

The Status of Arabic in the United States of America post 9/11 and the Impact on Foreign Language Teaching Programs

Abdel-Rahman Abu-Melhim

Department of English Language and Literature

Irbid University College, Al-Balqa' Applied University, Al-Salt, Jordan 19117

E-mail: abumelhim@hotmail.com

Doi:10.7575/aiac.all.v.5n.3p.70

Received: 06/04/2014

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.7575/aiac.all.v.5n.3p.70>

Accepted: 13/05/2014

This work has been carried out during sabbatical leave granted to the author, (Abdel-Rahman Abu-Melhim), from Al-Balqa' Applied University, (BAU), during the academic year 2013/2014.

Abstract

This study aims at investigating the status of Arabic in the United States of America in the aftermath of the 9/11 World Trade Center events. It delves into this topic and identifies the main reasons for the increased demand for learning Arabic. It also determines the impact of the renewed interest in Arabic on foreign language teaching programs. Furthermore, the study identifies the main Arabic language programs established in the U.S. after the events of 9/11, 2001 at various institutions of higher education. The process of data collection relied primarily on information and statistics provided by several authorized professional linguistic organizations based in the U.S. as well as a number of telephone interviews conducted by the researcher. Since September 11, 2001, Arabic language teaching and learning has become the focus of much more attention from the educational community in the United States. The study revealed that Arabic is the fastest-growing foreign language taught at U.S. colleges and universities ranking tenth among all other foreign languages during the last decade. Major reasons for the high demand for Arabic including political, family, and linguistic reasons are also discussed. Finally, the impact of this demand on Arabic teaching programs is explained providing a comprehensive list of higher educational institutions that teach Arabic in the United States today.

Keywords: Arabic post 9/11, Arabic as a foreign language, Language and politics, Arabic for specific purposes, Arabic status in America

1. Introduction

Arabic is undoubtedly an extremely important language among the numerous languages spoken in the world today. Its importance stems not only from the fact that it is spoken by a very large number of people world-wide, but also from its status as a sacred language since it is the language of the Holy Qur'an. This attitude towards Arabic is clearly illustrated in Dodge (2009), who explains that although the vast majority of the world's Muslims are not native speakers of Arabic, they make a serious effort to learn some Arabic. This devotion to learning Arabic despite its relative difficulty is mainly because of its bond and historical association with the Qur'an coupled with the fact that daily prayers for Muslims including recitation of the Qur'an are performed in Arabic five times a day. Therefore, interest in learning Arabic is not by any means limited to Arabs or even those who descend from an Arab origin. This creates the need for institutions that specialize in teaching Arabic as a second or a foreign language throughout the world. However, there was little interest in the North American society in Arabic prior to the events of the World Trade Center that took place on September 11th, 2001, at least compared to interest in other foreign languages especially European languages such as French, German, Spanish, or Italian. It was observed that the American federal government and American educators alike became increasingly interested in the Arabic language immediately after the events of 9/11. Since Arabic and Islam are usually connected together, a growing interest in Islam coincided with the demand for Arabic and Arabic institutions.

This is stated in a straight forward manner in the introduction to Dodge (2009) , who declares:

My work on the first edition of *The Everything Understanding Islam Book* began shortly after the horrific attacks of September 11, 2001. Interest in Islam was on the rise, although unfortunately it was often viewed as the "faith of enemies" or through politically colored glasses. Fortunately, many people recognized that Islam was much more rich and complex than what was widely portrayed , and they sought to learn more. For nearly a decade, I have hosted an online community (<http://islsm.about.com>) where people learn about Islam, ask questions, and make friends. In response to the first edition of this book, I received hundreds of follow-up questions through letters and e-mail messages from readers. Your feedback has helped shape this second edition, in which I hope to center discussions on the foundations of the Islamic faith and how those who follow this way of life interact with others in the world. In today's political climate, people tend to focus on what is different,

unusual, or suspicious. Certainly we should recognize legitimate differences of opinion and belief. However, how much more peaceful would the world be if we also respected and celebrated our similarities and common ground? (p.1).

The growing interest in Arabic as the language of Islam, which was unfortunately directly linked to the horrific attacks of 9/11, re-emphasize the already well-established connection between language and politics.

2. Purpose

This study seeks to investigate the status of Arabic in the United States of America in the aftermath of the 9/11 World Trade Center events. The study will delve into this topic in terms of identifying the main reasons for the obviously increased demand and growing interest for learning and teaching Arabic as a foreign language in the U.S.A. It will also determine the impact of the renewed interest in Arabic on foreign language teaching programs in terms of the inclusion of Arabic as a foreign language in K-12 classes in both public and private schools. Furthermore, the study will seek to identify the main Arabic language programs established in the U.S. after the events of 9/11, 2001 at various institutions of higher education.

3. Study Questions

In light of the purposes outlined above, this study seeks to answer the following questions?

1. What is the status of Arabic in the United States of America in the aftermath of the 9/11 World Trade Center events?
2. What are the main reasons for the obviously increased demand and growing interest for learning and teaching Arabic as a foreign language in the U.S.A.?
3. What are the major affects of the growing interest in Arabic on foreign language teaching programs in terms of the inclusion of Arabic as a foreign language in K-12 classes in both public and private schools?
4. What are the main Arabic language programs established in the U.S. after the events of 9/11, 2001 at various institutions of higher education?

4. Methodology

The process of data collection relied primarily on information and statistics provided by the American Association of Teachers of Arabic, Modern Language Association, the American Association for Applied Linguistics, the Linguistic Society of America, the Joint National Committee on Languages, the Arabic Linguistic Society and the Middle East Studies Association of North America.

Every serious effort was made to obtain data relevant to the topic of this research. Some of the above-mentioned institutions and organizations were contacted via E-mail, while others were contacted by telephone. Accordingly, several telephone interviews were conducted with individuals who were known to be knowledgeable and considered as an authority in the field of foreign language learning and teaching. However, some information and specific data were retrieved from the professional websites that publish official information and statistics regarding foreign language teaching in the United State of America especially information relevant to programs of teaching Arabic as a foreign language. Some information was also gathered from official U.S. government published reports. However, additional information was obtained by contacting the cultural attaché section of the united States Embassy in Amman, Jordan, being the country of residence for this researcher.

Finally, several selected directors of Arabic language programs in American institutions of higher education were consulted by the researcher after proper identification of major institutions that teach Arabic.

5. Literature Review

Linguistic literature dealing with Arabic as a foreign language in the United States of America prior to the events of 9/11, 2001 focused on Arabic as the language of people living in the Arabic-speaking world and its importance in terms of the number of speakers (Katzner, 2002). Moreover, several other linguists from all over the world (Ferguson, 1959) & (Al-Batal, 2007) for example became interested in Arabic from a pure linguistic point of view especially the existence of the unique diglossic situation that assigns separate linguistic roles to standard and colloquial varieties.

The events of 9/11 triggered a renewed interest in the Arabic language possibly for reasons that are not necessarily of a pure linguistic nature. This renewed interest in Arabic seems to be primarily marked with politics since the World Trade Center events were associated with and immediately linked to Arabs and Muslims. The need to learn more about Arabs and Muslims triggered a growing interest in teaching and learning Arabic as a foreign language in the United States of America to fulfill the curiosity of learners and to help them better understand the Arab and Muslim cultures since language and culture are obviously interrelated (Allen, 2004). However, linguistic literature dealing with the status of Arabic post 9/11 seems to be controversial.

Some applied linguistic studies especially those concerned primarily with teaching Arabic as a foreign language (Edwards, 2004) focused on Arabic as a means to better understand the Arab culture while other studies (Scollon, 2004) focused on Arabic for specific purposes especially its use in the U. S. Armed forces for a pure military purpose both inside and on military missions outside the United States.

Finally, some linguistic professional organizations provided statistics that illustrate the growing interest in Arabic post 9/11 contrasted with the limited interest in Arabic prior to the World Trade Center incident. Such organizations include: The American Association of Teachers of Arabic, Modern Language Association, the American Association for Applied Linguistics, the Linguistic Society of America, the Joint National Committee on Languages, the Arabic Linguistic Society and the Middle East Studies Association of North America.

6. Discussion

6.1 Arabic Language Teaching in the United States Today

Prior to the World Trade Center events that took place in September of 2001, applied linguistic studies especially those concerned with foreign language teaching revealed a very limited interest in learning Arabic in the United States of America. This fact was evident by various studies conducted during that period (Cumming, 2001), for example, who explained that in 2000, languages of the Middle East made up less than 2% of all foreign language classes offered in the United States: 1.3% Hebrew and 0.5% Arabic. Since the attacks of September 11th, and the FBI's urgent call for Arabic translators and interpreters, interest in the teaching and learning of this language has increased dramatically.

This section looks at the status of Arabic language teaching in the United States today in an attempt to answer the first question clearly stated in the study questions section of this paper "What is the status of Arabic in the United States of America in the aftermath of the 9/11 World Trade Center events?".

Numerous applied linguistic studies specifically those concerned with Arabic over the past decade revealed that Arabic is the fastest-growing foreign language taught at U.S. colleges and universities, this claim holds true in a large number of institutions of higher education in America including the University of Iowa in Iowa City. Furthermore, in 2006, Arabic became the 10th most-studied language in the United States (Heldt, 2010).

This high demand for Arabic teaching programs in the United States of America resulted in producing a tremendous number of Arabic speakers in the country after the World Trade Center events compared to the period that preceded that date. Information contained in the following two tables clearly illustrate this fact and outline the number of Arabic speakers in the U.S. before and after September 11, 2001. Moreover the tables break down the number of speakers for selected states as provided by the American Association of Teachers of Arabic, the Arabic Linguistic Society and the Middle East Studies Association of North America.

Table 1. Arabic speakers in the United States

Year	Arabic Speakers
1910	32,868
1920	57,557
1930	67,830
1940	50,940
1960	49,908
1970	73,657
1980	251,409
1990	355,150
2000	614,582
2010	864,961

Table 2. Arabic speakers in the United States by state in 2010

State	Arabic speakers
California	158,398
Michigan	101,470
New York	86,269
Texas	54,340
Illinois	53,251
New Jersey	51,011
Virginia	36,683
Florida	34,698
Ohio	33,125

Through personal contact with Professor Denes Gazsi, a lecturer and Arabic program coordinator at the University of Iowa, he enthusiastically stated that the University of Iowa is seeing huge enrollment growth in its Arabic language classes, mirroring a national trend showing the most growth in Arabic.

Gazsi additionally stated that enrollment in Arabic classes grew 127% nationally from 2002 - 2006, by far the largest jump of any language, according to the Modern Language Association. However, at the University of Iowa campus, enrollment in Arabic classes tripled from their launch in Fall 2006 - Fall 2009 _ from 34 students to 102 students. The University of Iowa in December, 2009, added an Arabic minor.

Arabic teaching programs are also available at other Iowa institutions of higher education including Iowa State University and the University of Northern Iowa which in contrast have fewer Arabic offerings than the University of Iowa, but the three universities participate jointly in a regents study-abroad program in Morocco for students in Arabic. This growing demand for Arabic is by no means limited to the above-mentioned universities in Iowa, but surely exceeds that to include other institutions nation-wide. For example, Officials at Cornell College in Mount Vernon are considering adding Arabic classes to the classes already offered through their foreign language department.

6.2 Reasons Behind the Demand for Arabic

This section looks at the main reasons behind the strong demand for Arabic in the United States today in an attempt to answer the second question clearly stated in the study questions section of this paper "What are the main reasons for the obviously increased demand and growing interest for learning and teaching Arabic as a foreign language in the U.S.A.?"

Speaking of Arabic, "That's fast growth," said Roland Racevskis, chairman of the UI French and Italian department, which also houses Arabic. "Interest in languages is often influenced by the world political scene."

Students often have interest in Arabic because of family background, because they are in the military or because they have career interests in linguistics, said Denes Gazsi, UI lecturer and Arabic program coordinator. Arabic is the main language in 24 countries, mostly in the Middle East and North Africa. The UI program offers three years, six classes total: two elementary, two intermediate and two advanced.

It becomes extremely obvious after reviewing the related literature concerned with investigating the status of Arabic in the United States of America today and based on information obtained from different reliable and professional organizations that there is no doubt what so ever that an extremely high demand for Arabic was triggered in the early years of the 21st century. The main reasons for such a great demand for Arabic and Arabic teaching programs can be summarized as follows:

1. Political reasons: These reasons are clearly represented by the events of the World Trade Center that took place on September 11th of 2001. The attacks were immediately linked to Arab terrorist groups. This prompted an instant interest in knowing more about Arabic- the native language of the accused individuals. This was done based on the belief that the more we know about their language; the more we will know about the attackers and the motives behind what they did. In other words, knowledge about the language will give serve as a vehicle to give us an insight about the speakers of Arabic. The above mentioned events triggered a very strong interest in learning Arabic. This is certainly a clear example of the bond between language and politics that has been in existence throughout human history.
2. Military reasons: The strong interest in learning Arabic in the United States army can be easily explained in relation to the above mentioned political reasons. President George W. bush at the time of the attacks on the Worlds Trade Center pledged to take military action against any country that housed the accused attackers regardless of their location in the world in a clear attempt to take revenge for the American victims. The U.S. department of Defense immediately sent out an urgent call for people who know Arabic to serve as teachers of Arabic for military personnel before their departure from America to be stationed overseas in different Arab countries. This was also associated with the need for English-Arabic interpreters and translators (and visas versa) to accompany the U.S. troops in their new locations. Such interpreters and translators were given generous financial bonuses and incentives to serve in the U.S. army either by being drafted officially or by personal contract.
3. Family reasons: Some individuals in America became more interested in Arabic since they descended from an Arab background or because they were somehow associated with someone who is from an Arab descent by marriage, business partnership, or even friendship. Such individuals wanted to learn Arabic out of curiosity and the need to know more about the language spoken by those who meant something to them.
4. Professional reasons: There was a number of orientalists and linguists who were interested in the Arabic language even prior to the events of the World Trade Center. Such linguists belonged to professional organizations including the Arabic Linguistic Society housed at the University of Utah with annual conferences held throughout the United States of America and the American Association of Teachers of Arabic. The 2001 events and the focus on Arabic prompted those linguists and teachers of Arabic in U.S. institutions to further their linguistic research into Arabic issues. A large number of such linguists wanted to learn even more about Arabic or reach an advanced level of proficiency in the language triggered by the same events.

6.3 The Impact of the World Trade Center Events on Arabic and other Foreign Language Teaching Programs

This section addresses the third question as directly stated in the study questions section of this paper, which reads "What are the major affects of the growing interest in Arabic on foreign language teaching programs in terms of the inclusion of Arabic as a foreign language in K-12 classes in both public and private schools?".

The demand for new language teaching programs or the lack of it, is directly linked to the level of demand for learning that particular language. As discussed in the above section and as clarified in the related literature review, it is very obvious that there has been a growing interest in learning Arabic as a foreign language in the United States as of the beginning of the 21st century particularly after the events of the World Trade Center that took place on the 11th of September, 2001. This growing demand to learn Arabic inevitably results in a clear justifiable need to establish new Arabic teaching programs at institutions of varying levels in the United States. Most of these institutions are in the higher educational level, while others are at the level of K-12 classes. It must be stated here that some of these educational institutions used to offer Arabic courses at a very limited level prior to the 2001 attacks.

During a personal telephone interview with Rosemary Feal, executive director of the Modern Language Association, she states that "there is an ebb and flow in language popularity, partly linked to economic and political trends". Later on in the same interview, Feal said "German and Russian used to be common offerings, but now more than 90% of high school language instruction is Spanish". Speaking of the University of Iowa as an example, she added that "The UI suspended enrollment to German graduate programs for one year, but undergraduate enrollment remains steady".

Along the same lines, Helena Dettmer, associate dean for undergraduate programs and curriculum in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Iowa, said in a similar telephone interview that "Russian, Spanish, Portuguese and French are all growing at the UI".

In an attempt to compare interest in Arabic at the University of Iowa to that at Iowa State University, a personal telephone interview was arranged with Dawn Bratsch-Prince, associate dean in Liberal Arts and Sciences at ISU, who clarified that "interest in Russian has dwindled as fewer high schools offer it, and ISU may downgrade Russian from a specialization to a minor. It would make sense to upgrade Arabic to a minor because of demand, but ISU needs more than the two courses it has". Information elicited from interviewees in the above mentioned telephone interviews clearly show that there is a direct correlation between interest in foreign language learning and the level of demand for launching new foreign language programs. It seems that there is a need to revise language teaching programs periodically in light of the demand for such programs. This kind of revision is usually based on a needs analysis considering the learning goals of foreign language learners. The results of this needs analysis determine what programs to downgrade, what programs to upgrade, or even what programs to cancel. It is clear that numerous institutions that did not offer any courses in Arabic prior to the 2001 events started offering a number of Arabic language courses to meet the needs of their students. However, other institutions which used to offer a limited number of courses upgraded their Arabic programs and started offering more advanced Arabic courses. Moreover, some schools and universalities which did not have any Arabic programs to begin with, established new programs that specialize in teaching Arabic as a foreign language. Information about the Arabic and other foreign language programs at the University of Iowa and Iowa State University are used here only for the sake of illustration. It is safe to say that what applies to these two universities applies to a large number of schools and universities in the United States of America.

Arabic speakers are in greater demand than ever before. The U.S. State Department as named Arabic a "critical language," creating scholarships for language study in the U.S. and overseas. At Boston University, for example, Arabic language enrollment has risen by 68% since 2005. BU students feel that knowing Arabic will give them a career edge in such fields as diplomacy, intelligence, business, engineering, international development, and academia.

One of the best ways to gauge the growing interest in Middle Eastern languages is to look at recent federal funding increases. Education appropriations for fiscal year 2002 included a 26% increase for Title VI of the Higher Education Act and the Fulbright-Hays International Studies Program. This added \$20.5 million in new funding to the nation's Middle East studies centers (Kramer, 2002). In August 2002, the U.S. Department of Education announced the creation of the National Middle East Language Resource Center at Brigham Young University, the first Title VI Language Resource Center to focus solely on the languages of the Middle East. The center focuses specifically on Arabic, Hebrew, Farsi, and Turkish (National Middle East Language Resource Center, n.d.). This new funding reflects the federal government's growing awareness of the need to enhance our understanding of Middle Eastern affairs and languages.

There has also been an increase in enrollment in Arabic and Middle Eastern studies at universities across the nation. The department of Middle Eastern and Asian Languages and Cultures has become one of the fastest growing departments at Columbia University in New York. Enrollment in courses such as *Contemporary Islamic Civilization* and *America and the Muslim World* have increased dramatically in recent years (Beam, 2003). At Brown University, in Providence, RI, for example, a number of classes focusing on Middle Eastern languages and cultures had to be cancelled—not because students were not interested, but rather because Brown University was unable to find enough teachers to meet the demand for such classes. In Fall 2002, the department of Arabic Language, Literature, and Linguistics at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., increased its beginning Arabic language offerings from two classes to five classes (Dillon, 2003).

The Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center in Monterey, California, the institution that provides language training to the U.S. armed forces and agents of the CIA, FBI, and NSA, reported a substantial jump in

enrollment in Arabic as the Department of Defense sent out requests for more Arabic linguists (Howe, 2002). In addition, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Graduate School has seen a rise in the demand for Arabic classes and is now offering five Arabic programs, a significant increase from the single program that was offered before 9/11 (Powers, 2002).

Finally, the high demand for new Arabic programs in the United States was not limited to institutions of higher education, but exceeded that to include K-12 grades. While the teaching of Arabic in elementary and high schools is not nearly as common as the teaching of Western European languages such as Spanish, French, and German, there has been a significant increase in enrollment particularly in private schools. A recent survey conducted by the National Capital Language Resource Center found that there are more Arabic programs in private schools than in public or charter schools. Of the 37 Arabic programs located throughout the 12 states surveyed, 22 were at private schools; of those, 21 were Muslim private schools. The average number of Arabic language teachers in the private schools was 5.5, while the average for public or charter schools was 1.83. The private schools averaged less time of Arabic instruction per week (3.9 hours compared to 5.28 hours at the public schools) but the private school students receive Arabic instruction for more consecutive years (8.9 compared to 4.5 for the public schools). Most of the schools surveyed teach Modern Standard Arabic (Johnson & Greenstreet, 2003).

6.4 Major Arabic Programs Available at Institutions of Higher Education in the United States

In this section, a serious effort is made to identify the various Arabic programs that are currently offered at different institutions of higher education in the United States of America in light of the previously discussed great demand for new Arabic programs triggered by the interest in the language after the World Trade Center events of 2001. This is done in an attempt to answer the fourth question asked in the study questions section of this paper, which states "What are the main Arabic language programs established in the U.S. after the events of 9/11, 2001 at various institutions of higher education?"

In a Modern Language Association report entitled "*Enrollments in Languages Other Than English in the United States Institutions of Higher Education*", published in Fall 2006, it was found that more Americans are studying languages than ever before. Over 1.5 million college students were enrolled in language courses in Fall 2006. Overall, enrollments in post-secondary language education jumped 13% as compared with 2002. This is following a nearly 18% increase in language enrollments between 1998 and 2002. The continued upsurge is easily attributable to increased interest in languages, as general undergraduate enrollments increased only 6.2% between 2002 and 2006 and 7.5% during the previous 4-year period. Yet the number of foreign language courses taken on a percentage basis of enrollments is only about half of the 1965 rate of 16.5%.

Spanish continues - as it has since 1970 - to be the most widely taught language at American colleges and universities across the country. Enrollment in French, German, and Russian continues to grow at a steady pace, while the percentages of students taking American Sign Language, Italian, Japanese, Chinese, Arabic, Portuguese, and Korean have grown dramatically. Of the top 15 languages learned, Chinese and Arabic grew most rapidly on a percentage basis.

The following table specifically identifies the top 15 foreign languages studied in the United States as published in the above mentioned MLA report.

Table 3. Top 15 foreign languages learned in the United States (Fall, 2006)

#	Language	% of Enrollment
1	Spanish	52.2%
2	French	13.1%
3	German	6%
4	American Sign Language	5%
5	Italian	5%
6	Japanese	4.2%
7	Chinese	3.3%
8	Latin	2%
9	Russian	1.6%
10	Arabic	1.5%
11	Ancient Greek	1.4%
12	Biblical Hebrew	0.9%
13	Portuguese	0.7%
14	Modern Hebrew	0.6%
15	Korean	0.5%

Additional information obtained from the MLA survey revealed that in addition to the traditionally taught languages, American college and university students are learning 204 less commonly taught languages indigenous to regions throughout the world. These include such languages as Amharic, Swahili, Persian, Hindi, Modern Greek, Hawaiian, Polish, and Vietnamese. Regional differences in language interests are also apparent. Interest in Italian and Hebrew is strongest in the northeastern United States, Florida, and in pockets along the West Coast. Asian languages, including Chinese, Japanese and Korean, are most popular on the Pacific Coast. The distribution of Spanish and Arabic is fairly even.

For the sake of comparison, the following table provides a list of 12 languages and the percentage of students enrolled in their programs as of Fall of 2002 immediately following the World Trade Center attacks. This information was also obtained from the same MLA survey mentioned above.

Table 4. Top 12 foreign languages learned in the United States (Fall, 2002)

#	Language	% of Enrollment
1	Spanish	53%
2	French	14.4%
3	German	6%
4	Italian	4.5%
5	American Sign Language	4.3%
6	Japanese	3.7%
7	Chinese	2.4%
8	Latin	1.9%
9	Russian	1.7%
10	Ancient Greek	1.5%
11	Biblical Hebrew	1%
12	Arabic	0.7%

In conclusion, and since information provided in this section clearly shows the ever-growing demand for Arabic programs after the World Trade Center events prompted by the interest in Arabic soon after the attacks, it is now crucial to provide readers, Arabic learners, orientalists, and interested linguists with a considerably comprehensive list of American institutions that offer Arabic foreign language teaching programs at varying levels along with their URLs for easy reference.

Table 5. American institutions that offer Arabic programs

#	Institution	State	URL
1	University of California, Santa Barbara	California	http://www.religion.ucsb.edu
2	University of Pacific		http://www.uop.edu
3	University of Colorado		http://www.colorado.edu
4	Colorado School of Mines	Colorado	http://www.mines.edu
5	University of Denver		http://www.du.edu
6	US Air Force Academy		http://www.usafa.af.mil
7	Hartford Seminary		http://macdonald.hartsem.edu
8	Trinity College	Connecticut	http://www.trincoll.edu
9	University of Connecticut		http://www.sp.uconn.edu
10	Yale University		http://www.yale.edu
11	Middle East Institute		http://www.mideasti.org
12	American University,	District	http://www.american.edu
13	Catholic University of America	of	http://arts-sciences.cua.edu
14	George Washington University	Columbia	http://www.gwu.edu/~arabic
15	Georgetown University		http://www.georgetown.edu

16	Howard University		http://www.founders.howard.edu
17	Johns Hopkins		http://www.sais-jhu.edu
18	Daytona Beach Community College		http://www.dbcc.cc.fl.us
19	Florida State University		http://www.fsu.edu
20	Miami University	Florida	http://www.fl.miami.edu
21	University of Central Florida		http://www.cas.ucf.edu
22	University of Florida		http://web.aall.ufl.edu
23	University of South Florida		http://www.cas.usf.edu
24	Emory University	Georgia	http://www.emory.edu
25	University of Georgia		http://www.uga.edu
26	DePaul University		http://condor.depaul.edu
27	Loyola University of Chicago		http://www.luc.edu
28	Northwestern University		http://www.cli.northwestern.edu
29	University of Chicago	Illinois	http://www.humanities.uchicago.edu
30	University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign		http://www.uiuc.edu
31	University of Illinois, Chicago		http://www.uic.edu
32	Indiana University		http://www.indiana.edu
33	Notre Dame University		http://www.nd.edu
34	Purdue University	Indiana	http://www.sla.purdue.edu
35	Purdue University at Indianapolis		http://mypage.iu.edu
36	Kansas State University	Kansas	http://www.ksu.edu
37	University of Kansas		http://www.ku.edu
38	University of Kentucky, Lexington	Kentucky	http://www.uky.edu
39	Grambling State University		http://www.gram.edu
40	Louisiana State University	Louisiana	http://www.artsci.lsu.edu
41	North East Louisiana State University		http://www.ulm.edu
42	Tulane University		http://www.tulane.edu
43	Boston Language Institute		http://www.boslang.com
44	Brandeis University		http://www.brandeis.edu
45	Amherst College		http://www.amherst.edu
46	Boston College		http://www.bc.edu
47	Boston University		http://lang.bu.edu
48	Harvard University	Massachusetts	http://www.fas.harvard.edu
49	Mount Holyoke College		http://www.mtholyoke.edu
50	Simon's Rock College Bard		http://www.simons-rock.edu
51	Smith College		http://www.smith.edu
52	Tufts University		http://www.tufts.edu
53	University of Massachusetts		http://www.umass.edu
54	Wellesley College		http://www.wellesley.edu
55	Johns Hopkins University		http://www.jhu.edu
56	University of Maryland, College Park	Maryland	http://www.languages.umd.edu
57	University of Maryland		http://www.languages.umd.edu

98	Skidmore College		http://www.skidmore.edu
99	SUNY Binghamton		http://classics.binghamton.edu
100	SUNY Buffalo		http://wings.buffalo.edu
101	SUNY Cortland		http://www.cortland.edu
102	Syracuse University		http://syr.edu
103	Yeshiva University		http://www.yu.edu
104	Ohio State University		http://humanities.osu.edu
105	Kent State University		http://dept.kent.edu
106	Ohio University	Ohio	http://www.ohio.edu
107	University of Cincinnati		http://asweb.artsci.uc.edu
108	University of Toledo		http://www.forlang.utoledo.edu
109	Tulsa Community College	Oklahoma	http://www.tulsacc.edu
110	University of Oklahoma		http://modlang.ou.edu
111	Portland State University	Oregon	http://www.fl.pdx.edu
112	University of Oregon		http://babel.uoregon.edu
113	California University of Pennsylvania		http://www.calu.edu
114	Penn State University - Joseph A. Lauder Institute		http://www.lauder.wharton.upenn.edu
115	Penn State University		http://www.psu.edu
116	Temple University		http://www.temple.edu
117	Bryn Mawr College		http://www.brynmawr.edu
118	Community College of Philadelphia	Pennsylvania	http://www.ccp.cc.pa.us
119	Haverford College		http://www.haverford.edu
120	Indiana University of Pennsylvania		http://www.chss.iup.edu
121	Lincoln University		http://www.lincolnu.edu
122	University of Pennsylvania		http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu
123	University of Pittsburgh		http://www.linguistics.pitt.edu
124	Villanova University		http://www.villanova.edu
125	Brown University	Rhode Island	http://www.brown.edu
126	Rhode Island College		http://www.ric.edu
127	College of Charleston	South Carolina	http://www.cofc.edu
128	University of South Carolina		http://www.cla.sc.edu
129	South Dakota State University	South Dakota	http://www.sdstate.edu
130	Rhodes College		http://www.rhodes.edu
131	Tennessee Foreign Language Institute	Tennessee	http://www.tfli.org
132	University of Memphis		http://www.people.memphis.edu
133	University of Tennessee		http://web.utk.edu
134	Baylor University		http://www.baylor.edu
135	Rice University	Texas	http://langcenter.rice.edu
136	University of Texas Austin		http://www.utexas.edu
137	Brigham Young University	Utah	http://asiane.byu.edu
138	University of Utah		http://www.hum.utah.edu
139	Northern Virginia Community College	Virginia	http://www.nv.cc.va.us

140	College of William & Mary		http://web.wm.edu
141	Old Dominion University		http://www.odu.edu
142	University of Virginia		http://www.virginia.edu
143	Virginia Military Institute		http://academics.vmi.edu
144	Middlebury Arabic School	Vermont	http://www.middlebury.edu/ls/arabic
145	University of Washington	Washington	http://depts.washington.edu
146	University of Wisconsin, Madison		http://african.lss.wisc.edu
147	University Wisconsin, Milwaukee	Wisconsin	http://www.uwm.edu

7. Conclusion

There has always been an interest in foreign language teaching and learning in the United States of America. This interest has always been almost exclusively directed towards European languages such as French, German, and Italian. Likewise, Spanish received a great deal of attention in the foreign language teaching community. Interest in European languages like French as always been associated with prestige. On the other hand, interest in Spanish can be safely traced to practical reasons including the need to communicate with native speakers of Spanish living in the United States, which is due to the geographical proximity of countries like Mexico and Cuba to the United States. This is not to claim that there was no interest in other foreign languages including Arabic. However, as shown in the discussion above, interest in Arabic up to the end of the twentieth century has been relatively limited especially when compared to other foreign languages.

Since September 11, 2001, the day on which the World Trade Center was attacked, Arabic language teaching and learning has become the focus of much more attention from the educational community in the United States of America. As previously discussed, numerous applied linguistic studies specifically those concerned with Arabic over the past decade revealed that Arabic is the fastest-growing foreign language taught at U.S. colleges and universities ranking tenth among all other foreign languages.

This has also brought to the forefront the numerous problems associated with Arabic language instruction. Some of the difficulties Arabic educators must face include inadequate and inappropriate materials as well as difficulties inherent in the Arabic language itself. However, with the establishment of the National Middle East Language Resource Center, the expertise from many different Middle Eastern language professionals in the United States has been brought together to build the resources and capacity of the Arabic language teaching community (Morrison, 2003).

Despite such difficulties faced by educators of Arabic as a foreign language, American institutions of foreign language teaching had to face the tremendous and ever-growing demand for Arabic to the point where some institutions had to cancel their offered Arabic courses not due to the lack of students enrolled, but rather because they could not find instructors. Reasons for this huge demand may be traced to the fact that the World Trade Center events were politically linked to the Arab world triggering an urgent need to learn Arabic. Other reasons for studying Arabic were linked to family background and the curiosity to learn more about the Arab culture. Yet, other reasons were pure linguistic in nature causing Arabic linguists and orientalist to delve into Arabic and the Arab culture from a non-traditional perspective.

Regardless of the reasons behind learning Arabic as a foreign language in the United States, no one can deny the unprecedented demand for Arabic during the last decade. This demand has become clear through the inclusion of Arabic as one of the foreign languages that American students can study to meet the foreign language requirement in high schools, both private and public, prior to their graduation. Varying levels of Arabic were also offered in K-12 grades. Finally, it was found that more and more American institutions of higher education are offering Arabic programs to meet the changing needs of their local communities. A large number of such programs now lead to a bachelor's degree in Arabic Language and Literature or higher. This clearly reflects the level of impact the demand for Arabic had on Arabic foreign language teaching programs resulting in the creation of approximately 147 institutions, and this list no doubt continues to grow.

Sources

A. Professional Organizations:

American Association for Applied Linguistics. Retrieved from <http://www.aal.org/>.

American Association of Teachers of Arabic. Retrieved from <http://aataweb.org/>.

Arabic Linguistic Society. Retrieved from <http://www4.uwm.edu/letsci/linguistics/als/>.

Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center. Retrieved from <http://www.dliflc.edu/>.

Fulbright-Hays International Studies Program. Retrieved from <http://www.isp.msu.edu/funding/fulbright.htm>.

- Higher Education Act*. Retrieved from <http://www.investopedia.com/terms/h/higher-education-act-of-1965-hea.asp>.
- Joint National Committee on Languages*. Retrieved from <http://www.languagepolicy.org/>.
- Linguistic Society of America*. Retrieved from <http://www.linguisticsociety.org/>.
- Middle East Studies Association of North America*. Retrieved from <http://www.mesa.arizona.edu/>.
- Modern Language Association*. Retrieved from <http://www.mla.org/>.
- National Capital Language Resource Center*. Retrieved from <http://www.nclrc.org/>.
- National Middle East Language Resource Center*. Retrieved from <http://nmlrc.org/>.
- Resource Guide Online: Less Commonly Taught Languages*. Retrieved from <http://www.cal.org/resources/archive/rgos/lctl.html>.

B. Telephone Interviews:

- Bratsch-Prince, Dawn, associate dean of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Iowa State University, April 15, 2014.
- Dettmer, Helena, associate dean for undergraduate programs and curriculum in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Iowa, March 31, 2014.
- Feal, Rosemary, executive director of the Modern Language Association, March 15, 2014.
- Gazsi, Denes, a lecturer and Arabic program coordinator at the University of Iowa, April 17, 2014.

References

- Al-Batal, M. (2007). Arabic and national language educational policy. *The Modern Language Journal*, 91(2), 268-271. DOI: 10.1111/j.1540-4781.2007.00543_10.x.
- Allen, R. (2004). Perspectives on Arabic teaching and learning. *The Modern Language Journal*, 88(2), 275-278.
- Beam, C. (2003, March 5). Middle East studies sees rise in student interest. *Columbia Daily Spectator*.
- Cumming, W. K. (2001). Current challenges to international education. *ERIC Digest*. Washington, DC: ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education. Retrieved from <http://www.eric.org/digests.htm>.
- Dillon, S. (2003, March 19). Suddenly, a seller's market for Arabic studies. *New York Times*.
- Dodge, C. H. (2009). *The everything understanding Islam book*. Avon, MA: U.S.A, F+w Media, Inc.
- Edwards, D. (2004). The role of languages in a post-9/11 United States. *The Modern Language Journal*, 88(2), 268-271.
- Ferguson, C. A. (1959). Diglossia. *Word*, 15(2), 325-340. DOI: 10.1075/lplp.3.3.08fer.
- Heldt, D. (2010). Arabic is fastest-growing language at U.S. colleges. *The Gazette*. Retrieved from <http://thegazette.com>.
- Howe, K. (2002, September 10). Learning to combat global terror. *Monterey County Herald*.
- Johnson, D., & Greenstreet, S. (2003). *Arabic language K-12: A survey*. Unpublished manuscript.
- Katzner, K. (2002). *The languages of the world*. London, UK: Routledge. DOI: 10.4324/9780203430163.
- Kramer, M. (2002). Arabic panic. *The Middle East Quarterly*, 9(3), 88-95.
- Morrison, S. (2003). Arabic language teaching in the United States. *ERIC Digest*. Washington, DC: ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics. Retrieved from <http://www.campus-watch.org>.
- Powers, E. (2002, August). Lessons from tragedy. *Washingtonian*.
- Scollon, R. (2004). Teaching language and culture as hegemonic practice. *The Modern Language Journal*, 88(2), 271-274.