all persons need to respect, like valuing life, the rights of others, honesty and obeying the law. Without these kinds of values, the state's recently earned democracy can be held to ransom.
4) **Cost versus effectiveness**

It is said that there is no valid research done on OBE, has high implementation and there is difficulty in measuring and testing some outcomes (Mc Quaide & Pliska, 1993:17).

There have been both successes and failures with OBE, according to Spady (1996c:11-12). A few positive examples have been cited by him (1994b:107-139). However, to do a study in this field requires “controlled conditions” which are feasible to measure, but research like this is not possible because of variations from school to school. However, he does agree that there is significant retraining of staff required, redesigning of the delivery system, retooling of the curriculum and of assessment. These costs can be phased in. In terms of actual day to day running of schools, OBE schools do not cost more to run.

As far as measuring or assessing of outcomes are attained, schools have to decide that and make their decisions known to students and parents. There is a great deal of transparency in this entire process if done properly.

5) **Standards and success**

A claim is made that there is “dumbing down” of the curriculum and a lowering of standards. In the traditional delivery system, all students do the same thing at the same time, and the faster student has to wait for the slower one. In a well-designed OBE system, this does not happen. Standards and success do not operate like a see saw, which means that when one goes up the other must come down. OBE’s four principles work like a lift, all four principles push the standards up.

6) **Instructional delivery and opportunity**

Some have claimed that the faster learner is retarded, and Carnegie units (class hour credits for each subject) are eliminated. The length of school day and year will be increased.
Teachers in OBE change their instruction style to match with the learners’ needs. They allow for active learning, co-operative learning and use time, materials and personnel flexibly. In the older traditional system of education things were fixed and rigid but not with OBE.

There is also the argument that OBE is instrumentalist and technicist, having its roots in behaviorism. This can be counter argued by stating that if outcomes are specified in advance, then there is a greater sense of accountability and direction. There is also greater social consensus about what constitutes worthwhile outcomes that should be striven for.

2.14.7 Misconceptions about OBE

There are many OBE models or programs, and they depend on how outcomes are defined, and how the curriculum is structured. This has caused some of the confusion that prevails about OBE. OBE allows for the use of any book, content or teaching practice. It is not prescriptive.

The misunderstandings around OBE are mainly due to a lack of understanding about what it really means. Some states wrote outcomes that were value laden and that caused the outcry against the “affective or psychological” manipulation (Spady, 1996a: 6-10). Also, the use of co-operative classrooms, multi-age classrooms, alternative assessments and multicultural classrooms are not prerequisites for OBE practice. There is also an incorrect mindset at work. Anything progressive like “reform” or “restructuring” is associated with OBE. Many of the terms used to describe OBE are also negative.

In the old system, the students that didn’t make the grade dropped out, and only the “successful” ones succeeded. This led to a misconception that the old system was effective, in that people could observe the success based on those that remained and had passed.
In terms of method there is still scope for drill and structure as methods to be used. OBE is not a method but a way of designing, delivering and documenting results based on consistent and simultaneous use of the four principles (ibid.). There is also no downplaying of basic educational skills like reading, writing and arithmetic. These skills still need to be taught, and within OBE it is how well they are able to demonstrate their understanding and use of these skills.

2.14.8 Implementing OBE in a school

Schools can decide to do OBE on either a micro (each subject does own) or macro (whole school reform) level. The micro would equate to the Traditional OBE, and at the macro level to Transitional or Transformational. Whichever route a school decides to embark upon, the school staff, governing body members and community at large have to be consulted. Together they need to understand what OBE really means, know why they are embarking on this course of restructuring, so that they will be enabled and empowered to tackle the challenges facing them, as well as the criticisms that may be levelled.

At the heart of the decision lies a strong community vision about what the school has to do to develop independent, critical adults ready to face life. Because of the potential for outcomes to be viewed as value statements, a broad consultation will avoid any stigmas to be attached (McNier, 1993:2-3). By getting all the parties together in decision making, students take responsibility over their learning and teaching. Parents also become partners in this process.

As part of teacher development, teachers need to ensure an interface between themselves, and lines of communication should be set up so that effective networking can occur (Battistini, nd:8).

At the micro level it is easier for individual schools to make the change to OBE. At the macro level change has to be accommodated within the broader framework of the
matriculation examination and university admission requirements. At the micro level, each subject could have its own specific outcomes:

Eg.

Grade 12 exit outcomes at end of schooling

Course outcomes

Grade or modular outcomes

*Fig. 2.3: How outcomes can be differentiated*

The classroom subject focused approach to OBE needs to be guided by the common set of exit outcomes which should relate to the more complex performances required by the learners (Spady, 1994b:99). The classroom reform approach has two strengths:

1) It focuses on what teachers themselves can do to improve instructional effectiveness and student learning, given the constraints of time and structure.

2) The potential for more learning to occur through applying the three principles of clarity of focus, expanded opportunity and high expectations.

The negative aspects are:

- It does not address larger outcomes, assessments, credentialing, and the organisational and policy issues vital to developing an OBE system fully.
- Its primary focus is on the micro level which has to do with micro curriculum segments, and micro opportunities to focus on time and opportunity (op.cit., 84).

In this study the focus will be on a transitional model, using the already developed specific outcomes for all languages which have been consulted widely by the National Department of Education, and based on these specific outcomes develop appropriate performance indicators and range statements for Arabic in grades 10,11 and 12. These will emerge from the data that will be obtained from the interviews to be conducted.
2.15 The similarities between the proficiency orientation and OBE

Proficiency is not a new method of teaching and learning, but an "organising principle" around which the language teaching enterprise can be focused. There are four striking similarities between OBE and the proficiency orientation. These relate to the roles of teachers and learners, the materials used and outlook towards grammar.

The role of the teacher becomes far more comprehensive. He/she becomes an instructor, initiator, listener, observer, co-ordinator and facilitator (Allen, 1990:3). The approach is more "labour intensive". The proficiency orientation focuses on the product of instruction, not the process. As such any teaching method and resource material can be used, as long as the proficiency level could be assessed at the end. Also, a proficiency based programme assesses proficiency in addition to accuracy. Teachers are encouraged to teach what they value as important in the teaching-learning (like negotiating meaning between two people) and then assess what they have taught. If tests are administered that only evaluate accuracy (spelling, grammar, structural correctness) then that test does not give the learner a chance to demonstrate skill at negotiating meaning. Proficiency testing is personalised, and asks the learner to use thinking skills and provides opportunity to demonstrate practical skills (Massachusetts Department of Education, 1996:13).

In terms of what learners can do, the proficiency based programmes looks at what students can do with the language, rather than the number of chapters “covered” or hours of seat time accumulated, or credit hours achieved (op. cit.,12). Since proficiency levels are not year levels, they allow for varying rates of contact of individual learning, and makes allowance for completion of a level at any time of the school year. It also allows for a heterogeneous grouping of learners. With flexible scheduling and timetabling, learners at the same level in grade 10, 11 or 12 could be placed together. Teachers then concentrate on developing varied strategies and develop a repertoire of student activities.
As far as materials are concerned, the proficiency orientation uses communication as the basic principle, and as such it requires materials that are authentic and in constant need of updating. Therefore, what has to be done with a reading text is more important than the nature of the text itself.

➢ The proficiency based syllabus starts by establishing a series of "situations" or "contexts" which the learner will be placed in and encouraged to make use of the language acquired in a competent manner. There is also the possibility of having more than one version of each proficiency level, without using the same text and or materials. This allows learners to practice the same skills and language functions, but in different contexts. In one year a version could be studied, and the following year another.

The role of grammar in a proficiency based programme cannot be undermined. It is an important tool in the process of becoming proficient. Grammar instruction can be provided through a variety of modes: direct instruction, computer software, written feedback, peer editing, peer speech and listening feedback, and opportunities to hear and imitate grammatically correct speech.

In the earlier phases the role of grammar is less prominent. The emphasis moves from intelligibility to accuracy. The three stages of difficulty in teaching grammar are that of the manipulative, meaningful (simulated authentic) and finally discourse. Instruction is functionally rather than grammatically based.

From the above points the similarities between the proficiency orientation and OBE can be observed very clearly.
2.16 Evaluation and assessment using the proficiency guidelines

Much work has been done by Rammuny (1990:331-348) and al-Batal (1990:1-11) amongst others in the field of designing appropriate tests to assess each skill at each level. By way of an example, one of these tests would be described.

Raji M Rammuny and Mahmoud E. Sieny, in consultation with John Clark (Defense Language Institute) Ernest McCarus (University of Michigan), and Charles Stansfield and Dorry Kenyon (Center for Applied Linguistics) developed the Arabic Proficiency Test (APT).

The Arabic Speaking Test (AST) is one of four components of the APT. It is a tape mediated test for oral proficiency in Arabic aimed at evaluating the learner's ability to speak Arabic fluently and accurately. It consists of two alternate forms, called Form A and Form B which are divided into four parts. Part 1 is a warm up with simple personal questions. Part two consists of picture-based questions. Part three has topic questions, and part four situation-related questions.

Scoring the AST is based on a fixed set of criteria or standards (criterion-referenced), and not by performance of one examinee compared to the other. Trained raters listen to the taped speech and assign one of nine ratings (Novice: low, middle, high; Intermediate: low, middle, high; Advanced and High; Superior). A Rater Training Manual is available which facilitates decision making about assigning global ratings. AST workshops are held to train Arabic language teachers to administer and score the AST. The AST can be administered to a group by an individual teacher, and covers a fixed series of fifteen tasks, which encompass comprehensibility, fluency, amount of communication and quality of communication, including linguistic accuracy and cultural appropriateness. There is also a participant feedback form.
From the example given, it can be observed that much thought and planning has gone into
the various proficiency tests for each skill, and this and the other tests can be used with
some minor modifications within the South African context also.

2.17 Culture and the foreign language

Culture is a very difficult concept to define. It is a broad concept embracing all aspects of
human life. The two major components of culture according to Valette (1986:179) are the
anthropological/sociological (covering attitudes, customs, values, etc) and the history of
civilisation (which incorporates history, geography, sciences, arts, achievements and
heritage). Language and culture are inseparable, and the former articulates the latter, and
the latter embodies and permeates the former (Suleiman, 1993: 62-63). Byram (1986:323)
elaborated on the fact that both language and culture are intertwined by saying that
"second language learning is second culture learning. The acquisition of a second language
is acquisition of a second identity". The second language is easier to learn if it is closer to
the learner's own culture or identity. In the case of Arabic in South Africa, while it may
not be the second language in most cases, learners would still acquire the culture as a
second culture, since both English and Afrikaans are predominantly western languages
with a similar culture.

The goals of teaching culture should incorporate three dimensions, according to Paulston
(1978): cognition, affection and action. **Cognition** is knowing the what and why about the
other culture. This factual information can be learnt about the target culture. **Affection** is
like acculturation, a phase during which properly informed empathy is achieved. **Action**
includes the "picking and choosing" aspects of the target culture, after which a learner
carries out the necessary behavioural modifications to express publicly the newly emerging
identity of the learner.

On the cognitive level a goal for culture would be to "develop a greater awareness of and
broader knowledge about the target culture, understanding the differences between the
target culture and the students' culture, and understanding the values of the target culture (Valette, 1986:181). On the affective domain, a goal could be the "development of tolerance for cultural diversity." As for the action level, a goal could be "helping individual to forge a new identity for himself".

While learning encompasses all of the three dimensions above, teaching relates primarily to cognition. As part of the curriculum framework, the realising of the goals for cognition should be embedded in all materials.

The arguments for including culture in the language course have been summarised by Adaskou et al (1990:4) as helping towards a better understanding and appreciation of both the learner's own culture and the "other". This added understanding will facilitate the learner's visit to the foreign land, and be an added source of motivation to learn the language.

Culture could be used as the backdrop or the main focus of teaching by gradually increasing the extent and quantity of cultural exposure. Teachers should also be more culturally sensitive, and part of their in-service training should be in the Arab world. Teachers have the role to develop a critical awareness and consciousness about the foreign culture. Stereotypes should be avoided, like saying "Arabs are.....". A preferred alternative is to say "Arabs in ..... at the time of ..... under this circumstance..... are ....." (Attar, 1990:192).

Culture should also be seen in its own right, not judged from an outsider or tourist's point of view. Each point of view should be examined in a way that allows for the recognition of the process of "seeing others" and "being seen by others" (op.cit.,193).

Cultural descriptors for the five levels were described by al-Batal (1988:449) as part of the proficiency guidelines, but were subsequently omitted because the concept culture was
considered a very vast concept, encompassing many disciplines. It was also hard to define and teach, especially for teachers who have not been exposed to the target culture.

Apart from the twelve cultural objectives mentioned by Lafayette, which cover the general historical, geographical, aesthetic and appropriate actions under various circumstances, al-Batal (1988:445) included a further two objectives:

1. The ability to understand the main principles of Islam and the role it plays as a major component of Arab culture.
2. The ability to use the appropriate level of the language (MS or Colloquial), depending on the cultural situation.

He also discusses a few techniques of teaching culture of which are:

1. The culture capsule, a ten minute explanation of the cultural difference between the native and target culture,
2. The culture cluster, during which a number of episodes of the target culture are given, each episode describing a critical incident of cross cultural interaction. Multiple explanations are given for the behaviour and the learner has to choose one.
3. The culture assimilator,
4. The cultural mini-drama.

Some of the potential difficulties in teaching culture are:

1. The extensive cultural diversity within the Arab world.
2. The diglossic situation, with MS being common, but regional dialects differing widely.
3. The Arabic language requires lots of time to learn, Culture can only be taught in detail once a substantial degree of linguistic proficiency is attained by the learners.

In order for any curriculum to be relevant within a cultural context, aspects of the target culture have to be incorporated. Within the SA situation also, selecting important and
relevant aspects of arab culture and embedding these in the curriculum is the challenge that has to be faced by persons involved in compiling learning programmes.

2.18 Summary

This chapter gave an overview of the situation and status of the Arabic language and its dialects as a backdrop to the approaches to TAFL. The development of the ACTFL Proficiency guidelines was documented and OBE principles discussed. The similarities between the proficiency orientation and OBE were given since they both concentrated on the intended or desired results of instruction, immaterial of the approach(es) used. The roles of the teacher and learner in both OBE and the proficiency orientation are similar. The importance of teaching about culture was stated as it is an important element that has to be embedded. This was completed because the information described will influence the decision making in terms of the curriculum framework to be proposed in chapter 6. The next chapter will focus on curriculum frameworks for languages.
CHAPTER 3
THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK (NQF) AND CURRICULUM FRAMEWORKS

3.1 Aim of chapter

The aim of this chapter is to develop a curriculum framework as a theoretical base for Arabic in the Further Education and Training band. In doing so, the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), the main policy document driving curriculum change in South Africa will be looked at with particular emphasis on the Further Education and Training band (FET). The philosophy behind the different types of language curricula will be analysed. Curriculum frameworks for foreign or additional languages will then be studied, and the principles for a framework for Arabic in the FET band will be explained.

3.2 The National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

The development and implementation of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) in South Africa is an attempt at reconstructing and integrating all education and training in South Africa under a unified banner which would address both individual needs of learners and the nation's needs in general. This comprehensive and integrated framework is aimed primarily at enhancing the access to, mobility and quality of education and training in South Africa.

3.2.1 The Further Education and Training (FET) band

This study will focus on the Further Education and Training band (FET) which corresponds with the new grades 10, 11 and 12. This phase is now called the FET band on the NQF. The level 4 certificate will be the new Senior Certificate for matriculation.
The FET band learning programmes have many advantages in the way they can be structured. The programmes at this level would be more learner-centred, and the modular nature of many of these programmes would allow for greater access and more exit and entry points in the system. Learners can therefore study and obtain credits within this band from a host of service providers, not only schools. Adult education training centres, NGO's, embassies, colleges and universities (through their community outreach programmes), could all play a role in presenting a wide variety of courses which learners could get recognition for, and cumulatively give them a certificate in this band at level 2, 3 or 4. Learners can resume study after a break and re-enter the framework at any stage, commensurate with their age, background and language development and previous experience and ability in the target language. It allows for a greater degree of specialisation than what was on offer until grade 9. Learners can have exposure to more focused and content-based skills, equipping them better for higher education or the job market. There is also the possibility of Specific Purpose courses in languages.

There would be multiple modes of delivery of curriculum, which could be face to face, distance education and the use of technology like the internet, satellite learning stations, the Technology Enhanced Learning Initiative (TELI) and Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL).

By offering modules within the learning programmes of this band, it would allow for greater transition and portability. It is easier for learners to move from school to school or province to province. It also facilitates the placement of learners by allowing mixed ability or vertically grouped classes to co-exist within one class. The length of modules or courses would depend on the target group aimed at, the nature of the programme itself and its outcomes. The delivery of a wide range of modules within learning programmes would be more cost-effective, flexible and responsive to individual needs.

While the state departments of education will set the norms and standards for FET provisioning, it will be the task of Education and Training Qualifications Assurers
(ETQA’s) to ensure that quality is maintained in all programmes offered by the various service providers. The ETQA’s are still to be appointed and this body is still to be formally constituted, according to the Department of Education (1997:23).

The types of programmes in the FET band (op.cit.:47) can be broadly clustered into three groups:

1. General education programmes – which would cater for the holistic development of learners, without any specific occupational focus.
2. Vocational education and training programmes, which would focus on skills and knowledge required by the market place for specific occupations, like typing or woodwork.
3. Community and personal development programmes, which consist of programmes catering for the specific needs of individual learners and or communities.

The modules for the Arabic language programme could fit under category two or three, two if they are aimed at specific skills like translation, interpretation or journalism, or three if they are more general.

The curriculum framework to be proposed should be in line with developments nationally by:

➢ Being informed by the broad national curriculum frameworks
➢ Be responsive, relevant and accessible to different target groups.
➢ Utilise an OBE approach to education, through the development of national unit standards that are registered formally.
➢ Be guided by the principles endorsed by the NQF.

According to the Curriculum Development Working Group (1996:22), outcomes are to be expressed as unit standards in the FET phase. If a credit is attained that is nationally recognised, then it will be equivalent to any other credit on the same level.
3.2.2 The granting of credits

The credit allocation would reflect the time it takes an average person to acquire skills, knowledge and attitudes specified in a unit standard. It has been proposed that ten hours of “notional learning time” be granted one credit according to the National Curriculum Development Committee (1996:16). This notional time is time spent in formal instruction and incorporating tutorials, experiments, projects, portfolio work, study at home, etc.

The two problems with the concept of “notional time” is that “time” is usually associated with the old paradigm to mean contact hours, and that the term “average” is difficult to define. Also, it takes different lengths of time to achieve specific outcomes, as stated in a unit standard.

The credit allocation to a unit standard is at least one credit but not more than 120. If the required content in which the performance achieved is wide, then a higher credit allocation would be made. A credit rating of 120 represents the contribution of a unit or a group of units equivalent to a full time learner devoting 1200 hours of learning time rather than contact time. As a rough guide, a school academic year consists of six hours per day which is equal to thirty hours per week. Over a period of forty weeks this amounts to 1200 hours. If seven subjects are studied the approximate time allocation is 170 contact hours, which is roughly equivalent to about 200 hours of notional time. In rounded off terms this would be about 20 credits. For Arabic as a third language, 20 credit hours would be the maximum number of credits possible, if the other six subjects include the fundamental and core components necessary for any qualification. This means that after adding up all the modules that make up the Arabic curriculum they should total to not more than 20 credits.

3.2.3 Qualifications and quality assurance in the FET band

Qualifications registered on the NQF will be awarded when sufficient credits for the relevant unit standards have been accumulated, whether through study, work or the
recognition of prior learning through formal or informal means. For Arabic this would imply that Muslim learners who have been taught how to read the Quran at madrassa (afternoon schools) can now attain some form of credit when pursuing further studies in Arabic.

The accumulated credits will lead to the award of a qualification or certificate based on the rules of combination laid down for that qualification or certificate, as well as the range of credits that are required.

The certificate should consist of 120 credits or less, providing it meets the requirements of SAQA in terms of the purpose of the qualification. The figure of 120 is a ballpark figure, and could vary as determined by SAQA. The various qualifications and units that compose them will ensure portability and equivalence.

The structure of the qualification could have three components (Department of Education, 1997:64):

1. Fundamental, which would include communication studies (official languages) and numeracy (mathematics).
2. Core or contextualised generic learning, which would be compulsory, and could differ from qualification to qualification.
3. Electives — additional credits to ensure that the purpose(s) of the qualification is (are) met. Arabic as an offering could be placed here.

The above section contextualised Arabic within the NQF. The next section deals with curriculum and curriculum frameworks.

3.3 Defining the term curriculum

Many definitions of curriculum have emerged over the years, and these depend on how persons have viewed the curriculum and their outlook about what education really is. A
curriculum could be for either a particular subject or area of study, or the total programme of an educational institution. It could be an official document as laid down by a department, with a syllabus and textbooks; or the actual which is the practice of a particular school. It could even be a formal programme of work, or informal which incorporate after school programmes (Longstreet & Shane, 1993:43-52).

According to Ornstein and Hunkins (1993:9-10) the concept curriculum could be placed on a continuum ranging from very specific or prescriptive to the very general. The five major views of the concept curriculum will be discussed briefly.

On the specific or prescriptive end of the continuum is the definition of curriculum as a plan of action, that is a written document which includes strategies for achieving prescribed goals. Advocates of this view, of whom Taba (1962) and Tyler (1950) are the main exponents approach curriculum as process, a plan that has a beginning and an end.

This is a narrow conceptualisation of the curriculum, according to Longstreet and Shane (1993:47), because even though students learn from what is not part of the plan for learning, or teachers teach what is also not reflected in the plan, then regardless of the value of the experience it is not part of the curriculum.

On the other extreme of the continuum is the definition that states that curriculum deals with the experiences of the learner, that is everything that happens in school or out of school, as long as it is planned. Humanistic curricularists hold this view. Caswell and Cambell (1935:69), Oliva (1982:35) and Eisner (1979:41) have similar definitions.

![Fig 3.1: The continuum of curriculum definitions](image-url)
Between the above two extreme positions, lie the following three definitions of curriculum. It is a system dealing with people and processes, or the organisation of personnel and procedures for implementing that system. The system can be linear (a means-end approach), or non-linear, one which is more flexible, and allowing curriculators to enter at any point, skip components, or work in more than one component at a time. Hunkins' Decision Making Model (1980) and Spady's curriculum framework model (1994b) can be placed within this paradigm.

Curriculum is also a field of study having its own foundations and domains of knowledge. It has its own theory, research and principles to interpret this knowledge. Under this umbrella can appear Phenix's definition of curriculum (1962:27).

Curriculum can also be defined in terms of subject matter, or content or the way we assimilate or organise information in the subject. It emphasizes facts, concepts and generalizations applicable to a particular subject only.

The major problem with relying on one particular definition of curriculum is that people tend to box everything in, which is very difficult to do in practice. Curriculum developers cannot control and plan with such a degree of meticulousness that nothing is left out. The written plan or document will always leave some relevant teaching and learning out because of the vast scope that it covers. As soon as the curriculum embraces learners and experiences, everything that goes on in school can be incorporated within the curriculum. This macro view of a curriculum which is synonomous to education poses difficulty to the curriculator who wants to delineate the field of curriculum from everything else happening at schools.

Curriculum as a plan is very limiting in that it has a beginning and an end. Curriculum as experience is too broad as it encompasses all learning which is difficult to plan for adequately. The view of curriculum as a system is closest to OBE principles in that its starting point is the outcomes or results that have to be achieved, and the rest of the
curriculum is derived from that premise. The proposed curriculum framework will use OBE principles as the point of departure as all curriculum work in the South African school system will be in line with OBE. The definition of a curriculum framework will follow after the next section.

3.4 Philosophies underlying language curricula

Scarino et al (1988:11-16) has completed a detailed analysis on the three major philosophies underlying language curricula. These three approaches are derived from the differing value systems they originate from. Skilbeck (1982:21) calls these approaches “classical humanism”, “reconstructivism” and “progressivism.” Two of these stress the importance of communication and are a reaction to the first “traditional” approach which focused on grammar, translation and literature.

A brief review of these approaches will be completed in order to give a clear picture of where the proposed curriculum framework in this study would fit. Each approach will be looked at briefly in terms of the following headings: syllabus design, teaching methodology, assessment techniques and some disadvantages of the approach. These divisions are similar to the ones described by Scarino et al (1988:11-16).

3.4.1 Classical humanism

Syllabus design: According to Scarino et al (1988:11) it is essentially content-orientated, analysing the language into its constituent parts, moving from the simple to the complex. The knowledge gained is used primarily in translating.

Teaching methodology: The focus is on analysis of grammar rules, with little or no communication
Assessment techniques: Assessments are norm referenced, completed at periodic intervals. These evaluate/assess the intellectual capacity of the learner.

Disadvantages: Learners are not able to converse spontaneously. They have linguistic knowledge (knowledge about the language) and analytical skills only. These skills do not indicate what the learner can or cannot do in the language. Only highly motivated learners succeed, while the rest opt out at the first available opportunity.

3.4.2 Reconstructivism

Syllabus design: This approach is goal-orientated (op.cit.:12). It strives to promote communicative ability and approaches language as a means of breaking down barriers between communities and nations. Its primary concern is the social use of the language. The content is taken from what the communicative needs are, that is what learners need to do with the language. Goals are expressed as behavioural objectives, not as mere knowledge objectives. Content is selected and sequenced in advance, and has to be mastered in a cumulative manner. The aspects of phonology, grammar and vocabulary are intertwined with the situations, contexts, themes, topics, functions and notions.

Methodology: There are two variations. Earlier it was the audio-lingual which emphasised the structures of the language, based on behavioural psychology and structural linguistics. Later there was a shift to emphasise meanings (functions and notions) and situations.

Assessment techniques: Criterion referenced assessment is completed, which identifies what the learners can or cannot do with the language based on well-defined criteria. Formative tests are conducted to measure attainment of lesson or unit objectives, and summative tests to check proficiency in either one or a combination of more than one of the four macro skills. The test items showed dimensions of learner performance in a profile form, indicating how well the learner could perform in each dimension.
Disadvantages: The use of drills destroys motivation and spontaneous language use outside the drill situation is severely curtailed. By specifying targets of language performance, the teacher becomes restricted to bringing about behavioural changes as part of the syllabus requirement. It is also not always possible to specify targets in an explicit way, which makes accurate criterion referenced assessment not possible. There are also individual variations in assessing levels of performance.

Two scales have been developed to describe performance in terms of proficiency. These are the Australian Second Language Proficiency Rating (ASPLR) scale (Ingram, 1984) and the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL, 1981). These scales describe performance proficiency in terms of syntax, lexis, discourse, pronunciation and register. The one difficulty is to assess learners' level of proficiency to be at a certain level, when learners differ markedly in their abilities in specific skills. Some learners are stronger on the oral component, while others in the written, and some even on both.

3.4.3 Progressivism

This approach is process-orientated (op.cit.:14) and it emphasises teaching methodology and procedure. Learners can choose a language that suits their own needs and aspirations. The syllabus would consist of a graded series of communicative activities, which allows learners to receive and process language gradually, without necessarily predetermining goals or specific levels of proficiency.

Teaching methods: Learners are actively involved in understanding and producing both oral and written communication. They are given the space to inquire, discuss and create their hypothesis concerning language phenomenon which they encounter. They are encouraged to take risks, learn from experience, and work together with others.
Assessment techniques: Learners are encouraged to describe and evaluate the process they have undergone through assignments and other activities. Their achievements are not related to levels of performance or to the achievements of others.

Disadvantages: Since teachers and students need specific goals to strive towards which are not specified in advance, it is severely lacking in giving clear direction. Another factor on the down side is that once learners develop errors in their use of the language, it is very difficult to rectify later. Also, this approach has not been adequately researched in school settings. Notwithstanding these factors mentioned, there may be limited application of it within the school environment.

3.4.4 Eclectic compromise

Since all three approaches have been tried and tested over time, they all do have many strong elements and a few disadvantages. The positive aspects of each approach can be reconciled and incorporated into a framework that embraces both the reconstructivists' concern for social needs and interests and the progressivists' concern for personal needs and interests.

Because needs vary from person to person, as well as over time, learning outcomes should be specified in as broad and accommodatory way as possible. Also, a balance should be maintained between the objective needs of groups of learners trying to achieve common goals, while at the same time catering for individual needs of learners who have specific or personal aspirations and needs. This balance can be maintained through the allowance for multiple entry points and the offering of options or electives within units of study, which are both possible in the FET band.

In the earlier stages of learning, learners could strive for common predetermined outcomes, and at a later or more advanced stage they could be encouraged to direct their own learning. The curriculum should provide language experience through the selection of
common activities, which focus on linguistic, conceptual and social knowledge. There should be common goals for each stage of learning. The activities should reflect both the subjective and objective needs and provide opportunities for learners to negotiate the objectives for the course, the assignments, as well as all activities. The assessment could incorporate both formative and summative activities, and consist of portfolios, which indicate their learning and proficiency levels.

3.5 Literature study on curriculum frameworks

A number of curriculum frameworks for foreign languages from various states of the United States, Canada, Alaska and Australia were studied. Many were based on the ACTFL proficiency guidelines and were outcome-based in their approach. Relevant aspects from each of these frameworks will be used wherever they apply within the South African context.

3.6 A definition of a curriculum framework

Valdes (1986:91) defined the curriculum framework to be “a set of broad state-wide guidelines that aid educational personnel in producing specific instructional plans for a given subject area or area of study to promote a degree of uniformity in curriculum offering.” Curriculum frameworks embody current education research and literature, and include all statutory and regulatory requirements. The frameworks for foreign language courses were based on language acquisition and learning theory, together with the proficiency scale developed by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL).

The framework developed was after a long process of consultation and input from a broad variety of stakeholders, including the community, education department personnel and students. These frameworks are not permanently cast in stone, and get reviewed periodically keeping them in line with regulatory changes as and when these get
introduced. The Department of Education continually reviews them and ensures their co-
ordination and effective implementation.

The key components of the framework (op.cit.:94-98) consists of:

- a rationale, mission statement or philosophy behind the offering of foreign languages
- an indication of the scope and parameters of the curriculum (equivalent to range statements)
- the intended outcomes, that is the broad statements that reflect the essential elements that should be demonstrated after successfully completing the course; and student performance standards
- the major concepts or content of the course.

In the above definition the first three of the four components also apply in the South African context. The fourth component falls outside the scope of the framework as will be indicated later.

Some of the terms used by Yaldes have equivalents, like “state-wide” guidelines could refer to “provincial” guidelines, or the unit standard accredited with the NQF. The “education personnel” would refer to departmental personnel like curriculum unit persons, language advisors and teachers. “Specific instructional plans” are the learning programmes that emanate from the curriculum framework. A “degree of uniformity” is necessary to facilitate the task of ETQA’s maintaining an equitable standard of quality among different service providers.

In another definition of a curriculum framework, Carl (1994:39) has stated that it is “a written document in which general policy for one or more instructional presentations in a particular subject is set out.” This definition is similar to the previously mentioned definition in that the "guidelines" would be the "written document", the "instructional plans" are similar to the "instructional presentations", and both refer to a given subject area or particular subject.
In addition to the above-mentioned dimensions, the Consultative Forum on Curriculum (1995:6) has indicated a few more features of what the curriculum framework should be or consist of. A curriculum framework provides the philosophical and organisational frame of reference through which norms and standards for curriculum design and development can be established. They also allow for contextualised learning to occur through the development of flexible and relevant learning programmes which take heed of particular needs, constraints and realities.

A curriculum framework also establishes the norms and standards for a subject or field of study, but does not prescribe content or methodological approaches. Outcomes or the results that are intended are specified, and these direct curriculum development by spelling out the principles of curriculum design by providing guidelines for organising teaching and learning by identifying appropriate performance indicators and range statements. Work completed by the Curriculum Development Working Group in South Africa (1996:17-19) categorises outcomes into two types: Critical (which used to be called essential) and specific. Critical outcomes express the intended results of education and training in a broad sense, whereas specific outcomes are more narrow and context-based.

Critical outcomes are generic and cross-curricular. They underpin all learning, inform all phases and bands in the NQF, and are not restricted to any specific area learning context. They are like guiding or working principles that direct all education and training. The process of consultation on these critical outcomes took a long time, but they have now been ratified and accepted by SAQA. They will be listed in chapter six.

Specific outcomes are context-specific. They describe the competence that learners should be able to demonstrate in specific contexts and at certain levels within particular areas of learning. In the South African context, specific outcomes for the Languages, Literacy and Communication learning area have already been developed after broad consultation. These are stated in chapter 6 under 6.5.
Performance indicators (PIs) are benchmarks or indicators of progress. They are the essential or minimal knowledge and skills necessary for learners to be successful at the next level of their educational experience. These benchmarks of achievements guide in the development of classroom based and on a wider level district wide assessments. They describe what the learners know, can do and demonstrate.

PIs also give a standard by which teachers can measure students ability to communicate. Parents and learners are also made aware in advance of what the expectations and outcomes for the course are.

Range statements according to the Ministerial Committee for Development Work on the NQF (1996:Appendix H) are a further elaboration on the PIs, giving the broad spectrum within which learning occurs. They can cover all the skills and proficiencies expected at various stages or levels.

The framework would even suggest approaches to evaluate learner's progress and assess achievement of learner outcomes. Assessment has been defined (op.cit.:Appendix F) as "the collection of data about student achievement, using a variety of means and procedures." Only through using a wide array of methods can a realistic assessment be made. Assessment should be both ongoing (formative) and summative.

Evaluation is "the making of judgements or decisions on the basis of the data collected in the assessment process" (op.cit., Appendix F). While evaluation is done principally by the teacher, it could even be collaboratively done by learners and their parents. The assessment methods have to be matched to the learning activity being evaluated. This assessment data has to be reliable by providing enough information to allow judgements to be made through frequent opportunities awarded to learners. The assessment should also be valid by being based on clearly stated outcomes and levels of achievements.
**Reporting** implies the interpreting and sharing of what learners have achieved based on the outcomes that were aimed at. Reporting is communicated to parents and can be monitored.

In general terms a curriculum framework will consist of:

1. A rationale for the study of a subject or field of study.
2. A list of specific outcomes for the teaching of that subject or field of study.
4. A list of range statements.
5. Assessment guidelines.

For the purposes of this study the language curriculum framework will consist of the following key components:

1. A rationale for the study of Arabic.
2. A list of specific outcomes for the teaching of languages, which have already been developed.
3. The performance indicators for each of the three grades, 10, 11 and 12.
4. A list of range statements for each of the linguistic skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening, as well as for the cultural component at each grade level.
5. Assessment guidelines.

The development of learning programmes or unit standards as well as content material specification that would emanate from this framework fall outside the scope of this study.

### 3.8 Conclusion

This chapter gave an overview of the NQF with particular reference to the FET band as it related to languages. Definitions of the terms curriculum and curriculum framework were stated and the five components of a curriculum framework were explained. The next chapter will focus on the research methodology for this study.
CHAPTER 4
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Aim of this chapter

The aim of this chapter is to give a brief overview of the two main paradigms of research, the quantitative and the qualitative, in order to select an appropriate paradigm and method for this study. The research questions will be stated, and the best way of gathering the data required will be selected and described. The process of how and with whom the interviews will be conducted is to be explained. Pilot interviews will be conducted, analysed and discussed. Finally, the elements that need to be considered in overcoming the threats to reliability and validity will be discussed. After the questions are refined, all the remaining interviews will then be conducted, transcribed, and an analysis thereof will appear in the following chapter.

4.2 The quantitative and qualitative research paradigms

Quantitative research is based on the positivist, rationalist or realist paradigm, according to Howe and Eisenhart (1990:2). It relies on “hard” or objective data that can be tested and verified using the various experimental approaches of data gathering. The variables are controlled or manipulated from the outside in order to test or verify a hypothesis.

Qualitative research falls under the phenomenological paradigm. It is also called the interpretive, naturalistic, idealistic, relative, non-positivist or alternative paradigm. Its main aim is towards hypothesis generation through observation and description (Silverman, 1993:21). The data is rich and deep, and there is a process of analytic induction in which the data derived is developed into theoretical categories, concepts or propositions (Fielding & Fielding, 1986:46).
Qualitative research has been defined by Locke, Spirduso and Silverman (1993:91-100) as being a “systematic, empirical strategy for answering questions about people in a bounded social context.” It is a means to describe and understand what people do, say and report as their experience. It is also an attempt to study the total context that creates meaning for the individual(s). The primary sources of data are interview transcripts, field notes from direct observations, diaries, documents and video recordings.

Qualitative inquiry is analytic and descriptive, because the investigator or researcher or interviewer has to discern subtle regularities within the data collected. Data reduction, manipulation, organization and display are essential activities in the research process.

Detailed descriptions of the context and what people do or say is the basis for inductive analysis rather than deductive analysis. Theory is created to explain the data, rather than data which is collected to test pre-established hypothesis. The researcher is the key instrument who observes first hand and gives an insider’s perspective to what has been observed. He/she tries to capture the essential meanings through “participant perspectives”. The data is descriptive, using words and graphics, rather than numbers and statistics according to Bogdan and Biklen (1982: chapter 1).

Qualitative research is also more flexible in its approach to data gathering, and the researcher can add or change the types of sources and the data gathered for a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

Quantitative research employs questionnaires, experiments and surveys to gather data, whereas in qualitative research the main techniques used are interviews, observations and document analysis as stated by both Bogdan and Biklen (1982:47-48) and Sprinthall, Schmutte and Sirois (1991:100-103).

While there appears to be a dichotomy or exclusivity between the two research paradigms, they should not be looked at as two extremes, but rather as contributing to and being
complementary of one another in terms of understanding different aspects of the same phenomenon. Therefore it would be incorrect to consider any one paradigm as being superior, as the data that is required should dictate which research method is to be used.

Leedy (1992:139) states that if the data required is primarily verbal, then the methodology should be qualitative, and if it is numerical, then the methodology should be quantitative. In this study qualitative research will be undertaken because the data required is verbal rather than numerical. Two sets of information or data are required in this study. The one relates to the outcomes or products for the study of Arabic in secondary schools. This information can best be obtained through individual interviews conducted with key personnel from the departments of foreign affairs, education, university staff, the business community, non-governmental and religious organisations involved in Arabic, and parents of students studying Arabic.

The other set of data required concerns the needs of and justification for an Arabic curriculum. This data can best be obtained through focus group interviews with students of Arabic and individual interviews with Arabic teachers at schools.

Another reason for choosing the focused group interview is that it is exploratory, and does not pursue hypothesis testing (Kvale, nd:22-23). This research aims at explaining or describing a phenomenon, rather than proving a hypothesis.

A further aim of this research would be to contextualise the information within a “wider social and historical context” (Bryman, 1993:65). Although the research will not encompass a very wide universe of respondents or subjects, it will nevertheless convey contextualised and relevant information. A holistic and total picture of the field of study is being sought, and therefore the phenomena and situations will be studied as a whole.
4.3 Rationale for the use of interviews

Both individual and group focused interviews are part of the qualitative research paradigm. The interview as an instrument is adaptable to the topic under discussion, allowing flexibility to the interviewer to probe further, rephrase questions, pose follow-up questions for clarity and gather as much data as is required for the study. Unlike questionnaires that are limited in their range of answers, the interview allows for a free flow of ideas.

In the focused group interview several participants are gathered together to discuss a topic identified by the researcher. The researcher directs the questions to a group of between four to ten participants with the aim of eliciting their thoughts and experiences on a specific set of questions. The interview is led by a moderator or interviewer who keeps respondents "focused" on a particular topic (Knodel, 1993:36). This verbal interaction is tape recorded, and then transcribed and analysed.

Many advantages have been stated by Basch (1987:433) for the focused group interview. These will be incorporated into the study. The focus group interview is an easy and flexible way of learning about respondents' views. Each respondent will participate in a homogeneous with his or her peers which will facilitate communication and lessen the inhibitions felt by some. In depth information will be tapped, and forgotten details stimulated. Because the groups chosen are from their own age group, participants will feel secure in that they are sharing their valued opinions with colleagues. The environment in which the interviews are held will be school classrooms which are non-threatening and comfortable. The answers given are explanations of how they feel and think, and there will be no right or wrong answers. The topic is centred around the interviewee's life experience, and is an attempt to understand the phenomenon under study as interpreted by him/her. The researcher will use specific questions to obtain the information required. By asking groups of individuals, a diverse range of responses is received through interaction.
Some of the disadvantages of the focused group interview are (op.cit., 432), that they can be a costly way of gathering information, since many groups have to be interviewed. The interviewer needs to be trained in handling responses from a group of people, and redirect, or probe further whenever necessary. If he/she is unskilled in maintaining a focus, the group’s input could go off on a tangent and become irrelevant. These disadvantages will be avoided by choosing secondary schools in close proximity to each other within the Gauteng province, and between three to five groups of students from grades 10 to 12 will be chosen for the interviews. Therefore the costs will not be prohibitive.

Each group will consist of between 6 to 8 respondents, since a group less than 6 will not be able to hold an active dialogue, according to Folch-Lyon & Trost (1981:446). Krueger (1988:227) has suggested that four groups be chosen as it was the optimum number. He also recommends an evaluation after the third group of interviews are completed. The greatest amount of new information will have been obtained after two sets of interviews, and the information will become saturated after three or four interviews due to repetition. By having individual interviews with teachers using the same questions, the data could be cross-validated.

The interviewer will conduct a few pilot interviews and these will serve as training for him and as a means of refining the questions before the main research commences.

In this study the individual focused interview will be used in instances where a homogeneous group of individuals cannot be gathered together due to their busy schedules. These will be completed personally or telephonically. Since they represent a small and specific sector, even one or two interviews with these respondents will result in more comprehensive data being obtained.

4.4 Pilot interviews
Initially five questions were used and these were asked to three of the stakeholders identified, namely:
- a group of students,
- two Arabic teachers, and a
- group of parents

These pilots were analysed critically by the researcher and the promoters. It was realised that the questions were not supplying the answers required for the research, and that the researcher tended to ask leading questions and probed too often. Subsequently these questions were revised to being three for Group A and two for Group B, and guidelines were given about how to conduct the interview.

4.5 Selection of respondents and questions asked

In this study the main data required was:

- The reason(s) why Arabic was chosen as a subject from a host of other optional subjects in the further education and training band (ie. the needs and justification for studying Arabic).
- The scope in terms of future careers with Arabic.
- Their opinions about the curriculum as presently offered in schools with a view to producing a framework that would address the needs identified and the outcomes that should be striven for.

The following two groups of stakeholders were identified in order to obtain the data:

**Group A**

In group A were persons who were familiar with the needs of students, the scope and curriculum for Arabic and would be capable of answering the three questions on need, scope and curriculum for Arabic. Groups of students from state and private Muslim schools were to be selected in order to elicit their views and aspirations and comments on the existing curriculum. Five groups were identified.
Since only one state school in Gauteng was offering Arabic in the further education and training band two groups were chosen from that school, one from grade 11 and the other from grade 12. Since the class numbers were small, the entire class was invited to participate. They were groups of twelve and thirteen respectively.

There were four Muslim private schools in Gauteng offering Arabic up to matric level. One school was used for the pilot interview, and since the questions were revised after that this interview was not used for analysis. A school in the Vereeniging and another in the Pretoria area were used, and both groups chosen had standard 8 and 9 students, both boys and girls. The groups consisted of 10 and 9 students respectively, and were chosen randomly by the deputy principal and Arabic teacher respectively.

All four student group interviews were held at the respective schools. The duration of the interview ranged from 10 to about 45 minutes.

The fifth group chosen was a mixed group of students who had completed Arabic to matric level either at a state or Muslim private school over the past three years. Two males and three females were chosen from the state school and two males and two females from the private schools making it a group of nine. They were chosen randomly from a group of eighteen students that were available. This interview was held at night at the home of the researcher.

These five groups were asked the following questions:

1) Why did you study Arabic at school?
2) How do you think you would use Arabic?
3) What do you think of the Arabic that you were offered at school?

The remaining ten interviews were individually conducted by telephone because of ease of accessibility since some were in KwaZulu and others all over Gauteng, and due to time and financial constraints.
The following stakeholders were identified and contacted during working hours where possible:

1) Two lecturers in Arabic Didactics from universities where they are currently involved in teacher training. One was chosen from Pretoria and the other from Durban.

2) Two senior personnel from the departments of education, one from the national department in Pretoria who is in charge of foreign languages, and the other a subject advisor for Arabic in the KwaZulu Education Department. No other provincial departments had personnel in this field at the time of conducting this research.

3) Three Arabic teachers were selected, one of whom was formerly a teacher involved in the Arabic Subject Committee, and who is presently the Deputy Consul in charge at the newly opened South African Embassy in Riyadh. The other is from a Muslim private school in Durban, and third from a state school in Johannesburg. There was no other state school teacher in Gauteng with the experience of having taught a matric class.

4) Three parents were chosen, and these were all who had more than two children pursuing Arabic up to matric during the past decade. They were chosen because they would be more well informed about the Arabic and changes to the syllabus over the past decade.

The above four groups of stakeholders were all asked the following questions:

1) Why do you think students choose Arabic in schools?

2) Where and how do you think they will use Arabic after matric?

3) What do you think of the Arabic curriculum as offered in secondary schools at the moment?

These three questions are similar to the three asked in the focus group interviews with students, and as such the responses will be combined when analysed.

A member of the ulama (religious leader) grouping who was a teacher at a Muslim school was consulted during the pilot phase of the study. Since he was the only Arabic teacher at a school, no others were included in the interview.
**Group B**

In Group B were persons who were identified as having a specialised interest in Arabic, and would be capable of answering two questions that related to the need or reason(s) for the study of Arabic, and the outcomes that should be attained. Since they would not know what’s being offered as part of the curriculum the third question was not asked to them.

In the group consisting of foreign affairs, trade, tourism and international relations, the following were interviewed:

1) Two travel agents were chosen randomly from a list of five, whose main field/area of interest was North Africa and the Middle East.

2) The Public Relations Liaison officer from the Department of Foreign Affairs. He was chosen because he was well versed in future policy as regards South Africa’s relations with the Arab world. The other two persons identified in the department could not be reached, despite repeated efforts.

3) A consultant from the South African Foreign Trade Organisation (SAFTO) involved with the Gulf. There was only one person dealing with this region.

4) The Asia Pacific Researcher at the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA) whose interest lies in Indian Ocean Rim area consisting of Oman and Yemen. He was the only person involved with this area.

5) A lecturer from the Department of International Relations at the University of the Witwatersrand. He was recommended by the person from SAFTO because of work done with that region during the last Gulf war.

Because the information received had become saturated by this point, it was not necessary to identify any other persons in this group.

The other persons consulted represent other stakeholders with interest in Arabic. They were:

1) An Arabic text book writer and publisher. He was the only person actively involved in this field in Gauteng.
2) An executive committee member of an organisation actively encouraging Arabic, the Society for the Promotion of Arabic (SPAL).

3) A director of the Centre for Islamic Studies at a university in Pretoria.

The above-mentioned eight persons were asked individually the following questions:

1) Why do you think students should study Arabic at secondary schools?
2) What scope would there be for students who have completed Arabic to matric level?
   This group was not asked the third question since they were not familiar with the school curriculum and as such would not be able to comment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data required</th>
<th>Group A</th>
<th>Group B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify needs</td>
<td>- use of Arabic</td>
<td>- identify products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- opinions on the present curriculum</td>
<td></td>
<td>- need for Arabic</td>
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<tr>
<td>- the scope for Arabic</td>
<td></td>
<td>- the scope for Arabic</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target groups and questions asked</th>
<th>Focus groups</th>
<th>Individual interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Five groups of students currently in the senior secondary phase of schooling or in the post matric phase</td>
<td>- Five groups of students currently in the senior secondary phase of schooling or in the post matric phase</td>
<td>- One from the department of foreign affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions asked:</td>
<td></td>
<td>- One from the trade sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Why did you study Arabic in school?</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Two travel agents representing tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How do you think you would use Arabic?</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Two from International relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What do you think of the Arabic that you were offered at school?</td>
<td></td>
<td>- One from a university centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual interviews</td>
<td>- One from a cultural organisation</td>
<td>- One Arabic writer/publisher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Three Arabic teachers (form both state and Muslim schools)</td>
<td>Questions asked:</td>
<td>Questions asked:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Two Arabic didactics lecturers</td>
<td>1. Why do you think students should study Arabic at secondary schools?</td>
<td>1. Why do you think students should study Arabic at secondary schools?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Two senior personnel from education departments</td>
<td>2. What scope would there be for students who have completed Arabic to matric?</td>
<td>2. What scope would there be for students who have completed Arabic to matric?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Three parents</td>
<td>Questions asked:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions asked:</td>
<td>1. Why do you think students choose Arabic in schools?</td>
<td>1. Why do you think students choose Arabic in schools?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Why do you think students choose Arabic in schools?</td>
<td>2. Where and how do you think they will use Arabic after matric?</td>
<td>2. Where and how do you think they will use Arabic after matric?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Where and how do you think they will use Arabic after matric?</td>
<td>3. What do you think of the Arabic curriculum as offered in secondary schools at the moment?</td>
<td>3. What do you think of the Arabic curriculum as offered in secondary schools at the moment?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1: The target groups, questions asked and description of data required
4.6 Factors in data gathering

4.6.1 Researcher as an instrument

In qualitative research the researcher is the main instrument in the research process. Notwithstanding this function, the researcher had to be careful not to play centre stage, and to use his intuition to develop a full understanding of the phenomenon at hand. He had to place aside his own perceptions and ideas in order not to contaminate the findings. He had to be empathetic, listening attentively, and encouraging interaction and response. If he did not understand anything said, he asked for clarity. At the end of the interview a further chance was given to respond to any of the questions asked, by saying “Let’s go back to the questions asked. Does anybody like to add on to the first question which was ....”

During the interview, encouragement was given for responses either verbally saying “mm ... mm” or through body language (like nodding the head) where applicable.

4.6.2 The recordings

All the interviews were recorded on a dictaphone machine which allowed for clarity in playback and facilitate transcription.

4.6.3 Field notes

After each interview field notes were recorded. General information about the observation was made during the interview, like who was present, where the interview occurred, what was said and done and how the event unfolded, was written down both during and after each interview. Possible interpretation of comments made were also recorded. These notes facilitated a better understanding and synthesis of the interviews.
4.6.4 Analysis and interpretation of data

After the interviews were conducted, they were transcribed as soon as possible by a professional dictaphone typist, and checked by the researcher to ensure accuracy.

4.6.5 Methods and techniques

The methods and techniques of data gathering and analysis for both Groups A and B were the same.

Each focus group and individual interview was transcribed verbatim. A reliability check was built in by employing the services of an independent decoder who analysed the interviews independently. A protocol and method analysis was given to the independent decoder, and both decoder and researcher met to achieve a consensus over the themes, categories and clustering. The content analysis as suggested by Kerlinger (1986:480-485) was followed.

4.6.6 Confidentiality

Permission was obtained from each respondent, and the information given was treated confidentially.

4.6.7 Venue for interviews

All interviews were conducted in suitable venues, either in classrooms, offices or libraries. Upon being seated, respondents were put at ease, and simple trigger questions were used to facilitate the interactive communication. Telephonic interviews were conducted with persons who were too busy to meet the interviewer.
4.7 The problems related to this study and how these were addressed

There were many issues that needed to be taken cognisance of in this study. These are discussed briefly.

4.7.1 Reliability

Reliability refers to the "degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category by different observers or by the same observer on different occasions" (Hammersley, 1992:67). It also has to do with the ability to replicate the study and arrive at similar conclusions. The issues that relate to reliability are:

4.7.1.1 Respondent bias

An aspect that could be manipulated is that convenient samples of appropriate participants could be selected, in order to obtain certain preconceived answers or data. Since the students were chosen from a cross section of types of schools (both state and private), and the students chosen randomly from class lists, this aspect was not be a problem in this study.

In addition, member checking was done by giving the transcriptions of the interviews to a sample of the respondents from each group for checking for accuracy, as suggested by Lather (1986:68). Silverman called this "respondent validation" (1993:156).

Articulate respondents in the group may want to control or dominate the discussion, and the interviewer diplomatically redirected the question from the "leader" to the other members in this group.
4.7.1.2 Independent decoder

The independent decoder for this study was a lecturer who had obtained a doctorate in the field of curriculum studies and who had experience in qualitative research with interviews. Her expertise and background made her suitable for this task.

The use of the independent decoder was to enhance the reliability of this study. After both the researcher and decoder made similar deductions, the validity of the research was enhanced. A sense of objectivity was maintained through this independent analysis and interpretation.

4.7.1.3 Data interpretation

The data was obtained by seeing through the eyes of the respondents. Whether the conclusions reached are a valid interpretation of the data would depend on how accurately the data was analysed and cross checked. An independent decoder’s assistance in this regard was sought to verify the analysis and categorisation of data, and to ensure that the researcher’s findings were acceptable.

4.7.1.4 Literature check

The results of the research was then compared to relevant literature, and new insights or conclusions that were made was focused on.

4.7.1.5 Other reliability checks

The following was also done to enhance the reliability of the research:

1) The researcher identified his role clearly as interviewer.
2) The context and atmosphere for all the data collection was similar.
3) Field notes were written accurately.
4) All the interviews were given to a professional typist who was able to do dictaphone typing, and the transcripts verified by the researcher.

5) Both the researcher and external or independent decoder met before and after the data assimilation for consensus over coding.

6) The analysis of the data was done in concrete and precise terms.

7) The homogeneity of the group was guaranteed through the selection of the respondents.

8) The researcher coded once, and coded again later and compared notes before making analysis.

4.7.2 Validity

By validity is meant “truth: interpreted as the extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers” (Hammersley, 1990:57). In addition to this, Silverman (1993:151) suggests using the criteria of refutability to test the validity of a research finding.

Validity has also to do with the accuracy in representation. It is a process for developing better or sounder interpretations of the observations made. Cronbach (1980:100), in defining validity, has said that “a proposition deserves some degree of trust only when it has survived serious attempts to falsify it”. Validity is therefore ascertained by examining the sources of invalidity. For this study an analysis had to be made of potential biases which could invalidate the quality of the observations or interpretations.

4.7.2.1 Generalisability of findings

Because very few subjects were chosen, the extent to which the findings could be generalised was limited. The argument often posed is that the interview results cannot be trusted because they are biased and limited to a select group of respondents only (Kvale, nd:20-21). Focused group interviews, by their very nature, have to be selective in their
respondents, as they aim to produce precise, nuanced and rich descriptions not obtainable in any other way. Since each situation is unique, the aim is not to generalise. Notwithstanding that fact, the data gathered in this study can apply to the three provinces where Arabic has flourished in the past, namely Gauteng, KwaZulu Natal and Western Cape, since the general situation of schools, learners and teachers backgrounds are similar.

Since the purpose of the interviews is to explore and to describe, the law of diminishing returns applies. Because the total number of schools offering Arabic to matric level presently did not exceed twelve, by interviewing at least three, the interviews yielded sufficient information. With the other stakeholders, one or two from each sector were sufficient. All the data (cassettes, transcripts and field notes) were kept safely. Other researchers could do an audit trail or replicate the study. This further enhances the validity of the research.

4.7.2.2 Researcher Bias

Because the researcher or observer or interviewer was directly involved in the data gathering, biasness could have occurred. Pilot interviews were completed as part of the training of the interviewer, and elements of bias picked up was brought to the attention of the interviewer. Three pilot interviews were completed, transcribed and analysed. Evidence of bias brought to the attention of the researcher was eradicated, as can be observed in later interviews.

4.7.2.3 Biasness in questions

Specific and focused questions were asked. In this study, the wording of the questions have been carefully checked to omit any biasness. The questions that were used were refined after the pilot study.
4.7.2.4 Reactivity

The very process of gathering data can induce change in the phenomenon itself, according to Zeller (1993:168). The interviewees were not told the questions before the interviews, so as to avoid being sensitised to the topic.

4.7.2.5 Triangulation

Triangulation has been defined by Firestone (1987:20) as the use of different methods to assess the robustness or stability of the findings. It is an “effort to increase the researcher’s confidence so that findings may be better imparted to the audience to lessen recourse to the assertion of privileged insight” (Fielding & Fielding, 1986:24-25). It is an effort to combine methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon, with a view to increase the validity of the findings.

According to Denzin (1978:27-28) there are four types of triangulation, data, investigator, theory and methodology. In this study the first three methods were used.

Table 4.2: The triangulation methods used in this study on the next page
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>In this study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data triangulation</td>
<td>To use a variety of data sources in a particular study</td>
<td>Interviews were tape recorded and transcribed. The transcripts were given to at least one person from each of the group interviews, and to the person interviewed individually to check the authenticity of the transcription. This was part of “member checking”, and copies of their verification kept on file for audit. Reliability was also achieved by keeping this prolonged contact with the respondents, which Krefting (1991:217) quotes Lincoln and Guba as calling this “prolonged engagement.” As part of document analysis, the currently used Higher Grade syllabus was used. Examiners' reports were unavailable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigator triangulation</td>
<td>Making use of several researchers or evaluators for the same study</td>
<td>An independent decoder was employed for the purpose of making an objective assessment of the analysis. The researcher discussed the research methods, findings and research process with the study leaders and the independent decoder. More than one stakeholder's views was obtained and compared with others. Each respondent (apart from the students and parents) was also a specialist in his/her field.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theory triangulation</td>
<td>Includes multiple perspectives to interpret a single set of data</td>
<td>Appropriate literature checks for the data were appended.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology triangulation</td>
<td>To use multiple methods to study a single problem.</td>
<td>Since both focus groups and individual interviews are different techniques of the same method, this form of triangulation was not done.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2: The triangulation methods used in this study

The logic of triangulation is based on the premise that no single method solves the problem of rival casual factors. Each method reveals a different aspect of empirical reality and multiple methods of observation were employed to strengthen the study.
4.8 Data analysis

The following steps would be taken to analyse the data:

Step 1: After the interviews were transcribed, the transcripts were taken back to a group of respondents for checking for reliability. The transcriptions were then read carefully, setting aside any preconceived notions of what would emerge.

Step 2: The responses were sorted out in terms of what was relevant to the questions asked, and these were compiled in a list. A list of key ideas, words, phrases and verbatim quotes will be stated, according to Basch (1987:417). Kerlinger (1986:477-80) called this the definition of the universe.

Step 3: These ideas were used to formulate categories of concerns, and categories were combined wherever possible. Each category was examined for sub categories, and the most useful quotes were selected and used as substantiation for the various ideas. A count was made of the number of times a category appeared so that the highest priority could be observed. Themes that appeared once only or infrequently can also be observed clearly. Kerlinger (1986:479) makes provision for the quantification of data. This analysis was also displayed in a tabulated form to facilitate ease in comprehension.

Step 4: The categories were then clustered into themes, which provided the main headings for the report. This categorisation was done through the process of reduction, which entailed a sorting out of the information, and a hierarchical placement. Final patterns emerged through the processing of this information, according to Miles and Huberman (1984:90).

Step 5: The independent decoder was given a set of the transcripts to identify and categorise the data. This was done independently from the researcher to ensure reliability.
The decoder's categories was then compared to the researcher's, and in this way the categories and subcategories were cross-validated.

To assist in the analysis of the information by the decoder, a protocol was given to her which provided the necessary guidelines for this to happen.

Step 6: Finally, both the researcher and decoder jointly decided on the final themes, the relationships between them, and the categories. Themes were developed from the raw data that was clustered together into categories. From the categories emerged the themes and the concomitant thick description.

Step 7: As part of a validity check, a literature study on Arabic as a foreign language was completed, and the categories identified were cross-checked with the literature study.

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter gave an overview of the quantitative and qualitative research paradigms, with special reference to the focus group and individual interview as the methods chosen to obtain the data for this study. After the pilot interviews the remainder of the interviews were conducted, transcribed and analysed.

The analysis, reduction and categorisation of the data will be the subject of the next chapter.
CHAPTER 5
DATA ANALYSIS

5.1 Aim of this chapter

All five focus group interviews and nineteen individual interviews were transcribed accurately and checked thoroughly by both the researcher and a sample of respondents. Meetings were held regularly with the independent decoder, before the analysis and after.

The aim of this chapter is to identify and discuss each of the five categories, subcategories and themes. The categories and themes that emerged have been documented and a sample of quotations from the raw data appended. A summary, literature check and synthesis will follow as a discussion to each category.

5.2 The coding of data

The data was analysed using the method suggested by Kerlinger (1986:477) as described in the earlier chapter under 4.9 and 4.10. The content was analysed in a systematic and objective way which consisted of the following steps:

1. The transcripts were read once by both the researcher and decoder independently to get a holistic picture of the data.
2. Key terms were defined for the sake of uniformity between the researcher and decoder.
3. The transcripts were read again and words/themes related to the research questions were identified by both persons individually.
4. These words/themes were the units for analysis. The researcher and decoder read the underlined words and themes and listed them. They were quantified to determine priorities, and then clustered into categories. The total number of times a reference was made to a particular theme was counted and appears in table 5.1.
5. They both met to discuss the coding and reached consensus over the categorisation. The main categories, sub categories and themes were then refined.
6. The results of these consultations is the body of this chapter.

After the five focus groups were analysed three possible categories emerged, which were curriculation, selection of the subject (including attitudes and perceptions) and application of Arabic. After the remaining nineteen individual interviews were completed, a clearer picture of five categories emerged. These were:

1. Careers
2. Religion and culture
3. The linguistic skills
4. Status of the language
5. Teachers, resource materials and the curriculum

The initial category of curriculation was better subdivided into three categories, i.e. categories 3, 4 and 5. The selection and application for Arabic were covered under categories 1,2 and 3.

The needs or reasons for the study of Arabic appeared as two categories, which comprised of careers where a knowledge of Arabic would help and the need to study the language for religious and cultural reasons. The products or outcomes from having studied Arabic could be classified into another three categories, one which referred to the different language skills and the other that linked up with the status of the language. The last category consisted of responses that pertained to the teachers of Arabic, the resource materials used, and the curriculum.

Some of these categories had sub-categories, and all had specific themes. The responses received were classified according to these themes. Graphically this can be represented as indicated in the table on the next page.

A summary of each category will follow each section, with the appropriate literature check appended.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Sub-category</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Focus groups</th>
<th>Individual interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interview number</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Careers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2 3 4 5 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade/business</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3 2 1 4 1 2 1 2 3 1 1 1 3 1 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhanced opportunities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 1 2 1 3 1 1 1 1 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diplomatic service</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Studies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 1 1 3 1 1 1 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching/Lecturing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 1 2 1 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Translator/Interpreter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 1 1 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hotel industry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 1 3 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scientific/engineering</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 1 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Specialists</td>
<td></td>
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<td>2. Religion and culture</td>
<td>Religion</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1 1 1 1 2 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The linguistic skills</td>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9 7 3 1 4 1 1 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listening</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Read - General</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1 1 1 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reading - Quran</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 1 1 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Translation</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 2 1 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 2 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Writing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 1 1 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Status of the language</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Arabic is an &quot;easy&quot; subject</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4 2 1 1 1 1 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arabic is an important language</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 1 1 1 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Added social mobility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 1 1 1 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>Views on Arabic made compulsory</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4 5 1 1 1 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Misconceptions about the language</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4 1 1 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Limited use of the language</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 1 1 1 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Standard is low</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1 1 1 1 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Teachers, Teachers</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1 1 1 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resource materials</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1 1 1 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resource mats. and Curriculum</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1 1 1 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9 2 2 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Curriculum Need for change</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 2 1 1 2 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contact hours</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 2 1 1 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rationalisation</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 1 1 1 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Solution</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maintenance</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1: A composite list of all categories, sub-categories and themes for all the interviews, as well as the number of references made to each
5.3 Background to categories 1, 2 and 3

The questions used in the interviews will be restated and the external decoders comments mentioned. Under each theme a select group of responses will be quoted and discussed. At the end of the list will appear a discussion of each category and an appropriate literature check.

Question one was "Why did you study Arabic in school? / Why do you think students choose Arabic in schools?"
This question elicited responses on the need for or reasons for the study of Arabic.

Question two was "How do you think you would use Arabic? / What scope would there be for students who have completed Arabic to matric? / Where and how do you think they will use Arabic after matric?"
This question aimed at identifying the results or outcomes expected after the study of Arabic.

The responses to both these questions were classified into the following three categories: careers, religion and culture, and the linguistic skills.

The external decoder called the first two categories the "selection of the subject" and "application of the subject". Both these categories had to do with the attitudes or perceptions towards Arabic. The third category was covered within what she initially called the "study skills" in curriculation.

5.3.1 Category 1: Careers

This category of careers included all references made to long term career prospects in which a knowledge of Arabic would assist, either in finding suitable employment in the
Arab world or in South Africa. Questions one and two of the interviews generated specific answers related to careers.

In this category, the themes were clustered into ten headings. Most of the careers mentioned required proficiency in terms of speaking and listening, followed by reading and translation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Number of references made</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.3.1.1 Travel abroad / Tourism</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.1.2 Trade / Business</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.1.3 Enhance opportunities</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.1.4 Studies</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.1.5 Diplomatic service</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.1.6 Teaching / Lecturing</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.1.7 Translator / Interpreter</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.1.8 Hotel industry</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.1.9 Scientific / Engineering</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.1.10 Specialists</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.2: The careers mentioned and the number of references made by respondents

5.3.1.1 Travel abroad and tourism

A number of respondents indicated the importance of speaking the language, in particular for the religious purpose of facilitating the pilgrimage (Umra or Hajj). Saudi Arabia featured prominently as their number one destination, followed by Egypt and other Gulf countries. They emphasized the value of Arabic not only because of the ease with which they would be able to communicate but also because they could get things done easily. There was also value in understanding the other culture adequately and to react accordingly. These views can be summarised in the following responses:

➢ ... travelling, making contact with people of other nations, ... or studying in a foreign language or even seeing the world through a different light, or break down the barrier between you and others (I, 6:39);
... you can find your way around. Whereas if you do not know the language you will have a tremendous difficulty and you feel very frustrated sometimes. You tend to even curse the Arabs sometimes because you don’t know the language ... (I, 13:56)

... we have a growing Muslim community within South Africa. Many of whom go on Haj to Saudi Arabia so in terms of tourism for religious purposes certainly, and I think there would also be a growing tourism trade from South Africa for just ordinary tourist purposes although at the moment I don’t think the region is that well known as a tourist destination (I, 11:52).

A career directly linked to tourism was that of a travel agent:

... there are growing opportunities. ... The tourism sector, for example now at Jan Smuts Airport you see there is an Info-Africa there and they have Arabic as one of the languages. It’s got Chinese, French, and Arabic written so if that is an index of things to come in the country then the tourism sector is going to develop first ... (I, 12:54)

Tickets, communicating with a lot of foreigners and that because there is quite a handful of them that come in here and that are non English speaking and so forth (I, 3:33).

5.3.1.2 Trade

After South Africa’s re-entry into the international arena of trade, many respondents mentioned the increasing number of trade and business opportunities with the Arab world. The students felt that if they had Arabic, they would be strategically positioned to take up these opportunities that are opening up. The adults interviewed also saw great promise in the economic sphere with careers in trade, industry and the business sector generally.

... when you promoting South Africa as an investment, a commercial or a tourist centre, and you are focusing on those areas of the world and it is vital that you use the vernacular and it is vital that we promote ourselves in the Arabic tongue, for example you know the big investment potential like Saudi Arabia and the Gulf, etc ... (I, 4:35)

The region is obviously well known for its oil supplies so strategically for South Africa having people with knowledge of that region would help in negotiations over oil
supplies. Also it is just a very wealthy region and possibly there are, I'm sure, many South African products that could be exported to the Middle East region. Like countries like Oman for example are currently expanding their trade links with South Africa .... Therefore having South Africans that are literate in Arabic that also understand the culture, therefore able to conduct themselves in the region without any embarrassing misunderstandings would be a great trade benefit to South Africa as well (I, 11:52)

➢ South African missions abroad or multinational conglomerates from the Middle East investing in our country would need translators, facilitators, people who understand the cultural norms of the Arab world (I, 5:37).

Other careers indirectly linked were that of translators and negotiators:

➢ There are lots of goods that are being manufactured here now, people who want to translate the products, instructions, manuals, etc. (I, 10:49)

5.3.1.3 Enhanced opportunities

Apart from travel and trade, there was also the possibility of merely increasing a person's opportunity to either pursue a career abroad, or to be more functionally competent in the midst of Arab guests or tourists. These two responses capture the general feeling:

➢ ... I might be able to get a job overseas (F, 2:6)
➢ ... as an opening to the outside world (I, 6:39).

5.3.1.4 Studies

Studies were interpreted by respondents in three ways. Firstly, respondents saw the possibilities of students studying further in Arabic as a subject with the related advantages of finding a better job.

➢ ... nowadays going to study in other countries and also working in other countries (I, 8:43).
Secondly, there are now increasing opportunities for scholarships to study abroad. Persons having some background in this field are at a distinct advantage:

- increased accessibility, in terms of scholarships, they will be enhancing their position of acquiring the scholarships in the Arab world because of the fact that they know Arabic, and that they have some basic understanding of Arabic (F, 5:37).

Thirdly, the possibility of furthering their studies in the religious field:

- they might want to further their studies Quranically. They might want to study the Quraan so they have got some knowledge about the grammar ... (I, 19:68)
- many of them after matric go to the Darul-Uloom to do the Moulanas course. ... and some of them have gone to Jordan to further their studies (I, 8:43).

5.3.1.5 Diplomatic service

The new diplomatic ties that South Africa has forged with Middle East heralds the beginning of a new chapter in the history of South Africa. The Department of Foreign Affairs require persons with expertise in Arab affairs, culture and language. Parents in particular were keen to see their children enter the diplomatic service due to the prestige attached to it. They used adjectives like “wonderful”, “effective” and “great”. The respondents mentioned the following:

- South Africa and the Arab world have forged a whole lot of diplomatic links ... (I, 16:62)
- there would be a lot of scope for people, who can work in the foreign office department (I, 10:49).
5.3.1.6  Teaching or lecturing

Some respondents mentioned the careers of either teaching or lecturing, either at a school, university or Darul Uloom (religious seminary). The following are some response in this regard.

➢ ... make use of it in the Islamic field, teaching in private schools, teaching in the departmental schools, ... (I, 1:27)

➢ ... there is growing interests from abroad, ... Malaysia, Indonesia, America, Europe, the Middle East ... can lead to a selective possibility of a lectureship in Arabic at a campus where there is no Arabic. Starting off perhaps on a part time basis and then developing to a full time possibility (I, 12:55).

5.3.1.7  Translator and/or interpreter

The ability to translate or interpret is another skill that would facilitate meaningful interaction. Respondents mentioned the following:

➢ ... more dignitaries coming over and sometimes to converse with them and you being an interpreter for your country ... (F, 3:14)

➢ ... job opportunities, ... specifically with translation, that opens up one avenue. ... playing the role of facilitators in business. It opens up a whole arena of opportunities for students studying Arabic ... (I, 5:37).

5.3.1.8  Hotel management

This career in the hospitality industry links up with the trade and travel themes mentioned earlier.

➢ ... in a position for hotel management ... in tourism there is going to be bigger scope for Arabic ... (F, 1:2).
5.3.1.9 Scientific or engineering field

Further job opportunities were mentioned in the scientific and engineering fields. This was evident from a respondent who said:

... Arab speaking countries, they are not so advanced in the technological side, ... there might be lots of job opportunities because mostly the Arab speaking countries are normally exporters of oil or agricultural products ... and not lots of engineers, technicians, scientists, so they need lots of people. If you are going into those fields you can apply for a job there (F, 2:11).

5.3.1.10 Specialists

Two specialist fields were also mentioned, that of Arabists and those who could write stories for children. Respondents mentioned the following:

➢ ... the department of foreign affairs, would need Arabists and Arabic specialists not only in terms of their knowledge in terms of that part of the world but also the language which obviously facilitates our dealings with that part of the world (I,4:35)
➢ ... (we need) literature that is conducive to South African consumption you see. We need stories and books written, dealing with our local historical facts. ... (I,10:50).

Summary and literature check

It is clear from the discussion above that there are distinct career possibilities for those who are proficient in Arabic. The opportunities abroad open up a wider range of career choices and more scope through marketable skills.

The careers alluded to by the respondents all relate to being able to speak Arabic fluently with Arabs. The implication for this to the curriculum framework would be a greater emphasis on the oral component rather than the reading and writing component which has been the case so far.
It is interesting to note that some respondents preferred using the first person “I” while others remained detached by using the third person “they” or “people.” This indicates that for some the opportunities are real and that they were thinking seriously about these.

Heugh in her article entitled “Trading Power” (1995:23) discussed the implications of globalisation within the South African context. She stated that the economic reality of South Africa’s trading partners is that they are increasingly non-English speaking. Germany is South Africa’s second largest trade partner, Japan the fourth and China the fifth, which implies that as priorities SA should be promoting German, Japanese and Mandarin as important languages for trade.

Since SA is also the economic hub of the subcontinent, if not the entire continent, then there is no doubt that the languages spoken in Africa like French, Swahili, Portuguese and Arabic should also be promoted.

5.3.2 Category 2: Religion and Culture

The responses to Questions 1 and 2 generated further answers which related to the personal lives of many respondents.

In this category, the religious and cultural need for the study of Arabic came across very clearly. There was a distinct need to study Arabic in order to access Islamic literature in particular the Quran and Hadith, and the Friday khutbas (lectures) in the mosques. The following table identifies the number of references made to the themes of religion and culture.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Number of references made</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.3.2.1 Religion</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.2.2 Culture</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.3: The themes of religion and culture and the number of references made
5.3.2.1 Religion

The vast majority of respondents alluded to the religious need and value for studying Arabic within the Muslim community. They were convinced that their understanding and appreciation of the Quran would increase. This was evident from the following:

➢ In South Africa the utility would be to understand the Quraan and the Hadeeth and the Khutbahs ... (I, 10:49)

➢ Some ... able to use it in the private capacity to improve their own knowledge of the Quraan and of Islam in general (I, 1:27)

➢ In South Africa it is based mainly on religious reasons. They want to read the Quraan and they feel Arabic is the language of the scripts and the holy language (I, 2:29).

5.3.2.2 Culture

The value of interpersonal appreciation and cross-cultural understanding should not be underestimated. The Arab world is also part of the Muslim world, and therefore an understanding of the culture would facilitate their intermixing and marriage. The cultural references made were within the Muslim and Arab context:

➢ ... and internationally for Muslims they need to know who they are. That can only be done through the tool of Arabic where you get an insight into the text of Islam both modern and classical and that makes for better South African citizens .... (I, 12:54)

➢ There are some fantastic cultural and historical places to visit in the region. Some of the older civilisations, I mean there are the Tigrus and Euphrates Valley region is the cradle of civilisation. So people interested in historical issues would find it a fascinating region (I, 11:52)

➢ ... you will be able to understand other peoples culture as well (F, 1:1).
Summary and literature check

Some of the responses in this category linked up once again to the career prospects with tourism and travel. These two categories are also linked in that they both could be career orientated.

In a comprehensive survey conducted by Belnap (1987:29-42) with students studying Arabic at twenty four universities in the United States and Canada, it is interesting to note the similarity in results. A total of 568 students’ responses were analysed. Their reasons for the study of Arabic are close to that of students in South Africa, even though the rankings differ slightly.

That survey ranked the reasons as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for taking Arabic</th>
<th>Total times chosen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Literature and culture</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Want to travel/live in Middle East</td>
<td>324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To talk to Arabs</td>
<td>290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research original sources</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Like languages</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To read Quran or religious texts</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General education requirement</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have Arab friends</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For fun</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To prepare for a career</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linguistic research</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To speak with their family</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To learn one’s own language</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required course for major</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For the challenge</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (to teach Arabic, addiction to the language, to not forget, to read the Quran, something unusual to put on a resume, or to travel to Middle East)</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.4: The reasons for taking up Arabic ranked in order of popularity
In the South African context, the study conducted by the researcher and the American study were similar in the reasons cited, even though the rankings may be different here and there. All the above stated reasons did appear as responses in the interviews conducted.

Two new reasons were mentioned and these were:

➢ "To speak with their family" or "to learn one's own language." This reason applies to Arabs who would like to further their studies of their native language in order not to forget it while living in an alien environment.

➢ “It was a required course for a major” implying that they needed this course as part of the degree requirement.

Some of their reasons for continuing with their study of Arabic at university level were:

1. career
2. culture and literature
3. required for major
4. challenge
5. other

A major difference between the two studies was that the US study targeted undergraduate level university students who were already on their respective career paths, whereas the South African study focused on South African students in secondary schools who were considering possibilities in terms of their careers. Nevertheless, the similarities are startling.

5.3.3 Category 3: The linguistic skills

The oral-aural skills featured very prominently which followed by reading, translation ability, vocabulary, writing and grammar.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The linguistic skills</th>
<th>Number of references made</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.3.3.1 Speaking</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.3.2 Listening</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.3.3 Reading: General literature</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.3.4 Reading: Quran</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.3.5 Translation</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.3.6 Vocabulary</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.3.7 Writing</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.3.8 Grammar</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.5: The linguistic skills and their importance

5.3.3.1 Speaking

Most student respondents mentioned the importance of communicating verbally.

- And you see if we know how to communicate better then the writing becomes easier because writing is just words on paper, that’s all. You will then have all the aspects of the language done, you have writing and communication (F, 2:8)
- It is more important to learn how to speak Arabic because once you know how to speak it, then whatever you seeing, you just write it down... (F, 2:9)
- It will make the language more interesting because if you do grammar you tend to get bored with it. If you talk or communicate it makes it interesting (F, 3:16)
- The oral work come first and then the rules. (F, 1:4).

Whether the spoken language should be first classical or the colloquial is a thorny issue. According to one respondent, a university lecturer who has had experience with both, she stated that:

- I know that some people think that you should learn the colloquial first and then learn the classical. I don’t agree with that, I learnt the colloquial when I was a child and I found it very difficult afterwards to learn the classical because we never used case endings. Lots of things like this and it just didn’t make sense, it was so confusing for a long time. It is much better to learn the classical and then you can learn the spoken easier afterwards because lots of the classical words reappear in the spoken but in a simplified form. It’s like, you see I am Dutch and when I came to South Africa it took
about two weeks for me to understand Afrikaans but afterwards I could well understand them and just attach the Dutch of it. I think it is much more difficult for an Afrikaner who does not know any Dutch at all to understand Dutch. It is just that way. The one language is a bit more sophisticated and more developed and therefore it is better to learn that and then sort of to downgrade to the colloquial after that. ... when I started studying Arabic then officially in Holland it was just only text, classical text and things like that and I was a bit frustrated that we did not go into the more practical side like newspapers and so on .... (I, 2:30)

➢ Well colloquial ... You would have to have classes, like in the European universities and the American universities now you always have a mother tongue speaker among the staff and they give either daily or three times a week lectures in the spoken language, reading newspapers, and having normal conversations with the students about all kinds of daily matters you know. (I, 2:29)

➢ So if we were to have ... someone who joins the department and is a mother tongue speaker ... we will have to decide from which country we will want a person like this because colloquials are very ... er .... I think our bet would be Egypt more than anything else. ... It would cost a lot of money to keep a person like that down ... So I don’t think it is a very practical thing to teach them colloquial ... at least understand ... the fusha ... because you can make yourself understood with that and you can listen to news reports and read the papers and listen to lectures at universities (I, 2:29).

5.3.3.2 Listening

Linked to speaking is the ability to listen. This skill could be practiced in the class, and used within religious settings like in the mosque with prayers or sermons:

➢ ... I think more listening comprehensions. I found that to be very good. We had a period everyday and we were questioned, that was very effective. The listening comprehension was a passage and then you have to answer. It trains your listening skills as well as your understanding because you know they will be questioning you on that (F, 3:17).
You know it is a place of worship, and following the service, but you can't speak the language. It is difficult I think ... (I, 16:64)

... the Imam of the Haram came, Imam Sudaisie. He gave a talk in Arabic and to just sit there and listen and you don't understand what he is saying (F, 4:19)

You can understand the Khutbahs even (F, 4:19).

5.3.3.3 Reading: General literature

The interrelatedness of the skills cannot be denied. Learning one skill often has a positive influence on another as indicated by the following respondent:

...also to understand Arabic writing. If I find something interesting I can just read it, I would not have to translate it with an Arabic dictionary or anything (F, 2:6).

Reading can also be an effective means for self study and lifelong learning:

Where did you study Arabic?

I didn’t. I picked it up through the books and dictionaries and so forth (I, 3:33).

The need for more resources, in particular simplified readers was stated clearly:

... there must be more readers ... we do not have enough readers, for our kids, simple readers (I, 18:67).

5.3.3.4 Reading: Quran

A great need expressed by most respondents was the ability to read the Quran with understanding:

... a limited knowledge of the language would be necessary ... also the Quran we just read it like parrot fashioned, we do not understand it. Like if we have vocabulary and a few application rules we will understand it even a little bit of the Quran ... (F, 2:5).
5.3.3.5 Translation

The ability to translate both written and spoken speech was important:

- So at least you can read and understand what is going on. And also these moulanas that come from Saudi Arabia they speak in Arabic, they give lectures in the Mosque. At least you can understand what they are trying to convey to you. The messages (F, 2:5)

- ... I would be using Arabic when I am doing my Aalim course or even if I am giving lectures and ... because you know the Arabic language and the vocab that you have, you can even translate that you know (F, 2:6).

5.3.3.6 Vocabulary

The limited vocabulary learnt was a factor that severely hampered learners' efforts to become more proficient:

- By the end of the day our vocabulary in Arabic must be very good (F, 4:20).

- ... the girls. They put in the effort. From standard eight they learnt their vocabulary so they knew all the words. So to construct a sentence they could do it easily. ... We never learnt our vocabulary so in order to come there and just translate an English sentence into Arabic it's a difficult part because our vocabulary wasn't good (F, 4:20).

5.3.3.7 Writing

The ability to write and correspond in Arabic was important to these respondents:

- ... because if you want to write a composition we can't do it ourselves, we need your help or the dictionaries help. This is because we do not have vocabulary and we do not know how to phrase the things so then that is why we had to prepare one because we needed outside help (F, 2:9).

- ... also if he has a penpal from Arab speaking countries he can reply your letters in Arabic as well (F, 2:11).
5.3.3.8 Grammar

Accuracy of use in the language cannot be denied. The incidental use and application of grammar was highlighted by this respondent:
➢ ... every year we used the same textbook.
Which textbook are you using?
“First steps in Arabic grammar”..... I think we should definitely introduce orals instead of introducing all the rules. As the rules ... come up ... you should mention it and explain the rule. This would make it easier to remember (F, 1:4).

Summary and literature check

The importance of oral communication has been stressed over and over by many respondents. This has been collaborated by Belnap in his survey (1987:36) who also found that the most frequently suggested improvement for course offerings at universities was the need for “more speaking in class,” followed by “more listening comprehension.” These findings allude to the general malaise of Arabic programmes which is insufficient oral communication.

An interesting difference between teachers and students was observed by Belnap in another survey conducted (1992:55) in which teachers were asked to rank the importance of skills and this was compared to ranking of the skills done by students. Teachers felt that reading, followed by listening, then speaking and finally writing should be taught. Students however ranked listening and speaking first, followed by reading and writing. Among the student respondents in this study, a similar ranking of the oral skills first and then followed by the written skills was observed.

In terms of the sequencing of the type of Arabic to be taught, Belnap (1987:38) conducted another survey with the Center for Arabic Studies Abroad (CASA) students who had
studied in an institution where oral MS skills were strongly emphasised. He found that not only did these students do well in MS, but they also seemed to learn the dialect better and faster than those who did not have a strong background in spoken MS. This finding has a direct bearing on the possible route we should adopt in South Africa.

There was also considerable agreement about the study of a colloquial. They mentioned specifically that they would like more colloquial taught in MS courses, or one or more full dialect courses offered. At least 50 percent indicated that a colloquial is either important or very important to their future plans. The problem was in deciding which colloquial to offer which is constrained by what they would prefer to study. The results on the preferred colloquial were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preferred colloquial</th>
<th>Number that chose it</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Levantine</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egyptian</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gulf</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North African</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraqi</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.6: The preferred colloquial ranked in order of priority

This study was conducted with students in America who have had continuous contact with the entire Arab world, whereas students in the South African context have had the embargo against travel and trade lifted recently. Historically, the South African link has been more with the Gulf (in particular Saudi Arabia) rather than with the rest of the Arab world. In terms of employment possibilities also, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf were more important than north Africa.

5.4 Categories 4 and 5

The question 3 in the interviews that was asked to Group A respondents was "What do you think of the Arabic that you were offered or was offered in secondary schools?" It generated a number of positive and negative comments listed as category four; and under
category five as teachers, resource materials and the curriculum. The external decoder initially called this methodology, teaching style, learning experience and learning opportunity in curriculation.

**5.4.1 Category 4: Status of the language**

The status of the language was clustered into firstly the positive comments and then followed by the negative comments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive comments</th>
<th>Number of references made</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.4.1.1 Arabic is an “easy” subject</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4.1.2 Arabic is an important or major language</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4.1.3 Added social mobility</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 5.7: The positive comments made by respondents*

**5.4.1.1 Arabic is an “easy” subject**

Most of the student respondents alluded to the ease of the subject, as compared to other subjects. This was attributed to the way the teachers taught the subject, which seemed to be motivational and enjoyable.

➢ They feel Arabic is much easier than many other subjects because they have some acquaintance with it ... (I, 1:21).

➢ ... it was very easy for me ... (F, 3:14).

**5.4.1.2 Arabic is an important or major language**

According to many respondents, they agree that Arabic is an important international language, ranking within the top ten most highly utilised languages in the world. They said:
Whenever Islam spread, it spread with the language and the Arabic language is spread all over the world. It is one of the major languages and I mean after English and French, Arabic is spoken in very many countries ... (F, 1:2).

Apart from the language being important, knowing the language made some respondents also feel important and recognised:

> And some people just feel more important if they know more. And now they know another language. It is something interesting (F, 2:5)

> ... it was a language that I wanted to learn. It was an inspiration to learn (F, 5:22).

5.4.1.3 Added social mobility

Another reason given is the added social possibilities that are available with a knowledge of Arabic.

> I had some white friends at the technikon and they were interested in the language and I just explained it to them and they were quite fascinated with it (F, 3:12).

The negative comments

The negative comments made concerning the language could be clustered into the following four groups:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Number of references made</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.4.1.4 Views on Arabic being made compulsory</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4.1.5 Misconceptions about the language</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4.1.6 Limited use of the subject</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4.1.7 Standard is low</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.8: The negative comments made by respondents

5.4.1.4 Views on Arabic being made compulsory

In this theme there were strong feelings expressed about whether the subject should be optional or compulsory. This dilemma is one that faces students at the Muslim private...
schools. At state schools this is not a problem as the subject is only offered as an optional choice.

Those who felt that it should be optional said that:

- I don't know whether it should be a compulsory subject, but certainly as an optional subject it would be very useful (I, 11:52).

Others who were in favour of it being made compulsory had the following to say:

- It was compulsory in our school to a certain extent. You see, it is a Muslim school and I assume that they would like the students to learn Arabic (F, 3:12).

Some who took it up because it was a compulsory offering were affected quite negatively:

- ...they feel since it is a compulsory subject they either leave the school or they start hating the language (F, 5:25).

A possible way out would be to make it compulsory in Muslim private schools in Standards 8 and 9, and making it optional in the matric year:

- I think they should make it compulsory but as a seventh subject so when you come to matric you will have a choice either to do Arabic as a sixth subject or not write the exams (F, 5:25).

5.4.1.5 Misconceptions about the language

There were a number of misconceptions about the language. These relate to the following:

1. Arabic as an easy subject which is linked to high marks.

- ... why some people choose Arabic is for all the wrong reasons. They think it's an easy subject, number one, and you can get an A at the end of the year and it improves your aggregate ... no one gives support for doing it, so then they think it's just a by-the-way subject (F, 5:26).
2. Some of the teachers do not display the kind of commitment students normally expect from teachers:

➢ ... the teachers would see the marks in Arabic and feel they are doing good, so they think the subject is a very easy subject so they can take it for granted ... I think that's a big problem in this school they don't take Arabic seriously, they take it for granted (F, 5:25).

3. How the subject is put across to the students during course selection programmes is another problem:

➢ I think the teachers should encourage the pupils more because at the end of the year when the teacher speaks to the principal he tells him how important Maths is, how important Science is but he won't emphasise much on Arabic. I think that discourages some of the pupils (F, 5:26).

4. Parents and a lecturer having an incorrect understanding about the language.

➢ ... I think Arabic is only taught at Muslim schools, I don't think at state schools or private schools. At private schools, yes they would teach it. You might know better than me but I don't think that they teach it (I, 2:31).

5. Some other general misconceptions relate to cultural stereotypes, like polygamy is a norm, rather than an exception; or it's easy to find a wife; and all Arabs wear veils:

➢ I need some assessment revival or so (laugh..). I will maybe come back with an Arab wife. ... She will have a veil ... (I, 6:40).

6. The difference between Arabic and other languages also became blurred. Some mistook the one for the other because of their close geographic and in some instances linguistic similarity:

➢ ... The science of Algebra comes around from Persian ... (F, 5:22).

It was in fact an Arab al-Khwarizmi who wrote the Arabic book “Al-jabr wal muqabala” from which the science of Algebra originates.
5.4.1.6 Limited use of the subject

Although respondents indicated that they found the subject easy, there appeared to be limited use and scope for it:

➢ In our situations you are hardly approached by anybody to speak the language ... we would be in a situation where you'd never use the language, almost never. Since I've left school I've never used the language unless you study further (F, 3:13)
➢ The application is limited naturally unless you become a teacher ... (I, 1:27).

5.4.1.7 The standard is low

Some students were frustrated about the low level of Arabic. They felt the amount and level of work should be increased. There was also too much theory and not much practical application:

➢ ... I felt the standard to be low because from the beginning you are learning Arabic grammar and you are learning vocabulary all the time so when you come to the higher standards you look for something more stimulating. ... Even the examination papers were not as stimulating as I wanted it to be. ... I think it is very limited, their choice of surahs and prose and things like that (F, 3:14).
➢ I think the standard should be higher (F, 4:20).

Summary and literature check

This category looked at the positive and negative comments made by respondents.

According to The World Almanac Book of Facts (1996:642), the most commonly spoken languages in the world in order of prevalence are:

Table 5.9: The most commonly spoken languages in the world on the next page
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Native speakers</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mandarin</td>
<td>844</td>
<td>975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindi</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bengali</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portuguese</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malay-Indonesian</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.9: The most commonly spoken languages in the world (The World Almanac Book of Facts, 1996:642)

Arabic has been ranked as the sixth most widely used language in the world. The international status awarded to the language makes it a useful tool for communication throughout the world.

5.4.2 Category: 5 Teachers, resource materials and the curriculum

In this category three sub-categories were identified.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-categories</th>
<th>Number of references made</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.4.2.1 Teachers</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4.2.2 Resource materials and methodology</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4.2.3 Curriculum</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.10: The subcategories of category 5

5.4.2.1 Teachers

The comments made about teachers were contradictory. Some felt that Arab teachers were better:
I think we also owe this to the Arabic teacher. ... only speaking Arabic. He is an excellent teacher. In the past six years, I don't think we could of asked for a better teacher (F, 5:23).

Others held a contrary opinion.

... the Arab teachers are not equipped to deal with the English language. Like our past teachers who always could not get the message across to us (F, 5:23).

The frequent changes of teachers was a critical problem in some schools. In two of the five focused interviews, this phenomenon emerged strongly because a number of teacher changes were made in those schools over a short period of time:

... my personal problem in school was changing teachers because every year we should get new teachers. The new teacher does not know exactly what you know and what you learnt, so they should start again ... Next year, you get another teacher who does the same thing and you don't know anything (F, 5:23).

Six teachers in the period of two years (F, 5:23).

5.4.2.2 Resource materials

The comments made about the present books used were contradictory. Some felt the books were adequate and good enough:

An-naasheen is much better in that there are exercises in which you have to fill in the missing words, put the sentences in the correct order, you can utilise the work much better ... (F, 1:3).

Others felt the books needed to be revamped:

... you do the same things and it becomes boring. An-naasheen we have completed about three books and it is the same settings (F, 1:3).
You can make the textbooks more brighter. More colourful. It's so depressing looking at the black and white pictures all the time (F, 1:3).

According to one teacher there is a distinct need for improving the present state of books and resources available in Arabic:

... it is not good enough that is why we are designing something now. "A" is busy with the research to try and produce something that would suit the South African context. We are using something that has been produced in the Middle East for a different target group and we are trying to apply those methods. The methods are good, we are trying to apply that text here in our situation here in South Africa which we are finding that it has its limitations (I, 17:66).

Linked to resources was the issue of teacher methodology. There were many deficiencies in this regard. The problems mentioned were:

- We used to swot the dialogue off by heart, but that was of no use to us (F, 1:4)
- ... we wrote this Arabic paper yesterday and we wrote composition and letter most of us, 90% of the Arabic pupils I know, went home and actually prepared a composition and learnt it off by heart. Now if we had sufficient knowledge on the Arabic language, and communication, I think we would not have had to prepare (F, 2:8)
- ... we can get many people to come to the Arabic class, many learned people in Arabic and speaking with us, discussing with us, on the basis that we know and while they speaking we are actually learning. ... Then the next day or next week you have two people coming and speaking, giving an Arabic dialogue (F, 2:10)
- Maybe we should introduce "Ifta Yaa Simsim" to all the Arabic students (F, 2:10).

A strong suggestion made was to consider alternative teaching methods, implying that something seriously was amiss with the present situation:

- ... what we should do is look at the way Arabic is taught at an Islamic institute, maybe we can learn from there (F, 1:3)
At all levels, for primary, secondary and tertiary education and institutes. Just see all
the methods that they use and find the most successful method. The method in which
the pupils learn the fastest .... So just use the same techniques and everything and then
maybe it will work out (F, 2:9)

... the approach is what makes it different really. ... If your approach is right you can
make it really attractive especially up to standard nine you are not bound by the
syllabus as such because of the internal exams (I, 8:45)

I think the problem is that most of the teachers would want to go by the syllabus. They
will just do the certain concept, whereas our teacher he will not just go by the syllabus
he will concentrate on speaking, talking to each other. .... I found it when we do the
syllabus, we have to have notes in our books and that was very boring. When you just
come in, they teach a certain concept and you don’t understand it and he goes out. Our
present teacher when he comes in, he just picks up a certain topic and we speak about
it and we only speak in Arabic. In other classes we speak in English and it defeats the
purpose of learning Arabic. When you learn a concept and you do not practice you
don’t understand it (F, 5:23).

5.4.2.3 Curriculum

According to one respondent superficially it appeared as if everything was in order:

... It meets the requirements of the Matriculation Board ... So the curriculum is quite
good at the moment. The vocabulary also is within the range of these matriculants
(I,1:28);

but he and another respondent admitted that there was need for review. The content
matter was found to be inadequate and lacking variety:

... we have to revise the syllabus ... (I, 1:28)

... that teachers have been able to wade through the poems ... (I, 1:28)

... now a new list is required because the present list is completely exhausted ...
(I,1:28)
... you need much more time and we need much more activities in Arabic, so ...

(F,5:21).

The problem related to insufficient exposure to the language and the minimal contact with
the language featured strongly:

➢ ...there should be more periods given to Arabic (F, 2:7)
➢ I think we should have Arabic everyday as we have for English and Afrikaans (F,5:24)
➢ ... the problem there is that it's a new language so we would not be able to converse in
Arabic yet. ... we need an extra few years, maybe at that stage, ... at this level the
teacher would be able to converse with us in this language that is being taught. ... need
a little more dedication and a little more time to allow for us to reach that level (F,2:7).

Continuing with the sub-category of the curriculum, the parents interviewed and one
didactics lecturer interviewed obviously did not have a deep insight into the nature and
scope of the curriculum. Their responses were based on speculation. Words like “think”,
“probably” and “I don’t know” predominated in their responses.

➢ ... a friend of mine received a copy of the school syllabus ... so I haven’t seen it yet
(I,2:31)
➢ I think it is good, ... It would probably help them I think (I, 15:59).

A very serious problem for the future lay in the fact that the departments of education
were cutting down on teacher training in the fields of additional languages, and also
catering only for the main subject offerings at schools. The issues of viable student
numbers to continue offering the subject is probably the most important challenge facing
state schools:

➢ ... question of how to re-prioritise the distribution of funds and money and that would
determine the future (I, 12:54-55)
➢ ... the numbers problem. Physically we don’t make up those large numbers in the state
schools and generally it is a rare thing to find a non-Muslim taking Arabic (I, 8:45)
... you train the teachers and then you don't have these numbers, then these people coming out of the universities with Arabic as majors or methods. Many of them don't end up at schools where there is Arabic. So there is a great loss both with regard to numbers of pupils as well as trained teachers too. And then what happens when the teacher comes back with trained methods and hasn't in three or four years been teaching Arabic, then the teacher loose interest too in it. They loose touch with the languages and they loose interest as well (I, 8:45).

As a final long term problem facing all foreign language programs is the issue of maintenance of whatever was taught or learnt. This involves going beyond the classroom, and creating opportunities for use of the language even after the schooling phase, and giving credence to the motto of lifelong learning:

- I think that when you leave school then Arabic is forgotten and you don't have anyone to speak to, so if the school could organise classes for after school to further knowledge of your Arabic, and to learn it better (F, 5:25).
- Even though I've come back (from studying Arabic in Jordan), I think I'm losing a lot, I have no practice so I'm forgetting even though we do have study groups amongst the girls it is week nights and is held in Mayfair and Fordsburg so it's not like I can make it (F, 3:17).

Summary

This category identified areas that needed attention. All future planning in terms of the curriculum will have to address the concerns raised as regards INSET for teacher development, appropriate resource material design and or selection, as well as curriculum design and development. These areas fall outside the scope of the present study.

Literature check

In Belnap's survey (1987:35) when students were asked what they enjoyed the most while studying Arabic, the most common response was the "instructors." Since this crucial
element is missing in some schools, the predominance of negative comments made by students from these schools can be observed in focus groups 1 and 5.

In terms of time spent learning Arabic the more contact hours the better. Armstrong (1985:31) asserts that there is a strong relationship between second language skill attainment and two variables, the amount of time spent in the teaching and learning environment, as well as the time when the language study began. In other words, the greater the exposure the better the results. This opinion is echoed by the respondents.

Armstrong (1985:33) studied the skills of students who returned from overseas where they studied the target language. He found a tremendous improvement in all skills and in their general level of proficiency. These returnees were also more interested in taking additional language courses, having realised the importance of the language and the increased job potential. This alludes to the importance of going abroad and the need for continuous study.

5.5 Synthesis

Category 1: This category clearly identified the importance of studying Arabic for travel, trade and business purposes.

Since SA is also the economic hub of the subcontinent, if not the entire continent, then there is no doubt that the languages spoken in Africa like French, Swahili, Portuguese and Arabic should also be promoted. With a more concerted drive to promote these “foreign” languages, South Africa could be in a strategic position to capture niche markets untapped before and swing things economically in her favour. The up-turn in the economy will have positive spin-offs in terms of job creation and at the same time decrease the crime rate.
It is interesting to note that some respondents preferred using the first person “I” while others remained detached by using the third person “they” or “people.” This indicates that for some the opportunities are real and that they were thinking seriously about these.

Category 2: This category clearly indicated the importance of religious and cultural reasons for the study of Arabic. These reasons are also significant for travel specifically for religious purposes.

Knowing more than one language has become an increasingly desirable additional skill. By being multilingual, it expands the individual’s sense of community. S/he is better able to cross cultural and linguistic boundaries through understanding similarities and differences, thus nurturing a greater sense of respect for others.

Cross-cultural communication would be of benefit to the country on an international level. Policy in South Africa can be shaped by its people; and the leadership in the country can be more well-informed and so play a more meaningful role in world events.

Category 3: The linguistic skills of speaking and listening far outweighed the rest. This indication is also in line with the careers mentioned which implied fluency.

In the current study conducted it is interesting to note that more respondents indicated that they would like to read and understand general Arabic literature rather than the Quran itself. This does in no way detract from the importance of studying the Quran for understanding rather than mere recital.

Another significant finding was that the general skill of reading superseded that of translation and writing ability. This implied that all reading should be with understanding, making translation superfluous from the learners' perspective.

In terms of assessment possibilities in the spoken skill, some interesting suggestions were made. These link up with Continuous Assessment techniques mentioned in OBE literature:
...instead of taking like set orals for this month and set orals for that month. Just progress and not so often maybe after three months take a record and see how the student improved in the class discussions (F, 2:10)

If you want to judge his oral capacity or anything just hold more of these discussions. If a person is able to converse more and express himself better he would get a higher mark (F, 2:10)

... you can have a period in Arabic where the whole class speaks in Arabic from what we know and try to speak to one another in Arabic (F, 2:8).

A respondent went as far as to say that:

> 80% of the Arabic mark should be oral and 20% written (F, 1:4).

The fact that two respondents indicated the writing skill as being important and only one referred to the grammar, does in no way detract from the importance of these skills. The various skills cannot be separated into water-tight compartments and have to be integrated wherever possible.

**Category 4: The status of the language**

As far as the status of the language is concerned, whether the subject is "easy" or difficult depends on a number of factors. In terms of the learner it would relate to his/her intelligence, ability to acquire the language and motivation to learn. As regards to the teachers it depends on how the language is taught, the methods and resources used, and the interest generated in the subject.

Arabic has been ranked as the sixth most widely used language in the world. The international status awarded to the language makes it a useful tool for communication throughout the world.
There is no doubt that Arabic is an input international language allowing its learners greater social mobility. The limited use for the language is dependent on how much the learner makes an effort to use the language especially in the company of Arabs. There are growing opportunities and learners should seize every available opportunity. As far as the standard being low, this is a matter that the School Governing Body (SGB), the principal and teachers have to jointly work out strategies to improve the quality of instruction and the resource materials used.

This category also clearly showed the need for more information required both by teachers and students. An intensive publicity campaign about its actual use would serve the purpose. In this way some of the misunderstandings which severely hampered the promotion of the language at schools could be averted. Also, the need for dialogue between the School Governing Bodies (SGBs) of Muslim schools, teachers and students has to be initiated to discuss the possibilities of offering Arabic as elective modules. This would help in alleviating the pressures related to it being a compulsory offering. The proposed curriculum framework in this study offers such a possibility.

**Category 5: Teachers, resource materials and the curriculum**

There appears to be a mismatch with what the school is doing with what the university is striving for in terms of its teacher development programmes. In one case it was observed that the lecturer did not know what the syllabus entailed. There has to be greater coordination. What is proposed is a closer link between the two.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The situation at present: two separate entities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The proposed change: A greater link between the two entities

*Fig. 5.1: The school and the university - as separate entities and with a link*
In the existing syllabus for Arabic (House of Delegates, 1987) there is heavily skewed weighting in terms of the written and reading components. This can be graphically illustrated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Marks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oral (20%)</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composition and letter (22.5%)</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension (12.5%)</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar and functional Arabic (22.5%)</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature (22.5%)</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 5.2: The current situation in terms of weighting of the various components

The functional use of Arabic using the communicative approach and targeting a proficiency level of 1+ necessitates a review of the present status quo. The suggested alternative is one in which the weighting is changed dramatically to focus on oral competence while still catering for the other skills. Graphically this can be illustrated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Marks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oral (50%)</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composition and letter (10%)</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension (10%)</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar and functional Arabic (15%)</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature (15%)</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the problems mentioned in 5.4.3.1 and 5.4.3.2 above there is clearly a need for an intensive In-Service Course (INSET) for teachers focusing on teaching communicatively and aiming for greater oral proficiency.

In terms of time spent learning Arabic many respondents indicated that it was insufficient. Also, travel abroad for studies in an Arabic environment was crucial for developing fluency.

A creative solution for the small numbers of students wanting to pursue the subject was proposed by one respondent. This response ties up well with the heterogeneous grouping recommended as a change mechanism in OBE:

- It is difficult to get the numbers. What we do in the primary schools is that we’ve made arrangements of sort of combining standard two and three and then you present that as one unit and then combine standard four and five and present that as another unit. That needs a lot of adjustments with regard to teaching methodology and content and things like that. You can’t strictly follow a syllabus that was made two years ago with these changes that have come about everyday. A lot of things in the syllabus have become obsolete with the reality of the class situation (I, 8:46).
5.6 Conclusion

One of the three aims of this study was to identify the needs for the study of Arabic. The interviews held with a number of stakeholders revealed that the two primary reasons for the study of Arabic were the careers related to Arabic which implied a greater amount of proficiency in oral competency. The other main reason was to understand the Quran and to have a better cultural understanding of Arab tradition and culture. This need required proficiency in reading, translating and writing.

These two primary concerns have been used as the basis to propose the curriculum framework which appears in the next chapter.

The remaining three categories, the linguistic skills, the status of the language, and teachers, resource materials and the curriculum have also been used to develop parts of the framework. These categories have also alluded to the problem areas that need to be addressed, and appear as ideas for further research recommendations and the way forward, which also appear in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 6
A CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK FOR ARABIC

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, decisions are to be taken based on the results of all five categories discussed. The information gleaned from the first three categories has been used to make proposals in terms of the type of Arabic to be taught and the modules proposed. The curriculum framework is described in detail, consisting of the five components: a rationale, specific outcomes, performance indicators, range statements and assessment guidelines. Finally the way forward is outlined.

6.2 Type(s) of Arabic to be taught

Before the framework can be described decisions have to be taken about the type or types of Arabic to be taught at South African schools.

Within the South African context, considering the very limited time available (only 360 hours over three years), only one form of the language could be taught adequately to reach the desired proficiency level in terms of oral communication. Emanating from category one, respondents mentioned a wide range of careers, most of which require strong communicative skills (mainly speaking and listening). This could be either in MS or a colloquial dialect.

Category two pointed to the importance of religion and culture as reasons for the study of Arabic. This framework should therefore address these needs by catering for the classical and MS versions of Arabic for reading and understanding, incorporating authentic cultural
and religious literature. The emphasis on the various linguistic skills will be covered within the range statements for each stage of the three stages of the FET phase.

From the data supplied by the respondents interviewed, communicative proficiency is an ideal that should be striven for. This should embrace all the four linguistic skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. Both the linguistic and cultural components of the language should be catered for in an integrated way.

After considering the various arguments in favour of and against the teaching of Modern Standard (MS), a colloquial (Coll), or both; and judging from the importance placed on oral communicative ability by most of the respondents, it would be plausible to consider the following proposals for schools in South Africa:

**Proposal 1:** Teach MS for speaking and listening for the sake of uniformity throughout all schools in South Africa within the restricted time that is available.

A detailed list of arguments in favour of the MS option were stated in chapter 2 (section 2.5.1). The three compelling arguments in favour of this option will be reiterated:

1. It transcends the diversity of the colloquials, and is more universally used and recognised.

2. With the colloquial dialects, the further away you travel from the country in which it is spoken, the less comprehensible you become. Dialect studies are also more cost intensive, and ideally native speakers have to be employed to teach this component.

3. Some of the careers mentioned were that of diplomats, scholars, journalists and businessmen, who would normally work with the educated elite from the Arab world. Therefore learning the MS would be in line with the kind of language they would require in their dealings with these people.
One respondent, the Arabic didactics lecturer at a South African university, who studied both the MS/Cl and the Coll had the following to say:

"I learnt the colloquial when I was a child and I found it very difficult afterwards to learn the classical because we never used case endings. Lots of things like this and it just didn’t make sense; it was confusing for a long time. It is much better to learn the classical and then you can learn the spoken easier afterwards because lots of the classical words reappear in the spoken but in a simplified form... The one language (Cl/MS) is a bit more sophisticated and more developed and therefore it is better to learn that and then to sort of to downgrade to the colloquial after that...." (I, 2:30).

The other points in favour of the MS option are that all South African qualified teachers will be able to adequately cope with and deliver a program in either MS or Cl, and would have difficulty teaching a Coll especially if they have not studied abroad. Also, proficiency in at least one colloquial dialect is necessary at the Advanced and Superior levels of the Guidelines, and since this is not aimed for within the South African context, the study of a dialect could be deferred to a point beyond the FET phase. If a school has the necessary infrastructure to cater for a dialect study (by having a native Arab speaker as a teacher) and learners request it, then the school could consider offering it as an option to MS. Additional dialect studies could also be pursued by individual students as an after school elective offered by other service providers. The main colloquial dialects of Egyptian, Gulf (Saudi and Kuwaiti) and Maghrebi could be possible options in this regard.

Since the communicative ability was considered very important from categories 1, 3, 4 and 5, the writer proposes that about 50% of the time should be devoted to developing the oral skills. This percentage has been arrived at based on category 3 in which the speaking skill far outweighed all the other skills put together. This is also in line with other outcome-based programmes for communicative purposes, like German and French, which are currently offered within the South African school system.
Proposal 2: Teach MS for reading and writing within 20% to 30% of the remaining time. This skill is necessary for reading newspapers, business contracts, and articles for research and study. In category 1 the themes referring to Trade/Business 5.3.1.2, Studies 5.3.1.4, Diplomatic service 5.3.1.5 and Translator/Interpreter 5.3.1.7 all allude to the importance of reading. The skill of writing in MS is mainly for composition and letter writing, which is one of the needs expressed by respondents.

Proposal 3: Teach the Classical (Cl) for reading, understanding and translating religious and literary texts; and for grammar. About 30% of the time should be earmarked for these skills. This need emerges strongly from categories 1, (5.3.1.4 Studies, 5.3.1.6 Teaching/Lecturing and 5.3.1.7 Translator/Interpreter); as well as from category 2 (Religion and culture) and Category 3, in which the skill of reading has been referred to for understanding the Quran and for translation.

The above proposals could be three modules offered concurrently in all three grades, 10, 11 and 12. For total novices to the language, an introductory bridging module could be offered in which the skill of reading and writing could be offered in MS or Cl, as both are the same. Muslim students who have this prior knowledge could be given recognition for this as part of prior learning.

Based on the information provided in chapter 2, section 2.12 (concerning the target vocabulary), chapter 3, section 3.2.2 (relating to contact hours and notional time), and chapter 2, section 2.11 (about proficiency levels), and emanating from the five categories of the empirical study conducted, the following decisions have been made. Over a three-year period the following are realistic targets that could be achieved:
For speaking and listening an alternative between MS and one of the three main varieties of a Colloquial dialect could be offered. The same proficiency level should be targeted for. These modules need not be fragmented and taught as separate entities and should be integrated wherever possible. While three grades have been identified it does not necessarily mean that students be confined within these limits. If a student acquires the proficiency targeted earlier, he/she could commence with the next level immediately. This is in line with the OBE principle of not being time or calendar bound. Conversely, if he/she is not coping, additional opportunities could be awarded the following year. The combination of all the three main modules of each grade’s course should total to 20 credits for certification purposes. At the end of three years the oral proficiency interview could be administered as a summative test to determine the precise extent of proficiency.

The three main modules with their corresponding numbers that could be offered in each grade are:

Table 6.2: The proposed modules for each grade (10, 11 and 12) on next page
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Grade 10</th>
<th>Grade 11</th>
<th>Grade 12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For reading and writing</td>
<td>For novices: 100</td>
<td>MS: 101 or Coll Egyptian 102E, Coll Gulf 102G, or Coll Maghrebi 102M</td>
<td>MS: 201 or Coll Egyptian 202E, Coll Gulf 202G, or Coll Maghrebi 202M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For speaking and listening (from categories 1,3,4 and 5)</td>
<td>A choice of either MS: 103</td>
<td>MS: 203</td>
<td>MS: 303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For reading and writing (from categories 1,2 and 3)</td>
<td>MS: 103</td>
<td>MS: 203</td>
<td>MS: 303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For reading, translating and grammar (from categories 1,2 and 3)</td>
<td>Cl: 104</td>
<td>Cl: 204</td>
<td>Cl: 304</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.2: The proposed modules for each grade (10, 11 and 12)

In theory then, the above proposal could work even in situations where a school cannot offer the curriculum within school hours due to any logistical problem. An outside agency like an NGO or university could offer this curriculum at the rate of two sessions per week (three hours in total) and learners could transfer these credits across into their school certification programmes. With the NQF this possibility is very real.

6.3 The Arabic curriculum framework

The proposals for the framework made in this study emanate from the findings of the various needs and expressed by the respondents. The emphasis has to shift from the writing and translation skill to the oral-aural. Categories 1, 3, 4 and 5 point definitely in that direction. This proposed framework tries to embody what is the current wisdom in teaching and learning of foreign languages and is in no way an ideal curriculum for all times, conditions and circumstances. As perceptions of learning and teaching change, so should this curriculum framework be reviewed at periodic intervals. It should also be open
to flexible interpretation taking into account the realities and constraints within individual schools.

The purposes of this framework is to inform decision-makers about the modules that are proposed, advise teachers, parents and learners about the performance indicators and range statements of the programme and assist teachers in planning the programme of teaching.

The curriculum framework to be proposed will consist of the following sections:
1. A rationale for the study of Arabic
2. A list of specific outcomes for the teaching of all languages in South Africa.
3. The performance indicators for Arabic in each of the three grades, 10, 11 and 12.
4. A list of the range statements for each skill at each of the three grade levels.
5. Assessment guidelines.

The development of learning programmes, specific units of instruction and content material specification is beyond the scope of this framework.

Graphically the framework can be represented as follows:

**Table 6.3: The Arabic curriculum framework**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The curriculum framework</th>
<th>Stage 1 (Gr 10)</th>
<th>Stage 2 (Gr 11)</th>
<th>Stage 3 (Gr 12)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Rationale</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Specific Outcomes (SO's 1-7)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Performance Indicators</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Range statements</td>
<td>Stage 1 (Gr 10)</td>
<td>Stage 2 (Gr 11)</td>
<td>Stage 3 (Gr 12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 4 skills: speaking, listening, reading and writing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cultural understanding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Classical language and study of texts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Assessment guidelines</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.4 Rationale for the study of Arabic

Arabic is an important mode of communication and a link to a culture and civilization with a great historical tradition.

The proposed Arabic curriculum will provide learners with an opportunity to:

- acquire an additional tool for communication (categories 1, 3 and 4).
- understand the Arab world and culture (category 1, 2 and 4).
- increase career opportunities in education, business, world trade, travel and diplomacy (category 1).
- facilitate travel to the Middle East for business, education, pleasure or religious purposes (categories 1, 2 and 3).
- enhance their understanding of the Islamic faith, belief and practices through direct contact with the Quran and Ahadith (category 2).

The study of Arabic will equip learners to be proficient in all four basic skills of the language, that is, to understand it when it is spoken or read, and to use the language with ease when speaking or writing in it. Learners would also develop a better understanding of the culture and tradition of its people, religion, history, geography, social institutions and literature.

The aim of this curriculum is to prepare learners to do the following. The themes they refer to in the empirical study conducted are indicated in brackets:

- Cooperate and compete in the international community (themes: 5.3.1.1 travel and tourism; 5.3.1.2 translation; 5.3.1.3 enhancing opportunities; 5.3.1.5 diplomatic service; 5.3.1.9 scientific and engineering fields and 5.3.1.10 specialists).
- Promote multilingual awareness (themes: 5.3.2.2 culture and 5.4.1.2 Arabic an important language).
- Enhance lifelong learning by increasing self-esteem and encouraging intellectual growth (themes: 5.3.1.4 studies; 5.3.1.6 teaching and lecturing).
- Improve the learner's creativity, self-concept, critical thinking and memory and listening skills (5.3.1.8 hotel management; 5.3.3.2 listening; 5.4.1.3 added social mobility).
- Expand the individual's knowledge base and enrich his/her life (themes 5.3.1.7 translation and interpretation).

The aim of the MS or Coll modules for speaking and listening is to be able to convey and receive oral messages. Learners should be communicatively competent, that is, able to get the message across in spite of grammatical or syntactical errors. These skills will be further refined through continued study.

The aim of the MS for reading and writing is to comprehend literary texts (category 2 religion and culture; themes 5.3.3.3 reading - general literature) and to be able to write compositions and letters (themes: 5.3.3.7 writing and 5.4.1.3 added social mobility). By being linguistically competent they would use the rules of the language with increased accuracy.

The aim of the Cl module is to increase comprehension through reading classical texts (themes 5.3.3.4 reading - Quran and category 2 religion and culture), and to be able to translate these into idiomatic English. They would also be familiar with the grammatical rules of the language (theme 5.3.3.8 grammar).

6.5 Specific outcomes for all languages

The specific outcomes for all languages have been worked out in detail by the National Department of Education (1997: chapter entitled "Performance indicators for language - intermediate phase"). These outcomes have to permeate all language instruction at all levels within the South African school system. The outcomes are:
Specific outcome (SO) 1: Learners make and negotiate meaning and understanding.
Since meaning is central to communication, the outcome aims to develop the learner's
ability to understand, create and negotiate meaning through using appropriate
communication strategies and the four linguistic skills (Categories: 1 careers and 3 the
four linguistic skills).

SO 2: Learners show critical awareness of language usage.
The development of decoding skills (reading and listening) is important for learners to
understand that language is a powerful instrument to reflect, shape and manipulate
people's beliefs, actions and relationships. The learner should be able to interpret and
consciously reflect on how language is used (Categories: 1 careers, 2 religion and culture,
3 reading - translation and 4 positive comments).

SO 3: Learners respond to the aesthetic, affective, cultural and social values in texts.
Learners develop listening, reading and viewing skills to recognize literary devices and
appreciate the use of artistic thought, expression, feelings and attitudes through exposure
to different genre (category 3 - listening, reading and speaking).

SO 4: Learners access, process and use information from a variety of sources and situations.
Learners develop their ability to function in society by locating, evaluating and using
information fully and effectively (Category 5 - resource materials and curriculum).

SO 5: Learners understand, know and apply language structures and conventions in context.
Learners develop grammatical competence by understanding and using grammar correctly.
They are able to edit and translate accurately (Category 3 - grammar).
Learners use language for learning.

Learners develop their use of the language as a tool to learn in all areas. It assists in problem solving, decision making and creative thinking (Categories 1 - careers and 2 - religion and culture).

SO 7: Learners use appropriate communication strategies for specific purposes and situations.

Learners develop their ability to apply communicative strategies within specific situations (Categories 1 - careers; 2 - religion and culture and 3 - speaking, listening and writing).

These outcomes are very comprehensive and embrace all the skills related to language acquisition and use. They are the guiding results or outcomes that should be striven for in all language programmes offered in South Africa, and Arabic is no exception.

6.6 Performance indicators

Performance indicators (PIs) as described in chapter 3 (section 3.6) are benchmarks or indicators of progress. They are the essential or minimal knowledge and skills necessary for learners to be successful at the next level of their educational experience. These benchmarks of achievements guide in the development of classroom based assessments. They describe what the learners know, can do and demonstrate.

PIs also give a standard by which teachers can measure students ability to communicate. Parents and learners are also made aware in advance of what the expectations and outcomes for the course are.

PIs also allow for a variety of content to be used as long as common outcomes are achieved. Teachers can plan their learning programmes and unit standards using the PIs as a guide.
PIs have been specified for each of the three stages of language development, which coincides with the three grades, 10, 11 and 12.

After assessing the Ohio State Board of Education's (1996:14-17) detailed work in their comprehensive model for foreign languages, the writer has found that their performance indicators are relevant even in the South African context. The first three stages lie within the target proficiency levels aimed at in this study and have been modified considering the South African conditions and situation. Arabic would be an optional subject offered over and above the two official language offerings that will be part of the compulsory core of subjects for all learners.

In stage one which aims at Novice - High proficiency (Table 6.1, column for grade 10 and table 6.2), grade 10 learners would begin to develop the ability to speak, listen, read and write in Arabic. They can speak and write using short sentences, words and phrases that have been learnt. They can understand Arabic when it is spoken in short simple phrases and sentences. Short written texts can also be comprehended. Visual cues and gestures would assist in comprehension. The emphasis on the spoken skill implies that most performance indicators should encompass the oral-aural skill.

The performance indicators at this level (op.cit.: 14) are that learners can:

- give and follow simple instructions in order to participate in age-appropriate classroom and cultural activities.
- describe people and things in their immediate environment.
- express preferences, wants and emotions.
- ask and answer questions to provide or obtain information on familiar topics such as daily routines, family and school events.
- exchange essential information such as greetings, leave taking and common classroom interactions using culturally appropriate gestures and oral expressions.
- function in a variety of authentic situations.
comprehend the main idea of short conversations and narratives on familiar topics. The writing and reading skills are to be developed gradually from this stage, and include the following:

- write lists and short paragraphs.
- read and understand authentic materials such as menus, schedules, forms and road signs.
- express simple themes, ideas or perspectives of the target culture.

Stage two is aimed at Intermediate Low proficiency (Table 6.1, column for grade 11 and table 6.2). In Grade 11 learners would be able to participate in simple conversational situations using groups of sentences. They can manipulate words and phrases, making their own combinations. They can write simple ideas, read authentic texts dealing with topics within their age range, and understand the main ideas when listening to conversations dealing with familiar topics.

The performance indicators for this stage (op. cit.: 15) are that learners can:

- demonstrate all previous performance indicators.
- exchange information about personal events and memorable experiences.

To facilitate travel abroad for pleasure, business or religious purposes, the learner should be able to:

- acquire goods or information through interaction and negotiation.
- ask for and give directions.

For reading and understanding, the learner should:

- understand the main ideas and significant details on familiar topics and in selected texts.
- comprehend spoken and written texts.

To communicate effectively, the learner should:

- write short paragraphs and personal letters.
- express personal opinions on a variety of topics, both orally and in writing.
➢ read, listen to, enact and talk about age appropriate folk tales, short stories, poems and songs that are written for native speakers of the target language.

Stage three aims at the Intermediate - middle level of proficiency (Table 6.1, column for grade 12 and table 6.2). Grade 12 learners can begin and sustain conversation by making statements, asking questions and giving appropriate responses. They can comment on everyday topics, both orally and in writing. In writing, learners are able to compose cohesive paragraphs related to familiar topics and personal experiences (narrative and descriptive only). They are able to understand the main ideas and some details in oral discussions and presentations, both live and recorded. They can discern information from authentic texts, both literary and religious.

Stage three performance indicators (op.cit.: 15-16) are that learners can:
➢ demonstrate all previous performance indicators.
➢ exchange information, both orally and in writing, about past, current and future events.
➢ initiate, sustain and close a conversation on a variety of topics.
➢ respond both orally and in writing, to a variety of situations by creatively combining and recombining vocabulary and structures to supply facts and opinions.
➢ understand the main ideas and significant details of live and recorded discussions, narratives and presentations.
➢ understand the main ideas and significant details in authentic written materials such as letters, articles, advertisements and age-appropriate literary texts.
➢ derive new information and knowledge from authentic texts in both reading and listening.

By this stage of the intermediate Middle level of proficiency, learners should be fairly proficient in Arabic, and be able to understand various printed and oral media. These PIs are clearly lodged within the communicative paradigm and cover all four skills although the emphasis is on the oral-aural form as indicated in category 3.
6.7 Range statements

The range statement is a further elaboration on the performance indicators, giving the broad spectrum within which learning occurs.

The range statements for each of the three stages and the four skills are listed below. These have been extracted from the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines for Arabic (Abboud et al, 1989: 371-75, 379-81, 383-5, 388-90), one of the most comprehensive works completed in Arabic to date. The background to these guidelines were discussed in detail in section 2.11. Both the generic guidelines and those specific to Arabic will be indicated under each skill. In addition, the cultural guidelines will also be given for each stage.

6.7.1 Stage one: Grade 10

Guidelines for speaking

The Novice and Intermediate level descriptors apply to both MS and a colloquial dialect.

Novice: the Novice level is characterized by the ability to communicate minimally with learned material. For many learners this level is their entry point into the study of Arabic for the first time. For others who have prior knowledge of reading, they will still require the communicative aspect in terms of the oral skills.

Speaking: Novice - low

Generic: Oral production consists of isolated words and perhaps a few high frequency phrases. Essentially no functional communicative ability.

Arabic: No functional ability to communicate in Arabic. Oral production is limited to a few common loan words often known to English-speakers, such as madina, salam, or isolated words and phrases like bukra, kayfak?, la, na'am, ma'lish, insha Allah.
Speaking: Novice - Mid

Generic: Oral production continues to consist of isolated words and learned phrases within very predictable areas of need, although quantity is increased. Vocabulary is sufficient only for handling simple, elementary needs and expressing basic courtesies. Utterances rarely consist of more than two or three words and show frequent long pauses and repetition of interlocutor's words. Speaker may have some difficulty in producing even the simplest utterances. Some Novice-Mid speakers will be understood only with great difficulty.

Arabic: No functional ability to communicate in Arabic. Oral production is limited to basic courtesy formulae, such as Kayfa haluk?, Shukran-'afwan. Can count up to ten, may be able to name the days and months; can list some common items such as food or clothing, uridu, aaziz, baddi, 'indi, shay, gahwa, khubz, ful, qamis, mi'taf, hiza.

Speaking: Novice-High

Generic: Able to satisfy partially the requirements of basic communicative exchanges by relying heavily on learned utterances but occasionally expanding these through simple combinations of their elements. Can ask questions or make statements involving learned material. Shows signs of spontaneity although this falls short of real autonomy of expression. Speech continues to consist of learned utterances rather than of personalized, situationally adapted ones. Vocabulary centres on areas such as basic objects, places, and most common kinship terms. Pronunciation may still be strongly influenced by first language. Errors are frequent, and in spite of repetition, some Novice-High speakers will have difficulty being understood even by sympathetic interlocutors.

Arabic: Able to satisfy partially the requirements of very basic communicative exchanges. Partial ability to make short statements using simple formulaic phrases, eg, Ismi fulan, tasharrEta; and ask a few simple questions: Ayna fulan? Kamissa'ah? Madha tashrab? Ayna tadrus?
Vocabulary focuses on basic objects and activities, numerals from 1-100, names of immediate family members ab, um, akh, ukht, zawj, zawja; and high frequency place names, misr, amrika, lubnan, shari', madina, madrasa, jami'a.

Pronunciation will often be faulty, and delivery will still be strongly influenced by first language.

Guidelines for listening

The Novice and Intermediate guideline descriptions are based on the assumption that reception involves the ability to comprehend either MS or a colloquial dialect. The novice level is characterized by an ability to recognize learned material and isolated words and phrases when strongly supported by context.

Listening: Novice - Low

Generic: understanding is limited to occasional isolated words, such as cognates, borrowed words and high frequency social conventions. Essentially no ability to comprehend even short utterances.

Arabic: No practical understanding of spoken Arabic. Can identify a few loan words in English such as kabab, qaftan, and names of cities and countries like Libya, Bairut.

Listening: Novice - Mid

Generic: Able to understand some short learned utterances, particularly when context strongly supports understanding and speech is clearly audible. Comprehends some words and phrases from simple questions, statements, high frequency commands and courtesy formulae about topics that refer to basic personal information or the immediate physical setting. The listener requires long pauses for assimilation and periodically requests repetition and/or a slower rate of speech.

Arabic: Able to understand some memorized words within predictable area of need. Understanding is limited to basic needs, Masmuk? Shu ismak? Ismak ai? Min ayna anta? Mumkin ashuf jawazak? Ma'ak ta'shira?; and simple courtesy formulae like ahlan wa
sahlan, ma'assalama, tafaddal, shukran, as well as material relating to everyday objects and situations.

Listening: Novice - High
Generic: Able to understand short, learned utterances and some sentence length utterances, particularly where the context strongly supports understanding and speech is clearly audible. Comprehends words and phrases from simple questions, statements, high frequency commands and courtesy formulae. May require repetition, rephrasing and/or a slowed rate of speech for comprehension.

Arabic: Comprehends a number of memorized utterances in areas of immediate need, involving situations where context is an aid to understanding: for example in a restaurant or store: Shu bitureed? Qadish? Ayyu khidma?; or on the train or bus, Ayna turid an tadhhhab? Raih fayn?
Can understand simple questions and statements on matters such as age, address, weather and daily activities: Ayna taskun al-an? Halatu al-taqs al-yaum hasana; as well as high frequency commands and courtesy formulae. Misunderstandings will frequently occur, even with carefully tailored speech.

Reading
These guidelines assume all reading texts to be authentic and legible. They could be in either classical or MS. Learners who know how to read the Quran could skip this elementary stage.

The Novice level is characterized by an ability to:
- identify isolated words and phrases when strongly supported by context; and
- identify learned material.
Novice - Low
Generic: Able occasionally to identify isolated words and/or major phrases when strongly supported by context.

Arabic: No functional ability in reading Arabic, but may be able to recognize a few isolated symbols in native orthography (such as the numerals 1 to 9).

Novice - Mid
Generic: Able to recognize the symbols of alphabetic and/or syllabic writing system and/or a limited number of characters in a system that uses characters. The reader can identify an increasing number of highly contextualized words and/or phrases including cognates and borrowed words, where appropriate. Material understood rarely exceeds a single phrase at a time, and rereading may be required.

Arabic: Able to read a limited number of isolated words and symbols (numerals, advertisements for Western products) and to recognize a few words regularly encountered in public writing, eg. Qif, and building signs, eg. Mat'am, funduq, matar. Confusion in recognizing the forms of graphemes often leads to misreadings. These are common signs found in the Arab world.

Novice-High
Generic: Has sufficient control of the writing system to interpret written language in areas of practical need. Where vocabulary has been learned, can read for instructional and directional purposes standardized messages, phrases or expressions, such as some items on menus, schedules, timetables, maps and signs. At times, but not on a consistent basis, the Novice-High level reader may be able to derive meaning from material at a slightly higher level where context and/or extralinguistic background knowledge are supportive.

Arabic: Can identify a number of set expressions and memorized material in areas of immediate need. Can recognize all Arabic letters as they occur in any position in a word,
including hamza and alif maqṣura. Where vocabulary has been mastered, can read, for instructional and directional purposes, standardized messages, phrases or expressions, such as some items on menus, eg.: samak, lahm, ma'kulat, mashrubat, 'asir, kubba, kabab; the days of the week; numbers ranging from 1 to 100; months; and simple biographical information such as nationality, address and age: "'umruha khams wa 'ishrun sana, al-'unwan wahid wa 'ishrun shari' ayyar, raqm mi'a sitta wa khamisun, dimashq, suria. Can recognize prepositional phrases using the most common prepositions, eg. Ba'da al-zuhr, 'an qarib, fi al-bank, but is often confused as to their meaning. Material is read only for essential information.

Writing
The guidelines for writing assume that all materials will be composed in Modern Standard Arabic.

Novice: The Novice level is characterized by an ability to produce isolated words and phrases.

Novice-Low
Generic: Able to form some letters in an alphabetic system. In languages whose writing systems use syllabaries or characters, writer is able to both copy and produce the basic strokes. Can produce romanization of isolated characters, where applicable.

Arabic: No functional ability in writing Arabic. Can copy isolated characters, but lacks control with regard to position and shape.

Novice - Mid
Generic: Able to copy or transcribe familiar words or phrases and reproduce some from memory. No practical communicative writing skills.
Arabic: Able to copy the graphemes of the alphabet with minimal difficulty but still is unable to write the appropriate forms of hamza, except in initial position. Can copy short phrases in writing. Can write from memory high-frequency items like numerals from 1-10, days of the week, names of countries and common personal names.

Novice - High

Generic: Able to write simple fixed expressions and limited memorized material and some recombination thereof. Can supply information on simple forms and documents. Can write names, own nationality, and other simple autobiographical information as well as some short phrases and simple lists. Can write all the symbols in an alphabetic or syllabic system or 50-100 characters or compounds in a character writing system. Spelling and representation of symbols (letters, syllables, and characters) may be partially correct.

Arabic: Can reproduce all the symbols of the alphabet in a form recognizable to a native-speaker and write frequently used memorized material such as own name and address and names and addresses of friends and associates. Can at least partially supply basic information required for such forms as hotel reservations and travel documents, for example, names, dates, nationality, eg.: al-Jinsiyya: Amriki; al-Mihna: Talib.

Can write some memorized short sentences, such as 'azizi fulan. Adrus kaza. 'Indi akhawan, sayyarati nisan ila al-liqa'.

Ability to write rudimentary personal communication is partial. Sound to symbol correspondence is developing, but reproduction in written form is still erratic. Control of grammatical features such as word order and gender agreement and errors in the use of such features are a direct reflection of parallel control in speech.
Cultural understanding: Grade 10

To communicate effectively is more than just knowing words, expressions and structures. Learners should also be aware of how close they should stand when communicating, body language and gestures especially when communicating with the opposite sex or with older people. This is especially important within the context of conservative Arab tradition. They should also know how families are structured and how they interact. According to the New York State Department (undated, chap IV: 1) they should also be cognizant of the dynamics of language that are culture laden.

Range statement
Learners should be able to use some key cultural traits of Arab society, as emphasised in Category 2 of the empirical study called Culture, which includes:

1. Recognizing cultural patterns and traditions of Arab culture.
2. Understanding the cultural implications of the spoken language and the dynamics of social interaction.
3. Using appropriate gestures in greeting, leave taking, and maintaining appropriate distance.

Classical language and the study of religious/literary texts: Grade 10

The study of the classical language with the view to understand the Quran and other Islamic literature is an important link to a better understanding of Islam. The need for this also emanates from category 2 referring to religion. It opens up a deeper sense of the ideas, words, myths, culture and tradition of the Arabs who lived 1400 years ago. The sources of prose and poetry studied will provide the cultural link to the different periods.

Range statement
Learners should demonstrate knowledge of some aspects of Arab-Islamic culture and selected facts from the daily life, tradition and history of its people. The main source of
this information would be their reading of authentic historical and literary texts relating the life of the prophet Muhammad and his companions.

6.7.2 Stage two: Grade 11

This stage takes the communicative abilities of the learner to a higher degree, that of the intermediate: The Intermediate level is characterized by the speaker's ability to:
- create with the language by combining and recombining learned elements, though primarily in a reactive mode;
- initiate, minimally sustain, and close in a simple way basic communicative tasks; and
- ask and answer questions.

The detailed description for this stage has been extracted from Abboud et al (1989: 371-75, 379-81, 383-5, 388-90).

**Speaking: Intermediate - Low**

Generic: Able to handle successfully a limited number of interactive, task oriented and social situations. Can ask and answer questions, initiate and respond to simple statements and maintain face-to-face conversation, although in a highly restricted manner and with much linguistic inaccuracy. Within these limitations, can perform such tasks as introducing self, ordering a meal, asking directions and making purchases. Vocabulary is adequate to express only the most elementary needs. Strong interference from native language may occur. Misunderstandings frequently arise, but with repetition, the Intermediate-Low speaker can generally be understood by sympathetic interlocutors.

Arabic: Can ask and answer simple questions: Madha turid? Mumkin tadullani 'ala...? Kayfa tahdur ila ...? Mata tasil al-tairah?; and engage in simple, generally reactive conversation, using present and past, positive and negative forms. Topics may include autobiographical information: 'Umri khamsa wa ishrun 'aman; Ana mutazawwij wa 'indi thalathat awlad, a'mal muwazzafa fi sharika kadha; simple purchases: Kam tukallif hadha?
Bikam hadha? Kam lira/junayh/dinar/dolar thaman kadha?; exchanging social amenities, and accepting and turning down invitations: La astiti'u al-yaum, 'indi mawid.

Most utterances contain fractured syntax and other grammatical errors. Misunderstandings frequently arise from poor pronunciation and limited vocabulary.

Intermediate

The intermediate level is characterized by an ability to understand main ideas and some facts from interactive exchanges and simple connected aural texts.

Listening: Intermediate - Low

Generic: Able to understand sentence length utterances which consist of recombination of learned elements in a limited number of content areas, particularly if strongly supported by the situational context. Content refers to basic personal background and needs, social conventions and routine tasks, such as getting meals, and receiving simple instructions and directions. Listening tasks pertain primarily to spontaneous fact-to-face conversations. Understanding is often uneven; repetition and rewording may be necessary. Misunderstanding in both main idea and details arise frequently.

Arabic: In areas of immediate need or on familiar topics, can understand simple questions: Madha turidu 'an taf'al ba'da dirastati al-lughat il-'arabiyya?

Comprehension areas may include basic information about such things as meals, lodging, transportation: Tu'lan al-khutut al-jawwiya al-suriya wusul rihlatiha raqm kadha min frankfurt; time, simple instructions, making a purchase (including some prices): Kam kilo turid? Ayiz kam kilo?; and personal identification. Misunderstandings frequently arise due to lack of vocabulary and inability to process syntactic information correctly.

Intermediate

The intermediate level is characterized by an ability to understand main ideas and some facts from simple connected texts.
**Reading: Intermediate - Low**

Generic: Able to understand main ideas and/or some facts from the simplest connected texts dealing with basic personal and social needs. Such texts are linguistically noncomplex and have a clear underlying internal structure, for example chronological sequencing. They impart basic information about which the reader has to make only minimal suppositions or to which the reader brings personal interest and/or knowledge. Examples include messages with social purposes or information for the widest possible audience, such as public announcements and short, straightforward instructions dealing with public life. Some misunderstandings will occur.

Arabic: Can read, for basic survival and social needs, simplest connected simulated and or authentic material. Can read simple, clearly written messages, personal notes or short statements, all of which may contain formulaic greetings, courtesy expressions, queries about personal well-being, age, one's family, the weather: al-tans gha'im sabahan, matir ba'da al-zuhr, ma'a riyah shamaliya gharbiyya tatahawwal ila gharbiyya masa'an; and time, where such materials are written by a native-speaker used to dealing with foreigners. Recognizes simple present tense, subject-predicate sentences and simple verbal sentences using regular verbs in past or present time. Eg. Kataba, yadnisuna, ta'malina; and/or high-frequency irregular verbs, eg. Kana, yaqulu.

Can recognize verbal constructions in both positive and negative and numbers up to 1000. Misunderstandings may arise when syntax diverges from that of the native language, or when grammatical cues are overlooked, eg. Possessive pronoun suffixes, verb conjugations suffixes, number and gender, and the idafa.

**Writing: Intermediate**

The need to write compositions and letters was identified in category 3 (writing). The Intermediate level is characterized by an ability to meet practical writing needs by communicating simple facts and ideas in a loose collection of sentences.
Intermediate - Low

Generic: Able to meet limited practical writing needs. Can write short messages, postcards, and take down simple notes such as telephone messages. Can create statements or questions within the scope of limited language experience. Material produced consists of recombination of learned vocabulary and structures into simple sentences on very familiar topics. Language is inadequate to express in writing anything but elementary needs. Frequent errors in grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling and in formation of nonalphabetic symbols, but writing can be understood by natives used to the writing of nonnatives.

Arabic: Can write short messages, such as simple questions and answers, personal notes, phone messages, eg.: *Ana fi al-maktaba, Araka fi al-maqasat fi al-sa'ati al-wahida*, but may make errors. Vocabulary is expanding but still limited to everyday objects and common verbs and adjectives. Topics are simple, such as short objective statements and recounting of everyday events in a list-like manner. Can write sentences using regular verbs in present and past time, affirmative statements consisting of simple equational sentences in the present tense; can also use the verb in the negative and a few basic interrogative constructions. Material produced consists of recombination of learned vocabulary and structures into simple sentences without subordinate clauses. There will be frequent errors in word choice and grammar.

Grade 11: Cultural understanding

As learners' proficiency in language grows they should demonstrate a broader and more comprehensive knowledge of the cultural traits of Arab society. They should:

➢ Perceive the patterns of traits and traditions, and be able to compare these to their own.

➢ Recognize the linguistic and cultural variations in the Arab world.

➢ Know how words, body language, rituals and social interaction interact and influence effective communication.
Grade 11: Classical language and the study of religious/literary texts.

Students will demonstrate an increased knowledge of selected facts about Arab tradition, daily life, history and ritual.

They will also have a deeper understanding of a selection of famous literature from the early Islamic period (Umayyad and Abbasid periods - 700 to 1258 CE).

6.7.3 Stage three: Grade 12

By the end of grade 12, learners should have developed their communicative abilities to an extent of being able handle many real-life situations, even though the ability to react naturally would not be spontaneous. Their ability to understand and apply grammar would facilitate their translating capacity.

The levels to be attained within the various skills will be described:

Speaking: Intermediate-Mid

Generic: Able to handle successfully a variety of uncomplicated, basic and communicative tasks and social situations. Can talk simply about self and family members. Can ask questions and participate in simple conversations on topics beyond the most immediate needs, eg, personal history and leisure time activities. Utterance length increases slightly, but speech may continue to be characterized by frequent long pauses, since the smooth incorporation of even basic conversational strategies is often hindered as the speaker struggles to create appropriate language forms. Pronunciation may continue to be strongly influenced by first language and fluency may be strained. Although misunderstandings still arise, the Intermediate-Mid speaker can generally be understood by sympathetic interlocutors.
Arabic: Can ask and answer questions involving areas beyond those of immediate need. Content areas may include: personal history, leisure time activities, *Uhibbu an azura al-muthaf*, *yu'jibuni kadha*, *fakihati al-mufaddal kadha*; and simple transactions (grocery shopping, getting hotel room, *Uridu ghurfa bisarirayn laha hamam mutilla ala .... Bikam al-layla*?  


Simple information about events [meetings, parties, media programs, etc.].  

Quantity of speech is increased and quality of speech is improved. Greater accuracy in syntax and morphology, such as high-frequency verbs and auxiliaries, *Kana, arada, qala.*  

The Immediate-Mid speaker is generally more interactive.  

**Listening: Intermediate - Mid**  

Generic: Able to understand sentence-length utterances, which consist of recombination of learned utterances on a variety of topics. Content continues to refer primarily to basic personal background and needs, social conventions and somewhat more complex tasks, such as lodging, transportation, and shopping. Additional content areas include some personal interest and activities, and a greater diversity of instructions and directions. Listening tasks not only pertain to spontaneous face-to-face conversations but also to short routine telephone conversations and some deliberate speech, such as simple announcements and reports over the media. Understanding continues to be uneven.  

Arabic: Limited understanding of topics beyond a variety of survival needs, such as personal history and leisure-time activities: *Kuntu A'mal fi madina Urubbiya wa lakin raja'tu qabla shahr ila al-Iraq.*  

Begins to understand longer utterances, but frequently needs repetition. Increasing awareness of time frames and more complex syntactic patterns such as comparison, purpose and causality.
**Reading: Intermediate - Mid**

Generic: Able to read consistently with increased understanding simple connected texts dealing with a variety of basic and social needs. Such texts are still linguistically noncomplex and have a clear underlying internal structure. They impart basic information about which the reader has to make minimal suppositions and to which the reader brings personal interest and/or knowledge. Examples may include short, straightforward descriptions of persons, places, and things written for a wide audience.

Arabic: Sufficient comprehension to understand simulated authentic reading materials consisting of several connected sentences for informative purposes and to understand main ideas and some facts in authentic material. Can understand and follow events of a very simple passages when content deals with basic situations and the sentence structure is uncomplicated (ie. without subordination such as relative clauses) and generally parallel to native language syntax, *Mike: Dhahabtu ila al-saf al'arabiyya fi al-sa'ati al-'ashirah wa ma kana al-ustadh mawjudan. Sami'tu annahu kharij al-madina al-yaum. Qad la yahdur dars al-sa'ata al-thalitha aidan.*

Can read critical elements of public announcements to determine who, when and where regarding such subjects as public events. Can interpret present and past time for most regular, and a number of irregular verbs, but still has difficulty recognizing the significance of other aspects of the verbal paradigm (eg. indirect imperative and purpose). Errors will still occur with such features as prepositional usage and the *idafa.*

**Writing: Intermediate - Mid**

Generic: Able to meet a number of practical writing needs. Can write short, simple letters. Content involves personal preferences, daily routine, everyday events, and other topics grounded in personal experience. Can express present time or at least one other time frame or aspect consistently, eg. nonpast, habitual, imperfective. Evidence of control of the syntax of noncomplex sentences and basic inflectional morphology, such as declensions and conjugation. Writing tends to be a loose collection of sentences or sentence fragments.
on a given topic and provides little evidence of conscious organization. Can be understood by natives used to the writing of non-natives.

Arabic: Writing style is still reflective of the grammar and lexicon of speech, but quantity is increased and quality is improved. Has an expanding repertoire of language use, permitting the writing of short, simple sentences on topics of writer's personal experience: likes and dislikes, daily routines; everyday personal occurrences; immediate surroundings (house, work, school); simple events and the like, eg. Ayna wada'ta miftah al-sayyara? Ma wajadtu fi durj al-tawila. La tashtari majalla Time. Ishtaraytuha. Can use most regular verbs correctly in past and present time-frames and writes simple sentences correctly. Mistakes still occur with word order, subject and object pronouns, idafa, noun-adjective and verb-subject/subject-verb agreement. Uses prepositions but the choice is often influenced by the native language. Rarely uses subordinate clauses (such as relative, purpose or causative clauses), thus rendering the written material a sequence of short and simple sentences. When resorting to a dictionary, can easily find pattern for regular Form I verb, but still has difficulties with other forms and derivational patterns. There is still interference from the writer's native language use.

Grade 12: Cultural understanding

Students should be able to produce with help culturally appropriate behavior by:

- Modeling how spoken language, body language and social interaction influence effective communication.
- Communicating in Arabic using silences, pauses and turn taking appropriately.
- Knowing and using grammar and register appropriately when addressing older people as a sign of showing respect.
- Identifying similarities and differences between their culture and Arab culture.
Grade 12: Classical language and the study of religious/literary texts.

Students can demonstrate knowledge of selected facts of Arab daily life, myths, legends, history and public life; and their influence on world history.

Their main source of knowledge would be authentic prose and poetry from the modern day period (20th century).

From the performance indicators and range statements stated above, teachers and course developers could identify unit standards for each segment or component. Each of these unit standards will have their own developmental outcomes that will ensure that unit standards are achieved. This aspect falls outside the scope of this framework and the present study.

6.8 Assessment guidelines

Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process. Its primary role is to inform. Teachers can plan their instruction accordingly and modify their instructional strategies and practice. It can be used to remediate, reinforce or extend student learning. By planning appropriate intervention strategies learner needs can be addressed. These needs were identified in chapter five.

Through assessment, learners come to know about their strengths and weaknesses and how to deal with them. Tertiary institutions and potential employers have an indication of the learners' competence through formal certification against standards that are recognized and acceptable.

Teachers need to develop a multifaceted assessment programme. It should reflect learners' progress in the four skill areas, should be authentic, culturally appropriate, proficiency based and integrated within the instructional process. Over time learners should have a
clear understanding of the progress they have made. This is in line with the principles of outcome-based education.

Assessment in proficiency based programmes are based on two components according to the Ohio Department of Education (1996:84), ongoing classroom assessments and district wide grade level assessments. For the Arabic curriculum, teachers will need training for the new and varied forms of assessment to be described below.

Lubisi et al (1997:15-16) have subdivided ongoing classroom assessments into ongoing formal continuous assessment and ongoing informal formative assessment. The ongoing formal continuous assessment provides for a variety of ways of demonstrating learner competence and covers a wide range of contexts. It is based on interesting and demanding tasks that motivate and support learning and should be accompanied by feedback to the learner as well as lead to the formal recording of results. This form of assessment is internally assessed, recorded and moderated.

The development of portfolios is one of the means for ongoing assessment and should be encouraged. A portfolio, according to the definition of the New York State Education Department (undated, chapter VI:2) is a "collection of students' work selected by students with teacher guidance, to demonstrate their accomplishments and competence." The portfolios could consist of:

1. Audio and video recordings made to document progress over time.
2. Samples of writing based on improvements through self-correction.

These are kept in file folders, binders, boxes and recently even as computer-based portfolios on CD-ROM.

The use of portfolios enriches instruction and assessment. It shows teachers, parents and students the quality work that has been produced and the level of competence achieved.
Students also take responsibility for their own learning as they produce and select suitable samples for inclusion.

The ongoing informal formative assessment is designed to monitor and encourage the learning progress. It provides guidance to the learner in the form of self-assessment and feedback through peer and teacher assessment. This diagnostic assessment guides teachers in their planning and encourages the setting of appropriately differentiated tasks.

The formal summative assessments can be internally or externally assessed and moderated. After these assessments, the recording or reporting of year marks is completed, and learners are awarded credits, qualifications or certificates.

The ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) could be used as the instrument to measure the degree or extent of proficiency achieved for the district wide grade level assessments in Arabic. This uniform system is also necessary for certification at the three levels of the FET band. According to Miyaji et al (1993:10) this interview makes no assumptions about how the ability has been attained and the kind of instruction given or course materials used. The student's performance is measured against the criteria of an educated native speaker's ability. This is criterion-referenced rather than norm-referenced, which is in line with OBE in practice.

Proficiency tests conducted as summative tests are also excellent for interprogram comparisons. They can be used to compare programmes with different goals and instructional methodology. Achievement tests can be used for intraprogram assessment and directly linked to instructional content. The problem with an over reliance of these tests is that they could be unrealistic and lack authenticity if they are not linked to what learners are likely to encounter outside the classroom (op.cit.:23). This problem has to be guarded against.
The three forms of assessment together contribute to assessment that stimulates and supports learning. Assessment is then developmental rather than judgemental, and criterion-referenced rather than norm-referenced.

The New York State Education Department (undated, chapter IV: 1-2) list some of the key elements related to assessment based on performance. These are:

- Students are expected to be able to communicate, to perform, to create, or do something using the language.
- Interaction takes place between the teacher and the student during the assessment process.
- Students know the criteria in advance for successful completion of the task.
- Models and opportunities to practice are provided for the students.
- Students are involved in self-assessment of their performance in the language, in part as an aid to helping them manage their own learning.
- Assessments are made of students' progress over time, particularly since mastering a language is a gradual process and requires time.
- Assessment activities are realistic and they integrate language and culture.

These criteria imply that objective tests, while useful for testing grammar, fall short of acceptable practice when it comes to proficiency. Tests should be more open-ended and teachers should understand the answers given. The teacher will have to determine "whether a correct answer hides thoughtless recall or whether apparently wrong answers hide thoughtful understanding" (ibid). Through personal interaction in assessment process, teachers can probe or question further for explanation or substantiation. Students can also be involved in their own self-assessment. Teachers have to design and conduct assessment not only to measure performance but assist students to identify their own strengths and weaknesses.

For proficiency-based assessment, authenticity is of crucial importance. The following criteria (ibid:) to evaluate authenticity could be applied: Authentic tests contain:
Engaging and worthy problems or questions of importance in which students must use their knowledge to fashion their performance effectively and creatively. These real life tasks should replicate the problems actually faced by learners, or learners when they become adults.

Problems that require the use of good judgement in determining which knowledge is appropriate.

Tasks that require the student to produce a quality performance.

Opportunities for thorough preparation as well as accurate self-assessment and self-adjustment by the student. (Questions and tasks may be discussed, clarified and modified if necessary).

Interaction between the teacher and the student. (Tests require students to justify their answers and choices that could lead to follow up or probing questions).

Concurrent feedback and the possibility of self-adjustment during the test so that the students may be consistently sensitive to the audience, the situation, and the context of the communication being tested.

Trained teacher judgement of performance in reference to clear and appropriate criteria;

Emphasis on the consistency of students' patterns of response in diverse settings under differing constraints.

These principles of performance orientation and authenticity make it clear that both the communicative and the cultural dimensions must always be integrated in all assessment tasks required of students. Cultural knowledge and understanding cannot be assessed independently from the application of language.

6.9 The way forward

Curriculum reform or change brings about many concomitant changes. A great deal of planning has to occur to take any new curriculum framework forward. Ideally a committee consisting of teachers, learners, parents, subject advisors, provincial curriculum unit
personnel and community members should be formed to look at the following aspects in detail:

- An evaluation of the various types of programme options available for TAFL and how other foreign language programmes have worked in similar situations like that of South Africa.
- A more comprehensive and detailed study of the needs and expectations of various communities who would like to promote Arabic.
- Staffing resources and options, both within the public and independent school systems.
- Ways to develop existing programmes and the curriculum.
- Current expenditure of existing programmes, and anticipated costs of phasing in of new changes, especially if modules are to be offered as in the recommendation of this study.
- How to broaden the purpose of language study to target occupational use. Arabic for Specific Purposes (ASP) courses, like Arabic for translators, Arabic for medicine, etc may be necessary in order to make the study of Arabic more relevant to the needs of South African learners.
- Orientating the language instruction towards the goal of making the language content relevant to the students' lives when they become adults. It should be both a personally enriching experience and help them in the workplace through the careers they are to embark upon.
- Setting appropriate standards of proficiency as benchmarks, after considering the constraints of time, resources and personnel available within the South African context.

This committee will need to educate all stakeholders about the proposed changes they wish to bring about to ensure smooth implementation of the curriculum. Their planning should be long term aligned with provincial policy meeting while at the same time meeting the needs of students. It should be proficiency-based, promoting and respecting the foreign culture while creating a deeper understanding of the language.
In planning they also need to consider what other schools are offering the language in the district, and how creative use can be made of sharing current staff complements across schools or districts. A nearby college or university offering an Arabic programme could also be a resource that the school could tap into.

When new staff are hired their language capabilities should be assessed so that staff growth could parallel programme growth.

The possibilities of continuing with the subject beyond grade 12 should also be pursued (alluded to in category 5 - maintenance of the language). This is vital for learners who would like to at the very least maintain what they have learnt. This is vital for lifelong language learning which should ideally be continued beyond the school in such a way that more credits could be attained for specialized studies in the field of Arabic at the Higher Education level.

They should also try to bridge school based courses with that offered by other service providers after school hours. These organizations or institutions may be offering continuing educational programmes, evening classes, distance learning opportunities or satellite training initiatives. The goal should be to "create a seamless web of language instruction programs so that individual learners can receive articulated, high quality language instruction as they move from school to college and beyond." (New York State Education Department, undated, chap VII:2).

For long term support, a database of resources and organizations involved in Arabic has to be compiled, as was done by the Massachusetts Department of Education (1996: 46-54). This would include listing professional associations like the British Association of Teachers of Arabic (BATA), and the American Association for Teachers of Arabic (AATA) as a resource base for teachers in South Africa.
Other resources would include information on:

➢ Exchange and travel programmes in Arabic for both teachers and learners.

➢ Foreign Language Experience (FLEX) and immersion programme research, design and implementation. FLEX programs are short self-contained programmes (3 weeks to a year) that introduce students to one or more languages and cultures. Language proficiency is not a goal of FLEX programmes, but through cultural awareness, a desire to learn the language may be engendered.

➢ A database of books and articles on inclusive and heterogeneous classroom, research, theory and practice.

➢ Internet resources should be tapped.

➢ Other technology, like software programs available in Arabic as well as videos, CD-ROM's, books, cassettes, dictionaries and encyclopaedias.

6.10 Strengths of this study

The research component of this study elicited verbal responses from a wide variety of stakeholders, both Muslim and Christian. A substantial number of interviews were held, which include five focus groups and nineteen individual interviews.

The information collected and analysed has resulted in a workable and extensive framework for Arabic in the FET band, one that is in line with the NQF and current thinking around OBE.

In the South African context this study has been pioneering work, not only for Arabic but for other foreign languages also.
6.11 Limitations of this study

The framework did not go as far as developing the learning programmes for the various modules suggested, nor in designing the relevant resource materials. It also did not assess current materials available, a step required before the design of new materials.

6.12 Further research

Emanating from this study, further research could be done by:

- Conducting a long term longitudinal study of actual careers pursued by students who had studied Arabic in matric and identifying the links or disjunctures in real terms. This exercise would also be useful in assessing the benefits of studying a third language in schools.
- Assessing the need, viability and priority of the various modules proposed.
- Developing and assessing similar and parallel programmes in MS and the three colloquial dialects, Egyptian, Gulf and Moroccan, as suggested in chapter 6 (section 6.2).
- Developing and assessing suitable learning programmes for each of the modules.
- Determining criteria for the design of locally relevant resource materials for each module.
- Piloting the Arabic Speaking Test (AST) as described in chapter 2 (section 2.4) and evaluating its worth within the South African context.

6.13 Conclusion

Language is a national asset and valuable cultural resource that should be utilized effectively at all levels.

Schools in particular have an important role in not only preserving but actively promoting the various languages and cultures that make up the rich South African mosaic. While
language can foster and develop national unity in a country that used language to divide and rule, the promotion of additional languages will lead to a flourishing of a cultural diversity that does not necessarily negate this unity that is being striven for. In fact, the study of world languages enriches the social fabric of the society, creating a better understanding among its people and the international community. A spirit of tolerance and empathy can lead to a greater sense of unity and purpose, resulting in less tension and strife globally.

6.14 Recommendations

The main needs identified were:

1. Oral communicative proficiency (category 1).
2. Reading the Quran with understanding, writing and translating (categories 2 and 3).
3. An understanding of Arab tradition and culture (categories 1 and 2).
4. A clarification of misconceptions regarding Arabic (category 4).
5. The development of a strong South African teacher base through INSET programmes ((category 5).
6. The design of materials to suit the South African situation ((category 5).
7. The need to rationalise, share limited human and financial resources and find creative solutions to problems experienced (category 5).

In order to address these needs in a co-ordinated and strategically efficient manner, many roleplayers will have to jointly play their parts. Learners need to be educated about the options available at schools and outside agencies that offer Arabic, and be aware of the concomitant recognition awarded for these courses by SAQA. Through career guidance they should be informed as to how these credits add up to various qualifications within the FET band. They should be encouraged to pursue these options, and be made to realise the potential benefits in terms of career possibilities.
South African teachers of Arabic should upgrade their skills to a proficiency level of at least Intermediate High (one level above grade 12 proficiency) in order to adequately teach the new proposed curriculum. For this to happen, Arab embassies based in South Africa should be more proactive in their involvement in the educational arena, by sponsoring teachers on an exchange basis, or by making resource materials available. They could also offer scholarships for further study abroad. Universities and technikons should work together with schools in developing and the rendering of mutually supportive programmes. The disjuncture mentioned earlier in section 5.5 has to be linked more effectively. The offering of appropriate INSET courses in all three varieties of Arabic, the Classical, Modern Standard and the main colloquial varieties of Gulf and Egyptian should be taken up in earnest. The provincial departments of education will have to find creative strategies and institute effective measures to develop and promote all languages. They should not only pay lip service to the principles of multilingualism as enunciated in the Constitution and the South African Schools' Act, but should actively strive to promote all languages. The departments could also introduce a system of incentives.

Arabic can still be made into a viable option if parents play a more active part in existing school governance structures. School governing bodies will have to exercise the mandate given to them by parents and learners to continue offering or begin to offer languages like Arabic that have been marginalised. They should also explore opportunities for sharing human, financial and material resources among neighbouring schools and other institutions. The business community will have to utilize its financial muscle by creating the necessary incentives for the continued study, research and development of the languages. NGO's should continuously monitor what is happening in the field and render any support they are able to harness. They could offer INSET courses for teachers, or the modules suggested for learners, or help in the design and publication of resource materials.

All the groups mentioned above should work together to ensure that the Arabic language becomes a viable and relevant option for study in schools. It is only with this vision and
commitment that South Africa will continue to be culturally alive, be an effective source of the African renaissance, and be able to take its rightful place among the emerging nations in the new millennium.
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Glossary of commonly used Arabic and Urdu terms used in the interviews

The following terms appear either in the main text or the interviews.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aalim</td>
<td>A learned scholar of Quran and Hadith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Nahda</td>
<td>&quot;The resurgence,&quot; the newsletter of the Society for the promotion of Arabic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As-salamu alaikum</td>
<td>The Islamic greeting, meaning &quot;Peace be upon you&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ayat/aayah</td>
<td>Verse(s) of the Quran</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dar ul Uloom</td>
<td>An Islamic seminary of higher learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dua</td>
<td>A prayer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hadith</td>
<td>The saying or narration of the prophet Muhammad (saw)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hafez</td>
<td>A person who has memorised the entire Quran</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hajj</td>
<td>The major pilgrimage to Mecca performed annually only during the twelfth lunar month.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iftah Ya Sim Sim</td>
<td>The Arabic version of &quot;Sesame Street&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imam</td>
<td>The leader in a congregational prayer in the mosque</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jumuah</td>
<td>The Friday congregational prayer, or the day Friday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kassus al-nabiyin</td>
<td>An Arabic reader about the stories of the prophets (as)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khutbah</td>
<td>The Friday sermon delivered in the mosque</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitaab</td>
<td>An Arabic text book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madrassa</td>
<td>Afternoon Muslim religious school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mawlana</td>
<td>A term that shows respect to a learned scholar of Islam. It could also refer to the one who leads the prayer in the mosque.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namaaz</td>
<td>The five daily prayers performed by Muslims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nashieen</td>
<td>An Arabic text book based on the communicative approach to teaching Arabic. A set of six books of which about two are used in some schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qaree</td>
<td>A person who has studied the art of reciting the Quran in a melodious tone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quran</td>
<td>The divinely revealed book of Muslims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramadaan</td>
<td>The ninth month of the lunar calendar during which Muslims fast.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salat</td>
<td>The five daily prayers performed by Muslims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Umrah</td>
<td>A minor pilgrimage performed in Mecca at any time of the year.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Glossary of Arabic terms relating to the kinds of Arabic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'Amiya</td>
<td>The colloquial dialect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-adabiya</td>
<td>Modern literary Arabic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-fusha al-muyassara</td>
<td>Simplified modern standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-lugha al-'arabiyya al-muyassara</td>
<td>Simplified modern standard Arabic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-maktuba</td>
<td>The written (form)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-mu'asara</td>
<td>The contemporary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-namuzajiya al-'asriya</td>
<td>Modern standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedouin</td>
<td>Pastoral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fallahi</td>
<td>Rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fusha</td>
<td>The high prestige or classical language. Even refers to literary Arabic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fusha al-'Asr</td>
<td>Modern formal Arabic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fusha al-Turath</td>
<td>Classical Arabic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madani</td>
<td>Urban</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX ONE: A SAMPLE OF ONE FOCUS GROUP AND TWO INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED

Focus group interview number 2

I The first question is why are you studying Arabic?
R- I was planning in the future maybe to go travelling and stuff like that and a very large chunk of the world is Arabic speaking so a limited knowledge of the language would be necessary. So it was one of the reasons and also the Quraan we just read it like parrot fashioned, we do not understand it. Like if we have like vocabulary and a few application rules we will understand it even a little bit of the Quran, because I am not studying Hafez classes and so I am not actually learning it. So if I read it and see something then I'll understand ... understand it better.

I ....Okay ....... Any other reasons?
R- One of my reasons is after schooling I intend maybe doing an Aalim course or even a Qaree course which would mean that Arabic is vitally important. In the Aalim course, I think the first three years you do your Arabic. It's a compulsory language you do your Arabic and that was one of the reasons why I have chosen Arabic. Like X said, I studied Arabic because ... with the times changing and different people you have to meet.... and the education system and.... the trade investments and all that. So Arabic might help you, assuming you are working in South Africa, and you become an Ambassador to another country, so you have a great trade investments for other countries and Arabic could help you. Like if you are in Saudi Arabia you learn to speak Arabic more properly and you speak it better and at a higher level. You understand what they are saying and it takes less time for you to get a narrator and the narrator must tell you what is said and it takes less time to get a narrator. And the narrator must tell what is said. Time is money ... so if you understand the Arabic language you can go immediately and trade. So that is like one of the reasons, and like I said, I would like to do an Aalim course insha Allah after school.

I .....Any other reasons?....
R- I think Arabic is really important but I am not going into that field. I am going into the computer field. If I can study I would like to study Arabic because mainly for the meaning of the Quraan and I always wanted to learn.

I Anything else?
R- I also took Arabic because most of the communicating like when you go for Umrah you can ask for directions or maybe you can communicate with someone and also if you want some more ... like information of the Prophet's times, most of the information comes in Arabic there by Nur-ul-Islam library. So at least you can read and understand what is going on. And also these moulanas that come from Saudi Arabia they speak in Arabic, they give lectures in the Mosque. At least you can understand what they are trying to convey to you. The messages.

R- It is like a thrill of knowing another language. Instead of only speaking English and Afrikaans from a young age you now know another language.

I Why do you think that is important?
R- Actually it is important like for the reasons which were mentioned before and also like er most people want to know different things. And some people just feel more important if they know more. And now they know another language It is something interesting.
I: (Long pause) Okay we will come back to that if we have to. Let’s look at the next question. It says: “Where and how will you use Arabic after matric?”

R: I will use it mainly if I am Insha-Allah going to be travelling overseas, there would be lots of different countries that I would like to visit and I would mostly use it as er... just to find out certain things because most of the countries I might be going to might be Arabic speaking like in North Africa, the middle East,... those areas... I would not be using it for trading and things like that,... because I would not be that interested in politics and the economy. Maybe more also to understand Arabic writing. If I find something interesting I can just read it, I would not have to translate it with an Arabic dictionary or anything.

I: Any particular kind of works or reading material you would like to look at?

R: I am not sure. That will come along in the future. Maybe I’ll decide then.

R: Is this actually linked to the first question?

I: Well, there is a bit of overlap, but ja....

R: So like you said in the first question and I answered and I said the Aalim course and in the first three years when you study, er... if you study Arabic you get the basic principles in Arabic. It actually saves you more time in those three years, you can actually complete your three year course in maybe one year. So mostly I would be using Arabic when I am doing my Aalim course or even if I am giving lectures and assuming that the Quranic ayaahs are read, .. right...and then off hand because you know the Arabic language and the vocab that you have, you can even translate that you know. Like I said with trade also that’s also where you can use Arabic.

I: Any other things that we have not spoken about?

R: Like just say we are going into a certain field, hopefully I would like to go into the scientific field as a line of work I don’t know now, but maybe in the future I will be working with someone who speaks Arabic it would make it easier, so there is also that chance.

I: Do you think that you would be working overseas?

R: Most probably if I do well I might be able to get a job overseas.

I: (Long pause) Okay any other points?

R: Sir I also want to go into the scientific or engineering field In South Africa there are the some of the countries like the Arabian countries are not so familiar with them. They not familiar with making their own products, so they actually like,... Dubai is Arabic speaking, and they needed aeronautical engineers and people have actually applied to get jobs in Dubai where you would have to go and stay there and work for a company for a number of years. So actually if these Arabic countries if you go there with this Arabic it would be easier for you to talk to them than for them to learn English all over again because they are quite familiar with Arabic. So in that field of work also it can help.

I: Anything else? Will you be using it later?

R: I don’t think so.

I: No. (long pause) I staat all?

R: ....When you trying to explain the ayats of the Quran if you interested in Arabic your own definition or meaning about the ayaah is better than somebody else’s definition because you can see it from your own point of view and ...make different assumptions.

I: Would be able to interpret the message?

R: You could say something like that. You could see something that some people did not see.
Let's go onto the third question which is also the last question. What do you think of the Arabic course which you have been following up to now?

R - This is merely the first steps towards learning the Arabic language... that is learning the vocabulary, the grammar, and all that .. and constructing sentences.

R - It does teach you the basics but if you want to pursue Arabic further you can't only do it in high school only because high school does teach you the basics but it is too little. You cannot be fluent in the language in this amount of time. And also another problem is the vocabulary, you see vocabulary for another language is mostly you sort of try and memorise it, right and that is the difficult part because there are too many words to remember, when you come across a strange word then you have to learn that meaning. You see that is where most of the learning ability to speak Arabic comes from, if you know vocabulary. We need to be exposed to different words and like, ...set aside some time to learn these words because like when you across a new section we hear a word but we don't hear it again. When you come across it for the second time you remember you came across it but you dont remember what it means.

I You think you need practice?

R - Yes, practice and lot's of vocabulary, that's basically the problem we are having.

R - I think the course we have been doing, learning poetry, literature, the Quraanic ayaahs is actually something very good. The only thing I feel is like when you sit in the English class you sit with an English mind where the teacher speaks to you in English and you speak back to the teacher in English and I think in the Afrikaans class the terminology's different from that in English. In the Arabic class, however, the teacher, because of a lack of exposure on our part, the teacher has to speak to us in English and therefore whatever we are learning we are not able to apply it. Like when you come to the English class the teacher will say “Good morning” and you would say “Good morning” back. When you come to the Arabic class however we all come in here speaking English, not speaking Arabic. The teacher might greet us in Arabic but the whole lesson is being taught in English.

R - Ja, but the problem there is that it's a new language so we would not be able to converse in Arabic yet. That is the purpose of the language, we need an extra few years, maybe at that stage, like Afrikaans, we started learning in standard one and some of us were exposed to Afrikaans while we were younger. So its already nine ten years. So obviously at this level the teacher would be able to converse with us in this language that is being taught. This here is only a few years now and it's also that we are older which makes it more difficult, because when you are young you can be influenced very easily. So to learn a second language you need a little more dedication and a little more time to allow for us to reach that level. To speak simple Arabic in the class.

R - So with regard to what he is saying I think that with our syllabus if the school is offering Arabic I feel that six periods of Arabic 35 minutes each, and by the time you come into the class there is only 25 minutes left for teaching, there should be more periods given to Arabic. Periods like Right Living and Guidance and all that, although they are teach you a lot, teachers might be teaching you, but those periods can be utilised for orals like in English we have an oral period where you come out and give speeches and everyone speaks in English so you can have a period in Arabic where the whole class speaks in Arabic from what we know and try to speak to one another in Arabic.
R- Something like a big conversation.
R- Ja.
R- Just to broaden your mind on the subject. Just to talk about something and then try to talk in Arabic.
R- That is a nice idea. Like having one period per week, you just choose a topic no pressure or marks or anything, just the topic and you choose one topic and you speak about it in Arabic. You find new words, new phrases and try and speak, and if the pupil goes wrong, then you just tell him how to say it, then he says it again, something like that.
R- Ja, that is similar to English. When you do a poem in English and a person has his views on the poem. One pupil will give his views, and the other gives another. Each person has their own views. They can agree and disagree with the views raised (English example given). So like in Arabic you have different views given. You have a lot of knowledge of the poem so therefore application and discussing and talking or speaking and teaching in Arabic will be better. You should learn to apply yourself, not only give the poems back in English and be able to tell a person what is happening in Arabic, that's the main reason for doing Arabic.
R- Like I said before, in those kind of classes, or a period like that, does not pressurise you to speak in Arabic because a person might have views but may not know how to express it in Arabic. You might say it in English and the teacher or other students assist him in saying the sentence in Arabic.
R- Ja, it is similar to the Afrikaans class. Some pupils do not know how to express something in Afrikaans so they might say something in English and the teacher assists the student in Afrikaans. So the student now realises that he made a good point and remember it if you wish to use it in the exams because you will be writing the paper in Afrikaans. So the same applies to Arabic. If a student says that I feel a man has been exiled for a good reason like the poem In Sri Lanka then the teacher will tell him okay this is what this means and this is the translation of what you just said so people will remember that and in that way you can even speak Arabic much better, much more fluently.
R- And you see if we know how to communicate better then the writing becomes easier because writing is just words on paper, that’s all. You will then have all the aspects of the language done, you have writing and communication.
I... So you see the main problem to be lack of communication.
R- The main problem is the lack of communication. Ja, communication and vocabulary.
R- The second thing when we wrote this Arabic paper yesterday and we wrote composition and letter most of us, 90% of the Arabic pupils I know, went home and actually prepared a composition and learnt it off by heart. Now if we had sufficient knowledge on the Arabic language, and communication, I think we would not have had to prepare.
R- It is like English, where you prepare as you go along. You have your views and when you see the topics you write whatever you wanted to say. But in Arabic it is actually
different where you have to go home and prepare something and remember that.

R- Ja. That is because if you want to write a composition we can't do it ourselves, we need your help or the dictionaries help. This is because we do not have vocabulary and we do not know how to phrase the things so then that is why we had to prepare one because we needed outside help.

R- And at the end of the day we are not learning anything. We are just studying parrot fashioned, come, put it in the paper, and finished.

R- The way you can learn like that is to just to discuss it with the teacher what you are writing and why. That will still be applied in the beginning when you start to learn the language but then to learn more at that moment in time you can just discuss what the teacher has told you to write down and why it is written like that. That is learning in the very beginning.

I ... But you think there is a need to learn how to write compositions and letters?

R- If you know how to speak it you know where to put the verbs and objects in the sentence.

R- It is more important to learn how to speak Arabic because once you know how to speak it, then whatever you seeing, you just write it down....

I ... Any other points?

R- (long pause)

I... Any other suggestions?

R- Sir, what happens if you look at how other foreign languages are taught to children, like French, Zulu for English speaking people, and Italian, Spanish, things like that. Afrikaans, how it is taught to people who don't know Afrikaans. How about looking at which method is the most successful for teaching, and compile a method out of one of those methods to make it easier for a child to learn Arabic.

I That can be done, which level?

R- At all levels, for primary, secondary and tertiary education and institutes. Just see all the Methods that they use to teach and find the most successful method. The method in which the pupils learn the fastest and even if they learn the fastest, like at primary school level even with adults you start from the lower level because that is the way you start and understand. progressing from that level upwards. So just use the same techniques and everything, and then maybe it will work out.

R- In these times one of the most successful methods and learning things the way students get their information is through the media. That is through the newspapers, magazines, television, so therefore we should be able to get newspapers during our Arabic periods and try and read the newspapers and understand it. Or we should be shown pictures in the paper where people are talking like on television and from that we would pick up.

R- Ja, but the way they are speaking at first it must be very slow and precise. Normally a person who speaks his own language speaks very fast and a person who is trying to understand would not be able to understand everything. Like in Arabic I noticed some of these Moulanas that come to the Mosques here in South Africa speak Arabic and they speak too fast, you just catch a word here and there but not the rest of the sentence. While you are
trying to translate the sentence from the beginning he is already at the end of the third sentence, something like that. So in the beginning, when they show, or a conversation is being heard, it should be done slowly to start off with.

R- For example the "Ifta Yaa Simsim" that tape, actually they're not speaking very fast, and that is just your basics. They say "Kuratul Qadam" you are playing soccer. They do not speak very fast so that we may understand but not fully, but we get an idea of what they are speaking. Maybe we should introduce "Ifta Yaa Simsim" to all the Arabic students.

R- Did you see the adverts in which they show you these quick methods of how to learn languages with a package of tapes. If something like that is successful then something like that can be done in which a number of phrases can be recorded and the sayings improves your language from nothing to a 100% in a very short time. So see what technique they are using there also. I don't know if it works, but lots of people say it does work so try that method.

R- I would rather use cue cards and whatever object it is you can paste it on that object. If a person walks pass and sits down and looks at the picture his vocabulary increases.

R- Let them do it themselves. Let them make cue cards around their house. Stick it on the object.

R- So everywhere they walk they will see the object and see the Arabic word, and remember the word. You would get more used of it. It is a nice idea.

R- When you come inside the house your mother may say "close the door" and if you have a cue card on the door it will be said in Arabic, or lunch is at one a clock. Then you look at your watch and that is a good idea.

R- For pupils you can give them that as a project to do at home.

R- Ja, make it small and inconspicuous.

R- I don't think parents will object because parents always want their children to learn more. They always want them to learn more and more. There is no boundaries in education and age is nothing. So I am sure they won't mind these cue cards and in the process they will also learn. Okay this means "Close the door"... for everybody in the house.....

I Any other points?

R- In the Arabic lessons we can get many people to come to the Arabic class, many learned people in Arabic and speaking with us, discussing with us, on the basis that we know and while they speaking we are actually learning. Because from others we actually learn. Then the next day or next week you have two people coming and speaking, giving an Arabic dialogue. Ja, just the basics, like what is the time? What do you do? Where you going now? From there we will come, and everyday you learn more so having basic dialogues you learn a lot.

R- Or when we come to give Arabic speeches or dialogues and when we are finished other students can be asked what did they understand and what was said.

R- Like as questions, have a question session.

R- Instead of having orals for marks it pressurises someone and if you don't pressure someone they will be more willing to do something like that. If you want to judge his oral capacity or anything just hold more of these discussions. If a person is able to converse more and express himself better he would get a higher mark.

I So not so much exam orientated, more natural.

R- Take a record of each pupil and see how he is progressing, Like instead of taking like set orals
for this month and set orals for that month. Just progress and not so often maybe after three months take a record and see how the student improved in the class discussions.

R- And you must not judge how much he knows because someone may have had background on the language, but just judge on how much he has progressed and how hard he is trying, like someone else, maybe he can get a higher mark.

I ....Okay anything else. (Long pause) Anything you would like to add onto the other questions like why you are doing Arabic and how you would be using it?

R- The point on the second question that “A” made was a very good point about these Arab speaking countries, they are not so advanced in the technological side, so people going into that field, like I want to go into that field, there might be lots of job opportunities because mostly the Arab speaking countries are normally exporters of oil or agricultural products or something like that ....and not lots of engineers, technicians, scientists, so they need lots of people. If you are going into those fields you can apply for a job there. They would readily accept you if they are short of those kind of staff.

R- And also if he has a penpal from Arab speaking countries he can reply your letters in Arabic as well.

I Just for correspondence on a friendly basis.

R- Ja just on a friendly basis.

R- Most of us will use it on a friendly basis, not on a real basis. We just need it to converse with someone on a friendly term like correspondence.

R- And, just by the way, reading signs, posters, notices in another country because if you can’t read notices, like on the road....

I ....Okay anything else. (Long pause) We’ll leave it at that. Thanks a lot for coming around.
Interview number 9

I Is that X
R- Yes.
I This is Mr Y here. I am doing a study on Arabic for curriculum design for schools, now what I wanted to know from you or anybody else in Z and I believe that you are the best person to speak to was er... I have two questions here. Why do you think students should study Arabic at schools?
R- And your next question? (pause).
I Sorry.
R- Your next question?
I The next one is what scope would there be for students who have completed Arabic at matric level?
R- Um .... Those are two tough questions (laughing).
I Well they are general questions. Just from your experience in Z in terms of trade and that.
R- Er ...Well I was basically doing the Gulf area initially. What I would say is why kids would look at that, it depends what they are going to study after matric. If you are going to go into the international trade or do some engineering degree, with all the opportunities that you would find in the Gulf, Saudi, Kuwait and in Dubai. Probably that is a good way to go about doing it. But then again, it depends on the students themselves, what type of a future they would want to get involved in. That is why I said it is a difficult question, because, for example, if I had the option ten or fifteen years ago, and if we were a normal society at that time, I would have probably studied Arabic and looked at the Gulf because that is where everything is happening. As far as construction is concerned we have engineering and all that. If you get involved in international trade, like for example, if you are involved in international trade presently, and if you study French, you can go to all the Francophone countries, so if you study Arabic, you are more au fait with the culture and the language when you start speaking with the Middle Eastern people. So that is why I said it is a very difficult question. Probably the easiest way would be to find out from schools, that is government or public schools where they have got teachers that guide kids for subjects and for future usage.
I Ja. By way of statistics and facts do you have any off hand to show how many South Africans are involved in which sector of the industry or anything of that sort?
R- South African states.
I Well persons from South Africa that are currently involved in the Middle East you know or for that matter in the future what scope do you think there might be?
R- Let's say that we don't have public information, but, however, when you look at people like “Murray and Roberts” they have got some joint ventures operations in the Gulf presently, in Dubai, Oman and I think in Saudia as well. And you look at people like “Denel” or “Armscor” the ones that they have in Abu Dhabi and probably the easiest way to get information relating to opportunities or joint venture companies as they are owned in the Gulf would either be to speak
with our charge de affairs in Abu Dhabi or our ambassador in Riyadh. They
would more or less know the companies that are trading there.... That is why I
initially said it was a difficult question to answer.
I  No, but I think that has helped a little. I think that the fact is that there is scope
abroad and...
R - .... Like I said it depends what your career guidance teachers have in mind for the
kids and maybe if you look from standard eight maybe and you have a chat with
them and they can actually assess the kids coming in to do the subject. That is
probably one of the easiest ways, the other way maybe on sort of a more post
matric level would be to look at your education institutions like “IMM”, “Damelin”,
you know those kind of guys. Where guys are studying for marketing diplomas or
what have you. The technikons of South Africa, probably on the post matric level
that is the best way, but if you can start talking to them from standard eight in
matric it could make a difference.
I  Sure, ja.
R- (Long pause).
I  Okay thanks a lot for your time. What is your full name?
R- Y.
I  What is your position at Z?
R- Er... I am a consultant.
I  But specialising on the Middle East or..?
R- Middle East is one of my specialisations and the other is bilateral trade, especially
for foreign companies that want to invest in South Africa or are looking at joint
ventures. We are trying to procure some products here; or encourage......on the
bilateral, not only one way that we used to be. We used to be export consultants
only but now we look at it the other way around as well. Trying to get investment
into the country. I am also involved in that now.
I  Sure, ja. And the Middle East is playing a big role or... how would you assess it?
R- Er ... Well presently they haven’t actually come in as one would have thought
they would. Mainly the problem might be the insecurity on the violence etc.
You know when I say violence I don’t talk about killing one another, I talk
more about the hijacking and the crime rate .... and the Arab is a very peculiar
person wanting to invest money where he can get security on it. But I
think it will improve in view of the fact that we now have a Saudi Arabian
ambassador. The Saudis are the guys that have the highest disposable income
in the region, so the mere fact that they have appointed an ambassador in the
country now shows the seriousness of trying to develop it with us. And Kuwait
has also got an ambassador here now, so God willing, things will open up and
they will come in now with the petro dollars. (Long pause).
I  Okay, thanks a lot. Bye
Interview number 12

I Okay you know in connection with my research I've got two questions for you. One is why do you think students should study Arabic at schools?
R- Okay I would say the first reason is learning languages currently allows them to sharpen their skills and make them more competitive both locally and internationally. That in my mind is a strong reason. It cuts across the board for both Muslims and non-Muslims and having that would be the thrust of our current move. That would be the first reason. So ideally a student should study English and an African language, Xhosa, Zulu, Afrikaans and presently a third language. That third language could be Arabic, French, Spanish, depending on the choice they have. So that would be my first point and certainly the second point would be with the fact that we are linking up and getting to know South Africa better and internationally for Muslims they need to know who they are. That can only be done through the tool of Arabic where you get an insight into the text of Islam both modern and classical and that makes for better South African citizens....
I The second one is what scope would there be for students who have completed Arabic at matric level?
R- I think there is a growing understanding in social sciences and business circles that students who have languages are better suited for business, for possibilities of being much more sharper astute persons in different contexts, be it business, academia, or as a teacher. So that is at a level of thinking, that is the level of a ... better rounded person. Practically I see there are growing opportunities. It's slowly growing, certainly teachers at schools, I am not too sure of their current situations, but I am speaking on top of my head on that one, but I noticed on the tourism sector, for example now at Jan Smuts Airport you see there is an Info-Africa there and they have Arabic as one of the languages. It's got Chinese, French, and Arabic written so if that is an index of things to come in the country then the tourism sector is going to develop first and the third is that it is very limited but academia is slowly growing. Slowly meaning as the universities slowly prioritise and attend to first come first serve issues, it's going to be on the agendas slowly now to widen the scope of university syllabi in each region. So you are likely to get regional. In a region, a campus or a group of campuses covering basics in a comprehensive way related to Arabic and Islamic Studies, be it a bit of Eastern Studies, politics and so forth. So to sum up, it would be teaching, tourism, and academia.
I All right, and in terms of scope at the university itself, do you think they have more centres opening up elsewhere or...?
R- Er... It's very much the question of how to re-prioritise the distribution of funds and money and that would determine the future. One definite possibility now is that there is growing interests from abroad, Malaysia, Indonesia, America, Europe, the Middle East... and that can lead to a selective possibility of a lectureship in Arabic at a campus where there is no Arabic. Starting off perhaps on a part time basis and then developing to a full
time possibility. I was briefly discussing this issue with M as to how it can be done because it takes a bit of time but once you’ve come up with the right chemistry it can grow......

I Okay, that was all X.
R- Okay.
I Thanks a lot.
R- You welcome.
I See you around.
R- Wassalaam.
APPENDIX 2: Field notes

Focus group interviews

1. Pretoria Muslim School (Std 8,9) 11.11.1996 15h00 – 15h40
2. Lenasia Secondary School (std 9) 18.11.1996 11h00 – 11h20
3. Lenasia (ex-students – Lenasia Muslim School and Lenasia Secondary School) 18.11.1996 20h00 – 21h00
4. Roshnee Islamic School (Std 9) 20.11.1996 15h00 – 15h40
5. Lenasia Secondary School (Std 10) 21.11.1996 15h00 – 15h30

Pilot study

A group of students from Central Islamic School were interviewed at the school after permission was granted by the principal. This interview was transcribed and discussed with the promoters. Valuable suggestions were made and the questions refined.

Focus group 1

The first focus group was conducted with students from the Pretoria Muslim School. It was held in a classroom on the school premises immediately after school had dismissed. This group consisted of standard 8 and 9 students, both boys and girls. The matric group were busy with their final examinations.

This group was talkative except for one boy who hardly spoke. They were a lively group as compared to the previous group in the pilot study.

Focus group 2

This interview was to have been conducted the day before, after their exam, but the girls suggested it be postponed. The next day the five boys pitched up and the girls did not. It was decided by the boys that the interview should proceed as the end of the year was approaching, and even they may not be available later.

The interview went well and lasted about 20 minutes. Two respondents tended to dominate the discussion.

Focus group 3

This group was chosen randomly from students who had matriculated with Arabic either from the Muslim private school or a state school. Two boys and three girls from the state school indicated their availability and two boys and two girls from the Muslim school were also keen on being part of the group. They all had matriculated within the last three years.

Some were continuing their studies in Arabic locally and one girl had spent a year studying Arabic in Jordan. The interview was scheduled for 7.30. Two girls did not arrive punctually as their lift was delayed. At 8.00 it was decided to continue without them. They came in ten minutes after the discussion had started. There was a shuffle of furniture and questions had to be repeated.
The group gave their honest impressions and one continually mentioned that he never "used Arabic since then", probably forgetting that his daily prayers were in Arabic!

After the interview refreshments were served and students discussed general matters for another half an hour before leaving. For some it was a happy reunion.

Focus group 4

This interview was held after school in an isolated classroom. There were six female and three male students. They were keen to participate and gave mature answers. Their teacher, a Moroccan, was quite interested in what was taking place, although he was under the impression that an oral exam was to be conducted with them. He left before the interview started.

The students generally spoke very highly of him and the sterling work he had been doing. He even compiled a set of Arabic text-books which were published and were being used at that school. The students were quite impressed with this effort of his, the first communicative book designed within the South African context.

This school has had an unstable Arabic teaching staff, about six changes in two years. This complaint came out very strongly. In addition, each teacher brought with him his own books and approach to teaching the subject. It was a case of "for each master there is his own method" (an Arabic proverb). This was aptly proven in this case, as each teacher did his own thing while he was there.

The students were also concerned whether the subject should be made compulsory or left as an optional subject. The Board of Governors of this school wanted to make it compulsory and there was some resistance to this move.

Focus group 5

After the matriculants wrote their matric Arabic exam paper on the 21st November, they were asked to come to the classroom for the interview. They all agreed to that arrangement. At about 2.30 a reporter from The Citizen newspaper called and wanted comments about the matric exam paper. The interviewer was called to the office to answer the questions on the telephone. In the process, the students thought that the interview was called off and the girls had left. The boys remained. Since it was in the midst of their exam period, it was difficult to reschedule the interview. It was decided that the interview should proceed without the girls. There were six boys, one of whom came in late with a can of Coke.

Two of them mentioned how hardworking the girls were as compared to the lackadaisical attitude of the boys. Their regret was that had they put in more effort, their situation would have been different after five years of exposure to the language.
Field notes: Individual interviews

Pilot interview

Two teachers, one from a Muslim private school and the other from a state school were interviewed together at length. The transcriptions were analysed by the promoters. Valuable suggestions were made and the questions refined.

1. Lecturers in Arabic didactics

There were four universities offering an Arabic didactics course in South Africa. The Universities of Durban Westville and Unisa were chosen due to their close proximity and experience in the field. At UDW the person chosen was involved with Arabic at schools since the inception of Arabic in 1975. Unisa was chosen because it had already had a history of involvement of teaching the didactics course.

Both lecturers were amenable and eager to assist in the research. The Unisa lecturer, however, linked her answers more towards the university rather than the school situation. While not everything said was relevant, she still had strong views which have some bearing on the study at hand.

Both were contacted telephonically during working hours after an appointment for the interview was made beforehand.

2. The travel agents

The first was a person involved in ticketing and reservations, an ordinary worker, whereas the other was a director in a big family travel agency business. Both were helpful and answered questions even though they were busy at the time.

3. The three teachers

The first interview was held with an ex-teacher who was now the Deputy Consul at the South African embassy in Riyadh. He was chosen because he was directly involved in the Arabic syllabus committee in Durban, and an Arabic teacher for the past twelve years. He was in South Africa at the time and though a busy person, was prepared to be interviewed. He was able to give two perspectives, one as a teacher and now in retrospect as a person from a South African mission abroad.

The Muslim private school teacher is currently involved in a text book research project and served as the Arabic facilitator for the Association of Muslim Private Schools (AMPS). His interview was conducted at night, after making numerous efforts to get hold of him during working hours.

The state school teacher conducted his interview hurriedly, giving short answers. He had participated earlier in the pilot study with another teacher and probably felt he did not have much more to say. There was no other state school teacher that could be contacted.
4. **The three parents**

The three parents were difficult to choose from a universe of so many. Using the criteria of having had more than two children who had studied Arabic at school during the past decade, these were the only three parents that were identified. It was assumed that they more than anybody else would be familiar with all aspects of the Arabic curriculum. It was disturbing to note that one did not know what was really being done at schools. One interview was held early in the morning, prior to her going to the flea market; the other two in the afternoon when they were more at ease.

5. **The two department personnel**

The two department of education personnel chosen were the only two directly involved in the field. The subject advisor for Arabic (the only one in the country) was formerly a teacher and a member of the Arabic Syllabus Committee. She was instrumental in getting the Higher Grade syllabus and prescribed list of books approved for Arabic. She discussed quite frankly the constraints felt in terms of promoting the subject at schools.

The other was the Deputy Director in charge of all foreign languages. While German was his field of specialisation, he was able to talk generally about all foreign languages.

6. **Foreign Affairs and trade sector**

The person from Foreign Affairs was difficult to get hold of. The others he suggested were also not available even after repeated requests. The interview held with him materialised a few days later and was quite informative in that it gave a sense of the direction that his department was moving in, especially in terms of north African and middle east affairs.

The person from the South African Foreign trade organisation (SAFTO), the South African International Industrial Association (SAIIA) and the lecturer of International Relations from the Witwatersrand University were all amenable and willing to assist. They made valuable inputs in terms of their work and experience in the field of trade, industry and international relations with the Arab world.

7. **The NGO sector**

The Arabic text book writer and publisher was a veteran publisher and teacher. His involvement in Arabic spanned a period of twenty years and he had a number of Arabic publications to his credit. He is one of the oldest grammar-translation teachers in the province. His answers were short and limited to his field of experience.

The Society for the Promotion of Arabic (SPAL) member had been actively promoting Arabic through canvassing parental support for the cause of Arabic. The interview had caught him off guard and therefore his input was shorter than it would have been otherwise.

The Director for the Centre for Islamic Studies was actively involved in both Arabic and Islamic Studies. He has travelled extensively and gave answers based on his international experience.