

Researching Foreign Language Planning and Policy in Saudi Arabia

By

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Declaration

This thesis is my own work, and no part of it has been submitted for a degree at any other university.

Maram Almansour

To Haitham,

For standing by me as I make my dreams come true

Acknowledgments

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Abstract

This is an exploratory and qualitative research project, aiming to investigate foreign language planning and policy in Saudi Arabia. This study examines the influences on foreign language planning and some of the main gaps in foreign language education in Saudi public schools. This study also explores multilingual literacy practices in informal settings, and students' and parents' views regarding the country's foreign language policy. This study employs aspects of Cooper's (1989) theoretical framework of language planning, which attempts to explain language planning in terms of 'who does what for whom and why'. This descriptive framework helps in understanding the current foreign language situation in Saudi Arabia and how it came to be. Both data collection and analysis use elements of Charmaz's (2006) constructivist grounded theory, whereby a theory is constructed from the emergent themes. The findings from this study show eight main themes:

1. English is the first, and only, foreign language.
2. Arabic is a privileged language.
3. Informal foreign language learning is disapproved of, challenged or ignored.
4. A belief that foreign language learning might hinder academic achievement.
5. Saudi children are multilingual in practice and outlook.
6. Saudi children learn foreign languages informally out of school.
7. Popular culture promotes foreign language learning.
8. Saudi children learn foreign languages through different modes.

These emergent themes explore the influences on foreign language planning in Saudi Arabia and the informal multilingual and multimodal literacy practices of children and young people living in the country.

Table of Contents

DECLARATION	II
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	IV
ABSTRACT	V
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1) ABOUT THE STUDY	1
2) THE CONTEXT AND RATIONALE	2
3) AIMS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	4
4) THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	5
5) METHODOLOGY	6
6) A BRIEF DISCRPTION OF MY RESEARCH JOURNEY.....	6
7) THESIS STRUCTURE.....	12
CHAPTER 2: EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA - A BRIEF HISTORY	14
1) INTRODUCTION	14
2) ABOUT SAUDI ARABIA.....	14
3) THE LANGUAGE PROFILE OF THE ARAB WORLD AND SAUDI ARABIA	18
4) EDUCATION AND ISLAM	22
5) THE EDUCATION POLICY	26
6) CHAPTER SUMMARY.....	31
CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW - FROM APPLIED LINGUISTICS TO NEW LITERACY STUDIES	33
1) INTRODUCTION	33
2) CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC CAPITAL.....	34
2.1) <i>English as a global language</i>	41
2.2) <i>Applied linguistics: a changing field</i>	46
3) NEW LITERACY STUDIES	52

4) NEW LITERACIES	56
5) POPULAR CULTURE	60
6) MULTIMODALITY.....	63
7) MULTILINGUAL LITERACIES.....	66
8) LANGUAGE AND POWER	67
8.1) <i>Language ecology</i>	69
8.2) <i>Linguistic landscape</i>	72
8.3) <i>Linguistic and multilingual repertoires</i>	77
9) CONTEMPORARY AND CRITICAL APPLIED LINGUISTICS	80
9.1) <i>Sociological perspectives on language learning</i>	87
9.2) <i>Language, identity and the social world</i>	91
10) KEY TERMS IN LANGUAGE RESEARCH	93
11) CHAPTER SUMMARY	95
CHAPTER 4: FOREIGN LANGUAGE PLANNING - A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	97
1) INTRODUCTION	97
2) TOWARDS A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	97
3) LANGUAGE PLANNING: A DEFINITION.....	103
4) A DESCRIPTIVE FRAMEWORK OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE PLANNING	106
5) LANGUAGE PLANNING AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN SAUDI ARABIA	110
6) FOREIGN LANGUAGE PLANNING WITHIN THE SAUDI CONTEXT	112
7) RELIGIOUS LANGUAGE PLANNING	115
8) TOP-DOWN AND BOTTOM-UP LANGUAGE PLANNING	118
9) CHAPTER SUMMARY.....	119
CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	121
INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH APPROACH.....	121
PART ONE: EXPLORATORY CASE STUDY.....	122
1) <i>Constructivist grounded theory</i>	123

2) <i>Tools of grounded theory</i>	126
3) <i>Issues in grounded theory</i>	131
4) <i>The sampling process</i>	133
5) <i>Data collection</i>	135
6) <i>Data translating</i>	139
7) <i>Data presenting: stories in grounded theory research</i>	140
PART TWO: EPISTEMOLOGICAL CONCEPTS	140
1) <i>Acknowledging the assumptions</i>	140
2) <i>Reflexivity and grounded theory</i>	141
3) <i>The researcher as a grounded theorist</i>	143
4) <i>Theoretical sensitivity</i>	145
PART THREE: ETHICS	146
1) <i>Ethics in qualitative research study</i>	147
2) <i>Ethics regarding the nature of Saudi Arabia</i>	148
CHAPTER SUMMARY	149
CHAPTER 6: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS	150
INTRODUCTION	150
THEME ONE: ENGLISH IS THE FIRST, AND ONLY, FOREIGN LANGUAGE.	151
<i>Sarah:</i>	151
<i>Amal:</i>	152
<i>Analysis</i>	153
THEME TWO: ARABIC IS A PRIVILEGED LANGUAGE	154
<i>Ahmed:</i>	155
<i>Analysis</i>	155
THEME THREE: INFORMAL LANGUAGE LEARNING IS DISAPPROVED OF, CHALLENGED OR IGNORED.	
.....	156
<i>Nouf</i>	157

<i>Sami:</i>	157
<i>Analysis</i>	158
THEME FOUR: A BELIEF THAT FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING MIGHT HINDER ACADEMIC	
ACHIEVEMENT	160
<i>Norah:</i>	160
<i>Asha</i>	161
<i>Analysis</i>	161
THEME FIVE: SAUDI CHILDREN ARE MULTILINGUAL IN PRACTICE AND OUTLOOK.	
<i>Sana:</i>	163
<i>Majed:</i>	164
<i>Fatimah:</i>	165
<i>Analysis</i>	166
THEME SIX: FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING OCCURS INFORMALLY OUT OF SCHOOL.....	
<i>Haya:</i>	167
<i>Eman</i>	168
<i>Analysis</i>	169
THEME SEVEN: POPULAR CULTURE PROMOTES FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING.	
<i>Reem</i>	170
<i>Analysis</i>	172
THEME EIGHT: SAUDI CHILDREN LEARN FOREIGN LANGUAGES THROUGH DIFFERENT MODES	
<i>Lama</i>	174
<i>Analysis</i>	180
CHAPTER SUMMARY.....	184
CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION	186
1) INTRODUCTION	186
2) LANGUAGE PLANNING AND LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY.....	188
3) MULTILINGUAL AWARENESS	191

4) ISSUES OF LANGUAGE DIVERSITY	194
5) MULTILINGUAL PEDAGOGIES.....	197
6) MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION IN THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING WORLD.....	200
7) MULTILINGUALISM AND SOCIAL CHANGE	204
7.1) <i>Family</i>	205
7.2) <i>Media and the Internet</i>	206
7.3) <i>Economy</i>	207
7.4) <i>Popular culture</i>	208
8) MULTILINGUAL AND DIGITAL LITERACIES	210
9) NANO LANGUAGE PLANNING.....	217
10) CHAPTER SUMMARY	219
CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION	221
1) INTRODUCTION.....	221
2) WHAT INFLUENCES FOREIGN LANGUAGE PLANNING IN SAUDI ARABIA?	221
3) WHAT ARE THE GAPS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN SAUDI ARABIA, AND HOW CAN THEY BE ADDRESSED?	222
4) HOW DO SAUDI STUDENTS AND COMMUNITIES PERCEIVE FOREIGN LANGUAGE POLICY IN SAUDI ARABIA?	223
5) LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER WORK	224
REFERENCES	225
APPENDICES.....	243
APPENDIX 1: INITIAL CODING PROCESS USING ATLAS.TI	243
APPENDIX 2: GROUPING CODES INTO THEMES	244
APPENDIX 3: SAMPLE OF QUESTIONS FOR THE FOCUS GROUP DISSECTIONS WITH STUDENTS	245
APPENDIX 4: SAMPLE OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS	246
APPENDIX 5: SAMPLE OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS AND SCHOOL STAFF.....	247

APPENDIX 6: ETHICAL APPROVAL	248
APPENDIX 7: IMAGE COPYRIGHT GUIDELINES	249

Table of Figures

FIGURE 1: A MAP OF SAUDI ARABIA	15
FIGURE 2: THE POPULATION OF SAUDI ARABIA.	15
FIGURE 3: SCREENSHOTS OF OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT WEBSITE AVAILABLE IN ARABIC AND ENGLISH.....	19
FIGURE 4: STREET SIGNS IN ARABIC AND ENGLISH.....	20
FIGURE 5: A SAUDI MAGAZINE PUBLISHED IN ARABIC AND ENGLISH.	20
FIGURE 6: MINORITY LANGUAGES SPOKEN IN SAUDI ARABIA (ETHNOLOGUE, 2014).....	21
FIGURE 7: PERCENTAGE OF HOURS PER WEEK FOR EACH MODULE IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS.....	27
FIGURE 8: PERCENTAGE OF HOURS PER WEEK FOR EACH MODULE IN INTERMEDIATE SCHOOLS.....	28
FIGURE 9: PERCENTAGE OF HOURS PER WEEK FOR EACH MODULE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS (LITERACY BASED)...	29
FIGURE 10: PERCENTAGE OF HOURS PER WEEK FOR EACH MODULE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS (SCIENCE BASED)..	29
FIGURE 11: DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES USED BY GROUNDED THEORISTS (BIRKS AND MILLS, 2011, P.90)..	125
FIGURE 12: THE PROCESS OF THEORETICAL SAMPLING (BIRKS AND MILLS, 2011, P.71).....	127
FIGURE 13: THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO PARTICIPATED IN THIS STUDY.....	135
FIGURE 14: THE PROCESS OF THEORETICAL SAMPLING (ADAPTED FROM BIRKS AND MILLS (2011).....	138
FIGURE 15: IMAGES OF REEM'S JAPANESE BOOKS.....	171
FIGURE 16: JAPANESE ANIME POSTERS DECORATING REEM'S BEDROOM.....	172
FIGURE 17: SOME OF THE KOREAN APPS LAMA USES.....	175
FIGURE 18: SCREENSHOTS OF <i>ARTIST IN THE STORY</i>	176
FIGURE 19: SCREENSHOTS OF LAMA'S IPOD (RECONFIGURED TO KOREAN).....	177
FIGURE 20: SCREENSHOTS OF A CONVERSATION BETWEEN LAMA AND MAHA (VIA <i>WHATSAPP</i>).....	179

Chapter 1: Introduction

1) About the study

This research project aims to explore foreign language planning in Saudi Arabia. It examines: first, current foreign language planning in Saudi public schools, and some of the main gaps in foreign language education. Secondly, the top-down influences on foreign language planning and policy in the country. Finally, the bottom-up views and perceptions of students, schools and communities regarding foreign language planning and policy, and the multilingual literacy practices of children and young people in Saudi Arabia. A theoretical framework of foreign language planning, based on Cooper's (1989) "language as decision making" framework, is employed in this study to support data analysis. Aspects of Charmaz's (2006) constructivist grounded theory are also used in this exploratory study to collect and enable initial analysis of the qualitative data.

This chapter:

- introduces the context of this study and explains its rationale;
- presents the aims of this research project and the research questions;
- introduces the theoretical framework for this study;
- introduces the research methodology;
- presents a brief description of the researcher's journey;
- and outlines the structure of this thesis.

2) The context and rationale

The main reason for undertaking this study stems from my background as a graduate from the English language department at Hail University, as well as my interest (as an English language teacher) in foreign language education in Saudi schools. My main area of interest is foreign language provision in Saudi schools. I am also interested in issues regarding the students' and the communities' linguistic needs. Discussions with fellow teachers, students, friends and family members helped me initially to understand the linguistic needs and practices of individuals in Saudi Arabia. My reflections on foreign language education in public schools generated questions that I wanted to pursue as a formal study.

One issue with foreign language policy in Saudi schools, in my opinion, is its ambiguity. The education policy does not clearly state what languages should be taught, in which schools and why (The Ministry of Education, 2011). Also, it is unclear why the Ministry of Education chose English to be the only language compulsorily taught in every public school in the country (The Ministry of Education, 1995). It is even unclear whether English is the country's second language or simply a foreign language, as linguists in Saudi Arabia often debate this issue (Al-Asmari, 2005; Al-Hazmi, 2003; Alsamadani, 2008; Alyousef, 2006; Sehlaoui, 2001). This situation leads many students to find other ways, outside of school, to learn foreign languages of their choice (e.g. home, the internet, language teaching centre, language teaching software or applications) as the findings from this research project show.

Foreign language planning in Saudi Arabia is a new (and interesting) field. However, research into foreign language planning is often associated with researching the

teaching and learning of English as a foreign language. It is essential to mention that this research project is not a study of English as a foreign language in Saudi schools, as this topic has been researched thoroughly by others (Al-Seghayer, 2005; Al-Hazmi, 2003; Alabdelwahab, 2002). In these studies, and many more, issues such as the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language, methods of teaching English, the use of technology in English classrooms, and learners' autonomy in relation to Saudi students, have been addressed. As previously mentioned, this research project aims to explore foreign language planning in Saudi public schools. It is understood that issues relating to the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language may appear in this study due to the inductive nature of the research project, however English is not the main focus here.

Another reason for undertaking this study is the lack of critique of education in Saudi Arabia. The Saudi education policy is heavily influenced by religion¹. This results in an absence of any significant critique of policy, as critiquing policy is often viewed as a criticism of Islam. Alessa (2010) attempts to provide a deeper look into the history of education in Saudi Arabia and how it came to be. He argues that education in the country needs a complete reform, as current policy does not promote creative and independent learning. Here, I attempt to rethink some of the influences on foreign language planning. I must acknowledge though that this research project provides basic data outlining foreign language policy in Saudi Arabia, and does not account for every language learned or used inside or outside school. There is more to explore here but unfortunately one thesis could not account for every aspect of language planning.

¹ See Education and Islam in chapter 2.

3) Aims and research questions

This is an exploratory, inductive and qualitative study. The area of this research is new, and little had previously been written on foreign language planning in Saudi Arabia (Payne and Almansour, 2014). The study aims to investigate foreign language planning in Saudi Arabia by analysing qualitative data and identifying the emerging themes. This study aims to answer the following three questions:

1. What influences foreign language planning in Saudi Arabia?
2. What are the gaps in foreign language education in Saudi Arabia, and how can these be addressed?
3. How do Saudi students and communities perceive the country's foreign language policy?

These questions aim to explore foreign language planning from different angles. The first question reflects a top-down approach, which examines the influences on foreign language planning in Saudi Arabia (e.g. religion, culture, politics and economy). This can help in understanding current foreign language policy in the country, and seeing how these factors contribute to the shaping of foreign language policy in Saudi public schools.

The second question identifies the main gaps in foreign language education in Saudi public schools. Current foreign language policy limits foreign language education to English, and does not account for other factors (such as minority languages, travel, work and popular culture). These gaps can create potential problems for Saudi students and the community as a whole.

The third and final question reflects a bottom-up approach, which investigates how Saudi students and communities perceive and view foreign language policy. This can help in identifying the community's linguistic needs, as well as shedding some light on the students' voice and their language practices.

Examining foreign language planning on a national scale is complex, due to the many political, economical and social elements affecting the planning process. This research project aims to draw an outline of how such elements influence foreign language planning in Saudi Arabia. This study provides basic data, which presents some of the issues of foreign language planning in Saudi public schools.

4) Theoretical framework

This research project is embedded in a theoretical framework of foreign language planning based on Cooper's (1989) descriptive framework. The framework is used to explore foreign language planning in Saudi Arabia. Researching language planning involves describing, predicting and explaining the planning process, as well as deriving a valid generalisation. Cooper (1989) argues that descriptive frameworks can aid in carrying out these tasks and evaluating their success. This descriptive framework will be used to explore foreign language planning in Saudi Arabia. In addition, Cooper's (1989) acquisition planning (or language-in-education planning) can be used to support the study of foreign language provision in schools (Ferguson, 2006; Ingram, 1989; Payne, 2006). Cooper's (1989) framework was a useful tool to examine the data initially; however, this study goes beyond a descriptive framework to look at the social and cultural influences on multilingual literacy practices (Grenfell et al., 2012; Pahl and Rowsell, 2006; Pennycook, 2001; Street, 2003; 2012).

5) Methodology

This is an inductive, exploratory and qualitative research project. The research model has been designed based on the strategy of Charmaz's (2006) constructivist grounded theory. In this study, grounded theory is considered appropriate as little is known about the area of research and a constructed theory of foreign language planning is a desired outcome (Birks and Mills, 2011). Elements of Charmaz's (2006) grounded theory were incorporated when collecting, analysing and handling the qualitative data. Here, the research project attempts to build a theory of foreign language planning from the emergent themes. A fixable and inductive approach seems useful when exploring complex phenomena, for example children's literacies. Snowball sampling (Wellington, 2000) provided interesting and deep data about how children and young people in Saudi Arabia interact with different languages and how they engage with multilingual and multimodal literacies (Hélot et al., 2012; Hornberger, 2000; Jaworski, 2014; Kaplan, 2014b; Ntelioglou et al., 2014; Sarkar and Low, 2012). Grounded theory tends to start with data collection and analysis before exploring the literature (Birks and Mills, 2011; Charmaz, 2003; 2006; Glaser, 1998; Morse, 2007). This non-traditional approach to research can be unpredictable; nonetheless, it allows data to direct the research path into new and exciting places (see Chapter 5 'Research Methodology').

6) A brief discription of my research journey

This section outlines and describes my experience as a researcher as I embarked on the first major research project of my career. Here, I reflect on my experience of the past four years and how it contributed to the development of my positionality and my identity. As I wrote this brief section, I became aware of a flood of memories, ideas,

and events that led me to my current research journey. My perceptions and my thinking have broadened (and in some cases completely changed) as my study grew.

This section highlights a number of the issues and challenges related to conducting an exploratory study. Talking with fellow researchers, I found that exploratory, inductive, and qualitative research is often described as unexpected, and difficult to plan or foretell. Minichiello and Kottler (2009, p.11) describe qualitative research as a journey full of “surprises, twists and turns in the road, and unforeseen obstacles”. Conducting this exploratory study was very challenging; nonetheless, it enabled me (an early career researcher) to learn, grow, and develop.

Before beginning this research project, I completed a Master’s degree in applied linguistics, which mainly looked into issues in second language acquisition and language teaching methodologies. Such debates and discussions were often limited to how policy makers influence language education, and how the human mind acquires and learns languages. I was more interested in the learners and their experience with language. For my Master’s dissertation I explored the impact of using ‘task-based’ language teaching (Ellis, 2003) on language learners at beginner levels. Although my study was not an empirical piece of research, it did nonetheless allow me to explore the learners’ experience with language and their linguistic practices both inside and outside school. Following my Master’s degree, I have decided to explore the language and literacy practices of children and young people in Saudi Arabia in an empirical study. My plan was to start my exploratory research project without research questions (as encouraged by grounded theory). However, I was required to produce a formal proposal and complete an ethical review before conducting my study (see Part

2 of Chapter 5 ‘Epistemological Concepts’). So, I started with the very broad research question “what influences foreign language learning in Saudi Arabia?”. This broad question enabled me to provide the required proposal (and other formal documents), yet allowed me space for theoretical sampling. The process of theoretical sampling (Charmaz, 2006) enabled me to immerse myself in the micro and multilingual practices of children and young people, both inside and outside school. My research questions then developed to explore not only the top-down influences in foreign language planning and policy in Saudi Arabia but also the multilingual perceptions, views, and practices of individuals.

This study explores the top-down and bottom-up foreign language planning in Saudi Arabia. I came to explore the multilingual literacies of individuals in Saudi Arabia from the perspective of a foreign language teacher. In this section, I discuss my transition from language teacher to language researcher, and how it influenced my understanding of this research project. I completed my teacher training at a Saudi university as an English language teacher between 2003 and 2007. At that time the ministry of education in Saudi Arabia introduced English as a foreign language to primary schools. A number of language teachers and language researchers were concerned about the implications of introducing foreign languages (namely English) to young learners. A number of researchers into applied linguistics and sociology, as well as school practitioners (including myself) became interested in issues surrounding language teaching and learning, and multilingual literacies: issues such as new methods of teaching English (Al-Asmari, 2005; Al-Hazmi, 2003; Al-Seghayer, 2005; Alabdelwahab, 2002), the sociocultural context of teaching english (Elyas and Picard, 2010; Khalifa, 2001), the challenges of language teaching and learning

(Alabdelwahab, 2002; Alessa, 2010; Alsamadani, 2008; Alshumaimeri, 1999), language teaching and Saudi history (Al-Rasheed, 2010; Al-Safty, 1990), westernisation in Saudi Arabia (Uddin, 2009; Yamani, 2000; Yamani, 2009), and the influence of identity and motivation on language learning (Alsamadani, 2008; Alshumaimeri, 1999; Elyas, 2008; Elyas and Picard, 2010; McMullen, 2009). Such studies are useful for exploring the language profile of Saudi Arabia; however, they fail to account for (and explore) the micro, out-of-school, and unplanned multilingual literacy practices of children and young people in Saudi Arabia.

After completing my training as a language teacher, I set out on a journey as a researcher. I needed more experience to understand what goes on beyond language classrooms and the true nature of language learning. In order to gain this, I embarked on a Master's degree and now a PhD degree, in the hope it would make me a better teacher. While conducting this research project I found myself dealing with challenges I did not expect. My journey did not only consist of challenges, but also opportunities for learning, as I attempted to solve the problems I faced. I found myself watching what fellow researchers did; learning from their experiences and how they dealt with the challenges associated with conducting research. I also found myself pausing and reading more about what it means to conduct research. Every step of my journey presented different types of challenges that I did not predict, yet inspired me to move forward. During my first year, I had major concerns about conducting an inductive and grounded-theory inspired study. I found myself attracted to the flexible nature of grounded theory, yet required to deal with the practical aspects of conducting a study (see Part 2 of Chapter 5 'Epistemological Concepts'). Often I had to pause my main work to acquire tangential information about writing a research

proposal (when I was not really sure about the direction of my research, the sample size, or what exactly I was researching), and writing a longer piece of discourse outlining my research plans. I had to seek help from fellow researchers and PhD candidates to learn how to produce such documents. During my fieldwork, I found myself first dealing with issues about conducting a research project in Saudi Arabia (see Part 3 of Chapter 5 ‘Ethics’). Yet again, I had to stop and explore the nature of research ethics, and the complex relationship between researcher and participant. It was important for me to consider the learners’ voice throughout this study, and how they identify themselves as language planners. I learned to resist the temptation of a traditional research path, where participants are often a tool for data collection. Instead, I built relationships with the children and adults who took part in this study (Tillmann-Healy, 2003), which afforded me a deeper insight into their social lives and literacy practices. My relationships with the participants made me personally invested in their social interactions as I often found myself inquiring about their literacy practices both online and offline. My friendship with the participants contributed to a flood of complex and messy data (see Chapter 6 ‘Findings and Analysis’). Once more I had to take a step back and find new ways to deal with my data. It was not only an issue of using software to sort and code it, but also analysing and interpreting layers and layers of important social interactions that went beyond foreign language learning. I found insights into language and literacies in places I did not expect. A number of interdisciplinary research centres at The University of Sheffield (CSL, 2015; CSCY, 2015; RESS, 2015) and The Institute of Education at The University of London (MODE, 2015; MIDAS, 2015) encouraged me to look beyond the world of applied linguistics to extract meaning from my data. I encountered many works which were essential to broadening my view (Agha, 2007; Bezemer and Mavers, 2011;

Blommaert, 2013b; Castles, 2003; Gee, 1996; Halliday, 1978; Heath, 1983; Hélot et al., 2012; James, 2013; Jang and Jiménez, 2011; Kress, 2012; Lankshear and Knobel, 2011; Norton and Toohey, 2011). I must admit, attempting to sort multilingual literacy practices and present them in a tidy way was a struggle. Before writing this thesis, I decided to write a paper about the multilingual practices of children in Saudi Arabia to help me with my thesis writing (Payne and Almansour, 2014). Although I was aware of the broader social, cultural, and historical influences on literacy practices, I found myself (with encouragement from the editors and co-author) limiting the paper to one aspect of the analysis (namely language planning and policy) as it presents a clean piece of academic work. The paper guided me to write my thesis in a similar way, where I presented very complex and interesting data yet limited my analysis to one aspect of the literature (language planning and language policy). My attempt to simplify my work and avoid any messiness caused my first thesis submission to fail. Once again, I had to pause and rethink my approach and writing. What seemed like a setback pushed me in the right direction. The feedback from the examiners guided me toward a new route of exploration. I returned to my data and looked at the stories of the people and their social and linguistic interactions. I returned to my starting point to understand the links between theory and everyday life. Social ideas and arguments (Blommaert, 2010; Gee, 1996; Gorter, 2006; Halliday, 1978; Heath, 1983; Heller, 2012; Hélot, 2003; Hornberger, 2000; Ito et al., 2010; Jewitt, 2009; Kress, 2003; Lankshear and Knobel, 2011; Marsh and Millard, 2000; Norton, 2000; Pennycook, 2001; Shohamy, 2009; Street, 1984; Williams, 2009) guided me to see that the complexity and messiness of everyday experiences cannot be explored by an abstract framework. Nonetheless, academic work often requires theoretical traditions to direct data analysis. In this study, I employed aspects of

Cooper's (1989) framework as a tool to negotiate data and data analysis; however, influenced by the work of Pennycook (2001), I go beyond descriptive theoretical frameworks and explore social, cultural, and historical influences on literacy practices, and how these contribute to social change. This approach enabled me to look at different ways of examining and exploring literacy practices. I find myself now more comfortable embracing the messiness of children's and young people's literacies, going freely from one theory to another and employing what best suits my work. I do not believe that my flexible and exploratory approach to research is a concrete method, as I expect to continue facing challenges in my future work, especially as the majority of academics prefer the traditional construction of a research project. I came to this study with many questions, some I attempted to answer here, others I have yet to answer. Nonetheless, these questions will be my personal drive for further exploration.

7) Thesis structure

This thesis is divided into 8 chapters. Chapter 2 presents a brief history of education in Saudi Arabia, which helps in understanding the context of the study and current educational policy, as well as foreign language education. Chapter 3 explores the literature review and how this research project moved from applied linguistics to New Literacy Studies. Chapter 4 presents the theoretical framework of this study. It is understood that any research project employing grounded theory should start with the data and then move on to theory. In this research project, the literature review was produced after data collection and analysis; nonetheless, it is presented in this thesis in the traditional order. Chapter 5 presents the methodology employed in this study, and explains the process of data collection and analysis. Chapter 6 presents the key

findings, and makes an initial analysis of the main emerging themes. Chapter 7 discusses some key issues emerging from the data and presents foreign language planning and multilingual literacies in Saudi Arabia. Chapter 8, the final chapter of this thesis, draws conclusions from the research project, and suggests areas for further research.

Chapter 2: Education in Saudi Arabia - a brief history

1) Introduction

This chapter presents a brief history of Saudi Arabia, its culture and society. Understanding the social context of this study and the country's history helps in understanding its education and foreign language policy. Here I present the language profile of Saudi Arabia and minority languages within its communities. This chapter also examines the country's relationship with Islam and how Islamic laws affect education. Finally, I look into foreign language learning in schools and problematise the teaching of English.

2) About Saudi Arabia

Located in the southwest corner of Asia, present-day Saudi Arabia was founded in 1932. It is located at a crossroads between Asia, Africa and Europe and is thus occupied by a diverse population (Central Department of Statistics & Information, 2011). It is an Islamic country and the majority of its population are Muslims. "Indeed, Saudi Arabia is considered to all Muslims in the globe to be the cradle of Islamic civilization" (Elyas, 2008, p.29-30). In 2010, the population of this country was a little over 27 million, of these nearly 8.5 million non-Saudi inhabitants, creating a multicultural community (see Figure 2) (Central Department of Statistics & Information, 2011).



Figure 1: A map of Saudi Arabia

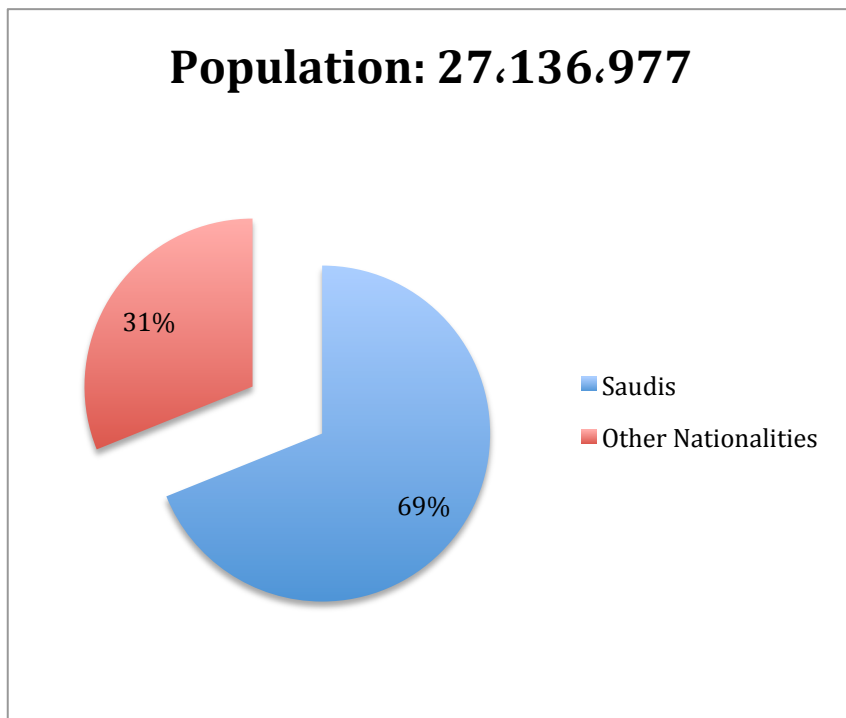


Figure 2: The population of Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia has high status in the region. To many Muslims around the world, Mecca (the birthplace of Islam) is a sacred city, and therefore Saudi Arabia is the protector of Islam (DeLong-Bas, 2004; Ochsenwald, 1981). As a country, Saudi Arabia believes that its strength and development lies with Islamic legislation guiding all aspects of life. Khalifa (2001) argues that there are three main reasons why Islam has a dominant role in Saudi Arabia:

1. The location of Saudi Arabia in the middle of the Arab region makes it the keeper of Arabic culture and identity.
2. Mecca (where Islam began) is located in Saudi Arabia, making the country the centre of the Islamic world.
3. Saudi Arabia used Islam as a force to unify different tribes in the region and establish its social and political structure.

Formal education was established in the 1930s, and by 1951 there were nearly 226 schools and nearly 30,000 students (The Ministry of Education, 2011). The Ministry of Education itself was established in 1954. Now there are almost 25,000 public schools nationwide, accommodating almost 5 million students (The Ministry of Education, 2011). Public schools (with Islam remaining at their core) provide free education to all citizens. Male and female education is completely segregated. The education system in Saudi Arabia can be described as ‘highly centered’ as all educational policies, curricula, syllabi, textbooks, teaching materials and even school uniforms are subject to control and supervision by the country’s Ministry of Education (Alshumaimeri, 1999; The Ministry of Education, 2011).

The socialisation of children and youth in Saudi Arabia is constantly debated. Kalifa (2001) argues that the greatest challenge Saudi children face is western influences on their society.

“Thus, local conditions as well as global change have also influenced children’s culture in contemporary Saudi society, and the study of Saudi Arabian childhood has to acknowledge the complexity of this situation in order to achieve a comprehensive understanding” (Khalifa, 2001, p.40).

She also argues that studies looking at social and historical shifts in Saudi Arabia often create tension between traditional and contemporary views within the Saudi community. Nonetheless, there are studies that attempt to understand the reasons for such conflict (Al-Jabry, 1988; 1991; Ammara, 1984; Ghalyon, 1990). These studies argue that Arab societies often struggle to find the middle ground between westernisation and Islamic culture.

“In the Saudi community, as well as other Arab countries, linguistic conflict can be seen not just between the study of Arabic and foreign languages such as English but also within the Arabic language itself. The Arabic diglossia has made Arabic speakers perhaps resemble bilinguals because they acquire and use two varieties of Arabic”. (Almahmoud, 2014, p.10)

Findings from this research project suggest that conflict between tradition and modernisation also arises when dealing with language education and language use.

3) The language profile of the Arab world and Saudi Arabia

The Arab world consists of 22 countries with more than 300 million people (Almahmoud, 2014). Arabic is the official language throughout the Arab countries; however, there are several ethnicities, backgrounds and languages, such as Berber, Kurdish and Armenian. In addition, some of the Arab countries were colonised, for example, Egypt was a British colony, Lebanon was a French colony and Libya was an Italian colony (Gadelii and Sector, 1999).

“Contemporary language planning in the Arab world is to some extent successful in promoting Arabic in the post-colonial period. However, there are shortcomings in other aspects of language planning practice. Coordination between the Arab agencies in relation to their efforts to meet the demands of the broader social context is urgently required”. (Almahmoud, 2014, p.87).

In Saudi Arabia, Arabic is the official language and has a strong attachment to Islam since the Qur’an is in Arabic. Nearly all Saudis speak Arabic as their first language (Central Department of Statistics & Information, 2011). Standard Arabic is used for education, religious practices (such as praying) and formal communication. Individuals, on the other hand, use a variety of different accents and dialects (e.g. Nejd Arabic and Hejazi Arabic). English is the main foreign language in the country and it is the only foreign language officially taught in Saudi public schools (The Ministry of Education, 2011). English is often used as the country’s second language as signs, publications and websites are often in both Arabic and English (see Figures 3, 4, and 5 below).

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الأربعاء 26 ربيع الآخر 1435 / 26 فبراير 2014

English | ديوان وزارة الداخلية الإمارات | القطاعات النوظف | الرئيسية < ديوان وزارة الداخلية

آخر الأخبار

سمو وزير الداخلية يرحى يوم التضامن مع الأطفال السوريين في الرياض

الأربعاء 26 ربيع الآخر 1435
يحضور صاحب السمو الملكي الأمير خالد بن بندر بن عبدالعزيز أمير منطقة الرياض، وأصحاب السمو الأمراء، رعى صاحب السمو الملكي الأمير محمد بن نايف بن عبدالعزيز وزير الداخلية المشرف العام على الحملات الإغاثية السعودية، مساء أمس

اقرأ المزيد

التصريحات وبيانات | الأخبار الأمنية | المتحدث الأمني

نتائج تنفيذ الحملة الأمنية الميدانية

التوظيف

عموياً لا توجد وظائف حالياً .

نظام المواعيد للمديرية العامة للجوازات | نظام المواعيد لوكالة الأحوال المدنية

إستعراض الكل | فعاليات وأحداث

يوم التضامن مع الأطفال السوريين الثلاثاء 25 ربيع الثاني 1435هـ

أهم الأحداث



الأربعاء 26 ربيع الآخر 1435 : سمو النائب الثاني يرأس جلسة مجلس الوزراء

اقرأ المزيد

الخدمات الإلكترونية

- الاستفسار عن طلبات تأشيرات العمل
- تجديد استمارة السيارة
- استعلام عن تأشيرة خروج وعودة
- الاستعلام العام عن صلاحية التأمين الصحي للمقيمين فقط
- استعلام عن المخالفات المرورية
- إصدار تصريح سفر للتابعين إلكترونياً
- خدمة التحقق من صلاحية الهوية
- استعلام عن وصول عمالة وراثين
- الاستفسار العام عن البصمة
- الإستمطار العام عن صلاحية التأمين على المركبات

اقرأ المزيد

إصدار وإلغاء تأشيرات الخروج والعودة والخروج للمهالي

الاستفسار عن العمالة الفردية والسجلات الخاصة

معرفة حالة جواز السفر والإطلاع على بياناته

خدمة التحقق من صلاحية الهوية

الأقسام

الرئيسية

عن الوزارة

الأخبار

المنافسات

البيانات الأمنية

المنادج الإلكترونية

الاسئلة الشائعة

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Figure 3: Screenshots of official government website available in Arabic and English.



Figure 4: Street signs in Arabic and English



Figure 5: A Saudi magazine published in Arabic and English

The English language has become popular across the Arab world for two reasons: the scientific and technical revolution of the United States and the western money and

knowledge invested in oil-rich countries (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987). It is also widely accepted that new knowledge is often developed and published in English. These factors, along with the status of English as a *lingua franca*, play an essential role in promoting English in Saudi Arabia.

There are, however, a number of multicultural communities who speak other languages in Saudi Arabia (Ethnologue, 2014). The large number of foreign workers in the country has created multicultural communities speaking a variety of different languages (see Figure 6), but none of these minority languages are officially taught in public schools.

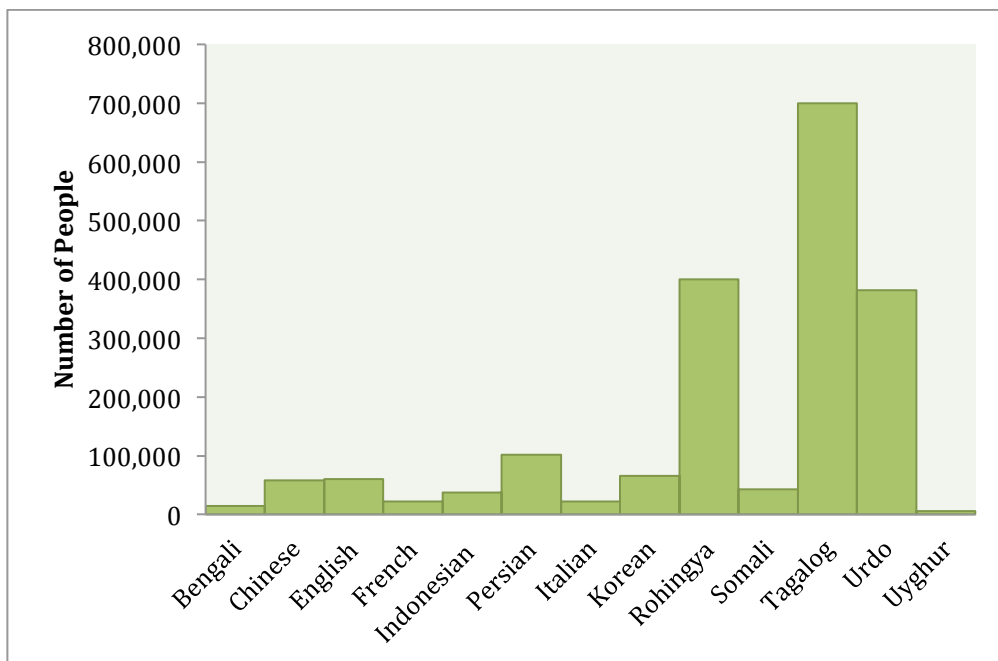


Figure 6: Minority languages spoken in Saudi Arabia (Ethnologue, 2014)

4) Education and Islam²

All of the country's policies (including its education policy) are derived from Islamic laws, with the main aim of developing a society that maintains Islamic values. The kingdom of Saudi Arabia is an autocratic monarchy, ruled by a large family, who govern using Sharia law (Coulson, 2011; Hallaq, 2009), which is based on an interpretation of the Qur'an and other religious texts. Saudi Arabia is steadily going through social and political change (Al-Rasheed, 2010; Wynbrandt, 2010; Yamani, 2009); however, a stricter view of Islam (Wahhabism) still has a huge influence on political decision making and social interactions within Saudi Arabia (Atkins, 2004; Ayoob and Kosebalaban, 2009; Commins, 2009; DeLong-Bas, 2004; Malbouisson, 2007). DeLong-Bas (2004) explains that in the mid 18th Century, Wahhabism encouraged independent reasoning, constant rethinking, and reinterpreting of traditions. Nonetheless, it has changed over time to become a tool to combat social change and western influences on Islamic communities. Nowadays, the term 'Wahhabi' is associated with literal and non-flexible interpretation of religious texts, as well as violent and extreme behaviour. DeLong-Bas (2004) argues that younger generations of the Wahhabi movement have started to incorporate different and violent ideas into their thinking. Malbouisson (2007) and Ochsenswald (1981) also explain how Wahhabism was then used as a political tool to establish modern Saudi Arabia, and the close relationship between the Saudi ruling family and the Wahhabi religious establishment.

² The history of the relationship between Islam and Saudi Arabia is very complex and goes back centuries. Here, I only present the current situation in Saudi Arabia, and how the education policy came to be. This research project is not a study of the history of Islam or the history of Saudi Arabia. The religious and political situation in the Middle East is very complex and beyond the scope of this study.

“To understand the present it is necessary to evaluate the past, and to understand a possible new type of emphasis on Islam in Saudi Arabia, it is necessary to see the Saudi experience in the broader framework of the Islamic revival elsewhere. In general, Saudi Arabia has played a remarkably small part in twentieth-century trends in Islam. This lack of participation in the major movements of the recent past has been a contributing factor in the cohesiveness of Islam within the Kingdom - fractionalization along theological, political, and intellectual lines has been relatively less than in other countries” (Ochsenwald, 1981, p.272).

Commins (2009, p.123) argues that Wahhabi views can be seen in Saudi formal education, as it mainly focuses on “God’s words (the Qur’an) and his messenger’s example (the Sunna) as the authoritative sources of belief (theology) and conduct (jurisprudence)”. Saudi education policy currently revolves around the protection of Islam and the Arabic language. The following extracts are representative of some of the main principles of the policy (The Ministry of Education, 1995).

1. Faith in Allah (the creator), Islam and Muhammad (peace be upon him) his prophet and messenger.
2. Full Islamic conception of the universe and human life, and that the whole of existence is subject to God.
3. Islam is the correct approach to a virtuous and happy life, in this world and the afterlife.
4. Religious education and Islamic culture are essential in all years of primary, intermediate and secondary education.

5. Sciences and art must have Islamic direction and deal with Islamic issues. All education theories, curriculum and materials must also have Islamic direction.
6. Arabic (the language of the Qur'an) is the language of all education.

This philosophy of “education for everyone” had a good start in the first few years after the education policy was established, but failed when faced with globalisation. Years of altering and changing the education policy caused it to lose its identity and fail to meet the modern world’s needs. Educators and policy makers tried to form a new policy, one that created balance between keeping Saudi traditions, political stability and economic growth. However, three decades of continuous social change in the area meant that reforming the education policy was a challenge (Alessa, 2010). There was (and remains) a clear conflict between religious parties, who want to keep the country’s religious identity, and liberal parties, who want to discard any religious or cultural restrictions and be more open to the world. This created disagreement over the future of Saudi children and youth, while at the same time creating a very ambiguous education policy (Alessa, 2010). For example, in 2008 a project was initiated to reform education with the aim of providing Saudi students with the quality of education they needed. The project has many objectives, including tackling education and the school environment as a whole. The project claims to focus on foreign language learning by promoting the use of technology (and new teaching methods) in English classrooms, however, it neglects foreign language learning beyond English. This educational reform project also claims to promote flexible and contemporary learning environments for students within the country’s education policy (Tatweer, 2011). However, in schools, Islamic and Arabic studies are at the forefront, and foreign language education beyond English is discouraged.

As a society, Saudi Arabia often tries to tame globalisation and control social change in the country. In schools, any curricular changes are usually met with conflict. Traditional institutions (and some religious figures) in the community often reject any non-religious education. This conflict creates challenges for younger generations as they struggle to meet the demands of the modern world. For example, Saudi women and girls are expected to study topics and choose careers that are deemed appropriate for a Muslim woman.

“Education has been one of the major vehicles for the transmission of external values and is bound to have an uneasy relationship with existing social and familial standards”. (Yamani, 2000, p.49)

Yamani (2000) states that younger generations in Saudi Arabia disapprove of the limited education and often challenge social tradition. She presents cases where young Saudi males and females have gone beyond formal education to seek knowledge and develop their skills. She also says that the youth in Saudi Arabia see a disconnection between their ambitions and aspirations and the reality of education. Foreign languages in Saudi Arabia often receive mixed views. Even English is sometimes viewed by religious figures as a threat to Arabic (the sacred language of Islam). This conflict is even greater when it comes to Saudi youth studying abroad. Young Saudis travelling and studying abroad are often attacked on social media sites (Twitter) by religious figures in the country. Western culture is often “demonised as a source of moral corruption” (Yamani, 2000, p.60). However, several studies

(including this study) show that Saudi youth see beyond the ‘aggressive’ representation of other cultures (Yamani, 2000; Alessa, 2010; Khalifa, 2001).

Yamani (2000) and Alessa (2010) argue that public education in Saudi Arabia discourages independent thinking, as students are expected to memorise their lessons and obey their teachers without question. Debating (or critiquing) is often described as immoral behaviour. Findings from this study show that some students almost never discuss their views regarding foreign language learning with their teachers. In addition, during data collection, students were more comfortable talking about their home literacy practices via emails or social media sites like Facebook than face to face.

5) The education policy

The education policy in Saudi Arabia was developed (shortly after the establishment of the country itself in the early 1930s) to allow a systematic and regulated approach to schooling. In order to understand the current Saudi education policy, one needs to look at the country’s history. After the Islamic reform of the late 19th Century and early 20th Century, Saudi Arabia proclaimed Islam the root of all political, cultural and economic development. The Islamic reform can also be seen clearly in the country’s education policy (The Ministry of Education, 1995). In all public schools, more time is devoted to religion than any other discipline (see Figures 7, 8, 9, and 10). What is more, the segregation of men and women in education reinforces the strict roles of men and women in Islam, and proper Muslim life. The education policy not

only enforces Islamic values but also the sanctity of the Arabic language (Alessa, 2010; The Ministry of Education, 1995).

Public education in Saudi Arabia is divided into three levels; primary (ages 7-12), intermediate (ages 13-15), and secondary (ages 16-18). Each of these levels consists of a number of compulsory topics (or modules) that all students must undertake. In primary education (see Figure 7 below), more attention is given to Islamic studies and Arabic language over other modules. Students in primary education have no choice in what they study, as they are expected to learn basic Arabic literacy and memorise verses of the Qur'an.

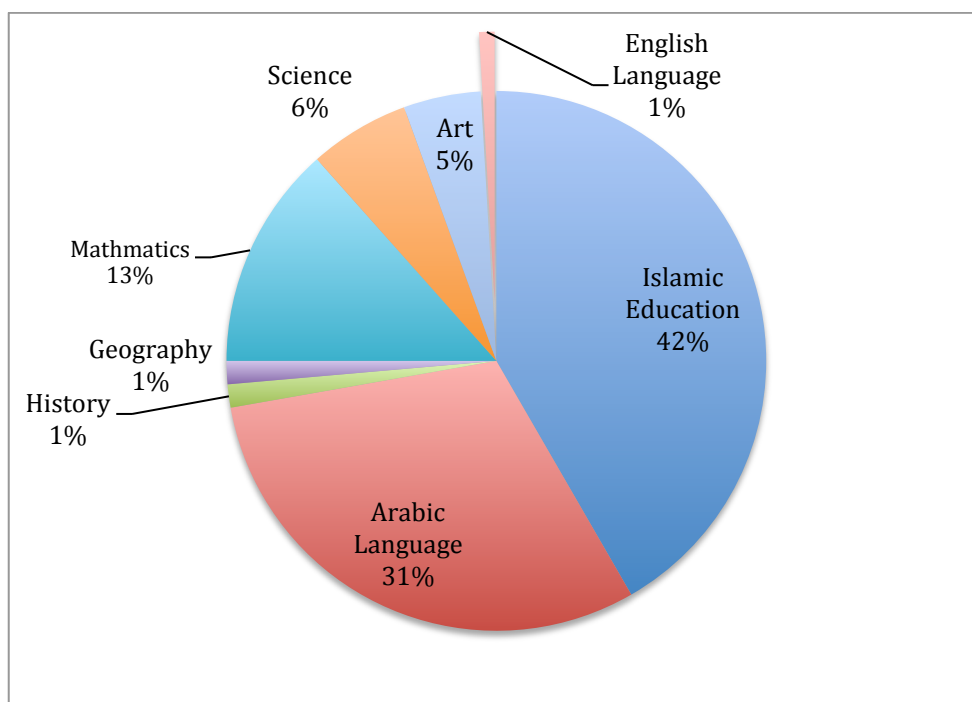


Figure 7: Percentage of hours per week for each module in primary schools

In intermediate education, students are also expected to complete a number of compulsory modules. Similar to primary education, more attention is given to Islamic studies and Arabic language (see Figure 8 below).

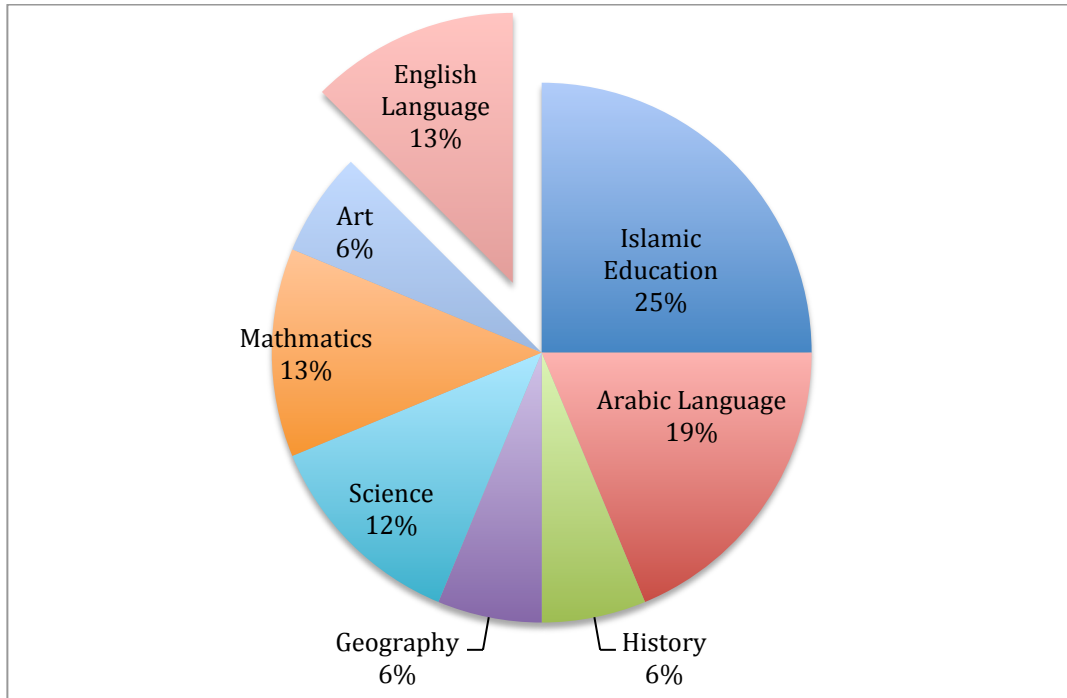


Figure 8: Percentage of hours per week for each module in intermediate schools

In secondary schools, students have a choice between a ‘literacy-based’ secondary education or a ‘science-based’ secondary education. Their choice will affect their higher education in the future (i.e. medical and engineering schools require a ‘science-based’ secondary education). However, whether choosing ‘literacy- or science-based’ secondary education, all students must complete compulsory modules that include Islamic studies and Arabic language (see Figures 9 and 10 below).

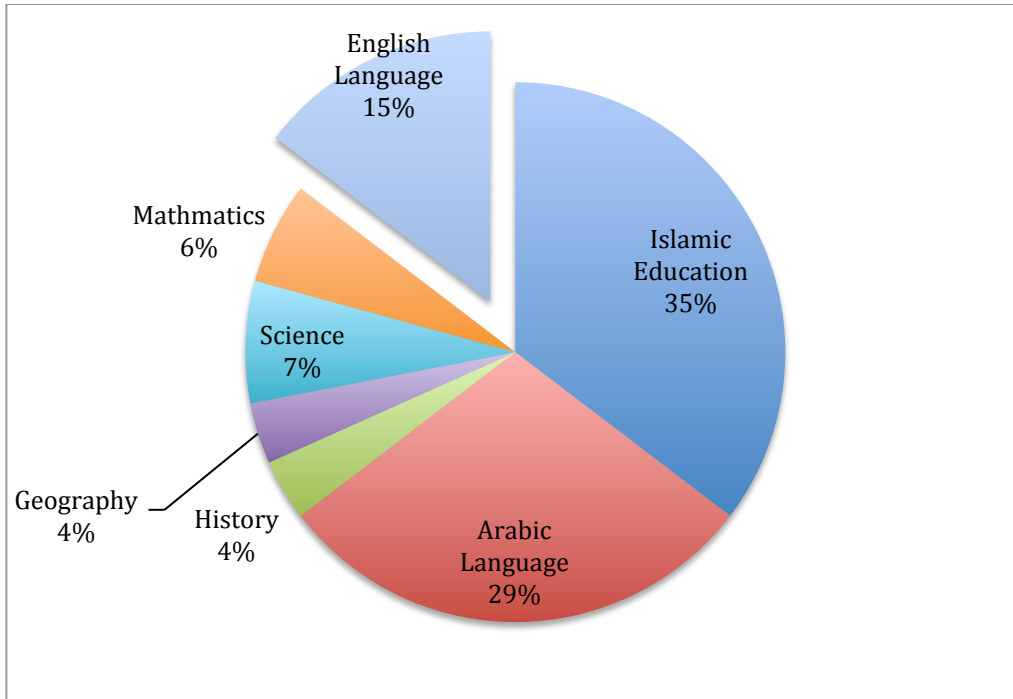


Figure 9: Percentage of hours per week for each module in secondary schools (literacy-based)

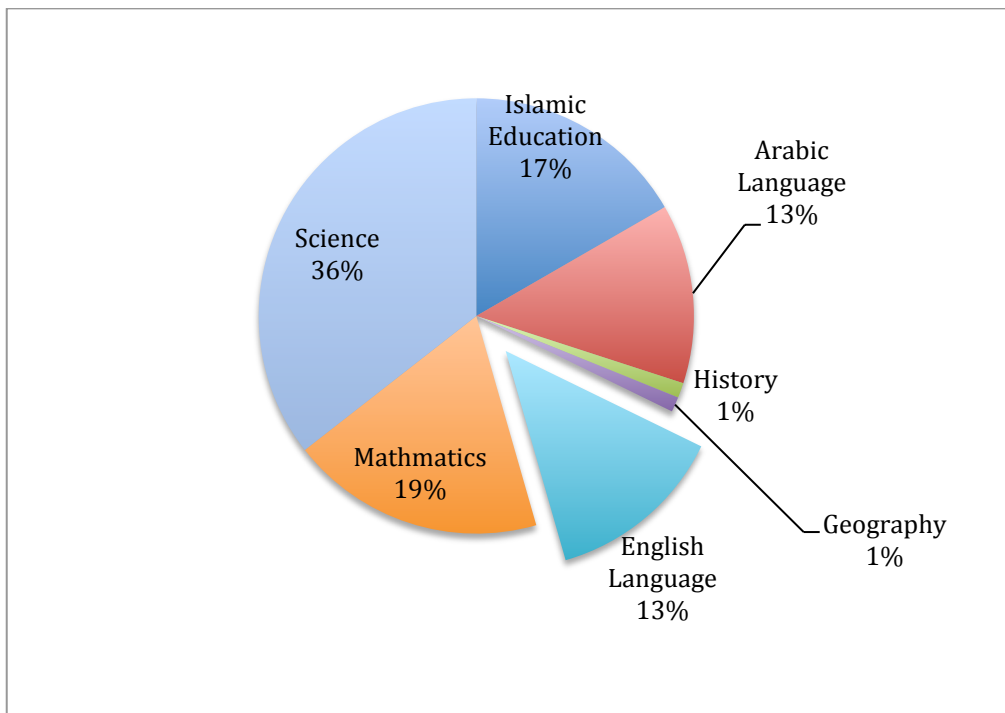


Figure 10: Percentage of hours per week for each module in secondary schools (science-based)

It is fair to say that one of the aims of the education policy is to offer every person in the country a chance to join an educational institution (schools, colleges, universities). This process aimed to bring an end to many years of illiteracy, especially with the discovery of oil in the country, and what that would mean for the country's cultural and financial status (Alessa, 2010). However, after the events of 9/11 and pressure from the American government, Saudi Arabia attempted to reform its education policy (Elyas, 2008). In terms of foreign language education, the only visible reform was the introduction of English as a foreign language to primary schools³. This small act angered many religious leaders in the country who demanded that young children should not be influenced by western culture. The Ministry of Education was faced with a very difficult task; on the one hand the American government is demanding more English language and less Islam (Elyas, 2008), and on the other, religious leaders are demanding the revival and protection of Islam and the Arabic language. This created a situation where teaching several foreign languages in public schools was untenable.

Current education policy was first published in 1968, and last edited in 1995 (The Ministry of Education, 1995). It is the only official education policy, and it does not reflect any political or social change since 1995. This has had a significant effect on educational practices, especially in schools, since educators are failing to understand such out-dated policies. Upon examining Saudi education policy, it is clear that the main objective is to spread access to education throughout the country. Decisions about education mainly aimed to establish a functioning government, reduce illiteracy and provide a basic education for people. The result of such decisions was the

³ Before 2001, education in English was not available to students younger than 12 years of age.

provision of a basic education without a clear vision of identity or philosophy. The lack of a clear vision stood as a barrier to the process of developing and improving education. Finding the middle ground between maintaining the country's own values and culture and embracing globalisation proved to be a difficult task (Alessa, 2010).

Arabic is the language of education in all public schools in Saudi Arabia. The education policy states that all school modules at all school levels should be taught in Arabic. It also states that students should be provided with one foreign language to enable them to communicate and interact with people from different cultures (The Ministry of Education, 2011; 1995). The education policy does not clearly state which foreign language to teach or why. The Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia chose English as a foreign language for all public schools. Students learn English as a foreign language from the fourth grade (age 10) to the last year of secondary school (age 18). Additionally, in order to enrol in universities, students have to pass an English language proficiency test and achieve an acceptable mark (The Ministry of Education, 2011). In most Saudi public schools, English is being taught as a foreign language. No other languages are being taught officially as a part of the national curriculum and students have no choice of what languages to learn. When making decisions, education policy makers in Saudi Arabia are employing a 'one size fits all' strategy, which causes issues for many people in the country.

6) Chapter summary

This chapter presents a brief history of education in Saudi Arabia. Education in Saudi Arabia is heavily influenced by religion (Islam), and its main objective is the preservation of Islamic and Arabic culture. As a result, foreign language education in

public schools has been limited to English only. Policy makers in Saudi Arabia often view themselves as the protectors of Islamic culture, therefore rejecting any western influences in Saudi schools. Every aspect of education, in their view, should have an Islamic vision and direction. This may be helpful in preserving Saudi culture, however, when dealing with global issues most students struggle as the first barrier they face is often a language barrier.

Chapter 3: Literature review - from applied linguistics to New Literacy Studies

1) Introduction

This research project aims to explore the influences on foreign language planning and policy in Saudi Arabia. I wanted to understand the influences on foreign language planning and policy in the country, the gaps in foreign language education and people's perceptions of foreign languages within Saudi Arabia. During my visits to three public schools in Saudi Arabia and after interviewing students at different school levels, I found my initial understanding of the students' literacy practices was mistaken. I found that despite the limitations on formal foreign language education in Saudi public schools, students engaged with multilingual and multimodal literacies on a daily basis. This discovery changed the way I viewed foreign language education in the country.

In this chapter, I attempt to make connections between the world of applied linguistics and language teaching and learning and the world of New Literacy Studies, multimodality, cultural diversity, and popular culture. First, I look at the ideas of cultural and linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1977; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990; Grenfell, 2011), the role of English as a global language (Crystal, 1997), and the changes within the field of applied linguistics (Kaplan, 2010). Second, I explore the main discussions around New Literacy Studies (Grenfell et al., 2012; Hélot, 2011; Street, 1984) and multimodal analysis (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001), and how they can be employed to research new literacies (Alvermann, 2010; Black, 2008a; Black, 2008b; Burnett et al., 2014b) and popular cultures (Buckingham, 2013; Buckingham

and Willett, 2013; Williams, 2011; Williams, 2009). This can be helpful in understanding how new literacies manifest within the Saudi community, and how media and power influence language learning. Third, I explore the connection between language and power (Fairclough, 2001; Halliday, 1978; Mayr, 2008), and how it impacts language ecology (Blommaert, 2013b), the linguistic landscape (Backhaus, 2007; Backhaus, 2009; Blommaert, 2013a; Gorter, 2006; 2013), and multilingual repertoires (Duran, 2014; Snell, 2013). Fourth, I explore some of the critical arguments around applied linguistics (Pennycook, 2001), the sociological perspectives of language learning, language identity (Norton, 2000; 2001; 2010; 2014), and the notion and ideas of imagined communities (Kanno and Norton, 2012) and how these influence multilingualism in relatively closed communities (like, Saudi Arabia). Finally, I examine ‘terminologies’ as one of the main issues in second and foreign language education (Kaplan, 2010). I hope that my study will open up the field of multilingual literacies in Saudi Arabia and explore the advantages and potentials of multilingual education.

2) Cultural and linguistic capital

Before conducting this research project, my understanding of foreign language education was limited to formal learning practices in the language teaching classrooms of formal institutions (schools and universities) using textbooks and other traditional language teaching materials. However, throughout this study, my understanding of foreign language education has broadened to include all literacy practices that students engage with inside or outside school. The awareness of the value of some languages and multilingualism have driven a large number of young people in Saudi Arabia to pursue foreign language learning outside school and make

use of different resources available to them (e.g. media and technology). Gerhards (2014) argues that while the communicative value of English is higher than that of most languages in the world, other languages (such as German, French, Spanish and Italian) are becoming more valuable. Crystal (2013) argues that in some parts of the world the Chinese language is more valuable than English. An awareness of the value of any language can motivate individuals to invest in that language. Norton (2014) explores the complex relationship between language and the social world. She explains that when learners use a language they do not only exchange knowledge, but also recognise their place within the social world. She also explains that when individuals invest in language learning they acquire complex and multiple identities, which change across time and space.

Over the past few decades, social, cultural and linguistic diversity in different countries (or communities) has been influenced by globalisation and migration. The notions of ‘super-diversity’ and ‘multilingual repertoires’ provide useful tools to explore language use and linguistic choice within communities and how people make meaning (Snell, 2013). Blommaert and Rampton (2012) tell us that super-diversity looks into deeper sociocultural processes and effects.

“Super-diversity is characterised by a tremendous increase in the categories of migrants, not only in terms of nationality, ethnicity, language, and religion, but in terms of motives, patterns and itineraries of migration, processes of insertion into the labour and housing market of the host societies and so on”.
(Blommaert and Rampton, 2012, p.1).

Blommaert and Rampton (2012) go on to explain that new media and technologies of communication created a new dimension to super-diversity. Baron (2008) also explains that, while migration started as a physical movement between societies, it gradually became a virtual movement (through technology) where people communicate and get involved with others around the world.

“In the first instance, these developments are changes in the material world – new technologies of communication and knowledge as well as new demographics – but for large numbers of people across the world, they are also lived experiences and sociocultural modes of life that may be changing in ways and degrees that we have yet to understand”. (Blommaert and Rampton, 2012, p.3)

In addition, he argues that the ideas of super-diversity provided new ways of looking at (and exploring) language, language speakers and the nature of communication. The development (or paradigm shift) in language and communication was intensified by super-diversity, as social and cultural aspects of language are being acknowledged even by traditional/established linguists (Chomskyan).

“The traditional idea of ‘a language’, then, is an ideological artefact with very considerable power – operating as a major ingredient in the apparatus of modern government – it is played out in a wide variety of domains (education, immigration, high and popular culture etc.), and it can even serve as an object of passionate personal attachment. But as sociolinguists have long maintained, it is far more productive analytically to focus on the very variable ways in

which individual linguistic features, with identifiable social and cultural associations, get clustered together whenever people communicate”.

(Blommaert and Rampton, 2012, p.4)

Agha (2007) argues that ‘ideological homogenisation’ achieves national/official language status, which often overlooks community practices. Another point that Blommaert (2013a) makes is that the connection between language, power, super-diversity and space is extremely complex and dynamic. He argues that on a smaller scale social context (such as a neighbourhood), tracing the links between super-diversity, language and power would be possible, yet very difficult on a larger scale social context (such as a society or a country), or as he puts it:

“Super-diverse spaces can be seen as complex and stochastic systems, that is: as dynamic and non-equilibrium systems in which a variety of forces interact and very different modes of development and change can be observed ... What we see in the neighbourhood is how different forms of ‘infrastructural’ emergence develop and are consolidated. These different infrastructures are tailored towards the need of the different groups with their different needs and trajectories of residence and use; consequently, they are multiple, they form a polycentric whole”. (Blommaert, 2013a, p.107)

Recently, culture, identity and social life have become main focus points when researching language learning (Mayr, 2008; Norton, 2010; 2014; Wodak, 2012). Language habitus and linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1977; 1989) have found new applications in language and linguistic research. Grenfell (2011) investigates identity,

language policy and multilingual practices by linking them to social and cultural junctures. He argues that transforming social theories from one context to another results in different interpretations of those theories. Grenfell (2011) also explains how social theories (like Bourdieu's) can be a useful tool to reproduce socio-cultural capital. For example, Bourdieu views language as a valuable and powerful tool that influences people's position within society, as well as ideologies regarding what is acceptable (see 'Language and power' in this chapter).

Blommaert (2010), along with other sociologists like Norton (2010), Heller (2012) and Grenfell (2011), attempts to understand the connection between social change, language and diversity (multilingualism). Heller (2012, p.24) tells us:

“That this is the crux of the matter: the tools we inherited to make sense of multilingualism belong to an era when we were invested, as social scientists, in understanding language as whole, bounded system and territorial boundaries. Indeed, I think the very idea of ‘multilingualism’ comes out of the ideological complex of the nation-state with its focus on homogeneity; it is a way to neaten up the mess of multiplicity, to put disorderedly matter back ‘into place’. It becomes a matter for academic enquiry, a ‘problem’ to be described and regulated, only insofar as was the constructed as ‘normal’, and therefore to be asked questions about”.

Here, Heller (2012) argues that “scientific approaches” to multilingualism often produce neat and simple data and ignore anything that does not fit within the overall framework. However, such diverse and messy data piles up over time and become

harder to ignore, provoking a “scientific revolution”. Heller (2012) also talks about how nationalism as an ideology (or a way of organising political economics and social relations) has shaped our ideas about language, culture and identity. She explains how such ideologies influence not only social life but also social research, which in many cases view multilingualism as a problem that needs to be studied. While Heller’s ideas regarding globalisation and mobility are not new, I find her argument useful in terms of acknowledging the messiness of social lives and finding new tools for researching globalisation and multilingualism, in a way that pays attention to ignored (and neglected) issues. In addition, Heller, Jaworski and Thurlow (2014, p.428) argue that:

“Since the globalised (or post-industrial) ‘new’ economy foregrounds an intensified circulation of human, material and symbolic resources, sociologists too have begun to recognise how mobility, multiplicity and fluidity are the normal state of affairs, rather than simple marked processes to be explained. Central to this ‘paradigm shift’ within sociolinguistics is a concern to rethink our long-standing approaches to ‘language’ and ‘speech community’; most clearly encapsulated in the notion of ‘ethnolinguistic identity’, these ideas are rooted in the belief that culturally or ethnically distinct and bounded groups of people use distinct and bounded languages for communication”.

Views on language, multilingualism, and identity, such as those of Blommaert (2013a), Heller (2012), Norton (2000) and Pennycook (2001), see language as communities of practice and ideology, rather than as autonomous systems. New Literacy Studies sees social diversity and multilingualism as a “mosaic of locally

situated practices” where individuals negotiate their language use in relation to social contexts (Heller et al., 2014). Heller (2012) also explains that exploring the different trajectories of identity can help in understanding “social categorisation and exclusion”, as she urges researchers not to look at people’s language practices as “inherent characteristics”, but rather as dynamic and mobile traits between agency and social context. I find Heller’s argument useful in relation to individuals, identity and multilingualism. As stories presented in this research project show, multilingualism is not seen as a characteristic of people, but rather a set of resources available. I would argue that individuals in Saudi Arabia construct, circulate, and navigate multilingual resources (both physical and digital) in an attempt to explore the connection between identity, multilingualism and ideologies, as evident in this research project. Bourdieu (1977) tells us that changes in language are an extension to changes in economy, and Blommaert and Rampton (2012) record how globalisation and mobility contribute to diversity within communities. This study, among others (Heller, Jaworski and Thurlow, (2014) and Jaworski (2014) explores new uses and values of multilingualism and how individuals negotiate (and build) their multilingual recourses, or as Heller, Jaworski and Thurlow (2014, p.450) put it:

“Multilingualism conceived of as a melange of intermixed, syncretized, and recontextualized words and expressions gives linguistic items indexical functions independent of their denotational meanings, transforming identities and becoming emblematic of spatial stratification in the political and economic local–global order”.

This can be seen in the findings of this research project, as the boundaries of the multilingual, multimodal, and digital literacy practices of children and young people in Saudi Arabia merge and blend together. This study shows evidence of how globalisation and popular culture influence children's and young people's micro literacy practices, as well as their decision-making processes.

2.1) English as a global language

Before exploring the role of English as a global language, we need to first understand what 'global language' means. Crystal (1997, p.4) defines a global language as one that has a special role "to achieve such a status, a language has to be taken up by other countries around the world. They must decide to give it a special place within their communities, even though they may have few (or no) mother tongue speakers". He also explains that any language can achieve global status if it is made the official language of a country, used as a dominant language, and prioritised in language teaching and learning.

There are many reasons behind the spread of English throughout the world. English provides its speakers with the opportunity of a better life, a better job and education (Crystal, 1997). However, I would argue that the status of English in the world should not lower the value of other languages, as English has become a second language (or a language of worldwide communication) for many people. Crystal (1997) claims that English is now a global language due to a desire for language unity. He explains that,

"In the context of colonialism, the desire for national linguistic unity is the other side of the coin from the desire for international linguistic unity. The

language of the colonial power introduces a new, unifying medium of communication within a colony, but in the same country". (Crystal, 1997, p.79).

Due to its political and historical nature, the English language acquired a special significance, which enabled it to mediate and connect different cultures. Such arguments regarding the position of English in the world are what drive most non-English speaking communities to adopt the teaching of English into their education systems. Many Asian, Middle-Eastern, African and South American countries would recognise the value of English and the advantages it brings to its speakers. As this research project shows, the Saudi education system, and indeed foreign language planners and policy makers, place significant value on English as a foreign language due to its global status. While no one can deny the value of English in today's world, I wonder if placing such value on one language is helpful. As mentioned before, there are a number of global languages, which contribute to diverse linguistic capital. Also, it is hard to predict the future of language and the future of English as a global language. To ask about the future of language is really to ask about the future of society. As Crystal (1997) explains, the power of any language comes from the power of the people who speak it. The power of the British Empire, American imperialism, the industrial revolution and even media and technology has given the English language its current significance and global status. However, the rise of English caused the decline of Latin (once a global and valuable language). Therefore, predicting the future of English is difficult. If we take the Internet, for example, it was an English medium when it first started and is now a multilingual space where hundreds of languages are being used and/or learnt. If the power of any language

comes from the power of the people who speak it, then the home language of any nation that rises to power or becomes dominant politically or economically could become global. Crystal (2013) would argue that at the moment there are no signs that other languages (Chinese, Spanish or Arabic) could affect the status of English as a global language, since many communities and individuals are investing time and money in English language teaching and learning, and the number of English language speakers in the world is increasing. It is essential to point out that while global English aims to create a sort of linguistic unity, how people use English reflects their cultural identities (i.e. world Englishes). World Englishes reflect the reality of what happens when a language becomes global, or is adopted en masse by people from different cultures, who want to engage and communicate on an international level, yet maintain a sense of identity.

Furthermore, Jenkins (2014) explores the shift of English from a foreign language to a lingua franca. She claims that over the past few decades 'English as a lingua franca' has gone from being completely non-existent to a worldwide phenomena and the object of many academic studies. Changes in language have been regarded with suspicion, and researching language change is often controversial. Jenkins, Cogo and Dewey (2011) explain that the messiness of language change is due to a number of issues, especially in language teaching and learning, as language teachers prefer clear rules. Language change also causes issues with traditional linguists who attempt to standardise English and place unrealistic limitations on its use, while, on the other hand, post-colonial linguists promote world Englishes. Indeed, Jenkins (2011; 2012; 2014) argues that even if language change within any community is slow, it does not mean that it is not happening, as smaller transformations are an indication of changes

in language practice. She also explains how English speakers (both native and non-native) always explore the potentials of English and find new ways of regulating the language.

“Debates surrounding the global presence of English have gradually become more commonplace at [English language teaching] conferences and publications. A number of teacher training manuals now incorporate sections that deal with the spread of English in the world... Yet, while texts of this kind are an important first step in raising awareness of [English as a lingua franca] among novice teachers, much more detailed discussions are needed if there is to be proper engagement with [English as a lingua franca] in practice”.

(Jenkins et al., 2011, p.305)

In addition, Nunan (2012) goes even further to explore the practical impact of global English (or English as a lingua franca) on language planning and policy. He argues that the current status of English as a global language created a movement around the world to introduce English to children and young people in most educational systems. Nunan (2012) also argues that introducing English as a foreign language at a younger age does not necessarily guarantee better language acquisition (or proficiency). He explains that practitioners should spend more time developing appropriate pedagogies and curriculum models rather than rushing to introduce English to younger learners. Indeed, language teaching and learning is a very dynamic field, which constantly reinvents and reevaluates itself. The status of English in the world, as well as linguistic imperialism, have always been main discussion points within the field of applied linguistics. Phillipson (2008; 2009) explores how global English affects local

languages and micro language practices in diverse communities. He argues that linguists, language planners and policy makers should view different languages equally, rather than labelling them as ‘foreign’, ‘second’ or ‘global’. Phillipson (2008) also urges linguists to explore the micro bilingual and multilingual experiences and practices of people, as it helps in understanding how languages are learned and used in the real world.

“The term *lingua franca* has been used in widely different senses in the past and is so still. I would claim that *lingua franca* is a pernicious, invidious term if the language in question is a first language for some people but for others a foreign language, such communication typically being asymmetrical. I would claim that it is a misleading term if the language is supposed to be neutral and disconnected from culture. And that it is a false term for a language that is taught as a subject in general education. There is an ironic historical continuity in *lingua franca* being used as the term for the language of the medieval Crusaders battling with Islam, for the language of the Franks, and currently for English as the language of the crusade of global corporatisation, marketed as ‘freedom’ and ‘democracy’”. (Phillipson, 2008, p.263)

Pennycook (2014) argues that English as a global or international language has been explored, discussed and theorised within the context of western academia. One of the main issues regarding global English and English language teaching and learning is that English is not just a language. It comes with much cultural, social, political and economical “baggage” (as Pennycook puts it). Pennycook (2014) tells us that when learners engage with English, they engage with a set of ideas, ideologies and cultural

politics. I find this argument helpful in terms of rethinking knowledge about language and language teaching. While starting a critical discussion about language and linguistics is not an easy task to establish, it is nonetheless necessary to investigate different purposes of the language and its connection to culture and people. As Pennycook (2014) explains, approaching language from a scientific perspective might not provide a clear understanding of the nature of language; instead, language researchers should ask themselves why are they researching language, and try to understand what people do when they use language.

“It is important to understand the development of a standard language within this larger framework. Thus the myth of standard English originally formulated in the Victorian era was consolidated in the period between wars, especially with the publication of the Oxford English Dictionary in 1928...It is worth looking in more detail, then, at the creation of this myth in relation to the development of Victorian Britain and the British Empire”. (Pennycook, 2014, p.113)

Therefore, it is difficult to remove English from its social, cultural and political context, which can also be said of research into global English and world Englishes.

2.2) Applied linguistics: a changing field

Linguistics is the scientific study of different aspects of human language(s). It provides researchers with different ways of exploring the structure of particular languages, and investigates what is universal to all human languages and how languages are similar or different. The study of linguistics looks at how languages

evolve and change over time, and how people learn, acquire, and use languages. Applied linguistics (a sub-field of linguistics) looks at practical issues regarding language use within communities (Davies, 2007; Schmitt, 2013). It is mainly concerned with the teaching and learning of second and foreign languages, language policies and language education. The studies of linguistics and applied linguistics are fundamental, as language is the centre of human communication and relates to every aspect of life. The fields of linguistics and applied linguistics overlap with psychology, anthropology, archaeology, education, literature, philosophy, history, social theory, and even sciences and computer sciences (Davies, 2007; Schmitt, 2013).

Knowledge of linguistics and applied linguistics provides a better understanding of how language works, as they provide tools for decoding and analysing the structure of language(s), as well as, identifying and solving language issues. The field of applied linguistics mainly examines language morphology, syntax, phonetics and phonology, semantic and pragmatics, first and second language acquisition, language disorder, and also historical linguistics and language change. However, recent studies in applied linguistics (Kaplan, 2010) expand the field of study to include language, culture, and some of the main issues regarding intercultural communications, i.e. identity and repertoire, linguistic capital, social change, language and media, computer-mediated communication, and linguistic diversity. Evans and Levinson (2009) argue that applied linguists should pay more attention to language diversity rather than “language universals”, as they explain that the value of languages comes from the people who speak them, and that language is a fundamental part of socialisation.

Many contemporary linguists, such as McGilvray (2012) and Smith (2001), tend to overlook the social philosophy of Bourdieu and feel more comfortable working within a cognitive science paradigm (i.e. Chomsky). I can see how separating language from its social context or setting can be tempting to most linguists, as it decontextualises and simplifies language analysis. However, a critical investigation of language is necessary. Understanding the communicative and preformative function and nature of language can help in exploring and accounting for a realistic linguistic context, as well as incorporating language in social theories. Studying language repertoires would enable linguists to see the social aspects and habitus of language, which would shed light on language practices in social spaces. “What is linguistically recognised therefore is constantly being confronted by everyday [repertoires], which itself requires an institutionalised norm to act as final arbitrator in the final analysis” (Grenfell, 2011, p.92). In other words, language use in everyday life should be recognised by linguists and cognitive researchers.

According to Kaplan (2010, p.4) “the term applied linguistics arose, in the 1940s, among a group of English composition teachers who wanted to identify with scientific linguistic concepts rather than with less precise literary concepts”. He also tells us that language teaching and learning are essential aspects of applied linguistics studies. Grabe (2010) argues that in the twenty-first century, the field of applied linguistics has broadened to include real world language problems, such as second and foreign language acquisition, language assessment, bi- and multilingualism, language rights, language planning and language policy. The broadening of the field of applied linguistics, however, has created a number of subfields, which emphasise the social

aspects of language. Grabe (2010, p.35) explains that the changes in the field of applied linguistics have four major consequences:

- The recognition of socially situated contexts for inquiry and exploration and, thus, an increase in the importance of needs analysis and variable solutions in different local contexts.
- The need to see language as functional and discourse-based, thus the re-emergence of systemic and descriptive linguistics as resources for problem solving, particularly in the North American context.
- The recognition that no single discipline can provide all the tools and resources needed to address language-based real world problems.
- The need to recognise and apply a wide range of research tools and methodologies to address locally situated language problems.

Grabe (2010) also explains that this shift in the field of applied linguistics can also be seen in applied linguistics research, where language data are now analysed and interpreted within their social and cultural settings. van Lier (1997) argues that in order to sift through several layers of idealisations and achieve an advanced understanding of language, an applied linguist should work with language in the real world and have a realistic picture of what language is.

Duff (2010) presented a number of qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches to researching applied linguistics (such as, second language classroom and classroom-based discourse analysis, ethnomethodology and conversation analysis, case study research, corpus linguistics, ethnography, language analysis, simulated recall, data elicitation methods, discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis, critical applied linguistics, multimodal semiotic analysis, complex systems

approaches and survey methods). The research approaches listed here can provide a comprehensive and in depth discussion and analysis of applied linguistics. However, I would argue that other research approaches could also be used to research and explore language and applied linguistics. Norris and Ortega (2006) applied meta-analysis approaches to language teaching and learning, Ortega and Byrnes (2009) explored the benefits of longitudinal research in second language capacities, and Belcher and Connor (2001) explore language and identity through first person narrative. Narrative inquiries are also an effective tool to explore the connection between language and identity, as Duff (2010, p.52-53) explains,

“Personal accounts and narrative of experience of language teachers, learners, and others (often across a broad span of time, space, experiences and languages) have increasingly become a major focus in some qualitative research. Evidence includes first person narrative, diary studies, autobiographies and life histories of learning, teaching or losing aspects of one’s language and identity”.

In addition to narrative aspects, this research project employs a constructivist grounded theory approach to explore foreign language planning and policy in Saudi Arabia (see chapter 5). Pennycook (2001) argues that emergent approaches connect language to its social formations, and help researchers draw connections between language education and wider social and political issues. Research into applied linguistics and second language acquisition often overlooks the implications of sociocultural theory. Lantolf (2010) notes that social and cultural theories (like, Vygotsky’s) inform and guide research, and their impact on language and language

research is appreciated. Sociocultural theories gave me a better understanding of how language and literacy practices can be influenced by cultural activities, concepts and social relationships.

One of the main issues, I find, with applied linguistics is its tendency to see English as a medium of quality education. Traditional applied linguistics often portrays English skills as essential for social and economic development. I find this problematic as it gives English a greater role in education, and dismisses the wider context of local (and multiple) languages. English can be an attractive choice, and its status as a global language is hard to ignore. However, Ferguson (2013) argues that, in many developing countries, the imagined benefits of English for individuals are often greater than the actual benefits. This is indeed the case in Saudi Arabia, where English is valued over other foreign languages, especially in foreign language education. Davies (2007) argues that applied linguistics promoted English and contributed to its spread. He also explains how research into language teaching and learning created the phenomena of 'World Englishes', and the more studies into English varieties, the more popular English became. It was this awareness of the effect of applied linguistics that caused a number of linguists and language researchers, such as Alvermann (2010), Becker (2014), Evans and Levinson (2009), Heller (2012; 2014), Hélot (2011; 2012) Kaplan (2010), Pennycook (2001; 2011; 2015), to move away from traditional applied linguistics approaches to focus on people, their cultural background, their identity, and their language and literacy practices.

3) New Literacy Studies

It is well established that language has strong connections to its social context, and sociolinguistic theories now influence language in education by bringing learners' cultural backgrounds into language classrooms. Street's work (1984) was the foundation of New Literacy Studies, as he challenged traditional theories regarding literacy and literacy practices. He explored the development of literacy theories and how they shift and evolve. Street's (1984; 1993) account of literacy practices within different communities provides a very helpful model for examining the development of language use. Exploring literacy as social practices rather than developed skills provides new perspectives on the nature of literacy. Street's (1984; 1993) work, as well as Heath's (1983), shows that language and literacy are used in different ways depending on the context (i.e. home literacy and school literacy). This suggests that literacy practices are somewhat embedded in ideological power relations, where power and discourse are taken into account. Street's (1984; 1993) approach to literacy explores language as an issue where power dynamics are constantly in place.

The field of New Literacy Studies is broad, and critically examines not only literacy practices and social interactions, but also the connection between language and power within a community. In addition, Street (1984; 1993; 2012) argues that most education systems do not recognise the complex and different ways people use language. The main challenge in language education is the assumption that everyone must acquire the same monolingual literacy model. However, in reality, literacies are multiple social interactions (and practices) within an ideological framework that give it meaning. Street (2012) argues that New Literacy Studies rejects the idea of a single and monolingual model of literacy. Instead, New Literacy Studies always look at the

social context and explores the uses of literacy and its meanings, by drawing on social semiotics and the construction of meaning. Jewitt (2009) argues that social and cultural theories of representation and communication have a huge impact on New Literacy Studies, as well as multimodal research. Engaging with multiple literacies always involves concepts of power and representation (Grenfell et al., 2012; Hornberger et al., 2008; Street, 2012), or as Kress (2010, p.56) puts it: “affordances are constantly reshaped along the lines of the social requirements expressed in that work by those making meaning”. Smith, Hall and Sousanis (2015) encourage the use of visuals in literacy studies, as a means for a deeper discussion (and understanding) of the meaning making process. Visualisation in literacy research incorporates different views and perspectives, which can be helpful for enhancing our understanding of literacy practices and meaning making.

“Thus, we encourage researchers to articulate their meaning-making processes, whether traditional or innovative, to be transparent about remediating processes – not so others can replicate specific interpretive moves, but to foreground the meaning-making resources researchers draw upon in order to illuminate the transacting processes that lead to their conclusions”.
(Smith et al., 2015, p.10)

Furthermore, Gee (1996) talks about the connection between sociological ideologies and literacy practices. He argues that literacy researchers often misunderstand the meaning of literacy practices (especially in the new media age). Gee (1996) and Heath (1983) view literacy as an empirical statement about reading and writing, where it can be used as a tool for rewriting and transforming social contexts. These

views can be political comments about changing society; however, Gee (1996) would argue that these views can be true of how the human mind works and how literacy and learning work. Such sociological approaches to language and literacy see learning and education as tools that enable people to identify and solve problems within their environment. Gee (1996), as well as Heath (1983), present a very interesting argument in which they explain that children's interactions with language outside school have a huge impact on their education. This is not only limited to the type of language(s) which children are exposed to, but also digital literacies. Gee (1996) brings together methodologies for studying communication within cultural settings.

I find Gee's (1996; 2003; 2007) work very helpful for this study as it explores the history of literacy and the nature of literacy practices and how these link to social theories. Exploring foreign language planning in Saudi Arabia introduced me to multilingual, multimodal, and digital literacy practices, and Gee's (1996; 2003; 2007) work was helpful in examining and understanding such contemporary findings and how they connect to wider cross-cultural issues within the Saudi community. Such new perspectives on literacies and meaning-making helped me better understand language and literacy within social, cultural, and political contexts.

New Literacy Studies attempts to explore new ways of viewing, understanding and researching language and literacy practices. Grenfell et al. (2012) examine the connections between New Literacy Studies, multimodality and Bourdieusian sociology. New Literacy Studies views language and literacy as social practices. Pahl and Rowsell (2012) explain how New Literacy Studies explores people's everyday

use of language. They also argue that literacy practices are not a set of skills, but rather social interactions through literacy events (like, texting or Facebooking).

“Literacy is bound up with our identity and our practices. The shaping of our literacy practices takes place in a number of different domains, for example, home, school, and workplace. Taking on an approach that looks at literacy as a social practice involves a number of key thoughts. It involves acknowledging that school is only one setting where literacy takes place. It recognises that the resources used to teach in classrooms might be different from the resources used by students in their homes”. (Pahl and Rowsell, 2012, p.24).

Pahl and Rowsell (2012) explain how New Literacy Studies can draw on multimodality, as it provides a deeper understanding of literacy artefacts (such as children’s drawings) and how such multiliteracies (including new literacies) contribute to the language landscape and social representations. New Literacy Studies (Burnett et al., 2014b; Merchant, 2015a; 2015b; Pahl and Rowsell, 2006; 2012; Rowsell et al., 2014) provides many examples of complex and diverse literacy practices, which explore the links between new literacies, technologies and multimodalities, and how all of this connects to larger concepts like identity, agency and space. This builds on the work of Street (1984; 1993; 2003; 2012), who argues that literacy practices are no longer a set of skills but rather forms of social interaction and social practice that link strongly to issues surrounding language and power. New Literacy Studies not only recognises literacy practices beyond reading and writing, but also contributes to the shift in new literacies.

4) New literacies

Media and digital literacies have altered the way people read, write and communicate. Gee and Hayes (2011b) explore the potential and implications of digital media on literacy practices. They argue that video games, social media sites and virtual realities (like Second Life) have become a space for situated and meaningful learning. Gee and Hayes (2011b) also challenge the notion of traditional literacy skills, as they illustrate how language is being shaped by digital media. The ideas and arguments of Gee and Hayes (2011b) provide an insight into digital media and how it has reshaped literacy and communication and continues to do so. This provides a helpful understanding of the connection between language and power in the digital age and how digital media contributes to social and linguistic change. However, Burnett et.al. (2012) and Burnett et.al. (2014a) challenge and question the meaning of “situated literacies”; whether these can fully explore new literacies practices, and how people use language and technologies. The notion of “situated literacies” overlooks the complexity and messiness of literacy practices, which are often multilingual and multimodal.

Indeed, production in new literacy and digital artefacts (like, videogames or digital stories) helps in developing literacy, as well as agency. In addition, Bulfin and Koutsogiannis (2012) emphasise the importance of home and digital literacies in education, and criticise media policy representation of people’s (especially children’s) digital literacy practices. They also argue that there is a clear separation between digital literacy practices inside and outside school. This describes literacy practices in most educational systems around the world (including the Saudi educational system), where messy, complex, creative, digital, multimodal and multilingual literacies take place outside schools and are often overlooked by formal education. These “non-

traditional” literacy practices are “unable to be captured and appropriated by school and teachers who are always one step behind” (Bulfin and Koutsogiannis, 2012, p.343). This study shows how children and young people in Saudi Arabia engage in multimodal and multilingual literacies outside school. Such literacy practices are often ignored, and in some cases discouraged, by teachers and school practitioners who do not see multilingual literacies as part of the official educational policy of Saudi Arabia. New literacies are important because they involve using new tools to negotiate new social interactions. In addition, new literacies are always changing, which is essential for language and literacy research, as well as language and literacy theories. This can be challenging for literacy researchers, as the rapid evolution of literacy and its changing context make developing adequate theories a difficult task (Leu et al., 2014). To overcome this challenge, Leu et al. (2013) and Leu et al. (2014) propose a dual level theory of new literacies, in which new literacies are viewed from two different perspectives, macro and micro (or what Leu et al. (2014) describe as uppercase and lowercase new literacies). While the broader and macro new literacies theories (Lewis and Fabos, 2005) provide a theoretical framework of new literacies, micro new literacies theories (Kress, 2003; 2012; Marsh, 2006b; 2011; Pahl and Rowsell, 2006; 2012; Street, 2012) keep up with the ever-changing nature of new literacies and New Literacy Studies. This research project started by exploring macro foreign language planning in Saudi Arabia; however, a bottom-up framework was required to explore the micro and nano multilingual literacy practices of individuals. This provides a deeper look into the messy nature of children’s literacy practices and their influences.

As mentioned before, new literacies have altered the way people communicate, as technology shifted literacy practices. Knobel and Lankshear (2014) present key findings and implications of new literacies research. They explain that unlike formal education, new literacies do not require all learners to have the exact same knowledge. Gee and Hayes (2011a; 2011b) argue that new literacy practices are much richer when young people are given a chance to share their knowledge and collaborate. Also, while schools push young people to produce traditional work (usually in written form), new literacies enable them to experiment with creative, informative and multimodal forms of production, such as films or videogames (Curwood, 2013; Curwood et al., 2013). Another point that Knobel and Lankshear (2014) make is that assessment, feedback and support in new literacy practices are not one-sided (teacher to learner), but rather a continuous process between a group of young people who have the same interests (Black, 2008a; 2008b). Furthermore, rather than viewing literacy as an autonomous set of skills, Burn (2008) and Jenkins (2006) argue that literacies (including digital literacies) are social interactions where people learn from each other. In addition, while formal education places much significance on textbook knowledge, new literacies value young people's practices and literacy events and activities (Alvermann, 2010; Ito et al., 2010; Ito et al., 2013), and allow young people to draw on and use available resources, instead of relying on formal and pre-approved school resources (Leander and Mills, 2007). Also, unlike formal education, which values individual authorship, new literacies encourage remixing and sharing as a means of production (Coiro et al., 2014; Knobel and Lankshear, 2010; 2014; Lankshear and Knobel, 2011; 2013), and offer young people a chance to develop their practical experiences and engage with people from different cultures or over long distances (Curwood et al., 2013). Such abilities are often not possible in

schools. New literacies pave the way for future learning, where young people take control of their own learning process, rather than depending on formal education, and with new literacies come new “ways of speaking” (Gee, 2003; 2007; Gee and Hayes, 2011a; Ito et al., 2010), where words like ‘link’, ‘layering’, ‘application’ and ‘slide’ have different meanings. Leu et al. (2013) and Leu et al. (2014) argue that formal education and academic language still struggle with the new changes in language. Also, while formal education tends to limit playing and playfulness to early childhood education, new literacies allow learners of all ages a chance to play and explore, which can help in identifying the key elements of learning (Ito et al., 2010; Ito et al., 2013; Williams, 2011; Wood, 2014). And finally, unlike formal education, which usually relies on one medium (written) for learning, new literacies use and mix several mediums (images, video, sound and written language) for learning (Hayes and Duncan, 2012). It is clear here that technology and media change (and keep changing) the nature of literacy. Burnett et al. (2014a) explore how the context of 21st century literacies are always changing and shifting, which not only influences literacy practices, but can also be informative for educational policies.

I found the ideas and arguments of Burnett et al. (2014a) very interesting (and useful) as they explore rapidly changing daily literacy practices. They argue that the impact of the “new sociotechnical arrangements” on children and young people’s literacy practices are unpredictable. The impact of social, political and economic change can affect education systems, as well as curriculum and education policies, which can also be unpredictable. Burnett et al. (2014a) argue that language researchers should rethink language theories in a way that would acknowledge the uncertainty of social change. Indeed, Burnett et al. (2014a) attempt to capture the changing nature of new literacies,

as well as the challenges researchers and educators meet when dealing with new literacies. They argue that the mobile, multimodal, fluid, and messy nature of literacies requires an in depth analysis of literacies as everyday social practices. In addition, Sanford, Rogers and Kendrick (2014) explore youth literacies from a critical perspective, which link new literacies to popular culture, digital media and digital identities.

5) Popular culture

One of the main concepts to investigate when exploring new literacies is popular culture. Marsh and Millard (2000) and Marsh (2006a; 2006b; 2011) argue that popular culture is essential to young people's engagement with new literacies. Hagood (2008) also explains that popular culture is strongly embedded in literacy practices and has connections to identity and social context. Popular culture provides a very useful framework for researching social and linguistic change, online identity and representation, and digital story telling (Black, 2008a; 2008b; Squire, 2008). Literacy practices are embedded within a sociocultural context, which relates strongly to popular culture. Marsh (2006b) argues that formal education should consider and incorporate popular culture in schoolwork. She also explains how popular culture (music, films, TV shows, novels etc.) plays a powerful role in forming children's and young people's literacy practices, as well as their own identities. Furthermore, popular culture is a very useful tool for bridging the gap between home and school.

“Recognising children's cultural capital and placing it on classroom walls and shelves will create a space in which children can feel more comfortable within school”. (Marsh and Millard, 2000, p.183)

Rowell, Pedersen and Trueman (2014) explore how young people's engagement with videogames influences literacy learning and digital literacy practices. They explain how popular culture offers new ways of exploring new literacies. Videogames, for example, have often been described as harmful and 'time-wasting' activities. However, Gee (2007) argues that videogames engage young people's critical thinking and their problem-solving skills. He also explains how videogames offer a space for active and embodied learning, and engage young people with connected learning (Ito et al., 2010; Ito et al., 2013). Schmier (2014) also explores how popular culture influences literacy practices and how it empowers learners.

“Literacy researchers have documented how bringing popular culture into the classroom can support students' ability to think and write critically about the media they produce and consume both in and outside of school”. (Schmier, 2014, p.40)

Engagement with digital literacy and popular culture increases the learners' ability to develop their digital identities. Educators often see popular culture as potentially problematic; however, children's and young people's engagement with popular culture, within their multiliteracy practices, shows a bottom-up attempt to bridge the gap between home and school, as evident in Dickie and Shuker (2014), Dunn et al. (2014) and Marsh (2011). Petrone (2013) explores the connections between youth, literacy and popular culture, and how such connections influence literacy education. He argues that popular culture is a tool young people employ to form their identity, develop their literacies and get involved in social and political processes.

Media and education polices often claim that popular culture has a negative effect on children and young people, and engaging with popular culture in literacy education is problematic (Mahiri, 2001; Moje and van Helden, 2004). However, Petrone (2013) argues that contemporary research into new literacies (such as Alvermann, 2010; Bartlett et al., 2011a; Bulfin and Koutsogiannis, 2012; Burnett et al., 2012; Burnett et al., 2014b; Lankshear and Knobel, 2011; 2013) see children and young people as “literate, innovative intellectuals who care deeply about aesthetic, social, and political conditions - and utilise popular culture texts and practices to help them do so”. (Petrone, 2013, p.9) Furthermore, Petrone (2013) provides new and interesting uses of popular culture, where it can be tool to critically examine media literacies and sociopolitical actions. Also, the “connected learning” approach (Ito et al., 2013) draws on popular culture (among other learning tools and settings) to address issues regarding social change and educational opportunities.

“The connected learning model is an effort at articulating a research and design effort that cuts across the boundaries that traditionally separate institutions of education, popular culture, home, and community”. (Ito et al., 2013, p.87)

Media literacies and popular culture are an expanded conceptualisation of literacy, which is the sharing of meaning through symbolic expressions. Hobbs and Moore (2013) argue that popular culture, new literacies and media recognise and shift societies. Learning processes are different due to technology and media, as educational systems are coming to grips with these cultural, political, economic, spiritual, and moral changes, which are woven together within a “media ecology”

context. In addition, Ito et.al. (2010) argue that popular culture provides children and young people with agency and authority, and reshapes youth culture. Popular culture also allows children and young people a chance to negotiate issues of culture and belonging.

6) Multimodality

Many studies into childhood and literacy show that children develop multilingual and multimodal skills (Flewitt, 2008; Jewitt, 2009; 2012; Jewitt et al., 2009; Kress, 2010; Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001; Ntelioglou et al., 2014; Rowsell, 2013a). Children are engaged in multimodal literacies in their everyday lives, and often find themselves in a multilingual world. The digital world has transformed children's literacy practices and their interactions with modes. The following sections discuss the impact of multimodality and multilingualism on children's literacy practices and development. Multimodality is the mixture of different modes to carry meaning (or communicate) between two people (Kress, 2010). Different modes (image, video, writing and audio) can work together to best convey meaning. Kress (2010) argues that people choose modes that best serve their purpose. Formal and informal ways of communication also affect which modes people use to communicate. Other researchers (Jewitt, 2012; Rowsell, 2013a; Stein, 2008; Yamada-Rice, 2013) argue that multimodal approaches can also be seen in children's communication and literacy practices. Children adopt different modes when playing and learning. Kress (2010) also argues that different modes have an impact on a child's identity. Music, food, clothes and language(s) are blocks that build a child's identity and impact his/her learning process. Kress (2010) states that when children go to school, they bring with them all of these blocks that built their identity.

“This recognition of multimodality as the assembly of multiple forms of meaning-making, and the increasing ease-of-use of digital technologies to help people represent meaning, has stimulated a great deal of educational research that examines how learners engage with these technologies, and how knowledge representation might change as a result of their use”. (Toohey and Dagenais, 2015, p.3)

Multimodality relies on multiple modes that represent and communicate meaning. It depends on people using several modes (visual, sound, written and gestures) in different social contexts to communicate or develop meaning (Bezemer and Mavers, 2011; Bezemer et al., 2014; Bezemer and Kress, 2015; Jewitt, 2012; Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001; Kress, 2010). It changes and reshapes over time to meet the requirements of different social contexts and different communities. Modes and semiotics often carry different meaning in different cultures or different communities, as modes need a shared cultural understanding of what they mean (Yamada-Rice, 2013). People use different approaches to select and arrange modes in order to carry meaning to others. Flewitt (2008) argues that children become literate through language and through combining different modes to learn. She also argues that the social or cultural world dictates how children use modes.

“Media require even very young children to use and interpret a varied repertoire of representational modes, and children’s ability to negotiate new forms of literacy carry high stakes for social standing and life destinations”. (Flewitt, 2008, p.122)

Over the past few years, literacy has undergone a fundamental shift. Kress (2003) states that literacy in today's world does not mean just reading and writing printed text. Media and technology have created a space where literacy is represented by many modes (such as image, film and audio). Kress (2003) argues that research into literacy has moved from a world of written text to a world where images and the visual dominate. Everyday communication nowadays depends on mixing language(s) and mode(s). Kress (2003) mentions that despite continuous change in literacy practices, children easily adopt and develop their multilingual and multimodal literacies.

One main argument Kress (2003) makes is that literacy has undergone a revolution, as it is no longer limited to its physical medium. In the digital age, the nature of literacy has changed, and new literacies incorporate multiple communication modes (including languages). Many literacy researchers (Kasdorf, 2003; Kress, 2003; Lynch and Horton, 2008) argue that digital literacies differ from traditional and paper-based literacies. Technology offers individuals functions that change their understanding of text. Kress (2003) touches on the importance of digital literacies in children's practices as they redefine the meaning of being 'literate'. In terms of research, multimodality can be used to explore the different modes people employ to make meaning, communicate and learn (as in this study). Multimodality can also be used as a research method to collect and analyse data.

7) Multilingual Literacies

In today's world, multilingual literacies have become the norm in children's practices. Digital literacies and technology have enabled access to different cultures and languages. Martin-Jones and Jones (2001) argue that languages and literacies are embedded within cultural practices in a complex way. Multilingual literacies allow people to have different identities in different spaces.

“In multilingual contexts, different languages, language varieties and scripts add other dimensions to the diversity and complexity of literacies. We use the term ‘multilingual’ rather than ‘bilingual’ in order to capture the multiplicity and complexity of individual and group repertoires”. (Martin-Jones and Jones, 2001, p.5)

Martin-Jones and Jones (2001) state that children's multilingual literacy practices start at home and within their local communities. Children explore the values and beliefs of different cultures through multilingual literacies.

“Literacy events and interactions, practices and activities, sites and worlds, are then somewhat different kinds of things, with relative emphasis perhaps on ‘doing’ (events and interactions), ‘learning’ (practices and activities) and ‘becoming or transforming’ (sites and worlds), respectively”. (Hornberger, 2000, p.364)

Over the past few years, linguistic diversity in Saudi Arabia has been increasing (Central Department of Statistics & Information, 2011; Ethnologue, 2014).

Ntelioglou et al. (2014) argue that in communities where multilingualism is the norm, children engage with multilingual literacies inside and outside school. Garcia and Homonoff Woodley (2009, p.157) urge schools to “recognise the multiple language practices that heterogeneous populations increasingly bring and which integrated schooling, more than any other context, has the potential to liberate”. In addition, Ntelioglou et al. (2014) argues that the lack of any consideration for linguistic diversity in education will result in the following:

- Foreign language education and support will include only official foreign languages (English in the case of Saudi Arabia).
- Literacy in school will include only official languages (Arabic and English). Students’ background, culture and language will be of little relevance to schooling.
- Parents (and family members) of different cultural backgrounds will not be able to contribute to their children’s education.

However, public schools in Saudi Arabia fail to recognise any multiple language practices of the students. Multilingual education (beyond English) is absent from schools and home multilingual literacies are considered irrelevant to children’s education.

8) Language and power

The language practices of communities are ideologically shaped by social, political and economical forces. Fairclough (2001) explains that education in critical language awareness should enable learners to understand the relationship between power and language, and realise that language ideologies are often implicit or “unsaid”. Wodak (2012) builds on the work of Fairclough and proposes three different diminutions of

power. First, power in discourse, which refers to the different meanings or interpretations of terms. It is a “semiotic hegemony” struggle, which influences aspects of language, like the choice of linguistic codes. Second, power over discourse, which refers to access to people and being seen and heard by the public. Third, power of discourse: which refers to the macro historical influences of language. Mayr (2008) also emphasises the importance of discourses when addressing issues regarding language and power. She argues that the importance of discourse comes from its “performative power to bring into being the very realities it claims to describe” (Mayr, 2008, p.3), and such power relations within institutions (e.g. universities, prisons or media) should not be ignored. Mayr (2008) successfully explores language and power within different institutional contexts, and how these institutions use their power to shape identities to their purposes. Therefore, she urges linguists to understand discourses as the result of institutional processes, which are often controlled by large organisations or corporations who have their own agenda and push for more profits. It is clear here how institutions (especially in education) use language as a means of creating or standardising social norms. I find Mayr’s ideas helpful in examining and understanding the connection between language and power within the Saudi context. Such connections between language and power have a huge impact on language planning processes, as placing limitations and restrictions on foreign language education in Saudi Arabia can be seen as a tool to foster a specific identity on the Saudi people (see religious language planning).

Mayr (2008, p.8) explains that “this view of discourse as constituting social reality does not necessarily lead to the view that discourse is all there is, but assigns discourse an important role in shaping reality, creating patterns of understanding,

which people then apply in social practices”. Critical linguists (Fowler), critical discourse analysts (van Dijk) and social theorists (Bourdieu/Foucault) all have different conceptualisations of ‘discourse’. Mayr (2008) explains that there are two main ways of looking at (or exploring) the meaning of discourse. The first is a structuralist paradigm, in which discourse focuses on the structure and cohesion of language. The second is a functionalist paradigm, in which discourse focuses on the social aspects of language and language use. It is critical for discourse analysis to consider both aspects of language (form and function), or as Mayr (2008, p.8) explains “language represents and contributes to the (re)production of social reality. This definition of discourse establishes a link to view of institutional discourses as engaged in reality construction”.

8.1) Language ecology

The paradigm of language ecology (Haugen, 2001) refers to the study of the relationship between language, its social environment and multilingual communities. Fill and Mühlhäusler (2006) tell us that language ecology has many useful applications in discourse analysis, anthropological analysis and research into language teaching and learning. They also explain that the study of language ecology was the first to criticise language and linguistic studies for the lack of “environmental point of view”. While no one can deny the influences of culture and the environment on language and linguistic practices, Sapir (2001) argues that it is the environmental influences on individual language users that cause language change, rather than influences on language itself. He tells us that “environment can act directly only on an individual, and in those cases where we find that a purely environmental influence is responsible for a communal trait, this common trait must be interpreted as a

summation of distinct processes of environmental influences on individuals” (Sapir, 2001, p.13). Understanding the relationship between language and social environment is a fundamental step of language planning. Mühlhäusler (2000) mentions that linguists often ignore social change and social development, and focus on wider meta-linguistic views of language and society. The study of language ecology should go beyond the syntax and semantics of language, as explained by Fill and Mühlhäusler (2006, p.49),

“Most ecolinguists turn against the idea of an ‘ecological correctness’ and stress that their criticism of language is ‘non-conservative’ (in the sense of ‘non-normative’), ‘gentle’ and not intended to change the language system. This criticism is meant to be placed within the Critical Language Awareness movement rather than in the neighbourhood of creating another Newspeak”.

In terms of multilingualism and multilingual communities, language ecology can be examined by looking at the interactions between languages within society as well as in the minds of bilingual and multilingual speakers. “The ecology of language is determined primarily by the people who learn it, use it, and transmit it to others”. (Haugen, 2001, p.57)

The idea of language of ecology can be used as a metaphor for language inequality within communities. This linguistic inequality ultimately leads to language loss or language extinction. Mora (2013; 2014) argues that exploring language ecology helps in understanding language and literacy practices. In the case of this research project, Saudi Arabia, a large and diverse country, only encompasses two languages (Arabic

and English) in its official policies, which can be problematic. The way language changes and evolves nowadays is very complex. As mentioned before, technology, social mobility, and migration affect the way in which people use and engage with language. Mora (2013; 2014) argues that the rapid change of language(s) in the present day implies that people are using languages in new ways, which gives more value to language access and linguistic identity. He also argues that, in today's world, it is very difficult to value one language over another (or label any language as foreign). The existence of any language within a community comes out of a need for that language (either driven by policy makers or individuals). Therefore, the language and linguistic framework of any community should focus more on literacy practices and language use as a social phenomenon, instead of focusing on language proficiency.

In my experience, while conducting this research project, educational institutions in Saudi Arabia make language decisions that help to promote and protect the Arabic language. They seem unwilling to alter or change their language policies even when the advantages of multilingualism, as well as the multilingual literacy practices of individuals within the Saudi community, are pointed out. The decisions made by language planners in the country have created a world that tends to lead its people to one language, one culture and one way of thinking (mono-culture). Cultural minorities within the Saudi context struggle to be seen or become present. I do believe that the Saudi policy makers overall are looking at 'one' as the ideal (or utopia). I would argue that focusing on one language (Arabic) tends to carry with it a sense that with one language, there is only one way of thinking.

As mentioned previously, language ecology focuses mainly on the links and the relationships between language and the social context in which it exists; however, this relationship can be difficult to fully comprehend. “This may be partly due to the fact in Haugen’s proposal is an unresolved ambiguity between adopting ecology as, on the one hand, a distinctive theoretical framework for the study of language and, on the other, a suggestive metaphor for certain aspects of multilingualism” (Garner, 2014, p.112). Garner’s idea (2004; 2014) of urging language researchers to explore language ecology beyond its simple structural system and look at how language is used within the social environment of its speakers, aided my understanding of the connection between language and culture. Exploring the dynamic between different languages, the speakers and their cultural backgrounds helped me realise that researching language should not only consider its structural and linguistic aspects. Researching language requires a broad and multidisciplinary approach that includes people, their literacy practices, culture and relationships. This could shed light on children and young people’s multilingual practices in Saudi Arabia and micro (and nano) language planning.

8.2) Linguistic landscape

Linguistic landscape is a cross-disciplinary field that links linguistics, sociology and geography (Backhaus, 2007; Blackwood, 2014; Blommaert, 2013a; Bolton, 2012; Bruyèl-Olmedo and Juan-Garau, 2009; 2015; Cenoz and Gorter, 2006; Gorter, 2006; 2013; Hélot et al., 2012; Hogan-Brun et al., 2012; Poveda, 2012; Shohamy et al., 2010). Studies in linguistic landscape look at how languages influence one another and how they are used in public spaces, signs, media and art. Linguistic landscape, as a lens, can also be used to explore diversity within communities; linguistic justice as

well as multilingual education. Linguistic landscape is a relatively new field, which originated as a link between the fields of language planning and policy, sociolinguistics, urban and cultural geography, multimodality and New Literacy Studies. Landry and Bourhis (1997, p.28) explain that “the presence or absence of rival languages in specific domains of the linguistic landscape can come to symbolise the strength or weakness of competing ethnolinguistic groups in intergroup settings. Exclusion of the in-group language from public signs can convey a message to the effect that one’s own language is not valued and has little status within society”. They point out that the lack of linguistic diversity within any community (like adverts, signs or media) can have a negative impact on the people who speak minority languages.

Gorter (2006) prefers the term “multilingual cityscape”, as it links perfectly with the urban context and language in public spaces, which are mostly multilingual. Nonetheless, it is clear here that linguistic landscape (or multilingual cityscape) is an effective and useful tool for exploring multilingualism, as it has many different lenses. Gorter (2006) explains that, through linguistic landscape, language researchers can explore multilingualism from different points of view (sociolinguistics, applied linguistics, language policy and regulations, advertising and marketing, and education). However, Gorter (2006) argues that while linguistic landscape provides an idea about multilingualism with communities, it is not a mirror that reflects the reality of what is happening in societies. Nowadays, communities are becoming dynamic environments full of images, signs and multimodal languages. Linguistic landscape explores how languages manifest (and change) within urban spaces. Sociolinguists (Gorter, 2006; Hélot et al., 2012; Malinowski, 2010; Shohamy and Gorter, 2008;

Shohamy et al., 2010) explain that linguistic landscape can be both informative and symbolic. It provides knowledge about the linguistic features of a community, as well as social and political ideologies in operation. “The study of the linguistic landscape can also be interesting because it can provide information on the differences between the official language policy that can be reflected in top-down signs as street names, or names of different buildings and the impact of that policy on individuals as reflected in bottom-up signs such as shop names or street posters” (Cenoz and Gorter, 2006, p.68). The power of linguistic landscape is its ability to make connections between different perspectives of multilingualism, which illustrate the theory and ideas of Bourdieu (1991). In addition, Shohamy and Gorter (2008) describe linguistic landscape as a field where different languages influence one another (or sometimes battle each other). Bolton (2012) explains how global English (and world Englishes) can impact linguistic landscape. He argues that discussing ‘world Englishes’ should not be limited to describing the features of a particular variety or its spread, as children and young people now engage in diverse worlds (both linguistically and culturally). Multilingual practices can be seen in both physical and virtual worlds, as individuals engage with media, technology, globalisation, and popular culture.

Backhaus (2007) explores how the status of English as a global language influenced language policies and the linguistic landscape of Japan. He explains how bilingual (Japanese-English) signs have become the norm in Japan’s public spaces since the 1980s. “There was a growing awareness that it was no longer sufficient to provide information on issues as important as street and place names, public transport matters, and public rules and manners in Japanese only. This led to some thorough changes in linguistic landscape policies at all administrative levels, and Tokyo as the national

capital was at the forefront of this development” (Backhaus, 2007, p.162). Language planners would find themselves facing a very difficult task when considering multilingualism and diversity within public spaces, especially on status and corpus planning levels. Backhaus’s (2007) exploration of the linguistic landscape of Tokyo established a link between linguistic landscape and corpus language planning. Also, Cenoz and Gorter (2006), as well as Shohamy and Gorter (2008), explore how linguistic landscape can be used as a method of researching minority languages, and how they connect with language policies and global English. However, Kallen (2010) argues that the top-down linguistic landscape is not always a reflection of the social and linguistic hierarchy and power. He suggests that:

“The contrast between ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ signage works best on the assumption that these different types of signage are in opposition within the same system, representing different interlocutors vying for the same structural position in the landscape. This assumption, though, is contrary to a great deal of everyday experience: the state is not in the business of opening hairdressers or small shops, and small shop owners do not usually take to relabeling streets. This complementarity of domains suggests that the street name sign and the small shop sign are not directly competing for the same territory, nor do they simply represent different sources of comparable expressions. They live, in a very real sense, in different, if parallel, universes”. (Kallen, 2010, p.42)

Here, Kallen (2010) proposes to view and analyse linguistic landscape not as a single framework, but rather as several multimodal elements that interact with each other to carry meaning. Dray (2010), on the other hand, presents a very interesting case study

about the monolingual and low modal linguistic landscape of Jamaica. She argues that there is no clear distinction between the vernacular and the standard in that monolingual landscape, which can be helpful to communicate messages easily and mitigate local identity. Blommaert (2013a) explains how language and linguistic landscape should not be separated from its local values (in other words, multimodal and multilingual landscapes will only appear in communities that value them). However, describing the monolingual, low modal and sometimes hand written linguistic landscape of any community as an “ideological struggle of signage” (Dray, 2010) is problematic, as it assumes norms and standards for linguistic landscape. Graffiti is one example of how urban landscape can challenge the norms of linguistic landscape and the preferred semiotics of a city (Pennycook, 2010).

“One of the reasons why graffiti may have received more scholarly attention than any other form of public visual discourse is that other forms of writing or signage have largely undergone the process of ‘automatisation’... Graffiti, on the other hand, as a largely outlawed art form, is often perceived by many as ‘out-of-place’, as iconoclastic in its content and style, and as creating a more immediate, direct form of engagement with the viewer”. (Jaworski and Thurlow, 2010, p.21)

Graffiti is not always disempowered, transgressive or illegal. Pennycook (2010) argues that graffiti can be an important resource for literacy and identity. Furthermore, Jaworski and Thurlow (2010) tell us that semiotic and linguistic landscapes often follow an unpredictable and messy path. They also argue that

postmodern art, media and literacy draw on the imagery and meaning of semiotic and linguistic landscapes and vice versa.

The notion and ideas of linguistic landscape (or multilingual cityscape) offer a Bourdieuan perspective of language and social reality. Linguistic landscape is influenced by an “unequal” language power of dominant groups within a community (i.e. the language(s) of dominant groups would be more visible in public spaces). Hult (2014) argues that the linguistic landscape of rich and multilingual communities is often overshadowed by global English, which falsely represents multilingual spaces as ‘English-dominant’ spaces. As mentioned before, linguistic landscape does not always reflect the reality of multilingual communities (Gorter, 2006; 2013), and Hult’s (2014) study can be seen as an evidence of this argument. On the other hand, Bruyèl-Olmedo and Juan-Garau (2009) argue that the ‘privileged’ status of English made its wide spread in the linguistic landscape of diverse communities justified. I find the field of linguistic landscape very helpful in understanding how official policies influence languages and multilingualism. It can also be helpful when exploring micro (and nano) multilingual practices of individuals. Linguistic landscape offers an opportunity to compare official foreign language policies within Saudi Arabia to individuals’ multilingual practices and attitudes.

8.3) Linguistic and multilingual repertoires

As mentioned before, language is often used in ways that are indicative to the rules of society. Even when using global languages, linguistic repertoires enable learners to express their identity and cultural backgrounds. Language use varies in social context, setting or roles, and often gives clear indication to people’s background, gender,

culture, age, class, education and ethnicity. Researching linguistic repertoires can be seen as a basic element of linguistic capital. Understanding how changes in language phonetics, syntax and morphologies can be helpful in understanding changes in a language and how these can influence individual language users. Grenfell (2011) argues that exploring linguistic repertoires and how these influence social life can help in identifying and addressing issues around language and ideologies. While recording and examining changes in language over time is not new, Grenfell (2011) proposes employing the study of multilingual repertoires as a tool to conceptualise language habitus and linguistic capital within social theories (like, Bourdieu's). Ludi (2006) argues that exploring multilingual repertoires can provide a better understanding of intercultural communication.

“The careful analysis of different manifestations of multilingual repertoires, situated in specific intercultural context and negotiated between interlocutors, questions a number of established representations of what a ‘language’ is. Thus, the investigation of the use of multilingual repertoires in the dynamics of intercultural communication may contribute to a more appropriate theory of language and language use”. (Ludi, 2006, p.12).

Ludi (2006) also argues that multilingualism goes beyond ideas around linguistic competence and looks at ways of life, where people live and experience two or more cultures. Multilingualism and multilingual repertoire bring together different cultures and form a social identity, which is not limited to a single culture. The development of multilingual repertoires is essential for understanding language use (and global English). Sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology established that there is a

reciprocal relationship between language and identity in terms of construction, maintenance, and change. Language influences identity (as speakers use language for self-expression) and identity influences language (as different social groups use or avoid certain linguistic elements). This can be clearly seen in migration, where contact between language, identity, and culture highlight communicative and representational means in a multilingual environment. Multilingual repertoires allow speakers to use the language resources available to construct their identities and develop self-expression.

Duran's (2014) examination of young people's linguistic practices shows the complex and diverse trajectories of multiple settings, and how children and young people make meaning of the rapidly diversifying cultures in which they live. I find Duran's (2014) work interesting and useful as (similarly to this research project) it explores people's engagement with complex and multilingual practices in their daily lives. Duran (2014) also urges for a more dynamic model of language socialisation; one that would highlight children's and young people's encounters with different languages and provide a better understanding of their contextualised agency and multilingual repertoire. Indeed, multilingual repertoires connect people's multilingual practices to larger frameworks like "superdiversity" (Blommaert, 2013a; Blommaert and Backus, 2012) and "historical and cultural identities" (Holland and Lave, 2001).

"[People's] past and ongoing experiences of connecting linguistic choice to contextualised interactions have some impact on the choice they make and the objectives in their present communicative involvement. The construct of language learners as multilingual subjects, who have hard-earned linguistic

and sociocultural knowledge, allow us to see their ‘history in person’ when their linguistic resources and practices are set forth in socialisation” (Duran, 2014, p.76).

Here, it is clear how multilingual repertoires can be a fundamental part of linguistic capital, and can be used to past and present experiences. Furthermore, Androutsopoulos and Juffermans (2014) draw on digital communications to explore identity, cultural diversity, and multilingual repertoire online. This can be helpful in theorising digital literacy practices in a way that would incorporate media and technology with multilingual repertoires. Jonsson and Muhonen (2014) explain that digital spaces (like, Facebook and Twitter) are often multilingual and superdiverse, where people’s linguistic repertoires build their online identity. They argue that such online multilingual repertoires should be acknowledged when researching language and literacies. Unlike traditional approaches to language variation, multilingual repertoires evoke a sense of ‘competence’. Snell (2013) explains that the notion of ‘multilingual repertoires’ draws on sociolinguistic theories of language and culture, and focuses on ideas of “diversity” rather than “difference”. She argues that multilingual repertoires are complex and layered, allowing language research to draw on sociological theories (like, Bourdieu) and incorporate discussions regarding ‘agency’ and ‘voice’. Linguistic repertoires evolve and expand as people experience different languages and different linguistic habitus (Busch, 2012).

9) Contemporary and critical applied linguistics

There are a number of issues in relation to language, politics and sociolinguistics. In exploring the connections between language and power. Pennycook (2001) explains

that language position conveys social and political power. Taking English language as an example, Pennycook (2001, p.47) explains that “it is worth looking very briefly at this position not only because it has had wide converge at least within Britain and enjoys fairly considerable support in popular media”. He also argues that researching the role of language should go beyond exploring the micro/macro relation or forms of power, to understand the conflict (or inequality) within a society and exploring language as a product of social relations. In addition, Pennycook (2001; 2011) provides a critical view of applied linguistics, where he raises a number of issues, and pushes applied linguists to consider language and literacy practices of individuals and how people communicate and interact with each other. Here, I would argue that the field of applied linguistics should not only focus on issues of language and power, but also move to consider people’s engagement with language and changes within the social context.

Aspects of applied linguistics overlap with New Literacy Studies and discourse analysis. Pennycook (2001, p.12) explains that “critical literacy has less often been considered in applied linguistics, largely because of its greater orientation toward first language literacy, which has often not fallen within the perceived scope of applied linguistics. It is possible, however, to see critical literacy in terms of pedagogical application of critical discourse analysis and therefore a quite central concern for critical applied linguistics”. Furthermore, he argues that it is not enough to link language to political views or the social world, but that critical connections should also be made.

In addition, language planning and language policy are often included under sociolinguistics. Pennycook (2001, p.55) explains that “language policy and planning, however, need to be subjected to the same sort of scrutiny as sociolinguistics more generally”. Luke, McHoul and Mey (1990, p.26) also explain that “many linguists and educational planners saw their task as an ideologically neutral one, entailing the description and formalization of language(s) (corpus planning) and the analysis and prescription of the sociocultural statuses and uses of language(s) (status planning)”. This explains that language planning and language policy are not inherently critical but rather a political approach to maintain the linguistic and social status quo (as in the case of language planning and policy in Saudi Arabia).

Baldauf (2010) explains that language attitudes have a major impact on language planning and social change, as it helps in understanding some of the issues of language politics. Eggington (2010) also mentions that unplanned language planning is essential to the overall process of language planning. He explains that “the term includes a semantic notion of an ‘unplanned’ planned activity, precise definition of something that is unplanned are difficult to construct” (Eggington, 2010, p.254). This suggests that the process of language planning has a social element, either intentionally or unintentionally. As Kaplan (2010) and Eggington (2010) suggest, unplanned language planning not only influences formal language planning, but also has advantages for the entire process. Planned and unplanned language planning attempts can co-exist in a symbiotic relationship and, thus, a formal language plan is incomplete unless it considers existing unplanned language plans within the social ecosystem. Also, the existence or nonexistence of unplanned language planning can offer vital information, allowing the language planners to consider the social and

language related factors to explain why unplanned language planning exists or does not exist. In addition, the relationship between planned and unplanned language planning and social power needs to consider the power relationships revealed in all the unplanned language planning activities in the society in question. Furthermore, the almost universal language competence that human beings share seems to give most people all the authority they need to become involved in language planning activities, especially at the local and micro planning level. This situation can create a myriad of mostly unplanned language planning activities and attitudes. Language planners need to address these aptitudes and activities in any formal plan.

Another aspect of language planning is bilingual and multilingual education, which Baker (2010) argues is not just about the use of a number of languages in the classroom. It is, instead, a multidisciplinary understanding of philosophy, sociolinguistics, politics and economy. “Indeed, there is no understanding of international bilingual education without contextualising it within the history and politics of country (e.g. United States) or a region (e.g. Wales in the United Kingdom) or a state (e.g. New York, Arizona, California). Bilingual education can be fully understood only in relation to political ideology and political opportunism” (Baker, 2010, p.294). I agree with Baker’s views in terms of acknowledging cultural diversity when planning. I see the success of foreign language planning when language classrooms recognise minority languages; home languages as well as learners’ cultural backgrounds and their identities. There are a number of applied linguists and researchers in the discipline of language planning who have started to acknowledge the social and historical aspect (and context) of language. As Ferguson (2006, p.9) explains:

“One of the more observed changes, perhaps, has been an enlargement of the range of topics addressed within language planning/policy and an extension of the discipline’s geographical purview relative to the early days of the 1960s and 1970s. Thus, the processes of language standardisation, codification and dissemination of the standard so strongly associated with nation-building project attending decolonisation, while still important, are no longer so central and have been joined by other issues – language revitalisation, minority language rights, globalisation and the spread of English, the preservation of linguistic diversity and bilingual education”.

Kubota (2013; 2014; 2015) addresses socio-political issues regarding language learners, as well as teachers and researchers, in relation to ideologies and politics, by drawing on criticism of post-colonialism and neoliberalism. Kubota (2013; 2014; 2015) also argues that the field of applied linguistics needs a modernist view of language and language use, one that would challenge monolingualism (or native speaker norms). She proposes a multi/plural turn to language, which supports language hybridity and provides a better understanding of language and identity. Indeed, Kubota’s (2014) “multi/plural turn” provides a new and interesting approach to exploring language and language learning; nonetheless, it provides a descriptive observation of language pedagogy and macro discourses. While the multi/plural turn challenges the ‘English-only’ ideology and language hegemonic, it overlooks micro language practices (especially outside school).

To bridge the gap between language theory and real world needs, Otsuji and Pennycook (2010; 2013) propose the notion of “metrolinguism”, which explores

language use in an urban context. Pennycook and Otsuji (2015) claim that globalisation and mobility have created cities with an increasing urban diversity, which has resulted in more languages and different language speakers. Metrolingualism describes the ways in which people with different (and mixed) backgrounds use, play with and negotiate language and identity. Metrolingualism does not assume connections between language, culture and ethnicity, but rather explores how such relationships link to contemporary (urban) language use. In addition, Otsuji and Pennycook (2010; 2013) explain that multilingual and “hybrid” language uses often go unremarked by language planners. They propose the idea of metrolingualism as an approach to move away from the notion of ascribed identities and emphasise the multiplicity and diversity of language and culture.

“Studies of contemporary language use – from new Englishes to multilingual workplaces – often evoke the notion of hybridity to capture the dynamics of language mixing that are observed. In the same way that multi-, poli- and plurilingualism focus on a plurality of entities to describe diversity, however, so hybridity also suggests the mixing of different and recognisable entities. Studies of global English(es), for example, often assume the existence of English before either pluralising the idea (world Englishes) or focusing on language mixing (hybridity) in order to account for diversity”. (Otsuji and Pennycook, 2013, p.85)

Otsuji and Pennycook (2010; 2013) also explain that the notion of metrolingualism does not separate language from its cultural and social surroundings, but rather

provides a new lens of exploring social life and language use. It also explores the creative aspects of language use (or linguistic practices) in relation to diversity.

“Looking for new ways of conceptualising language to meet this challenge, the notion of metrolingualism seems to open up new avenues of thoughts. By challenging the tendency to interpret the current multilingual phenomena as additive separate languages, we have proposed metrolingualism as a way to shift from enumeration strategies to the already different. In doing so, language is no longer seen as a state or territory. Multilingualism attempts to move away from ascriptions of language and identity along conventional statist correlations, and instead provides an alternative way to look at late modern urban linguistic mobility”. (Otsuji and Pennycook, 2013, p.90)

One of the main issues of traditional linguistics theories is multilingual education. Many language researchers (Hélot, 2003; 2011; 2012; Kaplan, 2010; 2014a; 2014b; Norton, 2000; 2001; 2010; Pavlenko, 2014; Pennycook, 2001; 2010; 2011; 2014) explain how language classrooms lack the depth of language interactions, as they mechanically accomplish language activities with no resemblance to real life situations. Pavlenko (2014) argues that, outside a language classroom, a bilingual mind engages with deep and meaningful multilingual interactions, as it naturally engages with multiple modalities. She also argues that such multilingual interactions are often overlooked even by rationalised linguistics theories, which are often shaped by the background of the theorists involved. Liddicoat and Taylor-Leech (2015) explain how language planning processes can be used as a tool to bring “realistic” multilingual interactions to the classroom. As mentioned before, the process of

language planning is driven by sociocultural and political ideologies, which often see linguistic diversity as a problem. To overcome this issue, Liddicoat and Taylor-Leech (2015, p.2) suggest that “language planning work constructs the role and function of languages in multilingual contexts in complex ways and the prevailing ideologies within a society and the attitudes and values they (re)produce are an important part of the context in which language education occurs. Multilingual education programmes need to navigate through the complexes of attitudes and ideologies that provide the backdrop against which they are implemented and which work to shape the possibilities for multilingual education within a society”. Indeed, debates around multilingualism and the value of different languages will always arise when planning; therefore, it is necessary to acknowledge the importance of multilingualism, especially when exploring human interactions.

9.1) Sociological perspectives on language learning

Exploring language from sociological and sociocultural perspectives helps in understanding the circumstances surrounding language and individuals. Incorporating social and cultural factors when researching language learning and literacy practices can aid in shaping (or building) language theories that reflect language beyond its structural form. Jang and Jimenez (2011) argue that sociological and sociocultural theories play a critical role when researching language teaching and learning in social contexts. They also urge language researchers to acknowledge the different social contexts in which learners learn and use language. Gonzalez, Moll and Amanti (2013) emphasise the importance of individuals, their life experiences and their communities as a source of knowledge, and encourage researchers to explore (and engage with) the social aspects of learning and teaching. They also argue that many empirical studies

produce data that fails to connect with major social issues. The ideas of Gonzalez, Moll and Amanti (2013) show me that the messiness of people, their everyday lives, and their social practices cannot be described in a simple and neat way. People themselves engage in multiple perspectives that influence their views, identities, decisions and practices. The work of Gonzalez, Moll and Amanti (2013) inspired me to leave behind my Chomskian views of language and language learning and adopt a sociocultural perspective of language. My experience with constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006) helped this transaction, as it was only after getting into the fieldwork that I started noticing the social and cultural aspects and influences on foreign language learning in Saudi Arabia. I find the work of Gonzalez, Moll and Amanti (2013) a great example of what happens when researchers step out of the comfort of simple (and descriptive) research, and look at phenomenon through a wide social lens. The richness and complexity of the data (as well as analysis) shed a new light and perspective on people's (children, families and communities) social connections and language and literacy practices. Reading the stories of people and their experiences also help the reader engage in new ways of thinking. James (2013) also makes a similar argument, where she notes that exploring the social and historical aspects of the world shapes people's (children and adults) views and understandings. Globalisation, as well as the diverse backgrounds and experiences of people, made multilingualism common in many communities (Hélot, 2011), and a main part of their social contexts. Therefore, people's engagement with different languages should not be viewed or examined in isolation to their social context, which is what Gonzalez, Moll and Amanti (2013) achieved. Their interactions with people and language were framed within a sociological theory (Vygotsky), emphasising the social and historical formation of families.

Sociological and sociocultural views of language do not only link it to social context, but also make connections between language and semiotics. Danesi (2000) tells us about different signs and codes, and how language learners engage with the structure of the language they are learning as well as its social context and its semiotics. Halliday (1978) uses the term “social semiotics” in an attempt to link language and society. He examines English language and proposes three different types of semiotics in English; interpersonal, ideational and textual (Halliday, 1978, p.112). While the idea of social semiotics is useful when researching (and exploring) language practices, I find myself disagreeing with Halliday’s approach, as he views language and society as separate elements that need to be linked (through social semiotics) rather than on being a part of the other. I see social semiotics as an extra layer that helps in understanding the nature of language within society; a dynamic process that helps in identifying cultural codes and how they change and influence language.

To fully understand the sociocultural influences on language and literacy practices we need to explore how different cultures influence one another and how cultural flows move between different contexts. Issues of cultural comparisons (on a theoretical level) often deal with theoretical perspectives, which are not necessary comparative, but rather exploratory of points of connection, contact and mutual benefits between different cultures. This is very clear in the case of Middle Eastern and Western countries, as it is very hard to talk about (or research) the Saudi culture without talking about American and British culture, especially in recent years. So it becomes very difficult to maintain any kind of claim that Saudi culture is somehow

independent of wider international flows of culture. This makes language and literacy practices a very interesting topic to explore.

Traditional approaches to cultural anthropology (Bartlett et al., 2011b; Ember and Ember, 2009; Keesing and Strathern, 1981; Overing, 2000) tend to link culture to a specific place, and examine national cultures in terms of similarities and differences over time and space. However, recent studies (like Blommaert, 2013a; Blommaert and Rampton, 2012; Fettes, 2011; Kubota, 2013; 2014; 2015) challenge such traditional approaches to culture, as globalisation and mobility create diverse cultures with many mixed characteristics. Ito et al. (2013) argue that exploring culture and language should go beyond descriptive and comparative approaches to a more transnational contact framework that explores connections between cultures as a part of one world. Ito et al. (2013) also argue that it is hard to think about national contact and national culture as independently evolving on their own. In today's world of increasing media connection and migration, it is untenable to think of culture as fixed to a particular location and particular people. Within the Saudi context, there are a number of studies (such as Khalifa, 2001; Yamani, 2000), which look at the influences of different cultures on Saudi society, and how traditional Saudi culture is produced and represented in relation to other cultures and people from around the world. It is clear here that culture is not a set of attributes fixed to a certain place or a certain group of people. Culture is more dynamic and contingent, especially within the digital world. New media practices and new literacies enable people to connect to a diverse world, where cultural boundaries blur and overlap.

9.2) Language, identity and the social world

Current and contemporary theories on language teaching and learning have recently begun to address issues in relation to learners' identities and connections to the social world. Exploring learners' identities has encouraged many researchers in the field of applied linguistics to focus on social and cultural dimensions to language learning. Toohey and Norton (2010) explain that current identity theories seek to understand language learner identity in relation to their sociocultural world. "Rather than seeing learners' identities as developed individually as expressive of the essence of individuals, current identity theorists have argued that identities are complex, multi-layered, often hybrid, sometimes imagined, and developed through activity by and for individuals in many social fields" (Toohey and Norton, 2010, p.160). They also explain that language and linguistics researchers have begun to consider the complexity of the notion of identity and focus on social theories. Theories such as those of Bourdieu (1977), who argues that language and speech cannot be fully understood without looking at individuals and their larger network of social relationships, or Vygotsky (1980) who argues that researching learning should include people's everyday practices and their engagement with their communities. Toohey and Norton (2010, p.181) explore the notion of investment as a method of understanding the connection between learners and their social interactions, as "people use language to negotiate a sense of self within and across a range of sites at different points in time, and that social relation in those historically specific sites enable or constrain opportunities for social interactions and human agency". Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) explain how cultural capital has different values in different social fields. Building on that idea, Toohey and Norton (2010) argue that when learners invest in second or foreign language learning, they do so knowing it will

broaden their cultural capital. Norton (2000) also explains that language researchers have become more interested in the notion of investment rather than learning motivation. Toohey and Norton (2010, p.183) note that “although motivation can be seen as a primary psychological construct, investment must be seen within a sociological framework, and it seeks to make a meaningful connection between learners’ desire and commitment to learn a language, and their changing identity”. Here, I would argue that language-learning investment should be the basis of foreign language education.

Norton (2001) proposes the concept of “imagined communities”, which refers to learners’ desire to learn or acquire foreign languages and become part of different cultures, which are not yet part of the learners’ sociocultural worlds. Toohey and Norton (2010) explain that imagined communities can sometimes be past (or historical) communities, and Mcwhorter (2013) would add fictional (e.g. Elvish, Klingon, Dothraki and Na’vi).

“Of particular interest to the language educator is the extent to which such investments are productive for learner engagement in both the classroom and the wider target language community. In essence, an imagined community assumes an imagined identity, and a learner’s investment in the target language must be understood within this context” (Toohey and Norton, 2010, p.184).

Furthermore, Norton (2001) urges second and foreign language teachers (as well as language planners) to embrace imagined communities as a tool to help learners live in multiple communities and negotiate multiple identities.

10) Key terms in language research

The field of language teaching and learning, especially the teaching and learning of English, has many terms, acronyms and abbreviations. Language planners, language teachers and language researchers find these terminologies confusing, and often debate their definitions. Indeed, while conducting this research project, I found myself facing issues regarding the position of English in Saudi Arabia. On one hand, English is officially recognised in formal education, higher education and media. However, there are still debates as to whether English is the country's second language or a foreign language. I must admit that such confusing debates regarding terminologies in language teaching and learning encouraged me to step out of the field of linguistics and the science of language and look for other views of language. As discussed before, sociologists and literacy researchers do not feel the need to label languages, as they view language as sociocultural practices that reflect people's identities, cultures and connections. There are some linguists who note the issues in language terminologies (Ellis, 2012; McKay and Schaezel, 2008; McKay, 2002; Mitchell et al., 2013). However, they still research the complexity of language learning under the "terms" umbrella. Language labels and terminologies are not only problematic in language teaching and learning, but also when exploring children's language development. Bishop (2014) argues that language terminologies are unsustainable, problematic and too general to be useful.

Identifying and defining terms in language and linguistics can be helpful, especially for early career researchers and language teachers and learners. Hall, Smith and Wicaksono (2013) present a very useful map of applied linguistics, which provides language and linguistic researchers with new ways of organising the field of applied linguistics, and makes connections with other fields of practices. Hall, Smith and Wicaksono (2013) move beyond traditional definitions of applied linguistics, and encourage researchers to explore language issues in relation to other aspects of social life to produce new meaning to existing terms; in other words, redefining key terms in applied linguistics. They also argue that political and economic factors create artificial borders between languages and often contribute to false and misleading definitions of certain terms. In this age of globalisation, mobility and technology, it is difficult to clearly identify terms, such as second language, native speaker and lingua franca. I found the argument of Hall, Smith and Wicaksono (2013) very helpful as it acknowledges different fields and disciplines (beyond applied linguistics) when addressing key terms. They also go beyond the traditional borders of applied linguistics and look at language pathology, forensic linguistics, translation and lexicography, which are not often associated with applied linguistics. It is essential to mention here that defining key terms in language and linguistics is not always an accurate representation of the linguistic situation. Language researchers should always consider their own assumptions and ideologies when attempting to define (or map) certain aspects of applied linguistics.

I would argue that labelling languages tends to ignore their complexity and how individuals use them. Globalisation has a massive impact on communities and technology, enabling wide access to different languages. Other global languages

(besides English) have begun to spread, and people no longer rely on textbooks to learn different languages. Individuals' identities, as well as their agency, are now critical factors of language teaching and learning. Therefore, labelling language as first, second or foreign would be problematic. In this study, I describe English as global (in terms of its status), foreign (in terms of the Saudi context) and second (in terms of official language education). I use these terms mainly to help the reader to understand the context of this research project; nonetheless, I conclude that multilingual and multimodal literacy practices might be a better way of exploring and understanding language interactions.

11) Chapter summary

This chapter provides an overview regarding the nature of language and culture. Moving away from traditional applied linguistics to a sociological perspective of language literacies and culture enabled me to rethink the process of language learning. I was also able to link data from this research project to wider social theories of linguistic capital and language diversity. It is clear here that language researchers and language educators should acknowledge the cultural backgrounds of individuals and how they impact language use and literacy practices. Globalisation, mobility, and technology are also fundamental factors that influence language use. As mentioned before, language and literacies are constantly evolving and shifting; therefore traditional views of language research might not be sufficient for exploring new literacy practices. Approaching language and literacy practices from a critical and sociological perspective not only provides a better (and more realistic) understanding of language, identity, and culture but also emphasises the importance of ideologies and power in language pedagogies.

Nowadays, there is an understanding (yet to reach most language classrooms) that language learning is not about learning vocabulary and grammar. While vocabulary and grammar matter, language planning, policies, and pedagogies need a more critical dimension, which explores the implications of language learning beyond classrooms. As this chapter shows, language is not just words and grammar rules. It is social interactions, which are influenced by identity, culture, politics, economy, and technology. New Literacy Studies raises very interesting questions about the nature of language in different contexts, and the relationship between language use and the environment in which it occurs.

Chapter 4: Foreign language planning - a theoretical framework

1) Introduction

This study applies aspects of Cooper's (1989) "language planning as decision making" descriptive framework to the Saudi context. Answering the language related question "who decides what, why, how, under what conditions and with what effects?" (Cooper, 1989, p.87-97) could shed light on the foreign language planning processes in Saudi public schools. This approach is deemed fit for this study in order to understand the cultural, political and economic processes and how they influence foreign language planning (Cooper, 1989). This chapter will first of all briefly introduce how a theoretical framework of foreign language planning is employed in this research project, followed by an examination of Cooper's (1989) descriptive framework and how it can be used within the Saudi context.

2) Towards a theoretical framework

The main aim of this research project is to explore foreign language planning in Saudi Arabia. This study also hopes to establish a theoretical framework of foreign language planning in Saudi public schools. This theoretical framework could provide a better understanding of the influences on foreign language planning and how individuals perceive it. It might also assist language policy makers and language teachers in addressing issues related to the teaching and learning of foreign languages in schools, issues such as foreign language provision, multilingual classrooms and students' language practices. It is understood that some of the ideas and issues in this research are not new (namely English as a foreign language), and have been fully explored by

language planning scholars (Al-Asmari, 2005; Al-Hazmi, 2003; Alabdelwahab, 2002; Alyousef, 2006; Dwaik and Shehadeh, 2009; McMullen, 2009). Nonetheless, this research hopes to establish a theory of foreign language planning that fits the Saudi context. To explore foreign language planning, this research investigates the provision, teaching and learning of foreign languages in public schools and students' language practices outside the school. This helps in investigating whether current language policy meets the linguistic needs and requirements of the Saudi community and students.

Research into language planning is a relatively new field. Fishman (1974) states that "language is a means of communication", and Wright (2004) elaborates on that definition of language by explaining that language is "a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols". This implies that language functions as a means and it is also considered a social code as well as a social institution. One of the main ideas Fishman (1974) focuses on is that all languages are imperfect, unsystematic and contain unnecessary elements. This is due to the fact that every language has words that no longer have meanings, and it has meanings that no longer have proper expressions. Fishman (1974) continues to explain that every language, or parts of them, can be deliberately changed or replaced due to a variety of factors, such as, individual initiative, the influence of leaders, authorities, prestige, imitative instance, propaganda, and most importantly, power.

The deliberate change or reform of a language can only result from language planning. Fishman (1974) argues that the main factor affecting language planning is

‘authority’. Individuals, organisations and institutions in positions of authority in the country are the ones who benefit from language planning and language reform.

Yet it is more than these factors, which affect change in language. Fishman (1974) explains that in the 20th and the 21st centuries other factors, such as radio, television, the modern press and a more dynamic social life may also affect changes in language. Kaplan and Baldauf (1997) see language planning as an activity that implicates a wider range of languages, rather than a specific aspect of a language, as modifications happen simultaneously to a mix of languages within a community. These modifications can be planned or result from a planned change. Therefore, language planning can have an effect in the community or region. Kaplan and Baldauf (1997) continue to explain that language planning could be responsible for the death, the survival and the revival of a given language. It can cause a language to change, shift or spread. Language planning can also precipitate language development and language amalgamation, as well as language contact, pidgin and creole development.

Fishman (1974) defines the theory of language planning as a science, which methodically investigates the ends, principles, methods and tactics of language planning. The methodical improvement of a language is the most important and most difficult task of language planning. It could involve eliminating inefficient language or adapting languages for new uses. Fishman (1974) also argues that different languages necessarily require different planning processes. Literary traditions, morphology and dialect vary from one language to the next and that can affect language planning. For Fishman, the theory of language planning is an applied science and can be compared with pedagogy, agronomy and medical technology. It is

also a normative science rather than a descriptive or factual one. In addition, the theory of language planning deals with values, as well as evaluating facts and giving norms for their improvement.

Fishman (1974) describes the ideal language as one which by the minimum of means achieves the maximum result. The characteristics of an ideal language should be as follows:

- It must do all jobs necessary for its purpose.
- It must be economical.
- It must have an aesthetic form.
- It must be flexible and adaptable.

According to him, language planning compares all aspects of the language, both oral and written forms, such as phonology, morphology, syntax and vocabulary. Vocabulary is considered the biggest and most intensive part of language planning. Fishman also states that improving a language faces problems due to the opposition between theory and practice. There are many obstacles facing innovation and reform, such as the desire for stability, traditions, usage, inertia and conservatism.

However, in order to overcome these obstacles and have a chance of success, innovation must depend on historical, social and psychological conditions. These conditions vary from one language to another and from one time to another. Haugen (1966) states that there are four processes involved in developing a standard language, however these processes can be problematic.

Selection of norm: the process of language planning involves either a selection of a new norm or changing and modifying the old one. Establishing a new norm may cause issues due to the sociolinguistic structures of the speakers involved. In any society, people will often have different accents and dialects, and choosing one variant of a language to be a norm means according favour and power to the group of people who already speak that variant. This situation may generate resistance from other groups in the community. This resistance is often strong and may cause division within the community. In some cases, there is a common dialect within the community that could be used as a norm. If such a common dialect does not exist, then a new norm must be constructed. This can be done by applying principles of linguistic reconstruction to make a hypothetical mother tongue for all speakers, by using an old mother tongue as a guide or by combining the forms most widely used in the community.

Codification of form: all languages have rules regarding their use. These rules can be seen as a form of agreement rather than formal statements. In most languages these rules are unrealistic, and when modern linguistics attempts to apply “rational insight” to the problems of the language, it is often met with rejection due to traditions and prescriptive grammar. Change in codification requires a clear idea about the nature of the previous codification. The success of codification lies within extensively and intelligently planned linguistic research.

Elaboration of function: the English language has nearly 450,000 words; however, most English speakers only know and use approximately 30,000 words. This is due to the fact that the majority of English words are technical terms used in specialised

fields and do not interest the average speaker or writer. In addition, some of the words in English are not English at all, but come directly from other languages. Language planners have always been concerned about using vocabulary from other languages to enhance their own language. Nevertheless, adaptation from other languages is simpler than innovation to reform a language. It is important to mention that elaboration involves the extension of linguistic function and is not only a matter of scientific vocabulary.

Acceptance by the community: the community does not always accept what the language planners propose. Authorities usually reject certain norms, and schools teach only what they believe to be the “correct language”. In the nineteenth century, historical linguists believed that forcing linguistic change was impossible. Nonetheless, applied linguistics has shown that there can be change; social planning became a reality as did language planning. Change and reform can be both possible and beneficial. The acceptance of innovation and change by any community can be determined by how difficult it is to teach the innovation, and to what extent the community is willing to comply. The innovation of grammar and orthography, for instance, depends on the willingness of parents to help their children, or altering the school curriculum and training teachers to teach it.

Standardisation: is the construction and subsequent dissemination of a uniform supradialectal normative variety. Standardisation is also an ideological process in a number of respects. The standard is commonly based on the variant spoken by the most powerful sector of the society in question. This helps legitimise the economic

and social dominance of the standard language's ideology; a constellation of beliefs publicised by the government and the media and widely accepted by the public.

“Turning now to the role of language planning in standardisation, we immediately encounter a complicating factor, inimical to generalisation, which is the considerable variation in the routes toward the building of a standard language”. (Ferguson, 2006, p.22)

Codification involves establishing or changing the form of a language through the production of normative grammar and dictionaries. On the other hand, elaboration can be referred to as “cultivation”, as it aims to expand the function of the language. If codification lies in the domain of corpus planning and elaboration combines corpus and status planning, then acceptance can be placed in the category of status planning. This is because it involves dissemination of the standard and planned efforts to persuade the community to accept the norm.

3) Language planning: a definition

The term language planning was not always used in the literature. Before it made its appearance, terms like “language engineering”, “language development”, “language regulation” (Cooper, 1989), or “glottopolitics” (Fishman, 1974), were used to some extent to refer to language planning. Since the introduction of the term “language planning” there have been several definitions of it, due to the range of views as to what is meant and understood by language planning. Haugen (1966) defines language planning as the “normative work of language academies and committees or what is also known as language cultivation and all proposals for language standardisation”,

whereas Rubin and Jernudd (1971) gave a similar definition to Das Gupta (1970), where language planning is considered a deliberate change in the language designed by organisations or institutions established for developing the language resources of the community. Other views, such as those of Fishman (1974), see language planning as the act of analysing language problems and solving these problems, whereas Tauli (1968) chose a simple definition by saying that language planning is improving the existing language or creating a new common language. Ferguson (2006) explains the role of language planning in the construction of national languages and nations, and the differentiation of the national language variant from other related variants through a process known as “ausbau”. This process involves the selection and promotion of elements of the national variant as opposed to equivalents in other variants on the same dialect continuum.

In order to investigate foreign language planning in Saudi schools and establish a theoretical framework of foreign language planning, first a definition of foreign language planning must be provided. While there are many definitions for language planning and language in education planning (Cooper, 1989; Ferguson, 2006; Gottlieb and Chen, 2001; Kaplan and Baldauf, 1997; Fishman, 1974), there is not a clear definition of second or foreign language planning. The lack of a clear definition is not the only issue facing foreign language planning as a discipline. For instance, the literature does not appear to give much time to foreign language planning, and often uses terms such as: “language in education planning”, “acquisition planning” and “language education policy” to refer to foreign language planning, even though such terms do not refer specifically to foreign language planning.

One possible definition of foreign language planning is “the policy, planning, organisation and facilitation of foreign and/or second language learning” (Payne, 2007, p.237). Payne argues that some educational policies, such as the National Curriculum for schools in England, might contain elements of foreign language planning, even if it is not always explicit. However, it is largely limited to the school paradigm and does not look to inform foreign language planning outside the school. Building on Payne’s (2007) work, foreign language planning is defined here as: “The formal or informal policy, planning, organization and facilitation of foreign language learning to influence the acquisition, learning or use of one or more foreign languages within a community”. This definition serves to embrace the various forms of language planning addressed in this study.

Language planning can be divided into two main categories, corpus planning and status planning. Cooper (1989) explains that corpus planning refers to the change in a language. This change could be due to the creation of new forms, the modification of old forms or the selection of alternative forms in spoken or written code. Ferguson (2006) adds that corpus planning addresses language form, and seeks to engineer change in the language code.

“Corpus planning seeks to develop a variety of a language or a language usually to standardise it, that is, to provide it with the means for serving every possible language function in society”. (Wardhaugh, 1998, p. 347)

Status planning, on the other hand, addresses the function of a language in society, and involves the allocation of language to official roles in different domains

(Ferguson, 2006). The object of status planning, according to Cooper (1989), is for a national government to recognise the importance or the position of one language in relation to the others. However, the term “status planning” has been extended to refer to the allocation of language varieties to given functions.

4) A descriptive framework of foreign language planning

Here, the study represents and describes foreign language planning in the context of Saudi schools. When describing any phenomenon, a researcher faces two questions: what should be described? And on what basis should the description be evaluated? (Cooper, 1989) In the case of foreign language planning, the descriptive framework addresses the following question: “What *actors* attempted to influence what *behaviors*, of which *people*, for what *end*, by what *means*, and with what *results*?” (Cooper, 1989, p.98)

This study employs aspects of Cooper’s (1989) “language planning as a decision making” framework, which refers to the decisions made or rules for the proposed language plans. This framework is suited to this research, as it is a study of public decision making or public policy (Kaplan and Baldauf, 1997). In a decision-making framework, three main factors must be taken into consideration: the individual, the organisations and the public. Within the ‘decision-making’ context, language planning can be produced by one of these main factors. It can be the product of individuals working outside organisations, sometimes it can be the outcome of formal organisations, such as schools and publishing houses, or it can be the creation of governments according to their own agendas (Cooper, 1989).

In order to set a framework for decision-making, this study attempts to address the following question in the Saudi context: “Who makes what decisions, why, how, under what conditions, and with what effect?” (Cooper, 1989, p.87-97). When addressing this question the policy maker must first be identified, i.e. ‘*who makes what decisions?*’ In most societies, including Saudi Arabia, the power to make decisions about language planning lies with the formal authorities in the country, also described as a ‘top-down’ language planning situation (Kaplan and Baldauf, 1997), from leaders and governments to school principals and language teachers. However, such language decisions are not made or chosen but rather forced by outside factors, which are sometimes not easily recognised or identifiable. That is why when answering the question ‘*who makes language policy decisions?*’, it is important to specify at which level a decision is made.

Identifying the language policy maker is not the only component in a decision-making framework. The second step is to establish ‘*what decisions are made?*’ Language policy decisions often fall under five categories of public policy (Cooper, 1989):

1. Distributive policies, which relate to services and the handling of goods such as: health and welfare, education, taxes and banking.
2. Extractive policies, which relate to payments and the collection of taxes.
3. Symbolic policies, which relate to knowledge and achievements.
4. Regulatory policies, which relate to controlling human behaviour.
5. Administrative policies, which relate to organisations and governments.

The third step of the decision-making framework is identifying the motivation behind language policy decisions, i.e. ‘*why do policy makers make these decisions?*’ If the

policy makers belong to formal authoritative bodies in the country, then maintaining or extending this privilege might be one of the reasons behind their decisions. Nevertheless, non-formal authorities make decisions about language policy as well. This might suggest that decisions about language policy react to external factors, such as politics, culture, economy and religion. Therefore, when examining the reasons behind language policy decisions, it is essential to study not only the obvious reasons behind language policy decisions, but hidden reasons as well, such as media, popular culture and art (Cooper, 1989).

A framework of decision-making should also examine the way in which decisions about language policy are made, i.e. *'how do policy makers arrive at decisions?'*

Before making any language policy decisions, policy makers should:

1. Identify the problem.
2. Research the problem.
3. Find or generate solutions.
4. Choose the most suitable solution.
5. Apply the solution.
6. Compare the predictions to the actual result of the solution.

It is not easy to identify the problem, as the definition of a problem might differ from one place to another, and that could affect or influence the language decision process (Cooper, 1989).

As mentioned before, there are a number of external factors or elements that could easily influence the decision-making process in language planning, i.e. *'under what conditions is a language policy made?'*. Cooper (1989) explains that wars, riots, the

economy and politics are examples of such external factors that could affect the decision-making process of language planning, and should be acknowledged when setting a theoretical framework of language planning. Different cultures, environments or even situations can have a huge influence on the language policy of a certain country.

The last step in setting a framework of decision-making is to examine the effect of the decisions made, i.e. *'what are the effects of the made decisions?'* (Cooper, 1989). Judging or studying the effects of language policy is not an easy task, and that could be due to:

1. The results or outcomes of some language policies may not be obvious for many years.
2. The data gathering is a long and expensive process.
3. Some policy makers could take advantage of their position, and make decisions that aim to ensure their personal benefit rather than help their community.
4. If a certain policy failed, some policy makers might deny the plan's failure to avoid confrontation.
5. It is difficult to differentiate clearly the effects of the policy from the effects of other factors, which could influence the overall outcome of the decision-making process.
6. Solving problems is not easy, as changing conditions create other problems.

This research attempts to set a theoretical framework of language planning by addressing the previous questions of a decision-making framework within the Saudi

context. This directs the data collection process and supports the findings and analysis of this study.

5) Language planning and social change in Saudi Arabia

Social change often has a huge impact on the process of language planning. Cooper (1989) argues that there are a number of factors that cause changes within a society:

- The physical environment: a change in geographical conditions, as well as economic or political status, can have an impact on language planning. In the case of Saudi Arabia, there are a number of political and economic changes that have affected life in the country. The discovery of oil in the 1920s, the gulf wars in the 1980s and 1990s, the events of 9/11 and the war on terrorism in the 2000s, and the Arab spring from 2010 until the present, are some of the factors that have had a huge impact on Saudi Arabia today. There are several studies examining the changes within the Saudi community (Alessa, 2010; Khalifa, 2001; Yamani, 2000).
- Population: changes in the population size of any community directly affects its lifestyle. In Saudi Arabia, the population has been increasing over the past years. Also, there has been an increase in the number of immigrants and foreign workers, which makes Saudi Arabia a multicultural community (Central Department of Statistics & Information, 2011). However, current education policy does not reflect the different backgrounds of the Saudi community and its individuals. Foreign language education shows that policy makers often neglect the diversity of the Saudi people.

- Discovery, inventions and cultural diffusion: discovery, inventions and publishing contribute greatly to social change, as well as the standardisation of languages. Many argue that the English language has reached its current global status due to the body of literature and the number of scientific discoveries made by English-speaking scientists. This does not only make English the language of knowledge but also helps in spreading English to other communities, like Saudi Arabia, where English is the main foreign language.
- Ideologies: beliefs and ideologies are what distinguish one community from another, and any change in the society's ideologies would directly affect life in it. As mentioned before, Saudi Arabia is a religious community adopting Islamic values and ideologies. The spread of any foreign influences that might introduce new values and beliefs would create conflict with the old ones. Language is one aspect of the conflict between new and old beliefs and values.
- Decision-making: social change often results from decisions made by policy makers as well as decisions made by individuals. At first sight, one would only see the result of the top-down decisions made by the policy makers in Saudi Arabia. These decisions mainly aim to preserve the country's Arabic language and Islamic values. However, when taking a deeper look into people's lives and their practices, one would see the results of their bottom-up decisions. Individuals' decisions are often more open to change and more accepting of other cultures.

Cooper (1989, p.168) states that “the forces that promote social changes are many and their relationships are complex. Each factor operates in a world which contains all the others”.

6) Foreign language planning within the Saudi context

There appears to have been little published in relation to language planning in general in the Saudi Arabian context. In their seminal work, Kaplan and Baldauf (1997) point to the Saudi policy of sending higher education students to English-speaking countries to build up the technocratic expertise of Saudis to facilitate the modernisation of the economy, as opposed to modernising Arabic to accommodate scientific literature (Kaplan and Baldauf, 1997). This goes partly towards providing a rationale for the place of English in Saudi society today. Language planning studies have been conducted in relation to Arab countries other than Saudi Arabia (Almahmoud, 2014; Payne and Almansour, 2014), such as Hassa’s (2012) study of the ongoing political, economic and social transformation of Morocco and the policy of linguistic Arabisation, the politicisation of Arabic in Sudan (Abdelhay et al., 2011) and the emerging language variety in Algeria fuelled by new technological practices (Mostari, 2009). Such studies fall largely outside the foreign language planning focus of this work which has the specific context of Saudi Arabia. However, Kaplan & Baldauf (1997) failed to realise that Saudi students are not only sent to English speaking countries for their higher education. A large number of university students are sent to non-English speaking countries like Japan, China, South Korea, India, Turkey, Germany, France and Spain (MHE, 2011). This then begs the question: Why is English the only foreign language in Saudi education? (Payne and Almansour, 2014).

Within the Saudi context it seems that the term “foreign language” is synonymous with English as a foreign language. Researching issues on foreign language planning often means researching the teaching, learning, acquisition or use of English as a foreign language (Al-Asmari, 2005; Alsamadani, 2008; Alyousef, 2006; Dwaik and Shehadeh, 2009; Sehlaoui, 2001). Even within the school paradigm, issues regarding foreign languages are almost always linked to English. This is due to the lack of explicitly planned foreign language provision in Saudi public schools, apart from English, and therefore, decisions about language planning and language policy invariably concern English (Payne and Almansour, 2014). As already stated, the education policy in Saudi does not specify or elaborate on foreign language provision in public schools (The Ministry of Education, 1995). Furthermore, the reasons behind selecting English to be the only foreign language in schools, beyond “historical drift” (Lambert, 1999), are largely unknown.

When governments plan, they often aim to develop either the natural resources of the country or the human resources within the country (Kaplan and Baldauf, 1997). Language planning falls under the human resources development planning, since the goal of language planning is to change human language behaviour. This makes language planning difficult to assess due to the changes in human language behaviour, which occur over several generations (language development, language revival, language emergence). Unfortunately, there is no easy way to measure and evaluate the success (or failure) of a certain language planning project. In addition, it is (sometimes) difficult to see the outcomes of such projects, which leaves a huge gap for predictions and guesses. The process of language planning includes four elements:

government agencies, education agencies, non-government organisations and other organisations (Kaplan and Baldauf, 1997).

Little has been written on foreign language planning theory in Saudi Arabia (Payne and Almansour, 2014). This, however, does not mean that foreign language planning and policy is not an issue in the country. Everyday, language teachers have to deal with many problems regarding teaching and learning of foreign languages in Saudi schools (e.g. issues relating to unclear language policy, language teaching methodology or even learners' attitudes towards language learning). Nevertheless, research into foreign language teaching and learning within the Saudi context has failed to provide a concrete theory of foreign language planning, which could address some of the current issues in the country.

In order to explore foreign language planning in Saudi schools, this research examines students' beliefs and perceptions about the teaching and learning of foreign languages in their schools. This could help in investigating how Saudi students feel about foreign language policy and whether they can take part in the decision-making process, as well as shaping foreign language policy in the country (Payne and Almansour, 2014). To investigate micro foreign language planning, this research surveys a number of Saudi students in order to identify and understand their views, opinions and choices regarding the teaching, learning and provision of foreign languages. Examining micro foreign language planning helps in providing a theoretical basis for this research, which can support the data analysis process. "Utilizing the pupil voice in research is established, in principle, as a bona fide

research strategy and it is realized that pupils may have much to contribute in certain areas” (Payne, 2006, p.169).

Micro language planning may also include “acquisition planning”. Acquisition planning is a part of language planning where governments, or non-governmental organisations, influence the language through education (Payne and Almansour, 2014). However, acquisition planning itself has expanded to include status planning and corpus planning. This process affects the methods of teaching languages, the formation of textbooks and the development of bilingual or multilingual schools (Baldauf and Liddicoat, 2008; Ferguson, 1977; Rubin, 1977). According to Kaplan and Baldauf (1997, p.133-117) this process of language planning aims to:

1. Choose a language to be taught in schools.
2. Decide on the requirements of teacher training.
3. Work with the local communities.
4. Determine the resources and materials to be used in classrooms.
5. Identify the cost of the planning process.
6. Evaluate the success or failure of the planning process.

However, the last point raises an issue regarding acquisition planning. Even with an effective evaluation system, measuring the outcomes of this process might not be an easy task, and therefore, acquisition planning needs extended research and careful preparation (Thorburn, 1971).

7) Religious language planning

The purpose of this section is to give an overview of the status of Arabic in Saudi Arabia. Arabic is not only viewed as the country’s first language but also as a holy

language: “Some languages more than others have acquired or developed a capacity to convey the tenets of one or more religions and have in the process been sacralised” (Omoniyi, 2012, p.347). In multilingual contexts, it is hard to understand the relationship between language and religion. The spread of any religion can be seen as a macro historical trend affecting languages in social groups, since languages linked to religion often have a symbolic power (Bourdieu, 1991). Religious languages allow their speakers to have political and economic power in the community.

Saudi Arabia is an Islamic country and the Qur’an is written in Arabic, consequently Arabic is the language of Islam (Payne and Almansour, 2014). According to Muslim beliefs, God created the world through Arabic, and therefore, it is divine. Fishman (2002) goes one step further and describes such religious language as “holy”. Religious language planning is often viewed as a divine responsibility of the faithful. Language planning in Saudi Arabia has been developed around maintaining Arabic culture and language. Nowadays, classical Arabic is maintained for the practice of Islam, while a variety of dialects are spoken in everyday life (Rosowsky, 2008). However, some religious groups in Saudi Arabia use classical Arabic in everyday life to strengthen their cultural status and maintain power. The introduction of any other language could be seen as the introduction of another religion (or traditions) and consequently a threat to Islam and the status of Arabic in the country. This standpoint may mean that “historical drift”, rather than overt explicit language planning, may be more acceptable in the case of Saudi Arabia (Payne and Almansour, 2014).

Languages have an essential role in the eyes of certain religious countries (especially Saudi Arabia). They are not only used for communication purposes but also to reflect

on the word of God. In some of these religious communities, a person's faith is often measured by how the language is used. Religious language planning tends to go beyond the linguistic issues of a language and address the 'sacred' uses of that language (Liddicoat, 2012a; 2012b). Researching language and religion is problematic, as in the eyes of religious communities there is a clear difference between "proper" and "improper" use of language (Omoniyi and Fishman, 2006). Rosowsky (2008) explains that "liturgical literacy" has an essential role in communities with deeply held religious faith; language and religion are inextricably linked.

In Saudi schools, students are often encouraged to read, write and speak Arabic, and only use English during English classes. This serves to maintain the students' first language, Arabic, and reduce "code-switching" with other languages. Younger students (between ages 6 and 9) are discouraged from using any foreign languages both to prevent acquisition of foreign languages and to maintain their Arabic. English is only introduced to older students (between ages 10 to 18) based on a common belief that older students will maintain their Arabic despite learning another language (Payne and Almansour, 2014). However, micro-perspectives on religion and language show that multilingualism is common in religious practices. Local community languages often influence literacy, music and prayers. Previous studies (Rosowsky, 2008; Liddicoat, 2012b) present evidence of people employing different languages from their communities in their religious practices, thus, the assumption that one language is empowered (or privileged) due to its link to religion is inaccurate.

Arabic in Saudi Arabia is more than the mother tongue and plays a major role in the religious domain. Any attempt to plan to introduce other languages, or indeed to modernise Arabic, could be seen as a threat to Arabic and thus access to the Qur'an. This might explain why education policy makers object to the introduction of several foreign languages to schools (Payne and Almansour, 2014).

8) Top-down and bottom-up language planning

Bottom-up language planning can be described as the “involvement and initiative from the indigenous communities themselves” to control or affect language planning (Hornberger, 1997, p.357). Indeed, top-down language policies would be difficult to implement if the bottom-up views disagreed with it (or opposed it), as Akinaso explains:

“The nature of such attitudes and their implications for language rationalization has not always been specified. The major reason for this neglect is the concentration of research efforts and analysis on the macro-sociolinguistic perspective of language planning... this has led to a focus on the role of central authorities, top-down directives on language choice, and speculations choices, ‘grass-roots attitudes’, and public perceptions about the relationship between language and the political economy”. (1994, p.140)

Language practices are shaped by communities and individuals, which make the bottom-up choices crucial to the process of language planning as a whole. This also means that if there is a widespread local desire to learn any language, then claiming that the language is invaluable (or imperialistic) must be false. On the other hand,

Wright (2003) argues that the spread of any language in a community can only happen when adopted and encouraged by top-down authorities such as governments.

“All the evidence to date suggests that governments are unable to legislate top-down about acquisition of lingua francas. Although language learning on an ideological basis was achieved in nation building, this was because top-down and bottom-up movements coincided: the spread of the national language was central to nation building; acquisition of the language was useful for individual success and social mobility. Such dual pressure is not present for any policy that tries to limit English-language spread”. (Wright, 2003, p.169-170).

Before decisions can be adopted, they need to be accepted. Cooper (1989) explains that policy makers often argue that certain languages need to be used for (or because of) certain purposes, or in a specific way. There will always be tension between top-down and bottom-up language planning, especially in developing countries, such as Saudi Arabia, where authorities do not concede the language rights of individuals. This creates a situation where teaching foreign languages (including English) is problematic, since learners have different views regarding foreign language learning.

9) Chapter summary

This chapter presents the theoretical framework of this research project. Cooper’s (1989) descriptive framework helps in understanding how different aspects influence language planning. In this study, I attempt to define foreign language planning as “the formal or informal policy, planning, organization and facilitation of foreign language

learning to influence the acquisition, learning or use of one or more foreign languages within a community”. I also employ some aspects of Cooper’s framework to explore and describe the different influences on foreign language planning in Saudi Arabia. Religion seems to be the main influence on foreign language planning in public schools. However, a deeper look into the students’ multimodal and multilingual practices tells a different story.

Chapter 5: Research Methodology

Introduction to the research approach

This is a qualitative, exploratory and inductive study. A grounded theory model is applied, whereby theory is constructed from the collected data (Charmaz, 2006). This study does not adhere strictly to Glaser and Strauss's (1968a) prescriptive approaches. Rather, it is rather a general inductive approach overall, in which data are collected, themes are identified and grouped into categories, additional data are collected (if needed), and then a theory constructed. It employs aspects of Charmaz's (2006) constructivist grounded theory, which mainly promotes flexible methods for data collection.

In this research project, the collection of qualitative data is seen as appropriate in order to gather the viewpoints of respondents. In this study, I seek to understand foreign language planning through qualitative methods (such as focus groups, semi-structured interviews and document analysis) that produce qualitative and descriptive data (Taylor and Bogdan, 1998). In the light of the qualitative nature of the study, a thematic analysis is deemed to be the most suitable way of constructing a theory from the collected data. In this research project, data collection and analysis happen simultaneously. Each day during the fieldwork I contacted the participants, collected data in Arabic, translated it into English, transcribed it and then coded it. The emerging themes were then used to direct the sampling process and collect more data. The process of collecting, translating, transcribing, coding and recoding the data immersed me in the field and led me down a path that I did not anticipate. I was able to collect rich data and link my research to different disciplines, because of the flexible and exploratory nature of it. I found myself answering questions that I had not

previously considered, thus strengthening this research project. Vasudevan (2011) encourages qualitative researchers to accept and embrace the unknown as it helps reveal meaning and understand the phenomenon. Vasudevan (2011) also argues that researchers (as well as educators) should avoid narrowing their ways of pursuing knowledge, as it can impact on how they engage with intellectual inquiry and educational practices.

This chapter is divided into three parts. The first part presents the research design and methods. It also presents some of the tools used for data collection and some issues in grounded theory research. The second part presents some epistemological concepts and looks into the link between the research and the researcher. The third part presents some of the ethical issues and considerations of this research.

Part One: Exploratory case study

The exploratory case study research approach (employed here) draws on the work of Yin (1993). Exploring foreign language planning in Saudi Arabia required an in-depth focus on the institutions, and the practices and processes of language policy making, language teaching and language learning. The exploratory study combines the elements of the investigation of case study research. “In this type of case study, fieldwork and data collection are undertaken prior to the final definition of study questions and hypotheses” (Yin, 1993, p.5). It is difficult to generalise from a single case to a wider population. As Yin states, “a common concern about case studies is that they provide little basis for scientific generalization” (Yin, 1993, p.10). Stake

(1995, p.7) also argues that “case study seems a poor basis for generalization”. Nonetheless, it depends upon the generalisation that one is trying to make. Statistical generalisation is the attempt to generalise findings from one case study (or experiment) to wider populations. Analytic generalisation is the generalisation to a wider theory. Whilst the former is problematic, Yin (1993, p.10) argues that “in doing a case study, your goal will be to expand and generalize theories”. Mason (2002, p.196) emphasises that “you can try to widen the resonance of your argument by asking questions about the *lessons for other settings*”.

1) Constructivist grounded theory

Grounded theory is an inductive systematic methodology where a theory emerges (or is constructed) from data. When analysing the data gathered for this study, aspects of Charmaz’s (2006) constructivist grounded theory are employed. Her version of grounded theory is seen to be suitable for this study since it is a model of qualitative research. It focuses on people and leads to conceptual description with no core category generation. She also believes that grounded theory helps in learning about the phenomenon studied and is a way to develop theories to understand that phenomenon. In addition, the developed theories will depend on the researcher’s view, as Charmaz (2006) argues that data and theories are not discovered, rather collected and constructed through the researcher’s past and present experiences, involvements and interactions with people, perspectives and research practices (Birks and Mills, 2011; Bryant and Charmaz, 2007; Charmaz, 2006; Corbin and Strauss, 2008; Morse et al., 2008). There are two main rules when analysing data in grounded theory research.

1. Everything is a concept.

2. Data analysis should proceed in relation to the research question.

Birks and Mills (2011) argue that researchers often lose sight of their research aims and questions due to the inductive nature of grounded theory. The amount of data could be overwhelming, making theory development (or construction) difficult. The following table provides a summary of the major data analysis techniques employed by grounded theorists (Birks and Mills, 2011).

Concepts					
	Codes	Categories	Properties and dimensions	Core categories	Methods of theoretical abstraction
Glaser and Strauss (1968a)	Coding incidents	Categories	Properties	Systematic substantive theory	Common sociological perspective
Glaser (1978)	Open coding that moves to selective coding of incidents once the core variable is identified	Categories which are interchangeably referred to as concepts	Properties and typologies	Core variable that explains a basic social process	Theoretical coding
Strauss (1987)	Coding paradigm: conditions, interactions, strategies, tactics, and consequences. Open, axial and selective coding	Categories	Properties and dimensions	Core category	
Strauss and Corbin (1990)	Coding paradigm: cause, context, action/interacti	Categories and sub-categories	Properties and	Core category is the central phenomenon	Storyline and the conditional matrix

	ons, and consequences. Open, axial and selective coding		dimensions		
Strauss and Corbin (1998)	Coding paradigm: conditions, action/interactions, and consequences. Open, axial and selective coding	Categories and sub-categories	Properties, dimensions and coding for process	Central category	Storyline and the conditional/consequential matrix
Clarke (2005)	Codes	Categories	Seeking variation in the situation of enquiry through: situational maps, social worlds/arena maps and positional maps	Multiple possible social processes and sub-processes	Situational maps, social worlds/arena maps and positional discourse maps and associated analyses
Charmaz (2006)	Initial, focused and axial coding	Categories	Properties	Theoretical concepts	Theoretical codes

Figure 11: Data analysis techniques used by grounded theorists (Birks and Mills, 2011, p.90).

This table shows that Charmaz's (2006) analysis techniques (employed in this study) are relatively simple, flexible and help in developing concepts. She also encourages qualitative researchers to adopt grounded theory approaches and explore new research strategies.

“By its fortieth anniversary year, grounded theory had become an acclaimed method in diverse fields. Scholars treat several of its strategies as standard

practice in qualitative inquiry and as part of the general lexicon in qualitative research. Researchers have widely adopted coding and memo-writing strategies, although they may use them in somewhat different ways than grounded theorists do. And, of course, as grounded theorists, we differ among ourselves on which strategies we adopt and how we use them”. (Charmaz, 2009, p.127)

There is no doubt that grounded theory is widely used in qualitative research and it is a major contributor to the validity of social research (Bryant and Charmaz, 2007; Bryman, 2008; Thomas and James, 2006). “Grounded theory represented a resolution of different epistemological positions and a solution to a broader problem of perceptions of the status of qualitative based knowledge in social sciences” (Thomas and James, 2006, p.767-768). Hardman (2012) also argues that grounded theory research produces data and results that have the same validity as other research designs.

2) Tools of grounded theory

Some of the data analysis tools have become fundamental properties of grounded theory. Here, I employed theoretical sampling, coding, constant comparison, saturation and memoing to collect and analyse data. The following part explains each of these tools.

Theoretical sampling: grounded theory is a popular research design as it helps guide and direct the research process and ensure rigorous work. Birks and Mills (2011) and Charmaz (2006) value theoretical sampling as it develops and shapes the early stages

of data collection and analysis. The following diagram by Birks and Mills (2011, p.71) provides a visual explanation of the theoretical sampling process.

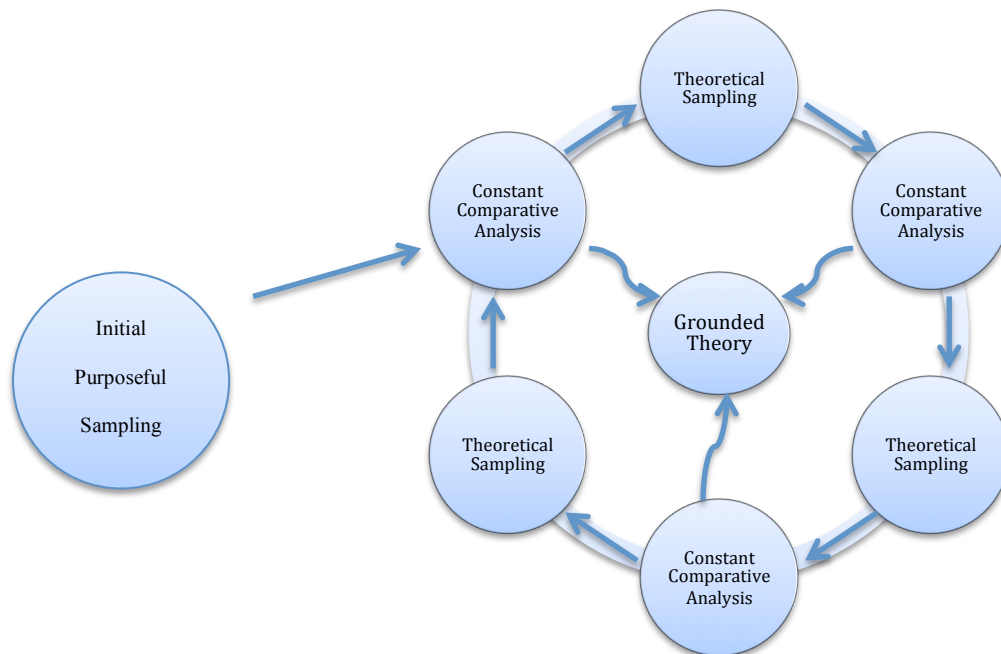


Figure 12: The Process of Theoretical Sampling (Birks and Mills, 2011, p.71).

Coding: Coding is one of the main processes in grounded theory research. In this stage, data are broken down into small denominations and labelled. This process occurs simultaneously with the data collection process. The first step of this process is initial coding, which in this study aims to outline and compare the data. Charmaz (2006) believes that initial coding should remain open and stay close to the data. The researcher should keep the codes simple and practical by constructing short codes. Initial coding should also preserve actions, compare data with each other and move quickly through the data. For this stage of coding, this research will employ the strategy of ‘line-by-line’ coding. Line-by-line coding works well with detailed data as it helps in:

1. Breaking the data up into parts.
2. Defining their actions.
3. Looking for implied assumptions.
4. Explaining and understanding embedded actions and meaning.
5. Clarifying and highlighting important points.
6. Comparing the data with each other and identifying gaps within it; by using this flexible strategy of coding, theoretical categories will be developed.

The second step of coding is ‘focus coding’. At this stage, codes are more directive, selective and conceptual. It aims to analyse and explain larger segments of data. Focus coding is developed by comparing data with each other and by comparing data with the codes.

The last and the most sophisticated step of coding is ‘theoretical coding’. In this stage, codes are linked together in order to form a theory. Charmaz (2006) argues that, when used properly, theoretical coding can add precision and clarity to the data analysis process.

Saturation: Saturation is a process that addresses the collection of the data as well as the coding of it. This process is achieved once the study has reached the stage that there is no point conducting further interviews or coding. Charmaz (2006) explains that saturation is reached when data no longer generate new codes. “Theoretical saturation is what grounded theorists aim for, or should aim for” (Charmaz, 2006, p.114). Dey (2007) describes saturation as one of the “attractions” of grounded theory

methods, as it tells the researcher when to stop sampling (Bryant and Charmaz, 2007; Glaser and Strauss, 1968a).

Data saturation is one way to measure quality in research. However, the concept of data saturation can be problematic. O'Reilly and Parker (2012) question the plausibility and transferability of data saturation in qualitative research and highlight some of its issues. They argue that qualitative researchers are often confused about the meaning of data saturation, and how and when it should be used.

“[In qualitative research] the researcher should be pragmatic and flexible in their approach to sampling and that an adequate sample size is one that sufficiently answers the research questions”. (O'Reilly and Parker, 2012, p.192)

Another issue regarding data saturation is transparency. Researchers should provide sufficient information about the process of data collection. O'Reilly and Parker (2012) would argue that aiming for data saturation makes transparency difficult to achieve, as sampling becomes complex. In addition, there are no methods for measuring whether saturation has been reached or not, and emerging themes could be endless, causing a piece of research to lose its focus.

Constant comparison: Constant comparison is an element of grounded theory. It refers to a process of keeping a close connection between the data and the concepts. “Grounded theory methods are referred to as inductive in that they are a process of building theory up from the data itself. Induction of theory is achieved through

successive comparative analyses” (Birks and Mills, 2011, p.11). In this study, constantly comparing the data will lead to, and help in, the initial coding. Codes and categories will then be compared in order to drive forward the process of theoretical sampling. This process of constant comparison will result in collecting rich data, as well as providing an explanation for the different categories (Birks and Mills, 2011).

Memo writing: “Memos in grounded theory research are records of thoughts, feelings, insights and ideas in relation to a research project” (Birks and Mills, 2011, p.40). When analysing the data, memos help the researcher in drawing connections between the codes and questioning them. Memos also enable the researcher to interpret data and understand these interpretations. In grounded theory, memos are used during the data collection and theory construction process (Birks and Mills, 2011; Charmaz, 2006). However, using memos in the planning stage of the research is useful to establish a habit of memo writing from an early stage (Birks and Mills, 2011). In this study, memos will be employed to record:

1. Feelings and assumptions about the research.
2. The researcher’s philosophical position.
3. A list of books and papers read and used in the research.
4. Issues and concerns regarding the study.
5. Reflections on the research process.
6. The emerging codes and categories as well as the developing theory.

Flexibility and freedom are essential to the process of memo writing. Therefore, memos, in this study, will be spontaneous, consist of one or two lines and be open to additions.

3) Issues in grounded theory

Some key aspects of grounded theory could be problematic, for example, the notion of theory, and whether it is discovered or constructed. It is not easy to clearly define what is grounded, what is theory and how discoveries are made (Corbin and Strauss, 1990; Glaser and Strauss, 1968a; Thomas and James, 2006). The next part will discuss the issues of theory, both grounded and discovery.

Theory: One of the major critiques of grounded theory research is the problematic notion of ‘theory’ itself. One could simply ask ‘*what is theory?*’ It is understood that the word ‘theory’ has several meanings, such as developed arguments, explanations or personal reflections (Thomas, 1997; Thomas and James, 2006). However, this research project identifies theory as ‘a proposed explanation of the researched phenomenon’. In other words, this research project will try to use the data in order to explain the influences on foreign language planning in Saudi Arabia, as well as the effects of it on the Saudi community, schools and students.

Another issue, proposed by Glaser (1998), regarding the notion of theory is “what if there is no problem in the field of research?” How can the researcher produce a theory (or a hypothesis)? Glaser (1998) argues that instead of researching the problems that exist (or do not exist) in the field of research or researching what the professionals (e.g. government or policy makers etc.) believe to be important or relevant, grounded theorists should research problems that the participants in the study face. Glaser (1998, p.116-117) believes that identifying “relevance to the study” provides focus to grounded theory research; also, that “discovering the main concern or problem of the

participants is what socially organizes the behaviour in the substantive area, hence the emerging theory”.

Grounded and emergence: Another problematic issue in grounded theory research is the notion of data, in other words ‘what is data?’ In order to deal with this issue, this research is employing Glaser’s (1998, p.8-9) “all is data” strategy. Every comment, interview, written word, observation and whatever reaches the researcher in the study field is data for grounded theory. This strategy provides the study with rich data, and aids the emergence of themes and concepts by examining patterns in the data. However, Thomas and James (2006) argue that grounded theorists will not be able to distance themselves from the data as they analyse (and reanalyse) it to enable the theory to emerge. Therefore, it is essential to acknowledge the fact that grounded theorists will never be free of their biases, and they (grounded theorists) should admit to what influences their thinking, as this quote explains:

“There is a central problem in the search for grounded theory. It is that there is no untethered spirit existing in the minds of researchers which will enable them neutrally and inertly to lay some cognitive framework over the data they collect to allow them to draw 'theory' dispassionately from this data, this ground. These researchers are human beings who walk, talk to friends, tend their gardens, watch television, read books, go to lectures. They have histories of friendships, relationships, of household life of one kind or another. They understand guile, happiness, sadness, envy, deceit, irony. Their heads are full of notions - notions about equality, justice, freedom, education, the future, hope, fraternity, charity, feeding the cat and parking the car. These are

precisely the things that comprise and give structure to their mental lives. They are what make the drawing of themes from the data possible. They are not things which can be put to one side temporarily for the purpose of discovering grounded theory”. (Thomas and James, 2006, p.783-784)

Discovery, invention or construction: One of the major critiques that Glaser and Strauss (1968a) face is their use of the word “discovery” in grounded theory methods. The definition of discovery (uncovering or revealing something) contradicts with the definition of theory (unproved explanation of something). In other words, how can a theory be discovered? Thomas and James (2006) argue that the word ‘discovery’ should be replaced with ‘invention’ or ‘construction’, since grounded theorists often use data to reach their theories.

4) The sampling process

This research project was conducted in the city of Hail in the northern region of Saudi Arabia. I chose to carry out the study there for a number of reasons:

- It is a relatively large city, home to more than 300,000 citizens (Central Department of Statistics & Information, 2011).
- Over the past few years, Hail has changed from a rural town depending mainly on agriculture to a growing economic centre.
- When researching social change in Saudi Arabia, researchers often examine larger cities like Riyadh and Jeddah. Smaller cities (like Hail) are often under-researched.
- I was born and raised in Hail and have established connections with schools there, which granted me easier access to students.

The aim of this research project is to explore foreign language planning in Saudi Arabia. Employing different data collection methods helps in capturing a wide range of information. Here, I used personal and group interviews, focus groups, observations, online chat (via Facebook, emails, and WhatsApp) and document analysis to ensure flexibility when collecting data (Payne and Almansour, 2014). Due to the nature of the Saudi community, I chose an exploratory and qualitative approach. During data collection, I asked general and open-ended questions about foreign language education and foreign languages in the community. Although this might not be as comprehensive as an ethnographic approach, it allowed me to explore and understand the respondents' experiences.

“Interviewing can be an extremely important source of data; it may allow one to generate information that it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to obtain otherwise - both about event described and about perspectives and discursive strategies. And, of course, some sorts of qualitative research rely very heavily if not entirely on interview data”. (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995, p.131)

Employing different tools to collect qualitative data provides a wide range of information to answer the research questions (Khalifa, 2001), as well as ensuring validity of the study (Maynard and Purvis, 1994). In this study, I believe it is important that participants (especially young students) feel comfortable when expressing their views. In many cases, students preferred to contact me outside of school or online to express their views or criticise education policy.

5) Data collection

This section describes the research context and the participants. The sampling process started with 60 students from three different public schools. In all three schools, English was the only foreign language provided, for an average of 3-4 hours per week. Due to ethical considerations, some students were met outside of school where I conducted one-to-one interviews.

School	Number of students	Age of students
Primary school	15	9-11 years old
Intermediate school	21	12-14 years old
Secondary school	19	15-18 years old
Outside school ⁴	5	8-11 years old

Figure 13: The number of students who participated in this study.

Students in these schools were first asked to complete an open-ended questionnaire. The aim was to get students thinking about their foreign language learning inside and outside school. The students were then asked to form small focus groups to discuss (and share) their views on foreign language education. After the initial data collection/coding, there was a need for further interviews/surveys with 4 English language teachers and 4 members of school staff⁵. The aim of these interviews was to understand the reasons behind current foreign language policy in public schools and

⁴ Access to school was not granted, so students were met outside of school with consent from their parents.

⁵ School principals and deputy heads.

how students felt about it. Themes from the first stage of data collection suggest that foreign language learning (beyond English) occurs outside the school (Payne and Almansour, 2014). The sampling progressed to include parents and students' home environments. To this end, 8 parents were sampled for this study. The purpose was also to explore the parents' view on foreign language planning and policy in schools and their children's language learning practices at home. Parents were more difficult to access than students in schools; for that reason, qualitative surveys only were used to collect data from them.

After the focus group discussions, students involved in this study became eager to show their language learning, so they took photos of objects around their homes (or bedrooms) that helped them learn a foreign language (Payne and Almansour, 2014). The photos helped in fully exploring the students' home practices, since home visits were not always possible. Taking photos would help further explore the implicit and explicit views of the students regarding language provision in schools and the status of different foreign languages. Secondly, by means of 'talk-through' and sharing the photos, students were encouraged to reflect on language policy and how it meets their needs and those of their communities. Pupil focus groups were conducted to obtain the views of pupils, both in intrinsic and instrumental terms (Stake, 1995). The photos from the students showed that technology, media and the Internet play a significant role in their language learning.

To explore the students' language learning in a different space, they were asked to share their practices online and through social networking sites (like Facebook,

WhatsApp, and emails). Some of the data collected for this research project was digital (emails, text, online chats). This was for a few reasons:

1. To ensure flexibility in data collection in order to fully explore the phenomenon.
2. Digital data collection enables researchers to tackle time and distance barriers.
3. Due to some ethical issues, face-to-face interviews were not always possible.

Online data collection facilitated theoretical sampling (or snowball sampling) for this study. In addition, participants felt more comfortable talking and expressing their feelings online via emails or social networking sites. Online interviews and chats are some of the new methods for data collection. Scott (2011) advises grounded theorists to use broad questions when conducting an online interview.

“A first objective for interviewing online is to minimize the actual and perceived risk to the participants. It is important to create the conditions under which the participants feel technically and emotionally comfortable, and able to share his or her experiences online”. (Scott, 2011, p.89)

Within the Saudi community, social networking sites and software (like Facebook, email and WhatsApp) are popular, which helped me communicate with participants at any time. Conducting this research project using online interviews and chats helped the theoretical sampling process and created a flexible space to collect more data (Payne and Almansour, 2014).

The diagram below (adapted from Birks and Mills, (2011) illustrates the process of theoretical sampling, which started with school visits and explored the school and home environment, as well as the online space.

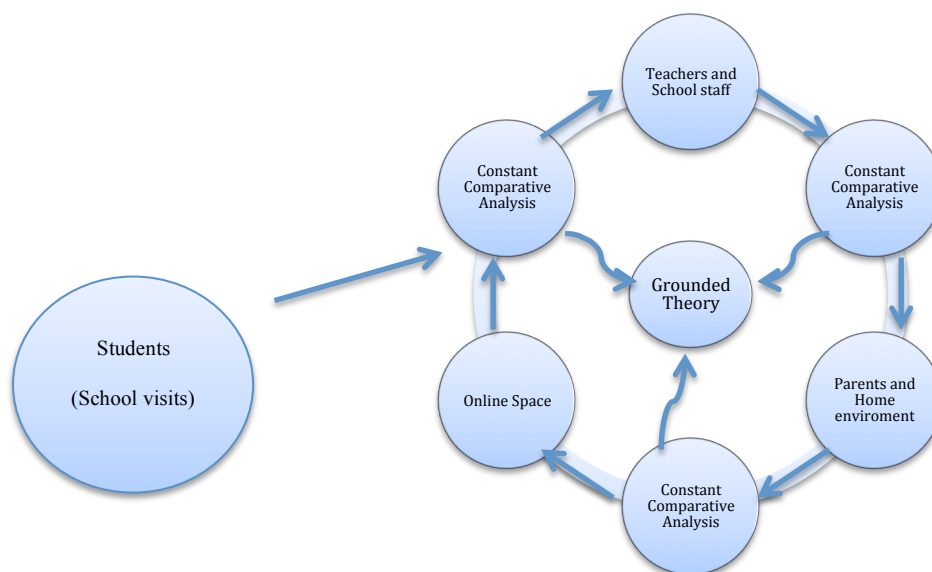


Figure 14: The process of theoretical sampling (adapted from Birks and Mills (2011)).

The data amounts to nearly 70 interview transcripts, around 40 photos, students' teachers' and parents' qualitative questionnaires and various school and government documents. Snowball sampling (Wellington, 2000) is employed in this study in order to gather rich data, as well as ensuring the flexibility of the data collection process. When gathering data, Charmaz (2006) promotes flexible interviews; ones in which the participants are comfortable and can answer the questions in depth and without pressure. Therefore, data collection in this study takes into consideration the participants wishes for where the data collection takes place and how it is conducted.

The number of participants increased as snowball sampling progressed. Data was collected by means of open-ended questionnaires, focus groups and semi-structured interviews. The students' beliefs and perceptions are seen, in this study, as a way to promote democratic education, and give language teachers and students a more active

role in the decision-making process. In addition, students' beliefs and perceptions can be used as a tool for educational research, since they provide validity to this study. Theoretical sampling, or snowball sampling, is an essential stage of grounded theory. It is the process of data collection, which is controlled by the emerging codes and themes. "Theoretical sampling means seeking and collecting pertinent data to elaborate and refine categories in your emerging theory" (Charmaz, 2006, p.96). Theoretical sampling is employed in this study by sampling to develop and elaborate the emerging themes. Also, theoretical sampling is used until there are no new themes emerging, thus reaching a point of 'saturation'.

6) Data translating

In this research project, data was collected in Arabic and all stages of theoretical sampling were done in Arabic. I felt that participants would feel more comfortable speaking their first language and would be able to express themselves better. When translating data in qualitative research, there are some issues and considerations. Temple and Young (2004) believe that the researcher's epistemological position could have an effect on the translation process. They argue that "if researchers see themselves as objective instruments of research then the elimination of bias becomes one of their chief concerns" (Temple and Young, 2004, p.163). In this study, I translated all data into English before the coding process. Although challenging, the process of translating helped me to explore my data from different angles and aided the initial coding. Literal translations were nearly impossible; therefore, when translating I focused largely on conveying meaning.

7) Data presenting: stories in grounded theory research

The use of stories in grounded theory research is not a new concept. Birks and Mills (2011) explain that many grounded theory studies use stories from the field as data sources. In-depth interviews, memos and fieldnotes can all be used to generate stories. Stories can also be employed in grounded theory research as a form of data representation. “Grounded theories are in fact stories, whether explicitly started or not, and some researchers do recognize the story inherent in the theory produced” (Birks and Mills, 2011, p.118). The writing process itself makes connections between the themes and concepts of the study, thus “storyline is the explanation of [the] theory”.

Part Two: Epistemological concepts

Passion and personal interest often drive researchers to choose their area of research. This interest is generated from previous knowledge about the area of study. However, a researcher must maintain an open mind when conducting the study (Birks and Mills, 2011; Glaser and Strauss, 1968a). Therefore, a balance between the researcher’s own assumptions and maintaining an open mind is necessary in order to identify concepts and generate theories. The following section argues the positionality of the researcher in educational research and problematises the notion of a ‘clean slate’.

1) Acknowledging the assumptions

Acknowledging the researcher’s assumptions, experiences and previous knowledge can be a useful tool in establishing his/her position in the proposed study. Acknowledging assumptions can help in identifying and explaining the researcher’s

philosophical position, and how it links to the study and the use of grounded theory as a methodology. Acknowledging assumptions can also help in identifying what the researcher already knows about the research topic, and what he/she expects to find from the research (Birks and Mills, 2011).

The use of literature in grounded theory research is often controversial and misunderstood. As mentioned before, a grounded theorist should enter the area of study with an open mind to enhance the theoretical sensitivity. Reviewing the literature, however, can jeopardise this process. It is understood that no researcher can enter the area of study as a 'clean slate', and most researchers need to provide a proposal for their research, which means avoiding a literature review might be unrealistic. Nonetheless, most grounded theorists postpone reviewing the literature until the final stages of the research in order to avoid compromising their theoretical sensitivity (Birks and Mills, 2011).

2) Reflexivity and grounded theory

One way to ensure quality in grounded theory research is by closely examining the data and keeping records of it. Employing reflective writing methods, such as memos and journals, can achieve this. However, the use of reflexivity in grounded theory research has been a subject for debate. Early grounded theorists believe that using reflexive techniques generates poor quality research and may cause "reflexivity paralysis" (Cutcliffe and McKenna, 2004; Glaser, 2001; Neill, 2006). Recent grounded theorists, on the other hand, have adopted the use of reflective writing. Clarke (2005) argues that grounded theorists should be visible and accountable throughout the research instead of hiding behind the methods. Charmaz (2006) also

acknowledges the obligation for incorporating reflexivity as a research design in the constructivist grounded theory. Researchers are often encouraged to be reflexive about how they analyse other people's accounts of their lives (Mauthner and Doucet, 2003).

It has been suggested that methods of data analysis are not simply neutral techniques because they carry the epistemological, ontological and theoretical assumptions of the researchers who developed them and they are later infused with the, sometimes different, assumptions of the researchers who use them (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2009; Mauthner and Doucet, 2003). Epistemological, ontological and theoretical assumptions influence the data analysis processes and projects as a whole. Also, reflecting on the reflexive processes of this research project has raised questions about the possibilities and limits of reflexivity.

“Can reflexivity be encouraged and enhanced by building it into the research methods and analysis processes, and by creating appropriate times, spaces and contexts to be reflexive?” (Mauthner and Doucet, 2003, p.415)

At the same time, is there a limit to how reflexive researchers can be, and how far they can know and understand what shapes their research at the time of conducting it, given that these influences may only become apparent once we have left the research behind and moved on in our personal and academic lives (Mauthner and Doucet, 2003)? Sociologists have often been concerned with reflexivity, and how “our subjectivity becomes entangled in the lives of others” (Denzin, 1997, p.27). Social researchers (including educational researchers) can be an essential factor in the

studies they conduct. Knowledge and understanding are viewed as contextually and historically grounded, as well as linguistically constituted (Mauthner and Doucet, 2003).

Mauthner and Doucet (2003) explain that theoretical and empirical knowledge construction processes are often affected by the “reflexive turn” in social sciences research, since “*how* knowledge is acquired, organized, and interpreted is relevant to *what* the claims are” (Altheide and Johnson, 1994, p.486). The production (or construction) of theory can be recognised as a social and cultural activity. Social scientists are encouraged to reflect on their methods of data collection and analysis as well as their methods of writing and reading. Researchers in social sciences cannot be neutral when reporting on their research, “as different readers interpret texts in different ways depending on their social location and perspectives” (Mauthner and Doucet, 2003, p.417). May (1998, p.173) also points out that “epistemology of reception” raises critical questions about “how and under what circumstances social scientific knowledge is received, evaluated, and acted upon and under what circumstances”.

3) The researcher as a grounded theorist

In grounded theory research, the researcher’s philosophical position is of great importance, since it identifies the researcher’s methodological preferences and positions him/her as a grounded theorist. Answering questions, such as “how do you define yourself?” and “what is reality?” (Birks and Mills, 2011, p.9), can help in positioning the researcher as a grounded theorist. It can also guide the process of data collection and analysis, as well as the formulation of the final grounded theory.

Glaser (1998) explains that in grounded theory the research project starts with an interest not a problem. Also, grounded theorists should not have any preconceived ideas about the problems they may encounter in the study. Corbin and Strauss (1990), on the other hand, suggest three different sources for the research problem.

1. *The suggested or assigned research problem.* Here a researcher (often a graduate student) asks a professor, in the same field of interest, for suggestions. Sometimes, the researcher takes over a small part of an ongoing piece of research to get involved in a similar research problem. Another kind of suggested research problem is when a researcher is offered funding for a research project on a certain topic.
2. *The technical literature.* Here, a researcher is encouraged to research an unexplored area (or a topic that needs further research). Sometimes, reading up on a certain issue may lead the researcher to explore new ways of solving old problems. Also, reading could stimulate curiosity about certain topics.
3. *Personal and professional experience.* Here, a researcher uses events (or experiences) from his/her personal or professional life as the source for a research problem.

The relationship between the researcher and the participants in grounded theory has changed from the first generation grounded theorists. Early grounded theorists view the participants, their words and actions as a source of data, which they need for their research (Corbin and Strauss, 1990; Glaser and Strauss, 1968b). In addition, in order to minimise the interaction between the researcher and the participants, Glaser (1998) rejects the idea of recording and transcribing the interview, and promotes the use of fieldnotes as source of data in order to maintain the researcher's theoretical

sensitivity. More recent grounded theorists, however, emphasise the importance of the relationship between the researcher and the participants, arguing that studying the recordings and transcripts exposed them to more data than the fieldnotes (Charmaz, 2006; Clarke, 2005). Recent grounded theorists also emphasise the importance of the participant's voice and how it can affect the data analysis process (Payne, 2006; 2007). Lately, grounded theorists have gone even further to position themselves within the research by studying the similarities and differences between themselves and the participants, in order to ensure quality in a research project (Charmaz, 2009).

In this study, my established relationship with the participants made it easier to talk to them and discuss issues of language planning. Some of the participants know me personally and felt comfortable talking to me (either face to face or online). I find such relationships extremely helpful in providing rich data. The discussions with the participants also helped my initial analysis of the data. I agree with Tillmann-Healy (2003, p.737) who argues that "friendship as a method can bring us to a level of understanding of experiences we may be unable to reach using only traditional methods". Tillmann-Healy (2003) also explains that the participants themselves benefit from their close connection to the researcher, as they feel their voice will be heard and represented.

4) Theoretical sensitivity

In grounded theory research, theoretical sensitivity can be seen as a way to involve the researcher in the study. It was defined as an important attribute of the sociologist who wanted to engage in grounded theory research (Birks and Mills, 2011; Glaser and Strauss, 1968a). Theoretical sensitivity is essential in grounded theory research, since

it helps in building the theory using the researcher's own interpretation of the data. In order to achieve theoretical sensitivity, many grounded theorists argue that researchers should enter the field of research with an open mind, so that they can build the theory from the data. Here, theoretical sensitivity can be problematic, as no researcher can enter the field of research with a 'clean slate'. Researchers often depend on their previous learning and knowledge when doing research, and early grounded theorists worry that some researchers may apply their previous knowledge, either consciously or unconsciously, when building their theory (Birks and Mills, 2011; Glaser, 1992; Glaser and Strauss, 1968a). Birks and Mills (2011) accord importance to theoretical sensitivity, as it reflects the sum of the researcher's personal, professional and experiential history, and increases as the research progresses.

Part Three: Ethics

This section examines some ethical issues when conducting qualitative research in Saudi Arabia. Aside from the usual ethical issues of a qualitative/exploratory study, this research project deals with other cultural and moral issues. This section attempts to investigate some aspects of ethical issues in qualitative research projects. Mauthner (2002) claims that the term ethics has often been linked with disciplines, and has "different moral codes": "Our ethical stance will also reflect our own moral, social, political and cultural location in the social world" (Mauthner et al., 2002).

1) Ethics in qualitative research study

For any qualitative research project, there are some essential elements for ethical consideration regarding both the participants and the researcher (Mauthner et al., 2002). First, participants should have full knowledge of the aims of the study, the reasons behind conducting the study and the meaning of participating in it. Second, participants should be conscious and able to express their thoughts and feelings freely. Third, participants should have the right to be anonymous when taking part in the research project, either while collecting data or presenting any report. Fourth, participants should provide permission or agreement to participate in any research project. Fifth, participants should be allowed to end their participation in the study without providing any reasons. The researcher, on the other hand, should possess sufficient training to conduct the research project. Sixth, the researcher should be aware of perceived power relationships in balance between him/herself and participants, and inform participants of any dangers and receive their consent. Finally, the researcher should take the morality of human conduct into consideration.

Grounded theory research often explores and explains a certain phenomenon, and to do that it needs to be flexible. Therefore, most grounded theorists employ tools, such as theoretical sampling, in order to ensure the quality and flexibility of the research. This, however, can create a problem when identifying the ethical and legal issues of the research project. It is difficult to pinpoint exactly what data are to be collected and how, as this process in grounded theory research is ever changing (Birks and Mills, 2011).

2) Ethics regarding the nature of Saudi Arabia

Conducting research in Saudi Arabia comes with some ethical considerations that are unlikely to be a concern when conducting research in many other countries. The strict religious nature of Saudi Arabia indeed created some issues when collecting data for this research project. As mentioned before, all schools in Saudi Arabia separate the genders. Males and females attend different schools and are not allowed to socialise in the same space. This is frequently mentioned in the country's education policy (The Ministry of Education, 1995). No men are allowed in girls' schools and vice versa. This meant that school visits in this study would be restricted to female schools. To address this issue, male participants were contacted outside of school. When collecting data, reaching male participants (either students, teachers or parents) was a challenge; nevertheless, they were not excluded from the study.

Under normal circumstances, permission to access any public school would have to be obtained from the school district, and due to the country's strict and religious nature, public schools are often mistrustful of outsiders. Home visits also proved to be a challenge for the same reason. To address this issue, I contacted schools with which I had prior connections. All three schools knew me, as I was a former student there. Knowing the schools personally created a relatively relaxed environment for data collection. The students' parents, on the other hand, were reached via qualitative surveys as they were more comfortable filling in a questionnaire rather than having an interview. In addition, to explore the home environment, some students offered to take photos of objects from around their homes showing how they learn foreign languages at home. Nonetheless, taking these photos was not without its problems. Students tended to take photos of objects around their homes/rooms, but often

avoided photographing themselves or any other family members for fear that these photos might become public. While collecting data, face-to-face meetings were not always possible, and even if they were, some participants (students, parents and teachers) felt more comfortable expressing their views online anyway. Again, this is due to the strict and religious attitudes pervading Saudi, where people are sometimes unable to express themselves freely. Therefore, online communications (e.g. emails and social networking sites) were used for data collection and as a method for the snowball sampling (Payne and Almansour, 2014).

Chapter summary

This chapter presents the research methodology of this study. The first part looks into the research design and how the data were collected and analysed. The research approach here employs aspect of Charmaz's (2006) constructivist grounded theory, where data and theory are not discovered but rather constructed (or co-constructed) by the participants and the researcher. The second part explores the connection between the research and the researcher. It argues some of the epistemological concepts relating to this research project and how the researcher's perspective, values and position impact the coding of data and the construction of theory. The third and final part discusses some of the ethical issues of conducting a qualitative research study in Saudi Arabia.

Chapter 6: Findings and Analysis

Introduction⁶

From data collection, and through the process of theoretical sampling, coding and recoding, the following eight themes emerged:

1. English is the first, and only, foreign language.
2. Arabic is a privileged language.
3. Informal foreign language learning is disapproved of, challenged or ignored.
4. A belief that foreign language learning might hinder academic achievement.
5. Saudi children are multilingual in practice and outlook.
6. Saudi children learn foreign languages informally out of school.
7. Popular culture promotes language learning.
8. Saudi children learn foreign languages through different modes.

The first four themes present a top-down view regarding language planning in Saudi Arabia, whereas the last four present a bottom-up view. This is an outline of foreign language planning in Saudi Arabia. In this chapter, each theme is described using stories collected from people involved in this study. These stories aim to present the qualitative data gathered and provide a better understanding of the context. Participants in these stories are given pseudonyms for ethical reasons. The findings were initially collected from participants in Arabic, and subsequently translated into English for presentation in this chapter. When translating the stories, the focus was on conveying the content of what was said rather than literal meaning.

⁶ The initial findings and analysis were published in *Current Issues in Language Planning* shortly after the fieldwork (Payne and Almansour, 2014). The paper was submitted to the journal in 2013 and, since then, the analysis of the emerging themes developed and drew on New Literacy Studies and multilingual literacies and repertoires.

Each theme is then analysed, incorporating aspects of Cooper's (1989) framework of language planning, "who makes what decisions, why, how, under what conditions, and with what effect?". The themes are then used to construct a theory of language planning in Saudi Arabia (Payne and Almansour, 2014).

Theme one: English is the first, and only, foreign language.

In Saudi Arabia, Arabic is the official language of education, and all modules at all public schools should be taught in Arabic. However, the education policy states that students should be provided with one foreign language, namely English. No other foreign languages are taught in public schools (The Ministry of Education, 1995). There is a belief that English is sufficient due to its global stature (Payne and Almansour, 2014). The following stories from Sarah and Amal present the views of an English teacher and a deputy head on this matter.

Sarah:

Sarah is an English language teacher at a primary school. I interviewed Sarah during my visit to the school where she works. During the interview I asked Sarah about her views on foreign language education in Saudi Arabia, and how she felt about teaching English. She told me that the Ministry of Education in the country made a good decision when they made English a compulsory module in public schools. Sarah explained to me that, in today's world especially, it is difficult to be monolingual, and learning English would help students in their future lives. "I believe that all students in Saudi Arabia should learn English as their second language," she said. I then asked

Sarah how she would feel about some students in her school learning other languages like Turkish and Korean in their spare time. She told me that she does not strongly object to it, but she still believes that students should spend that time learning and improving their English. “English is a required and credited module, and it is more useful than Turkish or Korean,” she explained. I finally asked Sarah whether it would be possible to introduce more foreign languages to the curriculum, to which she replied: “We need a permit from the Ministry of Education to introduce new modules. Also, to be honest, I do not think it is a good idea to introduce more foreign languages. Students already learn English, which I think is enough, and introducing more foreign languages might overwhelm them”.

Amal:

Amal is a primary school deputy head. During my visit to her school I had an interview with her about foreign language policy in Saudi Arabia, and foreign language education in public school. I first asked Amal about her views (as an educator) regarding the teaching of English only in public schools. She told me that she had never considered this issue. “As a school, we can only teach what has been approved by the Ministry of Education. Other teachers and myself are not allowed to plan or change the curriculum,” she explained. Amal believes that limiting foreign language education to English has never been an issue until recently, when, according to her, students expressed a desire to learn more foreign languages. She told me, “Media in Saudi Arabia has changed over the past few years. I think that might have been the reason why children started to pick up words and expressions from other languages”. At the end of the interview, I asked Amal if she knew the reasons behind choosing English as the only foreign language; she explained that she is not involved

in the decision-making process and does not really know the reasons why schools only teach English. “It could be because English is international,” she said. Amal also explained that teaching anything would require approval from the Ministry of Education. According to her, “it does not matter what students want, as a school we cannot really teach foreign languages besides English unless we have permission from the Ministry of Education. We can only implement the education policy and it can be difficult to do anything more without official approval”.

Analysis

The spread of English in the world is aided by globalisation and western capitalism (Phillipson, 1996). Due to its strong link with the west, English promotes western culture and values, creating tension between the west and Islamic communities like Saudi Arabia. This tension could be seen as one of the reasons multilingualism in Saudi Arabia is not studied or researched in much detail. Muslim policy makers, teachers and researchers find it difficult to be involved in globalisation and multilingualism while staying true to their Islamic values. Foreign language issues in Saudi Arabia are still discussed in relation to applied linguistics and the teaching of English in schools, and a theoretical framework of foreign language planning is yet to be established (Payne and Almansour, 2014). The Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia might embrace English as a foreign language in schools (due to its global status), yet it seems to oppose the teaching and learning of any other foreign languages. This ideology makes both explicit and implicit resistance to the spread of multilingualism in the country. However, on a micro level, multilingualism not only exists, but is also valued, as findings from this study show.

The main theoretical ideas in this research project are inspired by Cooper's (1989) language planning framework. His framework aims for a deeper understanding of the implementation of language planning and policy on both macro and micro levels, as well as the critical, ideological and political views and theories of language diversity and multilingualism (Payne and Almansour, 2014). Here, Cooper's (1989) descriptive framework can be used to represent (or describe) language planning in Saudi Arabia. At first glance, the *Who* in this situation refers to policy makers and government authorities undertaking language planning activities that include Arabic as the superior language in the country and English as the only foreign language. However, data from this research project presents cases where non-government authorities (such as parents and students) have undertaken activities on a micro level to learn foreign languages in informal spaces.

Theme two: Arabic is a privileged language

Findings from this study show that educational policy makers view Arabic as a privileged and valuable language. They have designed the education policy around protecting Arabic and Islamic culture. Their main aim is to ensure Saudi children are good Muslims and can speak Arabic. A number of school staff and parents also share the same views. The value of Arabic in Saudi Arabia stems from its link to Islam (see Part 7 of Chapter 4 'Religious Language Planning'), and educators take it upon themselves to protect Arabic from changes and make sure students acquire it properly (Payne and Almansour, 2014). The following is Ahmed's story, a primary school teacher.

Ahmed:

Ahmed is a primary school teacher. I was not able to visit the school where Ahmed works or meet him face to face. A mutual friend put me in touch with Ahmed, and I conducted the interview by email. I first asked Ahmed about his views on foreign language education. He told me that teaching a foreign language (English or any other language) to young children is problematic. “This could affect their first language (Arabic)”, he said. I then asked him about the students he teaches and whether any of them are learning more foreign languages. He told me that a number of young students in one of his classes are learning Turkish in their spare time. “People always see the advantages of learning more than one language, but there are some disadvantages. Children should first learn Arabic and appreciate it. It is a valuable and important language. I know students here would like to learn more foreign languages, but as educators we need to shift their focus to the important things like learning Arabic”. Ahmed believes that good Muslims should be able to speak proper Arabic, and “these children are Muslims”. He explained, “they need Arabic to pray and read the Qur’an. Other languages might be useful, but not as useful as Arabic. They already learn English at school, which I think is sufficient”. He added, “if children feel the need to learn more foreign languages, then they can do so when they are older. However, as children it is important to build their Islamic and Arabic identity without any foreign influences”. Ahmed then explained to me that he knows a lot of teachers and parents share the same view on foreign language learning.

Analysis

Language planning choices in Saudi Arabia are often linked to Islamic values and ideologies. This study shows that many believe that learning foreign languages can be

viewed as a threat to the status of Arabic in Saudi Arabia. In some extreme cases, parents do not even approve of the teaching of English at school, viewing it as a threat to Islam and the Arabic language. There is also the belief that decisions about languages are the responsibility of certain *elite* members in the community. Heath (1989, p.53) explains “the self-evident ideas and objectives a group holds concerning roles of language in the social experiences of members as they contribute to the expression of that group”.

According to Cooper (1989), policy makers have motives when planning. Understanding *why* can help in understanding the planning process. In Saudi Arabia, Arabic occupies a privileged place, and maintaining it is a main factor in planning. Data from this research project shows that policy makers feel threatened by other foreign languages, and often see issues when children are raised to be multilingual. Another reason policy makers disapprove of (or ignore) multilingualism might be to maintain their power in the community (Payne and Almansour, 2014). As Cooper (1989) explains, policy makers possess an *elite* power that can only be maintained if the policy is implemented.

Theme three: Informal language learning is disapproved of, challenged or ignored.

In this study, language teachers and school principals seemed to hold convergent views in relation to official education and language policy, as well as students’ language practices. In brief, they agreed with the provision of English as the main foreign language, and did not believe that other foreign languages should be taught in Saudi schools, denying the existence of micro-language planning (Payne and

Almansour, 2014). The following presents stories from a school principal and a 14-year-old student.

Nouf

Nouf is a secondary school principal. I interviewed Nouf briefly during my visit to the school where she works. I first asked her about the process of foreign language education in her school. Similar to other teachers and school staff I interviewed, Nouf told me that she could only implement the official education policy. I then asked Nouf about her views regarding students learning different foreign languages by themselves. She said, “there are some girls in this school who mentioned to their teachers that they are learning Japanese and Spanish. To be honest, I do not think they are really learning more foreign languages outside the school. Maybe they are watching foreign TV or reading foreign books”. She went on to explain that learning more foreign languages is a big problem as this might affect the students’ first language. In addition, she believes English should be the main focus, because it is the language of education around the world, and the majority of books and research papers are in English.

Sami:

Sami is a 14-year-old student. His sister (a friend of mine) told me that Sami is teaching himself French at home. I asked my friend to put me in touch with her brother to talk about his language learning. I interviewed Sami via Facebook where I first asked him why he is learning French. He told me that he started teaching himself French after visiting France on a holiday with his family. “I liked everything about the French culture and language,” he said. Sami then told me that he made a decision to

learn the language. “I asked my school for help, but my English language teacher told me that I should focus on improving my English,” Sami told me. I then asked him how he felt about his school being dismissive of his needs. He explained to me that he does not agree with the school’s position on foreign language education. He told me, “English is not more important than French. But I decided not to argue with my teachers and just teach myself French at home”. I asked Sami about his views on foreign language policy in Saudi Arabia, to which he replied, “the Minister of Education himself said in an interview that he had sent his children to private schools and abroad so they can learn foreign languages. He then said that language learning is important to him, and his two sons speak Japanese, French and Italian. If he sees the value of multilingualism, then why do public schools offer English only? It is unfair. I do not need to wait for a policy to change. I am teaching myself now”.

Analysis

Here, it was clear that the majority of teachers and school staff agree with policy makers about the provision of foreign languages in public schools. It was also clear that Arabic has a very high status and introducing another foreign language might affect it. In this language situation, English is seen as a middle ground between maintaining Arabic and meeting the students’ linguistic needs. Of course, one would probably not expect figures in authority in Saudi Arabia to adopt anything other than the official line. I do not criticise that. I also realise that these views could represent their real opinions in relation to the place of English and the existence of micro-language planning practices. Neither does this research project overlook the role or value of English as a foreign language in Saudi Arabia or as a global language in the

world. English as a *lingua franca* goes beyond political and geographical boundaries. Yet, its status should not undervalue other languages in the world.

Cooper (1989) explains that policy makers take certain steps (the *How*) to ensure the value of their decisions, as well as practical application. Ignoring or disapproving informal foreign language learning could be aiming to undervalue it.

“There is general agreement that policy making does not conform to the rational paradigm of decision making. This paradigm assumes a single decision maker or decision-making unit, with a single set of preferred outcomes, knowledge of a reasonably full range of alternatives and their consequences, the intention of selecting that alternative which maximizes benefits and minimizes cost, and the opportunity, willingness, and ability to make the necessary calculations”. (Cooper, 1989, p.92)

In addition, policy makers are not only ignoring students’ language practices and their demands, but they are also ignoring relevant factors like current political, social and economic changes. It seems that two forces, the country’s political legislations and everyday language practices of Saudi people, drive language planning in Saudi Arabia (Payne and Almansour, 2014). These top-down and bottom-up forces often clash and cause division, which can be seen in the education system. Some English teachers also share similar concerns around first language interference (Ellis, 2001), as they believe that English should be the students’ main concern.

Theme four: A belief that foreign language learning might hinder academic achievement

Findings from this research project show that some students and parents have mixed views regarding foreign language learning. Parents' main concern is their children's academic achievement. The following presents stories from a parent and a student.

Norah:

Norah is a housewife and mother of six. I know Norah and her family personally as they are our neighbours. I decided to interview Norah about her views (as a parent) on foreign language education, especially after I learned that one of her daughters (Reem, aged 15⁷) is learning Japanese at home. I first asked Norah if she knew why Reem had decided to learn Japanese. Norah told me, "the Japanese culture is becoming very popular with teenagers nowadays. Also I think it is because some of her friends at school are learning Japanese as well". I then asked Norah how she feels about Reem's foreign language practices. She said, "some people think that learning other languages might affect her first language. I do not really believe that. When Reem decided to learn Japanese, my main concern, to be honest, was her academic achievement. Sometimes Reem spends more time learning Japanese than studying or doing her homework, and that worries me". Norah told me that she knows the advantages of being multilingual but at the same time she worries about her children's academic achievement. Towards the end of the interview I asked Norah how she would feel, as a parent, if public schools in Saudi Arabia introduced more foreign languages to students. She told me: "That would be a great idea. Languages are very useful and children in Saudi Arabia should learn more languages. But I do not think

⁷ Reem's story is presented under theme seven (on page 170) to fit with the thematic analysis.

that would happen anytime soon. A lot of people think that learning more foreign languages would affect the children's first language (Arabic) and their Islamic identity. I really hope in the future people will embrace other cultures, and maybe then foreign language education would change”.

Asha

Asha is a 13-year-old student. I met her during my visit to her school. During the focus group discussions, Asha was one of the few students who strongly disapproved of introducing more foreign languages to school. Asha said that she is already struggling to learn English. She said, “language exams are really hard, and I have to memorise lots of words and grammar rules”. Asha explained to me that learning different languages would be a useful skill, but introducing several languages to learn at school is not practical. Asha then explained that her parents are not happy with her grades and she worries that if schools start to teach more languages then she will not be able to pass the exams.

Analysis

Here, it was clear that academic achievement is one of the main concerns for both parents and students. Learning a foreign language in school has always been an issue for some students, and researchers have been looking into the teaching and learning of English in public schools and some of its issues (Al-Asmari, 2005; Alabdelwahab, 2002; Alsamadani, 2008; Alyousef, 2006). For some, introducing more foreign languages at school means more exams and a heavier workload, which might discourage students from learning.

There seems to be a belief that introducing more foreign languages to school might overwhelm the students. On average, students complete between 10-15 modules in a school semester (The Ministry of Education, 2011). A number of students, parents and even teachers believe that introducing more foreign languages would increase the students' workload, and might affect their overall academic achievement.

This represents the *why* within Cooper's (1989) framework. Academic achievement seems to be another motive (besides maintaining Islamic and Arabic culture) that affects policy makers' decisions. Many educators and education researchers (Alessa, 2010; Yamani, 2000) argue that education policy in Saudi Arabia focuses mainly on Islamic and Arabic studies. This creates a general belief among people that foreign language education is not as important as other subjects, especially since a global language (English) is already provided at school.

Throughout its history, the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia has gone through its fair share of failed experiments. For example, the education reform plans of 1996 and 1998, the autonomous school programme and the endless experimentation with assessment (Alessa, 2010). Some participants of this research project (both adults and youngsters) worry that introducing more foreign languages to schools would be yet another failed experiment. Cooper argues:

“Policy makers reduce their task by considering only *changes* proposed for next year's programs and budgets, which is consistent with the idea that response to, or avoidance of, a threat to loss of power motivates public policy making”. (1989, p.91)

In other words, policy makers only value decisions that keep them in the position of power. In the case of education in Saudi Arabia, decisions around maintaining Islamic identity and the Arabic language are good strategies for keeping policy makers in power. As a result, languages other than Arabic (and English) are devalued and labelled as unnecessary and *extra* work.

Theme five: Saudi children are multilingual in practice and outlook.

In terms of the results captured from the focus groups, it is clear that students in Saudi Arabia would appreciate the provision of more foreign languages at schools. Students realise that due to its global status, English needs to be a required subject at school. However, in their view, there is no reason why schools have not planned to offer more foreign languages (Payne and Almansour, 2014). The majority of students who took part in this study showed an awareness of wider societal, curricular and linguistic issues and needs. The following stories from three different students explore their views on foreign language education in Saudi Arabia.

Sana:

Sana is a 15-year-old student. I met her when I visited her school. During the focus group discussions, Sana told me that she speaks both Arabic and Turkish as first languages. “My mum is Turkish and so is my grandmother,” she said. I asked Sana how she feels about foreign language education in Saudi public schools. She told me “the Ministry of Education assumes that all students in Saudi Arabia come from the same background. My father is Saudi and my mother is Turkish. I learned Arabic and Turkish at home and both are my first languages. At school I only speak Arabic and

learn English”. After chatting more with Sana I learned that she had attended three different schools, and at each school the only foreign language lessons provided were English. Sana and her siblings have to find different avenues for learning other languages. “My mum taught us Turkish, and my brother (Majed) taught himself Spanish,” she explained. I asked Sana to share her views on foreign language education in her school. She said, “I think it is ridiculous that my school will only offer English. I have the right to learn any language I want. Public schools in Saudi Arabia should provide more foreign languages to their students. I talk with my friends about this issue and we all agree that schools should provide a variety of European and Asian languages, and students should be able to choose what language they would like to learn, without enforcing one specific foreign language. English is important, and other languages are important as well. Schools should provide quality education, and should not prevent the learning of anything”.

Majed:

After chatting with Sana about her views on foreign language education in Saudi Arabia, I asked her to put me in touch with her 13-year-old brother (Majed) to talk about his experience of learning Spanish at home. I had a short interview with Majed via Facebook, during which I asked him about his decision to learn Spanish. He told me, “I learned Arabic and Turkish at home, and English at school. I thought it would be useful to learn a fourth language, so I decided to learn Spanish”. I asked Majed if there is a reason why he chose to learn Spanish. He explained, “I have a lot of friends on Facebook and a lot of them speak Spanish either as their first or second language. I became very interested in the language so I started watching Spanish TV online”. I asked Majed about his views on foreign language education at his school and whether

he can learn Spanish at school. He told me: “Just like other public schools, my school only offers English classes. Whenever we speak about foreign language education, the teachers would tell us to focus on improving our English”. Majed told me how he teaches Turkish and Spanish to other students at his school. “I am not the only one who wants to learn different languages, other students in my school wish they would speak more languages, and they ask me to teach them Turkish or Spanish”. Towards the end of the interview, I asked Majed about his experience of being multilingual. He said: “When I started learning Spanish, I learned so much about different cultures and their history. Being multilingual means I can read books from different cultures and learn from them. Learning languages other than Arabic helped my education, I now know more from reading non-Arabic books, and I can access different non-Arabic websites”.

Fatimah:

Fatimah is a 14-year-old student. I met her during my visit to her school. Along with other students from her class, Fatimah expressed an interest in East Asian culture. She said, “I really love Korea and Japan. I spend a lot of time watching Japanese Anime and Korean drama”. I asked Fatimah if she wanted to learn East Asian languages at school. “I wish there were Korean or Japanese classes in my school, but everyone thinks English is more important than other foreign languages,” she explained. I then asked Fatimah if she learns Japanese or Korean at home and she told me that she picks up some Japanese words and phrases from watching Anime. I asked her if she thinks languages like Japanese or Korean would be useful for Saudi students. She said: “If a community can speak only one language then they will not be able to improve, develop or keep up with the rest of the world, also they will not be able to

tackle any issue they face”. Fatimah believes that if Saudis cannot communicate with people from different cultures then they will not be able to solve their problems or move forward as a country. Fatimah told me: “Most of our issues are due to language barriers. Learning languages would benefit my future. I love Korea, and I am planning to travel to that country, I love its culture and I love the language. I believe that Saudi schools should ensure language diversity in the community and meet its linguistic needs”.

Analysis

The comments from students (involved in this research project) reflect a sense of fairness and justice. Often they use words like ‘rights’, ‘opportunity’ and ‘choice’, which might suggest that children and teenagers in Saudi Arabia have an awareness of social and political changes happening in recent years beyond Saudi Arabia (Payne and Almansour, 2014). It is clear that Saudi students see the advantages of being multilingual and would like to see a broader choice of languages in their schools, which suggests that they might be more accepting of other cultures and religions than the older generation. From a micro planning perspective, Cooper’s (1989) framework presents different elements. The *Who* in this situation refers to Saudi children and students undertaking language planning activities that include learning several languages in informal settings.

Political reasons and social change seem to play a role in promoting foreign language learning among Saudi students. Students are aware of the political, social and economic changes taking over the country (Payne and Almansour, 2014). Although Saudi Arabia has not been directly affected by the upheavals in the Middle East, the

ramifications are felt there and there is a sense that the Arab world is changing, albeit slowly, within the country itself.

Theme six: Foreign language learning occurs informally out of school.

Findings from this research project show that students are learning foreign languages (beyond English) informally and out of school. When students make a decision to learn any language of their choice, they often rely on family members, friends, media or online resources (Payne and Almansour, 2014). A number of students who took part in this study decided to learn different foreign languages out of school, as they did not wish to wait for education policy to change. The following stories present some of the means students employ in order to learn foreign languages of their choice.

Haya:

Haya is an 18-year-old student. I conducted an interview with her during my visit to her school. Haya is learning French at home. She told me that her father worked briefly in France and he taught her a few words in French. Haya then continued to teach herself. I asked her to tell me the reasons behind her decision to learn French. She said, “I like French more than English if I am being honest. I found myself drawn to the language and the culture”. She expresses her disapproval of the current foreign language policy in schools. Haya explained, “I do not understand why I cannot learn French at school. I do not think the Ministry of Education gave this issue any thought. They are still implementing a very old policy. When I go to school I feel like I stepped back in time”. Haya compares herself to students in Qatar and United Arab

Emirates who learn several foreign languages at school; she describes them as well educated and multilingual. “My teachers at school think that I should focus on learning English. I believe English is important but so is French,” she explained. When I asked Haya how she felt about foreign language policy in Saudi Arabia she told me, “I do not think learning Spanish will negatively affect my Arabic. I think the Ministry of Education should reconsider their policy and make sure students are getting a better education. When I compare students in Saudi Arabia with children and teenagers from other Arab countries, I feel that we are not on the same academic level”.

Eman

Eman is a 12-year-old student. I interviewed her during my visit to her school. Eman told me that her mother used to teach French at a school in Egypt. “When I started school in Saudi Arabia I had no foreign language classes, so my mum taught me English and French at home. When I reached the sixth grade, the school introduced English language classes”, Eman explained. I asked her if she wants to learn more foreign languages at school. She told me, “I wish I could learn French at school, I think it is a useful language. My mum still teaches me French at home. Some of my friends told me that I am lucky to have someone to teach me French, and sometimes they ask me to teach them French”. Eman told me how she spends any spare time at school teaching her friends French. She said, “sometimes my friends visit me at home and we spend a lot of time learning French. Sometimes we practise our French when we text each other”.

Analysis

These stories show that students disagree with current foreign language policy and the limitation of foreign language education to English. These stories, along with others (Sana, Majed, Eman and Reem), present cases where students in Saudi Arabia not only express the desire to learn more foreign languages but have made the decision to learn different foreign languages informally and out of school. In informal settings, students have more freedom to learn a language of their choice in different ways, e.g. online. Literature, music and visual content expose students to the target culture as well as the language. These informal multilingual practices represent real micro language planning in action (Payne and Almansour, 2014). Furthermore, they represent a stark contrast to the official line on language learning in Saudi Arabia and, thus, a sign of challenge. The stories from the children and teenagers who took part in this study show that whilst this type of language learning is essentially clandestine, in that it is not officially approved, it is happening openly in the home (Payne and Almansour, 2014). This suggests that some parents are relaxed in terms of their children accessing other languages and cultures beyond English.

From a bottom-up perspective, the students act as their own policy makers and take certain steps to ensure the value of their decisions, as well as practical application. Within Cooper's (1989) framework, this can be seen as the *How* aspect of language planning. Students act on current political, social and economic changes in Saudi Arabia and consider the advantages of multilingualism in the present day. These informal multilingual practices suggest that students are adapting to social change (Payne and Almansour, 2014).

Theme seven: Popular culture promotes foreign language learning.

Popular culture can be defined as the values, laws, customs, artifacts, art and traditions of a specific group of people at any point of time (Cheung, 2001). This research project revealed that students in Saudi Arabia not only express the desire to learn more foreign languages, but some teach themselves foreign languages of their choice outside of school. The following story shows how one student transformed her personal space to serve her language learning.

Reem

When I interviewed Norah (see theme four), she mentioned how one of her daughters (Reem) was learning Japanese at home. I asked Norah if I could meet Reem and talk to her about her experience of learning a foreign language informally. Reem is a 13-year-old student. She is learning Japanese at home using Japanese storybooks, Anime and films. Reem told me that she became very interested in Japanese culture after watching *Spirited Away* by Miyazaki (2001). Reem explained, “I started watching Japanese Anime and films, and I bought a lot of Manga books to read. I wanted to learn everything about the Japanese culture, and I learned Japanese in the process”. Reem then told me how she started reading more Manga and other books about Japanese culture. The following images show some of the Japanese books Reem has acquired. The following images present Reem’s collection of Japanese books, which she said helped improve her language and enabled her to learn more about Japanese culture.



Figure 15: Images of Reem's Japanese books.

Reem started to read not only Manga but also other Japanese books. She said, “I cannot find these books or Manga locally, so I order them from online stores”. Reem also decorated her bedroom with Japanese posters, and has a collection of Anime series. She also became interested in Japanese art; she explained, “I love everything about Japan, I started teaching myself Japanese to read Manga and watch Anime”. Reem told me that Japanese comics and storybooks are quite popular among her friends, and they often spend any spare time at school reading them. She said: “Some of these posters were a gift from my friend. She also likes Anime and she ordered these posters from eBay for my birthday”. Reem told me how some of her friends

love Japanese culture as well. She explained: “Sometimes they borrow my Manga and my Anime DVDs. We always watch Anime together and listen to J-pop⁸”.



Figure 16: Japanese Anime posters decorating Reem’s bedroom.

Analysis

I found that though implicit and informal, students were serious about their learning of languages outside of school, even if they did not sit formal examinations. Students went to great lengths to source posters, books and other materials in hard copy from the target countries to immerse themselves as much as possible in the target languages and cultures.

⁸ Japanese pop music and pop culture.

Popular culture is one reason behind micro decision-making in language planning. Within Cooper's (1989) framework, popular culture can be seen as the *Why*. Students' engagement with popular culture, and foreign language learning as a result, seems more like a lifestyle choice than a learning process. Unlike learning at schools, students actively engage with popular culture. Whether learning Japanese, Turkish, French or even English, the unstructured (by an official body) and unassessed nature of informal learning seems to be more appealing to students, and their attitudes to this type of learning are generally more positive. In these informal settings, learners employ *fun* tools, such as literature, music and visual media, to learn.

Due to globalisation, people are now more exposed to popular culture from all over the world. Films, TV, music, fashion, literature and games have a major influence on children's lifestyles. Learners use popular culture as a gateway to a world with which they can identify, creating a bond between themselves and different cultures and languages. Popular culture creates a social identity that becomes part of the learners' identity over time. It also has an impact on young people's education, attitudes and views of the world. It is hard to explore the influence of popular culture on learners' lives or the reasons some learners are attracted to different cultures. The influence of popular culture cannot be predicted or controlled, which might be one of the reasons why it makes top-down policy makers in Saudi Arabia feel uncomfortable or worried.

Although, to our eyes, such collections of posters, cards and books may seem trivial, they represent real micro-language planning in action. Furthermore, they represent a stark contrast to the official line on language learning in Saudi Arabia and, thus, a sign of challenge. There is a fine line for students between language learning and

embracing Japanese or Korean culture, for example, in their interactions with friends or their use of technology. That their personal spaces, such as bedrooms and play-areas, are decorated with Japanese posters and signs, might suggest that the language learning here happens implicitly. It is also clear that whilst this type of language learning is essentially covert, in that it is not officially sanctioned, it is happening openly in the home. This suggests that some parents are relaxed in terms of their children accessing other languages and cultures beyond English.

Theme eight: Saudi children learn foreign languages through different modes

Student language learning can also be seen in their use of technology and the use of other languages with friends. Respondents often configured their iPhones, emails and Facebook pages to the target language and culture. The following presents stories from two students at different school levels.

Lama

Lama is a 13-year-old student, who is learning Korean at home. I met Lama during my visit to her school. To learn Korean, Lama depended mainly on her iPod. First, she changed the setting on her iPod to Korean. She told me, “like this, when I’m using my iPod I think in Korean. I have a Korean keyboard and when I search in Google I use Korean. On the computer I use Arabic and English, but on my iPod it is always Korean”.

Lama is very interested in Korean culture, music, art and language. On her iPod, she has downloaded music and music videos. Lama explains, “I love K-pop⁹. I love the music and music videos. My two favourite bands are *SHINee* and *EXO*. I try to memorise all their songs. Sometimes I know what they say and sometimes I don’t, so I go and translate them. I also try to learn the dance choreography from the music videos. On my iPod I can replay the songs over and over without annoying anyone, because it is only me listening”.

While observing Lama using her iPod, it was clear to me that the process of foreign language learning goes back and forth between explicit and implicit. On her iPod, there are a number of Korean teaching apps that specifically teach how to pronounce words, and read and write in Korean.

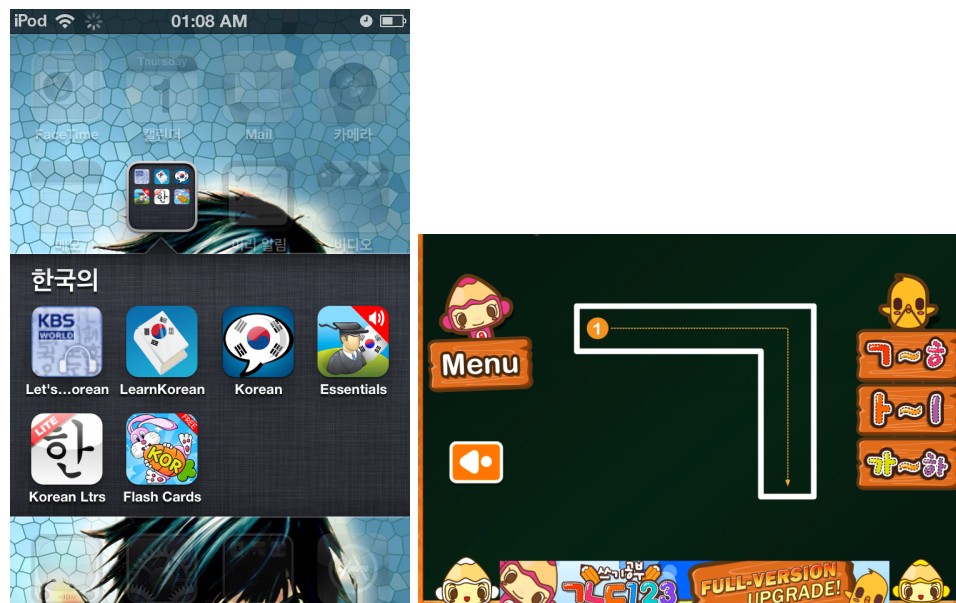


Figure 17: Some of the Korean apps Lama uses¹⁰.

⁹ Korean pop music and pop culture.

¹⁰ The screenshots of iPods and apps are taken from the participants’ devices. I am aware of issues regarding image copyright, however, there are no clear guidelines regarding using screenshots (see Appendix 7).

Lama spends some time looking up words in the dictionary downloaded on her iPod and speaking into the built-in microphone. Some of the apps Lama uses are language-teaching games, where the objective is to speak or write correctly. “I really like apps like (Duolingo) and (NeoFinger) where I get points for learning, just like a video game,” Lama said. Lama also uses her iPod to communicate with her friends in Korean. She told me that some of her friends are also learning the language. “When I text my friend I use Korean. It is more fun. We text each other when we watch our favourite Korean drama. She is at her home and I’m at mine, and at the same time we are watching the same thing and talking about it”.

Lama uses her iPod as a gateway to Korean culture. Besides listening to music, watching drama and learning the language, Lama follows news and stories from South Korea. She also follows the work of Korean local artists using apps like *Artist in the story* (Dunamu, 2012).



Figure 18: Screenshots of *Artist in the story*.

Lama told me that she has never been to South Korea, and only started to learn Korean after getting the iPod as a birthday gift from her family. I asked her whether it

is possible to use a computer in the same way. She said: “No, I use the computer for my schoolwork; also my sisters use it as well. I can’t sit on the desk all day. My iPod is mine and always in my pocket or bag. I use it first thing in the morning to check the time, and the time in Seoul”.



Figure 19: Screenshots of Lama's iPod (reconfigured to Korean).

When I met with Lama, I asked her what I thought at that point was a simple question: “how do you learn Korean?” She was not able to answer the question. Only by observing her home literacy practices was I able to see how she reconstructed her space (physical and virtual) to allow Korean language/culture to be a part of her everyday life.

Interviewing Lama was mostly straightforward, though she would often say what she thought ‘the researcher’ wanted to hear. For example, when I asked her if she uses Korean when she texts her friends, she said: “Yes, I use my iPod to text my friend *Maha* in Korean. We are both leaning Korean, and texting helps us improve our foreign language skills”. However, a closer examination of Lama’s interactions with her friend shows a completely different story. Lama and her friend Maha mix three different languages (Arabic, English and Korean) together in one conversation. Also, along with the three languages, images and emoticons are used.



Figure 20: Screenshots of a conversation between Lama and Maha (via WhatsApp).

Analysis

These findings show that language learning is not often a free choice for students in formal learning settings like schools. However, learners have choices and control over their language learning in informal settings like their own homes. Language teaching in Saudi Arabia must be balanced, and students' rights and linguistic needs should be met. Here, we examine the messiness of children's environments, and how they negotiate (and make meaning of) their surroundings through creative remixing of modes. Examining the children's interactions with modes is also a messy process, as it involves describing things that are complex and incoherent. This chapter presents the stories of two young children, and how they learn languages.

Lama's practice of switching her iPod operating language to Korean is an example of a fairly straightforward way of engaging technologically with Korean, whilst retaining the familiar look and feel of the iPod screen. A more challenging practice is evidenced in Figure 19, which shows an example of the same student texting her Saudi friend in Korean. Whilst the familiarity of the iPod screen remains, this is clearly a more substantial linguistic challenge showing that these students take the language learning seriously enough to want to attempt to communicate with each other in it.

In some cases, Saudi students used social networking sites (e.g. Facebook) to befriend young people of a similar age from different cultures. Online chats with international friends also helped their language learning. They claim that nowadays it is easy to learn languages without having to depend on textbooks.

Rowse (2013b) argues that multimodality has been theorised and applied in the school context. However, there is little understanding of it outside the education system.

“Working with multimodality is an entirely natural act that gives these producers a voice, and, while the world forges ahead using visuals, moving images and haptic text, teaching and learning in school remains anchored to words, often on printed pages. There is a need to shift this conversation, and producers whose livelihood relies on working with modes completely and successfully to convey meaning, hold promise for providing concrete, specific ways of doing so”. (Rowse, 2013b, p.3)

Rowse (2013b) uses the term ‘mode’ to describe a unit of expression or representation (image, sound or video). Modes work best when remixed together. Remixing modes is a part of the meaning making process. However, understanding how modes work together can be a hard task. Stein (2008) proposes the idea of “chains of semiosis” in which children use and remix modes to build their knowledge. Kress (1997) talked about how children use (or choose) modes that “feel right” and suit their purpose.

A bilingual (or multilingual) child often uses visual media (images, film) to understand concepts and emotions that cannot be translated from one language to another. Complex meanings (or concepts) can cross over language barriers and be conveyed through visuals. Children often think and express themselves in images, which go beyond their linguistic abilities. Different visual modes work together to

create an effect. When Lama uses her iPod, she negotiates a space where images, sounds, colour and story work together (and complement each other) to convey meaning. When engaging with visuals, children often think about the best way to learn. Children learn through making things. Drawing, making videos or playing with materials and fabric help children understand how things work.

When children want to communicate (or make sense of their world) and one mode cannot do it, they remix modes together. Children have a sense of what modes do and what they mean. So by using them creatively, they make meaning and communicate what they want to say, as they make decisions over which modes they want to use.

Now, remixing modes and visuals might look messy to the observer, but to the child everything makes sense. Yamada-Rice (2013, p.1) argues that “contemporary communication practices are increasingly multimodal”. Here, we would argue that multilingual learning and practices are also multimodal. Language textbooks often include images and writing combined together for the purpose of teaching a second language.

Digital technologies have changed the way modes are presented and employed. “The multimodal facilities of digital technologies enable images, sounds and movement to enter the communicational landscape in new and significant ways” (Jewitt, 2009, p.18). Digital media gives the visual mode an important role, especially in a multilingual context, since visuals transcend language and convey meanings and concepts better from one language to another. In order for young children to make meaning in the best way possible, they have to be designers of their worlds, by

employing modes, which they deem useful to their purposes. The messiness and creativity of modes remixing is not by any means random.

Law (2004, p.2) asks, “what happens when social sciences try to describe things that are complex, diffuse and messy?”. He argues that common research methods fail to describe complex phenomena (such as children’s practices), as “they are badly adapted to the study of the ephemeral, the indefinite and the irregular” (Law, 2004, p.4). Describing children’s foreign language practices proves to be difficult indeed, as it was nearly impossible to map the trajectories of their practices. A simple, qualitative interview with students would not have shown how a 12-year-old uses language. I found it extremely challenging to map and describe the students’ use of languages because it was messy. It was not a case of bad organisation but rather me attempting to describe (what Law (2007) calls) a moving target. Children’s practices constantly shift and change, and researching them often involves dealing with indeterminate phenomena.

Navas (2012) argues that remixing has become a form of discourse which influences and supports culture. Amerika (2011) also argues that remixing itself has become an art form and a literary invention, and urges us to explore remixing and mash-ups as a cultural activity in today’s world. Lessig (2008) points out the importance of creative mixing and remixing, to build, on the foundations of culture, a new world.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presents the overarching findings of this research project. After sampling students, parents and school staff, and through a process of coding, sorting and categorising, eight main themes emerged:

1. English is the first, and only, foreign language.
2. Arabic is a privileged language.
3. Informal foreign language learning is disapproved of, challenged or ignored.
4. A belief that foreign language learning might hinder academic achievement.
5. Saudi children are multilingual in practice and outlook.
6. Saudi children learn foreign languages informally out of school.
7. Popular culture promotes foreign language learning.
8. Saudi children learn foreign languages through different modes.

These findings represent the influences on foreign language planning in Saudi Arabia. The first four themes represent top-down views, where the main aim is to protect the Arabic language and Islamic identity. On the other hand, the last four themes represent bottom-up views of the students and their practices. This chapter presents stories from the field followed by a short analysis embedded within Cooper's (1989) framework.

Here, I have discussed the ways in which children learn languages at home. In today's world, children use different modes to make meaning. The cases presented here show that children do not use a single mode, but rather remix modes to make the best use of them. Their literacy practices and language learning are messy and very difficult to map. Technology, images, sound and video are used as tools to develop language skills. Here we assume no prior knowledge about remixing and mess in children's

interactions and literacy practices. This chapter has presented cases where evidence of remixing and messiness in children's environments can be seen.

Chapter 7: Discussion

1) Introduction

There is an interesting language planning situation manifested in these findings. The micro and nano multilingual practices show how language learning is going through major changes and development. Technology provides new opportunities for language use and language exposure. The stories presented in this research project tell how individuals (often children and young people) become language planners and develop their own multilingual worlds. Learner-agency and the decisions made by individuals tell of a desire for a multilingual situation that is not available in Saudi Arabia at the moment. This research project explored the dynamics between macro and micro language planning, in which top-down decisions seek the development of a particular (bilingual) language situation without encouraging any opportunities for a wider multilingual and diverse context. The status-planning dimension in Saudi Arabia is very clear. Arabic is the mother tongue and the language of Islam, and therefore commands protected status. The official language policy, as well as the official education policy, in Saudi Arabia revolves around protecting Arabic from any influence or change. In terms of foreign language education, English is the preferred and government-promoted foreign language; the language learnt by all learners as the official foreign language in schools. Whilst the reasons for choosing English may be based upon tradition or historical drift, the fact that English is a world language means its status too is largely uncontested. Both Arabic and English serve Saudi Arabia well in terms of balancing the traditional and religious elements of society with the outward looking and globally orientated factions of society. The position these languages is evidenced in the strong positive feelings expressed by participants in the study, in relation to the policies of the Ministry of Education. It is clear that there is

little appetite, on the part of the older generations represented in this study, to challenge official policies, and no real desire to challenge or question the hegemony of English either.

The students in this study hold contrasting views in relation to the hegemony of English and the seemingly intransigent position held by the Ministry of Education in relation to language curriculum modernisation. The bottom up, micro-language planning dimension sees students engaged in widespread, informal, online language learning of Japanese, Korean, French, Spanish and Turkish. The contrast between the government-led, the Ministry of Education and school-related ‘top down’ language planning position, and the student-led, micro and ‘bottom up’ language planning dimension is, I would argue, very exciting. It would appear that if the government, the Ministry of Education and school principals and teachers, represent the status quo in Saudi Arabia in a language planning sense, then the pupils engaged in their online, outward looking and, essentially, global language learning represent the future. These students are not only learning languages but doing this from within their homes and via smartphones; they are communicating with and accessing countries and cultures beyond the shores of Saudi Arabia. I would argue that this can only lead to a fundamental shift in Saudi language practices and policies if or, more likely when, the bottom up starts to influence the top down. The study of language in any context involves several disciplines, and is not confined to one (Ng and Bradac, 1993).

“In terms of content, study of language behavior runs the gamut from neuro-physiology of speech mechanism and aphasia, through comparative,

experimental, developmental, and social psychology, into cultural anthropology and the philosophy of science". (Osgood, 1953, p.726-727)

This research project explores foreign language planning in Saudi Arabia and, in doing so, goes back and forth between different disciplines: language planning, applied linguistics, literacy studies, multimodalities and even art. Each of these disciplines is present in the data and/or the analysis. This shows that researching language planning is complex and messy and cannot be examined without also looking into other disciplines. In this chapter, I discuss language planning and linguistic diversity in Saudi Arabia, multimodal language learning, language planning and education and the notion of nano language planning.

2) Language planning and linguistic diversity

Over the past few years, multilingualism has gained a new visibility due to the increase in mobility and migration (Castles and Miller, 2003). Linguistic diversity has become a common feature of everyday life. Public spaces, work places and homes all show aspects of linguistic diversity, and multilingualism can be seen all around us in films, media, the internet, and so on. However, this linguistic diversity is not currently seen in schools nor reflected in classroom practices. In Saudi Arabia, there are nearly 30,000 public schools (The Ministry of Education, 2011) in different communities with different linguistic needs, yet only two languages are promoted by the education system (Arabic and English). There is a growing need to communicate across linguistic borders, which means that the Saudi education policy, in terms of language teaching, needs to be reformed to adopt multilingualism. Saudi public schools are currently homogenous spaces, comfortable in their monolingual habitus, claiming that

linguistic diversity is a difficult challenge to address. The education system needs to be reimagined to include multilingual practices within educational norms, and to recognise the migrant minority languages, among others, developing outside the school context. Rethinking language diversity means rethinking the traditional conceptualisations of language education, as well as the assumption that teaching a second language is enough for linguistic diversity (Martin-Jones et al., 2012; Hélot, 2003; 2011; 2012).

Linguistic diversity in education does not mean including as many languages as possible in the curriculum, but the understanding of how languages are used in society. While conducting this project, it was clear that there were wider issues concerning multilingualism. There is always a belief that Arabic is a privileged language and an assumption that learning a second language hinders the correct acquisition of the first. In addition, languages are represented in a hierarchy, where one language is more valuable (or practical) than the other. These issues are often reinforced by the school system. Language in education (Ferguson, 2006) has been significantly influenced by language categorisation and labelling, such as, mother tongue, foreign language, global language, local/minority language. These labels only serve to enforce language hierarchies and create barriers to language learning. It is often believed, in monolingual views of language learning, that linguistic diversity simply means more foreign languages taught at school, or classroom activities in a variety of languages. Hélot (2012) argues that students should be aware of the complex relationships between languages spoken in the world today, and the value of each language and its cultural heritage. To understand linguistic diversity in education, we need to analyse the role of languages in education and move to a

multilingual perspective, stressing the importance and use of different languages, and making the school a multilingual society where students interact with different languages.

Linguistic diversity is not a secondary or minor aspect of language education and linguistic practices. In fact, it is the main and central aspect of language engagement and language interactions. The diversity of language and the diversity of different ways of speaking are no bad thing. On the contrary, many studies (Androutsopoulos and Juffermans, 2014; Beacco and Byram, 2002; Blommaert, 2013a; Blommaert and Rampton, 2012; Hassa, 2012; Hélot, 2012; Hélot and Young, 2005; Prinsloo and Stroud, 2014; Vertovec, 2007), including this one, show how multilingualism and linguistic diversity are the nature of language itself. Language is always changing and people use language to define themselves as nations, communities, groups, and families. Rather than seeing multilingualism and linguistic diversity as a nuisance, we should think about language from the very fact that linguistic diversity has always been and will always be part of humanity. Therefore, for human interaction to happen, a form of cross-cultural and intralingual communication has to occur, and linguistic diversity is central to the entire process. The situation nowadays regarding the diversity of language in the world can be described as very unique and interesting, especially since it has no historical precedence. One of the main ideas I came across while conducting this study is the idea of sameness and otherness. The government-led educational policies seem to have clear ideas about what it means to be a Saudi and a Muslim. The micro linguistic practices, on the other hand, challenge the ideas of 'us and them' and produce a parable of all forms of human communication, especially in relation to diversity and multilingualism. Linguistic diversity is a natural part of the

human condition, and for linguistic diversity to occur we need more than one language.

Another interesting argument arising from this study is the idea of diversity and inclusion. Yoshino (2013) explores such ideas and how people often modulate their own identity and background to adopt a mainstream behaviour. In this research project, official education policies only acknowledge one form of identity for all students (a Muslim, Arab, and Saudi). Learners with diverse backgrounds modulate their identity (and interests) and adopt the ‘normalised’ mainstream behaviour to be included. The stories of Nouf, Sana, Sami and Majed show how learners avoid discussing their multilingual literacy practices with their teachers and leave their diverse backgrounds at home, adopting only the ‘Saudi-Muslim’ persona in public. When it comes to language education and diversity, I strongly agree with Blommaert (2013a), Hélot (2012) and Hélot and Young (2005), who state that linguistic and cultural diversity should be embedded in education. Encountering different cultures, people, and languages, contributes to what I consider an impactful education, as it plays an important role in broadening the mind. The stories presented in this study show that children and young people in Saudi Arabia are engaging with diversity and multiliteracies in their daily lives, whether supported by formal policies or not, which I find both interesting and exciting.

3) Multilingual Awareness

As mentioned before, multilingualism allows people to see and experience the world through different eyes (or perspectives). Hawkins (1987) explains that there is a lack of coherence between language itself and language education. There is also a lack of

connection between languages taught in schools and languages spoken outside the school. In the case of Saudi public schools, there is no cooperation between teaching Arabic and teaching English. Neither is there a connection between teaching those two languages and other languages spoken in the community (e.g. Hindi, Indonesian, Turkish, etc.). The teaching of different languages should be integrated in order to understand their nature and function. Students should also be able to make sense of their learning experience and be aware of it (Hélot, 2012).

“Stimulate curiosity about language as the defining characteristics of the ‘articulate mammal’ too easily taken for the granted, to integrate the different kinds of language teaching met at school, and to help children to make an effective start in their foreign language learning’. (Hawkins, 1987, p.413)

Language acquisition approaches at schools often consist of superficial activities, not always integrated into the curriculum. One solution, proposed by Hélot (2012), is a “cross-curricular approach”, which allows bilingual learners to build on their knowledge of their first language in order to learn/acquire a second language by incorporating their identity to make sense of their experience. Cummins (2000) urges educators to develop a new form of pedagogy for multiliteracies development; one that challenges the lack of language provision in schools and helps students develop their literacy skills in different languages. This pedagogy of multiliteracies allows bilingual (and multilingual) students to learn through different languages, thus involving them in multilingual education.

Traditional language acquisition activities are often based on transmissive pedagogy, which is unable to ensure the presence of linguistic and cultural diversity in the classroom, since the learning objectives are planned to suit the class as a whole and not as individual learners. On the other hand, transformative pedagogy allows students to take ownership of their language learning and use a variety of languages inside (or outside) school. Transformative pedagogy also allows students to expand their linguistic capacity, which makes it possible for them to transfer knowledge across languages, developing their critical literacy (Hélot, 2003; 2011; 2012). Yamani (2000) states that the younger generation in Saudi Arabia are conscious of the world around them beyond the borders of Saudi. She argues that youngsters (in this conservative country) believe that embracing different cultures will enhance their personal and professional lives. However, unlike Saudi students, the majority of educators (and policy makers) seem to lack multilingual awareness. Hélot (2012) argues that foreign language education provides children with better opportunities in their future lives.

“It could also help children (monolingual and bilingual) and teachers, to understand the value of bilingualism and biculturalism whatever the perceived status of languages in society, because bilingual/bicultural individuals are the ones to build bridges between different cultures rather than erect frontiers”.

(Hélot, 2003, p.274)

Unfortunately, multilingualism is not valued in Saudi Arabia, as language policy makers simply choose to ignore it. As previously mentioned, public schools in the country are heavily influenced by religion and see Islam and Islamic culture as the

main source of knowledge. The level of neglect for foreign language education is worrying. There is evidence, as I have been able to show, that Saudi students are pursuing their foreign language education outside school. I would argue that policy makers' negative attitude toward foreign language education is problematic and shows a lack of vision. This research project explores the multilingual literacy practices of children and young people in Saudi Arabia, which suggests an awareness of the benefits associated with speaking more than one language. The children's engagement with different languages is not isolated as another subject area in the curriculum, but as something that interacts with their prior language knowledge and adds to their overall linguistic repertoire and ability. This study also suggests that, while Saudi Arabia might not be multilingual on an institutional level (schools and public services), it is multilingual on a social, individual, and discursive level.

4) Issues of language diversity

One of the key issues of language diversity in education is the meaning of the term 'diversity'. It is often understood (by policy makers and education systems) as a wide range of languages taught in schools. Offering a variety of different languages at school and teaching them separately creates a learning space where languages compete against each other, thus enforcing labels, such as global/valuable language. This top-down policy is insufficient to sustain language diversity in education.

Maintaining local heritage is one of the arguments against linguistic diversity in education. However, Beacco and Byram (2002) see linguistic diversity itself as heritage, and different languages spoken in the community should not be seen as foreign, as multilingualism is now the norm for many communities around the world.

Here, the multiplicity of languages itself is considered a heritage that must be protected (Hélot, 2003; 2011; 2012; Hélot et al., 2012; Hélot and Laoire, 2011; Hélot and Young, 2005; Pickel and Hélot, 2014). In many communities, including Saudi Arabia, children hear/speak many languages within the family context, yet schools fail to acknowledge or support the linguistic and cultural diversity present outside the school (as evidence from this study shows). In the case of Saudi Arabia, the education system often views the bilingual education available to students as the extent of linguistic diversity. Students and language teachers are often left to face limited competence in foreign languages, and the lack of support in language transmission, from home. The education system needs to normalise linguistic diversity in schools and help students become aware of different languages in their own community and see the value of these languages.

Language decisions are often the result of covert or overt beliefs about languages, and their social, political or economical values. Blommaert (2005, p.241) explains that these “socially and culturally embedded metalinguistic conceptualizations of language and its forms of usage” are often viewed as language ideologies. There is a strong relationship between language and ideology. To study languages in the social world is to study ideologies (Thompson, 1984). This study employs language ideologies as a link between formal social structure and everyday language use. Bourdieu (1991, p.167) argues that language ideologies work best when invisible, or in other words, “ideologies serve particular interests which they tend to present as universal interests, shared by the group as a whole”.

In the Saudi school curriculum, the term ‘diversity’ does not feature prominently, whereas terms like ‘nationalism’ or ‘Islamic values’ do, especially when talking about education and citizenship. While this might have been acceptable at some point in the past, the same thing cannot be said about today’s world, where (due to globalisation) a growing number of students in Saudi schools are multilingual and multicultural.

“We would like to argue that if education authorities are serious about the notion of otherness and want it included concretely in teaching approaches, rather than in abstract principles, such education should start in the classroom and be linked to the existing multiplicity of languages and cultures represented by the pupils themselves”. (Hélot and Young, 2005, p.248)

The reluctance of policy makers to acknowledge the diverse backgrounds of students makes it difficult for schools to incorporate diversity in the classroom. Hélot and Young (2005) urge education policy makers to value diversity in language education, as it is a step towards recognising multilingualism in schools. In addition, Pauwels (2013) argues that multilingual societies are the norm rather than the exception around the world, as it is nearly impossible to find a community that is truly monolingual. However, monolingualism has become the norm as the preferred linguistic condition to encourage ideas of unification and nationhood. Pauwels (2013) also argues that this romantic notion of language is still considerable today and has huge influence on multilingualism, as well as language provision. Multilingualism and linguistic diversity are not new or static phenomena, and considering them as such contributes to the growing number of endangered languages. Pauwels (2013) goes on to explain that globalisation and mobility are very hard to control, and that is

why ‘superdiversity’ and ‘hyper-multilingualism’ are becoming characteristics of many communities around the world. In multilingual societies, people require a multilingual repertoire to be able to go about daily life. Such multilingual repertoires are increasingly visible in communities that acknowledge themselves as multilingual. Indeed, multilingual realities often create a challenge to policy makers in terms of management. Managing a multilingual society is part of the language planning process, which is heavily influenced by politics, ideologies, and debates around identity and linguistic rights.

There is a need for interdisciplinarity in the fields of language planning and language policy. Language policy makers need the inputs of political sciences, sociolinguistics, sociology, social psychology, education, and economics. I argue that language researchers, language planners, and language teachers need to be interdisciplinary in order to fully understand language and linguistic practices. This can be a very hard challenge; nonetheless, a number of linguists (Backhaus, 2007; 2009; Baron, 2008; Hélot, 2011; 2012) have succeeded in linking language to other fields beyond its traditional boundaries. Exploring the diversity of languages and the different types of speech is an interesting aspect of language development. In many countries, linguistic diversity is the nature of language itself. Therefore, instead of regarding language diversity as a nuisance, we need to consider the colourful aspects of language as a natural part of humanity.

5) Multilingual Pedagogies

Language teaching and learning should support the social justice of students of different backgrounds. Therefore, multilingual pedagogies should include the

language practices of students and develop their linguistic diversity. “Multilingual pedagogies have most often been viewed in the past as adjustments to monolingual pedagogies in order to teach and develop one additional separate language” (García and Flores, 2012, p.232). However, the language practices of bilingual and multilingual individuals and their role in language development have only been recently acknowledged. There are, nonetheless, some key issues in multilingual pedagogies that must be acknowledged. It is hard to think about multilingual pedagogies without also considering curricular planning and the provision of different languages at school. In most Saudi public schools, language learning relies on “strict separation” (García and Flores, 2012), due to the language teaching methodologies developed within a monoglossic ideology. Teachers (often bilingual) exclusively use the target language, and create language activities to support the learning of that language only (namely English).

Hélot (2003) argues that it is hard to understand the development of multilingual education without analysing the educational terms within the political, social and cultural framework. Socio-historical and cultural factors often affect multilingual education. Saudi Arabia is known for its monolingual identity and Islamic heritage. Multilingualism and any other forms of foreign influence are often viewed as a threat to the cohesion and unity of the nation. Language policy makers often argue that multi-language education is a messy process and difficult to plan. There are no clear measures to choose or support foreign language education. Education policy makers need to answer questions like what languages to teach, why and what are the long-term implications of teaching foreign languages. However, findings from this study show that some children and young adults in Saudi Arabia are not concerned with the

messiness of foreign language education. Within students' language practices, there are no clear boundaries between formal learning, informal learning, physical space, digital space, inside the school or outside the school. Literacies are not just a set of skills that can be easily measured. They are embedded in people's social life and social context, within which they use and are tested on their use of language. Barton and Hamilton (2013) argue that the meanings and values of literacy are situated, which is often the bedrock assumption in literacy research. Barton and Hamilton (2013) go on to explain that literacy does not stand on its own, it is embedded within a cultural and political framework. In this research project, I argue that there are means for developing and implementing a multilingual literacy model, one which is better capable of acknowledging (and catering for) diversity among learners in Saudi public schools than the one currently implemented. The stories in this study show how learners in Saudi Arabia come from diverse backgrounds. However, these students find themselves in classrooms that are often unprepared for cultural diversity.

As discussed in chapters 3 and 4, language policy is a tool for managing language conflict. At many points in its history, the Middle East has promoted, attached, re-established, protected, eradicated, and protected language in a series of decisions, legislations, and policies (Suleiman, 2013a; Suleiman, 2013b; Tuma, 2014). The notion of language rights (Akinaso, 1994; Faingold, 2007; Hornberger, 2000; 2003) can be applied in this study, as multilingualism coincides with globalisation, the improvement of education, and the improvement of urbanisation. People living in Saudi Arabia have the right to an officially recognised multilingual education. At the moment, there is no evidence that such multilingual rights are being recognised by official language policies. In fact, multilingual rights are rarely discussed or

researched within the context of Saudi Arabia, even though it is an issue that affects people's everyday lives, as seen in this research project. Formal language education in Saudi Arabia can be described as 'depressing'; however, the bottom-up findings from this study suggest that the country is undergoing social change without realising it. This could be the beginning of a very complex conversation between language planners, language researchers, language teachers, and language learners, as multilingual literacy practices grow among children and young people in Saudi Arabia. The stories presented in this study tell us how embracing multilingualism make children and young people feel part of a wider and international community. This study contributes to the discussion about multilingual pedagogies and multilingual rights. Linguistic diversity is a fundamental value of language education and language use. However, linguistic diversity is often misinterpreted (and in some cases challenged) by the process of language protection (Fraser, 2009), as language protection (whether explicitly or implicitly) values one language over another.

6) Multilingual education in the English-speaking world

English as a global language has a significant impact on bilingual or multilingual education. This section will look into the status of English and problematise the teaching of English at school. Compared to other languages in the world, English can be positioned at the top of a perceived language hierarchy (Gardner et al., 2012; Graddol, 1998). Globalisation has allowed English to move beyond national and cultural boundaries and become the world lingua franca (Block and Cameron, 2002; Gnutzmann and Intemann, 2005; McArthur, 1998). Much has been written on English as a global language (Ferguson, 2006; 2013; Pennycook, 1994; 2014), and the teaching and learning of English in Saudi Arabia (Al-Asmari, 2005; Al-Hazmi, 2003;

Al-Seghayer, 2005; Alabdelwahab, 2002; Alessa, 2010; Alshumaimeri, 1999; Ayooob and Kosebalaban, 2009). Here, I argue that despite its global status, English does not replace (or overtake) other languages. I will also problematise the teaching of English as the only foreign language in Saudi public schools. Examining how authorities in Saudi Arabia have dealt with foreign language education has shown me that there is a clear lack of support for multilingualism and the use of foreign languages. English still dominates foreign language education. As a result, foreign languages (besides English) have lost their place in the curriculum, and multilingualism has been devalued and ignored, especially in early childhood. Social and religious pressures reject foreign language education for young children, in order to maintain their Islamic identity and Arabic language.

It would be very difficult to explore language learning without examining the role of English as a global language. As in the stories of theme one (see Chapter 6), English holds a special role as it provides its speakers with opportunities for better education (Crystal, 1997). The status of English in the world has a huge influence on language planning and foreign language policies in Saudi Arabia (see Chapters 2, 3, and 4). The language profile of Saudi Arabia is a great example of how English as a global language influences the process of language planning, as well as the language policies of different countries. This links back to the argument of Pennycook (2014), in which he problematises English language teaching and its impact on social and cultural diversity. The teaching of English has been criticised by many, as it gives English power over other languages. Munat (2005) proposes researching “world Englishes” rather than English as a global language.

“While some of us may question the legitimacy of that primacy [of English] and stubbornly insist that our own national idiom is to be protected from the infiltration of insidious foreign terminology, we are nonetheless forced to succumb to this dominance and learn English – unless we choose to be accompanied by the costly personal interpreter when we venture into foreign environments”. (Munat, 2005, p.144)

This study shows that English as a foreign language has been implemented in early years of schooling. The majority of parents interviewed in this study seem eager for their children to learn English, and schools make sure English is available to all students. Baldauf et al. (2010) believe that the tendency to focus on English learning could raise some issues; one of which is the impact of teaching English on other languages in the “language ecology”. They argue that English is overtaking other languages in the education system and threatening minority languages. I also argue that English is not only affecting the provision of minority languages in schools, but also other international languages (like Spanish, French and Chinese).

“[The] focus on the dominant language in the ecology damages not only the survival of the minority languages but also the chance of minority language speaking individuals to get the most out of schooling”. (Baldauf et al., 2010, p.431)

Forman (2014) argues that English language textbooks have a huge impact on foreign language pedagogies. In Saudi public schools, all textbooks (including English language textbooks) must have an Islamic direction. The textbooks often convey

inaccurate representations of the target language and culture (Arnold and Tennant, 2008a; 2008b; 2013a; 2013b). English language education relies mainly on these approved language textbooks; however, they often fail to meet the linguistic needs of the Saudi community. As a result, many students in the country struggle when learning English as their second language. This has created a situation where people (especially parents) are sceptical about introducing more foreign languages to school pupils. Another interesting finding from this study is the myth about multilingualism and academic achievement. Stories in theme three (see Chapter 6) feature parents, teachers and learners who are worried about the negative effect of engaging with many languages. Such myths about multilingualism are common among parents with young children as well as school practitioners. It is often perceived that children who engage with different languages will be delayed, confused, less intelligent, and will experience literacy difficulties. However, none of these claims have been shown to be true, and there is no evidence that children who engage with several languages are delayed as a result. Such myths regarding the negative effects of multilingualism do not consider all implications of multilingualism and linguistic diversity. The micro, multilingual, and multimodal literacy practices of children and young people in Saudi Arabia provide a better understanding of the value of language learning, and challenge the status of English. This was one of the main reasons that encouraged me, as a researcher, to move away from viewing language as a cognitive science paradigm and explore the connections between language and social formation. Linking the findings of this study to social theories has enabled me to better understand cultural activities and social relationships and how they influence language use and literacy practices.

7) Multilingualism and social change

This study presents evidence that the nature of childhood and youth in Saudi Arabia is gradually changing. The decisions behind Saudi education and language policies mainly aim to protect a majority-led, top-down, ‘ideal’; a neat form of identity that should be acquired by all people in Saudi Arabia (see Chapters 2, 3, and 4). However, findings from this research project suggest that people’s inherited pasts are different from one another. Individuals, even those who belong to the same communities and social groups, have different pasts, different experiences, and different backgrounds. People who share some of the same fundamental values also have diverse views and beliefs, which spring from personal experience and interest. The status quo would be very difficult to maintain as Saudi Arabia is going through a very rapid social and political change. Promoting linguistic diversity is more aligned with the aspiration of the people and their broader views about language and culture.

“The socio-economic and political changes that occurred in the Arab world affect children’s culture to a great extent. This is more obvious in the Arab Gulf societies because oil revenue has contributed to increasing their national income. Therefore, since 1970 these countries have been witnessing rapid social and economic change”. (Khalifa, 2001, p.6)

Upon conducting this study, it was clear to me that childhood and youth in Saudi Arabia are rapidly changing and developing. There are several local and global factors that have an impact on children’s culture. Findings from this research project show that children’s lives are heavily influenced by different cultures. Aspects of different cultures can be seen in children’s literature, clothes, music, games and lifestyles. This

socio-historical shift has changed Saudi children's perceptions about their identities. Other studies (Al-Hdeedy, 1986; Al-Safty, 1990; Khalifa, 2001; Suleiman, 2013a) show that children in Saudi Arabia nowadays have completely different views from older generations, especially when it comes to identity and their position within the community. A rise in income has aided the emergence of new cultural patterns, and the exposure to other cultures through different means (e.g. the growth of mass media) has led to the emergence of new cultural norms. The stories in this study tell us that linguistic diversity is a value most people in Saudi Arabia share, as it enables them to build relationships with different people from around the world.

To understand the change and development in children's lives in Saudi Arabia and how they view languages, we must look at the wider context of social change within the Saudi community. When examining the social change of developing countries (like Saudi Arabia), researchers often focus on macro influences, such as the political and economic structure of the country, with little regard to the practices of individuals (Hulme and Turner, 1990).

7.1) Family

The main institution that socialises children and influences their practices is family. Khalifa (2001) argues that any changes within a family's structure directly affects children's experiences and upbringing. She also highlights how different generations within the same family have different views regarding social life, and how the older generations' views often become rules and obligations for younger generations.

“Relation with parents and kin, most of all the mother, are subject to Islamic religious laws and rules. Therefore, social change and development has to be seen as conditional and as conditioned by the desire to maintain the moral values of the traditional Arab culture and heritage, as this can be clearly seen as the socialization role of the changing Saudi family”. (Khalifa, 2001, p.94)

Findings from this research project show that families have a huge influence on children’s and teenagers’ multilingual practices. Some cases from this study show that students often reflect on their older siblings’ and parents’ experiences when making decisions about their foreign language learning. Children and youth in Saudi Arabia are not ignorant of the changes in their communities and families, and they often challenge social norms (Yamani, 2000). Nowadays, Saudi children have established connections with different cultures (and languages) through overseas travel, mass media and foreign labourers arriving in the country. This, in turn, plays a huge role in changing family life. Khalifa (2001) and Yamani (2000) present stories about Saudi families who have embraced new “cultural patterns” and global culture.

7.2) Media and the Internet

“Media have a major role to play in maintaining or challenging existing language regimes, attitudes and ideologies” (Kelly-Holmes, 2012, p.333). As with any aspect of everyday life, multilingualism can be seen in media in both explicit (newspapers and TV) and implicit ways (advertising and global brands). Haarmann (1989) uses the term “impersonal bilingualism” to refer to multilingualism in advertising and marketing where the use of language is symbolic. The top-down explicit media

presents monolingualism as the norm, whereas the bottom-up implicit media features multilingual forms, often not linked to official policies (Kelly-Holmes, 2012).

Almahmoud (2014) mentions that over the past few years the Saudi government has lost its control over mass media due to new media technologies (the Internet), which has affected language planning and people's access to languages. "The argument concerning the positive and negative impacts of the media may refer to ideological principles to do with defining and interpreting the phenomena of language errors and change" (Almahmoud, 2014, p.16). He argues that there are three viewpoints for the phenomena of language change in Saudi Arabia. First is the change and development of language itself through media, which creates concern about the promotion and spreading of foreign terms and structures. Second is the change and development of language through natural processes, where language gradually changes to meet the linguistic needs of people. Third is the change and development of language through social construction, where linguists control language.

7.3) Economy

In today's world, multilingualism can be considered both the process and the product of economic activities. "The new economy has emerged as a fertile ground for linguistic research and drives its significance from the very nature of social transformations taking place today" (Duchêne and Heller, 2012, p.369). The economy has an impact on multilingual practices in any community and generates a framework for language use. Language has taken on an essential role in the global market. Bourdieu (1993) explains that in order to understand linguistic expressions, this must be viewed as the product of a linguistic market and linguistic habitus, as people

employ their linguistic resources to serve a particular purpose. Yamani (2000) states that younger generations in Saudi Arabia are in a very unique position, as they witness (and sometimes contribute to) social and economic changes in the country.

“The new generation is now beginning to recognise that state-guaranteed economic certainty is a luxury it can no longer depend on. The progressive decline in oil revenue in real terms had forced the Saudi government to scale back its spending on welfare provision. As an ever increasing number of the new generation prepares to enter the job market they face the prospect of under-employment or even unemployment”. (Yamani, 2000, p.70)

Yamani (2000) explains that young Saudis show an awareness of the economic status of Saudi Arabia, and whether their education is suitable for the job market. She also argues that Saudi youth recognise the need to develop their skills beyond formal education, and realise that they themselves must be in control of this.

7.4) Popular culture

The findings in this study build on the work of Cheung (2001), Dickie and Shuker (2014), Dunn et al. (2014), Hobbs and Moore (2013), Marsh (2006b), Marsh and Millard (2000), Petrone (2013), Rowsell et al. (2014), Schmier (2014), Williams (2009; 2011). The stories of Reem and Lama (see Chapter 6) show how popular culture plays a strong role in multilingual literacy practices, and how it can link to learners’ identities and their social interactions. The multilingual practices of Reem and Lama link back to the argument of Marsh (2006a; 2006b; 2011) about the powerful role popular culture plays in children’s literacy practices. These stories also

build on the work of Gee (2003; 2007) and Ito et al. (2013) in which engaging with digital literacies and popular culture allow learners to develop digital identities that enable them to deal with social change. The discussions in Chapter 3 explore children's interactions with popular culture and how these contribute to children's agency, the reshaping of youth culture, and ideas around diversity and belonging. Sarkar and Low (2012) define popular culture as the distinctive idea, customs, social behaviour products, or way of life of a particular society, people or period. Similar to multilingualism, popular culture is a common feature of today's world, as it lends itself to language mixing and crosses political and cultural borders easily. Films, music, food and art of a certain culture promote the language of that culture. Where rock music goes English follows, where Anime and Manga go Japanese follows, and where Bollywood movies go Hindi and Urdu follow. Popular culture, therefore, creates a bilingual layer in any community.

East-Asian languages, Japanese and Korean in particular, seem to be a key focus among Saudi students in this study. Japanese Anime cartoons, Japanese Manga graphic comics and Korean pop music expose students to the target culture as well as the language. Saudi students often use posters of Japanese and Korean bands and films to decorate their bedrooms and play areas. They also use Korean or Japanese motivational or instructional cards to help them deal with the stress of exams. In seeking evidence of student respondents' informal language learning practices, they were very keen to show their language resources and cultural artefacts via photographs shared on Facebook. "Online technologies have blurred the boundaries between producer and audience" (Williams, 2008, p.28).

Nowadays, technology can have a huge impact on a person's life. A student from Saudi Arabia can look at a computer screen and interact with people from around the world via social networking sites. The students in this study engage in daily online practices. These practices are often driven by popular culture (e.g. discussing TV series or films, sharing music videos). Students employ such online spaces to discuss Japanese animation, Korean pop music and Turkish drama. Williams (2008) argues that popular culture has adapted quickly to online practices because it allows interactive participation. These interactive participations expand the students' knowledge beyond a book. "Long before online technologies, people would make statements or judgements about identity and taste based on the popular culture reference of those they would meet" (Williams, 2008, p.26). Students' online literacy practices are shaped by their experience of popular culture, and become a part of their everyday life (Williams, 2009). Exploring people's interactions with popular culture provides a new layer to identity (Norton, 2000), diversity (Blommaert, 2013b), cultural and linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1991), multilingualism (Duchêne and Heller, 2012; Grenfell, 2011), and New Literacy Studies (Gee, 1996; 2003; 2007; Street, 1984; 1993; 2012). The stories presented here push the boundaries of multilingual and multimodal literacy practices. Lama, Reem, Sana, Majed, and Fatimah (see Chapter 6) are involved in messy and complex multilingual literacies influenced by globalisation and popular culture.

8) Multilingual and digital literacies

Within the field of childhood research, it is widely accepted that children engage with technology and multiliteracies on a daily basis (Yamada-Rice, 2013). This research project into foreign language planning and policy in Saudi Arabia shows that children

employ a variety of multimodal and multilingual tools in their everyday lives. However, research into languages and linguistics often fails to recognise the importance of such new literacies. This study provides an initial step in understanding the role of technology and multimodality in foreign language learning. Here, I hope to build on the work of (Williams, 2009; Yamada-Rice, 2013) and highlight children's multilingual and multimodal literacy practices.

Many educational researchers have addressed some of the main issues in language planning and foreign language planning (Payne, 2007; Payne and Almansour, 2014). Here, I argue that such literacies place bottom-up language planners (children) in the position of power. I also consider some of the main factors that impact children's and young people's multilingual decisions (like popular culture). There is a growing body of work that addresses issues in multilingual literacies, foreign language planning and multimodality and meaning making. This study links together multilingual literacy studies and multimodality in the digital world.

It is widely accepted nowadays that technology is changing the way people learn. This is especially true when children learn to read, write and make meaning from their world. Norton (2000) mentions that individuals have multiple and changing identities that affect language learning. She argues that multiple identities empower rather than restrict learners. Technology and digital literacies are tools that give learners an opportunity to control their own learning process. Razfar and Yang (2010) argue that creative play is a crucial step in children's development. In the digital world, play can contribute to the development of multilingual literacy and language acquisition. Technology and digital literacy are useful and easy resources that engage children

with languages. Digital literacy combines language with different modes (images, colour and sound) to tell stories; increasing children's engagement with multiliteracy, as well as exposing them to different languages and different cultures. Indeed, children's interactions with technology vary from one situation to another; nonetheless, technology provides children with the tools and resources necessary to help them develop their multimodal and multilingual skills.

The way children interact with multilingual literacies is influenced by technology and the digital world. Unsworth (2006) explains that information and communication technologies do not only influence literacy practices, but also create a new form of literary narrative (like, videogames). This study evidences how children actively engage in exploring the digital space. They learn how to combine different languages, images and sounds to make meaning and develop visual and verbal skills. Pahl and Rowsell (2006) argue that multilingual literacy practices are complex and influenced by local and global factors. Also, Marsh (2006a) explains that globalisation is not a one-way process but rather a multicultural and international exchange. Indeed, the stories in this study show how Japanese, Korean and Spanish culture influence children's literacy practices online.

“It is this complex interchange of locally influenced meaning with global discourses, leading to the production of new and hybrid texts, which informs much of young children's interactions with media in contemporary society”.
(Marsh, 2006a, p.21)

Marsh (2006a; 2006b; 2011) also explains how children's communicative practices focus mainly on media, technology and popular culture. Here, I find that children's multilingual practices are embedded in multimodal and digital environment. Many digital literacy studies (Alvermann, 2010; Androutsopoulos and Juffermans, 2014; Buckingham and Willett, 2013; Darvin and Norton, 2014; Gee and Hayes, 2011b; Hayes and Duncan, 2012; Hobbs and Moore, 2013; Jenkins, 2006; Jonsson and Muhonen, 2014; Kasdorf, 2003; Razfar and Yang, 2010; Rowsell, 2013a; Schmier, 2014; Unsworth, 2006) mention how technology is an effective tool to develop children's interactions, creativity and collaboration, which can be useful skills for the 21st century. Digital storytelling is a powerful tool for meaning making and learning, as it provides a strong foundation for different kinds of literacy.

Buckingham and Willett (2013, p.1) define youth in relation to their connection to technology; they explain, "Young people are frequently described as a digital generation – a generation defined in and through its experience of digital computer technologies". They also argue that children take on an active role when engaging with technology, rather than passive viewing of mass media. Multilingual education becomes more complicated when we account for the role of media and technology in children's daily lives. Children and young people employ different digital tools to become creators of their own perspectives and understanding in the digital world. The stories presented here show that children participate in (and react to) social, economic and political changes in their environments in a critical and creative way when engaging with multilingual literacies in the digital space. Rapid growth and change within the Saudi community has given birth to youth and media culture. Yamani (2000) explains that, unlike older generations, children and young people engage

daily with media environments, and new urban street cultures. To understand children's literacy practices and their language identity, we need to look at their engagement with technology (Marsh, 2006a; 2006b; 2011).

Themes 6, 7, and 8 (see Chapter 6) present stories of how children and young people in Saudi Arabia engage with new literacies on a daily basis. The literacy practices of Haya, Reem, Eman, and Lama link back to the work of Gee (1996; 2003; 2007), and others (Bulfin and Koutsogiannis, 2012; Burnett et al., 2014a; Burnett et al., 2014b; Hagood, 2008; Hayes and Duncan, 2012; Lankshear and Knobel, 2013; Leu et al., 2014), where literacy and communication are shaped by digital media and online networking. The power of digital media and its link to language use is often overlooked by formal education policies. The language situation in Saudi Arabia is a great example of what Bulfin and Koutsogiannis (2012) argue. There is a separation between inside and outside school literacy practices, as complex multilingual, multimodal, and digital literacies tend to take place outside school. The stories in themes 6, 7, and 8 (see Chapter 6) also correspond to the arguments about how new literacies enable young people to go beyond formal education and use resources available online (Alvermann, 2010; Ito et al., 2010; Ito et al., 2013). The argument of Burnett et al. (2014a) (see Chapter 3) was very helpful in exploring everyday literacies, how they are changing, and their impact on social interactions.

After meeting and chatting with a number of children and young people in Saudi Arabia, I went online to observe their online literacy practices. My aim was to explore and understand the influences of online multilingual literacies. I wanted to explore the practices of young people who did not necessarily see themselves as language

learners, but who were, nonetheless, involved in daily multilingual interactions with each other and other people around the world. These multilingual and digital literacies suggest that the online environment has become a space for children and young people in Saudi Arabia to represent themselves and conduct discourses. Exploring their online literacy practices challenged my understanding of language learning and multilingualism. There are complex connections and relationships between global and local, online and offline, as it is impossible to separate one space from another. While exploring the multilingual practices of children and young people in Saudi Arabia, I found myself needing to carry on a sort of ‘connected research’, where I did not only explore the physical (offline) space, but moved into the online space to see the dynamics taking place between the two. Digital literacies have made me question language learning in both digital and physical worlds. Data from this study show how the online space can be used as an extension of the physical space, and sometimes an alternative social space that could be inhabited and used.

Such micro multilingual literacy practices are not a new phenomenon in Saudi Arabia (see Chapter 2). Ntelioglou (2014) explains how multilingualism is the norm in most communities. This suggests that overlooking linguistic diversity in formal education and the multilingual literacy practices of students is very problematic, and could affect the language ecology of Saudi Arabia (Fill and Mühlhäusler, 2006; Haugen, 2001; Mühlhäusler, 2000; Sapir, 2001). The stories in this study clearly show that the multilingual repertoires of children and young people in Saudi Arabia form their social identities (Becker, 2014; Blommaert and Backus, 2012; Busch, 2012; Jonsson and Muhonen, 2014; Ludi, 2006; Snell, 2013). Majed and Reem (see Chapter 6) demonstrate how their multilingual repertoire is a tool for intercultural

communication. This builds on the work of Duran (2014) (see Chapter 3) on young people's interactions with diversity and cultural identity, and the work of Busch (2012) on learners' agency and voice.

The development of digital literacy provides a space for multilingual learning. Observing children's online practices was very interesting, as they use social media, moving from one window to another to chat with their friends online while simultaneously watching videos and clips. Davies (2006) argues that children engage with different layers of language and modes within the digital space, as they integrate music, images, emoticons and multilingual text. Such activities are very important in developing skills that help children make meaning and engage with new literacies. Davies (2006) tells us that digital technologies have changed (and enriched) children's lives. Also, their identity is interwoven with languages, cultural artefacts and shared understanding.

“The development of self within communities involves a sense of empowerment, as a sense of writing the self develops, a sense of possibility as an active agent in one's own life emerges”. (Davies, 2006, p.227)

The rapid development of technology and social media has allowed children to navigate seamlessly between different cultures. The digital world allows them to participate in and exchange economic, social and cultural capital (Davies, 2006). The lack of geographical boundaries offers children new opportunities for multilingual learning. The stories presented in this study show language learning in relation to power and inscriptions of identity. The children's uses of digital resources reflect how

they structure the world around them and how they see themselves within it. They do not only speak and exchange knowledge, but also identify themselves and how they occupy that space.

“[Language learners] invest in learning because they know that they will acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources, and these social and economic gains in turn enhance the range of identities they can claim in a particular community”. (Darvin and Norton, 2014, p.57)

It seems to me that within the digital world, children and young people feel a sense of agency and belonging, as their multilingual and multimodal communicative practices are valued. They also gain a better understanding (and appreciation) of linguistic and cultural diversity and how it impacts their learning. Digital storytelling is a powerful tool in language learning. It creates a space for children to construct narrative and experience language, and provides them with a better understanding of how different modes work together to carry meaning. The idea of using technology for language learning is contextualised within recent theories of learning. The children involved in this study found language learning in the digital world more motivating and enjoyable.

9) Nano language planning

Language planners often research or describe the language behaviour of communities rather than individuals. Therefore, language planning is often defined as “the way in which organized communities, united by religion, ethnic or political ties, consciously attempt to influence the language(s)” (Ager, 2001, p.5).

Cooper (1979) argues that language planners often avoid innovation or new strategies when planning. He explains that in his descriptive framework, 'who' does not only refer to top-down governmental legislators or organisations, but also bottom-up communities and even individuals. He also argues that the impact of the bottom-up decisions might not be as strong as the top-down decisions. However, this research project shows that bottom-up decisions have a huge impact on individuals' lives. This nano language planning gives the power to individuals to make their own language plans, and act on their decisions. Rules and laws do not drive nano language planning.

This research project identifies a clear gap between Saudi education policy and students' linguistic needs and desires. There is also a gap between government legislation and minority groups within the communities, as non-Saudis are expected to learn Arabic. Findings from this study show that there is a need for foreign language learning at schools beyond English. Students' linguistics practices outside the school demonstrate that English as a foreign language does not replace or diminish other foreign languages. This study shows that Saudi students employ languages (besides Arabic and English) to learn, understand, develop their skills and demonstrate their knowledge. In this study, individuals made decisions regarding their foreign language learning and employed approaches focusing on direct language use. Nano language planning does not face the same issues or obstacles as top-down planning, such as politics, economy and religion. In fact, nano language planning overcomes such influences.

Nano language planning can be effective, as language knowledge and language learning are brought together in an integrated way, in a space where the planners (the students) make the decisions. The unpredictable and uncontrolled nature of nano language planning makes it difficult to research or explore. The students' non-linear use of foreign languages creates issues for policy makers who are used to controlled and imposed practices. Nano language planning occurs in every aspect of the students' lives inside and outside school, in a physical or digital space. It can be seen in the students' interactions with each other, which only shows that it is unpredictable and messy. I argue that policy makers in Saudi Arabia find themselves overwhelmed by increasing demands for a reformed foreign language policy and the provision for more foreign languages in schools, thus ignoring or denying the issue.

10) Chapter summary

This exploratory study presents very interesting findings. In Saudi Arabia, the top-down decisions regarding language planning aim, primarily, to protect the country's first language (Arabic), and secondly to promote English as the only foreign language. Policy makers believe that Arabic and English strike a balance between the traditional and Islamic values of society, while also seeming to embrace globalisation. These top-down decisions fail to recognise the country's linguistic needs. This study enforces the ideas of Pennycook (2001) regarding language research. Separating language from its social and historical context creates a gap between language and linguistic theories and real world language use. This is the main issue in language classrooms where, instead of exploring the diversity of learners' backgrounds and linking language and literacy practices to social life, learners are mechanically completing language tasks (Pavlenko, 2014). People's engagement with language is

messy and cannot be described in neat way (González et al., 2013). Ideas of multilingualism (Jaworski, 2014; Kaplan, 2014b; Kelly-Holmes, 2012; Leppänen and Peuronen, 2012; O'Brien et al., 2014; Omoniyi, 2012; Sarkar and Low, 2012), diversity (Blommaert, 2013a; Blommaert and Rampton, 2012; Hélot, 2012; Hélot and Young, 2005; Prinsloo and Stroud, 2014; Vertovec, 2007), and language investment (Norton and Toohey, 2011, Toohey and Norton, 2010), are fundamental in language engagement and social interaction. This chapter has discussed the need to recognise linguistic diversity when planning, especially since students in Saudi Arabia show linguistic awareness and value multilingualism. In this chapter, I have discussed the need to consider multilingual pedagogies in Saudi Arabia. Finally, I have promoted the idea of nano language planning to describe the multilingual practices of individuals (children) in Saudi Arabia.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

1) Introduction

Saudi society has witnessed many social, political and economic changes in past years. These changes have affected the culture and experiences of children and young people in the country. This research project investigates foreign language planning and policy in Saudi Arabia, and presents some of the significant findings. This study employs aspects of Cooper's (1989) theoretical framework of language planning and Charmaz's (2006) constructivist grounded theory to answer the following questions:

- What influences foreign language planning in Saudi Arabia?
- What are the gaps in foreign language education in Saudi Arabia, and how can they be addressed?
- How do Saudi students and communities perceive the country's foreign language policy?

Here, I address the informal, multimodal and multilingual literacy practices of Saudi children. The following section presents a summary of the answers to the research questions and suggests areas for further work.

2) What influences foreign language planning in Saudi Arabia?

Education and language planning in Saudi Arabia are heavily influenced by religion. Upon its foundation, Saudi Arabia took Islam as the basis for all policies (including education). Language planning and language education in the country revolve around protecting the Arabic language. As previously mentioned, Saudi Arabia views Arabic as a holy language, the language of Islam.

To maintain Islamic values and protect Saudi traditions from outside influences, foreign language education has been limited to English only. Due to its international status, English serves Saudi Arabia in terms of meeting the demands of globalisation. Other foreign languages are, therefore, devalued and deemed unnecessary for Saudi citizens to learn. The discussions in chapters 2 and 3 of this study explored the top-down decision making process and how the current foreign language situation in Saudi Arabia came to be.

3) What are the gaps in foreign language education in Saudi Arabia, and how can they be addressed?

One of the main criticisms of Saudi education policy is its limited vision. Foreign language education ignores the rich and diverse backgrounds of individuals living in the country. Public education expects all students to speak Arabic as their first language and learn English as a second language, with little regard for their cultural and linguistic diversity. Education policy also fails to address these gaps, as none of the education reform projects touch on foreign language education (beyond English). On the other hand, findings from this research project show that students themselves have identified the gaps in the Saudi foreign language policy. They are also making decisions and taking steps to address these gaps outside formal education.

Discussions from this study explain how current foreign language policy does not meet the linguistic needs of Saudi society, particularly for younger generations. The decisions made by policy makers assume that everyone in Saudi Arabia is linguistically homogeneous and fail to recognise the diverse cultures represented in the country. The lack of multilingual awareness in current foreign language policy

causes many issues in children's education. The data show dynamic and complicated nano foreign language planning in Saudi Arabia. These language planning efforts can be described as interesting and exciting given the strict nature of the government.

4) How do Saudi students and communities perceive foreign language policy in Saudi Arabia?

The main finding from this study is that children and teenagers in Saudi Arabia are multilingual in practice and/or outlook. The students (sampled here) see the advantages of multilingualism and feel the need for a diverse foreign language education. The majority of participants (students and parents) disagree with the decisions made by the Ministry of Education. Foreign language policy has created a situation where foreign language education occurs informally outside of school.

Findings from this study present evidence of students finding other ways (outside formal education) to learn foreign languages. The discussions here offer a new way to understand and explore foreign language learning and new technologies as a means to achieve this (such as smartphones). Children and teenagers use technology to access information and engage in the learning of languages of their choice. Facebook, WhatsApp and other similar applications provide students with a modern and groundbreaking language learning experience, often not recognised by formal education.

The students in this study are not waiting to be guided in terms of which technologies to use and how to use them. They are not only engaged in informal language learning but also interacting with students from other countries and societies. This could be

viewed less kindly from certain quarters, given the closed nature of Saudi society. Indeed, the children (in this study) are language planners, since they recognise the language barrier reflected in the lack of provision of foreign languages in schools, and they are finding solutions to those problems through a variety of means (such as online language learning). However, these micro or nano language planning efforts are not fed back into a process that will affect the macro language planning stage. Therefore, the language planners are acting as individuals outside the language planning system of Saudi Arabia.

5) Limitations and further work

This research project contributes to the field of foreign language planning research. The study uses an inductive approach (based on grounded theory) to explore foreign language planning and policy in Saudi Arabia. As is the case with any research, there are always limitations. In the case of this project, the findings link to the sample setting; other settings may have produced different results. In addition, this is an exploratory case study, therefore, the findings (especially those in relation to bottom-up language planning) cannot be generalised without further investigation.

Findings from this study suggest areas for further research, for example, an in depth study exploring children's multilingual literacy practices in digital spaces, and the effect of popular culture on children's decision-making processes regarding language learning. The use of collaborative research methods to include children in foreign language planning research would be another worthy area of study.

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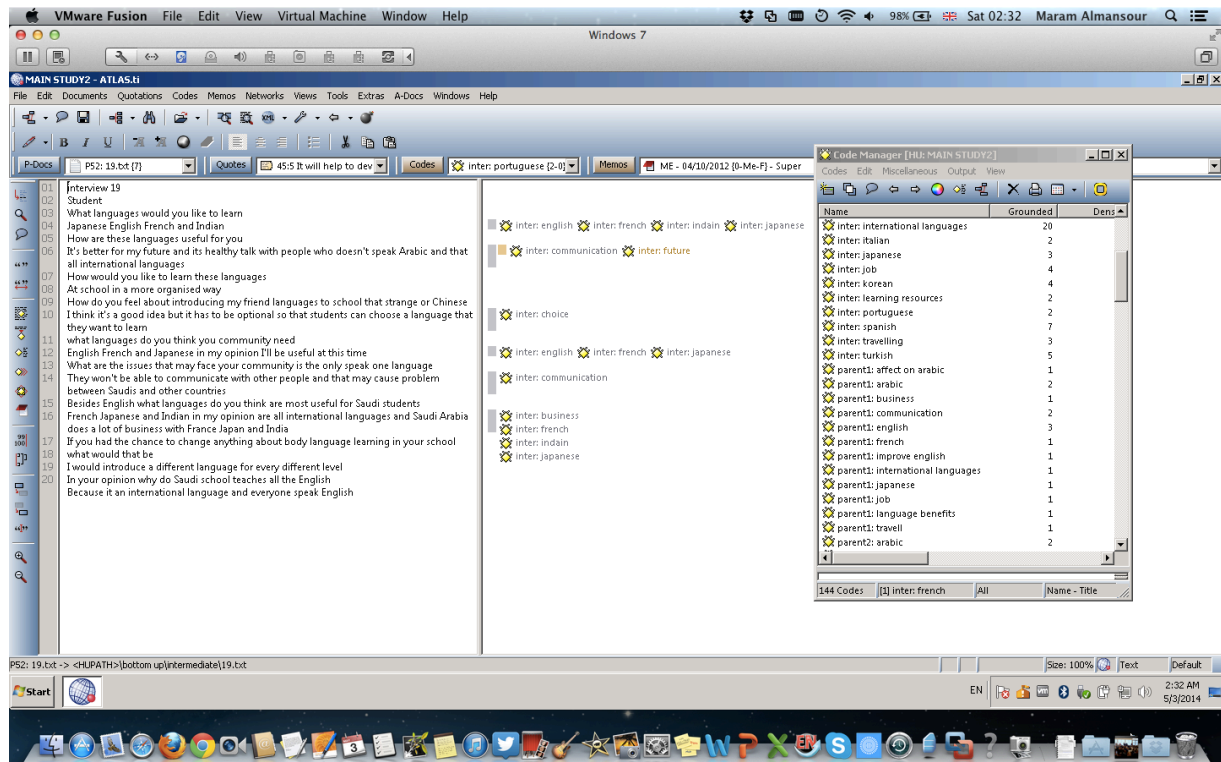
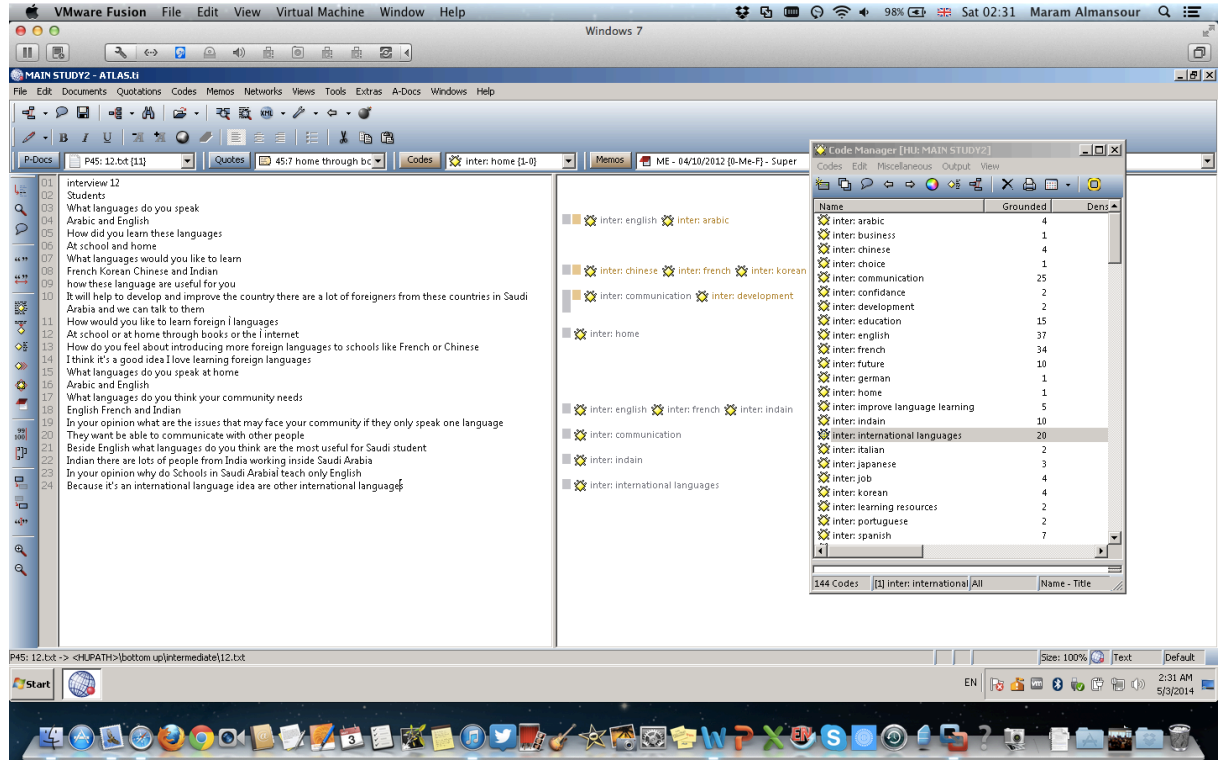
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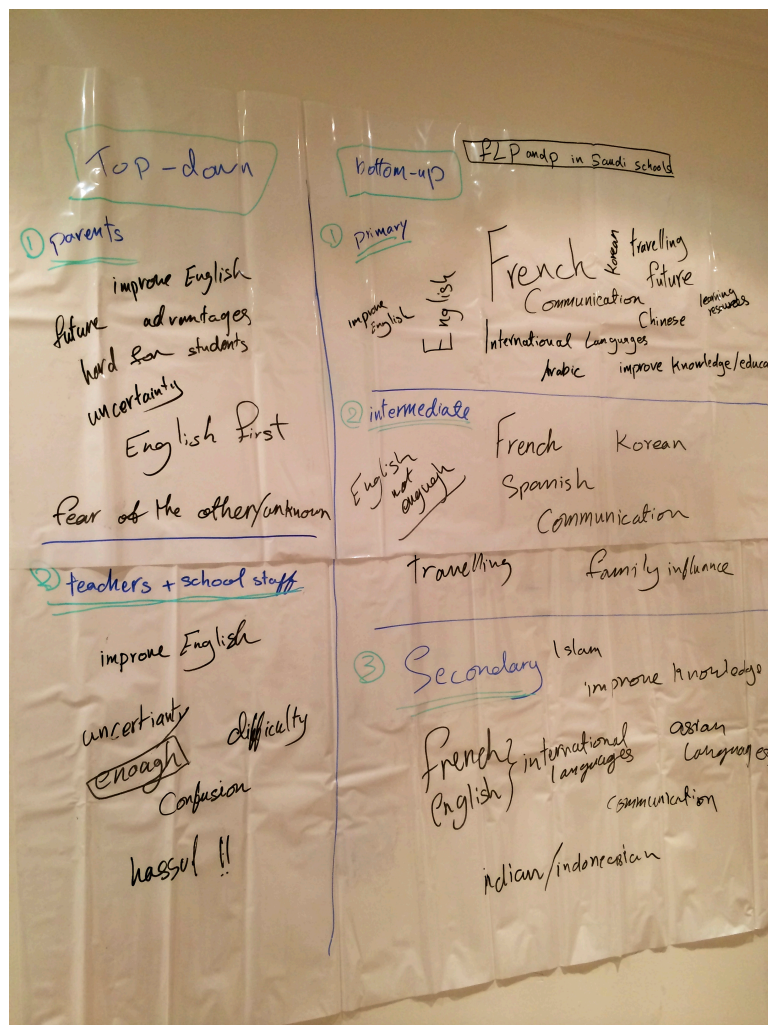
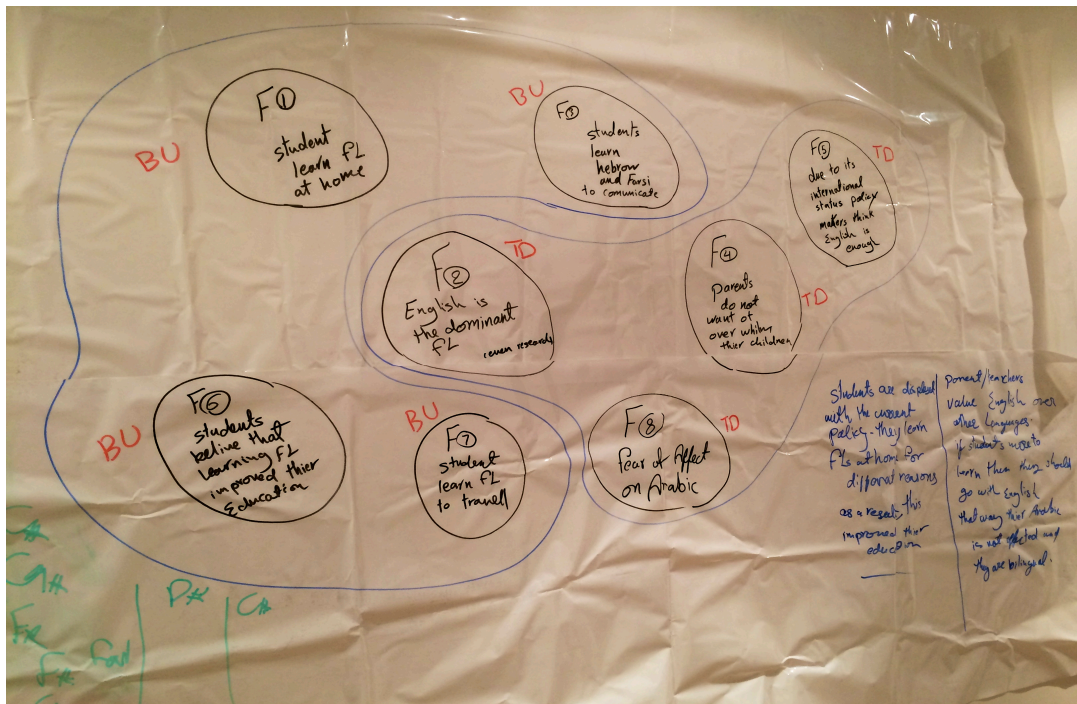
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Appendices

Appendix 1: Initial coding process using Atlas.ti



Appendix 2: Grouping codes into themes



Appendix 3: Sample of questions for the focus group dissections with students

1. What languages do you speak?
2. How did you learn these languages?
3. What is it like to learn a foreign language at school?
4. What languages would you like to learn?
5. What benefits you from learning these languages?
6. How would you like to learn these languages?
7. How do you feel about learning more foreign languages at school? (e.g. French, Chinese, etc.)
8. What languages does your family speak?
9. What languages do you think your community needs?
10. Why do you think your community needs these languages?
11. How did learning a second or foreign language affect your native language?
12. How did learning a second or foreign language affect your education?
13. How do you think multilingualism serve your community?
14. What issues do you think your community might face in the future if it does not become multilingual?
15. Beside English, what languages do you think might be useful for Saudi students? Please explain.
16. If you had the chance to redesign foreign language learning at schools, what would you do?
17. Is there anything else would you like to say (or ask)?

Appendix 4: Sample of interview questions for parents

- 1) What languages do you speak?
- 2) What languages are spoken in your house?
- 3) Do you children learn foreign languages at home? If yes, how
- 4) Do you children want to learn more foreign languages? Why?
- 5) Do you want your children to learn more foreign languages at school? Why?
- 6) Beside English, what languages do you think might be useful for Saudi students? Why?
- 7) Do you wish you had the chance to learn more foreign languages at school? Why?
- 8) If you had the chance to redesign foreign language learning at schools, what would you do?
- 9) Is there anything else would you like to say (or ask)?

Appendix 5: Sample of interview questions for teachers and school staff

1. Can you tell me about your background (studies/employments)?
2. What languages do you speak?
3. What languages do you teach?
4. How do you feel about introducing more foreign languages at school? (e.g. French, Chinese, etc.)
5. Has your school tried to introduce more foreign languages to students either officially or unofficially? If yes, please explain.
6. Do you think your students want to learn more foreign languages at school?
7. How do you feel about the way foreign languages are being taught in schools?
8. Do you believe that students need to learn more foreign languages? Please explain.
9. Do you use foreign languages (English or otherwise) outside the classroom? Please explain.
10. Do you think that Saudi students need more choices when it comes to language learning? Please explain.
11. What foreign languages (beside English) do you think are the most useful for Saudi students? Please explain why.
12. Do you know if more foreign languages are being taught somewhere else or in a different way?
13. If you had the chance to redesign foreign language learning at schools, what would you do?
14. Is there anything else would you like to say (or ask)?

Appendix 6: Ethical approval



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

The
School
Of
Education.

Maram Almansour
100224959

Head of School
Professor Jackie Marsh

Department of Educational Studies
388 Glossop Road
Sheffield S10 2JA

15th November 2011

Telephone: +44 (0114) 222 8081
Fax: +44 (0114) 222 8105
Email: F.R.Gilligan@sheffield.ac.uk

Dear Maram

Ethical Review Application:

Thank you for your application for ethical review for the above project. The reviewers have now considered this and have agreed that you can go ahead with your research project. Any conditions will be shown on the Reviewers Comments attached.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'F. Gilligan'.

Felicity Gilligan
PGR Officer

Appendix 7: Image copyright guidelines

- Guidelines for Using Apple Trademarks and Copyrights

<https://www.apple.com/legal/intellectual-property/guidelinesfor3rdparties.html>

<https://www.apple.com/uk/legal/trademark/>

<https://www.apple.com/legal/intellectual-property/trademark/appletmlist.html>

- WhatsApp Legal Info

<https://www.whatsapp.com/legal/>

- The University of Sheffield Copyright Guide: Copyright and Publishing

<http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/library/services/copypub>

<http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/library/services/copytheses>