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# OIL WORKING PAPERS

OIL Working Paper 1

## RESEARCH REPORT – ARABIC LESSONS IN GERMANY

SCIENTIFIC STUDY REGARDING THE STATUS  
OF ARABIC LANGUAGE TEACHING IN  
SCHOOLS

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Leipzig



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## OIL WORKING PAPERS

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Oriental Institute  
University of Leipzig  
Schillerstrasse 6  
04109 Leipzig

[www.gkr.uni-leipzig.de/orientalisches-institut/oil-working-papers](http://www.gkr.uni-leipzig.de/orientalisches-institut/oil-working-papers)

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## OIL WORKING PAPER 1: RESEARCH REPORT – ARABIC LESSONS IN GERMANY

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Bibliographic information from the German National Library: The German National Library indexes this publication in the German National Bibliography; more detailed bibliographic data is accessible on the Internet by visiting [dnb.d-nb.de](http://dnb.d-nb.de).

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The complete content of the working paper is accessible via the publication server of the University of Leipzig: [nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:bsz:15-qucosa-2-943361](http://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:bsz:15-qucosa-2-943361)

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ISSN (Print): **2944-4179**

ISSN (Online): **2944-4195**

URN [urn:nbn:de:bsz:15-qucosa-2-943361](http://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:bsz:15-qucosa-2-943361)

The research for this working paper was performed in the context of the research project *Teaching Arabic in Germany*, sponsored by



# CONTENTS

Preface.....	5
1. Introduction.....	7
1.1 Definition of terms.....	7
1.2 Research status.....	9
1.3 Objective and purpose of the study.....	10
1.3.1 Project objectives.....	10
1.3.2 Purpose.....	11
1.4 Research question.....	11
2. Study methodology.....	12
2.1 Data collection.....	12
2.1.1 Guideline-based expert interviews.....	12
2.1.2 Online questionnaires.....	12
2.1.3 Criteria for the selection of the data collection locations (schools with AU).....	13
2.2 Data analysis and presentation of the results.....	13
2.3 Research ethics and data protection.....	14
2.4 Challenges during the research process.....	14
3. Arabic lessons offered in schools in different States.....	16
3.1 Bavaria.....	16
3.2 Berlin.....	17
3.3 Brandenburg.....	19
3.3.1 Figures for Brandenburg in the 2021/2022 school year for the native speaker AU.....	20
3.3.2 Quality assurance provided under the supervision of specialist pedagogical support (work shadowing and specialist consultations).....	21
3.3.3 Professional expertise.....	21
3.3.4 Establishment of Arabic lessons in the native language.....	21
3.4 Bremen.....	22
3.5 Hamburg.....	23
3.6 Hesse.....	26
3.7 Lower Saxony.....	29
3.8 North Rhine-Westphalia.....	31
3.9 Saxony.....	35
3.10 Thuringia.....	38
4. Participants in Arabic lessons at school.....	43
4.1 Teachers.....	43
4.1.1 Biographical information and qualifications.....	43
4.1.2 Everyday classroom life.....	46
4.2 Students.....	52
4.2.1 Students in Arabic lessons based on the native language.....	52
4.2.2 Students attending foreign language Arabic lessons.....	55
4.3 Parents/guardians.....	58
4.3.1 Motivation regarding the child's participation in Arabic lessons.....	58
4.3.2 Expectations of the Arabic lessons.....	60

4.4	Stakeholders.....	60
4.4.1	Perspectives of the school boards and ministries.....	61
4.4.2	Perspectives of the school leadership .....	63
4.4.3	Perspectives of science .....	66
5.	Conclusion: Results of the study and recommendations/handouts.....	71
5.1	Qualification .....	71
5.2	Teacher training and qualifications.....	72
5.3	Methodological-didactic recommendations for specific teaching scenarios in the AU .....	72
5.4	Teaching materials.....	72
5.5	Curriculum .....	73
	Bibliography.....	75

# FIGURES

Figure 1:	States included in the study .....	7
Figure 2:	Objectives of the study .....	11
Figure 3:	Research process and methodological conception .....	13
Figure 4:	Arabic lessons in Bavaria .....	16
Figure 5:	Arabic lessons in Berlin .....	17
Figure 6:	Arabic lessons in Brandenburg.....	19
Figure 7:	Arabic lessons in Bremen.....	22
Figure 8:	Arabic lessons in Hamburg .....	23
Figure 9:	Arabic lessons in Hesse.....	26
Figure 10:	Arabic lessons in Lower Saxony .....	29
Figure 11:	Arabic lessons in North Rhine-Westphalia .....	31
Figure 12:	Arabic lessons in Saxony .....	35
Figure 13:	Arabic lessons in Thuringia.....	38
Figure 14:	Age breakdown of teaching staff .....	43
Figure 15:	Native languages of the teachers.....	43
Figure 16:	Countries of origin and migration experience of the teachers.....	44
Figure 17:	Educational background of the teachers.....	44
Figure 18:	Arabic-speaking teachers' own learning experience in the acquisition of Arabic .....	45
Figure 19:	Profile of the university degrees.....	45
Figure 20:	Teaching experience and subject-specific pedagogical knowledge of teachers.....	48
Figure 21:	Age breakdown of students in the Arabic HU .....	53
Figure 22:	Family language of SuS in the Arabic HU.....	54
Figure 23:	Motivations of SuS to participate in the Arabic HU .....	54
Figure 24:	Age breakdown of SuS in the FU Arabic.....	56
Figure 25:	Family language of the SUS in the FU Arabic.....	56
Figure 26:	Reasons for SuS surveyed to participate in the FU Arabic .....	57
Figure 27:	Motivation of parents of SuS in the Arabic HU.....	58
Figure 28:	Motivation of parents of SuS in the FU in Hamburg .....	59
Figure 29:	Motivation of parents of SuS in FU in Thuringia .....	59
Figure 30:	Signature: Pillars of professionalization of school-based AU.....	71

# TABLES

Table 1:	Development of participant numbers .....	18
Table 2:	Demand for Native-Speaker Arabic Teaching .....	20
Table 3:	Breakdown of participants in the native-speaking AU by location and teachers .....	20
Table 4:	Demand for Arabic lessons in Hamburg .....	23
Table 5:	Demand for Arabic lessons in Hamburg in the 2021/22 school year .....	24
Table 6:	Overview of the Arabic HU elective in Hesse .....	27
Table 7:	Demand for Arabic lessons in Lower Saxony .....	29
Table 8:	Demand for the Arabic HU lessons in North Rhine-Westphalia .....	33
Table 9:	Situation of the Arabic HU teaching in North Rhine-Westphalia during the school year 2021/2022.....	34
Table 10:	Distribution of schools with HSU Arabic by administrative districts and counties/cities.....	34
Table 11:	Overview of student numbers in the Arabic HU.....	37
Table 12:	Distribution of the Arabic HU in the elective area across the LaSuB locations.....	37
Table 13:	Overview of student and teachers' numbers in the AU (Salzmannschule).....	39
Table 14:	Overview of demand for the Arabic HU.....	41
Table 15:	List of teaching materials used and thematic topics teaching content.....	49

# ABBREVIATIONS

AU	Arabic lessons
BIMF	Commissioner for Integration, Migration and Refugees
ff.	and following
FU	Foreign language lessons
GS	Elementary school(s)
GTA	All-day program
HU	Lessons in the native language
Int	Interview
ITS	Integrated Secondary School
k.A.	not specified
LaSuB	Regional Office for Schools and Education of the Free State of Saxony
MIK	Project <i>Multilingualism is cool!</i>
n.d.	no date
n.p.	no page
OIL	Oriental Institute Leipzig
p./pp.	Page/Pages
Sec.	Secondary level
SMK	Saxon State Ministry of Culture
SuS	Students
THILLM	Thuringian Institute for Curriculum Development
TMBJS	Thuringian Ministry of Education
TMMJV	Thuringian Ministry for Migration, Justice, and Consumer Protection

# PREFACE

The promotion of multilingualism is an important issue that is increasingly gaining attention in the public debate in combination with aspects such as boosting equal education, integration, participation, and the development of students' identities. A debate about learning distant foreign languages such as Arabic or Chinese is also gaining more and more importance when it comes to the German education system.

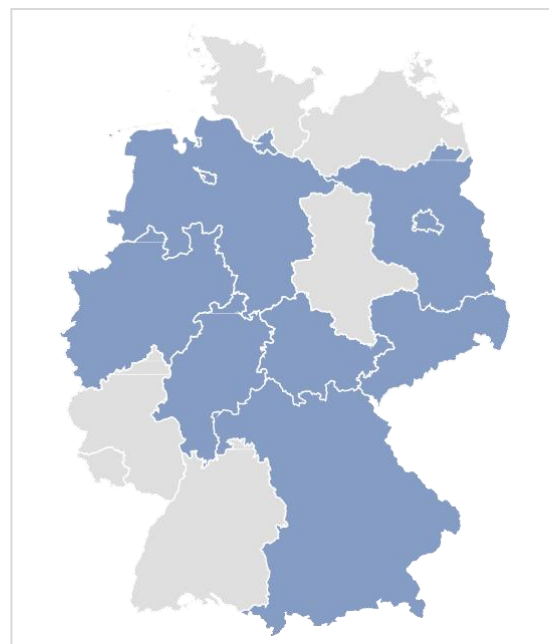
The qualitative study presented here was carried out as part of the research project *Teaching Arabic in Germany* (funded by Qatar Foundation International [QFI]) during the period from 2021 until 2023 at the Oriental Institute Leipzig (Professorship for Arabic Linguistics and Translation Studies). This study does not claim to be representative because of its qualitative research approach.

This report on the research project *Teaching Arabic in Germany* contributes to a more precise description of the current status of Arabic language teaching in schools around Germany. It highlights the basic structures and examines the role of the key players<sup>1</sup> (teachers, students, parents/guardians as well as stakeholders/representatives from research, ministries, school leadership, and school boards). The objective is to provide an insight into where state-organized Arabic lessons take place and to determine what characterizes the players and the teaching conditions for describing the potential for promoting Arabic lessons (AU) and for making recommendations for further development. Guideline-based expert interviews were conducted methodically, as well as – if a research permit was available in the respective State – surveys that were performed at schools with teachers, pupils, parents/guardians, and stakeholders. This study does not claim any statistical representativeness due to its qualitative nature and cannot provide a conclusive overview. However, it highlights the different perspectives of the individual players and summarizes the structural aspects of Arabic language teaching. The objective is to provide an overview of the situation of Arabic teaching in schools. The study therefore addresses the challenges identified by the different players interviewed in the school AU and also includes the perspectives of the experts who were interviewed. Recommendations for school AU can be derived on this basis.

<sup>1</sup> In most cases, the present study uses the generic masculine form to refer to persons, but this refers to all people unless otherwise stated.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

The Arabic language plays an important role worldwide, both quantitatively with more than 300 million language users<sup>2</sup> as well as in its importance as a cultural language of Islam.<sup>3</sup> Arabic instruction (AU) in Germany is closely linked to developments in the area of migration and geopolitical events in the Arab world. Particularly in recent decades, immigration from Arab countries has resulted in a rising interest for Arabic language skills. As a result, the focus of Arabic lessons, which had previously mainly focused on purely academic subjects, has now changed. As the number of migrants and refugees from Arabic-speaking countries increased, teaching languages gained a broader social significance. In terms of promoting multilingualism, Arabic now plays a key role in the education policy of the States together with other languages in Germany. At public schools in Germany, for example, the Arabic language is primarily taught as a native language or mother tongue and – although still rarely – as a foreign language.



**Figure 1:** Federal states included in the study

According to the German Constitution, cultural and educational concerns are the responsibility of each State. The Ministries of Culture of the 16 German States also determine the implementation of Arabic teaching offers.<sup>4</sup>

The Oriental Institute at Leipzig University is conducting the present study to investigate the current state of Arabic teaching in schools in the ten selected States of Bavaria, Berlin, Brandenburg, Bremen, Hamburg, Hesse, North Rhine-Westphalia, Lower Saxony, Saxony, and Thuringia. Chapter 2 provides an overview of the current state of research and formulates the goal and purpose of the study as well as its research questions. Furthermore, key terms used in the study are defined and the study method is outlined. Chapter 3 describes the individual situation of the school-based AU with regard to the respective structural and legal conditions in each State. Chapter 4 presents the individual players – the teachers, the students (SuS), and their parents/guardians as well as stakeholders – and their perspectives in more detail. Finally, in chapter 5 the findings of the study are summarized.

## 1.1 DEFINITION OF TERMS

The following is an overview of the key terms covered in the study.

Multilingualism is a key factor in Germany that has a major impact on the educational infrastructure. According to the projections of the 2022 microcensus, 23.8 million (28.7%) residents in Germany have a so-called migration background.<sup>5</sup> In terms of language use, 80% of the inhabitants speak only or exclusively German in their private households. The outstanding 20% are divided into the following categories: 10% speak at least one other language

<sup>2</sup> See Ethnologue (2018): “Arabic”; Guth (2012): *The Major Languages of the Islamic World*; Hammar skjöld Library (2018): “What Are the Official Languages of the United Nations?”

<sup>3</sup> See Guth (2012): *The main languages of the Islamic world*.

<sup>4</sup> Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the States in the Federal Republic of Germany (2022): Resolution of the KMK of December 13, 2007 – State feedback from October 7, 2022, and Lengyel (2021): “Native language teaching in Germany.”

<sup>5</sup> See Federal Statistical Office (2023): “Microcensus – Population by migration background, initial results 2022.”

besides German; 5% speak predominantly German; another 5% do not speak German at all. The above-mentioned languages are the most frequently spoken within the group that primarily uses a language other than German in their private household: Turkish (15%), Russian (13%), Arabic (10%), Polish (7%) as well as English (6%)<sup>6</sup>. These figures, which are noted in extracts, make it clear that for many children, other languages in addition to German also have an impact on their primary linguistic socialization.<sup>7</sup> Languages that are acquired in the family are considered to be **the languages of origin** (HS).<sup>8</sup> Language skills are therefore also passed on to the next generation(s).<sup>9</sup> Numerous research results confirm the positive synergies that arise for students when heritage languages are promoted.<sup>10</sup> The term “*Herkunftssprache*”, meaning either “heritage language” or “family language,”<sup>11</sup> is discussed in the literature, and the two meanings are differentiated:

“The term ‘heritage language’ [...] was coined in German as the equivalent of the English term ‘heritage language’ formed. Newer definitions [...] refer to HS as the first language acquired by an individual who grows up in a family in which the language of the surrounding majority society is not (exclusively) used. Heritage language speakers can grow up either speaking two languages simultaneously or initially master only the HS (L1) before adding the language of the surrounding majority population (L2) at a later date.

A person referred to as a heritage speaker was either born in the host country or immigrated with their parents from their home country before starting school and has therefore been raised in a multilingual environment from an early age of childhood. The child often feels more confident in the language around him (German); this is reinforced when he starts school and the influence of German increases – at the expense of the HS.”<sup>12</sup>

In the literature, the use of the term “**mother tongue**” is criticized. In an academic context, this term is considered to create problems because it cannot reflect the complexity of the socio-linguistic circumstances that influence the acquisition of the language of origin.<sup>13</sup>

State-organized language courses to promote heritage languages are offered in the majority of States. This language teaching is usually referred to as “HU” or “mother tongue teaching” or “first-language teaching.”<sup>14</sup> Due to immigration, the spoken minority language – in the context of the study, Arabic – will be taught in HU. SuS in the Arabic HU speak the Arabic language as their family language.<sup>15</sup>

**Arabic foreign language instruction** is only sporadically taught in public schools – for example, as a modern foreign language at high schools.<sup>16</sup> Its shadowy existence has not changed significantly in recent years.<sup>17</sup> Foreign language AU in the academic field or as part of adult education, on the other hand, has been given in Germany for a long time.<sup>18</sup>

The learning process of a foreign language differs from that of native languages in that learners of a foreign language are subject to a controlled process of acquiring it, “which takes place predominantly in the context of instruction.”<sup>19</sup> The form of acquiring a foreign language is therefore characterized by an explicit process based on systematics and awareness. Foreign language didactics and language teaching research, therefore, are dealt with as follows:

<sup>6</sup> See results of the 2021 microcensus (2023).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Brehmer/Mehlhorn (2018): *Languages of origin*, p. 9.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Brehmer/Mehlhorn (2018): *Languages of origin*, p. 9.

<sup>9</sup> See Brehmer/Mehlhorn (2018): *Languages of origin*, pp. 11ff.

<sup>10</sup> See Brehmer/Mehlhorn (2018): *Languages of origin*, p. 12; Dollmann/Kristen (2010): “Language of origin as a resource for school success?” pp. 123-146.

<sup>11</sup> Family language cannot be equated with the language of origin, because family languages can sometimes include different languages. See Brehmer/Mehlhorn (2018): *Heritage languages*, p. 22.

<sup>12</sup> Mehlhorn (2020): “Inheritance languages and their speakers,” p. 23.

<sup>13</sup> See: Brehmer/Mehlhorn (2018): *Languages of origin*, p. 22 or König (2016): “First language – language of origin – mother tongue.”

<sup>14</sup> In Brandenburg the term “mother tongue instruction” is used, while in Berlin the term “first-language instruction” is used.

<sup>15</sup> For a brief overview of the origins of the HU see Woerfel/Küppers/Schroeder (2020): “Heritage language teaching,” pp. 207-212.

<sup>16</sup> See Bouras-Ostmann (2016): “Arabic,” pp. 483-487.

<sup>17</sup> See Behzadi/Konerding/Nerowski (2019): “Arabic as a modern foreign language in school teaching,” pp. 405-425.

<sup>18</sup> An overview can be found in Bouras-Ostmann (2016): “Arabisch,” pp. 483-487.

<sup>19</sup> Königs (2016): “Language acquisition and language learning,” p. 281.

## 1.2 Research status

“...the acquisition, learning and teaching of foreign languages or second languages. [...]. In this context, it is very important that, due to the complexity of the multilingual contexts facing our societies today, the development of didactic and methodological multilingualism profiles is of particular research interest [...]. Thus, all non-institutional contexts in which foreign or second languages are learned and all age groups are taken into account when these forms of language learning interact with institutionally supported procedures.”<sup>20</sup>

This consideration is important for the teaching of Arabic in the multilingual society of Germany.<sup>21</sup>

## 1.2 RESEARCH STATUS

This chapter focuses on the current state of research on Arabic language teaching in schools as a way of categorizing the topic in the literature. Currently, little research attention is paid to Arabic language teaching in schools. In the context of multilingualism research, Arabic instruction in schools is usually only mentioned briefly in educational or educational studies and also within linguistics.<sup>22</sup> Overall, the topic of Arabic instruction in schools is mostly dealt with within research work on heritage languages.<sup>23</sup>

In Arabic studies, the topic is approached within the discipline of Arabic teaching methods. However, Arabic instruction in schools does not yet play a significant role and must be given greater attention in the future. Above all, it is not known how many students benefit from a school offering, how many schools offer Arabic lessons, and what type of Arabic lessons are offered (for example, lessons in a foreign language or a native language). Beyond the school context, Arabic is also taught as a foreign, mother tongue, or native language by clubs, within initiatives, or by churches or mosques.

<sup>20</sup> Bausch/Burwitz-Melzer/Krumm/Mehlhorn/Riemer (2016): *Handbook of Foreign Language Teaching*, p. 1.

<sup>21</sup> For an overview of the problem areas and potentials in the FU Arabic, see Salerno (2018): *Arabic as a foreign language in Germany*; for an overview of the teaching of Arabic see Goldmann (1993): “Arabic as a modern foreign language on the way to a teaching of Arabic,” pp. 11-63. For the state of foreign language teaching in schools, see Behzadi/Konerding/Nerowski (2019): “Arabic as a modern foreign language in school lessons,” pp. 405-425.

<sup>22</sup> See Bradlaw/Hufeisen/Nölle-Becker (2022): “Processes of professionalization,” pp. 307-330; Lippert (2020): “On the necessity of a post-ideological approach in multilingualism research,” pp. 1169-1196; Lengyel (2017): “Keyword: multilingualism research,” pp. 1-22; Fäcke/Meißner (2019): *Handbook of multilingual and multicultural didactics*; Krifka/Błaszczak/Leßmöllmann/Meinunger/Stiebels/Tracy/Truckenbrodt (2014): *The multilingual classroom*; Weth (2008): Multilingual writing practices in France; Kutzelmann/Massler (2018): *Multilingual reading promotion: basics and concepts*; Krumm (2009): “The importance of multilingualism in the identity concepts of migrants,” pp. 233-247; Hufeisen/Lindemann (eds.) (2005): *Total language curriculum – Integrated language didactics – Common Curriculum*; Hufeisen/Schlabach (eds.) (2018): “Comprehensive language curricula and other cross-language and cross-subject approaches”; Hufeisen (2003): “Models of the scientific description of individual multilingualism and the conditions of its emergence,” pp. 57-70; Hufeisen (2018): “Comprehensive language curricula and other approaches and concepts that span languages, subjects, and grades,” pp. 227-245.

<sup>23</sup> See Brehmer/Mehlhorn (2018): Heritage languages; Bylund/Díaz (2012): “The Effects of Heritage Language Instruction on First Language Proficiency: A Psycholinguistic Perspective,” pp. 593-609; Christ (2009): “On Multilingualism,” pp. 31-49; Dirim (2015): “Heritage language teaching as a symbolic space,” pp. 61-71; Gruhn/Mirja/Cantone/Karakaşoğlu (2012): “Recognition of multilingual identities and the promotion of school language,” pp. 33-65; Lengyel/Neumann (2016): “Heritage language teaching in Hamburg”; Löser/Woerfel (2017): “Heritage language teaching in Germany, Austria and Switzerland,” pp. 577-589; Maas (2009): “Language in migration situations: language development (written language) vs. multilingual communication,” pp. 145-161; Maas/Mehlem (2003): Written cultural resources and barriers among Moroccan children in Germany; Mediendienst Integration (ed.) (2022): “How widespread is heritage language teaching?”; Montrul (2016): *The Acquisition of Heritage Languages*; Reich (2014): “Heritage language teaching,” pp. 445-457; Söhn (2005): *Bilingual school teaching for migrant children*; Subklew (2001): *Mother tongue teaching and integration*; Surd-Büchele (2009): *Bilingual literacy acquisition. Cognitive prerequisites and social framework conditions from a cultural-historical perspective*; Thürmann (2007): “Heritage language teaching,” pp. 163-168; König (2016): “First language – heritage language – mother tongue.” Also, Husisy-Sabek/Hussein Farraj/Lapidot-Lefler (2023): “Arabic Creates an Atmosphere of Safety Because It Is Our Mother Tongue”; Gogolin/Hansen/McMonagle/Rauch (2020): *Handbook of Multilingualism and Education*; Küppers/Schroeder (2017): “Why Turkish heritage language teaching is a dying breed and why it would make sense to develop Turkish into a modern foreign language,” pp. 56-71; Lengyel/Neumann (2017): “Heritage language teaching in Hamburg,” pp. 273-282; Mehlhorn (2014): “Intercomprehension in Russian lessons at school,” pp. 148-168; Küppers (2016): “Intercultural education through school multilingualism,” pp. 340-352; Wiese (2010): “Does multilingualism lead to language decline?,” pp. 73-84; Reich (2016): “Heritage language teaching,” pp. 211-226; Reich (2017): “Institutional developments in heritage language teaching in Germany,” pp. 81-97; Mehlhorn/Brehmer (2018): *Potentials of heritage languages: Linguistic and non-linguistic influencing factors*.

State-organized Arabic instruction in schools is primarily offered as HU. However, the regulations and implementation vary.<sup>24</sup> Scientific literature<sup>25</sup> that explicitly addresses the German-speaking school context is limited to a few Arabic didactic essays or collected volumes.<sup>26</sup>

### 1.3 OBJECTIVE AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The goal of this study is to provide the first systematic inventory of school-related absences at public schools in Germany. As a result of major demographic changes, Arabic lessons are experiencing increased demand from parents and students.<sup>27</sup> The States have responded to this development with different measures. Nationwide, it seems that the teaching of rarely taught (foreign) languages is under-regulated and there is a lack of suitable teachers.<sup>28</sup> Before strategies to improve this situation can be developed or implemented, a comprehensive investigation of current educational offerings and their structures is required. In particular, it is important to include the perspective of the players involved in the AU (teachers, students, parents/guardians, and stakeholders). The goal of the study is therefore to provide a comprehensive inventory of Arabic teaching. This study is based on a comparative data analysis that includes the current range of available courses on the one hand and the educational policy measures and state guidelines on the other hand. Furthermore, the players' perspectives will undergo a qualitative analysis.

#### 1.3.1 Project objectives

- Systematic overview of AU offered at public schools
- Description of job-specific characteristics of Arabic-speaking teachers

<sup>24</sup> See chapter 3 the study on Arabic language teaching in schools of the States.

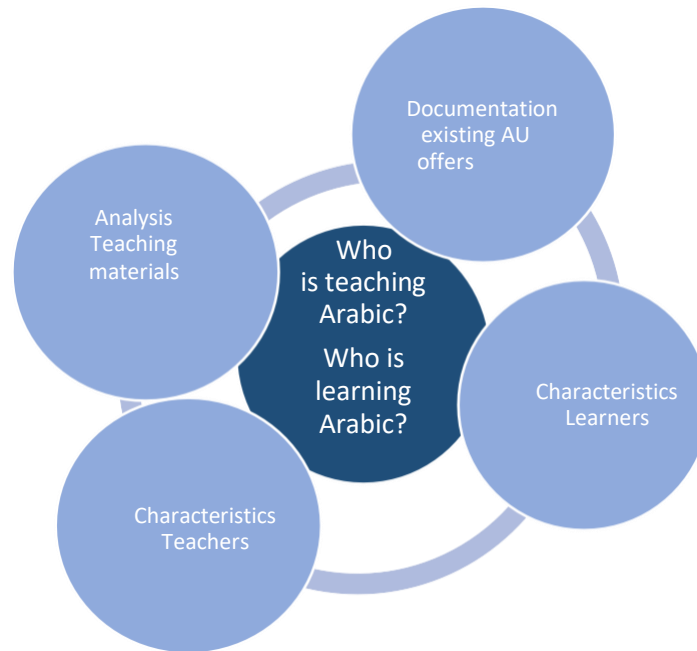
<sup>25</sup> In particular, corresponding scientific efforts within Arabic/Islamic Studies or Islamic Theology in Bamberg, Leipzig, and recently also in Münster.

<sup>26</sup> See Goldmann (ed.) (1993): *Contributions to Arabic didactics: Didactic and methodological problems of modern Arabic lessons*; Behzadi/Konerding (2018): "Language as a cultural mediator – the example of Arabic," pp. 235-252; Behzadi/Konerding/Nerowski (2019): "Arabic as a modern foreign language in school lessons," pp. 405-426; Konerding/Schmidt (2022): "Literature and culture mediation in native language Arabic lessons," pp. 102-128; Soukah (2022): "Native language Arabic lessons in NRW: situation and perspective," pp. 415-436; Alsulaitah/Schalück/Ismail (2022): "Differentiation of heterogeneous learning groups in native language Arabic lessons at Saxon schools," pp. 79-102; Salerno (2018): *Arabic as a foreign language in Germany: problem areas, challenges, and potentials*. More comprehensive data collections and analyses, which the planned inventory will partly be based on, have been carried out in the British context, see Wild/Emoekabu/Graham (2022): *Teaching of Arabic in UK Schools Research Report. Shift Insight* or in the Swedish context Backelin (2021): "Voices of Arabic Teachers in a Survey Questionnaire."

The pages of the *education network in China* contain data on the provision of Chinese lessons in Germany, which is not available for Arabic; they can provide an important guidance, cf. education network in China (n.d.): "Learning languages: Chinese lessons," n.p. – General information on native language lessons is available from the Native Language *Network – classroom instruction* of the University in Duisburg, the *Heritage Language Center* the TU Darmstadt and the Integration Media Service's annual report on heritage language teaching collected.

<sup>27</sup> See various press releases, including Sammann (2021): "Heritage language teaching"; Zinner (2020): "Arabic teaching in Germany"; Tatenhorst (2020): "Many primary school students in Bergkamen speak Arabic with a German accent"; Frey (2021): "Around 1000 young people from Mülheim are learning Arabic, Turkish and the like."; Klovert (2017): "Integration debate: What Arabic has to German schools"; Gesmati (2019): "Arabic lessons on Sundays."

<sup>28</sup> This is repeatedly stated for Arabic; see Zinner (2020): "Arabic lessons in Germany" or Behzadi et al. (2019): "Arabic as a modern foreign language in school teaching," pp. 405-426.



**Figure 2:** Study goals

### 1.3.2 Purpose

- Understanding the organization and structure of the educational AU
- Acquiring data concerning Arabic speakers and Arabic learners in Germany: especially understanding the motivation of learners and their parents to participate in the AU
- Evaluation of teachers according to their competence, their motivation, and their qualifications
- Identify recommendations for curricular requirements and qualification programs for Arabic-speaking teachers

## 1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION

The focus of this study is on the **situation of Arabic instruction in German public schools** and the description of the players involved and their perspectives in and about the school AU. The description of the situation includes mutual references between the perspectives of the actors involved and the analyses of official documents. This raises the fundamental research question of the current state of AU in German public-school systems.

### Arabic language lessons at German state schools - A review of the current status

The research question is divided into subordinate questions:

- Who is learning Arabic? – Characteristics of the students: Language learning biographies, background information, and motivation for participating in the AU
- Who teaches Arabic? – Characteristics of teachers: Biographical information, qualifications, motivation for teaching, challenges in everyday teaching
- What measures are taken regarding Arabic lessons in schools, in school districts, and at a state level?

## 2. STUDY METHODOLOGY

There are various qualitative methodologies available to answer the overarching research question. No claim can be made to sociological representativeness based on percentages, which are merely provided to ensure transparency. All quantitative information derived from documents or other sources are marked accordingly.

The central survey instruments include guideline-based expert interviews and online surveys. No participant observation was carried out during lesson observations, etc., as this was not permitted according to the research authorization.

In this chapter, the data collection and analysis are first summarized. Furthermore, research ethics principles and challenges in the research process are discussed in the present study.

### 2.1 DATA COLLECTION

In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the school-based AU, guideline-based expert interviews and online questionnaires were chosen as suitable instruments for data collection within the framework of the study.<sup>29</sup> This enabled us to gain in-depth insights from subject experts as well as the perspectives of students, teachers, and parents/guardians.

#### 2.1.1 Guided interviews with experts

The qualitative method of guided expert interviews (Helfferich 2014; Kruse 2015)<sup>30</sup> was used for the present study to obtain in-depth insights from people with specialist knowledge. Experts in the field of Arabic teaching (including people from academia, ministries, and school boards) in Germany have been interviewed. The interviews were conducted according to a semi-structured guideline to secure systematic data collection.

The expert interviews were the starting point for the design of the online questionnaires. The primary goal was to explore the research field and then decide how the research should be organized. The guideline-based expert interviews functioned to generate theoretical concepts.

#### 2.1.2 Online questionnaires

Questionnaires provide a hypothesis-testing procedure for the theoretical construction of the research object. The questionnaires collect information on the attitudes, preferences and experiences of the students and their parents/guardians as well as teachers and stakeholders. As a result, a comprehensive analysis of learners' backgrounds and motivations in Arabic lessons is possible. Guidelines and recommendations from relevant literature were used to design the questionnaires.<sup>31</sup> Questionnaires were created and conducted using the online tool LimeSurvey.

<sup>29</sup> The research project ran from November 2021 until August 2023. It should be noted that the research process is significantly influenced by the far-reaching effects of the COVID-19 pandemic has influenced the research field of schools and the choice of survey instruments is also affected.

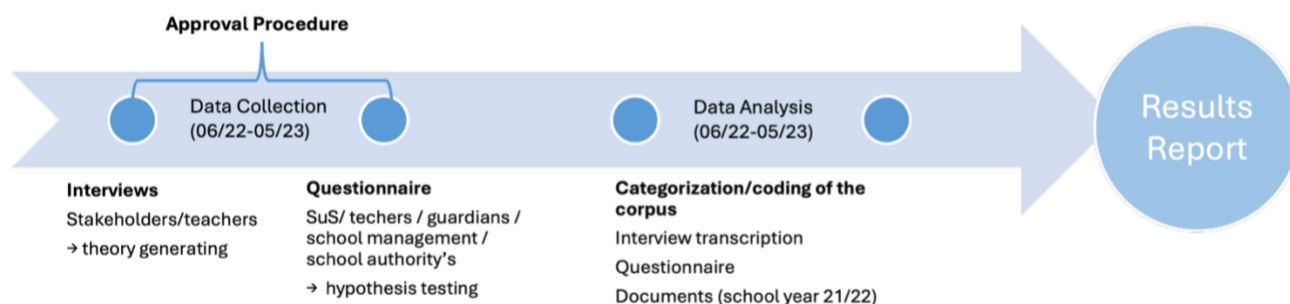
<sup>30</sup> Helfferich (2014): "Guideline and expert interviews," pp. 559-574; Kruse (2015): *Qualitative interview research: An integrative approach sentence*. The importance of being open to new perspectives, listening, and flexibility in the interviews is very important, to obtain deeper and more complex information.

<sup>31</sup> See Möhring/Schlütz (2019): *The survey in media and communication studies*.

## 2.2 Data analysis and presentation of the results

- Type 1: Teachers (contact permission and information obtained from the competent authorities)
- Type 2: Students (contact permission and information about the responsible teacher)
- Type 3: Parents (contact permission and information about the responsible teacher and/or school authority, in German and Arabic)
- Type 4: School principals, those responsible in school boards, and ministries

The data collection was a multi-stage process: First, contacts were established and a network (stakeholders mainly from research, school boards, and ministries) was put together. School authorities and ministries were the most important contact partners, as they were responsible for organizing Arabic lessons in schools.



**Figure 3:** Research process and methodological concept

A prerequisite for conducting the surveys in the research field is obtaining research permits from the Ministries of Education and Culture. The respective requirements may deviate from one state to the other. Some questionnaires needed to be partially customized during the research permit application process.

### 2.1.3 Criteria for the selection of the survey locations (schools with AU)

The results are considered to be exploratory, as random samples of schools, teachers, and stakeholders were included in the survey. The selection is based on the research circumstances and the optional character of participation in the surveys.

## 2.2 DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF THE RESULTS

Because of the lack of relevant specialist literature available on the subject and the exploratory approach of the study, an investigation based on (empirical) qualitative methodologies was considered appropriate to answer the research question(s). In the presentation of the results, however, the figures, which are presented as percentages, are therefore by no means intended to indicate a social-scientific representativeness. The display primarily serves the purpose of transparency.

The corpus consists of the 17 transcribed expert interviews and 882 surveys and documents (statistical material, official reports, framework plans, etc.). The data were evaluated using computer-aided analysis using the method and analysis steps of the qualitative content analysis of Mayring.<sup>32</sup> The transcribed interviews were analyzed in terms of content to identify key terms, themes, and patterns. The approach of Mayring provides a structured method for analyzing qualitative data. The category formation was inductive, starting with open coding and gradually merging into thematic categories. The *MAXQDA* analysis software was used for the assessment.

<sup>32</sup> See Mayring (2015): *Qualitative content analysis: principles and techniques*.

## 2.3 RESEARCH ETHICS AND DATA PROTECTION

In the research field of schools, **data protection, especially of personally-identifiable information**, played a particularly sensitive role, since SuS of different age groups are among the respondents. A declaration of consent from parents/guardians is required to conduct surveys of students in the school AU. Various age limit requirements apply.

There are various guidelines regarding the procedure for surveys with SuS in the respective States, and these must be followed with great care depending on each specific case. Teachers support the research process at the schools and therefore have to coordinate and check the completion of questionnaires, as supervision by the research team was previously not possible. The procedure for obtaining consent was handled very differently in the States, and it was extremely time-consuming. While some States defined different requirements for participation in the surveys for certain age groups (e.g. 7-14, 15-18, and over 18), other requirements were binding in other States.

**Anonymization:** Information about schools and locations included in the study is not permitted, as conclusions can quickly be drawn about individuals. Likewise, according to the requirements of individual research permits, it is not possible to mention only school names. Some States, on the other hand, even provide an overview of the names of teachers and schools on the Internet, while in other States this is prohibited and is enforced very strictly. In the interests of a uniform presentation of the research results, the names of schools and places, individuals who took part in the interviews, and other details that could enable persons to be identified were therefore not included.

Different regulations must also be followed for the **storage and retention of data**. This aspect relates to all processes of the study (data collection, data analysis, etc.). With regard to the archiving of the declaration of consent of the parents/guardians, for example the data must be deleted after set periods, in other cases the data has to be administered in the school – coordinated by the teacher. The research process must be monitored carefully and accurately to meet the data protection requirements.

The same applies regarding the **implementation**: In some States it was necessary to use questionnaires for specific age groups. Given the fact that it is not uncommon for SuS to participate in lessons spanning different age groups in the Arabic HU, the questionnaire types then had to be assigned individually to the SuS of a learning group. This made the research process considerably more difficult. Because siblings often attend the lessons, it was not always possible to assign parental consent forms to the children or they were only answered on one occasion. Research ethics doubts were treated with the utmost discretion and excluded from participation in the surveys.

**Linguistic challenges:** Regarding the heterogeneity of the respondents, teachers repeatedly made it clear that multilingual questionnaires would be of great benefit. This circumstance could not always be complied with, according to the approval requirements. As a result, surveys in some States were only conducted in the German language, in others also in both the Arabic and the German language. Multilingual accompanying material should provide and support further access to the surveys.

## 2.4 CHALLENGES DURING THE RESEARCH PROCESS

One of the biggest challenges in the research process was the far-reaching impact on schools during and after the **COVID-19- pandemic**. The ministries and school boards attempted to focus on maintaining the school rather than on developing it. Almost all employees contacted referred to this point and emphasized the need to prioritize previously postponed project applications; there was a general unwillingness on the part of the administration to process research approvals during this particular period. The authorities have even suggested postponing the application on some occasions. One of the biggest difficulties experienced was the pandemic by itself, putting unprecedented pressure on the administrative structures of the educational system and in some cases even resulting in the temporary suspension of teaching Arabic. There were repeated unprecedented levels of sick leave and requests for patience, as in the autumn and winter of 2022/2023 there were temporarily no classes. The creation of research permits therefore required intensive efforts.

## 2.4 Challenges in the research process

Also, the temporary university closure (Leipzig), home office regulations, and general restrictions for the public complicated the research process. Even though many of these problems could initially be resolved successfully by working digitally, they delayed the project, which relies heavily on human interaction and direct communication.

In addition to the pandemic situation, as of 2022, the school boards were also under pressure due to **the war in Ukraine**, the effects which were also evident, as a lot of capacity had to be allocated to the integration of new SuS at short-term notice. This made it difficult to conduct an extensive research process, so that in some States research permission was only granted with certain reservations, while at the same time making it evident what a wide range of responsibilities the school boards have to manage.

**Bureaucratic hurdles** arose when applying for research permits in Germany's federal system and when implementing research activities in general. A great deal of time was required to coordinate the research process and intensive communication – even after research approval was granted – sometimes clearly indicated ambiguous responsibilities. Data protection regulations, for example, prevented teachers from being contacted to some extent.

Among the **administrative challenges** were, above all, the applications for research permits and their complex regulations and procedures, which have already been outlined in the sections above. The different regulations that apply to the AU in most States require general approval for empirical research at public schools. Complex application procedures were required in the States to obtain permission to survey teachers, SuS, and parents.

The administrative barriers have the effect of a “reciprocal prevention mechanism” impacting the progress of research. A number of applications for research authorization were declined in the initial application phase and therefore had to be comprehensively re-examined by the research team. In some cases, a certain hierarchy was specified for research approvals: For example, it was stipulated that prior approval from the school principal was required before the student survey was conducted. That required a great deal of effort to obtain further consent from the school principals, who only had time in some cases or had a critical view of the research project, with the result that some cases the research process already failed at this point. These bureaucratic and legal requirements had methodological implications for the implementation of the surveys, a process that should be kept as low-threshold and intuitive to be appropriate for the target group. However, the legal and administrative effort involved made the implementation process particularly difficult, to comply with the strict data protection laws, declarations of consent must be sent by regular post; e-mails in particular should be avoided.

The **ministries' guidelines** already outlined within the research permit applications in the states but had **methodological implications**, such as some adjustments to the questionnaires were required. From a methodological point of view, it was important to ensure that the content of the questionnaires remained transparent. This also applies to questionnaires in the Arabic language, which were designed identically to the questionnaires in the German language. The heterogeneous group of parents/guardians received occasionally both questionnaires. This simultaneously ensured the highest possible density of information in the qualitative study to achieve a maximum level of precision.

# 3. ARABIC LESSONS OFFERED AT SCHOOLS IN DIFFERENT STATES

This chapter is devoted to the situation of Arabic instruction in schools in each State and discusses the structure of the offerings, the organizational framework, and the special features. In this regard, statistical data<sup>33</sup> is provided as a benchmark.

## 3.1 BAVARIA

In Bavaria, supplementary instruction in the native language has been offered since the school year 2009/2010 exclusively organized by the consular representations.<sup>34</sup> Thus, there is no state-organized offer for the Arabic HU in Bavaria.

Since 2016/2017, efforts were made to establish Arabic as a foreign language course as a so-called elective subject in Bavaria. Elective subjects are comparable to the work communities, all-day programs (GTA), or other additional offers in the academic program available in other States. Participation is voluntary and the results achieved are not for academic credit.<sup>35</sup> Arabic as an elective subject is currently offered at the secondary level. It is always a matter of teaching across all grades, whereby it is up to the school board and teachers to decide which age groups are admitted to classes.<sup>36</sup>

In practice, Arabic is offered as an elective subject primarily at high schools in Nuremberg, Erlangen, Bamberg, and Forchheim.<sup>37</sup> The goal of Arabic lessons is to provide SuS the opportunity to engage in an in-depth study of the Arabic language and culture. The lessons cover various aspects, ranging from Arabic script and grammar to the cultural and historical significance of the Arabic world.

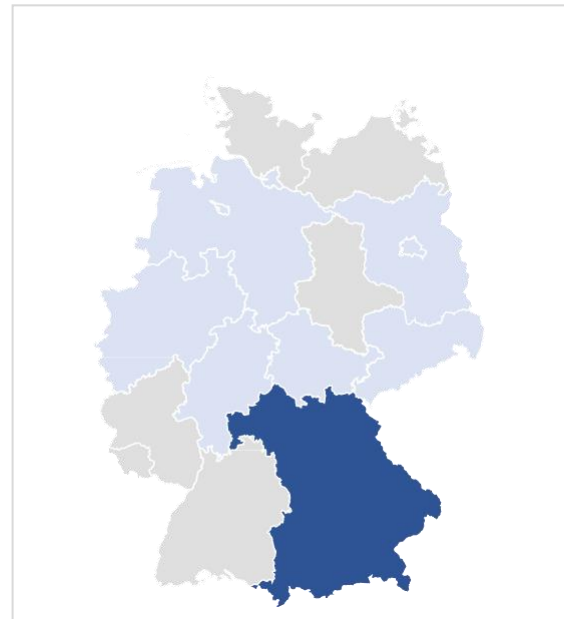


Figure 4: Arabic lessons in Bavaria

<sup>33</sup> To describe the situation, official documents were analyzed (announcements from ministries, school boards, framework and curricula, reports, other official documents, and interviews/surveys). Statistical data refer to the 2021/2022 school year and were requested from the respective ministries as part of the project study.

<sup>34</sup> By decision of the Council Ministry dated 9/14/2004, the supplementary mother tongue instruction, which had previously been offered by the State, was introduced after a period until 2009 current transition time. This funding was used for increased German language support. The justification for this measure was that excellent German language skills were the decisive basis for successful school attendance and the integration of children and young people with a migration background. Lessons in languages of origin for children and young people who have learned the language in their families, for example, are thus organized and financed exclusively by consular representations in Bavaria. They also provide teachers, teaching plans, and materials. Participation is voluntary and can be documented in a supplementary sheet to the certificate (Int\_017\_1-2).

<sup>35</sup> Achievements can be noted in the SuS school reports, with the teacher being able to choose from the following grades: “Participated with very great success,” “Participated with great success,” and “Participated.” Typical subject offerings in this context include choir, orchestra, and astronomy. It should be noted at this point that there is a separate curriculum and standardized training for teachers for Turkish in Bavaria, which is why this foreign language, in contrast to Arabic, can be offered as a regular school subject toward academic credit.

<sup>36</sup> As a further additional foreign language elective, Arabic was added with a weekly scope of 2 SWS at Bamberg high schools integrated as a project. The project is supported by the University of Bamberg. See Behzadi/Konerding (2020): “Arabic in school – project development in theory and practice.”

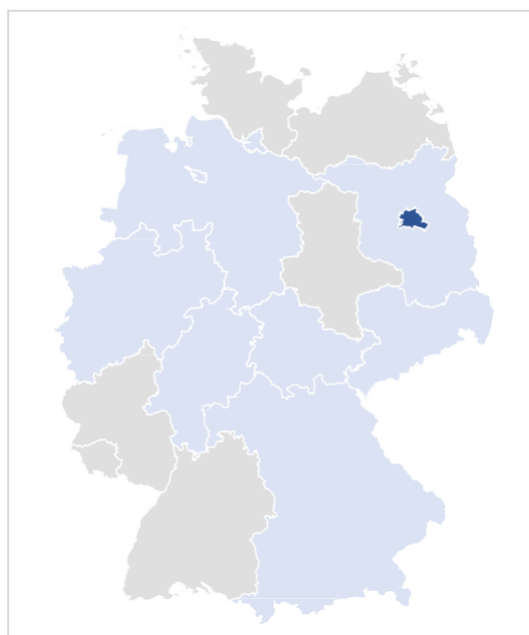
<sup>37</sup> See Int\_017\_2. Learning distant foreign languages is time-consuming, so the extra-curricular offer of Arabic as an elective subject in the upper grades – and thus for the students in addition to the preparation for the high school examinations – is rarely available.

Teachers are native speakers or graduates of Arabic studies and have a 4+ semester-long course on academic Arabic instruction, thus achieving the *Arabicum*. Arabic lessons take place in all types of schools. Teachers can attend training courses offered at the Academy for Teacher Training and Personnel Management, coordinated jointly with the University of Bamberg.<sup>38</sup> The two-part Arabic course as an elective aims to enable the acquisition of linguistic, cultural, and language didactic skills for the implementation of an elective Arabic course. The prerequisite for participation in the training is knowledge of Arabic at level A2 acquired at a college or university, based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), alternatively: 20 ECTS points; two semesters of 6 semester hours per week. This course was designed in collaboration with the University of Bamberg at the Chair of Arabic Studies (Prof. Dr. Behzadi) and is aimed at interested teachers from all public and private schools who have the necessary qualifications.<sup>39</sup>

In the 2022/2023 school year, according to the information taken from Int 017\_2-3, so-called “collective elective courses” in Arabic take place at one public high school each in Erlangen and Nuremberg. For such a collective course to take place, a minimum number of participants of 12 students with at least two students from neighboring high schools are required. The schools offering the course will receive an additional two hours per course from the State Ministry in addition to their regular budget. Students who wish to enter a Bavarian high school after attending a non-Bavarian secondary school (or grades 7-11 at a comparable institution) can request a change to the sequence of foreign languages specified in the timetable, according to § 15 paragraph 3 of the academic regulations for high schools in Bavaria (GSO). This regulation has been a proven instrument for years to take individual educational biographies into account and is applied at Bavarian high schools for a large number of native languages. In the 2021/2022 school year, a total of 36 students in Bavaria took advantage of the opportunity to include Arabic in the individual foreign language sequence and have their performance assessed with regular testing.<sup>40</sup>

### 3.2 BERLIN

In Berlin, state-run Arabic instruction has been offered as HU since 2013.<sup>41</sup> The range of services offered by the Berlin Senate Department for Education, Youth, and Family has been considerably expanded in recent years. In September 2022, a framework plan for grades 1 to 10 was published, which is partly based on the curricula for HU in Hamburg, Rhineland-Palatinate, and Saarland.<sup>42</sup> In this framework plan, which is also the first framework plan in Berlin for teaching the native language or first language, the term “first-language teaching” is used.<sup>43</sup> The framework plan defines a precise competence orientation without explaining language-specific features. In the 2022/2023 school year, Arabic as a first language was taught as an elective subject 2-3 hours per week at 31 primary schools (GS) and one integrated secondary school (ITS).<sup>44</sup>



**Figure 5:** Arabic lessons in Berlin

<sup>38</sup> See Int 017\_2; Academy for Teacher Training and Personnel Management (n.d.). Currently, it is not possible to predict how the demand for foreign language Arabic lessons is going to change, so there are no plans to draft a curriculum (see Int 017\_3).

<sup>39</sup> Int 017\_3-4. The academy in Dillingen also regularly offers advanced training courses on the Arabic-speaking world, e.g. *The Near and Middle East – Geography, Politics, Economy and Society* (2022) or *The transcultural experience as a potential for education – The Arab world in the classroom* (2021). Participation is open to relevant specialist teachers (Int 017\_3-4).

<sup>40</sup> Int 017\_2-3.

<sup>41</sup> Int 015\_15.

<sup>42</sup> See framework plan for first-language teaching (above). J.): *Part C: First-language teaching (grades 1-10)*, p. 4.

<sup>43</sup> See GEW homepage (2023): “The GEW Berlin welcomes the expansion of native language teaching”; Int 015\_16. First-language teaching is called HU in other States and is aimed at students with prior knowledge/with family language. See framework plan for first-language teaching (above). J.): *Part C: First-language teaching (grades 1-10)*, pp. 4ff.

<sup>44</sup> Int 015\_16. In Berlin, the primary school phase comprises six school years.

The increase in participating students in Arabic as a first language is also noticeable.<sup>45</sup>

**Table 1:** Development of number of participants

	School Year 2019/2020	School Year 2020/2021	School Year 2021/2022	School Year 2022/2023
Number of SuS in first language lessons/HU Arabic	350	846	1246	1450
Number of schools offering Arabic first language lessons	-	-	25 GS 2 ITS	31 GS 1 ITS

In the 2021/2022 school year, 13 teachers were working in Arabic as a first language.<sup>46</sup> “First language instruction is provided by teachers from the city/state of Berlin.”<sup>47</sup> They are employed on a contractual basis – either for a fixed term or for an indefinite period – rather than being employed on a fee basis. When hiring teachers, knowledge of German is important for the employment relationship in addition to knowledge of Arabic (at least C1).<sup>48</sup> Teachers can participate in service training modules specifically designed for teachers of first-language classes. Network meetings are also held to exchange ideas and support the creation of teaching materials.<sup>49</sup>

The framework plan is a cross-linguistic set of rules, but it defines didactic principles for first-language teaching, the function of the standard language in the classroom, the skills to be focused on, etc.<sup>50</sup> The latter are categorized into levels according to a development plan. The framework plan organizes the levels into a five-part module plan and specifies topics and content. The thematic content mentioned in the module plan should be based on the emphasis of the content taught in regular classes in the grades. Overlaps with general knowledge or German lessons are deliberately included to exploit synergies.<sup>51</sup> The framework plan shows an orientation toward curricula for modern foreign languages and German lessons. In the competency-oriented Arabic first-language teaching in Berlin, it is still planned to give SuS the chance to make an assessment, for which evaluation criteria are specified. Performance assessments of the students’ various competencies are intended to serve to develop the ability to self-reflect and control learning success.<sup>52</sup> A comment (“has taken part in Arabic lessons”)<sup>53</sup> is entered in the certificates. Furthermore, fundamental principles and development goals are included in the multilingualism *concept model* of the Berlin Senate for Education, Youth and Family from 2021.<sup>54</sup> In terms of content, the AU is devoted to a time-intensive literacy phase at the beginning, which also covers a time period of 1-2 years, as the students are also taught German at the same time.<sup>55</sup>

The Berlin Senate Administration is interested in further expanding the range of offers and is conducting an evaluation of Arabic as a first language, which is being scientifically supported by the General Linguistics/Leibnitz Centre for General Linguistics. Courses for further training modules are aimed at teachers and are provided by the Centre for Language Education Berlin (ZeS) for first-language teaching.

<sup>45</sup> The data provided are based on the information provided by the Senate in the context of this project study and the report of the Integration Media Service (2022): “Teaching in the language of origin,” p. 7.

<sup>46</sup> Information refers to a request from the Senate for Education, Youth, and Family.

<sup>47</sup> Framework plan for first-language teaching (n.d.): *Part C: First-language teaching (grades 1-10)*, p. 3.

<sup>48</sup> Teachers require a proven teaching qualification (in Germany or in their country of origin). German language skills must be certified at level C2 in the case of a permanent employment contract. See Int 015\_50-54.

<sup>49</sup> See Int 015\_64-66.

<sup>50</sup> See framework plan for first-language teaching (above). J.): *Part C: First-language teaching (grades 1-10)*, pp. 6-13.

<sup>51</sup> See Int 015\_39.

<sup>52</sup> See framework plan for first-language teaching (above). J.): *Part C: First-language teaching (grades 1-10)*, pp. 32-34.

<sup>53</sup> According to the information in (Befr/1/D/4), the report card can comment, “Has taken part in Arabic lessons with good/very good success.”

<sup>54</sup> See *Conceptual Model of Multilingualism* of the Berlin Senate Department for Education, Youth, and Family is available at [www.berlin.de/sen/bjlf/service/presse/pressearchiv-2021/pressemitteilung.1148278.php](http://www.berlin.de/sen/bjlf/service/presse/pressearchiv-2021/pressemitteilung.1148278.php) (August 21, 2023).

<sup>55</sup> See Int 015\_36.

In addition, there is currently no language-intensive school model for the German-Arabic language pair within the state-run program of the State European School in Berlin.<sup>56</sup>

The evaluation aims to measure competency progression and to align it with the newly defined objectives of the framework plan. The effects of the simultaneous promotion of Arabic and German on language skills should be identified to make adjustments to the framework plan if necessary. Another pillar is the continuing education and training of teachers in cooperation with the Center for Language Education (the Center is scientifically independent; it belongs to the Senate Administration) and with scientific expertise from linguistics or the departments of German as a second language/multilingualism.<sup>57</sup> In the future, language skills are to be expanded to offer students opportunities regarding the job market.<sup>58</sup>

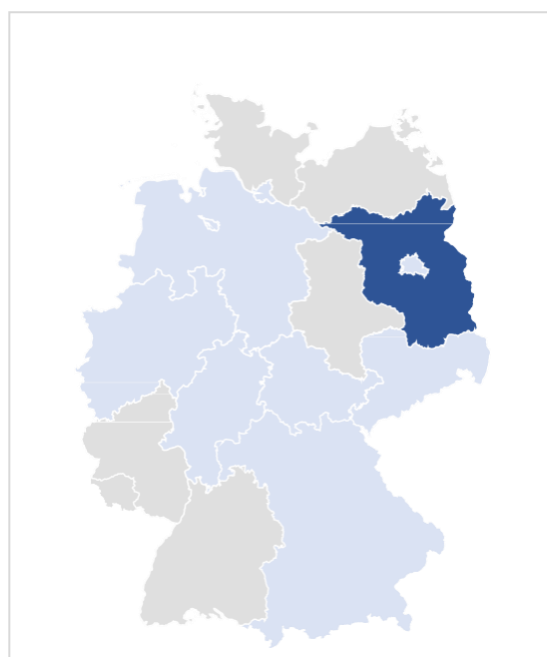
As part of this project study, surveys were conducted with students from various schools, parents/guardians, and stakeholders.

## 3.3 BRANDENBURG

In Brandenburg, Arabic is taught as a native language in public schools.<sup>59</sup>

The Brandenburg Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports (MBS) has commissioned RAA Brandenburg<sup>60</sup> with the coordination and organization of native-language Arabic instruction. Mother tongue instruction in the State of Brandenburg is anchored in law by the decision to integrate foreign language students into general curricular and vocational schools and to suspend compulsory schooling (Integration and Compulsory School Attendance Ordinance – EinglSchuV)<sup>61</sup>. Mother tongue instruction has been offered since 1997 via the current *Regional Offices for Education, Integration and Democracy* (RAA Brandenburg), “coordinated and professionally supported according to the legal framework.”<sup>62</sup>

Arabic is a very well-represented language within the range of native language teaching options. This refers not only to the number of students participating in the AU, but also to the relatively large number of groups, locations, teachers, and schools involved.<sup>63</sup>



**Figure 6:** Arabic lessons in Brandenburg

<sup>56</sup> See Berlin Senate Department for Education, Youth and Family (n.d.): “Special school offers: State European School.”

<sup>57</sup> Int 015\_23-25.

<sup>58</sup> Int 015\_36.

<sup>59</sup> The term corresponds to the native language instruction in a number of other States.

<sup>60</sup> The RAA Brandenburg started its activities in 1992 as a model experiment. In 1996 it was registered as an independent association. The RAA (Regional Offices for Education, Integration and Democracy) association was rebranded in 2006; the country has six branches. See RAA (n.d.): “The Supporting Association.”

<sup>61</sup> See Minister for Education, Youth, and Sport (2017): “Regulation on the integration [...] – EinglSchuV.” Before that, from 1997 the regulation on the integration of foreign-language pupils into general and vocational schools (Integration Ordinance – EinglV) in various versions.

<sup>62</sup> Information according to RAA request (10/20/2022).

<sup>63</sup> See the report from Integration Media Service (2022): “Factsheet on heritage language teaching” and Int 009\_006.

### 3.3 Brandenburg

Native speaker AU is given at 18 locations: Angermünde, Beeskow, Brandenburg an der Havel, Cottbus, Eisenhüttenstadt, Frankfurt an der Oder, Fürstenwalde, Gransee, Guben, Hennigsdorf, Jüterbog, Luckenwalde, Oranienburg, Potsdam, Premnitz, Rathenow, Strausberg, and Velten.<sup>64</sup>

The following figures illustrate the strong demand:<sup>65</sup>

**Table 2:** Demand for mother-tongue Arabic lessons

	School Year 2019/2020	School Year 2020/2021	School Year 2021/2022	School Year 2022/2023
Number of SuS in mother-tongue Arabic lessons	744	750	820	n/a
Number of schools offering mother-tongue Arabic lessons	n/a	n/a	27	18

#### 3.3.1 Figures for Brandenburg in the 2021/22 school year for mother-tongue AU66

**Table 3:** Breakdown of participants in mother-tongue AU by location and teacher

	Calendar Year 2021	2022 (January-July)
Participating students	820	779
Locations	35	32
Teachers	33	27

Surveys were conducted with students in the State of Brandenburg.

Teachers in the native-speaking AU in Brandenburg are employed exclusively as freelance employees on a fee basis. Other forms of employment (e.g. through employment contracts) are not possible. The recruitment is coordinated by the RAA Brandenburg.<sup>67</sup> The criteria for the recruitment of an Arabic teacher include general pedagogical qualifications and specialist knowledge. Ideally, the teacher has completed teacher training in the country of origin and has teaching experience in a language (ideally teaching experience in Arabic). The teacher must have native-level Arabic skills, as demonstrated by the application profile (university degree and teaching experience in the country of origin). German-language skills should be demonstrated at a B2 level. The individual application profile of the teachers is examined during the recruitment process to decide whether there is a need for training.<sup>68</sup> Some teachers also move into teaching through appropriate further training.<sup>69</sup> Every new teacher is trained through compulsory consultation to prepare them comprehensively for their teaching career. This addresses the specific circumstances of the AU (which also influence the teaching itself), structural and administrative tasks, and the teaching practice, which is determined by heterogeneity.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>64</sup> Information refers to the RAA's location overview of native-language Arabic instruction from 2023. See RAA (2023): "Mother tongue teaching." The location overview of 2022 noted 27 locations; see information from RAA Brandenburg.

<sup>65</sup> Information refers to the 2022 report from Integration Media Service of (2022): "Factsheet Native Language Teaching" and RAA (2023): "Mother tongue teaching."

<sup>66</sup> Information is based on information from the RAA (message dated 10/24/2022). Data are collected by the RAA/MBJS by calendar year and not by school year.

<sup>67</sup> See Int 009\_8.

<sup>68</sup> See Int 009\_10-16. Gradations are possible when hiring a teacher, for example, if the teacher does not have a university degree in education but has studied philology and has teaching experience.

<sup>69</sup> See Int 009\_18.

<sup>70</sup> See Int 009\_26. This includes administrative, structural as well as pedagogical content. Heterogeneity in the learning groups plays an important role.

### 3.3.2 Quality assurance thanks to specialist pedagogical support (observations and specialist consultations)

The RAA Brandenburg evaluates teaching practice through intensive observation (recording of lessons and analysis of the teaching materials used). Since there are also many offers in the periphery of Brandenburg away from the urban centers, it is particularly important to provide teachers with the best possible support. Therefore, the RAA Brandenburg also holds specialized consultations for teachers.<sup>71</sup> The use of suitable teaching materials is also addressed, for which binding criteria are communicated. In the RAA's own library Brandenburg teachers can find suggestions for suitable teaching materials for the AU.<sup>72</sup>

### 3.3.3 Professional knowledge

There is no binding curriculum that forms the basis for the native language offerings.<sup>73</sup> Close coordination with the teachers is ensured by a mentoring program, which includes subject-specific didactics (analysis, selection of teaching materials, structure of teaching units according to fixed criteria) as well as specialist support by experienced experts on Arabic and Islamic studies topics (so-called Islam department).<sup>74</sup>

Furthermore, students in Brandenburg are offered the opportunity to have their native language skills "recognized and documented on the certificate within the secondary level I and at the beginning of the qualification phase as part of a language assessment test."<sup>75</sup> The offer for native-speaker AU is recorded in the Eingl-SchuruV §7<sup>76</sup> as an additional support offer and is intended to promote holistic language development of the students regarding social and school integration.<sup>77</sup> The aim is to promote or build up skills in the native language. A "constant examination of one's own socio-cultural background and related family life should also be encouraged by the native language teachers."<sup>78</sup>

Learning groups for native speakers can be set up across grades or schools. Within the framework of the personnel requirements and taking into account the other support measures, the native speaker AU in Brandenburg can comprise up to four hours per week. The decision on the establishment of cross-school mother tongue instruction is made by the RAA.<sup>79</sup> AU takes place as an afternoon offering. Participation will be confirmed on the report card but not graded or evaluated.<sup>80</sup>

### 3.3.4 Establishment of Arabic lessons in the mother tongue

"In order to expand AU, the need would have to be greater." (See Befr/2/D/2.)

An offer for AU will be made available if the school determines there is sufficient demand, i.e., if there are enough native-speaking students. Reports of needs are usually also made by other stakeholders (parents or community

<sup>71</sup> See Int 009\_24.

<sup>72</sup> For example, you can find out here what distinguishes good or unsuitable materials. See Int 009\_26.

<sup>73</sup> Efforts to develop such a curriculum are being observed. It is assumed that different types of expertise, especially from practice (teachers), from science and from colleagues from other States.

<sup>74</sup> See Int 009\_103.

<sup>75</sup> Decision of the KMK from 2007 with feedback from the States from 2022, pp. 93.

<sup>76</sup> See Minister for Education, Youth, and Sport (2017): "Regulation on the integration [...] – EinglSchuruV."

<sup>77</sup> See RAA (n.d.): "Projects & Programs: Mother Tongue Teaching."

<sup>78</sup> *Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the states in the Federal Republic of Germany (2022): Resolution of the KMK of 13.12.2007 – Country feedback from 7.10.2022*, pp. 93.

<sup>79</sup> See *Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the States in the Federal Republic of Germany (2022): Resolution of the Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the States in the Federal Republic of Germany (13.12.2007 – Country feedback from 10/7/2022*, p. 93 and Minister for Education, Youth and Sport (2017): "Regulation on the Integration [...] – EinglSchuruV."

<sup>80</sup> See RAA – Regional Offices for Education, Integration and Democracy (n.d.): "Projects & Programmes: Mother Tongue Teaching" as well as Int 009\_29-32.

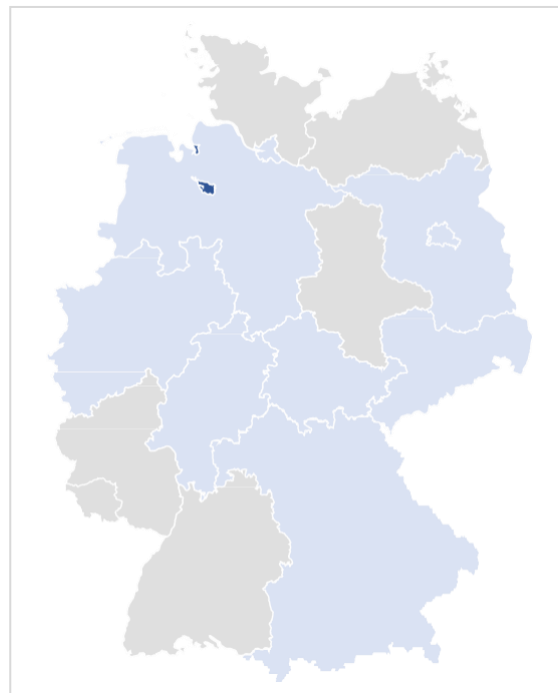
members such as accommodation employees, guardians, social workers, or school counselors).<sup>81</sup> The RAA Brandenburg provides a teacher and informs interested parents/schools. A lesson can be offered for a minimum of 12 SuS.<sup>82</sup> For the further establishment of the AU, it became evident that stronger independence of the teachers regarding their tasks (communication between school leadership and ties and parents) is desired.<sup>83</sup>

## 3.4 BREMEN

There is currently no state-organized Arabic school teaching program in Bremen/Bremerhaven. The Bremen Senate (*The Senator for Children and Education of the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen*) is also planning to integrate native language AU into public schools.<sup>84</sup> Demand has increased dramatically due to enormous immigration, especially since 2015.<sup>85</sup> So far, AU has only taken place in the private sector or as consular instruction.<sup>86</sup> In the 2021/2022 school year, HU, which was organized by the Senate, took place in Turkish, Kurdish, Farsi, and Dari/Persian, Polish, Russian, Greek, and Chinese.<sup>87</sup> For the HU in Bremen, there has been already a curriculum for primary schools since 2015.<sup>88</sup> The political situation is also a factor.<sup>89</sup>

In Bremen/Bremerhaven there are numerous extracurricular activities, consular Arabic instruction, and other private initiatives. The Arabic HU (since the 2021/2022 school year) is offered by the Moroccan Consulate in Bremen. Previously, Arabic consular instruction was also provided by the Tunisian Consulate at a school in Bremen. There is no consular Arabic HU in Bremerhaven. All offers for AU are covered by extracurricular offers (e.g. mosques).<sup>90</sup>

Regarding the concept of language education, the Senator for Education and Science of the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen (2013) considers the promotion of native languages and the development of multilingualism to be a



**Figure 7:** Arabic lessons in Bremen

<sup>81</sup> See Int 009\_36.

<sup>82</sup> Cross-school groups can also be set up if there are insufficient numbers of participants at a school. See Int 009\_47-50.

<sup>83</sup> See (Befr/2/D/2).

<sup>84</sup> See Int 007.

<sup>85</sup> See Int 007\_31. The Senator also receives requests from various sources (parents, civil population, associations, etc.).

<sup>86</sup> There is no information on the number of participants and other parameters, see Integration Media Service (2022): "Factsheet: Heritage language teaching."

<sup>87</sup> See Integration Media Service (2022): "Factsheet on teaching the native language." HU is sometimes referred to in Bremen as "mother language teaching." See Bremen Senate for Education and Children (n.d.): "Migrant Support."

<sup>88</sup> See Bremen State Institute for Schools (n.d.): *Homepage* ([www.lis.bremen.de](http://www.lis.bremen.de)).

<sup>89</sup> In 2019, a member of the left party made a request and asked for a report that would capture the circumstances of the HU in Bremen. See Bremen Senate for Education and Children (2019): "Teaching native languages: Report."

<sup>90</sup> Information is based on disclosure provided by the Senator for Education and Children. In Bremen, the consular Arabic HU (Consulate Morocco) has been held at a school in Bremen since the 2021/2022 school year. The consulate uses the school's premises for this purpose. There is no further contract between the consulate and the Bremen senator, so further information (number of teachers, number, and age of students, etc.) is not known. Teachers and teaching materials are provided by the consulate.

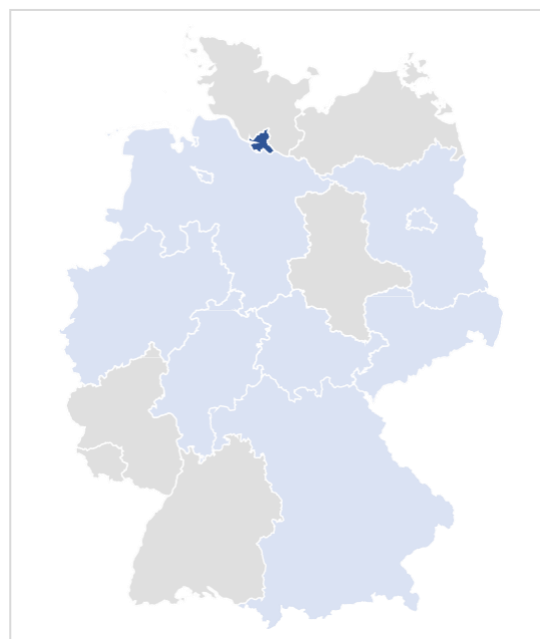
central reason.<sup>91</sup> There are also opportunities to have the language of origin recognized as a substitute for the second foreign language in the form of an examination.<sup>92</sup>

The Senator for Education and Children sees the high demand for the Arabic HU and is therefore striving to expand the HU offerings – specifically the offer of Arabic as a state-controlled elective. To this end, a systematic framework plan based on needs is to be developed.<sup>93</sup> An offer for the Arabic HU is also intended to ensure that decisions can be made on the selection of suitable teachers and that the lessons themselves are coordinated and supervised, which is currently not possible via the consulates. A key aspect is the development of a systematic procedure for recruiting teachers.<sup>94</sup> Contacts are in place with research institutions and other ministries (e.g. North Rhine-Westphalia and Hamburg).<sup>95</sup> The integration of teaching Arabic as a foreign language is also targeted.

### 3.5 HAMBURG

In Hamburg, there is a new foreign language curriculum draft for the study level (grade 11 and 12) since 2022.<sup>96</sup> This makes Hamburg, along with Thuringia and Hesse, one of the few States in which not only are Arabic lessons offered in the native language at public schools, but Arabic is also offered as a foreign language credit toward high school graduation. Arabic is therefore recognized as a tested subject. In Hamburg, many changes are taking place regarding the way Arabic language teaching is offered in schools.

The demand for AU in Hamburg is high, as the breakdown shows:<sup>97</sup>



**Figure 8:** Arabic lessons in Hamburg

**Table 4:** Demand for Arabic lessons in Hamburg

	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023
Number of learning groups (Arabic as HU and FU)	19	22	21	n/a
Number of schools with AU	6	n/a	4 (3 grammar schools, 1 district school)	n/a

<sup>91</sup> See [www.bildung.bremen.de](http://www.bildung.bremen.de). the Arabic HU is also not offered as a school-based course, but offered as part of the consulate.

<sup>92</sup> This option is usually available in the individual States. See Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (2022): *Decision of the KMK on 12/13/2007 – State feedback of 10/7/2022*.

<sup>93</sup> See Int 007\_07-09 and Int 007\_42.

<sup>94</sup> See Int 007\_11.

<sup>95</sup> See Int 007\_14.

<sup>96</sup> See *Grade-level Curriculum*. Newer Foreign Languages Arabic: Hanseatic City of Hamburg (2022): “Grade-level Curriculum – Newer Foreign Languages – Arabic.”

<sup>97</sup> Information is based on disclosure from the Citizens’ Request (2018) on HU at Hamburg schools, pp. 8-13, Integration Media Service (2022): “Factsheet on Native Language Teaching” as well as on information from the Board for Schools and Vocational Training.

In the **school year 2021/2022**,<sup>98</sup> 224 SuS participated in Hamburg in the AU:

**Table 5:** Demand for Arabic lessons in Hamburg during the 2021/2022 school year

Number of schools with AU	4 (3 grammar schools, 1 district school)		
Number of courses	16		
Total number of SuS	224 (of which)	Grade 5	4
		Grade 10	22
		Grade 11	11
		Grade 12	12
		Comprehensive Year	115
Number of teachers	15		

The Board for Schools and Vocational Training of The Free Hanseatic City of Hamburg had responded to a decision from 2019.<sup>100</sup> Below the university level, in primary school (grades 2 to 4), the Arabic language can be taken as an optional additional course at the HU. In middle school (grades 6 to 10), the Arabic HU can be offered as an elective subject (as a replacement for the second or third foreign language) for three hours per week. The Arabic HU takes place in the afternoons across all schools from primary school<sup>101</sup> to secondary school II and is organized as a central offering by the Hamburg board for schools and vocational training.<sup>102</sup>

The basis for the HU in Hamburg is provided by the regulations and implementation instructions for heritage language teaching in Hamburg.<sup>103</sup> This document defines the objectives, explains the various forms of HU in Hamburg, the requirement levels of the lessons, prerequisites, requirements for teachers, assessment and documentation of learning progress, regulations for newly immigrated pupils, and regulations on language assessment examinations.

For primary schools, the *Primary school curriculum and framework plan for first languages* has applied since the 2023/2024 school year.<sup>104</sup> For the middle school level, there are now drafts for the framework plan for modern foreign languages for district school curriculum<sup>105</sup> as well as the Gymnasium – sec I curriculum.<sup>106</sup> Both plans refer to the languages specifically mentioned (as does the framework plan for the HU primary school).<sup>107</sup> The plans are based on the GER and cover levels A1 to B1.<sup>108</sup> It is expected that these framework plans will be implemented

<sup>98</sup> Information from the Department for Improving Educational Opportunities of the school board for undergraduate and vocational education.

<sup>99</sup> Applies to grades 6-9

<sup>100</sup> See the Hamburg Parliament (2018): “Request from the Parliament of January 17, 2018: Teaching the language of origin at the Hamburg schools.”

<sup>101</sup> Since the 2022/2023 school year, the Arabic language is also taught in primary schools.

<sup>102</sup> See cross-school teaching offers in languages at primary schools (with a focus on native languages) in the 2023/2024 school year (Hanseatic City of Hamburg [2022]: “Cross-school electives in languages at primary schools”) and Cross-school teaching in languages in secondary level I (with a focus on languages of origin) in the school year 2023/24 – Senate administration of Hamburg (2023): “Cross-school language electives in secondary schools I (with a focus on native languages) in the 2023/2024 school year.”

<sup>103</sup> Hanseatic City of Hamburg (2021): “Regulations and implementation guidelines for heritage language teaching (HSU) in Hamburg.”

<sup>104</sup> Hanseatic City of Hamburg (2022): “Heritage language teaching: primary school 2022.” The framework plan specifically refers to the languages Albanian, Arabic, Farsi, Italian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, and Turkish. Pages 51-61 deal with very specific linguistic means for Arabic in the courses *My Environment* (Grade 1/2) and *Me and my world* (Grades 3/4). In addition, important language tools for teaching and basic grammatical structures are cited.

<sup>105</sup> Hanseatic City of Hamburg (2021): “Curriculum for district schools, grades 5-11 modern languages (draft).”

<sup>106</sup> Hanseatic City of Hamburg (2023): “Curriculum for secondary schools in modern languages (draft).”

<sup>107</sup> Chinese, French, and Spanish are also added. Arabic is discussed on pp. 50-59 (high school) and pp. 52–61 (district school).

<sup>108</sup> The following subject areas are listed with an allocation to the individual levels: Personal living environment (A1), Living together (A2), and social issues in the reference cultures (B1). The content is not only generally based on the requirements of the GER, but also refers to specific language/culture-relevant topics, such as Arabic in the world, modern standard Arabic and dialects, the school system in Arab countries, the history of Arab countries, regional studies, migration, Arab Spring, Arab pop culture, etc. Also, the basic grammar is taught at all three levels (A1, A2, and B1), whereby in each case it is listed very specifically which grammatical means and phenomena are to be dealt with.

during the 2024/2025 school year. Until then, the framework plans for native languages apply to the district schools<sup>109</sup> and high schools.<sup>110</sup>

For the grade level, there is the *Grade-level curriculum for Arabic as a newly modern foreign language*.<sup>111</sup> Arabic courses in the grade level take place in Hamburg at three different levels: as a newly acquired foreign language (B1), as an advanced foreign language with a basic level of requirement (B2), and as an advanced foreign language with an increased level of requirement (B3). The curriculum describes the desired competencies for each course type. In addition, topics are listed (e.g. the Arab world between tradition and change, ‘Orientalism’, the Arab Spring, the Gulf States, globalization, etc.). For Arabic as a newly introduced foreign language, grammatical structures that need to be covered are also listed. There is no fixed textbook for Arabic in the FU, although the Department of Education and Vocational Training provides recommendations for teaching materials.<sup>112</sup> In the *Grade-level curriculum for Arabic as a newly modern foreign language* of 2022, The FU Arabic is designed in a detailed competency-oriented manner, provides didactic guidelines, and explains in detail the performance assessment principles for the subject, which can also be introduced as a subject relevant for high school graduation.<sup>113</sup> Teachers should be trained subject-matter experts.<sup>114</sup> A corresponding study profile of the teachers is to be expected if only the content requires.<sup>115</sup>

HU is assessed and the grades are noted on the report card and taken into account for the student’s academic career recommendation.<sup>116</sup> Teachers in HU are to be qualified through the training and support offered by the State Institute for Teacher Training and School Development (LI). At the same time, the Hamburg school board offers consultation and guidance regarding curriculum development, performance assessment, teaching materials, etc.<sup>117</sup> Among the Arabic-speaking teachers in Hamburg there are both permanent and contract teachers:

“The heritage language instruction (...) is provided by both temporary and permanent teachers. Some of these teachers have completed an education degree and their preparatory service in Germany; others have acquired teaching qualifications abroad and have completed an adaptation qualification or supplementary course in Hamburg.”<sup>118</sup>

The model integrated in Hamburg can be considered a hybrid model, since lessons of Arabic as a foreign language are offered there in addition to a native-language offering. The basis for this is the Hamburg education plan for the grade level.<sup>119</sup> In the future, efforts are being made to expand the range of courses in Arabic as a foreign language from primary school through high school.<sup>120</sup> As far as teaching is concerned, there is also a great deal of heterogeneity in Hamburg,

“أن الطلاب من مختلف المستويات في نفس الصف (Befr/3/A/8)  
[... because students of different levels are in the same class.]

It remains (currently) questionable whether there are in reality any SuS with a foreign language profile in the FU Arabic:

<sup>109</sup> Hanseatic City of Hamburg (2011): “Curriculum for district schools (grades 5 to 11) – languages of origin.

<sup>110</sup> Hanseatic City of Hamburg (2021): “Curriculum for secondary schools – languages of origin.” These two plans have gone. However, it does not directly relate to the subject of Arabic.

<sup>111</sup> Hanseatic City of Hamburg (2022): “Curriculum for the study level of Modern Foreign Languages Arabic.”

<sup>112</sup> Int 016\_60-62.

<sup>113</sup> See draft of the educational plan: Hamburg Senate Administration: “Educational plan for the study level. Modern Foreign Languages Arabic, and Hanseatic City of Hamburg (2022): “Education Plan.”

<sup>114</sup> See Int 016\_30-32.

<sup>115</sup> Some of the Arabic-speaking teachers at the FU have doctorates. See Int 016\_32.

<sup>116</sup> See Regulations and implementation instructions for the HU in Hamburg, pp. 25: Hanseatic City of Hamburg (2021): “Regulations and implementation instructions for heritage language teaching (HSU) in Hamburg.” See also *Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the States in the Federal Republic of Germany (2022): Resolution of the KMK from 13.12., 2007 – Country feedback from 7.10. 2022.*

<sup>117</sup> Hamburg Citizens’ Assembly (2018): “Citizens’ request dated the 17. January 2018: Teaching the native language to Hamburg Schools,” pp. 6.

<sup>118</sup> Regulations and implementation guidelines for heritage language teaching in Hamburg, 2021, pp. 18.

<sup>119</sup> See Tiefenthal (2018): “Arabic is booming.”

<sup>120</sup> See Int 016\_22; Int 016\_46.

### 3.5 Hamburg

التاسع والصف السابع الصف مجموعتان لدي (Befr/3/A/8)

[I teach two grades, 7th and 9th, but unfortunately the foreign- and native-language students are in the same class.]

“We have many native speakers who can improve their high school average grades with the help of Arabic. With Arabic you can also handle English as a foreign language.” (Befr/3/D/2)

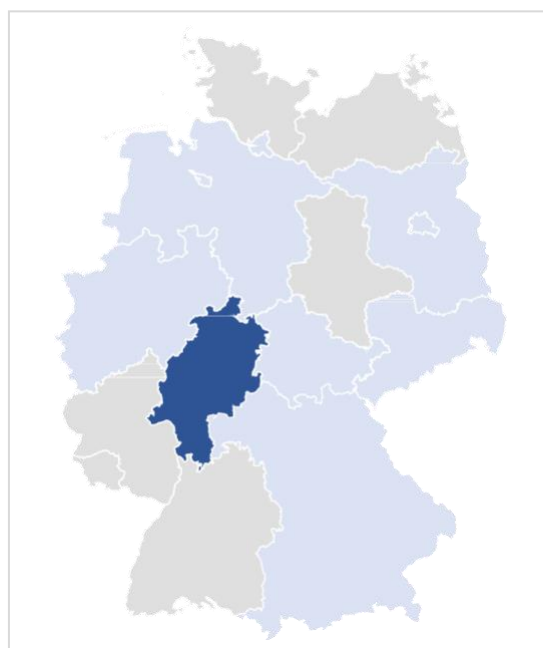
Arabic lessons at the grade level are intended to offer students who have insufficient foreign language skills due to their complex educational background (e.g. insufficient English skills for students from Syria)<sup>121</sup> the opportunity to take Arabic instead of another foreign language for their high school diploma. The prerequisite for taking Arabic as a core subject at the undergraduate level is that the students have taken Arabic lessons for at least four years or can demonstrate appropriate knowledge of modern standard Arabic.<sup>122</sup> Most of the time, therefore, it is students whose family language or native language is Arabic who take part in the FU Arabic.<sup>123, 124</sup> The FU Arabic was also introduced for students who have immigrated to Hamburg since 2014 and acquired Arabic as a language of education, due to their complex educational background.<sup>125</sup>

As part of the present project study, surveys were conducted with students (in the FU Arabic), parents/guardians, entitled parties, and stakeholders.

### 3.6 HESSE

In Hesse, Arabic is taught as a HU in public schools. A foreign language elective for Arabic with a syllabus (published in July 2023) was introduced for the 2022/2023 school year.<sup>126</sup>

The Arabic HU is taught in Hesse at 61 schools primarily offered at the elementary level and are organized by the Center for native language, multilingualism, and school integration. This organizes the aptitude assessment and the training of teachers in the Arabic HU.<sup>127</sup> The school boards at 15 locations (Bad Vilbel, Bebra, Darmstadt, Frankfurt a. M., Fritzlar, Fulda, Gießen, Hanau, Heppenheim, Kassel, Marburg, Offenbach a. M., Rüsselsheim a. M., Weilburg, and Wiesbaden) coordinate the design of the courses in their respective areas of responsibility. The Arabic HU is taught in grades 1-10 and usually includes two hours per week.<sup>128</sup>



**Figure 9:** Arabic lessons in Hesse

<sup>121</sup> See Int 016\_12-16.

<sup>122</sup> See Int 016\_14.

<sup>123</sup> The distinction between HU and FU has only existed in Hamburg since 2022, when the curriculum for the degree level was introduced. Since 2022, Hamburg has had a primary school education plan is available (HU), and during the 2022/2023 school year, Arabic was offered for the first time in a primary school, See Hanseatic City of Hamburg (2022): “Cross-school language electives in primary schools (with a focus on heritage languages) in the 2023/2024 school year.”

<sup>124</sup> See Int 016\_19.

<sup>125</sup> See Hamburg parliament (2018): “Request from the parliament of. January 17, 2018: Teaching the language of origin at Hamburg schools,” p. 5.

<sup>126</sup> Core curriculum for secondary schools and middle schools: Hesse Ministry of Education (2023): “Core curricula for lower secondary level” and Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs of Hesse (2023): “Arabic core curriculum. Secondary Level I.”

<sup>127</sup> See Int 011\_40.

<sup>128</sup> Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs Conference (2022): *Decision of the KMK on 12/13/2007 – State feedback from 10/7/2022*: “In Hesse, schools are required to develop an academic advancement plan, provided that there are students in the area who attend schools with a non-German language of origin, according to the regulation regarding establishment of school relations dated August 19, 2011.” Part 7: Students with a non-German language of origin, §48 (4), (4), ABl. p. 546), last amended by law on March 18, 2021 (GVBl. pp. 166); Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs Conference (2022): Resolution of the KMK dated 12/13/2007; Country feedback dated 10/7/2022, p. 95.

### 3.6 Hesse

The Arabic HU is widely used in Hesse.<sup>129</sup>

**Table 6:** Overview of the Arabic language courses in Hesse

	School Year 2019/2020	School Year 2020/2021	School Year 2021/2022	School Year 2022/2023
Number of SuS in HU Arabic	2959	2319	2888	n/a
Number of schools with AU	n/a	n/a	61	50

#### 3.6.1 School year 2021/22

61 schools, of which

- 13 schools grades 1-10
- 39 schools grades 1-4
- 9 schools grades 5-10

19 School locations: Darmstadt, Dietzenbach, Eschborn, Flörsheim a. M., Frankfurt a. M., Ginsheim-Gustavsburg, Hanau, Hattersheim a. M., Hochheim a. M., Kelsterbach, Kriftel, Maintal, Mainz-Kostheim, Offenbach, Raunheim, Rüsselsheim, Schwalbach am Taunus, Weiterstadt, and Wiesbaden

#### 3.6.2 School year 2022/23

50 schools, of which

- 13 schools grades 1-10
- 28 schools grades 1-4
- 9 schools grades 5-10

13 school locations: Darmstadt, Dietzenbach, Flörsheim a. M., Frankfurt a. M., Fürth, Ginsheim-Gustavsburg, Hanau, Kelsterbach, Maintal, Offenbach, Rüsselsheim, Weiterstadt, and Wiesbaden

#### 3.6.3 School year 2023/24

54 schools, of which

- 3 schools grades 1-10
- 36 schools grades 1-4
- 15 schools grades 5-10

11 school locations: Darmstadt, Dietzenbach, Frankfurt a. M., Fürth, Hanau, Kelsterbach, Maintal, Offenbach, Rüsselsheim, Weiterstadt, and Wiesbaden

The number of SuS participating in the Hesse HU has dropped recently, according to Integration Media Service. Overall, the proportion of SuS in the Arabic HU and Turkish is approximately 80%.<sup>131</sup>

<sup>129</sup> Information is based on the report of the Integration Media Service (2022): “Factsheet on teaching the native language.”

<sup>130</sup> See Hesse School Offices in Hesse (n.d.): “Teaching in the language of origin: Languages offered – Arabic” or Hesse School Offices (n.d.): “Arabic locations.”

<sup>131</sup> See Integration Media Service (2022): “Factsheet on heritage language teaching,” p. 13.

The advisory center for heritage languages, multilingualism, and school integration (FBZ) regulates the Arabic HU.<sup>132</sup> The *Elementary school framework plan* mentions the promotion of heritage languages and multilingualism in general.<sup>133</sup> However, the new core curriculum for Arabic also mentions the primary level.<sup>134</sup> The Arabic HU is generally not assessed.<sup>135</sup> However, in addition to the qualified participation note in the report card with the grades “participated,” “participated successfully,” and “participated very successfully,” there is also the option of showing the language skills of the SuS in the form of a language certificate, according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), thus providing proof of individual multilingualism.<sup>136</sup> The Hessian Ministry of Culture proposes a textbook catalog for the HU and also recommends specific teaching materials for Arabic.<sup>137</sup> In Hesse, the research project (LOEWE focus) *Minority studies – language and identity*, which is based at the Goethe University Frankfurt am Main, also deals with the HU.<sup>138</sup>

In addition, Hesse is the only State in Germany to have decided to introduce regular Arabic language instruction.<sup>139</sup> The decision came after an intensive debate in the Hesse state parliament among the coalition of CDU and Greens and aims to strengthen Arabic and Portuguese.<sup>140</sup> The curricula for secondary schools (middle school and high school) for Arabic as a modern foreign language, which can be chosen as a second or third foreign language, have been available since July 2023.<sup>141</sup> Teaching Arabic as a foreign language is to be introduced from the start of the 2022/2023 school year. The curricula (referred to as the core curriculum in Hesse) include a detailed concept that takes into account the competence orientation, competence areas, and content concepts of the subject.<sup>142</sup> The respective learning objectives are evident in the competence expectations for study time, with a clear orientation toward the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.<sup>143</sup> The development of the curriculum went through a standardized, multi-stage process that was largely supervised, advised, and checked by Arabic-speaking teachers and other specialists.<sup>144</sup> Since there is currently no degree course for teaching Arabic, the suitability of teachers must be checked another way, since this is a regular course that is subject to testing for graduation and for which a standardized teacher training (second state examination) is planned. The recognition of foreign educational qualifications takes place according to a standardized procedure, in which equivalent

<sup>132</sup> See School Offices in Hesse (n.d.): “Teaching in the language of origin.”

<sup>133</sup> See Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs of Hesse (1995): “Framework plan.” There is no explicit information about the HU.

<sup>134</sup> See the new core curriculum for Arabic (secondary school and high school): Ministry of Education Hesse (2023): “Core curriculum Arabic. Secondary Level I high school.”

<sup>135</sup> See Int\_010\_47-48.

<sup>136</sup> See School Offices in Hesse (n.d.): “Teaching in the language of origin.” An explicit set of rules (framework plan or curriculum) for the HU is not listed. Information on content and objectives (conveying orientation knowledge, reading, speaking, and writing in the language of origin) is roughly formulated. The Ministry of Education in Hesse publishes a schoolbook catalog for teaching the languages of origin, including Arabic: Ministry of Education in Hesse (2021): “School book catalog for teaching in the languages of origin, including Arabic.”

<sup>137</sup> European publishers in particular are noted: See Ministry of Education in Hesse (2021): “Schoolbook catalog for the undergraduate in the languages of origin, including Arabic.”

<sup>138</sup> See University of Frankfurt am Main (n.d.): “Language & Identity.”

<sup>139</sup> According to the press release, the introduction of the Arabic language teaching program follows the argument that Arabic, with around 320 million speakers, is a world language. See Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs in Hesse (5/25/2022): “The State expands the course offering in second and third foreign languages.” See also resolutions on replacing the language of origin for the second or third foreign language: Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (2022): *Resolution of the KMK dated 12/13/2007 – State feedback dated 10/7/2022*, pp. 95ff. These regulations are available to all pupils regardless of their language of origin.

<sup>140</sup> See Int 011\_12.

<sup>141</sup> See Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs in Hesse (2023): “Core Curriculum Arabic. Secondary School I and the Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs in Hesse (2023): “Arabic core curriculum. Secondary Level I high school.”

<sup>142</sup> The core curriculum does not specify any language-specific content (content areas). The core curricula are replacing the curricula previously applicable in Hesse and implementing the educational standards of the KMK. See Ministry of Culture of Hesse (n.d.): “Core curricula and curricula.”

<sup>143</sup> See Int 011\_20. For the 3rd foreign language with a scope of 6 weekly hours in two years of instruction should achieve a level of A1–A2. For the second foreign language, a level of A2 is defined. See Ministry of Culture in Hesse (2023): “Arabic core curriculum. Secondary Level I high school.”

<sup>144</sup> See Int 011\_32. Educational standards, the teacher’s profile, content and didactic design, etc. were taken into account. Speakers from the Teachers’ Academy are also examining the concept; scientific expertise is also being used. Further steps include a consultation process and a participation process.

knowledge and skills are tested.<sup>145</sup> German language skills at level C2 are required.<sup>146</sup>

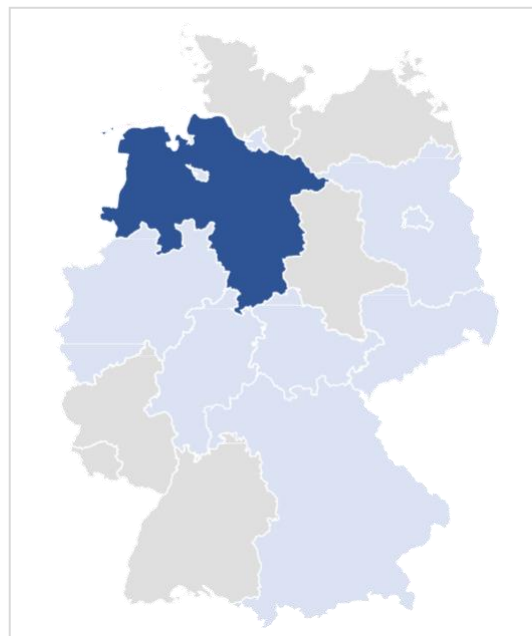
For this study, it was not possible to conduct surveys in Hesse because the research approval was not granted by the responsible authorities.

### 3.7 LOWER SAXONY

In Lower Saxony, an Arabic language course in schools was set up by the Lower Saxony Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs.<sup>147</sup> Arabic language courses in Lower Saxony are held regularly and are based on demand at primary schools. There were no courses at the secondary levels I and II.

In the 2021/2022 school year, the Arabic HU was found at 34 schools spread across ten locations (Aurich, Braunschweig, Göttingen, Hannover City, Hannover Region, Hildesheim, Osnabrück, Peine, Wolfenbüttel, Wolfsburg). The organization and implementation are coordinated by the Regional State Offices for Schools and Education in Braunschweig, Hanover, Lüneburg, and Osnabrück for their respective areas of responsibility. In addition, there are 17 language and cross-cultural education facilities<sup>148</sup> that have an advisory and support function for schools in promoting cross-cultural competence and multilingualism. In the context of the HU, they advise schools regarding the establishment of HU electives and also advise teachers on didactics/methodology and teaching materials. Language education coordinators manage language and cross-cultural education in the language education centers (Hannover City, Schaumburg, Osnabrück, Lüneburg, and Braunschweig).

The Arabic HU shows an increasing demand:<sup>149</sup>



**Figure 10:** Arabic lessons in Lower Saxony

**Table 7:** Demand for Arabic lessons in Lower Saxony

	School Year 2019/2020	School Year 2020/2021	School Year 2021/2022	School Year 2022/2023
Number of SuS in the Arabic HU	652	869	1048	
Number of schools with AU	n/a	32 GS	34 GS	1096
Number of learning groups with HU Arabic	n/a	109	135	36 GS
Number of teachers in HU Arabic	n/a	n/a	17	126

<sup>145</sup> See the website of the Teachers' Academy in Hesse: Teachers' Academy Hesse (n.d.): "International Teacher Training Qualifications."

<sup>146</sup> See Teachers' Academy Hesse (n.d.): "International Teacher Training Qualifications."

<sup>147</sup> Department 25 (immigration, culture, language education, school social work, all-day schooling) is responsible for the HU.

<sup>148</sup> See Lower Saxony Education Portal (n.d.): "Language education and cross-cultural education."

<sup>149</sup> Figures are based on information from the Media Institute for Integration, see Integration Media Service (2022): "Factsheet on teaching the language of origin" and the information from the Lower Saxony Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs dated 12/3/2021, 3/8/2023, and 3/9/2023.

the *Core curriculum of native language teaching* (2008) forms the basis for the Arabic HU in Lower Saxony, which is mandatory for all languages on the elementary school level. A strong focus on skills is evident in the core curriculum, which includes level specifications and optional provisions of the GER<sup>150</sup> and provides guidance for assessments. In addition, learning objectives for the competencies are defined, to be achieved by the end of 4<sup>th</sup> grade and developed using a variety of teaching techniques. Specific instructions are also provided for structuring lessons in accordance with the core curriculum.<sup>151</sup>

The Lower Saxony State Office for School Quality Development (NLQ) trains teachers in HU so that the lessons follow the core curriculum.

The HU's responsibility is to maintain and promote SuS educational language skills as a special qualification, while also promoting cross-cultural communication and behavior skills.<sup>152</sup> This needs to be achieved according to the relevant circular. Corresponding rules for the HU and the employment of teachers in the HU are defined in the circular<sup>153</sup> *Promotion of educational success and participation of non-German-speaking students*. The regulations for primary schools include the establishment of electives; they also define the class size (at least 10 students) and the registration formalities. The HU comprises two to three hours per week. A special feature is that at least some of the lessons will also be taught during the morning hours.<sup>154</sup>

It is also noticeable that students in grades 1 and 2 receive a certificate of participation; for students in grades 3 and 4, however, a grade is given as academic credit.<sup>155</sup> The Arabic HU is currently not offered in lower secondary education.<sup>156</sup>

The regional State Offices for Schools and Education recruit teachers for the HU. These teachers are required to be native speakers and not teachers specializing in foreign languages. A number of different requirements are specified for the recruitment of teachers in the HU.<sup>157</sup> A teaching degree in Germany or the country of origin is a prerequisite. Applicants must provide proof of German language skills and proficiency in the language of origin equivalent to level C1. In addition, applicants must also provide evidence of experience and competencies associated with their work as a teacher.<sup>158</sup> The language education center coordinators provide teachers intensively with support and supervision. Likewise, new teachers have the opportunity to do traineeships with experienced colleagues. Academic progress will be monitored with assessments.

It became evident that the school boards were not able to cope with the high level of demand. Requirements were not adequately fulfilled by the services provided, because it was difficult to recruit qualified teachers. Consequently, Lower Saxony decided to test the competencies of the teachers.

<sup>150</sup> This is common in the foreign language contexts.

<sup>151</sup> See Lower Saxony Education Portal (n.d.): "Multilingualism – Cross-culturalism (NIB)."

<sup>152</sup> See Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (2022): *Resolution of the KMK dated 12/13/2007 – State Feedback dated 10/7/2022*, p. 97 and Education Portal Lower Saxony (n.d.): "Teaching in the language of origin."

<sup>153</sup> See Lower Saxony Education Portal (n.d.): "Promoting participation in non-German native languages" or [www.schule.de/22410/25\\_8162](http://www.schule.de/22410/25_8162) 5.htm. The circular can be found there from MK dated 7/1/2014. – 25 – 81625 – VORIS 22410 – "Promoting educational success and participation of pupils whose native language is not German" is expired on 12/31/2021 and therefore no longer valid. The provisions formulated therein shall nevertheless continue to apply until a subsequent decree comes into force.

<sup>154</sup> See circular Education Portal Lower Saxony (n.d.): "Promoting participation of non-German native languages."

<sup>155</sup> See Lower Saxony Education Portal (n.d.): "Multilingualism – Cross-culturalism (NIB)." The core curriculum defines performance assessment in more detail. Additional information see Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (2022): *Decision of the KMK dated 12/13/2007 – State feedback dated 10/7/2022*.

<sup>156</sup> Information from the Lower Saxony Ministry of Culture relating to the 2021/2022 school year. Moreover, it is an option to have heritage language skills recognized or to set up heritage language working groups. For SuS in secondary level I who attend school years 5–10 have continuously participated in elective courses in their native language, there is also the possibility of taking a language test in their native language. All examinations, especially the language assessment examinations, contribute significantly according to the school certificate; they are considered crucial for equalization and promotion. See Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (2022): *Resolution of the KMK dated 12/13/2007 State feedback dated 10/7/2022*.

<sup>157</sup> All teachers – including teachers at HU – are subject to a six-month probationary period to first verify their qualifications. See Int 004\_38.

<sup>158</sup> In this context, the Lower Saxony Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs states the following: "Practical experience as a teacher, teaching-related skills, institutional skills as well as the ability to work as part of a team, commitment, and flexibility are still considered essential. Instructors for heritage language classes are state employees of the State of Lower Saxony. Consequently, they are subject to all applicable legal and administrative regulations of the State of Lower Saxony." See "Flyer for heritage language teaching in Lower Saxony" (March 2022), Lower Saxony Education Portal (n.d.): "Language of origin teaching (WEB)."

### 3.8 North Rhine-Westphalia

In Lower Saxony, additional efforts are already ongoing, and scientific expertise is being used to support the processes regarding language proficiency tests.<sup>159</sup> Collaborations with different groups of experts, including associations and scientists, are investigating important HU synergies and are revising policies.<sup>160</sup>

In this context, the goal is to be prepared to design the HU offers according to the individual requirements. Expanding these skills at lower secondary level including in the form of foreign language courses is also recommended.<sup>161</sup> The goal is to increase the number of qualified multilingual teachers.<sup>162</sup>

The present project study included surveys with students, parents/guardians, and stakeholders.<sup>163</sup>

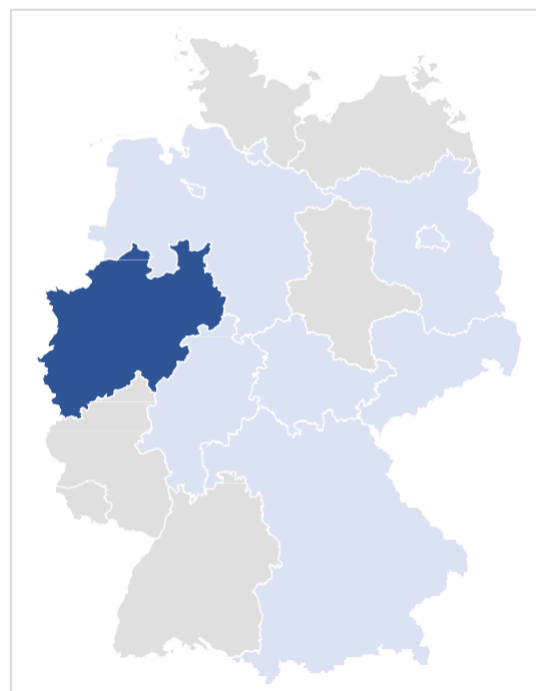
## 3.8 NORTH RHINE-WESTPHALIA

There is a long tradition of heritage language teaching in North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW), which is the most densely populated State in Germany. The range of lessons available to promote heritage languages is also correspondingly well-established. School AU takes place as an HU in NRW.

In principle, it is possible in NRW to offer any language as an HU or FU if the capacity of teaching staff and other resources are available.<sup>164</sup>

HU is an integral part of the mission of the Ministry of Schools and Education of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia.<sup>165</sup> The school boards coordinate the implementation and organization of the HU (five locations in NRW, which in turn bring together school boards in their area of the district government: Arnsberg, Detmold, Düsseldorf, Cologne, Münster).

The HU is an elective for students with an international family history.<sup>166</sup> There are two curricula for the HU in NRW: *A mother tongue curriculum for grades 1-4 and 5-6* (2000) and the *Core curriculum for mother tongue instruction in lower secondary education and Teaching in the mother tongue instead of the second and third compulsory foreign language for grades 7-10* (2006).<sup>167</sup> Both curricula are detailed compared to other curricula. The curricula include cross-linguistic requirements for the HU.



**Figure 11:** Arabic lessons in North Rhine-Westphalia

<sup>159</sup> Our contact partner for this is the Oriental Institute Leipzig.

<sup>160</sup> See Int 004\_14. The decree on multilingualism will be a prerequisite for the 2023/2024 school year. We are considering revising the core curriculum.

<sup>161</sup> See Int 004\_8. This would require appropriate structures such as the existence of a curriculum (also from other States). In line with developments in other States, there may be an opportunity to do so in the future also for Lower Saxony.

<sup>162</sup> See Int 014\_44.

<sup>163</sup> Due to the war in Ukraine and the resulting high demand for educational opportunities, surveys had to be or the coordination of HU and German as a second language teaching may be temporarily suspended.

<sup>164</sup> See Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (2022): Resolution of the KMK dated 12/13/2007 – States’ feedback dated 10/7/2022, p. 97.

<sup>165</sup> See Ministry of School and Further Education of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia (n.d.): “Teaching in the language of origin.”

<sup>166</sup> See Ministry of School and Further Education of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia (n.d.): “Teaching in the language of origin.”

<sup>167</sup> The curricula still use the term “*mother tongue instruction*”; in later specifications and on the official portals the term “heritage language instruction” is used. See Ministry of School and Further Education of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia (2006): “Core curriculum for mother tongue instruction in secondary school and instruction in the mother tongue instead of a second or third compulsory foreign language for grades 7-10” and Ministry of School and further Education of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia (2006): “Mother tongue teaching curriculum for grades 1-4 and 5-6.”

### 3.8 North Rhine-Westphalia

The curricula for grades 1-4 and grades 5-6 note principles for designing learning situations and address topics. In addition, methodological and didactic information is specified, including content-related guidelines for the respective grade level and information regarding performance assessment. It is noteworthy that great importance is placed on linguistic reasoning, language negotiation skills, and the ability of pupils to act cross-culturally. According to the detailed description:

“the fundamental tasks of mother tongue teaching ... are the promotion of multilingualism, cross-cultural competence and individualized support of pupils, which essentially coincide with the interdisciplinary objectives of general education in Germany.”<sup>168</sup>

Although the curriculum is relatively old, it includes language-specific project proposals in the appendix referring to language and culture, which is a great feature.<sup>169</sup>

The curriculum for secondary level I provides cross-language guidance regarding the learning objectives and performance standards to be achieved in secondary level I. Furthermore, the HU is standardized as a replacement for the second or third foreign language. The curriculum is also directed at SuS to intentionally convey that the ability to assess their personal performance will be communicated.<sup>170</sup> The curriculum for secondary level I defines the tasks and objectives of mother-tongue teaching. The entry requirement is successful participation in native language classes (grades 1-4, 5, and 6) for students who have already previously attended school in NRW. For the respective grades 7-10, competency expectations are noted, which are based on the GER.<sup>171</sup> Task types for achieving individual communicative competencies are also specified for grades 8-10, and information on performance assessment is presented in detail. The focus on the GER and the described competency orientation are remarkable.

The implementation of the HU is regulated by the circular on *Native language instruction* dated September 20, 2021 (BASS 13 – 61 no. 2).<sup>172</sup> Central to this is the scope of up to five hours per week for the HU and the greatest possible link with regular classes. A basic minimum number of 15 SuS is specified for the HU at the primary level and 18 SuS at the secondary level. Study groups may also be set up across different school types. A flat-rate fee for teaching material costs is specified for SuS in the HU.<sup>173</sup> A comment regarding participation in the HU is recorded on the report card; starting at grade 3, the HU is assessed and the performance is recorded on the report card under “Remarks.” The language test result for grade 10 is recorded under “Achievements” in the report card. The HU is not subject to academic credit. Students who take the HU in grade 9 or 10 are required to take the language test, although the test not subject to academic credit but serves, among other things, as quality assurance in the AU.<sup>174</sup>

Furthermore, the HU in NRW is supported by the State the *State program to strengthen primary school education through HSU – Multilingualism supports the educational success of children*:

“The State program is part of the language education concept of a primary school, taking into account the initial situation of multilingual students as part of teaching and school development and is directed at improving the skills of all students – especially regarding the educational language German. Through the State program, opportunities to more tightly mesh heritage

<sup>168</sup> Konerding/Schmidt (2022): “Literature and culture mediation in native language Arabic lessons,” p. 106.

<sup>169</sup> For Arabic, a draft project for a Juha evening is proposed. See Ministry of School and Further Education of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia (2006): “Mother tongue teaching curriculum for grades 1 up to 4 and 5 and 6,” p. 91.

<sup>170</sup> See Ministry of School and Further Education of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia (2006): “Core curriculum for mother tongue instruction in secondary school and instruction in the mother tongue instead of a second or third compulsory foreign language for grades 7-10,” foreword.

<sup>171</sup> See Ministry of School and Further Education of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia (2006): “Core curriculum for mother tongue instruction in secondary school and instruction in the mother tongue instead of a second or third compulsory foreign language for grades 7-10,” p. 13, grade 6 = at least A1–A2.

<sup>172</sup> See BASS (2021): “13-61 No. 2: Teaching the language of origin.” The 2021 decree is a revised form of the previous decree from 2016. The synopsis of the changes makes the developments in the HU in NRW clear: see Ministry of School and Further Education of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia (2021): “Heritage language teaching (synopsis).” What is particularly interesting is the fact that individual administrative districts have developed their own guidelines for the planning, implementation, and coordination of all the players concerned. See, for example, the guidelines of the Arnsberg District Government (2018): “Heritage language instruction in Arnsberg administrative district: Guide for school supervision, school leadership and HU teachers.”

<sup>173</sup> See Befr/5/D/2.

<sup>174</sup> See BASS (2021): “13-61 No. 2: Teaching the language of origin.” Depending on certain conditions, this can replace the poor performance of a foreign language.

### 3.8 North Rhine-Westphalia

language teaching with other elementary school subjects should be developed and implemented.”<sup>175</sup>

In the State of North Rhine-Westphalia, various developments are noteworthy—especially the KOALA concept—regarding the promotion of multilingualism, the HU, and the development of the AU related to it.<sup>176</sup> The Cologne District Government uses the well-proven KOALA approach<sup>177</sup> now known as Coordinated Multilingual Learning (2021)<sup>178</sup> (formerly known as Coordinated Literacy in Initial Primary School Teaching and then further developed). The concept refers to grades 1 to 4, whereby the students are taught alphabetically in a coordinated manner in the initial lessons by a tandem teaching team (teacher in regular classes and teacher in HU). A contrastive phonetic chart has been introduced as an important teaching tool in this respect. After completing literacy, contrastive learning takes place at grade levels 3-4, in a process in which the linguistic and subject-specific content of various subjects is coordinated in both languages.<sup>179</sup>

“As a result of the KOALA Project, students are able to establish a positive relationship between their two languages and cultures, consciously handle their bilingualism, and develop this further independently.”<sup>180</sup>

Teachers Plus—the Perspectives for Refugee Teachers program—was initiated to qualify international, trained, and experienced teachers who have sought asylum. The participants are prepared and trained for work at schools in NRW. The program lasts 12 months and includes various focal points (educational-cross-cultural qualification, German courses, pedagogical seminars, and school internship). The qualification project is financed by the Ministry of Culture and Science of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia and is carried out at various locations in NRW (e.g. University of Cologne, Bielefeld, and Duisburg). The participants’ perspectives also include working as a teacher at HU.<sup>181</sup>

The demand for Arabic at HU has also increased in NRW.<sup>182</sup>

**Table 8:** Demand for HU Arabic lessons in North Rhine-Westphalia in the 2021/2022 school year

	School Year 2019/2020	School Year 2020/2021	School Year 2021/2022
Number of SuS in HU Arabic	16975	19286	21754

The criteria for hiring teachers are defined in detail in the circular *Mother Tongue Teaching* dated September 20, 2021 (BASS 13– 61 no. 2). A particular feature is that the teaching staff at the HU work for the State of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW).<sup>183</sup>

Teachers who have completed a teacher training course according to the German law are allowed to teach HU. This requires a language degree according to GER for the heritage language of instruction at level C1. Teachers who have not successfully passed a teacher training course in Germany are required to

“hold a foreign teacher training examination certificate in the subject of heritage language teaching; a university degree from Germany or abroad relating to the subject of heritage language teaching; a foreign teacher training examination certificate; or a foreign university degree from their country of origin for a subject of recognized academic standing. Applicants must

<sup>175</sup> Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (2022): *Resolution of the KMK dated 12/132007 – State feedback dated 7/10/2022*, p. 97. Parents also support this with the implementation of the supporting parent support program “*Rucksack Schule*” and “*Bücherkoffer NRW*.”

<sup>176</sup> The *concepts of bilingual learning in the primary sector* as well as *living multilingualism* also need to be considered, focusing on the methodological and didactical possibilities of integrating different languages in the classroom.

<sup>177</sup> Academically supervised by Professor Hans H. Reich.

<sup>178</sup> For detailed information regarding the KOALA concept, see Cologne District Government (2021): “KOALA – Coordinated multilingual learning. Handout for planning and preparation.”

<sup>179</sup> See Elementary school association (2019): “Multilingual learning: Cologne experiences,” pp. 1.

<sup>180</sup> Education Portal Cologne (2021): “KOALA – Coordinated multilingual learning: A guide to planning and preparing.”

<sup>181</sup> See [lehrkraefteplus-nrw.de](http://lehrkraefteplus-nrw.de). An advisory board consisting of ministries, district governments as well as DAAD, Mercator, and Bertelsmann Foundation supports the program.

<sup>182</sup> Integration Media Service (2022): “Factsheet on teaching the native language.”

<sup>183</sup> See Ministry of School and Further Education of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia (n.d.): “Teaching in the language of origin.” An initial probation period is specified; this varies from six months to one year. See Befr/5/D/2; 4.

### 3.8 Nordrhein-Westfalen

demonstrate language qualifications according to the required competency level (C1 GER) and, in addition to the functional communicative skills, also have the necessary cross-cultural and methodological skills as well as the requisite linguistic capabilities and language awareness, according to the statements in the curriculum (School in NRW: Issue Number 5018).<sup>184</sup>

Language skills in German must also be demonstrated; various types of proof are defined for this, including a proof of higher education entrance qualification in German, such as the Goethe Institute's *Advanced Language Diploma* (GDS) or a corresponding qualification.

The fact that NRW also requires proof of language proficiency in the language of origin, which all other States do not (yet) require, is remarkable.

In the surveys, NRW also particularly distinguished itself by having a comparatively wider range of teacher profiles (especially in terms of countries of origin). The countries of origin of teachers are very diverse; besides Syria, there are also teachers from Egypt, Iraq, Palestine and Morocco. The majority of teachers in the Arabic HU (2021/2022 school year) are male.<sup>185</sup> The following information illustrates the situation the Arabic HU in NRW in the 2021/2022 school year:<sup>186</sup>

**Table 9:** Status of HU Arabic teaching in North Rhine-Westphalia

Teachers in HU Arabic	63 (of which)	52	Elementary school	2	Comprehensive school
		4	Lower secondary school	2	Grammar school
		2	Secondary school	1	Vocational college
	156 (of which)	144	Elementary school	1	Secondary school
		6	Lower secondary school	3	Comprehensive school
		1	Secondary school	1	Grammar school
	487 (of which)	442	Elementary school	5	Secondary school
		26	Secondary school	11	Comprehensive school
		2	Middle school	1	Grammar school
	7020 (of which)	6513	Elementary school	36	Secondary school
		307	Secondary school	111	Comprehensive school
		28	Middle school	25	Grammar school

**Table 10:** Distribution of schools with Arabic as an HSU by administrative districts and districts/locations

Administrative district	Number of schools in district/location	Number of schools in district/location	Number of schools in district/location
Arnsberg	7 Bochum	6 Hamm	12 Kreis Unna
	19 Dortmund	9 Herne	9 Schulamt des Kreises Soest
	8 Ennepe-Ruhr-Kreis	4 Hochsauerlandkreis	14 Märkischer Kreis
	6 Hagen	4 Kreis Siegen-Wittgenstein	
Detmold	7 Kreis Gütersloh	8 Lippe	4 Kreis Paderborn
	2 Herford	11 Kreis Minden-Lübbecke	10 Bielefeld
	16 Buisburg	3 Mönchengladbach	7 Kreis Wesel
	3 Krefeld	2 Oberhausen	20 Statdt Essen
Köln	16 Kreis Mettmann	5 Remscheid	11 Stadt Düsseldorf
	3 Kreis Viersen	4 Solingen	3 Wuppertal
	14 Bonn	18 Köln	16 Aachen
Münster	2 Bottrop	7 Coesfeld	n.g. Münster
	7 Gelsenkirchen	18 Recklinghausen	n.g. Warendorf
	6 Borken	14 Steinfurt	

<sup>184</sup> BASS (2021): "13–61 no. 2: Teaching the language of origin."

<sup>185</sup> 63 teachers were at the Arabic HU in NRW in the 2021/2022 school year. See Ministry of School and Further Education of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia (2021): "The school system in North Rhine-Westphalia from a quantitative perspective – Statistical overview no. 417 (2021/22)."

<sup>186</sup> Information refers to the Ministry of School and Further Education of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia (2021): "The school system in North Rhine-Westphalia from a quantitative perspective – Statistical overview no. 417 (2021/22)."

### 3.9 Saxony

The current situation in North Rhine-Westphalia highlights the major developments – based on many years of experience – in terms of the measures taken to qualify teachers, the development of teaching based on the circulars and curricula as such, further pedagogical training programs, and the accurately planned and coordinated implementation of the HU. The long-standing tradition and broad experience in the State is highlighted in the design of the HU. The surveys in NRW also revealed a gap between the development of all possibilities offered by the Arabic HU in rural and urban regions.

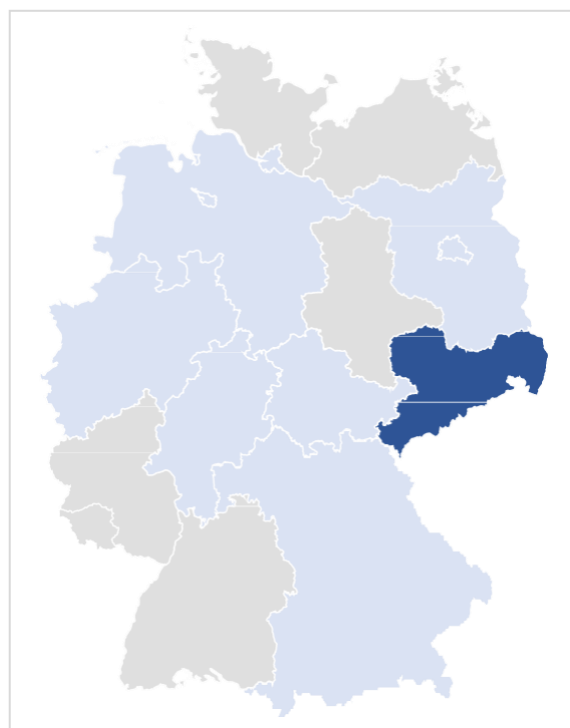
As part of this project study, surveys were conducted with students, parents/guardians, and stakeholders.<sup>187</sup>

### 3.9 SAXONY

In Saxony, school-based AU takes place as a native language elective; it is supported by the *Curriculum framework for teaching native languages*<sup>188</sup> from the Saxon Education Institute. In this framework, the HU is delivered in three formats:

1. A substitute subject for a second foreign language starting in grade 6
2. A full-day class organized independently by the schools
3. An elective that can be offered across all grades in primary schools or secondary school I, organized by school boards at the respective locations

In practice, AU in Saxony currently takes place primarily as HU in the elective area; in some cases, there is also AU in the form of a full-day class.<sup>189</sup> The five locations of the State Office for Schools and Education (LaSuB)—Leipzig, Dresden, Bautzen, Chemnitz, and Zwickau—organize and coordinate the lessons for the assigned schools. HU classes are established according to the requirements.



**Figure 12:** Arabic lessons in Saxony

<sup>187</sup> A decision regarding research activities in the most populous State can be taken directly by the schools or State Education Authorities, without an approval procedure by the Ministry. No surveys at schools were possible for the administrative district of Cologne. The research process was not easy: Requests or processes were stalled by subsequent rejections or doubts on the part of the participants involved; trust must be built where parents/guardians rejected the research. We do not know the reasons for this.

<sup>188</sup> The framework plans are published by the Saxon Education Institute. See Saxon Educational Institute (2015): *Framework plans for heritage language teaching. Handout for teachers*, Radebeul: Saxon Educational Institute. Saxon Educational Institute (2015): *Framework plans for heritage language teaching. Handout for teachers*.

<sup>189</sup> AU is also offered as a full-day program, for example at some schools in Leipzig. The Oriental Institute Leipzig provides support in setting up the teaching programs.

### 3.9 Saxony

The coordinators at the individual LaSuB locations are the central contact persons for all matters. They are responsible for recruitment, contract design, fee payment, and the quality of teaching as well as the training coordination.<sup>190</sup> In addition to the five locations, there is also the Radebeul location, which is responsible for supra-regional tasks related to quality development (e.g. through further training) and conceptual foundations. The HU's curricular foundations are also developed there.

There are various framework plans for the HU in Saxony. On the one hand, there is the curriculum of the *language of origin* (as a replacement for the second foreign language) for middle school and high school (both since August 2014). In addition, elective framework plans for *primary school, native language* and the *secondary school, native language* are also available (both since August 2015).<sup>191</sup> The framework plans are designed to be cross-lingual and, for secondary level I, cross-school.<sup>192</sup>

The Arabic HU as an elective is held as a cross-class, cross-school, and cross-institution course. This takes place as an additional, optional class in the afternoon outside of regular classes and is not graded. Participation in the HU is noted on the report card.<sup>193</sup> The course comprises two to four hours per week.<sup>194</sup>

The framework plan for secondary level I<sup>195</sup> (2015) provides the rules for teaching Arabic as a replacement for the second foreign language in middle school or high school. In this form, the Arabic HU can be graded as a replacement for the second foreign language and appears on the report card. The prerequisite for this is a sufficient number of students whose native language is Arabic within a class level.<sup>196</sup> To date, such an offer has not yet been made.

In addition, AU can also be offered as part of the full-day programs (GTA). The LaSuB does not have a coordinating role in this regard; the schools can organize the classes themselves. There are no curricular requirements for the GTA.

In the additionally published guideline *Framework plans for native language teaching – handouts for teachers*<sup>197</sup> (2015), Arabic HU teachers receive a guide to help them orient themselves in their teaching activities. The reference work is also intended to provide support to school leadership. It explains the individual forms of HU in Saxony and clarifies the objectives and topics that are to be implemented in the lessons. Examples are suggested for the planning and design of the HU, which are tied to the learning objectives and learning areas of the curricula.<sup>198</sup> The framework plans were drawn up by a curriculum committee, which also includes teachers, and is scientifically supported. In the framework plans, complex topics are mentioned – similar to the framework plans for DaZ lessons.<sup>199</sup> Orientation toward the GER has been deliberately avoided, because the HU does not follow didactic principles such as in the FU or mother tongue lessons in the country of origin.

The criteria for recruiting teachers at the HU were defined by the Saxon State Ministry of Culture (SMK) together with the LaSuB. This includes the fact that the teacher at the HU should have native Arabic skills and very good German language skills,<sup>200</sup> should have completed a university degree with pedagogical aptitude or linguistic discipline in the country of origin, and be able to provide evidence of teaching experience. Teachers are further qualified through training courses.<sup>201</sup>

<sup>190</sup> See Int 008\_18.

<sup>191</sup> See Int 012\_2-4.

<sup>192</sup> See conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the States in the Federal Republic of Germany (2022): Resolution of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the States in the Federal Republic of Germany of 12/13/2007 – Country feedback dated 10/7/2022.

<sup>193</sup> The note can be made if at least 80% attendance at classes is achieved. See Survey\_Sth.Sn\_1.

<sup>194</sup> The basis is the framework plan *for primary school mother tongue as an elective* (2014) and the framework plan *for secondary level I heritage language as an elective* (2015; revised edition. 2019). See Saxon State Ministry of Culture (2019): "Framework curriculum for elementary school language of origin (2014)."

<sup>195</sup> See Saxon State Ministry of Culture (2019): "Framework curriculum for secondary school I: language of origin (2019)." The curricula for teaching the native language can be accessed for the currently compulsory form (HU as an elective or a replacement for the second foreign language) for primary or secondary school via the curriculum database: [www.schule.sachsen.de/lpdb](http://www.schule.sachsen.de/lpdb).

<sup>196</sup> See Saxon State Ministry of Culture (2019): "Framework curricula for heritage language instruction," p. 5.

<sup>197</sup> See Saxon State Ministry of Culture (2019): "Framework curricula for heritage language instruction."

<sup>198</sup> See Saxon State Ministry of Culture (2019): "Framework curricula for heritage language instruction."

<sup>199</sup> See Int 005\_68.

<sup>200</sup> A level description was not provided, see Int 005, Int 008, Int 012, and Int 013.

<sup>201</sup> This will be monitored particularly intensively if some criteria cannot be fully met. See Int 008\_20 and Int 013\_14.

### 3.9 Saxony

Currently, Arabic is the language with the most SuS in the HU:

**Table 11:** Overview of the number of pupils in Arabic language lessons

	School Year 2019/2020	School Year 2020/2021	School Year 2021/2022	
Number of Ss in Arabic HU202	720	769	752, of which	540 at elementary school 182 secondary schools 30 high schools
Number of schools with AU	n/a	n/a	45	
Number of teachers employed in AU	n/a	n/a	25 (of which)	19 part-time teachers 6 employed teachers

The Arabic HU elective is distributed among the following LaSuB locations:<sup>204</sup>

**Table 12:** Distribution of HU Arabic in the elective area across the LaSuB locations

Bautzen	Chemnitz	Dresden	Leipzig	Zwickau
7 schools with HU Arabic in Bautzen, Görlitz, and Löbau	17 schools with HU Arabic in Chemnitz, Aue, Freiberg, Döbeln, Zschopau	20 schools with HU Arabic in The city of Dresden as well as Pirna, Coswig, Riesa and Großenhain	8 schools with HU Arabic in Leipzig and Grimma	2 schools with HU Arabic in Plauen
	at least 11 teachers	8 teachers in	2 teachers in	

Most Arabic language instruction courses in Saxony are in the areas of Chemnitz and Dresden.<sup>205</sup>

For evaluation and quality assurance, regular observations take place in the AU.<sup>206</sup> In addition, feedback is also provided via notes in the class registers.<sup>207</sup> Due to the great heterogeneity in terms of the learning level of students, teachers divide the groups so that there are different age structures in the learning groups. The literacy of the students plays a large role in making the groups.<sup>208</sup> The prerequisite for participation in the AU is that the students have native language skills or that knowledge of Arabic plays a role in the child's environment.<sup>209</sup>

<sup>202</sup> The data is based on a report by Integration Media Service (2022): "Factsheet on heritage language teaching," p. 18, and the data disclosed, following a request from the Saxon Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs.

<sup>203</sup> Among these are responsible schools: 28 elementary schools, 16 secondary schools, and 1 high school.

<sup>204</sup> Information is based on reports provided by the coordinators at the LaSuB locations and refers to the 2021/2022 school year in Saxony.

<sup>205</sup> The distribution indicates that, in addition to the school-based Arabic course, there are many opportunities for learning Arabic outside of school. The empirical study in this context at the Oriental Institute of 2020 was able to gain an impression of the diverse range of offers for AU in the Leipzig/Halle area. The study is still unreleased and is being presented at the seminar in the Master's program Arabic/Islamic Studies under the direction of Dr. Charlotte Schmidt.

<sup>206</sup> See Int 005 and Int 008\_48-50. Evaluations are based on the lesson plan of the 19 criteria. In doing so, methodological- didactical criteria and indicators are a central factor. Technical criteria cannot be assessed. Coordinates evaluate the HU of all languages offered in their area of responsibility.

<sup>207</sup> Int 005\_8.

<sup>208</sup> See Int 005\_12.

<sup>209</sup> See Int 005\_49. At least one parent or grandparent should be Arabic-speaking.

### 3.9 Saxony

An AU class will be established if a school or a school's service area identifies that there is an adequate need, i.e. if there are enough interested Arabic-speaking SuS.<sup>210</sup> Notifications of requirements are sometimes also submitted via other constituents (parents or multipliers such as accommodation employees, migrant organizations, guardians, social workers, school counselors, etc.).<sup>211</sup> For the establishment of a heritage language teaching offer, school boards have the option of using the registrations of the DaZ learning groups as a guideline. When selecting a school as a teaching location for the AU, the availability of the school occasionally also plays a role.<sup>212</sup> Teachers are hired on a contract basis.

The Arabic HU elective can be offered in Saxony especially if it is established as a replacement for the second foreign language, already prepared in the curricula. As a result, teachers would have to be hired as full-time employees and not paid on a contract basis. Additional quality assurance measures have been identified: developing language-specific handouts, establishing exchange forums with teachers working in the field, and providing teachers and coordinators with a better level of support.<sup>213</sup> Additional considerations are emerging regarding the structuring of lessons in the digital era, particularly when it comes to involving more rural regions.<sup>214</sup>

As part of this project study, surveys were conducted with students, parents/guardians, and stakeholders.

### 3.10 THURINGIA

In Thuringia, Arabic instruction as a foreign language is only offered at the Salzmannschule Schnepfenthal (special public secondary school for languages)<sup>215</sup>. The FU Arabic course offer is quite unique in Germany and also enjoys an extensive tradition.<sup>216</sup>

In addition, since the beginning of 2022, an AU promoting the native language is offered as an extracurricular course, which is state-funded but coordinated by private organizations.<sup>217</sup>

Foreign language AU at the Salzmannschule is available as a second foreign language starting in the 6th grade. Apart from the non-European languages Japanese and Chinese, Arabic supplements the elective offering for SuS as their second foreign language. The subject of Arabic provides SuS with access to another non-European language and cultural area with its specific characteristics and various social change processes.<sup>218</sup>

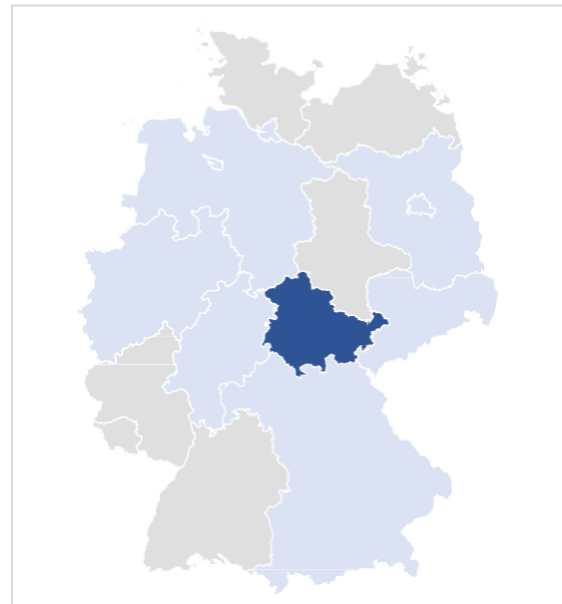


Figure 13: Arabic lessons in Thuringia

<sup>210</sup> See Int 005\_39– 42. Group sizes vary. A minimum number of participants ranging from 5 to 8 SuS is specified at some locations. cf. Questionnaire\_Sth\_Sn\_1 and incl.

<sup>211</sup> See Int 005\_34-36.

<sup>212</sup> See Int 005\_42.

<sup>213</sup> See Int 012\_10– 12.

<sup>214</sup> See Int 013\_21.

<sup>215</sup> Salzmannschule (n.d.): *Homepage*, [www.salzmannschule.de](http://www.salzmannschule.de)

<sup>216</sup> Recently, however, further developments have become apparent, for example in Hesse (see chapter 3.6). The subject of Arabic was already included in the founding profile of the special high school for languages. In 2001, this school was founded on the initiative of the Thuringian Ministry of Education. The tradition of the special language school dates back many years. (Information on request at the special high school for languages Schnepfenthal).

<sup>217</sup> See Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (2022): *Resolution of the KMK dated 1/13/2007--State feedback dated 10/7/2022*, p.101. In addition to these offers, the Thuringian Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport provides teachers with a selection of materials as a handbook for cross-cultural education in schools. See Thuringian Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (ed.) (2023): "Cross-cultural Education."

<sup>218</sup> See Int 006 and information from the school leadership of Salzmannschule.

### 3.10 Thuringia

The foreign language AU at the Salzmannschule is regulated by the Thuringian school regulations (framework timetables).<sup>219</sup> There is only one curriculum for Arabic, which is valid internally for the Salzmannschule Schnepfenthal.<sup>220</sup>

In the 2021/2022 school year, 84 SuS in Thuringia participated in Arabic lessons, all at the Salzmannschule Schnepfenthal, a specialized high school for languages. Here, two teachers with different profiles teach grades 6-12. They have subject-specific pedagogical skills and have learned Arabic as a foreign language or have acquired the language as a native speaker. The current demand is reflected in the enrollment patterns for a second foreign language at the Salzmannschule and has largely remained stable since the 2013/2014 school year.<sup>221</sup>

**Table 13:** Overview of the number of SuS and teachers in the AU (Salzmannschule)

	<b>School Year 2019/2020</b>	<b>School Year 2020/2021</b>	<b>School Year 2021/2022</b>	
Number of SuS in the AU	n/a	n/a	Class 6: 17	Class 10: 14
			Class 7: 13	Class 11: 7
			Class 8: 12	Class 12: 6
			Class 9: 15	
Numbers of teachers in AU	-	-	2	

Surveys with SuS in Thuringia were performed at the Salzmann School.

Generally, learning groups should not be smaller than 6 SuS.<sup>223</sup> At the Salzmannschule, the Arabic language is recorded and graded as a second foreign language on the report card. Teachers work full-time and have permanent positions.<sup>224</sup> The SuS at the Salzmannschule are mainly foreign language students who speak German or other languages as their home language.<sup>225</sup>

The curriculum specifies the educational targets of the Arabic FU at the Salzmannschule. The aim is to achieve subject-specific competency goals on the one hand and, on the other hand, to develop an interdisciplinary ability to behave properly using the foreign language in cross-cultural comprehension and communication situations. In addition, the objective is to provide age-appropriate, authentic insights into the reality of life in the Arabic language world (getting to know history, culture, tradition, customs and manners, political and economic circumstances).<sup>226</sup> The latter is mainly taught in the upper secondary school, where a second curriculum applies internally at the Salzmannschule.<sup>227</sup>

The guidelines for the Arabic FU have stayed the same since 2010. The Thuringian Ministry of Education (TMBJS) defined these guidelines and incorporated them into the present curriculum by commissioning the Thuringian Institute for Curriculum Development (THILLM). The specialist teachers can contribute their experience to the development and updating of the curriculum. For the curriculum activities there are subject-independent guiding principles that must be considered by the curriculum committees.<sup>228</sup> Academic cooperation is

<sup>219</sup> See Thuringian Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport (ed.) (2023): “Upper secondary school in Thuringia.” The respective Thuringian curricula provide the foundation for the curriculum timetables.

<sup>220</sup> See Int 006\_20.

<sup>221</sup> See Int 006\_22.

<sup>222</sup> See information provided upon request from the Thuringian Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (Ref. 33, October 2022).

<sup>223</sup> However, for AU (teaching of non-European languages) there are no general regulations regarding the formation of groups. See information Salzmannschule.

<sup>224</sup> As a state-run secondary school, the expenses as well as personnel and material costs are borne by the Free State of Thuringia. See inquiry Salzmannschule.

<sup>225</sup> Based on the results of the surveys.

<sup>226</sup> See Int 006\_26.

<sup>227</sup> During the qualification stage of the secondary upper school, admission to university or vocational training is also defined as an academic goal. Additional objectives include developing an understanding and awareness of social, political, ecological, and cultural correlations. See Thuringian Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport (ed.) (2023): “Upper, secondary school in Thuringia.”

<sup>228</sup> See Int 006\_28 and Questionnaire\_Th\_Sth\_01. A revision of the curricula for the AU is foreseeable. In the field of teaching plan development aims at scientific cooperation.

### 3.10 Thuringia

particularly important regarding curriculum development for the AU, especially for external evaluation of curricula or concept development.

In terms of the recruitment of teachers, the Thuringian Teacher Training Act is in effect.<sup>229</sup> Teachers for the AU are assessed according to their qualifications, since no teacher training for Arabic is available. Arabic-speaking teachers are welcome to attend further training courses in other States or in other countries. There are currently no special training courses for the AU in Thuringia.

The present project study involved interviews with SuS, parents/guardians, and stakeholders.

In Thuringia, **instruction in Arabic as a native language** is an extracurricular offering in the *State program for the extracurricular promotion of the native language of children and young people attending a general or vocational school*, financed by the Thuringian Ministry for Migration, Justice and Consumer Protection (TMMJV)<sup>230</sup> and coordinated and carried out by the Kindersprachbrücke Jena e.V. The association coordinates HU in its project *Multilingualism is cool!* (MIK).<sup>231</sup>

MIK acquires cooperation partners to set up teaching programs.<sup>232</sup> The project pursues various tasks that are set out as program modules: networking and cooperation, public relations, courses, and mentoring of teachers;<sup>233</sup> it runs an intensive mentoring program that supports the teachers.<sup>234</sup> This includes workshops in which teachers are initially given intensive advice during the introductory phase (getting to know the students/teaching situation) and receive pedagogical advice. During this phase, the objectives for the school year are defined and a plan for implementation is prepared. On this basis, the organization provides support especially for methodology and didactics. Furthermore, shadowing exercises are conducted, and a forum for exchange is established for the teachers.<sup>235</sup> An important focus within the continuing education and training for the teachers is the topic of internal differentiation to address the heterogeneous teaching situation in the Arabic courses. There are also general training courses on lesson design and lesson planning (taking into account the topic of motivation in HU), as well as language-specific training courses for Arabic regarding literacy or *diglossia*. The training courses take place in close cooperation with experts from the Friedrich Schiller University in Jena.<sup>236</sup> Through the mentoring program, direct feedback from teachers can be implemented in consultations or workshops. During the Arabic HU, the question of the role of language and identity and the relevance of the courses offered will also be actively addressed. Furthermore, the use of and search for suitable teaching materials are important focal points.<sup>237</sup>

<sup>229</sup> See ThürLbG § 22 for the recognition of foreign educational qualifications. See also: Thuringian Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (ed.) (2023): “Teachers: Teacher training, recognition” and the Free State of Thuringia (2008): “Administration online Thuringia: Thuringian Teacher Training Act (ThürLbG) dated March 12, 2008.” However, since Arabic is not an educational subject in Thuringia, the hiring process cannot be conducted according to ThürLbG §22.

<sup>230</sup> See Thuringian Ministry for Migration, Justice and Consumer Protection (2021): “Tender for a state program for the extracurricular promotion of the native language of children and young people who attend a general or vocational school.”

<sup>231</sup> The project has a duration of three years (2021-2024). See Thuringian Ministry for Immigration, Justice, and Consumer Protection (2021): “Kick-off of the State Program for Language of Origin.”

<sup>232</sup> See Int 014\_5.

<sup>233</sup> Kindersprachbrücke.de (2021): “Short description: Multilingualism is cool!” as well as the Thuringian Ministry for Immigration, Justice, and Consumer Protection (2021): “Kick-off of the State Program on Language of Origin” and Int 014\_5-7.

<sup>234</sup> For an overview of the conferences and clarification of the building blocks, see Kindersprachbrücke Jena e. V. (2023): “Documentation of the conference “*Multilingualism is cool!*”

<sup>235</sup> See Int 014\_6.

<sup>236</sup> See Int 014\_14. The Institute for German as a Foreign Language/German as a Second Language and the Chair of Educational Psychology provide important resources for this. There is also a cooperation with RAA Brandenburg.

<sup>237</sup> See Int\_014\_36.

### 3.10 Thuringia

Based on the TMBJS statistics on the migration background of students, in the 2021/2022 school year more than 4,000 students from Syria attended Thuringian schools. This is the largest group of immigrant students.<sup>238</sup> The large number of courses set up for the Arabic HU<sup>239</sup> demonstrates the demand:

**Table 14:** Overview of academic language courses according to HU Arabic

	School Year 2021/2022	School Year 2022/2023
Number of Arabic courses	35 (of which)	39 (of which)
	· 11 Gera	· 11 Gera
	· 6 Erfurt	· 8 Erfurt
	· 5 Weimar	· 5 Weimar
	· 5 Ilmenau	· 3 Ilmenau
	· 3 Jena	· 4 Jena
	· 3 Mühlhausen	· 3 Mühlhausen
	· 2 Arnstadt/online	· 2 Arnstadt/online
	· 1 Meiningen	· 2 Altenburg
		· 1 Meiningen
Number of SuS	459	>470
Number of courses as school	6	6
Number of courses (adult education centers, children's and youth/family centers, educational centers, club	29	33
Number of teachers employed, of which	23	26
· Teachers with pedagogical experience/teaching experience (minimum requirement)	11	12
· Teachers with pedagogical training/ teacher training in their country of origin	7	5
· Teachers with accreditation of their foreign educational qualification or German study/training certificate	5	9

Historically, with relatively low numbers of multilingual students, it has been difficult to establish sustainable electives to promote the languages of origin in Thuringia. Since 2015, however, the situation in the State has changed: the number of immigrant students has also increased in Thuringia. Since the number of immigrant students from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds varies greatly, it is especially difficult to form learning groups in rural areas.<sup>240</sup>

By making the HU permanent in Thuringia, the option of a report card grade could also be made possible, thus achieving a form of appreciation and awareness for multilingual students.<sup>241</sup> The Thuringian Ministry for Migration, Justice, and Consumer Protection has established the promotion of native languages within the integration concept on which the MIK project is based.<sup>242</sup> Since it is about promoting native speakers between the ages of 6 and 21, it becomes clear that the aim of the integration concept is understood comprehensively and aims to include adolescents and young adults of all school types and training paths. In the Thuringian Arabic HU, the Arabic language skills should be developed, expanded, and consolidated; cross-cultural and social skills should be expanded; and students should be given an opportunity to identify themselves with the culture and language of their country of origin.

During the development of the MIK project, the structural similarities with the State of Brandenburg resulted in an intensive exchange of ideas, so the *Brandenburg model* was used to develop the MIK project in Thuringia.<sup>243</sup>

<sup>238</sup> The reference refers to the information provided by the TMBJS (Statistical office of 11/2021); MIK refers to this information (MIK project presentation dated 3/23/2022). MIK provided the presentation.

<sup>239</sup> Statistical data regarding the Arabic courses in the national program *Multilingualism is cool!* (Version 10-14-22), provided by the Sprachbrücke Jena e. V.

<sup>240</sup> See Int 006\_26.; Int 006\_73. The provider therefore also offers hybrid, and formats online for the HU.

<sup>241</sup> See Int 014\_69.

<sup>242</sup> See Thuringian Ministry for Immigration, Justice, and Consumer Protection (TMMJV) (ed.)/Commissioner for Integration, Immigration and Refugees (BIMF) (2017): "The Thuringian Integration Concept – for a good coexistence!" and Int 014\_30.

<sup>243</sup> See Int 014\_12.

### 3.10 Thuringia

Although this is not a state-run school offering, the development is nevertheless significant, especially regarding future developments. At the same time, the electives for AU, which were organized by MIK, reflect the great demand that also exists in Thuringia.

Teachers are trained and recruited by the provider.

There is no school-based native language offering for Arabic or other languages in Thuringia. Initially, a pilot course was started, and further courses – at various locations in Thuringia – have been available since February 2022. In the summer of 2021, independent providers were able to apply to the Ministry in a concept selection procedure for the organization and implementation of mother-tongue teaching.

The start of most Arabic courses in the State program was scheduled for the beginning of the February 2022 school semester. Nationwide, 35 Arabic courses were installed, where 459 students participated in Arabic lessons. A particularly high demand can be observed in urban areas, where there were waiting lists.<sup>244</sup> In addition to the corresponding demand, suitable premises, the acquisition of a teacher, and a great deal of coordination with parents are prerequisites for setting up a class.<sup>245</sup>

The electives for AU are declared as extracurricular courses and include various forms, including online courses, courses in clubs or youth centers, courses in school or adult education centers, etc. Courses can be held with a minimum of 10 participants and usually comprise 2-4 hours per week.<sup>246</sup>

Arabic-speaking teachers are recruited according to certain criteria. They must be able to demonstrate native Arabic skills and German language skills at least at level B1. They should also be able to demonstrate pedagogical suitability in the form of training, as well as a degree or other teaching experience.<sup>247</sup> The aim is also to create low-threshold access to courses to reach students. The structure of the clubs or youth centers is very helpful in this regard.<sup>248</sup>

Building on the positive experiences in the State of Brandenburg, Thuringia is striving to further professionalize the relevant structures to create a standard for teaching in the native language. Another focus is quality assurance, which is to be achieved through the intensive mentoring program. This is important because there is no binding curriculum for the AU.<sup>249</sup> Overall, the aim is to make the HU more permanent.<sup>250</sup>

<sup>244</sup> See Int 014\_43.

<sup>245</sup> See Int 014\_45.

<sup>246</sup> See Kindersprachbrücke.de (2021): “Short description: Multilingualism is cool!”

<sup>247</sup> See Int 014\_8.

<sup>248</sup> See Int014\_26–30.

<sup>249</sup> See Int 014\_26.

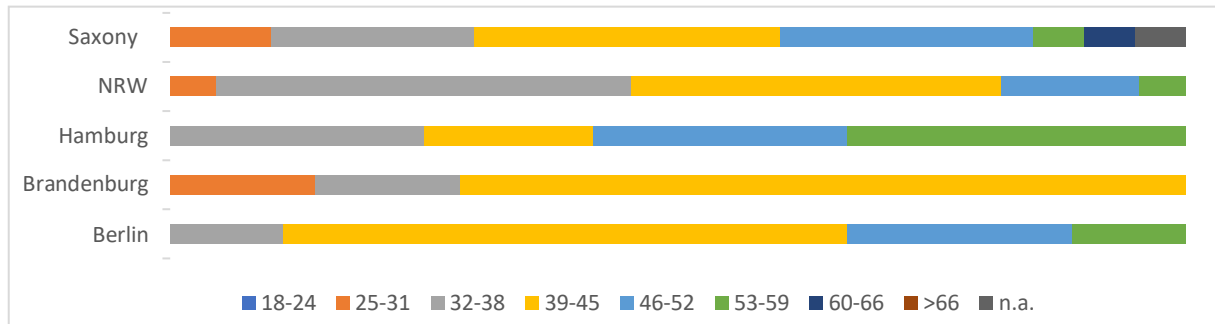
<sup>250</sup> After completion of the project in July 2024 clearer developments could become visible and point to further fields of action.

## 4. PARTICIPANTS IN ARABIC LESSONS AT SCHOOL

### 4.1 TEACHERS

#### 4.1.1 Biographical data and qualifications

##### Age of the teachers

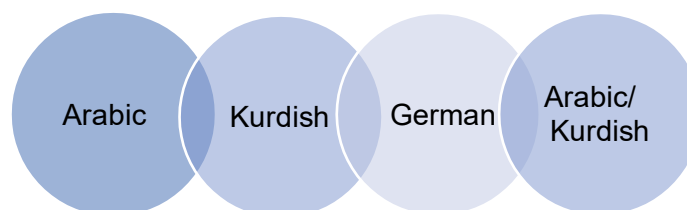


**Figure 14:** Age distribution of the teachers

The presented overview regarding the age structure indicates that the participating teachers are primarily people who have completed training or have professional experience. There is a tendency that the teachers surveyed are not newcomers to the profession and can demonstrate other professional experience. Because of the low level of participation in the surveys, quantitative assessments are not possible.

##### Mother tongue of the teachers

The native languages of the teachers surveyed were primarily Arabic, but also Kurdish; many of them are bilingual speakers, primarily Arabic-Kurdish speakers. Teachers providing foreign-language instruction have German as their mother tongue.



**Figure 15:** Native languages of the teachers

### Personal experience of migration

The majority of teachers teaching Arabic in schools have **their own immigration experiences**. Teachers with no immigration background are the exception to the rule. A large proportion of teachers immigrated went to Germany after 2015 and thus have lived 6-8 years in Germany. Teachers who have been working for more than 12 years in Germany teach Arabic less often in schools. Many Arabic-speaking teachers grew up in Syria and moved to Germany in the years 2015-2018. Syria as a country of origin is represented in all States, with the greatest diversity of countries of origin among Arabic-speaking teachers being found in the State of North Rhine-Westphalia (mainly Syria, Morocco, Palestine, and Egypt).<sup>251</sup>



Figure 16: Countries of origin and migration experience of the teachers

### Educational background

In response to the question “Where did you grow up?” it is evident that in many cases Arabic-speaking teachers completed both their school education and their studies in their country of origin.

As a result, it is noticeable that Arabic-speaking teachers in schools have not necessarily acquired their first-hand learning experience in the German education system, something that can be significant regarding the perspective on the teaching practice. Likewise, there is also the question of why the profile of Arabic-speaking teachers from Syria, who have been in Germany since 2015, stands out. From a demographic point of view, Syrians are the most represented group among citizens of Arab countries living in Germany.<sup>252</sup> Presumptions can therefore be made from the information on the motivation of teachers.

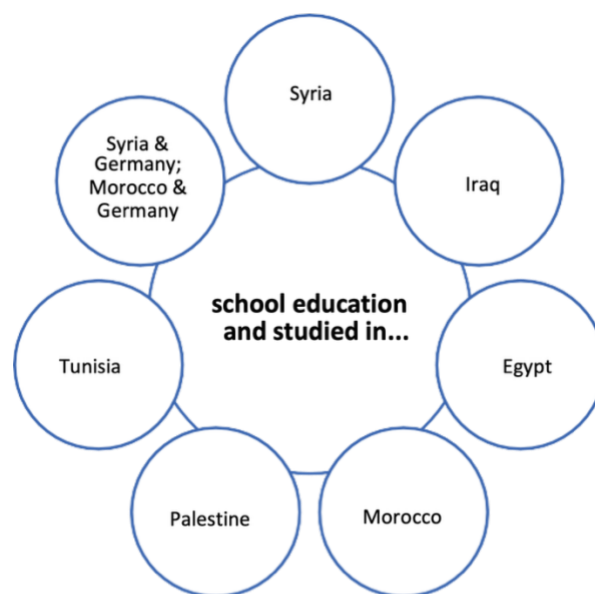


Figure 17: Educational background of the teachers

<sup>251</sup> The representation of countries of origin among teachers is also largely reflected in the statistics of the Federal Statistical Office (April 15, 2021), with similar information on citizenship of Arab countries in Germany. See Federal Statistical Office (2021): “Population and Employment,” pp. 145-151 (Table 12).


<sup>252</sup> See Federal Statistical Office (2021): “Population and employment. Foreign population: results of the central register of foreigners.

## 4.1 Teachers

Inquiries to teachers clearly show that they have a higher education entry qualification (general high school diploma or subject-specific higher education entrance qualification) and have graduated from a university.

“Experienced teachers with high degrees instructed us from the blackboard, we had to remember many things by heart, repeat them in groups, learn many difficult/advanced books in Arabic covering centuries, and take many examinations. This provided us with precision and reliability regarding the information and a simple explanation.” (Befr/4/A/5)

Conclusions about the development of one’s own (especially native) language skills can be drawn from the teaching culture experienced and one’s own learning experiences (question: “How did you learn Arabic yourself?”). Both the teaching culture – represented by teachers as role models – and the teaching method are also important.



Natural language acquisition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• as the mother tongue in the family/environment</li> <li>• Listening before speaking</li> </ul>
Education (school and university)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Memorizing</li> <li>• Copying and repeating, working on the blackboard</li> <li>• Systematic development of writing and reading skills</li> <li>• Literature/poetry/rhetoric/text analysis</li> <li>• Knowledge of origins and principles</li> </ul>
Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cartoons (in Standard Arabic)</li> <li>• Writing personal stories/participation in language competitions</li> <li>• Plays</li> <li>• Films/music/social media</li> </ul>

**Figure 18:** Personal teaching experiences of Arabic teachers when learning Arabic

## I High school diploma

Teachers in the Arabic HU hold a university degree, according to the recruitment requirements (see chapter 3). The majority of university degrees were primarily acquired in the country of origin. However, a heterogeneous study background of the teachers was observed.

<b>Law/Theology</b>	Shari’a (Islamic Law), Islamic Religion
<b>Linguistics/Foreign Languages</b>	Arabic literature, translation studies (Fr-Eng), German studies, German as a foreign language, English studies
<b>Educational science</b>	Social work, teaching degree in Islamic theology (Germany), pedagogy
<b>Islamic Studies/Arabic Studies</b>	Arabic language and literature + teaching degree (country of origin)
<b>Natural science</b>	Mathematics, physics, biochemistry, chemistry, geography
<b>Technical subjects</b>	Civil engineering
<b>Communication and media studies</b>	Journalism

**Figure 19:** Profile of university degrees

## 4.1 Teachers

### 4.1.2 Day-to-day teaching

#### Teaching style

The interviewed teachers mainly teach Arabic as a native language. There is also another group teaching Arabic as a foreign language. A minority of this group of people learn Arabic in other (voluntary) programs, e.g. in an all-day program.

An exception is that the teachers in the native-language AU are also permanently employed teachers.

In addition, it is noticeable that Arabic-speaking teachers in the FU are sometimes also native speakers of German, something that is rarely the case for teachers in the heritage language AU. However, there are also teachers whose mother tongue is another language, e.g. Kurdish, who work as teachers in the Arabic HU, e.g. in Hamburg, North Rhine-Westphalia, and Saxony.

#### Motivation of the teachers

“I teach Arabic **for several reasons**. First of all, I love the Arabic language and culture and would like to share my expertise and enthusiasm for this language with others. Secondly, I teach Arabic because I think it’s important that **Arabic-speaking children in Germany have the opportunity to learn** and cultivate their mother tongue when at school. Many of these children have difficulty **maintaining their language and culture in Germany**, as they often grow up in an environment where German is the predominant language. As an Arabic language teacher, I want to help these children appreciate their **language and culture** and be proud of it. In addition, learning the Arabic language can help children perform better in school and improve their academic skills. I also see my work as a contribution to **promoting cross-cultural understanding and integration of children speaking Arabic in Germany**. By learning the Arabic language, these children can stay in better contact with their culture of origin and at the same time **improve their German language skills**. So, I believe that my work as an Arabic teacher can contribute to **promoting equal opportunities and diversity in our society**.” (Befr/5/A/29)

If we take a closer look at the motivation of the Arabic-speaking teachers who participated in the surveys, various trends emerge.

#### ... to practice their qualification

As the profile of the degrees shows, teachers want to be able to practice their profession and contribute according to their qualifications, even if the conditions and orientation of Arabic language teaching do not correspond to those in their country of origin.

“Because it is the subject that I taught for 20 years at high schools in Damascus.” (Befr/6/A/25)

“I teach Arabic because I studied the subject and wanted to work as a teacher. Here in Germany, I have the opportunity to continue practicing my profession; that is why I like doing it.” (Befr/5/A/1)

#### ... because of the pleasure and passion for teaching

In addition to the qualification as an Arabic teacher, the people interviewed are primarily motivated by their enthusiasm for teaching. It can be seen that the performance of teaching activities gives teachers a sense of self-efficacy, which acts as a driving force in teaching.

“In addition, Arabic continues to be underrepresented and misunderstood, and Arabic lessons trigger prejudices and misjudgments in many people. Arabic is the key to numerous cultures, important historical events, literary treasures and much more. Arabic is not only a way to achieve a goal, but the process of learning Arabic is worth the start as such. It gives me

## 4.1 Teachers

great pleasure to teach my students a language that I have studied over many years and that I continue to learn every day.” (Befr/7/A/1)

### ... to participate in society and politics

Seeing their work as an important contribution to society offers an important incentive for teachers to teach Arabic. Since the majority of teachers have their own immigration experiences, it appears that involving themselves in the educational system (empowerment) is an important intrinsic motivation.

“I teach Arabic because, above all, I want to practice my profession. In addition, the number of Arab children in most German schools is growing and [I] think it’s great that Arab children can learn to read and write their mother tongue. I think that Arabic lessons in German schools will support integration efforts and thus also bring about harmony in the school and could thus also help with the integration and orientation process of families with Arab origins.” (Befr/4/A/5)

The fact that Arabic is present as a language in schools – although HU lessons are primarily taught in the afternoon – is seen as a sign of appreciation by teachers as part of the Arab community in Germany. Imparting knowledge about Arab culture (especially literature) – not only to the students in the HU – motivates teachers.

“I would like the Arabic language to receive more recognition and space in German schools and society.” (Befr/3/A/18)

The efforts to teach Arabic as a foreign language in Germany (in Hamburg and Hesse) are therefore seen as an important signal and can also be accompanied in part by the hope of a new reality if “Arabic is made possible as a language of choice for visitors/tourists in museums/palaces [...]” (Befr/5/A/19)

Teaching as a contribution to the integration and promotion of multilingualism and equal opportunities in society and the educational field encourages them to carry out their activities. In addition, the AU is understood as an educational mandate in the sense of an open society.

معا. التدريس ي تعتبر رسالة بالنسبة لي وكذلك قنطرة ل كسر حواجز بين (sic!) تعد اللغة العربية من اللغات الصعبة الشرح و هنا يكمن التحدى و التحفيز  
”الثقافات.“ (Befr/7/A/2) محاولة للتقليل من الأحكام المسبقة ضد اللغة، إمكانية لتدريس اللغة بدون دافع سياسي أو ديني

[“The Arabic language is one of the most difficult to explain, and therein lies both the challenge and the motivation. Teaching is [for] me a mission and also a bridge to overcome barriers between cultures. It is an attempt to reduce prejudice against the language. It is a way to teach the language without political or religious motivation.”]

### ... to promote cultural awareness and identity

“Languages open up new cultures, and because since 2015 many families from the Arab world reside in Germany, I think it is particularly important that children can not only speak their mother tongue at home, but also learn to read and write; in this way they protect their identity and can pass on their own culture to others. The mother tongue can also be a means of learning and mastering the German language well.” (Befr/6/A/5)

AU is – especially as HU – an important place to promote Arabic and German language skills or to ensure that they are not forgotten, as well as to reflect on cultural implications.

The AU is therefore an important place to raise awareness,

“[t]o teach the Arabic language and Arabic culture to children of Arab origin living in Germany. Multilingualism opens up an additional source of knowledge for children. It also promotes tolerance among children.” (Befr/5/A/4)

### ... economic and personal development

“I teach Arabic because I have to work (...)” (Befr/3/A/11)

In addition, economic interest and the need to earn money as well as career prospects play a role.

### Learning objectives achieved in the classroom

Promoting all language skills in class is the prioritized learning goal of the teachers surveyed. Promoting Modern Standard Arabic was emphasized as the primary goal. Reading and writing are very important. Attention is placed on clean phonetics during speech. In addition, cross-cultural competence and the promotion of individual multilingualism are pursued as important learning objectives.

What emerges is that SuS literacy in Arabic – at least in the HU – covers a significant proportion of the lessons. In addition, the teachers strive to teach grammar and vocabulary (especially of Modern Standard Arabic).

### Teaching experience and subject pedagogical knowledge

The personal migration experience is not only reflected in the motivation to teach; a large proportion of the teachers have their own teaching experience abroad. What emerges is that the teachers have taught the subject or gained other experience after completing their degree in teaching. Consideration of the experience profiles is important for further training and qualification courses.

Information on specialist pedagogical knowledge illustrates the potpourri of training paths and specialist backgrounds of the teachers even more. At the same time, it reveals the need for specialist training on fundamental issues of Arabic language teaching. Statements from teachers make it clear that there is a need for discussion and reflection among teachers and experts. The heterogeneous learning groups (especially at HU) pose major challenges for teachers.

Teaching experience outside of the subject area, not philological, at home or abroad (e.g. mathematics, geography, graphic design, religious education), with and without a specialist pedagogical background

Teaching experience outside of the subject area, philological at home and abroad (e.g. English), with and without a specialist pedagogical background

**German** as a foreign language/German as a second language, in Germany

**German** as a foreign language, abroad

**Arabic** in the country of origin, school sector (mother tongue teaching), mostly with a specialist pedagogical background

**Arabic** in another non-Arabic-speaking country, foreign and native language instruction (Turkey, Romania) and educational.

**Arabic** in Germany, foreign language teaching (university, school), mostly without any specialist pedagogical background

**Figure 20:** Teaching experience and specialist pedagogical skills of the teachers

## Dealing with diglossia in the classroom

Attitudes towards the integration of dialects in the AU vary from firm rejection to partial utilization to appreciative use as a basis for further learning in the classroom.

The wide range of variations in Arabic dialects sometimes leads to a tendency to overtax native Arabic-speaking teachers (especially those from the eastern Arabic Mashreq region), whereby dialects of the Maghreb and Mashreq are contrasted:

“There are incomprehensible dialects like Moroccan and Tunisian because they mix several languages such as Arabic, French, and Amazigh. It is difficult to convey the idea in these languages, so it is better to adopt Standard Arabic because it is uniform and is the language of books. In case of difficulties in understanding, the explanation should be in German and not in these dialects (...).” (Befr/1/A/4)

“Communication in groups where there are children from Northwest Africa is difficult because the deviation from standard Arabic is very strong. The dialects of children from Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq do not deviate greatly from the norm and are therefore understandable.” (Befr/5/A/4)

At the same time, the experience reports of some teachers made it clear that students in the AU can also reach their limits when discussing different dialects. Teachers in the Arabic HU are faced with the challenge of having knowledge of the different dialects and the methodological implementation. If the linguistic knowledge of the students is to be considered. Among teachers, especially those with a teacher training qualification in Germany, the attitude became more precise that addressing dialects in class was of great importance for the motivation of students and at the same time, encourage their ability to behave cross-culturally.<sup>253</sup>

During the interviews, it emerged that teachers are also an exceptionally heterogeneous group.

## Application of teaching materials and lesson planning

“They are said to come from Germany. They should be designed for the HU. They should consider the heterogeneity in the Arabic HU. They should be modern (not outdated).” (Befr/5/A/14)

Based on the requirements for the AU set by the school boards and the orientation framework, which is individually designed in the States (see chapter 4), different materials are used in the school AU. This also applies to the content discussed. Both should be summarized in the overview:

**Table 15:** List of teaching materials used, and teaching content addressed

Teaching materials applied	Teaching topics covered
<p><b>Arabic books for the HU:</b>            French publishers e.g:            - Editions Granada (various series, esp. العربية المسرة)            - Editions Jeunesse Sans Frontiere            (أحب اللغة العربية وأتعلّمها، أتعلّم اللغة العربية. esp.)</p> <p><b>Arabic books for mother tongue teaching (Arabic countries):</b>            - Lebanon (لغتي فرحي)            - Tunisia            - Syria            - Morocco            - Egypt</p> <p><b>Other publishers e.g:</b>            - Acdem Publishing (مفتاح العربية)            - Averroes Bookshop (في حديقة اللغة العربية)</p>	<p><b>Writing Skills:</b>            - Alphabet            - Script and calligraphy</p> <p><b>Reading:</b>            - Poems (e.g. by Nizar Qabbani, Mahmoud Darwish)            - Novels by Nagib Mahfuz            - Poetry, prose            - Non-fiction material            - Fairytales (also listening)</p> <p><b>Speaking:</b>            - Project work            - Excursions</p>

<sup>253</sup> See Befr/1/A/4.

## 4.1 Teachers

**Table 15: List of teaching materials used, and teaching content addressed**

Teaching materials applied	Teaching topics covered
<b>Own teaching materials:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Worksheets</li><li>- Nursery rhymes</li><li>- Cartoons</li><li>- Language apps (e.g. ألف ياء ناء )</li><li>- Games (e.g. memory game)</li><li>- Teaching platforms (especially in NRW)"</li></ul>	<b>Listening:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Short films</li><li>- Stories from the children's countries of origin (also reading)</li><li>- Children's songs (e.g. from Fayrouz, يا مدرستي )</li><li>- historical films</li><li>- Songs (e.g. by Kazem Al-Saher, songs from the 1970s, موسيقي شعبي )</li><li>- documentary films</li></ul>
<b>Social Media</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Content for the German-Arabic context (Datteltäter, Khateera etc.)</li><li>- Twitter, Instagram, TikTok</li></ul>	<b>Other topics:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Moral issues (&gt;correct behavior&lt;)</li></ul>
<b>Arabic books for foreign language lessons, e.g:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Salam (Klett Verlag)</li><li>- Ahlan wa Sahlan (Yale University Press)</li><li>- Arabiyyat al-Nass (Routledge)</li><li>- At-takallum (attakallum.com)</li></ul>	

Teachers repeatedly emphasize that they spend a lot of time compiling suitable teaching materials.

Some teachers are busy publishing materials for the AU themselves (especially in the HU), as there are no suitable materials for teaching native Arabic in a German context while taking cross-cultural sensitivities into account. Sometimes there are recommendations regarding materials from the school boards (see Befr/3/A/15).

According to teachers, it is of great benefit to supplement lessons with authentic, modern, and age-appropriate material. Lessons should be methodically varied and innovative and should take into account different social forms and media to motivate students in the best possible way. In this respect, it was also repeatedly emphasized how important it is to explain the significance and meaningfulness of learning Arabic as a language of origin.

## Challenges in day-to-day teaching

**Heterogeneity** characterizes native Arabic instruction in every respect. As explained, this relates both to the profiles of the teachers themselves and to the students, as will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter; the heterogeneity also affects the teaching situation itself.

“Some children do not speak or understand Arabic. I will then explain to them in German.” (Befr/5/A/24)

“Some students even have good prior knowledge of Modern Standard Arabic. Other SuS have very good prior oral knowledge of dialects. Others have no prior knowledge. For them, Arabic is neither their mother tongue nor their language of origin.” (Befr/5/A/14)

Given the heterogeneous profile of the students, teachers themselves are faced with the challenge of having to teach in a differentiated manner. Although the groups are usually divided according to level and knowledge and also take into account the age of the participating students, it is difficult to find adequate group divisions due to the individual language biographies of the students. A high level of fluctuation in learning groups further promotes heterogeneity, so that content is repeated over and over again, resulting in a flat progression. What characterizes the AU?

“Repetitions, heterogeneous groups, native speakers and non-native speakers together [...] in the group.” (Befr/5/A/19)

“Students are tired because of afternoon classes, sometimes Arabic is only their native language, but not their family language.” (Befr/5/A/19)

## 4.1 Teachers

“Some students speak the language as their mother tongue, others have no expertise at all because they have other mother tongues at home such as Kurdish, Berber,...” (Befr/5/A/19)

The information provided by the teachers illustrates the wide range of teaching situations that exist and how challenging teaching can be.<sup>254</sup> When dealing methodically with these teaching situations, didactic and methodological knowledge is an important basis. At the same time, it becomes clear that further research in the field of multilingual didactics is necessary. Further research should also address the question of which form of teaching is appropriate in the heterogeneous language profile of the students, or when the teaching gradually changes from being taught in the native language to being taught as a foreign language.

The high level of fluctuation is partly a result of the organizational conditions. Some students only get the opportunity to take part in the Arabic HU after they have reached primary school age; only then can they become literate, although the core group of the study had already completed this process. Another characteristic regarding the Arabic HU is that students come from different Arab countries and are familiar with different variants of Arabic. The teacher can creatively incorporate this starting point into the lesson and, for example, raise awareness of the linguistic situation of *diglossia* in Arabic. Here, too, however, didactic and methodological knowledge is necessary to design the teaching situation accordingly.

Due to the heterogeneity, teachers design lessons using internally differentiated learning scenarios. As a result, teachers of Arabic at the HU have to put in an enormous amount of effort in lesson preparation and coordination (e.g. communication with parents, school boards, and leadership), which, depending on the employment situation, is not always (adequately) remunerated.

### Teaching methods that motivate

Not just the high level of diversity, but also many other factors influence the daily teaching routine and the motivation of the students: the organizational framework regarding the Arabic HU, with sometimes long travel distances for the students; lessons in the afternoon after school; the collision of the Arabic HU with leisure activities; a lack of assessment in the form of grades, etc. Teachers describe the teaching situation as a place where the great linguistic potential of the SuS and energy cannot be sufficiently developed.

For the Arabic FU, teachers observe a strong progression at the beginning of the lesson (especially in writing, reading, and speaking); this, however, largely stagnates with the introduction of more complex grammatical structures, which then also results in a lack of motivation.

### Lack of suitable teaching materials

“HSU teachers must be able to teach students from grades 1 to 10. I teach 87 children of different grades. I have little material and have to find or create the materials myself.” (Befr/5/A/18)

“Missing teaching materials – I pay for them out of my own pocket. Missing curriculum – I have identified a book series for orientation. Teaching many learning groups with different levels of ability – so far, no solution.” (Befr/6/A/24)

“The material should be current and relevant and correspond to the latest developments in the Arabic language and culture. Practical orientation: The material should be practice-oriented and help students to apply their language skills in real situations. The material should demonstrate cultural sensitivity and make students aware of cultural differences and sensitivities. The material should include a variety of media and formats, including text, audio and video files, interactive exercises and games.” (Befr/6/A/16)

The different voices underscore what has already been made clear regarding the use of teaching materials and teaching content: the lack of suitable teaching materials represents a major challenge in the Arabic HU.

<sup>254</sup> For the differentiation of heterogeneity in the Arabic HU (related to Saxony) see Alsulaitah/Schalück/Ismail (2022): “Differentiation of heterogeneous learning groups in native language Arabic lessons at Saxon schools,” pp. 79-102.

### Topics that should not be covered

“Teaching language lessons, it is important to me to teach the language regardless of religion, because some people think Arabic lessons are Islamic lessons!” (Befr/5/A/10)

Teachers are eager to ensure that politics, religion, and questions of faith, as well as topics that fuel hatred, discrimination, and prejudice, do not become part of the classroom. Rather, the aim is to make the classroom a place of reflection in which to think about cultural barriers, concepts of origin and home, and multilingualism. Likewise, attempts are made to avoid sensitive topics such as war or topics that do not unite but divide (such as religion). Teachers note that socio-political questions (emergence of conflicts, the current political situation in regions of the Arab world) are difficult to answer because they lack specialized knowledge.

The information provided by the teachers participating in the surveys in the AU makes it clear that additional competencies are required to carry out the job. This includes a high degree of empathy and cross-cultural competence to be able to understand the experiences and situations of the students and their parents/guardians. At the same time, teamwork and conflict resolution skills are important to fulfill the balancing function (especially also as a language mediator in mediation between parents and schools or school boards) become.

## 4.2 STUDENTS

In the following, the students are characterized according to the courses offered<sup>255</sup> in order to highlight the differences between the two groups and also to enable a comparison.

During the evaluation, various factors were evidently influential regarding the completion of the surveys by the SuS. The motivation of the SuS, for example, indicated that the comments of third parties (parents or other persons) emerged and were likely to have influenced the answers provided by the SuS. Another possibility here is that students – especially those in the younger age groups – were not aware of or did not give an independent answer regarding their motivation/reasons for their participation in the AU. These answers need to be evaluated in this context.

### 4.2.1 Students attending Arabic lessons in their native language

#### Biographical information

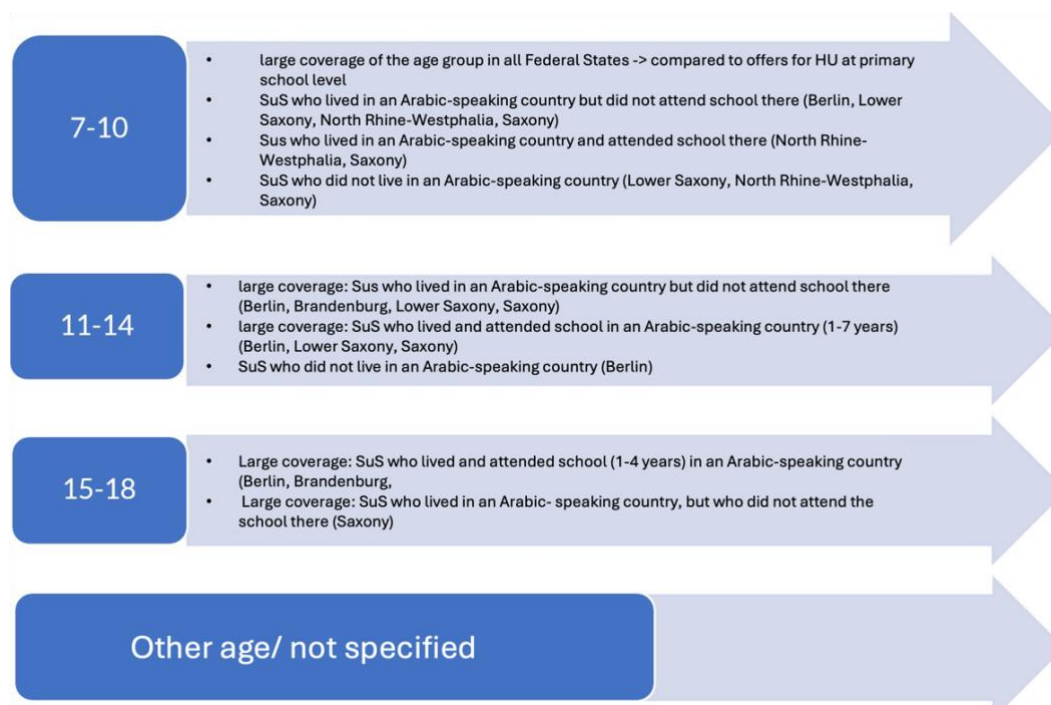
#### Age structure

From the interviews, it emerges how multifaceted the biographies of the SuS are. The biographical experiences of immigration and school attendance in an Arabic-speaking country are heterogeneous for each age group.

Referring to chapter 3 regarding the various courses offered in the States, a corresponding age structure emerges among the SuS interviewed:

<sup>255</sup> Here we are talking about the Arabic lessons offered in the language of origin in many of the States considered as well as the Arabic lessons offered in foreign languages in Thuringia and Hamburg. See chapter 3.

## 4.2 Students



**Figure 21:** Age structure of SuS in the Arabic HU

## Family language of the SuS

“Some students even have good prior knowledge of Modern Standard Arabic. Other SuS have very good prior oral knowledge of dialects. Others have no prior knowledge. For them, Arabic is neither their mother tongue nor their language of origin.”  
(Befr/5/A/14)

Arabic and dialects of Arabic have a central importance among the spoken languages within the family of students in the Arabic HU. However, other language profiles also emerge in which one or more languages are present in addition to Arabic. At the same time, students who do not speak Arabic in their families are represented in the Arabic HU.

The group of Syrian dialect speakers is significant. When naming the dialectal use of Arabic in the family, specific identifying attributions sometimes become apparent (e.g. Bedouin dialect in Palestine, or the Syrian dialect of Aleppo Damascus/Daraa).

The specific family language spoken may indicate a personal connection. Therefore, the language that is spoken to both parents is not necessarily identical to the language that is spoken between the siblings. German as a spoken language in the family plays a clearly important role. Regarding the self-assessment of the language skills of the students, it can be stated that these are assessed differently depending on their receptive competence (understanding the respective Arabic dialect) and their productive competence (speaking). Here, the diglossal character of Arabic is noticeable in the answers of the SuS, who describe High Arabic with attributes such as “complicated,” “difficult” and overall as more detached from the reality of life, but also associate it with admiration (aesthetics, cultural richness).<sup>256</sup> Heterogeneity is visualized in the composition of languages spoken in the SuS’s family:

<sup>256</sup> For more precise findings, in-depth research is required regarding the competencies of SuS in the Arabic HU. A tendency can be observed here when it comes to the perception of their own skills by the SuS surveyed in this study. Brehmer/Mehlhorn (2018) examined the mastery of individual language levels, in more detail. for example, by SuS Polish learners (depending on the input, where applicable), Cf. Brehmer/Mehlhorn (2018): *Languages of origin*, pp. 42-49.

Motivation of the SuS

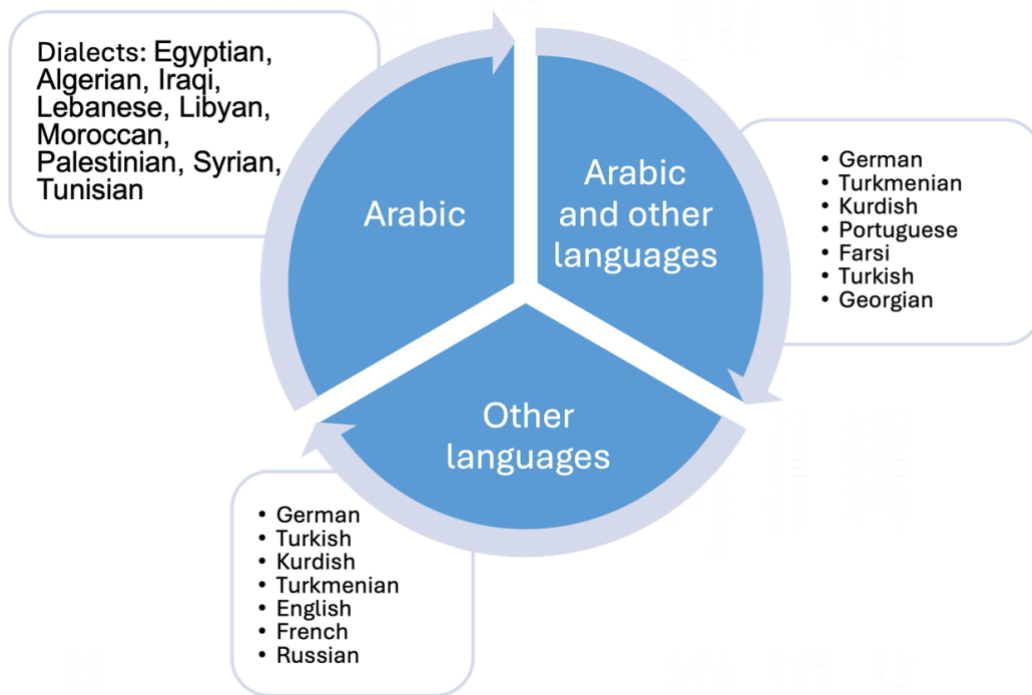


Figure 22: Family language of SuS in the Arabic HU

<p>Learn/not forget/improve mother tongue</p> <p>Communication with family/acquaintances/friends/ a parent</p> <p>Language of the Koran: being able to read and understand the Koran as Muslims; learning to pray correctly</p> <p>Return to the country of origin</p> <p>Self-efficacy &amp; self-confidence</p> <p>Part of one's own identity</p>	<p><b>Identity-forming factors</b></p>	<p>Supporting the teacher during the learning process</p> <p>Teacher (motivating, empathetic, competent)</p> <p>Learning standard Arabic and being linguistically competent</p> <p>Reading and writing are encouraged</p> <p>Interesting teaching topics</p> <p>Complexity of the language is a challenge</p> <p>It is funny</p>	<p><b>Teaching Situation</b></p>	<p>Parents promised a reward</p> <p>Parents set expectations</p> <p>Role model for other siblings</p> <p>Friends participate in classes</p> <p>Career prospects in Arabic-speaking countries</p> <p>to avoid learning a second foreign language</p> <p>Improve grades</p>	<p><b>External Factors</b></p>	<p>The aesthetics of language</p> <p>Wide distribution of language</p> <p>Understanding historical references</p> <p>Interest in the culture and geography of Arabic-speaking countries</p> <p>Reading and writing skills</p> <p>Learning a language is fun; curiosity</p> <p>Using media, especially social media (TikTok, YouTube, WhatsApp)</p> <p>Arabic food</p> <p>Achieving communication skills while traveling</p>	<p><b>General Factors</b></p>	<p>Complexity of the language</p> <p>All forgotten after the lock-down</p> <p>Study atmosphere in the course</p> <p>Lessons are exhausting</p> <p>It is boring</p> <p>Lack of grading/appreciation</p>	<p><b>Factors that reduce motivation</b></p>
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Figure 23: Reasons why SuS are participating in the Arabic HU

## 4.2 Students

For a group of students in the Arabic HU, the motivation to participate in the Arabic HU can be described in religious or cultural implications. Mastering Arabic, the language of the Koran and Muslims, is a significant motivational factor that is also mentioned by students whose family language is other than Arabic. Consequently, SuS who speak Kurdish, Turkish as well as Turkmen as their family language, for example, also participate in the Arabic HU. The Arabic HU represents a space that highlights connections between culture and religion (Islam). As a language of religion and culture in Islam, the Arabic language is of great importance.

### Everyday teaching

As the previous results show, heterogeneity at different levels characterizes the Arabic HU to a particular degree. The framework conditions of the Arabic HU cannot be described uniformly. Classes may take place in the afternoon, away from the students' home or school, or at school. Sometimes meetings take place in the morning or at noon.

Literacy is an important area of focus, particularly at the primary level. This is also reflected in the last topic of the lesson, precisely stated by the SuS, which often includes the introduction of letters (e.g. ج or ق/ف as a pair of letters). However, heterogeneity in learning groups also contributes to the fact that content-related and organizational consequences arise in everyday teaching, as should be added here from the perspective of teachers:

“Every year new SuS are registered, and at the same time some SuS withdraw, while other SuS are no longer permitted to attend lessons, as these are only offered up to the 9th or 10th grade.” (Befr/5/A/14)

As a result, the progress of learning can be adversely affected:

“The Arabic writing system is very different from the Latin alphabet and therefore **requires a comprehensive introduction to the Arabic script** to learn it effectively. Motivating students in Arabic lessons may be challenging....” (Befr/5/A/29)

“As learning Arabic is often challenging, lessons can be a flat progression to ensure that students understand what they have learned before moving on to the next topic. **A lot of repetition** can also be required to ensure what has been learned is memorized over time....” (Befr/5/A/29)

### 4.2.2 Students participating in foreign language Arabic lessons

As chapter 3 indicates, there are only a few courses for FU Arabic in a nationwide comparison.

#### Biographical information

##### Age structure

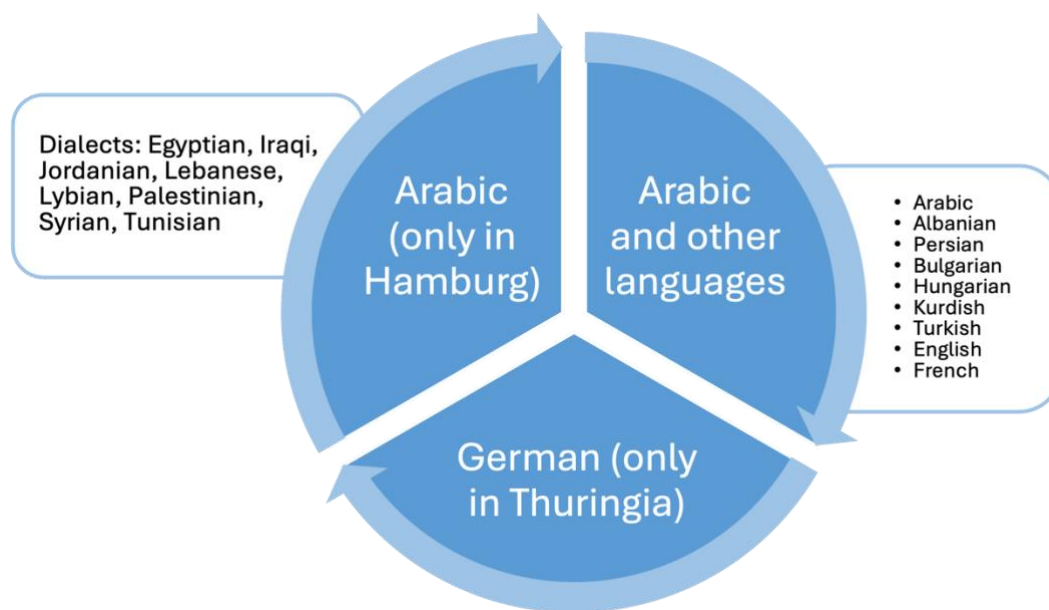
The age structure is based on the data presented in chapter 3 outlined framework conditions for FU Arabic. According to this, SuS can participate starting at age 11 (Thuringia) or 15 (Hamburg).

The results indicate major differences between the groups of SuS studying Arabic in Thuringia and Hamburg. The importance of these aspects was highlighted in Hamburg by SuS who have experienced immigration and educational factors (attending school in an Arabic-speaking country), whereas these aspects play only a secondary role within the group of SuS attending the Arabic FU in Thuringia.



**Figure 24:** Age distribution of SuS in the Arabic FU

### Family language of the SuS



**Figure 25:** Family language of the SuS in the Arabic FU

The SuS surveyed in the Arabic FU showed a significant tendency: the main family language of SuS in Thuringia is either German alone or German and one other language (Arabic is not as important in this respect; other languages include Albanian, English, French or Hungarian). The family language of SuS enrolled in the Arabic FU in Hamburg, on the other hand, is to a significant extent the Arabic language alone, or other languages in addition to the Arabic (e.g. Kurdish, Turkish, and Persian).

Specific, identifying classifications emerge when identifying the different dialects of Arabic used in the family (e.g. the Bedouin dialect in Syria and the dialect of Aleppo).

The specific family language spoken may indicate a personal connection. SuS attending Arabic FU in Thuringia occasionally have a bilingual parent profile. Moreover, they also record that siblings also speak Arabic to each other (e.g. if they are also learning Arabic as a foreign language).

Concerning the reported family languages of the SuS attending the FU Arabic in Hamburg, it is clear that the majority of the participating SuS are native language speakers. No participation of SuS with a foreign language profile for Arabic was identified in the surveys. What is striking is the long educational biographies (school attendance in Arabic-speaking countries up to 11 years). Among them are students whose family language is not Arabic (e.g. Kurdish), but who have gone through an Arabic-speaking school system.

## Motivation of the SuS

<p>Sprachbeherrschung: Hochsprache auch erlernen, nicht nur Dialekt (Hamburg)</p> <p>Meine Sprache und meine Religion, den Koran verstehen (Hamburg)</p> <p>Selbstwirksamkeit &amp; Selbstvertrauen</p> <p>Teil der eigenen Identität / Muttersprache (v.a. Hamburg)</p> <p>Kommunikation mit der Familie</p> <p>Interkulturelle Kompetenz fördern</p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"><b>Identitätsstiftende Faktoren</b></p>	<p>Lehrkraft ist kreativ und lustig</p> <p>Es macht Spaß.</p> <p>Interessante Unterrichtsthemen</p> <p>Lehrkraft (motivierend, empathisch, kompetent)</p> <p>Wohlfühlen: Unterricht ist nicht wie Regelunterricht (Hamburg)</p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"><b>Unterrichtssituation</b></p>	<p>Eltern möchten, dass eigene Sprache nicht vergessen wird (Hamburg)</p> <p>Sprache mit Zukunft (Elternmeinung), (Thüringen)</p> <p>Geschwister inspirieren (Thüringen)</p> <p>Freunde nehmen am Unterricht teil</p> <p>Arabisch ist im Umfeld präsent</p> <p>Berufsperspektiven in arabischsprachigen Ländern</p> <p>Zensuren / Abschluss erreichen (Hamburg)</p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"><b>Externe Faktoren</b></p>	<p>Ästhetik der Sprache (Schrift, Klang etc.)</p> <p>Verbreitung der Sprache (relevant national und international)</p> <p>Interesse für Kultur und Geografie der arabischsprachigen Länder</p> <p>Es macht Spaß eine Sprache zu lernen; Neugier auf außereuropäische Sprachen (v.a. Thüringen)</p> <p>Kommunikationsfähigkeit auf Reisen erreichen</p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"><b>Allgemeine Faktoren</b></p>	<p>Die Lehrkraft ist unsympathisch</p> <p>Unterricht ist anstrengend</p> <p>Niveau ist nicht passend, Grundlagen fehlen (Hamburg)</p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);"><b>Motivationsverringende Faktoren</b></p>
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**Figure 26:** Reasons of the interviewed SuS for participating in the FU Arabic

A fundamental interest in learning languages sums up the motivation of the students in the FU Arabic. What is significant for students in both States is the somewhat concrete professional goals (e.g. in the medical or social field, integration, work with refugees, tourism, or architecture, as well as the desire to work in Arabic-speaking countries) that they associate with learning the Arabic language. The presence of Arabic in Germany and worldwide is a central factor that motivates students in FU.

For one group of SuS in the FU Arabic in Hamburg, it was possible to recognize similar identity-forming motivations as those described nationwide in the Arabic HU (especially religious and cultural ties). SuS from the FU Arabic in Hamburg rated their proficiency in the dialect better, whereas SuS in Thuringia tended to rank their knowledge of the dialect lower than that of the standard language, which is related to the outlined profile of the SuS surveyed.

## 4.2 Students

Overall, it is striking that parents play a subordinate role compared to the situation in the Arabic HU. The teacher plays a central role concerning the motivation of SuS. They greatly appreciate attributes such as the ability to identify personally with one's own educational biography, empathy, humor, and creativity.

### Everyday teaching

In Thuringia and Hamburg, the Arabic FU course is held as part of regular lessons, although in Hamburg there are also afternoon lessons, and SuS occasionally have to commute further, as the lessons do not (necessarily) take place at their main school. The lessons are graded and take place in the secondary levels I and II.

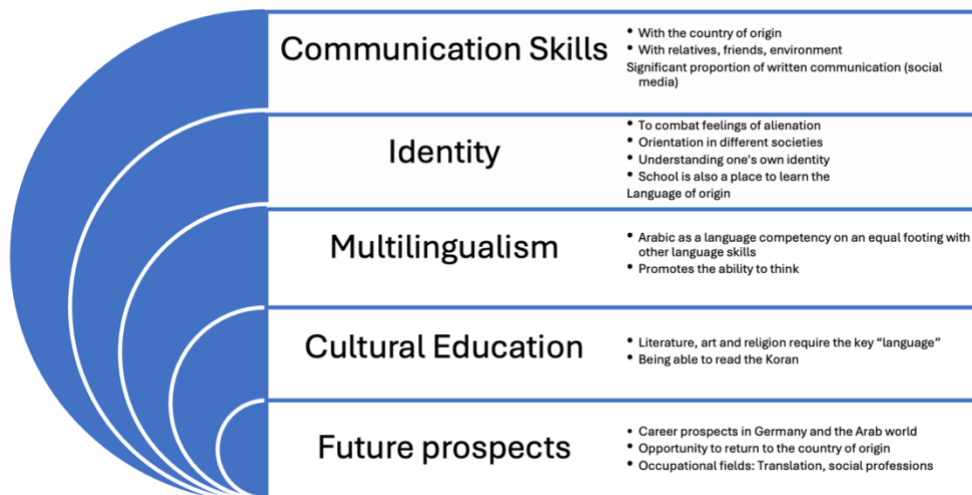
Students in the FU Arabic class name the lesson themes specifically, noting such categories as literary works, cultural projects, controversy regarding social roles, etc.

## 4.3 PARENTS/GUARDIANS

“[...] The trigger is initially the parents, who have this desire to continue learning the language.” (Int 004\_12)

Above all, in the context of the Arabic HU, it is the parents who provide the impetus and determine the demand for the establishment of AU electives. Parents/guardians play an immense role, as the majority of additional teaching options require their registration and consent. In addition, there is an organizational effort to be made, as the lessons do not always take place at the students' main schools and are often scheduled for the afternoon hours.

### 4.3.1 Motivation for the child's participation in Arabic lessons



**Figure 27:** Motivation of parents of SuS in the HU Arabic

## 4.2 Students

Similar to the SuS themselves,<sup>257</sup> parents whose children participate in the Arabic HU show the desire to promote language skills in the mother tongue and thus support an identity-related learning process.

What was striking about the parents' statements was that they attributed their own motivation to their children also (paraphrased): "My child learns because he wants to"; "my child learns because he likes learning and loves the Arabic language"; "I want him to be able to read the Koran"; "My child wants to be able to read the Koran"; etc.). Such transfers can sometimes also be found in the SuS answers.<sup>258</sup>

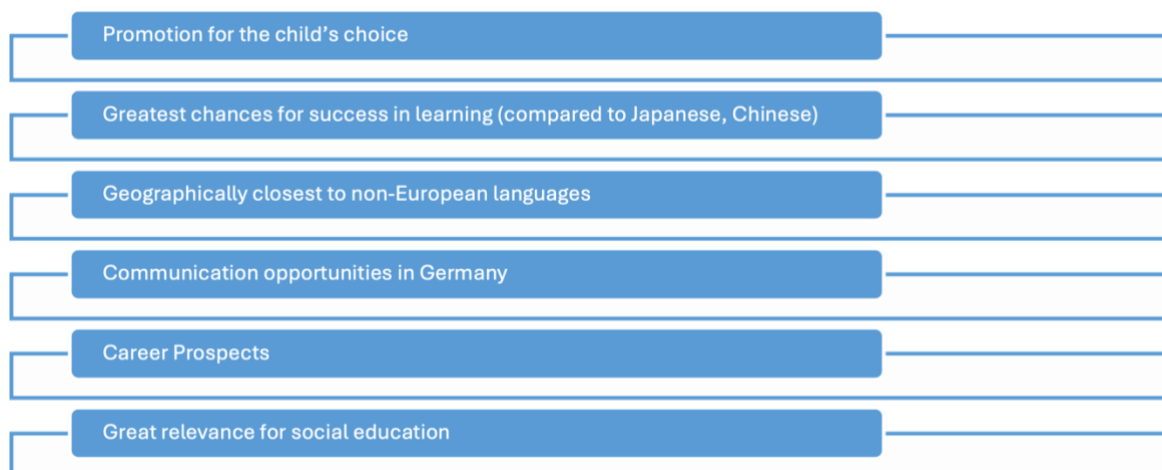
### Parents whose children attend the Arabic FU

Among the surveys of parents in the FU Arabic (in Thuringia and Hamburg), it was noticeable that large differences emerged. The motivation of parents in Hamburg to let their children participate in Arabic lessons is reflected in the profile of the Arabic HU courses:



**Figure 28:** Motivation of parents of SuS in the FU Hamburg

When explaining why they want their child to take part in Arabic lessons, the parents emphasize that it was their child's motivation that was the decisive factor in choosing Arabic as a school subject (among the other non-European languages that could be chosen). Various reasons stand out:



**Figure 29:** Motivation of parents of SuS in the FU Thuringia

<sup>257</sup>See chapter 4.2.1.

<sup>258</sup>See chapter 4.2.1.

## 4.2 Students

### 4.3.2 Expectations of Arabic lessons

#### Parents whose children attend a HU Arabic course

Parents have very specific expectations regarding the Arabic HU. These relate both to future goals (career prospects, i.e. linguistic foundations for later work as a translator) and to the design of the lessons themselves. This should be up-to-date and authentic. On one hand, old texts play an important role, but they should also be adapted into a relevant context for the SuS.

The development of communicative skills includes the promotion of all four competencies (reading, listening, speaking, and writing). The role of social media (voice messages, written messages) as well as reading literature and following and participating in debates are also specifically mentioned.

Parents are aware of the discrepancy between oral and written communication. In everyday family life, students are mostly exposed to oral language use in Arabic. There is therefore great interest in focusing on the development of writing and reading, as well as prioritizing the promotion of Modern Standard Arabic and thus also developing specific educational language skills. Dialects should play only a limited role (if applicable).

The expectations regarding the language level vary widely among the parents surveyed.<sup>259</sup> Within the expectations and motivation – similar to the students – a religious or moral connection (making the values of the Quran understandable) is clear. Thus, Arabic lessons offer an opportunity for internal integration/encounter between the Kurdish-Muslim and the multi-ethnic Arab community. At the same time, school-based AU cannot meet these requirements and needs, as religious aspects should not play a role there. A close connection to (Islamic) religious education makes sense. Teachers, in turn, should be trained accordingly to be familiar not only with the language but also with cultural-historical content and cross-cultural issues against the background of immigration and to be able to deal with the corresponding expectations.

#### Parents whose children attend Arabic as a foreign language<sup>260</sup>

Within the group of parents surveyed in the FU Arabic, it is noticeable that fewer ideas or expectations regarding content are mentioned. The different perspectives on the AU justify the unbiased expectations and the great openness towards content, especially the inclusion of dialects.

Practical expectations, however, are clearly evident: The practical benefits of Arabic language skills should be highlighted (relevance of Arabic language skills when traveling abroad; for the future world of work, such as communication in a professional context).

## 4.4 STAKEHOLDERS

Stakeholders – participants from school boards, school leadership, and science – are significantly involved in the organization and coordination of school-based AU. Their role will be illustrated below. The problem areas that have become clear from the surveys, and interviews are intended to show important trends in describing the situation of school-based AU. As already described in chapter 3 of this report regarding the situation in the individual States, these trends differ from region to region to some degree.

<sup>259</sup> For primary school, a level of A1–B 2 is clearly needed (differentiation between speaking – higher competency expectations and writing/reading – lower competency expectations). In secondary school, the expected levels to be achieved are B1/B2/C1–C 2. In some cases, the questions on the levels were not correctly interpreted.

<sup>260</sup> Here for the context of Thuringia.

### 4.4.1 Perspectives of the school authorities and ministries

According to the school boards and ministries, major challenges were identified regarding the organization, planning, and coordination of AU in schools.

In regard to the recruitment of **suitable teachers**: on the one hand, there are defined criteria, but on the other hand, the increasing demand for AU courses cannot be met. Boards and ministries have reported this spike in demand since 2015, when growing immigration from Arabic-speaking regions was noted.

“[Requests for] the Arabic language... have clearly **increased quite significantly**. [...] **Since 2015**, we have experienced a major refugee wave in which many Arabic-speaking children and young people have come to us. There is really an increasing desire to continue Arabic as a spoken language. **The problem for us is often to find suitable [...] teachers, and therefore we cannot always cover all needs.**” (Int. 004\_10)

The processes for responding to this shortage of suitable teachers and the necessary structures require different efforts at multiple stages to make appropriate use of existing expertise and to develop needs-based training programs to maintain the standards.

“Because the teachers who join us [...] have been with us since 2015, and they really are professionals. [Some] of them even hold a doctorate degree.... Language is one of the priorities.... The problem in [Arabic-speaking] countries: it is always frontal teaching, and the teacher is always the boss, and the children are always the ones there to learn it by heart and then prove it in exams.” (Int 016\_30)

Despite high qualifications, it is necessary to have a specific continuing education and training program for teachers (especially in the HU) in order to further strengthen the existing competencies. The same applies for competencies in the German language.

“I’m still a little sad about my Arabic teacher’s knowledge of the **German language**. Unfortunately, there is still a major shortcoming, because I also have the impression [...] that there is still a lot of persistence in the Arab community. But maybe also because the teachers in my area of responsibility do not have adequate jobs and most of them work as native-language teachers. Teachers I employ receive only my **fee for teaching the native language**. I will not elaborate too much so that they do not interfere with the job center. **We do not have the opportunity to hire them**, rather, it is always only contract teaching, which is currently carried out on a self-employed basis. In fact, it is a kind of pseudo self-employment. That’s why I try not to place people in a position that is too demanding. But this also means that they do not have an adequate job and continue to stay in their community. Many of the teachers currently have a C1 level of German language skills because they are teachers, who know how to learn and teach. But if I received the C1 certificate a year and a half ago and then stopped using the language, my skills would still be deficient in the language area.” (Int 008\_93)

Clearly, administrative circumstances or the need for specific further training for teachers can be interdependent. Arabic HU courses are intended to promote multilingualism, equal opportunities, and integration, but they can be a disadvantage for these goals under difficult administrative conditions.

The electives for school AU are an important measure to indicate appreciation and participation. Increasing the integration and visibility of heritage languages in the education system is an important way of gaining recognition, resulting in important social synergy effects.<sup>261</sup> As the research work of Hans Reich shows and experiences from the *KOALA* project confirm, it is important to promote the heritage language and German at the same time (parallelization); this can be achieved by integrating lessons in the heritage language and regular lessons. Thanks to their great commitment, school board employees in some places are attempting to create the greatest possible synergies and enable networking (cooperation with DaZ or other teachers in regular classes).

“You can create so many synergies and parallels. That’s a good thing, we’re making sure that cooperation and networking are more closely interlinked. I don’t think this is a self-evident fact from the start, because: The external teacher, who is sometimes not even recognized, because there are groups that only start when all the other teachers are not there and the secretary’s office is not occupied. As I said, the lessons can only take place after regular classes. It is not a substitute for regular classes, but voluntary additional instruction.” (Int 009\_32).

<sup>261</sup> See Int 016\_92.

The desire to evaluate teaching in the best possible way is evident among the school boards who are responsible for teaching in many languages and who may not have the necessary language skills.

“The evaluation of the lessons cannot be guaranteed to the fullest satisfaction, because I have twelve languages [in my area of responsibility], and I do not master any of the languages in the native language lessons. And it is actually the case that I observe the lessons and evaluate only based on what I see.... I use a recognized classroom observation sheet with 19 criteria. This form can also be used for sports.... You can already see a lot from this. [...] But the quality, what is actually taught in terms of content, I think is difficult [to assess]. We haven’t done that yet, and we said that we would assess the quality of the teaching. But there are also sometimes suspicions that Arabic lessons are confused with Islamic lessons. Something like this is difficult, but I don’t think I can prevent it from happening. Because when I’m observing, the lessons are not carried out in this way.” (Int 008\_48, 79)

The framework conditions for the Arabic HU also represent a challenge for school boards themselves when adding a course.

“It starts with what time the lessons start – directly after regular classes or perhaps a little later? Is it a school that is open in the afternoon because there is an after-school care center? Or is it a school that closes at 1:00 pm, and the cleaning staff arrives? So, all of those utterly practical matters that also need to be resolved. But in principle, we are already looking at it, and it is also possible for the teachers to be able to make copies or print the materials. If there is a DaZ room – there are schools that have DaZ rooms that are wonderfully equipped – then we make sure that the teacher can also use it, or the materials, or ideally ensure that the lessons can take place in the DaZ room.” (Int 009\_32)

The federal structure of the German education system and the differences of demand are responsible for the variations that can be observed regarding the implementation of Arabic lessons in schools. At the same time, **cooperation between individual States** is evident.

An exchange takes place between regions with similar circumstances in terms of demand or accumulated experience.<sup>262</sup>

The different circumstances also determine the structures of the HU itself, especially the demand for AU, established structures, and regionally different dimensions of experience regarding the integration of students with immigration experience into the school system. In some States, curricula/framework plans exist, which sometimes develop significantly and thus respond to the respective needs. Although the existence of appropriate curricula/framework plans has an impact on the possibilities for determining learning progress or the orientation and structuring of the lessons themselves, it is nevertheless noticeable that the circumstances under which AU takes place are so determining that even curricula cannot always be decisive. Rather, it is evident nationwide that fluctuation and heterogeneity determine the teaching situation and hinder learning progress.<sup>263</sup> Curricula can hardly do justice to the particular heterogeneity in teaching. The learning progress in the AU continues to be a challenge.

### Expanding offers for HU to FU: Crucial question: HU or FU?

An upgrading or the structural possibility of expanding the offerings for the Arabic HU into an FU is clearly evident in regional focal points (especially in Hamburg, Hesse, North Rhine-Westphalia, and Berlin). Consequences of the unification of the HU and FU bring with them far-reaching organizational and content-related consequences that have various implications.

“I still think about it critically. It is possible that this will change, because in the HU (...) the language aspect – not just language acquisition, but everything that goes with it... everything that accompanies it, i.e. knowledge about culture, about traditions, simply the feeling – is simply much, much more pronounced and cannot be understood by foreign language learners at first.

<sup>262</sup> Cooperations exist between Brandenburg and Thuringia; Hamburg and Bremen, Berlin. In addition, there are cooperation between ministries/school boards and research institutions.

<sup>263</sup> In some cases it became clear that the literacy process, especially in the Arabic HU (primary school), constantly determines the lessons without completing them or achieving any learning objectives.

## 4.4 Stakeholders

These children also bring a lot more with them from home, and I believe that this simply takes up a much larger space than in foreign language classes. That does not mean that foreign language learners would not have access to it or would not have the right to do so. But that would further differentiate and diversify the group. And I think that would also be a big challenge for the teachers and really to do justice to all the students. So, the focus is just a little bit different. I could imagine that this would be fun for the foreign language learners and would make the language lessons a lot more exciting for them if they could get involved in something like this. But you would have to make sure that it is actually feasible for the whole the group, including the teachers. Perhaps the other things making this so adventurous could be relaxed a little and then it would be possible. Because: We always have the challenge that groups are ... every group is different.” (Int 009\_62)

“I also support the provision of Arabic language classes, as Arabic is spoken by many people here and is also widespread throughout the world; it is never a mistake to be able to speak it a little!” (Befr/4/D/4)

“[...] if you look closely, teaching the language of origin, despite all its positive aspects, contains a certain degree of structural discrimination. So, the children – only a certain group of students are allowed to take part. It takes place in the afternoon. In some cases, it is not at one’s own school. I suppose that the language of origin could be upgraded to the extent that it really does function as a second foreign language. So... let’s take Polish in the border area between Germany and Poland, now related to [State 1]. If I have Polish as a second foreign language, then I have both native speakers and real foreign speakers. This is of course a great challenge in terms of internal differentiation, but I could very well imagine it. For me, teaching the native language, including Arabic, is a transitional form. So, I am aware that it is a form of discrimination. Now you can say: we do not want to discriminate, and we do not offer these native language lessons. That would be the wrong conclusion, in my view.” (Int 012\_20)

“For me, this is a temporary solution because I am now thinking very optimistically that at some point the teaching of the native language will be transformed into foreign-language teaching. Maybe you can find another word for foreign language, because it’s somehow like that, yes... I don’t like the term, but somehow you have to give the thing a name. Then it would be integrated into the curriculum and there would be grades. Then you could use the grade you have, if it is positive, to compensate for not-so-good grades. And then you could decide freely.” (Int 012\_22)

### Developing language-specific curricula

Language-specific curricula are a central starting point in establishing a course for school-based AU for the subject of Arabic as a modern foreign language. These already exist in Thuringia and most recently in Hesse since July 2023. In the context of the Arabic HU, concrete language-specific guidelines are an important means of enabling the achievement of learning objectives and quality controls.

“It would be nice if there was a uniform curriculum for Arabic as a native language, that is, a curriculum for Arabic. And I think it’s also very important that they test some kind of translation skills. That there is an assignment in the exam where they test mediation, just like in English. The students translate from situations from their everyday lives. This is how you can tell whether they are really interpreting correctly. Because the students usually also act as an interpreter for the family. Why not also use these as examination exercises?” (Int 008\_81)

## 4.4.2 Perspectives of school management

### Promoting multilingualism promotes awareness of one's own identity

The promotion of multilingualism is a central pillar in the education system of the German States. For the school principals surveyed, strengthening multilingualism is a task that should be given even more attention.

“HU strengthens the educational success of children – without a good knowledge of the native language, there is no good German – everyone thinks in the language they master best, which is usually the native language. So, if I want to strengthen thinking and thus education, I have to strengthen language skills.” (Befr/5/D/7)

### External factors that lead to participation in AU

As highlighted in chapter 4, there are many reasons for participating in the AU. Especially in the area of the Arabic HU, learning the Arabic language is justified by cultural or religious interest. The option of returning to the country of origin also plays a role.

“Kurdish-speaking people in particular want their children to have Arabic language lessons, as they are still afraid of being sent back.” (Befr/5/D/8)

### Teachers: fluctuation makes it difficult to involve teachers in schools

The involvement of teachers is also made more difficult by external factors. School boards are aware of the course for the Arabic HU, but often has little direct contact.

“[T]he lessons take place only once a week and are taught by only one teacher who comes to school in the afternoon for this purpose only. Unfortunately, the Arabic-speaking teachers change all the time, so it is difficult to maintain a continuous connection.” (Befr/5/D/5)

A permanent integration into the school team is emphasized as desirable, but structural prerequisites, including the recruitment of teachers, must also be in place.

“Good knowledge of the German school system, especially of all relevant aspects in the primary school sector, such as school law, general curricula... what every other primary school teacher also masters. HU is not just any old working group, but a networked, holistically implemented subject like any other – which also has an impact on school life in general.” (Befr/5/D/7)

### Important role of the HU teacher

A solid integration of the Arabic HU teacher into the school team is the basis for reflecting the real presence of multilingualism in everyday school life.

“Our Arabic teacher is with us once a week for the whole day, helps us extremely well with parent-teacher meetings, was recently with us on the trip for teachers, and feels comfortable with us.” (Befr/5/D/9)

### System-related problems of employment as an honorary teacher

Integrating the Arabic HU teachers into the school team also requires examining the conditions of employment.

“Teachers should be funded by the provider who commissions them not just for teaching only, but also for having time to maintain contact with the school system – as long as this is not guaranteed, networking will always be difficult. So, the HU ‘only’ runs alongside.” (Befr/5/D/5)

This closes the loop: teachers should have better pedagogical qualifications and also be qualified for other subjects. This creates the conditions for integration into school life.

“A sound training in subject-specific didactics, i.e. the ability to teach; (native) language skills alone are not sufficient – interest in contact and exchange with the teaching staff, especially about the students participating in the HU.” (Befr/5/D/5)

“Teachers need further training and education.” (Befr/4/D/5)

“I would like more feedback and a general exchange about the curriculum. There are hardly any points of contact with the courses for native language lessons in the afternoon.” (Befr/4/D/4)

### Time slot for HU is in competition with recreational activities

Multilingualism as a central pillar of the school system is not only evident in the AU offered. Nevertheless, the offers for HU in the afternoon can be considered to be of secondary importance.

“Arabic lessons take place after regular school hours, during the so-called “after school care,” similar to all-day activities such as dancing or accordion. The Arabic teacher is also at a different school every day of the week.” (Befr/6/D/6)

“The general conditions are very difficult: children and young people from other schools also take part in the Arabic HU course at the school where I work. They often wait for siblings. Not all parents accompany their children. The after-school children are not reminded of lessons by the educators. Unsupervised children disrupt the afternoon Arabic HU class. Therefore, the headmistress threatened to ban classes (“this is a bazaar!”). After-school teachers took children out of class because they had not tidied something up, etc. It is therefore of fundamental importance to recognize and organize Arabic lessons as regular lessons.” (Befr/6/D/6)

### Horizon of importance

The relevance of promoting multilingualism and expanding profiles for foreign language teaching have not yet been adequately implemented. In terms of a sustainable society and economy, important implications become clear.

“Identity and education: cultural self-assertion and access to high culture (Arabic opens up an unlimited wealth of literature and art); prevention of intellectual impoverishment in the diaspora and in particular in an unequal and unfair education system – identity and family: trans-generational communication... – also cognitive development: literacy in the native language facilitates learning foreign languages [...]” (Befr/6/D/6)

### Expectations of teachers in the HU Arabic

“I really appreciate the teacher who teaches Arabic at HU. I wish for them and others that they are recognized and paid as regular teachers; that they can conduct regular classes with curricula as part of the regular faculty. Generally important for Arabic-speaking teachers: – to convey a positive image of themselves and their culture to the children and young people who for the most part came to Germany as refugees under precarious conditions. They now live and learn here under comparatively very poor “socio-economic conditions,” for example suffer from structural pressure to present a positive picture of themselves and their culture. Adapting didactics and methods (of the Syrian school system) to the learning experiences and living conditions of children and young people – conveying enthusiasm for Arabic literature – clear separation between Arabic lessons and religious education.” (Befr/6/D/6)

School boards emphasize that they want to rely on teachers, which means that they have confidence regarding their competencies (teaching according to the principles of their training) and expectations of the teacher’s personality. The personality of the teacher and its importance for teaching was also examined in the *Hattie study* (2009).

It has been observed that school leadership is not always able to fully understand the regulations and structures of the HU.<sup>264</sup> The specific focus appears to be an influencing factor here. It can therefore be noted that the promotion of HU courses is also largely determined by the school leadership. School boards must find committed school leadership who will set up and support these (mostly) additional electives. It is therefore important to involve school leadership when it comes to implementing and promoting Arabic teaching opportunities (creating exchange, information, and qualification opportunities for school leadership).

Training in diagnostic skills for teachers should be included in further training and qualification courses. Teachers are faced with the challenge of having to deal with heterogeneity in the classroom. On the one hand, the precise diagnosis of the SuS competencies should be taken into account; but on the other hand, adequate

<sup>264</sup> This varied and includes the minimum number of students to set up a program or knowledge of sources of funding for the lessons and the teacher or existing regulations.

## 4.4 Stakeholders

methodological and didactic training should also be part of the training to support the students accordingly. This would in turn be an important basis for measuring learning progress (competencies in testing and assessment).

### Critical views regarding the expansion of AU for foreign-language children

The aforementioned promotion of Arabic language skills – regardless of whether it is a native or foreign language – is fundamentally a much-discussed issue.

“Arabic is extremely difficult and would overwhelm our non-Arabic speaking children. They should learn English better.” (Befr/5/D/9)

“I am cautious when it comes to expanding heritage language instruction as a foreign language offering. Teaching in the native language is not at the same level as teaching in a foreign language.” (Befr/4/D/6)

“I would like future Arabic-speaking teachers to have ... a pedagogical background, a commitment to correct language use in German as well, and fluent German language skills.” (Befr/4/D/5)

### 4.4.3 Academic perspectives

#### Challenge for the specialist discipline of Arabic studies

The central problem within the discipline can be summed up in the lack of a degree program for teaching Arabic. A tradition of teaching Arabic as a subject is only just beginning to emerge in Germany. At the University of Leipzig (Oriental Institute Leipzig), Arabic teaching stands out nationwide with its long tradition. More recently, developments have also been seen at the Universities of Bamberg and Münster.

There are some research contributions available. However, there are still insufficient research results on teaching itself.<sup>265</sup> There is therefore a need for more attention to this specialization and also for the training of experts in the subject. On the other hand, fundamental efforts must also be made by researchers to consolidate and professionalize this subject nationwide. The educational bureaucracy of the States makes this more difficult. The German patchwork inevitably contributes to the fact that Arabic didactics can develop – unlike in other centrally governed countries such as France or Italy.<sup>266</sup> Another problem is that the development of the AU is based on a definition as HU, although Arabic is intended as FU.<sup>267</sup>

When developing a teaching degree program in Arabic, it is important to impart basic knowledge from areas such as history, culture, literature, linguistics, etc., although Arabic studies, as a small subject, often concentrate more on highly specific content and orientations.<sup>268</sup>

#### Lack of corrective measures in the administrative framework

Established practice becomes entrenched and remains unquestioned when it comes to testing the language skills of teachers, for example. The testing of the language skills of teachers in the Arabic HU does take place (as in NRW, for example) and is usually carried out by resorting to familiar structures (e.g. native-speaking employees). However, there is a lack of an authority with transparent and scientific expertise that should be relied upon to ensure that quality standards and uniform control mechanisms apply. In Lower Saxony there have been attempts to test and certify the language skills of teachers.

<sup>265</sup>See Int 001\_18.

<sup>266</sup> See Int 001\_18–25.

<sup>267</sup> This was also clearly evident in the surveys of stakeholders (school leadership, ministries, school boards).

<sup>268</sup> See Int 001\_35.

### Didactic model for teaching the linguistic status of Arabic (diglossia)

Academic debates and studies have been dealing with the dialectic situation of Arabic for a long time. Linguistic discussions debate various models in this regard without taking into account any didactic consequences. There is also a lack of research to describe the situation of the Arabic HU and FU didactically. Dealing with this issue should be part of the qualification of teachers in the AU.

Within the group of teachers, immigration since 2015 seems to have changed the handling of dialects. Teachers who have been in Germany for a longer time and may also have become familiar with other learning cultures in their countries of origin tend to adopt an approach that focuses on standard language in the classroom, while the younger generation of teachers (who have mainly come from Syria since 2015) take more modern approaches that include dialects.<sup>269</sup>

### Strengthening the multi-perspective perception of non-European cultures in schools

From a scientific perspective, the school concepts that should integrate non-European areas more strongly have been mentioned. The integration of the Arabic HU teachers into the faculty and the connection to content-related subject-specific references in the lessons are important synergies that promote historical and global reflection skills.

The idea of expanding the HU to include an FU is emerging, particularly in States with large numbers of participants (Hamburg, NRW).<sup>270</sup> Heterogeneity characterizes the AU, especially in its form as an HU. Since students who sometimes have little prior knowledge of Arabic also take part in the HU, the idea also arises from the teaching situation. If the HU courses are opened up to FU, didactic consequences arise between students who speak their native language and those who speak a foreign language (inhibitions when speaking for the latter group, students who are under-challenged in the former group).<sup>271</sup>

On the other hand, a discussion arises that moves far away from the teaching courses in the native language. As a world language, the language of the UN, and the language of Muslim culture, Arabic still has little significance as a distant foreign language in the German education system, although the promotion of multilingualism also takes this aspect into account.

### Heterogeneity characterizes the HU and FU Arabic - Different approaches

Although heterogeneity is also a feature of the HU and sometimes students with levels A1 –C1 come together in a learning group, there is an emotional access to language and culture that is not necessarily present in the traditional FU.<sup>272</sup> Attempts to open an HU for foreign language teaching were difficult at the beginner level, while for level B1 and up, more favorable conditions were emerging.<sup>273</sup>

<sup>269</sup>See Int 001\_80-82.

<sup>270</sup> See Int 002\_10.

<sup>271</sup> See Int 002\_10.

<sup>272</sup>See Int 002\_18.

<sup>273</sup> See Int 002\_18– 20.

### Priority in the training profile of teachers

Teachers should demonstrate a linguistic background in their application profile. Some States assume a pedagogical profile (sports or mathematics teachers are also accepted for HU teaching), but a linguistic study connection is more important.<sup>274</sup>

The awareness of teaching a multilingual curriculum should be part of further training regarding moving away from fixed monolingualism and permitting the use of *inter-languaging* and *code-switching* as acceptable practices.

A clear distinction from Islamic education is necessary. Raising awareness of the relevance of the AU (also in concrete form) is an important measure for parents of students in the Arabic HU or FU. In this context, the importance of promoting multilingualism among children for identity formation must be emphasized. This creates new access.<sup>275</sup>

### Precarious working conditions

“I think it is fair that we get a permanent job, especially after more than five years of teaching with insecure contracts and low pay.” (Befr/3/A/16)

The general conditions of the Arabic HU affect the motivation of the parents and the pupils themselves to participate in the AU, especially since participation means stress and logistical effort for them.<sup>276</sup> Hybrid or digital courses represent an alternative, especially in rural peripheral areas.<sup>277</sup>

Another circular argument is evident regarding employment relationships: a lack of qualification opportunities determines the recruitment of teachers as qualified specialists. The situation has a diminishing effect on appreciation. Teachers pay the bill for lack of qualification. For parents and students, strengthening school-based courses for the AU would have a confidence-building effect on the German education system.

### Prestige factors of the teaching offers for HU and FU Arabic

The literature highlights the issue of the higher prestige of the FU.<sup>278</sup> The FU is given a higher prestige because it is integrated into regular classes and is graded (at least in many States). The HU, on the other hand, has less prestige because it takes place outside of regular classes as an optional elective in the afternoon. Parents/guardians play a major role in participation:

“This is something that parents usually decide on, not children. The parents register their children there and because it is something additional, there are often no grades at all. It doesn't matter whether you complete it afterwards or not. Well, sometimes it is noted on the certificate that you have taken part in it, so if that is the case [...], well, if it is somehow still organized by the State, if it takes place at the consulate school, for example, then it is a completely private matter and no one is interested. And the problem is that this additional heritage language instruction naturally clashes with all sorts of other leisure interests and hobbies of the students.” (Int 003\_14)

This circumstance plays a crucial role in the continuation of the AU beyond the primary school level. If German is the dominant language or the language of the environment, the motivation of the students to participate in the HU often decreases as they get older and as they progress into puberty and the recognition of the value of language

<sup>274</sup> Int 002\_46.

<sup>275</sup> See Int 003\_10.

<sup>276</sup> See Int 002\_22.

<sup>277</sup> Int 002\_24.

<sup>278</sup> See, for example, Küppers/Schroeder (2017): “Why Turkish heritage language teaching is a discontinued model,” pp. 56-71.

## 4.4 Stakeholders

skills in their language of origin remains low.<sup>279</sup> Coordinated literacy and language support in German and the language of origin is, however, beneficial.

### Equal opportunities

Teachers who work at the Arabic HU show a high potential to be employed in teaching as specialists with a specialized pedagogical background. Specific qualification measures are required for them to promote their high potential, their adequate integration into the school system, and equal opportunities and multilingualism.

“Parents certainly play a big role, but this **role is limited**. In other words, the class teacher plays a more crucial role than the parents, as some class teachers advise parents not to let the child attend classes because he or she needs to strengthen his or her German language and other skills in mathematics. **Some parents are uneducated and cannot read or write in their native language** or they believe that what the class teacher says is right. In addition, there are many Arabic schools or mosques on weekends, which makes it an alternative to teaching the Arabic language in schools.” (Befr/1/A/6)

If equal opportunities at school are indeed promoted, the Arabic HU courses must be supported and communicated by the school boards/ministries. Within the communities, different forms of authority play a role. The Arabic teacher does not always play the central role. Teachers in regular classes are also important contacts for drawing attention to Arabic teaching opportunities in schools. It should be noted that other private courses for the AU are more accessible and can sometimes have a stronger presence within the community.

### Persuasion: informing parents

The majority of the demand determines the establishment of Arabic lessons at school.<sup>280</sup> In this regard, the question also arises as to whether SuS and their **parents** are aware of the benefits of mastering a language such as Arabic when choosing a foreign language. It requires a great deal of strategic effort to persuade SuS of the advantages that learning a high level of Arabic offers for their future.<sup>281</sup>

The teachers at HU make an enormous effort to motivate students and maintain a lively exchange and contact with parents. Appropriate information events with external impact are important for motivation (events and competitions with an audience, parents’ evenings) to establish and promote courses for the AU.

### Immediate need for suitable teaching materials

The results of this study must be viewed in the context of their exploratory nature. The important findings explore the most significant connections of the hitherto little-researched topic of school AUs in Germany.

Urgent needs become clear with regard to the logistical implementation of the AU. These primarily concern the lack of suitable teaching materials for lesson planning and implementation. The division of learning groups also makes things more difficult. It turns out that due to the lack of structures (both from science as well as the schools themselves), it can be helpful to incorporate feedback from teachers into organizational matters.

“The division of learning groups should be improved by making the teachers responsible for it and not the school boards.” (Befr/5/A/14)

<sup>279</sup> See Int 003\_14. Studies by Bernhard Brehmer and Grit Mehlhorn describe this situation in further detail.

<sup>280</sup> This trend is also reflected in developments in the States such as North Rhine-Westphalia. But there would also be the possibility of introducing Arabic as a foreign language in Saxony if there was sufficient demand. Structures are already established in many regions; cf. framework plans in Saxony for example.

<sup>281</sup> See Int 003\_16.

## 5. CONCLUSION: RESULTS OF THE STUDY AND RECOMMENDATIONS/HANDOUTS

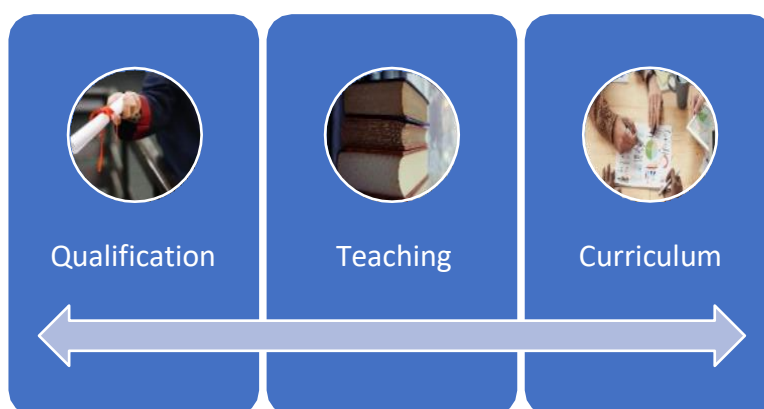
The situation of the AU is extremely heterogeneous in the ten German States examined. Courses for the Arabic HU are more widespread, while courses for FU Arabic, although showing positive developments, still represent an exception. On closer inspection, the courses for the Arabic HU reflect the experience of dealing with migration-related multilingualism in the education sector of the countries. This varies structurally and historically in the States considered. Individual States have built up expertise through their long experience to prepare for the situation after 2015 (increasing demand for the Arabic HU). A decisive effect of this was seen in the States such as Brandenburg and Thuringia, which have greatly expanded their offerings. In Thuringia, a new approach is being taken to establish low-threshold courses, working closely with scientific expertise. There are no framework plans in place in either of the two States; the developments still tentative but are being actively monitored. In the two large States, many courses are organized in rural areas.

Other States have different historically evolved structures, have greater resources, and can draw on a long tradition of experience and structures (e.g. North Rhine-Westphalia or Hamburg). In the city/states of Hamburg and Berlin, special paths seem to be emerging. With the new developments in the curricula (numerous parallels), a path toward the Arabic FU can be taken. The State of Hesse has also experienced new developments; the curriculum for foreign language Arabic lessons published in July 2023, for example, made it possible to take Arabic as a foreign language at a secondary school level for the first time starting in the 2023/2024 school year.

The developments in the States vary due to the federal system of making independent decisions. However, synergies between the States can be seen, such as in the establishment of state-run courses for the Arabic HU (e.g. in Bremen).

The majority of school AU take place as HU in the primary school sector.

Based on the results of the exploratory study, recommendations can be summarized.



**Figure 30:** Signature: Pillars of the professionalization of AU in schools

### 5.1 QUALIFICATION

Stakeholders complain that there are not enough suitable teachers available to meet the increasing demand. In particular, there is a lack of instruments for transparency and quality assurance. Secured qualification opportunities have a corresponding impact on the appreciation and remuneration of teaching activities.

## 5.2 TEACHER TRAINING AND QUALIFICATIONS

The coordination with universities and ministries to establish a qualification course is aimed at:

- Active teachers (depending on the teacher's profile) and includes corresponding postgraduate study programs
- Applicants for university studies (teacher training)

Developments vary from country to country. Therefore, developments will be individual and can never be generally binding.

An important step in the certification of teachers is the testing of language skills by independent subject matter experts.

## 5.3 METHODOLOGICAL-DIDACTIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SPECIFIC TEACHING SCENARIOS IN THE AU

The specific situation in Arabic teaching is primarily characterized by heterogeneity. Didactic models for teaching multilingualism should also be discussed for Arabic teaching. There are various didactic models available to make Arabic lessons effective. These models take into account the linguistic diversity and the needs of heterogeneous learning groups to use existing linguistic resources as a resource in the learning process. *Diglossia* in Arabic continues to be an important circumstance that should also be taken into account in a balanced way in teaching methods and didactics.

Another component of the qualification of teachers is subject-specific pedagogical and linguistic modules, which provide teachers with:

- A solid foundation in content;
- Guidance and the opportunity to undertake supervised teaching trials (especially those without previous teaching and learning experience in the German education system).

## 5.4 TEACHING MATERIALS

The development of suitable teaching materials is a *desideratum*. The need and demand for suitable teaching materials are made clear by all involved (teachers, school boards, ministries, and research representatives). These materials should:

- Focus on current events and the specific teaching situation.
- Be consistent with the principles and values of the German education system.
- Take into account the current trends in textbook research for the German educational system.
- Incorporate perspectives from experienced, trans-disciplinary experts.

Suitable teaching materials reflect the relevant premises of important subject experts to be endorsed by the ministries as approved teaching materials. Textbooks address the specific teaching situation in the German context and its needs and integrate the curricular requirements. Teaching materials are important to not only meet the academic standards, but also to be practically applicable in the classroom and tested accordingly. Subject matter experts from various relevant disciplines can provide valuable insights to make teaching materials versatile and engaging. High-quality teaching materials also ensure the quality of teaching, because they provide teachers with a structure to evaluate learning progress and specifically address curricular goals. They are an essential instrument for ensuring effective educational quality and supporting competence orientation in the German education system.

## 5.5 CURRICULUM

When developing the curricula, experts from Arabic studies should be included in the committees. More cooperation between science and boards/ministries is generally necessary for identifying problem areas and creating awareness. Important specialist expertise for advising school boards/ministries/quality control and especially teaching institutions with a focus on language and didactics is provided within Arabic/Islamic studies.

There is a high need for further research to professionalize school-based AU. Not only do guidelines for the curriculum represent a central basic instrument offering guidance for teachers, support for stakeholders in monitoring quality assurance and transparency of teaching, and guidelines for the development of teaching materials, but they also accompany the development of tests.

When developing the curricula:

- The committees should include representatives from Arabic/Islamic studies (ideally from Arabic teaching).
- An orientation regarding modern developments for foreign language curricula (e.g. competence orientation) should be taken into account.
- Language-specific specifications as well as content modularization should be included.

Arabic/Islamic Studies plays a central role in the development of Arabic as a foreign language in schools. These experts bring with them the necessary specialist knowledge and didactic competence to design curricular content in a practical and targeted manner.

To professionalize the school-based AU, intensive further research is required.

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(Editor’s note: parenthetical dates at the end of entries indicate when electronic resources were last accessed.)

## RESEARCH REPORT – ARABIC TEACHING IN GERMANY

### SCIENTIFIC STUDY REGARDING THE STATUS OF ARABIC LANGUAGE TEACHING IN SCHOOLS

The promotion of multilingualism is an important concern and is therefore increasingly being heard in the public debate, also because it is interwoven with aspects such as strengthening educational equity, integration, participation and identity development of students. As a result, the discussion about learning distant foreign languages (Arabic, Chinese) in the German education system is also receiving more attention.

The qualitative study presented here was carried out as part of the project conducted by Qatar Foundation International (QFI) in the period from 2021 until 2023 at the Oriental Institute in Leipzig at the Chair of Arabic Linguistics and Translation Studies in the research project *Teaching Arabic in Germany*. The report on the research project *Arabic teaching in Germany* contributes to describing the current situation of Arabic language teaching in schools in Germany. It shows the basic structures and highlights the role of the key players: teachers, students, parents or guardians as well as stakeholders and representatives from research, ministries, school leadership and school boards. The goal of this publication is to provide an overview of where state-organized Arabic teaching takes place and what characterizes the actors and the teaching situation to describe the potential for promoting Arabic teaching (AU) and to make recommendations for further development.

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(English version) Ed. February 2025,

ISSN (Print): 2944-4179

ISSN (Online): 2944-4195

URN: urn:nbn:de:bsz:15-qucosa2-943361

nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:bsz:15-qucosa2-943361