

The examination once again proved that compelling students to take a subject will never succeed. This is clearly seen in the results of these centres over the years. Of equal concern are the centres where candidates choose to do the subject as a sixth subject. These candidates are supposed to score well in the subject, but this is generally not the case. Where candidates choose to do the subject as a seventh subject they seem to do much better. This is because they want to boost their marks for entrance to tertiary institutions and are thus more motivated to do well. Part-time candidates also pose a major problem, as they very often do not sit for the examination.

Candidates taking Arabic at school have become progressively weaker. Their abilities in the first language, or language of instruction, are extremely poor. It is totally unacceptable that candidates should attempt a foreign language when their mother tongue skills are so poor. The Education Department, the schools, the educators and especially the candidates need to confront this very serious problem. No learner can answer any question paper adequately if his or her language skills in Grade 12 are the equivalent of or sometimes worse than that of primary school pupils.

Learning a foreign language requires much time, commitment and skill. Candidates simply disregard this. Educators should also continuously upgrade their skills, knowledge and pool of resources. Total commitment, love for Arabic and dedication are required at all times. The papers are, in essence, not so difficult as one has to bear in mind that most candidates have already started learning Arabic in Grade 8. Educators can thus structure a programme of learning and teaching around this. Perhaps new material should also be looked at in addition to the syllabus. If we do not become proactive, Arabic will certainly die a slow and painful death.