AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF THE TEACHING OF ARABIC AS A SECOND LANGUAGE IN CAIRO: THE INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE INSTITUTE – SAHAFYEEN: A PROGRAMME EVALUATION CASE STUDY

By
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Declaration

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that this thesis is written by myself and any references made to the sources are duly acknowledged.

Iman Aziz Soliman
Abstract

The difficulties facing Western students owing to diglossia have led a number of Western universities to incorporate a study abroad period in their Arabic Foreign Language (AFL) courses. This period plays a very important role in building students’ motivation and offers them a life-enriching experience of acculturation. Students who are ready to learn Arabic in an Arabic-speaking country are in need of reliable information about Arabic Second Language programmes (ASL) in the Arab world. At present, the only documented information available to these learners and/or course organisers is the brochures that are produced for publicity purposes. Whether these programmes are based on sound pedagogic beliefs and assumptions, and whether or not they manage to implement these in their syllabuses, methodologies, teaching activities and materials, remains a question to which only an empirical study of ASL programmes can provide an answer. This research examines the underlying assumptions of the Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) programmes offered in Cairo by the International Language Institute (ILI) - Sahafeyeen. The case study evaluates and describes the ILI MSA programme at the levels of “design” and “procedure”, and makes suggestions for development and changes. The thesis comprises an Introduction, and seven chapters including the Conclusion. The Introduction outlines the aim and scope of the study, explains its importance, gives an overview of similar studies conducted in other Arab countries and presents an outline of the different chapters.

Chapter 1 sets the scene for the study and provides background and context for the case study. It highlights the increasing demand for learning Arabic in the West in relation to the study abroad programmes. The chapter discusses diglossia as the major problem facing Western learners of Arabic, which directs them to the Arab world, where they can learn a dialect and at the same time acquire acculturation. The chapter also describes the ASL setting in Cairo. Chapter 2 explains and discusses the research methodology chosen, the data-gathering tools and the practical steps based on Lynch’s (1996) Context Adaptive Model. Chapter 3 examines how the ILI is presented in the available printed documents. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 constitute the core of this study. Chapter 4 looks at the ILI teachers, examines their beliefs and language learning experiences to provide a deeper insight into their classroom techniques and teaching methodologies. Chapter 5 focuses on the learners as a prime source of information and draws upon their beliefs, needs and background to offer an in-depth description and evaluation of the ILI programme. Chapter 6 analyses the ILI classroom procedures with the aim of revealing the ILI methodology in actual use as opposed to its presentation in the brochures and publicity materials. Chapter 7, the Conclusion, summarises the findings of the study and suggests recommendations for development and improvement.
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Introduction

This research investigates the Arabic Second Language (ASL) situation in Cairo using the International Language Institute – Sahafeyeen (ILI) as a case study. In the Introduction, the need for the study and its importance is argued. Reasons are given for choosing Cairo as the arena for the fieldwork and the ILI Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) programme as the subject for the case study. The Introduction concludes by outlining the content of the chapters.

1. Statement of the Problem: The Need for the Study

The necessity of studying Arabic, within its own context, before learners can show that they are proficient in the language, leads them to the Arab world. While there are many opportunities for students to venture into a new culture, new language and different civilisation, they are usually bewildered, not knowing where they should go to learn. Although the Arabic dialect that they need to learn may help them resolve the geographical problem of “where to go in the Arab world?”, many other difficult questions remain unanswered and decisions still need to be made.

For students who are ready to learn Arabic in an Arabic-speaking country with the prospect of acquiring acculturation and language proficiency, information is crucial for decision-making. Normally, students find that a great variety of second-hand data \(^1\) or quasi-first-hand data \(^2\) are the only information sources at their disposal. The same difficulty is likely to face Western universities when they are driven to select from unknown programmes and make decisions about where to send students in the Arab world, which schools they should recommend, what they should expect as a result of the study abroad programme, and how they should liaise with the institutions.

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\(^1\) First-hand data are obtained and verified either by research or through personal experience. Second-hand data are unverified information about an item, which are obtained from an oral or written medium provided by a source external to oneself.

\(^2\) Quasi-first-hand data are obtained from students’ feedback but have not been tested for validity.
A preliminary inquiry conducted (1999 - 2000) by the researcher among nine British universities that teach Arabic indicates that most of these universities have some lists of the institutions that teach Arabic in the Arab world. However, none of these lists are exhaustive, and only a few universities have first-hand information about the ASL courses that their students attend. The researcher’s ASL empirical experience supports this dearth of information not only in Western universities but also among Arabic teaching institutions in the Arab world.

At present, it seems that the only documented information available to the students and to course organisers from Western universities are the flyers and brochures that are produced for publicity purposes. These brochures have a glossy and artistic layout that is attractive to foreigners, as though artistic professionalism is correlated with pedagogic content. This false belief is in turn reinforced by the use of pedagogic terminology that has recently become the cosmetic gloss guaranteeing the sale of any of these courses to the Western market.

Whether these institutions really hold the sound pedagogic beliefs expressed in their brochures and in the assumptions underlying them - fully realising the implications they should have on their syllabus, methodology, teaching activities and materials - remains a question to which only an empirical study of ASL programmes can provide an answer. Therefore, research is needed to fill the gap in the information on these programmes with the aim of informing decision-making and highlighting ASL teaching/learning conditions in the target culture.

2. The Background to the Study

2.1 Similarities and Differences: Other Studies

A few researchers have attempted exploratory empirical work with the aim of finding out more about ASL institutions in the Arab world. To the best of the researcher’s knowledge, Kuntz’s (1997) survey of language schools in Sana’a, Yemen and Lunt’s
(1992) study of Arabic schools in Tunisia are the closest to the study at hand in aim and nature, though not precisely so in structure, focus and detail. 3

Kuntz's (1997) study of 14 language institutes in Sana'a is closest to the pilot survey conducted in this research about the Arabic institutions in Cairo presented in Chapter 1. Where the current study depends on interviews and brochure analysis in gathering data about ASL institutes in Cairo, Kuntz's study used interviews and observations to obtain answers to the following questions: “which institutes offer language instruction?”; “what were the origins of the institutes?”; “what are the credentials of the teachers of the languages?”; “what is the organization of the program?”; “what are the goals of the students?”; “what is the pay of the teachers?”; “what is the tuition?”; and “what were the materials for instruction?” (ibid.: 4)

Kuntz's study, like that of the Cairo institutes, identified the descriptive variables which allow learners to compare services in language instruction; however, she did not focus on ASL institutes alone. Kuntz gave more weight to the historical and institutional settings of the surveyed institutes than to their teaching methodologies. Kuntz's study has produced a number of interesting observations, the most important of which are: the need for trained language teachers; the payment of teachers for preparation time to mark students' assignments; and the teachers' desire to test new ideas without fear of being dismissed.

Lunt's (1992) investigation into the methods of teaching Arabic in Tunisia is perhaps the only attempt at providing verified, empirical information about these

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3 In 1991, the International Organisation for the Co-operation and Development of Arab and Islamic Culture invited the directors of ASL institutes in the Arab world to a conference in Tunis to share experiences. At this meeting, several issues were raised pertaining to the Teaching of Arabic as a Foreign Language (TAFL) and 5 reports were delivered by the directors of different institutions about their Arabic programmes: Al Azhar (Al Khatib, 1991); the Islamic University of Al Imam Muhammad bin Saud (Al Dekheil, 1991); the Ministry of Education in the Sudan (Al Sheik, 1991); Mauritania (Ibn Al Barraa', 1991); and Yarmouk University in Jordan (Al Makhzoumy, 1991). Although these reports offer sound pedagogic representations of the above-mentioned programmes, they are unlike the current study in that: (1) they lack the “investigative aspect”, pertinent to this study, which allows for a better description and a deeper understanding of the programmes’ context and setting; (2) the reports are directed only to the directors of the programmes as opposed to this study which addresses a multilevel audience; (3) with the exception of Yarmouk University, the reports focus on government institutions only; and (5) the reports do not possess an evaluative element (that is to say, they do not call for or suggest any changes).
institutes. Her study describes the methodologies and materials used for teaching Arabic in five institutes: the Bourguiba Institute; the Peace Corps Training for New Volunteers; the French School System (lycée and elementary school programmes); the Foreign Service Institute branch in Tunis; and the White Sisters’ Continuing Education Community Programme and compares the findings with those of the proficiency guidelines. One outcome of Lunt’s study is that instructors of Arabic in Tunisia provide some insights for their counterparts in the United States concerning pedagogic decision-making.

The current study is similar to Lunt’s research in that it explores ASL teaching at the level of methodology and materials and adds to this the attempt to discover the language and language learning theories underlying this methodology. However, where Lunt compares her findings to an ideal proposed by proficiency guidelines, this study uses Richards & Rodgers (1999) model of a method to provide the theoretical basis for examining the ILI methodology and for structuring a framework for the analysis of the data and findings. Moreover, the current study focuses on the ILI Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) programme so as to observe carefully, and to explore and analyse the multifarious phenomena constituting an ASL programme with the aim of establishing generalisations to cover the wider population (other ASL private institutions) to which this programme belongs. Both studies make use of observations, review of written material, and interviews; however, the current study also adds questionnaires to its research methodology.

The findings of Lunt’s pilot study highlight the need for similar studies of language institutes in other Arab countries. Such studies should aim at gathering relevant first-hand information, establishing a sound basis for ASL practice, and compiling a frame of reference to provide a better understanding of the objectives and advances in the procedures of teaching Arabic to non-native speakers.

According to Allen (1987: 44), the proficiency guidelines are “Generic Guidelines” intended to describe language activities in relation to the mastering of the 4 language skills and culture by placing them along “a spectrum between two poles”: zero (applied to someone with no knowledge of the language) and 5 (applied to an educated native speaker of the language). See Allen (1985) for a detailed description of these guidelines.

See Chapter 4.
3. Questions Raised by the Study

Based on the above observations, this case study attempts to examine ASL in Cairo by seeking answers to the following questions: who teaches ASL in Cairo?; what kind of programmes do these ASL institutions offer?; how deeply-rooted are these programmes in theories of language and learning?; to what extent do these programmes meet the students’ needs?; to what extent are the programme organisers aware of the problems caused by the cultural and linguistic baggage brought by the students into the classroom and what solutions are offered?; to what extent does research into modern language teaching feed into the development of these programmes?; how involved are the teachers in decision-making concerning curriculum and material development?; what is the extent of teacher participation in decision-making regarding the curriculum and syllabus development?; what are the resources available for teacher education and development?; and what are the means of assessing students’ progress or programme outcome?

4. The Choice of Cairo as the Research Field

The researcher’s Egyptian nationality equips her with a clear understanding of the social, cultural, political and educational systems necessary for studying a language programme within its own context.

Egypt’s historic and aesthetic importance together with its political stability provides the opportunity of an enriching study period for students. An overpopulated city (15 million people) like Cairo, offers a window on a variety of lifestyles and culture related to religious, social, economic and educational affairs. Moreover, Egypt’s role in ancient and modern history can offer students a glimpse of the various national trends that exist in the Arab world today. Cairo is also recommended because of the prominence of Egyptian Arabic. Cairene Arabic stands as the most comprehensible of the Arabic dialects in the Arab world. This is due to Egypt’s pivotal role in Arab publishing and the film industry. Such prominence is asserted in the introduction of Al-Kitaab fii Ta’allum al-’Arabiyya.(1995) which argues for the
importance of introducing a dialect together with MSA and chooses Egyptian Arabic for this purpose.

Non-Arab Muslim students and teachers from all over the world, who wish to study Arabic and Islamic studies, are attracted to Egypt because it is the home of the ancient Islamic University of Al-Azhar. Recognising its Islamic responsibility in an increasingly secular world, the Egyptian government offers non-Arab Muslims scholarships to study at this university.

Of the twelve famous Egyptian universities, at least five teach Arabic as a second language. Most famous among these are the Universities of Cairo, Alexandria, Tanta and Helwan. Alongside these government institutions, there exists a proliferation of private institutions offering ASL. The large number of institutions (government and non-government) that teach Arabic in Egypt, together with the availability of students from different backgrounds and of different nationalities, provide many opportunities for future comparative research.

5. The Research Sample: Private Institutions: The International Language Institute (ILI)

ASL institutions in the Arab world are divided into government and non-government institutions. In Egypt, government institutions are subdivided into foreign and national. National government institutions are those sponsored by the Egyptian government. Egypt's open and liberal policy, together with its political stability, has enabled foreign governments and educational institutions to participate in the teaching of Arabic as a second language. Most prominent among these are the American University in Cairo (AUC) and the cultural centres affiliated to foreign embassies.

Non-government institutions are profit-making, and are owned and run by individuals rather than by well-funded or educationally supported organisations. They depend on private resources for their funding and operation. A few of these institutions are affiliated to some well-known organisation in an attempt to guarantee
world-wide promotion. They adopt an active attitude in marketing themselves and attract a large number of students from all over the world.

The researcher has chosen to focus her study on private institutions for the following reasons: (1) the researcher’s familiarity with these institutions’ context and their programmes enables her to provide better interpretations of the findings; (2) the data required are easier to access away from government, administrative bureaucracy; (3) unlike government institutions, little if anything, is known about the efforts of these private institutions; (4) the researcher’s empirical experience leads her to believe that students prefer private settings to government institutions; and (5) the methodologies of private institutions have much in common with those of foreign government institutions (specifically foreign cultural centres) in regard to language teaching, which strengthens the generalisability of the research findings.

The ILI programme was selected as the case study for this research for the following reasons: (1) The ILI is one of the oldest ASL private institutions in Cairo (established in 1975); (2) the ILI MSA programme is well known to universities in the West (for example, the Universities of Edinburgh, Odense and Uppsala); (3) the researcher’s awareness of the context of the programme enables her to provide the description required for naturalistic validity besides guaranteeing fairness to the programme in making value judgements and discussing the research findings; (4) the accessibility of the information needed owing to the researcher’s good relations with the ILI learners and members of staff; (5) the recognition of the ILI teacher-training course by many government and private ASL programmes in Cairo as a reliable source for recruiting their teachers; and (6) the ILI ASL teachers are highly recommended and sought by reputable organisations such as the British Council in Cairo for their competence in language teaching.

In focusing the study on the MSA programme, the researcher intends to cover the majority of learners who come for a study abroad period in Cairo. This is because the programme is long enough to enable her to gather reliable data. Since learning
MSA is a university requirement for the majority of these learners, the researcher decided to restrict the study to the ILI MSA teaching methodology only.

6. Outline of the Chapters

Chapter 1 sets the scene for the case study. It highlights the relevance of an empirical, descriptive study of the ASL institutions in Cairo. The chapter defines diglossia, the main problem in learning Arabic, and emphasises the importance of the study abroad period in overcoming it. A brief overview of the ASL institutions in Cairo is presented to provide background and context for the case study of the International Language Institute – Sahafeyeen.

Chapter 2 presents the chosen research methodology and the practical steps entailed in conducting this study. The definitions of the research terminologies are explained and the reasons underlying the choice of a naturalistic design for this empirical work are clarified.

Chapter 3 introduces the case study. It examines the ILI programme as presented in the printed documents. The information provided in this chapter is based on the following ILI documents: All ILI brochures (2000 - 2001 & 2001 - 2002); the certificate document; the students’ registers; the ILI student database; the ILI website (2000 - 2001 & 2001 - 2002); the ILI coursebooks; the supplementary materials; university courses; the teachers’ résumés; the International House (IH) terms of affiliation and code of ethics; the organisational chart of the Institute; job description documents; and budget documents.

Chapter 4 presents the findings from the Teachers’ Questionnaire. This chapter considers the ILI teachers as a prime source of information in describing and evaluating the ILI programme. The information gathered from them focuses on the ILI teaching methodology and materials as a means of revealing the programme’s theoretical underlying assumptions.
Chapter 5 presents the findings of the Learners' Questionnaire about the ILI programme. These findings provide information about the programme from the learners’ perspective. It gives a more comprehensive description of the ILI programmes’ “design” and “procedure” and serves as a cross-reference to the findings discussed in Chapter 4.

Chapter 6 presents the findings of the classroom observation. The chapter gives the theoretical background to Classroom Observation in general and to the structured observation scheme used in this study in particular. The observation procedures are then explained and the findings are presented and discussed. This information focuses on classroom “procedure” and serves as a final cross-reference to the information provided by both the teachers and learners.

Chapter 7 is the conclusion to the study. It includes a general summary of the findings of the research and makes suggestions for improving the ASL situation specifically in Cairo and generally in Egypt.
Chapter 1

Arabic as a Foreign Language and the Study Abroad Period

This chapter sets the scene for the case study by considering three issues. First, diglossia is introduced as one of the major problems facing learners of Arabic as a foreign language and one which the study abroad period is intended to address. Second, the study abroad period is presented in relation to its importance for the learning of culture and increasing learners' motivation. Third, an overview of the ASL institutions in Cairo is given to provide the background and context for the case study of the International Language Institute - Sahafeyeen. This information is required for the comparative aspect of the research as outlined in Chapter 2.

1.1 Problems of Learning/Teaching Arabic

The increasing importance of the Arab world as an influential and interactive member of the international community has increased the number of recruits for Arabic learning in the West. Accordingly, Arabic has acquired a status equal to that of other modern languages ¹, leading to a change in assumptions in TAFL in the West. Despite all the efforts to ameliorate the learning/teaching conditions ² of Arabic in Western universities, Arabic is still perceived as a difficult language (Kuntz, 1996). This is so for the following reasons: (1) the diglossic nature of Arabic; (2) the lack of cognates with Indo-European languages; and (3) the lack of modern, readily available resources that are rich in cultural input. ³ Of these problems, diglossia and culture learning in relation to the study abroad period will be discussed in more detail in Sections 1.1 and 1.2.

¹ For the importance of Arabic, see Kuntz (1997); Toeimah (1982); and Nasban (1990).
² See Rammuny (1987) for the development of Arabic teaching methodologies in the United States of America and the underlying changes in assumptions in TAFL which led to this development.
³ Toeimah (1982) asserts that the most important problem of TAFL is the lack of suitable pedagogic materials. However, Parkinson's (1987: 81) research on availability of Arabic materials reveals that materials are available in their "raw" form but need "a concerted effort" to change them into, "usable dishes," adapting them to "specific classroom activities which will make them invaluable to our task of preparing proficient students."
1.1.1 The Problem of Diglossia

Diglossia is perhaps the most difficult issue in the teaching/learning of Arabic as a foreign language.

Many AFL teachers argue that diglossia underlies the majority of AFL teaching/learning difficulties. This is attributable to the fact that in Arabic, more than in other languages, the spoken variant is less taught in Western universities than the written variant. Andrew Freeman (1994), in his paper on diglossia, points out that Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) is incompatible with, or to use his own words, "does not fit neatly into" modern methodologies of language teaching/learning in that it poses a problem to the course designer when deciding the "what" and "how" of any syllabus.

Diglossia is a type of dichotomy "where two varieties of the same language exist side by side, throughout the community, with each having a definite role to

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5 "What" refers to the content of the course (that is, the variant of Arabic and the different activities), whereas the "how" refers to the teaching methodology that is chosen by the teacher to implement this syllabus.

6 It is important here to re-emphasise that when Ferguson used the term diglossia, he wanted to characterise a language situation rather than criticise a language (Ferguson, 1996). Ferguson’s (ibid.) article “Diglossia Revisited” explains his intention to encourage other people to identify other clear cases (apart from Arabic, Haitian Creole, Swiss-German, and Greek) and to develop a taxonomy of language situations which would lead to a theory. He also admits that his original article, in 1959, contained many weaknesses. Of these weaknesses were his referring to Arabic as “having Diglossia, as if it were (...) a disease or some unusual property of a language” (Ferguson, 1996: 54) and his failure to specify the real meaning of the term “variety”. Notwithstanding the fact that he describes one variety as “high” and the other “low”, Ferguson does not provide clear parameters of how far apart the high and low varieties have to be for a language to be classified as diglossic. This vague definition led to a wide variation in the use of the term “variety”. It also initiated controversy over the validity of classifying Arabic as diglossic in the first place (Freeman, 1996). The original taxonomy was also found to be deficient on the sociolinguistic level. It failed to make a clear distinction between the actual form of the language and peoples’ attitudes and feelings towards its variations. The fact that class differences and use of such variations were not mentioned rendered the term static, as did the lack of an examination of the phenomena of code switching and negotiation of meanings by register (Ferguson, 1996).
play" (Ferguson, 1959: 25). Ferguson explains that the “superposed variety” is usually assigned a higher status in society than the other and accordingly rates them as “high” and “low” varieties. Though native speakers use both varieties in everyday situations, they use them to fulfil different language functions or to express different registers. In the case of Arabic, diglossia refers to the situation where Arabs speak a variety of dialects together with Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). The latter stands as the higher variety and is used for official and religious purposes.

Foreign learners attempting to communicate in MSA would undoubtedly arouse the native speakers’ hidden or open ridicule. The dialect is the medium for popular Arabic culture, such as music and films. Thus, MSA learners will find themselves not only cut off from the everyday interaction around them, but also experiencing great difficulty in exposure to popular culture. To function in Arabic, students need to be competent in MSA and have some level of proficiency in the colloquial dialect (Heath, 1990; Badawi, 1991; and Kuntz and Belnap, 2001). The study abroad programme serves a variety of functions, chief among which is providing the students with the opportunities to experience the complexity of the diglossic Arabic language situation.

1.2 The Study Abroad Period

Study abroad programmes have recently become the norm for foreign language learners (FLL). A number of Western universities have incorporated a study abroad programme as a requirement for their degree courses. The UNESCO principles,

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7 Ferguson (1959: 34 - 35) gives a fuller meaning of the term diglossia by identifying the features of this language situation as follows: “Diglossia is a relatively stable language situation in which, in addition to the primary dialects of the language (which may include a standard or regional standards), there is a very divergent, highly codified (often grammatically more complex) superposed variety, vehicle of a large and respected body of written literature, either of an earlier period or in another speech community, which is learned largely by formal education and is used for most written and formal spoken purposes but is not used by any sector of the community for ordinary conversation”.

8 Freeman (1996) identifies four major groupings of Arabic dialects that are similar to those identified by Ferguson: Gulf and Arabian Peninsula, Levantine, Egyptian and Maghrebi.

9 For more on “diglossia” see Al-Kahtany’s (1997) study of the problem of diglossia in the Arab world. Also, see Badawi’s (1973) interpretation of diglossia in terms of five interrelated sociolinguistic levels of Arabic.

10 Good & Campbell (1997) estimated that 100,000 American students annually study for a term if not a year abroad. They also emphasised that 10 per cent of all American undergraduates will have had an experience of study abroad by the year 2000.
cited by Good & Campbell (1997), enumerate the benefits of a global education. These principles emphasise the importance of future coexistence in a multi-cultural, multi-faith global society. This is because survival in a foreign environment teaches the learners a language as well as providing them with lifelong experiences and values (ibid.).

1.2.1 Study Abroad and Culture Learning

Learning a language abroad is perhaps the most enriching yet challenging experience for language students. It is challenging because in increasing their proficiency in the new language, the learners develop a new identity.\textsuperscript{11} This identity is a by-product of learning the new language culture. Littlewood (1999a: 55) asserts this belief by arguing that “there is a close link between the way we speak and the way we perceive our identity and our world”. Thus, when we acquire a new language, we are actually giving a part of ourselves away to make room for the “markers of a new cultural group” (ibid.). This is because in learning a new language, we are allowing a new culture to affect the perception we have of ourselves in relation to the world around us. Suleiman (1993: 64) agrees that “teaching and learning of language and of culture are two sides of the same coin” and that we cannot separate one from the other without losing the significance of either language or culture. A substantial body of research has supported the importance of studying language/culture in its native environment and has encouraged learners of foreign languages to study them in the target countries (Kuntz and Belnap, 2001).

Paulston (1978: 372-373) does not believe that bilingualism and biculturalism go hand in hand. She explains that, in principle, to be bilingual does not necessarily mean that one has to be bicultural; however, she agrees that the reverse is impossible. This is because to become bicultural, one has to have lived in the country of the native language and used the language for daily interaction.

\textsuperscript{11} Crystal (2000:17) explains that there are many facets of identity. The new identity referred to by the researcher is the “social and cultural identity” rather than the “physical and psychological”.
The increasing awareness of the importance of becoming familiar with the culture of the target language underlines the role played by the study abroad programme in promoting language learning. However, the benefits of a study abroad period may not accrue to the learners if the courses that they follow are unsuitable for their needs. Such programmes provoke anxiety and insecurity, which build psychological barriers between the learners and the target language and culture. Those feelings generate a sense of alienation, which develops into what is known as "culture shock". If not well handled by the teacher or learners, this "culture shock" can have a negative impact on the learners. In a well-designed programme, the teacher will try to reinforce the learners' confidence and self-esteem by aiding their perception of cultural differences (Littlewood, 1999a). For example, the teacher may create real-life situations in class, where students learn techniques and strategies for coping with the outer world.12

Suleiman (1993) believes that culture learning comprises three dimensions: cognition, affection and action. He explains that 'passive knowledge' is second-hand knowledge provided by the teacher to the students in class away from the target culture. He also stresses the role of the teacher in presenting "cognitive facts about this culture in an objective and sensitive way" (ibid.: 74). Suleiman's module of culture teaching at St Andrews University emphasises the importance of incorporating rich cultural material in AFL courses. This material should be carefully chosen to provide students with a realistic view of the Arab world before entering the target culture. Suleiman's argument makes the success of the study abroad period the shared responsibility of the sending and the receiving institutions.

An important impediment to acculturation is the insufficient time allocated by the sending institution for students to study abroad. Lack of awareness and/or economic constraints on the part of the sending institutions do not help the students' acculturation. Suleiman (ibid.: 70) states that very few students of Arabic are given enough time to pass through all the "phases" of acculturation. He cites Brown (1987: 35) to provide a description of the phases of acculturation:

12 For a fuller explanation and definition of culture learning, culture shock, and social distance see Suleiman (1993), Paulston (1978) and Schumann (1976).
The first stage is the period of excitement and euphoria over the newness of the surroundings. The second stage — culture shock — emerges as the individual feels the intrusion of more and more cultural differences into his own image of self and security. In this stage the individual relies on and seeks out the support of his fellow countrymen in the second culture, taking solace in complaining about local customs and conditions, seeking escape from his predicament. The third stage is one of gradual, and at first tentative and vacillating, recovery. The third stage is typified by culture stress: some problems of acculturation are solved while other problems continue for some time. But general progress is made, slowly but surely, as the person begins to accept the differences in thinking and feeling that surround him, slowly becoming more empathic with the persons in the second culture. The fourth stage represents near or full recovery, either assimilation or adaptation, acceptance of the new culture and self-confidence in the “new” person that has developed in the new culture.

Suleiman (1993) argues that most students of Arabic interrupt their acculturation at the end of the second phase. The study abroad programme organisers should consider these observations seriously at the stage of course design; in order that students undergo fulfilling learning experiences, they should be given ample time for acculturation. In exploring the ASL scene in Cairo, this study will examine the extent to which ASL programmes cater for this need.13

Language learning/teaching research has made great efforts to uncover non-linguistic factors affecting the acquisition of a second language. Most prominent are personality, motivation and acculturation. Several studies have aimed at establishing a correlation between these non-linguistic factors and proficiency in language acquisition. Though such a relation has been established, a causal relation has been hard to prove (Littlewood, 1999a: 52 – 53).

The relationship [between proficiency and nonlinguistic factors] may be indirect. For example, if proficiency correlates with being an extrovert, this may not be due to the extrovert’s superiority in actual learning ability. It may simply reflect the fact that he engages in more social interaction and thus has more opportunities to learn. The true causal sequence would thus be: extroversion ➔ social interaction ➔ progress in learning.

13 See Chapters 1 and 6.
There may be no true causal relationship at all between the two factors measured... motivation might lead to greater proficiency but so might greater proficiency help to increase a learner's motivation.

Littlewood groups the non-linguistic factors affecting learning into three categories: “motivation for learning, ability for learning, or opportunities for learning” (ibid.: 53).

According to Littlewood (1999a), motivation is the force for learning a second language. Littlewood argues that communication dynamics lie at the heart of this force. Motivation is formed from closely linked components such as the learner’s drive, the need for achievement and success, curiosity, and the desire for stimulation and new experiences. Two types of motivation have generally been used to investigate foreign/second language learning: integrative and instrumental motivation.

Integrative motivation exists when the learner expresses a real interest in the target language community and wants to communicate with its members to have a closer contact with their culture. Instrumental motivation is related to what the learners aim to achieve from learning a language either by gaining a degree or improving their professional prospects. The study abroad period plays an important role in boosting the ASL learners' motivation. This is because an Arab environment provides the learners with the rich opportunities necessary for language and culture communication. For the first time, the learners can use the language for communication and for interacting with the environment which makes learning Arabic a purposeful task, because it enriches their lifelong experiences and influences the possibilities of their future employment. The Arab environment provides the students with an opportunity for personal interaction, which may create a positive attitude towards the language and consequently help learning. Littlewood (1999a) states that a language learner learns a language better when s/he is “favourably disposed towards” the native speakers. This positive disposition boosts the learner’s motivation.
Arriving in the Arab world, the Western learner of Arabic is frequently confronted with the question: “Are you a Muslim?” in an attempt to understand the student’s interest in Arabic. This question in all its guises of: “would you like to become a Muslim?”; “what do you know about Islam?”; “have you read the Qur’an?” provides an insight into the Arabs’ perception of the status of their own language. The Arabs, feeling and experiencing Western supremacy in economics, politics and technology in their everyday lives, cannot interpret the foreigners’ interest in Arabic except from a religious point of view. The Qur’an makes the Arabs proud of their language. The non-Arab’s secular interest in the language is likely to arouse suspicion of the learner’s possible intentions of being a spy or training to be a spy. This may have an impact on the learner’s perception of himself and, therefore, his motivation and acculturation.

The demands of the diversified interest of non-Arabs in studying Arabic has led the Arab governments to shoulder their new responsibility in teaching the language (Nasban, 1990). A number of institutions, colleges and schools have been established for teaching Arabic as a second language, and so TASL has spread all over the Arab world. Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Syria, the Sudan, Tunisia and Yemen are perhaps the most prominent amongst the Arab countries which have responded to this need (ibid.). Owing to the weak state of applied Arabic linguistics, many AFL institutions and universities have depended on research into English language teaching as a rich source of insights in their development of Arabic second language pedagogy (Suleiman, 1991).

Despite the unavailability of an exhaustive inventory of all the institutions that teach Arabic as a Foreign Language in the Arab world, they can still be classified, according to their affiliation and objectives, into two main categories: government and private institutions.

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14 See Mahmoud (1988).
15 Suleiman (1991) was referring to Western institutions. However, this situation also applies to the Arab context.
Government institutions implement government policies concerning the role and status of language teaching in education, such as universities or state schools. In the Arab world, these institutions do not always successfully draw a line between first and second language pedagogy in answer to the “what” and the “why” questions raised by language study research, though recently, attention has been paid to the “how” in most of these institutions. In terms of goals, however, these institutions’ statements of objectives reflect the non-linguistic ideologies and aims underpinning the status of Arabic in educational planning, which are primarily religious and pan-national in character (Suleiman, 1999: 107).

The popularity of non-government institutions has resulted from following a different set of rules from those adopted by state institutions. Private institutions are profit-making and business-oriented. Generally, they lack academic credibility on the international level and are regarded as intruders on the national level. Nonetheless, the courses offered by these institutions are more popular with foreign students of Arabic owing to their interactive nature, short intensive study periods, heavy borrowing of techniques from the methodologies of English foreign and second language teaching, and finally, because they are more Western-oriented in their settings. Better value for money, offers of trips, and other “supermarket” strategies are used in promoting these institutions.

However, this attitude is not without risks. In focusing on pleasing the “customers”, the students may not be presented with a holistic view of Arab culture and beliefs, but rather with an excess of postcard culture. Nevertheless, this does not undermine the educational value or the quality of teaching offered by these private institutions. In fact, they could play an important role in reforming Arabic language teaching in the government institutions, although this will depend on establishing the credibility of their ASL programmes. Field research of the kind presented here is a necessary first step to achieve this.

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16 Mahmoud (1988) ascertains these ideologies when, in accounting for the increasing interest in TASL, he sums up the TAFL objectives in a way that reveals them to be either purely Islamic or pan-Arab. These objectives convey Islam as “a missionary religion” (Chapman, 1988: 56) and the modern role of Arabic as a tool to implement this mission. For the religious importance of Arabic to the Islamic nation, see Abu-Khudeiry (1994: 73-85).
The interest in promoting Arabic to non-native speakers has caused some Arab countries to organise conferences and workshops for this purpose. This scholarly effort on the part of the specialists does not, however, seem to have succeeded in putting the pedagogic concerns of Arabic language teaching before the nationalist and religious concerns of the government bodies that control the state institutions. Hence, one often finds that teaching materials in these institutions tend to favour high culture at the expense of low culture, or the nationalist or religious values of a text at the expense of more universalist values, which are more suitable for second language teaching/learning.

1.3 ASL Institutions in Cairo

Since the study abroad programme plays a pivotal role in overcoming the difficulties in ASL acquisition and culture-learning, the researcher gathered descriptive information about 15 ASL institutions in Cairo in a pilot study during the academic year 2000 - 2001. The population of institutions represents a good mix of government and private institutes and universities.

This information serves to: (1) set the scene and provide the context for the case study by identifying the variables for the comparison of services provided by the different institutions; (2) specify the position of the ILI among other ASL programmes; (3) supply Arabic learners and universities with an overview of the ASL availability in Cairo; (4) highlight ASL beliefs and standards in Cairo; and (5) increase the validity of the suggestions pertinent to this study.

Interviews and brochure analysis were the instruments used for gathering this information about the ASL institutions. On contacting the interviewees, the nature of the research was explained and an appointment was made to meet the programme.

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17 A provisional list of institutions and schools consisting of 14 government and 8 private institutions was prepared. The 14 institutions offer 19 different ASL programmes. Of these, cultural centres offer 8 ASL programmes, and universities 12 other programmes. Of the 14 government institutions providing ASL programmes in Cairo, 9 are foreign and 5 are Egyptian. The foreign government institutions offer 13 of these programmes, whereas only 6 are available at the national institutions (Figure 1.1). However, the researcher has confined the pilot study to only 15 programmes owing to time and space factors. A list of the 15 surveyed institutions is provided in Appendix 1.
Below is a summary of the information gathered regarding the following issues: the courses and services offered; the programme objectives; the assessment procedures; the activities available; the teachers’ background experience; the books used; the teaching methods; as well as the beliefs and underlying assumptions of these institutions.

1.3.1 ASL Courses Offered in Cairo

A wide range of specialised and general Arabic courses is on offer to meet the needs of students. However, it is noteworthy that Arabic courses for specific purposes (ASP) are scarce in comparison with the other courses offered, owing to the lack of ready-made material, the time required to prepare these courses, and the limitations of the students' general proficiency. National government institutions share a skeptical standpoint towards these courses because they are firm believers in a synthetic approach to language teaching and learning. However, a number of private institutions and cultural centres offer ASP on demand.

1.3.2 Objectives

The taxonomy of ASL programmes into government and private institutions is emphasised by the settings and objectives revealed by the interviews. The underlying assumptions of the different programmes' objectives range between the two poles of the ASL objective continuum, revealing the national at one end and the commercial at the other. The interviews, as well as the school brochures, highlight institutional rather than well-defined linguistic objectives. They also make clear that the objectives of a number of foreign government institutions go beyond language/culture teaching to include community development and the promotion and conducting of different kinds of research.

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18 Programmes that requested anonymity restricted the researcher to keeping a very low profile when describing their programme.
19 See Appendix 2 (a–j) for information about these issues.
The pilot study has also shown that the programmes’ ideologies and objectives influence the nature of co-operation between the different institutions. For example, national government organisations adopt an “arrogant” attitude towards private institutions, based on the argument that the latter possess the commercial gloss but lack the academic depth required. Foreign government organisations welcome co-operation provided they maintain their own national identity and are guaranteed independence from any Egyptian national bodies or supervision by educational authorities. Private institutions long for co-operation but are held back by their lack of trust in the efficiency of government institutions and their fear of transparency in how they deal with the market-driven competition in the ASL field.
1.3.3 Teaching Methods

Very few ASL programmes were found to use, or rather to claim to use, a well-defined method of teaching, with the exception of the Berlitz School which, at least in principle, does not favour the mixing of methods. However, there was a bias in many institutions towards a quasi-communicative approach to language teaching. Also, tailor-made courses and teaching are used for certain study abroad programmes as demanded by the sending institutions.

On the whole, Arabic appeared to be the common medium of instruction. Only in seven programmes did teachers resort to translation in some or all parts of the courses. Although some programmes use translation as a means of instruction, the overwhelming majority of programmes treated translation as a last resort in classroom management.

Unlike Western universities, not all programme directors in Cairo agree that diglossia is a major ASL problem. Those who do view it as an impediment to learning Arabic give a number of reasons that are not necessarily linguistic in nature. For some, teaching both variants of Arabic poses organisational problems owing to the insufficient time the students spend in Cairo. Others believe that diglossia is a teacher problem that results when the teachers fail to highlight constantly the differences and similarities between the two variants in the classroom. For a number of other national government institutions, teaching the dialect is not an issue since their academic stature only allows them to teach MSA, while the dialect is something that the learner can pick up on the street. Private institutions, as well as cultural centres, however, tend to offer separate courses. Some of them point out that the learners’ needs are responsible for this situation because some students choose to focus on one variant and disregard the other. Only one programme, the Département d'Enseignement de l’Arabe Contemporain (DEAC), integrates both variants in teaching and refuses any artificial use of the language to satisfy students’ needs.

The pilot study has also shown that only 5 government programmes incorporate field trips in their teaching methods, whereas the majority of the other
programmes provide sightseeing upon request. There is also a general trend among
government institutions to use lectures as a teaching method. Private institutions,
however, rely more on modern methods and a few of them favour an eclectic method
of teaching.

1.3.4 Assessment

All programmes start with a placement test, with the exception of two programmes
where students come from their home universities already tested and their levels
identified. In some long-term programmes, the students are assessed on a weekly or
monthly basis during their course of study. All programmes include an achievement
test at the end of the course. However, in one of the private institutions, the end-of-
course tests are a recent innovation, since the students decide whether they wish to
repeat a level or go to a higher one. The interviews have made clear that the validity
of these tests is very much in question. The lack of an appropriate testing tool has
proved to be one of the students’ major frustrations in learning Arabic in the target
culture country, as we shall see later in Chapter 5.

With regard to programme assessment, students participate in giving
feedback on their Arabic courses in all the institutions; however, this situation does
not apply to the International Language Institute in Sahafeyeen. External assessment
in all programmes is usually carried out by the affiliated body or by the sending
institutions. With the exception of two programmes, none of the schools mentioned
that the teachers take part in the internal assessment.

1.3.5 The ASL Students

All the ASL institutions cater for learners regardless of their backgrounds. All
programmes offer teaching to students on their study abroad programme. According
to the directors of the ASL institutions in Cairo, learners of Arabic face different
problems from their counterparts in Western universities. The most common
complaints in all the programmes include: (1) more student demand for translation
instead of using Arabic as a medium of instruction in class; (2) vocabulary problems
caused by the lack of links between Arabic and Indo-European languages; (3)
academic concern for grades due to the absence of an adequate testing tool; (4) lack of orientation which makes students unaware of what is expected of them during their term abroad; (5) differences in the "chemistry" of students and teachers; and (6) young undergraduates find it more difficult to adjust to life in Cairo compared with mature students; hence, their culture shock is aggravated.

1.3.6 The ASL Teachers and Teacher-Training

An overview of the teachers employed shows that the majority of the institutions employ native speakers of Arabic, apart from two cultural centres which use non-native speakers to teach some of their Arabic courses. Most ASL programmes use part-time teachers, but some have a small number of full-time teachers. The number of full-time teachers is usually very small, ranging from one to three.

The teaching abilities of the teachers differ. However, a few programmes help their teachers develop their teaching skills and linguistic knowledge so as to teach all levels of students and both ECA\textsuperscript{20} and MSA. Most schools offer some pre-service training to acquaint the teachers with the school context and syllabus, although most teachers have relevant ASL training or experience. Some programme directors claim that the ASL market has a surplus of trained teachers and that in-service training is therefore unnecessary. Schools that have a teacher-training department offer in-service training and refresher courses, and prefer to appoint teachers that they themselves have trained.

Most teachers employed by the ASL programmes are in the age group 26–55 years. Though the ASL market uses teachers of different sexes, male teachers predominate in national government institutions.

According to the directors of the different programmes, political views, social and national ideologies, school objectives, language policy, pedagogic and quasi-pedagogic assumptions all deeply influence their selection of teachers on employment.

\textsuperscript{20} Egyptian Colloquial Arabic.
In foreign cultural centres, a degree in Arabic language is not a requirement although a degree in Arabic studies is considered an advantage. Some cultural centres and private institutions consider that Arabists cause problems in class because they lack awareness of the students’ lexicon. Hence, it is difficult for them to find or recruit good MSA teachers who are strong in their background knowledge of the language system and who at the same time are open-minded and flexible.

The belief in a national objective of promoting Arab culture and civilisation through teaching Arabic impinges on the national government institutions’ choice of teachers. A teacher’s academic knowledge of the Arabic language system and morphology is always given priority over his/her general ability and knowledge of teaching methodology and theories of language learning.

Unlike national government institutions, private institutions have different criteria for selecting their teachers. They are more concerned with personality, general knowledge and good teaching skills. A detailed knowledge of the language system comes second.

1.3.7 The ASL Syllabus: Materials, Culture and Acculturation

All programme directors refer to a book or a number of books that they use when they define their syllabus. None of the directors specifies a syllabus which relates to a particular methodology of teaching. Though all MSA books used by the programmes are in Arabic script, the ECA books have a different lay-out. Among the most commonly recognised and used on-shelf books are: Al-Kitab al-Asasi and Al-Kitaab fi Ta'allum al-'Arabiyya. It is common that the teachers’ own materials are part of almost every programme. A portfolio of an ever-changing collection of texts is mentioned only by one programme which advocates a communicative approach to teaching.

Though ASL programmes introduce students to Arab culture in one way or another, it is difficult for any of the ASL institutes to assert that actual acculturation
is acquired during the students’ term abroad. This may be due to the inadequate time spent by the students in Cairo. It may also be attributed to sending Western students to learn Arabic under the umbrella of their own cultural centres in Cairo which provides a “filtered version” of cultural exposure that can only be described as an “Arabic experience”.

1.3.8 Activities: Curricular and Extra Curricular

Most of the schools arrange sightseeing trips on request. Some of these trips are pedagogic, while others are recreational. Tours to other Middle Eastern countries are also part of the Middle East Program (MEP), run for American Christian universities, which offers cross-cultural training. This programme organises hands-on work experience in community service among the underprivileged in Cairo. Programmes which cater for a student body of businessmen do not offer any trips owing to the learners’ busy schedules.

1.3.9 Services and Facilities

Accommodation services are provided mainly by private institutions, which target a wider range of students. However, state universities with hostels help with accommodation. Cultural centres give students advice on looking for or sharing flats through advertisements on the students’ notice board. A number of institutions consider flat hunting part of the language and cultural training of the learners.

Libraries exist in all institutions. The size of the libraries and the bibliographical resources available vary greatly between government (national or foreign) to private programmes. Among the least provided facilities in all the programmes, apart from a number of universities, are language laboratories.

Cafeterias are the second most important facility in the institutions surveyed. In programmes where cafeterias are not available, a tea and coffee-making facility is provided.
Internet facilities are under consideration at schools where they are not available. Apart from a few schools, this service is provided at a monthly concessionary rate or free of charge. Though most schools provide or possess video facilities, most programme organisers commented on the impoverished resources of the ASL market in video materials for Arabic teaching. Most schools possess a few documentaries or films, which are not always subtitled, and therefore difficult for students to watch on their own.

1.4 Conclusion

This chapter has briefly discussed diglossia as the major problem facing the learners of Arabic in Western universities. This discussion aims at highlighting the importance of studying Arabic in its own cultural context and the reason why many Western universities have incorporated a study abroad period in their Arabic degree courses. The chapter also emphasises the importance of the study abroad period as a means of enabling learners of Arabic to attain a high level of proficiency in the target language.

Since very little information is provided about ASL institutions in Egypt, or the rest of the Arab world, it is not possible for learners of Arabic and their sending institutions to make a fully informed choice of which country to opt for and, within the country concerned, which institution to select. Therefore, this chapter has provided an overview of the ASL scene in Cairo by highlighting major points of comparison cross-institutionally. This information helps in placing the ILI, the case study for this research, in its proper country/context. The researcher is aware that other institutions exist outside Cairo, for example in Alexandria, but for reasons of time and space cross-city comparisons have not been undertaken. Hence, the chapter provides an overview of the different ASL programmes available in Cairo to set the scene for the case study of the International Language Institute- Sahafeyeen.
Chapter 2
Research Methodology

The aim of this research is to provide information about the ASL situation in Cairo. The information is provided through an extensive case study of the MSA programme at the ILI-Sahafeyeen. This chapter will present the methods used in constructing this empirical study and the constructs underlying the choices of these methods in relation to validity and reliability issues. In doing so, Lynch’s (1996) Context Adaptive Model for programme evaluation is introduced because it is used by the researcher for delineating the focus of this study, specifying the interests of the MSA programme evaluation, and explaining the practical steps taken to conduct the study.

This chapter is divided into three sections. Following this introduction, Section One presents some background issues relating to the research design, providing definitions for the terminologies used in this study. Section Two presents Lynch’s (1996) Context Adaptive Model and highlights the practical steps followed in constructing the research at hand. Section Three presents the case study and the methods used in this study to explore the ASL scene in Cairo.

2.1 Background Issues and Important Definitions

2.1.1 Programme Evaluation: A Naturalistic Paradigm

In a study of the theory and practice of programme evaluation, Lynch (1996: 2) defines the term programme as “a series of courses linked with some common goal or end product.” This end product could be preparing students for a general proficiency exam or could imply “preparing them to function ...” in a second language culture. This meaning of “programme” is adopted in providing a descriptive analysis of the ILI MSA programme.

In the same study, Lynch highlights the meaning of “evaluation” as “a systematic attempt to gather information in order to make judgments or decisions” (Lynch, 1996: 2). However, Nunan (1997a: 185) adds that evaluation does not only...
involve “assembling information but interpreting that information – making value judgments.” Nunan agrees with Lynch in defining “assessment” as the tests given to students to measure their proficiency or degree of improvement in relation to a certain programme, but he states that “evaluation” is a broader notion that might or might not include assessment-information. He writes:

To me there is a clear distinction between the two concepts. *Assessment* refers to the process and procedures whereby we determine what learners are able to do in the target language. We may or may not assume that such abilities have been brought about by a program of study. *Evaluation*, on the other hand, refers to a wider range of processes which may or may not include assessment data (Nunan 1997a: 185).

Nunan (1988), cited in Nunan (1997a: 185), proceeds to give a more exhaustive definition of “evaluation” by explaining that it also involves action:

The data resulting from evaluation assist us in deciding whether a course needs to be modified or altered in any way so that objectives may be achieved more effectively. If certain learners are not achieving the goals and objectives set for a course, it is necessary to determine why this is so. We would also wish, as a result of evaluating a course, to have some idea about what measures might be taken to remedy any shortcomings. Evaluation, then, is not simply a process of obtaining information, it is also a decision-making process.

According to Lynch (1996), evaluation comprises a descriptive as well as a comparative aspect. The ILI case study emphasises the descriptive aspect of the evaluation at the expense of the comparative aspect. In other words, the study examines the underlying assumptions of the ILI MSA-programme concerning language learning and teaching and their effect on classroom procedures rather than comparing the MSA programme outcome to that of other ASL programmes. However, this comparative aspect is implicitly inherent in any evaluation study and
becomes essential once we attempt to generalise from an “instance” (ILI) to a “class” (other private ASL institutions in Cairo).¹

Lynch’s (1996) definition of “evaluation” as a system of information gathering poses the question of “how” information should be gathered. He states that information gathering can be of two types: “qualitative” and “quantitative”.² In this study, the researcher adopts a qualitative/naturalistic method as defined by Lynch (1996) for the following reasons: (1) it advocates a more natural and spontaneous approach to language programme study which is compatible with the present study; (2) the naturalist perception of “reality”, as inseparable from values, is suitable for examining the ILI programme as an ever-changing entity that has to be observed, described, interpreted and understood within its own setting; (3) naturalistic research methods are generous in the descriptive information they provide as the basis for making suggestions for change or in providing informed advice to programme participants; (4) the descriptive aspect of the naturalistic method serves the purpose of exploration of the ASL situation in Cairo, which is the aim of this study; and (5) the choice of a naturalistic design is also necessary to satisfy the multi-level audience of the evaluation.

However, within the naturalistic paradigm of evaluation a variety of models and metaphors³ are used to focus on what is happening inside a language programme. The different metaphors and models are all based on description and depend on the ability of the researcher to infer evaluation findings from the data instead of testing a hypothesis (Lynch 1996). The ILI programme evaluation is not confined to one particular model.

¹ In numerating the advantages of case studies as a research method, Nunan (1997a: 78) acknowledges that some researchers claim: “one can generalise from a case, either about an instance, or from an instance to a class”.
² For a definition of qualitative or quantitative research and data gathering see Lynch (1996) and Nunan (1997a).
³ The models for collecting data for programme evaluation include: the responsive model, the illuminative model, the goal free model, the judicial model, and the connoisseurship model; besides these a number of other metaphors are borrowed from art, law and other disciplines. For a description and definition of the different models see Lynch (1996:80 -91). Also, see Beretta (1992).
The ILI programme evaluation is similar to the "Responsive Model"\(^4\), in that it addresses the needs of a multi-level audience, but it differs from it at the procedural level of data gathering. The study of the ILI programme is also similar to the "Goal-Free Model"\(^5\) in that it focuses on the procedures of the programme rather than starting with a clear set of objectives as these are elusive in the MSA programme examined. Also, in conformity to the "Connoisseurship Model"\(^6\), the researcher is a teacher who makes use of the ASL values and concepts as tools to detect the qualities of the programme. In borrowing from the different evaluation models, and adapting them to suit the ILI programme evaluation, the researcher adopts an eclectic approach to the evaluation of the ILI programme (see Beretta, 1992).\(^7\)

### 2.1.2 Issues of Validity and Reliability

Having defined the terms programme and evaluation as used in this research, a discussion about programme evaluation research is incomplete without exploring the issues of "reliability" and "validity". Providing definitions for these two terms and discussing them in relation to research approaches and methods is the proposed way of exploring these vital issues.

Nunan (1997a: 14) identifies reliability as referring to "the consistency and replicability of research." He then classifies this concept into internal and external validity.

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4 The "Responsive Model" is also known as the "transactional model". It is transactional in the sense that it responds to the requirements of various audiences. The evaluator's understanding of the programme evolves from themes that emerge during the data-gathering rather than from hypotheses in place before the evaluation begins (Lynch, 1996).

5 The "Goal-Free Evaluation Model" challenges the positivistic method that requires a statement of objectives of a certain programme before an evaluation can take place. The focus of this evaluation is not on what the programme is trying to accomplish or has accomplished, but on the procedure of the programme or, in other words, on what is actually taking place. Observations and interviews are the evaluator's main tools of data gathering (Lynch, 1996).

6 "Connoisseurs" are teachers who have training experience in the subject. They make use of values and concepts that are recognized in a discipline. They thus become measuring tools capable of detecting the qualities of the programme (Lynch, 1996).

7 Alderson (1992: 283) argues that "evaluation methodologies can be adapted to take advantage of the increased insights that developing methodologies might offer".
reliability. Whereas internal reliability refers to "the consistency of the data collection, analysis, and interpretation" (ibid.), external reliability refers to the extent to which "independent researchers" can obtain similar results by using the same method (ibid.). Validity, however, defines the extent to which a research method tests what it claims to be testing. This concept too is classified into external and internal validity. Nunan (1997a: 15) defines internal validity as the "interpretability of research", and external validity as "the extent to which the results can be generalised from samples to populations".

In Language Programme Evaluation Theory and Practice, Lynch (1996: 41) defines validity as "the notion of how we establish the veracity of our findings" and asserts that in language programme evaluation validity is linked "to what counts as evidence." According to Lynch, the meaning of validity differs according to the research paradigm (naturalistic or positivistic) chosen for a particular programme evaluation. Lynch asserts that positivistic validity is the congruence between the evaluation findings and some objective reality that exists independent of our own minds. From the positivistic perspective, the main issues concerning validity primarily refer to "certainty" and "generalisation." "Certainty" is an aspect of internal validity which addresses the question of whether or not a given programme was the actual cause of the effects that were measured. To guarantee this causality, strict controls are imposed on the students and the settings of the programme. Paradoxically, this control increases the internal validity of the research while at the same time jeopardising its external validity. The artificial conditions imposed on the research by such controls makes the research findings untransferable to any other programme. The tension between external and internal validity has led to the emergence of two approaches to positivistic validity. The main difference between these two approaches concerns the notion of causality. The first approach perceives causes as separate elements in evaluation design. The second approach views causality and expresses it as the complex interactions among the different units of the programme. This approach demands a researcher who is capable of using prior knowledge to support the evaluation (Lynch 1996). In the following quotation, Lynch discusses the notion of "cause" as a key characteristic of positivistic validity.
Another key feature of positivistic validity is the concept of causality. The traditional notion of cause as an objective entity, existing outside the human mind but capable of being perceived by it, albeit imperfectly, remains central to positivistic validity. Although some may allow that naturalistic evaluation can enhance our understanding of the context in which these causal relationships exist, positivistic certainty about cause is tied to experimental evidence. As Campbell (1986: 71) puts it, "[naturalistic methods], while improving the validity of our research, nonetheless provide less clarity of causal inference than would a retreat to narrowly specified variables under laboratory control." A naturalistic conceptualization of causality is somewhat different from this account. (Lynch 1996: 68)

Naturalistic validity, on the other hand, is the extent to which "the evaluator and the evaluation audience place trust ... in the evaluation analysis and conclusions" (Lynch, 1996: 65). Naturalists believe in the inseparability of facts from values. This, however, does not make a naturalist's knowledge claim an "aesthetic judgment of matters of opinion" (Lynch. 1996: 54). Lynch (1996: 55) summarises the efforts of a number of naturalists who propose that "types of understanding and inferences replace design features and research procedures as the key elements" to validity. He mentions that "internal and external validity, in a positivistic approach are replaced by descriptive, interpretive, theoretical, generalisable and evaluative validity" in a naturalistic approach (ibid).

Lynch explains the difference between the aforementioned variants by stating that "descriptive validity" refers to the "factual accuracy" of the "research account" (ibid.). "Interpretive validity" is the accuracy of the account in respect to its real meaning to the participants. A method has "theoretical validity" when it explains a phenomenon in relation to a theory and the agreement in opinion between researchers on the meaning of terms used to characterise this phenomenon. "Generalisability" has two dimensions: external and internal. "Internal generalisability" enables the researcher to generalise within the community group. "External generalisability" refers to generalisations to other groups or institutions. Finally, "evaluative validity" shows how the theory highlights implicit value judgements. Some of these types of validity are of course more applicable to specific aspects of a research project than others.
Lynch also discusses the "trustworthiness" criteria, which were introduced by some naturalists as measures for checking the validity of naturalistic design. Of these criteria he acknowledges "credibility", and shows that naturalists replace the positivists' external validity by "transferability", while positivistic reliability is paralleled by "dependability". In addition, naturalists also refer to "confirmability" which guarantees that the data provided by the evaluator is deeply entrenched in contexts separable from the evaluator's mind. The attempts to develop a more valid naturalistic typology of programme evaluation led pragmatic naturalists to add "utility" to the "trustworthiness" criteria to ensure the usefulness of the findings to the stakeholders.

Among the other methods suggested to reinforce naturalistic validity was the trend to use positivistic methods in the analysis of data gathered by naturalistic means (Lynch, 1996). Both Alderson (1992) and Lynch (1996 and 1992) mention that a combination of naturalistic and positivistic methods is more favourable and is frequently used in the field of applied linguistics. This combined method is called "triangulation"; according to Lynch, it increases the validity of naturalistic research. This is because triangulation involves gathering and analysing the data from different sources using different data-gathering techniques. Of these techniques, questionnaires, interviews, formal and informal discussions with the stakeholders, as well as classroom observations are all methods integrated in the present study to

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8 Credibility, according to the aforementioned naturalists, is "the match between the constructed realities of the respondents ... and those realities as represented by the evaluator and attributed to various stakeholders" (Guba and Lincoln, 1989; cited in Lynch, 1996: 56).
9 Transferability is the degree of similarity between the original study and the context to which generalisation is applied (Lynch, 1996).
10 Dependability is the constancy of the information (Lynch, 1996).
11 These definitions and accounts of naturalistic programme evaluation are provided in Lynch (1996).
12 In distinguishing between approaches and methods, Lynch (1996: 16) asserts that approaches are different from one another ontologically (the nature of what is there to know) as well as epistemologically (how we come to know what we know). Ontological and epistemological beliefs define an approach (also see Nunan's (1997a) discussion of the status of knowledge). Methods, however, are defined as the procedures and techniques that a certain approach dictates in research as regards the philosophical assumptions underlying what counts as evidence. There is a wide range of research instruments and methods or means of data collection. Positivistic methods make use of tests, questionnaires and a comparison variable, while naturalistic methods include observations, case studies, journals, open-ended questionnaires and different interview techniques (Nunan 1997a). Evaluation research allows for a mixture of both methods/techniques (Nunan, 1997a; and Lynch, 1996).
gather the required information about the ILI and the ASL setting in Cairo. In following Lynch's (1996: 60) route of "multiple sources" as a means of triangulation, the ILI data is gathered from programme stakeholders of different interests: the teachers, the learners, the director of studies, the managing director, and the head of the Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies Department at the University of Edinburgh. The researcher also depends on data gathered from sources outside and inside the classroom settings (classroom observational data, brochures and other publicised and printed literature as well as course material and books). Thus, by comparing data from the teachers' questionnaire to those of the learners' questionnaire and then comparing these with the classroom observation findings, making use where necessary of dependent interviews, the required first-hand information about the ILI MSA programme is provided.

However, a naturalistic evaluation perspective recognises that the theoretical aspect of validity, "what it is", is inseparable from its practical aspect, "how do I know when I have it" (Lynch 1996: 65). This is because in the process of naturalistic evaluation, validity definition and verification are carefully intertwined.

In this study, the researcher follows a number of techniques\textsuperscript{13} to guide her in the construction of the study and the analysis and evaluation of its results:

1. Immersion in the ILI programme setting to establish rapport, trust and an understanding of programme participants was realised through the researcher's seven years of work experience at the ILI as a teacher and teacher trainer as well as her one year experience as a director of development and student affairs at the same institute.
2. Identification of the most relevant elements of the evaluation setting by following Lynch's Context Adaptive Model.
3. Documenting the changes in what is being observed due to the presence of the researcher in the evaluation setting. This is realised by providing rich description

\textsuperscript{13} These techniques are adapted from Lynch (1996).
of the context and atmosphere in which observations, interviews or questionnaires were conducted.

4. Using non-fitting data to revise evaluation hypothesis through highlighting similarities and differences in the findings between brochure claims, students’ assumptions and evaluation of the ILI programme and teachers’ assumptions and pedagogic claims.

5. Avoiding giving too much privilege to the researcher’s expectations by recording her understandings before and after the evaluation. This occurred when the researcher’s interpretations of one of the stakeholder’s claims were challenged by another group of stakeholders with regards to a particular element of the programme.

6. Providing an extensive and detailed description of the evaluation setting throughout.

7. Triangulation is used to provide a non-biased view of the ASL scene in Cairo. The validity of the research findings is established and strengthened by means of triangulation.

8. To be able to generalise from the ILI case to other ASL programmes in Cairo, it was important to specify the standpoint of the ILI among these programmes. To this end, an investigation was carried out to find and list the different ASL programmes available in Cairo. The findings of this investigation clarified that the ILI was placed among the private/non-government institutions. Similarities and differences between these two contexts were then highlighted and a brief description of the listed programmes was provided to set the scene for the ILI case study (see Chapter 1).

2.2 Practical Issues: The Context-Adaptive Model (CAM)

In this section, the researcher introduces the reader to Lynch’s (1996) Context Adaptive Model (CAM) which presents the framework followed in structuring and focusing the objectives of the current study. The researcher chose this model because it provides procedural guidelines protecting against invalid tools of data collection and data analysis.
Lynch believes that since evaluation is an essential component of any language programme, it needs to be “tailored to the specific concerns of language education programs” (Lynch, 1990b; cited in Lynch, 1996: 3). Addressing a need for a tailored evaluation, he formulates the context-adaptive model (CAM) for language programme evaluation. This model is a flexible and adaptable starting-point for exploring a language education programme in its own setting. Lynch suggests ‘five steps’ as the solution for ridding language evaluation research of the many problems that have traditionally bedevilled it.

2.2.1 The CAM: Practical Steps

2.2.1.1 Step One: Audience and Goals

CAM takes the audience and goals of the programme evaluation as its starting-point. According to Lynch (1996: 167), the audience of the evaluation specifies its goals. He classifies the extensive range of audience or stakeholders of an evaluation as follows (ibid.: 168):

1. The Primary level audience includes those who sponsor the evaluation, together with the teachers and researchers who are carrying out the evaluation. They usually represent the body to whom the formal report is presented.
2. The Secondary level audience comprises the administrators, teachers and students who are in distant contact with the language programme under evaluation; this audience does not play an active role in the implementation of the programme. An informal report is usually provided for this audience.
3. The Tertiary level audience comprises the sponsors, teachers, researchers, students and others who are not in any form of contact with the programme but are interested in the evaluation findings. These usually look for the results in research literature or ask for copies of the original report.

Lynch then points to the fact that different categories of audience may possess conflicting interests or goals. He, therefore, suggests a preliminary matrix for charting audience and goals as a guide for the interaction pattern between aims and audience. Based on the interaction pattern between aims and audience the evaluator’s
role is shaped. This can be either an “external role”, where the sponsoring authority pays an external expert for the evaluation, or an “internal role”, where the evaluator is a member of staff or a teacher participating in the programme.

2.2.1.2 STEP TWO: THE CONTEXT INVENTORY

Having identified the audience, the CAM suggests a “context inventory” (Lynch 1996: 5) as a second step towards identifying the characteristic factors of a given language programme. “The CAM addresses this issue with a checklist, or inventory, of potentially relevant dimensions of language education programmes” (ibid.): These include:

1. Availability of a comparison group (such as a “traditional” language program in a similar setting).

2. Availability of reliable and valid measures of language skills (criterion-referenced and/or norm-referenced tests, with program-specific and/or program-neutral content).

3. Availability of various types of evaluation expertise (such as statistical analysis, naturalistic research).

4. Timing of the evaluation (when the program begins, ends, and has breaks; how much time is available to conduct the evaluation).

5. The selection process for admitting students into the program (random selection, self-selection, selection according to preestablished criteria).

6. Characteristics of the program students (native language and culture, age, sex, socioeconomic status, previous education, previous academic achievement, previous experience with the language and culture being taught in the program).

7. Characteristics of the program staff (similar to characteristics of students; also, job descriptions, experience, availability, competence, and attitude toward the evaluation).

8. Size and intensity of the program (number of students in the classrooms proficiency/course levels, and number of hours per week/term).

9. Instructional materials and resources available to the program (textbooks, other instructional media and materials, human resources, basic office supplies).
10 **Perspective and purpose** of the program (notions, beliefs, and assumptions concerning the nature of language and the process of language learning; explicitly stated and informally articulated curricular goals).

11 **Social and political climate** surrounding the program (perception of the program by the surrounding academic and social community, student and community attitudes toward the language and culture being taught in the program, the relationship of the program’s purpose to the larger social and political context).

### 2.2.1.3 Step Three: The Thematic Framework

Step three entails providing a preliminary “thematic framework” for the evaluation; in other words, it means finding a focus for the evaluation in contrast to the huge amount of information provided by the “context inventory”. A programme evaluation may focus on one of the following: (1) the intended curriculum (objectives, content and structure of the syllabus); (2) the actual curriculum (the classroom interaction, teaching methodology, materials and activities); or (3) the achieved curriculum (the results of the course). An important aspect of the programme evaluation is to identify the “what” of the evaluation.

### 2.2.1.4 Step Four: Information-Gathering

Step four should provide answers to the questions raised by the previous three steps. Information gathering at this stage is indispensable. Therefore, at this point evaluators need to design their methods of data collection. More precisely, evaluators have to make their selection of positivistic and/or naturalistic research methods (Lynch, 1996: 107-139).

### 2.2.1.5 Step Five: Data Analysis

Step five deals with data analysis and the procedures that facilitate this task, depending on the method (Lynch 1996: 139-154). The culmination of all these efforts is the report, which in the case of this study will be the relevant chapters of this thesis (4, 5 and 6) and the recommendations made as a result of the study. The
main criteria to follow in this respect will be those of fairness and utility. The presentation of the findings in this thesis should then be tailored to the audience (the readers). The amount of detail included should be reviewed according to the audience and should be useful for making recommendations for the programme evaluated or for future programmes.

2.3 Research Design and Methodology

This section explains the practical steps followed in conducting the programme evaluation for this study following Lynch’s (1996) CAM.

2.3.1 Step One: The Audience

Lynch (1996: 167) states that “all programme evaluation starts with a purpose, or purposes, and this is established, initially, by the audience(s) and their goals for the evaluation.”

In identifying the potential audience of this research, one can specify a group of people representing a range of interests in applied linguistics and Arabic language teaching and learning. This audience ranges from those specialising in ASL pedagogy to the ordinary student who is in need of some guidelines to make practical decisions about where to study in the Arab world. Among the specialists in applied linguistics are those from foreign universities who are concerned with teaching Arabic as a foreign language, AFL/ASL teachers and course organisers in the Arab world as well as in the West, co-ordinators of study abroad programmes, and ASL/AFL researchers and teacher-trainers.

The diversity of audiences may lead to conflict over the type of information required by different sectors (Figure 2.1). Where one group might require a judgement of a programme, another group might prefer a detailed description or a

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14 Fairness ensures that the constructions of all stakeholders are considered by the evaluator and accounted for thoroughly (Lynch, 1996).
mixture of both. To reconcile these interests the focus of the research is set down in step two.

**Figure 2.1 Interaction between aims and audience**\(^{15}\)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Judgemental</th>
<th>Descriptive</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Administrators</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Researchers</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Course designers</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Course co-ordinators</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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</table>

**2.3.2 Steps Two and Three: The Research Focus and Scope**

To identify the “what” of the evaluation, the researcher identifies the characteristic factors and potentially relevant dimensions of the ILI MSA-programme. From this “context inventory”, the thematic framework for the study is delineated; hence, the research focuses on the “actual and intended curricula”\(^{16}\) of the ILI.

The study examines the ILI course statement of objectives, and the underlying assumptions it contains about learning, the teaching methodologies used by the teachers to achieve these objectives, and their relevance to the students’ needs and learning styles. Effectiveness of textbooks and course materials are also examined. The study also scrutinises the ILI evaluation procedures and their validity for determining and assessing students’ levels and progress within the ILI.

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\(^{15}\) Figure 2.1 is an adaptation of Lynch’s (1996:169) preliminary matrix for charting audience and goals.

\(^{16}\) See Step Three, Section 2.2.1.
In doing so, the study delineates as the standard for success the programme's degree of achievement of its set objectives without comparing these with the outcomes of the different ASL programmes in Cairo. The comparative element inherent in this naturalistic programme evaluation aims at finding common traits between the different ASL programmes to which the research findings, suggestions and recommendations apply.

According to Lynch (1996), identifying the goal and the audience of the evaluation helps specify the role of the evaluator during the evaluation. Having participated in the ILI programme for nine years as a teacher, teacher-trainer, material and course-book writer and syllabus designer, the researcher's working and personal relationships with the administrative and teaching staff as well as the students are strong. Thus, these relationships qualify her to adopt the role of an internal evaluator who is able to take advantage of close understanding and knowledge of the programme in order to describe how it works in its own setting. The fact that the researcher has been away from the programme for two years strengthens the case for the objectivity required for an external evaluator to make a fair judgement.

2.3.3 Step Four: Information Gathering

2.3.3.1 A CASE STUDY: THE ILI MSA- PROGRAMME

The audience and its needs were the prime factor in choosing a naturalistic approach for this research. Since naturalistic research methods are generous in the information they provide, this typology was, therefore, best suited for satisfying the diversified interests of our audience. The evaluation of the ILI MSA-programme is thus conducted within the framework of a detailed naturalistic case study.

The case study is a longitudinal and observational empirical examination of a certain case within its own context (Nunan, 1997a). It draws on different data sources with the object of highlighting the uniqueness of a particular case and providing an understanding of the multifarious occurrences that are responsible for forming its structure and content (ibid.). In the absence of minimal standards of performance in
the ASL field and the lack of standardisation or definition of pedagogic terminology. Owing to the weakness of the linguistic discipline and the non-existence of an accredited teaching format, a positivistic research design was unsuitable for the current study. The case study naturalistic paradigm was, therefore, most suitable for the nature of this exploratory research which aims at describing the ASL setting in Cairo by focusing on the ILI programme.

2.3.3.2 DATA GATHERING METHODS

This section sets out the data-gathering tools used in the present case study. Like all naturalistic typologies, the case study does not use preset tools for data gathering. The data gathering methods are affected and formulated by information and insights imposed by the study (Lynch, 1996). Accordingly, this research uses a variety of data-gathering tools. Among these methods are questionnaires, interviews, class observations, as well as sustained study of curriculum documents including: brochures (1999 - 2000 & 2000 - 2001) and publicity materials; the MSA syllabus; coursebooks; university special courses; supplementary materials; placement and end of term tests, the certificate document as well as the ILI website information.

1. QUESTIONNAIRES

Questionnaires are popular data-gathering tools, for they enable the researcher to collect data in field settings or from different places by post. Both quantitative and qualitative research consider questionnaires time-effective data-gathering tools (Nunan 1997a; and Lynch: 1996). In qualitative design, questionnaires are defined as written interviews (Lynch 1996: 134). They may include both open-ended and close-ended questions. However, the researcher must word the questions carefully so as to avoid the danger of misleading responses (Nunan 1997a; and Low 1999). Clear objectives of the study and consistent referencing of items to the study objectives produce clear and focused questions. The wording should not lead the respondent towards any particular opinion nor reveal the researcher’s attitude (Nunan, 1997a). However, questionnaires can have a major problem that seldom occurs in interviews. In an interview, a researcher can usually guarantee an answer of some sort to every
question, whereas questionnaires can supply incomplete data because some of them may not be returned or they may be returned incomplete.

In order to guarantee the validity of the conclusions of this evaluation study, the following considerations were taken into account in posing the questions of the questionnaires\textsuperscript{17}: (1) that respondents are not identical in their expectations or experiences; (2) that key concepts are defined to the respondents; (3) the questions do not depend on respondents’ memories; and (4) the time and effort required of the respondents are given ample consideration. Considering these factors, the researcher prepared an optional answering session for the students in which an ILI teacher explained each question item and offered help with answering the questions. This arrangement was also made because of the researcher’s awareness of the effort required by the students to answer a relatively long questionnaire. With regards to the Arabic teachers, the researcher herself explained and offered help especially with the English and with any unclear terminology. In Chapters 4 and 5, the preliminary steps to each questionnaire are mentioned together with the difficulties in the coding of information and data analysis.

The present study includes the following four extensive questionnaires to collect information for the case study and about the ILI MSA programme:

1- The Study Abroad Programme Questionnaire
2- The Teachers’ Questionnaire
3- The Learners’ Questionnaire
4- The Syllabus Design Questionnaire

Only two of these questionnaires, the Teachers’ and the Learners’, are extensively dealt with in this study, providing an in-depth analysis of the ILI programme. Of the other two questionnaires, the Syllabus Design Questionnaire served as a cross-reference to brochure information as well as to teachers’ and learners’ assumptions regarding the MSA syllabus; the Study Abroad Programme

\textsuperscript{17} See Hutton and McGrath’s (nd.) Questionnaire design and programme evaluation.
Questionnaire explored the need for the study as well as the aims and areas of interest to ASL study abroad programme organisers. In what follows, a brief summary of the rationale and contents of these four questionnaires is provided.

**THE STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMME QUESTIONNAIRE**

This questionnaire was set to gather information from 9 British universities about the learning of Arabic as a foreign language; the reasons behind this interest; as well as the objectives of the study abroad period in relation to the respective university degree courses.

This information serves to: (1) specify the different objectives of the ASL term abroad; (2) identify areas of interest to study abroad students and their universities; (3) present the criteria upon which ASL institutions are selected by British universities; and (4) highlight the importance and need for this study, for informed decision-making.

**THE TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE**

Nasban (1990) recognises the ASL teacher as an indispensable factor in the teaching/learning of ASL. Belnap (1987) also asserts that students of Arabic perceive their teachers as the most enjoyable element in their course. In the absence of documented material providing information about the ILI teaching methodology, the teacher, therefore, becomes a vital source of information for this programme evaluation. The questions elicit information from the teachers concerning the MSA programme with the aim of specifying the ILI teaching method. In carrying out this task, Richards & Rodgers' (1999) elements of a method are chosen as the theoretical background for developing this questionnaire and highlighting the different aspects of the programme under investigation.

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18 See Appendix 3.
19 See Appendix 4.
20 Richards and Rodgers (1999) method is dealt with in more detail in Chapter 4.
THE LEARNERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

The learner has recently become the focus of attention of pedagogic research (Belnap, 1987). Language acquisition and humanistic approaches have placed the learner as an active participant at the centre of the language teaching process. This central role given to the learner in pedagogic research explains why the researcher has chosen the learner as one of the prime sources of information in examining the ILI programme.

Thus, the Learners' Questionnaire examines the ILI MSA programme from the learners' perspective. The areas of the ILI programme investigated by means of this questionnaire together with the practical consideration involved in gathering and analysing the data are discussed in Chapter 5.

THE SYLLABUS DESIGN QUESTIONNAIRE

According to Richards & Rodgers (1999), a teaching method comprises a number of components. Among these components comes the element of "design"; syllabus is incorporated within the category of "design". Since this research focuses on examining the ILI methodology, syllabus design lies at the core of this examination. Questions are asked to reveal the nature of the ILI syllabus in both the Teachers' and Learners' Questionnaires. A separate questionnaire, directed at the ILI syllabus-designer, was necessary to guide the researcher's analysis of the information provided by the teachers and learners. However, the Syllabus Design Questionnaire is not dealt with separately but is used by the researcher as a reference in evaluating the ILI MSA syllabus.

This questionnaire focuses on eliciting the following information:

- Tracing the progression of the syllabus
- Examining the language and learning assumptions underlying this progression

21 See Appendix 5.
22 See Appendix 6.
• Exploring the impact of students’ needs on syllabus design and development
• Identifying the ILI syllabus type, goals, objectives, as well as tasks and materials
• Eliciting the criteria used for grading syllabus content
• Examining the suitability of the teaching methodology with the syllabus goals.
• Identifying areas of syllabus that can be changed or adapted by the teacher
• Exploring ILI methods in evaluating and assessing the syllabus and materials

CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

Classroom Observations are an integral part of any naturalistic research design. This is because the classroom is the real testing-ground for the fit between theory and practice. Therefore, much can be learnt just by observing and thinking about pedagogic procedures. However, observation on its own does not enable the observer to analyse and account efficiently for all that is observed in the classroom (Lynch, 1996; Nunan, 1997a).

In this study the researcher makes use of “structured” observations as opposed to “unstructured” ones. The researcher videotaped seven sessions with different ILI teachers teaching at different MSA levels. To code the observations, the “segment” has been adopted as the basic unit for describing the intricately complex episodes of classroom procedures. The observation data helped reconcile discrepancies in teachers’ and students’ descriptions of the ILI method, thus enhancing the research validity of this case study.

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23 In unstructured observations the observer just sits and speculates on what is taking place without any specific focus in mind, whereas in structured observations the researcher makes use of checklists, schedules or field notes as guidelines on which to focus the data gathering (Lynch, 1996).

24 A more detailed explanation of the segment scheme of observation is provided in Chapter 6.
INTERVIEWS

Interviews are frequently used as elicitation tools in the research and testing of second language acquisition (Nunan 1997a). The types of interview can be placed upon a continuum with the strictly structured and formal at one end and the informal and conversational at the other. Midway between these two poles lies the “interview guide” used to explore the ASL institutions in Cairo. The “interview guide” enables the researcher to use time realistically and to be systematic in gathering information. It gives the interviewer the flexibility to ask for the clarification of ambiguous answers, thus avoiding the rigidity of the “structured interview” (Nunan 1997a; and Lynch 1996).

Interviews are classified as dependent and independent. Independent interviews aim at collecting information from different sources, while the former are follow-ups to the questionnaires, aiming at clarifying and reinforcing some elements of the questionnaires’ data.

The research incorporates both dependent and independent interviews. Dependent interviews are used in guiding the researcher’s assumptions in the evaluation. Where questionnaire data were unclear or non-yielding, the researcher conducted as many interviews as necessary to clarify the questionnaire responses. All interviews are recorded and some are transcribed with the aim of presenting conclusions that can be independently assessed.

SUSTAINED EXAMINATION OF THE CURRICULUM DOCUMENTS

Alderson (1992: 286) asserts that before evaluation, it is important for the evaluator to “understand, interpret and where possible discuss as much documentation relevant to the programme or project being evaluated”. Therefore, examination of documents was the preliminary stage in conducting this research. It was also a main source of information in gathering data about other ASL institutions in Cairo (Chapter 1). However, with regards to the ILI programme, the analysis of documents served to provide baseline data which either corroborated or challenged the empirical investigation.
2.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher has outlined the theoretical background and important definitions used in the research design. This was followed by the naturalistic evaluation approach used in constructing this study and the constructs underlying the choices of research methods and approach with respect to validity and reliability. Lynch’s (1996) CAM for programme evaluation was introduced to explain the practical steps taken to construct and conduct this study.

In discussing the practical steps of this research, the researcher specified the audience of the study, the scope and focus of this programme evaluation and explained briefly the different data gathering tools used to explore the ASL institutions in general and the ILI case in particular.
Chapter 3

International Language Institute - Sahafeyeen, Cairo: A Programme Evaluation Case Study

The main purpose of this chapter is to present an overview of the baseline data for the ILI programme. The information provided derives primarily from the institute’s available printed literature and is supplemented, where necessary, by the researcher’s interpretations gained from personal experience. The examination of the printed material introduces the different dimensions of the ILI programme following Lynch’s (1996) “context inventory” (see Chapter 2, Section 2.2.1). An account is given of the ILI’s history and background, including a description of the educational context, which identifies the characteristics and the potentially relevant dimensions of the ILI MSA language programme. The information provided in the following section is the result of examining the available documents including brochures, website information, course descriptions as provided by the ILI certificate, books and different course materials, examination papers, university course documents, newsletter and various other printed or published material. Areas of the programme which are not defined in the literature are elicited from a recorded interview with Mr Colin Rogers, the ILI Managing Director.

3.1 The International Language Institute (ILI): Baseline data

3.1.1 History and Background

The International Language Institute falls into the category of private institutions. It is situated in Sahafeyeen, a residential area close to the city centre on the west bank of the Nile. The Institute occupies two of the five floors of a converted apartment block. Its location is fairly close to al-Tahrir Square, which lies at the heart of Cairo.

The ILI was established in April 1977. It enjoyed a good reputation among Egyptian learners of English, which was its primary activity at the time. The Institute

also provides the Royal Society of Arts (RSA)/UCLES Certificate in teacher training for native teachers of English. Before the recent ferocious market competition, the ILI, as a member of the International House (IH) – London, world network of language schools, was considered perhaps the “foremost” school in its field.

The ILI started TASL and TAFL teacher-training in 1977. Although the Arabic section was established as a marginal activity, it gradually flourished, reaching its peak in the 1990s. With the English department sustaining financial losses as a result of the growing popularity of the British Council among learners of English, together with the high costs forced upon the ILI for maintaining its International House affiliation standards of small classes in well-equipped classrooms, the owner and director decided to close the English business and focus on Arabic. This decision led to improvements in the working conditions and educational standards of the Arabic department at all levels. It also allowed the Institute to employ full-time teachers, which provided the stability necessary for long-term planning. The new structure attracted long-term learners and university students, and also created a genuine interest in job training and teacher development by guaranteeing better teaching standards and services. The relief from the financial losses of the English department enabled the Institute to develop, produce and publish its own teaching materials as well as TASL-oriented books. It was also able to focus on exploring new local markets and providing teacher-training services and advice on curriculum design to local, national and international schools.

The ILI was later amalgamated into a larger corporation called Educational Services to guarantee greater financial support and stability, thus enabling it to face the fierce competition of well-funded foreign government institutions. It also benefited from the English department’s legacy of teacher-training, syllabus design and marketing. The Arabic department at the ILI adopted the standards of the RSA teacher-training course, adapting its contents to suit the Arabic language. Consequently, the ILI teacher-training courses became well known for their high standards both nationally and internationally. The Institute still preserves its
The ILI adheres to the IH code of ethics and conduct and is subject to regular inspection.

3.1.2 The ILI Affiliation to International House (London)

3.1.2.1 BACKGROUND AND AFFILIATION SERVICES

The International House Educational Trust was established in 1953. The International House organisation now spans 31 countries and currently has 110 affiliated schools. This creates a network of schools benefiting from the membership of a world-wide organisation based in London. The International House grants its affiliated schools the right to use its internationally recognised logo (IH). It also offers teacher recruitment, training and development services as a prestigious and promotional activity for the individual affiliate at teacher and director level. Career opportunities world-wide are also provided for English-teaching staff. Annual conferences and fairs are organised for all affiliated members at various organisational levels. An IH member visits the newly affiliated schools in the first year, and then every other year thereafter. The inspection visits are obligatory and help provide advice and maintain the circulation of teachers around the organisation. Contact and support for people facing the same challenges and difficulties are provided and ensured by annual conferences. All members of IH receive a certain amount of advice and assistance via circulars, publications, and conferences in addition to the affiliate website offering educational materials that are shared around the network.

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2 Check the International House website: www.ihworldwide.com
3.1.2.2 The International House Code of Ethics

The IH code of ethics lies behind the ILI’s high-quality service to its clients. As a member of the IH organisation, the Institute adheres to the code of ethics as stated in the IH web pages. According to the code, the Institute is required to provide a good learning environment in small classes, each comprising a maximum number of sixteen students. It is also committed to employing professional teachers responsible for the needs of the students as identified by the school. The code accounts for the ILI policy in employing only teachers with at least a grade B pass in their training courses. The Institute is also required to employ a director of studies responsible for the teaching standards, who should, together with the director of the ILI, be available to the teachers at all times. As laid down in the code, all the teachers must agree to regular observation of their classes for teacher development and training. In addition, the ILI provides the required in-service training and facilities for its teachers. Finally, the code requires a good working and communicative relationship between the affiliate (ILI) and the teacher.

3.1.3 The ILI Programme Participants

3.1.3.1 The ILI Director of Studies (DOS)\(^3\)

The ILI employs a full-time director of studies who holds a BA in Arabic literature and is responsible for maintaining teaching standards at the Institute. He selects candidates for the TAFL training courses and recommends the top grade trainees for employment at the ILI. He also plans the teacher development scheme and sessions, arranges for classroom observation and gives constructive feedback. In addition, he plans the ILI courses and course schedules, and is required to support and advise the teachers and students on educational issues. Most of the coursebooks and course materials are initially produced and provided by the director of studies. The DOS designs special Arabic course materials, liaising with teachers on their preparation. He is also responsible for developing new courses as well as assessing and testing schemes to enable the ILI to progress into new markets.

\(^3\) The information in this section pertains to the ILI-DOS employed during the period 1997 - 2002.
3.1.3.2 The Teachers

The ILI employs seven full-time teachers, comprising four female teachers aged 30 to 50, and three male teachers aged 30 to 40. The seven teachers come from different socioeconomic and religious backgrounds. Of the seven, none is an Arabist. They are graduates of various disciplines such as medicine, dentistry and commerce. All seven teachers have passed their T AFL training course at the ILI with a minimum grade B. The holder of a C grade certificate was employed only after two years’ subsequent work experience in Malaysia.

The proportion of male to female teachers is not based on any pedagogic belief that female teachers are better than male teachers or vice versa. It varies according to the Institute’s pragmatic needs at the time of employment. When evening-class teachers are needed or when there is a demand for a mix-and-match schedule during unsocial hours, more male candidates are chosen for the teacher-training course so as to increase the pool of male student teachers available for the final selection. This is because female teachers, whether married or single, owing to cultural or social norms, cannot always fulfil evening or off-premises schedules without constraints. On the other hand, more female candidates are selected for the teacher-training course, based on the common assumption that women are less likely to change jobs than men. Their geographical constraints and limitations of expanding their careers outside the Institute’s premises make them invest more in departmental and material development work within the Institute so as to compete with their male counterparts.

Teachers co-ordinate their work and share new teaching materials at the same level. They have a mentor system, which they call “co-ordination”. This system enables a senior teacher to transfer his/her experience and teaching materials to another who is teaching the same level for the first time. It also gives both teachers the opportunity to review and discuss their class preparation and to build on each

4 The ILI uses part-time teachers on a casual basis, especially when there is a high demand from university students who wish to study Arabic during their summer vacation. For highly specialised courses or for Arabic research students, the ILI uses a lecturer from Ein Shams University.

5 These figures and information represent the ILI capacity in 2000 - 2001.
other’s experience. The senior teacher also checks the lesson plans and class procedures of the newly employed teacher. The working atmosphere among the teachers is generally relaxed, apart from some insidious male chauvinism. The teachers have many interests and are qualified to lead cultural activities and school trips. They all enjoy a good rapport with their students and are available for consultation during working hours, throughout the week. Every teacher is contracted to work five teaching hours per day. However, the nature of the ILI courses allows only for four and a half teaching hours per teacher per day. All the teachers, apart from a qualified Arabic calligrapher, are expected to teach both Egyptian Colloquial and Modern Standard Arabic.

3.1.3.3 The Students

The ILI attracts a wide range of students from different walks of life. The methodology and programme are designed for adults; under-age students are not eligible. Thus, the classes contain students between the ages of 18 and 70 or older. Courses are provided for all kinds of students from “universities, embassies, research and development centers, diplomatic corporations, educational bodies, and charitable institutions.” Over the last ten years the ILI has also provided regular and tailored courses for many universities, including those in Australia, Durham, Edinburgh, Leeds, Manchester, Odense and Uppsala. Although the Institute tries to keep up-to-date statistics of the nationalities of its students for marketing purposes, so far there has been no evidence of a consistent majority of any particular nationality among its clients. The full capacity of the institute is around 100 students per term. However, the institute has worked to that full capacity only on very rare occasions.

The ILI classifies its students as long-term or short-term according to the duration of their study. The short-term students are those who attend the Institute courses for a month or two. Long-term students are those who plan a study period of three months or more. Students are classified as MSA, ECA or combined students (ECA & MSA). The university students who follow the ILI courses and levels are regarded as long-term students, while those who follow a tailored course specified
and agreed upon by their university and the ILI are usually categorised as university students. These classifications help the DOS monitor the students’ progress.

3.1.4 The ILI Courses

According to the brochure for the academic year 1999 – 2000, the ILI offered the following courses:

- Egyptian Colloquial Arabic (ECA)
- Modern Standard Arabic (MSA)
- Combined Arabic courses (ECA & MSA)
- Tailored courses
- Arabic for specific purposes

The institute also offered side and promotional courses. These are:

- MSA reading aloud and pronunciation courses
- Calligraphy
- ECA two-week conversation courses

3.1.4.1 The MSA Courses

The ILI MSA courses are the focus of this research. Two kinds of intensive MSA courses are available: long MSA courses and short MSA courses. Long MSA courses offer the student fifty hours of study over a period of five weeks consisting of ten contact hours per week. The short courses offer the student forty hours of study over a period of four weeks.

The ILI brochure, similar to the ILI certificate, breaks down the aims of the courses and distributes them among the various levels. Despite the communicative assumptions revealed in identifying MSA in terms of its usage, the aims of the course are, paradoxically, defined in the brochure as strictly structural and are specified as the grammatical and morphological rules that students learn at each level of study.

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6 The intensive courses require the student to study every day for four days a week; they differ from regular courses where the student studies twice a week. The latter, however, are no longer running at the ILI.
Special emphasis is laid on the syllabus content (the grammatical items included in each teaching unit) at the various levels of the MSA courses.

3.1.4.2 MSA UNIVERSITY COURSES

The ILI offers different course contents and formats for the MSA study-abroad programmes of a number of Western universities. However, these courses are affected by the various economic factors governing the sending institutions' budgets and departmental policies. The most regular courses are those offered to Odense University (Denmark) and Uppsala University (Sweden). The amount of coordination needed for programme development and administration varies greatly from one sending institution to another. Edinburgh University (Scotland), for example, accepts that its students can follow the standard MSA and ECA courses available at the ILI with general co-ordination and follow-up regarding attendance and total contact hours required. Odense and Uppsala, however, each have different programme specifications and objectives that need co-ordination and preparation at all procedural levels. Examinations and reports for these universities follow assessment schemes provided by the sending institutions. Odense University, for instance, requires an external examiner to attend and monitor the assessment of students' written assignments as well as the oral examination.

3.1.4.3 THE ECA COURSES

The ECA courses follow the same time scheme as the MSA courses although they offer fewer contact hours. The ECA long course comprises forty contact hours over five weeks compared with the short course of thirty-two hours over four weeks. The ILI runs nine levels of Egyptian Colloquial Arabic and the courses follow a functional syllabus. In the brochure, the teaching methodology followed is described as “the Situational Language Teaching Methodology”\(^7\).

\(^7\) Since the ECA courses are not the focus of this research, the researcher will not provide further details on these courses.
3.1.4.4 The Teacher-Training Course

The ILI is one of the very few places in Cairo that offer a TAFL teacher-training course. According to Colin Rogers, the managing director of the ILI, this teacher-training is adapted from the Cambridge RSA TEFL course and is adjusted to fit the TAFL context. The course is not recognised by Cambridge as it is not an on-going course but is offered according to the ILI demand for teachers. This ILI teacher-training course certificate, however, is acknowledged by many ASL schools today and is highly recommended as a necessary qualification for many ASL teachers applying for employment at government and non-government institutions. The course is also popular with the Ministry of Education in Brunei, which sends two female Arabic teachers every year for 12 months’ teacher-training overseas at the ILI.

Course participants are required to produce two written assignments related to Arabic linguistics or ASL pedagogy during their four-week intensive course. Teaching practice is a major component of the course and is part of the daily schedule. Small groups of teachers obtain practical experience from working with classes of different levels and are given daily feedback on their performance. The teacher-training courses are held only once per year or every other year, according to the Institute’s need for teachers.

3.1.5 The ILI Teaching Methodology

The ILI website\(^8\) states that the teaching methodology adopted by the Institute is the direct method. There is very little reference to this method or clarification of its meaning. However, it mentions that teaching takes place in small groups by well-trained native speakers of Arabic. This short reference to methodology is then followed by a list of what the students are expected to learn or cover at the different levels of instruction.

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\(^8\) The 1999 version of the ILI website was modified in 2003 by deleting any reference to a specific methodology. This change was a direct result of the researcher’s current study which highlighted loose use of terminology.
3.1.6 The ILI MSA-Syllabus

The original syllabus document described only three levels. The contents of these levels were listed under three main categories:

- Function
- Sample Language (structures)
- New vocabulary

The reduction in the course format from the regular two-and-a-half-month course in 1991 to one of four weeks' intensive study, together with piloting the MSA course and making alterations based on the procedural syllabus, have led to tremendous changes in the content, grading and distribution of both vocabulary and structures of the actual syllabus in 1993. Consequently, the original three levels of MSA proliferated into six levels by introducing new units where necessary and fitting in a new level for vocabulary-building. In 1998, the ILI advanced MSA syllabus developed two more levels of authentic reading comprehension owing to the increasing demand of university students for study abroad courses and the entry of more intermediate-level students of Arabic who needed to pursue higher levels of MSA instruction. Piloting these new advanced courses dictated a stepping-stone between the existing ILI Level Six (post-intermediate) and the new advanced courses. Selecting some units from the off-the-shelf course of Al-Kitaab fii Ta'allum al-'Arabiyya filled this gap between the ILI levels. The available certificate contains a course description which gives a more comprehensive layout of the MSA syllabus than that provided by the original syllabus, which does not include the latest modifications.

3.1.7 The ILI MSA Books

The ILI prides itself on being one of the very few private institutions that has invested in the development and production of coursebooks. Five books are used for MSA, together with an anthology of advanced readers, graded to be taught over a period of eight weeks. This anthology is referred to as "advanced materials" rather than books. Besides these in-house books, the ILI uses Al-Kitaab fii Ta'allum
All the ILI books are written and compiled by the DOS and the Assistant Director of Studies (ADOS). These books, however, are subject to teachers' alterations and modifications as they pilot them in class. The sections of the coursebooks are designed to fit the format of the ILI course timetable. Each book consists of fourteen units. Each unit consists of a text or dialogue, which is either written by the authors of the book or edited to exclude unnecessary difficult vocabulary and structures, thus fulfilling the objectives. The text is followed by comprehension questions, leading to a grammar analysis with further practice exercises for the particular structure highlighted by the text. Many of the texts provide the students with a rich cultural input, especially at the intermediate and advanced stages (Books 4, 5 and the anthology). The table of contents of each book is composed of the structure to be learned, page number and the reading topic. The authors do not introduce the books with an explanation of their objectives, methodology, rationale or layout. There is no mention of how teachers are to use these books. The teachers are trained to use the books and to supplement them with their own exercises, visual aids, grammar tables, vocabulary lists and drills which they in turn share after reviewing them with the DOS or ADOS. The teachers are also expected to go through the units systematically because each unit builds on the preceding one in terms of grammar and vocabulary. They are also required to teach all the units of a particular book within the course time-span to facilitate the movement in the registration of new and continuing students and to avoid creating in-between levels as far as possible.

The books are intended to look skeletal in order to protect the copyright of the institution. If no one else can use them apart from the ILI teachers, then no other teacher or student will be interested in copying them. This is a double-edged sword, as teachers tend to take all the ILI materials and supplementary work with them when changing jobs or making a career move to another school, without any

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9 This job is offered to a senior teacher when the workload requires it.
recognition that this is ILI material. The coursebook is not offered for sale as it is considered part of the course package, together with an in-house recording of all the texts and dialogues of the books for use in teaching pronunciation and listening skills.

The books have a number of typographical and grammatical mistakes which are corrected by the teacher in class. The attempt to reproduce the books and redesign the layout in a more modern and attractive format has been taken up by the DOS and the teachers several times over the years. However, since it is both an extremely time-consuming and expensive commitment and a very long-term investment, the exercise has never been completed. Nevertheless, the Institute has been able to supplement Books One, Two and Three with a series of in-house workbooks for these main courses, which provide “error-free” grammatical exercises and writing practice for both the teachers and the students in an appealing and self-explanatory format. This success story has encouraged the Institute, recently, to produce three well-reviewed coursebooks to go with the workbooks. However, they are stored in the drawer, waiting for a publisher.

The ILI coursebooks are not graded for a zero background long-term learner (one who studies over a period of 4 – 12 months). They are ideal for short-term students who come to take one or two courses. This is because their input is not graded from one book to the next in respect of the development of language skills and the building of vocabulary. The structures are, however, graded and sequenced through all the books on the basis of difficulty, starting with the fairly simple and ranging to the more complicated. Vocabulary is recycled through all the five books and is graded within the units of one particular book, though not from one book to the next. A clear example is Books One and Two, which deal with everyday lexicon, and Book Three, which is a media course book that introduces a political and economic lexical set.
3.2 Conclusion

This chapter has presented information about the International Language Institute with regards the following: (1) history and background; (2) the Institute’s affiliation to IH; (3) course participants; (4) the ILI courses; (5) the MSA course format, aims and objectives; (6) the ILI teaching methodology; and (7) the ILI syllabus and books. This information will be referred to and compared with the findings of the questionnaires conducted in this research.
Chapter 4

The Teachers' Questionnaire

This chapter presents the findings from the Teachers' Questionnaire. The information from this questionnaire, together with the information from the Learners' Questionnaire (Chapter 5) and from Classroom Observations (Chapter 6) should provide the reader with the facts about the ILI programme as a selected representative of ASL private institutions in Cairo. This information, scrutinised against the information provided about ASL programmes in Cairo (Chapter 1), produces a description of the ASL scene in Cairo, highlighting its problems and making recommendations for future developments.

The chapter is divided into two sections. Section One provides a brief definition of the term “method” and associated terms as proposed by Richards & Rodgers in *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching: A Description and Analysis* (1999). This is done for four reasons: (1) to use the definition as a framework for describing the different methodologies used in the questionnaire; (2) to use the elements and sub-elements of the method to specify the dimensions examined in the context inventory; (3) to cross-check the teachers’ knowledge of pedagogic issues and terms within the ‘method’ parameters; and (4) to provide a standard conceptual framework for identifying, describing, and evaluating the ILI’s “methodology” in language teaching.  

Section Two presents and analyses the findings of the Teachers' Questionnaire.

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1 "{...} ‘language teaching methodology’ refers to the general field of inquiry into how teachers can best facilitate language learning in classrooms’"(Littlewood, 1999b: 658). A different usage of the term overlaps with the term “method”. “In this second sense, ‘methodology’ refers to the collection of principles and procedures that make up a particular way of teaching {...}. In using this term, rather than ‘method’, the frequent implication is that the principles and procedures are integrated into a flexible framework, perhaps unique to a particular teacher or situation, rather than into a tightly prescribed system for teaching” (ibid.). Because strictly prescribed systems are in decline, since the 1970s the term ‘methodology’ is now more frequently used to refer to the term ‘method’ (ibid.: 659). Nonetheless Littlewood asserts that “the term ‘method’ usually implies a fully worked-out system for teaching which, in the perception of the language-teaching community, exists independently of any particular teacher who may try to apply it in the classroom” (ibid.).

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4.1 Teaching Methodology

4.1.1 Definition of a Method

One of the aims of the questionnaire is to establish the teaching methodology adopted by the ILI teaching staff in the ASL programme. Richards & Rodgers (1999) point out that the changing rationale for foreign language study and classroom techniques and procedures, used to teach languages, led to a proliferation in terminology. Linguists’ attempts in the 1940s to conceptualise the nature of methods and the relationship between theory and practice within a method sustained this proliferation. A clear definition and explanation of what is meant by the word “method” is therefore required before we can examine the existing teaching method(s) at the ILI. This section summarises some of the attempts made to define and describe the concept of “method” in the twentieth century. The summary highlights the ways in which these attempts have demarcated the abstract theory of learning from the concrete experience in the classroom.²

Richards & Rodgers (1999: 16) acknowledge that a distinction is drawn between “the underlying theoretical principles” of language teaching and learning and “the practices derived from them.” They examined a hierarchy of three levels of conceptualisation and organisation: “approach”, “method” and “technique”. In this hierarchy, the relationship between these three categories may be stated as follows: an “approach” is the correlative assumptions underlying the nature of language teaching and learning; a “method” is the overall plan of ordering the content of language presentation and skills to be taught, based on the selected “approach”; whereas “technique” is what actually takes place in class. The examined hierarchy was found deficient in giving attention to the nature of the “method” itself (ibid.:15 - 16).

² It is important to mention, at this point, that now-a-days modern foreign language teaching/learning research advocates an eclectic approach to language teaching. Nonetheless, the researcher has focused on language learning/teaching “methods” in describing and evaluating the ILI programme because the ILI and many other ASL institutions still promote and advertise their courses by advocating a particular teaching methodology. It is, therefore, important to highlight the ILI teachers’ awareness of the different “methods” in comparison to the “ILI methodology” which they pride themselves in applying and consider as a major strength in their programme.
Richards & Rodgers (1999) believe that the aforementioned hierarchy lacks an adequate explanation of the nature of the “method” and its relation to “technique”: hence, they propose a more comprehensive model of a “method”. In their model, they use the term “design” to explain the relationship between the pre-existing “approach” and “method”, whereas “technique” is replaced with the wider term “procedure”. “Thus, a method is theoretically related to an approach, is organizationally determined by a design and is practically realized in procedure” (ibid.).

A summary of Richards & Rodgers’ elements and sub-elements that constitute a “method”, and which will be used later by the researcher as a framework for defining and describing the ILI programme, is presented in the following definitions:

1 Approach is the theory of the nature of language and language learning, which is applied in language classroom practice.

Broadly speaking and from the point of view of language teaching and learning, the theory of language consists of an account of the nature of language and an account of the basic units of language structure. The existing theories of language are summarised in three main views: (1) the “structural view” perceives language as a building of structurally related elements for coding meaning. The main target of learning is to master the phonological and grammatical relations, and lexical items of this building; (2) the “functional view” stresses that language is a tool for expressing...
functional meaning and therefore function and semantics are paramount, although structure is not totally discarded. The aim of learning is based on the student’s functional needs for communication in specific contexts; and (3) the “interactional view” perceives language as the tool for social relations. This view is based on examining the patterns of moves, acts, negotiation, and interaction found in conversational exchanges. The content of teaching is therefore left to the intention of the learners and interactors.

The theory of the nature of learning comprises an account of the psycholinguistic and cognitive processes required for language learning as well as an account of the conditions that allow for successful use of these processes. The theories of language learning as reflected in different teaching methods stress either one or both of the following orientations: (1) the “process-oriented approach” builds on learning processes such as habit formation, induction, inference, hypothesis testing, and generalisation; and (2) the “condition-oriented approach” focuses on the conditions required for learning to take place, usually with emphasis on human and physical settings.

2 **Design** is the realisation of an “approach” within an educational context. In other words, it is the logistics or feasibility of implementing an “approach”. It comprises the following elements, which in turn consist of a number of sub-elements:

- Objectives and a syllabus model
- Type of learning and teaching activities
- Learner roles
- Teacher roles
- The role of instructional materials

3 **Procedure** is the actual occurrences of the planned “design” in daily classroom practice. Richards & Rodgers present it as follows:

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5 Learning theories are not the focus of this research and therefore are not comprehensively surveyed in this study.
6 For a detailed explanation of the sub-elements see Richards & Rodgers, Figure 2 (1999: 28).
7 See Richards & Rodgers, Figure 2.1 (1999: 28).
Richards & Rodgers' application of this framework, in describing different teaching methodologies, has shown that not all methods fit precisely into the suggested dimensions above (Richards & Rodgers, 1999: 29). However, for reasons of consistency and convenience, the researcher will use Richards & Rodgers' levels of "approach", "design" and "procedure" to provide the reader with the required definitions of the methodologies referred to in the questionnaire. These definitions, in turn, provide a theoretical basis for examining the data and describing the ILI programme, highlighting the deficiencies and strengths within the ASL context in Cairo.

4.1.2 Definitions of Teaching Methods

Below are brief definitions\(^8\) of the teaching methods mentioned in the questionnaire.

4.1.2.1 Grammar Translation Method\(^8\)

1. Approach: It is described by Richards & Rodgers, as "the method for which there is no theory" (Rodgers & Richards, 1999: 5).

2. Design: The main objectives of this method are to encourage mental discipline, develop intellectual skills and lay the foundations for further study of a foreign language. The syllabus is a set of graded grammar rules and a list of ungraded vocabulary to be memorised. The main language activities are translation, grammar exercises, dictation and, eventually, essay writing and reading texts, all focusing on

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\(^8\) Some definitions are more detailed than others as they are more representative and relevant to the case study pertaining to the ILI programme. Within one particular definition, certain elements of the method are more detailed as they also pertain to the ILI aspects of the programme under examination in this questionnaire.

accurate retrieval of the language system. Learners are recipients who have no control over the content of classroom instruction. Language learning to them is more like mathematics, which requires high academic inclination in the learners. They are expected to learn the grammar paradigms, understand the rules and apply them in exercises. This method requires very low teaching skills. Teachers are fully in control of classroom practice and mainly communicate in the students’ mother tongue. The teacher’s role, consequently, focuses on presentation of grammar, drilling vocabulary and correcting errors.

3. **Procedure:** highlights a teacher student transmission mode rather than an interaction pattern. This mode demands no sophisticated measures as far as space and equipment are concerned.

4.1.2.2 **THE DIRECT METHOD**\(^{10}\)**(ALSO KNOWN AS THE BERLITZ METHOD)\(^{11}\)

1. **Approach:** The language theory focuses on language as speaking; hence, it promotes systematic attention to pronunciation. The language learning theory is based on an analogy of children’s first language learning experience. Language is learnt from the association between language and context without the interference of the mother tongue. Vocabulary teaching therefore depends on pictures, gestures and the bringing in of realia into the classroom. It reflects an analytical and implicit approach to language learning and teaching in which the learners are expected to induce structure from context and use it.

2. **Design:** The main ‘objective’ of the Direct Method is attaining speaking proficiency rather than reading or appreciating texts. Live contact with the language is the main criterion for selecting and grading structures and vocabulary within the syllabus. The main language ‘activity’ is structured and graded conversation in which the learner uses the language to which s/he is exposed by answering questions posed by the teacher. The “teacher’s role” is crucial to this approach because success depends on the teacher’s creativity and ability to maintain class interest. The teacher

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\(^{11}\) This method is used in teaching Arabic as a second language at the Berlitz School in Cairo (see Chapter 1).
replaces the textbook. The teacher needs to be a native speaker of the language or possess at least that level of proficiency. The “learners” make active use of language with more flexibility on issues of grammar and restricted use of mother tongue. They are encouraged to think in the foreign language.

3. Procedure: Oral interaction is the prevalent mode of interaction between teacher and students. Active participation is more feasible with small groups. The insistence on using the mother tongue in turn puts a demand on the availability of visuals and other sophisticated kinds of materials. However, this method is recognised by Rodgers & Richards (1999: 33) as lacking a systematic basis in applied linguistic theory and practice, which should not be confused with the Situational Language Approach.

4.1.2.3 The Structural-Situational Approach

1. Approach: underlying this approach is the structuralist view of language. Speech is the basis of language and structure lies at the heart of it. Accuracy is therefore very important as regards pronunciation and grammar. The theory of learning is a form of habit-learning theory. It addresses the processes rather than the conditions of learning and adopts an inductive approach to language teaching.

2. Design: The main objective of situational language teaching is to teach a good command of all four skills. The syllabus contains a list of basic structures and a list of vocabulary. Vocabulary and structures are graded, and reading and writing come second to speaking and listening. The main language activities are substitution drills, repetitions, oral pair and group practice, controlled, oral-based reading and writing tasks. The teacher’s role is to prevent learners from acquiring bad habits by consistently correcting their mistakes. The teacher’s role is more prominent and controlling. The teacher is a model at the presentation stage, who, thereafter adopts the role of a conductor by initiating and monitoring drills and activities. The teacher is also the pacesetter of classroom activities. The teacher is essential to the success of

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12 This approach is also referred to as the Situational Language Teaching and Oral Approach. The ILI advertises that it adopts this approach in relation to ECA teaching (see Chapter 3).
13 The four skills are listening, speaking, reading and writing.
this method, as s/he always has to supplement the textbook with activities to support the structures and elicit sentences from the students. The learners have no control over the content of the learning and sometimes have to accept awkward practices.

3. Procedure: Classroom procedures comprise the following stages: (1) pronunciation; (2) revision (checking old structures and vocabulary with the aim of using them as basis for the new patterns); (3) presentation of new words and structures; (4) oral practice; and (5) reading the material or oral structure or written exercise (ibid.: 39 - 40). Correction, though differing in intensity and timing, is prevalent all through the lesson stages in different techniques.

4.1.2.4 The Audio-lingual Method

1. Approach: Language here is viewed as speech habits and not writing. A language classroom therefore teaches learners the language itself rather than about the language. A language’s structure is considered unique and the teaching of a language takes place in its linguistic and cultural context by focusing on the mastery of phonological and grammatical structures rather than on the mastery of vocabulary. The Audio-lingual Approach is based on a behavioural theory of language. Learning occurs as a result of a “stimulus” which elicits behaviour. A “response”, therefore, results and is “reinforced” as being appropriate or inappropriate to encourage repetition or suppression (Richards & Rodgers, 1999: 50). “Stimulus”, “response”, “reinforcement” are equated in classroom practice by the terms “mode drilling”, “elicitation” of learners’ replies and “correction”.

2. Design: The objectives of the Audio-lingual Method are short-term. The skills are taught in the following order: listening; speaking; reading and writing. The syllabus therefore consists of key items of phonology, morphology, syntax of the language arranged according to their order of presentation, together with a list of lexical items and suggested situations. Dialogues and drills are the main characteristic of classroom activities. Dialogues provide a context for the phonological and structural

items and are used to highlight cultural aspects of the foreign language. The learners play "a reactive role" and are viewed "as organisms" which, with skilful direction, can produce correct responses (ibid.: 56). The teacher's role is as central and active as in the Situational Language Method. The materials used are teacher-oriented and the textbook is hardly used in class, especially in the early stages of the lesson, when the learners are required to concentrate on the aural-oral aspect of the language rather than on reading.

3. Procedure: The target language is used as the medium of instruction. A class of ten is optimal. The teacher models all learning. Structures are selected and used for pattern drills.

4.1.2.5 COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING

1. Approach: The theory of language underlying this method perceives language as "communication". The role of language teaching is to develop "communicative competence" 16 with emphasis on fluency rather than accuracy. Therefore, second-language learning is perceived as acquiring the linguistic means to perform different kinds of functions.17

The Communicative Approach promotes a view of learning as "a process of natural growth", unlike other language teaching methods which perceive language learning merely as skill learning (Littlewood, 1999b: 665).

2. Design: The objectives of language teaching reflect the particular needs of its learners and express the conceptual meaning of language as well as the functional, social and personal aspects that it entails. These are expressed in reading, writing, listening, or speaking. "Pragmatic flexibility, together with an emphasis on

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15 Many ASL institutes in Cairo adopt a Communicative Approach to language teaching most prominent among these is the DEAC (Chapter 1).
individual differences" and needs, are the main criteria for a syllabus. Activities engage the learners in meaningful and authentic tasks that lead to communication. Examples of such tasks are problem-solving, information exchange activities, discussion and role-play. The teacher's role is one of a facilitator of learning rather than that of an instructor, but this varies according to the activity undertaken in the classroom. Correction is less frequent, and even rare, and the time and frequency of feedback are greatly influenced by the nature of the activity. The learners, to some extent, have control over the content of the learning and are expected to be active participants rather than passive recipients.

3. Procedure: Communicative principles can be applied to the teaching of any skill because it entails a wide range of activities. For this reason, a description of the classroom procedures is not feasible. Richards & Rodgers, therefore, claim that the Communicative Language Teaching is an approach rather than a method, since it is deficient at the prescriptive level of design and procedure.

4.1.2.6 Other Methods

Total Physical Response, Natural Approach, Community Language Learning, Suggestopedia, Silent Way

These methods are referred to in the questionnaire with the aim of examining the extent to which the ILI teachers are well informed about methodological pedagogic issues. A detailed description of these methods is irrelevant in identifying the ILI programme or in analysing the questionnaire findings. Therefore, only a short description at the level of approach is provided.

(A) Acquisition-Based Approaches

These approaches include the "Total Physical Response" and the "Natural Approach", which derive mainly from natural theories of learning. Proponents of

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18 See Littlewood (1999b: 665). Also, see Littlewood (1999c) for Communicative Language Teaching Methods and Swan (1985) for a critical look at this approach.
20 See Richards & Rodgers (1999: 87 – 152) and Stevick (1980) for a detailed description and definition of these methods.
these approaches advocate that teachers should focus on creating appropriate learning conditions rather than controlling the learning process. The “Total Physical Response” is based on the idea that children learn a great deal by responding to commands. Learners, therefore, should not be forced to speak until they are ready to do so. Until then, they process the language to form their own language system by listening and responding physically to commands. The “Natural Approach” is also based on this principle of language learning. Learners are only able to use the language that they acquire from natural processes for spontaneous communication. The language that they learn in class serves a subordinate purpose. It acts as a monitor for learners’ accurate production of language. Again, speech should emerge naturally when the learners are ready for it.

(B) HUMANISTIC APPROACHES

“Community Language Learning”, “Suggestopedia” and the “Silent Way” derive from humanistic theories of language learning. Advocates of these approaches focus on the affective factors of learning already introduced by the “Communicative Language Teaching”. Motivation and a sense of the learners being totally immersed as a whole person guide classroom instruction to focus on creating the conditions that meet the learners’ affective needs. “Community Language Learning” is based on ideas from counselling therapy. Classroom procedure maintains the learners’ sense of security by making them feel accepted as members of the “class community.” Discussions take place in the learners’ native tongue and a language counsellor, the teacher, suggests equivalents in the target language. The discussion is recorded and used for “reflection”, which enables the teacher and learners to work on the language that was used.

“Suggestopedia” stresses the learners’ sense of security as the main factor of language learning. The basis of this method is the belief that although learners are capable of learning a huge amount of material, they grow up with the impression that learning is difficult. Anxieties and tensions result and obstruct learning. The role of instruction is to reduce these anxieties by suggestive techniques. Learners are given

22 See Stevick (1980) and Littlewood (1999b) for a detailed account of these approaches.
new identities in the classroom to make them feel relaxed and secure. Baroque music is used as a background to penetrate the subconscious realms against which the teacher reads dialogues in the target language with an appropriate intonation. The learners understand the dialogues as they are given the mother tongue equivalents. At a later stage, the dialogues are further exploited in language work and role-play.

"The Silent Way" is characterised by using a set of cuisenaire rods on which classroom teaching is centred. The learners use the language with one another after they have been introduced to it by the teacher (e.g. give me a blue rod). The teacher interferes as little as possible, but as the students use the language, they silently instigate new attempts and show signs of acceptability. The teacher, however, does not supply the learners with corrections, as the learners are supposed to focus on the language and their own inner systems for its use. Sound charts are used to develop the learners' abilities to produce sounds as close as possible to the foreign language. The Silent Way differs from the other humanistic approaches in that it requires intense mental concentration as opposed to producing a relaxed sense of well-being (Littlewood, 1999b: 667).

4.2 The Teachers' Questionnaire

This section begins with a description of the practical steps taken to conduct the questionnaire. Next, the contents of the questionnaire are outlined. Finally, the section provides the results of the Teachers' Questionnaire, followed by analysis.

4.2.1 Preliminary Procedures

Nine of the ILI teachers were asked to complete the questionnaire. A staff meeting preceded the distribution of the questionnaire. At the meeting, the researcher explained the aims of her research to the teachers and the Director of Studies. Next, a plan for answering and returning the questionnaire was agreed. The teachers had the choice of answering the questions in English or Arabic, using the language in which they felt comfortable expressing their views.
A number of teachers preferred to visit the researcher's office after working hours to go through the questions and to answer them on the spot. Others made a list of what they regarded as the complicated questions and sought clarification. The teachers needed reassurance that there were no hidden tricks and that there were no "correct" answers to the questions.

Of the nine copies of the questionnaire which were distributed, responses were received from only seven participants. Among the respondents were six full-time ILI teachers and one part-time teacher. The following ID codes were provided for future reference to each of the seven teachers: A, B, C, D, E, F and G (see Table 4.1). Although teacher F left the ILI later in the year to teach at the British Council, the researcher chose to keep her answers to broaden the basis of generalisability in the study. 23

4.2.2 The Contents of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire consists of 49 questions. The objective was to gather information on the ILI programme at the level of 'design', as explained in Section 4.1.1. The content of the questionnaire, therefore, seeks the subjects' perceptions of themselves as teachers and their views on the nature of language and language learning. It also explicitly elicits the subjects' statements of belief by asking them about their teaching practice and implicitly by asking them about their language learning experience.

Questions 1 – 9 elicit demographic and background information about the ILI teachers, focusing on their previous work experience and the reasons why they chose to teach ASL. Questions 10–15 seek professional information regarding the teachers' ability to teach the Arabic variants, the different ILI courses and their preferences for teaching certain proficiency24 levels. The teachers' own foreign language learning experience is explored in Q16 - 17 & 34 - 49, examining the ways in which they

23 Of the 2 teachers who have not returned the questionnaire, one teacher only, Teacher I, will be referred to in the discussion of the findings. This is because Teacher I is considered an important asset to the MSA programme.

24 The term "proficiency" is used here to refer to the different levels at which the learners study. It does not necessary reflect the ACTFL Proficiency guidelines of language teaching.
could have shaped or influenced their roles and performances in the classroom
“procedure” as well as “design” (see Section 4.1.1). Questions 18 – 28 examine the
ILI teachers’ beliefs concerning the role of the teacher for later comparison with
Q31, which asks for information about their actual preference in the classroom. The
comparison is intended to identify discrepancies between what should happen and
what actually takes place in the classroom. Based on an assumption that has been
made earlier that there was no standardisation of terms in the ASL field, Q29 and 30
test the teachers’ knowledge of the different methods and current concepts of
teaching foreign languages. This is achieved by: (1) examining the teachers’
knowledge of common pedagogic terminology of the methods; and (2) verifying this
knowledge by exploring the respondents’ understanding of the role of the teacher in
relation to the different methods. Therefore, Q30, which can be considered a
rephrasing, if not a replica of Q29, is intentionally included in the questionnaire to
examine if the teachers really understand what is meant by each term. Where Q29
asks teachers to tick the teaching methods with which they are most familiar, Q30
asks them to identify the teacher’s role in relation to the different teaching methods.
These two questions therefore aim at protecting the study from false assumptions,
which could result from the teachers’ misconceptions of the different terms because
of their lack of acquaintance with the actual issues and their implications. Question
31 studies the ILI teachers’ roles in their classroom practice. Question 32 explores
the teachers’ perception of the learners’ role in class, again emphasising the
assumptions underlying their teaching methods and role in class.

The 49 questions comprise 41 close-ended and eight open-ended questions. In
the open-ended questions, the teachers are asked for their opinion on certain aspects
of the teaching methods, or their personal, or professional status at the ILI. For the
remaining 41 close-ended questions an adjectival scale is used to discover the
respondents’ preference rating of various teaching methods, learning media and
activities. The scale originally aimed at protecting the study from any tendency on
the respondents’ part to follow convenience at the expense of accuracy by simply
ticking the middle score. The respondents’ ticks and crosses, however, covered the
whole scale. As a result, it was decided to divide the scale into four equal parts; this
seemed to reflect better the actual distribution of ticks and crosses. It is worth noting that some respondents did not indicate preferences either because they found the question inapplicable to them or because they simply did not know what to say. In this case, their information is dealt with separately. Questions which did not produce much information, or which were not answered by the respondents, were weeded out.

Responses to close-ended questions are summarised and presented in the following section in tables, which, in some instances, are replicated in charts to give a better representation of the data. A summary of the teachers' free responses, which included most of the answers to the open-ended questions, is provided and repeated answers to these questions are omitted.25

**4.2.3 Data and Findings**

The findings of the questionnaire are summarised, presented and discussed under the following topics:

1. Teachers' demographic, educational and experiential background (Q1 - Q17).
2. Teachers' awareness of the pedagogic beliefs, and choices in classroom “procedure” (Q18 - Q32).
3. Teachers' foreign language learning experience (Q34 - Q46).
4. The Relationship between language teaching and successful language learning. (Q47)
5. The impact of the respondents' foreign language experience (FLL) experience on their teaching of ASL (Q48 – Q49).
6. Exploring the teachers' general experience at the ILI (Q33).

**4.2.3.1 Teachers' Demographic, Educational and Experiential Background (Q1 – Q17)**

Table 4.1 introduces the respondents to the reader. It is clear from the table that all the teachers are Egyptians and that they are all university graduates. It is the general policy of the ILI to recruit teachers from this educational background. In a country

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25 The teachers' quotations are edited. Spelling and grammatical mistakes are corrected, and where teachers answered in Arabic, translations are provided instead, with a footnote reference.
with a surplus of university graduates there is no dearth of graduate supply. This is particularly true in this case because the ILI offers most of its teachers full-time contracts, benefits, training and good pay in comparison with what they would earn in the local employment market.

Table 4.1 The Teachers’ Demographic Data (Q 1 – 6 & 8)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID Code</th>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Arabic Degree</th>
<th>Other Degrees</th>
<th>Teacher Training Degree</th>
<th>Part time</th>
<th>Full time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Hoda Adib</td>
<td>Egyptian</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Samia Louise</td>
<td>Egyptian</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Abeer Ghayeth</td>
<td>Egyptian</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Khaled El Sayed</td>
<td>Egyptian</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Hussein Amer</td>
<td>Egyptian</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Abeer Haidar</td>
<td>Egyptian</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Hany Abd Al Galil</td>
<td>Egyptian</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is interesting to note that only one teacher is qualified in Arabic. The others are graduates in other disciplines. However, these teachers have to show a high competence in the language before they are offered a contract at the ILI. The reason why the institute does not apply a strict policy of recruiting teachers who are Arabic specialists may be explained by Parkinson’s (1993) study concerning the application of the 1 - 5 proficiency scale to the native Egyptian university graduates’ abilities in MSA. The study reveals that differences in proficiency between the average college-education graduate and the graduate Arabic specialist is minimal. They both fall short of reaching the 5-proficiency scale in their MSA skills; a result which indicates that a degree in Arabic does not necessarily indicate a higher proficiency in the language. It is also worth mentioning that the ILI does not recruit teachers who have specialised in Arabic because experience has indicated that graduate Arabic

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26 The 1 - 5 proficiency scale measures the continuum of a non-native speaker's language practical skills in speaking, reading, writing, listening as well as cultural knowledge in the foreign language. Parkinson, however, used this scale metaphorically to measure Egyptian native speakers' ability in MSA.
specialists reflect a socioeconomic background incompatible with the multicultural
environment at the ILI. These teachers usually adopt ideological positions that are
insensitive to learners’ cultures and beliefs (Chapter 1).

It is also interesting to note that all the teachers, with the exception of
Teacher G, have a full-time contract. This is part of the ILI’s deliberate policy. This
policy is based on the belief that secure employment motivates the teachers by
earning their confidence, and then developing them into stakeholders. Judging from
their ages, the teachers are all mature and experienced practitioners. Some have been
employed by the ILI for more than seven years.

The ILI has an implicit equal opportunities policy; hence, there are four
females and three males on the list. This mix enables the institute to respond to
students’ needs. It is not unknown for some students to ask for male or female
teachers. Despite the fact that the ILI makes it clear that it is a secular institution, it
has happened that a few female students from an Islamic background have asked to
be taught by female teachers, and a few male students have expressed their unease at
being taught in a one-to-one situation, with the classroom door closed, by a female
teacher because it is against the teachings of Islam. There is also an understanding at
the institute that a student taking two or more courses should be exposed to both
male and female teachers of different interests.

It is clear from the table that all the teachers, regardless of the degree
background, are professionally trained; however, this training should be updated at
various points in their career.

Whereas the first eight questions refer to the demographic, educational and
experiential background, Q9 asks the teachers to explain why they chose to teach
Arabic as a Second Language for their career. Most of the teachers stated that their
love of Arabic and language teaching were the main reasons for their career choice.
This indicates that there is great empathy between the teachers’ likes and their
chosen careers. Satisfied teachers are bound to be committed practitioners, and this
in turn is bound to be reflected in how they carry out their work for a private institution. This synergy between the teachers’ motivations and their duties is an important asset. The management of the ILI understands this and tries, as far as possible, to respond positively to the teachers’ concerns.

Questions 10 - 13 are concerned with the teachers’ experience in teaching the variants of Arabic offered by the ILI programme and their preferences for teaching them at different levels. Tables 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4 set out the MSA and ECA courses taught by the ILI teachers.

Table 4.2 Teachers vs. ILI courses taught (Q10 &13)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Type</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ECA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASP</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With the exception of Teacher 1,27 all the teachers had experience in teaching both MSA and ECA. The ILI cannot afford specialisation, and it is also believed that the skill-mix in teaching the two language varieties is an asset which every teacher must develop. Teacher I is the only teacher who teaches MSA at what the researcher has called the script level. He was originally employed at the ILI as a calligrapher. When the institute books were initially developed, computers were scarce and typewriters did not offer a legible font for the students. The DOS employed a specialist calligrapher to write the books and help with editing texts and copying the different fonts of authentic texts. When computers and Arabic fonts were made available at the ILI, Teacher I was integrated into the ILI in-service training courses to become one of its permanent staff members. This teacher does not teach ECA courses, mainly because he only speaks Arabic and is, therefore, unable to offer explanations in a foreign language when needed. His inclusion in MSA courses is

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27 Teacher I is one of the two teachers who did not answer the questionnaire (see Section 4.2.2, footnote 23).
also restricted to the lower levels and the reading-aloud classes. Although this teacher has a restricted range, he is nevertheless very important because students feel obliged to use Arabic with him. He therefore fulfils an important function at the ILI. His special skill in calligraphy has also encouraged the ILI to use him to establish courses in Arabic calligraphy which are especially popular amongst Japanese students. This is an example where the interest in calligraphy in Japanese culture is transferred to the learning of Arabic from this background.

Table 4.3 MSA levels covered by ILI teachers (Q11a)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q11a</th>
<th>Levels</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Script</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Beginners</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>ASP</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>University Courses</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although teacher preferences are taken into consideration when allocating teaching duties to the different levels, the actual allocation of these duties depends on the number of courses run at the ILI at any one time. Tables 4.3 and 4.4 make it clear that most of the demand for courses at the ILI is for the Beginners to Intermediate for both ECA and MSA. This is followed by advanced, ASP and university courses for MSA, and Advanced courses for ECA (see Figure 4.1 for percentages of ECA and MSA courses taught at the ILI).
It is not clear from the responses why the high numbers in the low to the middle levels do not feed through to the Advanced level. However, this tendency is not ascribed with the ILI teaching strategies. Belnap’s (1987) findings concerning the motivation of students studying Arabic at institutes of higher education in the United States and Canada indicate that the majority of Arabic learners do not pursue their studies in Arabic at an advanced level. The researcher’s teaching experience at the ILI has led her to think that this drop-out may be attributed to two main reasons: (1) some students never plan to go beyond the intermediate level; and (2) the difficulty of the Arabic language and the investment in time and energy to achieve a high level of competence in it is beyond what their circumstances permit. This is particularly true for MSA. As far as ECA is concerned, it may be that all the students need is a formal start before they go on to develop their linguistic competence informally by interacting with Egyptians.

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28 The results of Belnap’s survey showed that more than 50 per cent of the students drop out between the first and second year; this was also the case in succeeding years. Students of Arab origins were those who pursued Arabic for seven years. Belnap’s study also showed that students’ motivation in studying Arabic affected the determination and duration of their study.
Question 12.a seeks the teachers' preferences for teaching the different levels, despite the availability factor highlighted in Figure 4.1. In considering these preferences, Table 4.5 shows that most teachers (57%) enjoy teaching the postscript levels for MSA and ECA. It is, however, interesting to note the following points pertaining to the teachers' preferences: (1) two teachers each slightly enjoy teaching the Beginners and Elementary levels; (2) one teacher does not enjoy teaching the Intermediate level; and (3) two teachers do not teach the Advanced level. We may present these results as follows: 71 per cent of the teachers indicate a preference for teaching the Intermediate level, with Beginners, Elementary and Advanced equal second (see Figures 4.2 and 4.3 respectively).

Teaching at the Advanced level received the highest percentage (28%) of the "Don't enjoy". This, in the researcher's view, reflects the fact that teaching at this level requires much preparation and commitment to the learners, who tend to be more specific about what they like or dislike. Also, students at this level would have seen different teaching styles and this leads them sometimes to make unhelpful (for the teachers) comparisons with previous learning experience. Although the
questionnaire does not produce this information, the researchers’ experience at the ILI supports that the above reasons are partly responsible for the teachers’ responses.

Table 4.5 Teachers’ preferences for teaching different levels (Q12a) 29

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Enjoy</th>
<th>Fairly</th>
<th>Slightly</th>
<th>Don’t enjoy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Script</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginners</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is also worth mentioning here that the teacher-training course which teachers take before they are accepted as members of staff at the ILI limits their teachers’ exposure at the practice and observation stages to Beginners, Elementary, or at the most, to Intermediate learners. This restriction is self-imposed due to the scarcity of groups of Advanced learners, who are required to provide the appropriate setting for teaching practice. The teachers, therefore, are not as experienced in handling Advanced materials and their repertoire lacks an interaction model appropriate for teaching the Advanced level.

Availability of materials is probably another factor that strongly influences teachers’ low preference for the Advanced course. Until 1998, the ILI materials fell short of providing any ready-made materials or even a skeletal standard for this level. This was an issue of constant criticism by the teachers, which finally led to the integration of Al-Kitaab fii Ta‘allum al-‘Arabiyya as part of the ILI MSA Advanced syllabus. The teachers, however, were not always fully in command of this book, because its format and activities were somewhat incompatible with the methodology which the teachers had been trained in.

29 Percentages are given to the nearest 1%; rounding errors mean that totals sometimes vary from 100%.
Question 12.b explicitly asks for the reasons for the respondents’ preferences indicated above, and these are as follows:

I enjoy more the elementary and intermediate levels, as I can follow the methodology, and the metalanguage is easy; plus I can see the students’ development very clearly. I enjoy the advanced levels less because it is hard to follow the methods of teaching properly but I like to work more on skills.

I enjoy teaching the first levels because it is easier to perceive the positive results of teaching on the students as they master and use what they have learnt. I [like] the higher levels because they allow more opportunities for dialogues and discussions, and for using new ways in learning and discovering many new ideas and foreign students’ problems through teaching.¹

I love [the beginners levels] because I feel I am laying the foundations of a building for beginners who have not studied Arabic before. As for advanced students, I feel I am decorating this building with the necessary effects for the completion of their learning.²

In intermediates and advanced: I can teach Arabic using Arabic 100%.

I love teaching all levels.

It is clear from the above mentioned responses that the teachers enjoy teaching different levels for different reasons. The Beginners and Intermediate levels

¹ This is a translation of the teacher’s quotation.
² This is literal translation of the teacher’s response in Arabic.
bring with them the reward of seeing the students' progress in a tangible manner. Teachers at these levels can see the fruits of their work in a way which the Advanced level does not offer. Clearly job satisfaction is the main factor here. Some teachers like the early levels because they can follow the textbook and the methodology associated with them. This gives the teacher a sense of security, which the researcher is sure, translates into enhanced confidence in class. Furthermore, the Beginner and Elementary levels do not demand a detailed knowledge of grammar. This is a relief to teachers, because of the notorious difficulty of MSA grammar.

Those who prefer the Advanced course do so because of the challenges that it offers, including the ability to improvise in class and to use a range of materials. The Advanced levels offer the teachers the opportunity to engage the students in intellectually stimulating conversations, thus taking the teachers away from the mechanical 'chores' of lower level teaching.

The range of answers given by the teachers is related to their image of themselves as professionals for whom language teaching requires skill, imagination and dedication. Although it would be prudent to deploy teachers at the levels they feel most comfortable, this is a luxury which the ILI, as a private institution, cannot afford. It is therefore wise to allocate the language teaching of each teacher in a way which will not cause rivalry and ill-feeling among them, even if it means allocating to them teaching that they would rather not do.

Questions 16 and 17 are concerned with the teachers' exposure to learning a foreign language and their level of proficiency in it. Table 4.6 sets out the subjects' responses to these questions. It is clear from the table that all the ILI teachers are proficient in English as a foreign language. The majority of the teachers, apart from Teacher F, were ranged along the language proficiency continuum between the Intermediate and the Advanced levels. The table also shows that the majority of the teachers possess a limited knowledge of at least one other foreign language besides English. The prominence of English as the common, popular language among the respondents is based on historic, as well as functional-communicative reasons.
supported by their Egyptian educational background. All Egyptian pupils following the national educational system are required to study at least six years of English and three years of French. The choice of English in the national curriculum of Egyptian school education as the first second-language relates to historic bonds between Britain and Egypt as well as the world-wide recognition of English as an international language for communication.

Table 4.6 Foreign languages and the degree of proficiency (Q16 & 17)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID Code</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>French</th>
<th>Danish</th>
<th>Dutch</th>
<th>Japanese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>Beginner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Beginner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Beginner</td>
<td>Beginner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The high level of English proficiency is related to the ILI criteria in selecting and recruiting new teachers. These criteria are based on the following factors: (1) the ILI’s affiliation to IH establishes English as the language of instruction in training teachers; (2) the ability to communicate with senior management and students outside the classroom; and (3) an exposure to British culture through language learning guarantees the teachers’ cultural understanding of the majority of the ILI clientele who are native speakers of English.

It is interesting to note that 3 out of 7 (43%) of the teachers report that they know French. This does not, however, give an accurate picture of the teaching of French in Egyptian state schools. This is a point which will be raised when discussing Table 4.11, which summarises the teachers’ assumptions about language.

32 The manager and owner of the ILI is British and therefore the language used for administration is English too.
competence and its relation to fluency. Table 4.6 shows that Danish, Dutch and Japanese are among the languages spoken by Teachers E and G. This is explained by their previous employment. Before joining the ILI, Teacher E worked in a youth hostel that lodged Japanese students, and Teacher G taught Arabic in Denmark. Teacher E’s knowledge of Japanese and teacher G’s knowledge of Danish and Dutch also reflect the interest among the younger generation of Egyptian graduates in pursuing new languages, with the prospect of increasing their employment chances and extending their experiential and empirical opportunities within the pervasive parameters of the international community. This modern trend, unintentionally, serves the ILI’s marketing interests in exploring and expanding into new markets. By employing teachers who speak different languages, the ILI reinforces its commitment to cater to, and encourage relations with students from different parts of the world, who in turn promote the ILI by word of mouth based on first-hand experience.

When enquiring where the subjects acquired their knowledge of these foreign languages, during our side-conversations, the respondents reported that it was mostly at national state schools. The prevalent mode of instruction in these schools is based on the traditional teaching of grammatical rules and vocabulary. Reading texts and grammar exercises are the most common language activities in such environments. Only Teachers E and G pursued their English language studies at the ILI in Sahafeyeen and the AUC. They also learned Japanese, Dutch and Danish at cultural centres affiliated to the target language countries. This indicates that Teacher E and Teacher G are the only two teachers who have been exposed, as language learners, to modern techniques of language teaching, which are highly characteristic of such institutions. From the researcher’s experience when training Teachers E and G, she perceived that they exhibited a greater awareness of the pedagogic issues discussed and their practical implications. They were more flexible and more receptive to feedback than their counterparts who lacked a similar language learning experience. It would be interesting, therefore, to investigate in the chapter on

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33 This term is used to refer to the degree of ease with which the speakers communicate at different levels of proficiency.
34 Teachers E and G are among the youngest of the ILI teachers.
35 The ILI Sahafeyeen was originally one of the foremost English language teaching institutions (see Chapter 3).
Classroom Observation whether a lack of exposure to modern teaching approaches had an effect on the teaching strategies of the disadvantaged learners when becoming competent teachers.

4.2.3.2 TEACHERS' PEDAGOGIC BELIEFS, AND CHOICES IN CLASSROOM PROCEDURE (Q18 - 33)

The Teachers' Questionnaire aims at establishing the veracity of the ILI's advertised statement of objectives from its stakeholders and scrutinising the language and language learning assumptions underlying these objectives. Hence, this section summarises the teachers' statements of belief and assumptions concerning language teaching in general and their adopted roles in classroom practice in particular. In discussing the findings of Q18 - Q33, issues concerning teachers' training, their beliefs, their individual differences and attitudes to language teaching will be raised and discussed.

Question 18 examines whether the ILI teachers shared the pedagogic view that the teacher's role conveys assumptions about language and theories of language learning adopted by practitioners. The responses unanimously agree with the relevance of the teachers' role(s) to understanding and consequently defining the "approach of any language" programme.

Questions 19 - 28 refer to the teachers' beliefs, their presuppositions and assumptions concerning the successful teacher's role and its effect on the success of a particular "method" as opposed to their actual role in classroom practice. Table 4.7 clearly shows that all the subjects agree that the success of a teaching method depends on the teacher's adoption of different roles. They also advocate a multi-functional role for the teacher in classroom practice. The multi-functional role is part of the modern "approaches" to language teaching (e.g. communicative language teaching and proficiency). However, the responses show differences in the level of 36 The ILI brochure states that the objectives of the MSA course are to enable the students to read and write at an appropriate academic level which should introduce the learners to the enormous wealth of classical literature. The ILI brochure also states that the MSA course enables learners to follow current day-to-day events in the Middle East.
agreement on these roles. Although reasons for these differences are not clear from the table, it is suggested that they are based on two factors: (1) the teachers’ implicit beliefs concerning the usefulness of each role; and (2) individual preferences directed by availability and practicality which influence the teachers’ inclinations towards some roles as opposed to others.

Table 4.7 Teachers’ beliefs concerning the teacher’s role in relation to teaching methods (Q19–28)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q</th>
<th>Teacher’s Role</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Slightly Agree</th>
<th>Slightly disagree</th>
<th>Totally disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Provider of content for language learning</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Provider of conditions for language learning</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Adapts roles to suit students needs</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Has good command of target language system</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Draws back to allow more communication</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Initiative and creativity with greater participation</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Capable of providing different interaction patterns</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Capable of adopting different roles pertaining to different methods</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Less involvement means more demanding roles</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Self-confident teachers can depart from textbook</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.7 sets out the respondents’ levels of agreement with the various roles played by the teachers in the classrooms. Although the teachers vary in their level of agreement, the responses of the assumed teachers’ role indicate that the ILI teachers keep their students’ best interests at heart. Therefore, they are willing to go the “extra mile”\(^\text{37}\) to develop the necessary materials and activities as well as providing the secure conditions recommended by the advocates of the Natural and Humanistic

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\(^\text{37}\) Hammoud (1996:110-111), in his survey of current classroom practices among teachers of Arabic, uses the term ‘extra mile’ to refer to the teachers’ willingness to adapt textbooks, use supplementary materials and to add variety to classes and better meet communicative programme objectives. He also refers to the ‘multitude of teacher roles’ and ‘keeping the students’ interests in perspective’ as being revealed by the teachers’ choices of classroom activities.
approaches to learning.38 Indeed, five of the teachers’ responses reflect the awareness of having to go the “extra mile” to satisfy these approaches at the level of “design” and “procedure”. They agree that less teacher participation necessitates more “demanding” roles by the teacher.

When examining the teachers’ responses in relation to the framework of the “method”39, a number of them were found incongruent at the level of “approach”. The “approach” which “stipulates” that the teacher is a provider of content is different from that which formulates the “teacher’s role” as a provider of conditions for learning. This incongruence coincides with Woods’ (1996) assumption that although language teachers know much about themselves in language teaching, they may not have categorised and labelled their experiences. Since these questions focus on the teachers’ generalised beliefs rather than their actual experiences, this difference may also be attributed to the teachers’ unarticulated, implicit belief in an eclectic approach as an ideal model for language teaching. One should also take into consideration the teachers’ misunderstanding of the wording of the questions. This is to be expected when there is no widely recognised definition of pedagogic terminology.

The confusion that may be caused by ignorance of the pedagogic terminology, together with Woods’ (1996) assertion that teachers may, in responding to questions about generalised beliefs, answer according to what they would like to believe, or would show that they believe, require cross-referencing. These beliefs can be confirmed or refuted by examining Q31 and the Classroom Observation (Chapter 6).

Responses to Q23 show the highest level of engagement (four teachers) among the “Slightly agree” scores, with three teachers on the agree side of the scale, with the assumption that less teacher involvement in classroom interaction allows for more communication. Clearly the respondents believe that the teachers’ continual participation in the lesson obstructs communication. This is perhaps the result of the

38 See Section 4.1.2.6.
39 See Section 4.1.1.
teachers' pre-service training, which sanctions less teacher talking time, refraining from eye contact during students' pair work, and more learner-centred activities as positive factors in good classroom practice. The fact that not all teachers actually follow this practice in their lessons may be the reason for this split in teachers' opinions between the “Agree” and “Slightly disagree” scores.

The responses to Q25 and Q26 set out teachers' beliefs concerning the abilities required of them. The words “different interaction patterns” and “different roles” pertaining to “different methods”, implicitly instills a positive value in the minds of the respondents. It is the researcher's contention that “different” has become an indispensable and required value of our modern life styles. This maybe because “different” carries with it connotations of “innovation”, “variety” and “interest” as opposed to “conformity” and “boredom”; an aspect that we believe played a role in influencing the teachers' favourable level of agreement with these questions.

Let us now examine the levels of disagreement concerning the teachers' role as presented in Table 4.7. It is interesting to note that the image of a successful teacher as one who “knows the target language system well, regardless of the way he teaches it”, obtained the highest level of disagreement: two teachers totally disagree with this image, while three teachers slightly disagree. The remaining two responses are divided between the “Agree” and the “Slightly agree” scale. Although this level of disagreement does not necessarily rank the knowledge of the language system below teaching methods, it certainly shows that the respondents share the belief that the abstract knowledge of the language system is sustained by effective language teaching skills. This belief concurs with the respondents' self-image and experience as skilful and creative language teachers. All the subjects are acknowledged by both the ILI students and the ILI management as highly competent, despite the fact that none of them, apart from Teacher G, are Arabic graduates. The ILI co-ordination system also fosters this belief by placing more emphasis on transferring skills and activities than on language analysis and language system.
Having reviewed the teachers’ beliefs concerning the teachers’ roles and their influence on teaching methods, it is perhaps useful to recapitulate the teachers’ statement of belief about a “method.” This statement of belief is presented within the framework of Richards & Rodgers’ model (1999). The ILI respondents believe that a teacher has a multifunctional role, which according to Richards & Rodgers, derives from Naturalistic and Humanistic theories of language learning. Those theories integrate process-oriented approaches and condition-oriented approaches to learning. Proponents of these approaches advocate a functional and interactional view of the nature of language and regard the language system as a hidden monitor\(^{40}\) for developing and improving the learner’s performance and communicative abilities. The respondents’ view of a teacher as a capable performer of a complex multitude of roles unrelated to any one particular method at the level of “approach”, as described by Richards & Rodgers (1999), leads us to believe that the teachers are purveyors of an eclectic methodology, most common among their counterparts of language teachers. Contradictions resulting from trying to fit the respondents’ beliefs to Richards & Rodgers prescriptive description of a “method” are attributed to the respondents’ lack of awareness of the terminology and to the previously discussed issues of belief and actual experience. However, the remaining questions of this questionnaire and the forthcoming chapters of this study will help us confirm or refute these beliefs.

Let us now examine the degree of the respondents’ awareness of the current pedagogic methods and terminologies as proposed in Section 4.2.2. Since the teachers in this study serve as a primary source of information concerning the ILI programme and ASL teaching, it is important to discover the respondents’ awareness of the current pedagogic terms before they are asked to discuss and/or refer to them in relation to their teaching experiences. This was a necessary step because it serves as a cross-reference for the brochure information, which lacks accuracy in its technical terminology and which uses “cosmetic gloss” in stating the programmes’ objectives (see Introduction, Section 1).

\(^{40}\) See Neilsen (1996); Littlewood (1999 b); and Brown (1987).
Table 4.8 Teachers’ awareness of teaching methods and terminologies (Q29)\textsuperscript{11}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Familiar</th>
<th>Slightly familiar</th>
<th>Unfamiliar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar–Translation Method</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situational Approach</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio-lingual</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicative Approach</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Physical Response</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silent Way</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Language Learning</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Approach</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggestopedia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tables 4.8 and 4.9 set out the respondents’ answers to Q29 and Q30 concerning the teachers’ level of familiarity with the different teaching methods and the role of the teacher within each method. It is interesting to note that in answering Q29 and Q30, all the teachers referred to the researcher to clarify the meanings of these methods. It was obvious to the researcher that the majority of the teachers were not confident with some of the methods and were unfamiliar with others. To clarify the different methods to the respondents, the researcher used the definitions given in Section 4.1.2.

The comparison of the teachers’ answers as summarised in the two tables gives the reader a clear idea of the inaccuracy of the respondents’ stated knowledge of the different teaching methods. Table 4.8 sets out the respondents’ level of familiarity with the different methods, which can be summarised as follows: (1) Situational Approach and Communicative Approach are the methods most familiar to all the teachers; (2) Total Physical Response comes in second place at 71 per cent; (3) the Audio-lingual Method, Community Language Learning, and the Grammar

\textsuperscript{11}\textsuperscript{}Percentages are given to the nearest 1%; rounding errors mean that totals sometimes vary from 100%.
Translation Methods come third at 57 per cent. The slightly familiar methods are distributed as follows: first comes the Natural Approach at 43 per cent, followed by the Silent Way at 29 per cent, the Grammar Translation Method and the Total Physical Response respectively 14 per cent each. The most unfamiliar methods are: (1) the Silent Way and Suggestopedia (71% each); (2) the Community Language Learning and the Audio-Lingual (43 % each); (3) the Grammar-Translation Method (29%) and (4) the Natural Approach (14%).

This summary indicates that the majority of the teachers were either familiar or slightly familiar with almost all the methods except for both the Silent way and Suggestopedia (71%). This high rate of unfamiliarity is attributed to these methods being among the “unconventional and relatively obscure”.

Table 4.9 Teachers’ awareness of the teachers’ role in each method (Q30)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>No response</th>
<th>Dependent</th>
<th>Slightly Dependent</th>
<th>Not at all dependent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar-Translation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situational Approach</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio-lingual</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicative Approach</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Physical Response</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silent Way</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Language Learning</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Approach</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggestopedia</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The respondents’ understanding of the teacher’s roles within the unfamiliar and slightly familiar methods did not accurately represent their statements in Table 4.8. Unfamiliarity with one of the methods should yield a “do not know” answer or a

---

43 Percentages are given to the nearest 1%; rounding errors mean that totals sometimes vary from 100%.
zero-response score in Table 4.9. For example, Table 4.8 shows that 29 per cent of the respondents were unfamiliar with the Grammar-Translation Method, whereas all seven teachers in Table 4.9 stated that this method was dependent on the teacher. An accurate representation should have yielded at least two zero-responses in Table 4.9; however, this was not the case. There are other examples of incongruence as well. For example, five teachers stated that they were unfamiliar with the Silent Way, and three with Community Language Learning. However, the representation of the zero-response answers in Table 4.9 are respectively four zero-responses regarding the role of the teacher in the Silent Way, and one for the Community Language Learning.

The respondents’ tendency to answer all the questions can be attributed to their awareness of their personal and professional image, which is largely influenced by Arab culture and education systems. Both culture and education emphasise “knowing” as a required, positive and rewarded quality, as opposed to the negative quality of “not knowing” which usually calls for punishment or disdain. In answering difficult questions, the teachers are exposed to professional scrutiny. To admit lack of knowledge in this professional encounter pushes the stakes incredibly high. 44 This probably led the teachers to give their answers based on hunches influenced by the semantic implications of the different labels given to the methods. Their professional hunches, however, are based on their practical experiences of techniques and strategies in the classroom practice.

Question 31 concerns the respondents’ actual, most frequently adopted roles in classroom practice compared with their idealistic beliefs regarding the role of the teacher. The teachers were given a set of roles and asked to score the degree of frequency with which they adopted each of them in classroom practice. The roles focused on some classroom management aspects of a teacher’s function, namely directing, source of information, counselling, correcting errors, model for learning, and other. It is clear from Table 4.10 that the respondents’ answers were spaced out on the “Very often” and “Fairly often” scale of frequency of each role with no scores

44 Stevick (1980: 7) introduces the presentation of self image pertaining to the learner as “the first law of survival.”
under "Rarely" or "Never". This result reflected the teachers' tendency to adopt multifarious roles in the classroom.

Table 4.10 The ILI teacher's role in classroom practice (Q31)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Very often</th>
<th>Fairly often</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Directing</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source of information</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselling</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correcting errors</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model for learning</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the researcher's experience as a teacher and teacher trainer, these findings should not be taken at face value. The scores indicate what the teachers thought that they were doing; which was due to their lack of knowledge of the pedagogic implications of the terminologies.

Brief discussions with the teachers concerning their understanding of terminologies confirmed these assumptions. According to the ILI, these roles are perceived as follows (cf. the role of the teacher, Section 4.1.2):

- Directing: this role entails selecting the target language, creating the situation and then deciding upon when and how to initiate and end activities and drills; afterwards the teachers give feedback.
- Source of information: this role stresses the cognitive function of the teacher as the one who possesses the information about the foreign culture and language.
• Counselling: this role is limited to giving the students' daily advice rather than adopting the counsellor's role as prescribed in Community Language Learning.

• Model for learning: this role entails giving an example of the target language and then creating an opportunity for the students to practise the pronunciation by repetition chorally, in groups, in pairs and individually.

• Correcting of errors: this role entails frequent correction of the students' mistakes, ensuring that the students fully understand the target language and therefore highlighting accuracy as a positive learning habit.

The multifarious roles show that the teachers did not strictly adhere to a specific role at the expense of others in classroom procedures. All the teachers enjoyed a degree of flexibility. They possessed an awareness of the students' affective needs, as shown in their willingness to manipulate roles and include variation in the classroom procedure instead of imposing rigidity and lack of variation. The zero-responses under “Rarely” and “Never” emphasise this variation and flexibility. However, it is obvious that variation occurs within the parameters of the centrality of the teacher's role in classroom procedures rather than the teacher's role in a “method”. This centrality may be due to the lack of clearly defined objectives in the ILI programme as prescribed by any specific “method” (see Section 4.1), thus leaving the teachers themselves to infer objectives from materials and classroom activities themselves.46

These roles also reveal that the teachers' participation probably restricted the classroom interaction to largely instructing/conducting and/or correcting; a mode of involvement that is usually exhibited by Audio-lingual and Situational Language Teaching, which are based on a habit-learning theory (see Section 4.2). Classroom procedure thus entails a synthetic viewpoint of language. The teachers, being the source of information, give the model of the target language, correct the learners' linguistic behaviour where necessary in a fairly teacher-controlled environment, with

the aim of producing accurate utterances and forming correct speech habits which gradually lead to fluency.

This view of the ILI teaching is further emphasised by the respondents’ answers to Q32. This open-ended question asks for the respondents’ views of the learners’ contribution to the learning process in the classroom. The following is a summary of the respondents’ answers.

Apart from one of the respondents, who did not understand the question, all the other six responses were consistent. Although one of the teachers stated that the learning process depended largely on the learner, it became evident that the hopes of a learner-centered approach was soon “stifled” by confining the learners’ role to that of helping their colleagues in class. Clearly all six respondents regarded the learner’s role in the classroom as subordinate to that of the teacher. The teachers believed that learners could have full control of their learning process when studying at home. In class, learners must be interested recipients during presentation time. Later, they can participate in all the activities provided and directed by the teacher, help their colleagues if they came to a halt and produce the language that they had been taught. This subordinate role of the learner may be due to the teaching system in the Arab world, which does not encourage learner initiative in the classroom. This suggests that the training given at the ILI, effective though it is, does not always succeed in overcoming deep-rooted cultural beliefs and practices. It also emphasises the behaviouristic approach advocated by Audio-lingual and Situational Language Teaching.

The validity of the researcher’s analysis is reinforced by the following quotations from the respondents’ answers to Q32:

[The learner should show] seriousness, interest and [should] study at home; participating in class and asking about what he does not understand [are also

47 "Naturalistic validity is reinforced by the degree to which the evaluator and the evaluation audience place their trust in the evaluation analysis and conclusions" (Lynch, 1996: 65-69). This has led the researcher to reiterate some of the responses to provide the information required for ascertaining the analysis and conclusions.
important in his role].

Sometimes the learner is just receiving the new language (understanding it), [that is to say s/he expresses a] passive contribution, whereas at other times s/he is contributing actively ([for example, when s/he is] speaking, reading or writing).

The Learning process depends on the learner, not on the teacher, so the learner plays a big role in this process. Students may help each other and co-operate [with the teacher] in the classroom.

[The learner] can contribute to a great extent [to the lesson] if he understands [the lesson] well; and [if] the [teacher is capable of] effective classroom management. [The learner's understanding of the lesson, together with the teacher's effective management, guarantee the students'] fairly satisfactory production of the language.

[I believe that the learner can have a role in classroom practice] by being a recipient of the information the teacher gives him.

[I believe a learner has a role in] (1) correcting and helping his friends [only] when he is asked to do so; [and in] (2) practicing speaking with other learners in class.

A comparison of the ILI classroom procedures, concerning the teacher's role, (Table 4.10), with the teachers' beliefs (Table 4.7) produces discrepancies. These discrepancies emphasise the gap between "fact" and "fiction", 48 most characteristic of teaching practice in general and language teaching in particular. This finding is supported by Richards & Rodgers' (1999: 155) acknowledgement that "an approach or a method is more than simply a set of instructions based on a particular view of language and language learning". They further suggest: "When a close degree of fit between method and programme objectives is lacking, a choice can be made through

48 "Fact" is used to refer to actual classroom practice, which is, to a great extent directed by availability of time and resources. "Fiction" is used by the researcher to refer to the ideal standards of language theories and their implication on the statement of objectives which rarely, if ever, fit neatly into classroom practice. These theories are the source of a standard utopic model that influences the teachers' perception and presentation of their professional-images.
"informed eclecticism"\(^{49}\) (ibid.: 158). This eclecticism was previously referred to when discussing the teachers' beliefs. However, the lack of standard terminology leads us to believe that the eclecticism the teachers adopted is what Richards & Rodgers (1999) call "uninformed eclecticism". Our observation is also confirmed by the teachers' lack of familiarity with clear-cut definitions of terminology as well as current pedagogic issues, which underlie the inconsistency between belief and practice in the ASL scene. The ILI teachers' pre-service training may account for the unfamiliarity of the terms and uninformed eclecticism. This is because the focus is on providing the teachers with the practical skills at the expense of explaining the underlying theories and issues of language pedagogy.

4.2.3.3 Teachers' Foreign Language Learning Experience (Q34 - 47)

This section examines the respondents' own language learning experience, with the aim of providing the researcher with greater insight into its effect on the respondents' teaching practice and their ability to relate to their students' needs. The questions, therefore, elicit information on the following issues:

- The respondents' level of fluency in the foreign language.
- The language component the teachers preferred learning most.
- The main difficulties that confronted the respondents as learners.
- The approach with which they were taught the foreign language.
- The level of enjoyment of the different language skills and activities to which they were exposed.
- The range of media and tasks to which they were exposed and their level of enjoyment.
- The importance of the range of language skills to them as language learners.
- The learning setting that they most enjoyed as language learners.

\(^{49}\) Richards & Rodgers (1999: 158) emphasise the importance of distinguishing between two kinds of eclecticism, explained as follows: "By this (informed eclecticism) we mean that various design features and procedures are selected, perhaps drawn from different methods, that can be shown to relate explicitly to program objectives. {...} A policy of uninformed eclecticism (which is how the term eclectic or eclectic method is often used), on the other hand, would be where techniques, activities and features from different methods are selected without explicit reference to program objectives".

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Table 4.11 Degree of fluency in a foreign language (Q35)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree of Fluency</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>French</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Fluent</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluent</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all fluent</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 34 asks the respondents if they speak a foreign language, and Q35 asks the respondents' degree of fluency in the foreign languages that they spoke. Their answers are shown in Table 4.11, however, only the English and French languages are considered, because they are the two most common languages learnt by the ILI teachers (see Section 4.2.3.1). It is clear from the table that five teachers have specified their level of fluency in French despite the fact that only three (see Table 4.6) have stated that they knew French. This confusion may be due to the respondents' individual understanding of proficiency in a language. The poor level of French instruction given in state schools, in the absence of the respondents' intrinsic motivation for practising French, explain their low proficiency level reflected in Table 4.11.

Figure 4.4

Figure 4.5
Let us now examine the respondents' beliefs (as language learners) concerning fluency and proficiency as shown in Figures 4.4 and 4.5. A comparison of the two figures shows that the majority of the respondents perceive proficiency and fluency to be somewhat correlated. The respondents' personal experience as language learners leads them to believe that beginners are not at all fluent, whereas advanced learners are certainly very fluent. Hence, the crucial question is: Does this correlation affect the teachers’ expectations of their students’ performance at the different levels of instruction? Perhaps the observational data in Chapter 6 will enable us to find an answer to this question.

Table 4.12 The teachers’ preferred language components in FLL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Component</th>
<th>Teacher Preferences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronunciation</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.12 shows that the respondents regard all language components as equally important to learn. However, the table makes clear that the most popular component of all language elements is pronunciation. Its importance may have resulted from lack of oral practice in their language-learning experience within the Egyptian system of education. Language teachers within this system are non-native speakers of the foreign language and do not give this component the attention that it deserves. The foreign language is taught with little emphasis on important sound distinctions between the second and first language systems. Consequently, the respondents believed that the features of the non-native speaker, characteristic of their speech, could have been minimised had they spent more time learning pronunciation. The extent to which the respondents’ preferences colour their teaching

50 See Yule (1999: 302 - 306) for features of pronunciation, transfer, temporal variation, interlanguage process, variability, strategies and communicative effectiveness, which affect speaking in a second language.
of Arabic as a second language will be highlighted in the observational data in Chapter 6.

Table 4.13 Language teaching approach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language teaching approach</th>
<th>Teacher exposure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grammar-based Approach</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicative Approach</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.13 sets out the different teaching approaches to which the respondents were exposed in learning the foreign language. All the respondents, apart from Teacher G, have been exposed to the grammar-based approach to language teaching. It is interesting to note that three teachers, namely B, E and G stated that they had been exposed to the Communicative Approach. It is true that Teachers E and G studied foreign languages outside the national system (see Section 4.2.1). However, the researcher cannot explain why teacher B makes this assertion, bearing in mind that she went through the national educational system.

Table 4.14 Language skills preferred by the respondents (Q 38)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>No Response</th>
<th>Very much Enjoy</th>
<th>Fairly Enjoy</th>
<th>Slightly Enjoy</th>
<th>Do not at all Enjoy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.14 shows the level of enjoyment experienced by the respondents in learning the different language skills. According to the table, the respondents considered speaking and listening the most enjoyable of the four skills. Reading occupied third position, with writing as the least enjoyable skill. This reflects the
importance which the respondents, as language learners, attached to the communicative language component. It would be interesting to see if this level of importance is also reflected in their language teaching.

It is also worth noting that speaking and listening, which are placed first and second in the preferred skills, are not commonly taught at state schools in Cairo. This preference, therefore, is not significantly indicative of the respondents’ experience as language learners. Since only two of the respondents studied modern languages at private institutions, which apply the latest teaching techniques, it seems that the respondents’ answers (Figure 4.6) are more inclined to reflect what they would have enjoyed most as language learners rather than what they actually enjoyed. Teacher A supported this assertion. On asking her why she did not rate listening among the skills she preferred, she replied that listening was not part of her experience as a language learner in state schools.

**Figure 4.6**

![Preferred Skills](image)

Figure 4.6 shows that writing was the least popular of the skills, perhaps because of affective and cultural factors governing the respondents’ FLL experience. In the Arab “person-to-person” oral culture, writing is not a daily means of communication. This contrasts with British culture, for example, where letter-writing and form filling are part of daily life and are important at all levels of personal and official communication. Culturally, writing in Egypt is not considered highly
functional in daily communication because of the high level of illiteracy (30%), the inefficiency of the postal service as well as the Egyptians' lack of trust in the privacy and security of government-provided services. The respondents' cultural norms may therefore imply that writing is a necessary skill to learn but not necessarily enjoyable. This is especially true because writing in their first language experience is usually associated with academic and aesthetic purposes.

Table 4.15 The importance of different language skills in language learning (Q45)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Fairly Important</th>
<th>Slightly Important</th>
<th>Not Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 45 asks about the respondents' beliefs concerning the importance of learning the different language skills compared with what they enjoyed as language learners in particular. Table 4.15 sets out the importance of the different language skills according to the respondents. Listening comes in first as the most important skill, followed by speaking and writing (at the same level of importance), and finally reading as the least important skill. These results, as presented in Table 4.15, do not match the responses in Table 4.14. Figures 4.6 and 4.7 make it easy to spot the differences between teachers' preferences as language learners and the theoretical importance that they attribute to learning each of the different language skills. The figures highlight that the respondents' preference as language learners is not in line with their beliefs as language teachers. It is interesting to note that the teachers' beliefs concerning the importance of listening and speaking matched the order of teaching listening and speaking skills in the Structural and Audio-lingual methods (see Section 4.1.2). However, this does not apply to writing and reading.
Chapter 5 explores the assumptions of the ILI learners concerning the importance of learning the different skills. This enables the researcher to examine if these assumptions coincide more with the teachers’ pedagogical beliefs or with their personal preferences. The observational data, at a later stage, will determine which has the stronger influence on classroom procedure and activities: the learners’ assumptions; the teachers’ beliefs; or the teachers’ preferences.

Questions 40 and 42 refer to the respondents’ level of enjoyment of the different media and language activities to which they were exposed as language learners. The responses are discussed with reference to the effect these preferences have on the teachers’ classroom practice; the discussion will also provide an insight into the possible reasons for these responses. In Chapter 5, the findings of this section will also be referred to when comparing the respondents’ preferences with those of their students.

**Figure 4.7**

![Importance of skills]

Table 4.16 lists a range of media and classroom activities and indicates the respondents’ level of enjoyment of each. It is important to note that in answering
these questions. only Teacher A did not rate any activities or media which were not part of her experience as a language learner. Examples of these include cassettes, games, videos, television, and reading promotional materials. The teachers' general tendency to give normative answers is again highlighted by their responses to Q40 and Q42. The majority of the teachers ticked a number of media to which they have not been exposed; an aspect that necessitates reference to the Classroom Observation data. However, it is worth mentioning that the majority of the respondents enjoyed, at different levels, the entire list of materials provided. The table shows that the most unenjoyable medium is “reading promotional material” followed by “letter writing” and studying textbooks alone as slightly enjoyed activity followed by studying textbooks and “letter writing” as slightly enjoyed activities. Clearly, most of the slightly enjoyable and the unenjoyable media comprised reading and writing. Tables 4.14 and 4.15 show that these two skills were the least popular or the least important to the respondents, both as language learners and as professional practitioners.

Table 4.16 Media and materials in language learning (Q 40 & 42)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Techniques and Materials</th>
<th>Enjoy very much</th>
<th>Fairly Enjoy</th>
<th>Slightly Enjoy</th>
<th>Do not Enjoy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cassettes</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Games</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking to natives</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying textbooks</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translating</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Videos &amp; television</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspapers/magazines</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading stories</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotional material</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letters</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All the respondents enjoyed “speaking to natives” as a medium for learning. Perhaps this choice is based on their genuine interest in communicating and understanding more about foreign cultures: an interest that is also emphasised in their
preference for learning the language skills and enforced by their professional careers and their general lifestyles.\textsuperscript{51}

Television programmes and films are allocated second place among the ‘Very much enjoy’ media. It is important to mention here that a national system of education can hardly provide these media. It is again most probable that the teachers were responding to what they thought they would have enjoyed most had they experienced it. In the researcher’s experience, the teachers’ preferences do not tend to colour their classroom practice in this respect. Despite the availability of the necessary equipment, videos and television programmes are the least used media in the ILI classrooms. This is due to economic factors as well as professional skill. The lack of ready-made packages demands that the teachers either prepare or record this material. The ILI’s limited budget cannot provide for the huge amounts of time and money required for developing and updating this material for a market as limited as that of ASL. Because of this lack of material, the teachers’ pre-service training falls short of providing the teachers with the skills required for operating these media in classroom activities. It is with some reluctance that the respondents may agree to give in to the administration’s request to conduct a video night for the students.

Five teachers regarded listening to cassettes as a “very much enjoy” medium for learning a language. All the same, it is worth mentioning that most state schools in Cairo cannot afford to provide the necessary equipment for playing cassettes in the language classrooms. It is, therefore, impossible for the respondents, apart from Teachers E and G, to have undergone this learning experience. However, it is possible that some of the respondents could have been exposed to this medium as part of their private endeavours in learning the foreign language.

Out of the preferred media for learning, listening to cassettes is the most used in the ILI teachers’ classroom practice. Even so, this practice is strictly confined to

\textsuperscript{51} Teacher A’s son is studying in the United States and all her family have migrated there since the 1960s; Teacher B has a Green Card for the United States; Teacher C’s husband works among diplomats; Teacher D is married to a foreigner; Teacher E worked in tourism for Japanese students; Teacher G has been to Denmark in search of a teaching career; and Teacher F’s husband works at Cairo Airport.
inauthentic recordings of texts from the coursebooks or faked variations of dialogue to present the vocabulary of a particular text or to initiate a speaking activity. The only occasional exception to this trend is the playing of a song as an end-of-course activity in the Upper-Intermediate and Advanced classes.

Four teachers enjoyed games, letter-writing and reading newspapers and magazines “very much”. Of all three media, letter-writing seems to have been the most feasible within the national system’s parameters and budget. In examining the effect of the respondents’ preferences on their daily MSA classroom procedure, all these media are strongly represented, though in different proportions. The most common use of games, for example, was restricted to the Beginners and the Elementary levels. Games at these levels were confined to controlled board games which focused on practicing verb conjugation or other derivational paradigms such as plurals or active and passive participles. In other words, they were controlled grammar exercises in disguise, because they lacked motivation and excitement. This, in turn, did not generate the language which naturally occurs in similar real-life situations.

The use of letter-writing in the MSA classes at the ILI is also applicable to the Beginner and the Elementary levels. This is because the ILI MSA Beginners and Elementary syllabuses emphasise the communicative function of the language, whereas the Intermediate and Advanced levels emphasise the language points clearly highlighted in reading texts. At these levels, essays based on the text genre that they read in class replace the letter as a form of writing.

There is a close match between the respondents’ preferences and their professional practice concerning the reading of newspapers and magazines. Very short texts from newspapers and magazines are clipped, edited and collated in a compact media course at the Elementary level. At the Upper Intermediate level, media texts are again used with the purpose of highlighting grammar. At the Advanced level, however, media texts are kept to a minimum as literary readings prevail. In general, though media texts are authentic in style and structure, they are
outdated and inaccurate in theme and content owing to the teachers' inclination to purify the texts of complexities and new structures that are beyond their learners' capacities.

Although textbooks and stories rate highest among the “fairly enjoyed” media for language learning, they are considered, from the researcher's experience, the most frequent of all media used in classroom practice. Perhaps this is due to their availability and practicality, which govern the classroom situation.

Generally speaking, the reasons why the teachers' preferences are not always represented in their classroom practice could be summarised as follows: (1) performance standards; (2) preparation time; (3) lack of teacher self-education; and (4) the teacher's professional image. These four factors are highly influential in all the ILI classroom procedures.

In order for the ILI to guarantee high-quality performance, the teachers are not given much opportunity to experiment with new techniques in their classes. They are required to follow in one another's footsteps through the co-ordination system (see Chapter 3, Section 3.1.3.2), which allows for transfer of skills and piloted materials from a senior teacher. This system restricts the teacher's initiative, prevents him from striking out along new paths and thus constrains creativity.

Because of the lack of ready-made ASL material and the stress entailed in providing five and a half hours' worth of teaching materials everyday, the teachers tend to accept at face value what they are given by their peers. The enormous preparation time needed to develop new communicative and interactive materials is often discouraging even the most creative, enthusiastic and adventurous teachers. The problem is exacerbated by the institute's limited budget and its interest, as a private organisation, in maximising its profits.

52 Two hours of ECA and two and a half hours of MSA.
It has been mentioned previously that the ILI's in-service training emphasises practical teaching skills at the expense of the relevant theoretical knowledge. This practice has repeatedly produced capable teachers who are competent at what they do but who lack all means of explaining why they do it. Accordingly, they are not always capable of venturing into uncharted territory without considerable support.

It is worth mentioning that the teachers are not proficient readers of academic English, which hinders further self-education in the absence of pedagogic literature published in Arabic. The teachers' means of professional improvement are, therefore, restricted to what is supplied to them by other senior teachers. With this in mind, they constantly refer to the model lesson that they have been taught during their training as the required level of competence set by the ILI. This affects the teachers' self-image; teachers who deviate from the “norm” fear making mistakes which could invite negative feedback from the students or disapproval from the DOS. The teaching culture is therefore one of compliance which might not encourage a “best way” philosophy yet indirectly implies a “safe way” to language teaching. This “safe way” does not allow the teachers' preferences to colour their classroom practice.

Table 4.17 Language learning setting (Q46)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Best</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Not good</th>
<th>Worst</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small groups</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-to-one</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inside the classroom</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside the classroom</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 46 asks the respondents for their opinion of the best learning setting. The question aims at providing the researcher with greater insight into the teachers’ beliefs, preferences and actual classroom practice. Table 4.17 sets out the teachers’ responses. Most (6) of the teachers indicate that an in-the-classroom setting is as suitable for learning as that outside the classroom. They differ, however, over whether a one-to-one setting is more conducive to learning than a small group. Five (71%) of the respondents consider small groups to be the ideal setting for language
learning. One-to-one teaching is shown as less popular. The small group setting is established at the ILI, where the average class ranges between five and seven students. A small group is more likely to maximise the learners' share of practice and enable the teacher to attend to the learners' needs and help them with their difficulties. In a small group, unlike big groups, the teacher can monitor and correct errors systematically and effectively.

The one-to-one setting is considered the least popular by the respondents for language learning because it is stressful for both teacher and learner. This setting requires a large amount of material and consequently demands more preparation. The haunting idea of an odd, arrogant or hard-to-please student is never far-fetched to an experienced teacher when thinking of one-to-one instruction as a less appropriate setting for learning.

Obviously, the institutional setting of the ILI rather than the respondents' language learning experience shapes the teachers' choice of small groups as the best setting for learning. In a state school the language classroom contains 40-60 students, complicating the situation for both teachers and learners and thus making learning less effective.

Question 36 examines the difficulties faced by the respondents in learning the foreign language. In analysing the difficulties which faced the respondents as language learners, the traditional way of teaching foreign language, highly characteristic of the Egyptian education system, is the main problem. All the respondents were taught English and French in a traditional way within an academic context. This method does not serve the need for world-wide communication; classroom instruction emphasises knowledge of the language system at the expense of communicative practice. The following answer given by one of the teachers highlights this lack of practice.

53 The maximum class capacity at the ILI is thirteen students and the minimum is three; one-to-one teaching is not a popular exercise.
French was very difficult to learn. This is because many Egyptians do not speak French. Thus there is no real need for practising French. My difficulties in learning English resulted due to the lack of opportunities to use English for communication before working at ILL. The method of teaching did not focus on daily life situations in which the language could be used.

To be fair, it should be mentioned that the large number of students crammed in each classroom confines the teachers within this system and prevents them from teaching language communicatively, and from allowing ample practice time for each pupil without creating complex problems in curriculum management.

The respondents’ answers stated that the lack of opportunity to practise the language was detrimental to their experience of learning French, which, in turn, affected their motivation for learning. Lack of motivation was aggravated by traditional instruction, which focused on teaching grammar and structure devoid of its communicative functions as expressed in the following responses.

As a learner of French, my problem was the lack of opportunities for real practice outside classroom time; even during the lesson, I was just a receiver and not a participant ([I was] learning through the old teaching system).

It is no surprise that one of the respondents’ difficulties was with French grammar (“[I had problems with] Grammar”) and verbs when the learners were exposed to abstract grammar; teaching techniques such as memorisation of verb paradigms and rules pose a serious challenge to the learners’ ability (“French is difficult because it has many irregular verbs.”).

4.2.3.4 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND SUCCESSFUL LANGUAGE LEARNING (Q47)

Question 47 asks the respondents to indicate with an explanation if their success in language learning was a direct result of having good teachers. Four respondents (57%) “Absolutely agreed” that this was so; two respondents (29%) “Somewhat agreed”; and only one respondent (14%) indicated that the teachers had no influence on his learning experience at all. These responses are shown in Figure 4.8.
Some of the explanations of why the respondents were or were not affected by their teachers and their teaching are given below:

The respondents who chose “Absolutely agree” stated:

[I absolutely agree that my success in learning the language is attributed to having a good teacher because] a good teacher knows what he is doing in the classroom.

[I was successful in learning the language because of] good teaching [which] depends on a good method and a good teacher.

If the student accepts the teacher, she will accept and learn anything from him/her.

Good teaching is conveying information to the learner [by] teaching grammar and vocabulary. A good teacher is therefore able to present all these aspects in an agreeable way that gives the learner confidence, corrects his errors and guides him.\(^{54}\)

An efficient teacher has the ability to make the students want to learn and to enjoy learning and communication.

The respondents who chose the “Somewhat agree” stated:

[Because] the classes were very crowded!! [I could not fully benefit from the teachers’ good teaching].

\(^{54}\) Edited to clarify the meaning of the teacher’s opinion.
Good teaching and good teachers gave me the [structural] basis of the language. At the stage where I stopped studying [language in school], I was still unable to read books, write letters or speak fluently. My personal efforts in learning the language by reading a great deal, with the help of a dictionary, was what enabled me attain my present level of proficiency.  

The teacher who chose “Do not at all agree” indicated:

No [the teaching and the teachers are not responsible for my success in language learning], because of the unconducive teaching method used in schools by non-native speaking teachers. The teacher was not in full command of the language and his pronunciation was deficient. (...) I learnt the language by practising outside the classroom. (...) This practice made me refrain from studying [the language] academically.  

The researcher did not expect the majority of the respondents to attribute their success in language learning to good teaching and good teachers. The teachers repeatedly highlighted their frustration with the educational system, and the inefficiency of this system in meeting their communicative needs as language learners. The assertion of six (86 %) of the ILI teachers that their success is a direct result of good teaching is a striking fact that calls for an explanation. Although the responses do not provide us with such an explanation, the researcher thinks that the teachers’ opinions were influenced by their deep cultural convictions. Their culture emphasises the importance of the teachers’ role in education and almost raises the teacher to the status of a prophet. Therefore, to marginalise the teachers’ influence undermines their long established convictions. Also, the respondents’ claim that good teachers and good teaching methods are the way to success could be looked at as an indirect attempt to strengthen their own feeling of adequacy and their involvement in meaningful action (teaching) as members of the same profession. In other words, accepting that there can be learning without teaching is to put the entire teaching career at stake and open it to unrestricted scrutiny.

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55 Edited for clarification.
56 Translated.
57 This cultural conviction is illustrated in a famous verse by the Arab poet Ahmed Shawky who asks the learners to stand up in reverence to the teacher because he is almost as equally important as a prophet:

"كاد المعلم ان يكون رسولًا"
Having established the teacher's importance in the learning process, this role is emphasised by the teachers' responses. One of the respondents explained: "Good teaching depends on a good method and a good teacher." Accordingly, this "good method", as highlighted by other responses, is one that necessitates the affective as well as the linguistic factors in classroom procedure; in this method, the teacher's role is central because the teacher presents a model for the target language and then directs and monitors the learning process in class with the aim of correcting errors based on his 'knowledge' of the language. This 'good method', again, reflects "the preservation of the self-image as the first law for psychological survival". The teachers' preservation of their self-image as both language learners and teachers is clearly illustrated by the idealisation of the teacher's role. This role is associated with desirable and positive qualities of "knowing", "ability" and "effectiveness," which guarantee success. These qualities are specifically indicated by comments such as: "good" teachers "know" what they are doing; they "know the structures" of the language "well", and are therefore "able" to present it "effectively" and "pleasantly."

It is also worth noting that another respondent stated that the "efficient teacher" was one who "makes the learner learn the language". This belief implies that teachers may tend to attribute the students' inability to learn the language to the teachers' own failure in applying the method. The learners' success is therefore correlated with the teacher's success.

4.2.3.5 THE IMPACT OF THE RESPONDENTS' FLL EXPERIENCE ON THEIR TEACHING OF ASL (Q48 - 49)

Question 48 asks about the effect of the respondents' FLL experience on their teaching practice. Figure 4.9 shows that according to 86 per cent of the respondents, their FLL experience has had an impact on their classroom practice. However, there is no indication of whether that effect was negative or positive, or how it influenced their teaching practice.

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59 This applies to all the teachers with the exception of the respondent who does not agree.
Question 49 asks the teachers to explain how their foreign language learning experience affected their teaching of ASL. Below are some quotations from the respondents’ answers:

When I teach, I reflect on my experience as a language learner and the difficulties I met then. I always put myself in the students’ shoes. I ask myself: “if I were the learner, would I have liked to be taught this particular thing according to this specific method; or would I have preferred a different way?” When I speak in class, I think about every single word I say; I also think of the best way to convey meaning. I allow for practice and consistently check the learners’ understanding of the concepts as presented. I take into consideration many other steps [such as] isolating difficulties that obstruct the learning process and monitoring the learners until they reach the stage of production [of the target language]. [I pursue this process] in the following lessons to enable the learner to use [the language] effectively and accurately and to have full command of it.

[I have not been influenced by my learning experience because] I learned English in school and the methods used then were completely different from the one I apply in my teaching. I, therefore, don’t have any previous experiences or memories to recall during teaching.

When I first learnt Danish, I noticed that some techniques and methods were futile and did not help the students. Now, I feel that I teach the students in the way I would have liked to be taught. [In my experience as a learner] the teacher used some difficult methods which obstructed my understanding

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of what he wanted to explain. [In my opinion] it is very important for the Arabic teacher to follow a course in a second language to be able to put himself in his student’s shoes.63

I give [the learner] what I lacked; that is to say: (a) patience; (b) confidence; (c) time for mistakes and corrections; and (d) communication with students.

The answers to Q49 show that the respondents’ “negative learning experiences” taught them “to do unto others as they would have liked others to do unto them.” The responses highlight some of the difficulties that face language learners in state schools in Egypt. These difficulties did not prevent the respondents from learning new languages or from progressing in language learning. As language teachers, these difficulties taught them to integrate humanistic aspects of language learning in their practice by creating the appropriate conditions for learning. Teacher F, who emphasised the importance of providing a secure environment, where the learners are all equally important and accepted, described these conditions as follows:

The teacher must not take sides in class. She should not reveal her personal preferences of some students at the expense of others. The teacher needs to restrain her emotions in order to become neutral. [It is important that] the teacher should include the student in the lesson and not confine his role most of the time, to that of a recipient.64

It should also be noted that in their answers the respondents presupposed that what would have worked for them, as language learners, would work for their learners. Although this presupposition may be applicable to the monocultural classroom of the state schools, it is inapplicable to the ILI classroom. This is so because the ILI classroom consists of language-learners from diverse cultural backgrounds and who are of different ages, sex, needs and abilities.

An examination of the ILI teachers’ responses to Q 49 reveals that their learning experience did affect the way they taught and interacted with their learners. In their teaching, they tried to avoid the problems that they encountered as language

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63 Translation.
64 Translation.
learners by continually bearing in mind their learning experience when making decisions. It is also clear from the responses that the teachers gave due attention to their learners’ psychological needs by providing a secure and sympathetic environment for learning.

4.2.3.6 Exploring the Teachers’ General Experiences (Q33)

Question 33 is an open-ended question and asks the teachers for their comments on their work experience at the ILI in general. The following summary presents some of the interesting points raised by the teachers concerning their professional interests.

A number of respondents suggested improvements to the programme, while others shared their interest in producing more comprehensive coursebooks and integrating audiovisual materials in teaching. Teacher A said that her experience at the ILI made her wonder whether it was beyond the capacity of some students to learn a language at all. Teacher A’s doubts that some students could ever learn a language requires comment on the importance of “teachers’ education” and the necessity for developing the ILI pre-service component in this area. To optimise the benefit of this training, the course should aim at striking a balance between providing the teachers with low-inference techniques and abstract principles and theory. These abstract principles encourage the teachers to investigate their own teaching to equip them with the tools necessary for providing answers to questions pertaining to their everyday practise.

Moreover, it can be inferred from the teachers’ responses that they failed to draw a line between the researcher and the researcher’s role as a director. Therefore, they openly expressed their needs to make them known to the senior management as the following responses indicate:

Putting into effect all postponed plans to improve the MSA books; also editing and reviewing the existing books and designing more books that integrate literature and short stories for the advanced levels.

A few students cannot go through the regular levels; they need extra work [to overcome their difficulties]. [I suggest that the programme structure allows for] a level between [each] two [existing] levels [to help these students].

[I suggest that the ILI should start] “using [the] computer [in classroom practice].

The Institute needs to get to use the television and the video for the different levels.

I think the MSA books are suitable and have the necessary information for the students.

It should also be mentioned that the teachers tend to be detached when expressing their needs. They state: “the ILI needs to use television and video for the different levels” and do not claim any responsibility or express any aspect of participation when they talk about “designing” more books and materials which deal with literature and short stories. Yet, these tasks are well known to be part and parcel of any teacher’s responsibilities. The researcher believes that this attitude indicates a deficiency in the teachers’ training. It is thus worth considering adding a component to the pre-service training which focuses on the teachers’ responsibilities and not merely the teachers’ role in the classroom. A component of this kind will encourage the teachers to claim responsibility for their own professional improvement, and to perceive themselves as stakeholders who play an active part in decision-making. This, in turn, may eventually lead to the development and restructuring of the ILI programme at all levels.

4.3 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the ILI programme at the level of “design” and “procedure” by means of eliciting and discussing the ILI teachers’ beliefs and actual practice. The findings of the questionnaire are examined and analysed by reference to Richards & Rodgers (1999) definition of “a method.” Though the results of this questionnaire are strictly related to the ILI programme, they are still useful since they apply to ASL teachers and teaching in general.
The analysis of the findings from the Teachers’ Questionnaire has revealed several important results. First, the findings show that the pre-service training offered at the ILI emphasises practical skills at the expense of explaining the underlying theories pertaining to language pedagogy. This lack of theoretical training restricts the teacher’s abilities to tread new paths and to take responsibility for their own professional development.

Second, it is clear from the findings that there is a discrepancy between the teachers’ beliefs and actual classroom practice. The discussion of the findings provides an insight into the probable reasons for this discrepancy. The most important is the lack of clear definitions in the teachers’ responses owing to their unfamiliarity with the terminology used in pedagogic research.

Third, the ILI teachers’ beliefs and practices concerning language/language teaching are affected by their educational background.

Fourth, the teachers’ educational background, together with the pre-service training, has led teachers to believe in a complex multitude of roles that advocate an eclectic approach to teaching Arabic as a foreign language as opposed to the direct structural approach mentioned in the ILI documents. However, this eclecticism is classified as uninformed, for it lacks the theoretical basis that affects the teachers’ decision-making.

Fifth, the ILI-programme is somewhat affected by the ILI’s policies of marketing and quality control. These policies are reflected in the co-ordination system, which guarantees quality teaching and neutralises unhealthy competitiveness among the teachers at the expense of encouraging initiative and claiming responsibility for programme and career development. The strict policies to which the ILI teachers are subjected, together with the lack of theoretical training, lead to the teachers’ detachment and unwillingness to take responsibility for initiating change or improving the programme.
Chapter 5

The Learners’ Questionnaire

This chapter presents the findings from the Learners’ Questionnaire. The information provided in this chapter gives the reader facts about the ILI programme from the learners’ perspective. The purpose of this information is threefold: (1) to serve as a cross-reference to the findings of the Teachers’ Questionnaire discussed in Chapter 4; (2) to present an overview of learners’ beliefs and motivations concerning learning Arabic and the implications of these beliefs for ASL teaching in general and the ILI curriculum and syllabus in particular; and (3) to examine the learners’ experience at the ILI as an ASL context in comparison with other experiences of learning Arabic in other programmes where available.

The chapter is divided into two sections. Section One describes the practical steps taken in administering the questionnaire with the ILI learners and discusses its content. In presenting the content, the researcher makes special reference to the theoretical issues touched upon by the Learners’ Questionnaire. This theoretical background provides the reader with the information necessary to understand and follow the issues underpinning the discussion of the findings.

Section Two presents and analyses the findings of the questionnaire. In this analysis, comparisons are made between the teachers’ and the learners’ perspectives on the ILI programme and general beliefs regarding the teaching and learning of Arabic As a Second Language. The results of these comparisons, together with the findings of the observational data (see Chapter 6), will enable the researcher to examine the following aspects: (1) the validity of the ILI brochure information; and

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1 See Appendix 5.
2 Second language pedagogy differentiates between syllabus and curriculum. “‘Curriculum’ is concerned with the planning, implementation, evaluation, management, and administration of education programmes. ‘Syllabus’, on the other hand, focuses more narrowly on the selection and grading of content” (Nunan, 1997b: 8). “Traditionally ‘curriculum’ is taken to refer to a statement or statements of intent - the ‘what should be’ of a course of study” (Nunan, 1999: 1).
(2) the extent to which the ILI programme caters for the ASL learners' needs, especially those learners on the study abroad programme. This chapter's findings, together with those of Chapter 6, will provide information about the ILI programme as an example of private ASL programmes in Cairo.

5.1 Introduction

The learner has recently become the focus of attention of pedagogic research (Belnap, 1987). Both language acquisition and humanistic approaches have placed the learner, as an active participant, at the centre of language teaching. This importance of the learner has led to the development of learner-centred as opposed to the traditional curricula (Nunan, 1999). These learner-centred curricula entail more communicative, eclectic and humanistic teaching methods. Consequently, one finds that teachers of Arabic in the West have recognised the centrality of the learner and have given him the attention that he deserves. In fact, researchers like Cadora & Daher (1977), Nielsen (1996), Lentzer (1978), Kuntz (1996) and Suleiman (1991; 1992; and 1993) have addressed this issue in their research and classroom practice. One can also assert that the rise of the communicative method and the more recent development of proficiency guidelines and testing are a response to an Applied Linguistics interest in the learner. This central role given to the learner in pedagogic research explains why the researcher has conducted the Learners' Questionnaire in examining the ILI programme in relation to the learners' beliefs and needs.

5.1.1 Preliminary procedures

As Director of Development and Student Affairs (2000 – 2001), the researcher had the privilege of "knowing" the ILI students even before their arrival at the school, as she dealt with their inquiries. Some of the students she even knew from the University of Edinburgh during her study period there in 1999 – 2000. This acquaintance was behind their keen interest to co-operate and to provide the information required about the students' needs, their preferred learning styles, their

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3 Ek (1980: 5) asserts that "If learning is to be truly efficient learners must be enabled to satisfy their own individual learning-needs in the most direct way possible."

4 See Allen (1985).
personality and factors influencing their study period in Cairo, the ILI syllabus, teaching methods, materials and coursebooks.

Attached to the questionnaire was a letter introducing the researcher, explaining to the students the aims and objectives of the research, and guaranteeing confidentiality in the use of the data. The researcher, being aware of her sensitive position as Director of Development at the ILI, asked a colleague (a senior teacher) to distribute the questionnaires, to go through them with the students, and follow up the returns on her behalf. The researcher reviewed the questionnaire with the senior teacher prior to issue, in order to anticipate questions that may have arisen from the learners.

The first batch of questionnaires was distributed on 15 November 2000 to a group of 25 long-term students, who were approached by the senior teacher and invited after class hours to a questionnaire session over refreshments. During the meeting, in view of the long and possibly tedious task ahead of them, the senior teacher asked the students if they wished to participate in the research. She gave them the choice of either staying and answering the questionnaire after the meeting or taking it home for completion at their leisure and then returning it to her. The majority of the students stayed and answered the questionnaire in class so that they could ask the senior teacher for clarification about difficult or unclear questions. From those who answered the questionnaire at the ILI and those who took it home the senior teacher received 20 returns.

The second batch of questionnaires was distributed to 13 long-term students late August 2001, in a less formal manner, via the teachers in their classrooms. The students took the questionnaires home and returned them just before the researcher left for Edinburgh in October 2001. Those who had doubts about the meaning of some of the questions came to the researcher’s office after class hours and asked for clarification.

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\footnote{See Chapter 3, Section 3.1.3.3.}
The ILI secretary, who was in charge of copying and distributing the questionnaire to the teachers, omitted to photocopy page 9. As a result, 13 of the 34 students who returned their completed questionnaires did not answer Q36.c to Q38; these returns were therefore classified as "did not answer" when summarising the data.

The 9-month gap between the distribution of the first and second questionnaires was intended to target the long-term students who had studied for a period ranging from three months to a year at the ILI. This was the criterion chosen by the researcher when selecting the students to whom the questionnaires were distributed. Students who had spent at least 3 months at the ILI were more likely to have a better overview of the Institute's methods and syllabus. Consequently, this experience increases the credibility of their value judgements because of their exposure to more levels of instruction, more teachers, more materials and different teaching techniques.

5.1.2 The Contents of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire consists of 94 questions examining the ILI programme at the levels of "design" and "procedure" from the learners' perspective. Of this total, 89 are close-ended questions and only 5 are open-ended. Questions 39 – 74, which deal with the learners' beliefs about learning foreign languages in general and Arabic in particular, were deliberately omitted, because of factors of space and time.

In what follows, the content of the questionnaire is presented in the order in which the findings are discussed. During this stage, the rationale behind the different questions and the theoretical issues drawn upon in the discussion of the findings will be briefly examined.

Questions 1 - 8, 10, and 12 - 15 elicit biographical information about the ILI learners. This information helps in answering the following queries: (1) whether the ILI programme objectives succeed in catering for the learners' needs, bearing in mind the learners' diverse backgrounds; (2) whether the learners' backgrounds shape
their opinions of the ILI courses and play an active role in their development; and (3) whether the learners’ biographical backgrounds affect their experience at the ILI. It is the researcher’s belief that biographical information about the ILI students is necessary for interpreting the information they provided about their learning experience at the ILI.

These questions elicit information concerning the learners’ age, sex, marital status, country, educational background, professional vocation, previous language learning experiences, reasons affecting their choice of the country for studying the target language, the duration of stay in the chosen country and duration of study at the ILI. The information elicited provides an insight into the learners’ beliefs and experiences regarding language learning/teaching and allows the researcher to evaluate the use of biographical information in syllabus planning and adaptation.

The variety of reasons why students learn Arabic and the short-term objectives set for their study at the ILI are covered by Q11. The responses to this question provide information about the ILI programme objectives and syllabus design, as advertised in the Brochure and Certificate Document. When compared with these documents, the responses reveal whether the MSA programme can satisfactorily meet the learners’ needs and objectives. The needs and objectives listed by the respondents also provide information which would enable the researcher to identify the type of motivation governing the ILI learners’ efforts in learning Arabic. This aspect of the study is important because motivation is considered a key factor in learning a language and is commonly used by educationalists to account for learners’ failure or success in this pursuit. The information assembled by the responses to this question will enable the researcher to make recommendations on how to maintain learners’ perseverance in studying Arabic.

6 Nunan (1999: 42) regards this information as highly relevant as a starting-point for the development of a Learner-Centred Curriculum. Although the researcher is aware that the ILI programme does not apply any such curriculum, she still finds this information useful in evaluating the effect that the MSA programme has on its audience.

7 For types and importance of motivation see Chapter 1, Section 1.2.1. Also, see Brown, (1987); Dörnyei, (1999); and Littlewood, (1999a).

Questions 16 and 17 show whether the learner’s characteristics (for example, age, sex, cultural, educational, religious backgrounds) could positively or negatively affect his/her learning of Arabic within the target culture prescribed. In Chapter 1, the researcher has explained how culture and language are interwoven in language learning and how study in an Arab environment is necessary for learning Arabic as a communicatively living language. An Arab context incorporates all aspects of life in an Arab society, which helps reconcile the unresolved Arabic diglossic tension which hampers TAFL in Western universities.

Since this study focuses on the ILI "method" at the levels of design and procedure, an examination of student assessment and programme evaluative techniques built into the Arabic curriculum are necessary to provide a comprehensive description of the ILI programme. To gain more insight about the validity of these techniques, Q18 and Q19 examine the students’ perception of their own abilities in using the language in comparison with the level at which they were graded according to the ILI placement test. Questions 86 - 91 refer to the kinds of tests and techniques used by the ILI in grouping the learners and assessing their progress. Question 90 asks whether the students found the testing tools relevant to the ILI course objectives. To examine the means of learners’ evaluation of the ILI programme, Questions 92 - 93 elicit the evaluation tools available for the ILI learner to inform decisions and changes concerning the curriculum.

Questions 20.a - 20.m investigate the learners’ preferred learning styles, so as to evaluate the extent to which the ILI syllabus caters for the learners’ subjective needs. Learners have individual ways of thinking and personalities, which are reflected in the adoption of different strategies in learning language and in the learners’ preferences for certain language activities over others.

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9Lynch (1996: 175) states that an effective evaluation is not possible without investigating “programme objectives, programme processes and programme outcomes.” However, the ILI programme outcomes are not extensively covered in this study because the study does not aim at examining the language abilities of the ILI learners.

10 Brown (1987: 79) defines strategies as the methods adopted by individuals in “approaching a problem or task.” Also, see Nunan (1999).
Questions 21 and 22 explore the source of the ILI syllabus content. Question 21 asks the students if they were given a needs analysis form to complete before they started their courses. Question 22 examines whether the learners think that the programme objectives have met their needs. Harmer (1990) and Nunan (1999) see the students' needs as pivotal to syllabus design because different types of students need to be treated differently. Also, needs analysis provides us with the “criteria and rationale for grouping learners, the selection and sequencing of course content, methodology, course length, intensity and duration” (Nunan, 1999: 45).

Questions 23 - 29 study the learners' beliefs about language learning/teaching and their role in the process. The identification of the learner's role within the ILI method reveal the theories of language and language learning advocated in Chapter 4, Section 4.1.1. Questions 23 - 29, therefore, explore the ILI learners' beliefs concerning the learners' centrality to language learning, so as to compare the extent to which this role fits with the ILI programme's “design” as revealed by the Teachers' Questionnaire.

Questions 30 - 33 ask the learners about their beliefs concerning what the teachers should be teaching in the ASL classrooms. The questions aim at examining inter-individual and intra-individual differences between the learners' opinions of the content of language instruction in relation to the ILI syllabus content and procedure. Based on the importance attached to the content of language instruction, Q30 - 33 explore the different beliefs of the learners concerning the content of the syllabus. These beliefs are compared with the actual MSA syllabus referred to in the Teachers' Questionnaire.

Questions 34.a - 37.c are based on the belief that “the activity type often serves to distinguish methods” (Richards & Rodgers, 1999). Certain methods focus

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12 Richards & Rodgers (1999: 21) believe that decision-making in relation to language content involves both subject matter and linguistic matter. They state: “Methods typically differ in what they see as relevant language and subject-matter around which language teaching should be organized”. According to Nunan (1997b: 5), syllabus design is “concerned […] with the selection and gradation of content.” This results in two types of syllabuses: product-oriented and process-oriented.
on grammatical accuracy, whereas others focus on communicative skills or even on the development of psycholinguistic activities. According to Richards & Rodgers (ibid: 22), the different “approaches” underlying the different “methods” manifest themselves in the choice of different kinds of language learning and teaching activities in the classroom. Hence, Questions 34.a - 37.d examine the learners’ different beliefs concerning what learning activities should focus on or include compared with the actual classroom practice to which they are exposed at the ILI.

Questions 36.a - 36.c scrutinise the ILI learners’ beliefs concerning the relevance of correction to their learning of Arabic as a second language. The questions reveal the adequacy of the teachers’ corrections as perceived by the learners, and discover their preferences regarding “when” and “how often” they like to be corrected during the lesson. Feedback procedures, whether concerning the form or content of the learners’ utterances, will help us examine the ILI syllabus in practice and reveal the MSA programme’s approach (Richards & Rodgers, 1999).

Question 38 reveals the importance of the varied skill activities to the learners’ study of MSA. According to Richards & Rodgers (1999) and Littlewood (1999b) not all methods give equal weight to these skills; in fact, certain skills are given more prominence when compared with other methods. Question 38 is a means of comparing the importance attributed to these skills in relation to their MSA study. This question, indirectly, examines the learners’ awareness of the sociolinguistic factors governing the use and teaching of MSA in relation to the different skills.

Questions 75 - 79 deal with the learners’ perceptions concerning the ILI programme at the level of “design”. “Design is the level of method analysis in which we consider (a) what the objectives of a method are; (b) how language content is selected and organized within a method, that is the syllabus model the method incorporates; (c) the types of learning tasks and teaching activities the method advocates; (d) the roles of learners; (e) the roles of teachers; (f) the role of instructional materials” (Richards & Rodgers, 1999: 20). Based on the nature of “design”, and on Harmer’s (1990) assertion that many institutions present the
syllabus in terms of the main textbook, Questions 75 - 79 focus on eliciting information regarding the ILI textbook and the grading of its content.

The importance and function of the textbook have been a topic of interest in pedagogic research and practice. Harmer (ibid.) argues that textbooks have their disadvantages as well as advantages. In his view, teachers develop a monotonous pattern of presenting and practising new language by sticking rigidly to the strict format of a book. The rigidity leads to the students’ loss of motivation and interest. However, a textbook is not totally devoid of advantages. It allows the teachers to select what the students need and to build on the perceived need by providing a variety of activities. It also spares the teachers the stress of having to prepare lessons daily from scratch and provides the students with a reference for the grammar and vocabulary that they have learnt in class.

Nasban (1990: 62) asserts that the textbook occupies a prominent place in AFL teaching. He sets parameters for textbook writers and presents four principal aspects that characterise a good textbook: sounds, vocabulary, constructions and culture. He acknowledges that these aspects, together with book format, use of visuals, time taken to teach the book, techniques available to facilitate the learning, indexes, glossaries, introductions and the ideas about language learning, should all be incorporated in textbooks. Nasban (ibid.: 346–355) breaks down these parameters and factors into 108 questions which provide useful criteria for textbook assessment. These will be considered as guidelines in discussing the questionnaires’ findings in relation to the ILI syllabus, as outlined in the coursebook. The analysis of the findings will also refer to Harmer’s (1990) views pertaining to the importance of coursebooks.

Questions 80 - 83 seek the learners’ opinions about the types of supplementary materials used by the ILI teachers. Materials can include anything that the teachers use in class, such as realia, pictures, texts, tapes, textbooks or films. The underpinning rationale behind these questions is based on Richards & Rodgers (1999) perception of the instructional materials as the last component within the level
of "design". Teachers’ choice of materials, therefore, indicates their teaching methods and assumptions about language and learning (Richards & Rodgers, 1999; and Nunan, 1999). Accordingly, information about the MSA materials is important for evaluating the ILI programme.

In examining teaching materials within the ILI programme, the questions take into consideration linguistic, sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic factors related to the role of instructional materials. Learners’ opinions of material authenticity,\(^{13}\) and the incorporation of culture in instructional materials are examined in Q80 - 83.

These questions also seek to establish how far the ILI teachers facilitate the learning process by incorporating authentic, communicative and cultural materials which stimulate subconscious and spontaneous mechanisms, leading to successful language learning, as well as challenging the learners’ conscious efforts to learn a language.

Questions 84 and 85 examine the actual teaching activities performed by the teachers in classroom practice, compared with the learners’ preferences. These questions explore the type of activities the teachers incorporate and to what extent these activities represent the outside world in the classroom resources. In this examination, material and activity authenticity are examined in relation to the type and goal of task or activity that the teacher asks the students to fulfil, within a selectively authentic sociocultural context (see Nunan, 1999). Hence, Q84 - 85 will examine the degree to which pedagogic principles are reflected in classroom practice.

Finally Q94, an open-ended question, allows the students to reflect on their language learning experience in Cairo in general and at the ILI in particular. The question asks the learners to comment on positive and negative aspects of this experience and asks them to make recommendations for change or improvements.

\(^{13}\) Wilkins (1978) argues that authentic materials are crucial for complete and successful language learning.
5.2 Summary of Data and Findings

The Learners' Questionnaire is intended to collect extensive information from the ILI-learners about the MSA programme. The responses provided are therefore both extremely diverse and numerous. To analyse the findings, the researcher used the "thematic framework" (Lynch, 1996) to categorise the data. Consequently, the findings are grouped according to the following three main themes: (1) the ILI-learners' beliefs and preferences; (2) the ILI programme; and (3) the learners' general comments, criticisms and recommendations concerning improvements to, or development of the programme. Recurring themes, relating to any one of the preceding categories, are, accordingly, grouped in what follows.

5.2.1 ASL Learning/Teaching: The Learners; Learners' Preferences, and Their Beliefs

5.2.1.1 Learners' Biographical Information (Q1 - 8, and 10)

Table 5.1 introduces the ILI learners to the reader. In the table, each learner is given an ID code number, starting with Q/L 1 and ending with Q/L 34, which is used when referring to students' responses to the questionnaire. This table provides information about the ILI long-term students' age, sex and nationality mix, and includes their professional background, as well as the duration of their Arabic language study. Information about the respondents' knowledge of other languages is also provided in this table.

Only two respondents did not mention their age, and two more did not give their occupation. Where students failed to specify their duration of study at the ILI, or any other aspect of the biographical information, the Institute's database was used to provide the required information where available to fill gaps in the table. However, where the information was lacking, the table-cell was left blank, indicating "no response".

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14 In Language Program Evaluation: Theory and Practice, Lynch (1996) discusses the procedures and steps of qualitative data-gathering and analysis. He refers to classification as a means of reducing data to a form which can be studied in a manageable manner. He mentions three schemes of classifications. These are the category systems, typologies, and display matrices. He mentions that the category system flows naturally from the thematic framework (see Chapter 2).
Table 5.1 shows that 85 per cent (29 learners) of the ILI long-term learners are students, whereas 15 per cent (5 learners) are from different professional backgrounds. Clearly, university students are the niche market for the ILI programme. However, this does not apply to short-term learners who come from different domains and professions.

It is not surprising that Table 5.1 does not reflect professional mixes among the respondents. This can be attributed to two main reasons. First, it is difficult for mature post-holders to take leave for 3 months from their employment to learn a language. Second, the fact that the majority of the respondents are students emanates from the limited scope of the research, which focuses on the ILI MSA programme, targeting only long-term learners as its subjects. It is, therefore, only natural for MSA learners at the ILI to consist mainly of university students, who join the ILI as part of their study abroad programme.

Another reason that contributes to the large numbers of “students” at the ILI is the new pedagogical identity of the teaching and learning of Arabic in the West, which has been, recently, informed by a substantial body of research into language acquisition. This new identity has led many Western universities to advocate cultural proficiency as an integral component of foreign language proficiency. This policy has motivated universities to encourage, require and, in some instances, even fund

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15 Unlike the subjects of this study, who are long-term MSA students, graduate learners from different walks of life are apt to pursue short-term Egyptian colloquial courses instead of MSA. This is because the latter group is usually interested in survival Arabic which enables them to live and work in the target country.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student ID</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Course duration in months</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Languages</th>
<th>Sex</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q/L 1</td>
<td>British</td>
<td>21</td>
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<td>Student</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q/L 2</td>
<td>Hungarian</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Economist</td>
<td>English &amp; Hungarian</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q/L 3</td>
<td>British</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>English, Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q/L 4</td>
<td>British</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Spanish, Arabic, English, French</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q/L 5</td>
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<td>28</td>
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<td>English, French, Arabic</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q/L 6</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Swedish, English, Arabic</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q/L 7</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Japanese, English, Arabic</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q/L 8</td>
<td>British</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>English, French, Spanish, Arabic</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q/L 9</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>English, Spanish</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q/L 10</td>
<td>Danish</td>
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<td>Danish, English, German, French, Arabic</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q/L 11</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>English, Arabic, Italian, French</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q/L 12</td>
<td>Canadian</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Ethnographer</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q/L 13</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Assistant Professor</td>
<td>Spanish, Catalan, French, English, Hebrew</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q/L 14</td>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Kazakh, Russian, English, Arabic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q/L 15</td>
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<td>23</td>
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<td>F</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q/L 16</td>
<td>British</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>English</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q/L 17</td>
<td>British</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>English, Arabic</td>
<td>F</td>
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</table>
Table 5.1 (Suit) Biographical information and background

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student ID</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Course duration in months</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Languages</th>
<th>Sex</th>
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<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>Danish, English, Swedish, Arabic, German</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q/L20</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Student</td>
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<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q/L22</td>
<td>American</td>
<td>26</td>
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<td>English</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>34</td>
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<td>English, French, Arabic</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q/L25</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>English</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q/L26</td>
<td>Canadian / British</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>English, French, Arabic, German, Persian</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q/L27</td>
<td>Australian</td>
<td>36</td>
<td></td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>M</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q/L28</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td></td>
<td>Student</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q/L29</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>39</td>
<td></td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Swedish, English, German</td>
<td>F</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q/L30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q/L31</td>
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<td>Student</td>
<td>Danish, Arabic, English</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q/L32</td>
<td>British</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q/L33</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>English, Arabic, Ancient Greek</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q/L34</td>
<td>British</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>English, Spanish, Arabic</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
students to pursue a term of language learning and cultural exposure in the target language country.

Yet another reason for the influx of students among the respondents could be the increasing interest of young learners in the Arab world as a means of extending their professional prospects and enriching their experiential opportunities.

Figure 5.1

It is clear from Table 5.1 that the respondents are predominantly British (18). The nationalities of the other respondents are grouped as follows: three Danish, two Australian, two Swedish, two American, two Canadian, one Hungarian, one Japanese, one Kazakh, one French and one Spanish. It is not surprising that the majority of the ILI learners are British since the ILI owner and director is British, and the Institute is affiliated to the International House Organisation in London. This obviously affects the ILI’s marketing policy and directs its efforts and course promotion towards the British education-market. It is clear from Figure 5.1 that a substantial number of students (9%) are from other European countries. The presence of European students is the result of the International House’s renown in Europe as a reputable language-teaching organisation with recognised international standards. The fact that Danish and Swedish students represent 15 per cent of the respondents is attributed to an agreement between the ILI and the University of Odense in Denmark, and Uppsala University in Sweden, according to which the institute acts as the host for these students’ study abroad programme. This, of course, reveals the
ILI's ability to meet the academic standards of both universities and its efficiency in designing the required material that integrates with the sending universities' Arabic programmes.

The fact that there is only one student from Japan and one from Kazakhstan shows that the ILI has a long way to go in proving its credentials in researching and meeting Asian university standards. This explanation does not apply to the small number of Spanish and French students. The Spanish students usually come to the target culture at a higher proficiency level than that of their counterparts from other European countries. Therefore, they apply for language courses at national government organisations where they are able to study, alongside Egyptian students, a range of subjects taught through the medium of Arabic. French students from French universities consider the French Cultural Centre more likely to fulfil their linguistic and acculturation needs as they can learn Arabic in an Arab country, yet within a francophone environment. The small number of American students at the ILI is due to the strong ties that American institutions have with the American University in Cairo, which caters for the needs of the American student population. The lack of representation of other nationalities among the respondents can only be due to the scope of the research, which is restricted to ILI long-term students over a limited period (3-6 months or more).

The researcher believes that the nationality mix of the respondents reflects a general Western orientation towards the learning of Arabic on a par with other languages; a trend that is attributed to the "consumer demand" for foreign languages, which grew steadily and has been enhanced by globalisation, economic and political interests and peaceful co-existence between nations.

Table 5.1 also sets out the respondents' age range and gender. Age and gender are acknowledged by Oxford (1999a) as the two most significant demographic factors in language learning. Figure 5.2 shows that apart from six

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17 This term is borrowed from Howatt (1999: 622), who in accounting for the history of second language teaching, asserts that a "Consumer demand for foreign languages" has promoted teaching languages in the nineteenth century among middle class adults who aspired "to rise in the world."
respondents, the majority of the ILI students’ ages range between the early and late twenties.

**Figure 5.2**

![Age range](image)

It is the ILI’s policy not to accept students under the age of 18. This is because the ILI adopts a methodology of teaching which caters for adults only. It is, therefore, not surprising that all 34 respondents are adult learners of Arabic. Figure 5.2 shows that 59 per cent of these long-term learners (2000–2001) are aged between 20 and 25, 22 per cent between 26 and 30, and 19 per cent are over 30.

This age distribution indicates that the ILI learners have “at their disposal a large variety of idiosyncratic learning habits” which they have developed from their previous educational and life experiences (Suleiman, 1992). It is important to mention that the success of these adult learners¹ in learning Arabic is, therefore, linked to the extent to which the ILI programme and teachers are able to cater for their different learning styles² and to satisfy their individual differences; a point which will be further examined in Q20.a – 20.m.

Second language studies of the age factor in language acquisition have shown that adult learners learn language more quickly and more efficiently than children

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¹ Research into second language learning emphasises age as “the most commonly mentioned determiner” in language learning success (Oxford, 1999a: 553).
² Suleiman (1992) cites Stevick’s categories of adult learners according to their differences into the intuitive learner, the formal learner, the informal learner, the imaginative learner, the active learner, the deliberate learner, and the self-aware learner. For more about categorisations, see Brown, (1987); Littlewood (1999a); Oxford, (1999a) and (1999b).
(Oxford, 1999a; and Littlewood, 1999b). This is usually because language acquisition is accelerated by their previous language learning experience(s) and the ability of adult learners to acquire syntax and morphology rapidly. It is, therefore, important for the ILI to include these adult learners in setting and developing their Arabic programme objectives. However, the researcher’s experience suggests that this is not true of the ILI. The effects of the lack of participation by adult learners in setting the MSA programme objectives will be discussed later in Q49.20

It is the researcher’s contention that the ILI teachers’ ignorance of the respondents’ individual differences, especially in their ages, may result in teacher frustration. For example, the ILI teachers are tempted to attribute the slow progress of students to their teaching method rather than to the students’ language-learning background or to age factor problems.21 The teacher sometimes responds by blaming the learners for their slow progress. This may generate tension and anxiety, which hampers the learners’ acquisition and the teacher’s resourcefulness in finding solutions to their learning problems. A language-learning module within the pre-service training, highlighting the importance of the age factor and other personal differences, could have provided Teacher A with at least part of the answer to her question of whether some students are able to learn a language at all (see Chapter 4, Section 4.2.3.6).

Figure 5.3 shows that the majority of the ILI learners (56%) are female students. This is a general trend, in which languages are studied more by females than males.

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20 Nunan (1999: 23) asserts that adult learners learn best in “a learner-centred rather than a subject-centred approach.”

21 An example of age language-learning problems is fossilisation. Oxford (1999a: 553) defines fossilisation as “the permanent cessation of L2 development in adult learning”. Littlewood (1999b: 33-34) refers to fossilisation as the inability of the adult learner “to progress further along the learning continuum;” as well as the learner’s inability to overcome errors. His obvious examples of such errors are those of pronunciation and foreign accent.
The higher number of females has some bearing on the work of the ILI. Oxford (1999a: 553) affirms that “women use different learning strategies than men” and that female learners “focus more on strategies related to social and communicative efforts.” This implies that any lack of awareness by the teachers of such gender differences may hamper their role as facilitators of learning and may account for student and teacher conflict in classroom practice. On the other hand, teachers’ awareness of male/female learning differences may encourage the ILI teachers to incorporate more gender-sensitive activities that stimulate successful performance and learning.

It is worth mentioning that the lack of ASL teachers’ awareness of the differences in cultural gender roles may lead to a negative attitude among female learners towards Arab culture and Arab men. As a senior member of staff at the ILI, the researcher has encountered many situations showing female learners are more likely to suffer from culture shock. This has been revealed, for example, when female students have sometimes directed their anger with Egyptian men against their male teachers in class. Other instances in which the lack of awareness of cultural gender roles, both by the teacher and the learner, show that serious communication problems
arise as a result of intercultural misunderstanding between men and women. To overcome these problems, the ILI needs to inform its female learners of the possible influence of this factor on their language learning, and, in particular, to advise them to avoid projecting their frustration onto their (male) teachers.

Table 5.1 shows that all 34 students spoke English, whether as a native language or as a foreign language, with varying degrees of proficiency. Of the total, 74 per cent spoke another foreign language compared with 26 per cent who spoke only their native language (English). In this respect, it is worth noting that the younger the learners, the more languages they declare to have mastered. Table 5.1 also reveals that the languages the learners have mastered are mostly Indo-European. This observation is probably attributable to the political, economic and cultural interests shared by members of the European countries.

That the majority of the respondents spoke at least one other foreign language besides their native tongue shows that the ILI learners possess an aptitude for foreign languages. Therefore, the respondents are both familiar with and have developed their own language learning strategies. Hence, it would be interesting to see whether these strategies and experiences play a role in the learners’ success or failure in learning ASL. The researcher also believes that the learners’ exposure to different language programmes in different contexts increases the reliability of their answers.

Table 5.1 shows that 17 of the learners do not mention Arabic among the foreign languages that they spoke, although they have all been studying Arabic for at least 3 months at the ILI. This could simply mean that some respondents thought that this is obvious, since they are already studying Arabic at the ILI. The researcher will

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22 An example is the case of a female student who approached the Administration, complaining of verbal-sexist harassment from one of the male teachers after complementing him for cleaning up the mess on an ILI felucca trip by saying that “he would make someone a good housewife.” In a discussion with the teacher, he confessed that the student’s remark was deeply wounding to his masculine pride and that he personally found it both inappropriate and insulting and was forced to retaliate by saying that he was ready to show her that he was man enough.

23 Kuntz (1996), in “Students of Arabic: Beliefs About Foreign Language Learning”, states that 57% of learners of Arabic believe that they have a foreign language aptitude. Littlewood (1999a) defines language aptitude not only as the learner’s cognitive ability to learn a language but relates it to a set of factors which make some learners better at learning languages than others.
return to this issue in relation to language proficiency levels when dealing with Q10, 18 and 19 below.

5.2.1.2 LEARNING ARABIC IN EGYPT & OTHER ARAB COUNTRIES & SCHOOLS (Q12 - 15)

Question 12 explores the reasons behind choosing Egypt, rather than other Arab countries, for studying Arabic (Table 5.2). Question 13 elicits whether the respondents have had a different ASL experience in any other Arab country.

Of the thirty-four students who answered Q12 and 13, 56 per cent said that they did not choose Egypt; rather, their home university or institution made this choice, based on educational or security factors. The remaining 44 per cent chose Egypt for social, cultural, touristic or even economic reasons. It is, perhaps, worth mentioning that three students out of the 19 who did not choose Egypt themselves support this choice. One of these students even states that, after travelling to Syria and Jordan, she would choose Egypt again, if the decision were left to her. Also, out of the 56 per cent (19 respondents) who were sent to Egypt by their home institutions, only two students have studied Arabic in other Arab countries. However, four students out of the remaining 15 students have had the opportunity of being in other Arab countries.

Table 5.2 sets out the reasons given by the 15 students who chose Egypt to reflect their personal, occupational or linguistic interests in the country. A number of these students have also commented that they have been to Egypt before and think that it is “Western-friendly” and has “a good choice of courses to study Arabic”.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student ID</th>
<th>Why Egypt?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q/L 2</td>
<td>&quot;I have a friend here to help me&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q/L 6</td>
<td>&quot;Because I've worked here before and I like the country&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q/L 7</td>
<td>&quot;1st I like heritage (e.g. pyramids etc.) 2nd It is easy to get a visa&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q/L 10</td>
<td>&quot;Because it is a centre for politics and culture and in a smaller way also economically&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q/L 12</td>
<td>&quot;The spoken dialect will be most useful in my work&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q/L 13</td>
<td>&quot;Because I did not know the country and the big city of Cairo attracted me&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q/L 14</td>
<td>&quot;It is easier to learn Arabic language here in Egypt than in other Arab countries&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q/L 16</td>
<td>&quot;I know friends here. One of them has studied at the ILI&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q/L 21</td>
<td>&quot;I consider Egypt a very &quot;Western-friendly&quot; country and inexpensive to live in, in comparison to other Middle Eastern countries. I'd visited Egypt twice and found the people kind and welcoming. My familiarity with Egypt was also a factor&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q/L 22</td>
<td>&quot;I had been to Egypt in 1999 and wanted to return&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q/L 23</td>
<td>&quot;I live here&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q/L 25</td>
<td>&quot;(Cairo is an) easy place to live in, life is not too expensive, {and there is a} good choice of courses in Cairo&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q/L 28</td>
<td>&quot;I chose Egypt because there are more opportunities for foreigners to study here than anywhere else in the Middle East, and also because there is much to do and see in Egypt. I also believed that Egyptian colloquial would be interesting to learn&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q/L 29</td>
<td>&quot;Because I've always wanted to see Cairo and I had heard good things about the ILI. Finally because I knew people that were going to be here at the same time&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q/L 31</td>
<td>&quot;Because Egypt is beautiful and I believe the ILI is the best option to study Arabic&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The respondents’ answers to Q13 show that only 18 per cent (6 students) of the learners have visited other Arab countries in order to learn Arabic as a second language. The majority of the students (82 %), however, have not studied Arabic in other parts of the Arab world.
The lack of exposure to other MSA programmes deprives the majority of the students the ability to make objective comparisons. It is therefore natural for the respondents to base their assessment and expectations of the ILI programme on comparisons with foreign language programmes other than Arabic. This could be misleading, at times, since research has shown that the Arabic language, because of its sociocultural nature, is more difficult to learn than any of the other commonly taught languages (Kuntz, 1996). Hence, the respondents’ assessment of the MSA programme should not be taken at face value. The lack of a comparator may also indicate that the respondents’ expectations could be coloured by their subjective preferences and individual learning styles, which would make it difficult to produce an objective comparison with other ASL programmes.

Table 5.3 Other ASL countries and institutes (Q14)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student ID</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Institute</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q/L 2</td>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>al-Mustansirya University</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>DEAC\textsuperscript{24}</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q/L 5</td>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>University of Amman Language Center</td>
<td>3 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q/L 13</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>معهد تعلم اللغة العربية للأجانب\textsuperscript{25}</td>
<td>3 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q/L 26</td>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>University of Jordan</td>
<td>5 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q/L 29</td>
<td>Yemen</td>
<td>Yemen Language Centre</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.3 presents the responses to Q14. This question asks for names of the Arab countries and institutions where the respondents have previously learnt Arabic. It is important to mention that only five students out of the six who stated that they have studied Arabic in a different Arab country answered this question. The nationalities and occupations of these five respondents are as follows: a Hungarian economist, a British student, a French teacher, a Spanish assistant professor and a Swedish student. It is only to be expected that three out of the five respondents are

\textsuperscript{24} See Appendix 1.

\textsuperscript{25} Translation: “The Arabic Foreign Language Institute”.

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not students because professionals, unlike students, can afford to visit more Arab
countries and choose their own programmes. Three out of these five respondents are
female and two are male. It is worth noting that Q/L2 has also studied Arabic in a
different school in Cairo, which makes his evaluation of the ILI programme more
realistic because of his exposure to MSA programmes within and beyond the same
country. The table makes clear that the majority of the respondents have studied
Arabic in the Levant, with the exception of one student who has been to Yemen. This
choice is, most probably, based on the belief that the Levant dialects are closest to
MSA.

The following list summarises the responses to Q15, which asks for the
students' opinions of the other Arabic programmes compared with their ILI
experience. The list shows that the two main factors affecting their educational
preferences are: (1) the quality of the teaching; and (2) the extent to which these
programmes contribute to their language study back home. The cultural setting
and/or the living conditions of a particular Arab country do not influence the
respondents’ preferences.

Al-Mustansiriya University was very good, they had excellent teachers
and a good program, I progressed a lot there. **** was not a good
school; I almost forgot things that I have learned before. It was a bad
choice. (Q/L 2)

The ILI course is better by far regarding the teaching approach &
organization. But, I really liked Jordan as a place to live, as much as I
like Egypt. (Q/L 5)

The two experiences of studying are positive but at ILI the methods are
better and the teachers are very well prepared. (Q/L 13)

Institute: Jordan. Course: good; but it didn't tie in with my Edinburgh
course because I was too inexperienced in Arabic. ILI course builds on
and consolidates what I have done.
Country: Jordan. Language in Jordan is easier to understand. Culturally,
both are fantastic. (Q/L 26)

This is not a simple question and it would require a long answer – but in
short I think that the teaching at the ILI is better, probably because the
teachers are better educated in teaching Arabic as a foreign language and
because there is a set course of study and good coordination. (Q/L 29)
Questions 20.a - 20.m aim at identifying the respondents' level of preference for the different learning media and activities. The questions are close-ended which allows the learners to select more than one preferred medium or activity and rate each choice on an adjectival scale. Like that used in the Teachers' Questionnaire, the scale employed for Q20.a - Q20.m was originally designed to protect the study from any tendency on the respondents' part to follow convenience at the expense of accuracy by simply ticking the middle score. The respondents' ticks and crosses, however, covered the whole scale. As a result, it was decided to divide the scale into four equal parts, which seemed to reflect better the actual distribution of ticks and crosses. Thus, the different preferences in Table 5.4 are presented in four categories: “Prefer very much”; “Prefer moderately”; “Prefer slightly”; and “Do not prefer”. These categories are used to examine the learners’ preferred learning styles in comparison with the ILI MSA classroom activities and media used for learning. The information provided is also compared with the findings of the Teachers’ Questionnaire (Q40 and 42) with the aim of comparing the teachers’ preferences as language learners with those of their students’ preferences and the implications this comparison may have on classroom practice.

In the following section the students’ preferred activities and media are grouped and discussed according to the respondents' rankings:

**Prefer Very Much**

The activities and media grouped under this category show that the respondents, like all mature language learners, enjoy a wide range of learning styles and activities. This result is in line with Oxford’s (1999a) analytic, global, sensory, intuitive and

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26 In “Second Language Learning: Individual differences”, Oxford (1999a: 555-556) asserts that “some researchers believe that L2 learning styles can be used to match students with more appropriate L2 instructional approaches geared to their instructional needs. He also affirms: “the teacher might employ style data to devise classroom activities that cater to style differences among students”.

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sequential categorisation of learning styles. However, “Learning by observing, listening and talking to native speakers or friends in Arabic” ranks, in first place, as the most preferred style of language learning. This highlights a global style of language learning, which enforces the learners’ previous exposure to a communicative approach in the learning of other foreign languages. This style encourages compensation strategies, such as guessing or paraphrasing when communication is blocked. It also enforces the learners’ genuine interest in communicating and understanding more about the target culture. However, since MSA is acquired by reading and writing, rather than by “observing, listening and speaking to friends”, a discrepancy occurs where a conflict emerges between the students’ academic requirements and their communicative and intercultural needs. Knowledge of the learners’ global learning style, together with the findings of Q18 and their communicative needs, require the ILI teachers and programme designers to seek and incorporate into their courses suitable activities and environments.

“Studying grammar” and “Having my own textbook from which I study grammar and learn Arabic words by seeing them written” are considered the second most preferred language learning activities. This choice coincides with Harmer’s (1990: 33) assertion that adult learners expect formal instruction to enable “learnt-and-then-practised language” to become part of their acquired store. This is because adults who learn a foreign language have a limited time for study and want to achieve results quickly. With this aim in mind, they tend to learn grammar items

27 According to Oxford (1999a: 555), analytical students are those who focus on details, unlike global students who focus on the main idea and usually like social interaction. Sensory students include visually stimulated students, auditory students do not need visual backup and therefore enjoy lectures, conversations, role play and oral directions, and hands-on students enjoy working with flashcards and appreciate frequent movement. Oxford also speaks of intuitive students, who think in large-scale, non-sequential ways, and sequential students, who are slow and steady in their progress. He also refers to the relevance of openness and closure, which are related to flexibility in reaching decisions or tolerance of ambiguity. Also, see Nunan (1999: 76-97) for research findings on types of learners and learning activities.

28 Younes (1990: 105) asserts that an “alternative approach to language teaching of Arabic as a foreign language is based on the integration of a spoken Arabic dialect and MSA in a single course of instruction”. In supporting his argument of an integrated approach he mentions that “FuṣHa, including both MSA and CA [classical Arabic], is not used for ordinary oral communication by any group of people in the Arab world. It is the language of reading and writing, and of formal prepared speech” (ibid.:111).
Consciously. Conscious learning of grammar and vocabulary from textbooks reveals an analytical style of learning compatible with the respondents' university courses, which highlight grammatical details and generally avoid free-flowing communicative activities.

Table 5.4 Learners' preferred language learning styles and activities (Q20.a - 20.m)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q 20</th>
<th>Preferred learning style/ medium</th>
<th>Prefer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Very much</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>Games</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>Pictures</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>Films and videos and watching TV</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>Talking in pairs</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>Cassettes</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>Excursions</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g</td>
<td>Studying grammar</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>Studying Arabic books alone by finding my own mistakes</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>Having problems to work on</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j</td>
<td>Observing, listening and talking to native speakers or friends in Arabic</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k</td>
<td>Reading newspapers</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l</td>
<td>Wanting the teacher to explain everything in order to write everything in my notebook</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>Having my own textbook from which I study grammar and learn Arabic words by seeing them written.</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"Learning by problem solving" and "Wanting the teacher to explain everything" ranked in third place followed by "Reading newspapers" in fourth place. These preferences show that the visual learning style is as popular among the ILI learners as the analytical style. Learners who prefer the visual learning style like "to read and obtain a great deal of visual stimulation" (Oxford, 1999a: 555). The
representation of other learning styles such as the hands-on, which is represented in learning by “going on excursions”, and the visual and auditory, as represented by “watching films and videos”, imply that the ILI adult learners possess a wide variety of learning styles and draw upon diversified learning strategies, which demonstrate their active participation in learning (Littlewood, 1999a: 67). As an ex-employee of the ILI, the researcher is well aware that these strategies are not fully exploited by the ILI teachers because of the teachers’ lack of knowledge of the importance of strategy training in optimising second language learning (Oxford, 1999b).

In comparing these findings with those of the Teachers’ Questionnaire (Q40 & 42), one realises that “learning through speaking to native speakers” is the only compatible medium of learning at the “very much prefer” level of preference between the respondents and their teachers as language learners. In other words, both the ILI learners and their teachers, as adult learners of foreign languages, realise the communicative value of language learning. However, this aspect of language is not always given the attention that it deserves when it comes to teaching a foreign language, owing to pragmatic decision-making and the availability of resources and training.

**Moderately Prefer**

Table 5.4 indicates that “Cassettes” (15 learners) comes in first place in this category, followed by “Reading newspapers” (13 learners) in second place; “Problem solving”, “Talking in pairs”, and learning through “Pictures” (12 learners each) rank in third place. “Games” (11 learners) fall in fourth place, followed by “Films and videos and watching TV” and “Wanting teachers to explain everything” (10 learners each).

The researcher believes that the “moderately prefer” category of the students’ preferences is more indicative of the media and activities provided in the ILI classroom practice. However, the ranking of preferences does not match the frequency of use of these media in the ILI - teachers’ everyday practice. It is also worth mentioning that when the ILI teachers use these media, they are limited to the presentation of new language and are restricted by the availability of resources. For
example, "Reading the newspapers" is restricted to extracts of short news items that introduce grammatical rules, and "Cassettes" are mere recordings of these items and other texts that serve the same purpose of providing a context for the new structures. This use of language learning activities in the MSA classroom requires the teachers to evaluate the purpose and place of these activities in the communication continuum.30

Slightly Prefer

"Studying Arabic books alone" and "Games" (9 learners each) are the most slightly preferred activities. This is because the former lacks the communicative factor most crucial to the ILI learners’ needs, while the latter is used by the teachers in a way that deprives it of the communicative value most integral to "Games".

Do Not Prefer

Where "Studying Arabic books alone", comes as the highest in the "slightly preferred" category, it is the foremost "Do not prefer" language learning medium, again, because of the lack of communicative value. This value is of crucial importance to learners who are integratively motivated in their study of Arabic in the target culture.

5.2.2 LEARNERS’ ASSUMPTIONS CONCERNING THE ILI METHOD (Q23 – 37)

Questions 23 to 37 concern learners’ assumptions about language learning and classroom practice. The respondents were asked to rate the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with 22 different statements about learning and classroom practice. Once again, the adjectival scale provided was reduced to four levels of agreement or disagreement: "Totally agree"; "Moderately agree"; "Moderately disagree"; and "Totally disagree". The information yielded is presented in Tables 5.5 and 5.6. To provide an accurate interpretation of the percentages included under each

30 See Harmer (1990) for a definition of this continuum.
level, the number of students replying to each question is stated in column N. The information in the tables is further classified and represented in four figures (Figures 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, and 5.7) to enable a comparison of the answers with specific aspects of the questions.

Table 5.5 sets out the respondents’ answers to Q23–29, which refer to the respondents’ assumptions concerning learning (Q23 & 28) and the learners’ role (Q24 - 27 & 29). Table 5.6 presents the responses to Q30 - 37. These questions explore the learners’ assumptions concerning the following: the medium of instruction (Q30); language components and the means of presenting those which are germane to classroom practice (Q31 – 33); the means and place of correction in classroom practice (Q36.a - 36.c); the aim and role of language activities in classroom practice (Q34.a - 35.b); and the focus of this practice in relation to the different language skills (Q37.a - 37.c). The importance of this information is threefold. First, it examines the ILI methodology in the light of the students’ expectations. This information is also compared with the teachers’ assumptions about classroom practice to show whether teachers and learners share common beliefs concerning teaching and learning. Second, it highlights the ILI learners’ expectations of their Arabic programme. Third, this information, together with the information provided in Chapters 4 and 6, helps in providing a realistic description of the ILI MSA programme, thus, increasing the validity of this evaluation.

5.2.2 Learners’ Assumptions: Learning and Learners’ Role (Q 23 – 29)

Let us now discuss the findings of Q23 – 29 (Table 5.5) concerning the learners’ role, as highlighted in Figure 5.4. It is interesting to note that 44 per cent of the respondents “moderately agree” that learning is the sole responsibility of the learners. However, the 24 per cent who “totally disagree” with this statement mainly object to the use of the word “sole”; they did not totally reject the learners’ responsibility. The answers to Q24 & 29 reveal that though the students firmly believe that learners respond differently to different teaching methods because of the

31 Hereafter, the researcher will mention the actual number of respondents to the different questions, in other tables, under the column N.
Table 5.5 Students’ assumptions: learning and learners’ Role (Q 23 – 29)\(^{32}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Students’ Opinion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23-Learning is the sole responsibility of the learner.</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24- Each learner responds differently to different teaching methods.</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25- Learners should plan their own learning programme and thus ultimately assume responsibility for what they do in the classroom.</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26- Learners monitor and evaluate their own progress.</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27- Learners are members of a group and learn by interacting with others.</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28- Learning is the direct result of repetitive practice in class.</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29- Learners in multinational classes have to adapt to whatever teaching method the teacher is using.</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

differences in their personalities and learning styles, yet they are also aware that, in a multinational classroom, a compromise of the interaction between the different group

\(^{32}\) Note that percentages are given to the nearest 1\%: rounding errors mean that totals sometimes vary from 100\%.
members is necessary for learning to take place, regardless of their own preferences. Since this does not always happen in actual classroom practice among students of different nationalities, the researcher’s experience leads her to conclude that the respondents’ answers to Q29 are idealistically normative. On various occasions, different learning styles and interests have clashed with teachers’ methodologies, thus provoking complaints, and many learning and administrative problems.

Figure 5.4

Although 35 per cent of the respondents “moderately agree” that the learners should plan their own programmes (Q25), the 3 per cent difference in opinion between the 35 per cent “moderately agree” and the 32 per cent “moderately disagree” indicates that this assumption is debatable among the ILI students. The highest level of approval from the respondents concerning their assumptions about the learners’ role, as expressed in Q26, reveals that the majority of learners believe that they are the best judges of their own progress; a point that requires the ILI curriculum manager to reconsider the programme’s assessment procedures.

The answers to Q27 show that more than half the number of students agreed, at varying levels, that learning takes place by interacting with other members of the group. Nevertheless, it is important to mention that experience has shown the researcher that, despite student awareness of the importance of co-operation between the individual members of the classroom, cultural bigotry has led many students to
refuse to interact with other class members just because they belonged to a different nationality or political group. This poses a serious problem which emphasises the importance of biographical information for the teachers when they are planning their group and pair work in the classroom.

The responses to Q28 show that more than half the respondents share with their teachers, at varying levels, a common view concerning language and language learning which subjugates the learners' role to that of the teacher. This is because a strong belief in learning as a direct product of repetition in the classroom coincides with habit formation theories of learning, which emphasise phonetic and grammatical accuracy, thus magnifying the teacher's role by making him or her the source of information and the model for the target language. The 35 per cent of the students who "moderately disagree" with that assumption are advocates of the more communicative and modern theories of language acquisition.

The findings in Table 5.6 are discussed under the following headings:

- Learners' assumptions concerning language components and the medium of instruction (Q30 - 33)
- Learners' assumptions about the focus and nature of language activities in classroom practice (Q34.a - 35.b)
- Learners' assumptions concerning the means and place of correction in classroom practice (Q36.a - 36.c)
- Learners' assumptions about the focus of classroom practice in relation to the different language skills (Q37.a - 37.c).

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33 In Chapter 4 (Section 4.2.3.2), it was mentioned that the teachers see the learners' role in class as subordinate to that of the teacher.
Table 5.6 Learners’ assumptions concerning language components and teaching practice (Q30 – 37.c)\(^{34}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Students’ opinion</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Totally</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Moderately</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Moderately</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Totally</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30- The language instruction in class should be Arabic and translation should be restricted.</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31- Grammar should be taught intensively to allow students to have a better and quicker understanding and grasp of the language.</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32- The teacher should put more stress on the teaching of vocabulary.</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33- Students should infer grammar from context.</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34- Language activities in class should aim at:</td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Totally</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Moderately</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Moderately</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Totally</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34 a- accurate production of the language</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34.b- fluency regardless of errors</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{34}\) Percentages in this Table are given to the nearest 1\(^\circ\); rounding errors mean that totals sometimes vary from 100\(^\circ\).
Table 5.6(Suit) Learners' assumptions concerning language components and teaching practice (Q30 – 37.c)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Totally</td>
<td>Moderately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35- Language activities in class should:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35.a- simulate real life situations where communication is needed.</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35.b- provide enough drills for grammar practice.</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36- When I make mistakes I should be corrected:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36.a- immediately, in front of all the class.</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36.b- later, at the end of the class activity in front of all the class.</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36.c- later, in private.</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37- Language activities in class should focus on:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37.a- Reading</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37.b- Writing</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37.c- Speaking</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37.d- Listening</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

35 Percentages in this Table are given to the nearest 1°. Rounding errors mean that totals sometimes vary from 100°.
5.2.2.2 Learners' Assumptions Concerning Language Components and the Medium of Instruction (Q30-33)

Figure 5.5 represents the answers to Q30 – 33, revealing the learners' assumptions about the language of instruction, the focus of the content of language teaching, and the method of presenting language structure. It is clear that the students' assumptions coincide with the ILI teachers' approach to language teaching and the focus of the ILI syllabus, which emphasise grammar and vocabulary teaching.\(^{36}\) It is interesting to note that the majority of the students, who have varying levels of proficiency, want Arabic to be the language of instruction and that they want translation restricted in the classroom. This desire may be due to their previous experiences in learning other modern languages with methods that use the target language as the medium of instruction. However, this consensus becomes strikingly contradictory when compared with the students' agreement on the importance of teaching grammar intensively (Q31), which is not feasible without translation, bearing in mind their low level of proficiency. The contradiction between what the students think is best (Arabic in Arabic for better communicative skills) and their needs (intensive grammar instruction) is further emphasised by the strong disagreement over inferring grammar from context (Q33), which deprives language teaching of its communicative and interactive value. This contradiction may be the result of an urge to fulfil the requirements of their university degree or the need to accelerate their acquisition of the language by mastering its structures. The respondents' avoidance of any inference techniques in teaching grammar shows that the majority of the learners are inclined towards direct language learning rather than language acquisition.

\(^{36}\) See Chapter 3.
It is also worth noting that despite the high level of agreement concerning the teaching of vocabulary (Q32), some students question the extent to which the teachers should pursue this aim.

5.2.2.3 LEARNERS’ ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THE FOCUS OF LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES IN CLASSROOM PRACTICE (Q34.a – Q35.b)

Figure 5.6 represents the respondents’ views on the aim and nature of language learning activities. Question 34 (a & b) elicits the learners’ assumptions about the aim of these activities, while Q35 (a & b) elicits their beliefs regarding their nature and focus. The students’ responses emphasise that classroom activities should aim at accuracy (Q34.a) rather than fluency (Q34.b). The fact that fluency is the only aspect of classroom activities that has obtained a “totally disagree” ranking (12%) shows that it definitely comes in second place in the learners’ list of priorities. These views derive from the baggage that most of the students carry with them from academic institutions, which still use the Grammar Translation Method to teach AFL. This method attaches much weight to accuracy and linguistic competence rather than fluency and linguistic performance. It also conveys a deep orientation to the students that the aim of classroom practice is the avoidance of errors.
The students' answers to Q35.a and Q35.b put grammar drills on an almost equal footing with simulating real-life situations. This indicates that the students are strong believers in a communicative competence that is rooted in grammatical ability. This reiterates the contradiction between the students' urgent need to communicate in Arabic with the people around them and their ideas about the best way to achieve this objective.\(^1\)

5.2.2.4 LEARNERS' ASSUMPTIONS CONCERNING THE MEANS AND PLACE OF CORRECTION IN CLASSROOM PRACTICE (Q36.a - 36.c)

Questions 36.a, 36.b and 36.c seek to ascertain the students' preferred technique of correction and its optimal place in classroom practice. This information is important because the place and technique of correction show whether accuracy is promoted at the expense of fluency and the degree to which anxiety and stress prevail in the classroom environment. The respondents' answers are compatible with their belief in accuracy and the importance that they attach to grammar learning. This is because the majority of the learners have nominated "immediate correction in front of all the whole class" (Q36.a) as the optimal means of correction. This choice indicates that learners can cope with the high anxiety caused by this type of correction.

\(^1\) The findings of Q34.a – 35.b will be further discussed in Q85. The compatibility of the ILI classroom activities with the learners' beliefs will also be examined in Chapter 6.
It is interesting to note that correction “later in private” (Q36.c) is the least acceptable form of correction among the ILI learners. This indicates that the students perceive corrections as an important means of instruction, by which they can learn from one another’s mistakes. It will be interesting to see, in Chapter 6, whether the ILI teachers are able to adapt and exploit correction techniques to the benefit of the learners.

Figure 5.7

5.2.2.5 Learners’ Assumptions Concerning Language Skills in Classroom Activities (Q37.a – 37.c)

Figure 5.7 highlights the importance of the different skills in classroom activities and the weight that should be given to each of these skills. The zero per cent given to all the skills in the category “totally disagree” shows that classroom activities should integrate all skills equally. However, the emphasis is on speaking (Q37.c) and listening (Q37.d).

5.2.2.6 Learners’ Assumptions Concerning the Different Language Skills in Relation to MSA Learning (Q38)

Question 38 refers to the respondents’ assumptions concerning the importance of the different language skills in relation to the Arabic variant that they are studying
Twelve out of the 34 respondents have not answered this question. The question asks the students to grade the skills, starting with the most important (1) and ending with the least important (4). In doing so, 3 of the respondents have proposed an "Equally important" category that was not originally listed in the questionnaire. Nevertheless, the researcher has included this category in Figure 5.8.

The responses represented in Figure 5.8 show that 14 per cent of the learners consider all four different skills to be equally important in MSA. Reading ranks first place (50%) in the most important category, whereas Writing came highest (41%) in the second most important category. These are followed by listening, which acquires the highest ranking (55%) in the third most important category; and finally, speaking comes highest (50%) in the least important category.

Figure 5.8

The majority of the respondents think speaking to be less important than the other skills, having earlier revealed their highly communicative interests in learning Arabic. This contradiction could be linked to the discrepancy between theory and practice in relation to the diglossic nature of Arabic. Although the learners believe that language is communication at the level of "Approach", they find that MSA does not lend itself to the elements and sub-elements of "Design" and "Procedure" that organisationally determine the communicative approach.² This is because the

² See Chapter 4, Section 4.1.1.
The sociocultural role of MSA is sustained by a "structural view" of language rather than a functional or interactional one.

The respondents' personal comments and background in Arabic show that students who are studying the two variants of Arabic have a better understanding of the reasons for this discrepancy. This finding is emphasised by Q/L 20, who has placed speaking fourth place and commented: "I chose this order because I study both (ECA & MSA); if I just studied one, my priorities would have been different". The researcher has also observed that at least three of the respondents (Q/L 14, 23 and 31), who have placed speaking as either the most or the second-most important of the language skills, are not studying ECA. They, therefore, were stretching the MSA boundaries to an artificial spoken communicative end to meet their survival needs in the target culture.

The students' agreement that reading should be given priority, followed by writing, then listening and finally, speaking, does not match their own belief that language learning activities should focus on speaking; nor does it fit with their teachers' beliefs concerning the importance of the different skills in language teaching and learning. The observational data (Chapter 6) will determine which of the skills has the stronger influence in MSA classroom procedure at the ILI.

5.2.3 The ILI Curriculum: The Learners' Actual Experience

5.2.3.1 NEEDS ANALYSIS AND THE ILI COURSE OBJECTIVES (Q21 – 22)

Question 21 asks the respondents to indicate whether they were given a needs analysis form, listing their reasons for studying Arabic and specifying the duration planned for pursuing this study at the ILI. The question aims at examining the degree to which the ILI depends in its programme design and development on information acquired from and about the learners. This information has become crucial in recent syllabus design studies, for it influences decision-making in modern language courses with regard to goal identification, objective setting, material development, learning modes and the evaluation of language-teaching curricula.
Of the 34 respondents, only one student did not answer Q21. Another student (Q/L 19), instead of choosing either “Yes” or “No”, ticked both answers. So the first answer, “Yes”, was considered. Ten respondents (30%) have stated that they were given a needs analysis form, while 23 (70%) have stated they did not receive any such forms. In the researchers’ experience, the ILI does not use nor distribute such forms. The only form that provides data about the learners is that used for pre-registration. This form gathers mainly biographical information about the learners, information regarding the Arabic variant that they wish to study, their educational background and the planned duration of study. The information gathered from this form is restricted to mainly administrative use, and provides a sound basis for ILI marketing and budget planning. It also helps the ILI director to arrange the teachers’ teaching loads and enables the teachers to plan their holidays accordingly.

Because this information is not fed into syllabus design and development or methodology modification, the ILI teachers are deprived of a crucial tool for catering to the students’ needs and alerting them to areas of possible conflict in classroom practice. From her experience, the researcher believes that the omission of needs analysis input in syllabus and methodology accounts for much disagreement between the ILI teachers and those students whose educational systems and beliefs about language learning do not match the ILI methodology. This situation has a negative impact on the programme and on the learners. Learning has often been obstructed and, in some cases, students have left the institute, in mid-course, dissatisfied.

In the absence of the needs analysis component, the ILI programme lacks a direct instructional and educational impact analysis, and therefore the means of

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39 It is the researcher’s belief that the 10 respondents who have stated that they were given a needs analysis form have mistaken it for the registration form, thus concluding, incorrectly, that the biographical information that they have supplied will feed into their coursework.

40 Nunan (1997b) identifies two types of needs analysis used by syllabus designers: learner analysis and task analysis.
identifying the purpose for which the courses are taught or learned. This in turn deprives the students of the information necessary to identify the value judgements and belief systems upon which the programme is based when deciding which programme to choose in the target country. The lack of a solid rationale for ASL programmes is a common characteristic of a number of institutions offering this kind of adult education in Cairo. It is highlighted by the lack of specifications by the Ministry of Education or the Ministry of Higher Education for these programmes.

Question 22 concerns the extent to which ILI learners have felt that the ILI course has met their language learning needs. The respondents are asked to choose one of three options: “Yes”, “No” or “I do not know”. This question aims to explore the impact of the lack of a needs analysis application on syllabus design (Q21) on the learners’ ability to learn the language and on their expectations of the programme.

Of the 34 subjects only one student (Q/L 8) did not answer this question. Of the remaining 33 respondents, 24 students (73%) stated that the MSA course which they studied met their needs. Six students (18%) did not know, and 3 respondents (9%) stated that it did not respond to their needs. It is worth mentioning that 3 of the respondents commented on their answers by adding that they were “not sure”.

Although the ILI does not use needs analysis to inform its specification of course content and decision-making concerning syllabus and methodology, the responses show that the majority of the ILI learners have felt that the MSA programme has met their needs. Their opinion is based on the fact that the structural ILI MSA syllabus focuses on a list of grammatical items and vocabulary which provides a basic element in acquiring communicative competence. This coincides with Nunan’s (1997b: 21) assertion that

41 Nunan (1997b: 24) acknowledges that: “an important step in the development of a language programme is identifying learning goals. These will provide a rationale for the course or programme. Learning goals may be derived from a number of sources, including task analysis, learner data, ministry of education specifications, and so on. The nature of the courses to be derived from syllabus specifications, the length of the courses, and many other factors will also largely dictate the types of communicative and pedagogic objectives which are both appropriate and feasible for the educational system in question.”
Analysis of the language used in different domains seems to indicate that, apart from certain technical terms, linguistic elements are remarkably similar. It is argued that whatever the learners' final communicative purposes are, they should be taught those elements that represent a 'common core' of language.

It can, therefore, be concluded that, despite their individual needs and different academic or professional requirements, the majority of the ILI learners want general Arabic.\footnote{Nunan (1997b: 22) makes the same assumption with regards to English learners.}

The fact that 18 per cent of the respondents indicated that they do not know whether the course has met their needs could be attributed to their tendency to measure their proficiency in a language by what they still need to achieve. This is in line with Clark's (1999: 539) assertion that "needs analysis may also extend to identifying the gap between the learners' current capability and the desired outcome". The "do not know" ratings can also mean that the term "needs" as presented in the questionnaire is open to many interpretations.\footnote{Clark (1999: 539) acknowledges that the term “needs” can refer both to what the learner needs to have done by the end of a course, and to what the learner needs to do during a course in order to learn effectively. It can refer to stable needs or needs that emerge as the learning progresses. It can refer to subjective needs felt by the learner, and to objective needs determined for learners by others, which the learner may not perceive".}

\section*{5.2.3.2 The ILI learners' reasons for learning Arabic: Students' motivation\footnote{For the definition of motivation see Harmer (1990); Brown (1987); Dörnyei (1999); and Littlewood (1999a).} (Q9)}

This section summarises and discusses the learners' responses to Q9 which seeks the reasons why the respondents are studying Arabic. The question provides a list of integrative and instrumental reasons (labelled 9.a to 9.j) from which the respondents choose those most relevant. According to Brown's\footnote{"Instrumental motivation refers to motivation to acquire a language as means for attaining instrumental goals: furthering a career, reading technical material, translation, and so forth. An Integrative motive is employed when learners wish to integrate themselves with the culture of the second language group, to identify with and become a part of this society"(Brown 1987:115).} definition of integrative and instrumental motivation, questions a, c, f, j, and i may be classified under integrative motivation, with questions b, d, e, g, and h under instrumental motivation. In addition
to the list provided, some students have given a number of other reasons for studying Arabic, as follows:

"[I am] just interested [in Arabic]."

"I lived in an Arab country for two–three months."

"I like languages and I lived in Saudi Arabia."

"In Japan we do not know much about the Arabs. I think that the Arab countries are [one] of the biggest groups in the world. I, therefore, wanted to know about them more."

"I spent my childhood in the Middle East."

Since these reasons are related to individual experiences and were not initially available in the questionnaire, the researcher will limit the discussion of the findings to the responses provided in Table 5.7

Table 5.7 makes clear that, in answering Q9, many of the respondents have chosen more than one reason for wanting to learn Arabic and their choices indicate integrative and instrumental motivations for fulfilling this aim. Learners’ motivations provide insights into the respondents’ attitudes towards ASL. A discussion of these motivations and attitudes towards language learning is presented below.

The high ranking of “studying Arabic because of interest in Arab culture” shows that the respondents enjoy a positive attitude towards the Arabic language and an empathy with Arab culture. The students’ empathy is the outcome of following various courses of study related to Islam and/or the Middle East. A large number of these respondents (17) are students from the University of Edinburgh,46 which supports this attitude. In the researcher’s experience, the students at Edinburgh are taught by those who teach the target culture47 on the

46 At the Department of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Edinburgh, Arab postgraduate students are asked by the Department to assist in teaching Arabic and/or assist in giving mini-lectures about Arab-related topics to the students. This practice helps dissipate the negative stereotyping of the TL group in the West (see Suleiman, 1993).

47 This is in line with Harmer (1990), who states that teachers, who hold negative perceptions of the TL culture do not prompt their learners’ extrinsic motivations. See also, Littlewood (1999a).
Basis of a firm commitment in the pedagogic process to seeing this culture in its own right and to evaluating it with reference to its own canons, rather than to judge it from the perspective of the tourist who tends to compare what he comes across in the foreign environment with things back home (Suleiman, 1993:74).

It is important to mention that integrative motivation, when coupled with a positive attitude towards the L2, can account for learners’ success in attaining high levels of proficiency in second language acquisition. Furthermore, a positive language attitude boosts the learners’ extrinsic or instrumental motivation in as much as it does their intrinsic or integrative motivation (Harmer, 1990). In this case, extrinsic motivation, together with a positive L2 attitude, lead to the learners’ success in language learning.

Table 5.7 Learners’ motivation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q</th>
<th>Reasons for learning Arabic</th>
<th>N (34)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>I have distant ancestors who spoke Arabic</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>It will help me in the future in my professional career</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>I am interested in the Arab culture</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>It is required as part of my degree</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>For research purposes</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>I have friends or relatives who speak it</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g</td>
<td>I need to fulfil a foreign language requirement for graduation</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>I want to do something different</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>I am interested in the politics and economic systems of the Arab countries</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j</td>
<td>I am a Muslim and Arabic is the sacred language of the Koran</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.7 shows that a number of respondents learn Arabic to extend their career opportunities or fulfil the requirements of their university degree. Both reasons clearly indicate instrumental motivation. It is the researcher’s belief that the

49 Note that the “No” column represents the number of students who chose this answer. Because multiple answers are possible, totals exceed 100%.
high drop-out in students' numbers at the more advanced levels, referred to in Chapter 4 and in Belnap's survey (1987), is related to instrumental motivation. Students who are instrumentally motivated tend to drop language study once the mission of passing an examination or finding employment has been accomplished.

The table also shows that 74 per cent of ILI learners are studying Arabic because they are interested in Arab culture, compared with 50 per cent who do so because it will help them in their existing or future professional careers. It is surprising that learning Arabic as an academic requirement (44%) ranked in third place, despite the fact that the majority of the respondents are university students. It is also interesting to note that Islamic and religious beliefs form only 3 per cent of the respondents' reasons for studying Arabic. This finding indicates that the ILI does not seem to attract large numbers of students from a Muslim background.\(^{50}\)

An interest in Middle Eastern politics and economics (Q9.i) as well as their wish to attempt something exciting and different (Q9.h), are given an equal rating (44% each of the responses) to the respondents' instrumental needs for widening their career prospects. It is worth mentioning that neither of these two reasons (Q9.i and Q9.h) match the types of motivation mentioned. This finding supports Oxford's (1999a) assertion that, in relation to second language learning, many types of motivations have not yet been identified. In the light of Oxford's (ibid.) argument, the researcher attributes the respondents' latter (Q9.h) reason for studying Arabic to "entertainment motivation,"\(^{51}\) whereas the former (Q9.i) reason, if not the learners' field of study, can be attributed to personal interest and general education.

In trying to identify the different kinds of motivations of the ILI learners, the researcher agrees with Littlewood (1999a: 67-68) that "motivation results from an interplay between internal and external factors" which boost learning. It will, therefore, be interesting to examine whether these motivational and L2 attitude

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\(^{50}\) The ILI, with national security in mind, adopts an explicit secular policy of recruiting students.

\(^{51}\) See Oxford (1999a: 556).
factors are well exploited by the teachers to encourage and optimise learning\textsuperscript{52} in the light of the forthcoming findings of the questionnaire.

5.2.3.3 The Learners’ Objectives (Q 11)

Since the ILI MSA syllabus is structurally based, it is necessary to identify the students’ objectives in order to compare them with those of the ILI syllabus. This comparison is important because it indicates the extent to which the ILI syllabus can cater for the students’ short and long-term goals.

Table 5.8 ILI learners’ objectives\textsuperscript{53}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q 11</th>
<th>Students’ objectives</th>
<th>N (34)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>Read and write Arabic (not speak)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>Participate in short simple conversations</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>Listen to the news in Arabic and be able to discuss the main topics</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>Build my vocabulary to meet areas that are more sophisticated</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>Function as a native speaker or interpreter</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>Consolidate my knowledge of Arabic grammar and build on it</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g</td>
<td>Understand the culture of the people</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>Participate in formal discussion</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>Develop my language skills according to my own level of study</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{52} Littlewood (1999a: 67-68) asserts that: “external factors can often be directly manipulated in order to help learning. (e.g. by providing certain kinds of input, arranging trips to the other country, and so on). Internal factors can sometimes be influenced in a less direct way (e.g. teaching about the country may create favourable attitudes), but it is more often a question of having to simply recognise them and take account of them as much as possible (e.g. by modifying courses to suit different levels of aptitude).” Oxford (1999a: 558) also states that “teachers might focus more clearly on heightening the L2 learning motivation by making sure the material and tasks are communicative, non threatening, exciting relevant, appropriately challenging, capable of stimulating successful performance.”

\textsuperscript{53} Because multiple answers are possible, totals exceed 100%. 

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Question 11, therefore, provides the respondents with a list of short-term and long-term objectives from which they are asked to mark those most relevant to their study at the ILI. Questions 11.a, b, d, f, and i represent the short-term goals and Q11.c, e, g, and h represent the long-term ones.

When answering Question 11, many of the respondents chose more than one objective for their study of Arabic at the ILI (Table 5.8). In examining the learners' responses, three points are noted. First, the majority of the ILI learners tend to share a short-term goal-definition strategy in learning MSA because of the limitations of time and resources available to them in Cairo. Second, the respondents' short-term goals are strictly performance-oriented. This shows that the students are realistic about what they can achieve in such a short period with regards to their current proficiency level. It can also be said that the respondents' short-term objectives are based on the fact that the majority of the students are instrumentally motivated to learn Arabic. Third, unlike the majority of the respondents' communicative long-term objectives (Q11.c and g), the learners' short-term goals focus mainly on the linguistic aspects of language learning.

This ultimate communicative-goal of language learning reveals two characteristics of the study abroad learners: (1) learners share a functional view of language which does not ignore the structural aspect but regards the mastering of linguistic components as a means to achieving communicative competence; (2) the learners' long-term objectives are formed by their integrative motivation.

Table 5.8 ranks the ILI students' objectives according to their significance to the students. Below is a presentation of the ranking of the short-term objectives, followed by that of the long-term objectives.

The learners rank "Building a more sophisticated vocabulary" (Q11.d) in first place (23 learners). Their response means that they expect the ILI programme to

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54 Nunan (1997b) defines the performance component of a syllabus as what the learner is to be able to do as a result of instruction.
55 See Q9, Section 5.2.3.2.
focus on this linguistic ability. This requirement is, perhaps, due to the general trend among many students to measure their language learning progress by the number of words that they learn and use at different levels. It could also, refer to the difficulty that Western students confront in learning Arabic vocabulary because of the lack of common roots in their native language and Arabic.

"Consolidating knowledge of Arabic grammar and developing it" (Q11.f) comes in second place (20 learners). This choice is directly affected by the requirements of the learners' university courses, which, to a great extent, stress the teaching of the language system by translation at the expense of communicative skills. It could also be said that knowledge of grammar gives many learners a quick, though sometimes false, sense of achievement that motivates them to continue studying the language for longer periods and enables them to assess their progress. Although these two goals (Q11.d & f) coincide with the ILI syllabus objectives, as presented in the ILI documents, it has to be mentioned, at this stage, that the ILI MSA syllabus lays more emphasis on grammar than vocabulary.56

“Developing language skills” (Q11.i) ranks in third place (18 learners), whereas “Participating in short simple conversations” (Q11.b) comes in fourth place. The researcher believes that the low priority given to basic conversation is unexpected. Surely residence in an Arab country should have prompted the learners to give this objective top priority for reasons of survival. This ranking seems to reiterate the learners’ belief in language “learning” as opposed to language “acquisition”. Their belief is sustained by their academic approach to MSA as enforced by their universities, where Arabic instruction emphasises conscious learning of the language system at the expense of a more balanced approach combining learning with the opportunities for the acquisition of language in an Arabic-speaking country.57

56 In the classroom observation (Chapter 6) it will be interesting to examine how much weight is placed on grammar and vocabulary.
57 Harmer (1990) acknowledges that a balanced activities approach is one that strikes a balance between roughly tuned input and communicative output. Mastering vocabulary and grammar is achieved by presentation and initial practice that develop the different language skills within a balanced activities approach and finally enable the learner to participate in short conversations.
The observation that “Reading and writing Arabic” (Q11.a) ranks least important among the short-term objectives could be attributed to the fact that the majority of the respondents are university students who have already been studying MSA for at least two years. Therefore, these students consider themselves to have passed the “threshold of illiteracy” in Arabic long before coming to the target language country. However, this ranking highlights an incompatibility between the requirements of the students’ university degree and the sociocultural role attributed to MSA in the Arab-speaking world. Since most academic language teaching programmes lack the aspects of interactive communication, which aims at enhancing the learners’ aural skills and acquainting them with the Arab culture, these two aspects have become the main objective of the study abroad period. Nevertheless, it should be noted that many universities restrict the financial support given to their students to MSA contact hours, to fulfil the degree requirements, instead of encouraging the learning of ECA, which facilitates the interaction required for cultural exposure.

The respondents’ ranking of reading and writing as least important also coincides with the ILI teachers’ (as language learners) ranking of these two skills.58 According to Belnap (1987) and Suleiman (1993), this is because language learners regard listening and speaking as superior to reading and writing. Their view is based on the fact that aural/oral communication with Arabs facilitates the students testing their own world image and prejudices concerning other nations against the reality of living and communicating within the foreign language country and interacting with its native speakers.

Let us now turn to the learners’ ranking of the long-term objectives. First comes “Listening to the news in Arabic with the aim of discussing the main topics” (Q11.c), followed by the learners’ interest in “Understanding Arab culture” (Q11.g). In third place comes “Participating in formal discussions” (Q11.h) and finally, their interest or goal “To become interpreters” (Q11.e). Although listening to the news in Arabic is considered one of the means of finding out more about Egypt and the

58 See Chapter 4, Section 4.2.3.3.
region, the respondents clearly differentiate between that objective and “understanding Arab culture” by giving more prominence to the former. The priority that the respondents give to “Listening to the news”, in particular, is ascribed to their awareness of the diglossic nature of Arabic, where MSA is not the norm for communication in daily life. Nevertheless, the learners believe that listening is the route to understanding, which is required to participate in dialogue and eventually to communicate or work in the target language country.

Having presented the learners’ ranking of the short and long-term objectives, it is perhaps worth reiterating that the MSA course objectives in the ILI brochure and Certificate Documents meet the respondents’ short-term goals. Since the course objectives are meant for short-term students, they focus on the outcome of the instruction instead of what the students are able to do at the different levels of learning. Focusing on the outcome of instruction enables teachers and students to measure progress, which enhances a sense of achievement for both parties during the students’ short period of study.

The learners’ responses to Q49 concerning the ILI syllabus show that the MSA syllabus fails to cater for the students’ long-term communicative goals. Also, they reveal that the short-term objectives of the ILI programme do not lead to the communicative competence required by the students. Nevertheless, this deficiency cannot be taken at face value because it is linked to a number of complicated issues, the most important of which include: the economic factors restricting the sending institutions; the students’ duration of stay in the host institution; the irregularity and unpredictability of the number of students for whom the host institutions expect to cater each year; the multi-national educational systems and backgrounds of the students; the different requirements of the sending universities; the time and costs entailed in preparing the necessary material incorporating these points; hiring the necessary teachers to cater for the long-term objectives of a small proportion of its students; and ensuring a financial reward for the ILI.

59 Q49 is an open-ended question which is discussed in a later section of this chapter.
An examination of the ranking of the students’ short and long-term objectives suggests to the researcher that if it is impossible to compile a syllabus with long-term objectives, it is necessary for the ILI to include a variety of language activities which would compensate the students for their unfulfilled goals. The ILI class activities should therefore give priority to listening comprehension and vocabulary building, followed by the teaching and consolidation of grammatical structures. According to the learners’ long-term goals, which are greatly enhanced by the sociocultural realities of Arabic, everyday conversations in MSA should be given second priority to understanding and speaking about current affairs as presented by the media. Reading and writing should include discussion, which enriches the learners’ experience and develops their communicative skills of negotiating meaning and demonstrating social competence.

5.2.3.4 Non-linguistic Factors Affecting the Students’ Learning of AFL in Cairo and/or at the ILI (Q16 - 17)

The researcher earlier suggested that an Arabic speaking environment is the solution for the learning problems that face the student of Arabic in a Western culture due to the diglossic nature of the language. Questions 16 and 17, therefore, explore the positive and/or negative effects of a number of non-linguistic factors (Table 5.9) on the learners of Arabic in the target culture. Question 17 and its responses were excluded from the analysis because of the learners’ misinterpretation of the question: the information given was inconsistent and factually incorrect.

All 34 respondents answered Q16 which asked them to indicate whether the listed non-linguistic factors (Table 5.9) had a “positive effect”, a “negative effect”, or “no effect” on their learning experience in the target culture. The findings of Q16 are grouped and discussed below according to the students’ classification.

Positive Effect

Table 5.9 shows that the “length of stay in the target culture” has the most positive effect on the acquisition of Arabic language. Of the total number of respondents, 82 per cent believe that the longer they stayed, the more progress they made in learning
Arabic. For example, Q/L 32 comments that she would prefer a longer period in the
target culture to achieve the desired proficiency level. However, it is becoming more
difficult, economically, for Western universities to cater for this preference. A
number of Western universities today reduce the duration of the study abroad courses
and/or reduce the financial support provided to students.

The students' background education in Islamic and Middle Eastern studies
occupied second place among the positive factors. Perhaps, this is because
background information about the Arab world helps to orientate students in the new
learning environment and, to some extent, facilitate interaction in a country where
not only the students feel alienated from the local people, but also many natives are
biased against the West because of the cultural, political and economic
stereotyping. The advantage of some background information about the target
culture highlights the importance of a cultural orientation for students who have not
had the opportunity of studying Middle Eastern history, literature or culture
beforehand.

The fact that 32 per cent (11 learners) of the total number of respondents (34
learners) thought their cultural background, as Westerners, had a positive effect on
their study of Arabic, shows a mutual interest between the students and the native
speakers in exchanging information about each other's culture. This interest attracts
local people to the learners and provides opportunities for social interaction.

Negative effect

The respondents' sex is the factor that has the most outstanding "negative effect" on
their learning experience, particularly regarding the female students' interaction
within an Arab society. A number of female students felt that they were not provided
with the same opportunities of social conversation that are available to their male
counterparts. Female students in general find it difficult to talk to men in the streets
without being harassed. It is, therefore, natural for the ILI female learners to feel

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60 Cultural stereotyping is the oversimplification of other people's cultures because of the misguided
assumption by a particular group of people that reality can be objectively interpreted through one's
own cultural pattern which colours one's world-view (Brown, 1987:124).
intimidated in a male-dominated society. The female learners’ allegation of unequal opportunities is substantiated by Q/L 10 who, unlike his female colleagues, feels that his “sex” has had a positive effect on his learning experience.

**Table 5.9 Non-linguistic factors and learning environment (Q16)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q 16</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Factors affecting learning</th>
<th>Positive effect</th>
<th>Negative effect</th>
<th>No effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Ethnic/Cultural</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Former education</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Occupational background</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Length of residence in the T. C.</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Urban/rural background</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Climate</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Religious/spiritual beliefs</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is interesting to note that “climate” comes second to “sex” as a “negative effect” on learning in the target culture. Of the total number of respondents, 24 per cent think that the hot climate and the heavy pollution in Cairo negatively affect their study of Arabic. The idea of heat as unconducive to learning is only natural when the majority of the ILI learners are from Western countries with colder climates. This finding, however, should persuade the ILI to offer its students more intensive courses during the winter and autumn terms and fewer during the summer. The sending institutions should also seriously consider the climate of the target country when organising and planning study abroad courses for their students.

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61 Percentages are given to the nearest 1%; rounding errors mean that totals sometimes vary from 100%.
In contrast to the 32 per cent of the respondents who think that being a Westerner positively affects their study abroad, 15 per cent allocate first place to this element as a factor that negatively affects their study. This group of respondents believes that Egyptians are attracted to them because they are interested in practising their English. This interest, unintentionally, deprives the learners, in many instances, of the opportunities that they need to practise speaking and hearing only Arabic in the streets and at social gatherings.

No Effect

The "religious and spiritual factors" together with the "age factor" attain highest responses in the "no effect" group. Two learners have made two interesting comments. In relation to the "age factor", Q/L 3, who was only 22 years old, comments that had he learnt at a younger age, he would have done better. In relation to "religion" a Muslim student, (Q/L 29), says that he does not know whether or not his being a Muslim has affected his Arabic learning experience in Cairo.

5.2.3.5 THE ILI CLASSROOM LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES (Q85)

Question 85 (Table 5.10) concerns the activities most commonly practised in the ILI classroom. It is argued that the type of classroom activity reveals the underlying goals of a language-teaching programme. This is because the teachers' choice of activities is strongly influenced by their assumptions of language teaching and learning and the consequent implementation of the syllabus. For example, sentence transformations, controlled language production and replica of dialogues indicate a strictly product-oriented syllabus that focuses on the knowledge of structures and skills learned by the students to fulfil the goal of language teaching instead of focusing on the learning process itself (Nunan, 1997b).

Question 85, therefore, provides the respondents with a list (Q85.a - 85.g) of classroom activities revealing the different teaching methods (Table 5.10). The respondents are then asked to indicate which activities the teachers used "some" or "all of the time". The answers provided will help in assessing the ILI programme by analysing the assumptions underlying the specified activities. It will also help in
assessing the ILI syllabus in relation to both the students' needs as well as the variant of the language (MSA or I.CA) which they are studying. Although all 34 respondents answered this question, Q/L 9 has stated that none of the activities mentioned related to her experience (N/A), and Q/L 14 has added “texts” to the list provided. These two categories (Q 85.h & i) have been added at the end of Table 5.10 and are highlighted by a bold frame.

Table 5.10 ILI classroom activities (Q 85.a – 85.i)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q 85</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>N (34)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>Role play</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>Note-taking</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>Talking and listening to other students</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>Making students give lectures about a variety of topics</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>Memorising conversations &amp; dialogues</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>Songs</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g</td>
<td>Language games</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>Texts</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5.9 gives a clearer image of the most commonly used activities in classroom practice. However, Q85.h and i are not represented in the figure to avoid misleading the readers, because these items were not included on the questionnaire in the first place.

This Figure shows that “talking and listening to other students” is probably the most common activity practised in the ILI classroom (94%). Classroom Observations (Chapter 6) will explore further whether this technique is used with a genuine intention to communicate or mainly focuses on acceptability and accuracy of pronunciation and grammar. However, it is worth noting that, sometimes, genuine speaking activities are frustrating for students who demand immediate teacher feedback on the accuracy of their language production, and who perceive peer input

62 Because multiple answers are possible, totals exceed 100%.
as an exposure to a somewhat inaccurate sample of the pronunciation and structure of the target language.

Figure 5.9

"Role play" (Q85.a) is the next most common activity in classroom practice (41%). This is a technique used by the teachers in their search for procedures to avoid boredom and to create more interaction in the classroom. Although simulation and role-playing are recognised techniques for "organising controlled, pre-communicative language practice" (Littlewood 1999c: 49), the ILI teachers normally practise this activity technique to encourage free production of the language taught, after reinforcing the accuracy of taught structures and topic-related vocabulary.

"Mini-lectures" (Q85.d) and "memorisation of conversations as well as dialogues" (Q85.e) are placed on an almost equal level. The former requires strong comprehension skills and rephrasing and manipulation of meaning and structures, while the latter emphasises accuracy of production by providing a repertoire of samples upon which the students can draw when exposed to similar situations. It is, however, worth mentioning that "mini-lectures" are not a widespread activity practised by all ILI teachers. It is mainly restricted to a few teachers who are well trained in teaching advanced groups and university students. The fact that it comes in third place (38%) among the more frequently practised activities may be because the
majority of the respondents are university students whose proficiency levels range between Intermediate and Advanced.

5.2.3.6 THE ILI COURSEBOOKS AND SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL: CONTENT AND GRADING (Q75 – Q83)

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ILI TEXTBOOK TO THE COURSE

Question 75 asks the respondents, from their classroom experience, to rate the importance of the textbook to the ILI course. The information provided by their answers is significant because the textbook is perhaps the most important measure of a specific programme’s objectives and syllabus design. The fact that the ILI and other ASL programmes in Cairo simply use the textbook as the syllabus instead of compiling a syllabus document, explains the importance of the students’ perception and assessment of this book to this research. In fact, the students’ perception and assessment of the ILI textbook is essential for two reasons: (1) to identify to what extent the course meets the students’ needs; and (2) to give expression to the teachers’ assertions concerning the ILI teaching methodology. In order to establish the importance of the textbook to the ILI programme, Q75 allows the respondents to choose one or more of the three choices: “an end in itself”; “a means to an end”; and “necessary to the course”. Of the 34 respondents, 3 students (Q/L 8, Q/L 19 & Q/L 32) did not answer this question.

In the absence of a comprehensive syllabus and an objectives document, the researcher would have expected most of the responses to Q75 to be in favour of the textbook as “necessary to the course”. However, the responses did not meet this expectation since they reveal that 58 per cent (18 students) of the ILI learners perceive the textbook as “a means to an end”, while 48 per cent (15 students) only regard it as “necessary to the course”. It is also worth noting that only 3 per cent (one student) of the students see it as “an end in itself”. These responses imply that textbooks are the means by which the teachers achieve their target. This invites us to believe that few ILI teachers refrain from using the textbook or can do without it.

63 See Chapter 1.
64 The ILI teachers expect the students to complete a set number of units allocated to a particular level of language proficiency before they can move to a higher level.
As Harmer (1990) rightly acknowledges, such dependence on the textbook results in limiting the teachers,\(^{65}\) which generates a situation where students are bored and have weakened motivation. This is an assumption that is reinforced by the following comment from Q/L 18:

"The lessons where I found I have been bored are those where the teachers have based the whole lesson on the textbook, making me feel that I could have done it at home."

COURSEBOOK DESCRIPTION

Question 76 concerns a description of the ILI coursebooks provided at the different levels of instruction. It is important to point out that the percentages provided in Table 5.11 express the respondents’ perception regarding the representation of each item in the coursebook at the various proficiency levels of instruction. A description of the ILI coursebook is given below, based on the questionnaire results, which are verified by an examination of the actual textbooks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of coursebook</th>
<th>N (34)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic texts</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-vowelled texts</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar rules in Arabic</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety of grammatical drills</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety of communicative activities</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illustrated vocabulary lists</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vowelled texts</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graded texts</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-graded texts</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translated vocabulary lists</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammatical rules explained in English</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{65}\) See Section 5.1.2.

\(^{66}\) Because multiple answers are possible, totals exceed 100%.
The respondents state that the Arabic texts in the coursebooks are non-vowelled (91%) and on the whole ungraded (30%). Each Arabic text is followed by a number of grammar-based drills (67%) and to a lesser extent by communicative activities (33%). Seventy-six per cent of the respondents assert that the grammatical rules presented in the books are written and explained in Arabic and that the books on the whole have few illustrated vocabulary lists (21%). Also, the responses reveal that the books do not include any translations of either vocabulary or grammar (3 %).

An examination of the MSA coursebooks not only confirms the students' responses, but also reveals the following additional information: (1) the textbooks lack an introduction to explain their objectives to the teachers and the students; (2) the textbooks lack both a glossary and index, which Nasban (1990) considers to be of vital importance to any Arabic Second Language textbook; and (3) textbooks also do not possess the positive elements of “summarising what has been studied so that the students can revise grammatical and functional points that they have been concentrating on” (Harmer, 1990: 219).

The students' description of the ILI coursebooks is reinforced by some of the students' comments on a later section of this questionnaire (Q94) which concerns aspects of the ILI programme that could have aided learning, had they existed. However, the researcher has chosen to quote them here because they support the respondents' description of the books:

I don't like the ILI textbook so much. For me it is not so good. First, there are no vocabulary lists. I think it [vocabulary] is the most important part in studying language. [A vocabulary list] makes us know which words we should know at a particular level. Also, it helps us remember the words. Second, there are not enough exercises. I feel the texts are not for us but for the school (it’s just a complaint). (Q/L 7)

The coursebook is outdated and dull. I suggest reading children's stories because they are more fun. (Q/L 4)
CRITERIA FOR ORGANISING THE CONTENT OF COURSEBOOKS

Questions 77 and 78 refer to the students’ opinion of the criteria followed by the ILI in the organisation and grading of texts in the MSA books. Question 77 asks the students about the criteria for grading the texts in the coursebooks, while Q78 asks the students’ if they think that the shifts between the units within the books are “graded”, “sudden” or “disconnected”.

Only 27 students answered Question 77. Two of the students (Q/L 9 & Q/L 10) who did not answer this question gave their reasons for not doing so. Q/L 9 exclaimed: “Were they graded!”; Q/L 10 simply wrote: “I do not know.”

The results set out in Table 5.12 show that “complexity of sentence structure” and “topic area” are the two outstanding criteria that students have chosen for grading texts in the ILI coursebooks. However, the classification of “complexity of structure” (67%) as the most important criterion emphasises the synthetic, structural nature of the MSA course, which assumes that language “learning is additive and linear” (Nunan, 1997b: 39).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basis for grading text</th>
<th>N (27)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of students</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complexity of sentence structure</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree of specialised sophisticated vocabulary</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic area</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of sentences and texts</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of paragraphs</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is interesting to note that although “topic area” has been allocated second place, it does not genuinely indicate an analytical approach to language learning or

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67 Because multiple answers are possible, totals exceed 100%.

68 Nunan (1997b: 39) demarcates an analytical syllabus as one which believes that language can be learnt “holistically” rather than “one thing at a time”.

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syllabus design, which would normally be the basis of syllabuses that use this criterion in grading content. The researcher’s teaching experience reveals that the use of the “topic” element in this way is minimal.

The students (48%) consider the “degree of specialised sophisticated vocabulary” the third most important criterion for grading texts in the MSA books. This stresses the synthetic approach to language learning (mentioned above), and consequently to language teaching.

Only 33 respondents answered question 78 (Figure 5.10). An examination of Figure 5.10 reveals that the students largely agree that the shifts between the units in the ILI textbooks are well planned, with one unit leading smoothly into the next. These well-planned shifts are similar in all synthetic syllabuses which build on the structure and vocabulary taught in the previous units.

However, 30 per cent of the students think that the units are disconnected. The conflict of opinion between the respondents may have arisen because they have been studying at different levels. The use of an anthology of reading materials, which is not linguistically graded nor streamed in with the MSA coursebooks, has most probably contributed to this difference in opinion. Q/L 25, an advanced student, sustains this assumption with the following comment:

I think the ILI course up to level six is very well designed. Each unit builds into the preceding one and teachers introduce speaking exercises gradually {....}. After level six I wasn’t so happy.

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69 Nunan (1997b: 38) defines analytic syllabuses as those “in which the learners are exposed to language which has not been linguistically graded”. They “result from experiential rather than linguistic content {....}. Such content might be defined in terms of situations, topics, themes, {....} or other academic or school subjects.”
Figure 5.10

Question 79 concerns the presentation of grammar within the coursebooks. To help the respondents express their views, the question offers them a choice of one or more items on the list (Table 5.13). Of the 34 respondents, three students (Q/L 6, Q/L23 & Q/L 33) did not answer this question, while another two did not choose any of the items on the list, but gave their own personal opinion instead. These answers are also included in the table and highlighted by a bold black frame.

It is clear that the respondents’ choices do not agree on a single format for providing grammar explanations in the coursebooks: 17 students (55%) claim that the grammar is presented in tables; 11 (35%) students claim the book provides clear grammar explanations; and 7 students (23%) state that no explanation of the grammar is provided. However, since the answers here cover a vast range of proficiency levels, and consequently are not restricted to one particular textbook, the percentages in the table indicate the dominant format of presenting grammar in the MSA coursebooks rather than a difference of opinion between the respondents. This disagreement, therefore, highlights a lack of a standard format for the presentation of grammar in the coursebooks. This is probably due to the handouts that teachers use to compensate for the various deficiencies of the coursebooks. These handouts, which are hand-written and are usually subject to individual teachers’ preferences,
lack the uniformity of format and content that would be required in the presentation of grammar in a coursebook.

Table 5.13 Presentation of grammar in the coursebooks (Q79)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method of grammar presentation</th>
<th>N (31)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illustrated grammar in tables</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear grammar explanation of rules</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar explanation in English</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No grammar explanations</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unclear explanations</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is perhaps worth noting that Q/L 34’s perception of grammar explanations as “unclear” may reflect the deficiency of the ILI books in providing explanations in a mediating language other than Arabic. Consequently, it is difficult for “broom cupboard students” who prefer to study at home rather than attend the classes, to understand the lessons or review them on their own.

To sum up the preceding results of Q75 – 79, one could say that the ILI books simply replace the non-existent syllabus document of the programme. Like all other institutions where the syllabus is presented in the form of a coursebook, the ILI teachers are expected to cover a specific number of units in a certain time and to include a number of supplementary materials and activities. The ILI books, in respect to the order of their units, have traits that qualify them as a synthetic structural syllabus. This is because structures are distributed and graded across the range of the ILI proficiency levels, and vocabulary is, to some extent, systematically arranged in the units. Structures based on the syllabus are contextualised in texts that

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70 Because multiple answers are possible, totals exceed 100%.
71 See Chapter I.
focus on "presentation of new language", which are followed by controlled practice of the items presented. This unit layout is emphasised in Q/L 25’s comments.

The comment by Q/L 25 on exercises that ask the students to produce “ten written sentences using a particular grammatical item” refers to a type of drill most revealing of the grammatical nature of the ILI syllabus, which advocates accuracy at the expense of task authenticity, regardless of the students’ level of proficiency. By constantly focusing on controlled and semi-controlled drills of a particular structure, this rigid lesson format deprives the books of the variety 73 and stimulus that motivate and aid the students’ subconscious learning.

An adverse effect of the ILI books, as in all language coursebooks, 74 is that they do not take on board the students’ needs. The texts, therefore, do not always appeal to all the students and sometimes are demotivating to learning:

I feel I would have acquired more vocabulary if the passages in the book had been more interesting and up-to-date. It is extremely difficult to memorize vocabulary on issues such as the production of orange juice because the text is not interesting. More opportunity to watch MSA news and read the papers would be great. (Q/L 11)

I feel that course materials are very outdated and extremely boring {…} In my opinion, and this is only my opinion, the ILI should constantly be on the look for more material. For Edinburgh students, I think the course is not at all well suited. We have all felt that we know the grammar (albeit shakily) and that the only way we have been hard-pushed has been in the acquisition of new vocabulary. (Q/L 34)

The ILI’s coursebooks, as described by the students, fall short of Nasban’s assessment of ASL textbooks regarding vocabulary, pronunciation, layout and format.75 Because the books lack glossaries and illustrated vocabulary lists, the teachers, being aware of this serious deficiency, feel compelled to overemphasise the

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73 Harmer (1990: 218-220) argues that preset decisions on textbooks could be restrictive and often stifle teachers’ initiative by tying them to a particular teaching method dictated by the course content. Therefore, “the discerning teacher” should select suitable items from the textbook and introduce variety to his/her lesson planning “to offset this tendency” and avoid boredom.

74 Harmer (1990) states that interesting materials are based on prior knowledge of the students’ age, sex, background, previous education, occupation, world knowledge and needs.

75 See Section 5.1.2.
presentation, explanation and use of new vocabulary in classroom practice. The researcher has observed that university students, taking courses at the ILI, have often complained about the overemphasis on vocabulary presentation. Students have stated that the presentation of vocabulary in the classroom could have easily been done without, resorting to a vocabulary list. This would have saved classroom time for more communicative language practice. Echoes of this complaint are found in students’ comments on the ILI programme (Q94).

The absence of vocabulary lists as well as glossaries and grammar explanations from the ILI coursebooks makes them fall short of Harmer’s (1990) perception of a “good textbook”. This deficiency leads to a lack of proper documentation of the lesson, which deprives the students of a means of reviewing and studying their lessons at home. Thus, apathy between the students and the coursebook is created as indicated by the following comment:

I don’t like the ILI’s textbook so much. For me it is not so good. First, there is no vocabulary list. I think it is one of the most important parts in studying language {...}. Second, there are not many exercises so I feel the text is not for us but for the school (it is just a complaint). (Q/L 7)

Teachers, however, have compensated for this deficiency in vocabulary lists by “hard pushing” the students, as one of them pointed out. This “hard pushing” is manifested in the teachers’ overemphasis on presenting vocabulary and practising it relentlessly in the classroom.76

76This aspect of the programme is examined further in Chapter 6.
TEACHING MATERIALS (GENERAL)

Questions 80 – 83 examine the following aspects of the MSA materials used by the ILI teachers: (1) the authenticity of the material,77 (2) the nature of the material (audio-visual/written); and (3) the cultural input of the material. This examination is important because classroom materials are the most conspicuous element of classroom practice. It is therefore possible to analyse a "method" at the level of "design", according to Richards and Rodgers' (1999) model, by examining course material.78 It is also argued that the teachers' choice of materials indicates their teaching methods and assumptions about language learning (Nunan, 1999). The responses to each of these questions will be dealt with, separately, in the following section, incorporating relevant quotations from students' responses to Q94, which covers a general account of their experience at the ILI.

Only 30 out of the 34 respondents answered Q80. The question focuses on the authenticity of the materials used by the ILI teachers and asks the students to identify to what extent the materials are authentic, semi-authentic, written by the ILI teachers or a mixture of written and semi-authentic materials. The students are also asked to specify the percentage of each type of the ILI materials. Of the answers provided, those from Q/L 11, 15, 31 & 34 indicate that these respondents have not, quite, understood this question. Nevertheless, their answers are included in the discussion of the findings. To discuss the findings of Q 80, the percentages supplied by the respondents are divided into seven groups ranging from 0 to 100 per cent.79 The percentage range represents the degree to which one of the specified kinds of

77 Lee, Poweny and Honeyman (1995: 115) identify two types of authenticity in teaching materials: "text-authentic material"; and "learner-authentic material". Textually authentic texts are texts that have not been written for pedagogic purposes and which possess "an intrinsically communicative quality". Learner-authentic material are "learner-centred and they can serve affectively as a motivator to promote learner's interest in language learning." Accordingly, not all textually authentic texts are learner authentic and vice-versa. Nevertheless, it is the teacher's role to try and make textually authentic texts learner-authentic by considering the following factors: the learners' interests and background knowledge; criteria for material selection; the learning environment; the communicative value of the task designed for a particular text; the teacher's attitude towards the learners and the teaching methods s/he adopts.

78 See Chapter 4, Section 4.1.

79 These percentage groups are: (0%), (1 – 20%), (21 – 40%), (41 – 60%), (61 – 80%), (81 – 99%), (100%).
materials is given greater importance or occupies more space than the others in the ILI materials.

The analysis of the data shows a wide variation in the answers which indicates a difference in opinion concerning the authenticity of the ILI materials among the students. The respondents state that the bulk of the ILI material is a “mixture of both” (semi-authentic & written material). Within the category of 100 per cent, this choice amounts to 23 per cent, which is the highest proportion in the students’ opinion grouping. Written material is the next most widely used teaching aid, as it is given the least rating (33%) in the zero per cent category group and the highest proportion (20%) within the category of 81–99 per cent. The respondents’ answers also show that authentic materials are the least represented in the ILI MSA syllabus. This deprives the ILI learners of the means crucial for successful language learning (Wilkins, 1978). It is, therefore, recommended that the ILI teachers should incorporate into their teaching more materials originally written for the native speakers of Arabic. These materials, according to Nunan (1999), should be reasonably authentic, not only in content and source, but also in relation to the type of activity that the teachers ask the students to undertake in a selectively authentic sociocultural context.

The identified difference in opinion over the authenticity of the ILI materials among the students is most probably due to the lack of source references and proper authentication of the Arabic texts used in the ILI textbook. This need for text authentication, together with the lack of an introduction that describes the writer’s objectives to the students, complicates the situation and misleads the students with regard to whether a particular text is authentic or not.

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80 Wilkins (1978: 79) defines authentic material as “materials which have not been specially written or recorded for the foreign learner, but which were originally directed at a native-speaking audience. Such materials need not even be edited, in the sense that linguistically difficult sections would not be deleted, although the linguistic content of such texts could well be exploited in various ways. The importance of incorporating such materials into courses is that they will provide the only opportunity that the learner will have to see the contrast between the somewhat idealised language that he is acquiring and the apparently deficient forms that people actually use, to meet the forms of language current in speech and to develop the ability to understand language that he will never need to produce.”
It is important to note that although the vast majority of the respondents fall somewhere between the Intermediate and Advanced levels of the ILI proficiency measure, they are still unable to identify the stylistic features of an authentic text. It is clear, therefore, that the respondents have not been exposed to a wide variety of reading passages in their language training. This situation is only to be expected, since the ILI teachers, for want of time to finish the syllabus, are compelled to use the texts in the coursebook, which provide the context for the grammatical items on the checklist of teaching at a particular level. A direct result of this practice is that the learners are limited to unauthentic texts, and are consequently deprived of the training required to make them proficient readers, capable of appreciating the style of a written text.

Another reason for the difference in opinion concerning the authenticity of materials may also pertain to lack of learner-authenticity in the materials used in the books and classroom activities (see Section 5.2.3.6, Footnote 74).

Question 81 asks the respondents to give the percentage of audio-visual material and that of written supplementary materials used by the ILI teachers. The examination of the results show that six out of the total 31 responses given are inaccurate because the percentage mix of audio-visual and written texts to which they refer do not add up to 100 per cent. Nonetheless, the findings show that “audio-visual material” is minimal, whereas written texts are extensively used by the ILI teachers. This result indicates that the MSA programme advocates a teaching methodology that favours reading over listening. It is worth mentioning, however, that this methodology has provoked criticism from the learners and has proven to be unpopular among proponents of audio-visual materials, who have commented\(^1\) that the texts are boring and outdated:

> We would have benefited from more visual aids, games, and general discussion, watching the news would be really helpful for our vocabulary accumulation. Texts should be up-to-date and on topics relevant to our degree. [I think] learning through literature reveals the culture and would be more exciting.

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\(^1\) Quotes are extracted from responses to Q94.
News broadcasts (television and radio, articles from recent newspapers and magazines that deal with current issues that people of our age in Egypt are interested in would be very welcome indeed, regardless of specific grammar. After all Egyptians don't spend one day solely speaking in the conditional). I also suggest reading children's stories. (Q/L 34)

As for things that might have been present I would have liked more listening work as I think this is the area in which I have most difficulty. (Q/L 25)

Media and audio-visual materials are extremely lacking. (Q/L 9)

More watching of films, programs and news on the video could be helpful. (Q/L 19)

We need more audio-visual broadcasts to improve listening skills; more relevant and updated texts e.g. newspaper articles. (Q/L 18)

A closer examination of the relation between the nature (authentic, audio-visual or other) of the MSA material used by the ILI teachers and the students' proficiency levels, according to Section 5.2.3.6, shows that the two do not directly correlate with each other; in other words, it does not follow that the more advanced the students, the more authentic or the more audio-visual materials the teachers are likely to use in teaching, and vice versa. One can, therefore, assume that the students' proficiency levels do not directly influence teachers' choices of material used in a particular class. Therefore, differences in students' opinions over the authenticity and mode (written/audio-visual) of materials used at an Intermediate or Advanced level are more likely to be based on the teachers' preferences and teaching approach than the students' abilities and the material itself.

Questions 82 and 83 concern the respondents' opinion of the cultural input and real-life simulation of the material used in daily classroom practice (Q82) and their effect on the students' comprehension of this material (Q83). These questions ask the respondents to specify the extent to which these aspects are built into the ILI materials, by simply choosing either "all", "most" or "none".

Of the 34 respondents, 30 students answered Q82, while 33 answered Q83. Table 5.14 shows that most of the respondents agree that the ILI materials
incorporate cultural aspects and everyday situations in the Arab world, which reflect the implications of language usage and register. It is worth noting that such a rich cultural input does not pose serious difficulties in comprehension for 88 per cent of the learners. This is in line with Littlewood’s (1999a) belief that a language teacher will try to reinforce the learners’ confidence and self-esteem by aiding their perception of cultural differences. It is also sustained by Suleiman’s (1993) emphasis on the importance of incorporating rich cultural materials in AFL courses.

Table 5.14 Cultural input and its effect on students’ comprehension (Q 82 - 83)82

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q 82</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>Most</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of students</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of students</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 83</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Some</td>
<td>Most</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of students</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of students</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, it must be mentioned, at this point, that the majority of the ILI materials, covering the presentation of culture, tend to express the universalist values of Arab life. This is because these values are considered more suitable for second language teaching/learning than those of nationalism or religion. The mixed religious backgrounds of the ILI teachers could influence their reluctance to incorporate religious teaching-materials for fear of being accused of fanaticism by the other party. Also, fear of evangelism, whether Muslim or Christian, to the “lost souls” of an “unbelieving”83 majority of the students, is at least partly responsible for the lack of religiously oriented texts. The ILI policy discourages national, political and religious discussions owing to the diverse ideologies and beliefs of their students, which could provoke conflict among them or with their teachers.

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82 Percentages are given to the nearest 1°: rounding errors mean that totals sometimes vary from 100°.
83 In Egypt, people are either born Christians or Muslims. A “nothing” belief label is not culturally or religiously acceptable by the least religious Egyptian.
5.2.3.7 LEARNERS AND PROGRAMME ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION TOOLS (Q18, Q19, Q86–93 AND Q92–Q93)

STUDENTS’ SELF-ASSESSMENT VERSUS ILI ASSESSMENT OF THE LEARNERS’ ABILITIES (Q18 WITH CROSS REFERENCE TO Q 10)

Question 10 refers to the time that the respondents have spent in studying Arabic at the ILI, while Q18 asks for the learners’ assessment of their language abilities and level of proficiency, compared with their actual streaming by the ILI (Table 5.15). In examining the respondents’ answers, one notices a discrepancy between the ILI assessment of the students’ proficiency level and that made by the students themselves. This finding highlights the differences between the students’ expectations and the ability of the MSA programme objectives to meet them.

The table shows that only 32 students have answered Q10, while 33 students have answered Q18. Of the 32 respondents, 14 students have been studying Arabic at the ILI for 6 months; seven students for five months; three students for four months; five students for three months; one student for ten months; one student for nine months; and one student for eight months. Depending on the students’ Arabic background, the majority are first placed at the Elementary or Early-Intermediate ILI levels.

84 The ILI advocates the following time scale for streaming students at the different proficiency levels: 8 weeks of MSA ILI course work to move up from the Beginners to the Elementary; 8 weeks to move from the Elementary to the Intermediate; and another 8 weeks to move from the Intermediate to the Advanced.

85 Note that most of the learners have done at least two years of academic MSA at their home institutions before coming to the ILI.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student ID</th>
<th>Period of study at ILI (months) (Q10)</th>
<th>Learners' self assessment (Q18)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beginners</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q/L 1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>+</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Q/L 13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q/L 14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q/L 15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q/L 16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q/L 17</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q/L 18</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q/L 19</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q/L 23</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q/L 24</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q/L 25</td>
<td>Not mentioned</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q/L 26</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q/L 27</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Q/L 30</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q/L 31</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q/L 32</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q/L 33</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q/L 34</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q/L 28 has two different level markers because she considers herself Elementary in conversation and Intermediate in reading and writing.
Of the 14 students who have been studying for six months, 87% of them only rate themselves as Intermediate, whereas the other 8 students (57%) regard themselves as only Elementary. Of the 7 students who have studied Arabic at the ILI for five months, 5 students (71%) regard themselves as Intermediate. Of the remaining 2 students (29%), one has not given any self-assessment, while the other has rated herself at the Elementary level.

There is a striking discrepancy between the learners' self-assessment and the ILI assessment of their abilities. This observation is significant for two main reasons: (1) although 26 respondents, at least, have studied Arabic for a period of two to three years before coming to Cairo, only one student speaks Arabic fluently and considers himself Advanced; and (2) of the 26 who have already studied Arabic, 73 per cent (18 students) consider themselves to have an Intermediate level of language proficiency. This discrepancy emphasises that the more the learners focus on studying MSA, the more likely they are to underrate their proficiency level. Clear examples are those of Q/L 22, who has studied at the ILI for eight months and ranks himself as Elementary, and Q/L 16, who has studied for 10 months, and still ranks herself as a beginner. The researcher believes that this underrating is the result of the diglossic nature of Arabic and the deficiency in the communicative approaches advocated in teaching Arabic in the respondents' home university programmes. This problem requires the ILI to consider integrating the two variants of Arabic in its long-term courses as an obligatory module rather than allowing the students to focus on MSA and ignore ECA or vice versa. By ranking herself Elementary at conversation and Intermediate at MSA, Q/L 28 underlines the importance of a combined course (ECA and MSA).

It is also worth mentioning that in examining Q/L 16, Q/L 21, and Q/L 22's biographical information (see Table 5.1), it becomes clear that these students have

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87 It should be noted that even if we disregard the duration of study at their home universities, a seven-month study period at the ILI, starting from the Beginners Level, should have placed the respondents at the Advanced level.

88 This student is half Arab and half Danish.

89 The researcher has interviewed this Australian student and knows that she has been studying post-intermediate Arabic.
not studied a foreign language before. One could therefore state that the exaggerated underrating of their second language abilities is due to the lack of previous experience in learning a foreign language. Accordingly, it could be concluded that the ability to assess their language proficiency depends on their previous experience in learning languages rather than application of intuitive measures of universal learning. This assumption does not mean that students who have no previous experience of foreign language learning cannot monitor their progress in language learning, because they can always refer to their experience of learning their first language. An example of self-awareness based on the knowledge of the first language is Q/L 28, who did not mention having studied any foreign languages and yet is able to assess herself as a Beginner in conversation and an Intermediate in other aspects of her MSA study.

The findings of Q18 show that the ILI falls short of meeting the learners’ expectations of themselves at the different levels of proficiency. This failing occurs because the ILI expects the learners to fulfil the MSA programme’s pre-conceived\textsuperscript{90} objectives, whereas the learners, after living in an Arab environment, realise the deficiency of these objectives in enabling them to communicate with other people. In other words, the MSA programme’s objectives and its assessment criteria measure the learners’ grammatical/linguistic competence and ignore the learners’ sociolinguistic and strategic competence.\textsuperscript{91} This finding persuades the researcher to encourage the ILI and all other similar institutions that offer ECA and MSA as two separate languages, rather than two facets of the same coin, to consider the “conceptualization and description of proficiency” (Stern, 1987: 341) as a prerequisite to defining this proficiency into objectives or standards. Only then can these objectives “serve as criteria by which to assess proficiency as an empirical fact, that is, the actual performance of given individual learners or groups of learners” (ibid.: 341). Accordingly, the ILI and similar ASL programmes should help the students develop the required sociolinguistic and strategic competencies needed to

\textsuperscript{90} Pre-conceived objectives are objectives that are not derived from students’ needs.

\textsuperscript{91} Stern (1987: 349-357) recognises proficiency as an “abstract scheme” which is multi-faceted and can be broken down into “grammatical competence; sociolinguistic competence; and strategic competence, “rather than to expect it to be expressed in one single concept.”
create independent learners who are able to survive in an Arab environment. This could be achieved by encouraging more outdoor tasks that force the students to interact within this environment.

However, it is only fair to the ILI to point out that this deficiency may be attributed to the economic factors governing their contracts with the sending institutions. This is especially true where the institutions’ budgets cover only MSA tuition and seldom any ECA contact hours, without persuasion by the ILI to include survival ECA tuition, as part of the study abroad packages.

The discrepancy between students’ assessment of their own proficiency levels and that made by the ILI also raises the question of the validity of the ILI tests. This doubt corroborates Stern’s (1987:353) opinion that “language tests represent what is taught in classrooms, and it is arguable that proficiency is more than that and that language tests only partially cover what constitutes proficiency.” This again persuades the researcher to ask ASL institutions in Cairo and elsewhere in the Arab world to agree on a recognised standard tool to measure the learners’ level of competency in Arabic. In the absence of a suitable standard measure, the gap between students’ expectations and the objectives of different programmes is more likely to continue to exist and even widen.

Question 19 asks the respondents to give their reasons for having rated themselves at certain levels of proficiency. Below is a summary of the findings and a discussion of these reasons supported by the students’ responses.

Of the 34 respondents, 2 students (Q/L 30 and Q/L 32) have not answered this question. A few respondents (Q/L 3, Q/L 4, Q/L 9, and QL 31) are happy to rank themselves at the same levels as those of the ILI:

This is my ILI level and it fits my level of Arabic at the present time. (Q/L 3)

I’m in upper-intermediate at ILI. (Q/L 4)
[I consider myself intermediate simply] because I’m in the intermediate class. (Q/L 9)

The other responses cite “speaking” as the main criterion on which to base high or low proficiency in Arabic, which consequently produces the discrepancy between the ILI assessment and their own. This is because speaking and listening are the main goals of foreign students who study Arabic (See Kuntz, 1996; Suleiman, 1991; and Belnap, 1987), whereas it is not given priority among the objectives of the ILI MSA-programme as mentioned in the ILI brochure (see Chapter 3). A clear example of the importance of speaking is demonstrated in the following responses:

Because I can speak in Arabic, I hope that I have reached this level - I mean intermediate level - I can also express my thoughts in Arabic. (Q/L 14)

I can get by in Arabic and understand generally but not specifically what I read and hear. Also, although I can make myself understood there are many mistakes in my spoken language and my accent is quite obviously foreign. (Q/L 18)

I feel that, after more than 2 years of study, I should be able to rate myself more highly, however, I consider my standard Elementary in comparison to where I want it to eventually be. I cannot have a conversation [at an] elementary [level]. (Q/L 27)

Only two respondents showed a broader perspective of assessment by including their “personal effort and directing their own learning” among the criteria for self-assessment.

The responses also confirm the findings and analyses of Q18:

1- The students, unlike the ILI teachers, evaluate themselves on the basis of what still needs to be achieved rather than what they have achieved:

Although I have studied it for 2 years I still feel that there is much to learn both in speaking it and in understanding what people say. (Q/L 19)

Although I feel my comprehension exceeds my ability to speak, I am only able to have very simple conversation and am not able to express my feelings clearly in MSA. (Q/L 21)
I think ILI is a bit generous. I would expect an advanced student to have more fluency and a wider vocabulary than mine. Also I compare my proficiency in Arabic to my proficiency in Spanish and my level in Spanish is much higher. (Q/L 25)

Because "advanced", to me, does not mean fluency, just an advanced level of learning. After 2 1/2 years of studying, I would hope I'm not "Elementary"! I know, however, that what I have still left to learn means I cannot be advanced yet! (Q/L 26)

2- The ILI needs to enforce an integrated MSA and ECA course for its long-term students.

[My] reading and writing of Arabic is good, although further knowledge of vocabulary is necessary. [My] speaking is really at a basic level, I cannot really have a flowing and in-depth conversation yet. (Q/L 5)

I understand all [the] grammar but my skills in speaking are less. (Q/L 6)

I have been studying for 2 years and I feel my grammar is OK and [my] reading and writing is OK too, except for vocabulary (which is my fault for not learning!) Speaking is DEFINITELY a problem, which I started off bad at and wasn't forced to improve at ILI... it is easy to get by without speaking. (Q/L 15)

3- The ILI courses should create more opportunities for oral interaction within a supportive environment.92

I have definitely improved since I have been here, and I feel like I have learnt a lot of vocabulary and [that I] am more confident with grammar. Although I understand all the Arabic spoken in class, I still find it difficult to understand people in conversation. I don't feel that my spoken Arabic is good. (Q/L 1)

I have already studied grammar, but have little speaking practice or vocabulary. (Q/L 8)

Despite good knowledge of grammar/ wide vocabulary, I still have a lot of problems understanding spoken Arabic. (Q/L 17)

I am only at an elementary level in spoken Arabic, because I only began to learn to speak when I came to Egypt and I have found practising opportunities to practise conversation outside the institute difficult sometimes. I am at an intermediate level in other respects because I believe I have a good grasp of basic Arabic grammar and vocabulary

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92 A supportive environment is an environment in which the language is used for daily communication.
and with this am now able to comprehend most Arabic at a basic level at least, and find that I am now able to steer my own learning. (Q/L 28)

4-. The respondents are self-aware learners who look to their "needs" as the main goal of their study abroad programme and therefore the main source of deriving a set of personal objectives, which serve as criteria for assessing their actual performance in Arabic:

I have studied for 2 years, and I have progressed considerably since coming here to Egypt & ILI. My listening comprehension from news programmes and listening to people speak has dramatically improved. (Q/L 20)

5- It is important to agree on a standard roof for the Arabic language, which allows for the conceptualisation and description of the different proficiency levels with the aim of deriving internationally recognised criteria for assessment. The following are examples of the range of criteria (highlighted in bold type) used by the respondents in assessing themselves at the different levels because of the lack of a standard measure of ASL competence:

I have studied Arabic for a couple of years but I am still not very good. (Q/L 34)

When I talk to the people on the street or somewhere else, I have difficulty and also [when I] compare [Arabic with] my other second language (Chinese) [I find that] normally I have no problems speaking it. But in Arabic, sometimes, I cannot say what I want and of course I can’t understand what the people are saying either, even if the conversation is very easy. (Q/L 7)

I am able to make myself understandable and understand conversation on general topics. (Q/L 10)

I am just beginning to learn this language. (Q/L 12)

93 Badawi (1991: 49) asserts that although linguists have agreed that "an" answer has already been given to the proficiency question, through providing the proficiency guidelines for Arabic, they are still far from agreeing that this is "the" answer. Much still has to be done to create a consensus on a scale of language proficiency in Arabic at the national level before we could acknowledge the existing proficiency guidelines on an international level. He argues that the language roof required to measure proficiency in ASL should integrate, what he calls, the native speaker’s "active" and "passive" competence in Arabic Language as well as the native speakers ability to choose between these two competencies on different occasions He emphasises that this "language roof" should be the ultimate goal of the non-native speaker learner regardless of his "specific needs" and the basis for all ASL curricula and testing. (ibid.: 57).
I have been studying (Arabic) for 2½ years. I feel I have a good grasp of basic and elementary grammar, etc. and am therefore learning things of an intermediate level. (Q/L 11)

Because I feel I know things in Arabic, I can read, and I can more or less speak it, but I need to study it more and more to feel secure in what I say, in what I read and write. I still need a lot of hours of study, years maybe. (Q/L 13)

- I can still only hold simple conversation.
- My pronunciation is weak.
- I'm beginning to be able to read and write MSA. (Q/L 16)

- I am at 3rd year at university.
- I have good understanding of Arabic grammar
- I have increased knowledge of vocabulary. (Q/L 24)

Because I can usually understand when people are talking to me – if they don’t use complicated language or heavy dialect – and I can usually make myself understood, plus I can read simple books and express myself in writing – although in a simple language. (Q/L 29)

I have completed two years of study. I can conduct simple conversations and write with moderate fluency on current topics. (Q/L 33)

5.2.3.8 COURSE AND STUDENT ASSESSMENT (Q66-93)

The primary intention of this study is to examine the ILI’s MSA programme at the level of classroom practice since it is more tangible than the level of “Approach”. However, a comprehensive description and examination of a language programme are curtailed in the absence of an assessment element. Hence, the questionnaire (Q86 – 93) addresses the course and student assessment tools of the programme. The questions describe these tools, and accordingly provide the reader with a comprehensive image of the ILI programme.

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94 Nunan (1997b: 4 - 5) states that curriculum study should comprise elements of planning, implementation and evaluation so “that decisions made at one level are not in conflict with those made at another.” Also, Nunan (1999: 116) states: “No curriculum model would be complete without an evaluation component. While it is universally recognised as an essential part of any educational endeavour, it is the component about which most classroom practitioners generally claim the least knowledge, and it is the one area of the curriculum about which many teachers express a lack of confidence.”
COURSE ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Questions 92 and 93 ask the students if they have had any opportunity of providing feedback on their course of study at the ILL. If so, Q92 includes a list of the different aspects of the programme, and asks the students to specify the aspects that they have been required to assess. Question 93 then proceeds to elicit details of the form or format of the feedback.

Of the 34 respondents, two students (Q/L 8 and Q/L 4) did not answer Q92. Hence, only the responses of 32 students are considered in Table 5.16. Of the total answers, the overwhelming majority of the students (84%) confirm that they have not been given an opportunity to assess any aspects of the MSA programme. However, 16 per cent (5 students) have indicated that they have been able to assess the different aspects of the programme and have even specified the assessment form and format that they have used. The researcher's experience, as a member of staff and as an administrator, leads her to believe that the 16 per cent do not express the reality of the programme since the students are not given an assessment form. Consequently, these students’ answers to Q93 are overlooked.

Table 5.16 shows that the ILI programme does not require any form of feedback from the students. It is, however, interesting to note that Q/L 9, who has given a “none” response to Q92 has stated that one of the teachers has informally asked the students for feedback at the end of his course.

One of the confused 5 respondents has unintentionally helped to explain the misunderstanding over Q93. In answering this question, he has specified that “questionnaires” were one form of assessment given to him and added the marginal comment: “this one” referring to the Learners’ Questionnaire provided to him by the

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95 The researcher believes that although the ILI programme is far from being a learner-centred curriculum (see Nunan, 1999), learners’ input is crucial in assessing it at all levels if change or improvement is liable to occur. This belief is emphasised by Q/L 16’s comment on the absence of a feedback form: “Students’ evaluation of class is vital for development of teachers’ skills and of the ILI lessons. I feel this is a big gap at the ILI.”

96 Question 93 asks the students to specify the form or format of this assessment. The students were given the following choices: questionnaires, opinion surveys, interviews, and weekly reports.
researcher. We may conclude from this that other students too, despite the introductory session and letter explaining the purpose of the questionnaire, have still perceived it as a course feedback form, especially when they relate the questionnaire to the researcher, who was then the Director of Development at the ILL. This also explains why, in many instances, students have focused on negative aspects of the programme or on what they have wished the programme to provide in the hope that the researcher, in her position, could implement change.

Table 5.16 Aspects of course assessment (Q92)\(^97\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course aspect</th>
<th>N (32)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of students</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning environment</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A second reason for the misunderstanding over the course feedback may be the students' confusion between the feedback that the learners give to their universities on returning home from Cairo and the feedback form referred to in the questionnaire. It is important here to reiterate that the ILL does not require any form of course feedback. The researcher knows from empirical research that this strategy is advocated to avoid creating bias in the students against some of the teachers, based on a chemistry mismatch rather than sound objective judgement. This kind of situation arouses the teachers' competitiveness and can create an atmosphere of continual rivalry instead of co-operation and co-ordination.

**STUDENT ASSESSMENT (Q86 - 91)**

Questions 86–91 examine the ILL's student-assessment tools at the different stages of the programme (Table 5.17). Question 86 covers the ILL criteria for grouping students on their arrival at the Institute. Question 87 asks the students to choose from

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\(^97\) Because multiple answers are possible, totals exceed 100%. 

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the list provided in Table 5.17 the kinds of tests that they have taken during their study period at the ILI. The basis of the ILI testing procedures is examined in Q88. The students are asked to specify whether the tests have reflected their creativity and flexibility in the language or whether they have just revealed the number of sentences, phrases and words that could be remembered. Question 89 asks how the students were able to monitor their own progress. Finally, Q90 and 91 are general assessment questions that elicit the students’ views concerning the compatibility of the ILI assessment procedures with the course objectives. Where Q90 is a close-ended question examining this compatibility, Q91 is an open-ended question that invites the students to specify whether or not they consider the programme assessment tools to be compatible with the course objectives. The findings and analysis of the preceding questions will be discussed according to the following categories:

1. Means of grouping students
2. Kinds of tests taken and what they measure
3. Means of student self-assessment
4. Assessment tools versus course objectives

MEANS OF GROUPING STUDENTS (Q86)

It is clear from the responses to Q86 that the main criterion for grouping students is the placement test. Although the ILI course-booking form on the link to the ILI website demands information about students’ previous knowledge of Arabic, if any, this information is not crucial in streaming the new students, for the final decision rests with the results of the placement test. However, this test has on many occasions proved inaccurate, for it mainly measures knowledge of structure rather than general language proficiency. This is why the DOS has to review all the classes during the first week of the course by observing how students fit and interact in their new groups, and effecting a few changes between levels where necessary. Students’ choice of their own proficiency level does not play an important role in grouping, because neither the teachers nor the DOS believe that all students are capable of assessing themselves objectively. There is usually the tendency among students of
specific nationalities to overrate themselves, whereas others tend to underrate themselves.

Table 5.17 Assessment (Q86 – 91)\textsuperscript{98}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q 86</th>
<th>Means of grouping students</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>No. of students</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>Placement test</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>Your own choice</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>Background information</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q 87</th>
<th>Kind of tests taken</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>No. of students</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>Proficiency</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>Placement</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>Diagnostic</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q 88</th>
<th>What do tests measure?</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>No. of students</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>The number of phrases &amp; sentences I could remember</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>The flexibility &amp; creativity I have achieved in using the language</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q 89</th>
<th>Means of monitoring Progress</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>No. of students</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>Written tasks set by the teacher</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>Oral language discussions assessed by the teacher</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>Establishing if I could use the language I have learnt outside the classroom</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>Tests</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>Marked homework assignments</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{98} Because multiple answers are possible, totals exceed 100\%.
KINDS OF TESTS AND WHAT THEY MEASURE (Q87 - 88)

Question 87 (Table 5.17), makes clear that the programme includes two compulsory tests: a placement test taken on joining the course, and an achievement test at the end of the course. This assessment procedure is relevant to a product-oriented, structural syllabus, supported by the students’ responses to Q88. In responding to Q88, the majority of the answers show that the tests tended to measure “repertoire and memorised forms and sentences” rather “than the creative use of language usage” or “both” these aspects of language.

According to Q87 (Table 5.17), continuous assessment is minimal since only 12 per cent of the responses mentioned “diagnostic tests”. The table, however, fails to explain whether this percentage indicates that very few teachers use tests throughout the course for assessing students’ achievement and understanding of specific taught items, or that the meaning of the term “diagnostic test” has been misinterpreted.

MEANS OF SELF-MONITORING OF PROGRESS (Q89)

Question 89 investigates the tools made available to the students for assessing their own progress during their course of study and whether these tools are built into the ILI programme or are simply subjective tools based on each student’s intuition. All the respondents answered this question, showing that “marked homework assignments” (Q89.e) and “written tasks set by the teacher” (Q89.a) are given the same level of priority as “establishing their ability to use the language they have learnt in outside-of-the-classroom situations” (Q89.b) as the main tools of self-assessment.

This fact emphasises the importance of giving students homework and explains the frustration of a number of students who have commented that they need more homework. The tendency among the ILI teachers to give minimal homework assignments is perhaps due to the extra time required for marking them. It also

99 It should be mentioned that Q/L 18’s answer to Q88 shows that the tests taken measure “none” of the listed items. In addition, two students (Q/L 7 and Q/L 31) did not answer this question.
reveals the Institute's general perception of the students as tourists who are coming to visit and enjoy themselves, and therefore they should not be troubled by too much work outside the classroom. Another reason for insufficiency of homework assignments could be the wish to save face and keep the classroom atmosphere tranquil at all times by suppressing any likely signs of rivalry between students of different nationalities.

The equally important priority given to statements 89.a and 89.e on the one hand, and to statement Q.89.b on the other, reveals that MSA students need to monitor their written as well as their oral competence in the language. Consequently, the ILI teachers, in designing their assignments, should not only focus on written work but should also consider developing relevant and realistic communicative tasks in which MSA could naturally be used outside the classroom.

It is interesting to note that the learners perceive "Oral language discussions assessed by the teacher" as the least important means of measuring their progress. Although teachers are perceived as an authority on written competence, this is not so when it comes to assessing oral performance. The students regard daily-communication in the street (65%) as a more reliable indicator in this regard. This finding is clearly shown by the low rating (38%) given to "Oral language discussions assessed by the teacher" as a means of assessing students' language progress. The low rating is perhaps due to the general tendency among the ILI teachers to encourage their students by frequently praising their oral performance even when it is inaccurate or incomprehensible.100

ASSESSMENT TOOLS VERSUS COURSE OBJECTIVES (Q91)

To discover the relevance of assessment tools to course objectives as portrayed in the brochure and the ILI course certificate, Q90 and 91 are included in the questionnaire. It must be pointed out that 15 students did not answer these questions as required. Of these Q/L 15 and Q/L 6 have said that it was because they never saw the brochure. This is an interesting remark, which can explain, in many instances, much of the

100 See Chapter 6.
frustration felt by the students about the ILI course. Students are required by their universities to join a particular language course, blindfold and totally ignorant of the impact that lack of information about the course objectives could have on the students' own expectations.

Although Q/L 16 has not given an answer to Q90 and 91, she has made an interesting remark that has indirectly and unintentionally highlighted a discrepancy between course objectives and testing tools: "I do not understand why colloquial exams are written." Also, Q/L 18 has pointed out that although she did not read the brochure, she still thinks that ILI testing could put "more emphasis on language acquisition and writing skills."

However, the 19 students who answered this question are divided in opinion over whether assessment tools have met the course objectives. Ten students chose "Yes", indicating that the course has met their needs, while 9 chose "No". This implies that the ILI needs to make a greater effort to define the course objectives and make them known to all its students.

5.2.4 General Comments on The ILI Experience (Q94)

Question 94 is an evaluative open-ended question. It asks the learners to reflect and comment on aspects of the ILI programme which have actually helped their learning of Arabic, or, hypothetically, could have helped, had the ILI made them available. This question gives the students the opportunity to comment on aspects of the programme which have not been mentioned earlier in the questionnaire. Of the 34 respondents, 6 students have ignored this question, believing that the questionnaire has been fairly comprehensive. The remaining 28 have commented on both the positive and negative aspects of the programme, particularly emphasising those deficiencies and negative aspects that have not met their expectations. A number of students went beyond mere criticism making suggestions for improvement.

In summarising the results of this question, it was found that the responses centred on five main aspects of the programme: (1) materials; (2) teaching
methodology and language of instruction; (3) teachers; (4) factors that aided or hindered learning; and (5) class sizes and lesson duration. Some of the respondents' comments have been quoted previously, as appropriate, to describe aspects of the ILI programme which have already been scrutinised in the questionnaire. Therefore, only the following aspects will be discussed here: teachers; class sizes and lesson duration; and general factors that have helped or hindered learning. It is also important to mention that where some of the comments have overlapped, they have been either mentioned twice (once under each of the relevant topics) or simply presented under the heading to which they are more closely related.

5.2.4.1 THE ILI TEACHERS

The respondents' comments emphasised that the ILI teachers have been the most rewarding factor in their learning experience. They point out that the majority of the teachers have been friendly, have spoken in Arabic and have been enthusiastic. Despite "rumours", they are also on the whole objective. This has facilitated the students' learning and boosted their motivation, thus making their study abroad period a satisfying experience:

I had a very good experience. The atmosphere for learning was one of friendliness and dedication in teaching. The interaction pattern between students and staff (was satisfying). Although I have heard about some problems dealing with subjectivity of some teachers' evaluations, my experiences have been good and I experienced objectivity in evaluation. (Q/L 12)

The way in which teachers always speak in Arabic and are really approachable, friendly and enthusiastic is very good. (Q/L 1)

I believe that I have been very lucky by having what I believe the best possible teachers available in the school as they inspire, motivate the students, especially me to attend the classes. They are an inspiration for me to learn the language, on the ground which they choose the right material. (Q/L 31)

The students' liking of their teachers seems to be an opinion shared among Arabic students in many places. Belnap (1987), in his survey of Arabic students, states that instructors, regardless of their teaching abilities, were the widely enjoyed aspect of studying Arabic by American students. This calls our attention to the importance of
not only the teachers' classroom abilities but also their character as an embodiment of Arab culture and society.

The students' comments about their teachers, largely, support Harmer's (1990) assertion of the qualities required in FL teachers to provide their students with intrinsic motivation. Most prominent among these qualities are: the ability to make his/her classes interesting; the ability to maintain objectivity and fairness to students; as well as the ability to inspire professional confidence.

The ILI teachers have not only been friendly, but also well prepared and organised. This professional dedication has aided the students' learning and activated their long-term memory:

The more organised and the more prepared the teacher was for the class session, the more I was able to retain [the taught language] in my long-term memory. When the teacher was not prepared, I left the class confused. A thoroughly prepared and organized class is the most helpful aid to learning Arabic. (Q/L 22)

The respondents also emphasised the importance of the teachers' role in clarifying the sociocultural role of MSA by constantly highlighting the differences between the two Arabic variants:

Teachers distinguished between ECA & MSA. Teachers' attitude has aided my learning. They were very enthusiastic, well prepared and well organized. I also appreciated the way they, especially ****, always made a very clear distinction between the MSA and ECA, which was really helpful for me in order to grasp the fact that they really are like two different languages. (Q/L 29)

However, the role of the ILI teachers has not been completely faultless, since a number of students think that the teachers have not pushed them enough to use Arabic in the classroom. Q/L 28 also states that some teachers engaged with their students in English conversation in the classroom. This is probably due to the economic factor restricting the availability of classes at all proficiency levels on
demand throughout the year at the ILI. A direct result of this situation is that the teachers are often required to handle mixed-ability and mixed-proficiency groups of students. In such instances, many teachers resort to using English in order to help the weak students keep pace with those who are faster or more advanced, thus controlling elements of anxiety and frustration that could result from incompatibility in the classroom.

Teachers need to be insistent on use of Arabic only in class. It is easy for students to speak in English in class and for the teachers to engage with them in English. Sometimes students will only begin to learn to speak when forced to! (Q/L 28)

I was never forced to speak, which I was grateful for at the time, but if I had been encouraged more or been put in a less advanced class then I would have benefited heaps more and built up my competence by doing so. (Q/L 15)

An interesting point raised by one of the students is “the teachers’ physical position” during teaching. This student criticised the relaxed sitting position of some of the teachers in favour of the class-centered authoritative standing posture. The student believes that the teacher’s standing position and projection of sound is more likely to generate the tension required to guarantee the learners’ attention:

Another factor I find important for teaching, which may seem ridiculous, is that the teacher should stand up for the majority of time when teaching. Teachers who stand up tend to speak louder, command more attention, and project their voice. On the contrary, those who sit down cause a very lethargic atmosphere in class – languages are alive and emotional and should be taught in that way! (Q/L18)

5.2.4.2 Number of Hours and Class Sizes

Only 3 respondents have commented on the timetable of the daily classes and the actual class sizes. Two of them disagree on the length of the classes per day. Q/L 13 thinks that “more hours per day” might have helped learning, whereas Q/L 24 has stated: “Two and a half hours seemed too long”. The only student (Q/L 28) who referred to class sizes found that “ECA and MSA classes were way too big and

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101 The minimum number of students required for opening a class is three. When this condition is not satisfied, the students are told to wait for the following course or are simply given the choice of attending a less well-matched language ability class. Many students prefer the second choice, especially when the Institute offers them a discount.
[consequently there was] not enough time to practice.” It is interesting to note that although the maximum standard number of students is the same for both ECA and MSA classes, “lack of practice” has been mentioned only in relation to ECA. This is probably because, unlike MSA, ECA classes emphasise oral practice of the language to a greater extent. Consequently, more class time is required for each student to practise the language.

5.2.4.3 COURSE RELATED FACTORS THAT HELPED OR HINDERED LEARNING

In this section the students’ comments are grouped and discussed under two main headings: factors that have helped or hindered learning; and factors that could have helped learning.

FACTORS THAT HAVE HELPED LEARNING

It is clear from Q/L 23’s comment that the ILI structural synthetic syllabus is well matched to the learning style of the long-term students. The classroom procedures required to implement the syllabus seem to have encouraged and aided the students in learning Arabic. Q/L 23’s comment lists these helpful classroom procedures:

- Learning of grammatical rules.
- [Teaching of] new vocabulary
- Practice of spoken language
- Teaching methodology and language of instruction (Q/L 23).

Drilling of vocabulary or exercises and texts that entail repetition in classroom practice have also been found helpful in learning Arabic:

- Repetition of vocabulary in class and consolidation [of this vocabulary by] using it in the following lessons has helped learning Arabic. (Q/L 17)

The popularity of repetition techniques, expressed by Q/L 17, supports Kuntz’s (1996)102 findings concerning the beliefs of a group of adult Elementary Arabic

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102 Kuntz’s (1996: 166) survey concerning Arabic students’ beliefs shows that adult Arabic students agree with other FL learners in that it is “important to repeat and practice” the language in order to learn it.
students as regards AFL learning. These beliefs\textsuperscript{103} may be based on the fact that adults are more self-conscious language learners than children. Consequently, they are more concerned about losing face by the inaccurate use of the language, be it grammar or vocabulary.

Two more factors considered helpful in learning Arabic at the ILI are homework and adequate assessment:

By being adequately assessed I was placed at a challenging proficiency level. Studying at this level constantly pushed (motivated) me to progress. I think it is important in language learning to be constantly challenged. (Q/L 18).

Among the factors that helped me in learning Arabic, were my homework (assignments) and paying attention to classroom instruction. (Q/L 10)

“Arabic being the language of instruction” is rated as most important among the other factors that have helped the respondents’ learning of MSA at the ILI. This is because instruction in Arabic is most representative of the language teaching methodologies which promote repetition and accurate reproduction of the language. Repetition techniques, as seen elsewhere in the questionnaire, fit the ILI students’ synthetic perception of the nature of language and their preferred learning styles, thus enhancing the students’ confidence. This conclusion is supported by the respondents’ comments to the effect that an Arabic mode of instruction and practice in the classroom boosts the ILI learners’ confidence and equips them to communicate with the outside world in daily transactions.

Teaching in Arabic has increased my knowledge of Arabic twofold; [it has encouraged] confidence-building and vocabulary acquisition. (Q/L 24)

Description of vocabulary in Arabic or by giving opposites [has helped my learning]. (Q/L 20)

Being taught in Arabic during classroom hours [helped learning] (Q/L 28).

\textsuperscript{103} Harmer (1990: 33) also states: “{...} it is clearly the case that students derive great comfort and benefit from some of the repetition techniques that audio-lingual methodology uses.”
Teaching in Arabic helped and improved my skills fast and efficiently. (Q/L 6)

Teachers’ insistence on speaking Arabic in class has given me the opportunity to handle phrases, construction and vocabulary acquired during my study. (Q/L 33)

{...} it was good to be taught in Arabic as well, we got used to hearing it spoken and felt confident after understanding 2 hours of Arabic! (Q/L 15)

FACTORS THAT COULD HAVE HINDERED LEARNING

The MSA coursebooks have emerged as the most outstanding obstacle on the road to language learning. This is because the books are ultimately lacking what Harmer (1990) calls “roughly-tuned” input, 104 which encourages the subconscious learning of a new language. It is obvious from the students’ comments, and from the books as they stand, that the texts are restricted to presenting the learners with “finely-tuned” input.105 This input is usually presented as artificial texts which contextualise certain grammar items. The students express their criticism of the books’ disadvantages with varying degrees of emphasis in the following quotations:

I feel I would have acquired more vocabulary if the passages in the book had been more interesting and up-to-date. It is extremely difficult to memorize vocabulary on issues such as the production of orange juice because the text is not interesting. More opportunity to watch MSA news and read the papers would be great. (Q/L 11)

I feel that course materials are very outdated and extremely boring {...}. In my opinion, and this is only my opinion, the ILI should constantly be on the look for more material. For Edinburgh students, I think the course is not at all well suited. (Q/L 34)

I don’t like ILI’s textbook so much. For me it is not so good. First, there are no vocabulary lists in the book. I think it (vocabulary lists) is one of the most important parts in studying language. It makes us aware of the lexical items we should know at the different levels and help us learn

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104 According to Harmer (1990), “Roughly-tuned input” is where students deal with language that is pitched at a slightly higher level than what they can produce. When students are exposed to this kind of input through the receptive skills, they acquire language subconsciously.

105 To Harmer (ibid.), “Finely-tuned input” is language that has been chosen carefully to present grammar items or some language function. This input usually involves strictly controlled language which is delivered at the “presentation stage” of the lesson. “Finely-tuned input” aims at activating conscious learning through repetition drills.
them. Second, there are not so much exercises, so I feel the text is not for us but for the school (this is a complaint). (Q/L 7)

The perception of the coursebooks as a hindrance to learning is, perhaps, due to the general ILI policy, which advocates quality control teaching. Innovative materials require inventiveness and experimentation and, therefore, risk-taking, which are not encouraged by the ILI administrative system. Also, the lack of materials dealing with current issues, mentioned by Q/L 34, may be due to its constantly changing nature (since today's news is tomorrow's history). It is also possible that the demanding preparation-time needed to update the texts in the books, without betraying their linguistic value,\textsuperscript{106} is one of the factors that deter the teachers from undertaking this huge responsibility. One could also argue that since most ASL private institutions tend to run high profits on low budgets, the financial aspect of improving the ILI MSA books should not be overlooked.

The respondents' comments emphasise that the ILI teachers rarely use audio-visual materials. A number of the learners believe that their learning experience at the ILI has been negatively influenced by the lack of audio-visuals. Watching films, listening to the news, or simply watching television could have all helped reinforce learning and developing the learners' skills. This is clearly expressed by the following comments:

We need more audio-visual broadcasts to improve listening skills; more relevant and updated texts e.g. newspaper articles [could help]. The coursebook is outdated and dull, reading children's stories is more fun. (Q/L 4)

Media and audio-visual materials [are lacking]. Course materials are dull. (Q/L 9)

More watching of films, programmes and news on the video could be helpful. (Q/L 19)

We would have benefited from more visual aids, games, general discussion; and watching the news would be really helpful for our vocabulary accumulation. Texts should be up-to-date and on topics

\textsuperscript{106} The texts in the ILI book are of grammatical value. This is because the text is a tool providing a comprehensible context for specific grammatical structures. To update these texts means to look for other embodiments of the target structures involved which is not always feasible.
relevant to our degree. Learning through the literature of the culture would be more exciting. (Q/L 32)

Since the subjects of this research are predominantly MSA learners, the courses that accommodate them focus, mainly, on grammar and reading skills, which are considered appropriate for the MSA variant (see MSA course objectives in Chapter 3). Consequently, audio-visual material is not given the attention that it deserves in classroom practice and so the students’ learning problems are aggravated. Because MSA is not the medium of oral communication, the students’ exposure to the spoken form of this variant is restricted to a few sentences used by the teachers in the classroom either to elicit information or to explain grammar. The students are, therefore, not trained to listen to and comprehend an authentic flow of spoken MSA. Accordingly, the individual attempts of a number of keen students to listen to the news are unsuccessful because of the lack of exposure to MSA audio-visual material in the classroom. So it is not surprising that Q/L 9 emphasises that “No matter how much I study, I could not make sense of the news.” This is especially true because she has not been trained to process listening or reading material which is more advanced than that which she can produce.

It is also important to mention that although one of the students has previously considered “homework assignments” among the factors that have aided learning, Q/L 27 asserts that even these tasks have not been sufficient and that “more homework with quick feedback to monitor progress as well as longer assignments over the weekend” could have definitely helped her learn better. The difference in opinion over this aspect of learning could be related to the different educational backgrounds of the heterogeneous groups of ILI learners.

Q/L 16’s comment raises an interesting issue for discussion. The learner, having had no previous language training, expects the ILI, as a reputable language-teaching institution, to go beyond its commercial boundaries and limited educational capacity to develop her aptitude for language learning and help her define her style by means of specific learning-style training.107 According to this training, the ILI

107 For further information on training in learning strategy, see Oxford (1999b).
teachers should advise the learners about certain types of behaviour or strategies that could help in learning a language and could be transferred to the study of other subjects.

Having never learnt another language before I didn’t know how to go about it. I spent the first few months finding out how I learn but (usually by trial and error (mostly error!). A learning style assessment would be beneficial at the beginning, then some practical ideas to try matching my learning style to ways to learn, memorize and practise the language. (Q/L 16)

Q/L 16’s high expectations stretch the institute’s capacity beyond the “market-morality” governed by profit-making (as is true of a number of private ASL institutions in Cairo) to a professional morality based on research and accountability. The programme’s profit-making policy reveals the ILI’s ignorance of the possible impact on developing students’ aptitude for learning a language. There may be two reasons for such unawareness: (1) most of the ILI’s clientele are affiliates of a Western educational system, which the teachers regard as more prestigious than their own. Consequently, this belief undermines the possibility of any contribution to the students’ learning experience outside the boundaries of MSA instruction and culture exposure; and (2) the ILI as a private institution lacks the educational vision of government educational institutions, which perceive teaching ASL to be part of their national duty. In the absence of this vision, the ILI and other private institutions can only reflect the tourist-culture underlying their policies.

It is therefore unlikely that a private profit-making institution like the ILI would go beyond the boundaries of a general language course to invest in developing the students’ learning skills. The responsibility of planning and organising ASL teaching, setting standards, constructing tests and developing students’ abilities and aptitude calls for the formation of a sound educational body to co-ordinate and supervise ASL teaching in Cairo.

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108 Davis (1999: 23) states: “professional morality is concerned with codes, contracts, professional training, professional ethical norms and standards, the systematic attempt to illuminate the ethos of a profession, and to elaborate its norms.”
In fairness to the ILI, it should be pointed out that the ILI subjects itself to the International House (IH) inspection and commits its staff to its code of ethics.\textsuperscript{109} This code of ethics guarantees professional accountability for the learning environment, conditions of employment and teachers’ education. However, since the ILI has long since divorced itself from EFL teaching, the validity of the IH code of ethics to the teaching of Arabic should be reconsidered for two reasons: (1) The IH can hardly supply the ILI with its affiliation services in the absence of an Arabic-speaking moderator; and (2) if language teaching entails socialisation into a new culture (that is, Arab culture), ASL teaching defeats its purpose by abiding by a “foreign man’s” standards and ethics in the assessment of its performance. This, however, does not mean that the IH standards are inapplicable to the ILI, as they are international standards and could be applied to many language schools. On the contrary, this is a plea for Arabic applied linguists\textsuperscript{110} to review the validity of these codes in an Arab culture and to amend them to fit the national and international objectives of teaching Arabic as a second/foreign language.

5.3 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the ILI programme at the levels of “design” and “procedure” from the learners’ perspective with reference to: the learners’ biographical information; their motivations; their objectives; their needs; the learning styles and strategies; and the assumptions about language and language learning/teaching; and the learners’ role. The study aimed at highlighting the ILI method and the extent to which the programme caters to the students’ needs.

The findings of the questionnaires are arranged in the following categories:

(1) The learners: assumptions and needs

(2) The ILI programme

\textsuperscript{109} See Chapter 3, Section 3.1.2.2.
\textsuperscript{110} See Mahmoud’s (1988) description of the role of Arabic applied linguists in developing ASL learning/teaching and addressing the pertinent issues of the discipline.
5.3.1 The Learners: Assumptions and Needs

The analysis of the results show that the majority of ILI long-term learners are Western university students, who study Arabic to fulfil requirements of their degree. Despite the belief of the sending institutions in the importance of an oral communicative competence for Arabic proficiency and culture acquisition, they provide inadequate finances for their students to study the dialect, leading to the learners' inadequate oral proficiency. The majority of these university learners had little choice in selecting the Arab country or the Arabic course they followed.

The findings also showed that the majority of ILI long-term students were female learners, who complained of lack of fair communicative-opportunities compared with their male counterparts. The ILI programme still has a long way to go in addressing these needs.

The fact that 74 per cent of the respondents speak another foreign language increases the reliability of their assessment of the programme. However, since their Arabic learning experience at the ILI has been devoid of a comparative ASL programme, their judgements are more likely to be based on their expectations. Nevertheless, the learners' proficiency in another language shows that all learners are able to identify their needs, and set realistic objectives as to what they expect to achieve in a limited time in the target culture.

As regards motivation, the majority of ILI students (74%) were integratively motivated learners, who possess a positive attitude towards Arabic. They also possess instrumental motivation, since 50 per cent of the learners have studied Arabic with the hope of enhancing a future or existing career, and 44 per cent learnt Arabic to fulfil academic requirements. Teachers should, therefore, increase students' motivation by encouraging them to exploit the Arab environment surrounding them outside the classroom and by providing opportunities for them to meet with native speakers.
As far as the students' objectives are concerned, it was clear that most of them are short-term ones. They focused on structure and vocabulary learning in the first place, with the aim of acquiring long-term communicative competence. This, however, was found incongruent with the weight western universities put on the learners' study abroad period in acquiring communicative competence.

The students' preferences of the different language activities reveal that they possess a wide variety of learning styles and strategies which are not fully exploited by the teachers. The results have demonstrated that aural interaction activities come in first place as the most preferred language activity, followed by studying grammar.

Climate and gender (female students) had a negative effect on the students' learning experience in Cairo. This finding should direct both the ILI and sending institutions to co-operate in addressing these factors in the course scheduling, planning and creating learning opportunities to compensate the female students for lack of street interaction. On the other hand, the duration of stay in Cairo had a positive effect on their learning.

The respondents believed in the importance of integrating the different skills in classroom practice with emphasis on speaking and listening. However, they gave a different ranking of the importance of the various language skills in relation to MSA learning.

5.3.2 The ILI Programme

To encapsulate the diverse findings about the MSA programme, the researcher uses the elements and sub-elements in Richards & Rodgers (1999) model. However, the extra element of assessment is added to the original categorisation of this model.

5.3.2 1 Approach

Theory of Language

The theory of language underlying the MSA programme as inferred from the responses was that which perceived structure and vocabulary as the basis of the
ability to communicate. This finding was in line with the MSA course objectives as advertised in the ILI brochure.

THEORY OF LEARNING
The theory of learning underlying the ILI method echoes principles of the habit-learning theory. It addresses receiving (from the teacher or from context), fixing language input in memory (by controlled practice) and using the language memorised in actual practice (pair work or role play) until the learners can extend their use of language to new situations outside the classroom.

5.3.2.2 Design

OBJECTIVES
The ILI did not use a needs analysis form, which could have had a direct instructional and educational impact in identifying the purposes for which the ILI courses are taught.

Most of the students indicated clearly that the ILI course objectives were unknown to them. This indicated the need for coordination between the sending institutions and the ILI for better course objective orientation in order to avoid many conflicts between the learners’ expectations and the teachers’ practice. However, 73% of the learners confirmed that the general Arabic courses offered by the institute catered for students’ global needs, rather than to specific or particular requirements.

THE SYLLABUS
The coursebooks have replaced a compiled syllabus document. The MSA syllabus described by the respondents and presented in the books is a synthetic syllabus in which structures and vocabulary are graded in order of their presentation from the simple to the more complex. This is in line with the certificate document which lays out and describes the students’ achievements at the different ILI levels.
TYPES OF LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Although the ILI published material is remiss in not mentioning the types of learning activities, the questionnaire results illustrated that the ILI teachers resorted to repetition and elicitation techniques in teaching and initial practice of grammar and vocabulary. These techniques bear a degree of resemblance to those used in Situational Language Teaching. However, the learners also claimed that talking and listening to other students was the dominant classroom activity. This focus was found incongruent with the advertised MSA course objectives, which focused on reading and academic writing.

LEARNER ROLES

Students’ beliefs appear to be in agreement with their teachers concerning the subordination of the learners’ role to that of the teachers’ in classroom practice. Forty-four per cent of the learners totally agree that learning is the responsibility of the learner, whereas 24 per cent totally disagree with this assumption. The latter percentage shows the level of responsibility that some learners are willing to assume for their studies.

TEACHER ROLES

Since the majority of the findings have favoured accurate production of the language, the researcher has assumed that the ILI teachers play the following roles in classroom practice: (1) a source and model of information; (2) a director of repetition drills; and (3) a monitor of students’ performance. Hence, lessons are teacher directed and the teacher sets the pace. The role of the teacher as essential to success of the method was emphasised by the students’ comments on the atmosphere of motivation and interest that the ILI teachers create in their classrooms. The centrality of the teacher’s role is incongruent with the eclectic approach detected in the Teacher’s Questionnaire.

These findings also revealed that the ILI teachers have lacked awareness of the implications of age, gender and learning style on their classroom practice and syllabus development. Although the students have criticised this inefficiency on the
teachers' part, the ILI learners were clear that the teachers' friendly attitude compensated for these shortcomings.

THE ROLE OF INSTRUCTION MATERIAL

The findings of the questionnaire showed that the ILI method depends on both coursebooks and the teacher. The majority of students perceived the book as the weakest factor in the course. Contrary to the books' format and the ILI classroom practice, the presentation of language in context came as a less popular approach to grammar teaching among the students. The findings also indicated that the shifts between the units in the coursebooks were graded up to the post-intermediate level. The shifts between the units from this level upwards were seen as abrupt. The students recommended more learner-authentic and textually authentic materials to override the boredom created by the use of the current coursebook. Examples of these materials were: interesting literary texts; children's stories; authentic and up-to-date newspaper and magazine articles. Audio-visual material and more listening activities were a high demand among the learners.

5.3.2.3 ASSESSMENT TOOLS

The majority of the respondents affirmed the lack of a feedback form for assessing the programme. This indicates that the ILI deprives itself of a source of input that guarantees its development and continuity. The learners were assessed by means of two tests: a placement test and an achievement test. According to the respondents, these tests measure the number of sentences and words the students could remember rather than their creativity in the language.

A discrepancy was revealed between the students' assessment of their own language abilities and the ILI criteria for grading students at the different proficiency levels. This discrepancy demonstrates a tendency among the students to underrate their language competence and among the teachers to overrate their students' performance. The learners had great faith in their teachers as assessors of their written work while they considered communicating with natives, on the streets, as the real measure of their aural competence in Arabic.
The information provided by this questionnaire together with the information from the Teachers' Questionnaire is subject to further investigation in the observational data in Chapter 6.
This chapter presents the findings of the Classroom Observations carried out at the ILI during the academic year 2000 - 2001. The information provided by this observation gives an account of the ILI's actual curriculum as enacted in the classroom. This account serves two purposes: (1) to verify the information provided by the teachers and the learners in Chapters 4 and 5 concerning the ILI MSA programme; and (2) to provide the necessary foundation for suggesting improvements and for making recommendations arising out of this study.

The chapter is divided into three sections. Following this introduction, Section One provides the theoretical background for the Classroom Observation research method. Section Two presents the practical steps and empirical considerations involved in conducting the Classroom Observation. Section Three presents and discusses the findings of the observations in relation to the data provided in Chapters 4 and 5.

6.1 Classroom Observation: Theoretical Background

This section aims at providing the reader with the theoretical background for Classroom Observation as a research method. This background is important in order to explain the role of the observation tool chosen for this study, in relation to other tools and the means of Classroom Observation. It also clarifies the meaning and function of the "segment" and highlights the theoretical issues and the practical considerations involved in using it as the scheme for this observation. The section starts by specifying the role of Classroom Observation in language education and pedagogy. It then proceeds to highlight some of the main techniques that are employed in Classroom Observation research to gather data about teaching and learning. In highlighting the main techniques, Classroom Observation schemes will

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Rees (1993: 75) defines the segment as "a stretch of lesson discourse, having a particular topic, and involving the participants in a distinctive configuration of roles, linguistic and organizational."
be given special attention since they are the method selected by the researcher in coding the actual classroom procedure of the ILI programme. From among the different schemes the "segment" will be highlighted since it is the scheme chosen and modified by the researcher for the Classroom Observations at the ILI.

There is unanimous agreement among researchers concerning the importance of Classroom Observation (Stern, 1987; Nunan, 1989; 1997a; Lynch, 1996; Malamah-Thomas, 1987; and Rees; 1993). This may be attributed to the fact that classrooms are appropriate contexts which bring about learning through teaching and language use. Classroom research, therefore, aims at bridging the gap between theory and practice (Nunan, 1989). Having said this, it has to be mentioned that although teachers and educationalists are encouraged to look to the classroom as their primary source of collecting information about teaching/learning, Lynch (1996: 108) asserts that successful observation "requires something more than just sitting and watching". This is true because classrooms operate "on many levels at once" (Rees, 1993: 54). Therefore, to disentangle the intricacy of the classroom events, researchers have adopted different research designs to quantify, describe and analyse teacher/learner verbal or non-verbal behaviour (ibid.). This, however, does not imply that there is a right or wrong method regarding the type of research employed because personal interest and preference control the final analysis of the data gathered.

In what follows, a brief account of the different observation techniques used in observing classrooms will be provided. The account includes techniques which focus on how often something occurs using ethnographic note-taking and description of classroom events as well as various forms of checklists and schedules which quantify classroom procedures.

### 6.1.1 Classroom Observation Techniques

In reviewing the different observation techniques, Nunan (1997a) specifies four main methods for classroom research. These are: (1) formal experiments; (2) stimulated recall; (3) interaction analysis; and (4) observation schemes.
Formal experiments are used in collecting data about language learning and use. They are less frequent in classroom research because many of these experiments do not take place in "genuine classrooms". Research that tries to specify the best method for language teaching by comparing the learning outcome of two different methods is an example of formal experiment.

Stimulated recall is a technique by which a researcher records or transcribes parts of a lesson and then asks the teacher and/or students to comment on it. This is a retrospective technique that allows the teachers to reflect on the actual lesson as opposed to the planned lesson and comment on it.

Interaction analysis involves the analysis of classroom talk. Malamah-Thomas (1987: vii) expresses the importance of classroom interaction as follows:

Whatever pedagogic approach is taken, it is the interaction of the classroom, assumption and assignment of different kinds of participant role, which mediates between teaching and learning. It is therefore of crucial importance that the factors which enter into this interaction should be subjected to careful and critical examination and their implications for pedagogic practice explored in the context of actual classrooms.

Interaction, according to Malamah-Thomas, is the context in which the teacher’s action is crystallised into communication by the continuous chiseling of the student’s reactions within an atmosphere of co-operation or conflict. This is why Classroom Observation, with an emphasis on interaction analysis, is important in presenting a better understanding of the actual syllabus in process as well as providing students, teachers and researchers with deeper insights into factors

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2 Nunan (1997a: 92) explains that "by 'genuine' I mean classrooms which have been specifically constituted for teaching purposes, not for the purpose of collecting data for research". He further explains (ibid.) that classrooms which are constituted for formal experiments aim "to control those variables which may intervene between the independent and dependent variables and thus render the results uninterpretable or, at the very least, make it extremely difficult to guard against threats to the internal validity of the research. Such control is extremely difficult to achieve in most classroom settings".

3 According to Malamah-Thomas (1987: 3) "most classroom lessons are based on a plan". Regardless of how detailed or sketchy this plan is, "a lesson plan is a plan of action".

4 Malamah-Thomas states (1987: 5) "When the plan is put into action, things get more complicated. For action is normally followed by a reaction, in the classroom as everywhere else. The teacher’s plan of action, translated into action in classroom, is bound to evoke some sort of student reaction".
affecting learning. Studies that scrutinise the social as well as the pedagogic aims of classroom talk are an example of this type of technique.

Observation schemes are formats that have been developed by different researchers over the years to observe certain aspects of classroom practice. Malamah-Thomas (1987) acknowledges teacher and pupil talk as the most outstanding focus of Classroom Observation. Accordingly, observation instruments were developed to focus on examining classroom talk. As the focus of language teaching shifted towards learners’ communicative abilities, further developments and modifications were introduced to those instruments in order to record information about the social as well as the pedagogic aspects of the classroom. As a result, observation schemes have become more sophisticated and complex (Nunan, 1997a) as many observers set up descriptive systems that examined features other than classroom talk in a language classroom. Some of these instruments looked at the “what” as well as the “how” in the language classroom. Examples of these instruments, as cited by Malamah-Thomas (1987) are the Target Language Observation Scheme (TALOS), Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching (COLT), and Mitchell and Parkinson’s Segment Scheme.

Other observational instruments focused on the more demanding task of observing the learning process, which is recognised by Malamah-Thomas (1987) as more difficult to observe than the observation and coding of teaching methodology. The development of new teaching approaches stressing the affective factors for learning also led to the development of instruments that record the learners’ feelings during classroom practice: how do the learners feel; how motivated are they by the different activities; how relaxed and accepted are they as members of the learning group? These questions shift the focus of the observation from “the objective of teaching” to “the process of achieving this objective” (ibid.: 79). Hence, the diversification in observational instruments was sustained by the emergence of humanistic trends in teaching.

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3 According to Malamah-Thomas (1987) the “what” refers to the meaning, topic or content as a major category for description, while “how” accounts for the pedagogic activities.
Among the proliferation of the aforementioned descriptive schemes, prescriptive or evaluative ones emerged. An example of these are observation instruments used by teacher trainers in assessing the trainees’ performances in the classroom and those used in examinations for Diploma for Overseas Teachers of English run by the Royal Society of Arts (ibid.). Those instruments are aimed at teaching the teachers what they should be doing and how to do it rather than what they are actually doing.

Since each of the aforementioned observation tools represents different ideologies, it is, therefore, important to specify the purpose of the observation before choosing a ready-made observation instrument. The significance of matching the tool to the purpose of the observation is highlighted by Malamah-Thomas (1987: 78):

> One man’s meat is another man’s poison. These observation schemes were drawn up by particular individuals in specific contexts. There are doubtless other individuals with whom, and other contexts in which, these assumptions do not hold.

This issue is also emphasised by Nunan (1997a) who regards observation as the main criterion for selecting a particular tool for a specific context.


As stated earlier, special consideration is given to observational schemes selected by the researcher to conduct the Classroom Observations at the ILI. Hence, this section gives a brief overview of the two instruments drawn upon by the researcher in developing an appropriate instrument for this study. These two instruments are the Mitchell, Parkinson and Johnstone (1981) Scheme and the Rees Observation Template (ROT) (1993). Since both schemes consider the “segment” the basic unit for dividing the lesson observed, the researcher will provide an explanation of the term “segment” in what follows.

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6 See also Lynch (1996).
In coding Classroom Observation, it is important to divide an observed lesson into units of observation before the coding. Accordingly, some systems divide lessons into "time units"; these systems, for example, consider that every so many seconds a new unit is recorded. Linguists, however, prefer dividing the lesson discourse into "natural units" corresponding to paragraphs and sentences of written texts. This system, however, is difficult because people do not speak exactly in full sentences. Mercer (1999) refers to Sinclair and Coulthard, who focused on classroom "exchanges" which give classroom talk its distinctive structure, and as a result they were able to identify four main types of teacher-initiated "exchanges" and twenty-two "acts", capable of describing all classroom talk. Sociolinguists and psycholinguists prefer syntactic criteria; therefore, the "T-unit" is used in an attempt to be more objective by relying less on meaning. In search for longer units of observation, which correspond with the teachers' divisions of their own lessons (Mitchell, Parkinson and Johnstone, 1981), the segment was borrowed from ecological psychology and deployed in Foreign Language (Rees, 1993). From the different lesson division-units used by researchers, Mitchell, Parkinson and Johnstone (1981) chose and developed the segment following earlier work by Gump, and Brown and McIntyre in analysing teaching behaviour (Mitchell, Parkinson and Johnstone, 1981; and Rees, 1993) to code FL teaching. The core idea of the segment is that it aimed at analysing a particular environment or behaviour "in recognition of their inter-relationship" (Rees, 1993: 57).

The segment is therefore defined as a continuous action in a stretch of time not less than 30 seconds and not long enough to engulf the whole lesson. Each segment embodies a pattern of behaviour within the teacher's own action plan and expected by the students' pattern of expectations. These segments are generally preceded by the teacher's introduction of a new activity or setting the scene for a new situation and denote that there is a reciprocal understanding between teacher and student as to what is going on in the classroom (see Malamah-Thomas, 1987; Mitchell, Parkinson and Johnstone, 1981; and Rees, 1993).

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7 A T-unit is any syntactic main clause and its associated subordinate clauses.
Mitchell, Parkinson and Johnstone's\textsuperscript{8} segment instrument for analysis of the teaching strategies of French in secondary schools in Central Scotland, highlight five features, namely: Topic; Language activity; Teacher mode of involvement; Pupil mode of involvement; and Class organization. Each of the five features of a segment offers the observer a considerable amount of detail in describing the segment as they are further analysed into their components.

Rees (1993: 57-58) adopted and modified Mitchell, Parkinson and Johnstone's Segment as an integral part of a "research package constructed to survey the teaching of English at secondary schools in Catalonia in Spain". In adopting Mitchell, Parkinson and Johnstone's scheme of observation to the Catalanian context, Rees (ibid.) introduced variations "to cope with the new situation" and developed the ROT. Unlike Mitchell, Parkinson and Johnstone's five-dimensional segment, Rees' segment "basically consists of four dimensions operating simultaneously:

- Topic focus (what the interaction is mainly concerned with)
- Teacher activity (the teacher's role)
- Learner activity (the ways in which the learners participate)
- Class grouping (how the learners are grouped)"

In this research, the researcher borrows and adapts Mitchell, Parkinson and Johnstone's (1981) five dimensions of the segment and adopts Rees' (1993) ingenious layout of the checklist-coding sheet. The practical considerations underlying the specification and modification of these instruments are discussed further in Section 6.2.2.

6.1.2 Conclusion

Classroom Observation has been recently promoted as a means of shifting the research scope to the context of learning, namely the classroom. The objective of this approach has been bridging the gap between theory and practice to provide practical answers to everyday, down-to-earth problems. When Classroom Observation is

\textsuperscript{8} This is a reproduction of the observation instrument as presented in \textit{Classroom Interaction} by Malamah-Thomas (1987). This reproduction is necessary because the researcher has used a modified form of this scheme in coding the classroom observational data.
carried out by teachers, it is regarded as a sign of teachers’ maturity because it implies teachers’ willingness to take responsibility for their own professional development by reflecting on their own teaching as a source for their education and advancement. Formal experiment, stimulated recall, classroom interaction and observation instruments are all means of carrying out classroom research. A great many instruments have been designed with the aim of recording classroom practice. These instruments focus on the following aspects: classroom language; classroom methodology; learning process; teacher evaluation; and classroom affect. It is, therefore, important for researchers and teachers to define the aim of their observation before using a specific observation instrument and modifying it to suit their own aims and objectives.

Classroom Observation is important in this research for three main reasons. First, by combining Classroom Observation with interviews and the questionnaires designed for this research, triangulation is achieved and the validity of the research findings is increased. Second, besides the validity factor, Classroom Observation is paramount to gathering the required first-hand information about the ILI classroom because it explores the ILI’s actual curriculum as opposed to the planned curriculum and what teachers think they do in their daily practice. Classroom Observation also tests the veracity of the teachers’ claims and the learners’ judgments presented in Chapters 4 and 5 concerning the ILI programme. Third, Classroom Observation also cross-examines the issues and concepts raised in Chapters 4 and 5 on the more solid foundation of the classroom context, thus enabling the researcher to draw reliable conclusions and to make valid recommendations.

6.2 Classroom Observations: Preliminaries

This section is divided into two sub-sections. The first sub-section presents the practical steps and empirical considerations involved in conducting the Classroom Observations at the ILI. The second sub-section gives an account of the decisions involved in selecting the observation tool used in this study to code MSA teaching at the ILI, and the decisions taken in modifying this tool and explaining the checklist of
the instrument. The information provided in sub-section two is grouped under three main headings: (1) Selecting an instrument; (2) Modifying the instrument; and (3) Units of Analysis.

6.2.1 Empirical Considerations and Practical steps

6.2.1.1 IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

Classroom Observation research raises a number of empirical questions that need to be addressed before the observation takes place. Most important among these are the “What”, “Who”, and “How” questions. In this study, the “What” refers to the focus of the observation which specifies what to observe and what to exclude; this question will be dealt with separately in Section 6.2.1.2.

The “Who” denotes the person who conducts the observation, her role and mode of involvement. “Who” also introduces the teachers and learners at the ILI who need to be observed. In this study, convenience and validity factors have led the researcher to conduct the observation herself and to adopt the passive-participant mode of observation associated with naturalistic design. This means that the observer did not actively participate in the classroom interaction and that her role was limited to that of an observer. The researcher used a video camera to record the different classrooms she observed with the aim of providing a retrospective analysis of the lesson recordings.

In answering the question of “Whom” to observe, the researcher focused on the ILI MSA learners and excluded the ECA classes. This is because MSA teaching is the primary interest of this study. However, unlike the Learners’ Questionnaire, the Classroom Observations did not specifically target the ILI long-term students only. The researcher equally focused on all the MSA learners within a particular classroom whether they were long or short-term students.

9 Lynch (1996: 124) argues that “The issues of structured versus unstructured observation, participant versus non participant observation, and observational focus ultimately leave us to consider sampling”. According to Lynch (ibid), sampling involves decisions concerning the observation focus followed by more decisions concerning “who, when, and how often to observe”.

10 Lynch (1996) recognises three modes of involvement for the researcher in classroom observation: active or complete participation; moderate participation; and passive or non-participant observation.
Following Edwards and Westgate's advice (1999: 327), the researcher tried to minimise the problems caused by "the obtrusiveness of the recording equipments" and the researcher's presence in the classroom. Asking the students' permission for recording their classes as well as filming five minutes of casual conversation with them and/or their teachers were some of the approaches used to ease any tensions of facing the camera. The students were also encouraged to forget about the researcher and just get on with their regular daily classroom procedures. The fact that the majority of the students were already familiar with the researcher in the context of her role as director of student affairs made Classroom Observation less intimidating. However, total dismissal of apprehension was impossible and was reflected in a number of students' behaviour. Moments of anxiety were indirectly expressed at times when a student would suddenly and jokingly ask the teacher when the researcher was to leave or simply when a student would laugh and ask the researcher to stop the filming when they made mistakes.

The "How" concerns the frequency of the observations and the length of each observation in relation to the procedures of getting permission to observe the classes (Lynch, 1996). Therefore, in relation to the 'How' question, the researcher will answer the "How often" and "How long" questions.

To answer the "How often" question it must be mentioned that the researcher initially aimed at recording three lessons for each of the ILI teachers, as they taught three different proficiency levels. However, in discussing the matter with the teachers, they all agreed that the initial plan was not feasible since the ILI schedule did not always allow every teacher to teach three different MSA levels of proficiency over the period of one year. The teachers, however, suggested that it was more feasible for the researcher to record an ECA class and an MSA class for each teacher. Although the researcher has recorded the ECA classes out of courtesy to the teachers, these recordings were excluded and the presentation and analysis of the findings focused only on MSA classes.
The one-year research period (2000 - 2001) spent by the researcher at the ILI has only allowed for one observation per teacher. This is due to the researcher’s work responsibilities which did not allow her to leave her office for long before she was summoned to answer inquiries or to solve students’ problems. No pressure was put on the teachers in scheduling the observations. It was left entirely up to them to invite the researcher into their classes whenever they felt ready for it. The fact that the researcher left the scheduling process of the observations open to the teachers also contributed to limiting the frequency of class visits. In the daily rush of the teachers’ teaching responsibilities, they forgot to invite the researcher into their classes repeatedly before the year had passed. However, the researcher’s 9 years past experience in observing these teachers for training, development, as well as for assessment purposes, compensates for the “as many as possible observations” and the “entire class period” recommended for “naturalistic evaluation design” (Lynch, 1996: 125).

After attending to the “How often” issue of the ILI Classroom Observations, the researcher advances to answer the “How long” question. The duration of the observation was also left for the teachers and their students to agree upon. This has led to the absence of uniformity in the stretch of lessons recorded. The observations, therefore, varied from whole stretches of a two-and-a-half-hour lesson, including presentation and practice, to single 20-minute classroom activities.

6.2.1.2 THE FOCUS OF THE OBSERVATION

In a preliminary interview with Professor Hillenbrand, of the University of Edinburgh, concerning ASL teaching in Cairo in relation to the Arabic term abroad, she mentioned that the university sends the Arabic Honours-Degree students to the ILI because “the ILI know what they are doing”. This comment has led the researcher to question what the ILI was actually doing, especially since the ILI brochure document lacks a clear conceptual presentation of what the programme offers or what the teachers do. A study of the ILI MSA programme was, therefore, constructed making use of interviews, questionnaires and Classroom Observation. The questionnaires aim at scrutinising the ILI programme through the eyes of the
teachers and learners at the levels of “approach” and “design” while slightly touching on the level of “procedure”. The observation scheme aims at verifying or contradicting the information provided by the questionnaires by focusing on the level of procedure, thus making use of the researchers’ empirical experience to resolve contradictions and to draw conclusions about the ILI in particular and the ASL scene in general. The focus of the observation is, therefore, the pedagogical as well as the affective content of classroom events at the ILI MSA-programme.

Having addressed the empirical questions pertaining to Classroom Observation, a description of the practical steps is provided. A preliminary meeting with the DOS and the teachers was held in order to obtain permission to video-record the lessons and to negotiate the logistics of the observations. The teachers’ opinions concerning the ‘What’, and ‘How’ questions were all considered and discussed during the meeting. The researcher and the DOS addressed the teachers’ worries and anxieties by, once more, assuring them that the recordings were carried out strictly for research purposes and that they were not to be used, under any circumstances, as a form of professional assessment for which teachers would be rewarded or reprimanded. Accordingly, the teachers were reminded that they should not ask the researcher for any sort of feedback after the observation; rather, they should expect a big thank you and eventually chocolate and cold drinks for all of the class participants as a gesture of appreciation for their cooperation.

Given the above, the following section presents the reasons underlying the choice of the selected observation tool and explains the changes incurred by the researcher to adapt the tool to the ILI classroom observation context.

6.2.2 The Observation Instrument

In this section the researcher addresses a major practical issue in relation to conducting the ILI Classroom Observation. This issue is the choice and adaptation of the observation instrument. In doing so, the explanations and procedures involved in developing this instrument are presented under two headings: selecting an instrument and modifying the instrument.
SELECTING AN INSTRUMENT

According to Lynch (1996: 111), observation tools are already used within a number of language programmes and it is always "wise" for a researcher to start from these already used observation instruments and adapt them rather than to create "something entirely new for evaluation". Within the ILI context, the researcher's previous work responsibilities entailed repeated Classroom Observations to assess teachers' performance. In doing so, she used and developed an evaluative feedback form. Teaching practice in this form was analysed in accordance with the teachers' conceptualisation of their own teaching behaviour. The feedback form consisted of the following categories: rapport; management; presentation; controlled practice; semi-controlled practice; free practice; and an overall assessment category. Under each category the researcher made notes of what teachers did or did not do, consequently facilitating or obstructing communication and the flow of classroom interaction.

However, since the aim of this research is neither to tell teachers what to do or what not to do, nor even to assess their performance, the existing observation tool used at the ILI in teachers' assessment was excluded. Moreover, to assure a degree of required objectivity, by protecting the study from any prejudice or bias on the part of the researcher towards her ex-colleagues, it was appropriate to look for a new observational tool. Nevertheless, in searching for an appropriate observation tool, the researcher's previous empirical experience has influenced her choice of what she considered a clear and usable scheme for this study. Convenience and the researcher's preoccupation with accuracy of coding were among the reasons which directed the researcher to focus on observation tools which described classroom events in a way that "corresponded broadly" with the "comprehensible descriptions" she previously used to identify teachers' behaviour (Mitchell, Parkinson and Johnstone, 1981: 75). In this respect, the segment features (topic, language activity, teacher mode of involvement, pupil mode of involvement and class grouping)

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11 See Section 6.1.
12 The feedback form developed by the researcher was a modification of the checklist for practical tests used in examination for the Diploma for Overseas Teachers of English which was inherited by the Arabic DOS from the English Department at the ILI (See Chapter 3).
introduced by Mitchell, Parkinson and Johnstone (1981)\textsuperscript{13} closely corresponded in their definition\textsuperscript{14} with the elements and procedures of presentation, controlled, semi-controlled and free practice procedures most familiar to the researcher’s conceptualisation of teachers’ performance. A modified variation of Mitchell, Parkinson and Johnstone’s segment tool was produced by Rees (1993). The adapted ROT was suitable for this research due to time and space factors. This is because the neat and compact format of the ROT allows for the representation of the multifarious intricacies of the classroom in restricted space and limited time (ibid).

Most prominent among other factors that also intervened in drawing upon the aforementioned tools for developing an observational instrument for the ILI programme observation are the units of lesson analysis and the focus of the observation.

\textbf{6.2.2.2 Units Of Analysis: The Segment}

It was mentioned in Section 6.2.1 that the division of the lesson into manageable units is always preferable before coding it. Rees’ (1993) definition of the segment indicates the degree of detail involved in describing the complexity of each unit of classroom occurrence. The all-inclusive characteristic of the segment is further elaborated by Mitchell, Parkinson and Johnstone (1981: 75) who explain that “for each segment, we know a) what is being talked about, b) what language is spoken, for what purpose, and c) what the involvement of the individuals present in the lesson is”. Therefore, the researcher found the segment an appropriate unit for dividing the observed lessons in this research because it supplies adequate detail about classroom events, most important to naturalistic design. The segment was also found to be appropriate, since it quantifies the number of occurrences of these events. The calculation of the occurrences of each classroom event enables us to use Classroom Observation as a means of arbitration to resolve the discrepancies in the learners’ and teachers’ opinions concerning the ILI programme through the quantitative analysis of the recorded classroom events.

\textsuperscript{13} See Section 6.2
\textsuperscript{14} See Mitchell, Parkinson and Johnstone (1981) for a definition of these five features.
The researcher's modification of the segment as a unit of division is discussed hereby. In doing so, the researcher highlights the similarities between Mitchell, Parkinson and Johnstone's (1981), original segment scheme and brings forth the modifications, introduced by the researcher, to the original guidelines for the coding of segments.

Mitchell, Parkinson and Johnstone's scheme (1981: 76) specifies an arbitrary minimum length of 30 seconds per segment. Accordingly, "candidate segments which last less than 30 seconds were subsumed in neighbouring ones" or "ignored and its time added to the single segment recognised in the surrounding discourse". The researcher abided, in most of the observations, to the 30 seconds constraint because it highlights the viability of organising and coding the degree of detail involved in describing the complexity of each unit of classroom occurrence. However, in adopting the 30-second minimum time, the researcher made allowances which compromised this constraint.

A breach of the 30-second minimum length of the segment was adopted by the researcher to provide a more realistic view of classroom practice. Hence, instances where the "introduction" category or "management/routine" categories or any other feature categories of the segment occurred in less than 30 seconds, they were still coded by the researcher so that the lesson representation of the observed classes does not appear devoid of these features. An example of these is Teacher C's lesson in which "study introduction" and "management/routine" were instances sometimes occupying less than 10 seconds and yet had to be coded; otherwise, the whole lesson would have been falsely portrayed as one long stretch of the same "activity" and "topic".

Multiple coding was another way of compromising the 30-second constraint. Again to give a more realistic and accurate representation of the classroom events, the researcher resorted to multiple coding within a specific segment. Multiple coding was necessary owing to the frequent occurrence of short classroom behaviour that might not have been reflected at all by strictly following the 30 seconds scheme. At
this point, it is worth mentioning that these short behaviour were represented to satisfy the descriptive nature of this naturalistic research and the time they occupied had also been quantitatively included in the calculations as individual segments.

6.2.2.3 MODIFYING THE INSTRUMENTS

Despite the vast variety of ready-made instruments, it is difficult for a researcher to apply any one instrument to a new context without modifying this instrument to serve the purpose and context of the new classroom situation. This is emphasised in the following quotation by Rees (1993: 55):

{...} the complexities of classroom happenings are all too frequently reflected in the impenetrable intricacy of the instruments devised to disentangle them. And matters are made yet more complex by the lack of universal conformity among learners, teachers, classrooms, methodologies and educational goals. This renders it extremely unlikely that an observation instrument designed for one context will readily adapt to another without modification.

Hence, the researcher developed and integrated the two aforementioned schemes (see Section 6.2.2) to fit the ILI context. This development produced an observation template which highlighted five dimensions per segment: language; topic; teacher's mode of involvement; learners' mode of involvement; language activities; and classroom interaction patterns. The newly derived observation scheme introduced modifications to the definitions given to each of the aforementioned dimensions. In doing so, the researcher intensively borrowed from and modified the definitions provided by Mitchell, Parkinson and Johnstone's scheme (1981) as well as the ROT (1993) checklist. However, it is important to mention that the dimensions and definitions of the new observation scheme were reviewed and redefined by playing back the video-recordings. Accordingly, further modifications were introduced and adjusted to encompass all classroom events of the ILI recorded lessons. A checklist to elucidate the borrowed and redefined dimensions of the used scheme is provided in Appendix 7.
A major modification, or rather, an addition to Mitchell, Parkinson and Johnstone’s scheme was the separate sheet which the researcher designed and used to reflect the overall feel of the general classroom atmosphere and learning environment. This sheet, however, does not aim at conveying the classroom atmosphere per segment; rather, it conveys a holistic and subjective evaluation of the general classroom atmosphere during a particular lesson.

6.3 The ILI MSA Classroom Observations

This section presents and analyses the findings of the ILI Classroom Observations. The aim of this analysis is twofold: (1) to provide a global view of the ILI MSA classroom procedures; and (2) to verify or contradict the information provided in the questionnaires and the ILI document. Hence, the section presents quantitative calculations of the time spent on the different aspects of classroom procedures in 7 MSA classrooms with the aim of conveying general trends in MSA practice at the ILI. This quantitative representation of the general trends in the ILI practice should resolve discrepancies in students’ and teachers’ beliefs and opinions concerning the ASL learning/teaching at the ILI programme; it should also protect the analysis from any bias on the part of the researcher as an ex-member of staff at the ILI. Alongside the quantitative representation, this section also presents a descriptive analysis of the ILI classroom atmosphere with emphasis on the teacher’s behaviour that influences learners’ affect.

6.3.1 Summary of Data and Findings

In Tables 6.1 and 6.2 (a) and (b), a detailed explanation of the choice, the modification and the explanation of the observation tool (henceforth OT), with reference to the theoretical and empirical considerations underlying this choice, are provided. The OT consists of 3 components. The first component deals with segments of classroom procedures; the second component renders high inference data concerning the teacher’s behaviour and general classroom atmosphere; and the third component concerns lesson identification information.
The information gathered under these three components was reorganised and represented in Tables 6.1 and 6.2 (a) and (b). The high inference data provided under the second component of the 7 OTs used by the researcher will be presented and discussed later under the title of “the ILI teacher and general classroom atmosphere.” In this discussion, the researcher will give an impressionistic account of the general atmosphere of the ILI classrooms by focusing on teachers’ behaviour and teacher/student relations.

Table 6.1 presents the information recorded under the identification components of the 7 OTs used in the MSA observations. For reasons of space, the table includes a summary of the information provided under the “language-feature” of the segment which conceptually belongs to the first division of the OT. Hence, Table 6.1 presents a framework of each observed lesson by presenting information concerning the following aspects: (1) the teacher’s identity; (2) courses taught; (3) materials used; (4) the linguistic and skills focus of each recorded lesson; (5) language of instruction; (6) classroom sizes; and (7) duration of each Classroom Observation.

6.3.1.1 Classroom Identification

The researcher recorded a total number of 8 hours, 34 minutes, and 10 seconds of classroom procedures in seven MSA classes of different levels of proficiency that were taught by seven different ILI teachers (Table 6.1). Each teacher was observed during different time frames15 of a single lesson. Out of the seven observed teachers, six were fully contracted (A, B, C, D, E and F) and one was a part-time teacher (Teacher X) who is provisionally contracted by the ILI to teach specific university courses. Table 6.1 shows that of the classes observed two were Elementary courses, one was an Intermediate course, and one was a university advanced course specially designed for the University of Odense. Thus, the materials used in these classes, during the observations, reflected a wide range of teaching media and of MSA supplementary materials and coursebooks.

15 See Section 6.2 for reasons of inconsistency in observation time.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Materials</th>
<th>Language focus and skills</th>
<th>Medium of instruction</th>
<th>Observation time Hrs: min: sec</th>
<th>Student No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Advanced (1)</td>
<td><em>Al- kitaab fii Ta’allum al-Lugha al-’Arabiyya</em> Handouts Board</td>
<td>Grammar, Stylistics Reading Writing</td>
<td>Non-vowelled MSA</td>
<td>01: 21: 00</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Advanced (2)</td>
<td>An unidentified text of an unknown source Handouts Board</td>
<td>Vocabulary Presentation Reading</td>
<td>Non-Vowelled MSA</td>
<td>01: 10: 23</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>ILI coursebook Handouts Flash cards</td>
<td>Reading aloud (Pronunciation)</td>
<td>Vowelled &amp; Non-vowelled MSA</td>
<td>00: 30: 26</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Post-intermediate</td>
<td>ILI coursebook Handouts Visuals Board</td>
<td>Grammar practice: Presentation Reading (المنصوبات السلوب الشرط)</td>
<td>Non-vowelled MSA</td>
<td>01: 32: 57</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>ILI coursebook Handouts Board</td>
<td>Grammar presentation Presentation Reading (كان وأخواتها)</td>
<td>Vowelled and Non-vowelled MSA</td>
<td>01: 55: 23</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>ILI coursebook Handouts Visuals Board</td>
<td>Grammar (أفعال التفصيل)</td>
<td>Non-vowelled MSA</td>
<td>01: 30: 18</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>Highly advanced</td>
<td>Odense University course materials Board</td>
<td>Mini-lecture Speaking</td>
<td>Non-vowelled MSA</td>
<td>00: 33: 37</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The classes observed varied in the number of attendants and consisted of students of heterogeneous backgrounds in terms of their education, nationalities and previous teaching/learning experiences, duration of study at the ILI and needs. Thus, the learners represent the wider population of the ILI short and long-term students. The student numbers reflected in Table 6.1 verify the ILI small group classroom setting claimed in the ILI brochures. They also coincide with the teachers’ preferred learning setting (Chapter 4). However, this finding contradicts Q/L.28’s claim that the huge class sizes do not allow for enough speaking practice (Chapter 5). The fact that teacher C’s elementary class consisted of 10 students, whereas Teacher X’s highly advanced class consisted of 2 students only, mainly university students who are half Arab, coincides with Belnap’s (1987) finding concerning the general drop in the number of students of Arabic at the advanced levels. It also corresponds with the researchers’ assumption that scarcity of advanced groups has influenced the teachers’ training experience and accordingly their inclination towards teaching the less advanced levels (Chapter 4, Section, 4.2.3.1).

The table makes clear that the lessons that focused on vocabulary and/or grammar presentation were supplemented by handouts. This coincides with the learners’ criticism of the ILI coursebooks which were found lacking with regard to vocabulary lists and grammar explanations and practice (Chapter 5, Section 5.2.3.6). The researcher’s examination of the handouts used in the classroom showed that all the handouts were hand written, poorly laid out and a few contained some factual and spelling mistakes. This reiterates the need for the ILI to go beyond its own fears of piracy\(^\text{16}\) and to put effort into addressing the students’ needs by reviewing existing materials, editing and improving them, and finally integrating them into a well-structured book format. It also contradicts the information provided in the 2003 version of the ILI website as regards the ILI curricula and books being constantly supervised by the International House.\(^\text{17}\)

Table 6.1 shows that the coursebook is central in all the MSA courses, except for the University of Odense course. This coincides with the assumption that the

\(^{16}\) See Chapters 3 and 5.

\(^{17}\) This information is provided under the ‘Agents’ link on the ILI home page: www.ili.com.eg
majority of the ILI teachers depend heavily on the textbook (Chapter 5). An echo of Q/L 18’s comment expressing boredom as a result of excessive use of the textbook was traced in teacher E’s lesson where the teacher maintained an instructional role throughout the lesson and focused on using the book and board all the time.

The Classroom Observation has also shown that in the two lessons conducted by Teachers A and B, one text was extracted from *Al-Kitaab fi Ta'allum al-'Arabiyya*, while the other was taken from an unknown source. These two lessons were photocopied without annotation or reference being made to the source textbook(s). This, again, coincides with the assumption made by the researcher concerning the confusion about the authenticity of the material due to the lack of source references and proper authentication of the Arabic texts used by the ILI teachers (Chapter 5).

It is noteworthy that all the MSA materials used in the observed ILI classrooms incorporated cultural aspects of the Arab world including sociocultural, national and political aspects of everyday life. This does not coincide with the researcher’s assumption that the ILI materials are “totally” void of religious and political cultural values. Although the national and political aspects of culture are undersupplied in the MSA coursebooks for the, previously mentioned, reasons in Chapter 5, they are not totally absent from the supplementary materials extracted from outside sources/books and used by a few teachers to compensate for the lack of advanced material. It is also important to mention that the political aspects of culture had the least representation among other cultural aspects and were presented and discussed with two half-Arab, half-Swedish students in the highly advanced classroom by Teacher (X) who is a lecturer at Ein Shams University. The texts used, however, confirmed the students’ exasperation at the lack of media and newspaper culture (Chapter 5).

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18 Q/L 18 asserts “the lessons where I found I have been bored in are those where the teachers have based the whole lesson on the textbook, making me feel that I could have done it at home". 
Of the materials used in all seven classes, cassettes are the least represented. This concurs with the learners' need for more listening comprehension and their aggravation at the lack of audio-visual material. It is also clear from Table 6.1 that the use of visuals to elicit and teach vocabulary is more common at the lower levels and Intermediate levels than at the advanced or highly advanced levels. This is due to the fact that advanced students are expected to possess an adequate store of vocabulary which enables them to understand and negotiate meaning in Arabic without the need for an intermediary visual aid. The use of visuals at the elementary levels also indicates the grading of lexical items through the MSA syllabus. This is emphasised by the shift in focus from visualised and concrete, everyday vocabulary at the elementary levels to the use of more abstract lexical sets at the advanced levels. This shift is not in line with the rank the Learners' Questionnaire results give to vocabulary as the criterion for grading the texts in the coursebooks (Chapter 5, Section 5.2.3.6). It is also important to mention that visuals were also used to provide contextualised situations for grammar presentation at all levels of proficiency since they presented an appropriate context for language structures. This, again, is not in line with the results of the learners' preferences concerning inferring grammar from context.

The fact that five out of the seven teachers have voluntarily chosen presentation of new language to be recorded for observation, is indicative of the teachers' deep convictions that grammar presentation skills are considered a teacher's credentials of language teaching competency. This belief also reflects that the ILI teachers are still geared up to teaching rather than monitoring or encouraging more independent learning. The focus on the importance of teaching to learning echoes the ILI teachers' belief and cultural conviction of the importance of the teacher's role in learning discussed earlier in Chapter 4. The prominence of grammar in the language focus and skills column also reveals a structuralist view of language which coincides with the identification of the ILI syllabus (Chapter 5). This view is further emphasised by the fact that six of the observed lessons, which integrated reading, listening, or writing skills, aimed at contextualising or practising new language items rather than developing the learners' skills. The emphasis of the

\[^{19}\] See Chapter 4, Section 4.1.2.3
language items rather than developing the learners’ skills. The emphasis of the ILI emphasis of the classroom practice on grammar and vocabulary teaching is in line with the learners’ assumptions concerning the focus of the content of language teaching and with the ILI teachers’ approach (see Chapters 4 and 5).

The fact that five out of the seven teachers thought the presentation stage more worthy of Classroom Observation than the practice stage, confirms the findings of the Teachers’ Questionnaire regarding the respondents’ self-image and experience as skilful and creative language teachers (Chapter 4). Again, that five of the lessons included reading comprehension together with grammar presentation is in agreement with the fact that the ILI programme is a proponent of presenting grammar in context. Students did not welcome presenting grammar in context since the majority of the learners expressed their preference that grammar should be taught explicitly with no context. The presentation of grammar through reading texts also shows why the learners found the texts boring and out of date since the teachers are mainly concerned with their grammatical value rather than the communicative one. However, it will be interesting to further examine the skills represented in Table 6.1 against the findings of Table 6.2 (a) and (b) in relation to the “learners’ mode of involvement”.

The prominence of reading (Table 6.1) coincides with the students’ views concerning the importance of language skills in MSA. In comparing these findings to those of the Teachers’ Questionnaire, it is clear that the focus on reading and writing contradicts the teachers’ beliefs concerning the importance of the different skills in language teaching and learning (Chapter 4, Section 4.2.3); however, the prominence of reading shows that their teaching is more influenced by their pedagogic language learning experience than by their pre-service training or their own preferences as learners.

Table 6.1 also demonstrates that the language of instruction in the classrooms observed is Arabic and that all the teachers spoke mainly non-vowelled MSA with a few instances of ECA. English was not resorted to at any stage in the observed
lessons and translation was not used by the teachers; however, translation was not utterly banned since the teachers allowed the students to speak to each other in English to negotiate meaning or difficult expressions. This observation corresponds with the students’ preference of Arabic being the language of instruction and the importance of excluding translation discussed in Chapter 5. It also coincides with the ILI advertised policy, in which teachers pride themselves, that they “teach Arabic in Arabic”. It also explains the high percentages of speaking and listening the learners are involved in (see Table 6.2 (a)) despite the fact that the recorded lessons all focused on the presentation of grammar and reading rather than these two skills.

6.3.1.2 THE ILI CLASSROOM PROCEDURES

Table 6.2 (b) presents an overall picture of the ILI MSA classroom procedures, as opposed to the procedures in the original OT(s) which reflect a particular teacher’s performance. It was mentioned earlier that the OT allowed the researcher to identify, describe and quantify each segment in each observed lesson (see Section 6.2.1). In doing so, the researcher observed a playback of the recorded lesson and made decisions concerning criteria for segmentation. The criteria upon which decisions for segmentation were made followed the researcher’s intuitive sense\(^{20}\) and the decisions were constantly reviewed against the OT checklist.\(^ {21}\) Having decided on the segmentation, the researcher then coded the different dimensions of each segment by constantly referring to the checklist and adapting it.

To present a global view of the ILI classroom procedures, the researcher produced 53 tables from the 7 coding templates. Each table presented the sum of the time spent in each classroom on one particular category-feature of the segment. This underwent further calculations to represent the overall percentages presented in Table 6.2 (a) which reflect an overall picture of the ILI MSA classroom practice as opposed to the procedures of one specific teacher reflected in the original OT/s.

\(^{20}\) Mitchell, Parkinson and Johnstone (1981: 76) acknowledge “while it is necessary to be as explicit as possible about the criteria upon which decisions concerning segmentation are made, it is pointless to pretend that to some degree, the observer’s intuitive sense of what goes with what will not play a role”.

\(^{21}\) See Appendix 8.
The findings and discussion of the observations, as per Tables 6.2(a) and 6.2(b), will be carried out under the following headings: (1) Topic; (2) Teachers’ mode of involvement; (3) Learners’ mode of involvement; (4) Language activities: and (5) Classroom interaction pattern.

**TOPIC**

This dimension of the segment refers to the spoken language of the classroom, rather than to what is read or written in the classroom. Most categories of the Topic dimension of the ILI classroom segment, as made clear in the checklist, are mostly teacher initiated and directed. This excludes “non-contextualised”, “learners’ performance”, “real life” and the “study-introduction” categories which include instances of teacher initiated but student directed, mainly fragmented, talk. Studying teachers’ talk under Topic is primarily a behavioural study of the ILI teachers, employing the topic of classroom discourse as primary data with the aim of gaining further insights into the ILI programme elements of “method” as recognised by Richards & Rodgers (1999).

Table 6.2 (a) makes clear that the greater percentage of recorded classroom talk (45%) focuses on “language points”. This means that the learners spent the majority of their time engaged in discourse that is mainly initiated and directed by the teacher about grammar or vocabulary. This discourse concentrates on talk about the language rather than engaging the learners in real communication in the language. The focus on “language points” rather than on tasks that develop the learners’ subconscious and gradual ability to use the language, shows that the ILI programme is based on the belief that language is a system and that this system is learnt rather than acquired. This implicit belief perhaps pertains to the sociocultural role of MSA and to the teachers’ first language learning experience.

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22 Since the primary interest of this research is to provide detailed information about the current MSA language teaching practice at the ILI, a description and analysis of the topic of classroom discourse is therefore used as a source of evidence of teacher behaviour in the ILI classroom. The examination of Language Classroom discourse with the aim of providing information about Classroom practice and teacher behaviour is recognised by Allwright (1999) as one of the purposes of studying language classroom discourse.
Table 6.2 (a) Observation of overall ILI classroom procedures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ILI Classroom Procedure Breakdown/Elements</th>
<th>Classroom Element</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classrooms Total Time</td>
<td></td>
<td>08:34:10</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management/routine</td>
<td></td>
<td>00:51:33</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study: introduction</td>
<td></td>
<td>01:44:28</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situations</td>
<td></td>
<td>00:31:04</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language points</td>
<td></td>
<td>03:52:07</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-contextualized</td>
<td></td>
<td>00:55:21</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real life</td>
<td></td>
<td>00:39:16</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learner</td>
<td></td>
<td>00:06:21</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learner's performance</td>
<td></td>
<td>01:37:18</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td>00:32:29</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructing</td>
<td></td>
<td>01:33:47</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructing/Interaction</td>
<td></td>
<td>01:30:17</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not involved</td>
<td></td>
<td>00:52:01</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interacting/Conducting</td>
<td></td>
<td>02:41:36</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participating</td>
<td></td>
<td>00:06:35</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring</td>
<td></td>
<td>01:43:35</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with individual</td>
<td></td>
<td>00:05:07</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with Group</td>
<td></td>
<td>00:00:00</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correcting</td>
<td></td>
<td>2:49:18</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hot</td>
<td></td>
<td>2:49:01</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cold</td>
<td></td>
<td>00:00:17</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific</td>
<td></td>
<td>01:11:39</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detailed</td>
<td></td>
<td>01:37:39</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td></td>
<td>04:45:29</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td></td>
<td>04:09:22</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td></td>
<td>01:25:11</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td></td>
<td>02:29:42</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Because multiple coding was possible, totals exceed 100%.
### Table 6.2 (b) Observation of overall classroom procedures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ILI Classroom Procedure</th>
<th>Classroom Element</th>
<th>Time (Hrs: min: sec)</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Breakdown/Elements</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Classrooms Total Time</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>08:34:10</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speaking</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imitation</td>
<td></td>
<td>00:46:33</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form Practice</td>
<td></td>
<td>02:26:54</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicative Practice</td>
<td></td>
<td>00:37:40</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td>00:23:23</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controlled Speaking</td>
<td></td>
<td>01:11:05</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>General</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>03:58:15</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Listening</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension</td>
<td>3% Comprehension</td>
<td>00:13:55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source (S)</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>00:03:33</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learners</td>
<td>00:00:00</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CassetteS</td>
<td>00:10:22</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Video</td>
<td>00:00:00</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gist</td>
<td>00:01:28</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Specific Information</td>
<td>00:03:28</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recognition</td>
<td>00:08:59</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copy from Board</td>
<td></td>
<td>01:22:27</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-creative</td>
<td></td>
<td>00:36:00</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cue/Guided</td>
<td></td>
<td>00:08:45</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free</td>
<td></td>
<td>00:00:00</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board</td>
<td></td>
<td>00:15:17</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aloud</td>
<td></td>
<td>00:30:45</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension</td>
<td>11% Comprehension</td>
<td>00:55:48</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasks</td>
<td>S Materials</td>
<td>00:59:09</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gist</td>
<td>00:00:00</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Details</td>
<td>00:08:45</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recognition</td>
<td>00:48:28</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interaction Pattern</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class</td>
<td></td>
<td>06:12:25</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td></td>
<td>01:35:09</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair</td>
<td></td>
<td>00:11:37</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td></td>
<td>00:28:09</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The theory of language as structure indicates traits of British Structuralism since 6 per cent of the total time of the recording was spent on situations. In linking structures to situations, “language is viewed as a purposeful activity related to goals and situations in the real world” (Richards and Rodgers, 1999: 35); nevertheless, the observations have revealed that the actual classroom operations are carried out at the practice stage without conscious attention to meaning or real world situations since they mainly focused on fragmented sentence transformations and filling-in of gaps (11% of discourse is non-contextualised). This is further emphasised by the poor representation of classroom discourse concerning “real life” (8%) which involves learners in real communication about their personal experiences and general knowledge.

The 45 per cent of time spent on language points in comparison with the 20 per cent of time spent on study-introduction and the 19 per cent of time spent on learners’ performance all designate the teachers’ role as determiner of content, practice director, model for target language and consequently corrector of errors, which are mostly acknowledged among other roles by the ILI teachers (Chapter 4). The aforementioned time percentages attributed to the different topic-categories specify the types of functions fulfilled by the ILI teachers in the MSA classroom. These functions resolve the contradiction brought about by the multifunctional-role assumed by the ILI teachers. This multifunctional role was brought about by the lack of awareness of the terminology and the previously discussed issue of “facts” and “fiction” (Chapter 4). The teachers’ role according to the analysis of classroom talk concerns mainly “methods” of teaching which propagate a view of structure as lying at the heart of language. These methods are deeply rooted in habit-learning theories of language learning, which propel accurate production of grammar and pronunciation of vocabulary through correction (see Richards & Rodgers, 1999). The ILI teachers, therefore, address the processes rather than the conditions of learning and adopt an inductive approach to language teaching. Although this procedure falls in line with the students’ perception of the role of the teacher as superior, directive,

24 Richards & Rodgers (1999: 35) claim that British structuralism was based on the notion of situation. “Many British linguists had emphasized the close relationship between the structure of language and the context and situations in which language is used”.

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corrective (Chapter 5), it does not correlate with the teachers' self image as proponents of modern approaches to language teaching, who are capable of introducing variety by adopting different roles.

**TEACHERS' MODE OF INVOLVEMENT**

The teachers' mode of involvement reiterates and emphasises the aforementioned findings of the Topic feature of the segment concerning the ILI theory of language and theory of learning. Table 6.2 (a) makes clear that the teachers are always involved and are highly in control, not only at the presentation stage but also at all stages of the lesson. This continuous involvement echoes traits of the teachers' learning experiences at state schools where conscientious teachers were teachers who were well prepared and who did not let students slip from their attention to avoid them making mistakes. This continuous involvement is in contradiction with the majority of the teachers' belief that the teachers' continuous participation in the lesson obstructs communication (Chapter 4). However, it emphasises the assumption made by the researcher that the reason for the split in teachers' opinions (Chapter 4) concerning the successful teachers' role, as the one who gets less involved to allow for communication, is due to the rarity of this practice in actual classroom procedures.

The teachers' involvement becomes more revealing as Table 6.2 (a) shows that the ILI teachers spent 18 per cent of the total recorded time instructing and 18 per cent instructing/interacting. Although the selected portions of 5 of the recorded lessons included presentation of language and vocabulary, these percentages of instructing and instructing/interacting are fairly high when reconsidered in relation to the 20-minute maximum presentation time prescribed by the teachers' pre-service training.\(^{25}\) This emphasises the assumption that the ILI teachers share the belief that abstract knowledge of the language system is sustained by effective language

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\(^{25}\) The ILI pre-service training emphasises that the presentation maximum time should not exceed 20 minutes (15.38%) of the total time of MSA lesson duration (150 minutes). During these twenty minutes, the teachers should impart the linguistic input they planned to teach. Having done that, the teachers' mode of involvement should shift from the instructing mode to the interacting/conducting mode, gradually leading to the less controlled and free practice of the language.
teaching skills. It also concurs with their self-image and experience as skilful and creative language teachers (Chapter 4).

In Chapter 4, the teachers’ lack of awareness of the meaning of pedagogic terminology led them to claim roles pertaining to Naturalistic and Humanistic theories of language learning. This misguided assumption is totally refuted by the Classroom Observation. This is because the 18 per cent of the time attributed to “instructing/interacting” and the 31 per cent of the time attributed to “interacting/conducting” pertain to habit formation theories of learning based on “stimulus–response-enforcement”\(^{26}\) rather than to integrating process-oriented approaches and condition-oriented approaches\(^{27}\) demanding multifunctional teacher roles. The time percentage accredited to instructing/interacting also reflects Harmer’s (1990) division of the teacher’s role as an organiser.\(^{28}\)

The 20 per cent of the time ascribed to monitoring reiterates the centrality of the ILI teachers’ role. It may also reveal a hidden belief among the ILI teachers that the linguistic quality of learners’ talk tends to deteriorate when it is not being directly monitored.\(^{29}\) This assumption is not farfetched when viewed in relation to Q/L 18’s comment which favoured class discussions to pair work since it guaranteed less linguistic mistakes: “Involving students in {...} class discussions and work in pairs is essential for keeping the class alert and stimulated. [Learners’ involvement should be] more in class discussions than in pairs so that mistakes could be picked up on [by the teacher]”.

The time percentages allocated to the involvement mode of correction are interesting yet not highly surprising in relation to the theory of language and the

\(^{26}\) See Chapter 4, Section 4.1.2.4.
\(^{27}\) See Section 4.1.1.
\(^{28}\) Harmer (1990: 202) asserts, “perhaps the most important and difficult role the teacher has to play is that of organiser. The success of many activities depends on good organisation and on the students knowing exactly what they are to do. A lot of time can be wasted if the teacher omits to give students vital information or issues conflicting and confusing instructions”. The organisation of an activity can be divided into four main parts: (1) lead-in; (2) instruction; (3) initiation; and (4) feedback.
\(^{29}\) Allwright (1999: 322), however, mentions that research “to investigate the accuracy of learner talk during interaction in small groups has failed to confirm teacher’s suspicion that the linguistic quality of learner talk is bound to deteriorate when it is not being directly monitored by the teacher”. 

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theory of learning claimed by the ILI programme. This is because habit formation approaches to language learning/teaching aim at ridding the students of all errors in order not to develop wrong habits (Richards & Rodgers, 1999; and Littlewood, 1999a). This teaching philosophy is made prominent by the time percentages (Table 6.2 (a)) spent on corrections at all stages of the lessons.

In order to give a better representation of the types of correction adopted by the teachers in relation to the total correction time, as opposed to the correction time in relation to the total recorded time, a further calculation of the time of the types of correction is carried out and presented in Figure 6.1 (a & b). The fact that the teachers spent 33 per cent of the total class time on correction and that 99 per cent of this time was hot correction and 55 per cent was detailed correction (Figure 6.1(a & b)) shows that the teachers demonstrated no traits of “waiting until activity or task has been completed to tell the students how well they did” which is recommended by Harmer (1990) and the proponents of communicative language teaching (Littlewood, 1999(a)). On the contrary, it shows that the teachers were mainly interested in correcting errors and did not mind interrupting the flow or fluency in communication to guarantee linguistic precision. The correction percentages reflected in Figure 6.1 (a & b) emphasise traditional approaches to language teaching; these approaches
regard errors as signs of failure by teachers and students.\textsuperscript{30} The frequent open class correction, however, is in line with the learners’ beliefs and preferences concerning the place and frequency of correction (Chapter 5). It also reflects traits of the teachers’ FLL experiences where they were taught in a traditional way which emphasised accuracy at the expense of fluency.

It is surprising that the classroom original OT(s) have shown that teacher E who has been exposed to modern foreign language techniques in learning Japanese has spent 50 per cent of his classroom time in correction. This, therefore, shows that the ILI teachers’ practice is more influenced by their first language pedagogic experiences and FLL experiences, at a younger age, rather than by their exposure to modern techniques in FLL as adults (Chapter 4).

\textsuperscript{30} Littlewood (1999a: 95) states that “Errors have traditionally been regarded as signs of failure on the part of both the teacher and the learner, and have frequently led to a sense of demoralisation on both sides. Now, however, we realise more clearly that they represent normal stages in the development of communicative skills. We also realise that it is normal for a learner to produce a form correctly in one task but make errors with it in another. We can therefore adopt a less negative stance towards errors. In some activities, for example, a teacher may decide to be selective in errors which he corrects, e.g. ignoring those which do not relate to previously acquired knowledge. In other activities he may decide to avoid correcting the forms of language at all, if this would interfere with the learners’ concentration on the communication of meanings.”
The teachers' correction mode also provides us with an answer to the question posed earlier as to whether the teachers' assumed correlation between fluency and proficiency affects their expectations of their students' performance at the different levels of instruction. The correction mode suggests a new relation between accuracy and fluency rather than a parallel relation between proficiency and fluency. The time spent by the teachers in correction reveals a belief that accuracy is the route to fluency at all levels of proficiency. This relation between accuracy and fluency coincides with the learners' belief in sound knowledge of the language system residing at the heart of communicative competence (Chapter 5).

The mode of correction may also explain some of the students' frustration concerning inability to communicate in Arabic (Chapter 5). This frustration results not only from the fact that they study MSA, which is not the medium for daily communication, but also from the correction mode (Figure 6.1 (a & b)) which does not distinguish between what Harmer (1990) calls "content feedback" and "form feedback". 31 The learners are, therefore, incessantly interrupted by hot and detailed linguistic correction which stifles the communication efficacy. Communication is hampered because the students' speech flow is turned into fragmented sentences constantly directed to the teacher rather than to their colleagues; hence, the learners' concentration is diverted from communicating meaning to using correct structures.

To encapsulate the ILI teacher's role as delineated in the Classroom Observation findings, one can claim that the teacher plays the role of controller when s/he is totally in charge of the class during the introduction of new language. Although it has been indicated that the teacher's role as controller should be limited to the accurate presentation and reproduction of language stage (Harmer, 1990), the percentages presented in Table 6.2 (a) as regards "topic" and "mode of involvement" prove otherwise. This is because the percentages reveal that the teachers spent the majority of classroom time either instructing or instructing/interacting since the bulk of classroom talk revolves around the teachers' high involvement in language points.

31 According to Harmer (1990: 202), content feedback "centres on the content or subject matter of an activity: it aims to give students feedback on their degree of communicative efficiency", whereas form feedback "tells the students how well they performed in terms of the accurate use of language".
The teachers' instructing/interacting mode reflects a shift in the role of the teacher from that of an instructor to that of an organiser and prompter who tells students what is expected of them and encourages them to participate or proceed when the activity comes to a halt. However, this shift in roles occurs within the parameters of the centrality of the teacher's role in classroom procedures, pertaining to a synthetic and behaviourist approach to language teaching/learning rather than to the teacher's borrowing from the diversified approaches of the different methods, as defined by Richards and Rodgers (1999). The involvement of the teacher in monitoring reflects the tendency of the ILI teachers to help their students during their pair or group work. In this respect, the researcher has observed that teachers walk around as a "walking resource centre" during pair work. The teachers' correction mode coincides with the learners' needs and the teachers' language learning experiences. However, this correction lacks the selection most relevant to the communicative and the more modern approaches to language teaching, thus negating the presupposition of the ILI teachers as proponents of these methods. In general, the teachers' mode of involvement emphasises high management skills, guided by an awareness of the students' affective needs and consequently leading to less rigid classroom procedures.

LEARNERS' MODE OF INVOLVEMENT

The Classroom Observation findings concerning the learners' mode of involvement seem to integrate all four skills in classroom procedures. This coincides with the learners' beliefs concerning the importance of the different language skills in language learning (Chapter 5, Section, 5.2.2.5). However, these findings are extremely interesting since they indicate that the learners' most prevalent mode of involvement in the ILI classroom is speaking (56%), followed by listening (48%), then writing (29%) and least of all reading (17%). These results are surprisingly paradoxical with the learners' broad lines of criticism of the ILI programme as lacking in speaking opportunities and listening comprehension. However, Harmer's perception of the communication continuum helps clarify this paradox, since

32 See Harmer's (1990: 204) definition of the teacher's role as a resource centre.
Harmer's communication continuum suggests a practice\textsuperscript{33} stage which falls between the communicative\textsuperscript{34} and non-communicative\textsuperscript{35} continuum of communication in language classrooms. This practice stage, which was closely followed in the ILI classroom procedures, together with the focus of the lessons on introduction of new language, is what rendered these high percentages of learners' involvement in "speaking" and "listening". When the ILI learners were involved in speaking, they were actually replying or repeating after the teacher; also, when the students were involved mainly in "listening", they were listening to grammar explanations. The students' criticism is, therefore, justified since the bulk of the time they spent in "speaking" and "listening" was spent focusing on language "form" rather than "meanings" that need to be communicated through both functional and social activities.\textsuperscript{36} The Classroom activities feature of the segment will further verify this assumption.

The 29 per cent in which the learners were involved in writing, represents the teachers' tendency to substitute the oral drilling, most pertinent to the habit formation methods of language learning/teaching, with written drills. This shows that though the teachers appear to be closely following a traditional method of teaching, they do not follow it blind to the limitations of the MSA variant they teach.

In examining writing, which occupies third place (29\%) among the learners' "mode of involvement", and comparing it against the findings of the Teachers' Questionnaire, the comparison makes clear that this 29 per cent is neither compatible with the teachers' preferences as language learners nor with their beliefs as regards

\textsuperscript{33} Harmer (1990) identifies practice output activities as those which fall between the non-communicative and communicative continuum. Though they may have a communicative purpose, the materials lack language variety that determines what the learners say. He also asserts that during this stage the teacher may help or point out inaccuracies. Harmer concludes that practice output activities "often have features of both non-communicative and communicative activities".

\textsuperscript{34} Harmer (1990: 46) claims that communicative activities are activities that give the students "the desire to communicate and a purpose which involves them in varied use of language".

\textsuperscript{35} Harmer (1990) claims that the introduction of new language is often an activity that falls at the non-communicative end of the continuum where the teacher makes use of controlled techniques, asking students to repeat and perform drills.

\textsuperscript{36} Littlewood (1999c) specifies functional activities as those which aim at allowing the learners to use whatever language they have at their disposal to communicate information without being bothered with the aptness of this language, whereas social activities are those where students pay attention to the appropriateness of language used to the social context in which the interaction takes place.
teaching the different skills (Chapter 4). This may pertain to the diglossic nature of Arabic, which leads the teachers to reinforce accuracy of language points taught through written production of the new structures and vocabulary during the practice stage.

Let us now examine the learners’ role as delineated by the findings of the Learners’ and Teachers’ Questionnaires in comparison with the findings of the observational data regarding the “learners’ mode of involvement”, the “topic” and “the teachers’ mode of involvement”. In comparing the learners’ and teachers’ beliefs 37 concerning the role of the learner with the findings of the Classroom Observation (Table 6.2 (a)), the observational data support some of the students’ and/or teachers’ beliefs as regards the learners’ role while they contradict others. The classroom observational data support the teachers’ and learners’ assumption that the learners’ role is subjugated to that of the teacher; this, in turn, is emphasised by the centrality of the teachers’ role.

**LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES**

According to Harmer (1990: 228), an activity is “what the teacher thinks of when he is asked, ‘What are you going to do in the class today?’” Rather than give details the teacher will often say, “Oh, I’ve got a nice group-writing task and then we’re going to do a song”. A full description of the ILI programme is incomplete in the absence of a presentation and description of the different activities conducted in the classroom in term of the skills involved in the teaching process.

The language activity feature of the segment examines what the teacher asks the learners to do in relation to the selected and taught language skills. Consequently, this feature of the ILI lesson segment will focus on the language skills underlying the different activities conducted by the teachers, rather than the media used or types of activities proposed. For example, the mini-lecture given by the students in Teacher

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37 In Chapter 4 it was stated that the teachers see the learners’ role in class as subordinate to that of the teacher. The teacher decides what is to be done in class and the learners co-operate by being interested recipients. Learners, however, have full control of their learning when studying at home.
X's lesson is presented in this feature of the segment and examined as a speaking activity.

It is clear from Table 6.2 (b) that 29 per cent of the learners' speaking time focused on "form practice". This supports the preceding assumptions made in relation to the "learners' involvement" feature. It also indicates that the teachers are misled in their belief that responding is a speaking activity; because of this belief, the learners were engaged, for most of their speaking time, in giving the meanings of vocabularies or transforming sentences for grammar practice. This non-communicative attitude of classroom talk is further maintained by the 14 per cent controlled speaking activity attested. In this activity, students mainly replied to the teachers' questions pertaining to the texts they read or the cassette they heard.

It is worth noting that 9 per cent of all the recorded time accredited to speaking as "imitation" pertains to an elementary-level teacher. This corroborates the presupposition that oral drilling is used at the beginner and elementary stages and is gradually substituted by written drills as the learners proceed towards the Intermediate and Advanced levels. This situation prevails due to the complexity of advanced structures and styles which do not naturally lend themselves to a suitable context for oral drilling, unlike the beginners' simple structures, which lend themselves to oral repetition in short, or mini dialogues of everyday situations. It is, thus, important to reiterate that MSA deeply affects the insufficiency of oral practice at the intermediate or advanced levels. Teacher C's choice of "letter to the editor" as a context for oral drilling is a substantial example of this effect. Despite the complexity of the advanced structures, the observation of classroom talk at the Intermediate and Advanced levels necessitates pronunciation drills as a classroom activity for a wider range of proficiency levels than simply the Beginner and Elementary levels where these activities are confined to at present. This is because the observation has shown a number of exchanges of phonetically unintelligible discourse at the ILI upper proficiency levels that were not addressed by the teachers. Turning a blind eye to the learners' pronunciation problems may lead, in the long term, to a further complication in the MSA learning/teaching situation since it
introduces and encourages a classroom “pidgin”\(^{38}\) that bars the learner from effective communication outside the classroom. This ineffective communication takes place for two reasons: (1) the learners try to communicate in MSA; and (2) the learners speak their own classroom version of MSA and expect the outer world to understand them and say “Bravo” as their teachers sometimes did in a number of instances where the observer could not decipher what the learner was saying.

Instances of incomprehensible talk, which cause an outsider in the classroom to feel easily left out, were obvious in student pair work and in the students’ attempt to communicate with their teachers. However, the need to encourage the students has led the teachers, despite their orthodox stance from the learners’ grammatical mistakes, to adopt an excessively lenient attitude towards pronunciation errors by not commenting on the learners’ incomprehensible talk, as long as they can guess what the students are trying to say. This attitude explains why the ILI learners perceive “Oral language discussions assessed by the teacher” as the least important means of measuring their progress (Chapter 5).

The percentage of “communicative practice” (7\%) highlights that the communicative value of language is not always given the attention it deserves when it comes to teaching MSA. This is due to pragmatic decision-making by the teachers and to the lack or unavailability of resources and/or training. However, the ILI teachers should be encouraged to undertake more “communicative practice” even if MSA is not the spoken medium of the language. The researcher believes that more attention should be given to communicative practice in MSA\(^{39}\), otherwise the students will never fulfil the main objective of the study abroad period: developing oral proficiency through classroom training and developing the learners’ strategies for better communication in an Arabic speaking environment.

The 5 per cent attributed to “real communication” reflects the teachers’ high management skills and emphasises the high control they have in directing their classroom procedure. The teachers focused on their lessons, and time was not wasted

\(^{38}\) This term is used metaphorically. For an accurate definition, see Blanc (1999).

\(^{39}\) See Seedhouse (1996) for “genuine classroom communication”.
on any side issues; also, the learners were always monitored leaving no space for diversion from the lesson script planned for the day.

Let us now examine the observation findings concerning listening. Although 46 per cent of the recorded time (Table 6.2 (b)) was spent on “general listening”, the students were mainly listening to the teacher explain the “language points” as they replied to questions or gave the meanings of words. Although this “general listening” mode allows the learners to hear spoken MSA, and is to some extent useful and intellectually challenging, it falls short of satisfying the need of developing expertise in what Harmer (1990) calls “specialist skills”. Therefore, although the learners are involved in “listening” for most of the classroom time, they are not actually being trained to listen and to develop listening sub-skills. Thus, the learners’ consistent complaint of absence of listening in their ASL training is justified (see Chapter 5).

It is also clear from the observational data (Table 6.2 (b)) that “listening comprehension” occupies only 3 per cent of the total ILI classroom procedure. However, the researcher has observed that this 3 per cent reflects traditional traits of the beliefs of the 1950’s and 1960’s (Whitney, 1999), since the recorded text was written to elicit grammatical structure and to develop the learners’ reception of Arabic. This is further emphasised by the 2 per cent attributed to listening for recognition rather than listening for details. This type of listening involved the students in extensive and intensive listening of every word in order to assert that they have understood what they have heard or identified the structure the teacher has asked them to find. Such practice imposes a great strain on the learners and does not help them transfer their listening classroom training to real life situations. This is because in real life situations the listeners are selective in what they hear and know rather than listening to every word.

40 Harmer (1990: 144 - 145) claims that the learner’s success in understanding the content of what he hears depends to a great extent on having trained specialist skills. He recognises six of these skills as: “Predictive skills; Extracting specific information; Getting the general picture; Inferring opinion and attitude, Deducing meaning from context; Recognising function and discourse patterns and markers.”

41 This is in line with Whitney’s (1999) description of the pros and cons of traditional listening in comparison with authentic listening material.

42 See Elkhafaifi (2001) for most common practice of listening comprehension in AFL teaching in the USA.
The fact that only one of the teachers included "listening" in his classroom is indicative of the ILI teachers' perception of listening as demanding and challenging to their teaching abilities in terms of handling the equipment, availability of resources, management of activities, and monitoring students' performance. In respect to handling the equipment, it is sometimes difficult for the teachers to play back and forth the recorded message in the absence of counters on the ILI machines. It is also difficult for them, as earlier mentioned in the Learners' Questionnaire, to find adaptable and suitable material that is interesting and useful at the level of content, and at the same time satisfactory to the teachers' linguistic objectives. Moreover, listening activities are difficult to design since they aim at creating a desire in the learners to listen and at the same time provide them with an assignment to achieve; this task is not always feasible in a multinational group of diversified interests. It is also difficult for teachers to develop tasks that teach and develop rather than test the students' listening abilities and make sure that these exercises are appropriate to the learners' levels and their acquired universal knowledge. The teachers also find listening challenging to their management skills because listening, unlike reading or speaking, is somewhat beyond their full control. Since the teachers' access to their students' minds is not possible, it is difficult for the teachers to follow how the learners perceive or recognise sounds in connected speech as opposed to isolated words; this, in turn, makes it difficult for the teachers to anticipate problems or set the time involved in the different phases of listening and listening activities. These difficulties are a direct result of the lack of special training given to the teachers to understand the nature of and handle listening activities. The researcher's empirical experience as a teacher trainer, and, as herself once a trainee, makes her assert that teachers are not given sufficient training in handling listening equipment, activities or material during their training course; the researcher also believes that teachers develop their experience in dealing with listening practice, in most cases, through trial and error. Thus, teachers are less confident to be filmed conducting a listening activity in comparison with a grammar presentation.

43 For interactive listening strategies, see Lynch (1995).
44 The researcher's assumption is in line with Whitney's (1999) view of the importance of teachers' competence in relation to listening.
It is the researcher’s belief that the poor percentages presented in Table 6.2 (b) with regards to the different media used for listening could be one of the main factors responsible for the ineffective communication which takes place in the MSA classroom as a result of the learners’ inaccurate pronunciation (see Chapter 5). This is because research on listening comprehension has made clear the direct effect of listening on pronunciation.\textsuperscript{45} Bearing in mind the aims of the study abroad period (see Kuntz and Belnap (2001), the detected low percentage of listening activities supports the learners’ suggestions concerning the need for the ILI teachers to make more use of a variety of media in classroom teaching (see Chapter 5).

The “learners’ mode of involvement” has shown that the learners were least involved in reading during classroom practice. Nevertheless, the percentages of the different skills (Table 6.2 (b)) illustrate that reading (11%) ranks highest among all the other skills. This discrepancy deceives because “speaking” and “listening” in language classrooms are not always of a pedagogic nature; they sometimes occur as an expected result of the classroom social setting (Malamah-Thomas, 1987). This is not the case with reading, which is not likely to happen unless the teacher plans for it in advance. Thus, the representation of reading as opposed to the presentation of speaking and listening can hardly force itself as a skill in classroom practice since it is not likely to happen as a natural result of a class gathering. In this respect, if we consider that the high percentages of “speaking” and “listening” do not entail skill development, the findings of the observations concerning the time spent by the ILI teachers on developing the learners’ reading skill (11%) coincides with the learners’ belief that reading was the most important skill to learn in MSA (Chapter 5). In reading, as in listening, the ILI teachers’ traditional trend to use skills work as a vehicle for language recognition or language presentation is again emphasised. This traditional trend is further accentuated by the 9 per cent of the total time spent on reading for “recognition” as opposed to the 2 per cent being spent on reading for “details” (Table 6.2 (b)).

\textsuperscript{45} See Gilbert (1995) who asserts the integration of listening and pronunciation. Also, see Belnap (1987) who argues for the importance of teaching of spoken MSA for listening.
Unlike the dialogue used for listening, the reading texts involved the learners in language that they can work with and understand though the language was above their productive level. The teachers tackle the difficulty of the texts by involving the learners in intensive vocabulary teaching followed by practice prior to reading every paragraph of the texts. This procedure implies that Arabic vocabulary poses a greater difficulty than structure to the ILI learners. The excessive emphasis of the ILI teachers on vocabulary work reflects the challenge vocabulary poses to learners of Arabic (Chapters 1 and 5) and justifies the learners’ comments on the need to learn more sophisticated lexical sets (Chapter 5). However, in retrospection on modern foreign language research, it may be useful to suggest that the integration of "extensive reading" in the MSA programme may offer some solution to the vocabulary learning difficulty which faces the ILI learners. It is the researcher’s belief that a structured "extensive reading" programme could sustain the objectives of the study abroad period since it creates an awareness among teachers of the importance of their role in developing their students’ out of class learning strategies.

Despite the fact that the reading comprehension texts were rich in their cultural input, this input did not seem to cause any difficulties for the learners. On the contrary, this cultural input satisfies the “purpose” factor, referred to by Harmer (1990), as most pertinent to teaching the receptive skills, especially when the purpose of its being introduced to Arab culture pertains to the learners’ integrative motivation revealed in Chapter 5. This observation is in line with the learners’ claim that the cultural input of the texts does not hamper their understanding of the material (Chapter 5).

It is worth mentioning here that the researcher’s observation has led her to believe that the ILI teachers and learners are proponents of intensive reading. This

46 Harmer (1990) sees involving students in roughly-tuned input, which means language that the students can process but cannot produce, as a positive value that should be available in all receptive skill work.
47 See Zimmermann (1997) for the importance of reading for vocabulary acquisition.
48 On the importance of exploring the outside of the classroom environment for the study abroad learners, see Kuntz and Belnap (2001).
belief was established by the tasks prepared by the teachers to occupy the readers in word-by-word readings as well as frequent readings (Williams, 1999). The learners' adamant efforts to read for complete understanding of every word in the text, is further support of the intensive reading style prevalent in the ILI classrooms. The majority of the comprehension questions were based on the text, thus focusing on "language related skills" (ibid.) with no occasion for incorporating prediction or inference activities which relate to reasoning skills.49

The superior status of writing imparted in the "learners' mode of involvement" (Table 6.2 (b)) is undermined by the percentages of time attributed to the different kinds of written practices introduced by the teachers. That the learners spent 16 per cent of the recorded time involved in "copying from the board" may prove that the learners may eventually become good spellers but does not necessarily indicate that they are trained to be proficient writers. However, this "copying" was necessary since the learners were expected to make their own notes on vocabulary and grammar from the board to compensate for the lack of adequate presentation of these two items in the ILI Books. Spending 7 per cent of the time in transforming sentences and gap filling from words that are already provided does not actually develop the students' abilities to assimilate, interpret and reformulate other people's ideas or present their own.

The MSA course objectives published in the ILI brochure50 show that these objectives contradict the daily classroom practice regarding writing. The MSA classroom practice does not reveal an awareness of the implications of modern language research pertaining to designing or teaching writing activities. This is emphasised by the absence of "free writing" as shown in Table 6.2 (b). The teachers'  

49 Williams (1999: 655) states that no two lists of reading sub-skills are the same. He argues that most of these skills can be roughly grouped either under "language related skills" or "reason related skills". "The former relate to knowledge of orthographic conventions, vocabulary, and syntax, and the latter primarily to inferences, made on the basis of the information from the text, or from the reader's general knowledge".

50 The ILI brochure states that the objective of the MSA course is to enable the learners "to read and write at an academic level, and to enable the learner to follow current day-to-day events in the Middle East and North Africa".
lack of training in developing process writing activities and their unawareness of the theoretical differences between "product writing" and "process writing" leads them to believe that classroom time spent on preparing the students for writing is time wasted. This belief also pertains to the teachers' cultural perception of writing as a disregarded means of communication (Chapter 4).

The fact that some learners are quicker in writing than others also makes free writing a less popular activity in classroom procedures and the more common format for homework assignments. This is because the teachers are under pressure to finish an allotted number of units per proficiency level (see Chapter 5). For that reason, "free writing" is erased from the teachers' repertoire of classroom activities since this activity does not conform to the uniform pace the teacher sets for all students to accomplish classroom activities within the syllabus.

Although the distribution of the skills in the ILI classroom procedures does not coincide with the belief that all MSA language skills are "equally important" to learn (Chapter 5), this distribution indicates that they are all integrated in the MSA classroom practice. A general observation of the representation of the skills in the ILI MSA classroom also shows that the teachers were more trained in developing a richer and more pedagogically oriented variety of reading activities than they were in listening or writing. This calls our attention once more to the importance of a formative evaluation of the ILI Teacher Training Course content.

**CLASSROOM INTERACTION PATTERN**

The Classroom Observation shows that the greater part of the MSA teaching occurs in a lockstep grouping order. Table 6.2 (b) makes clear that 72 per cent of the teachers' time is spent in a whole class setting which guarantees maximum concentration from the learners and complete control of the teachers by restraining

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51 According to Hedge (1999) the “process view” of writing argues that writing is a result of using cognitive strategies in exploring and gradually developing an organised piece of written material. Also, see Johns (1990) and Reid & Kroll, B. (1995) for composition theories.

52 “Lockstep” according to Harmer (1990) is the classroom setting for an activity where all the class is working with the teacher. It reflects the traditional teaching situation where teachers are in control.
the learners to “the same rhythm and pace” (Harmer, 1990: 205). This grouping order, however, has its own disadvantages because this whole-class setting leaves but little time for the students to speak at all, which is unjustifiable in a small group setting like that of the ILI classes. This setting is sometimes unconducive to language learning since it does not take on board students’ different abilities. Thus, quick students are bored, slow students are lost and shy students are left anxious and stressed out by being consistently “exposed in front of the whole class” (Harmer, 1990: 205).

Although one may argue that this grouping order might have imposed its presence on the observations because the classrooms observed all focused on language presentation, the conducting/interacting and the instructing/conducting modes counteract this argument by emphasising this lockstep even during the practice stages of the lesson. This classroom grouping is considered to be most threatening to the learners’ autonomy and to creative language use and, therefore, to learning (Harmer, 1990).

The 19 per cent attributed to “individual” pattern of interaction, pertains to the dominance of reading and writing activities which involve the students in controlled “language practice”. An “individual-study classroom setting” is considered useful since it allows the learners to work at their own pace (Harmer, 1990). Individual-study, thus, moderates the anxiety caused by “lockstep” and incessant “hot correction”. However, the researcher has seen that in many classes this grouping unintentionally reflected a “whole class mode” especially in classes that contained two or three students only. In these instances, it is the teachers’ “monitoring mode-of-involvement” that made this class grouping different from a “lockstep” one. That the teachers spent so little time involving the students in pair and group-work counteracts any presupposed communicative tendencies (see Chapter 4) in the ILI MSA classroom procedures.
In this section, the researcher discusses the personal relationships between the teachers and the learners and the general classroom atmosphere in which the learning takes place. The researcher focuses on how the ILI teachers exploit their non-verbal resources to communicate with their students. The impressionistic data gathered by means of the “Teacher and classroom atmosphere section” of the OT makes clear that all the ILI teachers enjoy an established high rapport with their students. This rapport facilitates organisation and administration procedures in the classroom events through creating an atmosphere of co-operation;\(^{53}\) in fact, the teachers are extremely friendly and non-threatening despite the centrality of their role. The teachers’ friendliness is established through their facial expressions, eye contact, tone of voice, their posture as well as the way they dress and move freely around the classroom. This friendliness guarantees accessibility to the teachers outside and inside the classroom, and creates a relaxed classroom atmosphere throughout the lesson. The teachers’ treatment of the students and their consistent attitude of encouragement do not only establish rapport but also boost the students’ extrinsic motivation and positive attitude towards MSA.\(^{54}\) It was obvious that the ILI teachers also make use of their personal qualities to foster the learners’ interest and maintain variation in order to compensate for the monotony of the traditional teaching methods and the long grammar presentation. The teachers’ warm up activity at the beginning of every lesson in which they ask their students to communicate their daily or weekend experiences demonstrates the teachers’ genuine interest in their students’ experiences as adult individuals, albeit that this interest is soon blurred by the shift in the teachers’ attention from the social to the linguistic. Examples of this interest is seen in Teacher F’s lesson in which a student sets an appointment with her to go to the Cairo International Book Fair during the weekend. The teachers’ genuine interest in their students supports the presupposition that all the ILI teachers are genuinely interested in communicating and understanding more about foreign cultures (Chapter 4). The students’ comments on the personal qualities of their teachers (Chapter 5) prove that this interest is mutual between the teachers and their learners.

\(^{53}\) See Malamah-Thomas (1987).

\(^{54}\) See Harmer (1990).
The observations have shown that the teachers were fair to all their students as they divided their attention equally between them. They also showed high management skills in setting pace, dealing with late and slow students and making the students feel relaxed and accepted. The ILI teachers were highly confident and involved in all their lessons. They consistently stirred the class stamina at the drilling stages by allowing laughter at mistakes and by mimicking the students' fading voices to drive away the monotony of repetition. All the teachers skilfully used their facial expressions and body language to give feedback, create rapport, encourage students, elicit and explain vocabulary. In short, the ILI teachers are responsible for improving the learners' extrinsic motivation even when they were least impressed by the ILI syllabus, books, availability of resources and at times even criticised the teaching methodology (Chapter 5).

6.4 Conclusion

The Classroom Observation chapter sets out to further examine the ILI programme with the aim of supporting or contradicting the findings of the Teachers' and Learners' Questionnaires at the level of "procedure". To provide global firsthand information about the ILI programme, as a representative of private ASL institutions in Cairo, the researcher modified a Classroom Observation scheme that describes the different elements of classroom "procedures" and quantifies the time spent by the teachers on each element as a final arbitration between the learners' opinions and the teachers' beliefs.

The summary of the observation data thus provides us with information about the dynamics, effectiveness, acceptability and efficiency of the ILI programme. This information helps in achieving two aims: (1) defining the elusive goals and objectives of the ILI programme; and (2) evaluating the relative effectiveness of the ILI method to the long-term students' needs.

6.4.1 The ILI Method: Classroom Procedure

The Classroom Observations show that a "British structuralist" view of language underlies the ILI's programme. The MSA teachers are strong believers in language
learning as habit formation, and thus they resort to written as well as oral drills and practice. These beliefs, being verified by the Classroom Observations, lead us to establish that the main objectives of the ILI MSA programme are to teach all four basic skills through structure. As a result, all four skills are integrated in the ILI syllabus, although the diglossic nature of Arabic dictates an emphasis on reading and writing. The ILI teaching aims at accuracy of grammatical structures and adopts a less rigid stance towards pronunciation errors. Nevertheless, both structure and vocabulary are orally drilled at the presentation stage of the lesson.

The ILI syllabus, as revealed from classroom materials, shows a similarity to the syllabus of Situational Language Teaching as described by Richards & Rodgers (1999). This is because the MSA syllabus, as represented in the coursebooks and materials, presents a list of Arabic structures and vocabularies organised in the order of their presentation within the framework of relevant contexts or situations.

The learning activities presented in the ILI classroom all focused on forms of sentence pattern practice activities. They revealed elements of repetition and controlled forms of sentence transformations or gap-filling related to a particular context or situation. The reading activities designed by the teachers revealed greater expertise in designing learner authentic tasks than those of writing and speaking.

The "learners' role" is subjugated to that of the teacher since the learners are intended to listen and repeat for the majority of the classroom time. The learners have no control over what they learn. However, after the presentation stage of the lesson, the learners are allowed more space to participate more actively in initiating responses and asking their colleagues. The learners rarely reach a free stage of practice for real communication at the functional or social level. In the rare instances where teachers allow for free or communicative practice, this activity usually occupies minimal time compared to the other forms of activity.

The teacher's role is threefold rather than multifunctional. In the presentation stage, he serves as a model, source of information and the setter of relevant situations.
for the presented structures. He then orchestrates classroom drills and activities through conducting and interacting with the learners. During the practice stage, although the learners are allowed to use the language with less control, the teacher is never out of the picture since he monitors to correct grammatical and structural errors or simply walks around as a resource centre. The role of the ILI teacher is not only central for the success of the method but also for reducing the students’ cultural shock by building positive interpersonal relationships with the students.

Instructional materials are indispensable for the success of the method. The teachers intensively draw on and use the coursebooks or a set number of selected texts at the advanced and high advanced levels where the coursebook is non-existent. The ILI books contain firmly sequenced lessons planned around putatively graded grammatical structures and vocabulary. As for visual aids, they are used intensively in the lower proficiency levels to present meaning and to build situations where applicable.

Although the observations covered a wide proficiency range of MSA classroom procedures, a general ILI line of common procedures was detected. All classes started with a socialisation activity, asking students about how they were or what they did or planned to do during the weekend. This activity aimed at getting speaking practice out of the way before they started their presentations. Hence, speaking practice was used to review old structures and tenses, improve the students’ pronunciation as well as warm up the students and attract their attention and gear up their interest in what followed. The teachers followed this speaking ritual by setting the situation for the new topic by eliciting and teaching vocabulary of the chosen text. Then, intensive reading comprehension took place; this was followed later by a presentation of the grammar embedded in the text. In order for the teacher to get the students’ tongues around the new language, he initiates a limited number of oral drills before directing the students to intensive written drills and practice activities. On rare occasions, the controlled and less controlled language activities lead to freer language activities due to the limitation of classroom time. The classroom time
restriction thus led the teachers to ask the students to carry out all free writing activities as homework assignments.

In order for the ILI programme to meet its study abroad learners' needs, it should integrate more activities for real communication. The teachers should also consider training their students to develop their learning strategies outside of the classroom to make the best of their experience in Cairo.
Chapter 7
Conclusion, Suggestions and Recommendations

This thesis sets out to investigate teaching Arabic as a Second Language in one private institution in Cairo, the International Language Institute (ILI) – Sahafeyeen. The thesis investigates the MSA teaching programme at the ILI against the backdrop of ASL teaching in Cairo. In carrying out this task, the researcher has conducted an empirical study by considering three aspects of this information: the learners, the teachers, and classroom practice. Analysis of the data has revealed a number of findings. The following is a summary of the most significant among these:

1- All ILI teachers, similar to those employed by private institutions, cultural centres and a few government institutions, have had some sort of pre-service teacher training course.

2- The ILI teacher-training course provides the teachers with effective teaching techniques, develops their ability in language analysis, trains them in material development, and equips them with high classroom management skills. It is these qualities and practical abilities that make the ILI teachers highly sought after and make the ILI-training more effective than an MA in TAFL from the American University, as acknowledged by the director of the Centre of Continuing Adult Education of the American University in Cairo.

3- This training, however, fails to provide the teachers with the theoretical tools necessary for deeper insights into their classroom practice and to take responsibility for their own professional development.

4- As regards the nature of language and its implications on classroom practice, the teachers are more influenced by their first language learning experiences than by modern assumptions about language learning.

5- Unlike other private institutions and cultural centres, the ILI encourages teachers to become stakeholders by employing full time teachers. However, the teachers are reluctant to take responsibility for decision-making about curriculum changes. This attitude undermines the ILI’s policy of full-time employment.
6- The ILI teachers have expressed a considerable degree of reluctance to suggest changes to their superiors. The teachers tend to throw the ball into the ILI court instead of taking the responsibility for effecting change. This attitude reflects a deep culture, but one which does not necessarily have to govern a private setting like that of the ILI. The teachers' attitude is intended to save face. By pinpointing loopholes in the programme, they may, in fact, be pointing to deficiencies in their own teaching.

7- The ILI co-ordination system for teacher development introduces newly employed teachers to ways of presenting new language points at different proficiency levels. This system guarantees quality teaching and avoids unhealthy competition and comparisons between the teachers. However, the co-ordination system does not encourage teachers' initiative or their experimentation with new techniques.

8- The ILI teachers are able and trained to design ASL materials for the different proficiency levels. This is a common trait among the majority of teachers in the ASL field due to the lack of adequate ready-made resources and material. However, the teachers lack the expertise in compiling, reviewing and collating this material into a comprehensive, user-friendly book that addresses the learners' needs rather than responding to the pressing demands of the classroom situation. This is made clear by the learners' complaints about the deficiencies of the ILI coursebooks.

9- The Institute's policy makes clear that the ILI's reputation and customer satisfaction are the primary factors governing decision-making. This behaviour is common among private ASL institutions and cultural centres.

10- Private institutions believe that one happy learner brings in more learners by word of mouth publicity. The ILI, therefore, tries to avoid complaints from dissatisfied learners because they are likely to mar its reputation. Saving the Institute's reputation protects business and is likely to influence the Institute's pedagogic decision-making and administrative policies in solving students' problems. Again, this is a common practice among private institutions.

11- Teachers use their personal qualities to compensate for inadequacies or deficiencies in the ILI methodology or syllabus.
12- A discrepancy was found between the teachers’ beliefs about language teaching/learning and their actual teaching practice. This discrepancy is probably the result of: (1) the teachers’ poor knowledge of the theoretical basis for their practice; and (2) their need to preserve their self-image as ASL professionals.

13- The ILI teachers’ pedagogic decisions were to a great extent influenced by pragmatism, availability of resources, and the pressure to finish the syllabus. Hence, insufficient attention is given to the communicative value of language.

14- The research has also shown that MSA teaching practice is influenced by the traditional way in which the ILI teachers were taught Arabic as a first language and English and French as foreign languages rather than by their exposure to more modern techniques of teaching foreign languages at an older age.

15- Although the teachers perceive language as a means of communication, and have expressed an inclination towards a complex multitude of roles inspired by the Communicative Approach, their classroom practice only gives way to the teachers’ involvement in instructing/interacting and conducting/interacting. This mode of involvement means that the teachers spend the majority of their classroom time presenting structure and teaching or drilling vocabulary.

16- The need for training teachers to handle advanced levels of proficiency has been detected from the teachers’ preferences to teach Beginners and Elementary levels. This finding was further supported by the employment of an Arabist to teach advanced university courses.

17- The ILI teachers play a central role in helping students cope with their cultural shock by building student/teacher interpersonal relationships.

18- The ILI MSA course objectives met these students’ immediate and academic needs within the classroom setting; however, they did not necessarily help the students explore the Arab environment they live in.

19- A discrepancy was also detected between students’ beliefs about language and their actual academic needs. The learners’ responses have shown that ASL learners look at language as a means of communication. However, they emphasise explicit teaching of Arabic structure without context and stress the need for more vocabulary teaching. This discrepancy results from lack of a clear
orientation with the objectives of the study abroad period in their sending institutions.

20- The ILI learners demand more listening and speaking activities in classroom practice because, on the whole, they are integratively motivated learners who are interested in learning about Arab culture by mixing with Arabic speakers.

21- In relation to MSA learning, the learners have highlighted reading and writing as the most important skills. The learners’ varied demands, as expressed in 19 and 20 above, are attributed to: (1) the diglossic nature of Arabic, which is bound to thwart the learners’ expectations of attaining oral communicative proficiency; and (2) the requirements of their university degrees. The frustration resulting from the discrepancy between students’ pragmatic needs and their general beliefs about language as communication could be resolved by encouraging students to integrate ECA learning into their course of study in Egypt.

22- As in other ASL programmes, the teacher is the vital factor in the ILI MSA programme. This is because the teacher uses her/his personal qualities to compensate for any theoretical weaknesses in ASL teaching methodology. This is done by establishing good relations with the students, being available to the students outside classroom hours, and maintaining a good classroom atmosphere at all times.

23- The learners’ experience in learning Arabic is improved by the teachers’ encouragement, flexibility, and rapport, which increase the learners’ extrinsic motivation by stimulating their interest in what the teachers have to say.

24- Contrary to Harmer’s (1990) assertion that students’ “liking” or “disliking” of the teacher does not matter, the ILI students’ comments show that “liking” of the teacher does matter in Arabic second language learning. What we call “teacher/student chemistry” is a vital element.

25- Mutual student/teacher cultural awareness is necessary to avoid class conflict and to maintain learning.

26- The ILI students’ biographical information is treated as a tool in the Institute’s marketing strategies and policies rather than as an instrument in syllabus or curriculum design. In doing so, the ILI deprives itself of a tool that could provide
insights into the learners' learning styles, interests, and background education and guide the teachers' choices of content and classroom activities.

27- The Institute’s concern about maintaining standards and good-quality teaching compromises the ILI teachers’ abilities and their attempts to experiment or explore new ways of teaching Arabic.

28- The need to make the “customers” happy influences the teachers’ assessment of their students’ achievement and may lead to compromising methodology so as to gain customer satisfaction.

29- Assessment tools and criteria emerged as an area that is worth further research and development, especially with regard to the learners’ oral proficiency. This was confirmed by students’ criticism of testing their ECA with written tasks.

30- The majority of the students’ self-assessment did not match the proficiency levels at which they were placed at the ILI. This has revealed that MSA learners tend to underrate their performance, because they tend to measure their language ability by what they still cannot do rather than by what they can do.

31- The teachers’ assessment of the learners tends to emphasise what the learner knows in relation to the actual instruction s/he has received.

32- The majority of the ILI students asserted that the ILI MSA programme met their needs. This revealed that the study abroad learners, like many other language learners, are satisfied with a general language course that focuses on language points and integrated interesting classroom activities.

33- The Classroom Observation has shown that the ILI teachers need to invest more classroom time in making use of more “real communicative” activities besides focusing on oral and written repetition-drills and controlled practice.

34- The Classroom Observation has highlighted that not all classroom speaking was communication and not all listening trained the learners’ comprehension ability.

35- Writing is confined to sentence transformations and board writing. Apart from reading comprehension, very little attention is given to training the learners in the “specialist” skills needed by a proficient second language learner.

36- The ILI coursebooks are out of date and were criticised by a majority of the learners.
37- Unlike other private and government institutions, the ILI deprives itself of a major source of programme evaluation and development by not using a student course assessment feedback form. Despite the “good” reasons that led the ILI programme to adopt this policy, it is not possible for a language programme to develop without student input. This view is supported by some of the ILI teachers who, in a group interview, felt that student feedback is crucial to teacher assessment and development.

7.1 Suggestions and Recommendations

These findings lead the researcher to make the following suggestions and recommendations pertaining to the ILI and other private ASL institutions (where applicable). Other recommendations concerning the ASL discipline are also presented.

7.1.1 The ILI-Sahafeyeen

1. The present ILI co-ordination system is intended to guarantee good-quality teaching and to prevent linguistic and procedural difficulties in classroom practice. However, it does not help develop an independent teacher who is ready to initiate change to cope with the latest trends in foreign language learning/teaching. The transfer of experience maintained by this system should be based on a critical and theoretical understanding rather than superficial mimicry of techniques.

2. A theoretical module in the teachers’ training would enable the teachers to talk meaningfully about their teaching and allow for informed eclecticism. This informed eclecticism would allow the teachers to borrow effectively and intelligently from other methods and experiences to meet students’ needs. In support of the importance of incorporating a theoretical module into the ILI teacher-training course, we may invoke Stern (1987: 31) who asserts, “Theory development {…} should make language teaching meaningful and intellectually satisfying”. This is because “As a result of theorising, the practitioner {…} should gain a sense of greater professional assurance and develop a fellow feeling with practitioners in related fields” (ibid.). Stern’s acknowledgement of the importance of theory development in language teaching could also offer a solution to the current ASL situation. A sound knowledge
of theory is bound to develop a more scientific and objective outlook on what programmes and teachers do or offer, thus, replacing mistrust between the ASL institutions with an attitude of interdependency. This interdependency would open the way for action research based on sound theoretical interpretations, and allow for the exchange of experiences leading to the development of ASL learning/teaching.

3. The ILI teacher-training course should accommodate the following:
   a. Theories of language and language learning.
   b. ECA and MSA linguistics and phonology.
   c. An introduction to various teaching methods as opposed to one particular ILI method.
   d. Computer-assisted learning and multimedia material.
   e. Theoretical bases for teaching the different skills.
   f. Teaching practice opportunities at different levels of proficiency with special emphasis on the advanced levels.

4. It is necessary to review and develop the ILI coursebooks and supplementary material. Special attention should be given to the audio-visual component.

5. Needs analysis and course feedback information should be integrated into course design and choice of activities.

6. Although MSA is not the spoken medium for daily communication, it is recommended that learners should be provided with ample meaningful communication for three reasons: (1) ILI learners all expressed the wish for oral conversation to develop their communicative abilities; (2) learners cannot listen to what they cannot say (Belnap, 1987); and (3) meaningful communication maintains students' attention and interest, which in turn, boosts their motivation for better understanding and learning of the language.

7. An integration of an extensive reading component in the MSA course would help students with vocabulary acquisition and motivate them to become more involved in the Arab environment surrounding them.

8. More attention should be given to developing learner-authentic listening comprehension materials and tasks. These materials should consist of pronunciation drills.
9. There is a great need for the development of an assessment tool that determines the learners' proficiency level rather than the number of words and sentences that they memorise during their study at the ILI.

10. The ILI should define and publicise a clear set of course objectives to narrow the gap between students' expectations and programme reality.

11. More co-ordination between the sending institutions and the ILI should enable effective use of the study abroad funding and time by providing learners with better opportunities for meaningful communication inside and outside the classroom.

7.1.2 THE ASL DISCIPLINE

1. On a more general level, the findings of this study show the need for an Arabic association for ASL teachers. This association should focus on the following issues: (1) holding seminars, workshops and lectures to address the teachers' pedagogic and educational needs; (2) building bridges for communication and exchange of experiences; and (3) improving working and employment conditions in order to provide ASL practitioners with a greater sense of professionalism.

2. An Arabic Second Language Teaching Organisation should be set up in Egypt to organise, accredit, and co-ordinate ASL activity in the country.

3. The organisation should adopt, activate and develop the already existing ASL teaching aims adopted by the Arabic Centre, Cairo University, together with the following additional aims: (1) to publish pedagogically oriented works in ASL; (2) to provide a comprehensive review of all of the ASL institutions in Cairo; (3) to encourage the exchange of experiences among institutions; and (4) to develop a protocol and code of ethics to guide ASL institution transactions and establish organisational and individual accountability.

4. An examination board should also be established, to encourage co-ordination between teachers in developing a recognised, standard, reliable ASL proficiency test. This test could be taken at any time and administered by Egyptian cultural centres in foreign countries or by recognised educational bodies in Egypt.

5. This research also calls for more evaluative empirical studies of other ASL institutions to provide deeper insights into ASL teaching/learning and their implications on catering for long-term students' needs.
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Appendices
### Appendix 1.

**List of Surveyed ASL Institutions: 2000 – 2001**

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Appendix 2.
(a – j)

Survey of ASL Institutions in Cairo: Findings

Each Arabic programme is given a number from 1 to 15 (see Appendix 1 for the identity of the different programmes). Under each number the information on a specific programme component is represented as follows:

+ = Do it    x = Do not do it    0 = Not mentioned    — = Inapplicable

The [*] after one of the previous signs = Yes/No but requires comment
### Appendix 2 (a) School Objectives

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### Appendix 2 (h) Best Environment for Learning MSA

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### Appendix 2 (i) Activities

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### Appendix 2 (j) Services

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<td>+</td>
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</table>
Appendix 3.

The Arabic Study-Abroad Programme Questionnaire
The Arabic Study-Abroad Programme at British Universities
Questionnaire 1

Name: 
Position: 
University: 

If exact figures are not available, please give estimates. Please mark estimates"(est.)"

1- How many students are studying Arabic in your department this year?

2- How many are studying Arabic as a core course and how many as an elective outside course?

Core: 
Elective/outside: 

3- How many students have studied Arabic in your department in the last five years?

1995: 
1996: 
1997: 
1998: 
1999: 

4- What percentage of the students are from each of the following backgrounds:

*Islamic and Arabic-speaking: 
*Islamic but not Arabic speaking: 
*Arabic speaking but not Islamic: 
*Neither Arabic speaking nor Islamic:
5- What are the main nationalities or ethnic backgrounds of the students studying Arabic at your department?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality etc.</th>
<th>Approx. %</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

6- In your opinion, why do the students study Arabic? Tick one or more as appropriate, and number in descending order from the most common to the least common.

*They intend or hope to work in the Arab world after graduating
*Religious reasons
*Ethnic reasons
*Cultural / literary interests.
*Research reasons
*Other reasons (please specify)

7- Are the students required to study Arabic in an Arabic-speaking country; or given the option of doing so, as part of their degree course?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required</th>
<th>Option</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
8- If the answer is No, please say Why. If the answer is Yes, please go to Question 9.

Now that you have given your reasons for not having a study-abroad program, I would like to thank you very much for your time and cooperation.

9- To which country/countries do you send the students?

10- Why do you send the students to this country/countries?

11- Who makes the decision, the department or the student? (tick as appropriate)
    *Department
    *Student
    *Both

12- Does the Department have a list of all the institutions that teach Arabic as a second language in the Arab world?
    Yes    No

13- Which institute/institutes do the students go to?

14- Why?
15- Does the Department negotiate the course specifications with the host institute before sending the students abroad?

Yes  No

16- If the answer is Yes, please outline these specifications under the following headings, or append relevant documents.

a. Number of contact hours:

b. Course content:

c. Teaching materials:

d. Teaching methodology:

e. Assessment:
f. Monitoring:

17- In what ways, if at all does the Department co-ordinate with the host institute with regard to the following:

a. Teaching materials:

b. Assessment and testing:

c. Monitoring attendance:

18- At what point in the degree course are the students sent abroad?

19- Why?

20- Are students allowed to undertake any work while studying abroad?

Yes  No

21- How well does the study program fit in with what the students have done
prior to going abroad?

Very well  Not at all well

Comments:

22- How well does the study program lead the students into what they are required to do after their return to your Department?

Very well  Not at all well

Comments:

23- How much, if any, feedback do you get from the students on their return from their study-abroad period?

A lot  None

Comment: (E.g. what form does it take or why not)

24- How satisfied are you with the results of the study-abroad programme?

Very satisfied  Not at all satisfied
Comment:

25- If you had the chance to change any aspect /s of the overseas course/s, what would you choose?

Thank you very much for your time and co-operation.

Iman A. Soliman
Appendix 4.

The Teachers' Questionnaire
Arabic as a Second Language
The International Language Institute (ILI) - Sahafeyeen - As a Case Study

Questionnaire No.2: The Teacher

1. Name: (You can leave the questionnaire anonymous if you wish)
2. Date of Birth:
3. Nationality:
4. Sex:
5. Marital status:
6. Qualifications:

7. Work experience:

8. Employment: (Part time - full time)
   (Part time - full time)

9. Why did you choose the teaching of Arabic as a second language for a Career?

10. Specialization: Egyptian Colloquial Arabic (ECA)
   Modern Standard Arabic (MSA)
   Both
11. What Proficiency Levels (as specified by the ILI) have you taught? (Please tick and fill in the table as appropriate and comment where needed)

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<th>Proficiency Level</th>
<th>ECA</th>
<th>MSA</th>
<th>No. of times you taught the level</th>
<th>Further comments</th>
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<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>

12. How much do you enjoy teaching Arabic at the following levels? Please mark the scale at the level which most corresponds to your experience.

a. Teaching Script

Very much enjoy  Do not at all

b. Beginner/Elementary

Very much enjoy  Do not at all
c. Intermediate/s

Very much enjoy  Do not at all

---

d. Advanced

Very much enjoy  Do not at all

---

Please give reasons for your personal preferences.

---

13- Have you taught any Arabic for Specific Purposes course? (ASP)  
If Yes, please state what purpose/s.

---

14- How do you feel about these classes?

---

15- Please indicate any particular problems and/or positive features.
16- Do you know any other language/s besides Arabic?

Yes            No

17- If Yes, please list the language/s and estimate your level of proficiency.

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<th>Intermediate</th>
<th>Advanced</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

18- The role the teacher plays in class conveys assumptions about language and/or language learning.

Very much agree  Totally disagree

19- The success of the teaching method depends on the degree to which the teacher can provide the content for successful language learning.

Very much agree  Totally disagree
20- The success of the teaching method depends on the degree to which the teacher can provide the conditions for successful learning.

Very much agree  Totally disagree

21- The successful teacher is one who adapts his/her role to suit the students' needs.

Very much agree  Totally disagree

22- The successful teacher is one who knows the language system well regardless of how s/he teaches it.

Very much agree  Totally disagree

23- The more 'teacher proof' (i.e. the teacher is not the focus of the teaching procedure) the method is the more communicative it is.

Very much agree  Totally disagree

24- 'Teacher-proof' methods limit teachers' initiative and creativity.

Very much agree  Totally disagree
25- The teacher should be able to change her/his role in class.

Very much agree  Totally disagree

26- The teacher should be able to play different roles when he adopts different methods.

Very much agree  Totally disagree

27- Less teacher-directed learning demands very specific and more demanding roles of the teacher.

Very much agree  Totally disagree

28- Only teachers who are sure of their role and the learners' role can successfully depart from text book-oriented teaching.

Very much agree  Totally disagree
29- How familiar are you with each of the following methods:

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<th>Slightly familiar</th>
<th>Unfamiliar</th>
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<tr>
<td>Situational or Oral Approach</td>
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<tr>
<td>Audiolingual Method</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicative Approach</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Physical Response</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Silent Way</td>
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</table>
30- In your opinion, to what extent is each of the methods below dependent on the teacher as source of knowledge?

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<tr>
<td>Silent Way</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Language Learning</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Natural Approach</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Suggestopedia</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

31- How often in your lesson do you take the following roles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q 31</th>
<th>Teacher's Role</th>
<th>Very often</th>
<th>Fairly often</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Directing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Source of information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Counselling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Correcting errors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Model for Learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

32- In what way can the learner contribute to the learning process in the classroom?
33- Do you have any other points which you wish to raise about your work as a teacher at ILI? Please use the space below for your answer.

34- Have you studied any foreign language/s?

Yes  No

If No, thank you very much for completing this questionnaire. If Yes, please continue.

35- How fluently do you communicate in the language/s you have studied?

a. The ----------- Language (write what language in the space provided)

   Very fluent  Not at all fluent

   [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

b. The ----------- Language

   Very fluent  Not at all fluent

   [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

c. The ----------- Language

   Very fluent  Not at all fluent

   [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]
36- What, if any, were the main difficulties you experienced as a learner?

37- How were you taught foreign language/s? (Tick one)

In a grammar based approach
In a communicative approach
Other (specify)

38- How much did you enjoy the following language activities.

a. Reading

Very much
Not at all

b. Writing

Very much
Not at all

c. Listening

Very much
Not at all
d. Speaking

**Very much** | **Not at all**
---|---

39- Do you like to study:

a. Grammar
b. Vocabulary
c. Pronunciation

40- How **much** did you **enjoy** using the following:

a. Cassettes

**Very much** | **Not at all**
---|---

b. Games

**Very much** | **Not at all**
---|---

c. Speaking to native speakers

**Very much** | **Not at all**
---|---

d. Studying textbooks

**Very much** | **Not at all**
---|---

e. Translating

**Very much** | **Not at all**
---|---
f. Watching videos and TV

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very much</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

41- How often did you use a dictionary?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very often</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

42- How much do you like reading the following:

a. Newspapers / magazines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very much</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

b. Stories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very much</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

c. Promotional materials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very much</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

d. Letters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very much</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

e. Others (please specify)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very much</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

43- Do you ever write letters in the foreign language?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
44- If Yes, please indicate how easy or how difficult you find this.

Very difficult       Very easy

45- In your opinion, how important is it to learn each of these in a foreign language:

a. Listening

Very important       Not at all important

b. Speaking

Very important       Not at all important

c. Reading

Very important       Not at all important

d. Writing

Very important       Not at all important

46- As a learner of a foreign language, how do you think you learn best?

a. In small groups

Best               Worst
b. In class (individual)

Best                      Worst


c. In class (teacher-led activities)

Best                      Worst


d. Outside the class

Best                      Worst


47- As a language learner, did you feel that your success was a product of good teachers and good teaching?

Absolutely                 Not at all


Please explain.

48- To what extent did your experience as a language learner affect your teaching of Arabic as a second language?

Very much                  Not at all


49- Please explain.


Thank you very much for your time and co-operation.

Iman A. Soliman
Appendix 5.

The Learners’ Questionnaire
Arabic as a Second Language
The International Language Institute (ILI)-Sahafeyeen- A Case Study

Questionnaire No.3: The Learner

1- Name:

2- Date of Birth: 3- Nationality:

4- Sex: 5- Marital Status:

6- University: 7- Occupation:

8- Language/s:

9- Reasons for learning Arabic:

a. I have distant ancestors who spoke Arabic
b. It will help me in the future in my professional career
c. I am interested in the Arabic Culture
e. It is required as part of my degree
f. For research purposes
g. I have friends or relatives who speak it.
h. I need to fulfill a foreign language requirement for graduation
i. want to do something different
j. I am interested in the politics and economic systems of the Arab countries
k. I am a Muslim and Arabic is the sacred language of the Koran.
l. Other (Please specify)

10- Duration of course of study at this Institute:

11- What do you want to achieve during your course of study at this Institute?

a. Read and write Arabic (not speak)
b. Participate in short simple conversations
c. Listen to the news in Arabic and be able to discuss the main topics
d. Build my vocabulary to meet areas that are more sophisticated
e. Function as a native speaker or interpreter
f. Consolidate my knowledge of the Arabic grammar and build on it
g. Understand the culture of the people
h. Participate in formal discussion
i. Develop my language skills according to my own level of study
j. Other (please specify)

12- Why did you choose Egypt as a country for your study abroad course?

13- Have you had any other experiences of studying Arabic in any other Arabic speaking country/ies?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

14- If Yes, please mention name/s of country/ies, institutes and the duration of each course of study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Institute</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15- How do you compare your experience at this institute and the country in which it is located with ILI and Egypt?

16- Please underline as appropriate, if any of the following factors have affected your learning of Arabic in general and your learning of Arabic in Egypt in particular

a. Ethnic group/ nationality
   Positive effect

b. Age
   Positive effect

  Negative effect
  No effect

c. Sex
   Positive effect

  Negative effect
  No effect
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Positive effect</th>
<th>Negative effect</th>
<th>No effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>d. Former education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Occupational background</td>
<td>Positive effect</td>
<td></td>
<td>No effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Length of residence in the target culture</td>
<td>Positive effect</td>
<td>Negative effect</td>
<td>No effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Urban /rural background</td>
<td>Positive effect</td>
<td>Negative effect</td>
<td>No effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Climate</td>
<td>Positive effect</td>
<td>Negative effect</td>
<td>No effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Religious / Spiritual beliefs</td>
<td>Positive effect</td>
<td>Negative effect</td>
<td>No effect</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17- If any of the previous factors have positively or negatively affected your study, please state to what extent it has done so.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Very much</th>
<th>Slightly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Ethnic group/ nationality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Sex</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Former education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Occupational background</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
f. Length of residence in the target culture

Very much  Slightly

g. Urban /rural background

Very much  Slightly

h. Climate

Very much  Slightly

i. Religious / Spiritual beliefs

Very much  Slightly

18- If you were to rate yourself as a learner of Arabic, in which category would you place yourself. Please tick as appropriate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beginners</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

19- Please mention why you have rated yourself at this level.

20- When it comes to language learning, I prefer the following learning styles

a. Learning by games

Very much  Not at all

b. Pictures

Very much  Not at all
c. Films and videos and watching TV
Very much  Not at all

d. Talking in pairs
Very much  Not at all

e. Learning through the use of cassette
Very much  Not at all

f. Going on excursions
Very much  Not at all

g. Studying grammar.
Very much  Not at all

h. Studying Arabic books alone, finding my own mistakes
Very much  Not at all

i. Having problems to work on,
Very much  Not at all

j. Learning by observing and listening to native speakers, talking to friends in Arabic.
Very much  Not at all

k. Learning through reading newspapers
Very much  Not at all
I. Wanting the teacher to explain everything, writing everything in a notebook

Very much Not at all

m. Having my own textbook where I study grammar and learn Arabic words by seeing them.

Very much Not at all

21- When I arrived at this institute, I was given a needs analysis form to fill in my reasons for studying Arabic and how long I intended to study the language for

Yes No

22- The language course I studied responded to my needs of studying Arabic

Yes No I do not know

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

23- Learning is the sole responsibility of the learner

Totally agree Totally disagree

24- Each learner responds differently to different teaching methods

Totally agree Totally disagree

25- Learners should plan their own learning programme and thus ultimately assume responsibility for what they do in the classroom.

Totally agree Totally disagree

26- Learners monitor and evaluate their own progress.

Totally agree Totally disagree

27- Learners are members of a group and learn by interacting with others.

Totally agree Totally disagree
28- Learning is the direct result of repetitive practice in class.

Totally agree  

Totally disagree

29- Learners in multinational classes have to adapt to whatever teaching method the teacher is using regardless of their own preferences.

Totally agree  

Totally disagree

30- The Language instruction in class should be Arabic and translation should be restricted.

Totally agree  

Totally disagree

31- Grammar should be taught intensively to allow students to have a better and quicker understanding and grasp of the language.

Totally agree  

Totally disagree

32- The teacher should put more stress on the teaching of vocabulary

Totally agree  

Totally disagree

33- Students should infer Grammar from context.

Totally agree  

Totally disagree

Please tick the answer that most reflects your opinion

34- Language activities in class should aim at:

a. accurate production of the language  
b. fluency regardless of errors

35- Language activities in class should:
a. simulate real life situations where communication is needed.
b. provide enough drills for grammar practice.

36- When I make mistakes I should be corrected

a. Immediately, in front of all the class
b. Later, at the end of the class activity in front of all the class
c. Later, in private

37- Language activities in class should focus on:

a. Reading
b. Writing
c. Speaking
d. Listening

38- Grade the following skills according to their importance in relation to the kind of Arabic you are studying. (ECA or MSA). Start with the most important and end with the least important:

* Speaking
* Writing
* Listening
* Reading

(Please feel free to omit any skill that you feel is irrelevant to your study).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MSA</th>
<th>ECA</th>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Choose the answer that most represents your beliefs about foreign language learning in general: ¹

(A) Strongly agree  (B) Agree  (C) Neutral  (D) Disagree  (E) strongly disagree

39- It is easier for children than adults to learn language to language.

¹ Question 39 to Question 74 are copied from Kuntz 1996).
40- Some people are born with a special ability to learn foreign languages.
41- Some languages are easier than others.
42- It is important to learn a foreign language with an excellent accent.
43- it is necessary to know the foreign culture in order to learn the foreign language.
44- You should not say anything in the foreign language till you can say it well.
45- It is better to learn a foreign language in the foreign country.
46- if you already speak a foreign language it is easier for you to learn another one.
47- It is acceptable to guess if you do not know a word in the foreign language.
48- I believe I have a foreign language aptitude.
49- It is important to repeat and practice always to learn the language.
50- I feel self-conscious speaking a foreign language in front of other people.
51- If you are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning, it will be hard to get rid of them latter.
52- Learning a foreign language is a matter of learning grammar rules.
53- Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of learning many new words.
54- Women are better than men in learning foreign languages.
55- It is easier to speak than understand a foreign language.
56- It is easier to read and write more than to speak and understand a foreign language.
57- I would like to learn a foreign language when I am interested in getting to know a certain people better.
58- People who speak more than one language are very intelligent.
59- Some nationalities are better than others in learning languages.
Choose the answer that most represents your beliefs about Learning Arabic in specific:

60- trying to learn Arabic is:

A = Very difficult      B = Difficult
C = medium difficulty   D = Easy      E = very easy

61- If someone spent an hour a day learning Arabic, it would take them (to learn the language):

A = less than a year     B = 1-12 years
C = 3 - 5 years          D = 5 - 10 years
E = you can not learn a language in a one hour a day..

62- Arabic is structured the same way as English.
63- I believe that I will learn to speak Arabic very well.
64- It is important to learn the Arab culture to learn Arabic.
65- If I heard someone speaking Arabic I would go up to them so that I could practice my Arabic.
66- Learning MSA is mostly a matter of learning many new words.
67- Learning MSA is a matter of learning all the structures of the language
68- If I speak MSA very well I shall have a lot of opportunities to use it.
69- Learning MSA is a matter of translating from English.
70- It is easier to speak modern standard Arabic than to understand it.
71- It is easier to read MSA than to speak and understand it.
72- I shall never learn MSA well until I have learnt ECA first.
73- It is always better to learn a little MSA before attempting to learn ECA.
74- Arabic is very hard to learn because of its diglossic nature.
Please tick the answer/s that is most relevant to your experience at ILI.

75- The Course Book is/was:

* an end in itself
* a means to an end
* necessary to the course

76- The Course Book contains the following:

a. Translated vocabulary lists
b. Illustrated vocabulary lists
c. Transliterated texts
d. Arabic texts
e. Vowelled texts
f. Non-vowelled texts
g. Grammatical rules explained in English
h. Grammar rules explained in Arabic
i. A variety of grammatical drills
j. A variety of interactive communicative activities
k. Graded texts
l. Non-graded authentic texts

77- Texts in the Course Book are/were graded according to

a. Complexity of sentence structure
b. Degree of specialized sophisticated vocabulary.
c. Topic areas
d. Length of sentences and text.
e. Number of paragraphs.

78- The shift from one unit to the other was:

a. Well planned and graded
b. Sudden
c. Disconnected

79- The Course Book provided:

a. Illustrated grammar tables
b. Clear grammar explanations of rules
c. Grammar explanations in English
d. No grammar explanations
80- Teaching materials that were used by the teachers were:

a. Authentic %
b. Semi authentic %
c. Written %
d. A mixture of both %

(Please, give a rough estimate of the percentage of each kind of texts)

81- To supplement the Course book, the teachers used a variety of:

a. Audiovisual materials %
b. Written texts. %

(Please mention the percentage of each kind)

82- None most all
The materials used by the teachers reflected or included cultural aspects and real every day situations of the Arab world and their implication on language usage and register.

83- None most all
The texts were difficult to understand due to the cultural concepts underlying them.

84- When I was given H.W. it usually took the form of:

a. Writing essays
b. Preparing for the next lesson
c. Reviewing and memorizing the days work
d. Doing an outside task based on your interests in life or relevant to your university studies.

85- The teacher used some or all of the following activities:

a. Role play
b. Note taking from mini lectures
c. Talking and listening to other students
d. Making students give lectures about a variety of topics
e. Memorizing conversations and dialogues
f. Songs
g. Language games

86- I was placed in the level I am at based on:
a. Placement test
b. Your own choice
c. Based on information about your knowledge of the language.

87- The kinds of tests I have undergone after or during the course were

a. **Proficiency** *(A curriculum free test that assessed my language competence)*
b. **Placement** *(A test that measured my language knowledge before starting the course with the aim of grouping me at a certain level)*
c. **Diagnostic** *(Tests that the teacher gave us during the course of study to specify certain weaknesses or misconceptions of a certain language point)*
d. **Achievement** *(An end of term test that was based on the material covered during your course of study)*

88- The tests reflect:

a. The flexibility and creativity I have achieved in using the language
b. The number of sentences, phrases and words I could remember

89- I was able to monitor for my progress through:

a. Written tasks set by the teacher
b. Oral language discussions assessed by the teacher
c. Establishing if I could use the language I have learnt outside the classroom
d. Tests
e. Marked homework assignments

90- In my opinion the assessment procedures were / are not relevant to the objectives the course brochure claims to achieve)

   Yes                No

91- Please give reasons

92- I was given the opportunity to give an assessment of the following course elements:

a. Methodology
b. Materials
c. Physical settings and learning environment
d. None

93- This assessment took the form of:

a. Questionnaire
b. Opinion surveys
c. Interviews
d. Weekly reports

94- Please comment on any aspect of the course that has aided your learning of Arabic or which could have helped you learn quicker had it been present in your course of study.

Thank you very much for your time and cooperation.
Please collect your free drink from the Cafeteria on your way out.
Iman Aziz Soliman
Appendix 6.

The Syllabus Design Questionnaire
Questionnaire No.4: Syllabus Design

1- Name:

2- Date of Birth: 3- Nationality:

4- Sex: 5- Marital status:

6- Qualifications:

7- Work experience:

8- Employment: (Part time - full time) (Part time - full time)

9- Position:

10- Are you the person in charge of the MSA Syllabus Design at the ILI?

Yes         No
11- Do any of the teachers or members of staff share this responsibility with you?

Yes  No

12- When was the ILI MSA syllabus first designed?
Please mention the date in the space below.

Date:

Please tick as appropriate

13- Has the ILI MSA syllabus undergone any major changes or modifications ever since that date?

Yes  No

14. If Yes, please mention what were the factors behind this change.

- ILI Management
- Changes in language and learning ideology
- Empirical experience
- Summative evaluation
- Market demand
- Students needs and feed back on Course.
- Teachers' input
- Other

15- If other, please explain in space below.

16- Was the MSA syllabus design based on needs analysis?

Yes  No
17- If Yes, were the needs analysis integrated into the course to become an aspect of formative evaluation? ( )

Yes

No

18- Which of the following groups of students do you think the ILI syllabus caters for most?

- Study-abroad students from foreign universities
- Local market students
- Arabic for specific purposes (ASP) students
- Students with general interests in the Arabic language and Arab culture.
- Others

If other, please specify.

19- Which of the following identifies the ILI syllabus best

- Structural
- Notional-Functional
- Task-based
- Procedural
- Content
- Natural Approach

20- Which of the following qualifies the ILI MSA syllabus best

- Analytical
- Synthetic
- Product-oriented
- Process-oriented

21- Does the ILI syllabus have any goal statement?

Yes

No
22- If Yes, please write it in the space below.

23- Please select the most outstanding type of goal (stated or unstated in the ILI curriculum document) that underpins the ILI syllabus.

- Affective goal
- Cognitive goal
- Learning goal
- Communicative goal

24- In your opinion which of the following goal statements bears resemblance to that of the ILI MSA syllabus.

- To encourage learners to develop confidence in using the target language
- To develop skills in monitoring performance in spoken language
- To establish and maintain relationships through exchanging information, ideas, opinions, attitudes, feelings, experiences and plans.
- To develop the ability to study in Arabic at university.

25- When looking back at the starting points in syllabus design, where would you start:

- Learning process
- Language analysis
- Learner’s needs analysis and personal data

26- What criteria for grading grammatical structures does the ILI MSA syllabus follow:

- Frequency
- Coverage
- Learnability/teachability
• Contrasts (~ حمض ~)
• All of these
• Other

27- If Other, please list these criteria in the space below

28- Please reorder the following criteria of grading grammatical structure according to their relevance in the ILI context. (Use a scale from 1-5. 1 being the most important and 5 the least important)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Degree of relevance to ILI context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contrast</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coverage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learnability/teachability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other as specified</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

29- Which of the following criteria do you use for grading and sequencing vocabulary:

a. Availability
b. Coverage
c. Frequency
e. Learnability
f. Need
g. Range
30- Does the ILI syllabus include an inventory of pedagogic tasks?

Yes  No

31- Are tasks graded in your syllabus from easy to difficult?

Yes  No

32- Express to what extent the following factors affect choice and grading of tasks in your MSA syllabus

a. The cognitive complexity of the task for the learner

To a great extent  not in the least

b. The cognitive load the task places on the learner

to a great extent  not in the least

c. The linguistic complexity and degree of accuracy required

To a great extent  not in the least
d. The psychological and communicative stress in carrying out the task

To a great extent, not in the least

e. The amount of help available from the teacher and others

To a great extent, not in the least

f. The degree of familiarity the learner has with the task

To a great extent, not in the least

g. The empirical experience of the teacher

To a great extent, not in the least

33- To what extent does the ILI syllabus make frequent use of the following tasks

a. Tasks that achieve a balance between frequency and accuracy

To a great extent, not in the least

b. Tasks that present less chance that L1 will be used

To a great extent, not in the least
34- Please express the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following:

a. Objectives act as a guide to the selection of other elements in the ILI curriculum

To a great extent  not in the least

b. The course-book can derive its objectives from the content of its units

To a great extent  not in the least

c. Objectives provide a sharper focus for teachers to give learners a clear idea of what they can expect from a language programme.

To a great extent  not in the least

d. Objectives help in developing means of assessment and evaluation

To a great extent  not in the least

e. Objectives are the embodiment of inexact syllabus goals

To a great extent  not in the least
f. No sound instructional system could possibly hope to emerge from a syllabus in which content is not stated in the form of objectives

To a great extent not in the least


g. The process of specifying content in terms of objectives leads to the trivialization of that content

To a great extent not in the least


35- In your opinion, which of the following reflects best sound basis for stating objectives

- What the teacher or instructor is to do in class
- Specification of course content
- Specification of generalized patterns of behaviour
- Specification of the kinds of behaviour which learners will be able to exhibit after instruction

36- Does the ILI differentiate in its statement of objectives between the following:

a. Real life objectives and pedagogic objectives
   Yes No

b. Product objectives and process objectives
   Yes No
37- Do the students and the teachers contribute to the preparation of the materials used in class?

Yes
No

38- If Yes, please indicate how

39- Has readily accessible teaching and teacher support been identified and provided for

Yes
No

40- Do you have regular class visits to test if the syllabus document is actually implemented in class

Yes
No

41- If No, please explain how you know if the syllabus is implemented in the actual class situation

42- If Yes, do you find that the class situation is an actual embodiment of the syllabus

Yes
No

43- Does the teacher facilitate student learning

Yes
No

44- If Yes, please explain how
45- How do students interact with the learning tasks / activities?

46- How do they react to the teaching procedures and methodologies?

47- What tasks and activities apart from those provided in the materials were carried out in the classroom?

48- Do the students get the chance to give feedback about the syllabus and teaching in general?

Yes  No

49- If Yes, explain how their feedback was acted upon.

Thank you for your time and kind cooperation.

Iman Aziz Soliman
15/05/00
01:31 p.m.
Appendix 7.

Classroom Observation Template Categories:

Checklist
Classroom Observation Check List

The categories used in the Classroom Observation Template used by the researcher to code and describe the ILI classroom procedures are adapted mainly from Mitchell, Parkinson and Johnstone (1981) and Rees (1993). Following is an explanation of each of these categories after adaptation to suit the aims of this study.

1. Language
Indicates the prevailing language in each segment.

**English (E)**
In this particular multinational classroom, English, which all the students speak (see table 5.1) replaces the students’ L1 and acts as the mediating language for overcoming communication difficulties in Arabic.

**Arabic (A)**
- Pure vowelled MSA
- Non-vowelled MSA
- Non-vowelled MSA with ECA expressions
- Vowelled MSA with ECA expressions

2. Topic
Indicates areas of discourse dealing with the main purpose of the lesson. This dimension contains eight categories:

2.1 Management/Routine Procedure
The teacher greets the students at the beginning of the lesson. It is also the language that the teacher uses in giving instructions before the start of a new learning activity including: organising the students in group or pair work and/or setting up the environment and materials for this activity.
This category includes wiping the board, sticking cards on the board or putting up pictures. It also includes the setting of homework assignments if the linguistic content of assignment is not discussed in detail.

2.2 Study Introduction

A teacher-conducted setting: the prelude to an immediately following segment, for example either giving instructions for what students are to do next or what the teacher is going to do.

2.3 Situations

This discourse concerns building situations for presenting new language items to express the function of these items or to elicit vocabulary or structure necessary to manipulate the text, dialogue or structure the students will engage in learning.

2.4 Language Points

This concerns teacher-directed discourse or activity. Discourse directly concerns the language item being studied, whether grammar or vocabulary, etc., which has been previously prepared or decided upon by the teacher. The discourse comprises explicit, analytic discussion of Arabic vocabulary or structures which are included in the syllabus material or which have been taught at levels previous to that which the teacher is currently teaching and of which the students need to be reminded so as to correct their mistakes or to understand the new structure.

2.5 Non-contextualized

This is a discourse in which propositions are made without a situational coherence. An example is where the students give fragmented sentences which, though grammatically and semantically correct, do not revolve around one theme or a
particular situation; or simply giving the meanings of a list of vocabulary. even when the lexical set revolves around the text topic.

2.6 Real Life

The discourse concerns aspects of the students’ and teacher’s lives and interests, including material which directly relates to the personal experiences of the participants or their general knowledge. It also covers recorded material other than that of the coursebook which the teacher uses to develop the learners’ listening skills. Instances where students make off-lesson remarks, tell anecdotes or even jokes are also included under this category.

2.7 Learner

The topic of the discourse is the students’ written assignments or material provided by the learners to be used in classroom discussions or language study. This may also include discussion of the content of the students’ assignments by the teacher, namely, what the learners are expected to write about.

2.8 Learners’ performance

The topic comprises commentary on students’ previous performance in an assignment or test. It also includes group correction of homework or assignments in class. This section concerns the reading aloud of actually written homework, whether it is an essay or sentences in the case of written, assignments and simply answering questions or summarising what they have read in case of reading assignments.

2.9 Other

Concerns any other topics other than those categorised above.
Dealing with Overlapping Distinctions

**STUDY INTRODUCTION AND SITUATIONS**

When teachers use the study introduction segment to sum up the gist of what students are going to read about or why they are going to read it, topic areas of study introduction and situations are ticked. The summary of the gist here offers an indirect situation in which teacher presents the main ideas using new and old vocabulary.

Instances of students summing up what they have done for late and absent colleagues are also included in this category.

**LANGUAGE POINTS AND WRITING**

The previous language topics areas are identified in relation to discourse. However, certain categories are also marked pertaining to written activities. An example of that is where students copy vocabulary, structure or sentences from board. Though these instances do not involve any discourse of any interaction pattern, still the language used is MSA and the topic area is a language point and is accordingly checked on the observation sheet.

3. **Teacher mode of involvement**

3.1 **Instructing**

The teacher is the only speaker and all the learners are focusing on what s/he has to say without any response required on their part. Instructing also includes occasions when the teacher is highlighting grammar on the board or writing sentences for students to copy or work on.

3.2 **Instructing/Interaction**

The teacher is the only speaker but allows for students' limited interaction to ask about what they do not understand or to ask for repetition. Instances of elicitation are also included in this section if they are concerned at the topic level with language
points and situations rather than the non-contextualized or learners’ performance. For example, this could occur at the stage of presentation, elicitation or building situations.

3.3 Not involved

This includes instances when the teacher sets an activity and allows the students to pursue it without interference.

3.4 Interacting/Conducting

The teacher engages in interactive public discourse with the whole class. The typical pattern is the question/response reaction. While interaction is likely to be with successive students singly, readiness to speak is required of the whole class, for example, during, before or after language practice activities.

3.5 Participating

The Teacher is not leading but participating with the students in an activity, for example, the teacher may read aloud with the students as they are doing so. The teacher may occasionally engage in corrective activity without causing a recategorisation of their mode of involvement.

3.6 Monitoring

The teacher goes around the class helping students or correcting them while they are involved in individual, pair or group work allotted to them by the teacher.

3.7 Working with an individual

Interaction is between teacher and a single student. The teacher is devoting private attention to or focusing on one student and maintaining eye contact. An example is student/teacher interaction when a student asks the teacher a particular or special
question after a presentation or during feedback after an activity or at any stage of the lesson when the teacher is drawn into a discourse triggered by the student.

3.8 Working with a Group

Working with two or more students privately.

3.9 Correction

3.9.1 HOT

On the spot word for word and open class.

3.9.2 COLD

At the end of an activity or lesson.

3.9.3 SPECIFIC

Corrects some mistakes related only to the lesson focus only or those that impede communication. It also includes teachers’ correction of vowelling and pronunciation when the focus of the lesson is to practise reading aloud.

3.9.4 DETAILED

Corrects all mistakes regardless of their relevance to the language focus being taught or nature of the mistakes, whether phonological, syntactic, semantic etc.

4. Learners’ Involvement

All students in the language classroom are involved in speaking, listening, writing or reading. This feature highlights the general mode of involvement of the II.I learners during daily classroom procedures.
5. Language Activities

In this section, classroom activities are explored in relation to the four skills. The description provided will focus on the aim of the activity and its source rather than on the organisational procedures that lead to the initiation of a particular activity. These procedures are described under the “situation” and “interaction pattern” categories of the OT.

5.1 Speaking

Where the “topic” component of the OT focuses on the teacher’s talk, the “Speaking” category describes the learners’ speech. It explains whether the learners are simply repeating after the teacher, practising linguistic items or are involved in actual communication.

5.1.1 Imitation

Includes all spoken Arabic in which the learner repeats after the teacher for phonological accuracy or the correction of their mistakes or the memorisation of dialogues and sentence patterns. It concerns drills where language is structurally constrained and has an expected component of pupil utterance. A typical instance of imitation is the activity of repetition, where modelling and imitative moves follow each other in interactive sequence, for example, dialogue building or substitution drills.

5.1.2 Form/Vocabulary Practice

The aim of speaking is to practise a particular form of language or certain vocabularies regardless of the topic or its communicative authenticity. Examples are transformational sentences, or asking about or giving the meaning of words on a handout or in the book or on board or at any point of the lesson in general.
5.1.3 Communicative Practice

This is when the discourse taking place, though initiated by the teacher for practising language, is intended for a real communicative purpose. These activities encourage students to talk about real life and experiences or use their imagination. Examples of these activities are: role-play or learners describing what they did during the holiday.

It also includes a discourse in which students summarise for late or absent colleagues what was covered during the latter’s absence so that they can follow the present work in the classroom.

5.1.4 Real Communication

This is when the discourse, though still within pedagogic constraints, concerns natural and unplanned communication in Arabic between teacher and learners, learners and one another or with visitors. For example, students comment on one another’s work or hold discussions concerning a raised side-issue or topic which was not planned by the teacher.

5.1.5 Controlled Speaking

This is a situation where the students are simply speaking as a direct result of a question asked by the teacher or by others. An example is speaking in reply to the teacher’s questions outside the situations discussed above. Here, the questions are based on a reading or listening comprehension that has been actually carried out in the classroom.

5.2-Listening

Most classroom activities, apart from silent reading, include some form of listening. Learners most of the time are listening to either the teacher or their colleagues. Listening is therefore categorised into intentional listening for comprehension and developing listening skills and strategies, and general listening, which is a direct product of speaking taking place in the classroom without any form of practice being designated by the teacher to follow.
5.2.1 General

This category concerns general listening, in which learners are engaged in listening to the teacher or to their colleagues and which is necessary for communication or learning to take place. It excludes specific listening comprehension activities or lessons which are intentionally set by the teacher to develop the students listening skill.

5.2.2 Comprehension

Listening comprehension concerns activities and lessons designed to develop the learners' listening skill by exposure to spoken Arabic language. The learners are engaged in communicative or general tasks that aim at understanding the gist of or providing specific and detailed information from the content. The following sub-categories refer to the source of language exposure and its aim in either listening comprehension or general listening.

5.2.2.1 Teacher
The students listen to the dialogue or news item read by the teacher.

5.2.2.2 Learners
The students listen to other students in the class as they answer questions or relate their real life-experiences.

5.2.2.3 Cassette
The teacher uses tape-recorded dialogues or narratives and news items read by other people.

5.2.2.4 Video
The teacher uses videotaped dialogues or movies, news items or even commercials.

5.2.2.5 Gist
The learners are listening for the gist.

5.2.2.6 Specific Information
The learners listen and answer questions put by the teacher to find specific information from the recorded or read material.
5.2.2.7 Recognition
Here, the aim of the students' listening is to recognise or identify language items like new vocabulary or specific structures as directed by the teacher.

5.3 Writing

5.3.1 Copying from the Board
The students copy language utterances, structures or grammar explanation from the board.

5.3.1.1 Non-Creative Writing
Sentence transformation and gap filling with words from a list provided.

5.3.2 Cue/Guided
Students are asked to rewrite a group of sentences in passage form by rearranging the events and using logical device connectors. The teacher may also ask the learners to create sentences using a particular word or structure, or to follow certain cues or pictures to compose a story or a paragraph.

5.3.3 Free Writing
Learners produce an authentic piece of written work on a specified topic and in a specified written form without any restrictions on structure or vocabulary.

5.4 Reading:

5.4.1 Board Reading:
Students read simple sentences, words or even morphemes from the board, handout or book.

5.4.2 Reading Aloud
Although comprehension is included here, the main focus of the reading is to practise accurate pronunciation, intonation and stops.
5.4.3 READING COMPREHENSION

Students read a text or dialogue with the aim of answering questions about the gist or details. This category is divided into the following categories:

5.4.3.1 MATERIAL

A book or newspaper or any other authentic or unauthentic texts

5.4.3.2 GIST

The learner is reading with the aim of giving the main theme of the content

5.4.3.3 DETAILS

The learner is reading for specific information and other details provided in the content.

5.4.3.4 READING FOR STRUCTURE AND VOCABULARY RECOGNITION

Although the aim of the reading includes comprehension, it is carried out in class with the aim of recognising or identifying a specific lexicon or structure.

Dealing with Overlapping Categories

READING AND SPEAKING

When students read out their answers after writing transformational sentences, this is regarded as speaking for the reading is carried out with the aim of developing neither comprehension nor pronunciation. The aim of the reading here is checking written performance, as opposed to board reading where, though the aim is also not to develop comprehension or pronunciation, yet the learners read materials provided by the teacher.

Instances where students are reading aloud for pronunciation, repeating after the teacher for the first time, are classified as speaking, for the students at this stage are imitating without having had enough time to read for themselves. Following instances of group, pair and individual repetitions are then classified as reading, for
the students are doing it at their own pace and are faced with pronunciation difficulties.

**READING AND WRITING**

Practice in writing language is always accompanied or preceded by reading. Where the end product of these activities in the classroom is written, it is classified under learners’ involvement and language activity as writing rather than reading.

**READING AND LISTENING**

When the teacher reads out sentences or passages and the students are simply following silently, this is regarded as listening, especially when the aim of the reading is neither accurate pronunciation nor developing reading comprehension skills.

**6. Segment Interaction Pattern**

The following categories describe the classroom interaction patterns at the various stages of the lesson in general and the activity stages of an activity in particular.

**6.1 Class**
The teacher or a specific learner maintains the attention of the whole class.

**6.2 Individual**
An example of this pattern of interaction is when teacher monitors an individual students’ work or answers his/her questions during an activity.

**6.3 Pair**
The teacher is not the focus of classroom events but monitors students with the aim of aiding and correcting as they work together in pairs at their own pace.

**6.4 Group**
The teacher interacts with a designed group of learners (2 or more) without any restriction on the nature of this interaction. For example, the teacher listens to group repetition of sentences or any other form of language with the purpose of correcting, commenting or checking meaning and instructions.
Humanistic Observations

Classroom Affect

The way the students and teachers feel about one another, about themselves and about the activity in the classroom can contribute to the success or failure of classroom interaction and consequently to that of learning. Classroom chemistry can provide an atmosphere of security and acceptance which is necessary for learning to take place. The researcher, in her professional experience, both as a teacher, teacher-trainer and as director of students’ affairs, has witnessed many instances where affect factors and teacher/student chemistry have led to many problems which at times were detrimental to some students’ experience in learning Arabic. It is therefore assumed that a description of classroom practice is incomplete without an evaluative description of the general classroom atmosphere. This description is influenced by the researcher’s subjective and professional assessment of the teacher/student relations during classroom interaction and the general atmosphere in which these interactions take place.

Classroom affect is represented on a separate sheet as an overall assessment of the lesson. It is not included in the segment scheme of analysis because it is somewhat difficult for affect to be coded on a 30 sec basis and it is better represented as a general attitude towards the lesson. This sheet, however, will include two main categories: the teacher and the classroom atmosphere, which will be further classified into sub-categories to give a more detailed description of the whole lesson.

1-Teacher

A- Personality/Presence

- Pleasant
- Nervous and fidgeting
- In control yet not authoritarian
- Authoritarian and self-imposing
- Interesting and looked up to by students
- Able to establish rapport
- Tolerant of cultural differences
- Encouraging and praises good answers
- Involved in the lesson
- Self-involved
- Aware of students needs
- Attends to students needs

**B- VOICE:**
- Audible
- Able to project
- Clear and has no speech defects

**C- EYE CONTACT**
- Maintains eye contact when addressing students
- Refrains from eye contact during monitoring and pair work

**D- BODY LANGUAGE**
- Expressive facial expressions
- Uses hands and body effectively to elicit, conduct or explain
- Does not point to students with finger or with pen
- Moves around freely
- Maintains his distance and does not touch students
- Adopts a suitable stature position suitable to pedagogic role he adopts e.g. squats when involved in private individual interaction, stands in the centre of classroom during presentation etc

**2- Classroom atmosphere**
- Relaxed and assuring
- Interest is maintained
- All students are involved
- Co-operation and willingness to work together
- Students and teachers tolerate mistakes
- Correction is welcome at all stages
- Prevention of cultural problems among students
- Cultural tolerance among students and between students and teacher
- Laughter and humour
- Class tempo:
  - Lively and varied
  - Stilted, monotonous and dragging.
  - Background noise interferes with classroom events.
- Quiet and isolated
Appendix 8.

Blank Classroom Observation Template

(OT)
<p>| Segment | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| Time    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Language|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| English |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Arabic  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| MSA Voweled |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Non-Voweled MSA |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| ECA     |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| ECA &amp; MSA |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Topic   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Study: introduction |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Situations |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Language points |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Non-contextualized |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Real life |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Learner |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Lerner's performance |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Other   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Teacher's mode of involvement |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Instructing |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Instructing / Interaction |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Not involved |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Interacting / Conducting |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Participating |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Monitoring |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Working with individual |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Working with Group |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Correcting |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Hot |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Cold |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Specific |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Detailed |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Learner mode of involvement |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Speaking |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Listening |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Reading |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Writing |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Segment | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
|---------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Time    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | 02:00 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Speaking| Imitation | Form Practice | Communicative Practice | Real Communication | Controlled Speaking |
| Language Activities | General | Listening | Comprehension | Tasks | Source | Teacher | Learners | Cassettes | Video | Gist | Specific information | Recognition |
| Writing | Copy from Board | Non-creative | Cue/Guided | Free | |
| Reading | Comprehension | Tasks | So | Materials | Gist | Details | Recognition | |
| Interaction Pattern | Class | Individual | Pair | Group | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feeling</td>
<td>Pleasant</td>
<td>Nervous &amp; fidgeting</td>
<td>In control yet not authoritarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence/Presentation</td>
<td>Interesting and looked up to by students</td>
<td>Able to establish rapport</td>
<td>Aware and tolerant of cultural differences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Encouraging and praises good answers</td>
<td>Involved in the lesson</td>
<td>Self involved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listen to students carefully</td>
<td>Aware of students needs</td>
<td>Attends to students needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice</td>
<td>Audible</td>
<td>Able to project</td>
<td>Clear and has no speech defects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eye contact</td>
<td>Maintains eye contact when addressing students</td>
<td>Refrains from eye contact during monitoring and pair work</td>
<td>Expressive facial expressions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uses hands and body effectively to elicit, conduct or explain</td>
<td>Does not point to students with finger or pen</td>
<td>Moves freely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body language</td>
<td>Maintains his distance and does not touch students</td>
<td>Adopt a suitable stature position suitable to pedagogic role he adopts</td>
<td>Relaxed and assuring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Environment</td>
<td>Interest is maintained</td>
<td>All students are involved</td>
<td>Cooperation and willingness to work together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students and teachers tolerate mistakes</td>
<td>Correction is welcome at all stages</td>
<td>Impeding cultural problems between students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cultural tolerance between student and other and student and teacher</td>
<td>Laughter and humour</td>
<td>Class tempo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lively and varied</td>
<td>Stilted, monotonous and dragging</td>
<td>Background noise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Noisy</td>
<td>Quite and isolated</td>
<td>Level:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Observed lesson duration:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Age mix:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teacher: | Date: |
Teacher ID: | Mode of employment: |
Level: | |
No of students: | |
Nationality: | |