

**A Study of Language Use, Language Attitudes and Identities  
in Two Arabic Speaking Communities in the UK**

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates patterns of language use, language attitudes, identity and attitudes towards learning Arabic, within two Arabic speaking communities in the UK. An important motivation is to investigate a rarely researched group to explore language practices, language proficiency, language attitudes and identity within this group. It is also an opportunity to investigate the relationship between Islam and the Arabic language and the relationship between Islamic and Arabic identities within Arab migrant groups from various national backgrounds. The two communities were approached and accessed via two complementary schools, one in Ealing in London, the other in Leeds, West Yorkshire.

The members of these communities were adults (teachers and parents), as well as children (pupils) in the two complementary schools. The data consists of interviews with children and adults at the two research sites, pupil participants' questionnaires and informal tests of proficiency in Arabic, supplemented by field notes based on participant observation.

The findings show that subjects' attitudes to the heritage language, in both its varieties, namely standard (*Fusha*) and colloquial Arabic, were generally positive. The children studied were dominant in English and used English with their siblings and peers. However, they typically used a mixture of English and colloquial Arabic with adults. Informal Arabic proficiency tests in vocabulary and reading conducted in the complementary school classrooms suggest that the pupils' Arabic proficiency was rather low, and certainly lower than they reported. Differences were discovered between the Ealing and Leeds communities. For instance, Leeds children showed a higher level of Arabic proficiency and reported using Arabic more frequently at school and at home than the Ealing children. One possible reason for this difference is the greater proportion

of children at the Leeds site who were born outside the UK; and the greater religiosity of the Leeds participants, which may have inclined them to more regular use and a higher valuation of Arabic than their Ealing counterparts. Moreover, there was variable language use in terms of intergenerational difference. Arab adults expressed support for the association between language and identity. However, children had diverse perspectives toward this relationship, expressing negative attitudes to learning standard Arabic outside the home, i.e. in complementary schools. Despite the differences between the communities, there was clear evidence of language shift being underway in both cohorts.

This study contributes to the literature on language and identity within ethnic minorities in the UK, while at the same time showing that Arab minorities are internally different and far from homogenous.

*I would like to dedicate this work to my wounded, beloved Syria; the great civilization that will one day, like a Phoenix, be reborn and gather all Syrians together.*

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1 Overview

Research on ethnolinguistic minority groups in the UK has expanded considerably in recent years, and has included studies of sociolinguistic aspects of, for example, Chinese, Bengali, Turkish, and Punjabi speaking communities, and of the various means (e.g. churches, community groups and complementary schools) used to transmit and maintain the heritage language and culture (see Creese et al., 2008; Francis et al., 2009; Harris, 2006; Hamid, 2011; Lawson and Sachdev, 2004; Martin et al., 2008; Wei, 1994). Less common, and less well-researched, however, is the nature of the Arab population in the UK. This is a well-established, highly diverse minority group, comprising individuals originating from many countries, of different social classes and holding different religious beliefs. Like other minorities, the Arab population has established social, business and educational institutions that aim to transmit knowledge of Arabic and of Islamic culture.

The aim of this study is to investigate language use, attitudes to Arabic and the maintenance of the Arabic language among Arab migrants in the UK, as well as investigating the identity expressed by this group. This research is very timely as Arabs in the UK occupy a fairly uncertain place regarding their expressed identities and attitudes towards the languages they speak and the communities they belong to, especially given recent political events. Regarding identity, there is no denying that the identity crisis the Arab world is experiencing now reflects on the identity issues of migrants living in the UK. Therefore, this study provides a valuable opportunity to investigate matters of Arab identity through the lenses of language and religion.

The importance of gaining access to the investigated community is crucial in socio-linguistic studies. This study dealt with a community that is fairly closed, especially after the accusations of terrorism that have stigmatized Arabs and Muslims in the UK and the western world since 2001. The complementary school was identified as both a research site and a window through which to access the community. It was thus chosen as a means of examining issues related to language use, identity and the relationship with religion.

This research is one of very few studies examining the language behaviour and identity practices of Arabs from various national backgrounds in the UK. In other words, it creates the opportunity to start researching a community which has been under-examined, although it is an interesting research field from which to collect and examine linguistic data.

The central goal of this thesis is to make a contribution to the sociolinguistic literature on ethnic minorities in the UK in general and the Arab population in particular by providing a detailed description of the patterns of language use, language proficiency, language attitudes and expressed identities of two groups of Arabic heritage individuals from two research sites in England, Leeds and Ealing, London. Below is an outline of the aims and main focus of the study.

## **1.2 Aim and focus of study**

The Arab population in the UK is divided along lines of class, religion and national background. It includes Arabs from the Gulf States, mainly transient sojourners residing principally in London, alongside poorer working class communities of Yemenis in such towns as Sheffield or Birmingham. There are also refugee and asylum seeker populations from countries including Iraq, Palestine, Syria and Egypt. The Arab

population is predominantly Muslim, though they have different degrees of religious affiliation, ranging from conservative and pious to the relatively more secular.

This study is intended to contribute to the literature on the Arab ethnic minority in the UK by investigating two major issues: language use among Arab migrants in the UK, and how members of this heterogeneous group express their identity. It explores these through a description of the patterns of language use, proficiencies, language attitudes, identity and religion, as well as the attitudes to learning Arabic in a formal setting and related issues of the child and adult participants from two research sites in two different parts of England. The study also refers to whether any language shift can be seen to have been taking place within the community during the period covered by the research (2011-2).

The investigation takes the form of two linked case studies that together provide a richly detailed account of sociolinguistic aspects of the two study populations (see 4.3.1). A variety of research instruments are employed to elicit data from participants at the research sites (see 4.5). The inclusion of two research sites and of two groups of participants also allows a number of useful comparisons to be made between them.

The particular areas investigated in this study include:

- The languages used by children with siblings, adults and friends at home, as well as in and around the research site as well as the languages used by adults to communicate with each other and with the children.
- The self-reported language proficiency of pupils in Standard Arabic (*Fusha*) and the home variety. These claims are compared with the results of an informal Arabic proficiency test testing pupils in vocabulary and reading in standard Arabic.



- Attitudes to the Arabic language in its two varieties – standard Arabic (referred to throughout this thesis as *Fusha*) and the spoken vernacular dialect. The study of attitudes also takes in pupils’ perceptions of learning Arabic in formal settings outside the home, as poor attitudes to the learning experience in complementary schooling may have a negative impact on Arabic learning and thus on the prospects of language maintenance.
- The descriptions offered by participants (i.e. children and adults) of their identities and of the place of the Arabic language and Islam as components of their identities.
- The role of Islam and the relationship between Arabic and Quran in influencing language use, attitudes and proficiency.

### **1.3. Organisation of the thesis.**

The thesis comprises six chapters, organised as follows:

- *Chapter 2* consists of a literature review of the following areas, which are relevant to the focus of the study: factors affecting language choice in multilingual/bilingual settings; studies of language shift/maintenance, the notion of ethnolinguistic vitality; language attitudes; and language and identity. Also reviewed are policies toward the languages of ethnic minorities in the UK within the various institutions that ethnic minorities have set up to transmit the heritage language. The literature review underlines the main theoretical framework used in this thesis.
- *Chapter 3* discusses the background of Arab migrants in the UK, and describes the diglossic situation in the Arab World, explaining the link between language and identities in the Arab world.

- *Chapter 4* outlines the methodology used in this study, describing in detail how this have been chosen; the reasons for choosing particular research instruments; how the subjects have been selected; and the actual fieldwork conducted. A copy of the questionnaire and the language proficiency test can be found in the appendices (see Appendix 4a, 4b).
- *Chapter 5* presents and discusses the empirical findings on patterns of language use, language proficiency, language attitudes, language and identity. The findings are compared to those of other similar or related studies.
- *Chapter 6 is*, the conclusion, and summarises the key findings of the study and their significance in relation to the literature. It also outlines the main limitations of this study and makes some suggestions for future research.
- The appendices include interview transcripts, and a CD disc with a representative sample of the data collected.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **2.1 Overview**

This chapter reviews the literature relevant to this study. It is divided into two main sections. The first section deals with issues of language use; of language shift and maintenance; of attitudes to language, and of the relationship between language and identity. The second section reviews the history of multilingualism in the UK and policies towards ethnic minority groups, as well as heritage institutions established for maintaining the language, such as complementary schools.

### **2.2 Literature on Language Use, Choice and Identity**

#### **2.2.1 Introduction**

This section discusses language use and choice, reviewing factors that can influence language choice. It goes on to consider language shift and maintenance, and associated concepts, such as the theory of ethno-linguistic vitality (EV) and language attitudes. It defines language shift, and the difficulties researchers have in observing this phenomenon. Different types of language shift are examined, as well as the main causes. The section also discusses the role of EV, one of the best known concepts in the study of language shift and maintenance. It then examines language attitudes. This chapter finally explores the concept of identity, and discusses the relationship between language and identity, and language and religion.

#### **2.2.2 Language Choice**

Since one of the aims of this research is to explore the language use of the Arab community in various domains and with different interlocutors, there is a focus on language choice. It is also necessary to investigate the different factors that influence the use of one of the languages, whether Arabic or English. This section, therefore, presents

a literature review on language use, particularly in relation to bilingual speakers in migrant communities.

Scholars have identified a number of factors which they believe influence language choice and language use in ethnic minority settings. These are as follows: domain, interlocutors, and topic. These factors are discussed in the following sections:

i) Domain:

Domain refers to the concept that each language or variety of language is assigned to particular function or space and particular participants in the society, such as language used in the work domain, family domain or religious domain, etc. (Spolsky, 2012; Weinreich, 1953). Fishman (1972) argues that domain is a useful idea in investigating individual and community language use. The home and the neighbourhood are believed to be the domains where the minority language is more often used (See studies on language use among second generation of Sylheti-Bangladeshi migrants in London and Turkish migrants in the Netherlands, respectively: Lawson and Sachdev, 2004; Yagmur, 2009). Further, following the “language domain” theory of Fishman (2000), language speakers in ethnic minority communities tend to associate certain languages with specific domains. For example, the language used at home, or within a neighbourhood, may be different from the language used at school or work. Rasinger (2010) found that Eastern European migrants in East Anglia have “a slight preference for the use of English outside the home/family domain, while in the home/family domain the L1 is used predominantly, as would be expected” (2010:298).

ii) Interlocutors:

Language choice is also fairly obviously influenced by interlocutors. Harris (2006) distinguished three patterns while investigating the linguistic behaviour of ethnic minority communities in the suburbs of London: one with parents, which usually

involved a mixed language of mainstream and minority languages; one with siblings which mainly involved using the mainstream language; and one with grandparents, which was mainly the minority language. The participants justified the extensive use of their minority languages with grandparents and elder relatives as showing respect and making their parents proud because they (the parents) had succeeded in enabling their children to maintain the mother tongue (Harris, 2006).

Similar results were found in other studies (see Lawson and Sachdev, 2004; Yagmur 2009), which suggests that language use may also be related to the speakers' age (Harris, 2006; Namei, 2008; Wei, 1994). Wei (1994), for example, found that older family members in the Chinese community in Newcastle mainly spoke Chinese for reasons mostly related to their social networks and limited English.

Gender differences are also believed to have an effect on language use patterns (Harris, 2006; Wei, 1994). For example, in the communities of Gujarati speakers in London, male involvement in life outside the house allows them to use English more than females, who tend to spend most of their time at home; so their proficiency in English is often lower than their male peers (Harris, 2006).

iii) Topic:

Language choice may also be influenced by the topic under discussion (Ritchie and Bhatia, 2013). Fishman (2000:92) suggests that "certain topics are somehow handled better in one language than in another, in particular multilingual contexts". Lawson and Sachdev (2004) point out that Bengali was used with topics related to family issues, while English was mostly used while discussing school matters. Furthermore, two separate studies of Turkish and Iranian migrants in the Netherlands and Sweden, Yagmur (2009) and Namei (2008), found that although the mainstream languages (Dutch and Swedish) were used to discuss many topics, such as socio-political and

educational issues, Turkish and Persian were chosen to discuss religious matters in both communities. Namei (2008: 420-421) explained that the use of the ethnic minority language is due to “the speakers’ limited competence in the subject matters”, or the lack of required vocabulary in the other language.

Wei (1994) discusses ‘macro-societal’ and ‘micro-societal’ perspectives on language choice in addition to these factors. In macro-societal terms, language choice is structured and systematically follows the social structures of the bilingual community. The micro perspective, on the other hand, suggests that language choice tends to follow speakers’ reactions to the behaviour of other actors in a particular context. Consequently, language use is not entirely predictable from the domain, as it is associated with the linguistic interaction that takes place within a group (Wei, 1994), which can be studied through conversation analysis (CA), an aspect that will be briefly discussed later in this section.

Within the macro-societal perspective model, Wei (1994) proposes two main approaches: the complementary distribution approach, following researchers such as Weinreich (1953); and the conflict model. The first approach claims that all of the languages or language varieties in the linguistic community are employed to serve a certain function. Therefore, languages, or their varieties, are assigned to a number of functions which complement each other to construct a consistent bilingual system. The conflict model, on the other hand, proposes that the two languages, or varieties of language, are not equal with regard to social position; hence, they are in a continuously competitive situation, unlike in the complementary model.

Turning to the micro perspective, two theories can be considered: accommodation theory and the social network approach. The former theory says that “speakers tend to accommodate their speech to persons whom they like or whom they wish to be liked

by” (Myers-Scotton, 2006: 131). Myers-Scotton argues that this theory can provide a potential explanation for members of minorities choosing to use the mainstream language as a way of assimilating within the new community, which in turn could result in language shift (Myers-Scotton, 2006).

Wei (1994) also argues that social network factors may influence language choice. According to this theory, “There is a dialectic relationship between speakers’ linguistic behaviours and [their] interpersonal relations” (Wei, 1994:23). In multilingual settings, therefore, language choice is affected by, and affects, the speakers’ social interactions (Wei, 1994), and researchers can investigate their participants’ linguistic identities by considering the identities of those with whom they interact. This approach is a useful descriptive tool for describing a particular kind of community, accessed by focusing on its central members.

The linguistic behaviour in which speakers move between two languages while conversing is referred to as code-switching (Harley, 2008), and is an extremely common feature of bilingual communities (see Clyne, 2003; Harris, 2006; Lawson and Sachdev, 2004; Pan, 1995; Wei, 1994; Wei and Wu, 2009). It has also been described by Wei and Wu (2009:193) as “the most distinctive behaviour of the bilingual speaker; there is no better behavioural indicator to show that a speaker is bilingual than when s/he is using two languages simultaneously in social interaction”.

Code-switching in bilingual speech had been regarded previously as a sign of bilingual individuals’ production of a ‘flawed’ language (see Coulmas, 2005; Myers-Scotton, 1993), “because of (i) their asymmetrical language proficiency or language deficiency and/or (ii) their memory recall limitations” (Ritchie and Bhatia, 2013:388), but this is a ‘misconception’ (see Ritchie and Bhatia, 2013), and the literature nowadays considers code-switching to be a normal and regular feature of bilingual language use. Coulmas

(2005) argues that code-switching is driven by a number of social and pragmatic motivations.

Gumperz (1982) proposed a distinction between ‘situational’ code-switching and ‘metaphorical’ code-switching. The first type refers to switching under the influence of the audience, domain or the purpose of the speech, while the second refers to switching languages within the same domain and with the same audience, for rhetorical purposes.

A number of motives for switching between languages among bilinguals have been proposed. One is the speakers’ attempts to draw attention to specific points in the conversation (Wei, 1994). Code-switching may also help fill in pragmatic gaps, as some expressions are more appropriate for use in one language than the other, or to fill in lexical gaps, as speakers may not know the meaning of a term in one of the languages (Myers-Scotton, 2006).

Just as there are numerous pieces of research that highlight the employment of code-switching in ethnic minority communities’ language use, there are others that stress that the frequency of code-switching is significantly lower, with older interlocutors rather than younger ones, as remarked, for example, by Lawson and Sachdev (2004). Through their work on Bengali migrants in London, Lawson and Sachdev highlight a number of reasons for the lower frequency of code-switching in communication with elder relatives. They argue for “an increased salience of Bengali identity with older relatives, perceptions that they [the elder relatives] have poor English linguistic ability, and/or deference in speech (by using Bengali) to older relatives, assuming that code-mixing is likely to be evaluated negatively by them” (Lawson and Sachdev, 2004:55). Code-switching is thus one manifestation of the way in which bilingual individuals negotiate and practice language choice. Additionally, speakers may volunteer information about



their language practices in the matter of language choice. We now move to a discussion of language shift and maintenance.

### **2.2.3 Language Shift and Maintenance**

In language shift, one language is gradually replaced by another language in a minimum of one domain of life (Clyne, 2003; Pandharipande, 1992), an example of which can be seen in the shift from Hungarian to German in Oberwart, Austria (Gal, 1979). Language maintenance, on the other hand, is a term used to describe a situation when a speech community keeps using the language in one life domain or more, although contact occurs with the mainstream language (Pauwels, 2004).

#### **2.2.3.1 Language shift studies**

A considerable number of language shift studies have focused on ethnic minority communities, where the mainstream language (i.e. the dominant one spoken by the majority) is in daily contact with the language spoken by the ethnic minority communities (the minority one). Clyne (2003) explains the emergence of language shift as “a product of pre-migration and post-migration experiences mediated through culture” (Clyne, 2003: 69). Nevertheless, language shift does not always occur as a result of migration. According to Fishman (1991) and Holmes (2001:51), certain “political, economic and social changes” can cause language shift in a non-migrant community. For example, in relation to the Maori in New Zealand (Fishman, 1991), the shift is a result of the contact between two languages, with one (English) being more powerful than the other (Maori). Michieka (2012) has argued that, in language contact, the language which is spoken by the more powerful speakers is more likely to be maintained than other languages, which gradually decline.

Collecting data in any language shift case is a demanding task for researchers for two reasons. Firstly, because of the “slow and cumulative” nature of the process of language

shift (Fishman, 1991: 40), researchers experience difficulties in collecting data before and after the shift occurs (Fishman, 1991). Secondly, censuses, which are systematic procedures to collect personal information from a designated population, and are generally agreed to be an important research data collection method in this field, are often unreliable (Fishman, 1991) because they are mostly managed by institutions with vested interests of one kind or another.

The questions, the nature of the interviewees and the data may also serve a particular institution's agenda, and this may influence the accuracy of the data (Fishman, 1991). Moreover, these censuses may not reflect the true language status as they are mostly based on participants' self-estimation of their language practices (Pauwels, 2004). Questionnaires and participant observation can also be used to indicate language shift in a speech community. Questionnaires may help by examining language use, proficiency and attitudes to the language. In addition, observing language choices in a speech community and the reasons behind these choices is another method of examining language shift/maintenance (Pauwels, 2004).

### **2.2.3.2 Types of language shift**

Various classifications of language shift have been made (Clyne, 2003; Tandefelt, 1992). For example, Tandefelt (1992) differentiated four types of language shift; partial, total, macro- and micro-level shifts. The first refers to the on-going process of language shift in the community. The second indicates the "point of no return" in language shift (Tandefelt, 1992: 151). Macro-level shift refers to the language shift of the whole community, and finally, the micro-level shift refers to an individual's linguistic behaviour (Tandefelt, 1992:151).

Similarly, Clyne (2003) refers to two types of language shift as part of his investigation into linguistic behaviour and the "dynamics of language shift" among migrants in

Australia: intra-generational and inter-generational shift. The first refers to a shift within the same generation, and the second to language shift between the second and third generations of a migrant group (Clyne, 2003), which is more common. The degree of language shift is usually higher in the second generation than in the first generation (Clyne and Kipp, 1997; Clyne, 2003). In investigating language shift, Clyne advises researchers to differentiate between language shift in the second generation and the non-acquisition of a language, as some of the second generation speakers do not learn how to use the ‘first’ language at all (Clyne, 2003). The participants of the current research belong to the first category (language shift among speakers of the second generation), as they are Arabic-speaking families and their children who learn Arabic in complementary schools.

### **2.2.3.3 Causes of Language shift**

Fishman (1991) identifies three main types of dislocation influencing language shift in a community: physical and demographic, social and cultural. These three are described briefly below.

#### **a. Physical and demographic dislocation:**

According to Fishman (1991), this type of dislocation affects the whole of a linguistic community, as it impacts on cultural, social and economic features of a community: “physical and demographic arrangements have cultural (and, therefore, language-in-culture) consequences” (Fishman, 1991:58). Hence, the demographic situation of the group should always be taken into consideration when the community is attempting to reverse language shift. These demographic features include where the language speakers live, how close they live to each other and how accessible the language institutions for speakers of various ages might be (Fishman, 1991).

Physical and demographic factors can be classified into different categories. Some might be disastrous and sudden (i.e. natural disasters such as earthquakes), while others can be long lasting, such as severe and chronic droughts or famines (Fishman, 1991:57). They can also arise due to human conflicts such as wars, genocide or ethnic cleansing. More recently, urbanization has been found to have a huge impact on the speed of language shift. Urban groups tend to form new social networks which increase communication with the out-group community (Fishman, 1991; Gal, 1979; Holmes, 2001). Conversely, rural groups living in more isolated areas can satisfy most, if not all, of their social needs by using their minority language (Holmes, 2001). The size of the group is also recognised as an influential factor in shifting the group's language. According to Holmes (2001), groups with large concentrations of numbers show more resistance to language shift. For example, areas with a large and concentrated number of Maltese speakers in Australia showed the lowest propensity of migrant groups to shift their language to English.

b. Social dislocation:

Social dislocation is described by Fishman (1991:61) as “a serious problem for the future of any ethno-cultural community.” Members of the socially dislocated community are often at a social disadvantage, due to a number of factors: their minority status, low incomes and limited access to educational and cultural institutions.

Communities that are poor or have a low educational level may be stigmatised and, as a result, the community members may develop a negative attitude towards their own community, its culture and language (Fishman, 1991). Indeed, some speakers may reject their original language and adopt the dominant, majority language, which could be seen as a way of rejecting the culture of the minority language in favour of a more dominant and privileged one. For instance, young Hungarian women shifted from Hungarian to

German in order to improve their socioeconomic status, as Hungarian was associated with peasant life in Austria. This eventually led to inter-generational language shift over many generations (Gal, 1979).

Social dislocation often creates a dilemma for community members. According to Fishman (1991), speakers of indigenous communities have to live with the dilemma of choosing between two goals. The first is to remain loyal to the original culture, i.e. not to be involved with the activities of the majority group. The other option is to integrate with the new community, which is likely to increase the speed of language shift. As Holmes (2001:59) points out: “Rapid shift occurs when people are anxious to get on, in a society where knowledge of the second language is a prerequisite for success”.

c. Cultural dislocation:

Cultural dislocation occurs when the dominant ruling group intentionally exercises its hegemony as the most powerful culture in a community. According to Fishman (1991), some Reversing Language Shift (RLS) activists claim that democratic societies can also resist the maintenance of minority cultures, because “they undercut the very cultural and identity distinctions on which minority language maintenance must be based”(Fishman, 1991:63). Democratic communities may provide their members (from all backgrounds) with unrestricted communication, thus strengthening the control of the majority cultures (including the language) over the indigenous cultures. Thus democracy can gradually reduce social diversity in that community, including cultural and religious differences. In fact, it has been argued by Fishman that people in democratic communities eventually depend on the same media information and institutions (educational and cultural) which are mostly dominated by the majority, and by the most powerful group (Fishman, 1991).

However, Fishman (1991) goes on to say that the claim that democratization and modernization are unfavourable for minority language and cultural maintenance is “misguided”, since true democracy includes cultural democracy, which is supposed to protect vulnerable cultures and their associated languages (Fishman, 1991).

d. Other factors:

Researchers such as Clyne (2003) ; Holmes (2001) and Myers-Scotton (2006); propose a number of other factors as causes of language shift within ethnic minority communities. These may include the following: time; exogamous marriages; English proficiency within the parent generation; the value of the language; religious institutions; family relations; and frequent communication with the homeland, as discussed in detail below:

- Time has been found to influence the process of language shift, which is found to correlate positively with the length of residence in the host country. As time passes, children usually leave their parents’ homes to live independently in the host community. In other words, they tend to assimilate more freely with the community and use its language very regularly (Clyne, 2003).

- Exogamous and in-group marriages can play a role in bringing about language shift or language maintenance, especially within the second generation of the language speakers; or where one of the parents belongs to the dominant language community (Baker, 2001; Clyne and Kipp, 1997; Fishman, 1991; Holmes et al., 1993; Holmes, 2001; Tandefelt, 1992). Tandefelt (1992:155) states that: “In a mixed family the minority language is clearly used to a more limited extent in the generation of children than in that of the parent who could have given this language as an inheritance”. Yagmur and Akinçi (2003), in contrast, proposed in-group marriages as a possible factor for maintaining the Turkish language among Turkish ethnic minority in France.

Gender variation in language shift has been observed in different communities, As a result of exogamous marriages, thus, in communities where men were more involved in marriages from outside their ethnic groups than women, language shift was seen to be higher for males than females; for example, Lebanese and Turkish migrants in Australia (Clyne, 2003). By contrast, in communities where women were more involved in exogamous marriages than men, language shift occurred more frequently in females than males, as seen in the Philippines and Japanese migrant communities in Australia (Clyne, 2003).

- Although there is no clear correlation between proficiency in the mainstream language and minority language shift, low English proficiency has been proposed as one of the reasons for the maintenance of the Turkish language within the Turkish migrant community in Australia (Clyne, 2003). Slavik (2001) supports this conclusion, observing that a high proficiency in English encouraged language shift among Maltese migrants in Canada because it helped them to mix easily and attain higher socio-economic professions within Canadian society, and that was accompanied by leaving behind the Maltese language (Slavik, 2001). Nonetheless, whether they are fluent in their mother tongue or not, children with low English proficiency parents are forced to use the first language to communicate with their parents. Clyne (2003) points out that:

“In families where the parental generation has a limited knowledge of English, home use of the language in the second generation is a matter of need. Where the parents have a high competence in English, it is a matter of will.”

(Clyne, 2003:37)

- The value of the threatened language also plays an important role in the process of language shift or maintenance. Language shift seems to be slower in communities where language is regarded by the speakers as a ‘core value’ (Somlicz, 1980; 1981),

which refer to the factors that are perceived as the most essential in forming a group's identity and culture. In other words, language appears to be better maintained in communities where it is perceived as a marker of identity (Holmes et al., 1993), such as Polish among Polish migrant communities, and Greek among Greek migrants in Australia, New Zealand and America (see Holmes, 2001). The international status of a language can also influence the maintenance of a language, as it affects the dominant society's perspectives on the language and consequently the speakers' attitudes to it (Holmes, 2001).

- Religious institutions such as mosques and churches can play a positive role in preserving the ethnic minority group's language (Hatoss and Sheely, 2009; Holmes, 2001; Yagmur and Akinci, 2003), as with the Tongan people in New Zealand, who attended a church where all services were in Tongan (Holmes, 2001).

- Family relations are discussed by Tannenbaum and Howie (2002) as a positive influence in maintaining the ethnic minority language amongst Chinese in Australia. The findings of their study provide evidence that the more positively the children perceive the relations with the families, the more likely they will be to use and maintain their ethnic minority language.

- Finally, maintaining strong links with the original countries and extended families, as well as promoting a positive attitude towards the home country, helps to maintain the language (Holmes, 2001; Holmes et al., 1993). This factor, among others, was considered significant in furthering language maintenance among Greek migrants in New Zealand (see Holmes et al., 1993).

Another factor affecting language shift is the ethno-linguistic vitality of the group. This term can serve as an umbrella that gathers a number of the points discussed in the previous sections, so ethno-linguistic vitality will now be considered.



#### **2.2.3.4 Ethno-linguistic vitality (EV)**

The concept of ethno-linguistic vitality was developed from Tajfel's intergroup relations theory (1974), and Giles' speech accommodation model (Clyne, 2003). The ethno-linguistic vitality of a group is related to the group's own awareness of their existence as an entity compared to other groups in the community. In other words, EV can be defined as "what the group thinks about itself in relation to other groups" (Myers-Scotton, 2006:74). In discussions about EV, there has been a tendency to refer to three different levels to classify the EV of a group: low, medium or high (Yagmur, 2011).

Many definitions have been given for EV, depending on the purpose of each study. For example, some studies have focused on the relationship between EV and maintaining group identity (Yagmur and Kroon, 2003); others have investigated the influence of EV on language maintenance. The EV of a group was initially defined by Giles et al. (1977: 308) as "that which makes a group likely to behave as a distinctive and active collective entity in inter-group situations". Clyne (2003), who applied the EV model to investigate language shift within migrants in Australia, defined it as a "model [which] explains LS in terms of the relative value of accommodating to the mainstream group as opposed to preserving the integrity of one's own group."

##### **(i) Dimensions of EV**

The sociological and psychological aspects of EV should be taken into consideration when analysing the EV of an ethno-linguistic group. EV is sometimes discussed in two dimensions; namely objective and subjective. The sociological factors are often referred to as objective vitality, while the psychological factors, such as attitudes, are considered to constitute subjective vitality (SEV) (Myers-Scotton, 2006). Subjective ethno-linguistic vitality is related to the speakers' attitude towards the ethnic language,

especially in comparison to other languages within the community. SEV is relevant to the study because I am particularly interested in my participants' attitudes towards their language and community, and the impact of SEV, or the language attitudes of our participants, on the patterns of language use. However, a brief description of objective EV will be presented below.

### 1. **Objective EV**

The constituents of objective EV, which are described by Yagmur and Akinci (2003) as the “*group factors*”, are as follows: 1. the group's status, such as the importance of the language in the cultural system of the group; and the level of similarity or difference between the minority language and the community's majority language. 2. The group's demographic status, such as the number of the group; the group's distribution within the host community. 3. The institutional support within the wider community, such as mainstream policies towards minority languages. (Giles et al., 1977: 309; Yagmur and Akinci, 2003)

***Group status has four strands, described briefly below:***

a. **Economic status** refers to the ethno-linguistic group's role in the economic life of the community in which they live (Giles et al., 1977), i.e. how influential it is in its role and how economically strong it is, compared to others.

b. **Social status** concerns the group's self-esteem, which is usually a reflection of the group's esteem within the wider community, and is closely influenced by economic conditions.

c. **Socio-historical status** refers to the history of the ethno-linguistic group. Historical factors were found to play a significant role in maintaining the group's language and its ability to remain as one entity. Others, however, may involve negative and discouraging events which can result in losing the language. Giles et al (1977:311), for example,

point out that “for some linguistic groups, the past offers few mobilizing symbols, while for others, the past may offer only demobilizing symbols leading individuals to forget or hide their linguistic identity thereby diluting the vitality of the group as collective entity.”

According to Holmes (2001), Greek migrants are often capable of resisting language shift to the mainstream language due to their pride in Greek culture.

d. **Language status** refers to the linguistic status of the language compared to other languages in society and internationally. High status languages, such as French, English or Spanish, are better able to survive than certain minority languages of lower status (Giles et al., 1977), as is the linguistic situation in some post-colonial African countries (see Ferguson, 2006).

#### ***Demography and objective EV***

Demographic factors are related to the number and distribution of the language speakers in the community, rates of birth, and mixed marriages, as well as immigration and emigration into and out of the group concerned (Bourhis and Sachdev, 1984; Yagmur, 2011). Speakers who are located in a concentrated geographical area tend to be more successful at maintaining their language than speakers who are scattered throughout the wider community (Sachdev, 1995). Sachdev (1995) noted that speakers who were dispersed in various locations throughout the wider community tended to assimilate into that community and adopt its language, while arguing that living in a concentrated location allows verbal interaction among the group members and thus maintains the use of the language and strengthens feelings of group solidarity (Giles et al., 1977).

#### ***The institutional support component of objective EV***

Institutional support is defined as “the extent to which an ethno-linguistic group enjoys representation in, and control over, the various institutions of a community, region or

nation” (Sachdev, 1995: 47). It thus includes both the formal and informal support available to a linguistic community in the wider society (Yagmur, 2009; 2011). With respect to informal support, minority groups may organise their own institutions to support the group’s culture and language; for example, complementary schools. On the other hand, formal support can indicate governmental support for the linguistic group, with participation of the ethno-linguistic group in policy making within the larger community (Giles et al., 1977).

- **Subjective EV (SEV)**

The other dimension of EV is the SEV, which is defined as the psychological dimension of EV, or “language attitude” (Myers-Scotton, 2006), and is related to the speakers’ attitude toward their language and their estimation of this language compared to other languages within the community. Language attitude is described further later in this chapter (see 4.4.2).

**(ii) EV and language shift**

A number of researchers (Myers-Scotton, 2006; Pauwels, 2004; Yagmur, De Bot and Hubert, 1999; Yagmur, 2011; Yagmur, 2009) argue that the EV of a group correlates with the group’s language shift/maintenance. In other words, groups with high EV are more likely to maintain their language and preserve their collective identity than groups with low EV. However, researchers argue for the separate influence of subjective and objective EV on language shift or maintenance.

Yagmur and Akinci (2003), for example, investigated the relationship between EV and the language behaviour of different generations of Turkish migrants in France. The study concluded that a language shift from Turkish to French had occurred more within the second generation of this ethnic minority group than the first one, although SEV is

higher among the second generation. In another study in 2004, investigating language shift among Turkish ethnic minorities in Australia and Germany, Yagmur also found that there was no link between SEV and a shift to the mainstream language. However, Hogg and Rigoli (1996) stated that the use of an ethnic language was more positively correlated with societal and institutional support (objective EV) than with the SEV of the Italian ethnic minority group in Australia, and concluded that “unexpectedly, SEV had little association with identification or language use” (Hogg and Rigoli, 1996: 87). This shows that there is often a disassociation between attitudes and use.

Turning now to language attitudes, the next section presents a brief discussion of the literature in this area, as the language attitudes of our subjects will be investigated in the current study.

#### **2.2.4 Language attitudes**

Garrett (2010) argues that defining the concept of attitude is not simple, given the breadth of the term and the importance of the different aspects of attitudes. Attitudes, however, have been defined as comprising three main constituents: cognitive, affective and behavioural (Garrett, 2010). The first refers to the influence of attitudes on an individual’s views of the world and particular incidents; the second involves emotions in relation to the attitude item; and the third refers to the interference of attitudes in behaviour (Garrett, 2010).

There is a general consensus in the literature that acquiring and using a language is easier for individuals who have a positive attitude to the language and its speakers (Garrett, 2010; Karahan, 2007; Zhang and Slaughter-Defoe, 2009), as language attitudes can not only influence the reactions to the speakers of the language, but also help predict others’ reactions to the choice of language, and hence influence this choice (Garrett, 2010). Baker (1992) and Holmes et al. (1993) highlight the importance of

language attitudes in shifting or maintaining the language. For example, Baker suggests that “In the life of a language, attitudes to that language appear to be important in language restoration, preservation, decay or death” (Baker, 1992:9). Similarly, Holmes et al. (1993) argue that language attitudes have a leading influence on the various levels of language shift and maintenance among Tongan, Greek and Chinese communities in New Zealand. Holmes et al. (2001) also found that positive attitudes motivated the speakers of the minority language to use their language in various domains and this helped challenge slow shift to the mainstream language. It can be difficult, therefore, to maintain a language if there are negative attitudes towards it in a community. However, some researchers, such as Fishman (1985) have argued that language attitudes do not always predict language maintenance or shift, as attitudes need to be linked to the language’s status as a core value in a particular group, or related to other values, such as religious beliefs. Core values refer to the factors that are perceived as the most essential and important in forming a group’s identity and culture. In addition, Slavik (2001) pointed to the importance of the instrumental value of the language in maintaining that language. Maltese migrants in Canada, for example, were found to be in an advanced stage of a shifting their mother tongue to English, despite positive attitudes towards the language. This is due to the migrants’ feeling that Maltese was not instrumentally valuable in everyday domains (Slavik, 2001).

Researching attitudes is not easy, since they are “*psychological constructs*” (Garrett, 2010:20); in other words, a state of mind. It is important, therefore, to take into consideration that the attitudes reported may not reflect the real opinions of the group investigated. Baker (1992:19) states that respondents may shape their attitudes to make those respondents appear more desirable or pleasant for their audience in interviews and questionnaires. In addition, respondents may be influenced by the researcher and the

aim of the research. Therefore, a comparison between reported and observed attitudes should always be considered.

There are three common ways of investigating attitudes: societal treatment studies, direct measures and indirect measures (Garrett, 2010). While the first two techniques tend to employ many methods in examining attitudes to language, the indirect approach is dependent mainly on the matched guise method. Moreover, all three techniques differ in the frequency of their use. Societal treatment studies involve inferring participants' attitudes from policy documents, media scripts, advertisements and other sources. Direct measures include asking participants direct questions regarding their language attitude, also known as evaluation preference (Garrett, 2010). This is usually undertaken through questionnaires, interviews and surveys. Finally indirect methods refer to eliciting the language attitudes of the participants using techniques without asking direct questions, the most common technique being the matched guise technique (see Garrett, 2010). In terms of frequency, the direct approach is the most common technique, followed by the indirect approach, with the societal treatment technique being less used in most language attitude research (Garret, 2010:51).

Examining attitudes is relevant to the study as I am particularly interested in my participants' attitudes to the language of Arabic and its varieties.

The following section turns to a discussion of identity and the relationship between identity and both language and religion. The literature on identity is significant to this thesis as the identities of our participants will be investigated.

## **2.2.5 Identity and Language**

### **2.2.5.1 Definitions of identity**

Defining identity is neither straightforward nor a simple procedure (Riley, 2007), and the number of interpretations of this notion makes it a "plural concept" (Gois,

2010:267). Indeed, identity is analysed in most of the literature as a complex notion (see Gois, 2010; Haarmann, 1999:61; Mills, 2001; Riley, 2007). According to Gois (2010:265) it is “a multidimensional and complex concept, frequently referred to both in everyday life and by the social sciences and humanistic studies, albeit rarely coherently defined”

Following a sociocultural perspective, Norton considers that identity is:

- “...*dynamic and constantly changing across time and place...*
  - ...*complex, contradictory, and multifaceted...*
3. ...*constructed by language*”

(Norton, 2006:3)

Social constructionists, meanwhile, regard identity as constructed by social and cultural interactions (Lane, 2009; Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004; Riley, 2007)

### **2.2.5.2 Types of identity**

There are different types of identities mentioned in the literature. These include, but are not limited to, personal, social, ethnic, and religious identities, which are outlined briefly below:

- Personal identity: Fearon (1999:2) considered personal identity to be a combination of features distinguishing individuals, namely attributes, beliefs, desires, in ways that they recognise as having specific significance, thus: (a) something a person feels particular pride about; (b) something a person takes special pride in, but which is fundamental to the way she functions, to the extent that she would not be able to without this; or (c) something that is so deep-rooted in a person that she feels it would be virtually impossible to change



even if this were beneficial. Gios (2010) highlights age, sex, family, work and education as important factors in constructing personal identity.

- Social identity: Social identity is a collective identity that “refers to a person’s sense of belonging to a group and the attitudes and emotions that accompany this sense of belonging” (Vedder and Virta, 2005:319).
- Ethnic identity: ethnic identity can be defined as “individual’s membership in a social group that shares a common ancestral heritage” as proposed by Padilla (1999: 115). A similar concept is also suggested by Norton (2006) in respect of cultural identity. Norton (2006:2) defines it as “the relationship between an individual and [other] members of a particular ethnic group (such as Mexican and Japanese) who are considered to share a common history, a common language, and similar ways of understanding the world.” Here, ethnic and cultural identities are referred to as roughly equivalent, following Suleiman (2003:6), and considered as an ethno-cultural identity, which is defined as “self-identification, feelings of belonging and commitment to a group, a sense of shared values, and attitudes towards one’s own ethnic group” (Phinney et al., 2001:496).
- Religious identity becomes salient when individuals or groups tend to identify themselves in terms of their religion rather than ethnicity or nation. This kind of identity was prominent in Europe in the 14th century, especially in rural areas where people used to introduce themselves as either being Jews or Christians (Joseph, 2004:172-173).

Identities in general, but especially ethnic, social and personal identities are thought to be fluid and changeable (Coulmas, 2005; Gois, 2010; Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2003).

In fact, identity may be considered as ever evolving and not fixed, and, individuals, as Dorian (1999: 25) points out, “will redefine themselves when circumstances make it desirable or when circumstances force it on them”. Consequently, they may have multiple and overlapping identities (Coulmas, 2005; Skutnabb-Kangas, 1999). These identities coexist and interact within individuals, with some being more salient than others, according to the situation (Edwards, 2011:99). Therefore, it is preferable, while investigating identities, to examine the many dimensions of identity, rather than over-emphasizing any single one (Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004).

### **2.2.5.3 Acculturation and identity in ethnic minority communities**

Phinney et al. (2001) identify four approaches to acculturation in ethnic minority settings: integration, assimilation, separation and marginalization.

Integration involves maintaining an ethnic identity as well as identifying with a new identity. Assimilation refers to the shifting of ethnic identity to a new one. Separated identity refers to the maintenance of an ethnic identity without identifying with the identity of the host community. Finally, marginalization refers to giving up both the ethnic identity and the identity of the mainstream community and acquiring a new identity.

Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004:21) also distinguish between three different identities in a multilingual context, namely imposed, assumed and negotiable. While the first category refers to an identity which cannot be denied or challenged by individuals, assumed identities are those accepted by individuals, with no attempt at contestation. Finally, negotiable identities are those that can be challenged and reframed by the individuals. The questions of identity are extremely relevant for understanding the complexity of identities of Arab migrant participants from different national backgrounds.

#### **2.2.5.4 The relationship between language and identity**

There are three schools of thought on the relationship between language and identity, as illustrated below:

The first considers that the group's language is often a key factor in defining groups, functioning very often as a distinctive marker within a group (Edwards, 2011). Followers say that "Specific languages are related to specific cultures and to their attendant cultural identities at the level of doing, at the level of knowing, at the level of being." (Fishman, 2001:3). As a result, ethno-cultural groups often seek to maintain their language, and in this way their ethno-cultural identity.

A second school of thought, however, considers that the major role assigned to language in constructing group and individual identities is exaggerated. This school argues that many groups have maintained their identity even though a language shift has occurred (Canagarajah, 2008; Kumar et al., 2008; Lane, 2009; Liebkind, 1999). Myers-Scotton (2006), for example, argues that language is not the most important feature in defining identities, especially when compared to factors such as religion or territory. In two separate studies, Canagarajah (2008) and Kumar et al. (2008) argue that Tamil and Hindi identities have been sustained, even though language shift has occurred within both the migrant Tamil and Hindu communities. In other words, group identity is maintained despite language shift, as Canagarajah (2008, 169) mentions: "Tamil identity and community are being redefined in terms of cultural rituals and not language".

We can say, then, that a definite relationship between language and identity should not be assumed for all groups. In other words, there is often a variable rather than a definite fixed relationship between language and identity. For example, Coulmas (2005) explains that the Dutch language is a marker of identity in Belgium, but not in Holland,

where it is “unchallenged” by other languages as it is the conventional choice of language. Of particular relevance here is Kumar et al’s (2008) statement that, “If a group considers language a core value, it will hold language central to its identity and will be likely to view language shift as a shift in culture” (2008:50). The Irish, for example, managed to preserve their identity despite shifting the language to English, because the Irish cultural values were expressed more through Catholicism than language (Somlicz, 1979 cited in May 2001, p. 136).

A third school of thought argues for a degree of inter-dependence between language and identity, since a group’s language affects the construction of its identity, and the group’s identity impacts on the language attitudes and choices of the group (Liebkind, 1999:144). Jupp et al. (1982) affirmed that there is a mutual relationship between language and identity in that certain styles of using language help to construct and reveal the speaker’s social identity. Similarly, personal, social or ethnic identity can influence the speaker’s way of communicating in various contexts. For example, the way white people talk in British work places can be different from the way Asian workers talk, although both groups use English (Jupp et al., 1982).

#### **2.2.5.5 Language and religion**

Language and religion are believed to be linked in various ways. For example, Crystal (1965) argues that language is the vehicle through which religious rituals and beliefs are expressed. Language can also “be created along religious lines” (Myers-Scotton, 2006: 21), as in the example of Hindi and Urdu, which both evolved from the Hindustani language. However, after the partition of the Indian sub-continent in 1947, Hindi became the language of India spoken by Hindus and other religious groups, using the Devanagari script, and Urdu is now spoken by Muslims in Pakistan. Urdu uses the Arabic script on account of its association with Islam (Myers-Scotton, 2006).

Religious practices also often tend to rely on the language familiar to the people addressed. In Singapore, for example, Muslim institutions use English to address Chinese converts to guarantee that converts will have a better understanding of the religion (Chew, 2006:230).

It is also the case that certain languages, (e.g. Arabic, Hebrew and Greek) are considered sacred languages because they are used in sacred rituals and religious books (Fishman, 1999). A detailed discussion of the relationship between Arabic and Islam comes in Chapter 3.

The loss of certain languages has sometimes, but quite rarely, been found to be accompanied by the loss of the associated religion within certain groups. For instance, the loss of one of the Chinese dialects in Singapore led to the loss of the associated religion “Taoism” (Chew, 2006:230), because these dialects “are essential in the transmission and maintenance of folk religions such as Taoism”.

After summarising the main points about identity, we now turn to a discussion about multilingualism in the UK.

## **2.3 Multilingualism**

### **2.3.1 Introduction**

This section explores the current state of multilingualism and ethnic minority languages in the UK. It reviews the history of migration to the UK, and focuses on issues concerning multilingualism in the UK, as well as government education policies towards minority languages since the 1970s.

### **2.3.2 Ethnic minorities in the UK**

Different groups have settled in the UK over many centuries, including Dutch speaking Flemings during the fifteenth century; Spanish and Portuguese Jews during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; and Eastern European migrants, as well as Arabic

and German speakers, during the nineteenth century (Alladina and Edwards, 1991; Gibson, 2007). Edwards (2009) discusses two major waves of migration to post war Britain. The first was after World War II, at that time migration to the UK was encouraged, due to the labour required for national reconstruction (Martin, 2010). This wave arrived between 1950 and 1960 and was mainly from the Commonwealth and the former British colonies, e.g. the Caribbean and South Asian countries, such as India, Pakistan and Bangladesh (Edwards, 2004; Reid, 1984; Vertovec, 2006). Between 1968 and 1973, a considerable number of migrants, mainly Gujarati speakers, arrived from Kenya and Uganda as political refugees (Stubbs, 1985).

As a consequence of their need to find employment and of the process of chain migration, the migrants settled mainly in London, the Midlands and the north of England, in cities such as Bradford, Leeds and Leicester (Edwards, 2001; Stubbs, 1985). These post-war migrants, and subsequent generations, make up the linguistic minorities of the UK; “[p]eople who share a language which is not the language of the dominant majority – in the British context, English” (Stubbs, 1985:18).

A second wave of migrants settled in Britain at the beginning of the new millennium. Migrants of this wave were no longer solely from former colonies or Commonwealth countries, but tended to be more cosmopolitan in nature, with a high proportion from the European Union and Middle Eastern countries (Edwards, 2009; McPake et al., 2007). In recent decades, Britain has thus become a “home - temporary, permanent or one among many - to people from practically every country in the world” (Vertovec, 2006:6). According to the UK’s 2011 national census, ethnic minorities were almost 15% of the population of England and Wales, an increase from 9% on the 2001 census. In earlier censuses, which have been conducted in the UK since 1801, the absence of direct questions concerning ethnic minority languages is notable. Reid (1984)

mentioned that these censuses record more about the participants' place of birth. The 2011 census, however, was the first to investigate directly the linguistic minority languages by asking about the participants' main language, and their level of English proficiency. According to the census, around 91% of the population in England and Wales have English as their main home language. Moreover, around 9% of the population speak other languages besides English at home and 4% of those do not consider English as the main language at home. In 2005, CILT found that 702,000 children in England spoke at least 300 different languages, 196 of which were spoken outside London. In Scotland, 11,000 children speak at least 104 languages, and in Wales, 8,000 children speak at least 98 languages. In fact, more than 350 languages are spoken by London primary and secondary school children at home (Baker and Eversley, 2000).

Linguistic diversity in the UK also reveals itself through the media and social services. By 2004, there were around 40 newspapers, serving 11 different minority language communities (Edwards, 2004). Police services in London are also offered in ten different languages, and the authorities are obliged to provide a translator, if required, while investigating a person from an ethnic minority group (Salverda, 2002).

### **2.3.3 Approaches to multilingualism**

Linguistic diversity in society has been thought of in three different ways; as a problem, a right, and a resource (Ruiz, 1984).

From the first perspective, ethnic linguistic minorities are viewed as a problem to be resolved by assimilation into the majority language. Supporters of this view believe that minorities should adopt the mainstream community's lifestyle and language fully. The second perspective regards the maintenance of the minority language as a right, while the third view takes the opinion that a minority language is a resource to enrich the

experiences and perceptions of all community members, regardless of their first language (see also Zhang and Slaughter-Defoe, 2009). This third view of multilingualism and linguistic diversity has been advocated in a number of studies (Auer and Wei, 2009; McPake et al., 2007), where three main benefits of multilingualism have been identified: improved international relations and trade; cultural enrichment; and social inclusion (McPake et al., 2007: 100-101). Multilingualism is also seen as a key factor through which different ethno-linguistic groups in society can successfully coexist. Auer and Wei (2009:12) comment:

*“Far from being a problem, multilingualism is part of the solution for our future. Social stability, economic development, tolerance and cooperation between groups are possible only when multilingualism is respected.”*

There are opposing views, however, according to which the linguistic majority believes that minority groups will dissolve, both linguistically and culturally, into the mainstream context; for example, the English context (Stubbs, 1985). As discussed by Gibson (2007), and Blackledge and Creese (2010), this explains the sometimes tense relationship between majority and minority ethnic groups. Furthermore, debates on societal multilingualism have often expanded to include issues of immigration policy, multilingual speakers' identity, and their level of integration with the host community. Controversy regarding the maintenance of minority languages in multilingual communities is also reflected in parents' dilemmas as to whether to transmit the heritage language to their children. On the one hand, they want their children to maintain their linguistic and cultural heritage. On the other hand, they are often concerned that learning more than one language might negatively affect their children's academic achievements (Auer and Wei, 2009).



It is quite difficult to get access to general policies towards multilingualism and the maintenance of heritage languages for ethnic minorities in the UK, but one place that is accessible is the realm of education, the focus of the following section.

#### **2.3.4 The evolution of education policies towards ethnic minority languages**

Official policies on linguistic minority in the UK have evolved considerably and the development of these policies from the 1970s to the present day is described below.

In the 1970s, the government established “induction centres”, where migrant children spent nearly two years learning and enhancing their English language skills before moving to mainstream schools with their native peers (Reid, 1988). These induction centres were later changed to so-called “withdrawal classes”, where migrant students were separated from their native classmates for a number of hours on a weekly basis in order to improve their English. In these classes, migrant students were also mixed with other native speakers of English of Caribbean origin who spoke Creole-influenced dialects of English (Reid, 1988). These classes were considered by Reid (1988) to be a central feature of the British educational scene’s move to multilingualism in mainstream schools.

Another phenomenon emerging in the mid-1970s was the replacement of the old terms with more positive-sounding ones, such as “bilingual learners for the linguistic minority” or “newcomer students”. There was also a change in school teaching materials in order to meet the needs of mixed linguistic/cultural classes (Stubbs, 1985:284). In the mid-1970s, the issue of mother tongue teaching also arose, especially with the publication of the Bullock Report in 1975, which “stressed the importance of home-school continuity in linguistic terms” (Stubbs, 1985:290). In September 1979, the Department of Education and Science (DES) introduced the Linguistic Minorities Project (LMP), to “discover the extent of bilingualism among the school population,

and the scale of mother tongue teaching provision available” (Stubbs, 1985:8). This project took place in three main settings, Coventry, Bradford and London, and consisted of four principal surveys:

1. An Adult Language Use Survey (ALUS), which investigated the language skills among pupils of eleven minority language groups.
2. The Mother Tongue Teaching Directory (MTTD), which obtained data on classes where languages other than English were used as a medium.
3. The Schools Language Surveys (SLS), which outlined a general view of literacy and speaking skills in schools.
4. The Secondary Pupils Survey (SPS), which evaluated the perception of the linguistic diversity in the class. In this survey, the same questions were asked of all pupils, regardless of their ethnical backgrounds.

A key development in policy came with the publication of the Swann Committee Report in 1985. Researchers agree (Martin, 2009 and Rampton et al., 2002) that the report was a landmark in UK policy towards ethnic minority languages.

A summary of the report (1985: 9) states that:

*Much of the confusion which exists in the multicultural field derives from the fact that there are two distinct dimensions to the debate. On the one hand, meeting the educational needs of ethnic minority pupils and, on the other, broadening the education offered to all pupils to reflect the multi-racial nature of British society.*

The committee made a number of recommendations, as summarised below:

- Abolition of segregation of majority and minority students in school. The policy of separating minority children from their majority peers to have additional classes in English was perceived as negative for both minority and majority children, as it increased social division, and deprived the educational process of any multicultural influence.

- Offering teaching support in multilingual classes. Bilingual teachers were appointed to assist main classroom teachers in achieving better communication with minority pupils until they were able to master the English language (Edwards, 2004). The committee, however, failed to specify the exact role of the support teachers; hence, teachers complained that they could not identify their role during the lessons, since in many classes they did not participate in preparing lessons, and this, in turn, could create confusion within the classroom (Edwards and Redfern, 1992).

- The state was not seen as responsible for maintaining the community language. This was the responsibility of the community itself. The report argued that, “if a language is truly the mother tongue of a community and is the language needed for child/parent interaction and for access to the religious and cultural heritage of the community, then it will survive and flourish regardless of the provision made for its teaching and/or usage in schools” (1985:15).

Thus, the role of mainstream schools was limited to stressing the multilingual character of the UK to their students, offering school buildings free of charge to minority communities on weekends or after school hours, and allocating those communities some of the Local Education Authority (LEA) grants.

The report, however, faced criticism for giving minimal support to multilingual education. Martin (2009: 497), for instance, suggested that such an approach involved “supporting a transitional model of bilingualism within an overall assimilation framework...[as] The ‘other’ language is used as a resource until full proficiency in English has been achieved”, which relegates the first language to subsidiary status.

Following the Swann Report, in 1988, the Education Reform Act (ERA), was passed by the Conservative government (Ager, 2001). ERA had different provisions, such as establishing “Local Management of Schools” (LMS), together with the national

curriculum and exams. By introducing LMS, the authority, including financial responsibilities, was transferred from the LEA to individual schools. Schools were also made responsible for spending money on LEA services, which had previously been provided without charge, and with the on-going increase in schools' financial demands, "the pressures on schools to reduce EAL expenditure were inevitable" (Rampton et al., 2002).

In mid-1988 a National Curriculum for all schools in England was released, and national exams at the ages of 7, 11 and 14 were announced. This step had a negative impact on linguistic minority students, as schools competed to attract higher achieving students, placing the majority of linguistic minority students at a disadvantage. Consequently, schools often rejected these students, as they were considered a risk that would 'negatively' influence the national ranking of the school. It led to the concentration of linguistic minority students in many low-achieving schools, located mostly in deprived areas (Rampton et al., 2002). The situation in 2000 could be described as having similarities with that of 1985, with the exception of the growing impact of globalization and different educational reforms. These two factors have reduced support for multilingualism in the UK schools, as Rampton et al. (2002: 8) state: "Overall, then, since 1985, it is difficult to report any positive developments in state school provision for the needs and potentialities associated with multilingualism."

We can say that ethnic minority languages are still not supported in state schools, as they are regarded as a barrier to the integration of minority children within the mainstream community. For example, in 2006 Turkish was used to teach science modules to Turkish GCSE students at a school in north London. However, this step provoked opposition from John McVittie, the new head teacher of the school, and from Nick Seaton from the Campaign for Real Education, who said "Teaching them in their

own language is really not practical or helpful, especially when in this school there are so many different languages spoken”. Although initially supported by Stephen Twigg, the Minister of Education at that time, this step was criticized later by the spokesman for the Department of Education who stated that “English language fluency is a priority for all pupils” (BBC, 2006).

Similarly, David Cameron argued in 2007 that giving too much teaching support in the classroom for linguistic minority students encouraged them not to learn English until a later age, which consequently affected “*national unity*”, and a “*sense of British Identity*” (cited in Blackledge and Creese, 2010: 9). Nick Clegg, the then leader of the Liberal Democrats, also announced in 2008 that: “we all have to make efforts to speak the same language because without the same language you know we can’t create a glue that keeps things together”(cited in Blackledge and Creese, 2010: 9). Those attitudes support Martin’s (2009) claims that British politicians’ outlooks were mostly monolingual.

In addition, UK citizenship regulations reflect mainstream attitudes to promoting the English language. Since 2003, any individual who applies for British citizenship is required to take an English language test, as well as the “Life in the UK” test. The English language test (ESOL) is for people whose English level is below ESOL Entry Level 3, and, since 7th April 2007, applicants have had to demonstrate that they “have studied for their ESOL qualification at an accredited college”. An “accredited college” in this context means either a publicly-funded college inspected by Ofsted or its equivalent.

A similar attitude can be noticed in other European countries, where modern European languages, such as French and Italian, are often recognized as having a higher status than other ethnic minority languages. Being bilingual in English, together with another EU language, is considered more important, and thus of a higher status, than being

bilingual in English and one of the ethnic minority languages, such as Punjabi or Urdu (Alladina and Edwards, 1991; Edwards, 2009; Extra and Gorter, 2001). Indeed, in much of Europe, ethnic minority languages are perceived to be problematic, as they are thought to create ghettoized communities which need to be integrated with the cultural and linguistic heritage of the majority. By contrast, modern European languages are regarded as a source of enrichment in the host community (Extra, 2006). In the European parliament also, different resolutions have been issued (1981, 1987 and 1994) to confirm the rights of the Regional Minority (RM) groups in maintaining their mother tongues. None of these regulations, however, discuss the linguistic rights of Immigrant Minority (IM) groups (Extra and Yagmur, 2004).

To conclude, minority language maintenance is considered the responsibility of its communities, and ethnic minority groups usually have to establish their own institutions to transmit their heritage language and culture. Some of these institutions are referred to as “complementary schools”: the sites of our research which provide a space for the maintenance of language within highly valued cultural and religious traditions.

## **2.4 Complementary Schools as sites for maintaining heritage language**

### **2.4.1 Introduction**

Having described the multilingual society in the UK, this section now examines one of the ethnic minorities’ institutions for teaching the heritage language outside home. Given the fact that bilingualism and language policy are most evident in education, it seems pertinent to examine the complementary school as a potential site for the investigation of language use, attitudes and identity. The section discusses the development of complementary schools in the UK, the history of UK-based complementary schools and the reasons for establishing them. It concludes with a critical review of current research on complementary schools in the UK.

## **2.4.2 Complementary schools in the UK**

### **2.4.2.1 Definitions.**

Complementary schools, also known as supplementary or community schools, are educational and social institutions attended by children of school age (8-15 year old) and founded by migrant communities to maintain their heritage languages and cultures (Creese et al., 2008; Lytra and Martin, 2010; Thorpe, 2010). The great majority of these schools are voluntary, and run either on weekends or in evenings after mainstream schools' hours (CILT, 2010; Creese, et al., 2008; Creese and Martin, 2008; Maylor et al., 2010). Although various names have been used to refer to these schools, this research uses the term 'complementary' because it affirms their role in relation to mainstream schools. As suggested by Creese and Martin (2008), these schools can complement the roles of other schools and provide a positive contribution to local communities, as well as in the life of the wider British community.

### ***2.4.2.1 History of complementary schools: numbers, types and goals***

Wei (2006) described the history of complementary schools in the UK as comprising three main waves. The first wave of schools, within and outside the London area in the late 1960s, were founded by the African Caribbean community to support black children who were not receiving sufficient support for their needs in mainstream schools. The second wave of schools emerged at the end of the 1970s and beginning of the 1980s to serve Muslim communities, mainly from south Asia and Africa, who desired separate schools where they could teach Islam. The final wave came at the end of 1970s with schools established by communities like the Turkish and Chinese, whose main aim was to maintain the heritage language and culture of the ethnic minority communities. Schools in this category, to which most of the current complementary schools belong, are described by Wei (2006:78) as "*truly complementary*", for two

reasons: firstly, they did not seek to replace mainstream education and secondly, they take place either at weekends or after mainstream school hours (Wei, 2006).

It is not clear how many complementary schools there are in the UK. Some researchers estimate the number to be 6000 to 8000 schools in England alone, 2000 of which are in touch with the National Centre for Supplementary Education (NRC) (Badwal, 2009). Others state the number to be less than 2200 schools (Issa and Williams, 2009). In a recent study in the same field, CILT (2010) estimates the number to be more than 3000 complementary schools, with one in five of these schools located in London.

Researchers have distinguished different categories of school; religious, cultural, national curriculum and/or community language schools (Creese et al., 2008; Issa and Williams, 2009). In the London Community Schools Project, 42.3% of the participating schools offered only community language teaching, while none of the schools offered only religious teaching (Issa and Williams, 2009). This research uses complementary schools as a means of accessing a particular migrant community in order to investigate attitudes to the heritage language and culture as well as language use. A CILT (2010) report points out that:

“Complementary schools constitute a much under-recognized educational resource. They transform the lives of the pupils they teach by helping pupils feel secure in their identity and instilling self-confidence. They have real potential to enrich the mainstream school sector”.

The emergence of these schools in Britain is believed to be a reaction to the government's neglect of ethnic groups' cultures and languages, although these groups are an important part of the British multilingual and multicultural community (Creese et al., 2008; Creese and Martin, 2006). According to Creese and Martin (2006: 1), “their



[complementary schools] existence is a result of complex social factors which place them alongside mainstream educational institutions.”

The main motives for establishing these schools can be summarized as follows:

- To transmit heritage languages and cultures (e.g. Turkish, Polish and Punjabi schools).
- To assist parents and children of ethnic minority communities understand the British educational system, and improve children’s achievements in mainstream schools. For example, Somali and African Caribbean schools (Maylor et al., 2010; Issa and Williams 2009 ).
- To offer religious teaching.
- To reinforce community social networks (Maylor et al., 2010).
- To provide a space free from racism, where minority community children can learn and practice their languages and cultures separate from the dominance of the monolingual/monoculture atmosphere in mainstream schools.
- To enhance pupils’ self-esteem and confidence (Bristol, 2007), and their appreciation and pride in their cultural communities. Black supplementary schools, for example, raise awareness of historical black figures who can serve as role models in the community in order to increase pupils’ confidence in their heritage and identity (Issa and Williams, 2009; Maylor et al., 2010).

### **2.4.3 Research studies on complementary schools**

The last ten years have witnessed an increasing amount of research on complementary schools in Britain, but studies in this area are still small in number, relative to the size of minority communities. The following discussion reviews some of the studies on complementary schools. Although, these studies have been used mainly for educational purposes and for what they show regarding attitudes to learning, they are useful for

identifying the limitations of using complementary schools for sociolinguistic purposes. My research uses complementary schools in the following way: first of all, I am interested in examining complementary schools as evidence of children's motivation for learning Arabic. Secondly, they are a means of accessing the broader Arab community, as well as to investigate a large number of participants. The three categories below are of particular interest to my study, as it investigates child participant attitudes towards learning Arabic in formal institutions, and their expressed identities in various domains, as well as their language use in complementary schools.

### **1. Student attitudes towards learning in complementary schools**

The first group of studies considers pupils' experiences of, and attitudes towards, learning Arabic in complementary schools (Archer et al., 2009; Francis et al., 2009; Strand, 2007). Some studies were quantitative (Strand, 2007), others qualitative, such as those by Bhatt et al. (2004), and others were a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods (e.g. Martin et al., 2003).

Francis et al. (2009) investigated pupils' motivations for attending complementary schools, their opinions regarding their experiences in these schools, and the impact on developing their learner and social identities. They found that one of the main reasons given for attending complementary school was to maintain the heritage language and develop literacy in this. Key findings were that Chinese students perceived instrumental benefits in learning the heritage language, including communication with the extended family and seeking better jobs. They also aimed to maintain their heritage culture by preserving the language, as they perceive acquiring "proficiency in Chinese as the key signifier of Chinese identity" (Francis et al., 2009:534). This study can be criticised in one respect, namely for overlooking the impact of the construction of learner identities

on the data generated, and hence on the way in which such data is assessed. Another study, Archer et al. (2009), found that Chinese pupils preferred learning in mainstream schools more than in their complementary schools, due to the teaching being at the weekend, the difficulty of learning in their mother tongue compared to English, the outdated methods of teaching and the paucity of the school's resources compared to their mainstream school. The methods used in these two studies were: ethnographic observation, documentary analysis and interviews.

Strand's study (2007), however, found a more positive attitude towards learning in complementary schools than in mainstream schools. Older pupils seemed to prefer complementary schools than younger ones. This was seen by Strand as "a significant strength of supplementary schools" (Strand, 2007). The advantages of complementary schools are summarised by Strand (*ibid*: 32) thus: "Pupils engaged in a wide range of learning activities at their supplementary schools, but particularly valued gaining a deeper understanding of their home language or culture, specific help with learning English and mathematics, help with mainstream school work, social activities, computer and ICT and the positive support of their supplementary school teachers". Strand used a quantitative questionnaire study in which 722 pupils from 63 different schools participated.

Although the studies above (Archer et al., 2009; Francis et al., 2009; Strand, 2007) examined students' attitudes, they are not comparable, since Strand did not provide information on the cultural background of the schools and their curriculum, factors which may affect attitudes. For example, pupils might have expressed more positive attitudes towards schools offering help with the National Curriculum (NC) than schools that were concerned only with heritage language and culture, as the former could directly influence their progression within mainstream schools (see also Maylor et al.,

2010).

## **2. Evidence of identities of heritage communities in complementary schools.**

The studies in this category focus on the space, whether physical or learning space, that complementary schools offer their pupils to develop and experience identities associated with their communities. According to Creese et al. (2008:40), “This is because complementary schooling provides a context for identity negotiation in bilingual contexts in which languages and linguistic repertoires are foregrounded in school mission statements.”

Studies in this area include Prokopiou and Cline (2010); Creese et al. (2006, 2008); Martin et al. (2003). Creese et al (2006) and Martin et al. (2003) found that multicultural identities were expressed more freely in complementary schools than in the mainstream, where mono-lingualism/mono-culturalism tended to prevail (Creese et al., *ibid*). Schools offered a space where students could move between different identities: heritage, bilingual and multicultural, and “where they could negotiate their relationship with the majority community and gain a solid understanding of their minority cultural identities”(Cline and Prokopiou, 2010: 77). Studies in this category used observation, interviews, and analysis of a number of linguistic extracts of teachers and pupils inside and outside their complementary school, such as in pupils’ houses, through student and teacher questionnaires, as well as field notes.

## **3. Evidence of Multilingual practices in complementary schools**

Several studies using ethnographic methods have examined multilingual practices in complementary schools, e.g. (Issa and Williams, 2009; Martin et al., 2006; Wu, 2006). For example, Martin et al. (2006) observed that different languages, English and

Gujarati, were used in a Gujarati complementary school as a medium of interaction. Various studies in literature agreed that both the mainstream and the heritage language were used in complementary schools to ease communication in teacher-student interactions (Creese et al., 2008; Lytra and Martin, 2010; Martin et al., 2006; Wu, 2006). For example, Martin et al.(2006) explained that teachers mix Gujarati and English to make themselves clear to the pupils with a particular focus on Gujarati. Likewise, pupils use both languages, though English is the preferred language for talking with peers. The same point was emphasised by Creese et al,who found that “The default mode in the classrooms we observed is that the teacher mainly speaks Gujarati and students mainly speak English” (2008:11).

Wu (2006) examined the culture of learning in Chinese complementary schools, and how different languages and cultures are integrated to form new “cross-cultural contexts” (Wu, 2006:65). The results showed that the teachers’ backgrounds influenced their teaching practices in complementary schools. For example, teachers who were already teaching in mainstream British schools expressed more sympathy with students than teachers who had not been involved in the British system. Moreover, teachers were found to code-switch to facilitate more effective/efficient communication in their classes. For example, “The teacher in this case tried to use Mandarin Chinese as the main medium of instruction. However, earlier on in the lesson the teacher used both Chinese and English to explain the task” (Wu, 2006:70).

Previous studies used interviews, observation and recordings as research methods.

In conclusion, although research on various communities and their institutions for transmitting the heritage language and culture (such as complementary schools) continues to expand, it can still be considered to be insufficient in general (Creese et al.,

2006), and particularly in terms of investigating the Arab community, with the exception of a very limited number of studies, such as Ferguson (2013). Therefore, in investigating the Arab minority groups and accessing their formal institutions for maintaining the presence of the language in the community, I seek to participate in filling this gap in the literature.

## **2.5. Conclusion**

This chapter has reviewed the literature on a number of themes related to the current study. These include factors influencing language choice in multilingual ethnic minority settings, together with factors affecting language shift and maintenance, including the notions of subjective and objective ethno-linguistic vitality.

Language attitudes and language identity are topics investigated in the study, and these areas have also been briefly reviewed. There are a number of findings in the literature reviewed above which pertain directly to the present research. Of particular relevance are the relationships between language attitudes and language shift or maintenance, as some researchers, such as Holmes (1993 and 2001), consider it to be essential, and others perceive the necessity to correlate this relationship with other factors (see Slavik 2001). In fact, what emerges from this review is that language attitude is particularly relevant for indicating the level of language shift among a study's participants. According to Komondouros and McEntee-Atalianis (2007: 367), "Examining language attitudes is therefore a key in analysing a language contact situation from a social psychological perspective". Thus, the language attitudes of our participants will be used to point to their language shift. Summarising the main points about identity in the chapter has been complicated; however, identity is a domain in which various studies from a wide range of disciplines have been carried out (Riley, 2007). The literature on identity is relevant to the current thesis as the identities of our participants will be

investigated. Since the Arab ethnic minority group is the focus of the study, it was decided to include a brief review of the state of linguistic diversity in the UK, and the debate over the status of ethnic minority communities, including the maintenance of their heritage language and culture. A historical review of the situation of these languages in the British educational system since the 1970s reveals few major changes with respect to the role of minority languages in mainstream schools, or even official institutions.

The literature on complementary school is particularly useful in identifying the value of these institutions as research sites for this study.

The literature has been useful in suggesting themes for investigation in this study and appropriate methodologies. In the present case, the focus is on Arab heritage communities and we examine their patterns of language use, language proficiency and attitudes, the multiple identities of participants, and their attitudes to learning Arabic in formal institutions outside homes. Arabic speaking communities in Britain are relatively poorly studied, so we believe the present study can contribute to the literature on ethnic minority communities in the UK. It will also be interesting to determine to what extent findings and themes reported in the literature are borne out in this particular thesis.

To better understand the background of this study's participants, a discussion on the nature of the Arabic language and the main markers of identities in the Arab world, and the situation of Arab communities in the UK is relevant. Therefore, this will be examined in the following chapter.

## **Chapter 3: Background**

### **Arab Communities in Britain, the Arabic Language and Arab**

#### **Identity**

##### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter reviews the history of Arab migrants in the UK in order to introduce the background of the participants in the current research study. The chapter also discusses the diglossic nature of Arabic to highlight the linguistic situation in which the participants of this study are learning and using the language. It then moves to discuss the relationships between language, religion and identity in the Arab world. Additionally it reviews the impact of Arabic and Islam in forming the identities of both individuals and communities in the Arab World. The section concludes with a description of current identity in the Arab world. A lack of information about Arab migrants in the UK and their linguistic and identity background in the literature explains the importance of this chapter.

##### **3.2 Arabs in the UK**

###### **3.2.1 History of Migration**

It is believed that Arab migration to the UK started after World War I when Yemenis were employed as donkey men and stokers on British ships, which called at Aden and different locations along the Red Sea (Dahya 1965:180). After World War II, during the 1940s and '50s, a second wave of Yemeni migrants reached the UK. Migrants in this wave worked as labourers in different industrial cities in the country, such as Sheffield



and Birmingham. They received assistance in respect of better employment conditions and wages after the war (Dahya, 1965, p. 180; Halliday, 1992). According to a journalism report (BBC 2008), in the 1940s, Egyptian migrants also arrived in the UK, followed by people from other Arab countries, such as Moroccans in the early '60s, seeking work opportunities.

In addition, Arab students, mostly from Iraq and Egypt, began to attend British universities to pursue their studies in the late 1960s. The 1970s saw the migration of Arab businessmen, as a result of the flourishing of the Gulf oil business, which led to high levels of relocation to the UK in order to establish trade in the British market (Nagel, 2005).

In addition to education and business, political unrest in the Arab world has always been a reason for Arabic migration to the UK. The civil war in Lebanon, the establishment of Israel and the wars in Iraq have resulted in considerable numbers of refugees and asylum seekers entering Britain. Moreover, dictatorships in some Arab countries have added to the number of individuals seeking political asylum in the UK, including Shi'a and Kurdish Iraqi asylum seekers fleeing from the regime of Saddam Hussein.

It is worth noting that Arab student migration has continued up to the present, with increasing numbers from across Arabic speaking countries enrolling in British universities. In 2000, according to Home Office records, 10,000 visas were issued to students from the Arab world (Nagel, 2005).

### **3.2.2 Numbers and Locations**

The 2001 census estimated that there were 700,000 Arabs in the UK (Miladi, 2006) accounting for "the largest non-Commonwealth immigrant groups in Britain today" (Nagel, 2002: 267). The Arab population is mostly located in London, in areas such as

Brent, Ealing, Kensington and Chelsea (Miladi, 2006; Nagel and Staeheli, 2008), and other cities which were referred to by Nagel and Staeheli (2008:420) as “former industrial centres”, such as Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, Sheffield and Glasgow (Miladi, 2006).

The Arab migrant community is a diverse community from various countries, including Egypt, Morocco, Palestine, Yemen, Lebanon, the Gulf States and Iraq. Miladi (2006) states that this community is mostly made up of distinct Middle Eastern groups, with a modest number originating from North Africa and Somalia. Arab migrants in the UK are mostly Muslims from different sects, with a smaller number being Christian Arabs. According to Goenka et al. (2007), Muslim Arabs constitute 7% of the whole Muslim population in the UK.

Most Arab migrants in the UK belong to the middle and upper middle class of British society. Many are university graduates (Al Rasheed 1996 cited in Nagel 2005, p. 201), such as Syrian, Jordanian and Egyptian professionals, and business men from the Gulf region of the Arab World, although there are some low income communities and poorer groups, such as the Yemenis in Sheffield, and Moroccans in some London boroughs.

Contrary to the popular belief that it is a united community, Arabs in the UK originate from diverse national cultures and identities, although they tend to speak as a united voice on cultural or economic issues, as Nagel remarks (2005, p. 2002), when saying that “while Arab business and cultural organisations foster - and indeed, rely upon - a sense of Arab unity and communality, the Arab community cannot be regarded as a unitary, bounded entity”.

### 3.3 The Language Situation in the Arab World

After the brief overview of the history of Arabs in the UK, an aspect worthy of comment is the language situation within the Arab world, as reflected in the situation of the language among Arabs in the diaspora.

Arabic is the official language of 23 states, with 300 million native speakers (Bassiouney, 2009), but there are other minority languages in the Arab world, such as Kurdish, which is spoken in Syria, and Iraq and Berber in Morocco and Algeria (Ennaji, 1999). There is, thus, considerable linguistic diversity within the Arabic speaking world. Ennaji (1999) comments that the language situation differs in these twenty-three countries based on:

- Differences in spoken dialects of Arabic (e.g. Egyptian and Syrian Arabic).
- Differences in colonial histories and inherited colonial languages, for instance English in Egypt and Jordan, and French in Morocco and Lebanon.
- Existence of non-Arabic speaking minorities, such as Kurds in Syria and Berbers in Morocco.

In addition to these, diglossia is another significant feature which characterises language use and traditions in the Arab world.

#### 3.3.1 Diglossia

The term diglossia refers to two varieties of the same language existing side by side, but with different functions. In the 1930s, William Marçais, a French linguist, described the diglossic situation in the Arab world, which consists of the co-existence of Classical Arabic or Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), also known as *Fusha*, and colloquial dialects. However, Ferguson (1959) was the first linguist to describe Classical Arabic as a high “superposed variety” (1959:325), and spoken Arabic as the low variety of the

language. Ferguson (1959) mentioned a number of differences between high and low varieties in the diglossic situation. Some of these differences were in grammar, lexical construction, prestige, employment, acquisition and phonology.

The roots of diglossia in the Arab World go back to the eighth century, when the Arabic grammarian, Sibawayhi, codified Classical Arabic (Owens, 2001), which is considered the pure language of the Qur'an (Ennaji, 2010). It is also the language from which MSA has evolved (Biadisy, Hirschberg and Habash, 2009; Owens, 2001; Palmer, 2007; Stadlbauer, 2010). For the perceived historical continuity with CA, MSA is also referred to by Arabic speakers as the language of the Qur'an. Between Classical Arabic and MSA, however, there are three main differences: different syntactic structures; different vocabularies; and different stylistic structures, as MSA has been exposed more to translation and bilingual activities than the sacred Classical Arabic (Bateson 1967, cited in Bassiouney 2009:12). Bassiouney (2009) reveals that Arabic speakers do not often distinguish between Classical Arabic and MSA.

In this study we focus on MSA, also known as *Fusha*, rather than Classical Arabic, since it is the formal language recognised in the Arab world today.

- Standard Arabic versus Regional Dialects

As mentioned above, of the two varieties of Arabic, MSA is considered more prestigious than regional dialects, as it “maintains a high degree of uniformity and functions as the official standard language in all Arab countries” (Altoma, 1969:3). Suleiman (2003) and Owens (2001) comment that MSA is highly respected as it is close to the language of the Qur'an and religious rituals, and as “the most prominent vehicle symbolizing Arabic unity in the modern world” (Owens 2001, p. 449).

Regional dialects, on the other hand, are considered by devotees of MSA to be corrupted versions of the language (Bassiouney 2009; Palmer 2007; Suleiman 2004 and 2003), as they are believed to “constitute a state of decay in the linguistic fabric of the Arabic language” (Suleiman 2004: 76).

The two varieties are used in different domains. MSA predominates as the written form, used in the news media, newspapers, religious sermons, and formal speeches, whereas regional dialects are the unwritten forms of the language, used in daily oral communication and the entertainment media (Ennaji, 2010). Palmer (2007) mentions that “The perception of lower prestige does not exclude Spoken Arabic from being the language that is actually used on daily basis in most every context a normal person would encounter” (p. 112). However, regional dialects have recently been used in some domains which were traditionally dominated by MSA. For example, an Egyptian TV channel has broadcast news in the spoken, informal Egyptian dialect, a step that has provoked much opposition from both radical Islamists and Arab nationalists, because it is seen as the affirmation of an Egyptian identity rather than a reflection of a collective Islamic or Arab identity (Bassiouney 2009).

Despite the fact that MSA is not a mother tongue in any Arab country, it is understood by educated Arabic speakers, regardless of their nationality, as it is the language taught in schools and mosques throughout the Arab world.

Regional dialects, however, are mother tongues and are named after their geographical origins (Ennaji, 2010). Researchers differentiate between five main dialects in the Arab world:

- Gulf Arabic, which is spoken in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Oman and other countries in the Gulf area in the Arab world;

- Iraqi Arabic, which is spoken in Iraq;
- Levantine Arabic, which is spoken in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Palestine;
- Egyptian Arabic, which is spoken in Egypt and Sudan;
- Maghrebi Arabic, which is spoken in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Mauritania.

(Biadisy, Hirschberg and Habash, 2009)

A speaker's ability to understand regional dialects depends on the geographical distance between the regions (Ennaji, 2010; Palmer, 2007). In other words, speakers in contiguous geographical regions will speak mutually intelligible varieties, while it is almost impossible for a speaker from Syria to understand a speaker from Mauritania when using their spoken dialect (Ennaji, 2010; Ennaji, 1999; Palmer 2007).

The nature of Arabic dialects is still the focus of much research. Researchers are interested in investigating their origins, whether they are languages in themselves, or whether they are developed forms of MSA: in other words, forms which have accepted borrowings and have been influenced by certain regional tongues (Haeri, 2000). According to Biadisy, Hirschberg and Habash (2009:55), these dialects "are the result of the interaction between different ancient dialects of Classical Arabic and other languages that existed in, neighbored and/or colonized what is today the Arab world".

In the Arab world, many linguistic modernisers have called for the promotion of the status of regional dialects and certain reforms in MSA in order to keep abreast of global developments, such as new inventions in science. Their call for reform has provoked opposition from MSA supporters, who describe the reformers as "misguided and dangerous individuals" who "must be defeated to prevent them from destroying one of the foundations of Arab culture" (Suleiman, 2004: 225).

The arguments between reformers and MSA supporters can be judged to be unequal, in that the modernisers' attempts are perceived as attacks on the whole literature and the Arabic cultural repertoire. More dangerously, it may be regarded as an attack on "Islam and the Quran" (Suleiman, 2004: 255). Given the previous points, it seems that there is not much opportunity for modernisers to negotiate any promotion of vernacular dialects.

Although MSA and its dialects are different in many dimensions, such as phonology, orthography, morphology, lexical choice and syntax, Arabic speakers do not consider MSA and the regional dialects as separate languages (Biadisy, Hirschberg and Habash, 2009:55). Another important aspect highlighted by Bassiouney (2009) is that native speakers of Arabic do not tend to differentiate between the standard language and dialects by name. Thus, Arabic is the conventional name for both. For example, were Egyptians to be asked about the language they use on a daily basis, they would reply 'Arabic', and not 'an Egyptian dialect of Arabic', although, in fact, they use the latter.

### **3.4 Identity in the Arab World**

The Arab world comprises a mosaic of religions, such as Islam, Christianity and Judaism, and ethnicities, such as Arabs, Kurds, Turcomans, Armenians and Berbers (Ennaji, 1999; Halliday, 1992). This linguistic and cultural diversity scene has, however, created problems when attempting to specify the definitive characteristics of an Arab identity (Bassiouney, 2009).

Suleiman (2003) argues that both the Arabic language and the religion of Islam are identity markers uniting people in the Arab World, despite their political and social differences. Hence, whenever religious differences occurred, the common language was used to bond the people, and, where there was a difference in language, Islam was used as a marker of identity. For instance, in some Arab countries, such as Syria and

Lebanon, where Christian Arabs make up a considerable percentage of the population, language serves as a significant marker of national identity. However, in other countries where the religion of the majority is Islam, religion may be a predominant marker of identity, as, for example, in Algeria, between Berbers and Arabs (Barakat, 1993).

Other groups, however, identifies with neither linguistic nor religious identity, but with their regional identity, for example Egyptian or Syrian groups. They believe that inhabitants of these countries have maintained their unique regional or national identities regardless of the dominant religion or language. Some of the pioneers of that movement included Lutfi Al Sayyid and Salama Mousa in Egypt, and Antun Sa'ada in Greater Syria, the founder of the "Syria National Party" in the mid-1930s (Suleiman, 2003; Hourani, 1946).

The relationship between the Arabic language and the two identities of Arab nationalism and Islam is discussed further below.

### **3.4.1 Arabic and National Identity**

The pan-nationalistic movement in the Arab world regards language as the most important unifying factor of Arab national identity (Barakat, 1993). Other factors, such as shared history, culture and land were also embraced by Arab nationalists, but none has assumed the same status as language (Bassiouney, 2009; Suleiman, 2003, 2004). Suleiman (2004: 80), for instance, makes the point that, "Arab national identity is based on language as the criterion that binds the Arabs culturally; it further acts as a force in the drive to achieve the political unity of which the nationalists dream"

This tendency to associate the language with a secular collective identity began in the 19th century, in nations that were made up of mixed religions, such as Greater Syria and Egypt, where Arabic served as "that ingredient which unites Arab Muslims and



Christians into a new identity that separates them from the Turks” (Suleiman, 2003:110). Nationalists hoped to replace religious affiliations with a national one, as the former discouraged many Arabs from resisting Islamic Ottoman occupation, which ruled over Greater Syria from 1516 until 1918 (Haeri, 2000; Suleiman, 2006). As Barakat (1993:35) observes: “Arab nationalism [was viewed] as a secular alternative to the Islamic Ottoman Caliphate”.

Although Arab nationalists cannot deny the fundamental relationship between the Arabic language and Islam, they argue that Arabic was a common bond between the Arab tribes, even before the emergence of Islam (Anis, 1970 cited in Suleiman, 2003: 40; Barakat, 1993). Al-Kawakibi, for instance, claimed “that Arab-speaking Muslims, Christians and Jews were ‘Arab’ before they were members of their respective religious communities” (Khoury, 1983:64).

Nowadays, MSA is considered to be the national language of Arabs, regardless of their religious beliefs. This categorising implies “that secularism has become a major force within the cultural and political life of at least parts of the region” (Haeri, 2000: 74).

### **3.4.2 Arabic Language and Islamic Identity**

There are numerous reasons why Arabic has been identified as a symbol of Islamic identity, and according to Islamist advocates, “[any] involvement of Arabic in non-Islamic nationalisms is intellectually and historically bogus and must as a result be rejected” (Suleiman, 2004:40). Firstly, Arabic is said to be the language chosen by God to reveal his words to humanity: “it is a language of revelation, of sacred scripture revered by hundreds of millions of believers” (Lewis, 1993:155). Secondly, it is the Prophet Mohammed’s mother tongue in which he delivered all his preaching (hadith). In fact, the Prophet Mohammed is said to have praised Arabic and encouraged followers

to learn it. Thirdly, MSA is closely associated with the heritage of literature, science and medicine which flourished in the period of the rule of the Islamic empire. The cornerstone of the Islamic empire (Ummah) was established by the Prophet Mohammed, after migration to Medina in 622 A.D. Within Muslim societies and communities, it is accepted that the current position of Arabic and its associated heritage would not have been achieved without Arabic's close association with Islam; thus "Arabic without Islam is like a body without a soul" (Suleiman, 2004:40). The beliefs listed above motivate many Muslims to become literate in Arabic, even though it is not their mother tongue (Ennaji, 1999). The enduring strength of this fundamental relationship between Arabic and Islamic identity led Ataturk, the father of the modern Turkish nation, to replace Arabic script with the Roman system, in an attempt to lay the foundations of a secular state, and so extricate Turkey from Islam (Safran, 1999).

### **3.4.3 Identity in the Current Arab World: the Changing Role of Religion**

There has always been a tension between advocates of Arab nationalism and Islamic movements, especially following the launch of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt in the 1930s. Islamic movements "have considered nationalism, whether in its full-blown Arab nationalist form or that of nation-state nationalism, to be an abomination" (Khalidi, 1991: 1370). At present, identities in the Arab world often fluctuate between an Islamic, an Arab and a regional identity. Recently, however, Islamic identities seem to be dominant over national ones; as Khalidi (1991: 1365) points out, religious affiliation "has provided the basis for a sustained challenge to nationalism in the Arab world in recent years". One of the most solid reasons is the recent expansion of radical Islamic ideologies, following the weakness of Arab Pan-Nationalism movements, as compared to their position in the 1950s. As a result of this ascendancy, nationalists tend to increasingly endorse the role of Arabic as a unifying factor in Arab secular identity.

They also refuse to accept the equivalence between the two identities, as they consider the Arab national identity to be an ethno-cultural one encompassing both Muslim and Christian Arabs (Bassiouney, 2009).

### **3.5 Conclusion**

This chapter has discussed a range of issues relevant to the background of Arab communities in the UK, such as their history of migration, numbers, locations and social classes. It also examined the relationships between language, religion and identity within the Arab world. There seems to be a conflict in identities in the Arab world, or at least conflicting ideas about the nature of Arab identity, as Bassiouney (2009:268) explains: “Arabs are still struggling with how to define themselves, as a group and/or individually, and how to belong to a group and still project a different identity. Language is at the heart of this struggle”. One of the key points highlighted in this chapter is that Arabic is considered crucial in constructing both Arab national and Islamic identities. In part of this research, I will investigate the association between Arab diaspora identities and the Arabic language. The current study also challenges conventional notions, in particular those in contemporary British political culture, which consider Arabs to be a homogeneous community within British society, highlighting rather Arabs’ diverse identities, and the complex inter-relations between them.

## **Chapter 4: Methodology**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter outlines the research aims and questions, together with the methodology and research approach of the study. It also discusses the choice of research setting and participants, as well as the relevant ethical issues.

### **4.2 Research Aims and Questions**

The present research aims at contributing to the literature on ethnic minority communities in the UK by giving a rich descriptive portrait of language use, proficiency, attitudes and identity practices across a range of Arab families in Ealing and Leeds. The research sites are two Arabic complementary schools in the UK, namely the Ealing Arabic School and the Leeds Arabic School.

#### **4.2.1 The complementary school as a language community**

One of the first critical issues to emerge while designing a sociolinguistic research project is establishing access to the language community under investigation. In the current research, a key factor which posed a challenge to the research stems from the fact that this demographic group has been demonized and criticised by mainstream media and politicians in recent years, resulting in the crass generalisation that migrant Arab communities are havens for extremist Jihadist groups, like al-Qaeda and al-Shabbab. Part of the reluctance to engage fully with the research might signal the way that stereotyped and scapegoated communities such as the Arabic community in the UK react by closing their doors to investigators of all kinds, including those carrying out academic research into attitudes related to identity or, where some access is given, involve a reluctance to address these underlying issues. Key political voices have reinforced this pressure and the resulting fear and anxiety within these communities, by

stating that its members should internally police those suspected of what is called 'extremism'. The broad nature of these attacks and demands mean that the community as whole is likely to be very cautious about opening up to 'others'.

However, the current research considered a number of options as points of access to migrant Arab communities in the UK. A mosque, for example, was considered inappropriate, given the gender constraints for a female researcher. It is important to mention here that, within most religious Arab communities, and thus in mosques, women are considered to have different roles from men and so men and women traditionally worship separately. Moreover, using mosques as the study research sites would have prevented the researcher from accessing secular views. Another option was to consider community halls or social centres as research sites. This was also disregarded, as many of these serve people who share the same national backgrounds, such as a Yemeni community centre, or the same religious backgrounds, such as Islamic centres, which include children for whom Arabic is not their first language. The current research seeks to consider Arabs from diverse national backgrounds rather than to be restricted to one nationality. The above reasons suggest that the complementary school 'stands in for' or represents crucial aspects of the Arab community, and its response to these difficult circumstances. It does so in enabling the study of language practices of women and children as well as of men, and opens up the possibility of gaining access to the domestic sphere, a context that would ordinarily remain closed to 'others' or those who might have a different 'agenda' or set of values than the community. In this mnemonic way, then, the complementary school stands for the language community and against the foreclosure of its manifold and hybrid identities and practices.

Complementary schools have allowed the researcher access to the required voices, in order to describe and analyse patterns of language use and identities in two UK-based

Arabic communities.

Using complementary schools as research sites has been discussed in the literature; these institutions have been studied from a number of different angles: for example, as a 'safe space' for multilingual practices and the negotiation of identities (see Blackledge and Creese 2010); or in terms of teaching and learning process (see Martin et al. 2006); or for their impact on ethnic communities and mainstream education (Archer et al. 2009; Maylor et al. 2010), for more studies on complementary schools see (2.4.3).

These schools reflect the cultural, linguistic and economic complexity of their communities. They gather individuals from various age groups, different religious perspectives and affiliations as well as different social backgrounds under the community umbrella (whether it is religious or ethno-cultural), therefore, they were considered in the literature as 'sites of representation' (see Miller, 2003a and b). In previous studies, these schools were also considered to represent a speech community in which different linguistic repertoires interact. with some more salient than others (see also Creese et al., 2006).

Although my study shares the same perspective in considering the two research sites (Leeds and Ealing complementary schools) as language communities in which various languages, varieties of language and discourses are practiced, there are some differences. While many of these studies restricted their focus to complementary schools, I used these sites as a starting point from which I could access and delve into the Arab community. These schools represent a window through which it is possible to look at the Arab Muslim community. The complementary school as a public or community institution is comparatively accessible and makes it relatively easy for Arabs outside of the particular community to engage with groups or individuals (pupils, teachers and

parents) from a similar ethnic or linguistic background who have a common purpose, i.e. transmitting or maintaining the heritage language, in this case Arabic. It is also a natural environment in which to pose questions about language use, attitudes, and identities, which would be interpreted as more relevant to this setting than others. Moreover, access to the teachers and pupils allows the researcher to have contact with the families of pupils attending the schools, thus enabling access to the home lives of some of the families as part of the research process.

A second reason for basing the research around complementary school settings is that, while these schools clearly could not substitute for the whole of the ethnic or linguistic minority community, they are still an important part of it and constitute a key agency for transmitting the heritage language and culture to younger generations (see Lanza 2008).

We turn now to the main research questions guiding this study.

#### **4.2.2 Four main research questions**

2. What are the language use patterns, and language proficiencies associated with pupils in two Arabic heritage communities?

The study examines the language use of pupils with family members at home, and with friends and teachers at the complementary schools in playground and in classes. It also investigates the evidence for pupils' knowledge of Arabic, as indicated by reading, writing, speaking and listening skills in both varieties of Arabic: Modern Standard Arabic (*Fusha*), and vernacular dialects. This range of evidence will help us to ascertain how far language shift is occurring in these migrant Arab communities.

It is worth noting here that I am using the term 'proficiency' to refer to levels of language knowledge because it allows me to talk about more developed or less

developed language skills.

2a. What are the language attitudes and identities associated with pupils, parents and teachers in two Arabic heritage communities?

The study focuses on participants' attitudes towards the two relevant varieties of Arabic in these communities: *Fusha* and vernacular dialects as well as towards English. It also explores the expressed identities of the participants and the relationship between these identities and the Arabic language.

2b. What attitudes do pupils and parents express towards learning Arabic?

The study focuses on the attitudes expressed by pupils and parents towards learning and teaching Arabic in institutional settings.

4. How, if at all, does religious affiliation influence language practices, attitudes and identities?

The thesis examines the role and influence of Islam in shaping attitudes to language, as well as constructing identities and maintaining the language, as the role of religion is prominent in forming Arabs' identities and their attitudes to the language (see 3.4.2).

5. What differences, if any, are observable in language use, attitudes, proficiencies and identities in distinct heritage communities, and what factors might help explain any differences observed?

The participants in both communities belong to geographically distinct but socially similar groups, as they belong to middle class Arabs in the UK, which provides an opportunity to investigate any variation, if any, and the factors responsible for it (for information on participants' backgrounds, see 5.2.3).



### **4.3 Research approach and design**

This study is a multiple methods study, drawing on instruments often associated with a quantitative survey approach, such as a questionnaire, and on techniques or elements more commonly found in qualitative, interpretive research, such as participant observation, field notes and interviews. The qualitative research methods adopted are influenced by ethnographic perspectives.

The study comprises two linked case studies focusing on language use patterns, language attitudes, and identity practices of pupils, teachers and parents from two research sites in Leeds and Ealing, London. These are complementary schools where the researcher was employed as a teacher for at least 16 weeks and to which she made frequent visits. Data collection methods included observation and field notes, questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and a language proficiency test.

Like other case studies (see Richards, 2011), the present research focuses on groups and individuals and seeks to offer a rich description of their patterns of language use, language attitudes, identities and attitudes to learning Arabic outside home. It blends description with interpretation, and synthesizes different types of data sources to provide an overall account. In this, of course, the researcher plays an integral role in the selection and interpretation of data, and for this reason in Section 4.6 below, we devote some space to the discussion of reflexivity power, reliability and validity in research of this kind. The fact that the study draws on different data collection instruments allows for a degree of triangulation, according to which findings from one data source can be checked against those derived from another (for example, comparing claims of Arabic language proficiency in questionnaires against the results of an informal proficiency test, see Sections 5.5.1 and 5.5.3). This, in itself, constitutes one kind of evidence for

validity and reliability.

It is useful to begin with some very brief comments on a case study approach, followed next by the role of ethnography in influencing the study methods and then a description of the research instruments employed for data collection.

#### **4.3.1 Case study approach**

As noted above, this thesis comprises two linked case studies, and can be considered what Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) categorise as a “multiple case study design”. The main reason for including two cases - two sites- in the overall study is that it allows certain comparisons to be made between the two, and consequently enables the researcher to investigate the extent to which patterns of language use, attitudes, proficiencies and identities are similar. In this instance, for example, we examine aspects of language use, language attitudes and language proficiency, and draw attention to some, though clearly not all, of the factors that are responsible for similarity and variability between settings.

Case studies allow us to look at the particularities of each of the communities under study. This thesis provides an opportunity to investigate Arab communities in very different cities and investigate their language practices, attitudes and identities. However, in this thesis, we make no claims for the ‘representativeness’ of the groups studied; neither is our main concern to generalise to other Arabic speaking groups in the UK. What we try to do is to relate our findings to the literature and to studies of other ethnic minorities, and in this way consolidate what the wider literature has to say on such matters as language shift, maintenance, use, attitudes and identity.

The advantage of a case study approach is that it allows the researcher to investigate particular groups or individuals in considerable detail in their natural context and, if

necessary, to investigate the influence of that context on the participants' behaviour. Also, case studies are flexible (Hakim 1987), and they very often, as in this case, employ multiple methods to generate a detailed picture of the participants (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2011 and Hakim 1987), which "allows a more rounded, holistic, study than with any other design" (Hakim 1987:61).

There are, however, as with most research approaches, disadvantages to case study research. For example, case study research methods rarely permit generalization, as interest tends to fall on the particular. It may also require repeated access to the research sites and skill in the use of various kinds of data collection instrument. There are also arguments that case study research can be subjective (see Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2011). However, the case study approach allows us to understand in detail the participants and contexts under study. Moreover, the researcher in the current study was fortunate enough to have repeated access to the research sites. The risk of subjectivity is mitigated in this research because the researcher used different data collection instruments (see also 4.6.3). The aim of ensuring that the data sets are transparent to the reader also insures against subjectivity

#### **4.3.2 Role of Ethnography**

The following section examines the role of ethnography in informing the current research.

Hammersley (1994) identifies six characteristics of ethnographic research: (1) It analyses empirical data chosen for the research; (2) The data are taken from the 'real world' and not from certain experiments designed by the researcher; (3) Data are collected from various sources, mainly observation and informal interaction with participants; (4) Data collection does not follow a fixed plan, it follows more the flow of

the research; (5) Data are gathered from a small group; and (6) The main methods of analysis are interpretation of data, rather than statistics or other quantitative methods.

The methods used in this study, together with the characteristics mentioned above by Hammersely (1994), indicate the extent to which ethnographic methods are used. (1) Not all data in this study come from the 'real world'. For example, the language proficiency test result data were gathered through designing a test for that sole purpose. (2) Observation was an important method, though not the main one (see 4.5). (3) The data collection procedure was fixed and prepared before starting the fieldwork. Moreover, the researcher decided the criteria of the pupil interview participants to be children who came from in-group marriages as well as having been born in the UK or having arrived before the age of 3. (4) The data analysis was based mainly on the researcher's analysis and interpretation. However, statistical software was used, such as Excel and SPSS, to analyse the questionnaire and the language proficiency test.

Participants were observed in only a part of their real life, as the researcher was able to observe participants' language practices only at school, since it was not possible to do the same at other sites, such as in their homes or original countries. So although the study does not fully correspond with ethnographic practice, which "looks for real actors in real events, using real communicative codes with real effects in real life worlds" (Blommaert2001:2), ethnographic methods informed the study design. However, the researcher's presence on the site, and her involvement in some of the participants' educational and social activities, presents her as an ethnographer who conducted fieldwork at both research sites. According to Blackledge and Creese (2010a:59) "Ethnographers strive to be reflective in representing and interpreting the social context of their research participants as they engage in social action alongside those they are researching".

Other possible methodological stances for a sociolinguistic study such as this might be to base the approach exclusively on quantitative methods, such as the administration of a detailed language questionnaire or survey targeting particular residential areas (e.g. Rasinger, 2010), or based on reported data from language diaries and questionnaire responses (Lawson and Sachdev, 2004). Another possible stance is the use of a single method such as using in-depth ethnographic interviews (see Borland, 2005). However, a number of problems quickly emerge when attempting to apply these stances to the current research.

Firstly, using previous instances would not allow the opportunity to look at the differences between what informants reported and how they actually behave.

Secondly, using a questionnaire, survey or a language diary to collect sociolinguistic data does not guarantee the researcher the best means of examining the reason why people behave in the way they do. Moreover, it does not allow the researcher to further investigate certain topics.

Thirdly, Arabic is a complex notion, given the fact that there are a wide range of different regional dialects, as well as the standard version, *Fusha*. Based on this, conducting a survey or a questionnaire would not give me the researcher the opportunity to examine the materials that lie beneath the surface.

Therefore adopting an ethnographically informed position and using multiple methods enabled the researcher to investigate the different linguistic and cultural components interacting in the community and influencing informants' language behaviour and identity practices. Moreover, it allows the researcher to investigate and follow certain points that were acknowledged in questionnaire responses or during observation, as well

as to compare the reported behaviour to the actual one. As an observer, I was there from the beginning so I was able to observe behaviour throughout the process.

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#### **4.4. Subjects and participants**

The section below describes the sampling of schools and participants

##### **4.4.1 Selection of Schools**

The schools were selected carefully by searching the web for a number of Arabic complementary schools. One school was contacted in Bradford, one in Leeds and four schools in Greater London. The head teacher of the school in Leeds was contacted through a friend. All the schools were telephoned, and when initial permission was given, a visit was scheduled in order to decide if the schools met the basic needs of the study, which were as follows: (a) having pupils of various Arab national backgrounds; (b) using different curricula; (c) varying in their degree of religious (i.e. Islamic) orientation; and (d) whether managers, teachers and pupils were willing to participate.

Several days of observation were undertaken in the six selected schools, as well as several meetings with the head teachers. Finally, the researcher decided on the most suitable schools for the research based on the needs of the study. A number of schools were excluded, for reasons related to the ethnicity of their pupils, as, for example, with the school in Bradford, where a significant number of the pupils were non-Arab Muslims, which could have affected the direction of the current research. Moreover, some of the schools, such as two in London, were very suspicious about having a researcher in their classes, and laid down very strict rules limiting her movement, which

could have created an uncomfortable atmosphere for the researcher and prevented her from spending the time needed to carry out the research fully in these locations.

The two schools in Leeds and Ealing were chosen because they were attended by children of Arab origin and from different Arab nationalities, and because each school employed a different curriculum. The school in Ealing, on the one hand, used a curriculum that was mainly focused on language. The Arabic School in Leeds, on the other hand, had a curriculum which focused on both Arabic and Islam. In this curriculum, the Arabic language was taught within an Islamic framework, introducing Islamic stories in a historical context. Religious observance appeared to be stricter in the Leeds context than at the Ealing site, which contributed to the researcher's understanding of the role of religion in influencing the topics investigated. Finally, none of the schools had been researched previously, which means that the subjects may have been more natural in their behaviour.

The following chapter (see 5.2.1) provides a detailed description of the two schools and the differences between them.

#### **4.4.2. Sampling of children and parents**

We now turn to describe how pupils and parents were selected. Selecting subjects is a fundamental issue in qualitative research.

The sampling or selection of children for this study had two stages. In the first stage those to whom the questionnaire was administered were selected; then, from among these, a number of children were selected for interviews.

The questionnaire sample was carefully chosen to include the following:



- (a) Pupils in 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> classes, aged 8 to 14, rather than elder ages since many schools start teaching the GCSE curriculum after the age of 14, i.e. the researcher would not have a chance to investigate the influence of the curriculum on pupils' language behaviour. Moreover, GCSE classes were smaller in number, as was observed by the researcher;
- (b) Muslims with different levels of religious observance;
- (c) Both genders;
- (d) Pupils of mixed national backgrounds, but originating from Arab countries;
- (e) Pupils' willingness to participate.

Out of nearly 50 pupil participants in each school, 37 from the Leeds school and 36 from the Ealing school agreed to complete the questionnaire. These same respondents were observed inside and outside classes, and field notes were made.

The interviewee sample:

Children interviewees were selected from those who completed the questionnaire, as one of the aims of the interviews was to probe further into questionnaire responses. Interviewees were chosen after the analysis of the questionnaire responses, and after two months of observation in each school.

Children were selected for interview if they were born in the UK or had arrived before the age of 3, and if they were of Arab background. Another key factor for selection was willingness to participate, and parental consent. After selecting the children for interviews, their parents were contacted. Some of the parents, however, did not agree to their children being interviewed. As an Egyptian father in the Leeds school said "I do not like people coming to my house, talking to my family and recording, I do not feel comfortable". Finally, parents were selected who volunteered their children for

interview. At the Leeds school, the parents interviewed were contacted during a charity day selling second-hand goods, and others were contacted by e-mail. At the Ealing school, the researcher contacted the parents in person when they came to pick up their children at the end of the school day. Interviewees were limited to eight of the children and their families, four from each school. Each interview lasted for approximately 90 minutes.

### Sampling of Teachers

Four teachers in each school were selected, based on their willingness to participate and the fact that they were 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> grade or GCSE teachers. It was also important for me to interview the teachers of the classes where the questionnaires were distributed. In addition, the two head teachers were interviewed.

In total, 26 interviews were carried out in this research.

## **4.5. Research instruments and procedures**

### **4.5.1 Participant observation and field notes**

Participant observation refers to the researcher's involvement in daily activities and events of the group concerned (DeWalt and DeWalt, 2011; Starfield, 2010). Mason (2002:84) describes it as a means for "generating data which entail the researcher immersing herself or himself in a research 'setting' so that they can experience and observe at first hand a range of dimensions in and of that setting". Although the data collected through this method can be subjective (Cohen and Manion, 1994; Hakim 1987), it is nonetheless considered effective for investigating the actual behaviour of the informants, rather than what they report about themselves. In these case studies "the purpose of such observation is to probe deeply and analyse intensively the multifarious phenomena that constitute the life cycle of the unit with a view to establishing

generalizations about the wider population to which that unit belongs” (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011: 296).

It has been suggested that it is preferable for the observer to be an insider, a member of the group, as this is believed to provide easy access and allow more natural behaviour by the subjects, rather than a situation in which an outsider is present (Nortier, 2008; Blackledge and Creese 2010). However, outsiders might be preferred by a community as they arguably maintain a distance with the research site and their participants and do not have a vested interest in the research (Blackledge and Creese 2010).

In this study in line with other studies (see Blackledge and Creese, 2010; Hamid, 2011), I attempted to locate myself as both an insider and outsider, in order to gain the advantages of both positions and perspectives. Thus, I tried “at one and the same time [to] achieve closeness and maintain distance” (Blackledge and Creese, 2010:103).

I may be considered an insider, in that I spoke the same languages as the pupils, teachers and parents; I speak and understand *Fusha*, as well as Levantine, Iraqi, Egyptian, Gulf and Maghrebi Arabic, to various degrees. I was able to understand and communicate with children who spoke in English and in Arabic, as well as with the adults, who mostly spoke in Arabic. I was also an insider at both schools because of my religious identity as a Muslim female in the UK. At the same time, I shared interests with the pupils, such as watching similar TV programs, and being familiar with their life experiences in the UK and their countries of origin. With adults, I was able to raise discussions about living in the UK as a migrant and at the same time discuss political and religious issues that were taking place in the Arab world. To summarise, children viewed me as an example of a bilingual individual in the UK, and the adults saw me as a

migrant who was pursuing an academic life in the UK and conducting research that they could use in the future.

As an outsider, I was able to position myself as a researcher with a fixed schedule, fixed observation hours and fixed aims, which gave me a high status among the participants. In order to keep focused on the research aims, I had a checklist with all the areas to be investigated.

Alongside participant-observation, field notes are often considered to be an essential research method, through which an awareness of the research site and participants is built up. Field notes are “products of and reflect conventions for transforming witnessed events, persons and places into words on paper” (Emerson et al, 1995:10). In this study, field notes contributed to my research archive, and enabled me to record my personal observations and thoughts, and “highlight the reflexivity of [my] role in shaping the research process” (Blackledge and Creese, 2010:77). Thus, while field notes may be subjective, they can still be regarded as valid and useful sources of data, when used in connection with the other methods (Blommaert, 2006:35).

Blommaert’s (2006) comments are worth quoting in full:

“I attach great importance to field notes, if for nothing else because I still use and re-use my own field notebooks, some of which are now over two decades old. They still provide me with invaluable information, not only about what I witnessed in the field, but even more importantly about how I witnessed it – amazed, outraged, amused, factual and neutral, puzzled, curious, not understanding, confident about my own interpretations. They still tell me a story about an epistemic process: the way in which I tried to make new information understandable for myself, using my own interpretive frames, concepts and categories, and gradually shifting into new frames, making

connections between earlier and current events, finding my way in the local order of things.”

Blommaert (2006:34-35)

Deciding exactly where and when one should write field notes is also important, as this procedure might cause stress to the participants, create an anxious atmosphere, or interrupt the natural flow of certain activities or behaviours in the field. Writing field notes in the field may also influence the researcher’s observations, which is why in this study I wrote key words relating to the main themes of the research in the field and the full version of the field notes immediately after leaving the research site, so as to minimize any disturbance to the subjects’ behaviour. The key words helped remind me of important incidents and behaviours which took place during the observations.

#### **4.5.2 Questionnaires**

Questionnaires were used in this study because they provide a means by which individuals’ personal information, language history, choice, language dominance and attitudes can be recorded (Codo, 2008; Nortier, 2008).

##### **4.5.2.1 Factors to consider in the design of questionnaires**

Questionnaires should be well structured before distribution because no changes or corrections can be made after administration (Rasinger, 2010). Questions should be clear, unbiased and non-suggestive and should not hint at preferable responses (Rasinger 2010). They should also be constructed to avoid any misunderstanding, and “an item should not include several questions to be answered by one response” (Wiersma, 1969: 279). Finally, questions should not ask about any sensitive issues which might cause personal discomfort to respondents (Wiersma, 1969).

Nortier (2008) differentiates between two types of questionnaire: oral and written, each of which has its advantages and limitations. Oral questionnaires overcome the potential for participants' reading and writing difficulties to limit the data collection, while written questionnaires free the participant from any self-conscious reactions originating from the presence of the interviewer.

#### **4.5.2.2 The Questionnaire in this study**

In the current study, a written questionnaire containing close-ended, multiple choice questions was distributed to the pupils to collect data on the following:

- Background information about the pupils' gender, age, original countries and religious affiliations.
- Language use at home, in the neighborhood, at the complementary school and at the mainstream school: two sets of questionnaires were devoted to examining pupils' language use at home, in the community and in the complementary school. Questions were formatted using a Likert scale, allowing the respondents to indicate how often they used each language, Arabic and English. A Likert scale was used because it is believed to be a useful method for "gathering respondents' views, opinions, and attitudes about various language-related issues" (Brown 2001:41).
- Self-reported language proficiency in Arabic and English was measured on a four-point Likert scale (from very good to weak), where pupils had to rate their reading, writing, speaking and understanding proficiency in Arabic (*Fusha* and vernacular dialect) and English. The results of the self-reported proficiency were contrasted to the results of an informal Arabic proficiency test that was also administrated (see 4.5.4).

- Language attitudes towards both *Fusha* and colloquial dialects: pupils had to rate their level of agreement or disagreement on multiple statements, regarding their attitudes to *Fusha* and their spoken dialect, on a four-point Likert scale.
- Identities expressed in different domains such as the home, the local neighborhood, etc. Pupil participants had to choose how they felt in relation to various identities, such as British, Arab, Muslim, more Arab than British/Muslim, etc.
- Attitudes towards learning Arabic and the learning procedure in formal institutions, i.e. complementary schools: in order to investigate pupils' attitudes to learning Arabic in complementary schools, pupils had to rate multiple statements, designed to elicit information about learning Arabic outside the home, on a five-point Likert scale.

It is important to note that the questionnaires for this study were first piloted with a group of participants of similar age to the study's subjects at an Arabic complementary school in Sheffield. This was to ensure that questionnaires would be clear for the respondents, to avoid any mistakes and misunderstandings and to develop some of the questions in specific areas. In the light of piloting, various questions were omitted and others modified in order to improve the questionnaires. For example, all questions were modified to include *Fusha* instead of Modern Standard Arabic, as most pupils at the piloting stage were not familiar with this term. For the same reason, mainstream schools were changed to English schools.

An example of a deleted question is one question which asked, "Does your mother wear a headscarf?" This question was omitted from the final version as many pupils refused to answer it in the piloted version of the questionnaire. The reason for this reaction to

the question is unclear; it could be because pupils were not comfortable talking about their mothers, that they perceived such information to be very personal, or that they failed to see what the purpose of such a question was.

At both schools, the researcher explained the purpose of the research and the confidential issues to the pupils and gave them the questionnaire during class time. Pupils were given 60 minutes to complete the questionnaire and allowed to ask questions while filling them in. The questionnaire data were processed using Excel.

Questionnaires do have some disadvantages: For example, participants may suppress their true point of view to please the researcher, and the design of the questionnaire may not allow respondents a good opportunity to elaborate on their answers (Codo, 2008:175), which may leave the researcher with a “‘thin’ description of the target phenomenon” (Dornyei, 2007:115). To reduce these potential limitations, interviews were also conducted to seek deeper and more revealing data from participants. The use of interviews is discussed below.

#### **4.5.3 Interviews**

Interviews were employed to investigate subjects’ views on language use, and their language attitudes and identities in more detail, and to complement the questionnaire data. The interviews can be considered semi-structured in that, although I followed a checklist in asking questions, the interviewees, who included children and adults, were given time to elaborate on their answers(Dornyei, 2007).

There are a number of considerations to be borne in mind in conducting interviews. The first is the relationship between the researcher and the interviewees. In this case, I could be considered ‘a community insider’, having worked in the two schools and coming from a similar origin to the participants, and thus I was able to ask both directive and



non-directive questions, as suggested by Codo (2008). A second consideration was the timing of the interview. Interviews can be carried out either in the early stages of the research or later on. When the aim is to obtain a response to certain ethnographic questions, interviews are recommended in the early stages, but if interviews are used to elaborate and build on already existing ethnographic data, it is recommended that they be postponed until the later stages (Codo, 2008), which allows the researcher to have “a sense of what things mean to participants” (Haller, 2008:256). In this particular study, interviews were conducted after the researcher had spent a considerable time observing in the field and also after analyzing the questionnaire. This decision allowed more in-depth investigation and an opportunity to elaborate on the questionnaires’ responses (Codo, 2008). It also allowed the researcher to become more familiar with the participants, thereby enabling her to select the most suitable participants for interviews. On this point, Codo (2008:166) comments as follows:

“If formal interviewing is postponed until the researcher has conducted ethnographic observations and is fairly familiar with the setting and the social actors investigated, she or he can make more informed decisions as to which participants must be interviewed and what sorts of questions need to be asked.”

A third consideration is the design of the interview questions, which depends on “the type of interview, the research goals, and the relationship between participants” Codo (2008:168). Questions can also be organised to move from the specific to the general or vice versa. The latter method has been used in this study. Sensitive questions (concerning religion and identity) were positioned in the middle of the interview, as Codo (2008) suggests, so as not to upset the interviewees at the beginning or end of the interviews.

The interview for parents (see Appendix 3a) focused on:

- Language use within the family and with friends.
- Which channels they watched on television and which books they usually read.
- Attitudes towards both varieties of Arabic: Modern standard Arabic (*Fusha*) and the vernacular dialect.
- The degree of religious affiliation and practice in the families.
- Their identities and their perspectives on the relationship between language and identity.
- The main reasons behind sending their children to learn Arabic in complementary schools.
- Attitudes to learning Arabic in formal settings, and the teaching methods followed there.

The interview for children (see Appendices 3c and 3d) focused on:

- Language use inside and outside the home
- Language use in the complementary school with teachers and pupils
- Which channels they watched on television and which books they usually read
- Attitudes towards the two varieties of Arabic
- Attitudes towards learning Arabic outside home
- Identities

The interview for the teachers (see Appendix 3b) focused on:

- The linguistic behaviour of the pupils inside and outside classrooms; with each other, and with teachers

- The language used in the classes
- The school curriculum
- The teaching methods followed

The interview for the head teachers focused on:

- The main aims of the school
- The communication between the complementary school and the students' mainstream school
- Aspects such as the management of the school, funding, the teaching curriculum and staff recruitment.

Interviewees were given the choice to be interviewed either in Arabic, English or both languages. Although this made the data process more complicated, as some interviews had to be translated and then transcribed, it was chosen to allow interviewees the best opportunity to express their views. It is worth noting that all adults chose Arabic. By contrast, all children chose English, stating that they considered it an easier linguistic option. This recalls Zhang and Slaughter-Defoe's (2009) study on language attitudes and maintenance amongst Chinese migrant families in USA, in which most parents reported Mandarin as the preferred language, whereas most of the children preferred to be interviewed in English.

Interviews were carried out with 26 subjects in total; 8 children, 8 parents, and 8 teachers (four from each school) and the head teachers of the two schools were also interviewed. The interviews lasted between 60 and 120 minutes. Interviews with the children and their parents were conducted in places they chose, either at home, in a local café or on the school premises. All teacher and head teacher interviews were conducted

on the school premises, except for two teachers, one from the Ealing school who chose to be interviewed in a local café in Ealing, and to complete her interview over phone. The other is from the Leeds school who could not stay after the school time, so she was interviewed over phone.

The interviews had been piloted with a number of participants who had similar profiles to the research subjects in this study. The pilot was very useful when developing the final version, as the sequencing of questions was changed and the wording of some questions was modified. For example, questions regarding the link between identity and language were amended to be clearer and to allow participants more opportunities to elaborate and communicate their ideas in the most natural, straightforward and easiest way to the researcher.

All interviews were recorded on a digital tape recorder and transcribed. Although this procedure was time consuming, it allowed the researcher more opportunities to analyse the data at length (Dornyei, 2007) and forms part of the research archive, from which quotes can be selected. In this study, nearly thirty six hours of interviews with different interlocutors were recorded.

One criticism of interviews is that they can be time-consuming and expensive compared to questionnaires, as well as requiring good communication skills that not every researcher will possess (; Codo, 2008; Dornyei, 2007; Rasinger, 2010). There is also a concern that informants may produce data either to present a positive image of themselves and their behaviours, or to satisfy the researcher by informing her/him what they think she/he admires (Dornyei, 2007).

In the present study, observation of participant behaviour in settings other than the semi-structured interviews allowed me to check and validate the interview data in the

process of analysis. Dornyei (2007) adds that informants may also be either reluctant to reveal information or very talkative, thereby producing a large amount of data, much of which might not be useful for the research. Also, some have argued (Codo, 2008) that the researcher might ask inappropriate questions, especially if they are an outsider, and that interviewees, as in questionnaires, may give inaccurate or incomplete answers to please the interviewer or to construct a favorable image of themselves. On the other hand, interviews offer an opportunity to obtain more detailed information than can be provided in a questionnaire and can be a useful complement to other kinds of data (Codo, 2008), and it is for this reason that I decided to gather interview data in this study.

#### **4.5.4. Language proficiency test**

I administered an informal, self-designed language proficiency test to pupils at each school site, in order to cross-check the self-reports pupils made of their Arabic proficiency in questionnaires and interviews. Thus, the test data allowed a degree of data triangulation. However, it is important to stress here that the test can be considered only as an informal instrument or check for gauging approximately the pupils' Arabic proficiency, as the design of a fully validated language test is, as many testers would affirm, a major undertaking that lies beyond the scope of this thesis. Nevertheless, I believe that the informal test, as designed, offers an approximate indication of pupils' Arabic proficiency. The following section provides a brief description of the test specifications, including the purpose and test takers, construct, methods, scoring, administration, and piloting.

#### **4.5.4.1 Test purpose and test takers**

The proficiency test was specifically designed to give an approximate indication of Arabic proficiency levels of pupils at the two research sites. The test focused on pupils' vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension.

The test examined the pupils' ability to:

- Produce appropriate Arabic translated equivalents of selected English words.
- Comprehend and read Arabic sentences and texts.
- Complete gap-fill exercises in order to demonstrate vocabulary knowledge.

The test was distributed to the same subjects who filled in the questionnaires, i.e. pupils in 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> grade at both schools (see 4.4.2). Twenty-one pupils at Leeds agreed to participate, and thirty-four at Ealing.

#### **4.5.4.2 Test structure and context**

The test was 60 minutes in length. Part 1, the vocabulary section, was to take 30 minutes, and 30 minutes were allotted to Part 2, the reading section, to assess pupils' Arabic reading comprehension.

#### **4.5.4.3 The test methods**

As mentioned, the test had two parts: part one consisted of 20 items to test pupils' Arabic vocabulary knowledge through the production of Arabic translation equivalents of English words. Part two consisted of 10 items to test pupils' reading comprehension. Pupils had to fill in one word gaps from an Arabic short story (see Appendices 4.a and 4.b).

The test materials were carefully chosen from existing Arabic text books (2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade in Syrian government schools) and placement tests in language centers, which

were suitable to the level of the test takers. The vocabulary test items were selected from two resources: the first was an Arabic language book directed at 3rd grade pupils in Syrian mainstream schools (العربيّه لغتي: Arabic is my language, published by the Ministry of Education in the Syrian Arab Republic). The second was an Arabic placement test designed for pupils whose first language was not Arabic, used in a language centre (Deckart Language Centre, 2011) in Tartous, Syria. The reading test passage was based on a famous short story from Arabic literature (the turtles and the two ducks) for children, from a 4th grade complementary school book (al Rabeih Publishing House, 2001).

The passage was altered into a cloze text, i.e. with 'gaps' where words had been removed, which participants had to complete using one word from a box containing a range of lexical items.

Test rubrics informed pupils about the aim of the test, the skills which were being examined, and how to answer the items. Rubrics were in English and written in age appropriate language.

#### **4.5.4.4 Scoring**

The total test marks consisted of: Part one: 20 items/20 marks (1 mark for each item), and Part two: 10 items/10 marks (1 mark for each item).

In the first part, candidates were asked to translate the underlined words. One mark was given for candidates who provided a suitable meaning (regardless of whether it was in standard Arabic or vernacular form), including for correct answers which had grammatical and spelling mistakes, as long as these mistakes did not interfere with the meaning. Correct answers, therefore, received (1) mark and others that were considered wrong received (0) mark.

In Part 2, the second reading section, answers were marked as either right or wrong. Correct answers received (1) mark, and (0) marks for wrong answers. As in the first part, grammatical and spelling mistakes in this section were not penalised, unless comprehension was impeded.

#### **4.5.4.5 Piloting**

The test was piloted using the same item types, but with a larger number of items, to allow selection of only the most suitable for the final version. Three postgraduate native speakers of Arabic took the test. Based on their performance and remarks, any confusing or difficult items and instructions were either modified or removed. This happened in two instances: for example, *I used my computer to store the information*. This item was removed as the researcher believed that it would not reflect the pupils' knowledge sufficiently, as the word computer كميوتر is used by Arab speakers despite the existence of an equivalent word in *Fusha*.

Pupils with similar profiles to the research participants also took the test. These were from the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> grade at an Arabic complementary school in Sheffield, who had similar backgrounds and abilities to the research participants. After taking the test, the pilot test takers were asked to complete a questionnaire to evaluate the clarity of the instructions as well as the difficulty of the different items. The students' feedback was taken into consideration when developing the final version of the test. Altogether, 13 items were removed as a result of the pupils' feedback; for example, some of the words, especially names of professions, seemed to be less used by pupils in Arabic, such as electrician and architect, as a considerable percentage of the pupils in the pilot study reported that they could not think of an equivalent in Arabic, therefore, those sentences which included professions were removed.



#### **4.5.4.6 Administration**

The test was administered in the presence of the class teachers. Candidates were informed orally about the test's two parts, and then a couple of minutes were given for them to ask questions. The instructions were also explained orally by the researcher, as well as being written in English on the test paper. The first item in each part was completed for the test subjects, as an example, in order to "facilitate test taking" (see Bachman and Palmer, 1996: 183).

#### **Analysis of scores**

After the participants completed the test, the researcher marked the papers. A significance test was conducted using (SPSS) to investigate any significant difference in the mean scores between the two parts of the test, and between Leeds and Ealing participants.

It is worth adding here that the Leeds school teachers did not seem very interested in finding out about the test scores, while the Ealing teachers did express an interest in the scores and in discussing the results with the researcher.

#### **4.6. Reflexivity and the Researcher as Research Instrument**

Reflexivity has been described as "self-critical sympathetic introspection and the self-conscious analytical scrutiny of the self as researcher" (England 1994:244). Field notes were consulted in the current research to cast a light on the reflexivity of the researcher's role (see also Blackledge and Creese, 2010). In qualitative interpretive research the role and influence of the researcher is very important, as they can be said to function as a research instrument, in that the voices of research participants (i.e. children and adults in the current research) are inevitably filtered through the researcher who layers her own interpretations onto the participants' voices. The researcher, in short, is

unable to escape being part of the scene while at the same time observing it, and her very presence may, to some extent, influence the behaviours observed (Blommaert 2006; Hamersley and Atkinson 1983). For this reason, it is important to consider, and discuss explicitly, how interpretations may be influenced by the researcher's individual history, beliefs, values and gender. These are discussed below.

#### **4.6.1 The Researcher**

I am a 30 year old female and I completed my BA degree in English Language and Literature in Syria in 2007. I am a bilingual speaker of Arabic and English and interested in the linguistic behaviour of bilingual Arab children in migrant countries, these children's engagement with the Arab culture, the way they perceive themselves, and the factors that influence their identities.

I started my MA in Applied Linguistics in the UK in 2008. As part of my MA degree, I investigated the language use, attitudes and identities of various Arab families in Sheffield. This motivated me to expand the research into a deeper and more systematic study, and to investigate language practices and language shift and maintenance within two Arab communities in two separated areas.

Several factors helped me to communicate effectively with the participants in this study. For example, being of the same ethnic group (Arab) as the research participants, as well as having good Standard Arabic skills and being able to understand and speak the Syrian dialect and other Arabic dialects, in addition to speaking English fluently, all facilitated the research. The importance of the researcher's linguistic background in communities such as the Arab community was confirmed by Hamid (2011) after investigating the Sylheti Bangladeshis in Leeds. The researcher (Hamid, 2011:172) "concluded that linguistic proficiency of the fieldworker is a prerequisite for research in

communities which have belief systems about their language and have regional languages (e.g. Sylheti) and dialects in their repertoire”

The researcher’s gender may be important in conducting social research (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983:84), and this is especially true in terms of conducting the current research. Being a Muslim female researcher may have helped me in this research, as it assisted me in gaining access to the homes of some families, many of whom can be regarded as strict Muslim families, who might therefore not have been as willing to cooperate with a male researcher carrying out the same work. Moreover, being a researcher and also an insider who spoke the same languages and had a similar ethnic/religious background also helped me communicate directly and more naturally with participants of all ages, without a translator, noting down observations, and at the same time interpreting participants’ linguistic behaviours and attitudes in a systematic and objective way (see Hamid, 2011).

#### **4.6.2 Issues of power**

In the present thesis, power is looked at in terms of social distance, distance in authority and differences in perceived status, both within the subject community and outside.

On the one hand, it is argued that the researcher gaining access to a target community might create an unequal relationship because she or he will bring to the setting education a sense of the outside and their own agenda, while the people who are being studied are not in a position to change anything (see Le Compte and Preissle, 2008:99). According to England (1994: 249), “Fieldwork is inherently confrontational in that it is the purposeful disruption of other people’s lives”. Therefore, it was important to create an equal status, i.e. reciprocal respect and trust, between myself, as a researcher, and the participants in the current study. As the researcher had status of both insider and

outsider (see 4.5.1), it would be possible to assume an advocate position (see Le Compte and Preissle 2008:97), but this was not the case in the current research. The position of the researcher was not to advocate the participants' attitudes or to campaign in any sense, nor adopt a critical approach, but to observe, learn and empathise, and also to respect and look after the participants' contributions to the research. My main aim was to deliver and convey the behaviour and attitudes of the community investigated as observed by me, the researcher, and described by its members (see also England 1994).

I adopted an outsider perspective in examining the aspects under investigation, i.e. with an objective, and non-partisan attitude. At the same time, I looked at these aspects from the participants' points of view, i.e. with an insider's perspective (see Cameron et al, 1994, and Le Compte and Preissle, 2008).

The participants in the current research were empowered to a certain extent, as defined by Cameron et al. (1994:22) thus: "research on, for and with [them]". This was achieved, first, by using interactive methods such as semi-structured interviews; secondly, although this research, as with any research, had its own agenda and issues which I wanted to focus on, I listened respectfully and encouraged participants to elaborate and raise their own points: for instance, on the influence of the teaching methods used at complementary schools on participants' attitudes to the language. Thirdly, I was ready to share the results of my research and the data available with schools and parents, such as the results of the Arabic test (see 4.5.4.7).

On the other hand, it is also argued that participants are central and therefore they have considerable power in the research project, as they are "active in accepting, rejecting or modifying the researcher's identity claims" (Harrington, 2003:617). In other words, they can guarantee the researcher's access to the research site and therefore ensure that

they can successfully collect the data needed. Regarding this, I adopted a stance of supplication through which my participants recognised that they were the experts in the research field, and the key sources for understanding and investigating the areas under investigation (see England 1994). I also attempted to create mutual confidence, trust and reciprocity, as detailed below.

First of all, parents occupy the most powerful position in this research, as they had the ability to cancel their interviews as well as their children's. However, I tried to gain their confidence by explaining my educational background and the aims of the research, assuring the parents of full confidentiality, explaining the importance of the issue investigated in influencing the sociolinguistic futures of Arab bilingual children.

Secondly, with teachers, I reduced the social-professional distance gap after spending time at the schools observing in classes and at break times and teaching in some classes. After a period, most teachers became used to my appearance in their schools, and interested in knowing more about my experience as an Arab student in the UK. They were very curious about my life, research, study and family, and I was happy to answer openly, as I believed this would help in building a confidential relationship with them.

Finally, during the first two weeks in each school, I tried to be a passive observer in classes and not a teacher. By doing this, I attempted to gain the confidence of the students. Moreover, I told the students, when I was asked informally about my title at their schools, that I was a student like them, who had to complete a research project/study in order to pass her exams. I also asked them to use my name when addressing me and not 'khale' (aunt in Arabic) or 'teacher', like other staff members. Moreover, I did not demand that they should use Arabic while addressing me as they were asked and reminded continuously by the staff in both schools, i.e. I was available

to answer them regardless of the language used, which contributed to starting a friendly relationship and building personal trust with these students. It also allowed me to investigate their linguistic behaviour when they naturally communicated among each other, as well as with me.

In order to investigate their natural linguistic behaviour, I assured students that their linguistic behaviour, whether they speak Arabic all the time or not, would not be reported to the head-teacher or parents. However, and similar to other research experiences (see Jonsson, 2012), it is critical to evaluate how participants' language behaviour and attitudes were influenced by my appearance at the research sites. Moreover, students undertaking the questionnaires and interview participants were repeatedly assured that their answers would be kept confidential, and neither the school nor parents would have access to the answers.

#### **4.6.3 Addressing issues of subjectivity and reliability**

It is a feature of the current research and similar qualitative research that the researcher is central, as she is both data collector and data analyst. In certain respects, this factor may influence the reliability and objectivity of the results. This, however, cannot be avoided as the researcher is unable to escape being part of the scene, while observing it. Accordingly, her/his presence to some extent may influence natural behaviour in the field (Blommaert, 2006; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983). The problem of reliability emerges from the impossibility of repeating the research to confirm the results, the uncertainty of the subjects as real representatives of their population, as well as the presence of the researcher at the research site (McNeill, 1990:83). However, there is an inherent variability and uniqueness to this research being conducted in this way in a specific community at a specific time.

To reduce the subjectivity and increase reliability, as well as to gain a deeper understanding of the areas investigated, triangulation was used in this study. Dornyei (2007:61) defines triangulation as “using multiple methods, sources or perspectives in a research project” and as “an effective strategy to ensure research validity” (ibid: 165).

Methodological triangulation (See Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011) is used in this research to capture the attitudes and the linguistic behaviour of the participants from various angles, in order to compare the data from the different sources, thereby reducing the danger of inadequate data being produced by the use of a single method (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983). The multiple sources of data also increase confidence that the data are reliable, and narrow the influence of the researcher’s perspective (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011).

Social studies have been assumed to be biased, which could include the conditions in which the research is conducted, the interests and the pressure of the powerful group in the particular context, as well as the actual behaviour of the researcher, such as adopting one side of the investigated point or sympathising with a number of participants because of social, personal or political background. As mentioned above, the researcher is the central tool in collecting data; moreover, he/she is a human being with feelings, preferences, attitudes and life experiences which may play a role in framing his or her observation or analysing the available data at a later stage (Stanley and Wise, 1993, 157).

The risk of bias in the current study is mitigated by the use of multiple data gathering instruments and by the necessity to triangulate these methods, as triangulation “also assists in correcting biases that occur when the ethnographer is the only observer of the phenomenon under investigation” (LeCompte and Preissle, 2008:48).

In this study, the focus on ‘production of knowledge’ without any expected results or conclusions was adopted as the key to minimizing bias. According to Hammersley (2000:164), “it follows from this that one form of systematic error can be motivated by the pursuit of other goals than knowledge; since they may lead to the collection, analysis and/or presentation of evidence in such a way as to bolster a predetermined conclusion related to those goals”.

Following Hammersley (2000), I also attempted to exclude my emotional, personal and social characteristics and to conduct the research and analyse the results as an individual who does not belong to the community. In general, individuals tend to have their own opinions and preferences but I tried to be neutral and avoid bias at all stages of my research. The reader is provided with access to representative samples of data sets (see Appendices) so that they can check the interpretations, if needed.

#### **4.7 Ethical issues**

Ethical issues were an important consideration in both collecting and analysing data, as there is always a need to respect participants’ rights and privacy in any study. I followed Dornyei’s advice on ethical issues:

- “We must make sure that we do not promise a higher degree of confidentiality than what we can achieve, and the guarantees of confidentiality are carried out fully.
- The right to confidentiality should always be respected when no clear understanding to the contrary has been reached.
- We must make sure – especially with recorded/transcribed data - that the respondents are not traceable or identifiable.”(Dornyei 2007:68)



This study is also sensitive, as it involves children aged less than 18 years old. Therefore, the security and confidentiality of personal data had to be protected, and approval from ethical reviewers at the University of Sheffield obtained. Before starting the data collection, informed consent was obtained from the subjects and ethics approval granted by the University of Sheffield Ethics Committee. The purpose of the research, and the nature of the participants' involvement, was stated on the Participant Information sheet given to the participants before they signed the consent forms. Consent forms were signed and a copy was given to the researcher by hand. Participants were informed about, and agreed to, the use of tape recorders.

Participants were also assured that all recorded data would be saved on the researcher's personal devices, accessed only by her and would only be used for academic purposes, with the anonymity of the participants assured. To ensure the anonymity of participants, no real names were mentioned in the data analysis or transcripts. Participants were also reassured and reminded of their right to withdraw from the research. They also had the chance to discuss matters of concern with the researcher.

#### **4.8 Conclusion**

This chapter has explained the study's design and the main methods of data collection. The current research comprises two linked case studies using multiple methods of data collection: observation, field notes, questionnaires, interviews, and language proficiency tests. Each data collection method has been explained in detail, along with the reasons for employing it. The drawbacks of each particular method were also discussed. The chapter also explained the selection of subjects, and discussed the ethical issues involved. The findings are described in the next chapter, preceded by a description of the research sites and of the families who were interviewed.

## **Chapter 5: Findings and Discussion**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to present the findings from the data collected using questionnaires, interviews, participant observation, language tests and field notes. The chapter also discusses the context of the study and backgrounds of all families interviewed. Using the questionnaire results to structure my discussion, I present evidence to challenge or support the self-reports through observation and interview data.

The structure of the chapter is as follows: 5.2 presents a description of the research sites and research participants; 5.3 examines language use at both research sites, as well as in various domains and with various interlocutors, 5.4 discusses the media followed by participants at home and the impact it has on language use, attitude and maintenance among the Arab communities in Britain; 5.5 investigates Arabic proficiency levels at each research site, through pupils' self-reported ability and their actual test performance alongside a section which includes English proficiency, as reported by pupils; 5.6 explores attitudes towards the Arabic language in both its formal and spoken dialect; 5.7 discusses the influence of religious observance on language behaviour and identity practices; 5.8 summaries pupils' attitudes to learning Arabic in a formal setting, away from the home (complementary school), with an analysis of pupils' and parents' opinions and comments; and finally 5.9 summaries and discusses the key findings. The following section provides a detailed description of the two research sites.

### **5.2 Background profile of research sites and pupil participants**

#### **5.2.1 Description of research sites**

I provide a description of the linguistic makeup of the complementary school as a site for the investigation of complex linguistic practices, attitudes, and identities, and the

reason why this description is useful specifically is that we can witness complex interactions in these speech communities, as participants operate in: English (the mainstream language), standard Arabic of *Fusha*, which is the target language of class teaching and text books, and also the regional dialects of Arabic. In fact, at both sites I observed that, although teaching focused on *Fusha*, there was a place for regional dialects because of the children's familiarity with it, due to their family background.

In what follows, it is clear that when the children talk about speaking Arabic, they mean using their regional dialects, which agrees with Bassiouny's perspective (2009).

## 1. The Leeds complementary school

### a) Location and history of the school

The school is located in the hired premises of a mainstream school next to a large mosque in an economically disadvantaged area in Leeds. It runs each Sunday from 9:30am to 4:30pm and teaches 8 classes, up to A' level. In addition there is a class for teaching Arabic to pupils from Muslim non-Arab families, such as pupils from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India. At the time of the study, nearly 130 pupils were enrolled in the school, aged between 5 and 16 years old. The school held its classes in the hired premises of a mainstream school.

### b) School management and aims

The head teacher is a woman in her late fifties with no teaching qualifications, but a long history of charitable volunteering within Islamic institutions in the UK. She founded the school in 1993. She may be described as a firm leader who enforced strict rules regarding discipline, lateness and lesson plans. In her interviews, she explained that managing the school had previously been easier, when the premises were provided

by the government for free; whilst in the period in which the research took place, the school had to pay £250 per week to rent the premises. This additional financial burden, besides the expense of insurance and police checks (CRB), had forced the school to hold its classes on Sundays only, whereas it had previously operated twice a week, on Friday and Sunday.

Although the school was not a religious foundation, its Islamic ethos cannot be ignored. This was manifested in language lessons with a religious content; for example, reading Islamic stories, history and the Qur'an. The school day started with a reading of the first text of the Qur'an (*Fateha*) by all pupils, before they entered classes. In addition, the Leeds school teachers, who were all women, covered their hair with the Islamic headscarf (*hijab*) while working at the school.

One teacher, who did not wear a headscarf outside of school but who did in school, when asked if this was her choice, answered: "Not really, but I feel I have to put on the *hijab* inside the school".

She added that this requirement was not directly stated but conveyed through many hints from the head teacher. The most common comments, as the teacher claimed, were, for example, "We serve as role models for our Muslim girls", or "You look so pretty with the *hijab*". Eventually, she decided to wear it inside the school to avoid these "annoying hints" as she described them. The Islamic orientation was also evident with the insistence that pupils pray during school time, sometimes in the middle of a lesson. This orientation was approved by the head teacher, who said that one of the main aims of the school was to serve "the Islamic community"; however, there was no mention of Islam in the name of the school. The head teacher wished to avoid mention of Islam, since, she said, British people viewed Islam as indexing terrorism: "*Yea, true... for me*

*why did I call it Leeds Arabic School, because in the west, the attitudes towards anything "Islamic" will not pass without linking it to terrorism".*

The head teacher stated that the school's main focus was language, but she also stated that ethics and religion were also key components of their curriculum, as follows: *"The main thing is Arabic, mother tongue. However, we also teach pupils ethics and their religion"*.

Here, the head teacher seems to have assumed that all the pupils were Muslim, overlooking the possibility that some pupils might be Christian Arabs. The pupils were often reminded that they were Muslims and that they should behave as good Muslims. This religious ethos was confirmed in my field notes at (13<sup>th</sup> Nov.12):

*"The religious factor appears as a substantial one in the schools' daily activities; class activities, teacher-student relationships, the reason behind learning Arabic..."*

The school is also described in the field notes as:

*"A strict school, teachers wear head-scarves. Most probably if I had to work here, I would cover my hair.... Although the school is a mixed school, girls and boys are conservative. Most of the girls cover their hair regardless of their age, which could be as young as 6 years old."*

Running costs were covered by the students' annual fees, with no donations, grants nor financial support provided either by the community or the council. The expenses included rent, insurance, CRB checks, stationery and £30 paid weekly for each member of staff to cover travel and food expenses.

No links were reported with the mainstream school and the head teacher described the relationship between the two schools thus: “*We are tenants at the mainstream school, nothing more*”.

### c) Curriculum and teaching methods

The textbooks used in the school had been imported from Jordan and Saudi Arabia. Books for teaching Arabic grammar and reading were from Jordan, while the Islamic history and Qur’anic studies books were from Saudi Arabia. The head teacher stated that she was not fully satisfied with the curriculum. However, given the lack of finance and the availability of books, this curriculum was considered the best option at that time. The focus of the textbooks is *Fusha*, and the main focus of the school was on teaching *Fusha*. Nonetheless, both varieties of Arabic were used in classrooms: *Fusha* and the teachers’ vernacular dialects, such Iraqi or Syrian Arabic.

Pupils were grouped according to their ages, with no entry tests to determine their levels. Instead, the class teacher met the child and evaluated her/his level, and if she later decided that the pupil was not in the correct class, she reported this to the head teacher. However, the school tried to keep pupils from the same age groups together, even though this meant various levels of ability in the same class.

Observation indicated that the methods used in class were traditional, teacher-centred and non-interactive, and it seems that few of the teaching strategies used in mainstream schools were employed in the Leeds complementary school. For example, I did not observe any group work or use of electronic resources, such as interactive boards or computers.

#### d) Teaching staff

The school employed nine teachers, aged between 30 and 55 years old, all born outside the UK. The majority were from Iraq, others from Syria and Sudan. The main reason for the teachers' migration to the UK was the unstable situation in their countries of origin. However, a few had come to the UK because their husbands had accepted a university or job offer in the UK. All the teachers were married and not in regular employment, with the exception of a Sudanese teacher who worked as a GCSE teacher at a mainstream school. Observation in the classes and during breaks suggested that the teachers' levels of English appeared to be limited. Only three or four of the nine teachers were good English speakers, which meant that Arabic was the dominant language used by teachers in most of the classes.

The exceptions were the head teacher, who spoke very good English, and three other teachers, one pursuing a master's degree at the University of Leeds and two others, one being a GCSE teacher in mainstream schools.

This lack of English proficiency led to incidents where teachers became angry with pupils using English which they could not fully understand. At the same time, it was difficult for some pupils, whose Arabic levels were poor to communicate exclusively in Arabic in class.

Recruitment of teachers was usually conducted by word of mouth. There was, however, a training period, and if the head teacher was pleased with the trainees' teaching attitude and behaviour, they became part of the teaching staff. None of the teachers held UK teaching qualifications, although some had teaching qualifications from their original countries. While talking with the teachers, a few stated that they were not convinced of the benefits of UK courses and qualifications, explaining that they were very good

teachers in their original countries. Consequently, they could not see why it was important to have a PGCE or other teaching qualification.

## 2. The Ealing complementary School

### a) Location and history of the school

Like the Leeds school, the Ealing school operated at the weekend, every Saturday, from 10 am until 1 pm, or until 2 pm for pupils who attended additional religious classes. There were nearly 200 pupils at the school at the time of the study, and 12 different classes, from reception up to A' level. These classes took place in hired mainstream school premises in a middle class area of Ealing Broadway, London. The school was one of three that had emerged from the Arabic Club in 1985, a charity foundation established by Arab migrants, mainly Lebanese and Syrians, to maintain Arabs' cultural heritage and organise cultural events for the Arab community in London. The other two schools were located in Wimbledon and Westminster.

### b) School management and aims

The head teacher at the time of writing, who used to be a teacher at the school and had been running the school for five years at the time that this research was carried out, was an Egyptian PhD graduate in his late fifties who worked as an Arabic teacher at King Fahd Academy, London. The other member of the management team was a secretary who dealt with administrative matters together with the registration and enrolment of new pupils. The school was described by the head teacher as a secular school that taught the Arabic language and culture without any strong religious influence. Nonetheless, there was an hour at the end of the school day when Islamic studies were taught, for pupils who wished to attend. The school's registration showed that half of the pupils



chose not to take part in the religious hour. It was observed that fewer pupils and teachers wore the hijab compared to the Leeds School. To safeguard the secular ethos of the school, the management had declared that pupils were not allowed to pray during class times, and teachers were not allowed to introduce religious quotes into their lessons. Unlike the situation in Leeds, religion was not referenced for either encouraging or threatening pupils to behave better. As the head teacher said:

“I was careful from the very beginning to clarify to the teaching staff that we are an Arabic language school, and the Arabic language, just like any other language, has nothing to do with religion, because, as I told you earlier, we have some pupils who are not Muslims.”

The school’s policy, as stated by the head teacher, was based on encouraging the pupils to participate in and be part of all large events in London, such as the 2012 London Olympic Games. For this particular event, the 5th and 6th grade pupils watched documentaries and were asked to design projects around the topic.

The school encouraged pupils’ integration into UK society, and recognised pupils as living in two cultures and as having a mixed identity, as reflected in the school’s activities. For example, two trips took place whilst I was observing at the school, the first to the Houses of Parliament, and the second to attend a Shakespeare play, performed in Arabic by a Palestinian group. The teacher who suggested these trips commented as follows,

“Yes, we want them to go to the Parliament; we want them to see where they make all the decisions, and what is more important is that we want them to feel that they are part of these decisions and can participate and help in changing them in the future”.

Regarding attendance at the Shakespeare play, the same teacher said:

“Let them see the great British culture in Arabic, let them know that the language we teach them here can be connected to this culture and can also communicate with it”.

The main source of income was pupil fees, with no donations received from other sources. The fees were nearly £300 per year and when the head teacher was asked whether he thought this was expensive compared to other schools, he said:

“This is not just charity work, it is also a business. Parents who bring their children to this school should agree that they are receiving a service and they have to pay for it”.

The school’s expenses covered the rent of the school premises, books, stationery, and paying the teachers £50 each for working from 10 am until 1 pm. This was much higher than the rate paid at the Leeds School (£30, albeit for fewer hours).

Paying a reasonable wage to the teachers was perceived by the head teacher as motivation for them to work harder. As in the Leeds school, there was no link with the mainstream school from which the Arabic school rented the premises. Nonetheless, contact might occur if the complementary school faced behavioural problems with any of the pupils. In this case, communication would be made with the mainstream school to discuss the issue. Much of the time this contact occurred through the parents, as explained by the head teacher. Contact could also occur when ‘A’ level exams were approaching, in order to agree on locations for sitting the exams and for completing the necessary administrative paperwork.

As in the Leeds school, Ealing pupils were grouped in their classes according to age, with no placement tests administered on first registration. Instead, the headteacher arranged a short, individual interview with new pupils to evaluate their level informally.

However, it was rare to see a class with a range of age differences, although there were often classes with a range of ability differences.

### c) Curriculum and teaching methods

The curriculum appeared to reflect the policy of the school in that it was directed at Arabs as L2 learners of the language, being free from religious or ethnic overtones. The curriculum used was Canadian, designed for Arab ethnic minorities in the diaspora, and covered teaching of the Arabic language and grammar. In most classes, two books were used; mainly one for reading and one for writing, while in others it was only one book for reading and writing and in one class the teacher developed her own materials for teaching Arabic. There was a noticeable difference between this curriculum and the one used in Leeds. Potential reasons for this could be related to the financial situation of each school, since the curriculum used in the Ealing school was more expensive or due to the teaching orientation of the school, as the Leeds school wanted to deliver the Arabic language, as well as Islamic teaching and history through the curriculum, which was not the orientation in the Ealing school.

In contrast to the Leeds school, the teaching strategies used at Ealing were somewhat similar to teaching methods used in mainstream schools. For example, there were group activities and pupils had opportunities to express their opinions in class about lessons and teaching methods. There was also a sports' day at the end of term. In addition, as many teachers stated either in informal conversation or through interviews, the head teacher encouraged them to use computers and interactive boards in their lessons. Although some teachers were not familiar with these facilities, colleagues taught them how to use these resources. The management justified this, saying this was useful

because many pupils liked this technology. In addition, the head teacher talked extensively about the reasons behind applying these teaching methods in classrooms:

“We do not want our pupils to look at this place as a sad and inferior place. We are all trying our best to make it equal to their mainstream school”.

#### d) Teaching Staff

The school employed 12 teachers, two males and ten females. Teachers' ages spanned a wide range, from 25 to 55 years old. They were all born outside the UK, coming from a range of Arab countries, such as Palestine, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon. Candidates who were willing to work at the school were required to have, as a minimum, a university degree, although this did not have to be in a specific academic discipline. However, the head teacher claimed that a number of the teachers at the school were qualified to teach in the UK, with others having qualifications and experience from their original countries. However, he declined to give the exact number, possibly because the level of qualification was a sensitive issue. Looking at the qualifications required at both schools, it seems that higher qualifications were demanded at the Ealing school, compared to the Leeds school. At the Ealing school, most of the teachers did not have permanent jobs during the week, although two ran 'after-school' Arabic classes in their local mainstream schools. Unlike the Leeds school, and in addition to the classroom teacher, each Ealing class had a teaching assistant who helped the teacher manage the different levels of ability within the class. There were no minimum requirements for classroom assistants working at the school, except for the legal requirement of a CRB check.

As in the Leeds school, most staff recruitment at the Ealing School appeared to have been done through personal contacts, and rarely through formal advertisements. The

head teacher interviewed the candidates informally and, if they were accepted, they were observed in a few classes before being given responsibility for their own class.

Observation suggests Ealing school teachers were less strict than their counterparts in the Leeds school. Inside the classroom, a significant amount of teacher-student interaction took place in both Arabic and English, which pupils were permitted to use in order to express and deliver their ideas with ease. The head teacher stated that the school believed that learning the mother tongue and culture could not take place through coercion: pupils had to love the language and their complementary school teachers, and be motivated to learn.

The main differences between the two schools are delineated below:

1. There was a more secular ethos and curriculum at the Ealing compared to the Leeds School.
2. The curriculum at the Ealing school was designed for Arabic L2 learners, while it was designed for Arabs in their original countries at the Leeds school.
3. Teachers at the Ealing school tended to have higher qualifications than at the Leeds school.
4. There was more stress on using Arabic at the Leeds rather than the Ealing school; in the Leeds school, teachers spoke Arabic most of the time in classes, but in the Ealing school, the teacher had more freedom to use whichever language she/he thought best for delivering particular lesson content, whilst giving Arabic priority.

Before analysing the results, a brief description of the families interviewed is presented below. The description includes information derived from home visits, interviews and

observation of the families' socio-economic status, their religious observance and language use within the home environment.

### **Profile of families**

#### **Description of the Leeds families**

##### Family 1: Dalal's family

The father of this family came from Palestine in 1990 to pursue his undergraduate degree in pharmacy, his wife followed in 1994. The family at the time of the study consisted of five members: the parents and three daughters (11, 9 and 2 years old). The father was doing his PhD and worked in one of the Leeds hospitals. The mother was a Masters graduate from Leeds University, and a housewife at the time of this research.

The researcher visited the family twice at their home. The family's financial situation was described, by the mother, as very good. The mother said that the family visited Palestine nearly every year and always invited members of their family to stay with them in Britain. The mother stated that, although the family lived in an English dominated area in Leeds, they made sure they socialised with "Muslim friends", especially through mosque activities. However, she said that the daughters were allowed to socialise with their British school friends, as long as they (the daughters) knew "*they were different, and had their own rules*".

As observed by the researcher and stated by the mother, religion occupied a very important position in this family. The mother, who wore a *hijab*, said it was vital for her and the father that their daughters maintained their religion. From the book case in the living room, an observer could notice that most of the Arabic books had a religious orientation. While I was interviewing the mother, the eldest daughter (11 years old) came in to take the Qur'an from which, her mother said, she read parts every day, prior to bedtime.

Observation suggests that the mother used vernacular Arabic most of or all the time at home with the children. Talk related to their mainstream school's homework was also carried out in vernacular Arabic. The children spoke vernacular Arabic with their mother, and each other. One possible reason for their extensive use of Arabic is the mother's insistence, as observed by the researcher. For instance, during the interview, the mother regularly reminded her daughters to use Arabic, although they were sitting and chatting in a different room.

The daughters went to the mosque every week to learn religion and socialise with friends, and if the mother could not take them, her friend did this instead.

#### Family 2: **Rasheed's family**

This was a Lebanese-Palestinian family originating from refugee camps in Lebanon. The father came to the UK in 1999 to pursue his studies as an engineer, and his wife, who was a university history graduate, followed him a few months later. The three boys (12, 9, and 3 years old) were born in the UK. The father works, as an engineer, in a car company and the mother was a housewife.

The interviews took place in the family's house in Leeds. The researcher had lunch with the family, spending more than 5 hours at their house in total.

The family described their economic status as comfortable. They visited Arab countries nearly every year, such as Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and the United Arab Emirates, as their extended family was in Lebanon, Syria and other Arab countries.

The family members reported that they were practicing Muslims, praying 5 times a day, as observation affirmed. The eldest son said that he had asked the school to assign a room where he could pray. The family visited the mosque approximately every two weeks. The mother, who wore a *hijab*, said that religion was the most important 'treasure' to maintain in the UK, followed by language; and the family said that they

socialised exclusively with Muslim friends, regardless of their first language or ethnicity. The parents added that Arabs who were not religiously observant might have a negative influence on their children.

The parents reported that they used only vernacular Arabic with each other, while the boys used a mixture of English and vernacular Arabic with each other and more vernacular Arabic with their parents. It was also observed that the boys used more English, and a mixed language (English and vernacular Arabic) more with their father than their mother.

While interviewing their parents, the children participated and used Arabic even with the researcher. However, Rasheed preferred to shift to English when he was interviewed alone.

In addition, the language used with the children was mainly Levantine Arabic, and the parents, especially the mother, kept reminding them to use it. One observation in this family's house was that Arabic TV channels were on for most of the time during my visit.

### Family 3: **Nadia's family**

This was an Algerian family with four members; the mother, who had a high school education; the father, who was a dentist; a boy (15 years old); and a girl (10 years old). The family migrated to the UK in 1988, and the two children were born here. The interview took place in the family's house, on the outskirts of Leeds. The researcher visited the family twice and spent at least two and a half hours there on each occasion.

The family seldom visited Algeria. The mother reported that her daughter communicated with her extended family via the Internet, using vernacular Arabic.

The family could be described as a strict Muslim family. The mother, who wore a *hijab*, claimed that she preferred religious TV channels along with some news channels, as



that would help her raise her children to be good Muslims. The family visited the mosque at least twice a week. The mother said that the mosque had a useful role in teaching her daughter Arabic. She sent her there when she was three years old to learn the language and Islam. She complained that the complementary school did not employ enough religious resources to teach Arabic, and that she liked her daughter to engage with practicing Muslim families rather than secular Arab families. Observation inside the house supports the family's high level of religious observance. For instance, the house was full of religious symbols (decorations and paintings), and the mother was always citing examples from the Qur'an and Islamic stories to support her points in any discussion. The mother also kept reminding her daughter to pray. The mother described their economic situation as comfortable.

The languages spoken at home were vernacular Arabic and French, but the mother said she spoke vernacular Arabic with the children. During observation time, the mother spoke Maghrebi Arabic with her children, and they replied in Maghrebi Arabic mixed with French words. It was observed that the mother's English was not very proficient, which could be one reason for the extensive use of Arabic.

#### Family 4: **Dina's family**

The father left Syria for the UK in 1990, where he met his wife. He was a Syrian doctor; and the mother, of Iraqi origin, was a teacher in the Leeds complementary school. The mother was a business graduate from an Iraqi university.

Interviews were held in the family's house. The researcher visited the house three times, spending at least three hours on each visit. The house had many religious decorations on the walls and side tables.

The family consisted of five members (two girls, aged 11 and 2 years old; and a boy aged 10 years old). The mother described the family's economic situation as comfortable.

The family was religiously observant, visiting the mosque every week, in addition to attending religious lessons every two weeks. The mother and the 11 year old girl both wore *hijabs*. The mother was conservative with regard to her daughter's behaviour, commenting on how a good Muslim girl should talk and walk. She stated that the children read the Qur'an every day and understood that the language of the Qur'an (Arabic) was part of their religion and their identity as Muslims. The mother also reported that her 11 year old daughter and her son prayed five times a day, as required.

The mother added that the family did not visit either Iraq or Syria because of the political situation, but they had been to the United Arab Emirates, where they had a large number of relatives.

During the researcher's visits the languages spoken inside the house were both English and vernacular Arabic, with the mother speaking more in vernacular Arabic than the father. The daughter spoke Arabic with the researcher and asked her about Syria and life there. However, when the interview began, she chose to use English saying this was the "easy" language, as she described it.

### **Description of the Ealing families**

#### **Family 1: Rida's family**

This was an Iraqi heritage family with 4 members. The parents are both working doctors in the UK. The boy (11 years old) and the girl (10 years old), who were born in the UK, were students at the Arabic complementary school and went every weekend. The parents left Iraq for the UK in 1991 to pursue their studies, then found jobs and settled in the UK.

The mother described the economic situation of the family as very comfortable.

The interview with the mother took a place in a local café, and with the boy in the family's house where the researcher spent about four hours, having been invited to eat with the family.

During the visit, the TV was not on, and the children were playing with electronic equipment, including a computer and an iPad. The house was decorated with minimal religious symbols, such as a painting on the wall with the name of "*Allah*". The mother reported that she received this painting as a gift from her sister who lived in Jordan.

The mother described the family as 'very secular, with no place for extreme religion'. Neither the mother nor the daughter wore a *hijab*, and the family did not visit the mosque. The mother said she liked the school because they did not focus much on religion. That had been a problem for her with other schools, where her children were bullied by their friends because they practiced their religion less than their peers. During the visits, none of family excused themselves to pray.

The family did not visit Iraq often and the children had never been there. Instead, they visited other Arab countries, such as Lebanon and Syria, but not very often, as most of their close relatives were in the UK at this time. The mother reported that children used mostly English with their relatives in the UK, except for their grandmother, who does not speak much English.

The mother commented that learning Arabic was very important for the parents in this family. However, the family did not use Arabic regularly at home, which the observation supported. The parents sometimes spoke in vernacular Arabic, and the children replied in English, and at other times the parents spoke to the children in English. Nonetheless, during visits to their home, the parents used mostly Iraqi Arabic with each other.

## Family 2: **Tarek's family**

At the time of the study, this family of Egyptian heritage consisted of four members; the parents, a boy (11 years old) and a girl (14 years old). The father had left for England approximately 15 years ago in 1999 to pursue a PhD degree at SOAS, a London university; then his wife followed him and the two children were born in the UK. The father worked as an Arabic teacher and the mother, who was a university graduate from Egypt, was now a housewife.

The interviews took place in the family's house where I had the opportunity to observe during two visits, each for at least two hours.

The two children went to the Arabic school in Ealing and the father said he was happy with the school, especially as it had a religious hour separate from the school's regular curriculum. The mother reported that she preferred this as she did not want anybody to teach her children religion, and did not like it when it was enforced as part of the curriculum.

The family visited Egypt at least once a year. However, political troubles in the country had recently reduced the frequency of these visits.

The father described the economic situation of the family as good.

Observation and interviews suggest that the family was moderately religious. They said they did not visit the mosque often. The father said he did not have time and he could follow his religious duties without going to the mosque. Moreover, the father declared that he did not distinguish between people on the basis of religion. The mother wore a *hijab*; however, the daughter did not.

During my visits, the parents mainly spoke vernacular Arabic with each other and while addressing the children. However, the children used English with each other, and a mixture of English and Egyptian Arabic with their parents. The parents watched mostly

Arabic news channels, while the children watched English channels. Each of the children has a TV in her/his room where they had only English channels and no access to Arabic channels.

### Family 3: **Lama's family**

The family consisted of five members at the time of the study: the parents, a boy and two girls. The boy was 16 years old, and the two girls 12 and 11. The parents had migrated from Palestine when they were very young. The mother had been in the UK since 1976 where she had taken her undergraduate degree, and met her husband. All the children were born in the UK.

The father, who did not live currently in the family's house, was an engineer who owned a restaurant in North London and the mother was a psychologist and translator who also taught at the Arabic school. The economic situation of the family was in the mother's words 'ok'. The interview with the mother was held in a local café in London, and with the family it took place in the family's house. I visited the home on 3 occasions, each time for at least 2 hours.

The mother described herself and her husband as secular individuals who wanted their children to be good Muslims but without any extremism or any pressure on the children to practice the religion. The mother emphasised this, saying that religion is more about "*daily life behaviour*" than praying and fasting. Moreover, neither the mother nor the daughters wore a *hijab*.

Observation indicated that the language used at home was mixed English and vernacular Arabic by the mother and mostly English by the children. The children, whose understanding of Arabic varied, replied to their parents in English and parents said that they did not force them to use Arabic.

The family did not visit Palestine very often because of the political problems there.

#### Family 4: **Hadi's family**

This family, who came to the UK in 1993, was of Jordanian origin. The father worked in the Jordanian embassy and the mother was a business graduate from a London university. At the time of data collection, the mother was a teacher at the Arabic school, in addition to working as a housewife. At the time of the study, the family consisted of four members: the parents and two children, a girl (16 years old), and a boy (9 years old).

The interview with the mother took place in a local café in Ealing Broadway, and her son was interviewed in their home, which allowed the researcher to observe in the family's home. The mother was a business graduate from Jordan. The mother reported that their economic status was very good.

Family members did not visit the mosque and said that religion had little influence on their social life. The mother, who did not wear the *hijab*, said that she did not want her children to be extreme Muslims, although she wanted them to know that their religion was Islam.

The mother reported that she and her husband used vernacular Arabic exclusively with each other. The children, however, used English intensively with each other. The parents mostly used Arabic with the children, who replied in English, except when they were reminded to speak in Arabic. I also observed the children only speaking English with each other.

In this family, the mother said there was extensive communication with the extended family in Jordan, via telephone and Skype, and when the children spoke with their family members, they mostly used Levantine Arabic with them.

## **Concluding summary**

To conclude, the families' profiles reveal that most of those interviewed in Leeds and Ealing shared similar professional and socio-economic backgrounds. However, they differed mainly in terms of the degree of their Islamic religious observance, with the Leeds families showing greater adherence to their faith.

### **5.2.3 Background: profile of pupil subjects**

The first 18 questions of the questionnaire focused on the subjects' background, including gender, place of birth, socio-economic status, visits to the country of origin and mosque attendance. These characteristics may have had an influence on the participants' language use and attitudes as well as their attitudes to learning Arabic in complementary school.

Table 5.1 below provides background data on the participants at the Leeds and Ealing schools.

**Table 5. 1: Child participant backgrounds**

		Leeds Subjects (N=38)	Ealing Subjects (N=37)
Gender	Female	23 (61%)	20 (54%)
	Male	15 (39%)	17 (46%)
Country of birth	UK	21 (55%)	25 (68%)
	Overseas	17 (45%)	12 (32%)
Does father work	Yes	36 (95%)	36 (97%)
	No	2 (5%)	1 (3%)
Type of Job	Professional/academic	25 (69%)	27 (73%)
	Not professional	5 (14%)	5 (13%)
	Do not know	6 (17%)	5 (14%)
Does mother work	Yes	20 (53%)	17 (46%)
	No	18 (47%)	20 (54%)
Type of Job	Professional/academic	14 (70%)	14 (82%)
	Not professional	4 (20%)	3 (18%)
	Do not know	2 (10%)	0 (0%)
When were you last in your home country	Less than 24 months ago	27 (90%)	20 (80%)
	More than 24 months ago	3 (10%)	5 (20%)
How often do you visit the mosque	Once a week	16 (42%)	11 (30%)
	Once a month	10 (27%)	5 (13%)
	Once every four months	10 (25%)	6 (16%)
	Never	2 (6%)	15 (41%)

The table shows that a slightly higher percentage of the Ealing child participants were born in the UK compared to their peers in the Leeds research site, with 32% born in countries such as Palestine, Morocco, Tunisia, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. 10% more of the Leeds respondents also claimed more regular visits to their countries of origin than their peers in Ealing. However, a considerable percentage of participants at both research sites claimed on-going relationships with their countries of origin by going there at least once every two years.

As indicated above, the socio-economic status of the families is relatively high. This agrees with Arab migrants social classes mentioned by Nagel (2005).

Nearly all the Leeds informants' fathers (95%) had a job, with 69% of those working in professional roles such as doctors, university lecturers or engineers, whilst 53% of mothers were also working, 70% in professional careers. As with the Leeds School,



97% of the Ealing pupil participants' fathers were employed, 73% of them had professional careers as doctors, university lecturers or engineers, and nearly 46% of the mothers were in employment, 82% in professional occupations. The high socio-economic status of subjects' families is further supported by interviews with the head teachers, and by the researcher's observation of pupil participants at the schools.

The table also reveals that the percentage of working mothers at both research sites was lower than working fathers, which may reflect the conservative nature of Arab society, in which women are not necessarily expected to engage in employment outside of their household duties.

One interesting point of difference was that fewer children at the Ealing site reported visiting the mosque than in the Leeds site. In fact, 42% of the Leeds children claimed that they went to the mosque at least once a week, and only 6% reported that they had never visited a mosque, compared to 41% of the Ealing respondents who said they had never been to a mosque. This points to a higher degree of religious observance among the Leeds research site children and adults, and it also supports that claim that respondents from Ealing tended to have a more secular background than the participants from the Leeds context. This offers scope for examining the link between religious affiliation and respondents' language use and attitude.

### **5.3 Patterns of language use**

#### **5.3.1 Language use at home with various interlocutors**

Information concerning language use with different interlocutors at home and in the two complementary schools has been derived from the pupil questionnaires, together with interviews with parents, teachers, and children at the two research sites.

Table 5.2 below shows responses on the topic of the language used by pupil participants with their parents at home.

**Table 5. 2: Language used with parents**

Language used with father						
		Always English	Usually English	English and Arabic equally	Usually Arabic	Always Arabic
Leeds (N=38)	Number of pupils	2	2	17	8	9
	Percentage of pupils	(5%)	(5%)	(45%)	(21%)	(24%)
Ealing (N=37)	Number of pupils	1	8	17	7	4
	Percentage of pupils	(3%)	(22%)	(45%)	(19%)	(11%)
Language used with mother						
Leeds (N=38)	Number of pupils	1	4	17	11	5
	Percentage of pupils	(3%)	(10%)	(45%)	(29%)	(13%)
Ealing (N=37)	Number of pupils	3	9	15	6	4
	Percentage of pupils	(8%)	(24%)	(41%)	(16%)	(11%)

Table 5.3 below reports the questionnaire responses on the language used by pupil participants with their siblings at home.

**Table 5. 3: Language used with siblings in Leeds and Ealing cohorts**

Language used with sisters						
		Always English	Usually English	English and Arabic equally	Usually Arabic	Always Arabic
Leeds (N=29)	Number of pupils	11	13	5	0	1
	Percentage of pupils	(37%)	(43%)	(17%)	(0%)	(3%)
Ealing (N=19)	Number of pupils	8	9	2	0	0
	Percentage of pupils	(42%)	(48%)	(10%)	(0%)	(0%)
Language used with brothers						
Leeds (N=22)	Number of pupils	5	11	5	0	1
	Percentage of pupils	(23%)	(50%)	(23%)	(0%)	(4%)
Ealing (N=25)	Number of pupils	11	8	5	1	0
	Percentage of pupils	(44%)	(32%)	(20%)	(4%)	(0%)

The questionnaire responses presented in Tables 5.2 and 5.3 indicate a marked difference in language use in the home domain, depending on the interlocutor's generation. In interactions with siblings, English is reported as easily the most common, most frequently used code, with comparatively little use of Arabic (3 or 4% in Leeds homes versus 0 or 4% in Ealing homes). Only one Leeds participant claimed to use Arabic always with her brother. This girl claimed that she always used English with her

sisters and brothers, except with her eldest brother, who had migrated to the UK recently.

In interaction with parents, on the other hand, the mass common reported usage was a mixture of Arabic and English (45% at Leeds and 41-45% at Ealing). It is unclear from the questionnaire data on its own what exactly respondents meant by a mixture of Arabic and English; whether, for example, this implies children answering in English to parents speaking to them in Arabic, or a more regular pattern of mixing both languages. What is clear, however, is that there appeared to be greater use of Arabic than English in interacting with parents. Even so, in Ealing 25 to 32% of respondents claimed to use mainly English with their parents.

Although English was used extensively at both schools, a slightly higher percentage from the Leeds school claimed to mix Arabic and English while communicating with their siblings than their Ealing peers. This difference between Leeds and Ealing in the respect may be attributed to the greater number of pupils in Ealing born in the UK, an indicator of increased length of UK residence.

The data obtained from interviews also suggests that Arabic was used more in the Leeds homes than the Ealing ones, and that there is a changing trend in language use across generations within the families. The parental generation reported the use of Arabic in most domains except work, whereas children reported the use of English in most domains, even with their siblings at homes (see Table 5.3). The interview data indicates that the tendency for most of the Leeds pupil subjects was to use Arabic with parents and English with siblings. Below, for example, are the comments of a 9 year old girl from the Leeds school who spoke in English:

*(1) Interviewer: All right, what language do you use here, at home, with your mother and father?*

*Dalal: Arabic.*

*Interviewer: Why do you use Arabic?"*

*Dalal: Because in English School, I speak English, and I get bored from speaking English all the time so I speak Arabic with them so I can keep practicing Arabic and I do not forget.*

*Interviewer: Ok, and what language do you use with your sisters?*

*Dalal: When we play I use English.*

*Interviewer: What about when you are not playing?*

*Dalal: mmm...a lot of English and some Arabic when Mom reminds us [laugh].*

Interviews with the Ealing children suggest that a significant number used both English and Arabic with their parents inside the homes, and mainly English with siblings, which corresponds with the questionnaire responses (see Tables 5.2 and 5.3). This contrasts with Yagmur (2009) who found that almost all his study's informants, of Turkish ethnic background, used Turkish with their parents. Moreover, in another study about Maltese people in Australia, Borland found that "those with both parents born in Malta were most likely to regularly speak Maltese at home with parents" (2005:114). As can be seen, language shift has progressed further in the Ealing group.

The two extracts below are taken from two different interviews from the Ealing site, with an 11 year old boy and an 11 year old girl, who both spoke in English:

*(2) Interviewer: What language do you use with him [father], English or Arabic?*

*Rida: Both, actually more Arabic, but with mom English.*

*Interviewer: So why do you think you use more Arabic with your dad, than mom?*

*Rida: My grandmother is from England [mom's mom], so my mom speaks better English than my dad.*

*Interviewer: So you use Arabic with dad because he does not know that much English?*

*Rida: No he does, but he prefers to speak in Arabic, though, when he is at home.*

*Interviewer: And your mom?*

*Rida: My mom speaks both. She probably prefers Arabic, but we end up talking to her in English most of the time. She finds it easier to speak in English than my dad as she learnt English more than him.*

*Interviewer: What about your sister?*

*Rida: No I do not speak Arabic at all with her.*

*Interviewer: Sometimes maybe?*

*Rida: No.*

*Interviewer: Do you sometimes switch the language to Arabic?*

*Rida: No, she does not like speaking in Arabic.*

In extract 2, the message conveyed was that a link exists between how comfortable the parents were in speaking English, and the language used by children to address them. In my opinion, it is more suitable to use the term “comfortable” and not “able to speak English” in analysing the previous extract, as most of the parents in both schools, including the father in extract (2) above, were employed in professional jobs in the UK, and consequently they had a good command of English.

The 9 year old boy says:

*(3) Interviewer: What language do you use at home?*

*Hadi: I use English, but also a tiny bit of Arabic.*

*Interviewer: When do you use this tiny bit?*

*Hadi: When my mom calls us for dinner, because we have Arabic meals, so she tells us to bring the things, and she says the objects in Arabic, but I already know them.*

*Interviewer: So she speaks to you in Arabic?*

*Hadi: Yes.*

*Interviewer: And, do you reply in Arabic?*

*Hadi: No, not really.*

*Interviewer: In what?*

*Hadi: English.*

*Interviewer: What about the language you use with your brother, and sister?*

*Hadi: English.*

*Interviewer: All the time?*

*Hadi: Yeah.*

### **5.3.1.1 Family language management**

Most of the Ealing and some of the Leeds parent participants said that they used Arabic and English with their children. Similar to previous studies (e.g. Lawson and Sachdev, 2004), they also reported switching to English at certain times while addressing their children, either because the children always replied in English, which eventually made the parents also switch to English, or because the parents wanted to make sure that their children understood particular points. Arabic seems to be used more in informal

situations, when important topics, i.e. school matters, are not being discussed (for literature on the role of topic on language choice see Fishman, 2000; Lawson and Sachdev, 2004; Ritchie and Bhatia, 2013). One of the mothers, for example, reported using English when trying to comment on the children's behaviour or any other important matter. The reason for using English was to make sure that the children understood fully and completely.

Below, for example, are the comments from two Ealing mothers who spoke in Arabic.

(4) Interviewer: *Which language do you prefer to use with your children and which one do you actually use?*

Rida's mother: *If I can control myself, I prefer Arabic, but it is easier to switch to English. Part of the problem is that they do not answer in Arabic, so you talk to them in Arabic, and they reply in English. Eventually, you give up, it is amazing. I do not know how they do that, they have succeeded in making us speak English to them rather than Arabic.*

The above comments show that some parents were accommodating to the children's linguistic preferences. However, it is not clear if the parents meant code-switching or shifting from one language to another.

The other mother said:

(5) Interviewer: *What language do you use with them at home?*

Hadi's mother: *We use Arabic.*

Interviewer: *So at home, it is Arabic?*

Hadi's mother: *Yes, they speak in Arabic, inside the home it is Arabic, yes.*

Interviewer: *Both of them [her children]?*

Hadi's mother: *Look many times I feel I have to use English, but Arabic is the main language.*

Interviewer: *What about them, do they talk to you in Arabic as well?*

Hadi's mother: *They reply in Arabic, but sometimes they speak to me in English...mmm...but they know Arabic very well, even among each other, they speak many times in Arabic, but you could say half half. In other words, sometimes they use Arabic, and sometimes English, depends on the topic.*

Interviewer: *When do you feel you have to speak with them in English?*

Hadi's mother: *If we are discussing an important issue, then I have to use English, because I want the idea to be clear in their minds. Sometimes I am afraid that the concept will not be delivered in a clear way, or they will understand it in a different way if I use Arabic.*

Interviewer: *what do you mean when you say "important issue"?*

Hadi's mother: *School grades, for instance!* [laughs]

While most of the Ealing parent respondents used Arabic and English with their children, observation and interview data suggests that the Leeds parent respondents, many of whom were highly proficient in English, insisted more on their children using Arabic most of the time while at home. Here are the comments from one of the Leeds mothers in Arabic (a university graduate).

(6) Interviewer: Which language do you use at home?

Dalal's mother: Arabic, we focus on it. Yes, sometimes we use simple terms in English that we are used to saying in English, like yogurt, but our conversations are in Arabic, maybe some words in English but in general it is all in Arabic. Even when the girls speak, or play, they sometimes use English words, we keep reminding them to speak in Arabic. At certain times, while they are talking to each other in Arabic they use an English word because they do not know the meaning in Arabic, so I and their father repeat it in Arabic.

Interviewer: *Do you feel, sometimes, you have to speak in English with them?*

Dalal's mother: *No at home I always speak in Arabic, at certain times they do not understand, and they ask what I mean, so I explain the meaning to them in Arabic using other words, and if they do not understand, I say it in English. Nonetheless, I always try to avoid the translation into English. First, I explain it in Arabic but in a different way, and if they do not understand it, I say it in English.*

Another mother from Leeds (Dina's mother), who also spoke in Arabic, explained:

(7) *"Me and their dad, we keep remind them to use Arabic with our Arab friends we speak Arabic with our friends, and we follow them [the children], and sometimes their Arab friends to keep using Arabic even if they do not want to"*

Leeds parent participants justified their insistence on Arabic by saying that their homes were the only domains which offered a good environment for practicing Arabic. It was also the only place where children's linguistic behaviour could be controlled by their

parents. Below is an explanation from one of the Leeds mothers, who commented in Arabic.

(8) Rasheed's mother: *My son leaves home at 8:00 in the morning, and comes back at 4:00 p.m. so he spends a long time at the English school where he speaks English all the time. When he comes back home he speaks English!!!! [surprised], especially in winter when he comes around 4:00 in the afternoon, he nearly always stays up for two or three hours and then goes to sleep, so if you do not speak Arabic with him at home he will lose the Arabic language.*

The parents' determination to control the language of their children was also found in previous studies of ethnic minority communities. For instance, Chinese parents in the USA also reported that using the mother language continuously at home "is an effective way of instilling the HL [heritage language] in these children"(Zhang and Slaughter-Defoe, 2009:87).

Interviews with some of the Leeds parent participants suggested that religion may also have been one of the reasons for the parents' insistence that their children speak Arabic at home.

A Leeds mother added in Arabic:

(9) Dalal's mother: *"I try making them love it. I tell them you should love it, it is our original language and it is a sacred language and the language of Qur'an. God chose it, and chose the prophet to be an Arab and you should be proud to know this language. In addition, it is the language of all the people in heaven"*

At the Ealing research site, however, interviews and observation suggest that less pressure was put on the Ealing child participants to use Arabic at home, and the Ealing parents did not seem to mind greatly shifting to English to facilitate communication with their children.

One mother, who was also a teacher at the Ealing Arabic school, commented in Arabic as follows:



(10) Hadi's mother: *"I do not force them. Earlier, I used to tell them "please speak in Arabic", and when they started going to school and learning English and shifting the language, I asked them just to reply in Arabic. However, they do not really do it, and I do not force them."*

The pressure put on their children to use Arabic most of the time by the Leeds parents might well explain the more frequent use of Arabic in the Leeds homes compared to the Ealing ones.

Interviews with Ealing children suggest that one of the motivations for learning Arabic was to maintain good relations with the extended family. For example, an Ealing pupil who was very attached to his uncle stated that one of his reasons for learning Arabic was to talk to his Arabic-speaking uncle. This point was also confirmed by parents. One of the mothers, who worked as an Arabic-English translator in London, said that her children's use of Arabic and attitudes towards the language significantly improved after a visit to Dubai, where the children spent time with their uncles. She pointed out in Arabic:

(11) Lama's mother: *I think it is the communication issue. In other words, in Dubai, they had their uncles, and those two [the uncles] are so funny. The kids really enjoyed that, and they were very close to them, so I guess it is the communication, and I did not force them, so they felt, they are in a comfortable atmosphere, their cousins, uncles and me, we were all speaking Arabic, we were very happy, and very relaxed.*

Spending holidays in countries of origin was also mentioned as a positive influence in using the minority language. Parents from both schools spoke about their children's high motivation and better ability to speak Arabic after spending time with families in countries of origin.

For example, here are the remarks of an Ealing father who spoke in Arabic:

(12) Interviewer: What language do they use when they go to Egypt?

Tarek's father: *Arabic, once when we had just arrived there, I was unpacking the luggage and I was surprised to hear my son speaking Arabic using the local accent of the city. But you know they still do not have this confidence because they know that their language is not 100% perfect.*

Interviewer: *Do the holidays have an influence when they come back?*

Tarek's father: *Yes. Egypt, for instance, was the thing that broke the ice. My daughter used to refuse even to say "apple" it was impossible. She came back from there speaking, not very fluently but at least she speaks. These trips make them feel more comfortable although it was only one week in Palestine.*

Lamaa 12 year old female child from the Ealing site also said the following, though, in

English:

(13) *"I like it whenever we go [to the original country] our Arabic improves, I like it when we speak Arabic there."*

Leeds and Ealing parent participants also mentioned that their children used Arabic when cajoling their parents to buy them expensive things or to agree to difficult requests, such as buying new electronic devices, as they knew Arabic was their parents preferred language. The children also used Arabic if they knew that the person being addressed did not understand English, or if they wanted to use a 'secret' language in a public place, as an Ealing mother commented below using both English and Arabic.

(14) Rida's mother: *"They never use Arabic unless they have no other choice, for example if the person in front of them does not understand a word of English. My kids when they realized that their grand mom could use some English, they started using English with her, although before they did not. In certain situations also, such as if they are on the train and they do not want others to understand what they are saying, they use Arabic, and of course when they want to bribe me [laugh], this is their version of blackmailing...."*

### **5.3.2 Language use at complementary schools**

In order to investigate language use in the complementary schools, I took audio-recordings of the first two lessons in the Leeds site, and thereafter I kept detailed notes

of classroom and playground interactions<sup>1</sup>. These materials allowed me to cross-check the results of the questionnaires and interviews.

In questionnaire and interviews, pupils were asked about the language used with their teachers and peers at the Arabic complementary school. Table 5.4 below reports the questionnaire responses regarding the language used in interaction with teachers.

**Table 5. 4: Language used with teachers**

		Language used with teachers				
		Always English	Usually English	English and Arabic equally	Usually Arabic	Always Arabic
Leeds (N=38)	Number of pupils Percentage of pupils	8 (21%)	4 (11%)	14 (36%)	8 (21%)	4 (11%)
Ealing (N=37)	Number of pupils Percentage of pupils	5 (13%)	8 (22%)	21 (57%)	3 (8%)	0 (0%)

A considerable proportion of questionnaire pupil respondents at Ealing (57%) claimed that they used both English and Arabic with their teachers. However, this claim, that they used English and Arabic equally, was not supported by the researcher's observations at the school, where English seemed to be the dominant language in student-teacher interaction.

As mentioned earlier, I did not have the facility to record exact instances of code switching. I noted some while observing in classes. For instance, in the Ealing 3rd grade class, the teacher dictated a text in *Fusha* for the pupils to write down. As they were doing the task, most of the pupils used mainly English with their teacher to ask about

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<sup>1</sup> It is worth noting here that because I was not allowed to record the interactions, I was able to consult home recordings in order to conduct a detailed linguistics analysis of the language; however, I noticed that students used code switching in their interactions with teachers.

certain words, as in extract (15) below, where the pupil used English to ask a question about a particular word for which he used Arabic.

(15) Teacher: فكّر وتأمل في هذا العصفور الصّغير

(Think about this little bird)

Pupil: Miss Maya, what is after عصفور?

(.....bird)

Teacher: الصّغير

(little)

Here we see an instance of the use of English by the pupil to ask questions about the subject, namely the Arabic language. The example presented in extract (15) could be formally labelled as code-switching, since we have one language followed by another. However, if we investigate it more deeply we notice that this is an Arabic language classroom where Arabic instruction is conducted in the medium of English; this means that the target language being taught was Arabic. All instructions were delivered in English.

Similar to the previous example is another classroom interaction which indicates that English was used frequently in the Ealing classes by teachers and pupils. The lesson was about forming questions in Arabic and it appears that the teacher used English to give instructions and the pupils also used mostly English to answer the questions.

(16) Teacher: *I am asking you*, من أين يأتي الطعام؟

(where does food come from?)

Teacher: *This is the question, please be quiet (addressing the pupils)*

Teacher: الى اين انت ذاهب يا ابي؟, دينا

(where are you going, my father?)

*Can you translate this, Dina?*

Dina: *Where are you going my dad?*

Teacher: ابي, *We said ابي*, *It means my dad, anything that has ي (E) at the end means; for me.*

It is noted here that the teacher addressed one of the pupils in English to direct her to answer the question. Actually, I observed that in Ealing the instructions were said in English regularly. In other words, the medium of instruction and class room management talk was typically in English, in order to teach the Arabic language. Instances like these could explain the 57% reported as using Arabic and English equally with the teacher (see Table 5.4), considering half of this speech as the target language and the other half as that used for class room management.

At the Leeds school, however, a high percentage of respondents claimed to use mostly Arabic while interacting with their teachers, and this was confirmed by observations, which showed that Arabic was indeed commonly used in student-teacher interactions.

It is clear from this example that pupils used English with their teachers before the start of the lesson in which they used Arabic exclusively; however, they used English with each other. The teacher, on the other hand, used mostly Arabic to form questions and convey instructions.

(17) Teacher: كلمة قرأ, نعم ساره

(The verb read, Sarah?)

Sarah: فعل ماض

(it is a past simple.)

Teacher: احسنت

(Well done).

Teacher: شو نقول، اريد اعرابا كامل

(What do we say, I want a full explanation.)

A student: فعل ماض مبني ع الفتحة

(A past simple with accent)

Teacher: احسنت يوسف. يلا خليل اكتب

(Well done, Yousef. Go on Khalil, write.)

A pupil addressing his friend: *This is easy.*

Teacher: اسمعو، انتبهو على زميلتكم سوف تقرأ الرسالة

(Listen and pay attention, your friend is going to read the letter.)

As noted in the previous extract (17), the medium of instruction was Arabic, and the pupil participants responded in Arabic which is different from the context at the Ealing site. However, it was interesting to observe that pupils addressed each other and commented on the lesson using English.

The difference between the Leeds and Ealing contexts in the language used in student-teacher interaction may be attributed to differences in teachers' English proficiency and the policy of the school, as is suggested by observations. Table 5.5 below shows the language used among the pupils in the complementary school.

**Table 5. 5: Language used with other pupils in complementary school classrooms and play areas**

Language used with friends in classrooms						
		Always English	Usually English	English and Arabic equally	Usually Arabic	Always Arabic
Leeds (N=38)	Number of pupils Percentage of pupils	17 (45%)	13 (34%)	8 (21%)	0 (0%)	0 (3%)
Ealing (N=37)	Number of pupils Percentage of pupils	29 (78%)	7 (19%)	1 (3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Language used with friends in the play area						
Leeds (N=38)	Number of pupils Percentage of pupils	31 (81%)	3 (8%)	4 (11%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Ealing (N=37)	Number of pupils Percentage of pupils	32 (86%)	3 (8%)	1 (3%)	1 (3%)	0 (0%)

Most pupils reported that they almost always used English with their peers, both in and out of the classrooms and play area. However, 21% of Leeds pupil participants claimed to use both English and Arabic in classrooms with their peers. Observation and field notes suggest that this claim did not represent pupil interaction inside classroom. Instead it reflected language use within a controlled practice or instructional task, such as answering a question or working in a group. This again suggests that language shift was taking place, since Arabic was almost never used for communicating with friends inside classrooms at both schools. This conclusion is further supported by the researcher's field notes from the Ealing school: *“As in different classes, students are always using English to communicate with each other. Moreover, they use English to explain the tasks to each other by switching the language just to use exact words in Arabic.”*

Although a number of pupils at both schools reported the use of Arabic with their teachers inside classes, see Table (5.4), both observations and teacher comments suggest that the pupils' claims of using Arabic with their teachers was an exaggeration. In fact, both Leeds and Ealing teacher participants commented on the extensive use of English by pupils inside and outside classes. Teachers mentioned that pupils always used English with each other and with teachers too, if they were allowed to. Two Leeds teachers, Najla and Hind, commented in Arabic as follows:

*(18) Interviewer: Between each other, what language do they use?*

*Najla: Of course, English.*

*Interviewer: And with you?*

*Najla: With me, they try to speak in English, I tell them, "No, speak in Arabic, try to learn".*

*(19) Hind: They speak mostly in English [laugh]*

*Interviewer: With each other they speak in English, even inside the classroom?*

*Hind: Yes, actually even with me they speak in English. When they ask question, I answer them in Arabic. Sometimes the child does not understand so I explain it in a different way in Arabic.*

*Interviewer: Do you feel you have to use English at times in the classroom?*

*Hind: Yes, I have to.*

*Interviewer: When?*

*Hind: With certain questions, especially if they ask questions outside the context of the lesson.*

In addition, the Ealing teacher participants reported switching between Arabic and English in class to facilitate delivering lesson content and instructions to their pupils (see also Extracts 15 and 16). A fourth grade teacher commented in Arabic as follows:

*(20) Interviewer: What is the main language you use in class?*

*Mai: Arabic, it should be Arabic, but I have to translate. Look, I try to translate because it is easier for the children, and because there is a Pakistani kid, if I do not translate he will not follow. So when they are writing, I say (nktah) [Arabic] and then say full stop [English], so I should talk in both languages.*

*Interviewer: And the language they use [the pupils]?*

*Mai: No, they speak in English with each other, even at home I assume they speak in English with each other.*

*Interviewer: And with you?*

*Mai: They also use English with me. As a result of that [using English all the time], I do not know if you have noticed, every Saturday they have to tell something in Arabic, they*



*prepare something at home and then come to the class to talk about it, they have to read it so it is not writing I want them to speak, we cannot be sure who would write for them at home.*

Here again is a fifth grade Ealing teacher who also used Arabic in the interview (Randa).

*(21) Interviewer: What is the main language for the pupils in class?*

*Randa: Look even those who know Arabic 100%, they use English with each other. Moreover, even those who use only Arabic at home, they try to use English with me.*

*Interviewer: With their friends, is it English as well?*

*Randa: With their friends, and with me. One of my pupils, I know he speaks Arabic very well, and he knows that my smile would be huge if he used Arabic. However, whenever he speaks, he speaks in English with me, unless I warn him to speak in Arabic, or motivate him by using Arabic intensively with him.*

The teachers' comments are corroborated by the interviews with the Leeds and Ealing pupils, who agreed that they used English in class with their friends and teachers unless they were asked by their teachers not to do so. Two Leeds pupils, Rasheed (a 12 year old) and Nadia (a 10 year old), reported the following in English:

*(22) Interviewer: Which languages do you use in the classroom [in complementary school]?*

*Rasheed: With my friends English, with my teacher sometimes Arabic and sometimes English.*

*(23) Interviewer: Which language do you use with your teacher?*

*Nadia: Mmmmm, sometimes she [the teacher] asks us to speak in Arabic, but sometimes I get confused when I am speaking in Arabic, so I speak in English.*

Tarek (11 year old), from the Ealing school, also confirmed that English was the main language used with peers in the complementary school, unless they were in the middle of an Arabic task. Tarek spoke in English.

*(24) Interviewer: What language do you use with your teacher?*

*Tarek: hehehehe [laugh] English as long as she is ok with that.*

*Interviewer: So she is not ok with using English all the time?*

*Tarek: No, sometimes she asks us to repeat something in Arabic, but I usually ask her questions in English and she answers in Arabic.*

*Interviewer: What about your friends?*

*Tarek: mmm...actually English most of the time.*

The slightly greater tendency of the Leeds school pupils to use Arabic in classes than their Ealing peers can be explained by various factors. First, the teachers' English competence influences classroom language use, as the Leeds teachers were not as competent in English as their counterparts at the Ealing school, which made Arabic more important for communicating with their pupils. The second reason is the policy followed at each school regarding the use of English. At the Ealing school, English appears to have been acknowledged as the children's first language, so it was allowed alongside Arabic in the classrooms in order to guarantee a better understanding of the lessons, as well as to create an enjoyable experience for the children at the school. Here, I observed that teachers switched between the two languages, as is common in complementary schools (see also 2.4.3.3) for further information on linguistic practices).

One Ealing mother comments (in both English and Arabic) on the language used at school as follows:

*(25) Rida's mother: The other thing about this school, which is different from their [children] previous school, is that this school teaches Arabic as a second language. They acknowledged that most children will not learn this as their first language, and it has been taught in a different way.*

By contrast, classroom observation and interviews with teachers and the head teacher at the Leeds school seemed to indicate that Arabic was the only language that was encouraged in classes. One Leeds teacher remarked in Arabic:

*(26) They [pupils] have to speak in Arabic, they have to hear Arabic all the time. We cannot accept them talking all the time in English, if they are going to do so...why are they coming to this school in the first place??!!! [sounding irritated] this is not acceptable here.*

A One Language Only (OLON) policy was theoretically followed at the school in Leeds, as is common in other complementary schools, where learners are expected to use only the language taught at the school (see Wei and Wu, 2009); however, Leeds pupils negotiated their way around this policy and also used English at the school mainly with their peers.

### **5.3.3 Inter-generational differences in language use**

The interview data point to interesting cross-generational differences in language use patterns in that parents reported the predominant use of Arabic when speaking to each other and in other domains, except for the work domain (see also Rasinger, 2010). The children, by contrast, reported mainly using English with each other and in most domains but mainly Arabic or a mixture of Arabic and English with their parents.

A mother from Leeds, who spoke in Arabic in the interview, said:

*(27) Dalal's mother: "Obviously Arabic with him [husband], I cannot express everything in English, you know how it is.... We have our own terms, words we cannot use in English while talking to each other, can we!!!"*  
*A father from Ealing also commented in Arabic:*

*(28) Interviewer: "What language do you use with your wife at home?"*  
*Tarek's father: "We use Arabic, we use some words in English, for sure, in our daily use. However, mainly it is Arabic. You know, although we have been in this country for ages but still Arabic is the natural, the easy, and the loveable language."*

This pattern diverges somewhat from Mills (2001), who examined identity and language among second generation Muslim-Pakistani mothers and their children in the UK. In that study, mothers mentioned that English was the main language for communicating with their husbands in their homes. The most likely explanation for the difference between Mills' study and the present one is the birth place of the parents, as Mills' respondents were second-generation mothers, whilst, the parents in our study were all born in their countries of origin and migrated to the UK at a later age.

### **5.3.5 Concluding remarks on language use**

As shown above, English was the language mainly used by children with siblings at home, and with teachers and their peers at the complementary school. However, Arabic was reported to be used more often with parents. The data from questionnaires, interviews and observations points to an intergenerational language shift among the participants in the study, which fits with previous studies investigating migrant communities (e.g. Clyne 2003 and Clyne and Kipp 1997). As mentioned above, and similar to previous studies (e.g. Harris, 2006), English was the dominant and preferred language of the younger generation. The parents, however, reported great use of Arabic with each other and with their children. This pattern is similar to that reported in many other studies of ethnic communities (e.g. Borland, 2005- investigating the Maltese ethnic minority in Australia; Hamid, 2011- investigating the Sylheti Bangladeshis in the UK).

The data revealed that Arabic was used slightly more at the Leeds site with adults. Possible reasons for this include: the place of birth, as a larger percentage of pupils in Leeds were born outside the UK; the parents' insistence on the use of the language at home; the complementary school teachers' proficiency in English; and/or the school's policy.

As mentioned above, children's relationships with extended families and their visits to their original countries had a strong influence on their language attitudes and use. These findings are similar to Holmes (2001); Holmes et al. (1993); Tannenbaum and Howie (2002). The findings are also similar to the study by Borland (2006), where the use of the ethnic minority language (Bangla), correlated positively with links to family in the country of origin. The results also showed that Arabic was sometimes employed by the children as a 'secret' language which they could use in public places and mainstream

schools without other children understanding them. This is similar to the situation discussed in Harris's (2006) study of language use and identity amongst Gujrat ethnic minority groups in the UK.

The data on language use also revealed that children's use of English sometimes influences the language used by their parents to address them (see extract 4). This corresponds with Tuominen's (1999) argument that children in bilingual families have the upper hand in determining language use inside the home.

Based on the proposition by Kumar et al. (2008:55) that "if there was a language shift between the two generations, then the first generation should be dominant in Hindi [the ethnic minority language] while the second should be dominant in English [the mainstream language]", the fact that English is the dominant language for the children's generation, but not for their parent's generation, suggests that a language shift is taking place in these two Arab communities in Britain. Such a shift has been found in many other ethnic minority communities in the UK: for example, the Bangladeshi community in London (Rasinger, 2013), and in Europe, as the Turkish ethnic minority community in Germany (see Yagmur and Akinci, 2003).

The findings on language use patterns are also corroborated by what participants report about their media consumption habits (e.g. TV watching).

## **5.4 Media**

The media is a potential influence on language use and identity, as it increases individuals' exposure to the language, and may influence their attitudes to it.

Therefore, parents and children were asked about the television channels they watched most frequently and the books they read.

In two of the Leeds families interviewed, parent participants said they watched Arabic channels with their children; however, they were very selective when choosing the Arabic programmes they watched.

The extract below is from an interview with a Palestinian family in Leeds where both parents chose to speak in Arabic:

*(29) Interviewer: Which channels do you watch?*

*Rasheed's father: In general we watch Arabic most of the time. However, honestly, we watch certain channels because we like their ethics. We want the channel to teach the culture and the habits of the community to our children. For example, if somebody dies what should he do, and if there is a wedding what should he do, but not all channels are like that, not all of them have ethical constraints.*

*Rasheed's mother: And they watch the English channels in the morning.*

*Rasheed's father: English TV only in the morning because when they go to their school, their friends will ask them if they have seen so and so and the child might feel like an outsider, so we allow them an hour or two in the morning; however, in the evening it is Arabic.*

In this case the parents used the media to convey cultural messages to their children and in doing this they deliberated over their choice of programmes.

An important point emerged here relating to the past norms in the Arab media, when most parents left their countries of origin, and the present culture in the countries of origin today. It is possible that, at the time when most participant families migrated to the UK, society was more conservative, with limited exposure to other cultures. However, due to satellite channels and globalisation, Arab TV channels have changed their programming style and a range of programmes are available, including programmes from all over the world, and they discuss topics that were once regarded as taboo in some conservative communities, such as the relationship between men and women.

Some of the parents in the Leeds school were unhappy with a particular Turkish programme (duplicated in Arabic), as they thought it was similar to western

programmes in the UK, in its lack of moral behaviour and its portrayal of women and men in non-traditional roles.

At Ealing, the majority of parent participants said that they did not watch television regularly, and when they did, it was mostly the news, as the mother in the following extract explained, using both Arabic and English in her interview:

*(30) Rida's mother: We watch mostly news.*

*Interviewer: Arabic or English?*

*Rida's mother: Arabic and English, my husband focuses on English but sometimes I put on the Arabic channels if there is something. In general we do not watch television that much.*

*Interviewer: What about reading?*

*Rida's mother: Honestly, reading is mostly in English, sometimes I bring Arabic books but I read mostly in English.*

One of the mothers commented that watching the news, which is very popular amongst Arab families, may have a negative impact on the children's views of the situation in their countries of origin.

Hadi's mother, who spoke in Arabic, said:

*(31) "The negative aspect of it is when something is happening in the Arab world, usually it is not a positive thing happening in the Arab world, so you end up watching the news a lot. The children hate that, and that has been conveyed very loudly... The TV in the UK is different from the Middle East. In the UK people are shielded and you do not actually see, you have a description of what is happening in wars but you do not see it. On Arabic channels, you see it and children find that very painful and difficult to watch. In some ways, it makes them reject the whole concept [of watching Arabic channels]."*

Other parents associated watching Arab channels with visiting friends or members in the extended family or with cultural/religious occasions, such as Ramadan, the month of fasting for Muslims, when watching TV is common.

Lama's mother from Ealing said in Arabic:

*(32) "Unfortunately, I have lost the TV in Ramadan because it was a meeting point with the children. After the futoor (breakfast is the first meal people have during Ramadan), we clean the table and we watch TV. Ramadan is important for us, culturally, like I do*

*not pray but I used to fast at Ramadan because it is related to our cultural heritage, and it reminded me of home.”*

The extracts below indicate children’s attitudes towards watching Arabic channels

Rida from the Ealing school commented in English:

*(33) Interviewer: Do you watch Arab cartoons?*

*Rida: No I used to watch one when I was 5 years old, they used to put me in front of the computer to watch it, but I did not understand it then.*

*Interviewer: What about now, have you tried watching any Arab channels?*

*Rida: No.*

*Interviewer: Why?*

*Riida: I feel like I don’t want to, everything is different, the characters, stories, places and everything else.*

*Interviewer: What about other Arab channels, do you watch any?*

*Rida: No, it is just the same.*

Children said they did not watch Arab TV because the programmes were different from those they saw on the channels in the UK, and different from their life and their interests.

In respect of reading, child interviews revealed that two of the Leeds child participants and one from Ealing claimed to read in Arabic, with the Qur’an being an important text for some of Leeds child participants. However, some of the child participants at both schools also said that they read other texts, such as Arabic short stories, that might have been brought or sent from their countries of origin.

Dalal, who chose to use English in her interviews, from the Leeds school said:

*(34) Interviewer: What do you read [in Arabic]?*

*Dalal: I read a lot of things, I like reading the Qur’an especially, I read some books also so I can learn some more Arabic Fusha.*

*Interviewer: What are those books?*

*Dalal: Stories, we brought from home or my aunt sent me.*



Tarek from the Ealing school said he did not mind reading in Arabic, but he was very interested in science and he could not find interesting Arabic books related to this subject.

On a similar point, Rida's mother from the Ealing school commented on the availability of Arabic books, using both Arabic and English and saying:

*(35) "That is something we struggled with; they have been exposed to books when they were very little, like children's story books, something like that. I think the difficulty is availability, so if things are available we buy them in mass for them but they are not all age appropriate. The other thing is I think their language ability does not match their age. So the books they can read are written for younger children, and they find them boring. In English they are reading five hundred pages, Harry Potter books, whereas their ability in Arabic is stories for five year olds that are very simple and they find that boring and tedious, it is a pity."*

The two points raised by the mother in the extract above, namely, the availability of Arabic books and their suitability, are the main issues faced by Arab ethnic minorities when selecting Arabic books for their children to read.

Turning to the parents' reading habits, a mother from the Ealing site and other two parents from the Leeds site said that they read mostly in English. One of the Leeds fathers remarked that he reads articles related to his industry and they were mostly in English.

#### **5.4.1 Concluding remarks on language and media**

The data shows that neither the Leeds nor the Ealing families seemed to rely greatly on media as a factor for sustaining the use of Arabic in their homes.

Nevertheless, some of the Leeds parent participants said that TV programmes helped them to convey Arabic culture to their children. However, conservative parents complained that some of the current Arabic TV programmes were not culturally appropriate. With respect to reading, appropriate Arabic materials for children are

limited in availability and suitability, which creates challenges for parents in supplying their children with interesting books that can compete with the English ones they are exposed to.

## **5.5 Language Proficiency**

### **5.5.1 Arabic Language Proficiency**

To complement the data on language use and to ascertain the degree of language shift in the younger generation as Jamai (2008:249) says, “the degree of language competence and fluency speakers achieve is a very good indicator of language use and maintenance”, so it was useful to collect information on the pupil participants’ Arabic language proficiency. The data discusses the respondents’ self-reported competence in *Fusha*, as well as in the vernacular form of Arabic used in their countries of origin, and it takes two forms: a) self-report questionnaire data on Arabic and English language proficiency, and b) informal Arabic proficiency test data. The latter, though assessed by an informal proficiency test, provides a useful check on the self-report claims, as these are known to sometimes be inaccurate, either through overestimation or underestimation. We turn first to the questionnaire self-reports on Arabic language proficiency in standard Arabic, *Fusha*, and the spoken vernacular Arabic.

#### **5.5.1.1 Self-reports on Arabic language proficiency**

The questionnaire sought to elicit information on the subjects’ self-reported abilities in writing, reading, speaking and listening to *Fusha*, and in speaking and listening in their respective spoken dialects on a four point scale ranging from ‘*Very Good*’ to ‘*Weak*’. Table 5.6 below reports on both Leeds and Ealing pupils’ ratings of their proficiency in standard Arabic (*Fusha*) across the four skills; and table 5.7 on their ratings of their proficiency across the speaking and listening skills in the spoken dialect.

**Table 5. 6: Frequency of pupils' self-reported proficiency in standard Arabic (Fusha)**

		Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Weak
Leeds (N=38)	Writing	7 (17%)	15 (40%)	12 (32%)	4 (11%)
	Reading	5 (12%)	16 (42%)	133 (35%)	4 (11%)
	Speaking	2 (5%)	12 (32%)	11 (29%)	13 (34%)
	Listening	5 (14%)	13 (33%)	16 (42%)	4 (11%)
Ealing (N=37)	Writing	6 (16%)	20 (54%)	10 (27%)	1 (3%)
	Reading	14 (38%)	15 (40%)	7 (19%)	1 (3%)
	Speaking	5 (14%)	6 (16%)	16 (43%)	10 (27%)
	Listening	3 (8%)	13 (35%)	12 (33%)	9 (24%)

**Table 5. 7: Frequency of pupils' self-reported proficiency in spoken dialect**

		Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Weak
Leeds (N=38)	Speaking	24 (63%)	13 (34%)	1 (3%)	0 (0%)
	Listening	29 (76%)	9 (24%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Ealing (N=37)	Speaking	27 (73%)	9 (24%)	1 (3%)	0 (0%)
	Listening	33 (89%)	4 (11%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

As can be seen, a majority of pupils from Leeds and Ealing claimed good or very good proficiency in writing and reading standard Arabic (*Fusha*). By contrast, when it came to speaking standard Arabic, a majority of both Leeds and Ealing reported only 'Satisfactory' or 'Weak' skills (63% of Leeds; 70% at Ealing). The picture for listening was a bit more complicated in that nearly 50% of pupils at Leeds (47%) claimed 'Good' or 'Very Good' listening skills whereas at Ealing a larger proportion (57%) reported only 'Satisfactory' or 'Weak' listening skills. Interestingly, a somewhat larger proportion of pupils at Ealing claimed 'Good' or 'Very Good' reading and writing skills in standard Arabic (70%-78%) compared to the pupils at Leeds.

Observations at school and in class suggests, however, that these claims to language proficiency in standard Arabic (*Fusha*) are substantially exaggerated, especially for reading and writing. I noted, for example, that teachers at both schools sometimes had

to clarify *Fusha* utterances by repeating them in the pupils' spoken variety or in English. A possible reason for pupils' exaggerated claims to proficiency is that they wanted to present a positive picture of their abilities, especially given the importance and prestige of *Fusha* literacy in religion, culture and, indeed, at the complementary school. It is also possible, however, that these young pupil participants were confused or unclear about their actual proficiency level.

Turning briefly to self-reported proficiency in the vernacular variety, we can see immediately, and unsurprisingly, that pupils from both Leeds and Ealing report very high levels of skill in speaking the home variety (97% at Leeds; 97% at Ealing), and, without exception, 'Very Good' or 'Good' listening skills. Spoken dialects do not, of course, feature at all in written texts, so there were no questions on reading or writing (see 3.3.1). In answering this question, however, it was not evident whether the meanings of *Fusha* and the spoken variety as well as the differences between them were sufficiently clear for the respondents, despite these having been explained several times before administering the questionnaires, together with examples given to further illustrate the distinction.

Overall, and as expected, a generally lower level of skills was reported for *Fusha* than for the spoken dialect. This was unsurprising as the home language was the variety to which pupils had more exposure.

If the figures for reported proficiency in the latter are accurate, it would appear that speaking/listening skills in spoken Arabic have been quite successfully maintained, despite relatively little use of Arabic with siblings and peers. There is a strong possibility, however, that once again the level of proficiency in the spoken variety has

been exaggerated to present a positive self-image and to save face. Finally, for the sake of quick comparisons, pupils were also asked to rate their English skills.

#### **5.5.1.2 English Language proficiency**

Pupils were asked about their self-reported competence in English through a questionnaire in order to draw a contrast with their self-reported Arabic competence. In addition to self-evaluation, this is generally an indication of the language the pupils prefer to use as well as to the level of language shift.

The results showed, unsurprisingly, that pupils in both schools claimed a very high level of competence in English across all skills (almost 100%) which is a marked contrast with self-reported skills in *Fusha*.

#### **5.5.2 Concluding remarks on Arabic and English self-reported proficiency**

As mentioned previously, *Fusha* was the language taught in schools and used in official domains and was not the mother tongue of speakers in the Arab world (see 3.3.1). On the other hand, vernacular dialects are used by parents and relatives in the home domain and in countries of origin. Therefore, the pupils' proficiency in using the home language was not surprisingly higher than their proficiency in *Fusha*. Nonetheless, pupils seemed to over-estimate their true level in *Fusha*. As an observer, the percentage given by pupils to describe their level in using and understanding *Fusha* seemed unrealistic, compared to their actual level observed in class, as teachers at both schools occasionally had to clarify *Fusha* utterances by repeating them in pupils' vernacular dialects or by saying them in English. The pupils may have felt external pressure to claim to have high levels in *Fusha*, as it is prestigious and the language of literacy. However, the results are compared to the test results in the following section (5.5.3).

With respect to their proficiency in English, pupil participants appeared to be more comfortable and certainly more confident in English than Arabic, which is an indication of a process of language shift. This conclusion is also supported by notes and evidence from the researcher's observation and field notes at both schools.

The following section presents an analysis of the proficiency test results, which allows a comparison between pupils' actual and reported Arabic language proficiencies.

### **5.5.3 Results of the Arabic language proficiency test**

To check pupils' self-report claims to proficiency in Arabic, and to have an independent measure of proficiency, an informal Arabic proficiency test was administered to 56 pupils in the 3rd, 4th and 5th grades in Leeds and Ealing. Details of the design of the test can be found in Section 4.5.4 (Chapter 4). Before discussing these results, it is worth noting that some of the Leeds pupils who agreed to fill in the questionnaire did not want to do the test. Teachers attributed this to pupils' generally negative attitudes towards sitting exams. An (SPSS) analysis was used to investigate differences in the mean scores of test takers. A t-test was also used to compare the results in vocabulary and reading, and the total marks for each school. The scores on the vocabulary subtest, the reading subtest and the overall test are reported below in Table 5.8.

**Table 5. 8: Informal Arabic proficiency test scores: Means and Standard Deviations**

Schools	Tests	Maximum Possible	Mean score	Standard Deviation
Leeds (N=22)	Vocabulary sub-test	20	15.5	3.92
	Reading sub-test	10	6.7	3.72
	Total test score	30	22.2	7.15
Ealing (N= 34)	Vocabulary sub-test	20	12.4	4.70
	Reading sub-test	10	5.4	2.56
	Total test score	30	17.9	5.8
Overall test scores (both schools) (N=56)	Vocabulary sub-test	20	13.66	4.63
	Reading sub-test	10	5.93	3.09
	Total test score	30	19.59	6.671

As mentioned (see 4.5.4), this test was informal and has not been validated against other standardised Arabic texts, of which, to my knowledge, there are few. Nevertheless, the results suggest that pupils' actual Arabic proficiency was indeed significantly lower than what they claim (see 5.5.1.1). In particular, there was a relatively poor performance in reading, where pupils appear to do worse than in the vocabulary subtest.

**Table 5. 9: Independent Samples Test**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Vocab score	Equal variances assumed	1.041	.312	2.571	54	.013	3.104	1.208	.683	5.525
	Equal variances not assumed			2.675	50.530	.010	3.104	1.160	.774	5.435
Reading Score	Equal variances assumed	10.407	.002	1.480	54	.145	1.241	.839	-.441	2.922
	Equal variances not assumed			1.368	33.821	.180	1.241	.907	-.602	3.084
Total score	Equal variances assumed	2.677	.108	2.490	54	.016	4.345	1.745	.847	7.843
	Equal variances not assumed			2.383	38.423	.022	4.345	1.823	.655	8.034

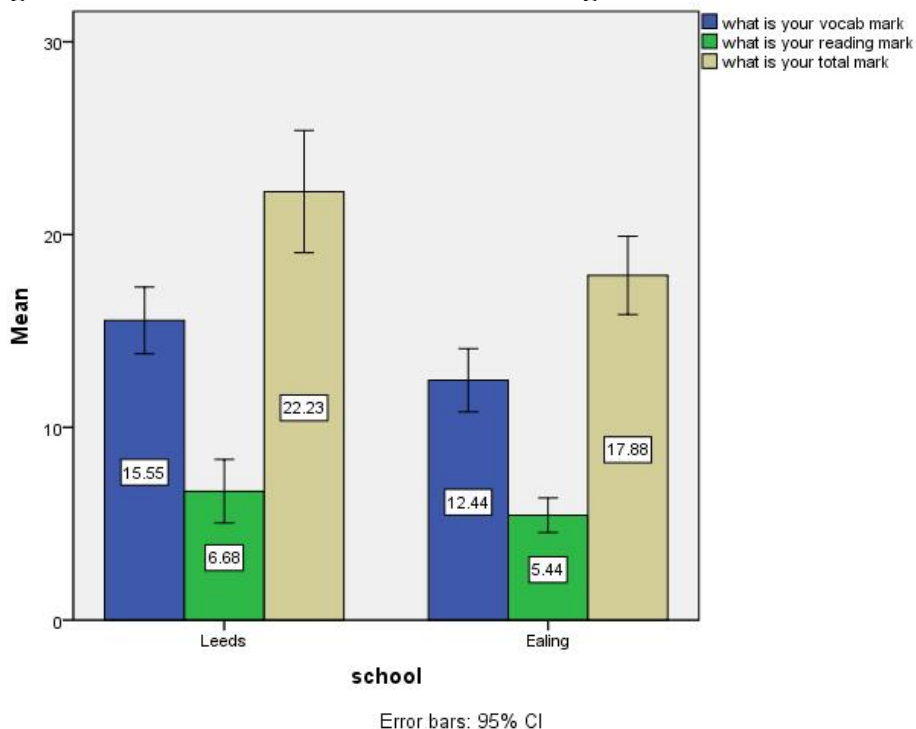


The t-test statistical results also show that there was a significant difference between proficiency at the Leeds and Ealing research site, with Leeds pupil participants performing significantly better overall, and in the vocabulary section. In total, pupils performed better in the Leeds school ( $M=22.23$ ,  $SE=1.525$ ) than the Ealing school ( $M=17.88$ ,  $SE=1.000$ ). This difference was significant  $t(54)=2.490$ ,  $p<.05$ .

Pupils performed better in the vocabulary part of the test in the Leeds site ( $M=15.55$ ,  $SE=.834$ ) than the Ealing site ( $M=12.44$ ,  $SE=.807$ ), and the difference was significant  $t(54) = 2.571$ ,  $p<.05$ .

In terms of reading levels, the difference was not significant  $t(45) = 1.480$ ,  $p>.05$ ; although pupils performed better in Leeds than Ealing: the Leeds school ( $M=6.68$ ,  $SE=.793$ ), the Ealing school, on the other hand, ( $M=5.44$ ,  $SE=.439$ ).

**Figure 5. 1: Mean score for Leeds and Ealing in relation to different parts of test**



Various factors explain why the Leeds pupil participants appear to have performed better in the Arabic proficiency test than their peers at Ealing. Place of birth is perhaps

the most important factor, since more pupils from the Leeds school were born overseas than was the case in the Ealing school, and that would have meant greater exposure to Arabic at an early age. Moreover, as elaborated in (5.3), there was a stronger insistence on the use of Arabic in the Leeds research site than in the Ealing research site and this was also the case within the families, as interviews and observation demonstrated. There were also more frequent visits to mosques by the Leeds pupil participants, where Arabic *Fusha* dominated, compared to their peers from Ealing (see Table 5.1). The above factors may have motivated, facilitated, or even obliged the Leeds pupil participants to practice Arabic more than their peers at Ealing, consequently gaining greater competence.

Comparing the pupils' language proficiencies in the test to self-reported proficiency shows that Ealing pupil participants evaluated themselves in the questionnaires as higher than their actual level, particularly in reading and understanding *Fusha*. Similarly, the Leeds sample, although they performed better than their Ealing peers, appeared to exaggerate their performance when they self-reported their Arabic abilities in the questionnaires. These findings appear to be different to the study by Yagmur, De Bot and Korzilius (1999), where the proficiency test results of Turkish participants were in line with their self-reported abilities in using Turkish.

#### **5.4.4.2 Comparison of performance at the same school**

Since the differences between the pupil participants' performances in the reading and the vocabulary parts of the test are remarkable, the mean scores of vocabulary and reading for the test takers in the same school were calculated. The results showed that pupils at both schools performed significantly better in vocabulary than in the reading section; see Table 5.10 above.

**Table 5. 10: Vocabulary and reading performance in each school**

School		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Leeds	Vocabulary	22	15.55	3.912
	Reading	22	6.68	3.721
Ealing	Vocabulary	34	12.44	4.705
	Reading	34	5.44	2.561

As mentioned above, the pupil participants at both research sites performed better in the vocabulary section than the reading one. This suggests that pupils encountered more difficulty in the reading part (fill in the gap-see 4.5.4.3) than in the vocabulary part (one word translation-see 4.5.4.3). One explanation might be due to the pupil participants finding it easier to translate one word into Arabic, especially with the rest of the sentence being written in English. With the vocabulary section it is clear that pupil participants retained more items because they refer to common cultural phenomenon that are used in everyday life. This indicates that they were immersed in the Arabic culture to a greater or lesser extent but not proficient in Arabic.

Alternatively, they may have found it difficult to understand the text in Part 2, as it was written in *Fusha*, or because pupil participants' reading skills might be lower than their vocabulary knowledge.

However, the test was indicative, it was a context to enable me to check the validity of the questionnaire and observation, and if pupil participants succeeded in translating an English word to any variety of Arabic, be it *Fusha* or dialect, I took that as evidence of proficiency (see 4.5.4.4). In other words, the test was not designed to test actual attainment of a language but the familiarity and proximity of the children's linguistic experiences to Arabic, regardless of which variety.

#### **5.4.5 Concluding remarks on Arabic proficiency**

In this section the results of the proficiency test at the Leeds and Ealing research sites were analysed, and a comparison was made between the pupil performances at both schools, and between the reading and the vocabulary mark in each school. An independent sample t-test revealed that the performance at the Leeds school was significantly better in vocabulary and in terms of the total mark than at the Ealing school. A number of reasons were suggested for this variance, such as birthplace, the frequency of mosque visits (see Hatoss and Sheely, 2009; Holmes, 2001; Yagmur and Akinci, 2003 on the role of religious institutions in maintaining a language), and the level to which Arabic was expected to be used among the schools and within families. One aspect that these results might be said to show is that the language shift was more pronounced in the Ealing context than the Leeds one.

In addition, it was found that most of the pupil participants at both research sites had better vocabulary knowledge than reading skills. Having the reading text in *Fusha*, while requiring participants to translate only one word into Arabic in the vocabulary test, may have been a substantial cause of this disparity. However, a further analysis is recommended to examine the significantly different performances between pupils at the same school. Nevertheless, these results offer a complicated picture that is not easy to interpret overall, indicating that the factors that influence language shift are also complex.

#### **5.6 Attitudes towards Arabic language**

The attitudes of ethnic minority individuals to their heritage languages have been widely investigated in the UK and elsewhere (e.g. Baker, 1992; Blackledge and Creece, 2008; Blackledge and Creece, 2010; Francis et al., 2009). Such attitudes are of interest in themselves but also because they are thought to some degree to be involved in

language shift/maintenance. For example, the theoretical framework of subjective ethnolinguistic vitality, reviewed in section 2.2.3.4, places importance on language attitudes as one predictor among many of the likelihood of language shift/maintenance (see also Baker, 1992; Holmes et al., 1993). The core value theory of language (see Smolicz 1980 and 1981) also claims that the maintenance of the heritage ethnic language is more likely to the extent that an ethnic group perceives a given language as a core value; that is, as a language central to the group's distinctive culture. Because of Arabic's role as the language of Islam, it may well be the case that the language is a core value for our Arabic heritage participants (see also 2.2.3.3,d). But that said, the literature (see e.g. Edwards, 2011) also points to a distinction between the communicative and symbolic dimensions of language. In this distinction symbolic attachments to language may outlast the loss of communicative functions and the loss of communicative abilities by the younger generation. It will be interesting to see if this is the case with our present research participants.

The following sections discuss first attitude to Arabic in general and second, more specifically, attitudes to the learning of *Fusha*.

### **5.6.1 Attitudes towards Arabic in general: Questionnaire Responses**

The data in this section was obtained from pupil questionnaires and interviews with four children, their parents from each school. Observation and field notes also complement the data on attitudes to Arabic. To assess pupils' attitudes towards the Arabic language in general, and to *Fusha* in particular, respondents were asked to rate statements on a four-point scale (from 'agree' to 'don't know'). Table 5.11 below reports responses regarding attitudes to Arabic.

**Table 5. 11: Pupil attitudes to Arabic in Leeds and Ealing**

		Agree	Neither agree or Disagree	Disagree	Don't know
<b>In England you don't need to learn Arabic, English is enough</b>					
Leeds (N=38)	Number of pupils	8	4	20	6
	Percentage of pupils	(21%)	(10%)	<b>(53%)</b>	(16%)
Ealing (N=37)	Number of pupils	12	4	19	2
	Percentage of pupils	(32%)	(11%)	<b>(51%)</b>	(6%)
Total	Number of pupils	20	8	39	8
	Percentage of pupils	(26%)	(11%)	(52%)	(11%)
<b>Knowing English is more important for getting a job than knowing Arabic</b>					
Leeds (N=38)	Number of pupils	16	11	8	3
	Percentage of pupils	(42%)	(29%)	<b>(21%)</b>	(8%)
Ealing (N=37)	Number of pupils	12	7	15	3
	Percentage of pupils	(32%)	(19%)	<b>(41%)</b>	(8%)
Total	Number of pupils	28	18	23	6
	Percentage of pupils	(37%)	(24%)	(31%)	(8%)
<b>If I have children, I would like them to learn Arabic</b>					
Leeds (N=38)	Number of pupils	36	0	1	1
	Percentage of pupils	(94%)	(0%)	(3%)	(3%)
Ealing (N=37)	Number of pupils	29	3	1	4
	Percentage of pupils	(78%)	(8%)	(3%)	(11%)
Total	Number of pupils	65	3	2	5
	Percentage of pupils	<b>(87%)</b>	(4%)	(2%)	(7%)

As can be seen above, some of the questionnaire items focus on perceptions of the instrumental value of Arabic in the UK, whether it is useful for life in general and for getting a job. A majority, demonstrating their attachment to Arabic (53% in Leeds; 51% in Ealing), disagree that English is sufficient for their lives in the UK. On the question of whether English is more important for getting a job than Arabic, there is a difference between Leeds and Ealing participants in that more Ealing pupils place instrumental value on Arabic for getting jobs (41% in Ealing; 21% in Leeds), perhaps because a greater number of parents in Ealing work in jobs reliant on Arabic such as Arabic language teachers or as Arabic newspaper journalists, as observation and field notes data suggest. This is not so much the case in Leeds whether there are fewer Arabic related jobs

Other questionnaire responses indicate a very strong sentimental or symbolic attachment to Arabic in that a very large majority of respondents say that they would like their children to learn Arabic (87%). This indicates rather clearly that Arabic remains highly valued on various grounds - for its religious role, for its wider cultural value, and its symbolic bonding function for these Arabic heritage individuals.

We now turn to pupil attitudes to the standard variety of Arabic (*Fusha*).

### 5.6.2 Attitudes to *Fusha*; Questionnaire Responses

Table 5.12 below displays Leeds and Ealing pupils' responses to questions on their attitudes towards *Fusha*.

**Table 5. 12: Attitudes to *Fusha* at both schools: Leeds and Ealing**

		Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Don't know
<b>Learning <i>Fusha</i> is important for me</b>					
Leeds (N=38)	Number of pupils	25	4	6	3
	Percentage of pupils	(66%)	(10%)	(16%)	(8%)
Ealing (N=37)	Number of pupils	21	5	8	3
	Percentage of pupils	(57%)	(13%)	(22%)	(8%)
	Total (75)	46 (61%)	9 (12%)	14 (19%)	6 (8%)
<b>I enjoy learning <i>Fusha</i></b>					
Leeds (N=38)	Number of pupils	11	17	10	0
	Percentage of pupils	(29%)	(45%)	(26%)	(0%)
Ealing (N=37)	Number of pupils	9	4	21	3
	Percentage of pupils	(24%)	(11%)	(57%)	(8%)
	Total (75)	20 (27%)	21 (28%)	31 (41%)	3 (4%)
<b>It is not easy to learn <i>Fusha</i></b>					
Leeds (N=38)	Number of pupils	24	6	7	1
	Percentage of pupils	(63%)	(16%)	(18%)	(3%)
Ealing (N=37)	Number of pupils	32	1	2	2
	Percentage of pupils	(86%)	(3%)	(5%)	(5%)
	Total (75)	56 (75%)	7 (9%)	9 (12%)	3 (4%)

As can be seen, although a large percentage of respondents in both schools agreed on the importance of learning *Fusha* (61%), a substantial majority of all pupils accepted that *Fusha* was not easy for them to learn (75%), while considerable numbers (41%) were ready to respond that they did not enjoy learning *Fusha*. It was noticeable, however, that fewer of the Leeds pupils were ready to admit to a dislike of learning *Fusha*, a difference between the schools of (31%), and also fewer were prepared to agree that learning *Fusha* was difficult. A possible reason for this is that at Leeds greater emphasis tended to be given to the sacred status of Arabic as a language of Islam and to the importance of learning the language for its religious value, while it was perceived as a mere variety by much of the Ealing respondents. Consequently Leeds pupils were perhaps less prepared to respond frankly to the question on their enjoyment of learning *Fusha*, as here (45%) selected the option 'neither agree nor disagree'. That said, the questionnaire responses provide clear evidence that the large percentage of respondents at both sites agree that learning *Fusha* is important for them.

### **5.6.3. Attitudes to Arabic: Interview Findings**

The data discussed in this section are based on interviews with four children and their parents, as well as four teachers from each research sites. I conducted these interviews in English with the children as they requested, and in Arabic with parents and teachers, as they requested as well.

These interviews were useful for amplifying the questionnaire responses on both attitudes to Arabic in general and more specifically to *Fusha*. Interviewees tended, as in the questionnaires, to express positive attitudes to Arabic, some highlighting its religious value, and some its practical communicative value, for example, for communicating with relatives. Others, meanwhile, taking a somewhat essentialist view, drew attention to the language as an inescapable bearer of identity.



On the religious value of Arabic, for example, Nadia, a fourth grade Leeds pupil, commented using English that Arabic was very important to her because:

*(36) "God prefers this language more than English and any other language. He prefers this language because it is a Muslim language and it is really a nice language."*

Indeed, when asked whether she would teach Arabic to her own children in the future,

Nadia from Leeds said (in English):

*(37) Interviewer: Are you going to teach your children Arabic in the future?*

*Nadia: Oh yea.*

*Interviewer: Why?*

*Nadia: Because I think Arabic is really a good language and it is God's language.*

A similar opinion was expressed in an interview conducted in English with a 9 year old Leeds pupil when she was asked if she would teach Arabic to her own children in the future. The girl chose to use English in her interview.

*(38) Interviewer: Are you going to teach your children Arabic in the future?*

*Dalal: Yes.*

*The interviewer: Why?*

*Dalal: Because they have to learn it when they speak to my parents when they get older, and to learn God's language.*

*In interviews with parents there was also sometimes mention of the religious importance of Arabic, as in this example of a mother of a Leeds pupil (Dina) who spoke in Arabic:*

*(39) Interviewer: What do you think about Arabic?*

*Dina's mother: It is the best. It is the first language in the world, very rich. Moreover, it is enough that it is the language of Qur'an, our God chose the prophet and his language is Arabic and the language of the heavenly people is Arabic as well. So for me it is a must, I try to make my girls understand all that so they will not feel that learning Arabic is a burden for them.*

It was noticeable that children and adults at Leeds made reference to the religious role and value of Arabic somewhat more frequently than those at Ealing.

As mentioned above, some interviewees made reference to the practical communicative value of Arabic, as illustrated in the following remarks of (Lama) an Ealing child, who spoke in English in her interviews:

*(40) Interviewer: Ok, are you going to send your children to Arabic school?*

*Lama: Maybe not to Arabic school, but maybe I will want to teach them myself.*

*Interviewer: So you want them to speak Arabic?*

*Lama: Yea, so like obviously we might visit Palestine, Lebanon, places like that, so I want them to speak the language so they can talk to their cousins.*

Others referred to Arabic as a bearer of identity, as is illustrated below in the case of Rida, who commented that, despite difficulties in learning the language, there was no escape from learning Arabic, simply because his parents were Arabs. Rida used English in his interviews.

*(41) Interviewer: I noticed that you are very good at using Arabic and you try to use it a lot, but would you prefer it if you could use English all the time?*

*Rida: Yes.*

*Interviewer: Can you tell me why?*

*Rida: The reason is because I find it easier to speak in English, and I find it a bit of a waste of time if you are trying to speak in Arabic and thinking in your head every time. Because I have been trying to speak Arabic for a few weeks now but still no progression, so I think it is not really working.*

*Interviewer: So you prefer it if they all [his family] speak in English?*

*Rida: Yes, and delete the Arabic part*

*Interviewer: So why are you trying to learn Arabic so hard?*

*Rida: Because I cannot change it. My dad and mom, uncles and grandparents are Iraqis so I have to study Arabic.*

Tarek's father from the Ealing research site also mentions identity reasons for learning Arabic, while also praising the beauty of the language:

*(42) The language is very beautiful, and they all [the kids] cannot imagine how pretty the language is and how important it is. Now my son knows the structure of the language; moreover, this is their identity.*

While the great majority of all interviewees expressed positive attitudes toward Arabic, citing religious, practical communicative or identity reasons, there were a few

exceptions. For example, Tarek from Ealing said he could see no communicative value in learning Arabic in the UK.

*(43) The interviewer: Is it useful to learn Arabic?*

*Tarek: Not very...not really...there are not many people to talk to here in London.*

*There was another instance where an Iraqi mother who is also a teacher at Leeds school seemed to attribute her son's negative attitude to Arabic by referring to the sectarian conflicts in Iraq and the resulting painful memories, commenting in Arabic:*

*(44) Dina's mother: I have my eldest son, for example, he does not like Arabic or Arab people, he says: "They do not care about us. We feel like England is our mother land more than Iraq", and he does not like to use Arabic at all.*

Turning now to attitudes (specifically) to *Fusha*, the interviews tend to confirm perceptions that this standard variety, typically not spoken in the home, is difficult to learn. For example, Lama, a 5th grade Ealing pupil, comments below, using English, on her difficulties in learning *Fusha*:

*(45) Interviewer: Do you prefer Fusha or the spoken language?*

*Lama: The spoken language.*

*Interviewer: Do you like Fusha?*

*Lama: Not really, it is a bit hard to learn. I like the spoken [vernacular dialect] because it is informal and you can just say (la, na'm or ah), so you do not have to say the full sentence. It is not hard to learn it, it is just the basics...*

*Interviewer: Do you understand Fusha?*

*Lama: If someone speaks it like mum or dad, it is easy, it is in my head, but if it is about having to learn the letters and the words then it is a bit hard, but I do understand a bit.*

*Interviewer: Can you speak it?*

*Lama: I would rather not, but yea, I can speak.*

And Rasheed and Abdul from Leeds both express, in English, below a preference for the more familiar home variety:

*(46) Interviewer: Do you prefer the home language or Fusha?*

*Rasheed: Home language.*

*Abdul: Home language.*

*Interviewer: Better than Fusha?*

*Rasheed: Yeah.*

*Interviewer: Why?*

*Rasheed: I really find Fusha hard. We say words I never think of.*

*Abdul: Understand.*

*Rasheed: Yes understand, I find this [home language] better*

However, there were child interviewees who recognize the difficulty of learning *Fusha* but at the same time accepted that it was an important variety to learn either because of its religious value or because of its usefulness as lingua franca in the Arab world.

Below a child from Leeds comments in English on the religious importance of *Fusha*:

*(47) Interviewer: Do you prefer Fusha or the spoken language?*

*Nadia: Arabic Fusha is the first language that God likes, and the second language is my language [Algerian] and the other languages.*

Meanwhile, Rida, a male child from Ealing, comments, in English, on the use of *Fusha* as a lingua franca in the Arab world and therefore does not object to learning it.

*(48) Interviewer: Going back to the accents, do you prefer to use Fusha, or the spoken Iraqi?*

*Rida: Iraqi.*

*Interviewer: Why?*

*Rida: Because it is much easier, I did not learn Iraqi at school, I know it from my mum and dad. If they had both explained Fusha to me, I would have known Fusha better.*

*Interviewer: Which one do you prefer to learn at school?*

*Rida: Fusha.*

*Interviewer: Why?*

*Rida: Because I know a bit of Iraqi, and if I know Fusha I can speak to somebody from Sudan or Saudi Arabia. All Arabs know Fusha; not just me.*

Parent interviewees also tend to value *Fusha*, commenting on its religious role as the language of the Qur'an, as an important cultural symbol, and as lingua franca in the Arab world. They therefore emphasised that they wanted their children to learn this variety.

For example, a mother of a Leeds pupil (Dalal), explaining why she wants her children to learn *Fusha* rather than the home variety, appeared to equate knowing Arabic with knowing *Fusha*. The mother, who chose to use Arabic in her interviews, said:

*(49) Obviously, they are better in the home language than Fusha... but my aim is to be perfect in Fusha. In other words, if they do not know Fusha, that means they do not know Arabic. That is why I try a lot to put on Arabic cartoon channels. The old cartoons are better than the new ones; more pedagogic and stronger Arabic is used in it than in the new cartoons. For this reason, me and their dad go on line and download old Arabic cartoons for them which they like a lot.*

Another mother of Algerian heritage, and a native speaker of a Maghrebian variety, emphasises the lingua franca role of standard Arabic (or *Fusha*) as a reason for wanting her children to learn this variety. The mother used Arabic in her interviews.

*(50) Interviewer: Which language do you prefer; spoken Algerian, or Fusha?*

*Nadia's mother: No, I want them to learn Fusha, and speak Fusha.*

*Interviewer: Why not the spoken language?*

*Nadia's mother: Because there are words people [from other Arab countries] will not understand in your spoken dialect, you'd need to explain them, so let them learn these words in Fusha from the beginning and everybody will understand, and the spoken language is easy for them to learn, so it is not a problem.*

She shows here a good appreciation of the relative positions and roles of standard Arabic and the spoken vernacular or home variety. The Maghrebian dialect, one might note here, is generally considered to be less widely comprehensible than Egyptian, Syrian or Palestinian varieties.

Yet another mother of a pupil at Ealing (Hadi) commented in Arabic that *Fusha* was indeed difficult to learn but she went on to say, without further explicit justification, that she sent her children to the complementary school to learn how to read and write in standard Arabic.

(51) *Hadi's mother: I love Arabic. I love it as a language, and I used to love it when I was at school, but Fusha for me is quite hard. It is hard to come and talk to me in Fusha, it is much easier to use the spoken language. If you are writing, that is fine, but sometimes it is difficult to speak in Fusha....*

*Interviewer: What about the kids, do you want them to use Fusha or the spoken language while speaking?*

*Hadi's mother: No Fusha no, spoken language yes, they use spoken language to speak.*

*Interviewer: What about reading and writing?*

*Hadi's mother: Of course, and it is going to be in Fusha, and that is why I sent them to the school. If it was for speaking our dialect, they are almost perfect with that.*

This again shows a good awareness of the diglossic situation in the Arab world, where a vernacular spoken variety exists alongside a more prestigious standard variety used for reading and writing, and serving as the language of the Qur'an. As Fellman (1973:28) writes, when describing the influence of Islam on Arabic speakers' attitudes to classical Arabic: "the divinity, beauty, and love of the religion are transferred to the language".

While most parents have strongly positive attitudes to *Fusha* and would like their children to learn it, this does not necessarily mean that they devalue the home variety. For example, Rasheed's father from Leeds points out in Arabic that speaking *Fusha* may create social difficulties back in the country of origin

(52) *Interviewer: Which variety would you like them to speak?*

*Rasheed's father: They need to speak the home language because if they speak Fusha, and they use it in our country, they will make fun of them and they immediately know that he is [his son] a stranger.*

### **5.6.3 Concluding remarks on attitudes to Arabic**

The findings of the questionnaires and interviews largely complement each other, and show, that pupils and their parents generally had very positive attitudes to Arabic in general, and to *Fusha* in particular, though for rather different reasons. Some participants, more usually those from Leeds, give priority to religious motives, seeing Arabic as inextricably bound to Islam and to religious observance. Others, more usually parents at Ealing, emphasised Arabic's literary heritage and the beauty of the language,

while not rejecting the link between Arabic and Islam. Again, there are those who gave priority to practical communicative reasons for learning Arabic (see also Francis et al. 2009), either for communicating with relatives ‘back home’ or for obtaining employment in the Arab world. The lingua franca role of *Fusha* in the Arab world was also mentioned. Finally, some participants saw Arabic in essentialist terms, as an inescapable bearer of one’s ethnic and religious identity and therefore as a language that must be learnt. This, of course, is a theme that recurs in the literature (for example, Fishman, 2001 and Edwards, 2001). As regards *Fusha*, many participants accepted that it was a difficult variety to learn, and many, particularly those at Ealing, were ready to admit that they do not find learning it enjoyable, but nonetheless a majority still saw it as an important variety. It is unclear as to the extent to which pupils were reflecting back the views of parents and teachers, into which they had been socialised or whether they were expressing their own independent opinions – perhaps it involved an element of both.

What is clear, however, is that the religious connections between *Fusha* and Islam assured the language a more respected status amongst the Leeds children than Ealing’s. Bearing in mind Zhang and Slaughter-Defoe’s statement that “positive attitudes towards one’s mother tongue often result in increased efforts in learning it, and in higher proficiency levels, and vice versa”(2009:78), the better test performance by the Leeds pupils (see 5.5.3.2) could be attributed to their more positive attitude towards *Fusha*.

The largely positive parental attitudes to Arabic uncovered in this study were similar to those found in other studies of attitudes to heritage languages in the UK and elsewhere. For example, the majority of the Arabic speaking parents in Martin’s (2009) study reported a positive attitude to Arabic for similar reasons to those found in this study, such as for maintaining culture, religion and links with extended families. Similarly,

with respect to the Chinese community in the USA, Zhang and Slaughter-Defoe (2009) found that parents held positive attitudes towards the heritage language, giving priority to the maintenance of family ties and identity.

Also of interest here, particularly in the light of our findings on patterns of language use and proficiency, which point to a degree of language shift, is the apparent discrepancy between, on the one hand, generally weak communicative skills on the part of pupils, combined with limited use of Arabic and, on the other, highly positive attitudes to Arabic and its value. However, as noted above, such a contrast has been identified in other studies of ethnic minorities (see Edwards 2011), where symbolic and attitudinal attachments to the heritage language often persists for longer than communicative abilities in the language in question, and perhaps more so, as in this case, where the heritage language is religiously valued, especially at the Leeds site. In this respect, then, as in others, the behaviour of our Arabic heritage participants is not very different to that of other ethnic minorities.

### **5.7 Language, Religion and Identity**

In order to explore the role of religion as an influence on language use, attitude, and identity, the researcher interviewed four children, and eight adults (four parents and four teachers) from each research site (see Chapter 4: 4.5.3) about how they saw the relationship between language, religion, and identity, and how they would describe their own identities. This data supplemented information derived from observation and field notes, including information on religious observances at each site. Before commencing, it is worth reiterating that respondents from the Leeds school visited the mosque more often than their peers at the Ealing school (see Table 5.1), which indicates a primary difference between the two schools' participants in terms of religious observance.



### 5.7.1 Religion and language

A number of different views on the relationship of language, religion and identity were expressed by interviewees. Some, for example, strongly asserted the central role of religion in their culture and identity, like this father of a Leeds pupil who spoke in Arabic:

*(53) Rasheed's father: It [religion] is very important because it is the base for maintaining our culture and our traditions. Arab culture is related to our religion. Therefore, we cannot separate religion from our culture, traditions and our identity. Religion is part of us and part of our culture and traditions.*

And others with a similar outlook frequently referred to Islam as a key motivation for learning Arabic and sending their children to the complementary school. Here, for example, are the views of the mother of a Leeds pupil who spoke in Arabic:

*(54) Interviewer: Why do you want to teach her [her daughter] Arabic?*

*Dina's mother: Why is she studying Arabic!!! To maintain her Qur'an, that is the most important thing.*

*Interviewer: So this is the main reason for teaching her Arabic?*

*Dina's mother: Yes, it is.*

Expressing a similar opinion below are the parents, both professionals, of another Leeds pupil (Rasheed) (both parents spoke in Arabic):

*(55) Interviewer: Why do you want to teach your children Arabic?*

*Rasheed's father: Religion is the main reason. In other words, if I want to list the reasons in order, I would consider the religion of Islam as the first reason and then pan-Arabism as the second.*

*Rasheed's mother: Some days I see a Pakistani kid carrying his Qur'an and going to learn Arabic in the mosque, and we do not learn it [the Arabic language]!!!!. We are Arabs and we lose the Arabic language!!! If it was not the language of the Qur'an, it could have been easier, but it is the language of the Qur'an...*

Another mother of a Leeds pupil mentions (in Arabic) that she stresses the religious dimension to learning Arabic to motivate her children in their Arabic learning:

*(56) Dalal's mother: "Yes, I want her to like it, because it is not easy for them; they are learning English and they learn Arabic, these are very long hours. You have to tell the kid from her/his early days why s/he is doing that, so I tell my child 'this is for*

*worshipping god, our prophet is an Arab, the Qur'an's letters are written in Arabic, you get benefit from every second and minute you spend in learning Arabic'. The kids usually understand that way because they ask you, what will you give me, so they will do nothing without taking something in return. So this is one of the ways to motivate them."*

A 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, again from the Leeds site, also cites Qur'anic knowledge as a motive for studying Arabic, (the interview was conducted in Arabic):

*(57) Najla: I tell them [pupils], the heaven's language is Arabic as well as the language of Qur'an, if you do not know it, how would you understand the Qur'an?*

Below, the Leeds head-teacher commented, in Arabic, that if pupils lost Arabic they would also lose contact with their religion and their ethnic community.

*(58) Interviewer: What do you think they have lost when they lose their language?  
The head teacher: [laugh] Everything; the Arabic language if you do not understand it, you will not understand the Qur'an, your prayers... In addition, there is a gap between them and the Arab community around them, they do not mingle in it.*

The close relationship perceived between Islam, language and identity also extends to some of the children interviewed, as the following remarks by a Leeds child, who spoke in English, illustrates:

*(59) Interviewer: Is it important for you to learn Arabic?  
Rasheed: Yes.  
Interviewer: Why?  
Rasheed: First of all it is the language of the Qur'an, and really it is my mother tongue language.*

We can see from the various views expressed above that, for some participants, Islam has a central role in their lives and identities, and they hardly distinguished between religion and ethnicity or between Islamic and Arab cultures. They also tended to see religion as a prime motive for learning Arabic, which is considered the sacred language of Islam (for the relationship between language and religion, see 2.2.5.5). All this recalls Khalidi's (1991: 1369) observation that:

“Much evidence exists to show that many Arabs have not drawn a sharp distinction between Islam and Arabism; they were different but closely linked forms of expressions of identity made all the more important by the encroachment of the West”.

In contrast to these religiously oriented views, there were, however, other participants, from the Ealing research site, who tended to give religion less importance and who adopted a more secular outlook. Moreover, the two cultures of Islam and Arabic were distinguished, although nobody denied the association between Arabic and Islam. For example, two mothers of Ealing pupils, both working professionals, appear to accept that there is a link between Islam and Arabic but reject the idea that Islamic and Arabic cultures are identical or inseparable (First interview was conducted in Arabic; second interview was conducted in both Arabic and English):

*(60) Interviewer: In your opinion, is Islamic culture identical with Arab culture?*

*Lama'a mother: No, not 100%. That is why I told you the basics in our culture are close to the religion but there are many things which are different.*

*(61) Interviewer: Do you differentiate between the Arabic culture and the Islamic culture?*

*Rida's mother: The Arabic culture, is a culture on its own, and has nothing to do with religion. What Islam did is that it supplied us with a beautiful language... Religion preserved the language. However, the development and the use of the language has nothing to do with religion. Most of what we do in our daily life is a cultural heritage and has nothing to do with the religion, there is no relation. Look at an Indian Muslim, are they similar to us [Arab Muslims]!!! No.*

These views reflect some of those reported in the literature – for example, that of Ennaji (1999: 387), who comments as follows:

“People wrongly associate Islamic beliefs with Arab ethnicity. They are unaware that there exist Christian Arabic-speaking populations in the Middle East (Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Sudan, Iraq, etc.), as well as non-Arab Muslim populations, such as the Berbers

in the Maghreb, the Kurds in the Middle East, and the Pakistanis and Malaysians, for instance.”

Another mother of an Ealing pupil, who happened also to be a teacher at the Ealing school, also appeared to distinguish between the cultural and purely religious aspects of Islam. The mother spoke in Arabic:

*(62) Interviewer: What about religion?*

*Hadi's mother: I did not try to implant the religious identity inside them [her children], but we are Muslims, no doubt, and I am proud and not ashamed of that. However, I do not practice Islam, we fast, we celebrate Eid, but it is more cultural than religious. In fact, there was a decision that I did not want religion to occupy a large space in our life, not just because we live in a non-Muslim country but also because I am more spiritual.*

Parents with a similar outlook also tended to downplay the importance of Islam as a motive for learning Arabic, stressing instead cultural, practical and identity reasons.

Tarek's father, from the Ealing research site, made reference (in Arabic), for example, to aesthetic, cultural and identity reasons for learning Arabic:

*(63) Interviewer: So why are you teaching the kids Arabic?*

*Tarek's father: First of all, it is a very pretty language, and they cannot imagine how beautiful and important the language is. Moreover, it is their identity.*

*Interviewer: As Muslims or Arabs?*

*Tarek's father: As Arabs*

This more secular outlook does not mean, however, that parents rejected the association between Arabic and Islam, as shown in the remarks of another mother of an Ealing pupil, who spoke in both Arabic and English:

*(64) Rida's mother: I want to do that for two reasons; the first is that they are Arabs, although they have British passports but originally they identify themselves as Arabs. The second one is because this is like any other certificate. That is, in future, whatever they study, they would have an advantage because they speak more than one language, and, you know, the competition for getting a job is very high nowadays, so at least they will have something that makes them stand out from others.*

*Interviewer: Does religion have any relationship with teaching them Arabic?*

*Rida's mother: No, I told you earlier. I want them to know about their religion, I do not want to leave that space empty; however, at the same time I do not want them to be extremist because they will choose what they want to do eventually.*

And, at the same time the positive influence of Islam in assisting language maintenance was recognised by at least one interviewee. This was Rida's mother from the Ealing research site, who described religion as playing a minor role in her own family life, but who also acknowledged that retaining a link between Islam and Arabic was important for the maintenance of the Arabic heritage language. The mother who used Arabic and English in her interviews said:

*(65) Rida's mother: I think it [language] becomes less relevant to them... If you look at other groups of people that migrated, people who maintain links, they maintain religious links rather than cultural or linguistic links. The fact that we have chosen not to maintain those links, actually I think makes it less likely for us to maintain the language.*

This, one could argue, is a sociolinguistically astute and accurate observation.

Like their parents, and probably influenced by them, a few children, especially from the Ealing site, gave mainly instrumental rather than religious reasons for learning Arabic. For example, a male child from Ealing mentioned that learning Arabic could help in getting a job or in travelling in Arab countries. The child who spoke in English said:

*(64) Interviewer: So how important is it for you to learn Arabic?*

*Rida: Six out of ten to learn it.*

*Interviewer: And what are the reasons?*

*Rida: To speak with other people, to go to different countries like Dubai, Amman and to be able to speak, and to have a better job. Even if you want to study something you can get an A-level in Arabic and you can get more chances.*

Interviewees were also asked about the role religion played in their social relationships, and again a variety of views were expressed. Some, the more religiously observant, said that they preferred their children to associate with other Muslims, whether Arabic speaking or not, as they felt that socialising with other Muslim families would protect

children against the potentially more harmful influences of Western culture. Here, for example, is the mother of 10 year old female pupil at Leeds speaking in Arabic:

*(66) Interviewer: "Does it make any difference if the family communicates with Muslims or non-Muslims?"*

*Nadia's mother: Sure, the close friends should be Muslims, because I do not want her behaviour to become British. I see her when she is with English friends, she wants to show her hair more, and other things which she will definitely do when she is older. However, I want to keep her safe as much as I can till eighteen, and if I can keep her with Muslim people, that will be very good.*

And, another 9 year old girl at Leeds expressed (in English) a similar opinion, as follows:

*(67) Interviewer: Does language have anything to do with choosing your friends, for example, do you prefer friends who speak Arabic?*

*Dalal: No, but I only think that if they speak Arabic you should be friends because they are from the same religion as you.*

*Interviewer: So you think religion is important?*

*Dalal: Yes, very.*

*Interviewer: You prefer to be friends with Muslims?*

*Dalal: Yes*

Other interviewees, however, commented that religion had little importance for them in their social networks, in selecting or making friends. Here, for example, are the comments of the father of an Ealing pupil, who spoke in Arabic.

*(68) Interviewer: What about making friends?*

*Tarek's father: I do not judge people here either by religion or nationality.*

*Interviewer: According to what, then?*

*Tarek's: According to the personal character between people. For me, I might be friends with somebody who does not even have a religion as long as we have similar personal characteristics... Religion for me is not a problem; we do not prefer certain people or differentiate between them based on their religion*

Like the parent above, a 9 year old male child from Ealing makes a similar remark; however, in English, explaining that Muslims can be of good or bad character:

*(69) Interviewer: Do you prefer to have Muslim friends?*

*Hadi: No.*

*Interviewer: Could you explain why?*

*Hadi: Because my friends are my friends, I do not care where they come from, or what their religion is, because people can be nice regardless...*

Interestingly, a 4<sup>th</sup> grade female pupil from Leeds, who expressed similar opinions to those above, said she liked friends who spoke English well. The girl, who spoke in English explained:

*(70) Interviewer: Does religion have anything to do with choosing your friends?*

*Nadia: It does not matter if they are Muslims or not, I just like to play with someone in the playground. I like to play with English people because they speak English well, like my friend Jessica...*

#### **5.7.1.1 Concluding remarks on language and religion**

As we have seen, interviewees expressed different views on the relationships between Islamic and Arab culture, and on the importance of religion as a motive for learning Arabic and in their social relationships. Given that the Leeds and Ealing research sites were selected on the grounds that one followed a more religiously-oriented curriculum and had a more Islamic ethos than the other, it is unsurprising that the majority of those expressing more secular views, giving Islam a less central position in their lives, came from the Ealing site and that the majority of those stressing the centrality of Islam in their social relationships, and as a motive for learning Arabic, tended to come from the Leeds site. At the Leeds school, religion, too, was found to be a significant factor in forming social circles for some of the Leeds parents, who favoured socialising with Muslim friends to maintain an Islamic atmosphere for their children.

Moreover, the declaration by a Leeds mother in extract (55) above that “*it could have been easier [to let go of Arabic] if it was not the language of the Qur’an*” explains the Leeds parents’ insistence on the use of Arabic inside the home, as demonstrated in the section on language use at home (5.3.1).

Overall, the data suggest that religious orientation, and the degree of religious conservatism, rather than nationality, or perhaps even social class, has become a major

factor dividing and distinguishing Arab individuals and communities in this study. Moreover, the relationship between Arabic and Islam is seen as a positive factor in maintaining the language among Arab ethnic minority communities, but not to the same extent in all groups (for language and religion, see Chew, 2006; Fishman, 1999; Myers-Scotton, 2006). Consequently, religion and degrees of religious observance cannot be overlooked when investigating sociolinguistic aspects of Arab communities in the UK.

### **5.7.2 Language and identity**

In this section, which relates to that above on language and religion, we discuss that part of the questionnaire and interview data where participants were asked how they would describe their own identities. Participants were asked in particular which of their various possible overlapping identities they would prioritise, whether religious (e.g. Muslim), national (e.g. Iraqi or British), ethnic (e.g. Arab), or some hybrid combination of these.



### 5.7.2.1 Questionnaire data analysis

**Table 5. 13: Responses regarding identity of Leeds and Ealing children in general and at home**

In general, I feel								
		British	Arab	Muslim	More British than Arab/Muslim	Equally	More Arab than Arab/British	More Muslim than Arab/British
Leeds (N=38)	Number of participants Percentage of participants	1 (3%)	1 (3%)	16 (42%)	1 (3%)	13 (33%)	1 (3%)	5 (13%)
Ealing (N=37)	Number of pupils Percentage of pupils	1 (3%)	7 (20%)	5 (14%)	3 (8%)	15 (41%)	4 (11)	1 (3%)
At home, I feel								
Leeds (N=38)	Number of pupils Percentage of pupils	1 (3%)	3 (8%)	25 (67%)	0 (0%)	6 (16%)	1 (3%)	1 (3%)
Ealing (N=37)	Number of pupils Percentage of pupils	3 (8%)	15 (41%)	6 (17%)	0 (0%)	10 (28%)	1 (3%)	1 (3%)

As seen in Table 5.13 above 42% of Leeds pupil participants identified themselves as Muslims in general; this percentage also increased to 67% when Leeds pupil participants were asked about their identity at home. However, 41% of Ealing child participants reported that they felt equally Arab, British and Muslim in general, while only 17% felt Muslim; this was a lower percentage than the percentage at the Leeds site. Moreover, the affinity with Arab identity was expressed more in Ealing homes, in which 41% of participants identified themselves as Arabs, compared to 8% at the Leeds

site. This difference suggests that the Leeds children showed a primary affinity with religious identity (rather than ethnic identity), while the Ealing children showed a greater adherence to ethnic (Arab) rather than religious (i.e. Muslim) identity.

**Table 5. 14: Responses regarding identity of Leeds and Ealing children at English school and in their neighbourhoods**

At the English school, I feel								
		British	Arab	Muslim	More British than Arab/Muslim	Equally	More Arab than Arab/British	More Muslim than Arab/British
Leeds (N=38)	Number of participants Percentage of participants	18 (47%)	1 (3%)	8 (21%)	3 (8%)	6 (15%)	1 (3%)	1 (3%)
Ealing (N=37)	Number of pupils Percentage of pupils	23 (62%)	4 (11%)	1 (3%)	2 (5%)	6 (16%)	1 (3%)	0 (0%)
At the neighbourhood, I feel								
Leeds (N=38)	Number of pupils Percentage of pupils	6 (16%)	1 (3%)	16 (42%)	3 (8%)	8 (21%)	2 (5%)	2 (5%)
Ealing (N=37)	Number of pupils Percentage of pupils	15 (40%)	8 (22%)	1 (3%)	2 (5%)	10 (27%)	1 (3%)	0 (0%)

Table 5.14 shows that a considerable percentage of child participants at the Leeds site (42%) stated that they felt Muslim in their neighbourhood, which suggests that they could be living in areas in which Muslims predominate. On the other hand, more pupil participants at the Ealing site identified themselves as British when they were in their neighbourhoods, which could indicate that they lived in areas inhabited by mainly white British people. The questionnaire responses also suggest that child participants at both sites aligned themselves more with a British identity when they were in their mainstream schools, although this percentage was higher in Ealing than Leeds. Moreover, in expressing their identity, child participants shifted between different identities in various domains. This finding agrees with the literature, which suggests that identities are not static (see Dorian, 1999; Edwards, 2011; Norton, 2006; Skutnabb-

Kangas, 1999). Of course, questionnaire results simply point to complex identities, they do not explain them. The interview results, on the other hand, help to do this. We turn now to discuss the interview results in which participants were asked to elaborate on their identities as well as the relationship between language and those expressed identities.

### **5.7.2.2 Interview data analysis**

As expected, interviewees expressed a variety of views. Some were quite determined to emphasise their Muslim identity, like a father from Leeds who spoke in Arabic:

*(71) Interviewer: How do you identify your family?*

*Rasheed's father: Islamic; it means I do not say Palestinian or Arab, I say Islamic*

This stance on the matter of identity was echoed by a number of others. Here, for example, is the mother of a Leeds child (Nadia's mother) who explained in Arabic:

*(72) "Islamic, definitely Islamic, I do not care about the country; neither Algeria nor Saudi Arabia."*

Another mother from the Leeds site was not so emphatic in rejecting an Arab identity but again prioritised the Muslim identity above others (the interview was conducted in Arabic):

*(73) Dalal's mother: For us, we mostly identify ourselves as Muslims, and I raise my daughters to be Muslims, and to feel Muslim from within. I like them to get close to their Muslim friends who are not Arabs, and feel that they are the same and what really gathers them is that they are Muslims and they have much more in common than they have differences. That means not because they are not Arabs, and we are Arabs, we are different. No you are the same because you are Muslims. So the first thing we focus on, me and my husband, is the religion. We are Muslims first...*

Confirming their answers in the questionnaires (see Table 5.13 above), and echoing these views of parents, and no doubt influenced by their school's curriculum and ethos, some children also chose to highlight their Muslim identity, like this 11 year old female child from Leeds who used English in her interviews:

*(74) Interviewer: What about you, do you say I am Arab or I am a Muslim?  
Dina: I just say I am a Muslim.*

Another 4<sup>th</sup> grade child from Leeds of Algerian origin expressed a similar viewpoint (also in English) but at greater length, referring also to the various languages she could speak:

*(75) Interviewer: If you were asked, how would you talk about yourself?  
Nadia: I would start with I am a Muslim, and my first language is Arabic, then French, then English. Well I do not understand French that well, I only understand it but I do not speak it.*

Hamid's (2011) study found similar results, in that students were influenced by their elders' identities and self-identified with the Bengali ethnic minority community in the UK.

With regard to the relationship between language and identity, another 3<sup>rd</sup> grade Leeds female child (Dalal) chose to emphasise the link between speaking Arabic and Islam as well as the need for good Muslims to learn Arabic. However, the girl explained in English that Islam was not restricted to Arabic speakers; speakers of other languages were also Muslims:

*(76) "The Qur'an is written in Arabic. As a good Muslim, you should learn Arabic, but Islam is not just speaking Arabic. You can speak in any other language, unless you are an Arab person."*

This distinction was also mentioned by Safran (1999:89), who said "The Arabic language is not congruent with Islamic fundamentalism; there are Arabic-speaking Christians and Farsi- and Turkish-speaking Muslims".

There were other interviewees, however, who had a quite different perspective on their identity. For example a father from Ealing, who worked as a teacher, explained in Arabic at some length that he and his family identified themselves first and foremost as

Egyptians and secondly as Arabs. The idea of a Muslim, or any religious identity, was firmly dismissed;

*(77) Interviewer: So the identity you are talking about, is it Egyptian, Islamic or Arab identity?*

*Tarek's father: My personal belief is that it is an Egyptian identity; I am an Egyptian who speaks Arabic. Of course, I believe in the Arab nation as one nation, and in pan-Arabism and all of that, and that does not contradict with what I am saying, but first and last I am Egyptian, whether Egypt is an Arab country or not.*

*Interviewer: Is this the identity you want to transfer to your kids?*

*Tarek's father: Yes, of course. Egypt as a country in the region chose, as our ancestors did, the Islamic religion as their religion, and others chose Christianity as their religion. You know that some countries chose the religion without adopting the language. However, Egypt chose Islam and Arabic, consequently the Arab culture, and the Arab identity, but if you ask me or ask my kids, we are Egyptians.*

*Interviewer: What comes next, the religious or the Arab identity?*

*Tarek's father: Personally I am an Egyptian first and Arab second. Or I am an Egyptian who speaks Arabic and believes in Islam, because I like to separate between these elements. Islam is a religion that a person believes in, but to say I am a Muslim, no I do not agree with those people. First of all, there is no contradiction between Islam as a religion and your identity. Islam is a religion, Islam has never been an ethnicity or nationality We have Egyptian Muslims, Egyptian Christians, and Jewish Egyptians; there is no contradiction.*

*Interviewer: So you do not identify yourself by religion?*

*Tarek's father: Not at all. I believe in separating the state and religion, and identity and religion.*

Meanwhile, another mother from Ealing, who was also a teacher at the 'Arabic' school, chose to emphasise not a national identity but rather a pan-Arab identity, which she saw as firmly linked to the Arabic language (the interview was conducted in Arabic). The role of religion as a constituent of identity was not mentioned.

*(78) Interviewer: Does religion play a role in your family identification?*

*Lama's mother: No, we are Arabs. Palestinians, but I am an Arab first, definitely Arab first, and the kids when they were young, they used to know the meaning of the same word in different Arabic dialects.*

*Interviewer: Why are you an Arab before being Palestinian?*

*Lama's mother: Historically, we are Arabs, and Arabism is very important for me, we are Arabs, and Palestine is just a region in the whole nation.*

*Interviewer: Do you think talking in Arabic is part of your identity?*

*Lama's mother: Sure, sure, we are all linked by history and also language, this is not just because I teach Arabic now, since I was a kid, or even at the university, I have always had this feeling....*

A somewhat different perspective on identity was provided by another mother of an Ealing child who had lived in the UK for a long time and who mentioned a dual aspect to her sense of identity. Rida's mothersaw herself as both Arab and British but, like some of the interviewees above, she did not consider religion to be an important aspect of her identity. She spoke in both Arabic and English:

*(79) Rida's mother: Me personally, I think the parents have a dual identity. I still feel that I am part Iraqi; but I am, also, British because I have been here for such a long time. On the other hand, because of our upbringing and the time we lived there we are nationalists; I feel I belong to an Arab nation, it is not the religion. So, I have much more in common with a Syrian Christian or Lebanese than Muslims who came from Pakistan... Where my children are probably different, they would think of themselves as British and Arabs but not Muslims. I do not think they have that link in terms of religion.*

It is clear that the woman here had integrated her original identity with the identity of the host community, i.e. British identity (for acculturation and identity in ethnic minority communities, see also 2.2.5.3). Moreover, the idea of Arabness for the two participants in the previous extract is similar to the perception of Nagel's respondents (2002) that Arabness "represents a set of values, traditions and attitudes that are common to people in the Arab world and that have been passed down over generations" (2010:271).

This notion of a dual or hybrid identity is also referred to by Lama, an Ealing child who spoke in English:

*(80) Interviewer: How would you identify yourself?*

*Lama: I would probably say I am English. If someone said to me where are you from? I would probably say the Middle East and if they say where were you born, I would say England... So if they said what language do you speak...no... If they said what is your main language? I would say English. So probably I would say I am half middle Eastern, half English, I would not say Palestine, because people would say Pakistan, so I just say Middle East.*

*Interviewer: Do you think speaking in Arabic is part of your identity?*

*Lama: Not really, because Arabic does not come to my life that much, only a bit, because of Arabic school, because I do not really care about Arabic.*

Interestingly, this girl rejected the idea that the Arabic language formed part of her identity and went as far as saying, quite frankly, that she did not “really care about Arabic” because Arabic played only a small role in her life.

Another 11 year old child from Ealing also rejected the idea that the Arabic language was relevant to his identity. He said in English that he felt more Iraqi and Arab and sometimes British but only to a marginal degree:

*(81) Interviewer: How would you identify yourself?*

*Rida: Iraqi.*

*Interviewer: Why not other identities like Muslim, Arab or British?*

*Rida: Well, I do not pray five times a day so I cannot be a Muslim really. British... mmm... I sometimes do identify myself as British, depending if I am identifying myself to somebody like a teacher, but it is quite clear I will not be English. My mom is quite clearly Iraqi, and my dad is certainly Iraqi, you can tell, so there is no point in saying British, and I am quite proud of myself being Iraqi.*

*Interviewer: What about an Arab nationality?*

*Rida: I am an Arab, because it is a sort of the same thing, it is like saying I am a Chinese person but I am Asian.*

*Interviewer: Do you think learning Arabic or being able to speak the language is part of your identity?*

*Rida: No.*

*Interviewer: Why?*

*Rida: There is a second generation Indian girl in my class, she says: I am Indian and not British although she is a second generation, and she does not speak the Hindi language.*

An interesting aspect of the two interview extracts above is that they illustrate that their identities are not fixed. In other words, individuals can feel and express different identities or different aspects of their identities depending on the domain, their interlocutors, and how they are asked about their identity (see also Edwards, 2011; Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004).

As we have seen, the two child interviewees above rejected the idea that Arabic, the heritage language, was important to their sense of identity, and this was a rather different stance from that sometimes mentioned in the literature (see e.g. Edwards, 2001; Fishman, 2001; Mills 2001). However, this was far from a universal viewpoint,

especially among parents, as is shown in this interview with a mother of an Ealing child who firmly associated the Arabic language with her identity (the interview was conducted in Arabic):

*(82) Interviewer: "Do you think speaking in Arabic has anything to do with your identity?"*

*Hadi's mother: "Yes."*

*Interviewer: "How?"*

*Hadi's mother: "I think it gives you access to and contact with and confidence in situations. It is difficult to say that you belong to something if you cannot communicate with the people, if you cannot read, if you cannot interpret and you cannot understand. For me the language gives identity."*

What we see here, then, may be a generational difference and a further indication of language shift. The parents with their higher proficiency in Arabic and their greater daily use of Arabic seemed more ready to see Arabic as an important element in their identity and as a marker of a distinct ethnic identity, as is frequently commented on in the literature, with respect to other ethnic minorities (e.g. Zhang and Slaughter-Defoe, 2009). By contrast, some children were quite ready, at least in interviews, to dismiss the idea that the Arabic language was important to their identity. Moreover, similar to the questionnaire results, they seemed more ready to refer to mixed or hybrid identities – for example, their country of origin, a British or a mixed Arab-British identity, recalling Nagel's (2002:278) observation that young Arabs in London "embrace a wide range of identities that indicate a sense of fusion or hybridity".

#### **5.7.2.2. Concluding remarks on language and identity**

As in the previous sections 5.7.1 and 5.7.2.1 questionnaire respondents and interviewees offered a variety of perspectives on how they would describe their own identities, with some giving prominence to Islam as the essential component in their identities. Given the sampling procedure and the selection of the Leeds site as one with a pronounced Islamic ethos and set of aims, it is unsurprising once again that the Leeds participants tended more commonly to stress a Muslim identity, whilst the participants from Ealing



did not exclude Islam but tended more commonly to emphasise the secular components of their identities, such as national or ethnic elements. There are also suggestions in the data of a generational difference. Parents tended to place considerable importance on the Arabic language in their lives and identities (Edwards 2011) while pupils seemed more ready to admit to a sense of a mixed or more fluid identity (Coulmas 2005; Skutnabb-Kangas, 1999), and did not give much importance to the Arabic language as an essential component of their identities (see also 2.2.5.4 for the relationship between language and identity). This said, the Leeds parent participants and a school curriculum that sought to foster Islamic values and identities probably influenced the child participants at the Leeds site, who quite often mentioned the importance of religion in their lives, in their identities, and as a motive for learning Arabic. In this respect these pupil participants seemed to accept the identity that their parents and the school projected onto them, distinguishing them from pupils described in other studies, such as that of Blackledge and Creese (2008), who reflected that pupils contested or attempted to renegotiate the identities the ‘Bengali school’ sought to foster.

Another theme that seems to emerge from the data is the growing importance of religion rather than nationality as a factor distinguishing the identity of Arab individuals and communities, which is similar to other studies (see Hamid, 2011). However, there are again different degrees of religious observance among Arabs in the UK, as elsewhere, and different degrees to which Islam remains a private marker of identity or is seen as a matter of public or political relevance. Here, it may be useful to call attention to Mandeville's (2010) four categories or levels of socio-political identification.

1. Liberal-pluralists, who endorse harmony between Islam and other ethnic groups, as well as the possibility of integrating into a non-Muslim society.
2. Communal-Pluralists, who praise the discrete identity of Islam and the requirement to remain loyal to Islam's traditions, but nevertheless appreciate

similarities between Islam and other religions and encourage participation in the public life of non-Muslim communities.

3. Communitarians, who prioritise Islamic identity and call attention to the importance of religious practices, as well as keeping social interactions within an Islamic circle.

4. Radicals, who underline Islamic identity and offer an exact interpretation of religion, which includes establishing an Islamic state with an Islamic political system.

By relating these categories to the present study, we could associate most parents and families at the Ealing site with the liberal pluralist group and most participants and families from Leeds with the communitarian or communal-pluralist groups. This, however, is somewhat speculative. What, however, we can claim with greater confidence on the basis of the data is that Arabs in the UK, like other individuals, express different motives for learning Arabic, have different perspectives on the importance of Islam, and describe their identities rather differently. These various perspectives often differ between adults and children, and provide some evidence of language shift and of change in the role of Arabic in the lives of the younger Arab generation. Finally, those media depictions which represent Arabs in the UK as simply part of a larger homogenous Muslim minority are far from accurate. The Arabs in this study differ very considerably in their degree of religious observance, in their attitudes, and in how they describe their identities.

Both Leeds and Ealing parent participants mentioned Arabic as one of the most salient markers of identity for their children, as has been noted in studies of other ethnic minorities (e.g. Zhang and Slaughter-Defoe, 2009). However, pupils did not consider the role of language to be such a vital element in shaping their identities, and this may have been a contributory factor for the language shift observed amongst the younger subjects. According to Michieka (2012) and Smolicz, (1980; 1981), placing the language as a significant factor or a core-value in group identity would positively

influence maintaining the language among its speakers. The children in our study, however, did not give Arabic such prominence as an identity marker, and this again may be an indication of language shift in process.

### **5.8 Attitudes to learning Arabic in formal settings**

The following section discusses children's attitudes to their learning experiences at complementary schools. The data was obtained from questionnaires and also interviews with four pupils and parents in each school, in addition to the researcher's observations and field notes.

As this is primarily a sociolinguistic thesis, it may be useful to first explain why it was thought useful to enquire about attitudes to learning Arabic in complementary school. One major reason is that the complementary school is one of the most important ethnic minority community institutions dedicated to transmitting and maintaining the heritage language (see 2.2.4.1 for goals of complementary schools). Thus, the perceptions pupils and parents have towards the school, the teachers and the quality of teaching may well have some influence on pupils' learning motivation, the likelihood of developing skills in the heritage language, and ultimately on the likelihood of maintaining the heritage language, as well as influencing their attitudes to the language, whether this is the standard or the home vernacular variety. Finally, as the complementary schools are research sites, it was thought worthwhile to take this opportunity to probe a little into attitudes to learning at school, as a topic of interest in itself.

Table 5.15 below displays responses to general questions on pupils' attitudes to their complementary schools.

**Table 5. 15: Attitudes to complementary school by Leeds and Ealing school respondents**

		<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
<b>I like going to the Arabic school</b>						
Leeds (N=38)	Number of pupils Percentage of pupils	4 (11%)	6 (16%)	13 (34%)	8 (21%)	7 (18%)
Ealing (N=37)	Number of pupils Percentage of pupils	3 (8%)	13 (35%)	4 (11%)	13 (35%)	4 (11%)
	Total	<b>7 (9%)</b>	<b>19 (25%)</b>	17 (23%)	21 (28%)	11 (15%)
<b>Going to this school is a waste of time</b>						
Leeds (N=38)	Number of pupils Percentage of pupils	<b>5 (13%)</b>	<b>5 (13%)</b>	9 (24%)	10 (26%)	9 (24%)
Ealing (N=37)	Number of pupils Percentage of pupils	<b>0 (0%)</b>	<b>3 (8%)</b>	6 (16%)	9 (25%)	19 (51%)
	Total	<b>5 (7%)</b>	<b>8 (11%)</b>	15 (20%)	19 (25%)	28 (37%)
<b>If I was a mother/father, I would send my child to the complementary school</b>						
Leeds (N=38)	Number of pupils Percentage of pupils	11 (29%)	16 (42%)	7 (18%)	4 (11%)	0 (0%)
Ealing (N=37)	Number of pupils Percentage of pupils	11 (30%)	13 (35%)	8 (22%)	5 (13%)	0 (0%)
	Total	<b>22 (29%)</b>	<b>29 (39%)</b>	15 (20%)	9 (12%)	0 (0%)
<b>I prefer the Arabic school to the English school</b>						
Leeds (N=38)	Number of pupils Percentage of pupils	4 (11%)	1 (3%)	11 (29%)	7 (18%)	15 (39%)
Ealing (N=37)	Number of pupils Percentage of pupils	2 (5%)	2 (5%)	10 (27%)	17 (46%)	6 (17%)
	Total	6 (8%)	3 (4%)	21 (28%)	24 (32%)	21 (28%)
<b>I feel more comfortable at the Arabic school than the English school</b>						
Leeds (N=38)	Number of pupils Percentage of pupils	4 (11%)	2 (5%)	17 (45%)	13 (34%)	2 (5%)
Ealing (N=37)	Number of pupils Percentage of pupils	4 (11%)	4 (11%)	6 (16%)	20 (54%)	3 (8%)
	Total	<b>8 (11%)</b>	<b>6 (8%)</b>	23 (31%)	<b>33 (44%)</b>	<b>5 (6%)</b>

As can be seen above, a significant number of pupils from both schools (43% - combining both 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree') were ready to say that they actually disliked going to the 'Arabic' school, but against that rather fewer pupils (a total of 18%) admitted that they saw going to the complementary school as a waste of time.

Because it reflects badly on the quality of the school experience, it is of some concern that more Leeds pupils (26%) than Ealing ones (8%) said that they felt going to complementary school was a waste of time.

One particularly interesting aspect of the questionnaire responses was the answers to the specific question of whether pupils would send their children to the complementary school to learn Arabic. Here, a very high proportion of all pupils (68% overall), over a third of all respondents, answered positively, despite many having previously said that they actually disliked going to the complementary school. This response is similar to, and consistent with, a previous section of the questionnaire in which pupils were asked about their attitudes to Arabic schools in general. This appears to show that, regardless their personal experiences of the complementary school, and regardless their actual proficiency level in Arabic, a large majority still had strong sentimental or affective attachments to Arabic as a heritage language and language of identity.

When asked to compare the 'Arabic' school with the 'English' school in terms of comfort, a surprisingly large percentage of pupils (50%) compared to (19%) said that they felt more comfortable at the 'English' school.

Interviews with pupils and parents were helpful for understanding some of the reasons for the above questionnaire responses. For example, they helped uncover that an important reason for the dislike of learning Arabic at complementary school was not to do with a dislike of Arabic language learning in itself but rather because of the scheduling of complementary school classes during weekends when other pupils were enjoying free leisure time. Similar reasons have been discussed in the literature (see e.g. Archer et al., 2009). Here, for example, are the comments of Lama, an 12year old Ealing pupil, who spoke in English:

(82) *Lama: I would not mind learning Arabic but not in the Arabic school because I do not like Arabic school, because it is every Saturday we get up, and then go. Maybe if it started at 1:00 till 3:00, but you have to be there at 9:30.*

A similar comment is made, also in English, by a Leeds girl (Nadia):

(83) *Interviewer: Do you like going to the Arabic school?*

*Nadia: Not really.*

*Interviewer: If it was not for your mum, would you go there?*

*Nadia: I do not think so; I could learn it at home.*

*Interviewer: Can you tell me why?*

*Nadia: Because I lose all my Saturdays, it is not really fair.*

And Rasheed a 5th grade Leeds pupil makes the same point explicitly:

(84) *Interviewer: Do you like the Arabic school you go to?*

*Rasheed: No. If it was on Friday instead of English school, I would like it.*

*Interviewer: So why don't you like it like this?*

*Rasheed: Because it takes all my Sundays; it takes them all away.*

And, a mother (Lama's mother), who is also a teacher at the Ealing school, comments in Arabic as follows, pointing out that dislike of going to school does not imply a dislike of Arabic:

(85) *Strangely, they tell you we like Arabic, but we do not like the Arabic school. They have no problem with Arabic, they have a problem with the Arabic school. I want to remind you, that me and my kids, we do not have weekends: Saturday we are at the school, and Sunday is one day, maybe if they had close friends at the school, things would have been different, but my kids did not.*

There were, of course, other reasons beyond the scheduling of classes for pupils expressing a dislike of going to the complementary school. Among these were a feeling expressed by a few pupils, such as Rida, a 5th grade Ealing pupil, who chose to speak in English in his interview, that the school did not provide a disciplined environment for learning Arabic. Consequently, they would prefer to learn at home:

(86) *I want to learn more, but I don't think the Arabic school is providing a lot of teaching habits, because I do not think the teachers are controlling the students enough*

*because there is lots of talking in our class but I want to learn more, so I would rather learn from my mom than learn from the Arabic school, although she does not have time but I would like to be a lot more fluent in Arabic.*

As mentioned above, the questionnaire responses (Table 5.15) indicated a substantial preference for the mainstream ‘English’ school over the ‘Arabic’ school in terms of ‘feeling comfortable’, and again the interviews helped cast some light on this. For example, one pupil, in 3rd grade at Leeds, commented in English on the behaviour of teachers as follows:

*(87) Interviewer: OK, now which one do you prefer more, your English or Arabic school?*

*Dalal: English school.*

*Interviewer: Why?*

*Dalal: They do not shout in English; in the Arabic school they do.*

*Interviewer: OK, what else?*

*Dalal: In Arabic school they are very strict, in English they are not; the teachers are calm and they just listen to you.*

And Rida, a 5<sup>th</sup> grade Ealing pupil, who also did his interview in English, suggested some ideas to improve the teaching process at complementary schools:

*(88) Rida: You could use the smart board a bit more to see things rather than using the whiteboard. For example, you can see a video explaining certain things, and the teacher could prepare other things.*

Interviews were also helpful with regard to uncovering reasons why pupils preferred the mainstream school. For example, Dina, a 5<sup>th</sup> grade Leeds pupil, suggested that teaching at the mainstream school was more interactive. Dina was interviewed in English.

*(89) Interviewer: Why do you like him [his mainstream school teacher] more?*

*Dina “He talks more with us, we play games together, and I see him more and speak with him more.”*

Teachers’ English proficiency also plays a role in defining pupils’ attitudes to the teachers and the whole experience of learning Arabic at complimentary schools.

Nadia, a 4<sup>th</sup> grade Leeds pupil, commented, in English, that the higher English proficiency of teachers at the mainstream school facilitated easier communication and a greater degree of rapport:

*(90) Interviewer: Which one do you like more?*

*Nadia: My English school teacher.*

*Interviewer: Why?*

*Nadia: Because she likes to talk to you a lot.*

*Interviewer: Do you think it is easier to talk to her?*

*Nadia: Oh yeah, her English is perfect.*

Echoing similar remarks in the literature (see e.g. Wei and Wu 2009 on Chinese complementary schools), a few pupils, like Lama and Yara (sisters) from the 5th grade at Ealing, who chose to speak in English, also made critical comments on the English of some complementary school teachers:

*(91) Lama: The teacher is alright but he is a bit boring, and his pronunciation is not really good, because he says 'the less' when he means 'the lesson'. If he does not understand something he just says 'yeah', he does not say what it means. You know when you taught the class, we had the book, and we had to translate the words, he does not know what they mean because all he does is go to his dictionary and look them up, and he does not actually explain the lesson to us.*

*Yara: When he tells us the meaning of the words in English, he actually says something completely different.*

Interestingly, despite the negative attitudes expressed by many pupils and some parents toward learning Arabic at complementary school, quite a few parents, especially those at Ealing, gave voice to the view that pupils were deriving some benefit from attending the complementary school. For example, a mother of an Ealing child (Hadi), who spoke in Arabic, said that she thought the school had improved their child's level of Arabic:

*(92) Interviewer: "Was their Arabic different after they went to the school?"*

*Hadi's mother: "Yeah, you can say my little kid's level has improved. First of all, he was not happy at the other school..., His level is much better now, he reads and writes much better now."*



And another mother of Ealing pupil (Rida) said that she felt her children had greater confidence with Arabic and used it more readily, she commented in both Arabic and English:

*(93) Interviewer: "Do you think attending the school is influencing the amount of Arabic used by the children*

*The mother: "Yes absolutely, and I think it is more noticeable here. At this school, they have increased their confidence. They are not speaking fluently, but they are trying to use the language more than in the previous school."*

That said, some parents, mainly those at Leeds, expressed some dissatisfaction with what they saw as the very limited time the school offered for learning Arabic. Below, for example, are the comments of one mother of a Leeds pupil (Nadia) who added in Arabic that she wanted more time allocated to teaching Arabic through memorisation of Qur'anic verses:

*(94) Interviewer: Are you happy with the Arabic school?*

*Nadia's mother: To some extent, not great though.*

*Interviewer: What is the problem, what are your remarks?*

*Nadia's mother: One day is not enough, still better than nothing [laughs]. In one day, they cannot do what you want them to do.*

*Interviewer: What do you want them to do?*

*Nadia's mother: They should schedule another day, even if it is a half day.*

*Interviewer: Are there any particular subjects you would like them to pay more attention to, or maybe add new subjects?*

*Nadia's mother: Yes, knowing the Qur'an by heart. I want her [daughter] to know the big sourahs (Qur'anic texts) by heart. Seriously if they tackle the language this way, they [pupils] will never forget it.*

Another mother (Dala's mother) of a Leeds pupil also stressed that the time for learning Arabic at the 'Arabic' school was insufficient, which is why she also taught her children at home, but she went on to point to another benefit of the complementary school, namely that her children could mix with other Arab heritage children in '*an Arab environment*', the mother who chose to speak in Arabic said:

(95) *“I am telling you, even the Arabic school is not enough to teach them Arabic; I started that at home a long time ago. I was teaching them Arabic before they started going to the school, and they already knew, roughly, how to read and write when they first went to school, and I still teach them at home. Yet I send them to the school as something extra, and not only to learn Arabic, but to meet Arab friends and to be in an Arab environment.*

Commenting on the influence of learning Arabic in a formal setting on their children’s learning experience and behaviour in mainstream school, parents tended to answer negatively about any beneficial effect on their children’s’ performance at the mainstream school, though they sometimes went on to comment that the complementary school helped develop their self-confidence and give them a greater sense of their ‘unique identity’ in a multilingual society. Below, for example, are the comments of the mother of a Leeds pupil (Dina) who spoke in Arabic:

(96) *Interviewer: Do you feel that the Arabic school has an influence on the English school?*

*Dina’s mother: Honestly not.*

*Interviewer: Neither negative nor positive?*

*Dina’s mother: No. In general it absolutely benefited them because when my daughter is translating at his English school, she manages because she is more confident that she is strong enough in the Arabic language. Obviously that is because of home and the school as well.*

And here are the extended comments of the mother of an Ealing pupil speaking in

Arabic and English:

(97) *Interviewer: Do you think attending the Arabic school has improved their achievement or behaviour at the English School?*

*Rida’s mother: I do not think it influences that. They [children] see it as a negative thing. They see it in terms of the fact that they are doing too much homework all the time. They think it is over-burdening them. I think it is useful because it gives them something unique, something a bit different in terms of identity, because they are not alone in this. This is London, a lot of the children at their English school have parents who have different backgrounds, so in his [her son] class, there is a girl who comes from Ukraine, so she goes to a school at the weekend, and she learns Russian. There are a number of children who go to the mosque. So they are not unique, because other children are doing activities at the weekend, but they might come with something that other children might not be doing. I think it gives them a sense that we might be*

*different from some people but it gives us something unique. I do not think it affects their achievement, though.*

### **5.8.1. Concluding remarks on attitudes to formal learning of Arabic**

The questionnaire and interview data reported on above indicate that substantial numbers of pupils actively disliked attending their complementary school and expressed a preference for the teaching at the mainstream school. The follow-up interviews suggested a variety of familiar reasons for these negative opinions - the inconvenient scheduling of complementary school classes at the weekends; and the far greater resourcing and better trained teachers at the mainstream school, compared to the complementary school.

In spite of these negative views, pupils do, however, say that they would still send their children to the complementary schools. In saying this they display a strong emotional or sentimental attachment to their heritage language and identity, as was revealed in a previous section of the questionnaire.

In addition, and again despite some reservations about the lack of time for learning and the quality of teaching, a number of parents were ready to say that their children derived benefit from the complementary school not just in terms of improving Arabic skills but because attendance raised their children's confidence, developed their sense of unique identity, and provided opportunities for meeting children of a similar heritage background in an Arab environment. These are also themes that have been touched on elsewhere in the literature (see 2.4.3.1,1).

As regards differences between the research sites, there was a slight tendency for pupils and parents at Ealing to express more positive attitudes to learning Arabic in the formal institution than their peers at Leeds. A possible reason for this difference is that the teaching and learning process at Ealing was more in line with the process at mainstream

schools. This is indeed what observation of classes suggested. I noticed, for example, that at Ealing teaching seem to be more interactive, pupils were encouraged to speak more in class, and they had more opportunities to use the computer, as well as regularly working in pairs.

To sum up, the rather negative attitude of pupils to their complementary school experience suggests that such schools may have had a weaker role in contributing to language maintenance than is sometimes believed. That said, despite all their limitations, a number of parents did feel that their children derived benefit from complementary school attendance - sometimes for improving reading and writing skills in *Fusha* but more importantly because these schools gave pupils more confidence, strengthened their sense of identity and security, and allowed them to mix with children of a similar background. Also, in saying that they wanted to send their children to the 'Arabic' complementary school, pupils revealed a continuing strong attachment to their Arab heritage and identity. If such schools were better resourced and had access to better trained teachers, it seems likely that they would have more impact on raising proficiency in standard Arabic and thus on maintaining the heritage language.

## **5.9 Conclusion**

Based on data from questionnaires, interviews, informal proficiency test, observation and field notes from two research sites, Leeds and Ealing, this chapter has reported findings on participants language use, pupil language proficiency, participants language attitudes and language and identity or self-identifications, as well as attitudes towards learning Arabic in a formal setting. The participants comprised children and adults (parents and teachers) from each case study site.

The data indicates a similar socio-economic background of respondents at both schools, but slightly more at Leeds were born in their countries of origin. Moving first to language use patterns, our findings quite closely resemble those of other, similar studies of UK ethnic minorities. There is evidence of language shift in that English rather than the heritage language, Arabic, was clearly the dominant language among the younger generation. Youngsters predominantly used English with their siblings and their peers both at home and at school, in the playground and even in class despite policies requiring that Arabic only be used in the classroom, especially at the Leeds site. With parents at home there was greater use of Arabic, specifically regional dialects, but also evidence of mixed language use.

It is unclear, however, if the mixing referred to in questionnaires was actually code-switching (CS) within a single participant's talk or alternating language use by parent and child, with the child answering the Arabic speaking parent in English.

With teachers there is also some evidence of alternating language use for language teaching in classrooms, especially at the school of Ealing, where the target language was *Fusha*; however, classroom management and instructions were given mostly in English. At the Leeds research site, on the other hand, classroom management and instructions were mostly delivered in Arabic.

Further evidence of language shift also comes from our informal investigation of Arabic language proficiency. The informal proficiency test showed, as expected, that pupils had relatively weak reading skills in *Fusha* and rather limited vocabulary proficiency. Interestingly, their actual reading and vocabulary proficiency seemed to be lower than they claimed in the questionnaires. This suggests that pupils were keen to present themselves as having a good proficiency in the highly valued heritage language for reasons of face or self-esteem. The weak reading skills in *Fusha* can be attributed to

limited exposure to this variety in the home and limited access to suitable Arabic reading materials, but also possibly due to a lack of interest. Overall, then, the generational differences in language use and language proficiency (much more use of Arabic by parents) suggests that, as in other ethnic minority communities (see e.g. Clyne, 2003; Namei, 2008; Wei, 1994) language shift is underway in the second generation of young people. Pupils also reported a much greater ability in English than Arabic. The significant difference between the levels of competence reported in Arabic and in English suggests the beginning of a language shift process among these participants.

As regards language attitudes, children and adults expressed highly positive attitudes to Arabic and standard Arabic, the language of the Qur'an and the variety taught in the complementary school. The main reasons for valuing Arabic so highly and for studying the language were, (a) its religious significance and functions (especially for Leeds parents and children); (b) its role as a lingua franca throughout the Arabic world; and (c) its prestige as the language of literature and Arabic culture. This said, a considerable number of pupils admitted that they did not enjoy learning *Fusha* and found it difficult. Nevertheless, nearly all pupils wanted their children to learn *Fusha* in the future. Here we see a strong sentimental attachment to the heritage language standing, in contrast with weak communicative abilities and limited communicative use, but this phenomenon has been noted elsewhere in the literature (see e.g. Edwards 2011).

Turning to matters of identity and language, a variety of views were expressed. Some parent and child participants gave Islam a central place in their description of themselves and prioritised a religious Muslim identity over other possible national or ethnic identities. Other participants, however, gave priority to more secular elements, describing themselves in terms of national or ethnic background, and occasionally as

having a mixed identity. Children tended more commonly to describe themselves as of mixed background than their parents and they seemed in general to give less importance to the Arabic language in their lives and in their sense of identity. Again, there is some evidence here of a generational difference, which is also suggestive of language shift.

There were some differences between the Leeds and Ealing participants, but this is perhaps to be expected, given the sampling procedure, whereby the Leeds site was selected for its more overtly pronounced religious ethos. Thus, Leeds participants, both children and adults, tended more commonly to prioritise a Muslim identity to a greater degree than Ealing participants. They also used a bit more Arabic in the home, and test results showed that Leeds pupils performed slightly better than their Ealing peers. However, Ealing pupil participants seemed to value their complementary school experience slightly more. One reason for the slightly greater use of Arabic and higher Arabic proficiency in Leeds may simply be that more Leeds child participants were born outside the UK and had resided here for a short time. However, at the same time, one cannot overlook the possible influence of religious observance, which may have encouraged Leeds participants to place a slightly higher value on Arabic use and learning.

In general, there are differences of viewpoint not only between the Leeds and Ealing participants but also to some degree within these groups. This suggests that Arabs in the UK, like other communities and individuals, cannot easily be treated as a homogenous, uniform population but rather differ along various dimensions as Nagel (2002) suggested, most notably perhaps in terms of religious observance. Another major point is that the data provides some evidence of language shift, and of the younger generation developing a mixed or hybrid sense of identity.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusion**

This thesis is a socio-linguistically-oriented description of the language use patterns, language attitudes and identities of two populations of Arab heritage individuals in two sites at Leeds and Ealing, London. Thus, it can be considered to comprise two linked case studies. The research participants are pupils, parents and teachers from two Arabic complementary schools. Though the thesis makes no strong claims to generalise beyond the study participants, the inclusion of two geographically separate sites, and of adult as well as child participants, helps illuminate the sociolinguistic situation of Arab heritage individuals in the UK, a population that has been relatively little researched. It also allows some cross generational comparisons to be made.

This chapter first summarises the key findings derived from the data and relates these to the research questions. This is followed by a brief outline of the main contributions of the study, its limitations and directions for possible future research.

### **6.1. Key findings summarised**

To recap, the first research question was as follows: What are the language use patterns, and language proficiencies associated with children in two Arabic heritage communities?

The study has uncovered a pattern that is similar to that found in other studies of ethnic minorities in the UK (see e.g. Harris, 2006; Rasinger, 2013; Wei, 2003). To be specific, the younger generations of Arabs in the UK are clearly English dominant. Children predominantly use English with siblings at home and with peers in the research site. Arabic and English are both used with parents. The parents, by contrast, reported much greater use of Arabic between spouses and with their children, and, as noted in other



studies (see e.g. Borland 2005; Harris 2006), made considerable efforts to encourage youngsters to use Arabic at home.

As is common in most ethnic minority bilingual communities (see e.g. Clyne 2003; Harris 2006, Lawson and Sachdev 2004), shifting between the two languages seems to be a common phenomenon in the home setting and to some extent in institutional contexts, such as complementary school classes. Shifting from one language to the other is reported in interviews to be triggered by such factors as a change in interlocutor or in topic: for example, discussion of school topics in the home was reported as triggering a switch to English. Owing to the limited access available to the homes of participants, it was not possible to conduct fine-grained and detailed analysis of the mechanisms of code-switching in the domestic contexts.

On the topic of language proficiency, an informal test focusing on reading and vocabulary only provided some evidence that pupils' vocabulary knowledge and reading skills in standard Arabic (*Fusha*) were not at a high level. Specifically they were rather weaker than was implied in the questionnaire responses, where there were, in particular, claims of unrealistically high proficiency levels in reading (e.g. 54% of Leeds pupils claimed 'good' or 'very good' reading ability). This result is interesting in itself as it suggests that the prestige of *Fusha* in the community and complementary school is high, and that, as a result, pupils sought to project a positive image of themselves by exaggerating their level of proficiency. Together, these patterns of language use and the findings on proficiency point to an ongoing language shift as the younger generation becomes more dominant in English, despite the efforts of the complementary school to maintain the heritage language.

Research question 2 asked the following: What are the language attitudes and identities associated with children and adults in two Arabic heritage communities?

It has commonly been found that attitudes to the heritage language often remain highly positive, even though use of the language and proficiency in it may be limited, or even declining (see e.g. Edwards, 2011; Slavik, 2001). This pattern seems to be repeated in this study, in that children and adults experienced highly positive attitudes to Arabic for religious reasons, and for practical reasons (e.g. travel, getting jobs, communication with relatives). Additionally, in essentialist terms some subjects, especially adult participants, thought it an inescapable part of their identity, in other words, if you are Arab, you must or should know Arabic (see e.g. Blackledge and Creese 2008, Zhang and Slaughter-Defoe 2009, for comparisons with other communities). Moreover, 87% of all children said they would like their children to learn standard Arabic in future, even though many also admitted that they themselves disliked learning *Fusha*. This indicates, that a continuing sentimental or symbolic attachment to the heritage language can co-exist with limited use and communicative ability in the heritage language.

On matters of identity, religion and Arabic, there were also a range of views expressed. Many of the adults at the Leeds site reported that they saw themselves primarily as Muslims in preference to other possible identities, such as Arab, British or Arab-British. They also tended to emphasise the role of the Arabic language as being important in maintaining an Islamic or Muslim identity, since Arabic is the language of the holy Qur'an. Some also said that they preferred their children to socialise with other Muslim children of whatever national background as a safeguard against unwanted western influences. These parental views, emphasising the primacy of a Muslim identity, also tended to be echoed by the Leeds children interviewed. However, these children had divided opinions on the topic of selecting their friends; some considered religion to be an important factor in making friends, while others did not.

Ealing adults, by contrast, tended more commonly to mention secular components of their identity, whether national (e.g. Iraqi), ethnic (e.g. Arab), or mixed (e.g. Arab-British). This difference between Leeds and Ealing participants in matters of identity and self-description was expected, as the study was designed to test the extent to which the self-stated ethos, whether secular or religious, of these research sites had an impact, or was evident in the attitudes towards language use, language and identities. As mentioned earlier (see 4.2), at the Leeds site, Islam was firmly embodied in the Arab language curriculum and Arabic was seen primarily as the carrier of an Islamic culture/identity. At the Ealing site, on the other hand, the focus was on the Arabic language, with less attention given to religion and to Arabic as a carrier of an Islamic culture.

Interestingly, there were some differences across generations at both sites. Children at both sites, more than their parents, were ready to make mention of a mixed identity (e.g. Arab-British), though not all that frequently, and were in some cases more ready to downplay the importance of Arabic in their lives and in their identities. Here again, generational differences are quite salient in the data.

Regarding research question 2b asked: What attitudes do children and parents express towards learning Arabic?

Attitudes to learning Arabic, as evidenced in their perceptions of their complementary schools, were mixed. In interviews, parents said that they valued the complementary school not only for teaching the heritage language and culture but also because they thought it helped increase their children's self-confidence and helped them mix with other children of a similar background. The children, on the other hand, were not usually so positive, and quite a number actually said they disliked attending the complementary school and learning Arabic, and not just because of inconvenient

scheduling. A few even said that they thought it was a waste of time. Such unfavourable views of learning Arabic outside the home, as expressed by quite a number of children in this study, cannot be regarded as encouraging for the prospects of language maintenance, as the complementary school remains one of the most important community institutions for transmitting the heritage language.

Research question 3 asked the following: How, if at all, does religious affiliation influence language practices, attitudes and identities?

A major aspect of the study involved religious observance and its role in each school. Analysis of the data confirms that children and adults from the Leeds research site had more religious observance than their peers at the site in Ealing. As mentioned above, Islam was found to influence the amount of use of the language at home, as parents at the Leeds homes insisted more on their children using Arabic, because “*this is the language of Qur’an*” as some declared. Language use was, however, not the only area influenced by Islam in the Leeds families. Language attitudes were also affected, as children and adults linked their positive attitudes to the language, especially *Fusha*, with the fact that this is the language of the holy book. It was found that religion was also used by the Leeds adults (parents and teachers) in order to bring positive changes in children’s attitudes towards language. As a result of this strong association, *Fusha* was not a subject for criticism within the Leeds participant community. However, the Ealing subjects evaluated their attitudes to *Fusha* with no pressing influence regarding for this being the language of the Qur’an; thus, children expressed varied attitudes to Arabic, *Fusha* and vernacular dialect, and most of the parents expressed positive attitudes to the language.

Turning to identity, Islam was found to be the main component of the identities expressed at the Leeds site. Islam was also found to influence social relationships with

mainstream British society, as most of the families preferred their children to mingle and communicate with other Islamic children. Among children, on the other hand, although the Islamic identity still prevailed, some of the children saw that Islam was not restricted to Arabic speakers, so language for them was not vital for their Islamic identity.

This influence did not exist in Ealing, where both parents and children did not consider Islam to be a condition for choosing friends. Moreover, at the Ealing site, various secular identities were mentioned by children and adults, such as Arab identity, national identities and a mixed Arab-British identity.

Research question 4 was concerned with the following: What differences, if any, are observable in language use, attitudes, proficiencies and identities in distinct heritage communities, and what factors might help explain any differences observed?

Before elaborating about the differences, we observed that speaking Arabic at both schools seemed to be enhanced by good relationships with extended family members. Some parents reported that their children tended to use more vernacular Arabic with members of their extended families with whom they enjoyed spending time. In addition, children said they wanted to learn Arabic to be able to communicate with relatives in their original countries.

In terms of the differences, a number were indeed revealed, some of which have been mentioned above and some of which we summarise below. First, slightly more use of Arabic was reported or claimed by Leeds participants, and these participants also performed better in the informal proficiency test than their Ealing peers. Possible reasons for this are that a slightly higher percentage of child participants at Leeds were born outside the UK, where they would probably have been exposed to Arabic for

longer. Also, and mainly for religious reasons, parents at Leeds appeared to make a slightly greater effort to insist on Arabic use in the home. They said this was the only domain where they could actively control their children's language use. Moreover, the explicit connection between Islam and Arabic as the language of the Quran in the Leeds site, including mosque attendance, may also have helped to raise levels of Arabic proficiency relative to the Ealing participants. Also relevant here perhaps is that the lower English proficiency observed in the Leeds teachers led to more use of Arabic at the school site. There were relatively few differences between the sites with regard to attitudes, except that Leeds child participants somewhat more frequently mentioned Islam as an important reason for respecting and learning *Fusha* Arabic, while Ealing children tended to mention instrumental reasons for learning *Fusha* Arabic more frequently, such as broadening future job possibilities. Again, and as noted above, these differences uncovered during the course of the study reflected the stated aims of each of the schools.

Overall, these results indicate that the explicit association of language and religion at the Leeds site seemed to shape language use, attitudes and identities. Similarly, the stated secular character of the Ealing site was reflected in the language use, attitudes and expressed identity of the participants from this community.

More important probably than the differences across sites are those between generations in language use patterns, proficiencies and expressed identities, which points to a language shift in the younger generation, as has been commonly noted in other studies of ethnic minority communities (see Clyne, 2003; Clyne and Kipp, 1997; Wei, 1994). This is also similar to Ferguson's (2013) findings that language shift from Arabic to English-dominant bilingualism was taking place among Yemeni complementary school pupils. The data from this thesis suggests that Arabic is seen as

having a core religious value which is one of the most influential factors for maintaining the language (see Spolsky, 2003). Thus, more secular families may be more susceptible to language shift in future generations. Related to this are Hamid's (2011:156) idea that religion "plays an important role in the maintenance or shift of a language if the minority language is also the language of religion".

## **6.2. Key contributions of the study**

(i) Drawing on a combination of questionnaires, interviews, informal test results and participant observation, this study provides a rich and detailed portrait of the patterns of language use, language attitudes and identities of two groups of Arabic heritage individuals at two geographically separate sites in England. These different data sources provide for a degree of triangulation and thus strengthen the reliability of the findings. Also, the inclusion of both adult and child participants, and data collection at two sites, has allowed a number of useful cross-generational and cross-site comparisons to be made, and this has enriched the study.

The descriptive detail provided in this study is an especially useful contribution to the growing literature on multilingualism and ethnic minorities in the UK in that Arab populations here have been relatively little studied in comparison to other communities (e.g. Chinese, Bengali, Turkish, Greek and Punjabi (see e.g. Wei 1994; Wei and Wu, 2009; Hamid, 2011; Lawson and Sachdev, 2004; Creese et al., 2008; Martin et al., 2008; Martin et al., 2003). Moreover, while many studies focus on poorer, mainly working-class minorities (e.g. Bengalis in London, Leeds or Birmingham, Punjabi/Urdu in London and Sheffield (see e.g. Hamid, 2011; Harris, 2006), this study involves research participants at Leeds and Ealing who had a prominently middle-class background. In addition, while previous studies on Arabic heritage minorities mostly

included participants from the same national background, for example Jamaï (2008) on the Moroccan minority in the UK and Ferguson on the Yemeni migrants in Sheffield, the participants in the current research had various different countries of origin. The study thus complements the few sociolinguistic studies of predominantly working class Yemeni or Moroccan populations in the UK (see e.g. Halliday, 1992; Ferguson, 2013), and helps illustrate how diverse the UK Arab population is in terms of country of origin, religious affiliation, length and place of UK residence, and social class.

(ii) The selection of two sites differing in their orientation to religion, thus contrasting a ‘religious’ site (Leeds) with a more ‘secular’ site (Ealing) has cast some light on the importance of Islam as a component of identity and as a motive for studying Arabic, for those who are more religiously committed. It has also pointed to the importance of religion, specifically Islam, as a factor that distinguishes Arabs in the UK from each other, as much as country of origin or social class (however, it must be noted that individuals who are religiously observant also differ in their Islamic beliefs and practices). The importance given by some participants to their Muslim identities is also consistent with the literature (see e.g. Hamid, 2011), which emphasises the strengthening in recent years of Muslim identities over other possible ethnic or national identities (e.g. Arab, Iraqi, Pakistani, Bengali- see also 3.4.3). Above all, however, the study confirms, in contrast with some media depictions, that Arabs in the UK are not a homogeneous group but comprise individuals who hold different beliefs and often express different ideas about their identities.

(iii) This study has found evidence of language shift in the younger generation and a tendency for them to express a sense of mixed identity. In these respects the study supports and consolidates existing theories on language shift/maintenance and language identity (see e.g. Fishman 2001 and Edwards 2011; Lane, 2009; Canagarajah, 2008).



Also, the fact that younger participants maintained strong sentimental attachments to their heritage language, despite having little communicative use for that language, is also supportive of the literature that has previously taken note of this contrast (see e.g. Edwards 2011).

(iv) This study has also investigated attitudes to two varieties of Arabic, *Fusha* and vernacular or colloquial dialects (e.g. Egyptian and Syrian), and examined their influence on pupils' attitudes to learning the language and their competence in using it.

(v) Although based on complementary school research sites, this study is mainly sociolinguistic in orientation and has relatively little to add about the educational processes taking place in this kind of school. Nevertheless, interviews with parents, pupils and teachers, as well as observation in the schools, has helped cast some light on motives for attending these Arabic complementary schools, and on pupils' perceptions of learning Arabic outside homes. Among other things, the findings suggest that pupils' attitudes are not particularly positive, and that, as currently resourced and funded, complementary schools do not always support the transmission and maintenance of the heritage language as much as they would like to. They also show that social motivations for sending children to the complementary schools (e.g. to mix with children of a similar background) may be equally as strong as the educational motives involved.

### **6.3 Limitations of the study**

i) The difficulties in gaining complete access to homes to enable observation participants using language in this context was a limitation. Also, families were generally reluctant to allow recording in their homes, which greatly limited the collection of spontaneous speech data, and consequently the amount of data for close linguistic analysis.

- (ii) An informal ‘proficiency’ test was used to collect data on pupils’ vocabulary knowledge and reading skills, and this proved useful as indicative of the child participants’ productive language knowledge. However, with greater time available it would have been desirable to design a more comprehensive and fully piloted test.
- (iii) In this study the complementary school site provided opportunities to collect data of a mainly sociolinguistic nature, as guided by the sociolinguistic and descriptive aims of this thesis. However, through my own teaching in schools and observation of classes, I was able to collect some data of relevance to an educationally-oriented analysis of the processes of these schools. Unfortunately, however, the scope of this study and time limitations have prevented further exploration of this aspect in the present study. A future study could go deeper into this area.
- (iv) As is true of most case studies, the findings of this study have limited generalisability beyond the present research participants, and I make no strong claims for this. As noted previously, the Arab population in the UK is diverse and what is true of one group may not necessarily be true of another. Besides, the number of schools and research participants sampled has been necessarily small. All this said, I have included two research sites in the study, and as the findings are similar to those of other studies of ethnic minorities, it is possible that the findings of this thesis may have a wider application.

#### **6.4. Further research**

There are many ways in which the present research can be extended, and some of these are implied in the discussion of limitations above.

- (i) Most importantly, more data needs to be accessed from home and community settings (e.g. mosques, shops, community halls) in order to develop a finer, more detailed micro-analytic picture of language use in the home and the community, including such phenomena as code switching or translanguaging. This will, however, require more time and resources than was available for the present study, and greater success in persuading participants to allow recording in their homes.
- (ii) In studies of language shift/maintenance longitudinal studies are useful though rare because they are time-consuming and expensive. It would be interesting, then, if a study could be carried out on a more longitudinal basis to see, for example, whether Leeds or Ealing children went on to use Arabic at home or at work in their future careers after leaving the complementary school. It would also be interesting to observe whether Leeds child participants will go on to maintain the use of Arabic outside of the religious domain.
- (iii) This study is the basis for a new research project on education to investigate the educational aspects of the schools visited, and some of the data collected during this study might be useful here. For example, it would be interesting to probe in more detail into the reasons for pupils' rather unfavourable attitudes to the learning process at complementary schools and to consider to what extent these could be linked to teaching methods and levels of teacher training. It would also be useful and interesting to attempt to pinpoint which school-related factors influenced Arabic attainment the most. However, this would probably require the development of more formal and comprehensive proficiency tests and other sophisticated research instruments.

- (iv) The importance of the religious factor has been mentioned already in this thesis. It would be interesting and useful, then, to investigate more closely what influence, if any, stricter religious observances and ethos had on teaching practices and curriculum materials.
- (v) As Arabic is a diglossic language with considerable differences between the spoken home varieties and modern standard Arabic (or *Fusha*), it would be useful to probe in further detail into pupils' literacy practices, in *Fusha*, at home and elsewhere to gauge the extent to which these practices were influenced by religious observance or other factors. Also of interest is how literacy in *Fusha* develops over a longer period and what factors influence such development.

It is clear from the small number of suggestions made above that much more can be done to investigate language use, attitudes and identities among Arab heritage individuals and communities. Although this study has several limitations, it can nevertheless be considered to have provided a broad picture of language use and attitudes among the participants at two research sites, and thus it may serve as a useful basis or starting point for further studies. The findings also lend support to the observations and theories that have been developed previously in studying the sociolinguistics of other ethnic minorities in UK (see e.g. Harris, 2006; Hamid, 2011; Lawson and Sachdev, 2004; Rasinger, 2013; Wei 1994).

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1

#### Participant Information Sheet



#### Participant Information Sheet

Title of Research: A Study of Linguistic Behaviours and Expressed Identities in Two Arabic Complementary Schools

#### Invitation

You are being invited to take part in a research study which is being carried out by Sanaa Bichani, a Ph.D student at the University of Sheffield. It is important that you understand why this research is being done and what is involved. Please take time to read the following information.

#### What is the purpose of the research?

We would like to investigate the language use and attitudes of pupils attending complementary schools to learn Arabic. This will involve observation of classes, and interviews and questionnaire for some pupils, their parents and teachers.

#### Why have I been chosen?

In order to achieve the research goals, 60 participants will be chosen to complete the questionnaire, eight of them will also be interviewed with their families at homes. Four teachers from each school as well as two head teachers from different complementary schools will be interviewed.

Do I have to take part?

It is your choice whether you agree to be involved with this research. If you decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and asked to sign a consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part in this research?

Your participation in this research will not cause you harm in any way. All information will be kept confidential and will be used only and solely for the purposes of the research stated above. .

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The information given by you is completely confidential and your name will not appear in any document such as the thesis or academic papers coming out of this research. You will also be able to see the results of the study on request from the researcher.

Name of researcher

Signature

Sanaa Bichani

-----

Name of supervisor

Signature

Dr. Gibson Ferguson

-----

[g.r.ferguson@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:g.r.ferguson@sheffield.ac.uk)

This information sheet is for you to keep. Thank you for your time and help.

## Appendix 2a

### Questionnaire for pupils

- Background

1. Please write your name: .....

2. What gender are you? F M

Please put a circle around the correct answer.

3. Please write your date of birth: .....

4. Please write the name of your complementary school (Arabic):

.....

5. Were you born in the UK? YES NO

Please put a circle around the correct answer

6. If No, Please write the country where you were born:

.....

7. If No, Please write the year when you first came to the UK:.....

8. Please write the name of the country where your father was born:.....

9. Please write the name of the country where your mother was born:.....

10. Do you visit the mosque in your area? YES NO

11. If YES, how often do you visit it

Every Friday

Once a month

Once in four months

Please put a circle around the correct answer.

12. As a Muslim. How do you describe your religious affiliation

Strict Muslim

Moderate Muslim

Secular Muslim

Please put a circle around the correct answer

13. Do you have siblings YES NO

Please put a circle around the correct answer

14. If YES, how many?

15. If YES, do they attend complementary school (Arabic).

16. Does your father work? YES NO

Please put a circle around the correct answer.

17. If YES, please write what work he does: .....

18. Does your mother work? YES NO

Please put a circle around the correct answer.

19. If Yes, Please write what work she does: .....

20. Do you visit your original country? YES NO

Please put a circle around the correct answer

21. If YES, Please write how frequent do you visit your original country

Once every year

Once every two years

Once every four years

Please put a circle around the correct answer

• Language Use

a. At home:

1. Which language do you use to speak to the following people? Tick the box which is closest to your answer.

	Always English	Usually English	English and Arabic equally	Usually English	Usually Arabic
Father					
Mother					
Sisters					
Brothers					
Friends					
Neighbours					



2. At Arabic schools:

22. Which language do you use to speak to the following people? Tick the box which is closest to your answer.

	Always English	Usually English	English and Arabic equally	Usually English	Usually Arabic
Head teachers					
Teachers					
Friends at the classroom					
Friends in the play area					

3. Here are some statements about your level in both languages Arabic and English. Please tick the box which is closest to your opinion.

Fusha: the language you learn in the Arabic school.

Home language: the language your parents use at home.

	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Weak
Writing in Arabic.				
Reading in Arabic.				
Speaking in Fusha.				
Speaking in home language.				
Understanding the home language				
Writing in English				
Reading in English				
Speaking in English				
Understanding English				

- Language Attitudes and Identity

1. Here are some statements. Please give your opinion. Tick the box which is closest to your opinion. Please be honest with your answers.

	Agree	Not agree	Neither agree or not agree	I don't know
Arabic is a beautiful language				
Arabic is an important language				
In England you don't need to learn Arabic. English is enough.				
You can be an Arab in England without knowing Arabic				
You can be a Muslim in England without knowing Arabic				
Knowing English is more important for getting a job than knowing Arabic				
If I have children, I would like them to learn Arabic.				

2. Here are some more statements. Please give your opinion. Tick the box which is closest to your opinion. Please be honest with your answers.

	Agree	Not agree	Neither agree or not agree	I don't know
<i>Fusha</i> is more important than the home language.				
Learning <i>Fusha</i> is important for me.				
I enjoy learning <i>Fusha</i> .				
It is not easy to learn <i>Fusha</i> .				

3. Here are some more statements. Please say if you agree or disagree with these statements. Tick the box which is closest to your opinion. Please be honest with your answers.

	Agree	Not agree	Neither agree or not agree	I don't know
Learning <i>Fusha</i> is not useful for me.				
<i>Fusha</i> is more beautiful than the home language.				
<i>Fusha</i> is more useful than the home language.				
I see no point in learning <i>Fusha</i> .				
Learning <i>Fusha</i> is useful for feeling an Arab.				
Learning <i>Fusha</i> is useful for feeling a Muslim.				

4. How do you feel about yourself?

Tick the box which is closest to your opinion

	British	Arab	Muslim	More British than Arab/Muslim	Equally	More Arab than Arab/British	More Muslim than Arab/British
In general, I feel.....							
When I am at home, I feel ...							
When I am at the 'Arabic school' I feel....							
When I am at the "English school" I feel.....							
When I am at my neighbourhood, I feel .....							

- Arabic school

5. Please how many years you have been attending complementary school:

.....

6. Here are some statements. Please say if you agree or disagree with these statements.

Tick the box which is closest to your opinion.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I like going to Arabic school					
If I was a father/mother I would send my child to the Arabic school					
Reading and writing in Arabic is important for me					
Being able to talk is more important than reading and writing.					
Going to Arabic schools is a waste of time.					
I prefer the Arabic school to the 'English school'					
The way of teaching is better at the Arabic school than the 'English school'					
Teachers are more friendly in Arabic school than English school					
I feel more comfortable at the Arabic school than the 'English school'					
The Arabic I learn at the Arabic school is the same kind of Arabic my parents speak at home					

Please feel free to add any comments.

Thank for your help in completing the questionnaire. Your help is much appreciated.

Sanaa Bichani 2011

Appendix 2b

Example of completed questionnaire for pupils

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Appendix A

Questionnaire for students

• Background

1. Please write your name: ~~Kam Mohamed~~
2. What gender are you?  F  M  
Please put a circle around the correct answer.
3. Please write your date of birth: 3/11/2002
4. Were you born in the UK?  YES  NO  
Please put a circle around the correct answer
5. If No, Please write the country you were born in: ~~Syria~~ UK
6. If No, Please write the year when you first came to the UK: .....
7. Please write the name of the country where your father was born: ~~Syria~~ Syria
8. Please write the name of the country where your mother was born: Saudi Arabia
9. Do you have brothers and sisters?  YES  NO  
Please put a circle around the correct answer
10. If YES, how many? 1
11. If YES, do they attend Arabic school (Arabic). Yes
12. Does your father work?  YES  NO  
Please put a circle around the correct answer.
13. If YES, please write what does he do? Dentist
14. Does your mother work? YES  NO
15. If Yes, Please write what does she do: .....
16. Do you visit your original country?  YES  NO  
Please put a circle around the correct answer
17. When was the last time you visit your original country? 4 months ago

18. How often do you visit the mosque in your area:

every Friday once a month once in four months never

Please put a circle around the correct answer.

• **Language Use**

**a. At home:**

1. Which language do you use to speak to the following people? Tick the box which is closest to your answer.

	Always English	Usually English	English and Arabic equally	Usually Arabic	Always Arabic
Father			✓		
Mother				✓	
Sisters			✓		
Brothers					
Friends		✓			
Neighbours	✓				

**b. At Arabic schools:**

2. Which language do you use to speak to the following people? Tick the box which is closest to your answer.

	Always English	Usually English	English and Arabic equally	Usually Arabic	Always Arabic
Head teacher			✓		
Teachers				✓	
Friends at the classroom		✓			
Friends in the play area	✓				

3. Here are some statements about your level in both languages Arabic and English. Please tick the box which is closest to your opinion.  
 Fusha: the language you learn in the Arabic school.  
 Home language: the language your parents use at home.

	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Weak
Writing in Arabic	✓			
Reading in Arabic		✓		
Speaking in Fusha.		✓		
Speaking in home language.	✓			
Understanding fusha.	✓			
Understanding the home language.	✓			
Writing in English.	✓			
Reading in English.	✓			
Speaking in English.	✓			
Understanding English.	✓			

• **Language Attitudes and Identity**

1. Here are some statements. Please give your opinion. Tick the box which is closest to your opinion. Please be honest with your answers.

	Agree	Not agree	Neither agree or not agree	I don't know
Arabic is a beautiful language	✓			
Arabic is not an important language in the UK.	✓			
In England you don't need to learn Arabic. English is enough.		✓		
You can be an Arab in England without knowing Arabic	✓			

	Agree	Not agree	Neither agree or not agree	I don't know
You can be a Muslim in England without knowing Arabic	✓			
Knowing English is more important for getting a job than knowing Arabic		✓		
If I have children, I would like them to learn Arabic.	✓			

2. Here are some more statements. Please give your opinion. Tick the box which is closest to your opinion. Please be honest with your answers.

	Agree	Not agree	Neither agree or not agree	I don't know
Fusha is more important than the home language.	✓			
Learning Fusha is not important for me.		✓		
I enjoy learning Fusha.			✓	
It is not easy to learn Fusha.		✓		

3. Here are some statements. Please say if you agree or disagree with these statements. Tick the box which is closest to your opinion. Please be honest with your answers.

	Agree	Not agree	Neither agree or Not agree	I don't know
Learning Fusha is not useful for me		✓		
Fusha is more beautiful than the home language.		✓		
Fusha is more useful than the home language.	✓			
I see no point in learning Fusha.		✓		
Learning Fusha is useful for feeling an Arab.	✓			
Learning Fusha is useful for feeling a Muslim.				✓



4. How do you feel about yourself? <sup>OK</sup>  
 Tick the box which is closest to your opinion

	British	Arab	Muslim	More British than Arab/Muslim	Equally	More Arab than Arab/British	More Muslim than Arab/British
In general, I feel.....					✓		
When I am at home, I feel.....		✓					
When I am at the "English school" I feel.....	✓						
When I am at my neighbourhood, I feel...	✓						

• Arabic school

5. Please write how many years you have been attending your Arabic school:

..... 4 years

6. Here are some statements. Please give your opinion. Tick the box which is closest to your opinion.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I like going to Arabic school			✓		
If I was a father/mother I would send my child to the Arabic school	✓				
Reading and writing in Arabic is important for me	✓				
Being able to talk is more important than reading and writing.		✓			
Going to Arabic schools is a waste of time.				✓	
I prefer the Arabic school to the 'English school'				✓	
The way of teaching is better at the Arabic school than the 'English school'			✓		
Teachers are more friendly in Arabic school than English school		✓			
I feel more comfortable at the Arabic school than the 'English school'			✓		
The Arabic I learn at the Arabic school is the same kind of Arabic my parents speak at home			✓		

Please feel free to add any comments:

Why are you asking these questions?

Thanks for your help in completing the questionnaire. Your help is much appreciated.

Sanaa Bichani 2011

## **Appendix 3**

### **Sample interview: transcript.**

#### **3.a Parents**

**Interviewee's name:** Sama, Dalal's mother from the Leeds School.

**The interviewer:** Sanaa Bichani (I).

Date: 24.02.2012.

The interview lasted for approximately 60 minutes.

**The interviewee** is a Palestinian lady in her mid-thirties, mother for four girls. She is married to a ph.D student in the pharmacy department at the University of Leeds. She is also a master graduate in Linguistics at Leeds University

**Location:** the interview took place in the interviewee's house in Leeds.

Transcription Notes:

The recording has been retained by the researcher for further research purposes.

To improve analysis, filters and false starts have been removed from the transcribed texts.

The whole interview has been translated from Arabic to English. The translation has been checked and verified by a second educated speaker of Arabic.

Not much attention was given to the participants' code switching, as this was considered to be beyond the scope of this research.

**I:** When did you first come to this country?

**S:** 9 years and half ago.

**I:** All the children were born here?

**S:** Yes, all of them.

**I:** What was the reason for coming to the UK?

**S:** I came because I got married, my husband was here, he studied pharmacy and then he started a job, after getting married I came here and started doing some courses.

**I:** Do you have a degree from Palestine?

**S:** Yea my undergraduate was from there.

**I:** What did you do?

**S:** Sociology, and when I finished I came here, I waited till I became a home student and then I did my master.

**I:** Have you worked in the UK?

**S:** Not paid job, but as a volunteer.

**I:** Are you thinking of going back to Palestine, or you are settled here?

**S:** Actually we are not thinking of going back, especially in this situation. My husband came to the UK long time ago when he was about 18 years old.

**I:** Is his Arabic good?

**S:** Yea, it is perfect he came when he was 18 years old, so his Arabic was perfect.

**I:** From which area Palestine did you come?

**S:** Me and my husband are from the north.

**I:** What does your husband do?

**S:** He is a pharmacist, he works at the hospital, teaches at the university, and he is currently writing up his PhD thesis.

**I:** I want to ask you, which language do you use at home?

**S:** Arabic, we focus on it. Yes, sometimes we use simple terms in English that we are used to saying in English, like yogurt, but our conversations are in Arabic, maybe some words in English but in general it is all in Arabic. Even when the girls speak, or play, they sometimes use English words, we keep reminding them to speak in Arabic. At certain times, while they are talking to each other in Arabic they use an English word because they do not know the meaning in Arabic, so I and their father repeat it in Arabic.

**I:** So it appears that you insist on Arabic, you want them to speak in Arabic?

**S:** Yes, from what we noticed from observing the children around us who have Arab parents; however, do not speak Arabic, we concluded that home is the cornerstone. If you insist on the children to use Arabic at home they will master it, hopefully. However, if they do not use it at home it is very hard because when they are outside the home, they will speak English, for sure with their friends; therefore, the house is the only environment that you as a parent can control.

**I:** But why is that great insistence on using Arabic?

**S:** Because I do not want them to lose their mother tongue; in addition Arabic is a very important language, even if it was not their mother tongue, I will teach them Arabic and I will insist on it. First of all, it is a gift for the child to raise him to be bilingual and especially with Arabic because this is the language of Qur'an, religion and people in the heaven so it is very important to be able to read the books in Arabic. You know all Muslims die to learn Arabic because it is the religious language and the language of Qur'an so it is very important to know it in order to read the Qur'an and understand its explanation. That is why; Muslims want their children to learn Arabic. For us, we were given that we were Arabs so we have to sustain the language, I do not want them to lose it. It hurts me to raise them without teaching them Arabic.

**I:** What about your neighbours and your friends, what languages do you use with them?

**S:** My neighbours are all British so we use English with them. We have friends who are Muslims but not Arabs so we also use English with them when we meet weekly at the

mosque. My smallest daughter does not know English, and I am deliberately not teaching her because I am not scared about mastering the English language. Another reason is that because the language you teach her first will be the dominant language and that is why me and their father we insist on using Arabic. With our Arab friends we use Arabic.

**I:** It needs patience

**S:** It is not easy but as long as you motivate them, you feel it is effective.

**I:** And which variety do you use, Fusha or the spoken Palestinian?

**S:** You know at home we are not used to Fusha but I try to make the language used close to Fusha. That is, if there are some Palestinian words that would not be understood by other Arabic speakers, I try to teach them to the girls in Fusha, so all Arabs can understand them when they use these words. They should learn Palestinian because this is our dialect and we feel comfortable using it, but Fusha is very important for me as well. It is very important for me that the girls learn Fusha to know the original language, and to read books and understand them. For this reason, I and their father download Cartoon programmes for them in which Arabic Fusha is used.

**I:** Do they like watching them?

**S:** Yea they are now, especially my youngest girl. I was happy that we found something they like and at the same time it is Arabic Fusha. It is important to know Fusha because if you only the spoken dialect that means you will not be able to read or write.

**I:** You want them to learn reading and writing in Arabic?

**S:** Of course, it is very important. Actually they are better in the spoken dialect but they are still at the beginning and little by little, my aim is that they master Fusha. If they do not know Fusha, then they do not know Arabic.

**I:** Do you feel, sometimes, you have to speak in English with them?

**S:** No at home I always speak in Arabic, at certain times they do not understand, and they ask what I mean, so I explain the meaning to them in Arabic using other words, and if they do not understand, I say it in English. Nonetheless, I always try to avoid the

translation into English. First, I explain it in Arabic but in a different way, and if they do not understand it, I say it in English.

**I:** What about the girls' friends, do you prefer them to be Arabs, Muslims or it does not really matter?

**S:** Now at school they do have British friends, I do not separate them from their British friends but I do let them know that they are different. I do not want my girl to hate that she is different; in contrast, I want her to know that this difference is good and nice; you can visit them [her British friends] and attend their birthday parties. However, in general, we socialize more with Muslims. I and my husband prefer to socialize more with loyal practicing Muslims those who take care of their children and their children's education. It is not important if they are Arabs or not, sometimes you meet Muslims and Pakistanis who have ethics and raise their children in more ethical way than the Arabs, and we prefer to be friends with those than Arabs whose children are not well behaved enough. It is more related to that [behaviour and ethics] than the language.

**I:** Where do you meet your friends?

**S:** We do have activities in the mosque, nearly every week. The kids go to Qur'anic lessons together every Friday and meet their friends there.

**I:** How often do you visit the mosque?

**S:** We go on weekly basis. On Fridays the kids have Qur'anic lessons. Actually, we go with our friends and they do have various activities at the mosque for the kids.

**I:** The majority in the mosque, are they Muslim Arabs, or Muslims from various origins?

**S:** This mosque is owned by an Arab family. However, it is oriented for all Muslims and not only Arabs. That is why, you may find it full of Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, Malaysians and other nationalities, everybody go there. The activities there are not only in Arabic, it is in both Arabic and English, so they target all Muslims not only Arabic speakers.

**I:** At home, do you watch more Arabic channels, or English ones?



**S:** In general, I do not watch television at all. Me and my husband do not watch television that much, we may watch news or a documentaries, and we watch some religious Arabic channels. We try to have Arabic in the background because the children listen and store in mind so I am very careful to expose them to the Arabic media to some extent.

**I:** What kind of programmes you prefer to watch on TV?

**S:** Religious, educational and cultural programmes. I do not let them watch any celebrities' programmes.

**I:** Do you watch movies?

**S:** We do if they are suitable for the children. We watch English movies and not the Arabic ones, because they are worse than the English movies in terms of their moral lessons. Arabic movies have no goals, the English ones are interesting for the children. What their father does is that he copies the movie on a hard drive and he edits it and takes out any inappropriate scenes, and then they watch them. We watch but we are very careful, if the children are around we take extra care. You know, on British channels, for instance, even advertisements are not morally appropriate.

**I:**Do you read?

**S:** I do not have too much time, although I love reading, but at home it is difficult, more on the internet, and on face book they put nice things to read about religion, and I have a book that I keep in the car when I am waiting for my girls at the school parking, I would have 10 to 15 minutes to read till they come.

**I:** What is the book about?

**S:** About sophism.

**I:** Is it in English?

**S:** No no Arabic, I do not like reading in English. In English I might read but not religious books. The religious books are in Arabic.

**I:** In general, do you read more in Arabic, or in English?

**S:** Not in English, in Arabic, I read English books before about the children and how to take care good of them, and I do have magazines, like this one [Islamic magazine], it is monthly and it is in English.

**I:** Now, how often do you visit Palestine?

**S:** When they [kids] were little we used to go each year, now after schools we go every year and a half to two years.

**I:** And how long do you stay there?

**S:** It depends, nearly three weeks, and the last time we stayed for a month.

**I:** Do the kids like it there?

**S:** Yes they do, sometimes they say we want to stay here [Palestine] because you know they are visitors and it is a holiday so they think life is like that in Palestine, and some other times they say we want to go back to England we miss home.

**I:** Does it affect them when they see the news about Palestine, do they feel scared?

**S:** You know, they do know exactly what is going on, especially when there were problems in Gaza, they started asking what is going on. However, it is difficult to explain the crisis for them in this age. We do not really talk too much about it, we still portray Palestine for them as the peaceful country and we speak about our memories, the delicious food there and other things. They miss their relatives there and they wish they could come and visit us.

**I:** Do you have frequent visits from Palestine?

**S:** My husband's family visits us more, and my sister was here last year and she may come next month.

**I:** Do they talk on the phone with their grand mom, grand dad and other relatives in Palestine?

**S:** Yes always on phone and on skype.

**I:** What language do they use with them?

**S:** Arabic, even when we went to Palestine last summer, everybody were surprised that my daughters speak Arabic very casually as they were raised in Palestine, my family was very happy of and proud about that.

**I:** Wow

**S:** Yes, if they do not know Arabic, how they will communicate with their relatives.

There is a question about the identity of the family, how would you identify your family?

For us, we mostly identify ourselves as Muslims, and I raise my daughters to be Muslims, and to feel Muslim from within. I like them to get close to their Muslim friends who are not Arabs, and feel that they are the same and what really gathers them is that they are Muslims and they have much more in common than they have differences. That means, not because they are not Arabs, and we are Arabs, we are different. No you are the same because you are Muslims. So the first thing we focus on, me and my husband, is the religion. We are Muslims first. Maybe because we are more practicing for our religion than other families we focus more on that, as I told you I do not choose my friends because they are Arabs, not at all, I choose them because of their ethics and religion and usually non-Arab Muslims, like Pakistanis are more loyal to Islam than the Arab Muslims.

**I:** Does Arabic have anything to do with this identity?

**S:** Of course, as I told you, it is the language of Qur'an and Islam so it does have a relationship with the identity and we focus on that.

**I:** How do you describe the Arabic language?

**S:** If they say that their friends only learn English, why they have to learn both Arabic and English, I would say because this is a sacred language, it is the origin and it is the language of Qur'an. Moreover, God choose this language and chose the prophet to be an Arab so you have to feel honoured to speak Arabic, I try my best to make them love the language and not feel that it is a burden. In all cases they must learn it.

**I:** So, you explain the reason?

**S:** Yes, I want my kids to like it because it is not easy to learn English and Arabic, and you have to explain for the kid why, so I tell them, in order to worship God and be a good Muslim, you have to learn Arabic. The letters of Qur'an are Arabic, and each second you spend in learning the language, God will reward you in return. Children understand better like this. They have to take a reward for everything they do, and this one of my ways to motivate them.

**I:** Do the children like going to the Arabic school?

**S:** Not really, they are quiet better now, but before they were not. The last year was the first year, so this year looks better, they are complaining less. However, you know children prefer the English school, because the way they teach at the Arabic school is just like the teaching methods in the schools in our Arab countries, if your remember, it is dictation, the teacher is standing on the board and shouting at the kids and giving them loads of homework and writing sheets. While at the English school, it is more fun, it is education without loads of homework, they read stories and write small essays once a week. They sit around the table with the teacher sitting with them, and not standing on the board. Education here is more interactive; children enjoy and study at the same time. That is why, our children prefer the English school, and they do not like holidays because they like being at school. Teaching at British schools make the children love the school, and that is why when the children compare the two schools together, there will be a difference, and they will not like the Arabic school where teachers are shouting most of the time. Now they are better because I try to make them like it, and I put an effort to achieve that; however, they are not as happy as they are in the mainstream school.

**I:** What about the mosque, do they like going to the mosque?

**S:** Yes, very much.

**I:** More than the Arabic school?

**S:** Yes because they have been going there since they were babies, it is like they were raised there, and they meet friends from various nationalities, so for them mosque is fun. Thanks God, we succeeded in making them like the mosque.

**I:** Why do you send them to both, school and mosque, why do not you choose only one of them?

**S:** I told you before, the school is not enough to teach them Arabic, I started teaching them since they were very little. When they went to school they already knew how to read and write the basics and I still teach them at home. I do not only rely only on the school in teaching them Arabic, I send them to school as an extra to make Arab friends. They go to the English school, and they have friends there, and you know the child like to be a member of a groups and copy them, so we need to give them an alternative as we say no for many things their friends do at the English school. We ask them not to do like their British friends so we should give them an alternative. That is why the Arabic school offers this alternative space where they can make Arab friends, it should not be English friends around them most of the time. Even the mosque, I do not send them there just to learn religion, because they only go on Fridays and this is not enough to teach them Islam, I am more dependent on teaching them Qur'an at home. However, the mosque is nice because they feel that they belong to a mosque and community. Similar to what I said about the Arabic school, it gives them an alternative to their friends at the English school. It is hard to visit people every week, everybody is busy, and they will not be able to have relationships with other Muslim friends so the only environment where they can make friends outside their English school is at the Arabic school, and at the mosque.

**I:** Interesting, and why did you choose this particular school?

**S:** Actually before this, we tried one in Bradford, and we did not like it very much because many of the children were not Arabs, and the teacher had to use a lot of English inside classes to make non-Arab speakers understand, and this not what we looked for. This school is better because the non-Arabic speakers have their own classes, I like that and I feel that my girls are improving in Arabic, they do have exams, and I do like the curriculum used there.

**I:** If you have the opportunity, what would you change in the school or maybe add?

**S:** Yea, I think teachers can improve their ways of dealing with the children and make it more interesting, and try to imitate the English ways of teaching.

**I:** Do you think the school has to change anything in the curriculum?

The curriculum is ok, you know I am not very expert with curriculums, but I think it is ok, I think the problem is with the teachers and their way of teaching.

**I:** Do you think going to the Arabic school have influenced their attitudes to the language?

**S:** It is better, it helped. Although they speak English outside classes or when the teacher is not at class but they are happy to have Arab friends and to have common things with them.

**I:** Ok, and did it influence their performance at the English school, positively or negatively?

**S:** Not really, it brought more work and homework to them, but we are managing, they do not press them very much at the English school, most of the teaching is at the school so they have time for the Arabic homework.

**I:** So not positive, nor negative?

**S:** No not negative no, but positive yes, it increases their self-confidence, because I keep telling them you are better than your friends at class because you know languages, because sometimes they complain, and say that their friends go only to one school, why do we go to two schools, so we have to explain why in a nice way to make them like it and accept it.

**I:** Do they have Arab friends in their English school?

**S:** No, not many maybe two girls, but they do have many Muslims. And actually these two girls are not really caring about their religion and language un-like my daughters.

**I:** The last question, do you think going to the Arabic school has influenced the amount of using Arabic inside the house?

**S:** I do not know what to say if it improves that or not, maybe other families could answer this question better. Because from the very beginning I am focusing on Arabic, and I work with them at home and not only at school, maybe other families depend only on the school and they may feel difference but I have not. However, I am sure it does have positive influences even if I cannot feel them.

**I:** Are you thinking of changing the school?

**S:** No I am happy with it, I cannot find a school better than this one in our area. For instance, at the Saudi school, my friends complain from more pressure on the kids as they teach them more modules. In our school, they teach them Arabic and Qur'an, and I think that is enough. They do not have to confuse the kids with maths, for instance; but still I would ask the teachers to improve their way of teaching and interacting with the kids.

**I:** Thanks very much and we are done.

### **3.b Teacher Interview.**

**Interviewee's name:** Sara Rahwanji (S), a Palestinian teacher at Ealing School.

**The interviewer:** Sanaa Bichani (I).

Date: 26.05.2012.

**Location:** The interview took place at the school, after school times.

Duration:

Approximately 55 minutes

Transcription Notes:

The recording has been retained by the researcher for further research purposes.

To improve analysis, filters and false starts have been removed from the transcribed texts.

The whole interview has been translated from Arabic to English. The translation has been checked and verified by a second educated speaker of Arabic.

Not much attention was given to the participants' code switching, as this was considered to be beyond the scope of this research.



**I:** Are you Palestinian?

**S:** Yea from Palestine.

**I:** Where were you born?

**S:** In Nablus, in Palestine. I lived there till university which I did in Baghdad in Iraq. After that I went back to Palestine where I worked for a year then I got married and came to the UK, so it has been almost 30 years now.

**I:** You have been here for 30 years now?

**S:** Yes.

**I:** Does your husband work here?

**S:** Yes, he is a doctor.

**I:** And your kids, were they born in the UK?

**S:** Yes they were all born here.

**I:** Do you visit Palestine?

**S:** Yea, I do every few years, sometimes with my family and sometimes alone.

**I:** Can I ask what was your first degree?

**S:** I did Geography.

**I:** Have you taught before working in this school?

**S:** I taught Geography for two years in Palestine, and I taught history as well.

**I:** For how long, you have been teaching at this school?

**S:** 18 years.

**I:** In this school?

**S:** Yea, almost 8 to 9 years after its establishment.

**I:** So you have witnessed the changing of a number of managements?

**S:** Yea, me and another teacher. The school was the top at the beginning and the head teacher was great. However, after she left the school's level decreased until Dr. Fared (the current head teacher) became the manager, it is much different now. If you have noticed he is modernizing it, we use the computers now like other mainstream schools, although we have never used them inside the school before. He also cares a lot about lessons' preparation. Moreover, he checks all the details even the exam questions. It was not like that before; nothing was that much organized and official. Now it is excellent and it is 100% Dr. Fared's effort because he completely changed the school. We only had 94 pupils when he started at the school, now we have over 200 pupils.

**I:** So it is almost the double number

**S:** Yea over 200, actually many of us (teachers) did not know how to use the computers, but now we do because we have to send the homework for the children as an e-mail. If he does not know what is the homework, his parents can check that.

**I:** Are you working as a volunteer here?

**S:** No I do earn some money.

**I:** How much do you get?

**S:** When I first started it was 45£ per day, and now it is 50£ and 10£ extra if you teach religion. The actual reason for me teaching here is that I am really attached to Arabic, and getting older is increasing those links with the language. I do not want to forget about my roots, I feel lost if I do not speak everyday with my siblings on Skype, it is like being connected.

**I:** So, you feel like the school is connecting you with the language?

**S:** It is connecting me with the language and with the Arab people in London. I feel happy although it is not easy to work on Saturdays and leave your family, but I am very sociable person, and I love meeting people.

**I:** Aha, what are the problems that you are facing at the school?

**S:** I cannot call it problems.

**I:** I understand, maybe the areas that you think it could be improved at the school?

**S:** Believe me; it is improving in a satisfying way for me.

**I:** What curriculum are you teaching?

**S:** A Canadian one, it is for teaching Arabic for L2 learners.

**I:** Are you happy with the curriculum you are teaching?

**S:** Yea, but the pupils this year are very good, sometimes I think the curriculum is easy for them and they could handle a more difficult one. However, the curriculum is good now and we are planning to develop it more next year. The books we are using are designed to teach Arabic for L2 learners. And as I told you we are planning to develop it in the next year, so during summer I will check the areas that need development and design an outline how to tackle each area and discuss that all at the school.

**I:** You teach the fourth grade now?

**S:** Yea, but when I first started I used to take higher classes. In fact, the previous head teacher asked me to take GCSE class, but I do not really like teaching old pupils because you feel that there is no much respect for the teacher in this country especially pupils in the GCSE age. My daughter was in GCSE and she asked me to stop teaching them because they acted inappropriately some times. To be honest, I do not want to get upset, I am teaching here to enjoy. That is why, I asked them to give me the youngest class, and first they did so, but year by year the school and the head teacher are pressing me to go to higher classes, but I am managing to stay with the fourth grade pupils for now.

**I:** Do you have various levels in your class?

**S:** Actually they are all nearly the same except one pupil.

**I:** Is she higher or lower?

**S:** She is very, very low, she is great in English but her writing in Arabic is so bad.

**I:** What are you planning to do with her?

**S:** I do not know, I have to discuss that with the head teacher. At the parents' day, her mom came and started telling me that her daughter was never excited before about the Arabic school and the Arabic language as now, so I felt embarrassed to tell her that she

is not actually good, that is why, I kept silent, and told her, please take care of your daughter's Arabic writing and she should be helping more I guess.

**I:** And the rest?

**S:** They, as I told you, are nearly the same, and their level is very good, like I have 18 pupils, 1 is bad, 3 are intermediate, and the rest are excellent.

**I:** Do you give the same exercises, at the same time to all pupils?

**S:** Yes, yes.

**I:** How would you evaluate their interaction with you and with the class?

**S:** I could say, it is very good as they are really good and active.

**I:** While observing, I noticed you use the interactive board with them, do you believe using the electronic facilities have an influence on the interaction at the class?

**S:** Yes, Of course it increases the interaction inside the class, because at their mainstream school, everything is on the computer, so we have to be the same. Otherwise, if we do not use computers or any other facilities, pupils would say what an old fashion school we are attending. I do have the whole curriculum on a flash memory which I am going to update it in the summer as well.

**I:** Have you noticed any difference in pupils' levels between they first came to the class and now?

**S:** 100% different.

**I:** Can you be more specific, like in what exactly?

**S:** See I like children to be comfortable at the class. However, border lines should always be there. Now, why I ignore some of their behavioural issues, the reason is that because they are good at studying. First of all, writing, they were all weak, now they are all good. One of the girls had a very bad hand writing, it was difficult to read her hand writing, now it is much better to do so. Second of all, the competition in class is much higher now, they are all encouraged to work and study and it is nice to have this atmosphere in class.

**I:** They were not like that at the beginning of the term?

**S:** No they were not, they did not know what writing by heart mean, it was not important for them, but for me it is very important. Now, they are translating, three weeks ago I have started that with them, translation very good for them. However, it is much easier for our pupils to translate from Arabic to English, but it is hard to translate from English to Arabic so we will focus on that more.

**I:** Right, have you noticed any differences in their attitudes towards attending the school, and their behaviour inside the class?

**S:** Look at the first two weeks, the pupil has to be sacred and wondering “who is this teacher?” and they are always attached to the old teacher, thinking “oooh, we wished we stayed with the old teacher”, and at the end of the year they become like that with their new teacher, saying “teacher we do not want to leave you”. That is very normal, you have to make them comfortable at the beginning of it and gradually you will control the class, and when they get used to you, they will be more relaxed.

**I:** What is the main language you use at class?

**S:** Arabic, it should be Arabic, but I keep translating, so like if they are writing something I say (noktah) and then immediately say full stop, so I have to use both languages, such as new line (str jadid). I have to say everything in both languages most of the time.

**I:** What about the pupils?

**S:** They use English with each other, even when they are at home, I believe they use English.

**I:** And with you?

**S:** Me too they try to speak in English. I do not know if you have noticed that every day, they have to bring something to class and talk about it in Arabic, they have to write it down in their own way and read it out for their friends at class.

**I:** Do you tell them exactly what to talk about?

**S:** No it does not matter for me even if the pupil decides to talk about his neighbourhood gossips, but it should be written, and pupil should read it in Arabic. For example, one of the girls told me that she has the hobby of collecting erasers so she said can I bring them to the class and talk about that, and I said yes sure, and today she brought all her erasers in a box and she started reading about them, and her friends were asking her questions.

**I:** What about other pupils, what language did they use to ask her the questions?

**S:** Actually it varies, some of them English, others Arabic and others a mixed language. the important thing, that this was the girl's first time speaking in Arabic, so that was a great accomplishment for her to be confident that she can use the language now.

**I:** Back to the language used with you, what if the pupils use English with you?

**S:** Sometimes I am very stubborn and I do not answer, I could also tell them that I am sure you can speak Arabic, take your time.

**I:** Is it always like that?

**S:** Not really, because sometimes there is no time to do that, so I just let them ask me in English.

**I:** Do you think the pupils like the Arabic school?

**S:** I do not know, but I do have a good attendance [she laughs].

**I:** What about your children, did they like the Arabic school?

**S:** [she laughs] to be honest, I do not think any child like the Arabic school, I used to fight with them to come to the school, actually I started teaching here so they well be encouraged to come with me.

**I:** Ok, what remarks you have about the school?

**S:** Oh now you are here and the school is really good and the head teacher is very professional and hard working person. There are some things, like we used to arrange a party at the end of the year and we stopped that. I think it will be good if we could do this party again.

**I:** Why did you stop?

**S:** I guess the parents did not support the event enough and that was one of the reasons. Now we do assembly for each class for about 15 to 20 minutes, I guess if we gather all the assemblies in one big party that would be nice. Now to the assembly, all parents come so why don't we have it in one day.

**I:** Would you like to add anything?

**S:** No, thanks.

**I:** Thanks very much for your time.

### **3.c Leeds pupil interview.**

**Interviewee's name:** Dalal (D), student in the third grade at Leeds Arabic school, 9 years old.

**The interviewer:** Sanaa Bichani (I)

Date: 25.02.2012.

**Location:** the interview took place in the participant's house.

Notes:

Transcription Notes:

The recording has been retained by the researcher for further research purposes.

To improve analysis, filters and false starts have been removed from the transcribed texts.

The whole interview has been done in English.

Not much attention was given to the participants' code switching, as this was considered to be beyond the scope of this research.



**I:** Do you prefer to speak in English or Arabic?

**D:** English is quite easier.

**I:** All right, what language do you use here at home with your mother and father?

**D:** Arabic.

**I:** Why do you use Arabic with them?

**D:** Because in English school, I speak English and I get bored from speaking English all the time so I speak Arabic with them so I can keep on practicing Arabic so I will not forget.

**I:** Do they ask you to speak in Arabic your mom and dad, or you just want to speak in Arabic?

**D:** I just want to speak in Arabic.

**I:** Ok, and what language do you use with your sisters?

**D:** When we play I use English.

**I:** What about when you are not playing?

**D:** mmm...a lot of English and some Arabic when Mom reminds us [laugh].

**I:** Do you, sometimes, feel that you want to speak English with your mother?

**D:** Yes.

**I:** When?

**D:** When my English friends come.

**I:** Why?

**D:** Because I don't want keep them asking us what we are saying.

**I:** Do they ask you?

**D:** Yes.

**I:** Do they make fun?

**D:** No they don't make fun. Just normal.

**I:** Ok that is what you speak, but what do you prefer to speak, do you prefer to use more English or Arabic?

**D:** Well, mmmmm...I am ok with Arabic.

**I:** Is there any other time when you feel you want to speak English with your mom?

**D:** When my friends go home I get in the mood of speaking English.

**I:** Your friends; where are they from?

**D:** different places, some of them are British, some of them from Palestine some of them they live in America.

**I:** Which language do you use with them?

**D:** the friends from Palestine, I use Arabic with them, but some of them are from England they are still Muslims and I use English with them because they don't speak Arabic.

**I:** What about your neighbours?

**D:** Well, the most who I know are English so I speak with them English.

**I:** Who are your closet friends?

**D:** Hayde, Mya and Emie, they are all from England.

**I:** Now think about the Arabic school you go to, what language do you use with your friends there?

**D:** I speak in English hehehehe.

**I:** What about the teacher?

**D:** I speak Arabic with the teacher.

**I:** And the head teacher?

**D:** Arabic, mostly.

**I:** why do you speak Arabic with your teacher and head teacher?

**D:** Because they keep asking us to do so, and I think the teacher feels more happy if we speak to her in Arabic.

**I:** Ok, do you visit Palestine usually?

**D:** Yes I visited it last year. Actually we go every two years.

**I:** Did you enjoy, did you like it?

**D:** Yes.

**I:** Do you remember what language did you use with your parents there?

**D:** We use Arabic a lot in Palestine, and sometimes mom and dad leave us with our relatives, and we have to speak Arabic and it does feel nice.

**I:** What language do you use with your sister in Palestine?

**D:** I speak in Arabic mostly if we are with other people, because mom says they may feel upset if we speak in English and they cannot get what we say. Sometimes, though, we use English especially when we are alone.

**I:** So you have relatives there?

**D:** Loads. [both laugh]

**I:** Ok, what language do you use with them?

**D:** Arabic.

**I:** Do they know how to speak in English?

**D:** Yes.

**I:** Is it difficult to communicate with your relatives in Palestine?

**D:** A little bit.

**I:** Why?

**D:** They just fight a lot, I have lots of friends there and I went to the school there and they fight a lot they shout, it is hard to speak to them, and they speak Arabic very fast. I think they are better than me in Arabic but I am better than them in English.

**I:** Do you speak sometimes with them in English?

**D:** No because no one knows English there.

**I:** Do you have fun there or you prefer if you go somewhere else?

**D:** I don't mind going there, actually I like it but I don't like going on the plane to go there.

**I:** Do you prefer if you can use English all the time with everybody?

**D:** No, I don't prefer to use English all the time because I get bored with the language. I feel like I want to learn another language.

**I:** Ok, now do you go to any religious lessons at the mosque?

**D:** Every Friday, I go to Qur'an lesson at the mosque.

**I:** after the English school?

**D:** Well not exactly straight away after the school, an hour after school.

**I:** Who do you go to the mosque with?

**D:** Sometimes I go with my friends because my sister don't want to go and my mother cannot so my mom's friends take me with my friends, and sometimes I go with my family.

**I:** Do you enjoy going to this lesson on Friday?

**D:** Yea, yea, I like learning Qur'an.

**I:** How many hours do you spend there?

**D:** About an hour.

**I:** So why do you like learning Qur'an?

**D:** I am just used to it, and I find it easier than reading a book.

**I:** Do you understand it?

**D:** I understand it; but some words not really.

**I:** Do you read Qur'an at home?

**D:** Yes, I do.

**I:** How often?

**D:** Every day I read a little bit, and before I sleep I do a little bit more.

**I:** Do you think religion is important in this house?

**D:** Yes.

**I:** How important is it very or little?

**D:** Very.

**I:** Are you happy with that?

**D:** Yes.

**I:** why?

**D:** it should be like that, because we believe in it, and we cannot forget it, that is why.

**I:** When they ask you to talk about yourself, what would you say? Would you say, I am a British or I am a Muslim or an Arab or a Palestinian or what?

**D:** My name is Dlaa, I am eight years old and I am a Muslim and British; unless they ask me where I am from.

**I:** Do you think speaking Arabic has anything to do with you being Muslim or Arab?

**D:** With being a Muslim.

**I:** Why?

**D:** Because if you are a Muslim, you have to learn some of the Arabic.

**I:** Why?

**D:** Because when you go to somewhere house and they say something to you like (al salam aleikm) and you don't know what would you reply. Something else how you are going to read the Qur'an if you don't know Arabic.

**I:** Does language has anything to do with choosing your friends, for example, do you prefer Arabic speaking friends?

**D:** I only think that if they speak Arabic you should be friends because they are the same religion as you.

**I:** So you think religion is very important?

**D:** Yes.

**I:** You prefer to be friends with Muslims?

**D:** Yes.

**I:** Why?

**D:** because they are just like me, similar parents and similar life, we could also go to the mosque together, and I will be happy with them more.

**I:** Do you feel embarrassed when your parents speak to you in Arabic in front of your friends?

**D:** No.

**I:** You know there are two types of Arabic; the language you speak at home and the Fusha which is the language you learn it at school and you read the Qur'an with, which one do you prefer?

**D:** I prefer the one we speak at home, because maybe the Fusha is quiet hard to learn.

**I:** Do you prefer to learn the home language at the Arabic school?

**D:** Yes, but still it is important to read and write, so if someone asks you can you write something in Arabic you do, and if someone asks you can you read in Arabic you do.

**I:** Now I want to ask you in which places or times you feel that Arabic is useful for you?

**D:** In the mosque, and at home, in Palestine as well. Like everywhere when there is no one around us, like no one who does not know Arabic because we have to speak English then.

**I:** Ok, you said it is important at mosque, right?

**D:** yea.

**I:** what do you think is the relationship between Arabic and the religion Islam?

**D:** Islam is not just speaking Arabic you can speak in any language unless you are an Arab person. When you are an Arab you speak Arabic.

**I:** What about you, do you say I am an Arab or I am a Muslim?

**D:** I am a Muslim from Palestine.

**I:** What do you read [in Arabic]?

**D:** I read a lot of things, I like reading the Qur'an especially, I read some books also so I can learn some more Arabic *Fusha*.

**I:** What are those books?

**D:** Stories, we brought from home or my aunt sent me.

**I:** Do you watch Arabic channels?

**D:** not all the time, but sometimes.

**I:** What channels do you watch?

**D:** Al Jazeera, Bara'am [kids channels]

**I:** Do you watch them because you want to, or because your mm asked you to?

**D:** Sometimes I want to watch them because they have nice programmes; actually, I like to watch them at night when the ITV and CBBC closed [English kids channels], because I watch mainly English the whole day.

**I:** Do you understand what they say on these channels?

**D:** Yes, but I mostly watch them with mom so I could ask her about difficult words.

**I:** Do you like going to the Arabic school you are going to?

**D:** Yes.

**I:** Which one do you prefer; the Arabic school or the mosque?

**D:** The Arabic school is better, because in the mosque they keep going up and down and praying and stopping then going back to learn, so you have to keep moving about in the mosque. I prefer the Arabic school because in the Arabic school you do not get really messy and move around, you stand in the line, unlike the school where you sit in your place and that is it.

**I:** Do you think going to the Arabic school influencing your Arabic?

**D:** No it is making it better.

**I:** How do you describe the Arabic language, do you like it or do you think it is boring?

**D:** I like it because sometimes if you have English friends and you want to talk about them without understanding you can talk in another language, and they will not get really really sad because they will not understand.

**I:** Do you like your teacher at the Arabic school?

**D:** I like her.

**I:** Why?

**D:** She lets us have breaks when it is not break times, and she plays a lot of games with us, that is why I like her.

**I:** Ok, now which one do you prefer more; your English school or your Arabic one?

**D:** English school.

**I:** Why?

**D:** They don't shout in English, in Arabic they shout.

**I:** Ok and what else?



**D:** In Arabic school very strict, in English school they are not; teachers are calm and they just listen to you, and it is a little bit better because we use English always there.

**I:** How can your Arabic school be better? What do you think?

**D:** Just if the teachers stop shouting, and if the teachers will not say the children to stop doing the things and let us do whatever we want in the classroom.

**I:** Do you think going to the Arabic school is influencing your learning at the English school?

**D:** No, not really.

**I:** Do you have friends in you Arabic school?

**D:** I have lots of friends there and there is one of the friends goes to my English school.

**I:** Ok now, let me ask you about the future, are you going to teach your children Arabic in the future?

**D:** Yes.

**I:** Why?

**D:** Because they have to learn it when they speak with their parents when they get older, and to learn the religion.

**I:** ok dear I think we are done here, thanks very much.

**D:** ok thank you.

### **3.d Ealing pupil Interview.**

**Interviewee's name:** Lama, a Palestinian girl (R).

**The interviewer:** Sanaa Bichani (I).

**Date:** 28.05.2012.

**Location:** The interview took place in the interviewee's house.

**Duration:** the interview lasted approximately 35 minutes.

Transcription Notes:

The recording has been retained by the researcher for further research purposes.

To improve analysis, filters and false starts have been removed from the transcribed texts.

The whole interview has been done in English.

Not much attention was given to the participants' code switching, as this was considered to be beyond the scope of this research.

The participant's sister was in the interview location as well, and she participated in some parts. She was also a student at the Arabic school, and coded as (Y).

**I:** Which language do you want us to use?

**L:** English.

**I:** English, why English?

**L:** Because I like English, I do not like Arabic. It is hard to learn.

**I:** Ok.

**L:** Well yea I just do not like it because it is hard to learn, and I do not like the way they teach us because they do not really teach us anything.

**I:** Ok, let us start with your name, so what is your name?

**L:** Rama.

**I:** How old are you?

**L:** I am 11 years old.

**I:** Ok Rama, what language do you use at home with your mom, sister and brother?

**L:** To my brother and my sister I use English all the time, and to my mom I use probably English most of the time, like 5% Arabic.

**I:** Ok, and do you like this 5%?

**L:**Not really. My mom says, and it is a bit of a joke, if we want dinner we have to say it in Arabic.

**I:** Do you say it in Arabic?

**L:** Yes, I know how to say it. I just do not like it.

**I:** You know the language but you do not like to speak it, why?

**L:** I do not know, I think it is because English is my favourite language and it is easiest to learn, and we go to English school five times a week, and most of my friends are in the English school. I do not really have any Arabic friends, except I have maybe three; it is not really a lot. I would not mind to learn Arabic but not in the Arabic school because I do not like it, because like it is every Saturday we get up, and then go. Maybe if it

started at 1:00 till 3:00, not that you have to be there at 9:30. Oh no we leave here at 9:30 and we have to be there at 10:00.

**I:** What language do you speak with those three friends you mentioned?

**L:** English, It is like Boushara and Thuraya, and they do not speak Arabic that much [she is referring to her girlfriends at the Arabic school], so I speak with them in English.

**I:** Ok, what language do you use with your dad?

**L:** English.

**I:** Do you feel like sometimes you have to speak in Arabic?

**L:** Oh yea, when I am helping my mom in preparing her lesson sometimes she says “say it in Arabic”, and then it is a bit annoying because I do not like to speak in Arabic.

**I:** Who are your closest friends?

**L:** My best friend is from Ireland, but she does not have an Irish accent, and the rest of them are from England. Loads of my friends are from Jamaica and another one is from South Africa, but she has not been there for a while, I think she went last summer, and she does not like it.

**I:** Do you visit Palestine?

**L:** We visited it four years ago I think, yea four years ago.

**I:** And did you like it?

**L:** Yea, I like that whenever we go, our Arabic improves. I like it when we speak Arabic there; it is nice. But in England I do not like speaking in Arabic.

**I:** So, why do you think you like speaking Arabic in Palestine and not in England?

**L:** Because every single person does, it is really fun; me, my cousins and Yara [her sister], we put on a play and we start imitating Palestinians in a good way. My cousin, he is our age, and he pretends to be an old man selling sweet corn and it is really funny.

**I:** Do you prefer if you go more to Palestine?

**L:** Yea, but it is a bit scary because of Israel. I am scared of everything; literally everything. I get scared as well especially because one of them tried to kill Yara.

**I:** What about living in Palestine?

**L:** Our house is really nice as well.

**I:** So you would not mind if you decided one day to leave England and move to Palestine?

**L:** Not that much, maybe if it was like every summer we stayed there and maybe we could have like a summer house. There is a problem to move, there is not any reason to go there because of Palestine, well, because of Israel, yes; and I do not want to leave my friends here. If they wanted to come with me and protect me from the Israelis then I would not mind.

**I:** Ok, do you visit the mosque here in England?

**L:** No.

**I:** So how would you describe the religious practices in this family?

**L:** I would say we are a tiny bit religious, because I like to learn how to pray but my mom does not have time to teach me but it is fine. I have halal food but Yara [her sister] does not really mind. However, definitely no pork.

**I:** Can you tell me more about that?

**L:** It is basically you choose what you want to do, because my brother thinks of himself as an atheist, but I only think because he is a teenager and he does not care about anything, and my dad is half-half, and me, my mom and my sister are Muslims.

**I:** What about you, how would you identify yourself, are you Palestinian, Arab, British, Muslim or maybe something different?

**L:** I would probably say I am English.

However, if someone said to me 'where are you from?' I would probably say the Middle East and if they said where 'were you born?' I would say England. If they said 'what language do you speak?' no, if they said 'what is your main language?' I would

say English. So probably I would say I am half Middle Eastern, half English. I would not say Palestine because people would say Pakistan, so I just say Middle East. If someone ask me what is my religion, I would say I am a Muslim but some other people are not very nice to Muslims not that, but they start saying things about the Hijab, and why people wear them and stuff. We were making our own hats one day, and someone in our group made a hat that looked like a Hijab; they made it on purpose, and I felt really disappointed because it was not very nice to make fun of that.

**I:** Did you tell him anything at that time?

**L:** I did not really say anything, but I went to my friend and I said: I do not think that is really good, they are just being horrible and racist.

**I:** So, in general, would you introduce yourself with your religion?

**L:** No.

**I:** Ok, now do you think speaking in Arabic has to do anything with your identity?

**L:** Not really, because Arabic does not come into my life that much, only a bit because of Arabic school, because I do not really care about Arabic.

**I:** Why are you learning the language?

**L:** I do not really want to; I do know probably the basics. I would not mind if my mom taught me, because it is very nice with my mom; my mom is a very good teacher; that is why. And I would like it if she taught me, so I am only learning it at the Arabic school, because of my mom because she has to go there [her mom is a teacher at the Arabic school]. I do not want to go.

**I:** Do you want to learn Arabic?

**L:** I would probably want to learn Arabic first, just to know some basics like how to have a conversation with someone. I would not want to know every single thing, just enough so if went to an Arabic country I would survive.

**I:** How would you describe the Arabic language? Is it pretty or useful, or not really?

**L:** It is like not useful if you are living in England, because in England nowadays there are less Arabs, except in particular places like Edgware Road or West Field. There are

no places where there are only Arabs or Muslims, so there is no point really. It is useful but it is not that useful here in England. There is no point having it because there are not many people to talk to.

**I:** Do you prefer the Fusha or the spoken language?

**L:** The spoken language.

**I:** Do you like Fusha?

**L:** Not really, it is a bit hard to learn. I like spoken Arabic because it is informal and you can just say (la, na'm or ah) so you do not have to say the full sentence. It is not hard to learn it, it is just the basics.

**I:** Do you understand Fusha?

**L:** If someone speaks it to me, like mama or papa, it is easy, it is in my head, but if it is having to learn the letters and the words then it is a bit hard but I do understand a bit.

**I:** Can you speak it?

**L:** I would rather not be, but yea I can speak.

**I:** In your opinion, what is the relationship between Arabic and Islam?

**L:** They are completely different. However, you need to learn Arabic to read the Qur'an. So you probably need to speak Arabic to read the Qur'an; or at least you need to know the language. For example, my older babysitter is Arab but she is Christian. She was born... I don't know where she was born, I think Iraq.

**I:** Can you tell me more?

**L:** Not all Arabs are Muslims. No, Christian comes as 60%, maybe.

**I:** Do you prefer friends from an Arabic background, who can speak Arabic as well?

**L:** Not really because they start showing off because I have these twins at school they are Arabs, they start to be rude and talk in Arabic to each other but when we were in year 2, I used to know more in Arabic, and me and Yara used to talk to them in Arabic at school, then it was fun but now it is not any more. [Her sister interrupts to add something about the two girls. She says: "because they make fun of it", then Rama

continues] Yea, they make fun of other non-Arab people, like they use Arabic words for them.

[Her sister starts to talk as well about these two girls] Yara says: It is not very funny; they act like it does not matter but it is so offensive.

[The interview continues with Rama.]

**I:** Do you prefer to be friends with Muslims?

**L:** I do not really mind, who I am friends with.

**I:** Do you watch anything in Arabic on T.V?

**L:** Yes “bab el hara” is one of my favourite Arabic shows [it is a very famous Syrian series], and MBC [a famous Arabic channel].

**I:** Do you watch them now?

**L:** No, mostly in Ramadan, yea. I would not mind watching, but my brother has not set up the thing, well it is set up but it is broken, and nobody fixed it because my brother would not do it because he does not really care about Arabic.

**I:** Do you want him to repair it?

**L:** Yea, I like watching these things, but it does not matter that much to be honest.

**I:** Ok, what about the internet, do you browse in Arabic?

**L:** No that much, I usually go to YouTube search for English songs, and not Arabic.

**I:** Do you listen to any Arabic songs?

**L:** Yes we do. My mom usually shows these songs to her students and she asked me to do it. They are really funny, and they teach you everything you need to know with the family. In one of them, there is a sailor, his name is...I cannot remember... as he shows his family, he says (ache, ohb akhe, Okhte) [my brother, I love my brother, my sister].

[Her sister interrupts here to say] **Yara:** yea, this song called nahn al a’elah” (we are the family).

**L:** but that is all, it is not very much.



**I:** Ok, what about reading in Arabic?

**L:** No, I do not like reading in Arabic. I tried to read my mom's books but it was really hard actually, so I stopped.

**I:** Do you read Qur'an?

**L:** Yes, we can. I know probably two souras (texts). If I want to read it, I would not probably understand it that much, but I will be able to read it, yes.

**I:** How long have you been in the Arabic school?

**L:** [she asks her sister, and then answers] Five or six years.

**I:** Do you like it?

**L:** No.

**I:** Why?

**L:** I told you before, I do not like it to be in my weekend. The teacher is alright but he is a bit boring, and his pronunciation is not really good, because he says the less if he means the lesson. If he does not understand something he just says yea, he does not say what it does mean. You know when you taught the class, we had the book, and then we had to translate the words, he does not know what they mean because all he does is go to his dictionary and look them up, and he does not actually explain the lesson to us.

[Her sister interrupts here.]

**Y:** When he tells us the meaning of the words in English, he actually says something completely different.

**L:** Exactly.

**Y:** There is a word, I looked it up, he said it is herbalaxa, but nobody knows what herbalaxa is. It ended up being 'nature', but he just says random words.

**I:** All right, did you enjoy being with Miss Sawsan [her previous Arabic teacher]?

**L:** It was alright but the people in the classroom were annoying, they keep talking, but I liked Miss Sawsan.

**I:** Ok, so what else you would like to say about the Arabic school?

**L:** I do not like the head teacher at all.

**I:** [laugh] why?

**L:** He is too strict, I liked Miss Faten [the previous head teacher], because she was nicer than Dr. Fareed [the current head teacher], because, this is the most important reason, is that when we want to get home, maybe I need the toilet or something, he talks to my mom for a long long time, he knows that we need to go home, but he does not really get it, and he always makes us stay outside, and I do not like going outside, it is annoying. I don't think he understands that she is our mom, I do not think he gets it.

**I:** Ok, these are many reasons, now would you go to the Arabic school, if it was not for your parents?

**L:** Probably not, I would rather that my mom taught me, because it is very nice the way she teaches, it is really very fun. Like last week I almost slept in class, so I had to go to my mum's class after lunch time, and what I did, I went on the computer, and I looked up Arabic translator and got one of my mum's books and translated the whole thing. It was quiet fun, the way she teaches is quiet fun. I would not mind being in her class.

**I:** Do you think attending the Arabic school is influencing your attitude towards the Arabic language?

**L:**No, it is making it worse, because it makes me feel whenever I speak Arabic I get really bored, because whenever I speak Arabic in Arabic school it makes me feel bored, so whenever I speak it at home or something I am bored as well, then I will not speak it anywhere else, because it is basically boring.

**I:**Do you use Arabic moresince you started going to the school?

**L:** Well, for me it is alright, but maybe when I am at the English school and somebody asks me what does this mean, I tell them. Sometimes it is hard for me to say it, because I do not know actually what it is. Like someone, ages ago, said what does something mean, and I either forgot or did not know what it meant. I honestly did not know, because they expect that I am an Arab and I know how to speak Arabic.

**I:**So, do you think it is making your Arabic better?

**L:** Not really.

**I:** What about your achievement in the English school; is it influenced by going to the Arabic school?

**L:** I think that English school has nothing at all to do with Arabic school, they are two different worlds. They do not mix or anything.

**I:** So, which one do you prefer: your Arabic school or English one?

**L:** English school.

**I:** Why?

**L:** It is not boring, is more organized and the friends there are nicer. I do not know, I just like it there more.

**I:** What about the teachers, the teachers at the Arabic school, or at the English school?

**L:** English teachers, they are really nice and lovely.

**I:** What about the Arabic school teachers?

**L:** They are nice as well, but like strict and sometimes I feel they are confused with what to do and how to deal with us. I feel much happier in my English class.

**I:** Can you give some points or remarks in order to improve your Arabic school?

**L:** I think that we should have more fun lessons, and we should be able to have a choice on what we want to do. And our homework is absolutely terrible, we copy from a book and that does not do anything. My mom said that if you copy from a book that improves your writing and that does not do anything. I think after year 4, they just forget about the pupils. They think 'oh they are old enough; we do not care about them'. They forget about people over year 5, and they give the people under year 4 nice lessons and stuff.

**I:** So you think it was nicer when you were in year 4?

**L:** Yea, of course; it was more fun and teachers were nicer.

**I:** Now let me ask you about the future, are you going to send your children to an Arabic school?

**L:** Maybe not to Arabic school, but maybe I want to teach them myself.

**I:** So you want your children to speak Arabic?

**L:** Yea, so like obviously we might visit Palestine, Lebanon and places like this, so I want them to speak the language so they can talk to their cousins.

**I:** Ok, we are done. Thank you very much.

## Appendix 4a

### Informal Arabic Language Proficiency Test

#### *Arabic Language Test*

**Name:**

**Year:**

**Time: 55 minutes.**

**Answer ALL questions.**

#### **Section A: Vocabulary.**

1. Translate the underlined English word into its Arabic equivalent according to the example given.

**(20 marks)**

**Example.** The patient went to the hospital.

**Answer:** مستشفى

1. The doctor asked the patient to have his medicines on daily basis.

**Answer:**

2. He wrote a long letter.

**Answer:**

3. There were a lot of people in the hall.

**Answer:**

4. The children play in the garden.

**Answer:**

5. My dad travels by car every day.

**Answer:**

6. It takes me long time to get here every Saturday.

**Answer:**

7. I buy vegetables from the grocery.

**Answer:**

8. The butterfly was flying from one flower to another.

**Answer:**

9. We saw a very high mountain in Scotland.

**Answer:**

10. My brother caught a little bird.

**Answer:**

11. The teacher came to the class.

**Answer:**

12. The doctor saved the life of the patient.

**Answer:**

13. I spend holidays with the family.

**Answer:**

14. It was very hot in Spain.

**Answer:**

15. They always walk on the pavement.

**Answer:**

16. The baby swims in the sea just like fish.

**Answer:**

17. My mother cleans the house every day.

**Answer:**

18. That is my second year in this school.

**Answer:**

19. He only drinks water.

**Answer:**

20. I travel to Leeds every morning.

**Answer:**

## Section B: Comprehension and Gap Filling.

1. Read the following text and complete it with the words in the list according to the example given.

(10 marks)

لسلحفاة، وافقت، بحيرة، تنطقي، نطير، وقعت، الله، سمعت، بطتين، عود، الأرض، أطيير

قررت البطتان أن تغادرا غدير الماء، فطلبت منهما السلحفاة أن يصطحباها معهما. سألت .... (1)....

البطتان: " كيف السبيل الى حملي وأنا لا أستطيع أن .... (2) مثلكما؟"

قالتا لها: نأخذ بطرفي .... (3).... وتتعلقين بوسطه، و .... (4).... بك في الجوار حتى نجد بحيرة فنقع فيها ولكن اياك

اذا .... (5).... الناس أو الحيوانات يتكلمون أن .... (6).... بكلمة.

.... (7).... السلحفاة على ذلك. ثم أخذتاها البطتان وطارتا بها في الجو، فقال الناس: ( عجبا، سلحفاة بين .... (8)....

قد حملتاها!)

وقالت الحيوانات: ( كيف تقضي السلحفاة وقتها مع بطتين؟)

فلما .... (9).... السلحفاة ذلك قالت: (فقا .... (10).... أعينكم أيها الناس! ويا أيتها الحيوانات). ولما نظقت السلحفاة

.... (11).... على الأرض وماتت.

### Answers:

9	5	1 السلحفاة
10	6	2
11	7	3
	8	4

## Appendix 4b

### Example of completed Arabic Proficiency Test.

Ealing Arabic School (13)  
Appendix 4 (b) Example of completed  
Arabic Language Test

Name: ~~John~~  
Year: 3

Time: 55 minutes.

Answer ALL questions.

#### Section A: Vocabulary.

1. Translate the underlined English word into its Arabic equivalent according to the example given.

(20 marks)

Example. The patient went to the hospital.

Answer: مستشفى

1. The doctor asked the patient to have his medicines on daily basis.

Answer: دكتور

2. He wrote a long letter.

Answer: طويل

3. There were a lot of people in the hall.

Answer:

4. The children play in the garden.

Answer:

5. My dad travels by car every day.

Answer: سيارة

6. It takes me long time to get here every Saturday.

Answer: ساعات

7. I buy vegetables from the grocery.

Answer: خضار

8. The butterfly was flying from one flower to another.

Answer:

Answer:



9. We saw a very high mountain in Scotland.

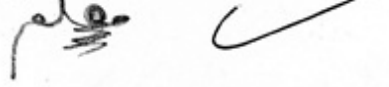
Answer:

10. My brother caught a little bird.

Answer:

11. The teacher came to the class.

Answer:



12. I. The doctor saved the life of the patient.

Answer:

13. I spend the holiday with the family.

Answer:

14. It was very hot in Spain.

Answer:

15. They always walk on the pavement.

Answer:

16. I. The baby swims in the sea just like fish.

Answer:

سبح



17. My mother cleans the house every day.

Answer:

بيت



18. This is my second year in the school.

Answer:

سنة



19. He only drinks water.

Answer:

ماء



20. I. I travel to Leeds every morning.

Answer:

Section B: Comprehension and Gap Filling.

1. Read the following text and complete it with the words in the list according to the example given. Please write your answers in the in the table.

(10 marks)

السُلْحَفَاءُ، وافقت، سمعت، تنكّطي، نظير، وقعت، الله، سمعت، بطنين، عود، الطير

قررت البطتان أن تغادرا غدير الماء، فطلبت منهما السلحفاة أن يصطحباها معهما.  
سألت (1)---- البطتان " كيف السبيل إلى حملي وأنا لا أستطيع أن ---- (2)---- مثلكما؟"  
قالتا لها: ( نأخذ بطرفي ---- (3)---- وتتعلمين بوسطه، و---- (4)---- بك في الجوار حتى نجد بحيرة فتقع فيها ولكن إياك إذا  
---- (5)---- الناس أو الحيوانات يتكلمون أن ---- (6)---- بكلمة. ---- (7)---- السلحفاة على ذلك.  
ثم أخذتاها البطتان وطارتا بها في الجو، فقال الناس: (عجبا، سلحفاة بين ---- (8)---- قد حملتاها!)  
وقالت الحيوانات: ( كيف تقضي السلحفاة وقتها مع بطنين؟)  
فلما ---- (9)---- السلحفاة ذلك قالت: ( فقا ---- (10)---- أعينكم أيها الناس! ويا أيتها الحيوانات).  
ولما نطقت السلحفاة، ---- (11)---- على الأرض وماتت.

Answers:

9.	5. وقعت	1. السلحفاة
10.	تنكّطي	2. أطير ✓
	7.	3. كود ✓
11.	8.	4. بطنين ✓

## Appendix 5

### Example of fieldnotes

Today I have to teach the fourth grade class, I was given the lesson plan from the teacher who was absent because she has gone to Hajj. On the train to Leeds, I was reading the lesson plan and trying to think of what I am going to do in the class and how I am going to attract the students and keep their attention. I am doing my CELTA course nowadays, so on the way to Leeds I was thinking of how I am going to apply my fresh CELTA instruction in teaching the class.

Children's ages vary between 9 and 12 years old, the class has mixed genders and mixed nationalities, such as Egyptian, Algerian, and Syrian students. Again the strict religious appearance was obvious in this class. The two Egyptian boys were found a bit religious more than the Algerian and the Syrian girls, and actually I am not sure if the gender has anything to do with the religious pride, maybe because the boys go to mosques more than girls. Also students from Sudan were also found in this class. The teaching experience was interesting. I was impressed by the students' discipline. Students are very polite, and very respectful to their teacher, which I believe it to be the influence of their cultural heritage. I was thinking about how these students can balance between their learning experience in mainstream schools which I believe it to be more spontaneous and between this experience in complementary schools which is stricter, and controlled by loads of cultural and religious rules. And I was again wondering what is making the students really obeying!!!! is it the religious teaching or what else.....!!!!!!

Before entering the class, the students were having conversations about the current political situation in the Arab world. They were talking about Gaddafi and one of the

students told her friend “did u see the Gaddafi on TV?” ...”they killed him”...”they also dragged him and he was bleeding and bleeding”... and she kept going on and on about it. Basically she was describing the scene as she saw it on the TV. We entered the class after that to start our first session.

#### The first session

The first session was the Arabic language session, we had a lesson about two ducks and a turtle who are trying to immigrate from a lake to another one. The moral of that lesson was to do as you told and to keep your promises. Children answered questions and read the lesson, their reading level can be described as good. They all read in a sufficient way, except two girls from Algeria who seemed not to use Arabic at all in their houses. Then, a grammar lesson about verbs and nouns were explained. In the grammar lesson, the book used texts of Qur’an for elaboration, and the students had to analyse parts of the speech. The language used for inside the books is the standard Arabic and the language used in the classes for instructions are mostly the spoken dialect. That sometimes confuses the students. Moreover, students, most of the time, do not understand the text in its SA and you have to explain it to them, using simpler language, such as using their dialects, so they will be able to understand it and answer the questions.

As in different classes, students are always using English to communicate with each other. Moreover, they are using English to explain the tasks to each other with switching the language to use the exact words in Arabic. Students also switch the language to Arabic in order to speak with me as they assume that I do not speak good English. The reason behind this is that their teacher who, as I observed in previous

weeks, is not a fluent English speaker. Some of the students were ok with handling a full conversation in Arabic with their teacher, others did not.

In one of the tasks, the students were asked to write sentences about their parents, and it was noticeable that many of the students used informal words in their writing.

Half time of the class, the head teacher came to tell the students that she is not going to photocopy all the exercises anymore. Therefore, the students have to write their answers on copybooks, that they can get either from the school, buying it, or bring the photocopies with them from houses. The head teacher justified her decision because she wants to save papers.

The head teacher was shifting between the two languages (Arabic and English); all important information were told in English and maybe repeated in Arabic, and when she was addressing me either, explaining about the decision or seeking my support, the language was immediately switched to Arabic.

The break:

It is break now, I have a better relationship with the teachers now so we were all standing in the playground area, talking and discussing different social and obviously political issues. The language we were using is Arabic and only Arabic. However, students were using English and only English among each other. Students were switching the language to Arabic whenever they address one of the teachers. For example, one of the students uses English when she talks to her friends and Arabic when she talks to the teacher. The same student, and in the same location, uses English when she speaks to her mother although she is a teacher at the school; this is a clear indicator how certain languages can be associated with certain individuals.

The second session:

After the break we have the religious class. The students asked me if they can pray after the break, or actually they asked whether we are going to pray or not. I suppose they did that all the time with the class main teacher. However, I did not want them to pray, and I did not want to pray myself, maybe I was not sure I will be able to do that correctly. I was postponing it and telling them that they have to wait till we finish the class. Then, they were angry and shouting and they said “teacher you are not allowing us to pray”, here I used my authority as a teacher in the eastern culture and asked them to behave and be patient as I have a lesson plan and we all have to follow this lesson plan. They did not ask after that and I am not sure if that was because they were convinced or not. In this situation I was not able to tell the students that I do not really prefer them praying in the class because this is a school and not a mosque, I was always very careful when talking about religious matters in the school, and what is accepted and not accepted in this school.

The religious lesson consists of two parts; the first one, contains some texts from the Qur’an, and the other one was about the ethics they should follow as Muslim students, some of the ethos are teaching the students not to interrupt their teachers, not to speak in classes, to be loyal and devoted in their studies. The children then had to summarize the lesson and talk about what they have learned, and the moral lesson of it.

The thing here is that this particular lesson can be given by any educational institutions to teach the students how to behave in classes but in this school it was put in a religious context; i.e. that the characters in the lesson are Muslim children. So, all these general ethics were connected with Islam, all the examples were given from Hadith (profit’s quotations), and from the Qur’an.

At the end of this class we started reading parts of the Qur'an and some of the students recited some of the texts by heart. It is amazing how they memorized it by heart, although their Arabic is not perfectly good, and when I stopped them to ask them about specific words, they gave general answers which indicated that they do not understand everything they are saying.

The third session

This session was about Islamic history; specifically the family tree of the prophet, his mother and father and the way he was raised. The students were very interested in this information, although they looked familiar with the topic. Children answered certain questions after the lesson such as, who is the prophet's mother, and when did she die, etc.

It was the end of the class, students were given a home work to memorize 5 ayats of the Qur'an, in addition to continue the questions about the prophet's family.

The book used in this session is the Islamic history (Saudi Arabia); which is a book about the history of the religion and the Umma (the Islamic nation), the history and the life story of the prophet, and other stories about Islam. This session or book does not involve directly teaching the language, it teaches stories using the Arabic language and it has exercises related to that.

## Appendix 6

### Time line

		Date of visit(s)	LEEDS						Date of visit(s)	EALING								
			Observations	Questionnaire	Interviews	Test				Observations	Questionnaire	Interviews	Test					
Oct-11	School Visits	16th	OC/OP					Oct-11	School Visits									
	Family Visits	23rd	OC/OP						Family Visit									
Nov-11	School Visits	13th	OC/OP/T		IH		Nov-11	School Visits										
		21st	OC/OP		IH/IT													
		27th	OC/OP/T	Q/Q	IT/IT													
Dec-11	Family Visits						Dec-11	Family Visit										
	School Visits	3rd	OC/OP/T					School Visits										
Jan-12	Family Visits	11th	OC/OP				Jan-12	Family Visit										
	School Visits	15th	OC/OP		IT			School Visits										
Feb-12	Family Visits	24th/25th			IP/IS (Dalal)		Feb-12	Family Visit										
	School Visits							School Visits										
Mar-12	Family Visits	15th			IP/IS (Rasheed)		Mar-12	Family Visit										
	School Visits	27th/28th			IP/IS (Nadia)			School Visits	9th	OC/OP								
Apr-12	Family Visits						Apr-12	Family Visit	17th	OC/OP								
	School Visits	2nd/3rd/5th			IP/IS (Dina)			School Visits	24th	OC/OP/T		IT						
May-12	Family Visits						May-12	Family Visit										
	School Visits							School Visits	21st	OC/OP		IH/IT						
Jun-12	Family Visits						Jun-12	Family Visit	28th	OC/OP		IH						
	School Visits	10th						School Visits										
Total	Total		OC: 8 OP: 8 T: 3	2	IH: 2 IT: 4 IS: 4 IP: 4	1	Total		OC: 9 OP: 8 T: 2	2	IH: 3 IT: 4 IS: 4 IP: 4	1						
													School Visits	5th	OC/OP/T			
													School Visits	12th	OC/OP	Q	IH	
													School Visits	19th	OC/OP	Q	IT	
													School Visits	26th	OC		IT	Test
Family Visits	21th			IP/IS (Rida)														
Family Visits	21th/27th/28th			IP/IS (Lama)														
School Visits																		
Family Visits	12th/14th			IP/IS (Tarek)														
Family Visits	16th			IP/IS (Hadi)														

OC	Observation at Class	IT	InterviewTeacher
OP	Observation at Playground	IP	Interview Parents
OH	Observation at home	T	Teaching
Q	Questionnaire	IH	Interview Head Teacher
IS	Interview Student		