Available online at www.sciencedirect.com

SciVerse ScienceDirect

Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences 66 (2012) 126 – 135

Procedia
Social and Behavioral Sciences

The 8th International Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) Seminar - Aligning Theoretical Knowledge with Professional Practice

Teaching Arabic as a second language in Nigeria

Adam Sirajudeen[a] and AbdulWahid Adebisi[b]*

[a]*Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Kogi State University, Anyigba, Nigeria*
[b]*Department of Foreign Languages, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria*

Abstract

Language learning as a scientific process and a student-centred activity requires a wide range of planned teaching-learning activities. A number of obstacles hinder the effectiveness of teaching and learning Arabic in Nigeria as a Foreign Language (AFL).This paper situates the search for durable interventions within the context of the present objectives of teaching Arabic in Nigeria, the realities of teaching the subject as a foreign language and the numerous barriers which frustrate the effectiveness of the teaching of the subject in Nigeria. The paper concludes that the haphazardness that characterizes the teaching-learning process has inexorably resulted in the circle of the production of Arabic teachers who lack requisite pedagogical competencies for teaching a foreign language. A number of recommendations are put forward towards ameliorating the situation.

© 2012 The Authors. Published by Elsevier Ltd. Open access under CC BY-NC-ND license.
Selection and peer-review under responsibility of the LSP 2012 Committee, Language Academy, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia.

Keywords: Teaching Arabic in Nigeria; Foreign Language Pedagogy

1. Introduction

Language remains an intricate multifunctional phenomenon that, facilitates human communication. The utilities of foreign language learning transcend the benefit of obtaining an academic qualification for employment. Foreign language learning is now construed as a facilitator of globalization and a strong vehicle of fostering world peace and intercultural understanding in a world of extreme diversities.

The emergence of new paradigms for foreign language learning and teaching is now more rapid in the context of contemporary events. The post-September 11 strategies for fighting terrorism, the renewed interest in understanding Arab culture and managing information emanating from the Arab world have accentuated the demand to study Arabic by the international community. These developments and the age-long motivations for

*Corresponding author. Tel+234-806-285-7606, +234-803-288-5271
E-mail address: adebisiaa66@yahoo.com

1877-0428 © 2012 The Authors. Published by Elsevier Ltd. Open access under CC BY-NC-ND license.
Selection and peer-review under responsibility of the LSP 2012 Committee, Language Academy, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia..
doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.11.254

studying Arabic in Muslim and non-Muslim locales have indicated the need for a more focused attention on mechanisms for achieving greater effectiveness in the teaching of Arabic as a foreign language. The facts which make Arabic a priority language to be studied are compelling. Apart from its status as the fifth most commonly spoken native language in the world with over 300 million speakers, it is the official language of 20 countries and an official language of the United Nations, Arab League, Organisation of Islamic Conference and African Union. The demand for Arabics with bilingual in careers such as journalism, business and industry, education, finance, banking, translation and interpretation, consulting, Foreign Service and intelligence have further emphasized its position as a language of strategic importance. With the combined annual GDP of 600 billion dollars of the Arab region, the increase in population, commerce, trade and economic activities Arabic will definitely have a more significant role to play in world affairs.[1]

Arabic, in Nigeria, has been used and is still studied, largely, for liturgical as well as academic purposes. The study of Arabic for communicative ends is limited compared to the religious and academic utilities for which the language has been subjected. This, of course, restricts the competences of the graduates who are constricted to function as Arabists within Nigeria alone. Apart from the extremely limited population of Shuwa Arabs (100,000 in 1975) [2] of Northeast Nigeria who speak a dialect of Arabic as Mother Tongue (MT), the overwhelming majority of users of Arabic are also multilinguals who study Qur'anic Arabic or Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) as a non-native linguistic code. Thus, within the Shuwa Arabic-speaking environment, Arabic is diglossic and is thus comparable to similar situations where 'lower' variants of Arabic which are not taught but acquired as a mother tongue used for everyday informal interaction. Formal Spoken Arabic (FSA) or Educated Spoken Arabic (ESA) is the chosen language of instruction in most Nigerian classrooms. In the Arab world, this 'higher' form is the language used in official and elevated interactions since colloquial Arabic is seldom used in formal domains. 'Arabic' is used throughout this discourse with reference to both classical Arabic which is the language of the Qur'an and classical Arabic literature and or Modern Standard Arabic which is the language of contemporary writings and the broadcast media.

The challenges faced by non-native learners of Arabic may be generic or context-specific. Language learning is generally considered to be more demanding than language acquisition. While the latter involves a gradual process of imitating speakers of a language through verbal interactions, the former entails the conscious mastery of the vocabulary and grammar of the target language. Thus, the level of communicative proficiency of users who passed through an acquiring experience tends to be stronger than those with a learning experience. Some of the intricacies involved in foreign language learning is encapsulated in Akmajian , *et al's* [3] submission that:

> "One needs only study a foreign language, or take a course in linguistics to begin to appreciate the enormous complexity of human language. At every level - phonetic, phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic- human language is an intricate system of abstract units, structures, and rules, used in a powerful system of communication."

2. The Problem

The structural characteristics of Arabic as compared to other languages studied in the school system in Nigeria, the sociolinguistic context within which Arabic is studied and the language teaching competences of the Arabic language teacher in Nigeria are some of the variables which affect Arabic education in Nigeria. It is noteworthy that the United States Department categorizes the difficulty intensity of Arabic to be Level 3 on a 1-3 rating scale along with languages such as Chinese, Japanese and Korean while other Semitic languages such as Hebrew and Amharic are placed at Level 2 difficulty. The extreme language diversity in Nigeria where over 250 languages are spoken imposes on the bilingual educator enormous tasks requiring specialised pedagogical knowledge and skills. In view of the numerous challenges facing the subject, Abukakre [4] contends that Arabic in Nigeria is struggling for survival in a difficult terrain**.** In a similar vein, Oladosu [5] reports that the trend in the

study of Arabic in formal settings has been fluctuating between 2000 and 2011. He posited that the stiff competition which Arabic faces with English and French as first and second official languages respectively and with Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba and other indigenous languages as Nigerian Mother Tongues offered as school subjects places Arabic within a matrix of the daunting challenges. [5]

Although the teaching process broadly encompasses preparation, presentation, application and review/evaluation, different contents and contexts of learning lend themselves to different approaches and different strategies of instruction. Experts in language teaching, have identified peculiarities of language teaching which distinguish it from instruction in other subject areas. The teaching of Arabic is not only dissimilar to the teaching of most world languages because teaching as a foreign language constitutes a different task from its general teaching without considering intricacies associated with bilingual or multilingual education. First, Arabic is unlike English, French and Nigeria's main indigenous languages such as Hausa, Igbo in terms of its peculiar orthography. Arabic is cursive and written from right to left while the Roman script is employed for the orthographic representation of the foreign and Nigerian languages. Secondly, the short vowels of Arabic are invisible except when verbalised. Thirdly, many phonemes of Arabic are lacking in the sound system of most Nigerian languages. In a study conducted in 2000, Musa [6] identified a minimum of nine consonants lacking in six Nigerian languages (Kanuri, Gbagi, Ijaw, Hausa, Igbo and Hausa). [6] Fourthly, the morphology is complex and inflected as reflected in its three cases and eight noun declensions.[4] Since a second language is ultimately learnt in the context of the first and in view of the status of Arabic as L3 or L4 in most Nigerian learning contexts, the effectiveness of instruction in this linguistic context is suspect. This paper studies the challenges associated with the teaching of Arabic in Nigeria as a foreign language and consequently recommend appropriate interventions in the light of the material and human resources required for teaching a second language in a developing country such as Nigeria.

3. Characterizing Arabic in Nigeria

The history of Arabic in Nigeria is not quite different from that of other non-Arab Muslim societies. Arab traders who extended their trading interests to West Africa also carried along with them their religion and language. On arrival in West Africa, they embarked on a process of conversion of the African population, an effort which involved adapting not only to the religious precepts of Islam, but also to Arabic with the imperfections associated with the acquisition of a foreign language within the context of a dominant mother tongue. Thus, the process of Islamization and Arabization occurred simultaneously. The process of the acquisition of Arabic was initially informal and at best non-formal since the early agents of Arabization were mainly merchants. As early as the 11th Century, the introduction of Islam in Kanem Borno signalled the beginning of Qur'anic Arabic education in the area. [7] The learning of Arabic alongside the Qur'an confirms the reality of the foreign status of Arabic in Nigeria.

This experience is almost analogous to the history of the development of Arabic studies in the early period of Islam. The expansion of the religion beyond the shores of the Arabian Peninsula, during this early period, witnessed the outbreak of *al-Lahn* (solecism) involving both the Arab native speakers as well as non-Arabs. The intermingling of Standard Arabic or *al ᶜArabiyyah al Fus-ḥa* with some foreign languages which resulted in the adulteration of Arabic in the conquered territories evoked interventions to preserve the textual integrity of the Qur'an and the linguistic heritage of the Arabs. The process of codification first led to the evolution of *an-Nahw* (Arabic grammar) and various aspects of Arabic philology. This development formed the basis of teaching and learning Arabic. Subsequently, extensive linguistic and literary studies emerged as an integral part of the study of traditional Islamic sciences. Linguistic reforms were later effected to simplify the language and consequently facilitate its learning. [8]

Presently, considerable number of speakers of Arabic whether as Mother Tongue (MT), Second Language (SL) or Foreign Langauge (FL) are ubiquitous in parts of the globe with varying degrees of presence. Similarly, a

large population of non-Arab Muslims who use Arabic for liturgical purposes exists in different parts of the world. Although a second language or L_2 generally refers to a language learnt after the acquisition of the mother tongue or L_1. The term 'second language' is technically applicable where the language is not indigenous to the speech community where it is used as the main language of communication. This characterization of Second Language is true of the status and function of a country's official language or lingua franca especially in a multilingual setting such as Nigeria where English functions as the language of political administration, education and commerce. A foreign language (FL) however, has no visible communicative value or function as against the roles of the mother tongue (MT) or the second language. Typical illustrations of foreign languages in Nigeria are Arabic, French, German, Latin etc. Foreign languages have no recognized official functions but are studied for intellectual or professional purposes.

The numerous indigenous Nigerian languages are used in informal interactions and also taught alongside English where the indigenous language has orthography and a school curriculum. English is, generally, the second language of the Nigerian child (it may be the third in some cases) or his first depending on the language used at home. Thus, English is not regarded strictly as a foreign language in Nigeria. A foreign language in Nigeria will therefore be defined as any language (except English and other Nigerian languages) spoken by nationals of countries other than Nigeria. By virtue of this definition and in line with the linguistic situation in Nigeria, Arabic conveniently qualifies as a foreign language in the country.

The recognition of Arabic as a Foreign Language (FL) exhibits different dimensions. In an extreme FL situation, Arabic becomes so foreign to the learners that it is merely studied for two or three lessons a week, and not used it outside of the classroom. On the contrary, an extreme SL situation which English typifies; teaching and learning may occupy a larger part of the daily life of learners. [9]

4. Arabic at the Primary and Post-Primary Levels

The roles Arabic is expected to play have been vital determinants of the approaches used in instructional delivery and extent of its study by various categories of learners. Muslims who required basic literacy in Arabic for the purpose of performing Islamic rituals are contented with the mastery of the rules of reading and writing the Arabic script. At this rudimentary level of Arabic studies, majority of the pupils who learn Arabic do so through the non-formal Qur'anic schools called '*Makarantar Allo*' or Tablet School in Northern and Eastern Nigeria and '*Ile Kewu*' or 'Home of Arabic' in Western Nigeria.. The attendant constraints of lack of a curriculum, haphazard nature of instruction, poor learning environment, lack of adequate teaching and learning aids, the excessive use of the cane to maintain discipline and limited scope of learning largely restricted to the basic literacy skills of reading and writing the Arabic script. The main teaching method in this school is parrot-like repetition and memorization method. The teacher copies the alphabets on pupil's wooden slates and then employs the choral technique in teaching them.[10]

Although some students are able to advance their studies through the more organized *madaris*, the totality of instruction at the lower level discourages many potential Arabists who might possess a strong aptitude for language learning but are advertently forced to terminate their studies at this level. The higher form of this system is found in the *`ilimi* or *`ilimiyyah* schools. Here, the pupils are introduced to a variety of branches of knowledge such as Arabic grammar, rhetorics, literature, etc. The lecture method of delivery which revolves around the reading of certain venerated texts are not used with a view of discussing the contents but merely to imbibe the message and style of the author and to memorise the details. This approach is reminiscent of medieval process of Islamic education. Thus, we find that in teaching Arabic at the secondary school level in the *Ilmiyyah* schools also identified as the *madaris,* there is an over-concentration on the grammar-translation method which stresses language learning with little or no consideration for the subsequent use of the language. Priority is thus given to ability to read and translate grammatical rules and comprehension passages while the skills of listening and speaking are ignored.

In spite of the fact that some of such schools make use of few Arab expatriates, they do not utilize the opportunity of the presence of the native speakers to create a platform for an immersion programme. Depending on their area of specialization, they may not also be involved in the teaching of pure Arabic subjects at all. In this situation, the Grammar-Translation method which offers little opportunity for second language acquisition is extensively used. Thus we discover that the foundations of the study of Arabic in Nigeria are, therefore fragile.

The teaching of a foreign language within a multilingual context calls for strategies to mitigate the negative effects of the contact between languages, the potential areas on interference between the target language and the other languages already acquired by the learner. The implication of the failure to do this is that the learner transfers features of the MT and SL as well as other languages spoken on the target language. Mutual intelligibility is, of course, hampered during interaction with native speakers of the language being acquired.

In the Nigerian public formal school system, Arabic is not offered in public schools as an independent subject. Instead, Qur'anic Arabic is taught at the rudimentary level of learning the system of Arabic orthography and the rules of its reading ostensibly for the purpose of Qur'anic recitation. In private western-oriented Islamic schools, Arabic is offered as a subject with the objective of developing communicative skills of pupils. However, as Musa puts it, "the teachers of Arabic have tended to teach the subject theoretically concentrating on its structural features and neglecting the pragmatic functioning of the language as a means of interaction".[11]

It must be acknowledged that the effort to maintain quality has been directly or indirectly enhanced by the statutory responsibilities of bodies such as the West African Examinations Council (WAEC), the National Examination Council (NECO), the Nigerian Educational Research Council (NERC), the Nigerian Arabic Language Centre and the National Universities Commission (NUC) to mention but a few. In the same vein, the Nigeria Association of Teachers of Arabic and Islamic Studies (NATAIS) has, over the years, intervened to ensure that Arabic teaching and learning produce excellent output.

However, the weaknesses associated with the teaching of Arabic at the primary level are carried on to the secondary level. One of the main purposes of teaching Arabic at the secondary level is to meet both foundational and transitional objectives particularly for those who may pursue a career in Arabic through its extensive study in higher education. The two objectives are hardly achieved since most of the students who secure admission into tertiary institutions to study Arabic are the products of the *madaris* many of whom encounter difficulties in communicating in English. This situation has inexorably provided a recipe for deficiencies in the teaching of Arabic as a foreign language at the tertiary level.

5. Methodology

The quest for insight and depth of information made the participant/observer method of investigation a basic information gathering tool for this study. The study benefited from the considerable length of practice of the researchers (12-15 years) as teachers of Arabic at the secondary and tertiary levels of education. In addition, the contents of the National University Commission's (NUC) minimum standards for Arabic were scrutinized *vis a vis* the current academic programme brochures of Arabic in three universities, namely; Kogi State University, Anyigba, the University of Jos, Jos and al-Hikmah University, Ilorin. The analysis yielded no significant difference in the literature and language aspects of the programmes in the sampled institutions. In other to establish the dimensions of current practice regarding the teaching of Arabic, the study surveyed the pedagogical approaches utilized for teaching university undergraduates and pre-service teachers in colleges of education by targeting tertiary education teachers of Arabic who attended the Conference of the Nigeria Association of Teachers of Arabic and Islamic Studies (NATAIS) held in Katsina, northern Nigeria between 4th and 6th March, 2010. Using an unstructured interview, a total of 32 respondents from 6 universities and 8 colleges of education provided information on their professional training as second language teachers, their familiarity with second language teaching methodologies, the utilization of same in actual teaching-learning contexts and the types of resources utilised to support instruction.

6. Examining Objectives and Teaching Methodologies

The objectives of offering Arabic to higher education learners in Nigeria do not significantly vary from institution to institution. The Arabists sampled agreed that achieving both academic and communicative competences are encapsulated in the philosophy and objectives of teaching Arabic in Nigeria. Apart from serving as a teacher education programme especially in the colleges of education, the Arabic programmes aim at producing Arabists in the context of globalization and technological development. Such specialists should normally be able to function effectively in contemporary human societies using the linguistic resources at their disposal as basic tools. In other words, the graduates of Arabic are expected to be proficient enough to be able to converse with educated native speakers of Arabic to the extent that linguistic and meta-linguistic (discourse on the structure of the language) exchanges can occur.

A typical illustration of the dual objective of producing graduates with academic and communicative competences is the Arabic programme at the Kogi State University which, in part, aims to "turn out competent Arabists who will be able to function effectively in social, political and economic spheres of life and to expose the students to the culture of the Arabs and the contributions of Arabic Language to West African historical and intellectual heritage in general and Nigeria in particular"[12]. In a nutshell, the institutions aim at producing professionals who will be able to function as translators, interpreters, broadcasters, writers, diplomats in the Arab world, tourism managers and in such ancillary careers such as serving curators, numismatics, ethnographers, historiographers.

The survey established that majority of the University teachers did not undergo any formal pedagogical training while their counterparts in the colleges of education did. However, both were yet to acquire competences in second language education and as such are not conversant with foreign language methodologies such as the Cognitive, Audio-Lingual, Direct Method, Natural/Communicative Approaches, Total Physical Response (TPR), the Silent Way, Suggestopedia, Community Language Learning (CLL) and the Total Immersion Programme. They could not therefore be expected to a pedagogical knowledge they were yet to acquire. Although all the institutions now have modern language laboratories which they share with other foreign and indigenous languages, the availability of Arabic resources that will make the instructional process meaningful and result-oriented is doubtful. Moreover, the effectiveness of their use to assist learners acquire requisite skills in the target language is not guaranteed.

The teaching of Arabic in higher education requires constant programme evaluation in order to ensure that, standards and operational guides for successful learning outcomes are maintained. The effectiveness of any educational programme depends partly on the quality of the planning and extent of its implementation. Arabic is taught in Nigeria within a complex multi-lingual context which makes foreign language learners susceptible to a wide range of tendencies capable of upsetting the anticipated competences in the target language. The intricate language situation in Nigeria is a direct demand on the foreign language teacher, to evolve, adapt, adopt and utilize various language teaching methods to confront the variegated teaching-learning scenarios within and outside the classroom. Knowledge of the content area is therefore as important as the pedagogical strategies deployed to ensure that learners achieve both communicative and academic competences.

In the Nigerian situation, a combination of poor motivation and labeling produce a psychological complex among learners of Arabic that not only lead to low performance but also abandoning their career in Arabic in favour of other competing 'high priority' disciplines after their first degree in Arabic. Apart from the situation in Al-Hikmah University, where the Arabic is subsidized for students there is lack of incentive for learning and teaching the subject in other institutions sampled. This concern is described by Abdul as the indifference of the Federal and State Governments as well as corresponding Ministries in the teaching of Arabic as a language, which make Arabic play a second fiddle to other foreign languages studied within the Nigerian school system. [13]

The articulation of problems associated with the teaching of Arabic as a foreign language should logically lead to the appropriate intervention.

The situation is aggravated by the unavailability of instructional resources which effectively support teaching and learning. For instance, most of the text books in circulation were designed for use in the Arab world with native speakers in mind. The facilities offered by such books to the foreign learner are thus minimal. In many cases, learners find such texts cumbersome to follow. Perfunctory interest has been shown by local authors to address the need to author suitable books that are tailored to the needs of the Nigerian learner of Arabic. Apart from Naibi Suwayd's *Kayfa natadhawwaq al-Adab al-Arabi* only a handful of beginners' primers are available for teaching the rudiments of Arabic. The lack or paucity of funds has been indicated as the main constraint of potential authors.

The most major obstacle to effective teaching of Arabic is the gaps which exist in the training of the manpower expected to ensure that teaching Arabic is effective. The lack of qualified professional educators with specialization in *teaching Arabic as a foreign language* is a critical challenge. While there are specialists for the teaching of English for Special Purpose (ESP), English for Academic Purpose (EAP), there is yet to be any attempt to incorporate in the curriculum the teaching of Arabic for professional purposes. The relative dearth of specialists quantity-wise and quality-wise identified by Abdul earlier referred to several decades ago still constitute a cog in the wheel of Arabic education in Nigeria. Therefore, one major problem of teaching Arabic in Nigeria is the predominance of literature specialists and lack of adequate language experts in Arabic as a foreign language. Substantial number of teachers of Arabic in our tertiary institutions are more at home in teaching literature, stylistics in Arabic literature, Arabic literary history etc. Specialists in teaching Arabic as a foreign language are near non-existent. This has posed a serious threat to the professional handling of teaching of Arabic language to non-Arab speakers in the country. No wonder then that the proficiency levels of graduates of Arabic from universities in the Arab world is not comparable to the levels attained by graduates of Arabic from Nigerian universities. There is no gainsaying the fact that today, in spite of the continuity and positive change in the enrollment of candidates for Arabic studies in Nigeria, the performance in Arabic language in Nigeria is drastically dwindling. It is interesting to note that institutions in the Arab world especially in Saudi Arabia, Sudan, and perhaps Egypt now emphasize the training of teachers of Arabic as a foreign language as obtainable in the Western world particularly United States of America and Europe where their programs provide for the teaching of Arabic as a foreign language. The fact of the non-availability of specialists in the linguistic study of Arabic and its pedagogy is further corroborated by the lopsidedness in the research output of lecturers in Arabic in Nigerian tertiary institutions. The research focus of the lecturers has tilted more to the literary aspect rather than the linguistic aspect.

7. The Strategies

Producing graduates of Arabic with native-like ability should be an ultimate aim of any credible Arabic programme. This programme of instruction should result in high self-esteem, autonomy and effective communicative skills at the end of the training programme. Various strategies exhibit separate strengths and weaknesses when applied in different contexts. A combination of strategies may also produce salutary results depending on aspects of second language learning involved. Thus, a clear demand on the pedagogical capacities of the Second Language (SL) teacher and more importantly his creativity and resourcefulness will be required. For instance, the Total Immersion Programme be it the effective or ineffective typology has a high potential of yielding impressive outcomes. While the former involves slow communication of the teacher in the target language the latter in which the teacher speaks more rapidly has the capacity of replicating the target language culture if properly implemented. However, the best immersion technique may be incapable of developing capacity for spontaneous oral communication in different domains and contexts. The learning environment has a

crucial role to play in ensuring that the learning period is prolonged as much as possible beyond the time allotted for classroom interaction.

This brings to the fore the need to evolve a strategy that could address the peculiarities of teaching and learning Arabic within the framework of the Nigerian tertiary education system. The initiative to establish an Arabic Language Village within the speech community of Shuwa Arabs deserves applause. Within the Village, Arabic is made the *lingua franca* since Arabic is the common linguistic denominator among higher education students who converge there for the one year language acculturation programme. However, the facilities offered at the village ought to form the climax of the second language education of the trainees. It is is in the light of this that this study proposes the Intensive Arabic Teaching-Learning Approach as adapted from Netten and Germain. The Intensive Arabic (IF) entails the following processes:

1. A reflection of an equilibrium between academic and communicative competences in the course offerings of the BA. Arabic programme.
2. Use of Arabic as the 'only' medium' of communication in the Arabic language and literature classroom.
3. Allocation of a minimum of contact 200 hours to classroom encounters within the second semester of the second year of a four-year programme through the use of a concentrated curriculum.
4. During the one-year acculturation programme, the number of contact periods should reach a minimum of 250 hours per semester.
5. Academic staff at the Arabic Village should be made up of a minimum of 70% native speakers preferably with specialization in teaching Arabic as a second language.
6. To ensure constant exposure to Arabic and the culture of the Arabs, the acculturation programme should be packed with both academic and social activities including socialization with the Arabic speaking Shuwa tribe.
7. Emphasis in the year four should be on assessing and monitoring extent of oral proficiency and fluency in using Arabic for various purposes. Remediating deficiencies and reinforcement of skills acquired should take place at this level.

The multi-stage strategy proposed above is premised on the limitations of learning Arabic in an environment in which it is not spoken and also in view of the fact that the learner may not benefit from the "luxury" of spending a long period in an Arabic speaking community. The strategy is therefore focused on various intensive teaching-learning experiences backed by a combination of old and modern teaching and learning resources all of which should be propelled by relevant pedagogy. The main strategy is to ensure that the learner masters the complex system of a language within a reasonable span. A studied review of the entire educational plan for learning Arabic in Nigeria such that there will be a synergy among all the domains in which Arabic is learnt is inescapable. This step will logically lead to the evolution of an integrated curriculum of Arabic which will include all levels of the teaching of the subject as well as ensure that both academic and communicative objectives are not only reflected in the curriculum but well balanced. This opens the way for more equitable opportunities for specialization in the literary and linguistic aspects of the language.

More importantly, the curriculum should begin to reflect the needs of learners to be able to compete effectively for scarce job opportunities after graduation. The curriculum content at the university level should not only include course offerings that would empower the graduate of Arabic to be self employed but also include course offerings in linguistics and language pedagogy. At the postgraduate level, it should be feasible to mount graduate courses leading to specialization in teaching Arabic as a foreign language. Such a programme will benefit immensely from the quality of the Arabic undergraduate programmes and the resourceful teaching of the subject at the lower levels given the expected broad orientation of the learners. Apart from this, various short-term certificate and diploma courses in Arabic should be mounted to cater for the needs of learners who intend to use Arabic solely for communicative purposes either because of their socio-economic interests or religious

preferences. To achieve all of these, a new corps of professionals must be trained otherwise, these objectives will remain mere dreams. Faculties of Education should consider mounting programmes leading to the award of Bachelor of Arts in Education with the chief aim of producing Arabic language educationists.

Immediate strategies which can be functionally deployed in the classroom include but not limited to a number of specific Measures. The questions teachers of Arabic must first answer are: Why is the class taking place? Are there enough opportunities for the learners to practice? Who is at the centre of classroom activities, the teacher or the learner?. In proffering credible answers to these questions, teachers would at the same time ensure that the learner requires a huge dose of motivation to be able to excel. Furthermore, the following additional policies should ensure greater effectiveness of second language instruction:

1. The teacher must be familiar with the general theory and practice of language teaching to make a success of teaching Arabic.
2. There should be a strategic use of the combination of the audio-lingual modeling of dialogues through the target language, grammar translation, Total Physical Response (TPR) and the silent way method.
3. Teachers should identify different learning styles of the learners to customize the methods of their teaching to soothe different learning styles.
4. In this modern age, Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) through appropriate software, teacher-generated electronic resources and through Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs) and customized language laboratories should form part of the resources for teaching Arabic to non-Arab learners.
5. The social media network offers opportunities of interaction with native speakers and foreign speakers of Arabic worldwide. Students should be guided on the strategies for benefiting maximally from this facility.
6. Students must be accorded the opportunity of interacting with experienced Arab and non-Arab faculty members (depending on the human resources available) during classroom encounters and in various mentoring situations.
7. Students should offer courses in linguistics, especially applied linguistics, sociolinguistics, second language acquisition, methods of teaching foreign language and Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL)

8. Conclusion

Globalisation on the one hand has revealed a greater need for people to communicate more extensively through the instrumentality of language. The language learning landscape has been rapidly evolving. It is note-worthy that teacher education is not a one-shot exercise. In language teaching, teachers need to update their skills to be abreast of new developments so as to create the most positive impact on students. Arabists should begin to pursue the new vision of promoting and showcasing the potentials of Arabic as a vital means of communication in an ever-changing world. Since the classroom remains the ideal place for structured learning, Arabic language teachers, in Nigeria, must develop the capacity to harness the resources offered by modern technology to enhance the effectiveness of their teaching. Although the teacher's speech primarily functions as a resource in delivery, technological devices offer useful facilities for enhancing teaching-learning activities. Electronic resources such as e-books, audio and video devices such as cassettes, CDs and DVDs, digital broadcasts ensure that teaching resources are not confined to the teacher. More importantly, the expertise of the teacher in foreign language education and his creativity in managing different teaching-learning scenarios is germane to make a success of second language learning.

References

[1] *World languages and cultures, "Arabic"*.
Retrieved from http://www.vistawide.com/arabic/why_arabic.htm on 3/4/12.

[2] *Ethnologue: Languages of the world*.
Retrieved from http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=shu on 27/5/12.

[3] Akmajian, A., Demers, R., Farmer, A. & Harnish, R. *Linguistics: An introduction to language and communication*. 5th ed. New Delhi: Prentice Hall of India Private Limited, 2008.

[4] Abubakre, A. Survival of Arabic in difficult terrains. *Inaugural Lecture*, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria 2002.

[5] Oladosu, AGAS. Fluctuations in the Fortunes of Arabic Education in Nigeria. *Inaugural Lecture*, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria, 2012. pp.49-50.

[6] Musa, I.A. *A critical study of the implementation of the rules of `Ilmult-Tajwid and `ilmul-Qira'at in Nigeria*. Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Jos, Jos, Nigeria, 2012; p56.

[7] Bello, M. *Infāqul-Maysūr fī Ta'rīkh Bilād at-Takrūr* ed. Abu Bakr Gummi, Cairo: n.pub. 1964 p.10 59-50.

[8] Raji, MGA. The rise & fall of the classical Arabic language. *Journal of Islamic research*, 2003.3

[9] Ryding, KC. *Some key issues in learning Arabic as a foreign language*. Retrieved from http://arabic.georgetown.edu/about/aboutarabic/afl/ on 03/05/12.

[10] Ogunbiyi, I. A. Teaching Arabic language skills in Nigeria. *Kaduna language symposium procedings,* 1987. p.146.

[11] Musa, I.A. (2008). Developing the child's communicative skills in Arabic. *Nigerian journal of religious education,* p.60-71.

[12] Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies. Kogi State University, *Academic Programme 2012-2017*, pp.6-7.

[13] Abdul M O A. (1981). The Teaching of Arabic in Nigerian Universities: Problems and Prospects. *Journal of NATAIS*, 1981, p. 40-52.

[14] Netten J and Germain C. *Pedagogy and second language learning: Lessons learned from Intensive French. Retrieved* from http://www.aclacaal.org/Revue/vol-8-no2-art-netten-germain.pdf on 22/10/12.