For Arabic classrooms at U-M, this study compares:

- student perceptions of their own language learning strategies and strategies emphasized by faculty with
- faculty perceptions of the strategies they emphasize

Additionally, comparisons in reported strategy use are made between:

- students identifying as “heritage” learners (i.e., raised in home where Arabic was spoken)
- and non-heritage speakers.

Our project makes use of Oxford’s “Strategic Inventory of Language Learning” (1990: 14-22). We have combined the standard 33-item version of this survey with a second section asking students and faculty to report their perceptions of the degree to which each of these language learning strategies are emphasized in their Arabic courses.

In Fall 2011, all students in introductory Arabic courses at the U-M were sent an online survey. There were 99 responses, a return rate of XX%. One-third of the sample (33 students) identified themselves as heritage speakers.

All instructors teaching Arabic at U-M were sent an online survey. There were 13 responses, a return rate of XX%.

The Mann-Whitney U Test was used for tests of statistical significance.

For students, statistically significant differences (p<.05) in language learning strategies are:

- Heritage speakers report higher rates of:
  - Oral Practice: Starting conversations (M=3.45 vs. 2.63)
  - Looking for people to talk to in Arabic (M=3.52 vs. 2.84)
  - Asking questions in Arabic (M=3.50 vs. 2.94)
- Reading for Pleasure: (M=2.42 vs.1.65)

- Non-heritage speakers report higher rates of:
  - Flashcard Use (M=3.74 vs. 3.12)
  - Thinking about Learning Progress (M=4.3 vs. 3.82)

1. Faculty need to make explicit the teaching strategies they use, as well as the language learning approaches that will be most effective for students.

2. Through initial assessments, faculty should better understand students’ learning strategies, as well as differences between heritage and non-heritage speakers’ approaches.