Arabic Language Learning in Europe: Realities of Policy & Practice

Brussels, Belgium
8 – 9 May 2023

www.qfi.org/symposium/
Mainstreaming Arabic in schools

The importance of language learning is now being more recognized in education policies. And the importance of Arabic as the 5th most spoken language in the world is also being recognized. Yet, Arabic language is not a mainstream offer and, therefore, not a realistic option for students in primary and secondary schools outside of the Arab world.

The goal of this symposium is to bring partners and potential partners together to network, share, and to better understand the current context and players; identify synergies; and articulate opportunities for collaboration and growth. Over two days, with approximately 40 academics, policy makers and practitioners from the language education and Arabic fields, this symposium will allow for structured dialogue on key issues and examine the practice and needs of teaching Arabic as a global language in schools.

QFI has operated for over 10 years primarily in North America and the United Kingdom. More recently, QFI has entered Europe with programming in Germany and Italy but is still a relatively new player in this region. Leveraging QFI’s experience working with the various aspects of the teaching and learning of Arabic, this first symposium brings together key stakeholders across Europe and the United Kingdom who are working on Arabic, or languages.
Venue

Warwick Hotel, Brussels, Belgium

Address: Rue Duquesnoy, 5 - 1000 Brussels, Belgium

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E-mail: info.warwickbrussels@warwickhotels.com

The venue for the Symposium is the Warwick Hotel. Check-in time is after 15:00 on May 7, and check-out time is before 12:00 on May 10, so please plan travel accordingly.

A welcome reception for attendees is on May 7 at 19:00 - 20:00 at the hotel rooftop lounge.

There will be a dinner for attendees on May 8 at 19:00 at Al-Barmaki restaurant, located at Rue des Eperonniers 67, 1000 Bruxelles.
Program

Monday, Day One
8 May | 2023

09:00 - 09:30  WELCOME NOTE
Tahreem Akhtar and Annelise Claire, QFI, US

09:30 - 10:50  Opening Session:
PERCEPTION OF ARABIC LANGUAGE LEARNING
This opening plenary will explore the current situation of language learning and the
Teaching of Arabic in Europe and the UK. What are the opportunities and constraints that
Arabic faces in these contexts? How can Arabic language education become a more
Common offer as a modern language for all types of learners – those with or without prior
Arabic knowledge? What is needed to shift the perception of Arabic language education?

Moderated by Dr. Carine Allaf, Senior Program Advisor, QFI, US
Speakers:
• Dr. Mahmoud Al-Batal, The American University of Beirut (Retired), US
• Dr. Fabrice Jaumont, President, Center for the Advancement of Languages,
  Education, and Communities (CALEC), US/France
• Dr. Peter Konerding, University of Münster, Germany
• Stefania Bertonati, Lecturer of Arabic Language at the University of Pavia, Italy
• Dr. Kurstin Gatt, Department of Middle Eastern and Asian Languages and
  Cultures, Faculty of Arts, University of Malta, Malta

10:50-11:15  BREAK / FAMILY PHOTO

11:15 - 12:45  Panel One:
THE CHICKEN AND THE EGG DILEMMA
Quality and sustainable language programs require strong and effective teachers.
Teachers come to the profession of Arabic teaching with various backgrounds and
in various ways. This session will examine the existing models for teacher supply and
Teacher training (both pre- and in-service), as well as the challenges & opportunities in
addressing teacher needs. What is needed to produce a professional pool of Arabic
teachers to develop sustainable Arabic language programs? What is the current situation
in each region?

Moderated by Julia Sylla, Director of Programs, QFI
Speakers:
• Luma Hameed, Associate Lecturer, Goldsmiths, University of London, UK
• Shahir Nashed, Arabic language teacher, Salzmannschule Schneipenthal, Germany
• Lisa Hanna, Deputy Director, SCILT, Scotland's National Centre for Languages, Scotland, UK
• Reem Kassabgy, Head of Arabic, Malmö University, Sweden
• Dr. Anthony Malone, Associate Professor, Department of Education, Maynooth University, Ireland
13:00 - 14:30  LUNCH

14:30 - 16:00  Panel Two:  
TEACHING TO/FOR WHAT? WHAT IS THE GOAL OF TEACHING ARABIC AT THE PRIMARY AND SECONDARY LEVEL?

What is the ultimate goal of learning Arabic at the school level? Assessments drive instruction in many, if not all, school systems. And schools include Arabic as an offer for multiple reasons. This session will examine the various assessments being utilized in language classrooms across the UK and EU. What examinations currently exist for Arabic learners and how are they being utilized? How do teachers / schools decide what assessments to use? How are linguistic competencies that are in the assessments and that are being evaluated, being decided?

**Moderated by Tony Calderbank, UK Consultant, QFI, UK**

**Speakers:**
- Fauzia Saeed, Teacher, Hampstead School, London, UK
- Dr. Lama Nassif, Associate Professor of Arabic Studies, Williams College, US
- Dr. Paula Caffaro, Professor of Arabic, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- Paula Roetscher, Teacher of Arabic, Salzmannschule Schnepfenthal, Lecturer in Arabic, University of Erfurt, Germany

16:00 - 16:15  BREAK

16:15 - 17:30  Closing Session:  
EMERGING KEY THEMES

**Moderated by Tom Dente, Chief of Strategy and Growth, LG Consulting, US**

19:00  Dinner

AL-BARMAKI
Rue des Eperonniers 67, 1000 Bruxelles
Tuesday, Day Two  
9 May | 2023

09:00 - 10:30 Opening Session: BEST PRACTICES IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION
A panel will explore best practices in language learning and the benefits of learning from experience with an aim of promoting the growth and professionalization of Arabic language teaching and learning. What should Arabic learn from other foreign language experiences? The goal of this session is to pinpoint key areas of learning from more established and mainstreamed languages such as French, Spanish, and German.

Moderated by Omar Tarabishi, Program Officer, QFI, US
Speakers:
• Dr. Lourdes Ortega, Professor of Linguistics, Georgetown University, US
• Fhiona MacKay, Director, SCILT, Scotland’s National Centre for Languages, UK
• Dr. Ian Collen, Senior Lecturer in Modern Languages Education at Queen’s University Belfast, UK
• Montserrat Montagut and Nuria Miro, Catalan Ministry of Education, Barcelona, Spain (via Zoom)

10:30-10:45 BREAK

10:45 - 12:00 Panel Discussion: WHO IS QFI AND HOW CAN IT SUPPORT ARABIC LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN EUROPE AND THE UK?
In recent years, there has been an increased focus on the importance of multilingualism in schools. A growing body of research has shown that multilingualism can have a number of benefits for students, both in terms of their academic achievement and their social and emotional development. How can QFI support Arabic language education in Europe and the UK? The goal of this session is to discuss this question and the emerging themes from Day One with QFI team members.

12:15 - 13:30 LUNCH

13:30 - 15:30 REGIONAL / THEMATIC WORKING GROUPS

15:30-15:45 BREAK

15:45 - 16:30 NETWORKING TIME

16:30 - 17:30 Closing Session: WHAT IS NEEDED FOR ARABIC LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN EUROPE AND THE UK?
Working groups will present their findings and recommendations.
Closing remarks by Latrecia Wilson, Executive Director, QFI, US
Moderated by Tom Dente, Chief of Strategy and Growth, LG Consulting, US
Meet the attendees

Dr. Mahmoud AL-BATAL
Professor of Arabic, the American University of Beirut (Retired), US

Dr. Haifa ALSAKKAF
Director, Good World Citizen Organization, Italy

Louise BACKELIN
Ph.D. student, Department of Languages and Literatures, University of Gothenburg, Sweden

Stefania BERTONATI
Lecturer of Arabic, the University of Pavia, Italy

Simone BRITZ
Teacher of Arabic, Federal Foreign Office, Germany

Dr. Paula CAFFARO
Professor of Arabic, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Hanna CAMPBELL
Language Policy Officer, Department for Education, England, UK

Dr. Rita CARRARESI
Head Teacher, the Istituto Comprensivo N. 3 of Sesto Fiorentino, Florence, Italy

Marisa CAVALLI
Independent expert, Consultant, the ECML of Council of Europe, Austria

Dr. Ian COLLEN
Senior Lecturer, Modern Languages Education, Queen’s University Belfast, UK

Dr. Ian COLLEN
Senior Lecturer, Modern Languages Education, Queen’s University Belfast, UK

Dr. Ken CRUICKSHANK
Director, Sydney Institute for Community Language Education, Professor in Education, The University of Sydney, Australia

Tom DENTE
Chief of Strategy and Growth, LG Consulting, US

Mialy DERMISH
Executive Director, SIRIUS Policy Network on Migrant Education, Brussels, BE

Dr. Rima ELABDALI
Assistant Professor, Department of English, University of Tennessee, US

Inger FÄLT
Operation Manager, Language Center, Gothenburg, Sweden

Dr. Souzan FA TAYER
Professor of Arabic, Università degli Studi di Napoli l’Orientale, Italy

Dr. Kurstin GATT
Department of Middle Eastern and Asian Languages and Cultures, Faculty of Arts, University of Malta, Malta

Vicky GOUGH
Lead for Modern Foreign Languages in the UK, British Council, UK

Charlene HACKLEY
Coordinator Education and Integration, City of Kassel, Germany

Luma HAMEED
Associate Lecturer, Educational Studies, Goldsmiths, University of London, Founder of Arabic Sawa1, UK
Lisa HANNA  
Deputy Director, SCILT, Scotland’s National Centre for Languages, UK

Hannah JACK  
Languages Curriculum Policy Advisor, Department for Education, England, UK

Dr. Fabrice JAUMONT  
President, Center for the Advancement of Languages, Education, and Communities (CALEC), US/France

Reem KASSABGY  
Head of Arabic, Malmö University, Sweden

Dr. Peter KONERDING  
Coordinator, the Centre for the Arabic Language, Lecturer of Arabic, University of Münster, Germany

Fhiona MACKAY  
Director, SCILT, Scotland’s National Centre for Languages, UK

Anna MAIETTA  
Primary School Teacher, Istituto Comprehensive 3, Sesto Fiorentino, Italy

Prof. Dr. Sebastian MAISEL  
Chair, the Arabic Language and Translations Program, Oriental Institute, Leipzig University, Germany

Dr. Anthony MALONE  
Associate Professor, Future Leaders Program Leader (Year 2 – MAELM), TL21/M.Ed (IL) Program Leader, Department of Education, Maynooth University, Ireland

Feras MOFLEH  
Mother tongue teacher, Language Center, Gothenburg, Sweden

Shahir NASHED  
Teacher of Arabic, Salzmannschule Schnepfenthal, Germany

Dr. Lama NASSIF  
Teaching and Learning Resources Fellow (2022-2023), Queen Rania Foundation, Associate Professor of Arabic Studies, Williams College, US

Dr. Lourdes ORTEGA  
Professor of Linguistics, Georgetown University, US

Dr. Jordi PÀMIES ROVIRA  
Head of the Department of Theories of Education and Social Pedagogy, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain

Dr. Kenia PUIG  
Education Officer and Teaching and Learning Manager, Post-Primary Languages Ireland, Department of Education, Ireland

Paula ROETSCHER  
Teacher of Arabic, Salzmannschule Schnepfenthal, and Lecturer in Arabic, University of Erfurt, Germany

Fauzia SAEED  
Teacher of Arabic, Hampstead School, UK

Dr. Angelina SÁNCHEZ MARTÍ  
Lecturer of Research Methods and Diagnosis in Education, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain

Camilla SANQUERIN  
Counselor for Welfare, Volunteering, Integration and Solidarity, City of Sesto Fiorentino (FI), Italy

Prof. David TRESILIAN  
Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature and English, American University of Paris, France

Sylwia WIECZOREK  
Head of Unit, Language Center, Gothenburg, Sweden
The symposium is structured in the form of panel discussions, which will allow for a constructive discussion that will result in clear, context-specific recommendations on what can be done to make Arabic a mainstream offering in schools.

Our two rapporteurs:

- **Dr. Rima Elabdali** is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Her work appeared in top-tier journals such as the Journals of Second Language Writing, TESOL Quarterly, and Computer & Composition and in edited volumes by Routledge and Multilingual Matters.

- **Dr. Angelina Sánchez Martí** is a Tenure-track Lecturer of Research Methods and Diagnosis in Education of the Department of Applied Pedagogy at the Autonomous University of Barcelona. She is a researcher of the group ‘Critical intersections in education (atlas)’ and is also attached to the interuniversity and interdisciplinary center for studies and research CER-Migracions.
Social Media Kit for the symposium

If you would like to share your experience at the Symposium on social media, please use the hashtags #MainstreamArabic and #SpeakArabic #TeachArabic.

When referencing QFI, please credit us as @QFIntl on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, and as @qatar-foundation-international on LinkedIn.

If you choose to share about QFI online, you may find this information helpful:

- QFI’s mission is to advance the value of teaching and learning Arabic as a global language.

- QFI encourages the study of Arabic as a global language by supporting the professionalization of Arabic teaching and research-informed methodology and practices.

- With extensive experience working in the Americas, the United Kingdom (UK), and Europe, QFI has established networks of educators, administrators, students, researchers, and other experts in language learning.

- QFI is an independent organization based in Washington, DC, United States.

If you choose to post on social media, please remember to ask permission before quoting someone by name and/or posting their photo online.
The Chatham House Rule is used around the world to encourage inclusive and open dialogue in meetings.

The Chatham House Rule helps create a trusted environment to understand and resolve complex problems. Its guiding spirit is: share the information you receive, but do not reveal the identity of who said it.

The Rule reads as follows:

“When a meeting, or part thereof, is held under the Chatham House Rule, participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed.”
Thank you!
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