



# **Feasibility Study for Collaborative Implementation of Strategic Languages**

*A study into creating collaborative models of course  
development and delivery in Arabic and Chinese*

On behalf of the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)

By

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## ***Context***

This feasibility study on collaborative implementation of strategic languages has been commissioned by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). It focuses specifically on Arabic and Chinese, mapping trends in student demand and current provision as well as exploring possible collaborative models of course development and delivery for these languages.

The project has been managed by the Open University with the assistance of partner institutions (Nottingham Trent University, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of Portsmouth, University of Salford and University of Southampton).

## ***Aims and Objectives***

The project aimed to establish the demand, deliverables and modes of course delivery working in partnership between the OU and conventional universities. The feasibility study focused in particular on the following objectives:

- to carry out a comprehensive overview of current provision and public interest in these languages;
- to negotiate within the consortium a plan for strategic languages and secure a willingness to commit to a cooperative venture;
- to develop course proposals for at least one Arabic course and/or one Chinese course at beginners' level.

## ***Study Findings***

The findings reported are based on numerous data collected from a variety of available sources and special market research commissioned by the Open University for this study. Although conclusions can only be indicative, as information is inevitably incomplete, main findings from different sources seem to be consistent with respect to general trends, interest and challenges ahead.

The evidence of the research data gathered clearly indicates that the demand for studying Arabic and Chinese languages is increasing in all kinds of provision, however overall figures remain low compared to traditionally studied European languages such as French, Spanish, German and Italian. It seems that the strategic importance of these languages has been recognised nationally and internationally at a political level but it still needs to be emphasised at an educational level.

From the evidence available, it could be suggested that the causes of historically low enrolments in Arabic and Chinese are due to some of the following factors:

- scarce provision,
- mismatch between demand and provision,
- lack of flexible mode of instruction,
- political and educational support for the study of European languages,
- lack of interest in non-European languages,
- unawareness of contribution of languages to personal development,
- perceived irrelevance in career prospects,
- lack of clear connection between languages, mobility and global communication.
- perceived difficulties in learning non-European languages.

The consortium has explored ways to deal with these factors in a collaborative way.

### ***Collaborative Course Models***

All partner institutions in the consortium were involved in the Strategic Languages Working Group in order to negotiate a possible collaborative course model, and expressed willingness to continue negotiations on course specifications and the development of materials for new courses in the future.

Different aspects of the specific courses were discussed and agreed, namely the development of 30 point credit beginners' courses, a focus on global aspects of the languages, course structure, general communicative pedagogy, a curriculum that integrates language study and development of cultural awareness, suitable materials, and a flexible itemised format. There were also initial discussions but no final decisions on potential syllabus and themes, intended learning outcomes and general assessment strategy.

The consortium considers that the collaborative course models will be unique and attractive with distinct features such as up to date content, use of new media, enhanced online provision, a progressive curriculum with enhanced pedagogies, maximum flexibility to enable a wider participation amongst learners. It also believes that collaboration could be an effective mechanism to achieve the goals of this project.

The proposed models could bring a number of benefits to the sector. The benefits include:

- the involvement of multiple institutions in collaborative arrangements building on complementary strengths and expertise of individual partners,
- mitigation of potential financial risks,
- design and testing of new models of curriculum development,
- coordinated development of appropriate teaching materials,
- an effective and far reaching supply to meet demand from students irrespective of their geographical location.

### **Issues for consideration**

Various issues have been identified as affecting the feasibility of the planned courses in Arabic and Chinese by the consortium.

Firstly, attracting a variety of students, inducting potential learners on the benefits and challenges of studying Arabic and Chinese, careful design and effective structure of courses are key measures to a successful recruitment and retention of students in Arabic and Chinese.

Secondly, innovative course models could encounter traditional conceptions on how to learn languages. Resistance to the use of technology needs to be addressed with adequate induction and promotion of its potential.

Thirdly, language specialists are needed to deliver growing provision. Teacher development and training is currently a major concern as there are very low numbers pursuing postgraduate studies and seeking teacher qualifications.

In relation to all the above issues, an effective targeted marketing is essential. Promotional activities could also be directed at the role of languages for communication, understanding, business and other employment.

Finally, two further issues could impact on the realisation of the proposed models. On the one hand, it is anticipated that funding from the government will be needed to support this project as well as students willing to engage with it. On the other hand, the consortium will have to investigate any issues concerning the intellectual property of the materials and models developed in partnership.

## ***Recommendations***

In order to address the findings of this study, the consortium recommends the following actions:

### **1. Ensure adequate provision at national level**

Provision of strategic languages is in the nation's interest. There should be an effort from the Government to ensure a good provision of these languages in HE. Provision of needs to be matched to growing demand. A national strategy for effective provision of Arabic and Chinese that can reach all students should be urgently considered.

### **2. Expand types of provision**

There is a need to expand current types of provision in strategic languages in order to make connections with a wider range of students and introduce more flexibility and choice of learning modes. This could be achieved with coordinated actions between conventional and distance learning institutions embracing new technologies.

### **3. Encourage and reward collaboration**

Collaboration across HEIs should be encouraged for efficiency sakes in sharing and adopting of best practices as well as innovative models of cost-effective collaboration and partnerships with local schools and colleges, including support of local teachers. Funds could be directed to cooperation between different delivery systems of instruction in order to improve provision of Arabic and Chinese language courses.

### **4. Support promotional initiatives in order to stimulate demand**

Promotional initiatives need to focus on encouraging the study of Arabic and Chinese with the use of attractive materials, emphasising the potential of technology for language learning, linking strategic languages with employment highlighting the role of languages in students' professional careers, and raising awareness of the direct correlation between language skills and successful trade.

### **5. Develop introductory courses in Arabic and Chinese**

This report has offered a compelling case for the need to create high quality 30 CATS-point Level 1 language courses in both Arabic and Chinese, as a multi-HEI collaboration. Furthermore best value for money will be achieved by working collaboratively on developing courses that are flexible enough to suit various types of HEIs. HEFCE should support this development.

## **PART I: THE STUDY**

Part I summarises the rationale behind the study, including an explanation of the educational context that identified the need to support strategic languages at a national level. It also offers a description of the main aims, objectives and scope of the study, partners involved and the reporting framework of the consortium.

### ***Introduction***

This feasibility study is part of a three strand project on collaborative models of course development and delivery funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). The project was proposed by the Open University (OU) with the support of a number of Higher Education institutions (HEIs) as an initial step towards greater collaboration within the sector to meet the strategic needs of the country. The initiative sought to establish a national consortium to harness the different but complementary attributes and delivery capabilities of the OU and other HE providers.

The main purpose of the feasibility study was to assess the possibility of increasing national capacity in Arabic and Mandarin Chinese through bringing together a community of academics from a range of partners, and to determine the means by which the consortium might best collaborate over the creation and delivery of courses in strategic languages.

### ***Background***

Seven years ago, the Nuffield Foundation reported that languages were in crisis.<sup>1</sup> More recently, Alan Johnson, the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pointed to problems being encountered in a number of core discipline areas, including strategic languages (such as Arabic and Chinese). In the past few decades knowledge of Arabic and Chinese languages and cultures has been identified as of strategic importance for intercultural understanding. The Parker Report already predicted the long-term 'major political and commercial significance' of these languages.<sup>2</sup>

At the same time both languages have been recognised as vulnerable subjects, i.e. subjects where supply and demand are threatened, whilst the government attaches strategic importance to them and provision should not be left entirely to market forces within the HE sector.<sup>3</sup> Individual institutions are finding it difficult to achieve the critical mass of student numbers necessary to deliver strategic language subjects (with the notable exception of, for example, Russell Group institutions.) Whilst there is demand generally in small pockets, very few institutions have sufficient students to offer a viable strategic languages programme, thus exacerbating national and regional skills shortages.

In its advice to the Secretary of State, the HEFCE suggested that the OU might be able to play a sector-wide role in addressing this problem, since it could make available 'provision to relatively isolated pockets of student demand and can deploy centrally

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<sup>1</sup> "Languages: The Next Generation", the final report and recommendations of The Nuffield Languages Inquiry, The Nuffield Foundation, May 2000, p. 54. Available at: <http://languages.nuffieldfoundation.org/languages/links/index.asp>

<sup>2</sup> "Speaking for the Future", a report to the University Grants Committee, February 1986, p.15.

<sup>3</sup> "Strategically important and vulnerable subjects", final report of HEFCE Chief Executive's Strategically Important Subjects Advisory Group, June 2005. Available at: [http://www.hefce.ac.uk/Pubs/hefce/2005/05\\_24/#exec](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/Pubs/hefce/2005/05_24/#exec)

developed curriculum materials to a range of partners.<sup>4</sup> The Council for Industry and Higher Education also suggested that ‘minority languages could be offered by The OU through a central spine approach and as a supplement to other subjects offered by individual institutions’.<sup>5</sup> The OU responded with a project on collaborative models focusing on these issues. In addition, the initiative sought to create an opportunity for addressing other national priorities on a significant scale, such as widening participation and fair access, stimulating new sources of student demand and enhancing excellence in learning and teaching<sup>6</sup> in a cost efficient way for students and institutions across England. This activity is also in line with the recommendations by the European Language Council (ELC)<sup>7</sup> with respect to the promotion of language learning and linguistic diversity among undergraduates of all disciplines as central to the process of integration and participation.<sup>8</sup>

There are many benefits in sharing technological expertise, tools and resources across institutions rather than working in isolation. Cost effective provision could be created by combining the available resources from a number of institutions as well as working on innovative developments together. Partnership between distance-learning and conventional educational institutions could be particularly beneficial and effective. For instance, many full-time institutions have invested in high-tech language laboratories and some are currently investing in on-line resources for the benefit of their students. The OU has developed, supported through extensive research, a successful approach to delivering language courses at a national scale using unique and innovative technologies that enhance pedagogy for language learning and foster e-learning. Among these, the OU has been using pioneering synchronous online conferencing systems which enable interactive communication between teachers and students.

Although this study focuses on Arabic and Chinese it is believed that any experience gained in the collaborative exploration of models of course development and delivery could be applied to other potential language initiatives, or indeed to other strategic and vulnerable subjects. Therefore, it makes sense to share the financial risks with HEFCE rather than leave it exclusively to supporting partner institutions.

### ***Participant Institutions***

For this study, the Faculty of Education and Language Studies of The Open University entered into partnership arrangements with five HEIs:

- Nottingham Trent University, School of Arts and Humanities
- School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), Faculty of Languages and Cultures
- University of Portsmouth, School of Languages and Area Studies
- University of Salford, School of Languages

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4 “Strategically important and vulnerable subjects”, final report of HEFCE Chief Executive’s Strategically Important Subjects Advisory Group, June 2005, p. 12. Available at: [http://www.hefce.ac.uk/Pubs/hefce/2005/05\\_24/#exec](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/Pubs/hefce/2005/05_24/#exec)

5 “Strategically Important Subjects”, Council for Industry and Higher Education, April 2005, p. 5. Available at: [www.cihe-uk.com/docs/SUBS/Strategically\\_important0504.pdf](http://www.cihe-uk.com/docs/SUBS/Strategically_important0504.pdf)

6 HEFCE Strategic Plan, 2003-08, pp. 11-14. Available at: [http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/HEFCE/2003/03\\_35.htm](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/HEFCE/2003/03_35.htm)

7 An independent organisation that since 1997 has been working on the issues of a multilingual and multicultural Europe from the point of view of higher education. Their present efforts are concentrated on two complementary network projects supported by the European Commission: the Thematic Network Project in the Area of Languages III (TNP3) and the European Network for the Promotion of Language Learning Among All Undergraduates (ENLU).

8 “Promoting Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity: An Action Plan 2004-2006”, Commission of the European Communities. Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, COM(2003) 449 final.



- University of Southampton, Modern Languages Department and Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies (Higher Education Academy)

All partners were keen to participate in the consortium with the OU and to take the opportunity to support the government's national languages strategy.

### ***Aims***

The main aims of this strand of the project were to establish the demand, deliverables and modes of course delivery working in partnership between the OU and conventional universities as a cost effective means of increasing national capacity in strategic languages.

### ***Objectives***

The feasibility study focused in particular on the following objectives:

- to carry out a comprehensive overview of current provision and public interest in these languages;
- to negotiate within the consortium a plan for strategic languages and secure a willingness to commit to a cooperative venture;
- to develop course proposals for at least one Arabic course and/or one Chinese course at beginners' level.

### ***Scope***

The scope of this feasibility study was to report on trends of supply and demand in Arabic and Chinese, focusing on needs, interests and potential gaps in the current provision. Central to the study was the exploration of collaborative course models. The consortium explored a collaborative course model for HE that could respond to the need for pedagogic innovation, curriculum design and widening access. In consultation with partner institutions the OU has conducted a business appraisal of possible course models for both Arabic and Mandarin Chinese, including in depth market research, a cost benefit analysis, an assessment of risk and an agreed timescale for the delivery of the courses. It was outside the remit of the project to undertake the development of materials or seek to market or recruit students to the proposed courses.

### ***Organizational and Reporting Framework***

In order to achieve the set objectives a Steering Group involving representatives from all the key stakeholders has overseen progress of the whole Collaborative Models of Course Development and Delivery project. A Strategic Languages Advisory Panel met on three occasions to identify the most appropriate route for collaboration in Arabic and Chinese and sought to mitigate risks identified. The Advisory Panel reported outcomes of their discussions to the Steering Group. The Advisory Panel recommended the creation of a Working Group that could enter into in-depth negotiations on innovative collaborative course models for each language. All members of the consortium demonstrated willingness to commit to a cooperative venture with specialist representatives for each language in the Working Group (see Appendix 1). There were four meetings of the Working Group and main outcomes of these are summarised in Part III of this study.

## **PART II: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

Part II presents main findings from the most recent quantitative and qualitative data on trends in student numbers and provision of Arabic and Chinese language learning in the past few years, as well as on current levels of interest.

### ***Introduction***

Market intelligence has been gathered to inform this study from secondary school to postgraduate level as well as provision by language centres and local education authorities. In addition, the OU commissioned further research on the level of student interest in learning these languages, and other general language learning data. Other sources of information such as research papers and official reports have also been taken into consideration. The study has also been informed by data provided by Asset Languages.

It is important to highlight some issues emerging from the statistics with respect to these two languages:

- Many of the studies reflect a low percentage of responses from the targeted population so data should be interpreted with caution.
- There is lack of clarity in most of the data with respect to which variety of Arabic (Modern Standard, Egyptian, Moroccan, Lebanese, etc.) or Chinese (i.e. Mandarin, Cantonese or Hakka) is being used.
- Similarly, current classifications and references to Middle Eastern and Chinese Studies disguise actual figures for these languages, as it is uncertain whether the programmes offer language content and how many students are including language in their studies.
- Data related to different kinds of language provision refers to different points in time so it is hard to get a complete picture of actual activity within a year or from year to year.
- It is not possible to differentiate accurately foreign language students from the so called heritage students, i.e. learners raised in homes where the target language was spoken.
- Individual institutions might code and report their figures to HESA in different ways.

### ***Sources of Data***

This summary uses the following sources from websites and publications:

- Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data reflecting students' enrolments in Higher Education across all years during 1998-2006.
- An analysis of the HESA data on enrolment trends (FPE) from 2002/03 to 2005/06 carried out by the DfES, June 2007.
- A HESA survey on destinations of first-degree language graduates (2004/05), January 2006.
- A summary of HESA data (headcount) by CILT, the National Centre for Languages, June 2007.
- Universities and Colleges Admissions Services (UCAS), subject and applicant characteristics data from first-year students' applications for Major subject of study, 2005.
- An analysis of the UCAS data (including all applications and acceptances) from 1996-2006 carried out by CILT, the National Centre for Languages, June 2007.

- The report “The National Languages Strategy in Higher Education” by Hilary Footitt, University Council of Modern Languages, 2005. Examines national/regional trends in HE provision, professional and vocational routes, institutional factors which promote and extend learning during 1998/99-2001/02.
- The report “Community language learning in England, Wales and Scotland” on a survey carried out by CILT, the National Centre for Languages, to look at trends in community languages in local authorities, mainstream and complementary schools, 2005.
- A survey on adult language provision by Local Education Authorities (LEAs) in England carried out by CILT, the National Centre for Languages in collaboration with the Association for Language Learning and National Institute of Adult and Continuing Education (September 2003–August 2004), May 2005 (69 responding= 46%).
- A survey of less specialist language learning in UK Universities (1998/99) by Keith Marshall, December 2001 (58 responding= 41%).
- A report on ab initio language teaching in UK language degree programmes, the Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies (LLAS), based on a short questionnaire, June 2006 (26 responding).
- The feasibility study “Language Skills” by Canterbury Christ Church University College and partners from the University of Surrey, University of Southampton, the Federation of Small Businesses and the Languages National Training Organisation, on behalf of the South East Development Agency (SEEDA) to explore the potential to improve business competitiveness through language skills, November 2000-March 2001.
- The report “Chinese Studies in UK Schools”, British Association for Chinese Studies, June 2003.
- A report on foreign language study in HE in Europe by Nick Byrne based on the survey sent to all members of the European Network for the Promotion of Language Learning Among All Undergraduates (ENLU), September 2005 (23 countries responding= 88%).
- A marketing survey on the number of language undergraduates, range of languages, policies and models in Europe by the Pôle Universitaire Européen de Lorraine, ENLU project, October 2005 (123 universities responding= 25%).
- A report on the use of distance education and e-learning for language learning among undergraduates in Europe, survey carried out in 2005 by the ENLU project TASK GROUP 3, April 2006 (28 institutions responding).
- The study “ELAN: Effects on the European Economy of Shortages of Foreign Language Skills in Enterprise” undertaken by CILT in collaboration with InterAct International and international team of researchers to investigate the use of language skills by SMEs across Europe, December 2006.

The summary also includes data from the following studies commissioned by the Faculty of Education and Language Studies, The Open University:

- A survey on the interest of the general public in beginners Arabic and Chinese. Examines appeal, motivation, interest levels from demographic groups, preferences of place of study and course levels, August 2006 (10,000 individuals, age 15+ national).
- A survey on the interest in beginners Arabic and Chinese of current OU language students at level 1 and 2, humanities level 1 and business management students.

Examines appeal, size, length of course and reasons for interest, November 2006 (163 responding= 19%).

- Interviews with OU language students at level 1 and 2 on preferences for course length and credits awarded, February 2007 (227 responding).
- A survey on the participation levels in Arabic and Chinese in Institution Wide Language Programmes (IWLPs) in 2005/06-2006/07, February 2007 (14 responding).
- An analysis of HESA data (2002-2005) to determine trends in student numbers following combined or joint honours degree programmes including Middle Eastern or Chinese Studies, July 2007.
- A focus group research study in each partner institution on the type and nature of a beginners' course in Arabic and/or Chinese that would be attractive to students, June-July 2007 (5 institutions responding).

### ***Trends in Student Numbers and Provision in Arabic and Chinese***

This section presents key statistical data on Arabic and Chinese language in all types of education at a national level and beyond. It highlights how, in the past decade, there have been considerable changes in student numbers taking up these languages and how new offerings have been responding to the demand. Detailed figures and more information can be found in the Appendices.

#### **1. Enrolments**

Despite a discouraging picture at the end of the 90s, student numbers for Arabic and Chinese have been steadily increasing in the UK since 2002 in all kinds of provision, from secondary to HE. This change in demand can be related to promotional activities leading to an increase in offerings. Evidence of upward trends for learning these languages seems to be global.

1.1 Trends in enrolments in Arabic and Chinese were reported as going from insignificant and fragile figures to critically low in the period 1998/9-2001/02.

- UCAS data on full-time equivalent first degree undergraduates during this period shows a very limited uptake of both Arabic and Chinese (see Appendix 2).
- HESA data confirms an overall sharp decrease in the numbers of UK, EU and overseas domiciled first degree undergraduates taking strategically important languages in England during that period. Modern Middle Eastern Studies decreased an average of -9%, this percentage goes up to -12% with respect to UK students alone.<sup>9</sup> Chinese decreased substantially more, an average of -16% (see Appendix 3).

1.2 Growing student numbers in HE since 2002 for both languages (although from very low baselines). Spectacular changes are reflected in HESA published data on Chinese in the following years. Arabic is shown as growing at a slower pace. However, both languages present a faster expansion in first degree, other undergraduate as well as in postgraduate enrolments compared to the average change in other languages.

- HESA data shows over 500 FTE counts in both Modern Middle Eastern Studies and Chinese Studies across a range of HEIs (see Appendix 3 & 4).

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<sup>9</sup> HESA data quoted in Footitt, 2005, p. 9. Previously, in 2001, Marshall had reported that from a total of 25,801 language students in less specialist languages in HE and FE degree levels in 1998/99, very low numbers were taking up Arabic (15 students, 0.06%) and Chinese (186 students, 0.7%).

- Total headcount data as reflected by HESA indicates a minor drop in Modern Middle Eastern Studies in the year 2005/06 while Chinese appears on the rise (see Appendix 2).
- 1.3 Preferred routes recorded by UCAS show fast disappearing numbers of first degree undergraduates studying single honours or majoring in all languages. A trend reflected in both Modern Middle Eastern Studies and Chinese Studies where students are choosing joint or combined honours degrees (see Appendix 2).
- 1.4 In terms of mode of study, according to HESA data (see Appendix 5), the trend from 2003/04 to 2005/06 reveals a clear preference for:
- part-time study in both languages at undergraduate level, with postgraduates preferring full-time mode.
  - Modern Middle Eastern Studies show a more stable picture throughout the years with slight growth while Chinese Studies reflect more marked increases although with less students overall.
- 1.5 This tendency is also noticeable in the latest figures by institution from the Association of University Language Centres in the UK and Ireland, showing enrolments in languages overall much higher in extra-curricular courses than in degree modules. Excluding OU students, Queen's Belfast is at the top with 1,917 students registered in extra-curricular languages.<sup>10</sup>
- 1.6 Recent demand for Arabic and Chinese has been particularly strong at entry level and level 1. This can be linked to the fact that until now provision for these languages has been quite limited.
- Very low learners are taking up higher level courses for both languages, although numbers in higher levels have been slowly increasing in recent years.
  - Low student numbers at postgraduate level (including PGCE), particularly in Chinese. In 2001/02 numbers of UK domiciled postgraduates were reported as just 125 studying Arabic or affiliated subjects, and 85 in Chinese.<sup>11</sup> Figures, however, show an encouraging improvement in recent years (see Appendix 4).
  - On a survey commissioned by the OU, 14 Institution Wide Language Programmes (IWLPs)<sup>12</sup> also reported an increase in student numbers for both languages at lower levels between 2005/06 and 2006/07. These changes represent, however, only an average increase of 21 students in Chinese, and just 9 in Arabic (see Appendix 8).
- 1.7 A greater interest in these languages and therefore higher enrolments at level 1 were earlier noticed in responses from a 2003 survey by other Adult Language Learning in England (Local Education Authorities)<sup>13</sup>
- Three quarters (74%) of all learners were studying at entry level and level 1.
  - The number of students in LEAs increased 50% in both languages between 2000 and 2003. Arabic was in bigger demand with 965 enrolments than Chinese with 709 learners, although more LEAs offered Chinese.

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<sup>10</sup> Excluding the OU, King's College London figures at the top with 1,048 students registered in languages as part of their degree.

<sup>11</sup> As reported by Footitt, 2005, p. 12.

<sup>12</sup> Data reflects responses from adult language learning provision in Bath, Birmingham, Brighton, Cambridge, City, Durham, Exeter, Loughborough, Manchester, Nottingham, Nottingham Trent, Portsmouth, Salford, Sussex.

<sup>13</sup> As reported by CILT, May 2005.

- One of the identified barriers to provision was low learner numbers (35% of institutions) resulting in cancellation of courses.

1.8 Another indicator of the growing popularity of these languages are the latest figures recorded by the Asset Languages Assessment Scheme developed as part of the National Languages Strategy in England. Assessment figures reflect the uptake of Arabic (since 2006) and Chinese (since 2005) at different levels and with respect to different skills.

- Total entries across 4 skills and 3 stages in 2006/07 reveal a great interest in Chinese with 3,100 entries for this language and a good response to first offerings in Arabic with 600 entries.<sup>14</sup>
- In addition, 270 applications were registered in total for Accredited Teacher status, 90 of which were for Arabic and 180 for Mandarin Chinese.

1.9 Figures for secondary education in England, Wales and Scotland during period 2001-2005 also show a growing pattern (see Appendix 9):

- Total increase in GCSE entries was recorded as +9% compared to much rapid changes for Arabic (+63%) and Chinese (+40%).
- A Level entries in England almost doubled for both languages in that period, showing strong retention rates especially for Chinese from GCSE entries. For instance in 2001, 70% of GCSE entries for Chinese went to continue A Level while in 2003 only 22% of GCSE entries continued with Arabic.
- The British Association of Chinese Studies has mentioned as factors influencing the rise in schools:<sup>15</sup>
  - the independent sector,
  - town-twinning,
  - specialist language colleges (since 1996),
  - language assistants (organised by GAP since 1990, and the British Council since 2000).

1.10 More specifically, in 2002, Edexcel records for vocational qualifications showed 2,701 entrants for GCSE Chinese and 1,783 for AS/A2. These were mostly studying at international schools and were of Chinese background.

1.11 In relation to this it is relevant to point out that schools sector data hides heritage students from second language learners. It is unclear at this point which of these groups is expanding and more research is necessary to clarify this issue.

## 2. Provision

Arabic and Chinese emerge in the data as vulnerable subjects since it seems that there has been a lack of provision and currently offerings are still not able to cover adequately the demand. Although provision has been strengthened, it is not reaching all areas and all students. In his report, Marshall indicated that very few HE and FE institutions were offering degree levels in 1998/99.<sup>16</sup> From a total 56 HEIs offering languages only 2 institutions (4%) were reporting Arabic and 9 (16%) institutions Chinese. Moreover, there is evidence of uneven regional offerings and concentration of student numbers in a few institutions.

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<sup>14</sup> Data provided by Caroline Cole, Centre Support Manager, Asset Languages, July 2007.

<sup>15</sup> "Chinese Studies in UK Schools", 2003, p. 13.

<sup>16</sup> Marshall, 2001, 3.1.

- 2.1 Latest data on student numbers per region show them highly concentrated in the London area and the South East. Figures from 2001/02 show insufficient regional offer at undergraduate level<sup>17</sup>
- Middle Eastern studies were absent in Merseyside, East Midlands, East, West Midlands
  - Chinese studies were absent in Merseyside, East, South West, West Midlands
- 2.2 Provision and demand varies considerably from region to region. In the critical period 1998/99 to 2001/02 a decline in demand shows the London region (-24%) as the most affected with respect to Arabic and the North West (-80%) with respect to Chinese (see Appendix 10).
- 2.3 In her report, Footitt indicated that 'there is a growing concentration of language undergraduate courses in a small number of institutions.'<sup>18</sup>
- The provision of languages was reported as concentrated in the Russell Group HEIs.
  - In particular, provision for Arabic and Chinese has been very unstable with, on the one hand, some significant cutbacks such as the ones at the University of Durham in 2002, and on the other, the creation of new programmes.
- 2.4 Trends in provision since 2004 indicate the following, although the actual volume of activity is unknown:
- Institutionally wise, according to HESA data, during 2004-2006 courses leading to named degrees were concentrated in a few institutions. Highest student numbers in Modern Middle Eastern Studies appear in SOAS and with respect to Chinese Studies numbers are highest at the University of Leeds. Noticeable as well is the fact that the University of Westminster has increased its full time intake significantly in Middle Eastern Studies (see Appendix 6).
  - More HEIs are offering part-time courses.
  - More HEIs were running small groups of Chinese and Arabic as part of combined programme of study. There are fewer degree programmes for Chinese.
  - There has been a considerable increase of offerings in HEIs in 2005, with 119 courses in Chinese and 111 courses in Arabic.<sup>19</sup>
  - A recent survey at LCI found that 80 out of 105 universities in Britain offer some kind of Chinese language courses.<sup>20</sup>
  - Most basic training provision for adults is through local colleges or specialist schools and institutions.
- 2.5 General Language Provision in 2003/04 in other Adult Language Learning in England (Local Education Authorities) shows the increasing popularity of Arabic and Chinese (see Appendix 7).<sup>21</sup>
- More than half of LEAs were offering courses in Chinese, and 45% of LEAs provided Arabic.
  - Most LEAs offered non-accredited language learning (93%).

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17 HESA data quoted in Footitt, 2005, p. 12.

18 Footitt, 2005, p.12

19 As reflected by annual UCAS.

20 Information provided by George Zhang, Chinese Language Course coordinator, SOAS, September 2007.

21 As reported by CILT, May 2005.

- A few LEAs offered distance learning (10%) and blended learning (10%). Data does not indicate for which language and it is reasonable to assume that these options are not still available for Arabic or Chinese.
- LEAs offered a good choice of courses:
  - daytime and evening language learning classes (almost 100%)
  - short courses (72%)
  - weekend (45%)
  - summer courses (41%)

2.6 More specifically, during the same period, the British Association of Chinese Studies reported a clear rise in provision of the teaching of Chinese in schools in the UK.<sup>22</sup>

- In 2003 the DfES listed 50 Specialist Languages Colleges in England and Wales that were offering Chinese to a certificate level, which meant about 30% of the total SLCs. In addition to these, there were at least 14 schools in the independent sector as well as a considerable number of extra-curricular offerings plus over 109 Chinese mother tongue schools.
- Currently it is estimated that 4% of secondary schools offer some provision of Mandarin Chinese.<sup>23</sup>

2.7 With respect to teacher training for Arabic and Chinese, at present there are only a few national providers, reflecting, perhaps, the still scarce interest in single honours and postgraduate studies in these languages.

- Main providers currently are shown in the table below.

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Training</b>
Goldsmiths College	PGCE Arabic/ Mandarin Chinese
SOAS	Certificate in Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language (CTAFL) Certificate in Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (CTCFL)
University of Exeter	PGCE Secondary Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) with Mandarin
University of Sheffield	PGCE Mandarin Chinese

- In addition, the Asset Languages Assessment Scheme offers the possibility of an Accredited Teacher Status for both Arabic and Chinese.

### 3. Employment needs

A HESA survey on destinations of first-degree language graduates in 2004/05 revealed a 5.5% of unemployment level six months after graduation, while the rate was 6.6% for the rest of the UK graduates. Despite this higher employment rate among those with languages, and the political acknowledgement of the strategic role of languages, the majority of students and businesses are not making a sufficiently clear link between employability and language skills.

<sup>22</sup> "Chinese Studies in UK Schools", 2003, p. 13.

<sup>23</sup> CILT figures, "Languages Update" by Samia Earle, Languages Colleges and Teachers of Modern Foreign Languages, Spring 2007.



- 3.1 In the final report and recommendations of the Nuffield Languages Inquiry, “Languages: the next generation”, in 2000, there was a call for a wider range of languages to be spoken by the UK workforce. From a business point of view, Arabic and Chinese were mentioned as an emerging need.
- In particular, it was recommended that ‘business could do much to support colleges in integrating languages such as Arabic, Hindi or Chinese into vocational programmes in parts of the country where these languages are spoken fluently by students.’<sup>24</sup>
  - With respect to secondary school education, it was recommended that a number of languages including Chinese and Arabic should be supported with special funds since they ‘are spoken by huge numbers of people in countries of significant economic and political interest to the UK.’<sup>25</sup>
- 3.2 The relevance of Arabic and Chinese language skills in UK businesses has been explicitly recognised in order to operate efficiently in the global market.
- In terms of commerce, the UK Trade & Investment Sector Advisory Group has identified as priorities the trade with China (including Hong Kong and Taiwan), Malaysia, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates. China is expected to account for 10% of UK companies’ global revenues by 2009.
  - A survey conducted in 1999 found that 35% of the UK managers questioned felt that language skills would be of vital importance to business success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>26</sup>
  - However, most recent data on the use of language skills by enterprises and the impact of these on their business performance indicated that, in fact, currently a low percentage of companies in the UK and Ireland (compared to other European countries) show interest and commitment in getting expertise in specific languages and their cultures.<sup>27</sup>
- 3.3 There is an alarming lack of professionals with Arabic and Chinese language skills in UK companies.
- For example, a feasibility study on language skills carried out in 2001 showed that 14% of SMEs (21 responding) declared experiencing language barriers with Arabic.<sup>28</sup>
  - The British Association of Chinese Studies reported in 2003 that, according to the Business Language Information Service, language and cultural barriers mean loss of business and China was the country where companies experienced most cultural misunderstandings.<sup>29</sup>
- 3.4 A comprehensive study by Hagen in 2005, reports on the needs and consequences currently experienced by the lack of language expertise in business in England and Wales:<sup>30</sup>
- an average of 46% of companies declared to have experienced language barriers, 20% mentioned cultural barriers, and 21% declared to have lost

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24 Recommendation 4.11, p. 22.

25 Recommendation 7.3, p. 48.

26 H. Vandevelde, “How to make a language policy pay”. *Professional Manager* 9 (2), 2000.

27 ELAN report, December 2006.

28 “Language Skills”, Canterbury Christ Church University and partners on behalf of SEEDA, 2001, p. 44.

29 “Chinese Studies in UK Schools”, 2003, p. 10.

30 *Language and Culture in British Business*, Stephen Hagen, CILT, 2005.

business as a consequence. Specifically, 4% of companies in England and Wales declared barriers with Arabic and 11% pointed out barriers with Chinese. Findings indicate that business in the North West (14.7%), East (13.1%) and Yorkshire and the Humber (12.7%), and the North East (12.2%) experience problems with Chinese.

- an average of 51% of companies declared to use employees with translation and interpreting skills,
- in the language skills capacity audit 2000-2003<sup>31</sup>, the national average training was 0.5% in Arabic and 2% in Chinese.
- Hagen highlights that there are noticeable regional variations in professional training for these languages with responses by companies from the North West of England emerging as most supportive. In particular, data indicates that Chinese is growing in Yorkshire, the Humber, Scotland, Wales and East of England.
- about a quarter of companies take up language training. Most popular modes of study were registered as part-time evening (36.4%), part-time day hours (26.6%) and self-tuition (16%),
- future international trade predicted by UK companies include China and the Middle East,
- future demand for training for companies is predicted as an average of 3% in Chinese and 1% in Arabic.

3.5 In contrast, in Europe, large companies seem to be aware of the importance of global languages and perceive higher needs for Arabic and Chinese. In a recent survey of 30 companies, 17% expressed a current need for Chinese language skills and 10% for Arabic.<sup>32</sup>

3.6 In addition, in the fields of defence and diplomacy, Arabic and Chinese languages have been identified as a high priority and predicted as a long-term need.

- The Ministry of Defence (MoD) has recognised the central role of languages for security and military matters. Arabic features as a priority language in their current training.
- The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) train about 10% of diplomatic staff each year through their language centre. Arabic and Mandarin are within 21 languages identified as directly relevant to the strategic priorities of the FCO.
- A similar concern for the development of language and cultural expertise in these areas has been expressed abroad. For instance, the US Naval Academy's Language Studies Department has started to offer new Majors in Chinese and Arabic using multimedia resources.

3.7 It has also been reported that specifically for Arabic there are a variety of job destinations in demand that students should be made aware of:<sup>33</sup>

- Apart from the governmental needs in the FCO, intelligence service, the army and the British Council, Arabic graduates are sought by the BBC, cultural and religious organisations, and human rights groups.

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31 LNT/CILT Language skills capacity audits (200-2003), excluding London and the South East, as reported by Hagen, p. 72.

32 ELAN report, December 2006, p.45

33 "Arabic teaching in Britain and Ireland" by James Dickins and Janet Watson, In the *Handbook for Arabic Language Professionals in the Twenty-first Century*. Wahba, K. et al. eds., pub. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, New York, 2006.

- There is also a high demand for translators and interpreters with Arabic and English, although the adequate skills for these jobs are not currently offered in undergraduate degrees in Britain and Ireland.

#### 4. Other relevant data/ predictions

Trends in student numbers and provision for Arabic in Europe and beyond appear to be on the rise as well.

4.1 Data from surveys to ENLU<sup>34</sup> members in 2005 indicated growing activity in Europe. However, a similar pattern to the UK emerges where student enrolments for Arabic and Chinese are comparatively low and mostly at low levels, and provision varied substantially from country to country.

- From a figure of 10,278 students taking less widely taught languages, a total of 1,099 were studying Chinese and 862 studying Arabic (see Appendix 11). Chinese appears as one of the most popular non-European languages (together with Russian and Japanese).
- Institutions questioned in Europe did not seem to favour particularly these languages as much as other major European languages such as French, German, Spanish and Italian, some countries reflected historical links with other languages in their preferences.
- Out of 27, only 7 institutions reported offerings in Arabic but 14 already offered Chinese.
- The majority of courses on offer were at level A1/A2 (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, Council of Europe) for both languages, and non-assessed.
- Half of the universities were in favour of an exclusive approach (i.e. limiting offer to specific languages), and half of an inclusive approach (i.e. offer potentially open to all languages). Among those in favour of an exclusive approach, 20 institutions (22.5%) gave priority to Arabic and 22 (24.7%) to Chinese. The percentages show Russian (37.1%) as favourite.
- With respect to non-European languages, Russian is popular in Scandinavian countries, PECO countries and Baltic States<sup>35</sup>, while students in Western European countries seem to be turning to Arabic, Chinese and Japanese.

4.2 Arabic and Chinese HE teaching in the United States has experienced steady increases in enrolments with a noticeable change from 2001 and expects further increases in the coming years. The National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project has responded to the recent demand on these languages and developed guidelines for teachers. Their most recent document highlights that:<sup>36</sup>

- The American Association of teachers of Arabic (AATA) lists over 165 HEIs currently teaching Arabic. In addition, a nationwide survey on school provision showed 18 public and charter schools offering Arabic in their curriculum.
- A steady expansion of Chinese is also reported from the early 1960s in the USA. In 1995 there were 26,330 students enrolled in 384 programmes (excluding heritage Chinese language programmes).

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<sup>34</sup> European Network for the Promotion of Language Learning Among All Undergraduates.

<sup>35</sup> ENLU project, October 2005, section B.4.

<sup>36</sup> *Standards in Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century*, National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, Allen Press, 2006.

4.3 Figures from the Modern Languages Association (MLA) in the USA show Arabic and Chinese among the twelve leading languages in enrolment figures in HEIs in 2002.<sup>37</sup>

- Student numbers have dramatically increased compared to overall enrolments. As shown in the table below, in Arabic, numbers nearly doubled between 1998 and 2002, a faster growth compared to Chinese but less students in total:

Language	1960	1998	2002	%change 1998-2002
Arabic students	541	5,505	10,584	92.3
Chinese students	1,844	28,456	34,153	20.0
Total enrollments	604,496	1,193,830	1,321,320	17.0

- Despite the fast increase, as in the UK, figures represent a low percentage of the total enrolments, i.e. 0.8% for Arabic and 2.4% for Chinese.
- The increase is also explained by new offerings since 1998, in Arabic recorded as 74 and 84 in Chinese.

4.4 Figures from the Chinese Ministry of Education reflect a dramatic growth in student numbers worldwide since the mid-1980s. From 2004 the Chinese government has been promoting the study of Mandarin through the rapidly and globally expanding Confucius Institutes, planning to establish 1,000 institutes by 2020. Official figures indicate that there are 30 million people studying Chinese around the world and that more than 2,500 HEIs are offering Chinese courses in more than 100 countries.<sup>38</sup>

### ***Interest in Arabic and Chinese***

This section summarises current interest in Arabic and Chinese. Data has been mostly drawn from surveys commissioned by the OU between 2006 and 2007 but also contrasted with other available information. Main findings show a lower overall interest in these languages compared to European languages and students are mostly motivated by personal interest.

## **5. Expressed interest**

The overall interest in beginners Arabic and Chinese remains comparatively low.

5.1 The results of two extensive surveys carried out in 2006 on the interest of the general public and of current OU students in beginners Arabic and Chinese reflect more interest from OU students than from the general public with a slight preference for Chinese.

- On the one hand, 7% of the respondent from the general public were interested in Chinese and 6% in Arabic.
- On the other hand, among OU languages, humanities and MBA students 20% were interested in Chinese and 18% in Arabic (lower among business students.)

<sup>37</sup> "Foreign Language Enrollments in United States Institutions of Higher Education" by Elizabeth B. Welles, Fall 2002, p. 9-13.

<sup>38</sup> "Confucius Institute: Promoting Language, Culture and Friendliness" by Gong Yidong (2006/09/29) from the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the UK website. Available at: <http://www.chinese-embassy.org.uk/eng/zt/Features/t274357.htm>

5.2 The interest was reversed in responses from Members of Parliament in the survey carried out by the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education in England and Wales (NIACE) in April 2004, showing a preference for Arabic.

- The results showed that 65% of MPs expressed a desire to learn a language (given the time and opportunity) and 7% were interested in Arabic while only 4% were interested in learning Chinese.
- Not surprisingly, greater percentages resulted for European languages, with French (34%) and Spanish (32%) being at the top.
- MPs' responses at present, however, could be more in tune with the general public, i.e. interest in learning Chinese might have over passed Arabic. Although it is unlikely that their interest is much closer to the positions taken by European languages.

## 6. Student profile

It is hard to define clearly distinct groups of learners but there is some indication of the interest among younger students as well as of the presence of a variety of what could be considered heritage students.

6.1 From the general population survey by the OU in August 2006, the profile of the interested student emerges as follows:

- The highest interest is with those who are young, currently in education or have completed their education later than age of 19+,
- Chinese seems to attract more male than female interest; Arabic does not appear to show any difference,
- 66-67% of those interested fall into social grades AB and C1 (lower middle class),
- Chinese attracts more interest from London (16%); a third of those interested in Arabic comes from the North,
- 80% of interested students in Chinese have internet access at home, 16% have no access (work or home), while only 65% of interested students in Arabic home access, 26% have no access.

6.2 There is some information on the characteristics of the current student body for these languages.

- For example, the British Association of Chinese Studies reported that the majority of students of Chinese are native speakers.<sup>39</sup>
- With respect to Arabic, Dickins and Watson mention the following student population:<sup>40</sup>
  - experienced language learners,
  - people with an interest in Islam,
  - people who have spent time in the Arab world,
  - students of Arab background,
  - students of Islamic backgrounds.

## 7. Reasons

Learning motivations for studying Arabic and Chinese appear to be largely for personal interest and work prospects followed by enhancing travel experiences. These seem to

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39 "Chinese Studies in UK Schools", British Association for Chinese Studies, June 2003, p. 8.

40 "Arabic teaching in Britain and Ireland" by James Dickins and Janet Watson, 2006, p. 2.

constitute the three main reasons expressed across the board for all languages, although the priority order varies according to the student profile.

7.1 Among the general population consulted, main reasons declared for studying Arabic or Chinese were:

- personal interest / personal development (63%-67%),
- recognition of the growing importance of the language (26-31%),
- To get basic knowledge for holidays and travel (15-20%).

7.2 For OU language, humanities and MBA students reasons were similarly personal interest/development, followed by recognition of importance of world languages; although for Arabic, work was also mentioned.

7.3 Focus groups consulted in June-July 2007 revealed that potential and current Chinese learners declared stronger motivation from a career perspective, learning Chinese is regarded as a strategic move for future work and life.

- Main reasons given by these groups for studying Arabic were:
  - personal interest in broader understanding of Arabic speaking countries,
  - increasing work opportunities,
  - enhancing travel experience.
- Reasons expressed for studying Chinese:
  - employment prospects,
  - self-development and interest,
  - enhancing travel experience.

7.4 In the 2003-2004 survey carried out by CILT on adult language learning in LEAs, declared reasons for studying any language were as follows:

- holidays (74%)
- personal interest (55%)
- work (48%)
- buying a property abroad (46%)
- family reasons (33%)
- cultural/social (16%)

7.5 Again, reflecting main reasons mentioned above, in February 2007 OU language students surveyed expressed interest in studying a language at level 1 as:

- Personal/ improve language skills 29%,
- travelling/ interest/ enjoyment 18% (each reason)

## **8. Programme and mode of study**

Responses to surveys and focus groups indicated that students appear to attribute a high value to language learning in a classroom, but at the same time, they welcome flexibility and choice of study time. Most learners interested in Chinese and Arabic are willing to achieve competence in all skills beyond beginner level.

8.1 Local college features as the most favoured place (49-52%) for language learning. Language students favour face-to-face as the core mode of learning, classroom contact is highly valued for motivation, instant feedback, speaking practice and socialisation.

8.2 Comments from students surveyed suggest that a high percentage is willing to study beyond beginner level. For instance,

- 50% of OU Language and MBA students would consider going beyond beginners,

- 28% of students were happy just to complete beginners. This might be an indication of a group of students who want to gain experience in a range of languages.
  - students from focus groups in partner institutions hoped to study beyond beginners.
- 8.3 Accreditation does not seem the main driver for learning Arabic and Chinese.
- Half of OU Language and MBA students would opt for a 10-credit taster, half for 30-credit course in either Arabic or Chinese,
  - Other learners are aiming for real personal gains rather than a certificate.
- 8.4 There are some indications coming from learners about the time they are willing to invest in learning Arabic and Chinese.
- Focus group learners prefer 3-4 hours a week in class but also flexibility with 3 hours self-study time.
  - Those who were interested in Chinese seem to be willing to spend more time in and out of class than students interested in Arabic.
- 8.5 With respect to content, students show limited awareness of the role of culture learning in language learning; culture is perceived as a side issue that might add value.
- 8.6 Most students seem to be interested in learning Arabic and Chinese to communicate. Speaking is clearly signalled as the most valued skill followed by listening, then reading and writing.
- 8.7 Focus groups carried out in partner institutions revealed that learners welcome the advantages new technologies have brought such as flexibility, interaction and relative low cost of online materials, however traditional approaches to language learning prevail.
- e-learning is viewed by students as a support method, not as the main method to learn,
  - despite the younger age and familiarity with technology, the majority of students show unenthusiastic responses to e-learning with a preference for traditional learning methods, e.g. frequent teacher contact and use of textbooks,
  - technology is seen as only supporting learning since it is perceived as peripheral and complicated and can distract from the actual learning process; with less than 50% of course time allotted to it,
  - flexibility and choice of study time is highly valued,
  - self-discipline might prove a problem and face to face, teacher led classes, are seen as essential,
  - books seen as key, the argument being that it is easier to read printed material, than from a screen,
  - e-learning is considered as complementary or peripheral,
  - DVDs and CDs are perceived as likely to be dated,
  - very few advantages are identified with online provision but these include more freedom geographically, and flexibility of access,
  - many disadvantages are perceived in online provision: products can be very expensive, using computers can be tiring, less productive, distracting from work, and can waste a lot of time having to install new software or having difficulties up-loading and downloading.

## 9. Preferred routes to language study

There is no data available on the preferred routes to Arabic or Chinese studies. Among the whole language student population in HE, Business appears as a constant favourite route of study; other popular combinations seem to be Law or Politics and Economics. It can be assumed that these are most likely routes as well for those interested in Arabic and Chinese.

9.1 Marshall reported that in 1998/9, top preferences in 36 institutions were as follows:

- Business and Administrative Studies with 3,251 students (32.3%)
- Humanities with 1,623 students (16.1%)
- Sociology, Economics and Politics with 982 students (9.7%)

9.2 In the following years, up to 2002, when student numbers were dramatically dropping, Footitt highlighted as study routes:

- Most popular: Other Languages, Business, Law,
- Quite popular: Humanities, Social Studies,
- Less popular: Creative Arts, Communication, Engineering, Sciences.
- Unpopular: Medicine, Architecture, Technologies, Veterinary Studies.

9.3 More recently, CILT's headcount analysis of HESA data, summarising first-degree undergraduates in 2005/06, indicated these preferences:

- Most popular joint disciplines of combination: Business Studies, English and Politics,
- Follow by Law, Management Studies, History, Economics and Linguistics.

## Conclusions

### Market trends

- Since 2002 both languages seem to be taking off with encouraging annual increases in enrolments from secondary to HE in England and abroad.
- Overall enrolments in Chinese are growing faster than Arabic in the UK. This is probably a consequence of the great official support to promote Mandarin from the Chinese government, the official agreement in 2000 between the DfES and the Ministry of Education and other organisations such as the Confucius Institutes and the British Association for Chinese Studies (BACS).
- The trend is increasingly to combine language learning with another discipline. The numbers of students opting to take a language alongside their main subject has been buoyant for both languages for several years.
- Undergraduates in Arabic and Chinese show a clear preference for part-time study while most postgraduates opt for a full-time mode.
- Postgraduate figures are very low but are slowly getting better since 2002. There are currently very low numbers taking up teacher training in these languages with a direct impact on the national teaching capacity.
- Numbers are particularly high at level 1 with noticeably lower numbers at higher levels. The highest uptake at level 1 has been also felt in Local Education Authorities and schools.
- Both languages are also currently in the top group of the most widely taught community languages in the UK.



- The map of Arabic and Chinese language provision reflects a historical deficiency. At the end of the 90s, provision for these languages in HE and FE was scarce, students were concentrated in a limited number of institutions with uneven presence at regional level. However, in the past few years, the evidence shows that offerings are increasing especially as part-time and extra-curricular options.
- The importance of offering a wider range of languages, particularly major spoken world languages, in the secondary curriculum has already been officially recognised. It is expected that, if the recommendations on the introduction of foreign languages in primary schools of the Dearing report (March 2007) are supported, young students' familiarity with these languages will increase in the next few years. This should impact on HE enrolments
- A rise in provision has been also recorded in LEAs, specialist languages colleges, the independent sector and secondary schools. Teacher training possibilities are quite limited but have also increased in the past few years.
- There is a lack of professionals with Arabic and Chinese language in UK companies. Students and businesses alike are less interested and committed to invest in language and cultural skills than other European countries despite evidence pointing at the impact of this on effective trading and competitiveness.
- A comparison between low or lack of enrolments in strategic languages and language barriers experienced by businesses in different regions reveals a correspondence between language needs in companies and language provision in regional areas.
- Companies in England and Wales are already declaring language and cultural barriers in these languages leading to loss of business. However, the national training need for Arabic and Chinese predicted in the future is low, this is much higher among companies in Europe.
- Training in Arabic and Chinese has also been officially identified as of strategic importance in the fields of defence and diplomacy; consequently new provision is emerging to specifically target these needs.
- Other Arabic and Chinese specialised language training, for example, translation and interpreting activities is inadequately addressed. Low postgraduate numbers lead to a lack of options and lack of specialist linguist teaching in HEIs which in turn lead to a vicious circle of limited uptake.
- Growing trends in student numbers and provision have also been recorded in Europe and the USA. Overall patterns in those countries reflect similar issues to those in the UK, showing comparatively low enrolments, preferences for low level courses and unbalanced regional and national provision for Arabic and Chinese.
- Some noteworthy differences with respect to the USA are that there student groups (second language learners and heritage learners) have been identified and provision has been divided according to their different needs. Another difference is the fact that in the USA Arabic is growing faster, the demand is felt more strongly, but Chinese enjoys more student numbers.

### **Level of interest**

Main findings from commissioned OU market research for this study reflect a relatively low interest in Arabic and Chinese. Potential students seem uncertain about the benefits and challenges of studying these languages.

- Market research data identified specific groups of interested students in learning Chinese and Arabic. They include the young, social grades AB (middle class) and

C1 (lower middle class) who have taken other language courses as well as heritage learners who are looking to improve their knowledge of the language of their parents or grandparents. The actual percentage of each of these groups is unclear.

- Previous experience of language learning appears to influence level of interest. A comparison between data from the general public and from language students from all partner institutions indicates that the interest among the latter group in the study of Arabic and Chinese is much higher.
- Personal interest, work prospects and enhancement of travel experiences are consistently named as the main reasons for studying Arabic and Chinese.
- The great majority of students interested in these languages expressed a wish to study all skills beyond beginner level, although current figures suggest that very few actually continue to higher levels.
- Learners claim to value flexibility and choice of study time but those in conventional universities attribute, at the same time, a great importance to contact time with the teacher and are unenthusiastic about information and communication technologies for language learning.
- Main chosen routes to Arabic and Chinese studies are unknown, although Business, Law, Politics and Economics have figured as favourite for language learners in the past decade.

## **PART III: PROPOSAL FOR COLLABORATION**

Part III outlines progress by the consortium on a collaborative course model. It also includes a proposal for further development and delivery of courses in Arabic and Chinese highlighting potential working partners, benefits of such a model as well as issues that need to be taken into consideration.

### ***Course Models***

A Working Group met four times to negotiate possible collaborative course models. All partner institutions identified specialist teachers for each language who could provide expert advice, and expressed willingness to continue negotiations on course specifications and the development of materials for new courses in the future.

Members of the Working Group carried out a comprehensive audit of commercially available as well as free online learning materials for each language, establish initial contact with relevant publishers, shared pedagogical approaches and curricula, and reviewed course models that could be used in a wide range of contexts.

A number of aspects of the specific courses were discussed and agreed at these meetings by all partners for both languages such as:

- The development of 30 point credit beginners' courses that could be delivered in 5, 10, 15, 20 or 30 credits chunks.
- Level 1 courses (exit level equating to level A2 of the Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference.)
- Target languages being Modern Standard Arabic and Mandarin Chinese with a focus on global aspects of the languages (including exposure to colloquial dialects when relevant.)
- Outline of course structure based on six units each including revision activities.
- General communicative pedagogy with a balance of skills.
- A curriculum that integrates language study and development of cultural awareness.
- Suitable available printed materials, audiovisual and online resources.<sup>41</sup>
- Additional online components for independent study.
- Flexible itemised format that allows face to face and distance delivery based on current OU methods of communication at a distance.

There were also initial discussions but no final decisions on the following:

- Course syllabus and themes.
- Intended learning outcomes.
- General assessment strategy.

Partners felt no current course met these requirements and that this was a unique opportunity to work on such a model. The consortium considers that this collaborative course model will be unique and attractive with distinct features:

- up to date content through a range of materials,
- use of new media, developing the most effective media and technologies for learning, assessment and student support,

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<sup>41</sup> The Working Group benefited from comments to this respect from colleagues at Westminster University, King's College and Carnegie Mellon (USA).

- enhanced online provision,
- a progressive curriculum with enhanced pedagogies,
- maximum flexibility to enable a wider participation amongst learners.

### ***Collaborative Development and Delivery***

The consortium for strategic languages had fruitful negotiations on the general nature of collaborative courses and there was full participation and consensus about the possible models presented here. Partners believe there is enough evidence of the growing importance and demand for Arabic and Chinese and is willing to continue its work to develop such courses.

The consortium will seek opportunities to progress jointly in the development of a course model for each language and it is also very keen to explore possible new collaborative modes for the delivery of the courses. The practical implementation of the proposed course models and partnerships will need to be closely monitored in order to ensure that the benefits of innovative arrangements are greater than the possible risks and that these can be applied effectively more widely. These activities, however, will require a considerable upfront cost and it is envisaged that financial support from HEFCE will be needed.

### **Benefits**

Collaboration could be an effective mechanism to achieve the goals of this project. Some of the main benefits of the proposed models are:

- involvement of multiple institutions in collaborative arrangements building on complementary strengths and expertise of individual partners,
- mitigation of potential financial risks,
- design and testing of new models of curriculum development,
- coordinated development of appropriate teaching materials,
- standardisation of learning outcomes that will establish a framework of reference at national and potentially international level,
- innovative, flexible and cost-effective development and delivery of courses, a model that can be applied to other areas,
- effective and far reaching supply to meet demand from students irrespective of their geographical location.

### **Potential interested partners**

The OU intends to progress this initial work in partnership with other institutions. All current partners listed below have expressed an interest in collaborating in the development and delivery of the course models discussed.

- **The Open University** is already engaged in widening participation, currently offering four languages at beginners level (French, German, Italian and Spanish), and actively developing its provision in other languages (e.g. Welsh). Adding Arabic and Chinese to this suite of beginners' courses would enhance the Department of Languages as provider of distance language courses in the UK.
- **Nottingham Trent University** has been offering Mandarin Chinese as an elective to non-specialists undergraduates at stage 1 and 2 and recently 3 within the University Language Programme (ULP) since 1992/93, currently with provisional approval to introduce a Joint Honours degree, depending on demand.

Of the approximate 2,000 students registered on the ULP in 2006/07, 100 took Mandarin Chinese. Arabic just started in 2006/07.

- **The School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London** is widely recognised as a global leader in academic excellence in the field of Oriental and Middle Eastern language learning. It has a Confucius Institute funded by the Chinese Government. SOAS is interested in linking its **Centre of Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL)** on 'Languages of the Wider World' (the School of Languages at SOAS in collaboration with UCL) to the consortium. The CETL shares the ambitions of this project of strengthening provision in languages of strategic importance to the UK, and believes that participating in the consortium with the OU would be a cost-effective means of doing so.
- **The University of Portsmouth** has a well-established School of Languages and Area Studies, which is one of the largest departments of its kind in the UK. It has a dedicated and well-equipped Learning Resources Centre, for use across the student body as well as by those studying languages to degree level. It has recently invested in a range of new resources, including a suite of state-of-the-art digital multimedia language laboratories and up-to-date classrooms with the latest learning and teaching technology. It has a track record of excellence in teaching and research in languages and area studies, in materials development and in outreach work with local schools. It has extended its range of provision in Mandarin by adding a Chinese Studies pathway to its range of degrees from 2007, and hence expects to make a full contribution to the project and gain much from collaboration with other partners in the sector.
- **The University of Salford** currently offers Masters level programmes in interpreting and translation for Arabic and Chinese speakers. It has developed a nationally recognised strength in this field and has plans to introduce ab initio BAs in Arabic and Chinese from 2008. Therefore these collaborative courses will suit their immediate needs.
- **The University of Southampton** hosts the **National Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies**. Both the University and the Subject Centre are committed to supporting good practice in teaching and learning in these areas. They are particularly interested in exploring the idea of cross sector collaboration in the area of strategic languages. They are also keen to take part in the initiative and to take the opportunity to support wider languages initiatives in support of the government's national languages strategy.

The consortium will be inviting other interested partners in the development and/or delivery of collaborative courses for Arabic and Chinese.

### **A possible model for future national provision**

The Open University will aim to harness the experience gained in the proposed partnership and work to ensure that effective practice is shared with other universities and also with colleges and other providers. The consortium could provide a template by which other institutions could draw upon a range of services as they experience opportunities that cannot efficiently be met from within their own resources or through a local partnership. The areas which might be addressed include curriculum coverage; progression from sub-degree providers; new systems of mobility between full and part-time learning; open content; e-learning resources; qualification and awards frameworks;

provision of higher education experience in schools; and services to disadvantaged learners, particularly the disabled. The model might lead to a new relationship between the OU, other HEIs and HEFCE. All institutions have an interest in undertaking action research which will determine whether it is possible to develop a third model of trans-institutional collaboration.

### ***Issues Arising***

Various issues affect the feasibility of the planned courses in Arabic and Chinese by the consortium.

### **Student recruitment and retention**

Although exact figures are unknown, there is evidence of the fact that the great majority of enrolments reflect a heavy presence of heritage students. Attracting a wide range of learners is one of the challenges that will need to be addressed in promotional activities for these languages. At the same time, reaching interested heritage learners with these courses might encourage them to study additional languages later on.

A number of factors have an impact on the value learners attribute to non-European languages such as Arabic and Chinese. Students' expectations on the time they need to invest in language learning, the specific difficulties of each language, the pace at which the language skills can be developed, their significance for employment, the relevance of cultural knowledge for successful intercultural communication do not always match reality. Narrow, vague and unspecific conceptions and attitudes might bring unexpected frustration while studying and even deter students from choosing these languages. Therefore, there is a need for induction at an early stage based on realistic information on what learning Arabic and Chinese involves and the role they can play in personal and professional development.

Data gathered showed that potential learners seem uncertain about the implications of studying non-European languages. One issue is the difficulty of these languages. In a scale of 1-7 (1 being most difficult and 7 less difficult), the Foreign and Commonwealth Office graded Chinese as level 1 of difficulty and Arabic as level 2. Focus group students appreciated clarifications on the challenges and difficulties in studying these languages. For example, they were unsure about the difficulties involved in learning a different script. Particularly difficult are Chinese characters which need heavy practice and memorisation. This suggests that too much emphasis on writing at lower levels might de-motivate students and consequently impact on their retention. Students need very clear guidance and an approach that keeps them motivated. Thus, it is crucial that the courses are designed with these needs in mind.

In relation to retention as well, students from conventional universities have indicated that they are not investing enough self-study time in language learning. Jobs, family, commitments and other studies have been given as reasons. However this might be also due to lack of structured activities for independent learning and/or lack of flexible time. Effective use of technology for independent study time and provision at a distance could solve this problem.

### **Learning materials and use of technology**

There is a considerable development of in-house materials in universities across the UK for language learning but very little sharing of these is going on. Many of the materials are for classroom use although e-learning and the development of online learning

opportunities is growing. There is no doubt that technology is increasingly attractive for educational purposes but it can also bring resistance and frustration. Additional resources for language learning are nowadays mostly in the language labs, virtual learning environments and online pages. HEIs around the globe see technology as a means to increase student numbers and the range of options so are keen to invest resources in this area.

A survey from the ENLU project in 2006 revealed that the great majority of institutions (94%) surveyed across Europe were keen in facilitating independent language learning and in widening the range of languages they offer with the introduction of technological delivery modes. However, they also declared a need for advice and support on the use of technology for independent learning.<sup>42</sup> The Open University has been identified as exceptional in implementing e-learning in their provision of modern languages and is in a position to support other institutions in this area.

Currently, there are some basic resources available via a number of educational websites, some developed by UK Universities, such as the Chinese Multimedia supplementary lessons for independent study by the University of Oxford<sup>43</sup> or the new Arabic online independent learning resources at King's College. Internationally some of the main online based courses providers for Chinese are Beijing University of Language and Culture On-line Education College (China), the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (Spain), Carnegie Mellon University (USA), with no current equivalent for Arabic. There are also national and international commercial providers of online or multimedia courses for both languages.

Two of the newly created Centres for Excellence in Language-based Area Studies<sup>44</sup> are of great relevance to this project. The Centre for the Advanced Study of the Arab World (CASAW)<sup>45</sup> and the British Inter-university China Centre (BICC)<sup>46</sup> will be promoting the teaching of Arabic and Chinese language respectively using virtual learning environments. Initial contact has already been established with these Centres and responses have been positive with respect to possible cooperation.

Online learning could offer a solution to provision, optimising national access to trained teachers where face-to-face access is impossible. Nowadays a digital environment for managing the development of content and reaching students at a distance is crucial for ensuring maximum flexibility in the delivery, constant monitoring and updating of the materials' quality and interaction. Since the launch of beginners' courses at the Open University in 2002, it has been clearly demonstrated that, even for students with no technological background, online tuition can achieve the same outcomes as face-to-face teaching, and overall achieves the same success rate. The Open University had the highest overall satisfaction rating from students in the 2007 National Student Survey. However, focus groups in partner institutions gave unenthusiastic responses to e-learning. Some common barriers for language students from a traditional background seem to be:

- a belief that communication should be face-to-face,

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42 ENLU project report, April 2006.

43 Freely available at: <http://www.ctcfl.ox.ac.uk/Chinese/index.html>

44 This initiative is jointly funded by the HEFCE, the ESRC, the AHRC and the SFC over a five year period.

45 Working in partnership are the University of Edinburgh, University of Durham and University of Manchester.

46 Working in partnership are the University of Oxford, University of Bristol and University of Manchester.

- a wide gap in students' perception regarding advances in innovation and use of technology for language learning.

These barriers will need to be addressed through promotional activities emphasizing the benefits of e-learning. In addition, students might need to be inducted into some of the new technologies where they previously had no experience of them. A blended model of course materials or wholly online might need careful marketing as it would not always fit current expectations. However, the more technological mindset of younger students who are by and large computer literate might not see this aspect as a challenge.

## **Teacher development and training**

Teacher availability has been widely recognised as a key factor to sustainability of provision of strategic languages in the state education system. However, the numbers of UK domiciled postgraduate students in Arabic and Chinese (including PGCE) are very low. This has clear implications for the supply of teachers and specialists in the future.

The lack of qualified tutors was highlighted, for instance, as the main barrier to provision of language learning courses in the LEA Adult language learning survey (May 2005). This shortage has been acknowledged with respect to both strategic languages with indications that it is an issue not only affecting the UK but worldwide.<sup>47</sup> In addition, there is a need for trained teachers using online methodologies.

More specifically, a number of issues have been identified with respect to specialists in Arabic in the past few years:<sup>48</sup>

- low interest at postgraduate level,
- soon to retire older generations of teachers,
- lack of incentives for graduates to pursue an academic career,
- lack of post-graduate training,
- the gradual loss of a national resource for teaching Arabic and other Middle Eastern languages,
- in the long term the loss of expert advice which should be available to government, the diplomatic and intelligence communities, and business.

Some efforts regarding provision of specialised teachers have happened at secondary level. For instance, The British Council is facilitating language assistant exchanges in these languages<sup>49</sup>. Similarly Britain's Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT) is promoting specifically the teaching of Mandarin Chinese and, following an agreement between the British and Chinese governments, it is piloting a scheme for hosting language teachers from China next academic year. They have also set up online Chinese and Arabic networks to help the sharing of good practice among teachers of these languages.

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47 "The National Office of Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language estimates that five million teachers are required by 2020 to teach 100 million Chinese learners worldwide" (Yidong, 2006). Available at: <http://www.chinese-embassy.org.uk/eng/zt/Features/t274357.htm>

48 As reported in "Arabic teaching in UK Universities: Perspectives and Problems" by Clive Holes, Professor for the Study of the Contemporary Arab World, University of Oxford, 2003, and "The Crisis facing Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies in British Universities", report following a Seminar at Portcullis House, October 2003, Sponsored by Robert Jackson, MP.

49 Latest update from the British Council (October 2007) reports that "80 schools now employ Chinese Language Assistants and 1 Arabic Language Assistant at KS4."



Another source of support are the successful Confucius Institutes that provide Chinese language teacher training courses including short pre-service courses and professional development programmes on the teaching of Chinese language and culture for school teachers. Likewise, CILT, The National Centre for Languages, is working closely with the Training and Development Agency and Initial Teacher Training Institutions to support Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) for teachers of community languages, and their Comenius Network is supporting their work on a regional level.

There is a need to offer scholarships in order to encourage students to continue their studies at higher levels. It is good news that grants will be available to UK graduates in the newly created Centres for Excellence in Language-based Area Studies<sup>50</sup>. Students will be funded to pursue studies in Arabic in the Centre for the Advanced Study of the Arab World (CASAW) and Chinese in the British Inter-university China Centre (BICC). However, complementary to this specialist training by the Centres, funds could be also allocated to support the development of language skills at undergraduate level.

There might be a chance to address this in the short term by a) retraining language teachers in one of the two languages; and by b) fast tracking native speakers through a PGCE. The OU has in its flexible PGCE an effective model for teacher training which provides an alternative to conventional local provision.

### **Marketing and promotional activity**

Targeted marketing will be essential in order to influence and stimulate demand and reach the likely markets interested in this provision.

Much more could be done to promote these world languages and their cultures, particularly Arabic which has had, so far, less publicity and support from the media and official bodies than Chinese. Arabic should be particularly emphasised in terms of gaining intercultural understanding and citizenship in the UK as well as for its role in international peace. Chinese should be promoted for communication and understanding with the most likely dominant economic (and political) superpower of this century. Promotional activities should start at primary school level. This should become easier in state schools through the new National Languages Strategy for England.

Although there is a recognised need for language skills in the labour force, awareness of its importance is low among UK based students and companies compared with the rest of Europe. Promotional activities should focus on stressing the importance of these skills. Market intelligence gathered shows that UK students seem to have little interest in studying a language, the proportion of these students is small and is getting smaller in HE. Marketing activities should be directed, for instance, to highlight to students the relevance of strategic languages for international business, politics, diplomacy, military services, the media, tourism and banking. In addition, UK employers need to be made aware of the role of languages and intercultural competence in increasing competitiveness in the global market. The new course models could be promoted amongst the employers as a more flexible high quality package. The message can be strengthened through Sector Skills Councils, Regional Development Agencies and CILT that can emphasise to employers the importance of strategic languages.

Cross-sector initiatives such as Routes into Languages and Languages Work are already seeking to stimulate demand for university-level language study, and are likely to impact on numbers in future years.

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<sup>50</sup> This initiative is jointly funded by the HEFCE, the ESRC, the AHRC and the SFC over a five year period.

A related issue is that although a joint effort between distance education and conventional institutions will enhance provision, students might still not engage with the increased opportunities in language learning due to (ill-informed) preferences regarding mode or location. Marketing might also need to emphasise the proven effectiveness of alternative modes of learning, outlining the advantages and benefits of online learning (which, among others, allows for easy communication and meeting students from other institutions.)

### **Funding issues**

This collaborative project can bring enormous benefits to the sector, however it requires a significant level of engagement with a number of institutions and will need a substantial investment both in terms of its development and subsequent delivery.

Another area of concern is the threat to phase out funding for students studying for qualifications equivalent to, or at a lower level than, a qualification they already hold. Government funding needs to support language learning at all levels as the advice is on multilingual competence, i.e. on opening opportunities to learn new languages to support outward-looking attitudes and integration. The impact of this policy could be disastrous particularly for strategic languages. Languages should be exempted from this policy.

### **Intellectual property**

Issues of ownership of materials and course model developed in partnership need to be investigated.

## **PART IV: RECOMMENDATIONS**

Part IV presents some recommendations in support of future developments in strategic languages.

Taking into account the market research gathered for this study, the project partnership would like to suggest the following key recommendations to HEFCE:

### **1. Ensure adequate provision at national level**

- 1.1. Student numbers are expanding for Arabic and Chinese but individual HEIs do not have the capacity to always respond to rapid changes in learning trends. Matching provision to growing needs should be actively addressed in order to enable students the opportunity to take up strategic languages. It seems necessary a shared financial investment in the development and delivery of additional courses and programmes.
- 1.2. Current language provision for Arabic and Chinese shows an uneven and fragile picture. Teaching is concentrated in some geographical areas and in some institutions. Consideration needs to be given to a national strategy for effective provision that reach all students regardless of the area in which they live.
- 1.3. Provision of strategic languages is in the nation's interest. There should be an effort from the Government to ensure a good long-term provision of these languages in HE.

### **2. Expand types of provision**

- 2.1. There is an urgent need for making connections with a wider range of students who could be attracted to strategic languages. Initiatives should ensure that participation widens and includes a more varied student profile in terms of social class and ethnic background of Arabic and Chinese learners.
- 2.2. The geographical mismatch between language learning demand and local provision for strategic languages needs to be addressed. A coordinated move between conventional and distance learning institutions embracing new technologies could ensure an adequate national provision of Arabic and Chinese courses, offering students appropriate opportunities for interaction with real or virtual teachers and peers, as well as interaction with a variety of materials and contexts.
- 2.3. More flexibility needs to be introduced in curriculum offerings for Arabic and Chinese language learning. Information and communications technology could help to support formal and informal learning and promote learner autonomy.
- 2.4. Technology can also play an important role in facilitating access and choice of learning modes providing a more personalised learning experience. Provision of strategic languages should ensure a wider range of tools in order to enable learners to manage their learning according to their needs and interests.

### **3. Encourage and reward collaboration**

- 3.1. There is a need for a long term high quality provision for strategic languages in the adult market. New activity should aim at ending solitary and inward-looking ways to approach both course design and delivery. The sector should be developing collaborative courses which will meet the need of both face to face

- and distance teaching and which can be used flexibly. Working with colleagues across HEIs should bring efficiency, sharing and adopting best practices.
- 3.2. Effective cooperation between different delivery systems of instruction has the potential to dramatically improve provision. Mutual institutional support should aim at maximising range, access and learning opportunities for students regardless of their location. Funds could be directed to this kind of initiative.
  - 3.3. Innovative models of cost-effective collaboration in strategic languages could be enhanced through alliances with relevant educational centres and publishing houses.
  - 3.4. There is also scope for partnerships with local schools and colleges to promote strategic languages and support local teachers in their work.

#### **4. Support promotional initiatives in order to stimulate demand**

- 4.1. Student numbers in Arabic and Chinese are growing but remain comparatively low. Although it is expected that new language learning policies at primary and secondary level will help to attract more learners to languages, recruitment and retention will remain an important challenge particularly for strategic languages. One initiative could be the development of promotional materials for encouraging their study. These could take the form of Why Study Arabic? Why Study Chinese? as well as presentations and packages, including videos and podcasts to promote the importance of studying these languages.
- 4.2. There seems to be a mismatch between trends in course development and students perceptions with respect to e-learning. Students appear unaware of the potential of technology for language learning. There is a need for promoting this potential and highlight its benefits.
- 4.3. Promotional activities could also be directed to linking strategic languages with employment, making students aware of the role of languages in their professional careers. For this purpose it will be necessary to find out current study combinations by students of Arabic and Chinese languages to identify lack of training in specific combinations of relevance to current strategic needs.
- 4.4. Companies need to be aware of current language and cultural communication obstacles leading to loss of business. Nationally a very low percentage of companies are planning to invest in Arabic and Chinese language and culture training programmes in the near future. Promotional activities could aim at raising awareness of the direct correlation between language skills and successful trade.

#### **5. Develop introductory courses in Arabic and Chinese.**

- 5.1. This report has offered a compelling case for the need to create high quality 30 CATS-point level one language courses in both Arabic and Chinese, as a multi-HEI collaboration. Furthermore best value for money will be achieved by working collaboratively on developing courses that are flexible enough to suit various types of HEIs. HEFCE should support this development.

### ***Conclusion***

On the basis of the above recommendations and the initial explorations by the consortium for collaborative course models, we suggest that the time is right for this collective approach to the teaching and learning of strategic languages and that the consortium is in a unique position to develop cost-efficient models which could be adopted later on in other relevant contexts.

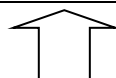
## APPENDICES

### **Appendix 1: Strategic languages' reporting framework and membership**

<b>Collaborative Models Project - Steering Group</b>		
<b>Institution</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>
Open University	Prof. Linda Jones	Chair PVC (Curriculum Awards)
Open University	Dr Sharon Ding	Chair of German Re-versioning and Strategic Languages Advisory Panel Dean (Faculty of Education and Language Studies)
Open University	Dr Hazel Rymer	Chair of Science Advisory Panel Associate Dean (Curriculum Development)
Nottingham Trent University	Prof. Yvonne Barnett	PVC and Head of College, Science and Technology
University of Reading	Dr Kris Spelman-Miller	Director Teaching & Learning Faculty of Arts & Humanities
University of Southampton	Ms Vicky Wright	Director of the Language Centre
HEFCE	Ms Liz Franco	Higher Education Adviser North East and North West Regional Teams



<b>Strategic Languages - Advisory Panel</b>		
<b>Institution</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>
Open University	Dr Sharon Ding	Chair Dean (Faculty of Education and Language Studies)
University of Southampton	Ms Vicky Wright	Director of Language Centre
Nottingham Trent University	Prof. Marianne Howarth	Dean School of Arts and Humanities
School of Oriental & African Studies	Dr George Zhang	Chinese Languages Course Co-ordinator
University of Salford	Prof James Dickins	Arabic, School of Languages
University of Portsmouth	Mr John Naysmith	Head School of Languages and Area Studies
Open University	Prof. Jim Coleman	Academic Director
Open University	Dr Inma Álvarez	Academic Leader



<b>Strategic Languages - Working Group</b>		
<b>Institution</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>
Nottingham Trent University	Ms Lingling Mao	Chinese tutor
SOAS	Mr Yousef Omar	Coordinator Diploma in Arabic
	Dr George Zhang	Chinese Languages Course Co-ordinator
University of Portsmouth	Ms Houria Hammoudi	Arabic tutor
	Mr John Cross	Senior Chinese Tutor
University of Salford	Dr James Dickins	Senior Lecturer in Arabic
University of Southampton	Dr Ouadie Sabia	Arabic Tutor
	Dr Lu Rugang	Chinese tutor

## Appendix 2: HE trends in full-time first degree undergraduates 1996-2006

Subject	Acceptances												Applications		
	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	change 2005-06	2005	2006	%change 2005-06
<b>T1 Chinese</b>															
Single Subject	72	77	95	71	58	58	80	70	78	100	115	15%	476	747	57%
Major Subject	29	22	24	15	13	22	23	19	6	16	6	-63%	89	63	-29%
Balanced Combination	64	76	95	83	88	80	87	100	101	164	196	20%	780	1133	45%
Minor Subject	0	0	5	3	1	5	66	29	58	72	75	4%	318	339	7%
Total	165	175	219	172	160	165	256	218	243	352	392	11%	16663	2282	37%
% of 1996*	0%	6%	33%	4%	-3%	0%	55%	32%	47%	113%	138%		55%	112%	
weighted FPE**	123	130	160	124	111	114	161	142	152	217	242	12%	1031	1469	42%
% weighted	0%	5%	30%	0%	-10%	-7%	30%	15%	23%	76%	96%		40%	100%	
<b>T6 Modern Middle Eastern studies</b>															
Single Subject	90	59	68	42	87	123	116	145	157	136	115	-15%	788	658	-16%
Major Subject	12	13	26	13	13	14	13	13	8	4	2	-50%	46	5	-89%
Balanced Combination	111	128	116	114	109	110	134	149	174	207	245	18%	1309	1437	10%
Minor Subject	1	10	8	12	10	13	15	14	10	15	16	7%	84	78	-7%
Total	214	210	218	181	219	260	278	321	349	362	378	4%	2227	2178	-2%
% of 1996	0%	-2%	2%	-15%	2%	21%	30%	50%	63%	69%	77%		100%	96%	
weighted FPE	154	135	146	112	154	192	197	233	253	247	244	-1%	1501	1406	-6%
% weighted	0%	-12%	-5%	-27%	0%	25%	28%	51%	64%	61%	59%		114%	101%	
<b>All RT Language Disciplines ***</b>												%change 2002-06		%change 2002-06	
Total							6,255	6,003	6,002	6,155	5,714	-9%	34,710	33,969	4%
<b>All Subjects (degree only)</b>															
Total							344,581	355,531	362,985	393,316	381,643	11%	2,247,448	2,185,063	4%

\* unweighted student percentages: total student counts each year

\*\*weighted student counts: Full Person Equivalents (FPE) each year (=SH 1, JH ½, Ma 2/3, Mi 1/3)

\*\*\* the RT groups (European and non-European languages, including American studies)

Source: UCAS data not including clearing accepts, analysis carried out by CILT, June 2007.

### Appendix 3: First degree undergraduates 2002-2005

	% change 1998-9 to 2001-2	2002-3	2003-4	2004-5	2005-6	% change 2002-3 to 2005-6
Modern Middle Eastern studies	-9%	805	920	995	955	+19%
Chinese	-16%	605	685	755	850	+40%
French	-19%	14400	14130	13930	13925	-3%
Spanish	+3%	8225	8255	8535	8655	+5%
German	-17%	5875	5805	5550	5350	-9%
Italian	-5%	3005	2885	2755	2620	-13%
Russian	-15%	1535	1585	1600	1635	+7%

Figures show all UK (excluding OU), EU and overseas students.

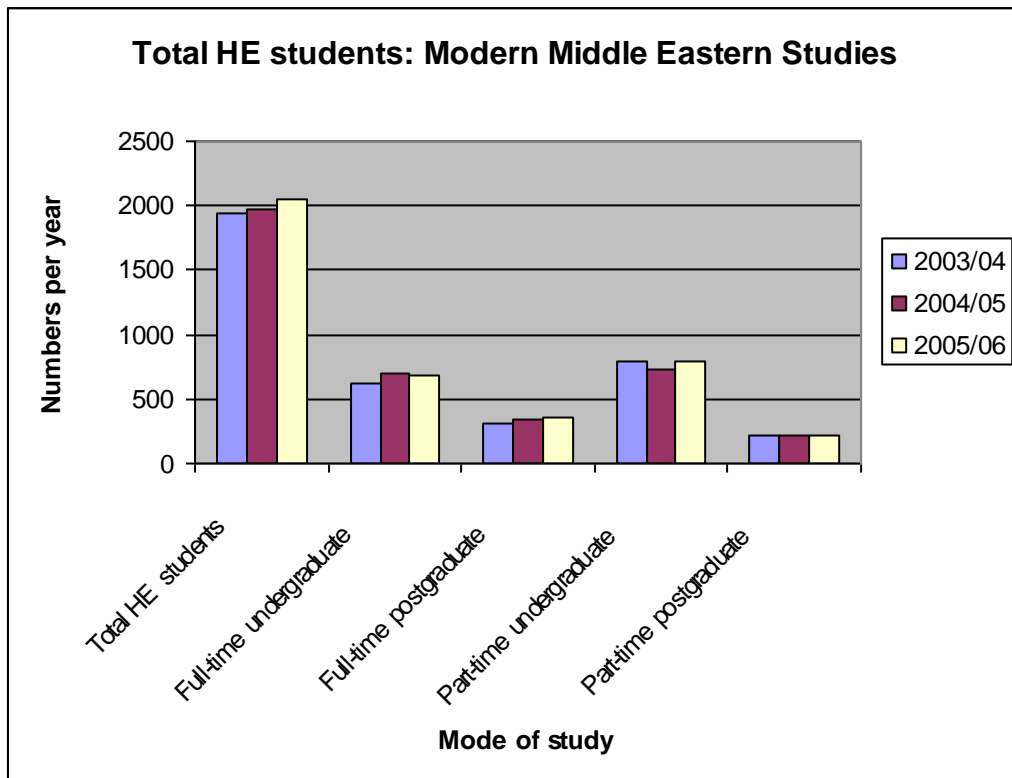
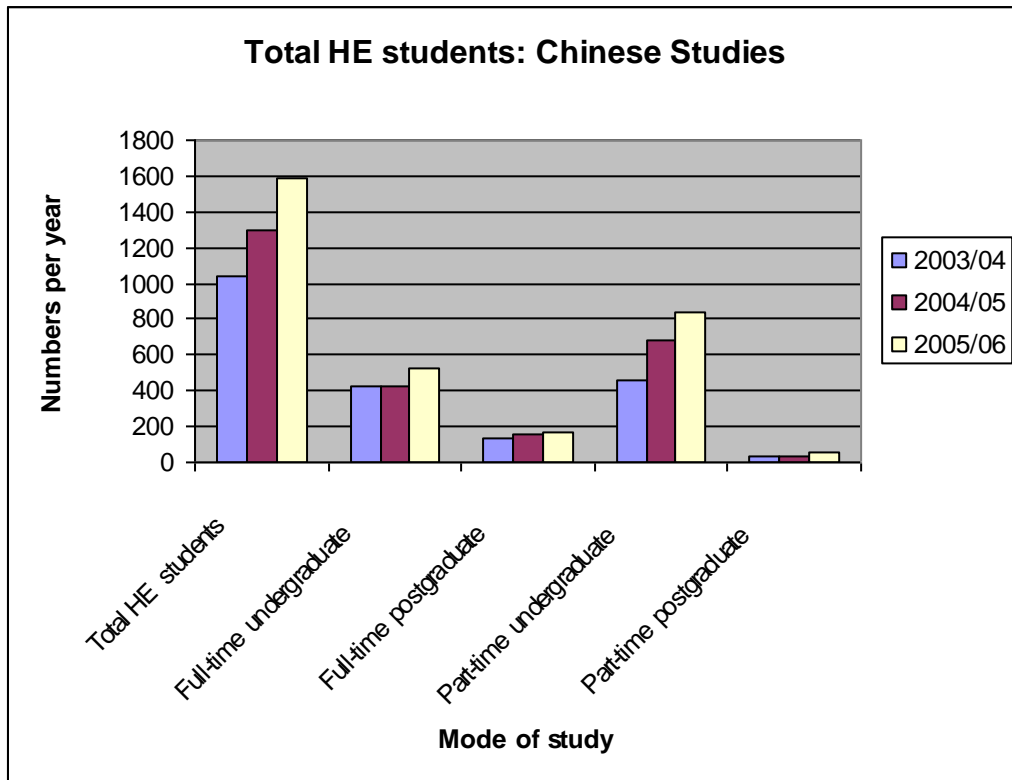
Source: CILT headcount analysis of HESA data 2001/2- 2005/06, June 2007.

### Appendix 4: HE student numbers per subject 2002-2005

First degrees	2002/3	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	%change
Chinese	505	510	550	570	+12.0%
Modern Middle Eastern studies	675	745	780	710	+4.7%
Total change all languages	29,530	27,905	27,635	27,715	- 6.2%
<b>Other undergraduates</b>					
Chinese	260	370	560	790	+207.1%
Modern Middle Eastern studies	650	670	650	765	+18.4%
Total	22,300	22,825	22,420	24,670	+10.6%
<b>Postgraduates</b>					
Chinese	150	170	185	225	+51.4%
Modern Middle Eastern studies	515	530	545	575	+11.1%
Total	5,790	6,185	6,270	6,290	+8.7%
<b>Students studying ALL subjects at UK HE institutions (excl OU)</b>					
UK domiciles	1,741,335	1,778,515	1,796,135	1,837,230	+5.5%
Overseas domiciles	275,015	299,705	318,395	330,035	+20.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,016,350</b>	<b>2,078,220</b>	<b>2,114,525</b>	<b>2,167,265</b>	<b>+7.5%</b>

Source: HESA data (FPE), analysis carried out by the DfES, June 2005.

**Appendix 5: HE student numbers per mode of study 2003-2005**



Source: HESA data, total numbers of students leading to named degrees, analysis carried out by OU, 2007.



### Appendix 6: Students per institution 2004-2005

HEI (accounts for 91.5% of the FTEs)	Chinese first degrees	Middle Eastern first degrees	Chinese first degrees	Middle Eastern first degrees
	2004/05		2005/06	
The School of Oriental and African Studies	85	165	95	175
The University of Leeds	100	80	100	75
The University of Nottingham	40	0	45	0
The University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne	5	0	10	0
The University of Edinburgh	45	35	70	55
The University of Westminster	20	40	55	125
The University of Manchester	0	55	0	65
The University of St Andrews	0	30	0	40
London Metropolitan University	5	5	45	5

Courses leading to named degrees.

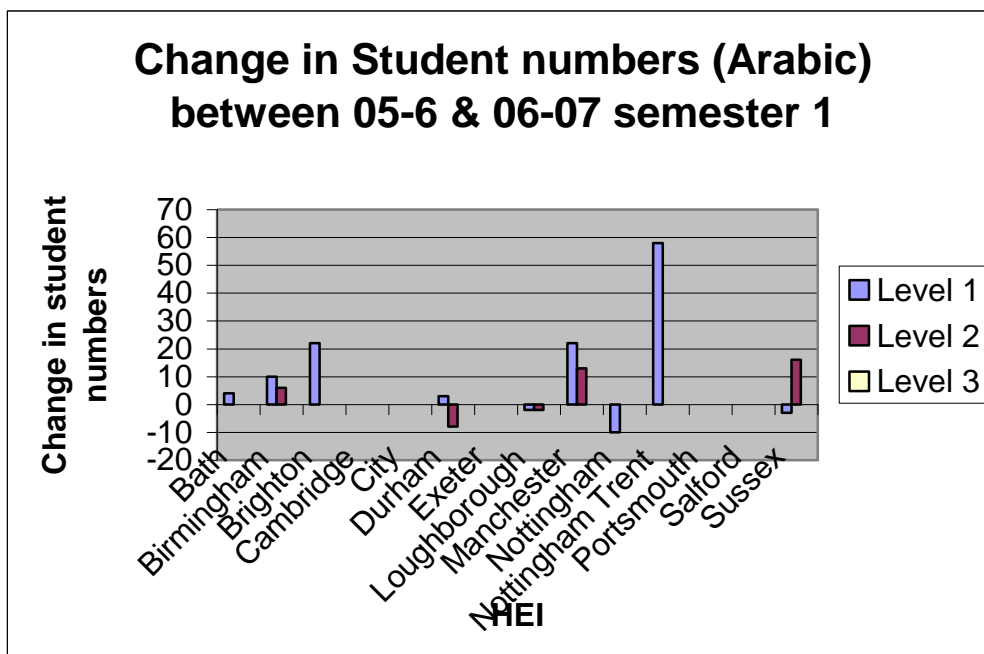
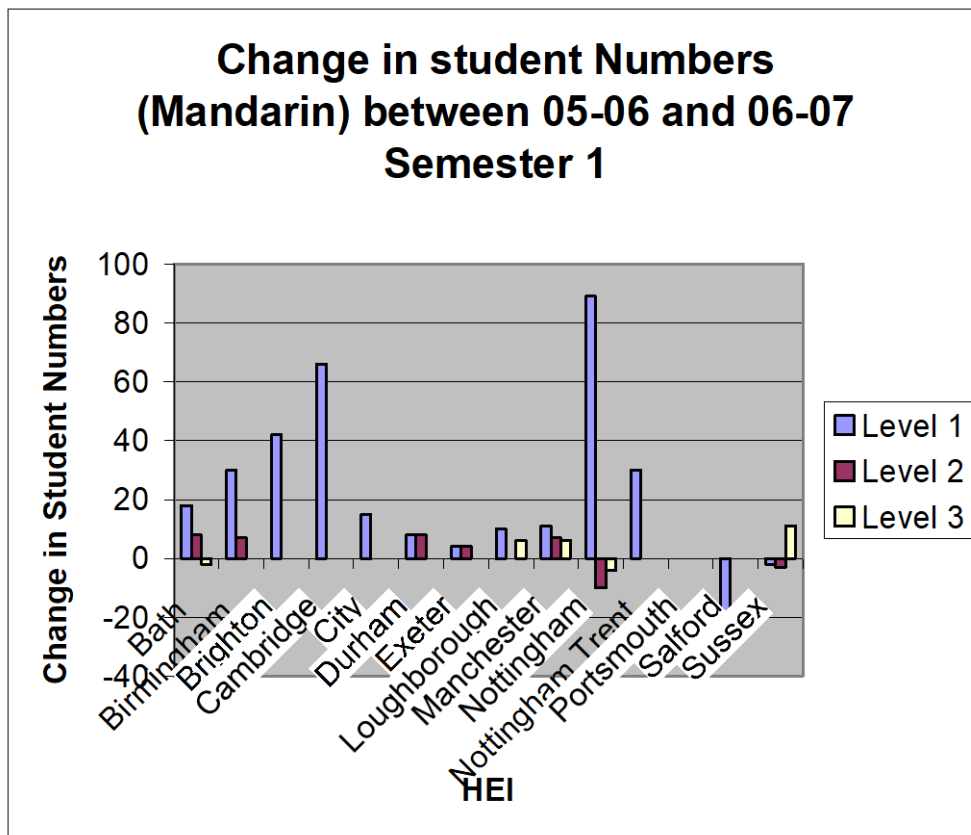
Source: HESA data, 2004/05 and 2005/06.

### Appendix 7: Student numbers in Chinese and Arabic in LEAs 2003/04

Language	Number of LEAs offering language (% total number)	Learner numbers	Increases over past 3 years (2000-2003)	Number of LEAs offering language that could provide learner numbers / out of total providing language	Cancelled courses due to low numbers
Arabic	31 (45%)	965	+ half LEAs	26 / 31	0
Chinese	35 (51%)	709	+ half LEAs	30 / 35	7 (10%)

Source: Survey on enrolments in Local Education Authorities by CILT, 2005.

**Appendix 8: Language centres changes in student numbers per level 2005-2006**



Source: Survey on enrolments in IWLPs, The Open University, 2007.

## Appendix 9: School examinations in England, Wales and Scotland 2001-2005

Language	All GCSE entries 2005	% change in all GCSE entries from 2001 to 2005	All A level entries 2005 (2001)	A level entries In England from 2001 to 2004			
				2001	2002	2003	2004
Arabic	2,183	+63	429 (275)*	167	188	181	218
Chinese	3,091	+40	2,062 (1,375)	1,102	1,400	1,496	1,677
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25,894</b>	<b>+9</b>	<b>5,906</b>				

\* comparison is with 2002 – figures not available for previous years

Sources: "Community language learning in England, Wales and Scotland" Report by CILT; and House of Commons Hansard Parliamentary Records, 19 Oct 2005 (for details of A levels in England 2001-2004).

## Appendix 10: Changes in (UK domiciled) undergraduates by region 1998-2001

	Arabic	Chinese
North East	-13%	- 5%
Yorks. & Humberside	+19%	- 7%
North West	+15%	- 80%
Merseyside	--	--
East Midlands	--	...
East	--	- 28%
South East	- 10%	- 24%
London	- 24%	--
South West	...	--
West Midlands	--	- 16%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>- 12%</b>	<b>- 16%</b>

Table shows percentage of increase/decrease numbers from 1998/99 baseline to 2001/02

%s based on less than 50 individuals suppressed and represented ...

Regions without the languages shown as --

Source: HESA data 1998/9 & 2001/2, as reported in Footitt, 2005, pp. 11-12.

**Appendix 11: Student numbers in less widely taught languages in Europe 2005**

<b>Language</b>	<b>Assessed Study</b>	<b>Non-assessed Study</b>
Chinese	518 (7%)	581 (20%)
Arabic	392 (5%)	470 (17%)
Total for LWT & EU Accession countries	7,330 students 27 institutions	2,848 students 20 institutions

Source: ENLU Project report, September 2005, p. 16.

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