

UNIVERSITY OF BAHRAIN

College of Arts



**Department of English
Language and Literature**

Intergenerational Linguistic Variation in Bahrain: An Exploration of Youth Language Use

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the M.A.
Degree in Applied English Language Studies

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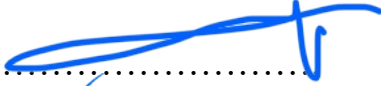
Department of English Language and Literature

M.A. Degree in Applied English Language Studies

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Abstract

Today's society views English as a lingua franca and a prerequisite for future success. Therefore, bilingual upbringing has been rapidly growing in importance globally and across Bahrain. Despite the advantages, adverse social effects, such as perceived negative impacts on Arabic fluency, intergenerational relationships, and the specificity of the Arab identity can result from this phenomenon. This thesis aims to explore the intergenerational variation in language practices and ideologies in Bahrain. By specifically examining young Bahraini bilinguals enrolled in private schools within the family language policy framework, this study addresses questions related to the prevalent linguistic features that characterize their speech, the impact of youth bilingualism on family language practices, and the intergenerational variation in language ideologies that govern how languages are managed within the Bahraini family. Within a mixed-methods research design, interviews were conducted with twenty Bahraini parents to investigate their language beliefs and practices, and three focus group discussions were held with young bilinguals to analyze their linguistic choices. Findings reveal that while younger generations gravitate towards English for self-expression, older generations commodify English as a tool for success yet perceive it as a marker of unauthenticity. The results suggest that the spread of English is infiltrating into the everyday language practices of Bahraini families. Despite the global trend towards bilingual upbringing, Bahraini parents display lack of knowledge regarding language management strategies that support bilingual development. Ultimately, this thesis enriches our understanding of how unequally distributed bilingualism affects family relations and identity formation and the current English-Arabic debate in the Arab world. Implications and future recommendations are accordingly presented.

Keywords: Bahraini youth, bilingualism, intergenerational variation, family language policy, language ideology

Declaration

I declare that this thesis, submitted to the University of Bahrain, was conducted by me through the collection of authentic data. This research has not been previously accepted and is not being currently considered for any other degree at any other university.

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The thesis defense committee considered the thesis title:

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my parents and my nephews and nieces.

Observing your interactions inspired this thesis.

Acknowledgments

The biggest advantage I had in authoring this thesis was the social and cultural capital I accumulated through my lived experience as a Bahraini bilingual. Over my lifetime, I had the privilege of gathering expansive knowledge about Bahrain's intriguing sociolinguistic context and the intergenerational linguistic variation in the Kingdom not through academic research, but through living spontaneously within my diverse community. My personal experience in a multigenerational and multilingual Bahraini family shaped the research questions I wished to investigate to culminate my master's journey.

The second biggest advantage I had is the large supportive network of family members, friends, colleagues, professors, and acquaintances – thank you to everyone who made this possible. I would like to especially thank my supervisor, Dr. Shadiya Al-Hashmi, for believing in my initial idea and nurturing it to grow into this thesis, and my husband, Ali Alwatani, for his tremendous and unwavering support.

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List of Abbreviations

CPH	Critical Period Hypothesis
FLP	Family Language Policy
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
MLP	Mixed Language Policy
mL@H	Minority Language at Home
OPOL	One Parent One Language
T&P	Time and Place
SL-CS	Sociolinguistic – Code-switching
SL-SG	Sociolinguistic – Slang
PR-AR	Pragmatic – Arabic pragmatic markers
M-CL	Morphological – Clipping
M-AFX	Morphological – Arabic affixation
PH-RF	Phonological – Reduced and assimilated forms

Transliteration System

Consonants

Arabic Script	Letter	Arabic
أ	ʾ	ʾalif
ب	B	bā
ت	T	tā
ث	Th	thā
ج	J	jīm
ح	ḥ	ḥā
خ	Kh	khā
د	D	dāl
ذ	Dh	dhāl
ر	R	rā
ز	Z	zayn
س	S	sīn
ش	Sh	shīn
ص	ṣ	ṣād
ض	ḍ	ḍād
ط	ṭ	ṭā
ظ	ẓ	ẓā
ع	ʿ	ʿayn
غ	Gh	ghayn
ف	F	fā
ق	Q	qāf
ك	K	kāf
ل	L	lām

م	M	mīm
ن	N	nūn
ه	H	hā
و	W	wāw
ي	Y	yā

Vowels

آ	Ā	'alif mmdūdḥ
أ	Á	'alif maqṣūrah
و	Ū	wāw
ي	Ī	yā

Chapter One

Introduction

Chapter One

Introduction

This chapter introduces the sociolinguistic situation in Bahrain, specifically the prevalence of English use and the significance attached to it in the modern postcolonial context of Bahrain. The potential impact of the spread of English on the identity of bilingual Bahraini youth and their relationships with the wider multigenerational Bahraini society is discussed. This chapter then outlines the problem statement and research objectives, questions, and significance. It also provides the thesis structure and the key terms pertinent to this study.

1.1. Background and Context

Through a series of conscious and subconscious choices, humans maneuver their language use to form a linguistic embodiment of their identity and sense of self (Sayahi, 2020). The current thesis addresses the societal-level implications of bilingualism, especially due to discrepancies in the language fluency of different layers of society. The spread of English in particular proves to be a persistent global phenomenon exceptionally evident in post-modern contexts (Blommaert, 2010). The rise of English both as a lingua franca globally and as a second language within non-English communities is therefore redefining the way speakers of English as a second language view and present themselves and their realities. This consequently impacts the way those speakers form relations in a heterogeneous society with an unequal distribution of English language proficiency across different generations.

The spread of English is often attributed to globalization, which is a term used broadly to refer to political, social, and cultural expansions across country borders due to factors such as the Internet and cinematography (Al-Issa & Dahan, 2011), among many other factors. While globalization is predominantly viewed in a favorable light, some perceive it to have a negative impact on the unique identity of specific languages and cultures. In the Arab world, for instance, globalization is a synonym for Westernization, and more conservative populations view it as a threatening force that must be resisted (Najjar, 2005). However, younger Arabs, born in the age of globalization, may view it as a force that promotes an alternative identity and offers a better lifestyle and a better future in a world that values the commodities attached to globalization and the English language.

The proliferation of English and the significance attached to it is highly visible in the context of Bahrain. English is no longer of secondary importance, for it has become a prerequisite for achieving success in higher education and receiving adequate employment opportunities in the 21st century. However, English education is unequally distributed in Bahrain (Al-Alawi, 2023); government schools adopt Arabic as a medium for instruction, thereby sidelining English. Nevertheless, educational policymakers evidently acknowledge the importance of English language proficiency and thus introduced English education across all primary-level grades in 2004 (Abou-El-Kheir & MacLeod, 2017). Therefore, current government school students are significantly more accomplished in English than previous generations, and despite the fact that they are still struggling to achieve high levels of proficiency (Ministry of Education, 2023), they cannot be compared to the previous generations of Bahrainis who received their formal education during

colonial or post-colonial times and were barely exposed to English language instruction, in an educational system that does not emphasize the importance of English (Al-Alawi, 2023).

In comparison to the government school context, private schools in Bahrain use English as a medium of instruction, and most international schools similarly sideline Arabic language education. It is also worth noting that this choice between free government school and paid private school education is an indicator of socioeconomic status and a connotation for prestige and privilege in Bahraini society, coupled with how Arabic came to symbolize tradition, while English symbolizes modernity and materialism. There is therefore a steady increase in private school enrollment in recent years as indicated by the Ministry of Education (2021) statistics reports, which show an increase from a total of 96,961 students in the academic year 2014/2015 to 108,606 students in the academic year 2018/2019. Moreover, parents opting for government school education may still consciously or subconsciously teaching their children English, either through supplementary education, i.e., English tuition, or through exposing their children to English media and hiring English-speaking houseworkers.

English has therefore infiltrated into every aspect of the lives of Bahraini youth, as a second language for expression and an essential skill to cope with today's reality. The role of parents in raising their children as bilinguals, alongside the tireless efforts spent by the Bahraini government and policymakers to fortify the status of the English language in Bahrain, are recognized in this study as part of the local trends that are influencing the rapidly increasing number of Bahraini bilinguals that use English in their daily interactions. These local trends are supported by globalization and the status

of English as a lingua franca across all major media platforms (Nabidullin & Ordabaev, 2021), with content being created every second of every day to be consumed by nonnative speakers of English all over the world.

1.1.1. Family Language Policy

Although Arabic is the official language of the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Kingdom lacks a clearly delineated national language policy (Bulaila & Sdiri, 2021), and little to no effort has been dedicated to understanding the multifaceted linguistic situation in today's Bahraini society. However, the aforementioned educational context and the number of expatriate workers in Bahrain who rely on English to communicate with Bahrainis point to major shifts in the linguistic situation of the Kingdom. Moreover, with the new generation of Bahraini parents showing an increasing tendency to raise their children as bilinguals and the younger generation heavily incorporating English alongside Arabic in regular conversations, the intergenerational variation in Bahraini society gains additional layers of complexity. This is because, despite the significance attached to English and bilingualism in modern society, the older generation of Bahrainis remains predominantly monolingual. This intergenerational linguistic variation is bound to have consequences that impact and reshape intergenerational relationships and communication. An aspect of the impact of this intergenerational linguistic variation in Bahrain is the metaphor *chicken nuggets* used to describe bilingual Bahraini youth (Al-Alawi, 2023). This metaphor acts as a vehicle for the anxieties felt by the non-chicken nuggets members of Bahraini society towards English as an inhibitor of authenticity and a signifier for the loss of traditional values and conventional ways of speaking.

A language policy is a deliberate attempt to influence and affect language practices and the status of a specific language in a given society and the connotations attached to it (Curdt-Christiansen, 2009). These policies can either be explicitly stated or implicitly acknowledged across all domains including the home domain, i.e., the family. According to Curdt-Christiansen (2009), language policies related to the public domain tend to be implemented to influence sociopolitical structures, while family language policies (FLPs) are largely based on the family's perception of sociocultural structures. More specifically, FLPs are shaped by what is perceived by the family to be advantageous and prestigious, which can include an interplay of many factors such as ideologies, religious values, attitudes, and prejudices. Similar to other language policies, FLPs consist of three main elements: language ideologies, language practices, and language management (Spolsky, 2004). Language ideologies encompass the foundational beliefs that underpin each language policy. Language practices relate to how languages are used in various contexts and for specific purposes. Language management involves deliberate efforts to shape language practices.

1.2. Problem Statement

Internal linguistic diversity within communities has consequences related to public life, family relations, and the establishment of identities. With globalization and local policies shaping the omnipresence of English in modern Arab communities, it became crucial to critically examine the evolution of language use within Arab societies across different age groups affected differently by the abovementioned factors. This thesis attempts to zoom in on the intergenerational linguistic variation in the context of Bahrain,

examining the impact of this variation on social dynamics – especially within the family – through utilizing a set of sociolinguistic methodological tools.

1.3. Research Objectives

The focus of this thesis is threefold; the first objective is to attempt to provide a holistic account of the sociolinguistic situation within the Bahraini community by capturing their household linguistic practices to investigate how Bahraini bilingual youth use their linguistic repertoires to communicate with older versus same-age peers. The second objective is to delineate the influence of youth bilingualism on the Bahraini family, and the third objective is to document how language ideologies differ across generations. These objectives contribute to the overarching aim of documenting the status of intergenerational linguistic variation in Bahrain today, mainly fueled by the rise of English as a crucial asset and a global language.

Family represents the fundamental dimension of society and the basic source of linguistic input. Therefore, this study addresses three intertwined aspects that fundamentally impact a family's language policy: language ideology (i.e., what parents – the decision-makers and FLP managers – believe about language), language practices (i.e., the internal linguistic practices of Bahraini families), and language management (i.e., what efforts are being made to maintain or marginalize specific languages).

1.4. Research Questions

To achieve the aforementioned objectives, this thesis addresses the following research questions:

1. How do young Bahraini bilinguals use their languages to communicate with different generations?
 - 1.1. What are the most prevalent linguistic features of young Bahraini bilinguals?
2. How does the prevalence of English impact the linguistic practices of Bahraini families with bilingual children?
3. What are the language ideologies that shape how Bahraini families with bilingual children manage language use?
 - 3.1. To what extent do the language ideologies of young Bahraini bilinguals differ from the older generation?

1.5. Significance of the Study

The increasing emphasis on English language education in Bahrain warrants conducting research studies to investigate the impact of this phenomenon on different layers of society. However, the scholarship tends to glaze over how linguistic changes affect the Bahraini community internally, especially in relation to the issues of intergenerational discrepancies in linguistic attainment, identity, and language shift that affect family relations. This tendency works to disregard the role of the family in the Bahraini youth's bilingual development and marginalize the bottom-up efforts made by Bahraini families to address the language shift influencing the Bahraini society to either support or resist the status of the English language in Bahrain.

To the author's knowledge, little to no academic focus has been given to gaining a nuanced understanding of the sociolinguistic situation in the context of Bahrain. Therefore, the significance of the present study is derived from being the stepping stone towards understanding the sociolinguistic

changes that are currently occurring in Bahrain, with a focus on the intergenerational changes in language preferences and use, and how different generations respond and deal with these changes. The findings of this study will redound first and foremost to Bahraini society, given the crucial significance attached to both Arabic and English fluency and healthy intergenerational communication in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

1.6. Key Terms

The current investigation approaches numerous concepts, including *bilingualism*, which refers in this study to fluency in two languages where one of them is the individual's first language (L1) and the other is a second language (L2) learned from a young age. The term *linguistic variation* is used to indicate variation in both language practices and ideologies, specifically between different generations of Bahrainis, i.e., *intergenerational linguistic variation*. The investigated demographic in this thesis is referred to as *the youth*, comprising young Bahraini bilinguals specifically enrolled in or were previously enrolled in private schools. In reference to Spolsky (2004), the term *language practices* refers to the way individuals use language(s) in their daily practices, *language ideologies* refers to the underlying beliefs that govern language use and management, and *language management* refers to the explicit or implicit approaches that promote or marginalize specific languages.

1.7. Thesis Structure

This introductory chapter is followed by Chapter Two, which is dedicated to reviewing existing relevant literature and delineating the theoretical framework underpinning this research study. It examines

bilingualism as a phenomenon, the interplay between language and identity, and family language policy. Chapter Three details the methodology adopted to conduct this study. Chapter Four presents the attained findings from the adopted methodology, while Chapter Five discusses the results thoroughly and in relation to the reviewed literature. Finally, Chapter Six concludes this thesis with a comprehensive summary accompanied by some proposed recommendations for both practice and future research.

1.8. Summary

This chapter established the context of this study and outlined its objectives, questions, significance, and structure. The following chapter will situate this thesis within the body of relevant scholarship.

Chapter Two

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Chapter Two

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

This chapter attempts to provide a comprehensive examination of existing research papers and theories related to the research problem defined in the previous chapter. It includes two main sections: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework. While the former synthesizes previous research that contextualizes the current investigation within the broader academic discourse, the latter outlines the theoretical and empirical framework utilized in this thesis. This structure was followed to ensure a smooth transition from the wider context to the narrow, as the theoretical framework emanates from the final section of the literature review.

2.1. Literature Review

This section consists of three major parts, which are Bilingualism, Language and Identity, and Family Language Policy. These three parts cover the three core ideas relevant to the current investigation. Each part begins with a general introduction defining the rationale for the general topic selection, followed by the major relevant recent studies conducted in the Western world, then the Arab world, thereby highlighting the universal importance of the covered topics and the gaps that attest to the significance of the current study.

2.1.1. Bilingualism

The universal increasing interest in building multilingual societies extends its roots to the Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) and the benefits of early multilingualism (Tekin & Al-Salmi, 2019). Childhood is perceived as the optimal and most ideal period for second language acquisition. Numerous

studies over the years set out to verify the validity of the CPH (see Oyama, 1978; Patkowski, 1980; Sharabidinovna et al., 2020), concluding that alongside factors such as learning styles, age is a significant factor in second language acquisition, marking prepubescence as the best period to effectively acquire L2. The benefits of bilingualism have also been widely investigated across the bilingual individual's life span, from childhood (e.g., Kovács & Mehler, 2009) to old age (e.g., Bialystok et al., 2007). These studies have found that at every stage, individuals who actively use more than one language display significant differences in their linguistic processing, cognitive performance, and socioemotional experiences when compared to their monolingual counterparts.

While the aforementioned studies address how these implications affect bilingual speakers as individuals, they largely disregard how bilingualism affects their interactions and relationships with the wider community. This concern is especially valid when considering younger speakers who have an unbalanced acquisition of their linguistic repertoire. Bilingual children with typical language development, whether they are simultaneous bilingual children (exposed to both languages during their early childhood) or sequential bilingual children (exposed to L2 after acquiring their L1), have an uneven distribution of linguistic abilities within and across the two languages (Kohnert, 2010). The majority of bilinguals tend to have a more dominant language (i.e., stronger, more preferred). Yet, as Bernardini (2017) notes, there is a weak academic interest in the impact of having a weaker, more preferred language when discussing bilingualism.

2.1.1.1. Youth Bilingualism

Hispanic and Latino immigrants in the United States of America received a large amount of scholarly interest as a bilingual community for their use of Spanglish, a language variety resulting from blending the vocabulary and/or grammar of Spanish and English in conversations (Ardila, 2005). However, the regular use of English also seeped into their home countries, filling Spanish with English phrases and loanwords. Placing globalization and the predominance of Western culture at the center of this phenomenon, Lugo (2019) examines English language use among Latino adolescents in Puerto Rico. This study addresses some core concepts that include *translingualism*, which views bilingualism as a facilitator of a third space (Soja, 1998) that allows for novel possibilities for creative language use and meaning construction. This perspective thus redefines bilingualism as “one linguistic repertoire with features that have been societally constructed as belonging to two separate languages” (García & Wei, 2014, p. 2).

To explore how Latino adolescents in Puerto Rico use language, Lugo (2019) observed 20 high school students enrolled in a private school and 30 high school students enrolled in a public school. The data were extracted through strategic note-taking, focus group discussions, and interviews. Private schools in Puerto Rico rely on English for instruction material, while the utilized instructional strategies are mixed and bilingual, featuring both English and Puerto Rican Spanish. When describing the language use of youth in private schools, the author highlights popular culture and internet slang as main motivators for translingual activity and notes that the use of English in these domains is an inevitable outcome of the Western cultural imperialism currently exercised over local cultures. Meanwhile, public schools in Puerto

Rico follow a Spanish-only educational policy for all subjects except English. In this setting, translingual activity and frequent English use are only found in groups with genuine interest in foreign culture, through either peer and/or social media engagement. In the study's population, people who exclusively use English to communicate are referred to using the derogatory term *gringos*, and talking exclusively in English is perceived as snobby and boastful.

The sociolinguistic situation in Puerto Rico is mirrored in a large number of non-English speaking communities affected by globalization, and the Gulf region is no exception. Daquila (2024) explores the linguistic behavior of Emirati youth, focusing primarily on their English language use as the most salient feature of their speech. This study identifies individuals born between 1997 and 2013 as Generation Z, the generation of digital natives whose lives are heavily impacted by technology and globalization. Millennials are individuals born between 1981 and 1996 and Baby Boomers are individuals born between 1946 and 1964. Since English serves as the global lingua franca and the most common language used across the Internet and social media platforms, Daquila (2024) seeks to explore whether this prevalence of English poses a risk to the linguistic stability and identity of Emirati youth.

Daquila's (2024) investigation included 50 participants from each generation. These participants were thoroughly surveyed for their use of English borrowings, code-switching, level of pronunciation, and use of certain slang words through a series of questionnaires and interviews. A questionnaire with 100 English items showed that the younger the generation, the more English verbs they employ in Emirati Arabic. Regarding pronunciation, the

author concludes that the younger the generation, the less Arabization of sounds there is (e.g., pronouncing /b/ for /p/ in park).

Generation Z participants consistently surpassed the Baby Boomers and Millennials in their English language usage and proficiency, suggesting a strong generational shift towards increased English integration in everyday communication. Their reliance on English is evident from their inability to retrieve the Arabic equivalent of 36 words. This foreshadows the interview results, where 100% of Baby Boomers and 84% of Millennials expressed their concern regarding both the identity of Emirati youth and the purity of the Arabic language, displaying an orientation towards linguistic purism.

Similar to Lugo (2019), Daquila (2024) recognizes the significant influence of Western culture reflected in the way young Emiratis use language. The employment of English is depicted in their frequent insertion of popular phrases and trendy words in their everyday conversations, and their native-like pronunciation shows their immersion in Western culture. However, although the investigation of linguistic behavior is more focused on the target sample in Lugo (2019), Daquila (2024) remarkably includes older generations in its sample. The findings of Daquila (2024) therefore further highlight how the lives of younger generations are heavily impacted by Westernism.

2.1.1.2. Promotion of English in the Arab World

Seeking to understand the motivation behind the parental promotion of bilingualism in Oman, Tekin and Al-Salmi (2019) interviewed 10 parents raising bilingual children. The authors touch upon the effect of youth bilingualism on intergenerational relations in the Omani family and how English fluency impacts the lives of Omani youth. The interviews revealed

that parents raise their children as bilingual to ease their integration in today's globalized world, to give them a better future in terms of education and career path, and due to the perceived cognitive benefits of bilingualism. Tekin and Al-Salmi (2019) note that by strongly emphasizing English language education, parents unknowingly deprive their children of acquiring crucial L1 skills. Parents reported that their children's Arabic communication is heavily interlaced with English, making it easier for them to communicate with foreign workers than their own grandparents and great-grandparents.

Tekin and Al-Salmi (2019) remarkably capture the promotion of bilingualism in the Gulf region, with nuanced details emerging from the qualitative method of data collection. In a more recent study, Al-Jarf (2022) compares the promotion of English versus Arabic in Saudi Arabia. After affirming the promotion of English language education through government-set educational policies in public schools and higher education institutions – alongside the existing international schools that rely on English as a medium of instruction in the Kingdom – the study turns its focus to the role of parents in promoting bilingualism. In Al-Jarf (2022), 82 parents were recruited to participate in a survey addressing the language development of their children. The results highlight that parents in Saudi Arabia are generally more concerned and focused on their children's English language proficiency than Arabic.

Parents promote English language learning through utilizing more diverse activities and resources when compared to Arabic. For instance, they engage their children in English entertainment applications and programs, watch English cartoons and videos with them, and enroll them in English teaching courses during the holidays. Meanwhile, efforts dedicated to

enriching the Arabic language are mainly limited to Quran recitation lessons and Islamic education. Al-Jarf (2022) also reports that children are often left unsupervised when consuming Western media which affects their language development. The author recommends increasing positive parental involvement in the language development of children through consciously providing linguistic input and higher levels of supervision. Moreover, Al-Jarf (2022) recommends establishing better communication between households and schools and offering training programs to parents in order to help them fully utilize the prospects of technology in language development.

While the abovementioned studies highlight the bilingual trend in Arab societies, they somewhat neglect the wider social implications of this trend and how it redefines the linguistic identity and ideology of Arabs. Sayahi (2020) reviews the multilingual situation in Tunisia, claiming that the language ideologies in the country play a significant role in the renegotiation of identities in light of the new sociopolitical system. Aside from Tunisian Arabic and French, English is heavily promoted in the Tunisian linguistic scene. Sayahi (2020) bases his observations on recorded interviews and a 14-question questionnaire administered to 25 Tunisian secondary school teachers. In addition, the analysis includes public discussions on the language use of sociopolitical figures published by Tunisian citizens on social media. The findings of Sayahi (2020) show a disconnect in the connotations attached to the speakers of each language. For example, responses from the questionnaire show that the participants perceive Arabic to be the real language. This ideology, coupled with the inseparable link between the religion of Islam and Arabic, led to Arabic becoming a core marker of an authentic and moral identity in Tunisia.

While French and English do not seem to compete with Arabic as markers of authenticity and moral character, they instead compete with it as markers of symbolic power. The analyzed social media posts show favorable views of Tunisian public figures who can express themselves fluently in both French and English. As English becomes increasingly commodified as the language of the modern world, it serves as a tool for the judgment of ability and fine performance. According to Sayahi (2020), the fact that more parents are choosing to enroll their children in private schools that emphasize the teaching of foreign languages is a clear index of the appeal of English and French in Tunisian society.

It is therefore evident that in multilingual situations, languages influence how social and national identities are shaped and discussed in public discourse. With the proliferation of English, this debate between authenticity and commodification is held across the world. The next subsection focuses specifically on how English is perceived to influence identity in different parts of the world, where English exists alongside a language used as a marker of authenticity.

2.1.2. Language and Identity

Sociolinguists view language choices made by bilingual speakers as more than mere effective ways to communicate; they also represent an expression of identity (Wei, 2012). Whenever individuals choose to communicate in one language or dialect over another, they reflect their attitudes toward the people and languages involved. Wei (2012) argues that the language choices made by bilingual speakers can be viewed as a method to define the self against the other within the broader social context. The

following studies focus on the unique identities of bilingual speakers, specifically those whose L2 is English.

2.1.2.1. Linguistic Identities in Non-English Communities

Sibanda (2022) explores the complex relationship between language and identity, specifically in the context of contemporary South Africa. In South Africa, there is an ongoing English-Afrikaans debate that corresponds to broader issues related to power and society in the region. Sibanda (2022) addresses questions related to the perceptions of different layers of society towards the prevalence of English language learning, basing these inquiries on the social identity theory (Tajfel et al., 1971) which states that social identities affect people's attitudes and behaviors, including attitudes towards language. This theory stipulates that through language, social identities are established and maintained. For instance, an inclination towards a linguistic variety may cause detachment from groups that do not conform to that specific variety.

Sibanda (2022) administered a questionnaire to 47 English language students in South Africa, moderated focus group discussions, and interviewed three parents of English language learners. In addition, the focus group participants reflected on their language use by recording language interaction entries in their diaries to reveal their communication patterns and language preferences. The findings show mixed opinions towards English in the Afrikaans-speaking community. While a progressive part of the community associates English with power and social leverage, other conservative parts view it as a threat to the local identity. The community's attitudes towards English are deeply rooted in culture. The learners describe community prejudice towards speaking English with an English accent, claiming that their

community associates it with negative ideas such as bragging, acting white, and losing one's culture.

Although the community believes that English fluency is a prerequisite for success, English speakers are still discriminated against due to the perceived attachment they have to Western culture. This is evident through referring to them as coconuts or Oreos. In the same vein, during the focus group discussions, the learners noted that they selectively use English. They try to avoid using it when surrounded by monolingual Afrikaans speakers. They even fear mixing languages as it would sometimes lead to people laughing at them. Sibanda (2022) also highlights the contradictory nature of language management in South African families. While children are encouraged by their parents to learn English, the same parents seemingly disapprove of the spread of English in their community. This encapsulates the dilemma faced by the people of this community, where they are disadvantaged if they speak in English, and they are also disadvantaged if they do not.

The language diaries kept by the participants indicate that young people use Afrikaans when speaking to older individuals, while they prefer English or code-switching when communicating with their siblings and friends. The prevalence of code-switching in the language diaries suggests that this pattern of speech is a new and convenient way for young people to counteract their lower competence in Afrikaans. During the focus group discussions, the learners described Afrikaans as a difficult language and pointed towards their tendency to consume media in English. Similar findings were found in other studies surveying similar contexts (e.g., Jansen, 2019).

The abovementioned discussion adds nuance to the existing complex and intertwined relationship between language and identity. In situations

where languages are perceived to be competing in a community, people who choose to speak a foreign language run the risk of being accused of detachment from their values. Sibanda (2022) and Jansen (2019) make a case for a generational-based pattern of language shift, where different age groups in the same community have different language preferences, with younger generations bringing foreign influences into the traditional way of speaking.

2.1.2.2. Linguistic Identities in the Arab World

With the global spread of English, the sociolinguistic situation in South Africa is not unusual. Al-Alawi (2023) closely examines the figure of personhood *chicken nugget* in the context of Bahrain through analyzing the identification practices among Bahraini youth. The study applies discourse analytic methods to the metacommentaries of three young Bahraini bilinguals. The study finds that the English of chicken nuggets is excessive and exaggerated, going beyond the level of English that is required for communication in the context of Bahrain. Moreover, alongside frequent code-switching, the participants assigned specific socioeconomic features to chicken nuggets that include wealth (i.e., attending private schools) and liberalism (i.e., less adherence to conservative religious practices). The findings indicate that privately educated bilingual Bahraini youth are labeled with a figure of personhood that denotes a unique identity that stands against the traditional identity of the community. This label, which is widely used in the Kingdom, acts as a vehicle for the anxieties felt by non-chicken nuggets members of Bahraini society towards English as an inhibitor of authenticity and a signifier for the loss of traditional values and conventional ways of speaking.

The main focus of Al-Alawi (2023) affirms the global phenomenon of Western predominance, compelling people from all over the world to assign a label for those who are not white themselves but are visibly influenced by white culture, similar to the derogatory label *gringos* assigned to Puerto Ricans (Lugo, 2019) and the labels *coconuts* and *Oreos* assigned to South Africans (Sibanda, 2022). The findings of Al-Alawi (2023) highlight the complex sociolinguistic situation in Bahrain, which is extremely undertheorized and underexamined.

Al-Anzarouti and Hamed (2020) attempt to investigate the linguistic practices of the demographic identified in Al-Alawi (2023) as chicken nuggets by surveying 215 Bahraini middle and high school students enrolled in private schools, alongside some of their parents and teachers. By exploring the linguistic preferences and practices of these students, the researchers aim to assess the influence of bilingual education on identity construction. The results of a series of surveys and interviews show that while these students are proficient speakers of Arabic, they face considerable challenges in relation to Arabic literacy.

The data analysis in Al-Anzarouti and Hamed (2020) reveals that students find the minimal compulsory Arabic classes in schools boring and difficult. Meanwhile, their overall attitudes towards English are positive. The researchers note the prevalence of this perspective in the entire Gulf region, where code-switching and English language fluency serve as indicators of good education and high social status. Finally, although parents and teachers in Al-Anzarouti and Hamed (2020) are aware of the difficulties faced by the students when learning Arabic, they do not perceive the loss of Arabic as a real risk. The findings of Al-Anzarouti and Hamed (2020) affirm the

sociolinguistic profile of Bahraini youth described in Al-Alawi (2023) and shed light on a group of Bahraini youth who are bringing innovation to the Arabic language through their extreme reliance on English. It also portrays the extent to which this reliance on English hinders their ability to effectively use Arabic.

Meanwhile, Hayat and AlBader (2022) zoom in on the influence of English on Kuwaiti Arabic, manifested in the *McChicken phenomenon*, which refers to the use of code-switching among young Kuwaitis who lack Arabic proficiency. Hayat and AlBader (2022) note that due to globalization, English has been affecting the native languages of countless countries, creating different versions of *World Englishes* that are primarily reviewed in the scholarly works of Crystal (1999), McArthur (2001), and Kachru (2006), and the *McChicken language* can be considered one of them. Hayat and AlBader (2022) describe the driving forces for this phenomenon as economic power, prestige, and globalization.

To study the phenomenon, Hayat and AlBader (2022) targeted Kuwaitis born in 1990 or later. According to the authors, the term *McChicken* would not be used to describe individuals older than 31. A total of 76 participants filled out an online questionnaire and eight of them were interviewed. The findings indicate that entertainment is the main driving force behind the participants' heavy reliance on English, regardless of their educational background. Although the participants who attended public schools received their instruction in Arabic, they compensated by consuming Western media. Participants also referred to Arabic as difficult, classical, and archaic. The authors referred to this as a form of Orientalism (Said, 2001), where Eastern culture is viewed as outdated and Western culture is viewed as progressive.

Similar to Sibanda (2022) and Jansen (2019), the results of Hayat and AlBader (2022) also show generational-based differences when it came to the participants' language preferences. While they converse using English or a mixture of Arabic and English when talking to their friends, cousins, and colleagues, they try to speak exclusively in Arabic when conversing with their older family members, who frequently complain about the prevalence of English. Hayat and AlBader (2022) conclude that although the McChicken phenomenon appears linguistic in nature, it is largely sociocultural, due to the *Anti-McChickens* who continuously bemoan the current linguistic changes Kuwait is experiencing.

In their conclusion, Hayat and AlBader (2022) note the scarcity of research dedicated to studying how English is widely spreading among Gulf youths and affecting their lives and identities. The following subsection focuses primarily on how bilingualism among youth can affect heterogeneous societies as a whole, starting from the smallest and most important unit of society, the family.

2.1.3. Family Language Policy

Current sociolinguistic research on multilingualism and its implications is undergoing various transformations, mainly due to the broader shifts in the field towards ethnographic and critical approaches and the increasing focus on the examination of the sociocultural and linguistic changes ushered in by globalization (Lanza & Gomes, 2020). These changes are bound to impact the modern family as a speech community, thereby giving rise to FLP, a relatively novel field of inquiry that highlights the importance of understanding the significance of language within diverse family configurations, viewing language as a vital part of a family's identity construction.

FLP emanated from the field of language policy largely attributed to Spolsky (2004) who proposes that every language policy consists of three main elements: language ideologies, language practices, and language management. This triadic model (see 2.2.1.) has been expanded to include modifications specific to the family context by Curdt-Christiansen (2009). These modifications include factors that influence the ideologies and management interventions of families. The following subsection details these two models that constitute the theoretical framework underpinning the current investigation. FLP was originally defined by King et al. (2008) as “explicit and overt planning in relation to language use within the home among family members” (p. 907). The notion of family gains another layer of complexity when considering factors such as immigration, transnationalism, intercultural marriages, and globalization.

For this reason, FLP studies have almost exclusively associated multilingualism with the immigrant identity, thereby deriving conclusions that are often similarly associated with issues of ethnicity and nationality rather than the global multilingual experience. When discussing the future of the field, Lanza and Gomes (2020) discuss the need for further research to shed light on cosmopolitan rather than immigrant contexts, characterized by diversity and digital exposure. Lanza and Gomes (2020) also suggest devoting more attention to the influence of neoliberal language ideology (Piller, 2015) and the commodification of language on FLPs. Finally, they note the scarcity of FLP research in the MENA region.

These suggestions naturally emerge when reviewing the history of FLP research, the phases of which have been delineated by King (2016). The first phase is composed of diary studies conducted by linguist parents in

multilingual families to record their children's multilingual language acquisition. The second phase encompasses multilingual language acquisition studies conducted to address key psycholinguistic research questions, with the family taking a secondary role. The third phase marks the concrete establishment of FLP as a field of inquiry with studies adopting a more sociolinguistic approach, while the fourth phase witnesses an inclination towards investigating a more diverse range of contexts, family configurations, and languages. Finally, the fifth phase observes a focus on immigrant, transnational, and/or cosmopolitan multilingual populations, with notable adaptability in research methods. In what follows, studies considering FLPs from different perspectives are discussed.

2.1.3.1. Language Policy in Multigenerational Families

Abdullahi and Wei (2021) focus on the internal changes experienced by the Somali community in Britain, who are struggling to maintain their authentic identity in their Western environment. To explore the intergenerational changes in language preferences and issues of identity within the community, Abdullahi and Wei (2021) utilized Curdt-Christiansen's (2009) model of FLP and collected data through an online FLP questionnaire completed by 63 participants, focus group discussions with young community members, and interviews with Somali community members. The results affirmed that the contrast in the language preferences of the children and youth of the community on the one hand and the parents and grandparents on the other represents a prevalent and real concern within the Somali community. While grandchildren predominantly speak English, most of their parents and grandparents have not fully acquired English language proficiency, relying mostly on their heritage language for everyday

communication. This causes an identity crisis for both the youth, who do not feel a strong sense of belonging in neither Somalia nor Britain, and for adults, who struggle to communicate and keep pace with the new generation.

A notable observation is the lack of emphasis on Somali literacy in the community. While parents attempt to teach their children how to speak Somali, they do not emphasize reading and writing as strongly. Arabic literacy is promoted more than Somali in the Muslim Somali community due to its importance in religious practices. Aware of the linguistic changes and the diversity that characterizes the Somali community in Britain, local organizations attempted to create inclusive spaces that aim to promote Somali language and culture. The ways through which the events in those spaces are managed indicate the awareness of these organizations of the intergenerational linguistic variation in the community. For instance, when the event is directed towards the youth, the promotion pamphlets are written in English, while they would be written in Somali when the event is oriented towards the elderly.

Arab communities are similarly struggling with managing their language policies amid the intergenerational linguistic divide. Mansory (2019) qualitatively analyzes the household linguistic practices of Saudi families living in the United Kingdom by interviewing ten Saudi parents. The interviews were structured to examine the languages they use to converse with their children within their household, explore their language ideologies, and address issues related to the children's identity and sense of belonging. The findings depicted that English proficiency in children is a source of pride to their parents despite their own lack of English proficiency, especially when their children speak in a British accent. Throughout the interviews, most parents admitted that their children's Arabic skills are weak and that Arabic is

only exclusively used by their children when performing Islamic duties, such as praying or reading the Quran. Six out of ten parents mentioned fearing the loss of their children's traditional Muslim identity, stressing that as their Arabic weakens, so does their Islamic identity due to the interrelatedness of Arabic and Islam, further complicating the implications of their linguistic practices. Moreover, their weak Arabic skills create a barrier that hinders their communication with their monolingual relatives, primarily their grandparents, thus disallowing the formation of healthy relations between the two generations. Mansory (2019) concludes that linguistic balance must be emphasized going forward, primarily by parents, in order to preserve Arabic. Although parents express that ideally their children should be fluent in both Arabic and English, they are actively marginalizing Arabic by choosing to speak English in their household.

The linguistic situation in postcolonial bilingual contexts can be viewed in parallel to the diasporic situations depicted in Abdullahi and Wei (2021) and Mansory (2019). In multilingual societies, competing languages are often in a state of constant struggle as people choose to actively use one language and marginalize the other. Mansory (2019) mentions the need to compare the household practices of his sample to, for instance, Hispanic families settled in the United States, hypothesizing the similarity between the two situations. In both contexts, a struggle to maintain the heritage language (i.e., Spanish) is met with the emerging need to speak the dominant language (i.e., English) associated with modernity and a better future. These associations are identical to the markings assigned to Arabic and English in the Arab world (Al-Jarf, 2022; Sayahi, 2020; Tekin & Al-Salmi, 2019). Abdullahi and Wei (2021) also mention *fish and chips Somalis* as a term often used within the British Somali

community to describe Somali youth with scarce knowledge of Somali, similar to the chicken nuggets and McChicken phenomena in the Gulf (Al-Alawi, 2023; Hayat & AlBader, 2022)

With a larger focus on the language management component of the FLP framework (Curdt-Christiansen, 2009; Spolsky, 2004), de Oliveira (2022) examines the language policies of Brazilian families raising bilingual children. A total number of 24 parents who are actively incorporating English in their everyday language practices completed an online survey that explores their role in their children's language development. According to Pearson (2008), there are four key language management strategies adopted by parents. The first strategy is One Parent One Language (OPOL), where each parent uses a different language with the child, fostering person-language association. The second strategy is Minority Language at Home (mL@H), where both parents exclusively use the less dominant language in society at home. The third strategy is Time and Place (T&P), where specific times or functions are assigned to each language. The fourth strategy is Mixed Language Policy (MLP), where parents alternate between languages based on context or topic without paying particular attention to their language use.

de Oliveira (2022) found diverse applications of the abovementioned strategies among families. OPOL is used by seven families, while MLP is used by six, making them the most common two language management strategies used in Brazilian families raising bilingual children. Moreover, six families utilize a combination of either OPOL and MLP or T&P and MLP. The primary motives for the participating parents to raise their children as bilinguals reveal their language ideology. The importance of English in today's world was a

recurring motive, along with the perceived benefits of English fluency, including better education and career opportunities.

Participants strongly emphasized the need for well-informed approaches to bilingual parenting and the significance of raising awareness regarding the various language management strategies that can be used to support the language development of children. De Oliveira (2022) cites Grosjean (2010), who stresses that although parents should not be expected to be experts in language management and policies, it is important for them to distinguish facts from misconceptions to effectively support their children's language development in today's multicultural and multilingual reality.

While FLP research has largely focused on analyzing policies from the perspective of parents, Nelson et al. (2023) shed light on the dynamicity of FLP studies. Nelson et al. (2023) set out to portray FLPs from the perspective of multilingual Mexican youth. The importance of studying their perspective is derived from the agency and sense of individuality they obtain as they reach adulthood, therefore impacting and transforming the language policies of their families. The researchers used an online questionnaire to collect information about the linguistic experiences of 172 multilingual young Mexicans, covering their community, family, and personal language ideologies, the measures taken by their parents in favor of or against multilingualism, and their perception of their FLP over time. While Spanish is the official language in Mexico, the participants were also fluent in English and/or various indigenous languages.

Concerning the perceptions of the community, English was widely perceived as a language that would open doors for young Mexicans. According to the findings of Nelson et al. (2023), the motivation for acquiring

English is influenced by the neoliberal language policy that values English as the language of the future and the prerequisite for success in the global market. The effect of globalization can also be seen in how the young participants often mentioned learning English through social media, music, cinema, and video games. The most common negative community attitude towards speaking English was its association with snobbery, showing off, or talking about other people in the room who do not understand English. There were almost no negative family ideologies expressed towards the idea of multilingualism, except those relating to the fear of losing one's culture or identity.

This adds a generational layer to FLPs. The findings of Nelson et al. (2023) show that younger generations have unique linguistic trajectories when compared to older generations. The young participants in Nelson et al. (2023) constitute, in theory, the first generation to attend compulsory English classes from preschool to high school across all private and public education programs. The rapid technological developments in recent years have also provided younger generations with access to multilingual resources that older generations did not enjoy. Moreover, these generational differences result in practices of selective language use. For example, English was often used with only siblings and same-age peers. It can therefore be concluded that younger generations tend to shift towards dominant or socially prestigious languages.

Regarding parental measures in favor of or against multilingualism, 103 participants identified explicit actions taken by their parents or other adults to promote multilingualism, the most common measures included speaking to them in the target language or enrolling them in English tuition programs. The findings of Nelson et al. (2023) demonstrate how internal factors such as

family culture and traditions, emotions, and identity, and external factors such as globalization, technology, and access to new linguistic resources play a huge role in the early practices of families that later influence the management decisions for the languages spoken within the family. However, their data also shows how these factors are experienced differently by each generation, which causes a form of renegotiation of the FLP with each intergenerational interaction within the family. The significance of the impact caused by technology and globalization on youth language use, especially the predominance of English usage, has also been revealed by studies conducted in the Gulf region (e.g., Daquila, 2024). Through their findings, Nelson et al. (2023) highlight the importance of including the younger generation in the examination of FLPs and viewing those language policies with a generational lens in providing a comprehensive account of the linguistic practices and ideologies of communities.

2.1.3.2. Implications of Informed FLPs

Cox et al. (2021) argue for Shared Language Erosion as a potential explanatory factor in previously documented, but not fully explained, deterioration of immigrant youth's mental and behavioral health. By referring to previous literature, Cox et al. (2021) show that families with members who share equal levels of language proficiency report more harmonious respectful relations, higher levels of family cohesion, and less family conflict. Researchers have proved a connection between fluent bilingualism across all family members and healthy family relations when compared to other configurations of family language use (see, e.g., De Houwer, 2020; Mueller et al., 2020). Shared Language Erosion describes a process where younger generations become increasingly adept and comfortable speaking English, due

to formal education, social media exposure, and communicating in English with peers. Simultaneously, their heritage language development is negatively affected due to the same factors. On the other hand, older generations tend to acquire English language skills at a much slower rate while maintaining their mother tongue. This results in the gradual erosion of a *shared language* to facilitate parent-child communication.

Cox et al. (2021) significantly attribute this erosion to formal education, arguing that the purpose of formal education is to expose children to diverse knowledge domains that are essential for their ability to function in society. For immigrant youth, however, this exposure occurs mainly in English, without corresponding exposure in their heritage language. This results in limiting the child's ability to comprehend and express themselves in their heritage language effectively, thereby increasing their preference for English. For example, even though some young immigrants can speak and understand their heritage language, their literacy skills in that language are not as proficient. Supported by their previous research in this arena (e.g., Anderson et al., 2020; Cox et al., 2013) Cox et al. (2021) propose that Shared Language Erosion can impact family relations in three primary ways: (a) increased parent-child conflict due to high levels of misunderstanding, (b) lower levels of parental competence, which negatively impacts the family's ability to respond to external and internal stressors, and (c) the exacerbation of preexisting deficiencies in parent-child attachment, as misunderstood youth are likely to turn to their peers for attachment security.

Although the context described in Cox et al. (2021) cannot be likened to the reality in the Arab world today, it undeniably portrays a possible trajectory. As generations become more and more dependent on English with

the continuous promotion of bilingualism and the increased rate of private school enrollment, Arab children will potentially –if not already– receive similar exposure to diverse knowledge domains exclusively in English. Considering the seriousness of the reported negative implications resulting from the different levels of language proficiency across family members of different generations, Shared Language Erosion (Cox et al., 2021) is a scenario to be avoided partially by adopting informed family language policies, alongside informed national and educational language policies.

2.1.3.3. Language Policy in Bahrain

Studies related to language policy and the official status of English in Bahrain are incredibly scarce. Although Al-Alawi (2023) attempts to add nuance to our understanding of bilingual Bahraini youth by analyzing the use of the figure of personhood assigned to them, little scholarly interest was dedicated to dissecting the dynamics of English in the Kingdom. This is despite the rising worldwide interest in investigating the linguistic effects of globalization and the interesting sociolinguistic landscape of Bahrain. In an attempt to fill this knowledge gap in the status of English in Bahrain, Gomaa (2017) explores the physical linguistic landscape of Manama, Bahrain by analyzing the languages used on street signs. Gomaa (2017) concludes that English closely follows Arabic in importance and significance in the public scene. The data also shows the level of linguistic diversity in Bahrain evident from the frequency of English-Arabic bilingual signs. Meanwhile, Gomaa (2020) sets out to explore the virtual linguistic landscape, concluding that it shares features with the physical linguistic landscape. The Bahraini E-Government National Portal is nearly fully bilingual with information provided in both English and Arabic, which sends out a clear message

regarding the social significance and status attributed to these two languages in the Kingdom. The findings of Gomaa (2017; 2020) provide insight into Bahrain's national language policy, which evidently places emphasis on English alongside the Kingdom's official language, Arabic.

Seeking to better define the status of English in Bahrain, Bulaila and Sdiri (2021) set out to empirically examine the status of English through a questionnaire administered to two groups of participants; Bahrainis aged between 16 and 24, and Bahrainis born before 1971. The findings show that English is extensively used by Bahrainis across all investigated domains, which are the workplace, educational institutions, government offices, banks, post offices, shops, restaurants, hospitals, recreational places, and homes. Bulaila and Sdiri (2021) attribute the spread of English in Bahrain to various factors aside from the national policy that overtly favors multilingualism.

By looking at the demographic characteristics of the survey respondents, there is a generational trend in the spread of English, which indicates a shift in the status of English in Bahrain. This shift is traceable by comparing the mean scores of the two investigated groups. The younger generation reports using English more than the older generation, which supports the argument that the Kingdom is undergoing major shifts in its linguistic scene. Moreover, women were identified as drivers of change by using English more than their male counterparts, and private schools and companies are also playing an active role in the spread of English in Bahrain.

Regarding attitudes, Bulaila and Sdiri (2021) found conflictual trends within the investigated sample. The scores of both those who favor and those against the use of English across the specified domains are statistically significant. The findings regarding how positively or negatively the spread of

English is impacting Arabic and local culture are similarly conflictual. The final verdict made by the researchers is that English is a second rather than a foreign language in Bahrain and that its status is still undergoing a shift and is displacing Arabic in numerous contexts and domains.

While the abovementioned studies focus primarily on how English is spreading in the public domain in Bahrain, the current investigation zooms in on the private domain, the home. As a part of their examination, Bulaila and Sdiri (2021) dedicated a couple of questions in their questionnaire to the home domain. When the respondents were asked to report on their use of English at home, over 75% of the respondents stated that they do use English at home. When asked about their attitudes towards the phenomenon of parents using English to communicate with their children, around 30% of the respondents were in favor of using English with children at home, and over 12% were neutral. These numbers are monumental considering the number and heterogeneity of the participants.

More importantly, the researchers reported that a statistically significant portion of the respondents were in favor of English becoming the first language of family communication. Bulaila and Sdiri (2021) therefore conclude that English has gone beyond the status of a second language for some young Bahrainis, to arguably gain the status of a first language. The fact that Arabic is being displaced by English even at home for a statistically significant portion of Bahraini society warrants dedicating research to how and why the spread of English –primarily across the younger generation– is impacting the inner functioning of the Bahraini family.

According to Lanza and Gomes (2020) and as evident from the research papers reviewed above, phases 4 and 5 (see 2.1.3.) are currently in progress,

seeking to address the limitations of earlier FLP research. This thesis contributes to these two phases by investigating the young bilingual population in Bahrain, which is characterized by a unique and complex sociolinguistic situation that is significantly understudied. Moreover, by focusing on the language pair Arabic and English, the current study adds to the scarce FLP literature on Arabic-speaking families in their home countries, diverging the focus from Hispanic and European languages.

2.2. Theoretical Framework

Building on the literature discussed in the previous section, this thesis utilizes a dynamic triadic model of language policy. This model provides a structured framework that encompasses the research questions addressed in this study. This section dissects this framework and provides the theoretical grounding for examining the language practices, ideologies, and management strategies of multigenerational Bahraini families.

2.2.1. Triadic Model of Language Policy

This thesis utilizes and bases its analysis on Curdt-Christiansen's model (2009) of FLP, adapted from Spolsky's (2004) triadic model of language policy (Figure 1). According to Spolsky (2004), in the study of language policies, attention must be given to language ideologies, language practices, and language management. This triadic model is applicable to any family situation in which family members are bi- or multi-lingual. Within this model, language ideology refers to the attitudes and perceptions of family members towards the languages spoken in the family, language practices refer to how individuals practically use the concerned languages in everyday life, and

language management refers to the measures and actions taken to maintain and/or develop a particular language.

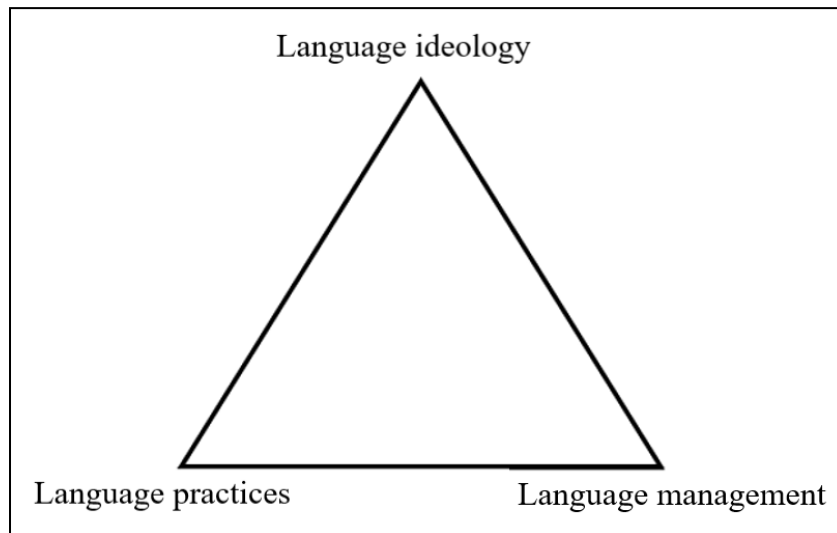


Figure 1. Language policy according to Spolsky (2004)

Curdt-Christiansen's (2009) model was selected for the current analysis since it adds dynamicity and specificity to Spolsky's (2004) flat model by suggesting various micro and macro factors that influence the language policies of families. It is important to note that this extended model was derived from the researcher's empirical examination of the family language policies of 10 Chinese Canadian families (Curdt-Christiansen, 2009). Therefore, it is more practical in nature than it is theoretical. By focusing primarily on how multilingualism is perceived and valued in these families, and how each language is linked to particular linguistic ideals, Curdt-Christiansen (2009) places the parental ideology that underpins the family language policy at the center of her analysis. The findings of Curdt-Christiansen (2009) suggest that powerful language-specific beliefs that are often determined by socio-political and economic factors and societal

expectations are then transformed into active language practices, both explicitly and implicitly.

Curdt-Christiansen (2009) visualizes her understanding of the multidimensionality of language ideologies in Figure 2, which illustrates the complex relationship between the three components of FLPs with multiple interactive processes at work. Curdt-Christiansen (2009) extends Spolsky's (2004) triadic model by viewing FLP as a mediational tool interacting with the existing educational framework, social structure, political agenda, and personal interests and ambitions.

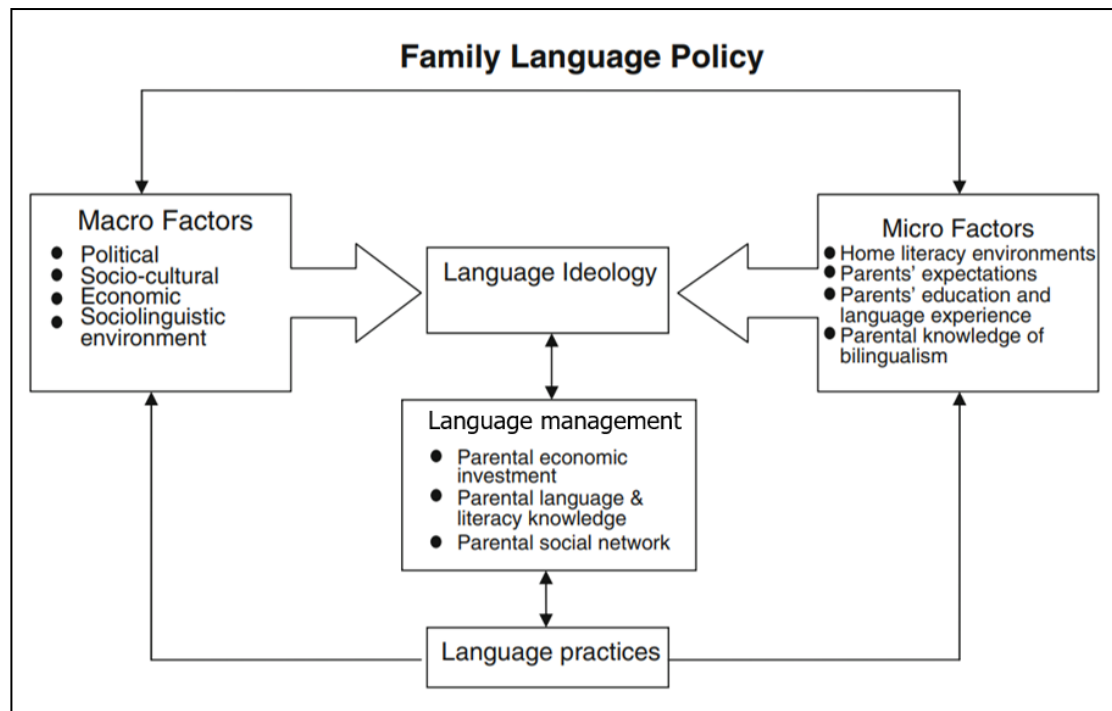


Figure 2. Dynamic model of FLP (Curdt-Christiansen, 2009, p. 355)

2.2.2. Linguistic Capital

The macro factors suggested by Curdt-Christiansen (2009) are heavily underpinned by Bourdieusian theory and Bourdieu's (1991) influential work about linguistic capital. According to Bourdieu (1991), linguistic capital takes three principal forms, economic capital, cultural capital, and social capital. Although economic capital is the only capital that can be directly converted into money, the other two forms of capital can be indirectly converted into economic capital. Curdt-Christiansen's (2009) findings suggest that language is a typical form of economic capital that can create financial opportunities and material wealth and bring economic advantages. In other words, when considering English as L2, non-native speakers view English as a key that unlocks financial gain and introduces better future opportunities. This concept was brought up repeatedly in the literature (Al-Jarf, 2022; de Oliveira, 2022; Nelson et al., 2023; Tekin & Al-Salmi, 2019).

2.2.3. Language Management Strategies

As noted by Grosjean (2010), children are exceptionally adaptable language learners, and it is unnecessary to consciously separate the languages they are exposed to by person, place, or time to ensure successful bilingual upbringing. However, there are management strategies that can be used to organize family communication practices in order to foster balance and enforce specific language ideals. According to Pearson (2008), four major strategies were referred to in de Oliveira's (2022) analysis of the language management strategies utilized by Brazilian families raising bilingual children. OPOL is a strategy where each parent uses a specific language with the child; mL@H is a strategy where both parents exclusively use the less dominant language in society at home; T&P is a strategy where specific times or purposes are assigned to each language; and MLP is a strategy where

parents alternate between languages without paying particular attention to their language use. The current study refers to these strategies in the analysis to highlight the language management practices of Bahraini families.

2.3. Summary

This chapter provided a comprehensive overview of the research studies relevant to the current research problem. By reviewing recently published literature discussing bilingualism, language and identity, and FLP both internationally and regionally, the significance of the current study emerges as a crucial investigation into the influence of English on the lives of Bahraini families. Guided by the theoretical framework introduced in the final section of this chapter, the following chapter details the adopted methodology to answer the research questions.

Chapter Three

Methodology

Chapter Three

Methodology

Aligning with the current research trends on English and bilingualism in the Arab world, this study's methodology focuses on the younger generation of English-speaking Bahrainis while contributing to the overarching objective of investigating the language policies of Bahraini families with bilingual children. This chapter outlines the mixed-method research design adopted to analyze the current research problem. It details the methods of data collection, the methods of data analysis, and the demographic details of participants.

In an attempt to reach reliable results, both quantitative and qualitative approaches were adopted to explore the language use of young Bahraini bilinguals thoroughly, understand the impact of the prevalence of English on the household linguistic practices in Bahrain, and examine the intergenerational variation in the language ideologies within the Bahraini family.

3.1. Data Collection and Instruments

The methods of data collection and analysis used in this study are structured interviews, focus group discussions, and a linguistic analysis of the focus groups data, as detailed below.

3.1.1. Structured Interviews

As the default decision-makers of the family language policy, Bahraini parents with children enrolled in private schools were recruited in this study to self-report their family's linguistic practices, ideologies, and interventions through structured interviews. The interview questions are adapted to this

study's context from a validated United Kingdom national survey formulated by Curdt-Christiansen (2022) as part of a large-scale project aimed at understanding the sociolinguistics of different multilingual communities in the United Kingdom (see Appendix A for the full list of original and adapted questions). Examples of the questions adaptation process can be seen in Table 1. Irrelevant questions were excluded from the list of utilized questions, such as questions regarding the impact of Brexit on language attitudes.

Table 1. Examples from the questions adaptation process

Original Survey Question (Curdt-Christiansen, 2022)	Adapted Version
[What do you think about the following statements?] Being bi/multilingual benefits a child's academic performance.	Do you think that speaking English affects a child's future career and academic performance in Bahrain?
[How frequently in a typical week do the following language activities take place in your family?] Your child attends religious services to learn/practice your non-English home language(s).	Do you sign up your child for Quran/praying classes to support both Arabic and religious development?

Overall, 14 questions were used in the interviews. The main questions addressed the primary languages used at home for common interactions, such as greetings and shopping lists, and extended to specific contexts like spoken and written communication between the parents, the parents with their children, and the children with their grandparents. Additionally, participants

were asked about the actions they take to support their children's language development, their children's confidence and comfort levels when speaking and writing in English versus Arabic, as well as any linguistic generational gaps, such as children using English slang words that are unfamiliar to parents. The final set of questions discussed the interviewees' perceptions of the impact of bilingualism on cultural identity, academic and work opportunities, and the balance between Arabic and English in the context of Bahrain. The interview questions correspond to the three main components of FLP: language practices, language ideology, and language management.

3.1.1.1. Participants

A total number of 20 Bahraini parents were interviewed by the researcher. In qualitative Social Sciences studies, this number of interviewees falls within the common range of participants required to reach saturation, particularly in studies with relatively homogenous target populations (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). This could allow for in-depth exploration of novel fields of inquiry such as FLP. The interviewees were 50% mothers and 50% fathers, aged between 33 and 48 years old. The interviewed parents have children who are currently or have previously been enrolled in private schools, born between 1997 and 2014. Moreover, 90% of the interviewees have a bachelor's degree, while 10% have a master's degree. Regarding employment status, 90% of participants are currently employed.

To facilitate the process of recruiting interviewees, snowball sampling was utilized, i.e., people who meet the selection criteria from the researcher's various professional and educational networks then invite others with similar demographic information. The use of snowball sampling is particularly effective considering the specificity and homogeneity of the community

investigated in this study. The sample herein is focused, targeting a specific age group with similar socioeconomic statuses (i.e., able to afford private education) and with the same nationality and religion. Prior to commencing the interviews, participants were briefed and their full consent to participate and record the interview sessions was obtained. Confidentiality was maintained through pseudonymization, i.e., using “Interviewee 1” instead of the participant’s personal information, and securely storing data. The average duration of the interview sessions was approximately 20 minutes.

3.1.1.2. Data Analysis

The interview recordings were transcribed through intelligent verbatim transcription by the researcher, codified, and logged into an Excel sheet to explore trends in the data thematically and quantitatively (see Appendix B for the interview transcripts). This was achieved through calculating the frequency of the codes. Intelligent verbatim maintains clean and filtered data without redundancies or filler words. Table 2 demonstrates how codes were assigned to participants’ answers to facilitate the quantitative analysis. The themes emerging from the interview data were informed by the theoretical framework that underpins this research, i.e., Curdt-Christiansen’s model of FLP (2009).

Table 2. Codification of interviewee answers to “Do you think children can only be attached to their culture and religion if they fully understand Arabic?”

Interviewee	Answer	Code
4	Arabic is, as they say, indispensable, it’s our primary language and the language of Islam. Children won’t be able to understand the deep religious meanings within Islam in English rather than Arabic.	Agree
16	I don’t think language has a particular impact on the religion you practice.	Neutral
7	It might be theoretically hard, but if you look at it another way, the foreigners I worked with in Britain, such as Pakistanis, don’t speak Arabic but are very conservative in their religious views.	Disagree

3.1.2. Focus Groups

To explore the language practices and ideologies of the younger generation in Bahrain, focus groups were held with young bilingual Bahrainis, who are or were previously enrolled in private schools. The focus group discussions were centered around how these young Bahrainis are using their linguistic repertoires when communicating with different generations, how they perceive the social standing of English and Arabic in the context of Bahrain, and their reflection on their personal and their families’ language practices and ideologies.

The participants were provided with the key discussion points above by the researcher to guide the conversation (see Appendix C for the full list of

discussion points). However, they were encouraged to engage in open dialogue, allowing them the freedom to discuss and share their perspectives. This approach ensured recording their spontaneous exchange of ideas and observing their natural speech.

3.1.2.1. Participants

A total number of three focus group discussions were held, which is enough to reach saturation in qualitative studies investigating a homogenous sample (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022) Each focus group comprised three Bahraini bilinguals aged between 16 and 22, who are or were previously enrolled in private schools. Considering that the researcher was the only moderator during the discussions, maintaining three participants in each group ensured allowing participants sufficient time and space to contribute. The total number of participants in the focus group discussions was therefore nine participants. Six out of the nine participants in the focus group discussions were females. Participants for the focus group discussions were recruited through reaching out to the researcher's professional and educational network to ensure a relevant and diverse sample. The disproportionate rate of males and females in the focus group discussions could be an indicator of the higher willingness among females to engage in deep discussions revolving around language.

The focus group discussions were scheduled according to the participants' convenience. Before commencing the discussions, the participants gave their full consent to participate in the discussions alongside their permission to record the sessions. Confidentiality was maintained through pseudonymization, i.e., using "P1" instead of the participant's personal information, and securely storing data. The average duration of each focus group discussion was approximately 25 minutes.

3.1.2.2. Data Analysis

Similar to the structured interviews, the audio recordings of the focus group discussions were transcribed by the researcher for analysis (see Appendix D for the focus group transcripts). The transcription was done verbatim for the focus group discussions. A thematic analysis approach was employed to systematically identify, organize, and interpret patterns across the data. Initial coding was performed by reading through the transcripts to identify recurring themes and keywords relevant to the research questions. Codes were then grouped into broader themes that reflect the three main components of FLP (language practices, language ideology, and language management) that compose the theoretical framework of this research.

3.1.2.3. Linguistic Analysis

Linguistic analysis was employed to examine the language used by participants in the focus group discussions. This approach enabled the researcher to identify not only recurring themes and patterns in the participants' practices and ideologies but also the linguistic patterns and structures they used to express their views during natural correspondence. The transcriptions were systematically dissected using defined criteria for identifying sociolinguistic, morphological, phonological, and pragmatic features (Table 3). The frequency of the aforementioned features was calculated using Excel after codifying the data as illustrated in Table 3. This ensured providing a detailed description of the prevalent linguistic features of the young Bahraini bilinguals in the sample.

Table 3. Identification criteria and codification of linguistic features

Linguistic features		Identification criteria	Code
Sociolinguistic	Code-switching	The alternation between English and Arabic within a sentence at the lexical level	SL-CS
	Slang	The use of informal or nonstandard registers prevalent among youth	SL-SG
Pragmatic	Arabic pragmatic markers	The use of Arabic filler words in English speech	PR-AR
Morphological	Clipping	Morphological reduction of word forms	M-CL
	Arabic affixation	Adding Arabic affixes to English words	M-AFX
Phonological	Reduced and assimilated forms	The use of informal and phonologically reduced and assimilated forms in English speech	PH-RF

Moreover, each full sentence uttered with a subject and a predicate followed by a pause was codified in the data analysis process in order to obtain a general overview of the English-to-Arabic usage ratio. Full English sentences were codified as “ER” and full Arabic sentences were codified as “AR” while sentences that contain both Arabic and English, i.e., codeswitching, were codified as “SL-CS.”

3.2. Summary

This chapter presented a detailed overview of the research methods and processes employed in the current investigation. The data collection methods involved structured interviews and focus group discussions. The analysis of the focus group discussions included a linguistic analysis of natural speech. The research design was guided by Curdt-Christiansen's model of FLP (2009). Analyzed statements from the interviews and focus groups were classified into the micro and macro factors suggested by Curdt-Christiansen (2009) for language ideology and management. The sampling techniques, recruitment strategies, and participant demographics were also described in this chapter to provide transparency and context. The results of the methodology detailed in this chapter and their extensive discussion in relation to the research questions and with reference to the reviewed literature are respectively presented in the following two chapters.

Chapter Four

Findings

Chapter Four

Findings

This chapter presents the findings of the methodology outlined in the previous chapter. The findings are organized into three main sections, corresponding to the three components of FLP. Under each section, results from each method are detailed.

4.1. Language Practices

Overall, across the interviews, the focus group discussions, and their linguistic analysis, young Bahrainis appear to exhibit complex bilingual language practices, and they incorporate the usage of English heavily in their everyday life. Moreover, the results indicate that the widespread use of English in Bahrain has a clear impact on the household linguistic practices of Bahraini families.

4.1.1. Interviews

All twenty participating parents reported observing their children speaking either fully in English (55%) or partially alongside Arabic (45%) when communicating verbally with their same-age peers. Regarding written communication, 90% of interviewed parents observed that their children use English fully when communicating with same-age peers while 10% mentioned that their children are comfortable with texting their peers in both Arabic and English. When asked about their own practices with their children, 90% of parents reported speaking in both Arabic and English with their children at home on a daily basis. Pertaining to text messaging their children, 60% of parents reported relying fully on English while 35% use both Arabic

and English in written communication with their children. When asked why she relies fully on English when writing to her child, one parent said, “It saves time. If I write to him (my child) in Arabic, I’d sometimes need to explain or translate to him.” (Appendix B, Interviewee 2)

While parent-child communication appears to be heavily interlaced with English, older relatives are less adaptive to multilingual communication in Bahrain. When asked about the language used in the verbal communication between their children and their grandparents, 90% of interviewees noted that their children try to communicate exclusively in Arabic with their grandparents and other older relatives. Regarding written communication, 60% of parents noted that their children struggle to use Arabic even with their monolingual relatives.

In alignment with the data above, 75% of parents reported that their children are more comfortable and confident when speaking in English, especially during public speaking activities and formal presentations, while 25% of parents reported that their children are comfortable with both Arabic and English. Concerning their children’s level of confidence and comfort when writing, 90% of parents reported that English is easier, faster, or more natural to their children. Meanwhile, writing in Arabic is often associated with a higher level of anxiety evident through children asking their parents to proofread their output.

Children’s bilingualism appears to have a significant impact on the overall language practices of their parents even outside parent-child communication. Out of the 20 interviewees, 17 noted that after having children, they started using English and mixing languages more in their daily lives. In everyday tasks such as writing birthday cards (Figure 3) and shopping

lists (Figure 4), participants prefer using either English or both languages. Gender appears to have an impact on this preference. In both tasks, fathers account for the minimal percentage of parents using Arabic exclusively, which could possibly indicate that females are more likely to use English in their everyday lives.

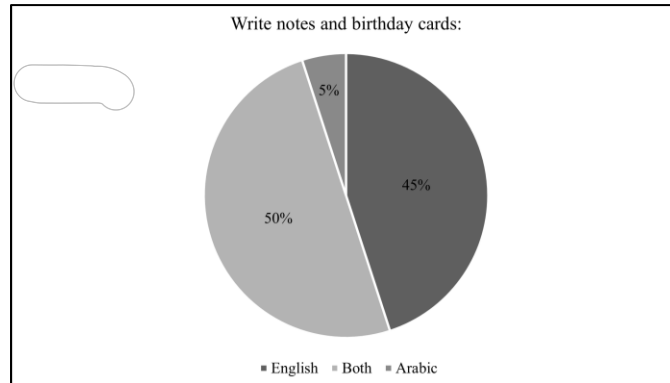


Figure 3. Most frequently used language when writing notes and birthday cards

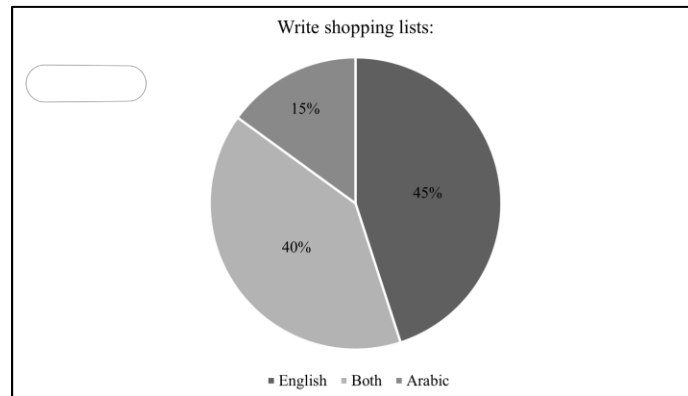


Figure 4. Most frequently used language when writing shopping lists

Moreover, an overwhelming majority (95%) reported that their children, especially the younger ones, use slang terms that the parents struggle to understand. One parent said, “[...] he (my child) often says things I don’t understand – forcing me to use Google so I can understand what they mean.”

(Appendix B, Interviewee 5) Four interviewees mentioned that alongside slang, they are also learning new vocabulary from their communication with their children despite already being highly fluent in English. According to parents, this is due to teaching their children the private school curriculum, as they studied the same educational material and scientific concepts in Arabic rather than English. In this regard, one parent noted, “I learned from my daughter body part names in English. Even names of planets – I don’t know all of them by heart. Me and her dad were just arguing the other day on which planet is Jupiter in Arabic.” (Appendix B, Interviewee 19)

Lastly, regarding their children’s entertainment habits, 90% of parents reported that their children watch television and/or YouTube videos in English always and on a daily basis. When asked about their Arabic media consumption, 75% of the interviewees reported that their children either never, or very rarely, watch Arabic videos or television shows. One interviewee noted about her daughter’s entertainment habits, “My daughter is always watching Western media, to the extent that just a few days ago, she was asking me to throw a Halloween party. I told her no; we don’t do that [...] the only Arabic content she watches is educational or religious videos.” (Appendix B, Interviewee 19)

As for reading books, 75% of participants similarly noted that their children always or often read in English for entertainment while 85% never or very rarely read Arabic books for fun. Considering that the majority of produced Arabic media is in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), the aforementioned data shows that Bahraini youth are particularly resistant to Arabic when it’s standardized rather than colloquial. It is also worth noting that 4 out of 20 parents mentioned that their children generally do not read

much, which could indicate the need to further encourage reading as a practice in Bahrain.

The interview results indicate that children's bilingualism has a significant impact on the overall language practices of Bahraini families. After having children, Bahraini parents report increased use of English in daily tasks and an improvement in their own English language competency.

4.1.2. Focus Groups

Across all three focus groups (three participants in each, nine in total), young bilingual Bahrainis recognized that they use different languages with different people, particularly people from different generations. All participants agreed that they use a mixture of Arabic and English when talking to their friends, siblings, or same-age peers while they try to stick to Arabic only when talking to their older family members and senior colleagues. In alignment with the results from the interviews, 8 out of 9 participants noted that speaking in Arabic is easier than writing. When asked why, the participants expressed finding the grammatical and spelling rules of Arabic to be difficult and complicated. The participants felt underequipped and unprepared to use Arabic in professional settings. One out of 9 participants mentioned that writing is easier because it allows her to take some time to process.

Requiring time to process was a recurring theme. Across all focus groups, individuals noted that they often find themselves translating in their head from English to Arabic when speaking in Arabic. However, this internal translation process does not occur when they are speaking in English. Similar to the findings of the interviews, this indicates that young Bahrainis are

generally faster and more responsive when they are speaking or writing in English rather than Arabic.

All participants appeared to naturally gravitate to English when writing personal notes and reminders for themselves. Regarding their entertainment habits, 7 out of 9 participants reported exclusively consuming English media. While one participant reported frequently listening to songs and watching television shows in both Arabic and English, another one said, “When it comes to music, I listen to both (Arabic and English music), but movies and shows I only watch in English. I think Arabic (shows) are a bit cringy.” (Appendix D, Focus Group 1) This negative perception of Arabic media is reflected in both the interviews and focus group discussions. One of the male participants also noted, “They (Arabic shows) try to act out Western-based ideas and it’s awkward.” (Appendix D, Focus Group 3)

Bahraini youth affirmed in the focus group discussions their selective use of their linguistic repertoires with a generational-based trend. While they prefer to converse in English or a mixture of Arabic and English with same-age peers, they attempt to speak exclusively in Arabic when conversing with older individuals.

4.1.3. Linguistic Analysis

The language use of young Bahraini bilinguals is characterized by distinct features that highlight both their bilingual proficiency and the influence of their sociocultural identity and linguistic environment. Figure 5 illustrates the most significant linguistic features emerging from observing natural conversations between young Bahraini bilinguals. Code-switching (SL-CS) represents the most salient feature, followed by the use of Arabic

pragmatic markers in English speech (PR-AR), English slang words (SL-SG), clipped forms (M-CL), Arabic affixations (M-AFX), and assimilated and reduced forms (PH-RF), respectively. These features are thoroughly discussed below.

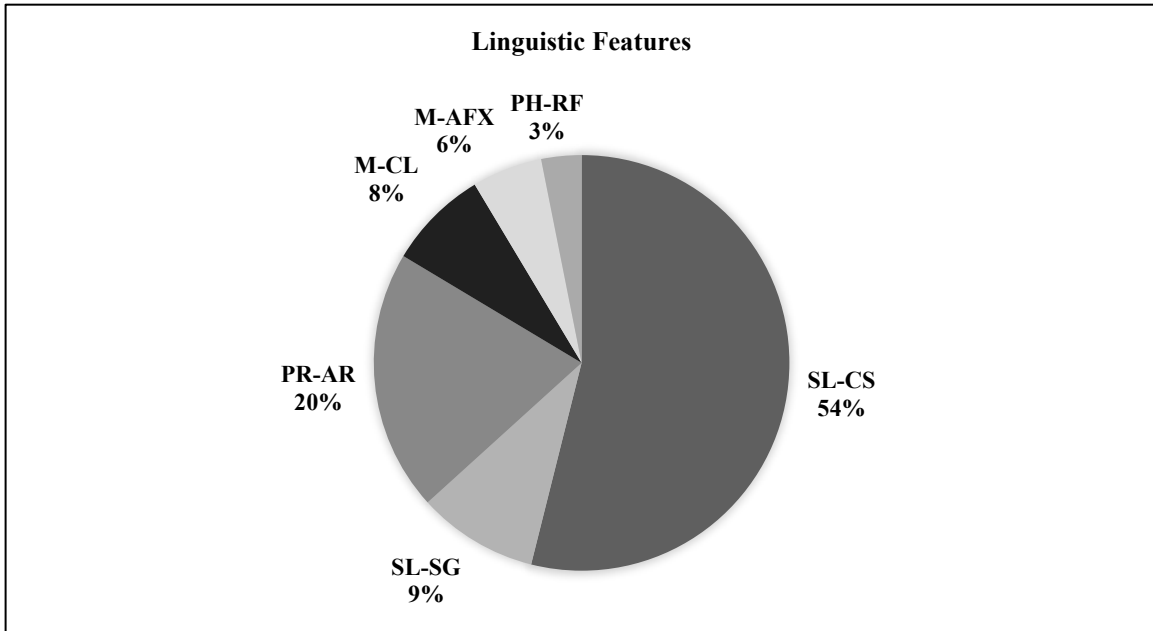


Figure 5. The most significant linguistic features in the speech of young Bahraini bilinguals

4.1.3.1. Sociolinguistic Features

Code-switching is the most prominent feature that characterizes the speech of young Bahraini bilinguals. It could serve various communicative functions, including increasing efficiency, emphasizing specific ideas, or addressing lexical gaps in linguistic competency. Below are multiple examples of this feature from the data.

Example 1. To be honest, even if I were to get married, *ya 'nī btzwj* [...]

[To be honest, even if I were to get married, as in get married.]

Example 2. *Lazim tsm ‘ayn comments ‘alá ‘al-mawḍū‘a*

[You have to hear comments on the subject.]

Example 3. Depending on the person *ila qa ‘ad aklmh.*

[Depending on the person I’m talking to.]

Example 4. Maybe cus you work in a setting *fīh wajd baḥraynyīn.*

[Maybe because you work in a setting that has a lot of Bahrainis.]

Example 1 shows the participant switching to Arabic to repeat and emphasize the idea uttered originally in English. Meanwhile, Example 2 illustrates how the participant switched to English at the lexical level to possibly address a gap in her linguistic competency. Examples 3 and 4 demonstrate how the participants likely switched to Arabic for efficiency purposes as if the Arabic expressions were recalled faster than their English equivalents.

Out of all the sentences uttered during the focus group discussions, 37% included code-switching (Figure 6). Around half the sentences uttered were fully in English and only 12% were fully in Arabic. Gender had a somewhat notable influence on the bilingual language practices of young Bahrainis in the data. Males are more likely to speak full sentences entirely in either English or Arabic, thereby avoiding excessive sentence-level code-switching. In contrast, females demonstrate greater fluidity in switching between Arabic and English. This finding corroborates the interview data, which included fathers using Arabic more than their female counterparts in everyday tasks.

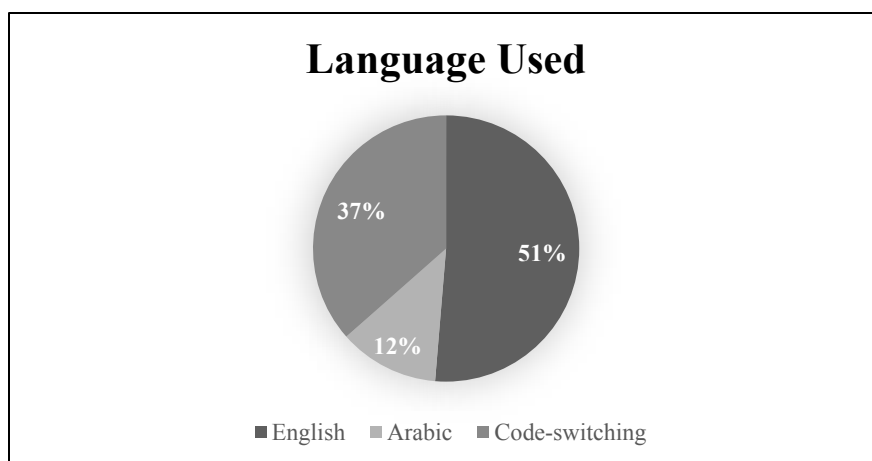


Figure 6. Frequency of languages used at the sentence level

The second dominant sociolinguistic feature was the use of slang. The English speech of Bahraini youth is highly informal and often accompanied by contemporary slang terms. This can be viewed as a reflection of their exposure to Western media and current social media trends. Such speech often features unconventional grammatical structures, with a relaxed adherence to standard syntax. Examples of this can be seen below.

Example 5. [...] Maybe **lowkey** I do think it's more prestigious

Example 6. [...] It's **cringe** but I dunno

Example 7. Oh my god same, same!

4.1.3.2. Pragmatic Features

Arabic pragmatic markers are often embedded in English sentences to facilitate conversations between young Bahraini bilinguals. This feature adds a layer of cultural nuance to their speech. It is worth noting that this feature in the focus group discussions was found to be largely unidirectional, with Arabic fillers appearing in English speech but not in the reverse. When English words are inserted within Arabic speech, they mostly serve to affect

the literal meaning. In the data, the two most frequently used words are *'Aḥs* (meaning “I feel like”), which occurred 22 times, and *Ya 'nī* (meaning “you know”), which occurred 19 times. Below is an example of this phenomenon from the data.

Example 8. I don't know. *'Aḥs* it's difficult to be forced to use Arabic. I have to translate in my head and it's *ya 'nī* exhausting.

[I don't know. I feel like it's difficult to be forced to use Arabic. I have to translate in my head and it's, you know, exhausting.]

Example 9. Exactly. *Ya 'nī* balance is not as easy as it sounds

[Exactly. Balance is not as easy as it sounds, you know.]

Example 10. [...] *'aḥs* it's hard to express myself with them.

[I feel like it's hard to express myself with them.]

While English pragmatic markers were not similarly integrated into Arabic speech, the focus group participants frequently used filler words during pure English speech. The most frequently used word is “like” which occurred 16 times. Other filler words include “literally” and “definitely.” Illustrative examples from the data are listed below.

Example 11. When we do **like** short presentations during class [...]

Example 12. I would've been able to respond quickly. But I had to **like**, think.

Example 13. I get special tasks. **Literally** this week [...]

Example 14. I **definitely** feel some sort of pressure [...]

4.1.3.3. Morphological Features

Arabic grammatical elements, such as the linking device *wa-* (meaning “and”), the definite article *al-* (meaning “the”), or the connective particle *fa-* (meaning “so” or “then”), are frequently used as affixes with English words in the speech of young Bahraini bilinguals, forming unique bilingual constructions (Examples 15-18). This bilingual morphological affixation process demonstrates the seamless interaction between the participants’ linguistic systems and their linguistic creativity.

Example 15. *Bi-al-Nisbah ll-music*, I listen to both [...]

[As for music, I listen to both.]

Example 16. It depends, *ya ‘nī ‘alá al-*type of relationship

[It depends on, you know, the type of relationship.]

Example 17. *Idhā bi-al-fuṣḥá wa-*formal setting [...]

[If it’s in MSA and the setting is formal.]

Example 18. [...] they’re embarrassed [...] *fa-*they prefer to not talk in Arabic

[They’re embarrassed [...] so they prefer to not talk in Arabic.]

In addition, the use of clipped forms emerged as a prominent morphological feature in the speech of young Bahraini bilinguals during the focus group discussions. The frequent use of clipping not only demonstrates their linguistic creativity but also emphasizes their inclination toward colloquial and dynamic expressions, aligning with the informal speech norms common in native English peer interactions and media. Below are illustrative examples from the data.

Example 19. Even in **uni** and in my internship [...]

Example 20. It's **cus** they don't have confidence

Example 21. Bro *sā'āt 'afakkir bi-al-sā'āt* how to [...]

[Bro sometimes it takes me hours to think how to ...]

4.1.3.4. Phonological Features

Lastly, the use of phonologically reduced and assimilated forms was identified as a key linguistic feature. These forms reflect the participants' adaptability in informal contexts, showcasing their relaxed and pragmatic approach to communication. By employing such reductions, they exhibit their English fluency and exposure to informal speech patterns.

Example 22. We're not being judgmental it's just that I'm not **gonna** feel comfortable [...]

Example 23. [...] **cus** I **dunno** how to do it in Arabic.

Example 24. That's **kinda** bad.

These linguistic features reinforce the findings of the interviews and focus group discussions regarding the language practices of Bahraini youth. The way they use language reveals the extent to which entertainment habits can impact language practices. It also provides insight into the manner through which they prefer to present themselves, which will be further explored in the following section.

4.2. Language Ideology

The data shows that the participants' attitudes toward English and Arabic were shaped by a blend of seemingly conflicting pragmatic and cultural considerations, as detailed in the sections below.

4.2.1. Interviews

Parents were first asked about their general opinion towards bilingualism, and whether or not speaking multiple languages can cause confusion among children. The results show a divide as 40% of participants agree that it can be confusing and 60% disagree. One participant said, “Not only can they (children) handle being bilinguals, but they can also learn up to five or six languages” (Appendix B, Interviewee 7) while another expressed, “It might cause them confusion when it comes to writing, for example, they’d often write in Arabic from left-to-write (rather than from right-to-left).” (Appendix B, Interviewee 9)

However, there was no divide when it came to their opinion of English being beneficial for a child’s future career and academic performance in Bahrain as all interviewees expressed this sentiment. English was referred to by parents as a global language and the language of the future. Nevertheless, three out of 20 parents mentioned that in the job market in Bahrain, Arabic fluency is equally important for government jobs and some educational institutions. One mother said, “My son has a strong foundation in English, but when it was time for him to enter university, he found it challenging to even pass the Arabic requirements of the university.” (Appendix B, Interviewee 18)

While English was described as a universal language, Arabic was described by the interviewees as a beautiful language. Participants referred constantly to how much they love Arabic as a language, hoping that their children could foster similar fondness for the language as they grow older. Moreover, the vast majority of parents (90%) believe that children can only be attached to their culture and religion if they are proficient in Arabic and that consuming English content hinders their attachment to their culture.

“What attracts children on YouTube and television is always English content. Even if we’re trying to teach her (our child) things about, let’s say, Islam and prayers, the idea of these matters won’t reach her as effectively as the idea of, for example, Christmas, when she sees it in a video or hears it in a song.” (Appendix B, Interviewee 20)

When participants were asked about their feelings towards the widespread use of English in Bahrain, their opinions varied. Forty percent of parents were overall happy that many people in Bahrain speak English, viewing it as a reflection of the Kingdom’s modernism and quality of education. However, 45% of participants felt negatively about the spread of English, viewing it as a foreign power that is rapidly impacting the everyday life of Bahrainis. Four parents mentioned that the current situation in Bahrain which strongly emphasizes English is influenced by social media campaigns that portray English to be fancy and trendy. One parent said, “Most Arab Bahraini families have older members that do not even speak English, and when these families enroll their children in English-based schools without a high level of proficiency on their part what happens? If we weren’t educated and did not speak English but our child does, how would we communicate with him? What’s happening now is more of a trend, rather than a studied informed plan,” (Appendix B, Interviewee 8) while another parent said, “I think what’s happening right now is merely a trend caused by social media. If one of the major influencers started signing up her kids for Arabic tuition, everyone would imitate her and do the same.” (Appendix B, Interviewee 6) Three out of the 20 participants were neutral.

Despite their own language practices with their children, and the heavily English-oriented practices they reported of their children, the majority

of interviewed parents (65%) felt uncomfortable and annoyed when young Bahrainis are exclusively using English although their mother tongue is Arabic. This was described by parents to be disrespectful and arrogant. One interviewee said, “It even annoys me on TV. When we watch reality shows in Arabic the contestants are always trying to talk in English, even if their English is broken, and it’s embarrassing because you are Arabs why aren’t you talking in Arabic? You’d never see foreigners talking in a language other than theirs in shows that are supposed to represent their countries.” (Appendix B, Interviewee 19)

However, seven parents (35%) did not mind it when young Bahrainis spoke in English. One parent said, “My son, for example, is more comfortable with using English with his friends, and I’d like for him to express himself comfortably.” (Appendix B, Interviewee 3) Out of these seven parents, five were women, which could indicate that women are more open and accepting towards the spread of English among youth in Bahrain.

The majority of parents (65%) believed that their children’s ability to make friends and form deeper connections is affected by their bilingualism. One parent said, “They (my children) have always been closer to my side of the family rather than their dad’s because most of us are fluent in English.” (Appendix B, Interviewee 2) Another parent also expressed, “Out of all his aunts, he (my son) is closest to the aunt who studied English literature [...] I think this is due to him being able to express himself freely with her.” (Appendix B, Interviewee 3) Meanwhile, the other 35% of parents did not believe that their children connected better with people based on their language proficiency.

When asked to reflect on the sociolinguistic landscape of Bahrain, all participants admitted that the rapid spread of English among Bahraini youth is somewhat worrying. The majority (70%) felt that the spread of English is threatening the status of Arabic in the Kingdom and expressed that Arabic needs to receive governmental support, especially in private institutions. However, 30% of parents believed that the current linguistic situation in Bahrain is still acceptable and the integrity of Arabic is not at significant risk, although they expressed concern over the far future, thereby viewing the loss of Arabic as a probable future scenario.

Finally, parents were asked whether or not they receive criticism from wider society regarding their children's reliance on English. Out of all interviewees, 55% did not express receiving direct criticism from their network, "No one can judge anyone because all of our kids are chicken nuggets, unfortunately." (Appendix B, Interviewee 10). Nevertheless, 45% recalled receiving criticism. Several parents mentioned that people have called their children chicken nuggets. Mothers appear to be more likely to receive criticism from wider society, as six out of the nine parents who recognized receiving criticism were females.

Most of the parents were not strongly affected by the criticism. One mother said, "It used to bother me a lot, but I don't care anymore. If anything, I feel ashamed because I used to make fun of chicken nuggets too." (Appendix B, Interviewee 19) Another mother also expressed, "My best friend criticizes me every day. Whenever she sees me talking to him (my youngest son) in English she starts pestering me about it. It sometimes embarrasses me because I don't want people to think we're bragging or something, it's just easier for us to communicate in English." (Appendix B, Interviewee 2) One of the

interviewed fathers also noted that despite not directly receiving criticism, he mentioned getting “stares” from people when he talks in English with his children, “but I mostly ignore them,” he said (Appendix B, Interviewee 20).

The interview data shows that although parents are ideologically committed to Arabic and view it as a symbol of authentic and Islamic identity, their language practices do not reflect to some extent their ideological beliefs and commitments.

4.2.2. Focus Groups

As evident through their language practices, the focus group participants all tend to portray themselves in English rather than Arabic, indicating that their underlying ideology favors English over Arabic. One discussion point addressed whether or not the participants view one language as holding more prestige or influence than the other. All participants agreed that English carries more social importance. Similar to the interview responses, they described English as a universal language. English was also described as a valuable skill. The participants noted that their high level of English fluency granted them access to unique social advantages. One participant owed her employment largely to her English communication skills, and all the participants agreed that they had been previously especially chosen as representatives in educational and professional settings due to their English proficiency.

On the flip side, the participants also expressed receiving negative treatment due to their reliance on English. One participant said: “[...] at my previous company, I was the chicken nugget [...] all the (foreign) clients were directed to me. And it’s always in a joking or sarcastic tone.” (Appendix D,

Focus Group 1) Another participant noted that this type of treatment mostly comes from “[...] the people that don’t speak English. Their justification for them not being able to understand (English) is ‘It’s all because you guys are chicken nuggets.’ It’s never it’s because ‘I’m not educated.’” (Appendix D, Focus Group 2) This same sentiment was echoed across the male participants’ focus group. However, across all three focus groups, the participants did not appear to be negatively affected by these comments.

All the young bilingual Bahrainis participating in the focus group discussions found themselves feeling more connected and at ease when communicating with people who share their same level of bilingual proficiency. Although they can form deep connections with people who speak Arabic only, they appear to appreciate the ability to code-switch and communicate through both English and Arabic in their relationships with others. The excerpt below embodies this sentiment:

Excerpt 1.

[Focus Group 1]

P1: I would definitely be closer with people who speak English because I use a lot of English, especially when I express, I don’t know how to express myself in Arabic.

P2: Especially when you need to say something critical and emotional, you always go for English.

P1: To be honest, even if I were to get married [...] I can’t get married to someone who doesn’t speak English.

[...]

P3: Even with my friends who only speak Arabic, there are certain things that I struggle to say to them.

P1: I'll be honest, I don't even think I have friends that don't speak English.

P3: I do, and I think it's hard to express myself with them.

P1: I don't know how but speaking English changes one's personality.

I don't know how to explain it, but I do think their personality is different.

This excerpt demonstrates that Bahraini youth tend to have a form of ideological bias towards bilinguals. This bias was also echoed across the other two focus groups. One participant said: "I need someone who speaks like me. As in someone that mixes both (English and Arabic). I can't even be friends with like a full-on English person." (Appendix D, Focus Group 2)

During the focus group discussions, Bahraini youth revealed that they encounter negative community perceptions of English use. Nevertheless, they also encounter positive treatment due to their bilingualism. They also display a clear bias towards bilingual rather than monolingual individuals, thereby affirming that the bilingual experience has a profound impact on identity formation.

4.2.3. Linguistic Analysis

Considering the frequency of the use of English and code-switching during the focus group discussions (Figure 6), it is evident that young Bahraini bilinguals have a strong ideological commitment to English. Moreover, their significant use of slang, clipping, and reduced and assimilated forms may indicate their immersion in popular culture and Western media. By choosing to express themselves through this informal register, they distance themselves

from orthodox language ideologies and embrace innovation and creativity in language use.

This is particularly evident through their use of unique hybrid bilingual structures. In the focus group discussions, the participants repeatedly attach Arabic affixes to English words and use Arabic pragmatic markers in English speech. Alongside showcasing their linguistic creativity, these language practices also symbolize their attachment to Arabic. By inserting Arabic elements in their speech, they show that although they may prefer to use English due to their educational background, environment, and various social factors, Arabic remains an indispensable part of their identity.

However, the fact that the only sentence spoken fully in MSA was uttered sarcastically demonstrates how colloquial Arabic is viewed in a favorable light in comparison to MSA (Excerpt 2). While participants show signs of identifying with colloquial Arabic, they appear to resist and avoid MSA, in alignment with the data from the interviews and focus groups regarding their entertainment habits.

Excerpt 2.

[Focus Group 1]

P1: It depends on the setting. You're at work, you're writing an email, would you rather write it in Arabic?

P2: Um immediately no. I can't.

P1: In professional settings for sure I'm gonna use English cus I dunno how to do it in Arabic.

P2: [sarcastic tone in MSA] *Ma'a taḥīyātī.*

[Kind regards.]

[laughter]

The linguistic analysis illustrates how Bahraini youth adopt nonorthodox language ideologies that allow them to view their bilingualism as one large repertoire rather than two separate languages.

4.3. Language Management

Overall, families in Bahrain appear to employ a range of strategies in an effort to balance the two languages. However, the realities of daily life, including the dominance of English in education, entertainment, and professional environments, made this balance difficult to achieve. Despite the ideological commitments to Arabic evident through the interviews, many participants struggled with integrating Arabic into their everyday lives, especially for younger generations.

4.3.1. Interviews

Out of the 20 interviewed parents, only 4 participants felt confident that their children are equally fluent in English and Arabic. The majority of participants (75%) expressed a strong desire for their children to be equally fluent in both languages, thereby recognizing the benefits of bilingualism. While English is perceived as essential for their children's future opportunities in Bahrain, Arabic is seen as crucial for cultural grounding. When asked about the measures they take to support their children's language development, the most common method was enrolling them in Quran recitation classes, which was mentioned by 70% of parents. This method, which aims to contribute to both religious and Arabic language development, fortifies the relationship between Arabic and religious and cultural considerations.

A large number of parents (45%) mentioned reading Arabic books with their children as an intervention to nurture their interest in Arabic. However,

they often faced resistance from their children. One parent said, “I also try to dedicate nights for reading in Arabic and reading in English. They always try to avoid the days allocated for Arabic.” (Appendix B, Interviewee 1) Similarly, three parents mentioned trying to sign up their children for Arabic tuition, but they were met with the same resistance. Another parent expressed, “I even tried to sign my youngest child for Arabic tuition, but he refused to attend. A few years back, Arabic tuition didn’t even exist. It (Arabic fluency) was a given. I also tried to read Arabic books with him and encouraged him to read Arabic books on our way to school, but I failed to make him commit.” (Appendix B, Interviewee 2)

This resistance may signify the younger generation’s ideological commitment to English content as more entertaining and interesting. It may also confirm that although bilingual children have a preference for talking in English, they particularly resist consuming content in MSA and are more adaptive to colloquial Arabic.

In addition, children’s interactions with grandparents and monolingual Arabic speakers emerged as an important influence on Arabic fluency. Grandparents, who predominantly speak Arabic, offer a cultural immersion that parents believe strengthens children’s linguistic and cultural connection to Arabic. The majority of parents (90%) mentioned grandparents as external factors that positively influence and encourage their children to speak in Arabic. On the other hand, 35% of parents mentioned that the presence of English-speaking housemaids or nannies affected their child’s preference for English, especially in the early language acquisition phases.

Other less frequently mentioned interventions included trying to speak in English at home as much as possible, dedicating one parent to English and

one parent to Arabic, and spending more time and effort on Arabic homework. The results indicate that mothers are more involved in their children's language development, as all of them mentioned taking action to support their children's language development and 80% of them mentioned more than one action. Meanwhile, 2 out of 10 fathers did not mention taking any action to support their children's language development, and only 4 fathers (40%) mentioned taking more than one action.

The interview data illustrates that parents are aware of their children's excessive reliance on English. This is evident through their attempts to support their Arabic language development. However, their children's resistance to those attempts shows their ideological commitment to English rather than Arabic as more entertaining.

4.3.2. Focus Groups

The struggle to improve Arabic fluency and achieve balance was a recurring theme in the focus group discussions as well. Several participants pointed out that younger family members felt embarrassed or insecure when speaking Arabic due to fear of making mistakes. The participants also reflected on their own level of proficiency and confidence in their Arabic skills, expressing their desire to rely more on Arabic in the future.

When asked to reflect on their respective FLPs and the language management measures taken by their parents, the participants in the focus group discussions described how their family environment played a big role in their language development. While their families encouraged them to learn English for practical reasons, they also emphasized the importance of speaking Arabic at home. For most of the participants in the focus group

discussions, this was highly contradictory. One participant said, “They want you to learn it (English), but they want you to use it only when you *have* to.” (Appendix D, Focus Group 1)

The participants implied that their parents encouraged their English language development for their future, without the expectation that their identity and daily practices would be impacted by their English fluency. The participants mentioned facing criticism and disappointment from their parents for relying heavily on English and not prioritizing Arabic in their daily communication. One participant highlighted the contradiction in his family’s language policy by saying: “They (my parents) accommodate my (younger) sister by speaking to her in English. Then they get mad because she doesn’t speak Arabic. How would she learn?” (Appendix D, Focus Group 3) However, Excerpt 3 shows that despite recognizing the flaws in their FLPs, they acknowledge the difficulty of their parents’ role as the managers of the FLP:

Excerpt 3.

[Focus Group 3]

P1: But I think that they’re navigating the shift in society as well.

Like, they don’t know what to do either, so I don’t blame them.

P3: Exactly. Balance is not as easy as it sounds, you know.

The focus group participants are similarly aware of their excessive reliance on English. However, they largely attribute this imbalance to their private education and emphasize contradictions in their FLPs.

4.3.3. Linguistic Analysis

While this methodological analysis tool does not particularly lend itself to the analysis of family language management, the way the young

participants utilize language may reveal insights into their linguistic upbringing. Their frequent code-switching and heavy reliance on English may indicate the lack of strictness and orthodoxy in their FLP. Although the older generation might have conservative language beliefs and ideologies, they do not translate into strict actions, resulting in an unmonitored mixed language policy that allows children to speak freely in whatever language they prefer.

4.4. Summary

This chapter presented the results of the methodology detailed in the previous chapter based on the theoretical framework of FLP adapted in this research. As evident through the structured interviews, focus group discussions, and linguistic analysis, young Bahraini bilinguals appear to rely heavily on English in their daily lives. The language practices of young Bahrainis are also impacting the household linguistic practices of Bahraini families, particularly parents, who try to employ various interventions to manage the language use of their children. However, despite the ideological commitments of parents to Arabic, achieving balance appears to be extremely challenging in today's reality in Bahrain. The following chapter discusses the abovementioned findings in relation to the research questions and with reference to the literature review.

Chapter Five

Discussion

Chapter Five

Discussion

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the findings presented in the previous chapter in relation to the research questions. Therefore, the discussion is organized in subsections corresponding to each research question addressed in this thesis. By making references to the literature review, this study establishes its position amid the current scholarship and fills the gap in the literature.

5.1. Language Use of Young Bahraini Bilinguals in Intergenerational Communication

The dynamic manner through which young Bahraini bilinguals in the sample navigate, maneuver, and utilize their linguistic repertoires seems to have a specific and unified pattern. The results from both the interviews and focus group discussions portray Bahraini youth as an adaptive group aware of the linguistic intergenerational variation in the Kingdom. While they appear to allow their language preferences to surface while talking to their same-age peers, they can to some extent suppress these preferences to match the preferences of their interlocutors when talking to people from older generations.

These generational-based differences in language preferences were similarly noted by Bulaila and Sdiri (2021), Daquila (2024), Hayat and AlBader (2022), Nelson et al. (2023), Jansen (2019), and Sibanda (2022), who investigated postcolonial contexts that emphasize the importance of bilingualism, specifically English as L2, in the modern world. The younger

the generation, the heavier the reliance on English. Parallel to the findings of Hayat and AlBader (2022) and Sibanda (2022), the present study concludes that young Bahraini bilinguals converse with each other using either English or a mixture of L1 and English. Meanwhile, they attempt to avoid using English when talking to older relatives or colleagues.

These generational-based differences were attributed by Abdullahi and Wei (2021) and Cox et al. (2021) to the fact that older generations have not acquired English language skills as much as the younger generation due to the lack of immersion in the host country's culture when compared to their younger descendants. However, in the context of Bahrain, as noted by Al-Alawi (2023), these generational-based differences in language preferences appear to be due to the discrepancies in access to English education and resources, which underwent drastic changes in the last two decades.

While other studies (Mansory, 2019; Tekin & Al-Sakmi, 2019) report that the aforementioned variation creates a barrier that obstructs intergenerational communication, the results of the current study indicate that bilingual Bahraini youth display a level of flexibility that allows them to connect and effectively communicate with the older generation. Although they clearly express in the focus group discussions that they find it easier to communicate and build strong connections with people who match their level of linguistic competency in both L1 and L2, they are still able to compromise and attune their preferences to match their interlocutors.

It is significant to restate here that the age group investigated in this thesis is comprised of what has been described as Generation Z (Daquila, 2024). The participants noted that the subsequent generation (i.e., Generation Alpha) is “another story” (Appendix D, Focus Group 3), indicating that for

the upcoming generations, the linguistic variation is far more pronounced. Moreover, young Bahrainis being able to connect more effectively and comfortably with other bilinguals is a clear denotation of the influence of their bilingualism on their social identity. This idea is supported by the social identity theory (Tajfel et al., 1971), which justifies the individual's inclination towards his own linguistic variety.

While Bahraini bilingual youth appear to be able to compromise on their preferences and effectively communicate verbally with the older generation, this compromise is not as feasible in written communication. Abdullahi and Wei (2021) observe a significant lack of emphasis on L1 literacy rather than oracy. The current study also notes that young Bahraini bilinguals struggle especially with Arabic literacy rather than their listening and speaking skills. Parents note that while text messaging or writing in Arabic, their children often display a level of anxiety and ask them to proofread, unlike their confidence when writing in English.

5.1.1. Prevalent Linguistic Features of Young Bahraini Bilinguals

The linguistic analysis in this thesis highlighted code-switching as the primary sociolinguistic feature that distinguishes the speech of young Bahraini bilinguals. This aligns with the most salient feature characterizing the speech of Emirati youth, which is the frequent use of English loanwords in Arabic speech (Daquila, 2024). The way the participants use their linguistic repertoires echoes Lugo's (2019) redefinition of bilingualism as a third space that enables youth to creatively use language and construct meaning. At times the structure is Arabic-dominant with smaller English units, and other times the structure is English-dominant with smaller Arabic units.

Through sociolinguistic features such as slang and informal register, morphological features such as clipping, and phonological features such as the use of reduced and assimilated forms, the influence of globalization and popular culture manifests as a promoter and motivator for English use. In alignment with previous studies in the literature (e.g., Daquila., 2024; Lugo, 2019), the current study recognizes the cultural imperialism exercised by the West over the rest of the world, including Bahrain. This is evident through the way young Bahrainis are subconsciously mimicking the way English is spoken by Western content creators in their daily conversations with each other.

The gender-based variation in the bilingual language practices of young Bahrainis affirms to some extent the results of Bulaila and Sdiri (2021), who identify females as drivers of linguistic change by relying on English more than their male counterparts. However, males in the current study still predominantly rely on English, and females are viewed as drivers of linguistic change due to their higher level of fluidity in switching between languages and using excessive sentence-level code-switching, rather than solely due to their reliance on English.

Lastly, pragmatic features such as embedding Arabic pragmatic markers in English speech, and morphological features such as affixing Arabic grammatical elements to English words reinforce Lugo's (2019) redefinition of bilingualism. Arabic and English exist simultaneously in the minds of the participants, and by inserting Arabic constituents in their predominantly English speech, they demonstrate that Arabic remains an indispensable part of their identity as a facilitator for idea expression and meaning construction.

The above discussion suggests that these linguistic features that characterize the language of Bahraini youth are explanatory, rather than causal.

5.2. Impact of English on the Language Practices of Bahraini Families

The findings of the current study show that the level of reliance displayed by bilingual Bahraini youth is significantly impacting and transforming the language practices of the family unit in general. Eighty-five percent of parents participating in this study revealed using English more in their daily practices after having children. English has infiltrated into daily family tasks such as greetings, writing birthday cards, writing shopping lists, and doing homework. This is in alignment with the findings of Bulaila and Sdiri (2021) regarding the context of Bahrain, who report that over 75% of their respondents use English at home and around 30% are in favor of using English with children at home.

Despite the majority of parents in the present study acknowledging their children's disproportionate reliance on English and expressing their desire to achieve a perfect balance, their language practices at home often contradict their beliefs. As noted by Mansory (2019), parents are actively marginalizing Arabic by choosing to speak English in their household despite believing in the importance of equal fluency in L1 and L2. By doing so, parents compromise their own language preferences and accommodate their children's, thereby unintentionally participating in the possible gradual erosion of their children's proficiency in L1.

This might explain why although 70% of participants in Bulaila and Sdiri (2021) are against using English at home, 75% are still actively using it.

This divide could also be attributed to the external factors that influence family language practices referred to by Nelson et al. (2023), which are experienced differently by different generations, such as globalization and access to linguistic resources. While parents are struggling to keep pace with globalization and had limited access to English resources during their upbringing, Bahraini youth attending private schools view English as a first language of communication. By accommodating their children's preferences, parents are navigating the current global climate in which they might feel disadvantaged in comparison to the youth.

However, due to the way English is transforming the language practices of Bahraini families, parents report a level of improvement in their own English language competency. Four parents mentioned learning new vocabulary as a result of conversing with their bilingual children and using English in domains they previously used Arabic in. Cox et al. (2021) note how children enrolled in private schools receive exposure to knowledge domains exclusively in English. In Bahrain, parents who received their formal education in Arabic now find themselves navigating scholarly material in English. Therefore, parents appear to be positively impacted by their children's bilingualism in terms of their own language acquisition.

Another positive impact of bilingualism is parents noting that their children are more expressive in English rather than Arabic. In the focus group discussions, the participants also highlighted their reliance on English for emotional expression. Cox et al. (2021) identify bilingualism in families as a significant factor that contributes to the well-being and harmony of family relations. The new generation of parents raising bilingual children appears to

recognize these relational benefits, despite their worry regarding extended intergenerational family relations with monolingual family members.

5.3. Language Ideologies Shaping FLPs in Bahrain

By referring to the macro factors influencing language ideology in Curdt-Christiansen's (2009) model of FLP, the findings of the current investigation suggest that the language ideologies of Bahrainis are shaped by economic factors such as globalization, sociolinguistic factors such as the status of English in Bahrain, and sociocultural factors such as religion. The impact of globalization and the neoliberal language policy that views English as the language of economic success (Nelson et al., 2023; Piller, 2015) is felt at large in the context of Bahrain. Both the parents in the interviews and the youth in the focus group discussions spoke in length on the importance of English today for both one's educational journey and future career.

Previous studies conducted in the Gulf (e.g., Al-Jarf, 2022; Tekin & Al-Salmi, 2019) show that the parental promotion of English in the region is primarily led by the parents' desire to ease their children's integration in today's globalized world and give them a better chance at success. This ideology is mirrored in non-Arab parts of the world (de Oliveira, 2022; Nelson et al., 2023). The sociolinguistic environment in the Gulf region further reinforces the aforementioned neoliberal language policy. As noted by Gomaa (2017; 2020) and Bulaila and Sdiri (2021), the sociolinguistic environment in Bahrain clearly places English alongside Arabic as a second language, if not at times as a first language. This is a clear motivator for parents to adopt language practices, ideologies, and measures that correspond with the surrounding environment.

Religion stands as a counter sociocultural macro factor that opposes the aforementioned factors, adding complexity to the dominating language ideologies in Bahrain specifically and the Arab world in general. In Bourdieusian terms, while the previously mentioned factors assign English economic and social capital, religion assigns Arabic invaluable cultural capital. English is repeatedly referred to by the interviewees as the language of the future and success, and Arabic is referred to as the language of the Quran and Islam. Similar to the findings of Sayahi (2020) in the context of Tunisia, Arabic is a marker of religious and cultural authenticity, while English can often be culturally perceived in a negative light.

From a cultural standpoint, English spoken as L2 can be viewed in the community as a form of bragging. This idea has been expressed by the participants in the current study, who are often anxious to be perceived as boastful, as well as other studies (Sayahi, 2020; Sibanda, 2022). This gives rise to competing ideologies; although contemporary communities are fully aware that English holds substantial economic capital and is a prerequisite for success in modern society, English speakers are still discriminated against due to the perceived attachment they have to Western culture.

In addition to these ideologies, language management efforts that guide the Bahraini family's FLP are also influenced by an additional set of factors highlighted by Curdt-Christiansen (2009). First and foremost is the parents' economic investment. By choosing to enroll their children in private schools, parents are investing significant capital into their children's English proficiency. Meanwhile, efforts dedicated to enriching Arabic skills are mainly limited to Quran recitation lessons which require less capital, in both the results of this study and others (e.g., Al-Jarf, 2022; Mansory, 2019).

Alongside economic investment, parents' knowledge of bilingualism is another factor that influences language management practices (Curd-Christiansen, 2009). The results of this thesis indicate that the language management strategies utilized by Bahraini families are marked by a lack of a well-informed structured framework. Although parents generally harbor positive connotations to bilingualism, there is a lack of awareness when it comes to formulating their FLPs. This could be a significant factor that might explain why parents and children alike feel frustrated that their language ideologies are not being translated into language practices. Through the responses of the participants, the researcher was able to conclude by looking at Pearson's (2008) paradigm that two families are utilizing the OPOL strategy, and one family is utilizing the T&P strategy, although these strategies were not particularly named by the participants.

While in de Oliveira (2022) the OPOL strategy was used deliberately by the parents to counteract unbalanced bilingualism, the parents in the current study unknowingly utilized this strategy because one parent was significantly more fluent and proficient in English, "I've always used English at work and while studying, but I never used to use it at home before having kids. My wife and I communicate mostly in Arabic, and she refuses to talk to the kids in English because she says she is scared of teaching them incorrect structures. She received her education in Arabic all her life. Therefore, I started using English with our daughters and Arabic with her, while she uses Arabic with them." (Appendix B, Interview 12) The rest of the interviewees (85%) do not particularly employ a management strategy, following instead an unplanned MLP approach where they alternate between Arabic and English based on context or topic without paying particular attention to their language use.

5.3.1. Intergenerational Variation in Language Ideology

By referring to the micro factors influencing language ideology in Curdt-Christiansen's (2009) model of FLP, parents' expectations and language experience play a significant role in shaping the family's FLP. However, intergenerational variation in expectations and language experience can add a layer of complexity to the FLP. For instance, if we consider Lugo's (2019) redefinition of bilingualism as a part of a constellation and youth identity rather than viewing it as a binary construct, we can uncover a facet of the intergenerational ideological variation.

While the language practices of the bilingual Bahraini youth in this study provide a direct reflection of Lugo's (2019) redefinition of bilingualism, the older generation appears to view bilingualism as binary. One of the focus group participants encapsulates this idea by saying, "They want you to learn it (English), but they want you to use it only when you *have* to." (Appendix D, Focus Group 1) This situation is mirrored in other postcolonial contexts. In South Africa, Sibanda (2022) highlights how the same parents that encourage their children to learn English seemingly disapprove of the spread of English in their community. Through raising their children as bilinguals, parents appear to fail to consider that biculturalism is often a part of bilingualism. Rather than bilingualism being binary with an on-off switch, English will likely impact their children's identity and daily practices, as evident through the interviews, focus group discussions, and linguistic analysis.

Another aspect of the variation is the meanings attached to chicken nuggets, the currently widely used label in Bahrain to describe young bilinguals who frequently code-switch and rely heavily on English to communicate (Al-Alawi, 2023). According to Al-Alawi (2023), this label is a

vehicle for the anxieties felt by Bahrainis who view English as an inhibitor of authenticity and a signifier for the loss of traditional values, similar to the function served by other metaphors used across the world to describe English speakers in ethnic communities (Abdullahi & Wei, 2021; Hayat & AlBader, 2022; Lugo, 2019; Sibanda, 2022).

This function for the label resonates with the interviewed parents in the current study, who often feel ashamed when their children are labeled as chicken nuggets due to their own attachment to traditional values. However, the focus group participants in this study extend the function of this label to include an expression of insecurity. Young Bahraini bilinguals appear to view the use of this label as a deflection from and a justification for the user's own lack of English communicative competency.

In the same vein, the parents in the present study express their hyperawareness of English use being viewed as snobby and embarrassing in Bahrain, particularly by older generations. This is in alignment with the perspectives found in other ethnic communities (Lugo, 2019; Nelson et al., 2023). While older generations find English use embarrassing, Bahraini youth appear to view MSA from the same lens. During the focus group discussions, media content in MSA was repeatedly described as cringe and awkward. Moreover, the linguistic analysis revealed that the only sentence spoken in MSA during the discussions was uttered sarcastically.

Moreover, similar to the focus group discussions held in Sibanda (2020), where Afrikaans was described by the participants as a difficult language, the Bahraini participants in the current study across all three focus groups mentioned the difficulty of Arabic grammatical rules and diction. This corroborates the findings of Al-Anzarouti and Hamed (2020), who reveal that

Bahraini private school students find the minimal compulsory Arabic classes difficult and overwhelming. This negative view of Arabic as an unnecessarily complex language in comparison to a more accessible and practical English falls under the theory of Orientalism (Said, 2001). This idea that MSA is archaic, and English is progressive does not exist in older generations, who often favorably view the complexity of Arabic as a “rich and beautiful language compared to English.” (Appendix B, Interviewee 9).

According to Cox et al. (2021), these intergenerational linguistic ideological differences can be a source of major conflict within families and societies at large. Therefore, outlining these differences in the context of Bahrain and fostering open intergenerational dialogue is of paramount importance.

5.4. Summary

This chapter discussed the findings of the methodology adopted in this thesis in an attempt to provide comprehensive answers to the research questions. Through referencing the literature, this study establishes its significance as the findings in the context of Bahrain significantly align with the broader research tradition concerning the issue of the widespread use of English in non-English communities. The following chapter concludes the thesis and offers recommendations for both practice and future research.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

Chapter Six

Conclusion

This chapter concludes the thesis by summarizing the key research findings and implications in relation to the aforementioned research objectives. It also reviews the limitations of the study and proposes practical recommendations and avenues for future research.

Through conducting structured interviews with 20 Bahraini parents with children enrolled in private schools, moderating three focus groups with nine young Bahraini bilinguals, and linguistically analyzing the language use of Bahraini youth, this thesis examined the impact of the growing bilingualism in Bahrain's modern society on youth identity and intergenerational relationships. The findings of the study revealed that the language practices of Bahraini families are heavily impacted by children's bilingualism. Bahraini youth selectively utilize their linguistic repertoires based on the language preferences of their interlocutors. These preferences appear to follow a generational-based trend. When talking to siblings, friends, or same-age peers, they use either English or a mixture of Arabic and English. However, when talking to older relatives or colleagues, they consciously or subconsciously switch to Arabic.

Bahraini parents raising bilingual children act as an intermediary layer. The interviewees can effectively communicate and keep pace with both young bilinguals and older monolinguals. Their children's reliance on English is transforming the language practices of the family as a whole. Parents report using more English after having children, even in daily tasks such as writing shopping lists and birthday cards. They also report perceived improvement in

their own English competency, specifically in relation to vocabulary acquisition. Nevertheless, parents express concern over their children's entertainment habits, which are centered around Western media consumption. This concern stems from the perceived negative influence this content might have on their identity as Muslim Arabs.

The findings also indicate intergenerational variation in language ideology. Parents and older Bahrainis recognize the importance of English for future success, but they associate the excessive use of English with snobbery and boastfulness. Meanwhile, Bahraini youth regard English as a part of their identity. To some extent, they associate Arabic with negative connotations, particularly MSA. They perceive Arabic education to be difficult and complicated and describe Arabic entertainment content as awkward and cringe.

Lastly, the results of the study detect contradictions in the language management approaches utilized by Bahraini parents. Despite their anxiety towards their children's entertainment habits that support their English language development, they do not offer resources that can enrich their children's Arabic language development. Arabic education is restricted to the limited Arabic classes they attend in private schools alongside Islamic education and Quran recitation lessons. Moreover, although they recognize their children's excessive reliance on English as a significant issue they are struggling to address, they lack the knowledge required to adopt effective family language policies that can help them achieve a balanced bilingual upbringing.

The following excerpt from the interviews highlights the immense need for guidance parents might feel while navigating through the trials and

tribulations of raising bilingual children. “Based on my experience, I feel like I made the mistake of focusing on one language and then shifting entirely to another language [...] I initially exposed my firstborn to Arabic only and I refused to let anyone speak to her in English. When she was three, I enrolled her in a private school, and they told me that I must speak English with her because her English was very weak. I freaked out and I shifted entirely to English, I even told my parents to try to speak to her in English. This shift was very extreme, and we lost all hope of achieving balance. Therefore, being bilingual is not inherently confusing for children, but it has to be done right.” (Appendix B, Interviewee 10)

6.1. Limitations

The findings of this research study could be limited due to numerous factors. The duration to execute the research methodology may not have been extensive enough to fully develop an in-depth comprehension of the modern sociolinguistic context of the Kingdom of Bahrain and its impact on intergenerational linguistic variation. This thesis is in no way exhaustive in unpacking the huge influence of unequally distributed bilingualism on family relations and identity formation, nor the current complex English-Arabic debate in the Arab world. It is rather a stepping stone towards more efforts dedicated to analyzing the language dynamics in the Kingdom.

Insights into the parents’ language practices with their children were obtained through self-reporting during the interviews and focus group discussions. From a methodological perspective, supplementing this data with actual observations of parent-child communication might have resulted in more reliable data. This did not take place due to time constraints and lack of alternatives or access to authentic data. Moreover, the size and homogeneity of

the sample might act as a limitation. The impact of bilingualism in Bahrain is not exclusively experienced by families with children enrolled in private schools. English is transforming reality in Bahrain across all domains (Bulaila & Sdiri, 2021), it is therefore important to document and study the intergenerational language variation in domains other than the home. It is important to note that the home domain was selected to initiate this rigorous research into the dynamics of English-Arabic in Bahraini society because family constitutes the smallest and most significant unit of societal construction.

6.2. Recommendations

Similar to the recommendations of Al-Jarf (2022), de Oliveira (2022), and Grosjean (2010), more informed involvement is required from parents, who are expected to have a general knowledge of FLPs and language management strategies if they are raising bilingual children. As noted by the interviewees in the current study, governmental efforts should be dedicated to enriching Arabic literacy in entertaining ways that appeal to the younger generation. Children's bilingual literacy may also benefit from more parental and educational initiatives that focus on reading, as the results of the current study indicate that children in Bahrain are less likely to read for entertainment, especially in Arabic.

While executing the research methodology, the interviewees and focus group participants expressed immense enthusiasm and gratitude for the opportunity to share their perspectives on the research problem. Their active engagement and thoughtful contributions reveal how deeply the intergenerational linguistic variation in Bahrain resonates with individuals,

affirming its importance and the necessity for continued exploration and action.

Based on the aforementioned limitations, conducting longitudinal and quantitative studies with larger sample sizes may elicit more profound and generalizable results. Furthermore, the common characteristics shared by the sample population may suggest the need to conduct research studies with participants of more diverse backgrounds. Recruiting participants via means other than snowballing would also contribute to yielding more generalizable results. Investigating the way intergenerational linguistic variation is affecting domains other than the home in Bahrain, such as the workplace, will also contribute to the study of language dynamics and policy in the understudied context of Bahrain. Generally, the growth of multilingualism and multiculturalism in our Bahraini society warrants dedicating more research studies to how they impact the cultural context, the bilingual individual's relationship with the immediate environment, and on resulting intergenerational variation. This is particularly important in postcolonial contexts where language is a part of culture, and cultural specificity is emphasized and cherished. This is reflected in the words of Interviewee 6:

“It [the spread of English] doesn't bother me. English is mandatory in today's world and we as a Kingdom should keep up with the rest of the world. It bothers me when people forget their roots. There are people my daughter's age who are completely uninformed linguistically, culturally, and religiously. They're better described as foreigners rather than Bahraini.”

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Appendices

Appendix A. FLP Interview Questions

A.1. Original FLP Survey (Curd-Christiansen, 2022)

Your age group	Response
Your gender	Response
Your (first) child's age	Response
At what age did your (first) child arrive in the UK?	Response
The type of family in which you live now	Response
Your role in the family	Response
	Other than above (please specify)
Your length of residence in the UK	Response
Your highest educational qualification	Response
	Other than above (please specify)
Your current employment status	Response
	Other than above (please specify)
If you are employed, what is your (main) job?	Open-Ended Response
The first part of your UK address postcode (e.g. BA2, WC1A)	Open-Ended Response
Your ethnicity	Open-Ended Response
Your first language(s)	Open-Ended Response
Your religion	Response
	Other than above (please specify)
Your nationality/ies	Please select - Your 1st nationality
	Please select - Your 2nd nationality
Your country of birth	Response
Your partner's first language(s)	Open-Ended Response
Languages used in your family	Open-Ended Response

What languages do you use at home in the following situations?	Send messages via social media or SMS to family members - Please choose one from the following options
	Audio/Video chat with family members (e.g. Skype, FaceTime, WeChat.) - Please choose one from the following options
	Email family members - Please choose one from the following options
	Telephone family members - Please choose one from the following options
	Read news online - Please choose one from the following options
	Write letters and postcards - Please choose one from the following options
	Watch TV - Please choose one from the following options
	Listen to radio - Please choose one from the following options
	Listen to songs - Please choose one from the following options
	Read books - Please choose one from the following options
	Write shopping lists - Please choose one from the following options
	Help with your child's school homework - Please choose one from the following options
	Mealtime conversation - Please choose one from the following options

	Others, please describe - Please choose one from the following options
What languages are used among your family members?	Between you and your partner - Speaking (including face-to-face talk, video chats, phone calls, etc.)
	Between you and your partner - Writing (including text messages, social media messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)
	Between you and your partner - Telephone
	Between you and your partner - Send emails
	Between you and your partner - Write letters or postcards (delete?)
	You to child - Speaking (including face-to-face talk, video chats, phone calls, etc.)
	You to child - Writing (including text messages, social media messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)
	You to child - Telephone
	You to child - Send emails
	You to child - Write letters or postcards (delete?)
	Your partner to child - Speaking (including face-to-face talk, video chats, phone calls, etc.)
	Your partner to child - Writing (including text messages, social media messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)
	Your partner to child - Telephone

	Your partner to child - Send emails
	Your partner to child - Write letters or postcards (delete?)
	Child to you - Speaking (including face-to-face talk, video chats, phone calls, etc.)
	Child to you - Writing (including text messages, social media messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)
	Child to you - Telephone
	Child to you - Send emails
	Child to you - Write letters or postcards (delete?)
	Child to your partner - Speaking (including face-to-face talk, video chats, phone calls, etc.)
	Child to your partner - Writing (including text messages, social media messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)
	Child to your partner - Telephone
	Child to your partner - Send emails
	Child to your partner - Write letters or postcards (delete?)
	Child to siblings - Speaking (including face-to-face talk, video chats, phone calls, etc.)
	Child to siblings - Writing (including text messages, social media messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)
	Child to siblings - Telephone
	Child to siblings - Send emails

	Child to siblings - Write letters or postcards (delete?)
	Child to paternal grandparents - Speaking (including face-to-face talk, video chats, phone calls, etc.)
	Child to paternal grandparents - Writing (including text messages, social media messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)
	Child to paternal grandparents - Telephone
	Child to paternal grandparents - Send emails
	Child to paternal grandparents - Write letters or postcards (delete?)
	Child to maternal grandparents - Speaking (including face-to-face talk, video chats, phone calls, etc.)
	Child to maternal grandparents - Writing (including text messages, social media messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)
	Child to maternal grandparents - Telephone
	Child to maternal grandparents - Send emails
	Child to maternal grandparents - Write letters or postcards (delete?)
	Paternal grandparents to child - Speaking (including face-to-face talk, video chats, phone calls, etc.)

	Paternal grandparents to child - Writing (including text messages, social media messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)
	Paternal grandparents to child - Telephone
	Paternal grandparents to child - Send emails
	Paternal grandparents to child - Write letters or postcards (delete?)
	Maternal grandparents to child - Speaking (including face-to-face talk, video chats, phone calls, etc.)
	Maternal grandparents to child - Writing (including text messages, social media messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)
	Maternal grandparents to child - Telephone
	Maternal grandparents to child - Send emails
	Maternal grandparents to child - Write letters or postcards (delete?)
	Child to another adult in the family (e.g. uncle, aunt, childminder) - Speaking (including face-to-face talk, video chats, phone calls, etc.)
	Child to another adult in the family (e.g. uncle, aunt, childminder) - Writing (including text messages, social media messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)
	Child to another adult in the family (e.g. uncle, aunt, childminder) - Telephone

	Child to another adult in the family (e.g. uncle, aunt, childminder) - Send emails
	Child to another adult in the family (e.g. uncle, aunt, childminder) - Write letters or postcards (delete?)
	Other (please specify)
What do you think about the following statements?	It is disadvantageous for a child if only the non-English home language(s) are used at home.
	A child's sense of belonging can only be maintained if she/he understands the language of the culture.
	Speaking the non-English home language(s) may play a negative role in a child's ability to master English.
	Speaking two or more languages confuses a child.
	It is important to speak mostly English with a child from a young age when living in the UK.
	Being bi/multilingual benefits a child's academic performance.
	Being bi/multilingual is beneficial for the future of a child's career.
	**
	**
	Reading and writing in two or more languages at home is essential for a bi/multilingual child.

	A child's ability to read and write in two or more languages plays a positive role in his/her academic development.
	--
	I wish that my family could use English and our home language(s) equally frequently.
	Learning non-English home language(s) is a private matter that should be done only at home.
	It is beneficial for a child to attend a community/heritage language/complementary school to learn the non-English home language(s).
	Grandparents' involvement is key to a child's home language development.
On average, how many hours PER WEEK does your child spend on the following activities at home? (If your child no longer lives with you, please think about the time when she/he did.)	Watch TV programmes in English
	Watch TV programmes in non-English home language(s)
	Play games in English on electronic devices (e.g. a smartphone or tablet)
	Play games in non-English home language(s) on electronic devices (e.g. a smartphone or tablet)
	Watch videos in English on YouTube or other online streaming sites

	Watch videos in non-English home language(s) on YouTube or other online streaming sites
	Attend religious services using non-English home language(s)
	Use electronic devices (e.g. a smartphone or tablet) for English literacy practices
	Use electronic devices (e.g. a smartphone or tablet) for non-English home language literacy practices
How frequently IN A TYPICAL WEEK do the following language activities take place in your family?(If your child no longer lives with you, please think about the time when she/he did)	You read in English.
	You read in your non-English home language(s).
	You read to (or together with) your child in English.
	You read to (or together with) your child in your non-English home language(s).
	Your child reads by her/himself in English
	Your child reads by her/himself in your non-English home language(s).
	Your child attends English tuition outside school.
	Your child attends tuition to learn your non-English home language(s).
	Your child uses the local library services for English learning.

	Your child uses the local library services for non-English home language(s) learning.
	Your child attends religious services to learn/practice your non-English home language(s).
	Your child attends community events to learn/practice your non-English home language(s).
How many books (including E-books) does your child own?	English books
	Books in your non-English home language(s)
	Bi/multilingual books
How would you describe your child's language attainment?	Speaking in English
	Listening in English
	Reading in English
	Writing in English
	Overall speaking in your non-English home language(s)
	Overall listening in your non-English home language(s)
	Overall reading in your non-English home language(s)
	Overall writing in your non-English home language(s)
How would you describe the difference between the non-English home language	Response

abilities of your 1st child and your 2nd child?	
	Other than above (please specify)
Your language practices after your child was born	My own language practices changed. - Please select
	My mixed use of languages increased. - Please select
	I started to use different languages with different people at home. - Please select
	I started to use more English. - Please select
	I started to use more of my non-English home language(s). - Please select
	After my child started nursery or primary school, my own use of English increased. - Please select
	After my child started nursery or primary school, my own use of non-English home language(s) increased. - Please select
Please list up to three people in your family who influence your child's non-English home language ability the most.	Please select - 1st
	Please select - 2nd
	Please select - 3rd
Actions you would take for your child's language development (please tick all applicable options)	Hire a bi/multilingual nanny/child-carer
	Hire a bi/multilingual nanny/child-carer who speaks at least one of our non-English home languages

	Sign up my child for non-English home language tuition
	Register my child for summer camp to learn English
	Register my child for summer camp to learn our non-English home language(s)
	Organise frequent visits for my child to stay with relatives in my home country for language purposes
	I learn my partner's language
	Involve my child's grandparents in child-caring
	Maintain virtual contacts with family members overseas through mobile devices
	Other (please specify)
Your perspective	I would prefer to hear only English around me in my daily life.
	deleted
	I'm happy that many people speak other languages than English in Britain.
	It is unacceptable for people living in the UK to speak languages other than English.
	Generally, I feel comfortable using my non-English home language(s) in public.
	More governmental support is needed for maintaining home languages for minority groups in Britain.
	**

	The overall public attitude towards people speaking languages other than English has changed after the Brexit vote.
	Since the Brexit vote, it has become more difficult for children of migrants to learn their home/ethnic languages.
	Since the Brexit vote, there has been less social support for non-English speaking people (e.g. interpreters).
	Since the Brexit vote, my family has begun to use less of our non-English home language(s) in public.
	After the Brexit vote, I would like to hear more English spoken in public.
Impact of Brexit	After the Brexit vote, the overall public attitude towards people speaking languages other than English has changed.
	After the Brexit vote, it has become more difficult for children of migrants to learn their non-English home language(s).
	After the Brexit vote, there has been less social support for non-English speaking people.
	After the Brexit vote, my family has begun to use less of our non-English home language(s) in public.

A.2. List of Interview Questions

1. What language do you most frequently use at home in the following situations?
 - Greetings

- Write notes and birthday cards
 - Write shopping lists
 - Help with homework
2. What languages are used among your family members?
- Between you and your partner - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)
 - Between you and your partner - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)
 - Between you and your child(ren) - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)
 - Between you and your child(ren) - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)
 - Between your child(ren) and siblings/cousins/friends - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)
 - Between your child(ren) and siblings/cousins/friends - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)
 - Between your child(ren) and grandparents - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)
 - Between your child(ren) and grandparents - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)
3. How did your language practices change after having children?
4. Please select how often the following activities take place in your family:
- My child(ren) watches TV or YouTube in English
 - My child(ren) watches TV or YouTube in Arabic
 - My child(ren) reads books in English
 - My child(ren) reads books in Arabic
5. What language is your child(ren) more confident and comfortable using when Speaking?
6. What language is your child(ren) more confident and comfortable using when Writing?

7. Does your younger child(ren) use slang terms and English phrases you struggle to understand?
8. How does your child's relationship with his languages changes over time?
9. What do you think of the following statements?
 - Speaking English benefits a child's future career and academic performance in Bahrain.
 - Children can only be attached to their culture and religion if they understand Arabic.
 - Talking with grandparents and people who only speak Arabic helps my child's Arabic fluency.
 - I'm happy that many people speak English in Bahrain.
 - Generally, I feel uncomfortable when someone is only using English although they speak Arabic.
 - More support is needed for maintaining and promoting Arabic in Bahrain.
10. Does your child connect better with people who speak both English and Arabic rather than with people who only speak Arabic?
11. What are the actions you take for your child(ren)'s language development?
12. Do you wish your children are equally fluent in Arabic and English?
13. Do people call your child(ren) "Chicken Nugget"? If yes, how does that make you feel? Which age group/gender does this usually come from?
14. Do you have a nanny/housemaid, and if so, does it play a role in your child's language development?

Appendix B. Interview Transcripts

Interviewee 1 (34-39, Mother, Bachelor's degree, Employed)

1. *What language do you most frequently use at home in the following situations?*

- *Greetings*
English
- *Write notes and birthday cards*
English
- *Write shopping lists*
English
- *Help with homework*
English because subjects are already in English

2. *What languages are used among your family members?*

- *Between you and your partner - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*
Arabic
- *Between you and your partner - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*
Arabic
- *Between you and your child(ren) - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*
Mix
- *Between you and your child(ren) - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*
English
- *Between your child(ren) and siblings/cousins/friends - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*
English
- *Between your child(ren) and siblings/cousins/friends - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*
English

- *Between your child(ren) and grandparents - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

Arabic

- *Between your child(ren) and grandparents - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

Both, because even if they were to write him in Arabic he'd respond in English.

3. *How did your language practices change after having children?*

They did not change. I've always used a mix of languages in my speech.

4. *How often do the following activities take place in your family:*

- *My child(ren) watches TV or YouTube in English*

Everyday

- *My child(ren) watches TV or YouTube in Arabic*

Never

- *My child(ren) reads books in English*

Everyday

- *My child(ren) reads books in Arabic*

Rarely

5. *What language is your child(ren) more confident and comfortable using when Speaking?*

English

6. *What language is your child(ren) more confident and comfortable using when Writing?*

English

7. *Does your younger child(ren) use slang terms and English phrases you struggle to understand?*

My older son, who is more exposed to social media, uses weird slang that I don't understand at times, while this problem does not occur frequently with my younger child

8. *How does your child's relationship with his languages change over time?*

As my child grows older, he becomes more attached to English. I presume this is due to his growing awareness of his lack of Arabic competency. Also, my younger child is more proactive in her Arabic learning - he's mostly the one avoiding the days when I read in Arabic with them.

9. *What do you think of the following statements?*

- *Children can only be attached to their culture and religion if they understand Arabic.*

Yes. Arabic is very important in maintaining a sense of belonging in the community.

- *Speaking two or more languages confuses children.*

No

- *Speaking English benefits a child's future career and academic performance in Bahrain.*

Yes definitely, especially in Bahrain.

- *Talking with grandparents and people who only speak Arabic helps my child's Arabic fluency.*

Yes, they are forced to think of the Arabic equivalent to the responses in their head.

- *I'm happy that many people speak English in Bahrain.*

No. English is spreading and I don't like it.

- *Generally, I feel uncomfortable when someone is only using English although they speak Arabic.*

Yeah I don't like it. Talking in a mixture of Arabic and English is fine, but talking fully in English even though the other person is talking in Arabic it's annoying.

- *More support is needed for maintaining and promoting Arabic in Bahrain.*

Not for it to exceed English in particular, but to at least make it equally important. Reality has been inverted. If you don't speak English, you can rarely find someone in public spaces that you can deal with in Arabic. Workers are mostly foreigners. Yesterday in [store name] there was only one Bahraini. What if an old person came to the store? He wouldn't be able to

talk to any other worker, although we are in an Arab country. This shouldn't be the case.

10. Does your child connect better with people who speak both English and Arabic rather than with people who only speak Arabic?

Yes. They're not even exposed to kids who only speak Arabic.

11. What are the actions you take for your child(ren)'s language development?

I sign them up for Quran and praying classes. I also try to dedicate nights for reading in Arabic and reading in English. They always try to avoid the days allocated for Arabic.

12. Do you wish your children are equally fluent in Arabic and English?

Yes

13. Do people call your child(ren) "Chicken Nugget"? If yes, how does that make you feel? Which age group/gender does this usually come from?

No. They understand it's important.

14. Do you have a nanny/housemaid, and if so, does it play a role in your child's language development?

No

Interviewee 2 (40-45, Mother, Bachelor's degree, Self-employed)

1. What language do you most frequently use at home in the following situations?

- *Greetings*
Both Arabic and English
- *Write notes and birthday cards*
Both Arabic and English
- *Write shopping lists*
English. I rarely write them in Arabic
- *Help with homework*
English

2. What languages are used among your family members?

- *Between you and your partner - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

Arabic

- *Between you and your partner - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

Arabic

- *Between you and your child(ren) - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

Both

- *Between you and your child(ren) - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

English. It's easier for him to read and understand. It saves time. If I write to him in Arabic I'd sometimes need time to explain or translate to him.

- *Between your child(ren) and siblings/cousins/friends - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

English

- *Between your child(ren) and siblings/cousins/friends - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

English. He even has native speaker friends from school.

- *Between your child(ren) and grandparents - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

My son knows how to differentiate. He speaks in English with those who understand it but uses Arabic to speak to his older aunts for example.

- *Between your child(ren) and grandparents - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

English. He'd always prefer to use English. He tortures me over writing even one word in Arabic for school.

3. *How did your language practices change after having children?*

Only after the birth of my youngest son (2012). I started mixing languages and using English more.

4. *How often do the following activities take place in your family:*

- *My child(ren) watches TV or YouTube in English*

All the time. He'd never watch in Arabic.

- *My child(ren) watches TV or YouTube in Arabic*

Never

- *My child(ren) reads books in English*

Almost every night

- *My child(ren) reads books in Arabic*

Never. Their school forces them to borrow a book from the library monthly.

When he borrows an Arabic book, he returns it without reading it or after only reading a page or two. He literally says, 'Arabic gives me headache'.

When I play the radio in Arabic in the car he says, 'it's hurting my head, turn it off,' yet he's fine with English radio. He's serious with the headache thing!

5. *What language is your child(ren) more confident and comfortable using when Speaking?*

English

6. *What language is your child(ren) more confident and comfortable using when Writing?*

English

7. *Does your younger child(ren) use slang terms and English phrases you struggle to understand?*

Yes. This happens a lot, and I ask him to explain to me what he's saying.

8. *How does your child's relationship with his languages changes over time?*

My youngest child keeps getting more and more dependent on English. There's a big age gap between him and his other siblings. Although the rest of my children also heavily use English with their friends, they're comfortable using Arabic with me. It's his generation! They have easy access to English content and social media. His cousin, for example, had weak English language skills, but after Covid, and the surge of media consumption, he became proficient in English and started losing his Arabic fluency.

9. *What do you think of the following statements?*

- *Children can only be attached to their culture and religion if they understand Arabic.*

I strongly agree with that.

- *Speaking two or more languages confuses children.*

I think they especially struggle with Arabic.

- *Speaking English benefits a child's future career and academic performance in Bahrain.*

Yes. English is important. It is a global language.

- *Talking with grandparents and people who only speak Arabic helps my child's Arabic fluency.*

Yes. The more he communicates with Arabic speakers the more he's forced to learn the language.

- *I'm happy that many people speak English in Bahrain.*

No I'm not. It'd be okay if they use the two languages equally, but lately Arabic is neglected and the focus is mainly on English.

- *Generally, I feel uncomfortable when someone is only using English although they speak Arabic.*

Yeah, I don't like it

- *More support is needed for maintaining and promoting Arabic in Bahrain.*

Yes

10. *Does your child connect better with people who speak both English and Arabic rather than with people who only speak Arabic?*

Yes definitely. They've always been closer to my side of the family rather than their dad's because most of us are fluent in English.

11. *What are the actions you take for your child(ren)'s language development?*

I do sign them up for Quran and praying classes, partly to help their Arabic language development. For religious purposes Arabic is of paramount importance. Pronunciation has to be perfect when reading Quran. Right now, I've been taking him to praying classes. Just the other day, he left the class earlier than the others. When I asked him why, he said it's because they're playing an educational movie in Arabic, and I don't understand what's going on, so I just left. I even tried to sign my youngest child for Arabic tuition, but he refused to attend. A few years back, Arabic tuition didn't even exist. It was a given. I also tried to read Arabic books

with him and encouraged him to read Arabic books on our way to school, but I failed to make him commit.

12. *Do you wish your children are equally fluent in Arabic and English?*

Yes, for sure.

13. *Do people call your child(ren) "Chicken Nugget"? If yes, how does that make you feel? Which age group/gender does this usually come from?*

Yes. My best friend criticizes me every day. Whenever she sees me talking to him in English she starts pestering me about it. It sometimes embarrasses me because I don't want people to think we're bragging or something, it's just easier for us to communicate in English. I wouldn't say it comes from a certain gender but from older people. They view it as 'ruining' Arabic. Young people don't mind it.

14. *Do you have a nanny/housemaid, and if so, does it play a role in your child's language development?*

I think because my youngest son was left with English-speaking nannies and housemaids more than his other siblings, he became this much more reliant on English. My other children were looked after by their grandparents and my siblings. They provided a source of Arabic for them while they became an additional source of English for him. Before Saint Christopher, I took him to a local kindergarten, and he had perfect Arabic at that point in time. Then I took him to Saint, and his Arabic completely disappeared. Environment plays a huge role.

Interviewee 3 (40-45, Mother, Bachelor's degree, Unemployed)

15. *What language do you most frequently use at home in the following situations?*

- *Greetings*

Both

- *Write notes and birthday cards*

Both

- *Write shopping lists*

Both

- *Help with homework*

Both. I talk in Arabic, but their responses are always mixed. I sometimes have to translate questions from Arabic to English for my younger son to understand them.

16. What languages are used among your family members?

- *Between you and your partner - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

Arabic

- *Between you and your partner - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

Arabic

- *Between you and your child(ren) - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

Mix

- *Between you and your child(ren) - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

Mostly Arabic. I always text in Arabic and they mostly mirror the language I use.

- *Between your child(ren) and siblings/cousins/friends - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

Always in English.

- *Between your child(ren) and siblings/cousins/friends - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

Always in English too.

- *Between your child(ren) and grandparents - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

Arabic

- *Between your child(ren) and grandparents - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

Arabic

17. How did your language practices change after having children?

I definitely started using English more. So many school-related events and applications force us to use English only. Even the Bahrainis in the school respond to you in English if you asked them something in Arabic.

18. *How often do the following activities take place in your family:*

- *My child(ren) watches TV or YouTube in English*

Always

- *My child(ren) watches TV or YouTube in Arabic*

Rarely

- *My child(ren) reads books in English*

My older son yes, always, but my younger son doesn't enjoy reading regardless of the language.

- *My child(ren) reads books in Arabic*

Rarely

19. *What language is your child(ren) more confident and comfortable using when Speaking?*

English

20. *What language is your child(ren) more confident and comfortable using when Writing?*

English

21. *Does your younger child(ren) use slang terms and English phrases you struggle to understand?*

Yes, they always use vocabulary I don't recognize.

22. *How does your child's relationship with his languages change over time?*

They keep drifting away from Arabic as time goes, relying on English more and more.

23. *What do you think of the following statements?*

- *Children can only be attached to their culture and religion if they understand Arabic.*

Yes, that's true too. They have to resort to Arabic when it comes to Islam and Quran. They need the language for religious purposes. But other than

that, Arabic is of secondary importance in public life today. Even ministries and public institutions are starting to prioritize English.

- *Speaking two or more languages confuses children.*

When they were in KG yes. They used to always mess up their languages. As they got older, they learned how to differentiate and separate them.

- *Speaking English benefits a child's future career and academic performance in Bahrain.*

Yes. I strongly agree as they say.

- *Talking with grandparents and people who only speak Arabic helps my child's Arabic fluency.*

Yes.

- *I'm happy that many people speak English in Bahrain.*

Yes. It's the language of the future!

- *Generally, I feel uncomfortable when someone is only using English although they speak Arabic.*

No, I don't mind it. My son for example is more comfortable using English with his friends and I'd like for him to express himself comfortably.

- *More support is needed for maintaining and promoting Arabic in Bahrain.*

I agree with this. Arabic is still our mother tongue, and it needs to be supported. Especially when it comes to religious aspects. From my experience, private schools neglect Arabic severely. But I'd still prefer that over my children growing up without learning English.

24. *Does your child connect better with people who speak both English and Arabic rather than with people who only speak Arabic?*

Yes. Especially my older son who's in his early twenties. Out of all his aunts, he is closest the one of who studied English literature over the others. He loves to travel with her, and I think this is due to him being able to express himself freely with her.

25. *What are the actions you take for your child(ren)'s language development?*

When it comes to their education, I only focus on Arabic with them. I don't even need to bother with English, they are already extremely proficient, they don't need further support.

26. *Do you wish your children are equally fluent in Arabic and English?*

Yes, I really hoped they'd receive equal emphasis, but this did not happen in APG.

27. *Do people call your child(ren) "Chicken Nugget"? If yes, how does that make you feel? Which age group/gender does this usually come from?*

Yes. It mostly comes from people who have their children enrolled in public schools.

28. *Do you have a nanny/housemaid, and if so, does it play a role in your child's language development?*

Yes, but I mostly bring Indonesians, so it does not play a role.

Interviewee 4 (40-45, Father, Bachelor's degree, Employed)

1. *What language do you most frequently use at home in the following situations?*

- *Greetings*

Arabic

- *Write notes and birthday cards*

Both, it depends.

- *Write shopping lists*

We don't really write lists, but if we were to do it I think Arabic

- *Help with homework*

Both, depending on the subject.

2. *What languages are used among your family members?*

- *Between you and your partner - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

Arabic, 98% in Arabic, except for loanwords that are easier to say in English.

- *Between you and your partner - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

Arabic, same as speaking.

- *Between you and your child(ren) - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

We try to communicate in Arabic.

- *Between you and your child(ren) - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

Arabic too.

- *Between your child(ren) and siblings/cousins/friends - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

Both. He adapts to the environment. His friends in school are mostly chicken nuggets, so they'd find it weird if he spoke in Arabic.

- *Between your child(ren) and siblings/cousins/friends - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

Both as well.

- *Between your child(ren) and grandparents - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

Arabic for sure.

- *Between your child(ren) and grandparents - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

Arabic.

3. *How did your language practices change after having children?*

I don't notice a big change.

4. *How often do the following activities take place in your family:*

- *My child(ren) watches TV or YouTube in English*

Always.

- *My child(ren) watches TV or YouTube in Arabic*

Always too, depending on the topic. I notice that he watches scientific content in English and cartoons in Arabic and often alternates.

- *My child(ren) reads books in English*

Never.

- *My child(ren) reads books in Arabic*

Never too. He's not a big reader, I have to force him to do his reading homework.

5. *What language is your child(ren) more confident and comfortable using when Speaking?*

He's very fluent in both.

6. *What language is your child(ren) more confident and comfortable using when Writing?*

I'd say Arabic, but both.

7. *Does your younger child(ren) use slang terms and English phrases you struggle to understand?*

Yes. He uses some terms he learns from YouTube and stuff like that. Kids from his generation are definitely more proficient, we need to keep up.

8. *How does your child's relationship with his languages change over time?*

I feel like he's leaning more into English, as he advances in school.

9. *What do you think of the following statements?*

- *Speaking two or more languages confuses children.*

In the country overall, English is indispensable and so is Arabic. You have to be proficient in both. So, confusion is inescapable. Even our regular conversations contain both.

- *Speaking English benefits a child's future career and academic performance in Bahrain.*

Yes. English is of primary importance. You won't be able to advance anywhere without it. From devices to communication, it's not optional to not know English.

- *Children can only be attached to their culture and religion if they understand Arabic.*

Yes. Arabic is indispensable. It is the language of our religion. They won't be able to truly understand the deeper meanings of Quran without Arabic.

- *Talking with grandparents and people who only speak Arabic helps my child's Arabic fluency.*

Yes, this is why my child has a balanced competency in both. While his environment at school is predominantly English the culture at home and with his aunts and uncles is Arabic.

- *I'm happy that many people speak English in Bahrain.*

No. I'm not very happy about it because I feel like there is some negligence. Balance is the ideal solution. But focusing on one side is wrong. We see Arabs out there that are weak in Arabic, and this does not represent our society nor environment.

- *Generally, I feel uncomfortable when someone is only using English although they speak Arabic.*

Yes. It's frustrating. And what's more frustrating –and this happened to me a lot– the person isn't even that proficient in English. They're just trying to imitate their environment or even their kids.

- *More support is needed for maintaining and promoting Arabic in Bahrain.*
In Bahrain I feel like there's still some sort of balance. Websites have both Arabic and English.

10. Does your child connect better with people who speak both English and Arabic rather than with people who only speak Arabic?

Not really. He can get along with anyone that speaks Arabic or English.

11. What are the actions you take for your child(ren)'s language development?

None really other than conversing with him.

12. Do you wish your children are equally fluent in Arabic and English?

He's already fluent in both.

13. Do people call your child(ren) "Chicken Nugget"? If yes, how does that make you feel? Which age group/gender does this usually come from?

No.

14. Do you have a nanny/housemaid, and if so, does it play a role in your child's language development?

No.

Interviewee 5 (34-39, Mother, Bachelor's degree, Employed)

1. What language do you most frequently use at home in the following situations?

- *Greetings*

Arabic. In our house it's always Arabic. But as much as we talk to him in Arabic his first instinct is always English. Even for example my son is

telling me about his dreams, he'd talk in English. To the extent that if he were to talk in Arabic it'd take him longer.

- *Write notes and birthday cards*

English.

- *Write shopping lists*

English.

- *Help with homework*

Both, depending on the subject. If it were science or mathematics English of course, but Arabic and Islamics in English.

2. *What languages are used among your family members?*

- *Between you and your partner - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

Arabic, 90% in Arabic.

- *Between you and your partner - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

Arabic.

- *Between you and your child(ren) - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

Mix.

- *Between you and your child(ren) - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

When we text message it's always in English.

- *Between your child(ren) and siblings/cousins/friends - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

Not a single word in Arabic. Even their fights are in English.

- *Between your child(ren) and siblings/cousins/friends - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

English.

- *Between your child(ren) and grandparents - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

He speaks to them in Arabic because he feels that they might not understand English. But people his age or us, if he feels like the person he's talking to will understand, he talks to them in English as if it's his mother tongue.

- *Between your child(ren) and grandparents - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

If he sends a message there's no way he'd write it in Arabic. In writing he generally uses English.

3. *How did your language practices change after having children?*

Yes. And it's not just because of having children. Life requires English more than before. But he plays a big role. At home I don't think we used to use English this much.

4. *How often do the following activities take place in your family:*

- *My child(ren) watches TV or YouTube in English*

Always. It's what taught him English before he even entered school.

- *My child(ren) watches TV or YouTube in Arabic*

Zero Arabic.

- *My child(ren) reads books in English*

Yes, a lot.

- *My child(ren) reads books in Arabic*

Even in Arabic sometimes but mostly English.

5. *What language is your child(ren) more confident and comfortable using when Speaking?*

English.

6. *What language is your child(ren) more confident and comfortable using when Writing?*

English,

7. *Does your younger child(ren) use slang terms and English phrases you struggle to understand?*

Yes. He was just saying something, but I forgot what it was, some term meaning 'skill issue' that's apparently frequently used in his generation. He often says things I don't understand – forcing me to use Google so I can understand what they mean.

8. *How does your child's relationship with his languages change over time?*

Ever since he was a kid, before even entering school, he was more into English. And I feel like it'll continue being a part of him.

9. *What do you think of the following statements?*

- *Speaking two or more languages confuses children.*

I think the opposite is true. Especially with young children, their brains are so flexible! Look at the Persians in Bahrain, their kids speak Arabic, English, and Persian. If we were to learn Persian now at our age, it'd be very difficult.

- *Speaking English benefits a child's future career and academic performance in Bahrain.*

Yes. Especially in Bahrain it's very important. You'll only need Arabic if you work a government job. Even in ministries they're starting to require English. Anywhere else you only need English. The simplest example is interviews, you'll be disqualified as a candidate the minute you stutter while trying to speak English. It's the language of the century and the future.

- *Children can only be attached to their culture and religion if they understand Arabic.*

Yes. Arabic is honestly very important to me. I love Arabic. This is our language and our religion.

- *Talking with grandparents and people who only speak Arabic helps my child's Arabic fluency.*

Not really. He's too reliant on English. If anything, they learn English from him rather than vice versa. The only thing that helped him improve is Quran recitation classes. From grade 1 till now I have been registering him in a Quran course called *Egra Wartaqi* (Read and Advance) without skipping a single month. It truly helped him improve so much. I always recommend it to all my friends with kids in private schools or with low Arabic competency.

- *I'm happy that many people speak English in Bahrain.*

I can't say whether I'm happy or not but honestly, we are Arabs living in an Arab Muslim country and we must be prouder of our culture and language before it disappears. I will be very sad if one day everyone around me speaks English. I will be happy if they speak both, that'd show we are educated and modern.

- *Generally, I feel uncomfortable when someone is only using English although they speak Arabic.*

It wouldn't bother me, but I will probably think to myself what's wrong with this guy why does he think he's better than everyone.

- *More support is needed for maintaining and promoting Arabic in Bahrain.*

I feel like so far, the situation is stable we didn't reach the red level alert. Most, but not all, private schools try to focus on Arabic. We might reach the red level alert in the future though.

10. Does your child connect better with people who speak both English and Arabic rather than with people who only speak Arabic?

I don't know. Everyone around him goes to a private school so all his friends speak English. Actually, another example is his youngest aunt who is 25 years old. In his brain her mother tongue is English. The other day he was talking with his cousin, and I asked them, why are you guys talking in English why don't you try speaking in Arabic with each other? He was like, what's the problem now? Why is it bothering you? I told him there's no problem but we're Arabs why are you talking in English? He was like your sister speaks only English. I told him she speaks Arabic too, but she knows you're more comfortable in English. And I feel like he's very close to her and loves her so much because she gets him.

11. What are the actions you take for your child(ren)'s language development?

None really other than conversing with him.

12. Do you wish your children are equally fluent in Arabic and English?

Yes. As I said earlier, Arabic is essential to me. But English to be honest is also of paramount importance.

13. Do people call your child(ren) "Chicken Nugget"? If yes, how does that make you feel? Which age group/gender does this usually come from?

Not really, because everyone around him is the same. Lately, whoever knows English is fancy and whoever doesn't is looked down upon.

14. Do you have a nanny/housemaid, and if so, does it play a role in your child's language development?

No.

Interviewee 6 (34-39, Mother, Bachelor's degree, Employed)

1. What language do you most frequently use at home in the following situations?

- *Greetings*

Both. I try to alternate and emphasize Arabic. As a language, Arabic is very important to me.

- *Write notes and birthday cards*

Both as well.

- *Write shopping lists*

Both as well.

- *Help with homework*

Both, depending on the subject.

2. What languages are used among your family members?

- *Between you and your partner - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

Arabic.

- *Between you and your partner - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

English.

- *Between you and your child(ren) - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

Both. Because there are some words she only knows in English.

- *Between you and your child(ren) - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

English when we're just chatting. English is much easier for her.

- *Between your child(ren) and siblings/cousins/friends - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

English.

- *Between your child(ren) and siblings/cousins/friends - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

English.

- *Between your child(ren) and grandparents - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

Our family doesn't have a lot of intergenerational differences. My mom was a school principal, and my dad worked in HR. So, they're happy about her level of English and they always speak in English with her.

- *Between your child(ren) and grandparents - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

English.

3. *How did your language practices change after having children?*

No. I've always used English a lot in my everyday life.

4. *How often do the following activities take place in your family:*

- *My child(ren) watches TV or YouTube in English*

I have rules, she can only use her iPad on Friday, so she doesn't consume a lot of media. But on Friday, she almost always gravitates to English I'm not going to lie.

- *My child(ren) watches TV or YouTube in Arabic*

She does watch but not much.

- *My child(ren) reads books in English*

Yes always.

- *My child(ren) reads books in Arabic*

Always too. I insist she reads an equal amount in Arabic.

5. *What language is your child(ren) more confident and comfortable using when Speaking?*

I think both.

6. *What language is your child(ren) more confident and comfortable using when Writing?*

She hates writing in general, she finds it difficult. I think it might be because of Covid-19. But I think she can write confidently in both.

7. *Does your younger child(ren) use slang terms and English phrases you struggle to understand?*

No. Her English is not affected by social media. Maybe because I monitor her Internet usage, and she mostly learns her English from family interactions and school.

8. *How does your child's relationship with his languages change over time?*

I'd say she keeps getting comfortable with both. I'd say maybe even more Arabic at this point in her life because she's very attached to her Arabic teacher.

9. *What do you think of the following statements?*

- *Speaking two or more languages confuses children.*

I've even been to doctors about this, and they told me that kids can learn up to seven languages. This is why electronics are dangerous for kids, because their brains are easily affected by input.

- *Speaking English benefits a child's future career and academic performance in Bahrain.*

Yes. I strongly agree. I went to a public school, and if I wasn't a hard worker I wouldn't have been able to build my career and English fluency. It's clear who worked hard to learn English and who didn't. A lot of people our age didn't succeed in their career because of this, they didn't care about English.

- *Children can only be attached to their culture and religion if they understand Arabic.*

I disagree. Arabic is important and it's our language, but it depends on how you raise your child. If you build a strong religious foundation for your kids, language won't change anything.

- *Talking with grandparents and people who only speak Arabic helps my child's Arabic fluency.*

I'm neutral about this. I think kids should be free to use whatever language they wish to use regardless of their interlocutors' preferences.

- *I'm happy that many people speak English in Bahrain.*

It doesn't bother me. English is mandatory in today's world and we as a Kingdom should keep up with the rest of the world. It bothers me when people forget their roots. There are people my daughter's age that are completely uninformed linguistically, culturally, and religiously. They're more foreigners than Bahrainis.

- *Generally, I feel uncomfortable when someone is only using English although they speak Arabic.*

It's their personal choice and they're free to choose whatever language they want. But I don't like it when people are not even that good at English but they try to speak it just so they appear better than others. I know how to speak English and I'm confident that my English is better than yours but you're Bahraini and you should be proud of your mother tongue if English isn't your strong suit.

- *More support is needed for maintaining and promoting Arabic in Bahrain.*

Currently? No. I think what's happening right now is merely a trend caused by social media. If one of the major influencers started signing up her kids for Arabic tuition, everyone would imitate her and do the same. What's happening right now is a game of imitation.

10. Does your child connect better with people who speak both English and Arabic rather than with people who only speak Arabic?

I don't think so. Connection between people can be achieved regardless of language. There are some people with whom you don't even share a language, but you still love them.

11. What are the actions you take for your child(ren)'s language development?

I always sign her up for Quran and praying classes. I also dedicate more time and spend more effort on Arabic language learning. I read with her in both Arabic and English.

12. Do you wish your children are equally fluent in Arabic and English?

My daughter is equally fluent in both.

13. *Do people call your child(ren) "Chicken Nugget"? If yes, how does that make you feel? Which age group/gender does this usually come from?*

It does happen to me. It doesn't come from family but from outside.

14. *Do you have a nanny/housemaid, and if so, does it play a role in your child's language development?*

No.

Interviewee 7 (34-39, Father, Bachelor's degree, Employed)

1. *What language do you most frequently use at home in the following situations?*

- *Greetings*

Both.

- *Write notes and birthday cards*

English. Anything writing is done in English.

- *Write shopping lists*

English.

- *Help with homework*

Both.

2. *What languages are used among your family members?*

- *Between you and your partner - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

Arabic.

- *Between you and your partner - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

I write to my wife in Arabic. But she prefers to text in English, so both.

- *Between you and your child(ren) - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

To be honest, when the topic is serious or I'm trying to explain to them something complex I use both. I feel like they won't really understand if I speak fully in Arabic so I use English to make sure they get it.

- *Between you and your child(ren) - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

English. When they message me it's always in English.

- *Between your child(ren) and siblings/cousins/friends - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

They mix.

- *Between your child(ren) and siblings/cousins/friends - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

English.

- *Between your child(ren) and grandparents - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

With my mom they have to talk in Arabic.

- *Between your child(ren) and grandparents - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

They won't use Arabic to write either. They always prefer writing in English.

3. *How did your language practices change after having children?*

Not necessarily my own kids but ever since we had the younger generation in my family, I started mixing languages more when I became an uncle.

4. *How often do the following activities take place in your family:*

- *My child(ren) watches TV or YouTube in English*

Always all the time.

- *My child(ren) watches TV or YouTube in Arabic*

They never watch in Arabic.

- *My child(ren) reads books in English*

They always do.

- *My child(ren) reads books in Arabic*

Never. Only English.

5. *What language is your child(ren) more confident and comfortable using when Speaking?*

English.

6. *What language is your child(ren) more confident and comfortable using when Writing?*

English.

7. *Does your younger child(ren) use slang terms and English phrases you struggle to understand?*

Yes, they do sometimes.

8. *How does your child's relationship with his languages change over time?*

I still don't see them gravitating towards Arabic. Unless I push them to read Quran and stuff they are only increasingly depending on English.

9. *What do you think of the following statements?*

- *Speaking two or more languages confuses children.*

I disagree. Not only can they handle being bilinguals, but they can also learn up to five or six languages

- *Speaking English benefits a child's future career and academic performance in Bahrain.*

Yes, it's very important.

- *Children can only be attached to their culture and religion if they understand Arabic.*

It might be theoretically hard, but if you look at it another way, the foreigners I worked with in Britain, such as Pakistanis, they don't speak Arabic but were very conservative in their religious views.

- *Talking with grandparents and people who only speak Arabic helps my child's Arabic fluency.*

Yes of course. I only see them forced to practice their Arabic in their daily life when they try to communicate with Arabic speakers.

- *I'm happy that many people speak English in Bahrain.*

I'm neutral. It's important so we can communicate with the rest of the world. If Chinese people had good English, they'd have taken over the world by now.

- *Generally, I feel uncomfortable when someone is only using English although they speak Arabic.*

No, it's fine, maybe it's what they're used to using.

- *More support is needed for maintaining and promoting Arabic in Bahrain.*

I don't think so.

10. Does your child connect better with people who speak both English and Arabic rather than with people who only speak Arabic?

When they were younger yes, I used to notice it a lot. It's not as big of an issue now. But they're still more comfortable communicating with other English speakers.

11. What are the actions you take for your child(ren)'s language development?

I see Quran and praying lessons as the only solution for them to learn proper Arabic.

12. Do you wish your children are equally fluent in Arabic and English?

Yes. I hope they also learn a third language!

13. Do people call your child(ren) "Chicken Nugget"? If yes, how does that make you feel? Which age group/gender does this usually come from?

No, not really. Everyone in my circle has their kids enrolled in private schools anyways.

14. Do you have a nanny/housemaid, and if so, does it play a role in your child's language development?

No. Never.

Interviewee 8 (40-45, Father, Bachelor's degree, Employed)

1. What language do you most frequently use at home in the following situations?

- *Greetings*

Both. Depending on the mood. The kids, especially the younger one, likes to use English more.

- *Write notes and birthday cards*

Both languages.

- *Write shopping lists*

Arabic.

- *Help with homework*

Both.

2. What languages are used among your family members?

- *Between you and your partner - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

Arabic.

- *Between you and your partner - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

Arabic as well.

- *Between you and your child(ren) - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

We mix languages with them.

- *Between you and your child(ren) - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

Both as well.

- *Between your child(ren) and siblings/cousins/friends - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

Their foundation is stronger in English. So, they mostly prefer English. But they do talk in English as well.

- *Between your child(ren) and siblings/cousins/friends - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

Both.

- *Between your child(ren) and grandparents - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

Arabic.

- *Between your child(ren) and grandparents - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

They have no problem writing to them in Arabic as well.

3. *How did your language practices change after having children?*

I used to use English before I had kids, but now the language is more utilized due to the kids and doing their homework with them. We've always used in English but before it was more for specific purposes, now it's infiltrated into everything in life.

4. *How often do the following activities take place in your family:*

- *My child(ren) watches TV or YouTube in English*

Always. They lean more towards English content.

- *My child(ren) watches TV or YouTube in Arabic*

I think they never do. They enjoy English shows more. They're more fun, while Arabic shows are more serious and instructional.

- *My child(ren) reads books in English*

They're not big readers and they don't have a lot of books.

- *My child(ren) reads books in Arabic*

Never.

5. *What language is your child(ren) more confident and comfortable using when Speaking?*

English.

6. *What language is your child(ren) more confident and comfortable using when Writing?*

English. They love English more. It's because of school. English became their native language.

7. *Does your younger child(ren) use slang terms and English phrases you struggle to understand?*

I know exactly what you mean. I told my older kid multiple times to not use the slang vernacular English he hears on YouTube and stick to standard dialects. But in his mind the two are mixed because of the content he consumes.

8. *How does your child's relationship with his languages change over time?*

Little by little he's been getting attached to Arabic more.

9. *What do you think of the following statements?*

- *Speaking two or more languages confuses children.*

On the contrary, since the beginning I encouraged my kids to learn English as a foreign language. But the problem was that he learned English first, and it became the foundation.

- *Speaking English benefits a child's future career and academic performance in Bahrain.*

In ministries for example English is not essential, but in private institutions English is indispensable.

- *Children can only be attached to their culture and religion if they understand Arabic.*

A hundred percent. It starts with them drifting away from their original language and the rest of the values will follow. If you scrutinize the content kids nowadays consume online it's always representative of Christianity, they might think these values and beliefs are the right thing. Parental control needs to be on high alert 24/7.

- *Talking with grandparents and people who only speak Arabic helps my child's Arabic fluency.*

That's true. And vice versa.

- *I'm happy that many people speak English in Bahrain.*

I don't have a problem with it but often times I feel like English is too emphasized, even if it's not necessary. Most Arab Bahraini families right now have older members that do not even speak English, and when these families enroll their children in English-based schools without a high level of proficiency on their part what happens? Language is lost and so is the child. If we weren't educated and did not speak English but our child does, how would we communicate with him? What's happening now is more of a trend, rather than a studied informed plan.

- *Generally, I feel uncomfortable when someone is only using English although they speak Arabic.*

Yes, it bothers me, what's the point of that? If we're both Arab, why are you talking in English? It feels like they're showing off.

- *More support is needed for maintaining and promoting Arabic in Bahrain.*

Yes, we need to respect Arabic and start paying attention to it more. We don't have strong Arabic speakers anymore.

10. Does your child connect better with people who speak both English and Arabic rather than with people who only speak Arabic?

I think yes. They like people who can speak to them, especially online when texting.

11. What are the actions you take for your child(ren)'s language development?

I sign them up for Quran classes, and I think this is a prevalent strategy in Bahrain right now.

12. Do you wish your children are equally fluent in Arabic and English?

Yes of course.

13. Do people call your child(ren) "Chicken Nugget"? If yes, how does that make you feel? Which age group/gender does this usually come from?

No, not really.

14. Do you have a nanny/housemaid, and if so, does it play a role in your child's language development?

Yes. She's Indian so they speak to her a lot in English. And I feel like my older kid really learned a lot of his English from the Filipino nanny we had at the time, he even took her accent.

Interviewee 9 (40-45, Father, Higher Education, Employed)

1. What language do you most frequently use at home in the following situations?

- *Greetings*

Mix.

- *Write notes and birthday cards*

Both languages, but mostly I personally write in Arabic.

- *Write shopping lists*

I don't usually write shopping list, but when I do I write them in English.

- *Help with homework*

Their subjects are all in English, except for Arabic and religion. If it's Arabic and religion I don't really use English, but other subjects I explain stuff in both languages.

2. What languages are used among your family members?

- *Between you and your partner - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

Arabic.

- *Between you and your partner - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

We text in English sometimes, so both.

- *Between you and your child(ren) - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

I mix languages with them. I mostly use English words in Arabic sentences, not full English sentences.

- *Between you and your child(ren) - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

English only.

- *Between your child(ren) and siblings/cousins/friends - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

When my kids play together they only speak in English, but with their cousins they sometimes mix languages. I'd still say they use English more though.

- *Between your child(ren) and siblings/cousins/friends - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

English only.

- *Between your child(ren) and grandparents - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

Arabic.

- *Between your child(ren) and grandparents - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

I'm not really sure, but I don't think he ever texts in Arabic. He probably also writes to them in English.

3. *How did your language practices change after having children?*

As a family I think we have started mixing languages more. It's mostly because the kids' education is primarily in English, so we are obliged to speak to them in English. But me personally, as a father, I don't like speaking to my kids in English. Their mother speaks to them in English more than me. Our language is Arabic so what's the advantage that English has over it? It is the true authentic language and the language of Quran. Even if I'm forced to use English with them because they'd understand me more, I don't like doing it.

4. *How often do the following activities take place in your family:*

- *My child(ren) watches TV or YouTube in English*

Always, 100% in English.

- *My child(ren) watches TV or YouTube in Arabic*

I never see them watching in Arabic.

- *My child(ren) reads books in English*

Yes, they always do.

- *My child(ren) reads books in Arabic*

They read in Arabic but more so in English. And they only read in Arabic because we push them to not because they really want to.

5. *What language is your child(ren) more confident and comfortable using when Speaking?*

I'd say both when it comes to speaking.

6. *What language is your child(ren) more confident and comfortable using when Writing?*

English. They're both better in English when it comes to writing.

7. *Does your younger child(ren) use slang terms and English phrases you struggle to understand?*

Yes, my older kid always does. The other day, when he said a word I did not understand, he was like where did you study? Why don't you know English? I told him I don't know everything.

8. *How does your child's relationship with his languages change over time?*

I think their dependence on English is increasing, probably because of school.

9. *What do you think of the following statements?*

- *Speaking two or more languages confuses children.*

I think any person can handle more than one language. It might cause them confusion when it comes to writing, for example, they'd often write in Arabic from left-to-write.

- *Speaking English benefits a child's future career and academic performance in Bahrain.*

Yes of course. English as a language is a necessity when it comes to work. This is why we're enrolling them in a private school.

- *Children can only be attached to their culture and religion if they understand Arabic.*

This is true. Some people only care about English and that's a gateway for them to also become distant from their original culture. I don't see the speakers of other languages compromising their mother tongue for the sake of English.

- *Talking with grandparents and people who only speak Arabic helps my child's Arabic fluency.*

Yes. Our parents babysit the kids when we're at work and I feel like a lot of their Arabic comes from that.

- *I'm happy that many people speak English in Bahrain.*

No, I'm not happy. I love Arabic, it is such a rich and beautiful language compared to English. And people in Bahrain nowadays are understanding things wrong. They don't view English as a useful language in today's world. They view it as fancy and trendy.

- *Generally, I feel uncomfortable when someone is only using English although they speak Arabic.*

Yes, it's very frustrating. I feel like they think they're better than I am. Like they're boasting.

- *More support is needed for maintaining and promoting Arabic in Bahrain.*

Yes, I agree, in a fun way.

10. Does your child connect better with people who speak both English and Arabic rather than with people who only speak Arabic?

I think he's fine with both Arabic and English speakers.

11. What are the actions you take for your child(ren)'s language development?

I take them to the mosque for Quran recitation and praying classes, I also try to read with them books in both Arabic and English.

12. Do you wish your children are equally fluent in Arabic and English?

Yes. They're fine speaking Arabic in our vernacular language, but when it comes to reading and literacy, they find English easier. So, I really hope their skills become more balanced when they grow up.

13. *Do people call your child(ren) "Chicken Nugget"? If yes, how does that make you feel? Which age group/gender does this usually come from?*

No, people are very supportive. Even those from the older generations. My mom for example she did not get the privilege of learning English, and she struggles because of that when going out to malls or restaurants or even when using devices, so she's happy when she sees her grandchildren getting that privilege.

14. *Do you have a nanny/housemaid, and if so, does it play a role in your child's language development?*

No.

Interviewee 10 (40-45, Mother, Bachelor's degree, Employed)

1. *What language do you most frequently use at home in the following situations?*

- *Greetings*

We use both languages. Before my daughters started school, we used to strictly use Arabic, then we had to switch to English at home when they started school because their English wasn't that good at the time. Now that they're a bit older we use a mixture of both languages.

- *Write notes and birthday cards*

Always in English.

- *Write shopping lists*

Unfortunately, English. I'm a bit embarrassed but English.

- *Help with homework*

Majorly English, except for some subjects in Arabic.

2. *What languages are used among your family members?*

- *Between you and your partner - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

Arabic.

- *Between you and your partner - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

Arabic as well.

- *Between you and your child(ren) - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

Mix.

- *Between you and your child(ren) - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

We use both as well. My younger daughter mostly sends voice messages and they're all in English, but my older daughter mixes and alternates between languages when she texts. She can chat in English and in Arabic. It depends on the situation; some jokes can only be said in Arabic.

- *Between your child(ren) and siblings/cousins/friends - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

They speak with their chicken nugget cousins in English fully, but if they sense that the person they're talking to is not like them they try to talk in Arabic.

- *Between your child(ren) and siblings/cousins/friends - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

English definitely. I never noticed that they type anything in Arabic with their friends. When they talk some stuff have to be in Arabic, words like *yā za 'm* (as in) or *'bālhā* (she thinks) or *ya 'nī* (you know), stuff like that. But when it comes to typing no, always in English.

- *Between your child(ren) and grandparents - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

They speak with them in Arabic. Even if it's sometimes broken, they try to only speak in Arabic. I can see that they put a lot of effort into it.

- *Between your child(ren) and grandparents - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

Same thing. They try to stick to Arabic even if they make mistakes.

3. *How did your language practices change after having children?*

As a teacher in a government school, the language level we use at work is very different from the language level my kids are using at school. I feel like because the student-level is overall low, my own language deteriorated. It doesn't happen willingly. But to be honest, when my kids entered a private school, and I started tutoring them, it really affected my language more than work ever did. My daughter in grade five is learning extremely heavy scientific material with a lot of vocabulary and scientific terms that force me to elevate my own language. In certain terms, my own language level is increasing. My English is considered at least very good. I don't have issues with pronunciation for example. But now with my kids, in certain subjects, my knowledge is not as advanced, since I studied them in Arabic. Although I know English, I did not study chemistry or business in English. So, the improvement is not purely linguistic, it's subject-area terminology. I come across terms and I'm like oh! This is that thing I learned in high school but in English.

4. *How often do the following activities take place in your family:*

- *My child(ren) watches TV or YouTube in English*

They always watch in English, on a daily basis.

- *My child(ren) watches TV or YouTube in Arabic*

My older daughter watches Kuwaiti shows sometimes, but my younger daughter never does.

- *My child(ren) reads books in English*

They always read in English.

- *My child(ren) reads books in Arabic*

I bought them a lot of Arabic books and I tried to encourage them to read them but because their Arabic is weak, they get bored and frustrated quickly. For their age, most private school kids progress very slowly in Arabic. They know Arabic – It's not like they don't, but the whole process is kind of slower, that's why they get bored. They're much quicker in English.

5. *What language is your child(ren) more confident and comfortable using when Speaking?*

Definitely English.

6. *What language is your child(ren) more confident and comfortable using when Writing?*

English as well.

7. *Does your younger child(ren) use slang terms and English phrases you struggle to understand?*

I'm trying as much as I can to cope with them. They do come to me with a lot of slang terms in English from TikTok and stuff. But I don't see them using these kinds of innovative terms in Arabic. I see them sometimes recycling old words with different new meanings. The other day they were talking about *gardis* and it's an old term that used to have a very inappropriate meaning during our time. I was shocked when I heard them use it, but they were like no mama; this word is used to describe a group of people who dress in a certain way and go to certain places together weekly on a specific day.

8. *How does your child's relationship with his languages change over time?*

In terms of content they consume I can see my older daughter being immersed in Arabic culture more as she grows up. I think it might also be because I monitor them more when they watch English stuff because they have a lot of inappropriate hints. During this age and time, it's really difficult, you find inappropriate hints here and there even in shows that are rated 7+. So, I try my best to monitor what they watch and preferably I watch the show with them. That way, when we see something that doesn't align with our values I can explain the intercultural differences for them.

9. *What do you think of the following statements?*

- *Speaking two or more languages confuses children.*

Based on my experience, I feel like I made the mistake of focusing on one language then shifted entirely to another language. I have a nephew who is less than two years old and he already started to talk. He's mixed, so he's exposed to Arabic, Persian, and English. I can see that he understands all three when adults talk to him. This means that there is a chance for kids to develop multiple languages at once, even if there probably will be a language that is not as strong as the other. This is where I went wrong. I

initially exposed my firstborn to Arabic only and I refused to let anyone speak to her in English. When she was three, I enrolled her in a private school, and they told me that I must speak English with her because her English is very weak. I freaked out and I shifted entirely to English, I even told my parents to try to speak to her in English. This shift was very extreme, and we lost all hope of achieving balance. Therefore, being bilingual is not inherently confusing for children, but it has to be done right.

- *Speaking English benefits a child's future career and academic performance in Bahrain.*

I definitely agree that English is important but depends on where they're going to work. As a government employee, communication is almost entirely in Arabic. So, it depends on the child's career prospects. However, I totally believe that generally speaking, any language you're willing to learn will benefit you one way or another. Since English is the top language right now, anywhere you go you'll be able to use it. I see that right now in Bahrain all banks and all companies want to hire people with very strong English.

- *Children can only be attached to their culture and religion if they understand Arabic.*

I believe it's hard to get attached to a thing you find hard to understand. When for example my daughter has to memorize a *surah* for her religion class, even if she understood the meaning behind the *surah*, because she can't recall the exact meaning of words from her memory, she feels detached from the core of the *surah*. She only had to memorize two verses from Al-Baqarah, and I had to translate every single word just so she understands exactly what she is memorizing. I was also trying to teach her the meaning of *riba* in Islam the other day, and he was like oh it's like scamming. You see them relating Islamic notions to stuff they see online, rather than understanding them at their core.

- *Talking with grandparents and people who only speak Arabic helps my child's Arabic fluency.*

Yes of course. Languages are acquired through exposure.

- *I'm happy that many people speak English in Bahrain.*

Of course I'm not. I believe that our language is very beautiful, I love the way we speak, and it'd be a real shame if one day Arabic disappeared from Bahrain. This is our problem. We abandoned our mother tongue a little bit, which is shameful to be honest. There are times where I think what are we even doing? Why are we enrolling our kids in private schools and emphasizing English more than Arabic? But it's also not right to be stubborn and hurt our kids' future by marginalizing English. There are families in Bahrain where it doesn't matter whether the kid spoke in English or not, but in our family, we care about our kids' fluency and where they're going to work in the future.

- *Generally, I feel uncomfortable when someone is only using English although they speak Arabic.*

At some point in my life this used to bother me but now it'd be wrong to talk because my daughters are like that. When I was younger, I used to say there's no way I let my daughters become chicken nuggets, but unfortunately, they did.

- *More support is needed for maintaining and promoting Arabic in Bahrain.*

Yes. I'd love it if we had programs aimed at celebrating Arabic and giving it what it's worth.

10. Does your child connect better with people who speak both English and Arabic rather than with people who only speak Arabic?

Naturally yes. In our family, the younger generation is all chicken nuggets. So, I don't see them struggling to communicate with kids their age because of language barriers. However, if I decide right now to transfer my older daughter to a public school right now, she's going to struggle, both academically and in terms of making friends. Not because the other students might only speak Arabic but because of the whole cultural baggage and references that come with speaking English. The younger one is – I don't want to embarrass my child – tends to be a bit racist when

it comes to this. She gets frustrated when she can't express herself in English sometimes.

11. What are the actions you take for your child(ren)'s language development?

As I mentioned earlier, I talk to them at home in the language I wish to develop. But I also signed them up for a while in a Quran reading program called *Eqra Wartaqi* (Read and Advance). It helped their reading skills a lot, even though it was online.

12. Do you wish your children are equally fluent in Arabic and English?

Yes of course.

13. Do people call your child(ren) "Chicken Nugget"? If yes, how does that make you feel? Which age group/gender does this usually come from?

Currently, all their cousins are in private schools. No one can judge anyone because all of our kids are chicken nuggets, unfortunately. However, it does come sometimes from older generations who comment and complain here and there on how our kids are always talking in English.

14. Do you have a nanny/housemaid, and if so, does it play a role in your child's language development?

No.

Interviewee 11 (40-45, Mother, Bachelor's degree, Employed)

1. What language do you most frequently use at home in the following situations?

- *Greetings*

Mix. But to be honest, mostly in English.

- *Write notes and birthday cards*

English. We very rarely use Arabic.

- *Write shopping lists*

Both.

- *Help with homework*

Both again. Depending on the subject.

2. What languages are used among your family members?

- *Between you and your partner - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

Arabic.

- *Between you and your partner - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

Arabic.

- *Between you and your child(ren) - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

Mix.

- *Between you and your child(ren) - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

Mix. I mix, but she writes in English.

- *Between your child(ren) and siblings/cousins/friends - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

Mix.

- *Between your child(ren) and siblings/cousins/friends - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

She always texts her friends in English.

- *Between your child(ren) and grandparents - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

Arabic. She can speak fluently in Arabic. But she mixes with me because I give her the chance and I'm fluent in English because I work in HR, so she feels more confident and comfortable expressing herself. But with her dad and other older family members, she communicates in Arabic.

- *Between your child(ren) and grandparents - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

Arabic.

3. *How did your language practices change after having children?*

Yes. I didn't mix languages before. When my daughter started doing it, I started to do it too. Mostly to keep up with her. But with other people in my life, I still use Arabic.

4. *How often do the following activities take place in your family:*

- *My child(ren) watches TV or YouTube in English*

Always.

- *My child(ren) watches TV or YouTube in Arabic*

She watches Arabic shows sometimes, but her favorite shows and the ones she's actually interested in are always in English. I feel like she only watches Arabic shows when her dad and I are watching and she sits along.

- *My child(ren) reads books in English*

Never. She's not really a big reader.

- *My child(ren) reads books in Arabic*

Same thing.

5. *What language is your child(ren) more confident and comfortable using when Speaking?*

I don't know. I wish I knew. But if let's say she's asked to do a public speaking task, I think she'd rather do it in English. She finds English easier for self-expression.

6. *What language is your child(ren) more confident and comfortable using when Writing?*

English.

7. *Does your younger child(ren) use slang terms and English phrases you struggle to understand?*

Yes, she does this a lot. I don't know what she's saying most of the time. It's hard for me to understand the abbreviations they use. She just sent me a Reels video that's like "when your mom doesn't understand some meme, so you try to explain to her" or something, and I still didn't reply to her on Instagram because she disrespected my abilities.

8. *How does your child's relationship with his languages change over time?*

I feel like she has been maintaining some kind of balance, she speaks English with me and her friends, but she's also comfortably using Arabic with her dad and other family members.

9. *What do you think of the following statements?*

- *Speaking two or more languages confuses children.*

I disagree. Children can handle learning even more than two languages, and they have the ability to distinguish between them and when and where to use each language. Most of my coworkers are Persian, and their kids speak Persian, Arabic, and English, and they can effectively separate between them.

- *Speaking English benefits a child's future career and academic performance in Bahrain.*

In our country, yes. Anywhere else in the world it won't be as important. But we're giving the language a lot of importance.

- *Children can only be attached to their culture and religion if they understand Arabic.*

Yes, I agree.

- *Talking with grandparents and people who only speak Arabic helps my child's Arabic fluency.*

Yes. She respects their Arabic preferences, so she tries hard to keep up with their preferences.

- *I'm happy that many people speak English in Bahrain.*

Sure, I don't really have negative feelings about it. Maybe because I can get along just fine.

- *Generally, I feel uncomfortable when someone is only using English although they speak Arabic.*

It doesn't bother me. People are free to use whatever language they're comfortable with. It actually bothers me when educated Bahrainis can't speak English, it really worries me about their future. It breaks my heart when I see smart graduates with good GPAs and very poor English. They'd never get the job.

- *More support is needed for maintaining and promoting Arabic in Bahrain.*

Yes. I'd love it if we had programs aimed at celebrating Arabic and giving it what it's worth.

10. *Does your child connect better with people who speak both English and Arabic rather than with people who only speak Arabic?*

I think we're fine so far. Overall Arabic skills are only very poor when it comes to reading. No matter how much you promote Arabic reading children really resist it.

11. What are the actions you take for your child(ren)'s language development?

I encourage reading Arabic books, as I said earlier, particularly the Quran, but it's very hard for children to stick with the habit of reading, especially since Arabic books are very educational. I also encourage her to watch Arabic TV with me and her father.

12. Do you wish your children are equally fluent in Arabic and English?

I think my daughter is equally fluent in Arabic and English.

13. Do people call your child(ren) "Chicken Nugget"? If yes, how does that make you feel? Which age group/gender does this usually come from?

For me, this term is serious, and it attacks one's character. I don't use it, and I wouldn't allow anyone to use it to describe my daughter either, unless it's said jokingly. Even though kids these days don't view it as an insult or bullying, they're fine with it.

14. Do you have a nanny/housemaid, and if so, does it play a role in your child's language development?

No.

Interviewee 12 (34-39, Father, Higher Education, Employed)

1. What language do you most frequently use at home in the following situations?

- *Greetings*

We use both.

- *Write notes and birthday cards*

Both as well.

- *Write shopping lists*

Mostly English.

- *Help with homework*

It depends on the subject. I honestly tutor them most English-speaking subjects while their mother handles the Arabic subjects.

2. What languages are used among your family members?

- *Between you and your partner - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

Arabic.

- *Between you and your partner - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

Both, but mostly Arabic.

- *Between you and your child(ren) - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

English.

- *Between you and your child(ren) - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

English.

- *Between your child(ren) and siblings/cousins/friends - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

I notice them using both.

- *Between your child(ren) and siblings/cousins/friends - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

English. Writing is easier in English.

- *Between your child(ren) and grandparents - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

Arabic only.

- *Between your child(ren) and grandparents - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

They try to write to them in Arabic as well.

3. *How did your language practices change after having children?*

I've always used English at work and while studying, but I never used to use it at home before having kids. My wife and I communicate mostly in Arabic, and she refuses to talk to the kids in English because she says she's scared of teaching them incorrect structures. She received her education in Arabic all her life. Therefore, I started using English with our daughters and Arabic with her, while she uses Arabic with them.

4. *How often do the following activities take place in your family:*

- *My child(ren) watches TV or YouTube in English*

Always.

- *My child(ren) watches TV or YouTube in Arabic*

They do sometimes. Not as much as English.

- *My child(ren) reads books in English*

I wish. They don't really like reading no matter how much we try.

- *My child(ren) reads books in Arabic*

Same thing.

5. *What language is your child(ren) more confident and comfortable using when Speaking?*

I think they're comfortable using both. Especially since they're used to communicating in both languages at home.

6. *What language is your child(ren) more confident and comfortable using when Writing?*

English of course. This is more of a reflection of their educational environment which mostly emphasizes English.

7. *Does your younger child(ren) use slang terms and English phrases you struggle to understand?*

Yes, all the time. The student becomes the master. They have to explain stuff to me instead of the other way around.

8. *How does your child's relationship with his languages change over time?*

I feel like they have a positive relationship with both languages. This has been the case since they were kids.

9. *What do you think of the following statements?*

- *Speaking two or more languages confuses children.*

I strongly disagree. Kids have flexible brains. They can learn two languages and more with the right exposure.

- *Speaking English benefits a child's future career and academic performance in Bahrain.*

This is very true in Bahrain. Your chances at having a good future are highly dependent on your level of English fluency.

- *Children can only be attached to their culture and religion if they understand Arabic.*

This is the dilemma. English shouldn't be emphasized at the expense of Arabic considering how important Arabic is in our culture and religion. We're not people who are detached from their language. Our language is our identity, and it's upsetting to see Bahrainis that are very detached from their mother tongue.

- *Talking with grandparents and people who only speak Arabic helps my child's Arabic fluency.*

I strongly agree. My daughters get most of their Arabic input from their grandparents, who babysit them when we're at work. This is how they got their very beautiful Bahraini dialect. They speak better Bahraini than I do.

- *I'm happy that many people speak English in Bahrain.*

I really am. I believe it reflects us as a civilized and advanced nation. However, as I said before, it should never be at the expense of Arabic.

- *Generally, I feel uncomfortable when someone is only using English although they speak Arabic.*

I have to be honest it does annoy me sometimes. Especially when they reply to you in English after you initiated the conversation in Arabic.

- *More support is needed for maintaining and promoting Arabic in Bahrain.*

I agree. It'd be nice to see popular initiatives aimed at promoting Arabic for children in an innovative way.

10. Does your child connect better with people who speak both English and Arabic rather than with people who only speak Arabic?

No. I don't see language affecting who they connect with. As I said, our household balance is reflected in every aspect of their lives so they can get along with both Arabic and English speakers.

11. What are the actions you take for your child(ren)'s language development?

I love reading English books with them and to emphasize the importance of reading in general. I also sign them for praying classes, which I believe corrects their tongues and get them used to using Arabic daily.

12. Do you wish your children are equally fluent in Arabic and English?

This is the end goal, yes. They're equally fluent when it comes to speaking, but not reading and writing. There's a clear inclination towards English.

13. Do people call your child(ren) "Chicken Nugget"? If yes, how does that make you feel? Which age group/gender does this usually come from?

Not really, I can't recall facing criticism.

14. Do you have a nanny/housemaid, and if so, does it play a role in your child's language development?

No.

Interviewee 13 (34-39, Father, Bachelor's degree, Employed)

1. What language do you most frequently use at home in the following situations?

- *Greetings*

Mostly Arabic.

- *Write notes and birthday cards*

English.

- *Write shopping lists*

Both Arabic and English.

- *Help with homework*

Both, depending on the subject.

2. What languages are used among your family members?

- *Between you and your partner - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

Arabic.

- *Between you and your partner - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

Arabic too.

- *Between you and your child(ren) - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

Mix.

- *Between you and your child(ren) - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

English.

- *Between your child(ren) and siblings/cousins/friends - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

Both languages as well.

- *Between your child(ren) and siblings/cousins/friends - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

She always chooses to write in English.

- *Between your child(ren) and grandparents - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

She has the ability to distinguish whether or not it's appropriate to use English, so with them she uses Arabic only.

- *Between your child(ren) and grandparents - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

No, she still writes in English.

3. *How did your language practices change after having children?*

Yes, for sure. I started using English more so I can keep pace with my daughter.

4. *How often do the following activities take place in your family:*

- *My child(ren) watches TV or YouTube in English*

We restrict her screentime, so this is not a common activity in our family.

I'd say sometimes.

- *My child(ren) watches TV or YouTube in Arabic*

Same thing. We make sure she watches Arabic content as much as English.

- *My child(ren) reads books in English*

She doesn't tend to read a lot, but when she does, she leans towards English books.

- *My child(ren) reads books in Arabic*

Very rarely.

5. *What language is your child(ren) more confident and comfortable using when Speaking?*

English.

6. *What language is your child(ren) more confident and comfortable using when Writing?*

English again.

7. *Does your younger child(ren) use slang terms and English phrases you struggle to understand?*

Yes, and I ask her to explain them to me. She mostly picks them up from school though not from the internet.

8. *How does your child's relationship with his languages change over time?*

She's been really into Arabic lately, hopefully this will continue.

9. *What do you think of the following statements?*

- *Speaking two or more languages confuses children.*

Kids can definitely handle more than one language.

- *Speaking English benefits a child's future career and academic performance in Bahrain.*

Yes, it's essential and important.

- *Children can only be attached to their culture and religion if they understand Arabic.*

Yes, I agree. I believe Arabic is also essential when learning about Islamic culture.

- *Talking with grandparents and people who only speak Arabic helps my child's Arabic fluency.*

Totally. If everyone was accommodating to her English preferences she would lose her Arabic.

- *I'm happy that many people speak English in Bahrain.*

No, it bothers me. There should be more of a balance than there is right now, especially in private schools.

- *Generally, I feel uncomfortable when someone is only using English although they speak Arabic.*

Yes, it does bother me. It even feels disrespectful.

- *More support is needed for maintaining and promoting Arabic in Bahrain.*

I agree. Considering the monumental importance of Arabic I think there should be more promotion for the language, especially for kids.

10. Does your child connect better with people who speak both English and Arabic rather than with people who only speak Arabic?

I don't think it matters to them. They can get along with other kids regardless of language.

11. What are the actions you take for your child(ren)'s language development?

We try to teach her that Arabic is our primary language. We also take her to Quran lessons which help her with her reading and speaking skills. I think this is a good supplement to her private education.

12. Do you wish your children are equally fluent in Arabic and English?

Yes of course.

13. Do people call your child(ren) "Chicken Nugget"? If yes, how does that make you feel? Which age group/gender does this usually come from?

It does happen sometimes, receiving criticism I mean, but they're only worried about losing our language and culture. It's not judgmental, it comes from a place of fear and anxiety.

14. Do you have a nanny/housemaid, and if so, does it play a role in your child's language development?

Yes. I think her presence might influence my daughter's language development especially as they get along well and they're always talking in English.

Interviewee 14 (34-39, Mother, Bachelor's degree, Employed)

1. What language do you most frequently use at home in the following situations?

- *Greetings*

Mix. I always greet them in Arabic, but they often reply in English.

- *Write notes and birthday cards*

They write in English.

- *Write shopping lists*

Both Arabic and English.

- *Help with homework*

Both, depending on the subject.

2. *What languages are used among your family members?*

- *Between you and your partner - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

Arabic.

- *Between you and your partner - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

In writing we mix.

- *Between you and your child(ren) - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

Mix.

- *Between you and your child(ren) - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

Both.

- *Between your child(ren) and siblings/cousins/friends - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

They mix with each other and with their friends.

- *Between your child(ren) and siblings/cousins/friends - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

I always see them writing to their friends in English.

- *Between your child(ren) and grandparents - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

They mostly talk to them in Arabic.

- *Between your child(ren) and grandparents - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

They use both.

3. *How did your language practices change after having children?*

I started using English more. Especially since I have to tutor them after school and do their homework with them, and everything is mostly in English.

4. *How often do the following activities take place in your family:*

- *My child(ren) watches TV or YouTube in English*

They don't watch a lot. They're three siblings and they are close in age, so we encourage them to play together. But I'd say they sometimes do.

- *My child(ren) watches TV or YouTube in Arabic*

They watch an equal amount in Arabic.

- *My child(ren) reads books in English*

They don't read a lot, but when they do, they do it in English. They just went to the book fair in school and all the books they brought home were in English.

- *My child(ren) reads books in Arabic*

They never do.

5. *What language is your child(ren) more confident and comfortable using when Speaking?*

I don't really know but I think both. They're fine with both languages.

6. *What language is your child(ren) more confident and comfortable using when Writing?*

I don't know. I think both. But for example, my daughter had an English writing quiz today and she refused for me to tutor her. She was like I already know everything I don't need your help. But she asks for her help more when she has Arabic homework or tests.

7. *Does your younger child(ren) use slang terms and English phrases you struggle to understand?*

Yes, they always do. Especially the boys. I ask them "what does this mean" and they tell me you wouldn't get it, this is how people born in the 2000s talk.

8. *How does your child's relationship with his languages change over time?*

I feel like because of school, they're becoming more dependent on English.

9. *What do you think of the following statements?*

- *Speaking two or more languages confuses children.*

I think it might only confuse them when they're very young. When they first entered kindergarten, I noticed some confusion. But once they grew up it seemed fine.

- *Speaking English benefits a child's future career and academic performance in Bahrain.*

Yes, for sure.

- *Children can only be attached to their culture and religion if they understand Arabic.*

I agree. I think there's a correlation between Arabic and religion. For example, my son always says I don't like Arabic, and I tell him Arabic is the language of Islam and the language of our prophet Mohammed. There's a strong correlation.

- *Talking with grandparents and people who only speak Arabic helps my child's Arabic fluency.*

I agree.

- *I'm happy that many people speak English in Bahrain.*

There are Bahrainis whose kids don't even speak Arabic. This is very upsetting.

- *Generally, I feel uncomfortable when someone is only using English although they speak Arabic.*

It doesn't bother me. They can speak however they want. I got used to this at work since we started working alongside the younger generation.

- *More support is needed for maintaining and promoting Arabic in Bahrain.*

I think private schools should do more activities aimed at improving Arabic.

10. *Does your child connect better with people who speak both English and Arabic rather than with people who only speak Arabic?*

No. They have the ability to build relationships with both.

11. *What are the actions you take for your child(ren)'s language development?*

Nothing other than taking them to a weekly Quran lesson.

12. *Do you wish your children are equally fluent in Arabic and English?*

I think they're equally fluent in both. I think this is because my kids went to regular kindergartens before I took them to a private school. Those who went to private institutions since the beginning are definitely more fluent in English.

13. *Do people call your child(ren) "Chicken Nugget"? If yes, how does that make you feel? Which age group/gender does this usually come from?*

No. There are people who argue regarding private schools not being much better than public schools. It mostly comes from people who have their kids enrolled in public schools.

14. *Do you have a nanny/housemaid, and if so, does it play a role in your child's language development?*

No.

Interviewee 15 (40-45, Father, Bachelor's degree, Employed)

1. *What language do you most frequently use at home in the following situations?*

- *Greetings*

We use both Arabic and English in the house.

- *Write notes and birthday cards*

Both. Mostly English.

- *Write shopping lists*

Both. Mostly English again.

- *Help with homework*

It depends on the subject.

2. *What languages are used among your family members?*

- *Between you and your partner - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

Their mom and I always use Arabic.

- *Between you and your partner - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

We text in English sometimes but mostly in Arabic.

- *Between you and your child(ren) - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

Mix. But especially with my youngest daughter I speak in English because that's what she's most comfortable with.

- *Between you and your child(ren) - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

Same as speaking.

- *Between your child(ren) and siblings/cousins/friends - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

I notice them using both when speaking.

- *Between your child(ren) and siblings/cousins/friends - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

I think I've only ever seen them text each other and their friends in English.

- *Between your child(ren) and grandparents - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

Arabic only.

- *Between your child(ren) and grandparents - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

Arabic.

3. *How did your language practices change after having children?*

My work is reliant on English, so I've always been reliant on it. But at home, my wife and I always used English before having children. After having kids, I've been using more English at home with them and switching to Arabic when I'm talking to my wife and other family members.

4. *How often do the following activities take place in your family:*

- *My child(ren) watches TV or YouTube in English*

Always.

- *My child(ren) watches TV or YouTube in Arabic*

Never, to be honest.

- *My child(ren) reads books in English*

They do sometimes.

- *My child(ren) reads books in Arabic*

Never.

5. *What language is your child(ren) more confident and comfortable using when Speaking?*

Definitely English.

6. *What language is your child(ren) more confident and comfortable using when Writing?*

English.

7. *Does your younger child(ren) use slang terms and English phrases you struggle to understand?*

Yes of course. That's what they call Gen Z talk.

8. *How does your child's relationship with his languages change over time?*

I'm trying to get them more into Arabic, so I hope that they grow to love the language as much as I do. I feel like they've been making progress.

9. *What do you think of the following statements?*

- *Speaking two or more languages confuses children.*

I disagree. I know children are capable of accommodating multiple languages.

- *Speaking English benefits a child's future career and academic performance in Bahrain.*

Of course. I wouldn't hire anyone on my team who isn't able to communicate with everyone in the world. English is a universal language.

- *Children can only be attached to their culture and religion if they understand Arabic.*

I strongly agree. This is why ever since they were kids, we read the Quran together in the living room every day. Arabic is an essential part of our religion.

- *Talking with grandparents and people who only speak Arabic helps my child's Arabic fluency.*

I agree.

- *I'm happy that many people speak English in Bahrain.*

I agree. I'm proud to see educated Bahrainis with excellent English fluency.

- *Generally, I feel uncomfortable when someone is only using English although they speak Arabic.*

To some extent. Mixing is fine. It's natural. But when they exclusively talk in English when you speak to them in Arabic it might be a bit annoying.

- *More support is needed for maintaining and promoting Arabic in Bahrain.*

I agree. Arabic is a beautiful language, and it should be celebrated more.

10. Does your child connect better with people who speak both English and Arabic rather than with people who only speak Arabic?

I think yes. They're used to being surrounded with English speakers, and they're more comfortable expressing themselves emotionally in English. So, I don't think they'd be okay with not being able to talk in English with their close friends.

11. What are the actions you take for your child(ren)'s language development?

As I said, reading the Quran together at home is a ritual we have been doing since the kids were very young. My oldest son is 20 and we still do it. I also sign them up for Arabic tuition before Arabic exams.

12. Do you wish your children are equally fluent in Arabic and English?

Yes.

13. Do people call your child(ren) "Chicken Nugget"? If yes, how does that make you feel? Which age group/gender does this usually come from?

No. People in my environment and other kids in my circle are all the same.

14. Do you have a nanny/housemaid, and if so, does it play a role in your child's language development?

Yes. I personally think it does play a role since we speak with them in English at home. This is more exposure to English for the kids.

Interviewee 16 (34-39, Father, Bachelor's degree, Employed)

1. What language do you most frequently use at home in the following situations?

- *Greetings*

English.

- *Write notes and birthday cards*

English.

- *Write shopping lists*

English.

- *Help with homework*

Both.

2. *What languages are used among your family members?*

- *Between you and your partner - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

Both.

- *Between you and your partner - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

Both, but mostly in English.

- *Between you and your child(ren) - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

Both.

- *Between you and your child(ren) - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

English only. They're used to typing in English.

- *Between your child(ren) and siblings/cousins/friends - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

They talk to each other in English mostly, like 90% of the time.

- *Between your child(ren) and siblings/cousins/friends - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

English.

- *Between your child(ren) and grandparents - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

They try to talk in Arabic.

- *Between your child(ren) and grandparents - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

Both. They rarely text them but when they do it's in English, but they write them cards in Arabic and ask us to proofread them.

3. *How did your language practices change after having children?*

I don't notice that big of a change since my wife and I love English as well and always use it at home, but it definitely increased because with the kids, I sometimes don't feel like speaking Arabic is an option.

4. *How often do the following activities take place in your family:*

- *My child(ren) watches TV or YouTube in English*

Always.

- *My child(ren) watches TV or YouTube in Arabic*

Never. They always say there are no good shows in Arabic, and I have to agree. All the shows and movies I watch are also in English.

- *My child(ren) reads books in English*

Always.

- *My child(ren) reads books in Arabic*

Never. But not because they're not good it's because they find them too hard.

5. *What language is your child(ren) more confident and comfortable using when Speaking?*

English.

6. *What language is your child(ren) more confident and comfortable using when Writing?*

Definitely English.

7. *Does your younger child(ren) use slang terms and English phrases you struggle to understand?*

Yes. I sometimes act like I get it, then I use Google to understand what they mean.

8. *How does your child's relationship with his languages change over time?*

I feel like they keep getting attached to English.

9. *What do you think of the following statements?*

- *Speaking two or more languages confuses children.*

That's not true. They might have a stronger language, but I don't think they could get confused.

- *Speaking English benefits a child's future career and academic performance in Bahrain.*

One hundred percent. You can't find a job without English nowadays.

- *Children can only be attached to their culture and religion if they understand Arabic.*

I don't think language has a particular impact on the religion you practice.

- *Talking with grandparents and people who only speak Arabic helps my child's Arabic fluency.*

I agree. I see how they're forced to think of how to reply in Arabic when they're talking to my parents, it's good practice for them.

- *I'm happy that many people speak English in Bahrain.*

I am. English is practical and it's the language of the future. You can't keep up with technological advancements without English. Look at ChatGPT for example, it's primarily trained on English data, and you won't be able to utilize it to its full potential without English.

- *Generally, I feel uncomfortable when someone is only using English although they speak Arabic.*

Not at all. Language is a medium of communication. As long as they're communicating it doesn't matter what language they're comfortable using.

- *More support is needed for maintaining and promoting Arabic in Bahrain.*

I've never thought of that before. I don't think it'd make much of a difference. The world is leaning towards English as a whole.

10. Does your child connect better with people who speak both English and Arabic rather than with people who only speak Arabic?

Yes. I feel like they're used to the flexibility of having the option to speak whatever language that comes to mind. They even get frustrated when they need to explain themselves or translate. I do think language plays a factor when they're forming relationships with other children.

11. What are the actions you take for your child(ren)'s language development?

Other than formal education, we've been thinking of signing them up to Quran classes but we haven't yet.

12. Do you wish your children are equally fluent in Arabic and English?

Well, if I had to choose, I'd choose they're more fluent in English than Arabic. They don't really need Arabic to function in society, but they definitely need English. It's a necessity.

13. *Do people call your child(ren) "Chicken Nugget"? If yes, how does that make you feel? Which age group/gender does this usually come from?*

Yes. It mostly comes from older people. But I don't mind, it's only a sign that they're good English speakers.

14. *Do you have a nanny/housemaid, and if so, does it play a role in your child's language development?*

Yes. It definitely does play a role.

Interviewee 17 (40-45, Father, Bachelor's degree, Employed)

1. *What language do you most frequently use at home in the following situations?*

- *Greetings*

Arabic only. It bothers me when I say *Salam* (peace be upon you) and they reply with "hi." What's hi!

- *Write notes and birthday cards*

I write in Arabic. They write in English.

- *Write shopping lists*

Arabic.

- *Help with homework*

This depends on the subject.

2. *What languages are used among your family members?*

- *Between you and your partner - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

Arabic.

- *Between you and your partner - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

Arabic.

- *Between you and your child(ren) - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

Both. I talk mostly in Arabic and they reply with a mixture of both.

- *Between you and your child(ren) - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

Both. The youngest writes in English only but my older kids write in both.

- *Between your child(ren) and siblings/cousins/friends - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

They use both Arabic and English.

- *Between your child(ren) and siblings/cousins/friends - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

English only.

- *Between your child(ren) and grandparents - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

Arabic.

- *Between your child(ren) and grandparents - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

Arabic.

3. *How did your language practices change after having children?*

I started using English more English. They ruined my language.

4. *How often do the following activities take place in your family:*

- *My child(ren) watches TV or YouTube in English*

All the time.

- *My child(ren) watches TV or YouTube in Arabic*

Never. They watch in Japanese and Turkish and not in Arabic.

- *My child(ren) reads books in English*

I wish they read more but the books they do buy are mostly in English. but they don't read a lot.

- *My child(ren) reads books in Arabic*

Never.

5. *What language is your child(ren) more confident and comfortable using when Speaking?*

English.

6. *What language is your child(ren) more confident and comfortable using when Writing?*

English.

7. *Does your younger child(ren) use slang terms and English phrases you struggle to understand?*

Yes. I don't know where they get these terms from. I even tell them this is not English.

8. *How does your child's relationship with his languages change over time?*

I feel like compared to my youngest kid, who is 13, the older ones are more comfortable with Arabic. So, hopefully they become more comfortable with Arabic as they grow older.

9. *What do you think of the following statements?*

- *Speaking two or more languages confuses children.*

I disagree, they can learn a lot of languages, but it has to be done right. We emphasize English too much in Bahrain.

- *Speaking English benefits a child's future career and academic performance in Bahrain.*

Yes, for sure. Why else would people spend a lot of money to enroll their kids in private schools.

- *Children can only be attached to their culture and religion if they understand Arabic.*

I agree.

- *Talking with grandparents and people who only speak Arabic helps my child's Arabic fluency.*

I agree. Arabic would be lost if everyone gave them the option of speaking in English.

- *I'm happy that many people speak English in Bahrain.*

I'm neither happy nor sad. It's just a fact of life and business. It's not just in Bahrain.

- *Generally, I feel uncomfortable when someone is only using English although they speak Arabic.*

I agree. I was saying earlier how it annoys me when I greet my children in Arabic, and they reply in English. Why not speak in Arabic?

- *More support is needed for maintaining and promoting Arabic in Bahrain.*

I strongly agree.

10. Does your child connect better with people who speak both English and Arabic rather than with people who only speak Arabic?

Yes. All their friends speak English.

11. What are the actions you take for your child(ren)'s language development?

We take them to the mosque for praying classes, I think it helps their Arabic language too to interact with people who only speak Arabic.

12. Do you wish your children are equally fluent in Arabic and English?

Yes.

13. Do people call your child(ren) "Chicken Nugget"? If yes, how does that make you feel? Which age group/gender does this usually come from?

No.

14. Do you have a nanny/housemaid, and if so, does it play a role in your child's language development?

Yes. I believe it plays a role because we only had an English-speaking nanny for my youngest son, who is evidently more reliant on English than the rest of his siblings.

Interviewee 18 (40-45, Mother, Bachelor's degree, Employed)

1. What language do you most frequently use at home in the following situations?

- *Greetings*

I use Arabic, they reply to me in English. It's very rare they say good morning in Arabic.

- *Write notes and birthday cards*

They write in English too.

- *Write shopping lists*

Mix.

- *Help with homework*

Depending on the subject. Their sentences are either fully in English or have English words.

2. *What languages are used among your family members?*

- *Between you and your partner - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

Arabic.

- *Between you and your partner - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

Arabic.

- *Between you and your child(ren) - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

Again, I talk in Arabic, and they reply in English. Their dominant language is English, and every once in a while, I mix too.

- *Between you and your child(ren) - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

I write to them in Arabic, and they reply in English. Only one of my daughters has an interest in Arabic and she tries to write messages in Arabic sometimes.

- *Between your child(ren) and siblings/cousins/friends - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

They use English with each other and friends,

- *Between your child(ren) and siblings/cousins/friends - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

Always English.

- *Between your child(ren) and grandparents - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

They have to talk to them in Arabic. My oldest daughter sometimes avoids talking just because she doesn't want to talk in Arabic. She sometimes doesn't even understand what they're saying. My other daughter and my son are fine with casual conversations in Arabic, but not formal Arabic.

- *Between your child(ren) and grandparents - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

Same thing. They either write in Arabic and ask me to check before sending or they write in English if they think they'd understand them.

3. *How did your language practices change after having children?*

I definitely started mixing languages more and using more English every day. I am happy about this because I learned a lot from my kids, and it's an important skill that's even benefiting me at work. I tried to learn English before but nothing worked as good as having kids who prefer to communicate in English.

4. *How often do the following activities take place in your family:*

- *My child(ren) watches TV or YouTube in English*

Always. Even when we go to the cinema, we have to choose English movies

- *My child(ren) watches TV or YouTube in Arabic*

Never or very rarely.

- *My child(ren) reads books in English*

They read a lot and always in English. They even like listening to BBC news in English instead of reading news in Arabic.

- *My child(ren) reads books in Arabic*

Rarely. I try to encourage them but they prefer English.

5. *What language is your child(ren) more confident and comfortable using when Speaking?*

English.

6. *What language is your child(ren) more confident and comfortable using when Writing?*

English.

7. *Does your younger child(ren) use slang terms and English phrases you struggle to understand?*

Yes, all the time. And I even fight with them about this.

8. *How does your child's relationship with his languages change over time?*

I feel like each one of them has a different experience. While my son and one of my daughters keep getting more dependent on English, my other daughter is working on her Arabic and is getting more comfortable with both.

9. *What do you think of the following statements?*

- *Speaking two or more languages confuses children.*

I disagree. Children should be able to learn both languages with no problem. But it was our mistake as parents for focusing on English.

- *Speaking English benefits a child's future career and academic performance in Bahrain.*

Well, for our generation, people born in the 80s, English was not very attainable. This is why we enrolled our kids in private schools to protect them from what happened to us. Our lack of proficiency became a huge obstacle when it was time for us to work. But now, as a mother, my son has a strong foundation in English, but when it was time for him to enter university, he found it challenging to even pass the Arabic requirements of the university. I had to transfer him to another private university so he can take all his subjects in English. This was a huge blow to take after paying a lot for years for his private education. And now most of government jobs require strong Arabic as well. During our time, English was more in-demand for government jobs, maybe because there was a gap in the market back then for Bahrainis with good English. the point is, even though English is important for one's future in Bahrain, so is Arabic.

- *Children can only be attached to their culture and religion if they understand Arabic.*

I agree.

- *Talking with grandparents and people who only speak Arabic helps my child's Arabic fluency.*

I agree. If they interact all the time with people their age Arabic would disappear. We now have two generations in Bahrain, they either talk pure Arabic or pure English.

- *I'm happy that many people speak English in Bahrain.*

Yes of course as I said it wasn't attainable for us before so I'm proud to see newer generations growing up with opportunities we didn't have.

- *Generally, I feel uncomfortable when someone is only using English although they speak Arabic.*

It doesn't bother me per se, but I prefer when everyone speaks their mother tongue if it's just regular conversation.

- *More support is needed for maintaining and promoting Arabic in Bahrain.*

Yes. We need this desperately, but we don't feel heard. We also consider the financial situation. Even at school, when our kids don't do well in Arabic, they ask us to pay extra for remedial lessons. We're already paying the school fees. Why not elevate the language with government support or overall as a curriculum.

10. Does your child connect better with people who speak both English and Arabic rather than with people who only speak Arabic?

Yes. This is actually true. Most of their friends are also bilingual and I remember once my daughter had a friend group where the girls talk mostly in Arabic, and they used to avoid talking to her in certain topics and that used to bother her.

11. What are the actions you take for your child(ren)'s language development?

I took my youngest daughter for Quran lessons. I think it really helped her, she got better than her siblings at reading. I also have a big library full of English and Arabic books and I encourage them to read from it. They do read but without really understanding. And most of the time they don't come to me as a mother for help, they feel like they're too old for that so that's a big problem I face. Another thing is that I spend so much time tutoring them when there's an Arabic exam or assignment, to make sure they really understand the content.

12. Do you wish your children are equally fluent in Arabic and English?

Yes. This issue really bothers me. I wish I could close my eyes and open them to find them being equally fluent.

13. Do people call your child(ren) "Chicken Nugget"? If yes, how does that make you feel? Which age group/gender does this usually come from?

Yes. I'm the type that gets really affected by this to be honest. My sisters and I are all struggling with our kids' languages because of private schools but I think their kids are better than mine. Maybe because my kids are a bit less social, and they don't visit their grandparents and older uncles as much. I do get criticized but I take into consideration what they say as advice.

14. Do you have a nanny/housemaid, and if so, does it play a role in your child's language development?

No. I don't like bringing nannies or housemaids.

Interviewee 19 (34-39, Mother, Bachelor's degree, Employed)

1. What language do you most frequently use at home in the following situations?

- *Greetings*

English.

- *Write notes and birthday cards*

Both.

- *Write shopping lists*

Both. Depending on the things. Sometimes there are stuff that I only know in English, and sometimes it's the opposite.

- *Help with homework*

Both.

2. What languages are used among your family members?

- *Between you and your partner - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

Both. Me personally each Arabic sentence would have a word or two in English. I contradict myself now that I think about because whenever my husband does this, I mock him and say are you a chicken nugget? When I do the exact same thing.

- *Between you and your partner - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

Mostly Arabic I'd say.

- *Between you and your child(ren) - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

Both. I either speak fully in English or fully in Arabic. I try to not mix. But she always replies with a mixture of both.

- *Between you and your child(ren) - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

English only.

- *Between your child(ren) and siblings/cousins/friends - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

She speaks pure English with her friends. Especially for emotional expression.

- *Between your child(ren) and siblings/cousins/friends - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

English. There's no way she'd write in Arabic.

- *Between your child(ren) and grandparents - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

She knows that she should speak to them in Arabic. Sometimes she says something in English and realizes that they didn't understand her, so she translates to Arabic.

- *Between your child(ren) and grandparents - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

English unfortunately.

3. *How did your language practices change after having children?*

They changed a lot. I started to mix languages way more. Me and her dad found ourselves in a tough situation to be honest where we had to talk English more to keep up with her.

4. *How often do the following activities take place in your family:*

- *My child(ren) watches TV or YouTube in English*

My daughter is always watching Western media, to the extent that just a few days ago, she was asking me to throw a Halloween party. I told her no; we don't do that.

- *My child(ren) watches TV or YouTube in Arabic*

She watches sometimes, but the only Arabic content she watches is educational or religious videos, not a full cartoon.

- *My child(ren) reads books in English*

When she was younger, we used to always read together in English. Now, I decreased the focus on English books to focus more on Arabic books.

- *My child(ren) reads books in Arabic*

Sometimes. I try to focus on Arabic books more than English books as I just said, but she isn't as eager to read in Arabic. She finds it harder. The other day I was asking her about her favorite teacher in school and she said her favorite is her English teacher, because English is easy, Arabic is harder.

5. *What language is your child(ren) more confident and comfortable using when Speaking?*

English.

6. *What language is your child(ren) more confident and comfortable using when Writing?*

English.

7. *Does your younger child(ren) use slang terms and English phrases you struggle to understand?*

Yes. This is not really slang but I learned from my daughter body part names in English. Even names of planets – I don't know all of them by heart. Me and her dad were just arguing the other day on which planet is Jupiter in Arabic.

8. *How does your child's relationship with his languages change over time?*

She's definitely getting closer to English. Always have been always will be.

9. *What do you think of the following statements?*

- *Speaking two or more languages confuses children.*

I think confusion does happen. Sometimes I feel like she wants to express something, and she gets lost between the two languages. When I used to look at other families, I'd say taking their kids to a private school where everything is in English is alright, but they don't have to use English in their

daily life too. But unfortunately, I can see now that it's easier for kids to communicate and express themselves in English, this is why they do it.

- *Speaking English benefits a child's future career and academic performance in Bahrain.*

Yes, for sure. When I compare my daughter's level in school now to my own level when I was her age there's no room for comparison.

- *Children can only be attached to their culture and religion if they understand Arabic.*

I strongly agree.

- *Talking with grandparents and people who only speak Arabic helps my child's Arabic fluency.*

Yes, of course.

- *I'm happy that many people speak English in Bahrain.*

I strongly disagree. This is because along with the language came the culture. It became normal nowadays for girls to have boyfriends and guy friends, this all started with the 'chicken nuggets' generation.

- *Generally, I feel uncomfortable when someone is only using English although they speak Arabic.*

It's very annoying. It even annoys me on TV. When we watch shows such as Top Chef in Arabic the contestants are always trying to talk in English, even if their English is broken, and it's embarrassing because you are Arabs why aren't you talking in Arabic? You'd never see foreigners talking in a language other than theirs in shows that are supposed to represent their countries. This really bothers me.

- *More support is needed for maintaining and promoting Arabic in Bahrain.*

I don't think the current situation is fine as it is. Especially in private schools, 100% of the books in KG are in English, and some homeroom teachers aren't even Arabs. The characters and dialogues are all English. Our children are receiving their formative education almost entirely in English. Arabic is very neglected.

10. *Does your child connect better with people who speak both English and Arabic rather than with people who only speak Arabic?*

I think she can get along fine with anyone regardless of language. I don't think she discriminates based on language.

11. *What are the actions you take for your child(ren)'s language development?*

We have to read before bed, and I alternate between Arabic and English books. I also encourage her to watch Arabic videos, especially *Nasheed*.

12. *Do you wish your children are equally fluent in Arabic and English?*

Of course I do. It is very unfortunate that she isn't

13. *Do people call your child(ren) "Chicken Nugget"? If yes, how does that make you feel? Which age group/gender does this usually come from?*

One of my sisters used to always comment on her. She used to say, "your daughter is such a chicken nugget" and stuff. It used to bother me a lot, but I don't care anymore. If anything, I feel ashamed, because I used to make fun of chicken nuggets too.

14. *Do you have a nanny/housemaid, and if so, does it play a role in your child's language development?*

No.

Interviewee 20 (34-39, Father, Bachelor's degree, Employed)

1. *What language do you most frequently use at home in the following situations?*

- *Greetings*

Both Arabic and English.

- *Write notes and birthday cards*

Both. Mostly Arabic but I use English here and there.

- *Write shopping lists*

Both. Sometimes the list is in Arabized English with words like Shampoo.

- *Help with homework*

Both.

2. *What languages are used among your family members?*

- *Between you and your partner - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

Both. If the sentence has ten words, one is in English.

- *Between you and your partner - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

Mostly Arabic.

- *Between you and your child(ren) - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

We mix with each other. For her the mixture is 50%. For every word in Arabic there'd be a word in English.

- *Between you and your child(ren) - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

English only.

- *Between your child(ren) and siblings/cousins/friends - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

English.

- *Between your child(ren) and siblings/cousins/friends - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

Always English.

- *Between your child(ren) and grandparents - Speaking (including face-to-face, video chats, phone calls, etc.)*

Our parents belong to the older generation, so English is nearly non-existent for them. She tries to talk exclusively in Arabic with them except for very common words such as friend or school.

- *Between your child(ren) and grandparents - Writing (including text messages, emails, letters, cards, etc.)*

English still. Talking is fine but she prefers to write in English.

3. *How did your language practices change after having children?*

I was just telling my wife that our daughter ruined our language. When I look at her, I remember that I used to make fun of other people's children and it's embarrassing because she's exactly like them now.

4. *How often do the following activities take place in your family:*

- *My child(ren) watches TV or YouTube in English*
Always.
- *My child(ren) watches TV or YouTube in Arabic*
Very rarely.
- *My child(ren) reads books in English*
Always.
- *My child(ren) reads books in Arabic*
She reads in Arabic sometimes but mostly in English.

5. *What language is your child(ren) more confident and comfortable using when Speaking?*

English.

6. *What language is your child(ren) more confident and comfortable using when Writing?*

English.

7. *Does your younger child(ren) use slang terms and English phrases you struggle to understand?*

Yes, all the time. We now need their help instead of the other way around.

8. *How does your child's relationship with his languages change over time?*

I feel like she keeps getting closer and more attached to English. she's fine with Arabic but English is always her top choice for emotional expression and comprehension.

9. *What do you think of the following statements?*

- *Speaking two or more languages confuses children.*
From an educational standpoint, I think it's easy for children to acquire multiple languages without any confusion. The difficult and confusing part is our role as parents figuring out when and where to use each language to ease their bilingual upbringing.
- *Speaking English benefits a child's future career and academic performance in Bahrain.*

I agree. We are now leaning towards the external world, people work remotely and abroad, and English is important as a global language to communicate with the external world and learn from universal experiences.

- *Children can only be attached to their culture and religion if they understand Arabic.*

I agree. What attracts children on YouTube and on television is always English content. Even if we're trying to teach her (our child) things about, let's say, Islam and prayers, the idea of these matters won't reach her as effectively as the idea of, for example, Christmas, when she sees it in a video or hears it in a song.

- *Talking with grandparents and people who only speak Arabic helps my child's Arabic fluency.*

Yes. She always learns new Arabic words when she's around her grandparents.

- *I'm happy that many people speak English in Bahrain.*

I'm not. I feel like we're losing track of what language really matters for our everyday life.

- *Generally, I feel uncomfortable when someone is only using English although they speak Arabic.*

It bothers me very much. Whenever I see Bahrainis from afar, I don't even need to be interacting with them, talking in English with their friends and saying stuff like "yes bro" it really pisses me off.

- *More support is needed for maintaining and promoting Arabic in Bahrain.*

I agree.

10. Does your child connect better with people who speak both English and Arabic rather than with people who only speak Arabic?

I think she can get along with either. She can switch languages according to the other person's preferences.

11. What are the actions you take for your child(ren)'s language development?

I try to speak to her a lot in Arabic at home.

12. Do you wish your children are equally fluent in Arabic and English?

13. Do people call your child(ren) "Chicken Nugget"? If yes, how does that make you feel? Which age group/gender does this usually come from?

I don't get straight up mockery or criticism, but I do get stares from people, even from my sisters, when I talk to her in English, but I mostly ignore them.

14. Do you have a nanny/housemaid, and if so, does it play a role in your child's language development?

No.

Appendix C. Focus Group Discussion Points

1. Language Choices

- How do you navigate your language preferences in different social settings? For example, what language do you typically use when communicating with your parents?
- How about siblings, friends, or extended family members like grandparents, aunts, or uncles?
- Is there a noticeable difference between the language you use in spoken conversations versus written communication?
- When it comes to writing personal notes, cards, or even setting reminders for yourself, which language do you naturally gravitate towards?
- In your entertainment habits—whether listening to music, watching TV shows and movies, browsing the internet, or posting on social media—do you favor one language over the other, and if so, why?

2. Language and Identity

- When speaking or writing, do you feel a greater sense of comfort or fluency in one language compared to the other?
- What kinds of emotional or cultural associations do you attach to each language?
- Do you find yourself feeling more connected or at ease when communicating with people who share your same level of linguistic proficiency?
- When it comes to deeper relationships, do you find it easier or more challenging to build meaningful connections with people who only speak Arabic? What about those who only speak English—does that pose any unique challenges?

3. Reflection on Family Practices

- Within your family dynamics, which language seems to take precedence, and in what context? For instance, is Arabic the go-to language for religious or cultural discussions, while English takes priority for topics related to education or professional life?
- In everyday life and in online interactions (through texting, social media, etc.), do you notice yourself using one language more frequently than the other? If so, how does this align with your family's values or expectations?

4. Reflection on Wider Society

- When interacting with society outside your family—whether at malls, cafes, school, work, or during official phone calls—what language do you prefer to use?
- Do you view one language as holding more prestige, influence, or social importance than the other?
- Have your attitudes or feelings towards Arabic and English evolved over time as you've grown older? Do you feel that you are moving closer to, or further away from, your mother tongue? What drives this shift—personal experiences, social pressures, or practical reasons?
- Have you ever been teased or labeled as a “chicken nugget”? If so, which gender or age group tends to engage in this type of behavior, and how does this experience affect you emotionally?
- On the flip side, have you ever been treated differently or gained special advantages in formal settings, such as job interviews or academic spaces, due to your proficiency in English?

Appendix D. Focus Group Transcripts

Focus Group 1 (Females aged 18-22)

1. Language Choices

- *How do you navigate your language preferences in different social settings? For example, what language do you typically use when communicating with your parents or extended family members like grandparents, aunts, or uncles?*

P1, 2, 3: Arabic

- *How about siblings, friends, or same-age peers?*

P1, 2, 3: Mix

- *Is there a noticeable difference between the language you use in spoken conversations versus written communication?*

P2: بس عادي لأن في وقت عشان تفكرين typing in English is generally much faster.

P1: It depends on the setting. You're at work, you're writing an email, would you rather write it in Arabic?

P2: Um immediately no. I can't.

P1: In professional settings for sure I'm gonna use English cus I dunno how to do it in Arabic.

P2: [sarcastic tone] مع تحياتي

[laughter]

P2: Bro ساعات أفكر بالساعات how to ask someone in an email for approval.

- *When it comes to writing personal notes, cards, or even setting reminders for yourself, which language do you naturally gravitate towards?*

P1, 2, 3: English.

- *In your entertainment habits—whether listening to music, watching TV shows and movies, browsing the internet, or posting on social media—do you favor one language over the other, and if so, why?*

P1, P2, P3: English.

P1: And Korean.

[laughter]

P1: But, sometimes, إذا الموضوع لي دخل بالدين, I go for Arabic.

P2: أحس English. بس أطالع بال movies and shows, I listen to both, بالنسبة لل music, شوي it's cringy بالعربي.

P1: Even if it's an Arabic show that everyone says it's so good I just cannot do it.

P3: إن it's cringe but I don't know. I can't relate or understand properly. Even if I were to watch something in Arabic the subtitles لازم English.

P1: Same.

P2: I feel ashamed على روجي discriminating أحسني.

P1: Oh my god same, same! I do acknowledge that بس it's just hard.

P2: I know right, أصدع ... I cringe so bad بس ما أقدر.

2. Language and Identity

- *Do you find yourself feeling more connected or at ease when communicating with people who share your same level of linguistic proficiency?*

P3: Um, yes

P2: أحس It depends, على type of relationship. With friends for example yes, I prefer to have the option of using both languages بس يعني مثلاً I'm pretty connected to my mom although ما تعرف English.

P1: Um that's true. [Addressing P3] Why did you say yes immediately?

P3: I don't know. أحس it's difficult to be forced to use Arabic. I have to translate in my head and it's يعني exhausting. The other day, I was having a serious conversation أحس يعني كنت مو عارفة أتكلم بالعربي and I felt like I was at a loss of words وي خالي.

P2: If it was in English it'd have been faster.

P3: Yeah! I would've been able to respond quickly. But I had to like, think.

P1: صدق, speed is a factor.

- *When it comes to deeper relationships, do you find it easier or more challenging to build meaningful connections with people who only speak Arabic? What about those who only speak English—does that pose any unique challenges?*

P1: I would definitely be closer with people who speak English because I use a lot of English, especially when I express, ما أعرف I express in Arabic.

P2: أحس when you need to say something critical وفيه الموضوع مشاعر you always go for English.

P1: To be honest, even if I were to get married, يعني بتزوج –

P2: توني بقول!

P1: I can't get married to someone who doesn't speak English.

P2: بس مو كلش he can speak حتى لو كان إن it's still a no.

P3: إلا ما أعرف أقولها إلا بس يتحجون عربي with my friends حتى لهم.

P1: I'll be honest, I don't even think I have friends that don't speak English.

P3: أنا I do, وأحس it's hard to express myself with them.

P1: I don't know how but speaking English changes one's personality. I don't know how to explain it, but I do think their personality is different.

[laughter]

P2: بس لكن مثلاً I don't particularly mind talking to people in Arabic only. صدق صدق: P2: I explain إن people who can speak English. It's much easier for me إن I prefer في الشغل. Otherwise, لازم أحولهم بالعربي كل ال terms, كل شي which is so hard.

3. Reflection on Family Practices

- *Within your family dynamics, which language seems to take precedence, and in what contexts? For instance, is Arabic the go-to language for religious or cultural discussions, while English takes priority for topics related to education or professional life?*

P1: I definitely feel some sort of pressure from my family to excel in English.

P2: لازم تتعلمون لأن بعدين بتحتاجون اللغة ومدي. they encourage me. بس إن not pressure أحس. شنو.

P1: Um personally I wasn't pressured because I took an interest in the language. I loved it. بس مثلاً بابا. He'd download movies for me without ترجمة.

- *In everyday life and in online interactions (through texting, social media, etc.), do you notice yourself using one language more frequently than the other? If so, how does this align with your family's values or expectations?*

P3: It's contradictory! They want us to learn English, but at the same time ...

P1: They want you to learn it but they want you to use it only when you have to. I don't want you to use it at home cus our language is Arabic.

P2: على الموضوع لازم تسمعين.

P1: See I think for us at least at this point it's not so bad, أختي ولد أختي, بس إذا أجوف سلمان ولد أختي, guys, guys, this guy does not speak Arabic. He's like 'English is easier for me'! حتى. أنني ساعات أضيع وياه.

P2: My cousins بعد they understand Arabic بس إن they're embarrassed لأن لو بقولون يعني هم عادي يفهمون. they prefer to not talk in Arabic. غلط الناس بتضحك عليهم ف ويستوعبون بس عادي انتين تكلمينهم عربي يردون بالإنجليزي.

P1: because he's too shy
يعني عنده لا تسأليني عن العربي ما عيش مني ما أبي أدرس :
يخاف إن يغلط ويقولون ما يعرف

P2: Because he feels like everyone knows how to speak Arabic
إلا هو ما يعرف

P3: It's cus they don't have confidence

4. Reflection on Wider Society

- *When interacting with society outside your family—whether at malls, cafes, school, work, or during official phone calls—what language do you prefer to use?*

P1, 2, 3: Definitely English.

P2: Press two for English.

- *Do you view one language as holding more prestige, influence, or social importance than the other?*

P2: Not that it's more prestigious – it's just more powerful ...

P1: maybe lowkey I do think it's more prestigious. قاعدة أفكر إنني مساعة قلت ما
بتزوج أحد ما يعرف إنجليزي. That's kinda bad.

P2: هذا إلا كنت بقوله. We're not being judgmental it's just that I'm not gonna feel
comfortable and connect
وي أحد ما يعرف إنجليزي

- *Have you ever been teased or labeled as a “chicken nugget”? If so, which gender or age group tends to engage in this type of behavior, and how does this experience affect you emotionally?:*

P2: Yes. Even at work.

P1: Maybe cus you work in a setting فيه واحد بحرينيين

P2: at my previous company, كان كوثر is the chicken nugget, anything in
English give it to Kawther. All the clients were directed to me. And it's always in a
joking or sarcastic tone. I don't even feel like a 'chicken nugget', they just say it
cus I'm 'different'.

P1: Me too. When people call me ‘chicken nugget’ I say I’m not a chicken nugget, Maha [colleague] is a chicken nugget. We live a completely different lifestyle.

- *On the flip side, have you ever been treated differently or gained special advantages in formal settings, such as job interviews or academic spaces, due to your proficiency in English?*

P1: I got a job.

[laughter]

P3: Even in uni and in my internship, they wouldn’t have liked me if I didn’t speak English.

P2: They trust me to send all the emails حق ال big projects.

P3: When we do like short presentations during class, يعني كله they choose me.

Focus Group 2 (Females aged 16-19)

1. Language Choices

- *Do you find yourself consciously switching between languages according to the person you’re speaking to?*

P1: No. Not consciously. It happens automatically.

P2: Oh yeah definitely.

- *Do you find yourself translating in your head?*

P1: Yeah. Only إذا to Arabic, you like, need to think. Like you think it in English but then how do you say it in Arabic? You translate it in your head.

- *Overall in Arabic, do you feel like it’s easier to write or to talk?*

P3: To write is easier. Because like, I can process and all.

P2: Um, I think to talk is easier.

P1: I agree.

P2: Cus certain words I wouldn't know how to write.

P2: That means you're just illiterate.

[laughter]

- *When it comes to writing personal notes, cards, or even setting reminders for yourself, which language do you naturally gravitate towards?*

P1, 2, 3: English.

- *In your entertainment habits—whether listening to music, watching TV shows and movies, browsing the internet, or posting on social media—do you favor one language over the other, and if so, why?*

P1: I do both.

P2: I do English only.

P3: Me too. I feel it's harder to keep up with Arabic shows.

2. Language and Identity

- *Is it easy to be friends with someone that only speaks Arabic?*

P1: لا.

P2, 3: No.

P1: I'd need someone who speaks like me. يعني that mixes both. حتى I can't be friends with someone, like, a full-on English person.

P3: I'd find it really hard to express myself with someone that doesn't speak English.

- *What language would you prefer to use to post on social media?*

P2: I wouldn't post at all.

P1: I'd do both الصراحة.

- *Do you feel like you're becoming more okay with Arabic as you get older or are your feelings still the same.*

P1: أحس لا it's still the same. Especially with like, strangers, I prefer talking in English.

P3: Yeah.

P1: It's just that I'm more confident speaking in English than Arabic.

3. Reflection on Family Practices

- *Do you feel like your family is happy that you speak a lot of English or would they rather you speak more Arabic?*

P2: I think they'd like us to improve our Arabic.

P1: اي me too.

- *Do you feel like it's contradictory? Since they're the ones who enrolled you in schools that focus on English then they become upset that you use a lot of English to communicate?*

P2: Yeah.

P1: إن يعني منكم. أي!

P2: يعني بابا ما يتحجى عربي. they speak to us in English. حتى في البيت P2: he switches when he's talking to us it's in English and when he's talking to ماما مرة, وحدة عربي.

4. Reflection on Wider Society

- *Do you view one language as holding more prestige, influence, or social importance than the other?*

P3: Um, I do think English is of higher status than Arabic.

P2: You think so? Maybe cus like it's a universal language it's like of a higher status بس in Bahrain, I'd like to speak better Arabic.

- *Have you ever been teased or labeled as a “chicken nugget”? If so, which gender or age group tends to engage in this type of behavior, and how does this experience affect you emotionally?*

P1, 2, 3: Yes.

P1: It comes from a lot of different people like family. من حتى our own generation. أحس it's more the people that don't speak English يعني their justification to them not being able to understand, is oh انتون لأن chicken nuggets. It's never oh it's cus I'm not educated.

P2: Yeah, I agree with that.

- *On the flip side, have you ever been treated differently or gained special advantages in formal settings, such as job interviews or academic spaces, due to your proficiency in English?*

P1: Yes.

P2, 3: Yeah.

P2: People respect you more when you speak English.

P1: أي they view speaking English, like a [...]

P2: Skill.

P1: Yeah, skill.

Focus Group 3; Males aged 18-22

1. Language Choices

- *Do you find yourself consciously switching between languages according to the person you're speaking to?*

P2: I feel like I subconsciously switch to Arabic when I'm speaking to like, my grandma.

P3: Yeah.

P1: إلى قاعد أكلمه consciously. Depending on the person أحس.

- *Do you find yourself translating in your head?*

P2, 3: Yeah.

P1: أي.

P3: English to Arabic not Arabic to English. When I hear an Arabic sentence, I do some direct translation in my head so it makes more sense.

- *Overall, in Arabic, do you feel like it's easier to write or to talk?*

P2: Um, speaking is easier than writing.

P1, 3: Yeah.

- *Why is it difficult to write?*

P1: cus of school, we got more قواعد اللغة صعبة، واللي درسناه كله بالإنجليزي في المدرسة ف used to writing in English.

- *When it comes to writing personal notes, cards, or even setting reminders for yourself, which language do you naturally gravitate towards?*

P1, 2, 3: English.

- *In your entertainment habits—whether listening to music, watching TV shows and movies, browsing the internet, or posting on social media—do you favor one language over the other, and if so, why?*

P2, 3: English.

P1: ملل وأحس أصعب يعني. مستحيل عربي.

P3: بالعربي Naruto تخيل تطالع.

[laughter]

- *Why is it funny?*

P1: cringe. أحس إن, في المسلسل formal setting يعتمد يعني إذا بالفصحى و.

P2: cringe, but they try to act out Western-based ideas and it's awkward. إن اللغة هي اللي تسويه

- *Let's say you're calling a hotline, would you pick 1 for Arabic or 2 for English?*

P1, 3: English.

P2: instruction إذا شي بسيط مثلاً موعد مستشفى عادي عربي، بس إذا مثلاً بتصل لبتلكو ويعطوني ألف: ما بفهم بالعربي.

P3: I know what يعني سو جذي بعدين سو جذي لا بفضل إنجليزي multiple choices أي إذا في I'm looking for لازم أترجمها فأخاف أضيع، بالإنجليزي بالعربي.

2. Language and Identity

- *Is it easier to be friends with other bilinguals rather than monolinguals?*

P1, 2, 3: أي.

P1: واحد. في المدرسة. عادي full English أحس. That's the kind of people we grew up with منهم كانوا يتكلمون بس إنجليزي.

- *What language would you prefer to use to post on social media?*

P2, 3: English.

P1: I don't post. But if I were to post I'd use English.

3. Reflection on Family Practices

- *Do you feel like your family is happy that you speak a lot of English or would they rather you speak more Arabic?*

P2: أحس ما عدهم اعتراض عادي.

P1: some pressure. أحس في.

P3: يقول لي في وجهي انت ما تعرف تتكلم عربي. في الصراحة disappointed أبوي.

P2: next to her they're grateful for my Arabic. أحس like at all, so مريم اختي ما تتكلم عربي.

P3: أي الجيل الأصغر بعد قصة ثانية.

- *Do you feel like it's contradictory? Since they're the ones who enrolled you in schools that focus on English then they become upset that you use a lot of English to communicate?*

P1: It's very contradictory.

P2: They accommodate my sister by speaking to her in English. بعدين يعصبون إنها ما تعرف عربي. How would she learn?

P1: they're navigating the shift in society as well. Like they don't know what to do either so I don't blame them.

P3: Exactly. يعني balance is not as easy as it sounds.

4. Reflection on Wider Society

- *Do you view one language as holding more prestige, influence, or social importance than the other?*

P3: English is definitely more important socially.

P1, 2: Yeah.

- *Have you ever been teased or labeled as a "chicken nugget"? If so, which gender or age group tends to engage in this type of behavior, and how does this experience affect you emotionally?:*

P1, 3: أي.

P3: By older coworkers.

P2: أحس أي أحد ما يعرف يتكلم إنجليزي يقول جذي ويتطنز. It doesn't bother me كله أقول أنا الحين chicken fillet. كبرت صرت

P1: Yeah I don't care.

P3: Me too.

- *On the flip side, have you ever been treated differently or gained special advantages in formal settings, such as job interviews or academic spaces, due to your proficiency in English?*

P1: أي، يفضلون يعني اللي يتكلمون إنجليزي أحسن.

P3: I get special tasks. Literally this week task جاني لأن محد في القسم يعرف يكتب إنجليزي formal letter عدل وكان يعني لازم نكتب للوزارة.

ملخص البحث

تُعد اللغة الإنجليزية لغة عالمية وشرطاً أساسياً لتحقيق النجاح المستقبلي في المجتمعات الحديثة. لذلك، زادت أهمية تعليم الأطفال اللغتين العربية والإنجليزية منذ الصغر في مملكة البحرين. ورغم الإيجابيات المرتبطة بتعدد اللغات، يمكن أن تنتج عن هذه الظاهرة آثار اجتماعية معاكسة، كالتأثيرات السلبية المتصورة على طلاقة اللغة العربية، والعلاقات بين الأجيال، وخصوصية الهوية العربية. تستكشف هذه الأطروحة لغة الشباب في البحرين والاختلافات بين الأجيال فيما يتعلق باستخدام اللغة والأيديولوجيات المرتبطة باللغة العربية واللغة الإنجليزية في المجتمع البحريني. من خلال استهداف الشباب البحرينيين اللذين يتحدثون اللغتين العربية والإنجليزية الملتحقين بالمدارس الخاصة على وجه الخصوص ضمن إطار سياسة اللغة في الأسرة، تنظر هذه الدراسة في كيفية تواصلهم مع الأجيال الأكبر سناً، وأبرز الخصائص التي تُميز حديثهم، ومدى تأثير اعتمادهم على اللغة الإنجليزية على ممارسات الأسرة اللغوية، ومدى اختلاف الأيديولوجيات اللغوية بين الأجيال التي تحكم كيفية إدارة اللغات في الأسرة البحرينية. أُجريت مقابلات مهيكلة مع عشرين من الآباء البحرينيين اللذين يلتحق أطفالهم بمدارس خاصة لاستكشاف سياساتهم اللغوية، كما عُقدت ثلاث مناقشات جماعية مركزة مع شباب بحرينيين ثنائيي اللغة لتحليل اختياراتهم اللغوية. تكشف النتائج عن اختلافات دقيقة بين الأجيال فيما يتعلق بممارساتهم وأيديولوجياتهم اللغوية؛ فبينما تنجذب الأجيال الأصغر سناً نحو اللغة الإنجليزية كأداة للتعبير عن الذات، تنظر الأجيال الأكبر سناً للغة الإنجليزية كأداة لتحقيق النجاح الأكاديمي والمهني وكعلامة على ابتعاد الشباب عن الهوية العربية الأصيلة في الوقت نفسه. ومع ذلك، يبدو أن لانتشار اللغة الإنجليزية تأثير كبير على ممارسات اللغة واستراتيجيات التربية في الأسر البحرينية بشكل عام. ورغم التوجه العالمي نحو تعليم الأطفال لغتين أو أكثر منذ الصغر، يُظهر الآباء في البحرين افتقارهم إلى المعرفة اللازمة بتأثير اللغة على الهوية وباستراتيجيات إدارة اللغة التي يمكن أن تعزز من التوازن بين اللغات. تضيف هذه الأطروحة إلى فهمنا حول تأثير انتشار اللغة الإنجليزية على العلاقات الأسرية وتكوين الهوية، كما تُثري النقاش الحالي حول حالة اللغتين الإنجليزية والعربية في العالم العربي، وتضع حجر الأساس للدراسات المستقبلية والجهود المخصصة لتحليل ديناميكيات اللغة في المملكة.

الكلمات الأساسية: الشباب البحريني، الثنائية اللغوية، الاختلافات بين الأجيال، سياسة اللغة في الأسرة، الأيديولوجية اللغوية

جامعة البحرين



كلية الآداب

قسم اللغة الإنجليزية وآدابها

الاختلافات اللغوية بين الأجيال في البحرين: دراسة في كيفية استخدام الشباب البحريني للغات

تم تسليم هذه الأطروحة كجزء من متطلبات الحصول على درجة الماجستير في الدراسات التطبيقية
في اللغة الإنجليزية

إعداد الطالبة

زهراء السيد شرف شبر أحمد

الرقم الأكاديمي: ٢٠١٧٣٢٠٧

بإشراف

د. شادية الهاشمي

أستاذ مساعد في اللغويات

جامعة البحرين

مملكة البحرين

مايو ٢٠٢٥