

The International Academy - Amman

Policy Name:	Language Policy
Effective from:	January 2008
Last Updated:	30 November 2020

I. PURPOSE

Language is first and foremost the means of communication between individuals, groups and nations. Through the acquisition of language, students are enabled to access the necessary learning tools for their continued and future development and success; thereby enabling them to meet the challenges and opportunities of a rapidly changing world.

IAA, therefore, believes that language and learning are inextricably linked. Through the languages spoken and taught at the school, students can develop attitudes and skills as well as knowledge about their own and others' social and national cultures; thereby encouraging multiple perspectives, understandings and international awareness.

IAA ensure that the following practices about languages are implemented:

- All teachers are language teachers regardless of discipline or grade level;
- Home language development in Arabic is vital in order to develop cognitively in addition to maintaining cultural, heritage and community links;
- All languages are equally valuable; however, English is the language of instruction at IAA;
- Additional support is provided for the development of English and the home language of Arabic to support students in fulfilling their educational and social potential;
- All members of the school community have an important role in a student's language development either through use of language and/or promotion of language learning;
- The school community should be encouraged to acquire and develop additional language/s; and
- Students of other home languages should also receive additional support (where practicable).

IAA Definitions

Ab Initio - This is the study of a language at beginner level for students who have no previous experience in it.

Differentiation - The adaptation of teaching strategies and content to help students access the curriculum.

Home language - This is the language that gets spoken at home by students, parents and/or caregivers. This is the language that students are most comfortable in terms of expressing themselves.

Language of instruction - This is the language by which the school curriculum is delivered.

Language A - This may be the student's home language; but not necessarily so. It is the student's best language and is usually the language of his or her future education.

Language B - This is usually the language that a student has some previous experience either through study or exposure. It is usually expected that a student will use this language to a fairly sophisticated level.

School Community - This is defined as students, parents, teachers, administrators and other staff who work within the school facility.

II. POLICY

IAA delivers an international programme to a predominantly Jordanian school population. All students are encouraged to study Arabic regardless of nationality. The language of instruction is English with Arabic taught at all grade levels and Spanish offered as a third language (Language A/B) in the Secondary School. It is intended that all graduating IAA students will be bilingual in English and Arabic. The home language of Arabic is used in some classes depending on grade level, including Religion (in Primary and Secondary), Social Studies in Arabic (SSA) (in Primary) and Individual and Societies in Arabic (IAS A) (Secondary).

In the Primary School, the emphasis is on continuing acquisition of English language skills and refinement of Arabic for Arabic home language speakers and Arabic acquisition for home language speakers of languages other than Arabic. Language and Literacy courses are delivered in the English language. All other courses are delivered in English, with the exception of Religion and SSA (as required by the Ministry of Education).

In the Secondary School, all subjects are delivered in English with the exception of Arabic Language, Religion, Spanish and religion, and IAS A. Spanish is offered to students as a third language in the MYP and DP. All students will be strongly encouraged to use the targeted language of instruction in the corresponding class.

As language is the key to all learning, appropriate linguistic strategies will be taught throughout all subjects regardless of language of instruction. Through the communicative approach for language development, the language curriculum and instruction will enable students to:

- Acquire knowledge to help them make sense of their surroundings;

- Critically express thoughts with clarity and confidence;
- Develop communication and critical thinking skills;
- Confidently communicate, either orally and/or in writing;
- Understand the power of language and apply it appropriately;
- Choose appropriate registers according to audience, situation and need;
- Find a balance between listening and speaking; and
- Reflect on how they use language.

Arabic as a Home Language

As the most widely used mother tongue, Arabic takes an important role in the lives of our students. For linguistic and cultural reasons, the teaching of modern Classical Arabic is given high value at IAA.

Arabic development in Primary School is supported directly for students through the teaching of Arabic by specialist teachers with hours allocated according to level. In the Secondary School, all students must also study Arabic. Additional support (where available) will be given by the Arabic Department to students who are having difficulty. In Grades 11 to 12 students may opt to not take Arabic if they are not Jordanian nationals or parents sign a waiver to acknowledge that by not taking Arabic their child will not be eligible for Tawjihi equivalency. Mother tongue is further developed through the teaching of Arabic through Religion and Social Studies (Primary and MYP) as well as the scheduled Arabic classes. This is in accordance with Ministry of Education regulations.

English as a Home Language

As the second most widely used mother tongue, English is the language of instruction at IAA and takes an important role in the lives of our students, as their future studies will most likely be in English.

Students with Home Languages other than English and Spanish

For students with other home languages, language development is encouraged and supported where possible. For such students, IAA will attempt to find appropriate resources, including teachers, literature and cultural experiences.

Additional Language Support

IAA recognises that not all students learn at the same pace or have similar learning aptitudes in regard to languages. Accordingly, additional English and Arabic support will be provided for identified students that consider the following:

- Student's home languages
- Identified learning needs
- Students' individual learning profiles

The provisions made to students will be in consultation with all involved and will act in the best interest of the child while encouraging language developments at the same time. As a rule, students should not be removed from their regular classes for support; support should either be 'push-in' or take place outside of the normal lesson time.

All teachers are language teachers and therefore, lessons are designed to maximise language exposure and practice. Further support (for English and Spanish) will be provided through differentiation of lessons and class teacher assistance, which will be documented in curriculum maps. The nature of the assistance will depend on the level of need. Support may take the form of additional classes and/or extracurricular activities.

Language Profiles

All students entering IAA will undergo an admissions test (see 'Admissions Policy'). The data collected as part of the application process, will assist in the development of a learning profile, with the language profile being a component of their learning profile. The student's language profile will include information on the home language (or languages), language(s) of education and languages that the student has been exposed to.

Placements

For Primary students, placement in English language classes will be according to age and grade level; whilst in Secondary (Grades 6-10), placement will be based on diagnostic testing for Grade 6. After Grade 6 all students will take English A MYP and testing will be used to identify those students in need of push in support.

Placement in Arabic language will be according to age and grade level and level of home language or language acquisition (for those students whose home language is not Arabic).

Spanish

Spanish is offered as an additional language for students in grades 6-12 at language B level. At Grades 6-10 most students study Spanish B. In Grades 11 and 12, it is offered in Groups 1 & 2.

IAA recognizes that every student is unique, and it is possible that a student will enter IAA with a language background very different from the usual profiles. For such students, IAA will assess each situation on a case-by-case basis, and attempt to find a solution which will meet those needs within the constraints of the school.

Mid-Year Entrants

Mid-year entrants (for Grades 6-10) are placed in language groups according to ability with consideration given to available places and course requirements. It is not usual for IAA to accept midyear entrants in Primary but in such instances language policy provisions still apply.

Curriculum

Students from the Early Years to grade 5 follow the literacy scheme of work set out in the English National Curriculum for Literacy in English, while Literacy in Arabic follows the Jordanian Ministry of Education guidelines. This framework will be modified according to needs with work differentiated in response to ability and skill.

Early Years

Pre-K (Ages 3-4)

Pre-K language teaching consists of a wide variety of opportunities for children to speak, listen and develop their language skills. This will come from planned activities and guided play as well as literacy activities. The key foci in both English and Arabic are speaking, listening and understanding, which research shows is the most effective focus. The schemes of work for both English and Arabic are identical as the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is designed to be multilingual. Parental support will be in the form of home/school conversations, talk homework and story reading in English and Arabic.

Kindergarten (Ages 4-6)

A structured phonics programme in English and Arabic is in place to support the children towards reading and writing. Language instruction in kindergarten will continue the emphasis on speaking, listening and understanding skills. It will move the children towards more formal literacy sessions.

Grades 1-5

Arabic and English grammar and comprehension will be taught through in depth study of genres. Comprehension will be further extended through Guided Reading where students will be introduced to text analysis and higher order questioning. Students will learn to write in a variety of genres. In Arabic, specific criteria have been created by IAA teachers for developing writing. These are designed to gradually develop students' skills, and support formative practice. Speaking and Listening are more formalised through use of drama, presentations and debating in the Upper Primary.

Grades 6-10

All of the language specific classes in IAA Secondary School generically follow their respective International Baccalaureate guidelines. All Languages A and B respectively, regardless of whether it being Arabic, English or Spanish, work with and apply the published MYP and DP aims, objectives, including the MYP interim objectives, and assessment criteria for their respective subject group. In Secondary School, technology is incorporated into language learning and there is an increased emphasis on cross disciplinary work and real life usage.

Students in Grades 6-10 follow the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme. According to IB specifications, Language A (Arabic and English) follows an integrated approach to language learning and focus on language through literature and use of film and other media. Language A programmes are designed for students who are native or near native level. Students will be expected to write academic essays and original creative pieces as well as responses to literature.

Students who study Language B (Arabic and/or Spanish) are usually non-native speakers or students who have been predominantly in a non-Arabic speaking environment. The emphasis is on fluency and accuracy in the language skills of reading, writing, listening

and speaking. Lessons will focus more on acquisition of language skills as opposed to literature appreciation and analysis. The goal for Language B learners is to have functional fluency by the end of Grade 10, though not necessarily the ability to use the Language B as extensively as Language A.

Grades 11-12

Students at the International Baccalaureate Diploma level must take as a minimum two languages- two from Group 1 or one each from Groups 1 and 2. The language students select from Group 1 is their best language or is the language in which they intend to continue their post high school studies. Bilingual students may select a second Group 1 language in lieu of a Group 2 language. This option is best for students who intend to attend university in a language that is different from that of the language of the country in which they live (e.g. a Jordanian student who intends to attend university in English). Otherwise, students must also study a Group 2 language, either a Language B or a Language ab initio. The focus of Group 2 languages is language acquisition. Language B focuses on acquiring language skills through the study of the language in context and is intended for students with some previous experience with the language. Ab initio is designed for students who have limited exposure to the language and focuses on language in everyday use.

At the DP level, students may opt to take their mother tongue as a Self-Taught A language if that language is not normally offered at the A level at IAA. The school will attempt to accommodate requests for Self-Taught courses pending the availability of tutors.

All students in grades 11 and 12 are required to take English, preferably at the Language A level.

Methodology

The various teaching methodologies at IAA promote a stimulating learning environment, integrating knowledge, critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills. Students, at all grade levels, are encouraged to take responsibility for their own work, as well as to think for themselves through active learning. Teachers will provide a wide range of learning experiences and opportunities so as to develop and enrich student language skills. They are also mindful of their methodology in accordance with the age of their classes. Younger students develop their language skills through examples and patterns as well as having a large sensory input. Older students, on the other hand, require more logical and abstract teaching, and are able to develop cognitive and analytical skills.

The many nationalities present amongst faculty and staff also will provide a wide range of teaching approaches. Through interactive learning, students will be given the opportunities to engage as both receivers and senders, as well as participate in meaningful communication. Cooperative learning will enable students to achieve goals as a group within the classroom, sharing information and skills. By actively engaging in

content and skills based learning, language skills will develop also through other subject areas, and allow students to appreciate the power within language and language learning.

IAA also recognizes that students have their own learning styles, hence differentiation is seen as an invaluable tool. Teachers will provide work which caters to the students strongest way of learning, whether this be auditory-sequential, kinaesthetic-tactile, or visual-spatial, whilst at the same time giving students opportunities to absorb knowledge and skills through a less favoured style. Technology will be used in the classroom as appropriate in order to enhance student learning.

Resources

IAA is well provided with resources for languages at all grade and age levels. Resources will be age and grade appropriate with emphasis on developing language skills and providing for extension and/or remediation. The school libraries play a key role and are a central part of the school language program. They are used as an integral part of the curriculum, by students and teachers, and are frequently developed with updating of resource materials. A wide range of literature in the school libraries will extend and supplement classroom resources. The aim is to help students become independent and committed readers, through free interaction with a variety of texts and to develop literacy skills. The school library includes both Arabic and English literary and non-literary texts. In the Secondary school, there is a smaller selection of the same in Spanish.

Each department will also ensure an adequate number of resources which further supplement subject specific resources (e.g. vocabulary wall charts). Teachers are also able to access the EAL/AAL teachers for additional teaching materials and support designed to assist in developing subject specific language skills.

Language Use Around School

IAA is aware of the power of language and words, and acknowledges that what individuals say, and how individuals say things, directly affects people's perceptions of our intentions, goals and values. IAA therefore encourages all its community members to develop positive means of communication that foster a sense of community. For this reason, IAA students and teachers should, when in group situations, use the language that is common to that group. This also means avoiding the use of words that denigrate, degrade or alienate others.

School Documentation

IAA uses British spelling for English language documents and modern standard Arabic for all documents produced in Arabic. As a general rule, school documents will be produced in English and in Arabic only where necessary (such as admissions, prospectus and some letters to parents). Arabic translations will not be possible for many documents; however, most, if not all of the school community are able to read and understand English. The format used by the Modern Language Association (M.L.A.) is used throughout the school for references and bibliographies to document sources.

Professional Development

In order to better provide for staff language acquisition, IAA will regularly provide in school professional development on language acquisition and language teaching methodology. All faculty are expected to participate and are encouraged to deliver and adopt proven strategies.

IAA also encourages faculty to practice differentiation for language and other student needs with the goal of establishing a systematic monitoring system. As life-long learners, the faculty will also be encouraged to develop their own language skills.

III. APPLICABILITY

Limitations

This policy will be subject to a yearly review and update as new information about effective language development and teaching becomes available.

Approvals

All language placement decisions are recommended to the Assistant Director for Curriculum/Whole School Curriculum Coordinator by the language coordinator, who reviews and makes suggestions for final approvals by the Director.

Responsibilities

Senior Leaders

Senior Leaders collaborate on these responsibilities:

- Building a culture of learning and sharing best practices for teaching and learning;
- Organizing and developing professional development to enhance the implementation of best practices related to language learning and development; and
- Ensuring the effective delivery of training and development in school.

Assistant Director for Curriculum/Whole School Curriculum Coordinator

- Collaborates with the Language Coordinators on the placements of students;
- Oversees the establishment of annual language improvement and development goals for the school, sections and departments/grade levels;
- Oversees professional development related to language acquisition and development;
- Develops systems for sharing best practices and materials; and
- Reviews and shares updates and information on the profession as a whole.

Principals/Deputy Principals

- Help identify overall needs of section programmes;

- Ensure staff are familiar with and have updated information on the programme Standards and Practices; and
- Oversee the effective implementation of teaching and learning.

Language Coordinators

- Collaborate with the Assistant Director for Curriculum to review the placement of students;
- Liaise with teacher for all aspects of teaching, learning and language development; and
- Develop and provide training for staff in relation to language development and improvement.

Teachers

- Actively contribute for the language development of all student; and
- Plan for the effective teaching and delivery of the taught curriculum following best practices and students' IEPs.

Librarian

- Providing resources and expertise on incorporating information literacy into the unit planning for different subject areas;
- Assessing the reading interests of students for the purpose of collection development; and
- Suggesting resources for reading as when needed.

Learning Support Manager

- Continuous development of a student-centered approach to inclusion;
- Oversees the development of students' IEP's in a coherent manner across the school;
- Trains and support the learning support team, as well as teachers in strategies related to differentiation and inclusion; and
- Ensure consistent use of shared knowledge, language and skills across the school.

Learning Support Team

- Responsible for development and implementation of students' IEP's;
- Act as a resource that provides differentiation strategies for teachers;
- Partner with teacher to facilitate the inclusion of all students;
- Implement the consistent use of shared knowledge, language and skills across the school;
- Provides research-based methodologies for remediation;
- Facilitate the implementation of accommodations alongside teachers;
- Monitor student data to ensure students perform at age-appropriate level.

IV. REFERENCES

International Baccalaureate. 2014. Language Policy. Available online at: <https://www.ibo.org/globalassets/ib-language-policy-en.pdf>. Date accessed: 18 November 2020.

V. KEY DOCUMENTATION SUPPORTING IMPLEMENTATION

Teaching and Learning Policy
Professional Development Policy
Assessment Policy
Curriculum Policy