London Metropolitan University

MA International English Language Teaching and

Applied Language Studies

Arabic Language Maintenance Without Maintaining Spoken Arabic:

A case study of 'speaking Fusha' at a weekend school in London

Author: Fardous Bahbouh

Supervisor: Tim Marr

August 31, 2010

This dissertation is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Masters in International English Language and Applied Language Studies.

I confirm that this dissertation is all my own work

Signature: _____

Word count: 14,676

Contents

Acknowledgments:

Abbreviations

RLS   Reversing Language Shift

H   High variety

L   Low Variety

CL   Classical Arabic

MSA   Modern Standard Arabic

SA   Spoken Arabic

ESA   Educated Spoken Arabic

Abstract

This study explores a unique case of language maintenance at an Arabic weekend school in London. The school is run by devoted non-linguist native Arabic speakers and it has a policy of speaking Fusha, the literary variety of Arabic, inside classrooms. In addition, Spoken Arabic is usually corrected and considered inappropriate to the extent that the school administration prefers speaking English rather than Spoken Arabic inside the classrooms.

In investigating this paradoxical situation, this study aimed at exploring attitudes and perceptions about Arabic varieties among parents, students, teachers, and the school administration, observing the Arabic varieties spoken at the school and investigating their influence on the Arabic language maintenance efforts.

This study indicates that the multifaceted aspects of Arabic diglossia and Arabic various regional spoken dialects have an enormous influence on the school. Fusha is considered as superior to Spoken Arabic, even though Fusha is not often used as a spoken variety. All participants showed favorable attitudes toward Fusha and seemed to believe that Spoken Arabic is only learned at home. Furthermore, given the highly diverse background of students and teachers, the school is a centre for language interactions among various regional spoken dialects of Arabic. These dialects are sometimes mutually unintelligible. The findings suggest that instead of contextualizing the school's efforts toward effective language maintenance, the school's policy of speaking Fusha seems to effect students' perceptions of Spoken Arabic which might weaken, rather than foster, the continuity of Spoken Arabic among the Arab-British students.

A source of inspiration

Starting my teaching career as an English Teacher at a university in Syria, I had the perception that teachers who are native speakers of English tend to have a different status in the profession. I then decided to teach Arabic, my native language. I joined a University in the United States of America and I was looking forward to becoming the native-speaker teacher. That university, however, offered classes in Modern Standard Arabic, MSA, and it was my first time that I was supposed to speak MSA. Only at that time did I realize that I was not a fluent speaker of MSA. I was confused and upset. I kept wondering: "How is it possible that I am not fluent in my 'native language'?!!"

I lived in Syria most of my life until I was twenty. At school, we studied all subjects in Arabic, with the exception of English Language classes which we attended for only two or three hours a week. I spent years learning Arabic grammar and I was a top student in my Arabic classes. However, we never had to speak MSA at school, like the majority of schools in Syria. After I started teaching MSA courses, I came to realize that speaking MSA in spontaneous conversation requires more than knowing the rules of Arabic grammar.

Furthermore, I was not the only one confused and frustrated with speaking MSA. Some of my students, whom we refer to as heritage students, spoke or had Arabic spoken at their homes. Some of those students were struggling in the Arabic classes because they had to modify the way they spoke at home to fit the MSA classes. The general pattern for heritage students of any language is that they speak their heritage language at home, and they learn how to read and write through educational institutes. However, for Arabic heritage students, it is a different situation.

After my initial confusion, I became more aware of the diglossic nature of Arabic and the challenges teaching Arabic resulting from the varieties of Arabic. My particular interest in teaching Arabic to heritage students led to the present study which is conducted at an Arabic weekend school in London where most of students have Arabic roots.

1. Introduction:

In the United Kingdom, Arabic is an immigrant language in a host speech community where English is the dominant language. It is a common practice among immigrant communities to establish schools to maintain and foster their language and culture. This small scale case study is about language maintenance of Arabic as an immigrant language. It is conducted at a weekend school in West London. The school's policy is that teachers and students are supposed to speak Fusha in the classrooms. The issue at hand is not merely a linguistic case; it has religious, cultural and political dimensions. The puzzling question is: what makes the school choose a policy of speaking the literary variety which is not usually used for speaking and what makes Arabic language maintenance like "fighting a lost battle," as the school director describes it?

This study aims at 1) exploring attitudes and perceptions among parents, students, teachers, and the school administration regarding Arabic varieties 2) observing what languages/language varieties are actually spoken at the school, both inside and outside classrooms 3) investigating the school role in language maintenance and how Arabic varieties influence Arabic language maintenance.

2. Reversing Language Shift:

Even though Arabic is a world language and has millions of native speakers in other parts of the world, Arabic in the United Kingdom is an immigrant language. In his plenary address to the National Heritage Language Conference, Fishman (1999) defines a heritage language as "a language of personal relevance other than English." (Cited in Deusen-Scholl 2003, p. 216). Fishman (2001) divides heritage languages into three categories: Indigenous, colonial and immigrant languages. (Cited in Deusen-Scholl 2003, p. 216).

2.1 Immigrant languages:

When immigrants arrive to a new country, there is an urgent need to know the host language to be able to function and survive in that country. Fishman (1972, p.52) discusses the case of immigrants to the United States where "English was the only language of values outside of the home". Furthermore, the role of English is even bigger for the new generations, who are born in the English speaking country and who study at schools in English. Edwards (1994, p.83) observes that "the classical pattern for new comers to the United States, for example, was bilingualism (mother tongue and English) by the second generation and English monolingual by the third". A similar scenario might apply to immigrants in the United Kingdom where language shift starts from the heritage language to the dominant English Language. Children become increasingly monolingual in English when they start their education in English and interact more with the English-speaking community. Even when they maintain bilingualism in the two languages, they usually speak them in different domains and for different functions. Furthermore, heritage languages are weakened and more challenged with the international spread of English and with English becoming "a world lingua Franca" (Edwards 1994, p.41). Therefore, it is not unusual for immigrant communities to establish schools to maintain their languages and culture.

2.2 Intergenerational transmission and language maintenance:

Joshua Fishman, the founder of the field of Reversing Language Shift, RLS, has many publications addressing language shift and whether it is possible to reverse it. Fishman (1991 and 2001) argues that RLS is not only concerned with preserving the language; it is also about preserving identity and culture. RLS efforts do not approach language as merely a means of communications. Fishman (1991, p.28) argues that "The two most common ingredients of programmatic definitions of the cultural goals of RLS movements are (i) mining the past for inspiration to meet the challenges of the future and (ii) strengthening cultural boundaries so as to foster greater intergenerational cultural continuity."

Furthermore, Fishman (1991) argues that any efforts to reverse language shift should start by identifying the type of language shift and the current status of that language within communities and network. He sets a sociolinguistic 'Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale' that measures the severity and disruption status of a language through eight stages with higher numbers indicating greater disruption. On that scale, the stages that describes the status of Arabic as an immigrant language in the United Kingdom are stage 6: "the attainment of intergenerational informal oralcy and its demographic concentration and institutional reinforcement" and stage 5: "Xish[1] literacy in home, school and community" (Fishman 1991, pp.92-95)

Therefore, intergenerational transmission of the immigrant language, which takes place in the family domain, is a crucial stage in reversing language shift. Its focus is language oralcy in the family. The immigrant language should be used for oral interaction in the family, and even in the neighborhood and the community. The next stage is language maintenance. The immigrant language schools' efforts are mainly for language reinforcement and promotion of literacy in the immigrant language. Fishman (1991, p.111) emphasizes that intergenerational mother tongue transmission and language maintenance are not the same. He explains that they are closely related because language maintenance is the post transmission stage.

Maintaining an immigrant language requires a great deal of dedication and hard work. However, there is a crucial need to differentiate between language maintenance dedication and language maintenance effectiveness among the teachers. The critical challenge for language maintenance is that students may identify the immigrant language and the language maintenance efforts with the homeland of their parents, teachers, or even their grandparents, which mean with things that are foreign. Furthermore, when teachers are born outside the UK, educated outside the UK, do not speak English, or not aware of the culture and the educational system of the students, this might create a distance between students and teachers. Fishman (1966, p.113) explains the risk when a teacher cannot effectively communicate and relate to the students that "he might successes in doing nothing more than identifying language maintenance in the minds of his pupils with 'foreignness'"

Moreover, in cases when intergenerational transmission does not happen or is not completed, as Fishman (2001) explains, schools have a much more difficult task because students come to school already speaking another language as their mother tongue. Furthermore if the immigrant language is not used for functions outside the school in daily life, then the school

---

[1] The Symbols X and Y used by Fishman since 1991 and widely adopted to refer to threatened language X and unthreatened or less threatened Y.

efforts become more of teaching that language as a second language. Therefore, Fishman (2001, p.14) expresses the crucial need for linkage between language functions inside and outside the school. He emphasizes that RLS efforts "cannot afford functionally diffuse or free-floating efforts" and therefore there they must establish two things: "(1) a priority of functions, and (2) a priority of linkage between the functions in order to derive the maximal benefits from their relatively weak resource base and unfavourable resource competitive setting" (Fishman 2001, p.14)

This particular point regarding linkage between functions is what makes RLS of Arabic complex. In Arabic, the separation of literary and oral functions is an essential characteristic of Arabic linguistics and sociolinguistics. In addition, in this Arabic school where this study is conducted, teachers and students are required to speak the literary variety of Arabic, MSA, which is different from the Arabic spoken outside the school. Before proceeding in this discussion of Arabic language maintenance, it is necessary at this point to explore in some details Arabic varieties.

3. Varieties of Arabic:

The Arabic linguistic and sociolinguistic situation is characterized by a wide range of varieties, both horizontal and vertical, to use Eisele's (2002) terminology. The multifaceted aspects of Arabic varieties are described in terms of diglossia and numerous regional spoken dialects.

3.1 <u>Diglossia:</u>

In his well known article 'Diglossia', Ferguson (1959) introduces the term diglossia, modeled on the French diglossie, and argues that the Arabic language is diglossic because of the existence of both Classical Arabic and Spoken Arabic which are used for certain purposes and in certain contexts in the Arabic speech community. He lists Modern Greek, Swiss German, and Haitian Creole as diglossic languages. Ferguson (1959, p.244) defines diglossia as:

> "Diglossia is a relatively stable language situation in which, in addition to the primary dialects of the language (which might include a standard or regional standards), there is a very divergent, highly codified (often grammatically more complex) superposed variety, the vehicle of a large and respected body of written literature, either of an earlier period or in another speech community, which is learned largely by formal education and is used for most written and formal spoken purposes but is not used by any sector of the community for ordinary conversation."

He also states that children learn the Low variety L first as their mother tongue while the High variety H is learned through formal education. Therefore, "the speaker is at home in L to a

degree he almost never achieves in H." Ferguson (1959, p. 239) discusses differences between H and L varieties in term of forms and functions. For example, grammar in the H variety is more complex and "it is learned in terms of 'rules' and norms to be imitated." On the other hand, grammar in the L variety tends to be simpler and it "is learned without explicit discussion of grammatical concepts". Furthermore, Ferguson (1995, p.236) lists specific functions for each variety. For example, H is used in formal situations such as a sermon in a church or a mosque, political speech, and university lectures, while L is used for informal situations such as giving instructions to servants and talking with friends and family. He emphasises the importance of "using the right variety for the right situation... A member of the speech community who uses H in a purely conversational situation or in an informal activity like shopping is equally an object of ridicule."

In his description of Arabic diglossia, Ferguson (1995) argues that Classical Arabic is the 'high' variety, H. It is the literary variety of the Arabic language. On the other hand, spoken Arabic which is used for daily communication and has no official written form is the 'low' variety, L. Furthermore, Ferguson (1995, p.247) highlights the high status of Classical Arabic for native Arabic speakers. They view it as a unifying factor that "connects the community with its glorious past or with the world community". On the contrary, the various spoken dialects are viewed as "divisive." Furthermore, Classical Arabic is viewed as a prestigious 'heavenly' language because it is the language of the Quran, the holy book of Islam which is considered as God's revelation in God's actual words.

However, many scholars find Ferguson's classification to be an inaccurate account of Arabic varieties. For example, Fishman (1972) states that the use of Arabic varieties is more flexible and changeable than Ferguson's dichotomy. Badawi (1994) argues that instead of only two varieties there are five levels of Arabic: 1) Classical Arabic 2) Modern Standard Arabic 3) High Standard Colloquial 4) Middle Standard Colloquial 5) Low Colloquial. Holes (1995, p.39) considers Ferguson's categorization of High and Low as a 'misleading oversimplification'. Many scholars prefer the description of the Arabic linguistics as a spectrum, a continuum, or a diglossic continuum (al-B atal, 1992; Edwards, 1994; Holes 1995; Kaye, 2001; Elisele, 2002; Wilsmen, 2006; Wahba, 2006; Younes, 2006). For the present study, I will be referring to the diglossic nature of Arabic indicating a diglossic continuum.

In recent years, the term Modern Standard Arabic, MSA, has been widely used. As Holes (1995) explains, MSA is the modern descendent of Classical Arabic and shares with it most of the grammar, with some variation in vocabulary and phraseology. MSA is the literary variety currently used for writing and reading across the Arab countries. It is generally used for speaking in very formal situations, and in some TV programmes and news reports. Almost all native Arabic speakers learn Spoken Arabic as their first language and then learn MSA when

they start their school education or religious education. Holes (1995) also states that all school materials are written in MSA.

Furthermore, the terminology Classical Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic are used mainly among Western scholars, while for ordinary native speakers of Arabic both Classical Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic are referred to as Fusha (Holes, 1995; Wilmsen, 2006). Badawi (1973) uses the term 'contemporary Fusha' to refer to MSA. Since many participants in the present study are native Arabic speakers, I will be using the term 'Fusha' as it is used by most native Arabic speakers referring to both Classical Arabic and MSA. It is more practical to use the terminology that the participants are familiar with.

3.2 <u>Spoken Arabic Varieties:</u>

Spoken Arabic, SA, refers to language varieties used for daily oral communications and most native speakers of Arabic learn their spoken dialects as their mother tongue. Furthermore, SA is not one variety; it is a collective term used when referring to the various regional spoken dialects. The Arabic word for SA is Ammiyah.

Some linguists who conducted observation about the language use of native Arabic speakers have concluded that SA is spoken in a wider context than initially expressed by Ferguson (1959). For example, Wilmsen (2006, p.131) conducted fieldwork for a PhD dissertation the focus of which was modes of speech of educated speakers of Arabic, mainly their conversation at work and at conferences and other discussion sessions. His main finding was that "The vehicle for discourse of the educated professionals whom I observed and with whom I interacted was vernacular Arabic… Thus, even intellectuals and language professionals, whose very work requires them to write and declaim at the highest standards of formal Arabic, spent most of their professional lives (and their home lives as well) steeped in another variety of Arabic: the vernacular." A similar observation was made by Badawi (1973) who stated that a university professor in the Arab world "writes in CF (contemporary Fusha) but usually delivers his lectures in the vernacular of the educated" (cited in Wilsmen, 2006, p. 150).

It is well agreed that the domains for speaking MSA or SA are not rigidly defined. (al-B atal, 1992; Edwards, 1994; Holes 1995; Kaye, 2001; Elisele, 2002; Wilsmen, 2006; Wahba, 2006; Younes, 2006). Some Arabs might use SA in formal occasions. However, speaking MSA in intimate domains or for bargaining in the market is perceived as absurd and ludicrous (Holes, 1995). There is only one exception, as Kaye (2001, p.120) explains. Non-Arab sometimes can and do use MSA in domains where it is not expect, and they "get away with it" without being laughed at because this is part of the "natives tolerance of the speech of non-natives". Also Kaye (2002, p.120) describes the use of MSA by non-Arabs as being part of 'foreign Talk'". This argument is very relevant to the present study and it highlights the contradictory situation of

requiring Arabic heritage children to speak MSA as part of language maintenance efforts when speaking MSA has 'foreignness' implication.

Furthermore, Holes (1995) also explains that speakers from geographically close areas do not have difficulty understanding each other's dialect. However, mutual intelligibility becomes harder among speakers of geographically remote areas. Holes (1995, p. 5) states that "Geographically, these dialects might be thought of as being distributed along innumerable sets of intersecting continua." In addition, some dialects such as Egyptian and Levant dialects are generally understood by speakers of other dialects because of popular TV programs and songs. Also, dialects of capital cities such as Cairo and Damascus are "more widely understood than others, and have acquired the status of 'prestige' national or even international spoken dialects."

Given the wide variation of SA, one would wonder what happens when speakers of different dialects come together. There are a few studies about Arabic inter-dialectal conversations. Holes (1995) argues that Arabic speakers of different dialects resort to language accommodation strategies such as reducing the use of words that are particular to specific dialect and might not be understood by speakers of other dialects and using words that are common among dialects and more likely to be understood.   Similarly, S'hiri (2002) concluded from her study of language spoken by Tunisian journalists to Levant journalists at a media agency in London that Tunisian speakers tend to linguistically converge toward their interlocutors. They modify the way they speak to make it easier for their interlocutors to understand them. They also eliminate code switching to French. Furthermore, both Holes (1995) and S'hiri (2002) state that native Arabic speakers hardly ever speak MSA in face-to-face conversations.

3.3 The emerging Middle variety:

In his discussion about stability of Diglossia, Ferguson (1959, p.240) predicts that some factors might affect the stability of diglossia and lead to the emergence of a "relatively uncodified, unstable, intermediate form." He describes the 'anticipated' intermediate form of Arabic as "a kind of spoken Arabic much used in certain semi-formal or cross-dialectal situations has a highly classical vocabulary with few or no inflectional endings, with certain features of classical syntax, and a generous admixture of colloquial vocabulary."

Currently, many scholars talk about a change that is happening to the diglossic situation of Arabic by the emerging middle variety (Mitchell, 1987; Ryding, 1991; Stevens 2006; Wahba, 2006). There is no consensus about the name or the exact description of this middle variety. It is, however, viewed as a solution for intelligibility during inter-dialectal conversations, and for teaching Arabic as a foreign language. For example, Mitchell (1987, p.8) argues for the

existence of Educated Spoken Arabic, ESA, a variety of the language that incorporates features from both MSA and the SA. He states that "it is the interplay between written Arabic and vernacular Arabic(s) that creates and maintains Educated Spoken Arabic both nationally and internationally." Another name for the middle variety is Formal Spoken Arabic, which is described by Ryding (1991, p.212) as "a supra-regional, prestige form of spoken Arabic practical as a means of communication throughout the Arabic speaking world."

In addition to being a potential solution for inter-dialectal conversations, the semi-formal characteristics of Educated Spoken Arabic solve the problem for Arabs who do not speak "a fully inflected MSA with a high degree of proficiency or accuracy" because they can speak the "so-called 'pause forms,' in which the complex inflections of formal Literary Arabic are greatly reduced" (Stevens 2006, p. 56). Furthermore, Educated Spoken Arabic also serves as a bridge between MSA and SA, and facilitates the learning process of Arabic as a foreign language (Stevens, 2006; Ryding, 1991)

3.4 <u>Arabic inflectional case endings</u>:

As discussed above, there is a big difference between MSA and SA in phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics. In general, MSA grammar is more complicated and is learned through formal education. Therefore, not all Arabic speakers are aware of the detailed rules of MSA. As Stevens (2006, p.56) explains "there are many rules not well known to the nonspecialists that are found only in written, and except for formal spoken contexts, are never encountered in everyday spoken Arabic. As a result, native speakers of Arabic, even educated ones, are often unsure of MSA grammatical rules and can't give correct examples (let alone explain rules)." A similar observation was made by Badawi (2002, p160) that educated native speakers of Arabic rarely speak formal literary Arabic, and if they do, "they usually deviate from the prescriptive rules."

One of the major differences between MSA and SA, and which makes speaking MSA in spontaneous conversations difficult, is the use of case endings. As explained by Stevens (2006, p.43), nouns in MSA are inflected according to their position in the sentence (nominative, accusative, genitive) and according to their state (definite or indefinite). "When definite, the noun takes the definite article 'al and one of the three case endings without final –n; when indefinite, it takes no article and the same three case endings with final –n. Thus al-kitābu, al-kitāba, al-kitābi 'the book' contrast with kitābun, kitāban, kitābin 'a book'".

On the other hand, nouns in SA do not take case endings. Thus, 'a book' versus 'the book' is expressed kitāb versus il-kitāb. Therefore, it is a lot easier for speakers because they do not have to worry about the correct case endings while speaking. In his study of the history of Arabic varieties, and the evolution of SA, Holes (1995, p.30) states that the Arabic used in

everyday speech of Arabs probably had begun to lose the final short vowel endings indicating mood and case "by the late seventh century."

3.5 The influence of Arabic varieties on learning Arabic:

There are very few studies about learning Arabic as an immigrant language. For the present study, the researcher spent a tremendous amount of time looking for research about the influence of diglossia on the language acquisition of young heritage learners of Arabic without finding any. The researcher also searched for studies that investigate any potential correlation between speaking MSA and students' reading abilities, and could not find anything. Therefore, given the lack of research about Arabic acquisition and learning by heritage students, it was necessary to look at the available literature about learning Arabic by native Arabic speaker children, and learning Arabic as a foreign language. This literature has been approached with extreme caution because these are relatively different contexts. However, this literature was the only available resources, and it is relevant to the present study, in particular, the discussion about teaching MSA.

To start with, Arabic native speaker children are born into a complicated linguistic context: They grow up speaking their native dialect and then learn to read and write in MSA. Al-Jabiri (2003) talks about the difficulties Arab children face in learning MSA because it is like learning 'a new Language'. Also, he states that students do not use this new language, MSA, in their everyday life outside the school, which adds to the complication of the situation. Furthermore, in their study, 'Is Literary Arabic a Second Language for Native Arab Speakers?: Evidence from Semantic Priming Study,' Ibrahim and Aharon-Peretz (2005) compared the semantic priming effects in auditory lexical decision within Spoken Arabic, SA, with the effects found across languages with Literary Arabic, LA, or in Hebrew. The Study concluded that "despite the intensive daily use adult native Arabic speakers make of SA and LA, and despite their shared origin, the two languages retain their status as first and second languages in the cognitive system."(Ibrahim and Aharon-Peretz, 2005, p.51)

Moreover, Mahmoud (1986, pp.241-242) discusses the educational impact of diglossia in contexts where Arabic is in a direct competition with a foreign or a second language, especially in the North African countries of Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco. He states that diglossia makes Arabic hard to master and diglossia is one of the reasons why "French had violently usurped most of the social, educational, administrative and most importantly, the economic and technological functions of Arabic."

Furthermore, according to the United States Foreign Services Institute's (FSI) ranking (1986), Arabic was among the most difficult languages to learn (cited in Stevens 2006, p. 36). In addressing the question of what makes Arabic difficult to learn, Stevens (2006) argues that there are numerous reasons for this classification. Among these reasons are the spoken/written dichotomy, orthography, and morphology (derivational and inflectional). In addition, there are more difficulties related to pedagogical factors such as the scarcity of professional teachers and teaching materials and the teaching methodology where some native-speaker Arabic teachers tend to teach Arabic the same way they learned it as a native language.

Stevens (2006, p.56) explains the difficulty of learning Arabic because of the spoken/written dichotomy that more efforts are required from the students to learn both speaking and writing varieties and to differentiate between them. He also suggests that "there must be a certain difficulty psychologically in acquiring two closely related systems and keeping them separate while the acquisition process goes on. Perhaps it might be easier to learn two unrelated languages simultaneously than two closely related systems." Ferguson (1971) has similarly argued that learning Arabic might seem to the students as learning two languages in one.

3.6 Challenges and Implications of Teaching MSA:

Given the complexity of Arabic varieties, it is common for Arabic as a Foreign Language programs to teach only MSA for both oral and literary function. There are many challenges and negative implications of this practice. Wilmsen (2006, p125) states: "It is an open secret in the Arabic teaching profession that the language taught in the classroom is not the same as that usually used in speech". In addition, teaching only MSA requires artificial situations because students learn to use MSA in situations and domains where it is not used in the daily life, such as greeting, introducing people and ordering food. Teaching MSA only limits the chance of teaching Arabic culture because Arabic songs, TV shows, folk cultural elements are mostly in SA.

Furthermore, speaking MSA in the Arabic classrooms places more pressure on teachers, even if they are native Arabic speakers because they are not used to, and sometimes not able, to speak MSA in conversations. A testimony by Younes (2006, p.163) after teaching and developing the Arabic program at Cornell University for over fourteen years clarifies these difficulties and explains how it affects classrooms' atmosphere:

> But writing as one who has been subjected to the forced use of Fusha for speaking, where I felt completely unnatural and inappropriate, and as one who has witnessed countless instances of Arabic instructors confused and overwhelmed by feelings of guilt as they struggle to cope with the requirements of 'i'rab (case and mood ending) while trying to think of what to say, it is my strong belief that the insistence on using Fusha for speaking in the Arabic language classroom takes the joy and spontaneity out of teaching

the language and takes the meaning out of a classroom discussion. The reason for that is simple: instead of focusing one's energy and attention on the message he or she is trying to convey, the focus is shifted to form.

In addition to the classroom implications, teaching only MSA has negative implications on the learning outcome as well. Wilmsen (2006, pp.132-141) argues that given the sociolinguistic situation of Arabic varieties, "relying on one variety ignores the dynamic aspect of communication for the language learners (users)". Therefore, he states that Arabic programs that teach only MSA produce "a disabled learner who cannot communicate adequately." Therefore, he concludes that teaching only MSA is a waste of time. This opinion was also expressed by Badawi (2002). Furthermore, Stevens (2006, p.61) points out the paradoxical situation that achieving high proficiency in MSA takes a long time and actually involves "surpassing true 'nativelike' performance."

Recently, there have been some arguments that students should learn Arabic varieties as they are spoken by native Arabic speakers in real-life situations. Wahba (2006, p.151) states that the Arabic programs' objectives should be directed toward producing a competent diglossic user of Arabic "who has the linguistic knowledge (linguistic and cultural) and the communicative ability to use Arabic language in its social context." Similarly, Younes (2006, p.164) argues that Arabic should be treated as "one system of communication with a spoken side and a written side and a common core" because it would be a more accurate reflection of the sociolinguistic realities of Arabic and pedagogically more effective. Even though, it might seem difficult and confusing for students to differentiate between varieties of Arabic, Al-Batal (1992, p.302) argues that this potential confusion "should be regarded as part of the total experience of learning Arabic."

4. RLS perspectives on language varieties:

In the previous chapters, I talked about Arabic as an immigrant language in the UK, and language maintenance efforts. I also addressed Arabic varieties and issues with Arabic language learning. In this chapter, I now address the issue of handling language varieties from the perspective of RLS. Fishman (1991, p.114) states that one of the critical aspects of RLS is that "it often has an internal conflict or ambivalence to face up to, within the very circle of the true believers themselves, as well as an opposition from the external world of Ymen, Yish (including Xmen-via-Yish) and Yishness." Therefore, RLS efforts should start by resolving internal conflicts and allocating the limited available resources to the more necessary functions of the language.

In the Arabic case, native Arabic speakers view Fusha, (H) as the prestigious holy language, and it is the literary form of Arabic. On the other hand, spoken Arabic dialects (L) have little, if any, prestige. It also has no official writing system, and it varies a lot across geographical areas.

However, those spoken dialects are the language varieties used in speaking. There is not a standard spoken dialect in Arabic. At the school where the current study takes place, they have a policy of 'speaking Fusha' inside the classrooms. Fishman (1991, p.344) argues that when schools insist on speaking a standard variety, "this may well constitute an additional psychological burden" because if people feel that the spoken dialects are not proper language, this might make them give up the efforts to maintain that language. In addition, Fishman (1991, p.340) states that in informal and intimate contexts, it would be "ludicrously out-of-place" for people to speak the standard language as "if they were bishops or prime ministers or even teachers, as if they were 'talking books' rather than two ordinary and very human human beings…"

4.1 <u>Dialectal permissive approach:</u>

How should language varieties be handled in the context of language maintenance? Fishman (1991, p.344) states that the best way to handle the problem of dialects is "by making sure that RLS-efforts recognize, utilize and dignify the local dialect". He also advocate for a dialectal permissive approach in schools; "Teachers must always be situationally acceptive of dialect speech in the elementary classroom, whether RLS is involved or not, and they must cultivate dialect acceptance among their pupils, regardless of whether one two or many dialects are presented in the classroom." In addition, RLS efforts should also be directed for promoting tolerance toward spoken dialects among adults.

Moreover, Fishman (1991) emphasizes that even if there is a need for a standard form, it comes as a complement for the dialects in some functions. This applies to the process of maintaining Arabic as an immigrant language because of the absence of a standard spoken dialect, since MSA is a standard literary variety. Therefore, if an Arabic school chooses MSA to be spoken inside the school it is creating a disconnection from the language spoken in daily life, and losing the linkage between school function and other functions of the language which weakens language maintenance efforts (Fishman 2001).

5. The Study

This is a small scale qualitative case study conducted at a weekend school in West London. The school was established twenty years ago by members of an immigrant association from Syria. Currently, there are more than 400 students at the school, divided into 26 classes. According to the school's records, most students are second or third generation Arab-British. Only few of them were born outside the United Kingdom. All teachers are native speakers of Arabic and they all hold university degrees in different fields from Arab countries. Teachers come from different Arab countries; Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine, Iraq, Egypt and Yemen.

The first part of this study is focused on participants' attitude and perception of Arabic varieties and what should be taught and spoken at the school. The second part is an analysis of the observations conducted at the school inside and outside classrooms. The third part is a discussion of how Arabic varieties influence Arabic language maintenance at the school and investigation what makes the school like 'fighting a lost battle' as the school director described it.

5.1 <u>Data collection:</u>

I conducted this qualitative study as a participant observer. During my first visit to the school, the school director asked me to work with them to help improve Arabic language teaching at the school. This was an ideal opportunity for me to become an insider and facilitated my access to teachers, students and parents.

Data collection was conducted over the period of three months and incorporated a variety of data gathering methods. Data collection included 25 anonymous questionnaires for parents (appendix One). Parents had the choice to answer a questionnaire written either in Arabic or in English. I handed the questionnaires out to parents when they visited the school for parents meetings, or to observe the morning activities of their children. This proved helpful because I got a chance to personally talk to the parents face to face, clarify the terminology used in the questionnaire and answer any questions they had. Data also included 25 anonymous questionnaires for students who are 12 to 18 years old (appendix Two). I also handed out the questionnaires myself, provided some clarifications and explanations, and answered students' questions.

Given the sensitivity and complexity of the topic, and in order to get in-depth information, I conducted follow up interviews with 5 parents, and follow up interviews with 10 students after I got their parents' permissions. Students' interviews were conducted in pairs to make it easier and more of a chat between the students. In addition, I conducted interviews with 8 teachers who teach different levels at the school (appendix Three). I also had the opportunity to talk to other teachers through informal chats and discussions.

For the school administration, I conducted an interview with the head teacher, the school director, and a member of the School Board. The head teacher is in charge of training teachers and supervising them. She also gives instructions regarding teaching methodology and teaching materials. The school director and the member of the School Board are both among the founders of the school.

All these interviews were semi-structured interviews. I also invited and welcomed personal anecdotes and digression from the participants. I left it to the participants to choose the

language for the interview. Generally, students' interviews were mostly in English, while the rest were mostly in Arabic. All interviews were digitally recorded, and the audio files will be destroyed after the submission of this dissertation.

Furthermore, I conducted several observations at the school. These observations had two aims: 1) to find out what languages and language varieties are spoken at the school, 2) to get a better understanding of attitudes since "attitudes are inferred or inferable from things occasionally said and done (as well as from things never said or done, even though one is in an environment in which it is common to do or say such things)" (Fishman 1991, p. 49). Therefore, elements of ethnography were incorporated, even though they were not in the initial planning of the study. Data also included the researcher's notes and journal entries about the general atmosphere of the school and interactions among students, teachers, staff, parents, in addition to classrooms observations. (Appendix Four is a sample journal entry).

5.2 Sensitivity of the study

There are many factors contributing to the sensitivity and complexity of the issue of teaching Fusha at the school. Therefore, I was very careful in the way I approached the topic when I talked to people at the school. Fishman (1991, p.11) expresses "language issues in society are usually fraught with emotions, values, ideals and loyalties and, as with most 'matters of the heart', they seem so compelling that to pause for clarification may seem, to many who favor reversing language shift to be not only unnecessary but unfeeling." For example, one day the school director told me in a motherly tone that she was worried that the present study that I am conducting at the school might be the beginning of a movement away from Fusha, and it would promote SA which will create a distance from Quran and kill the unity of Arab countries.

In addition, a parent who works as an administrator at the school approached me and seemed not happy about my study. She expressed the importance of Fusha Arabic to maintain 'the Arabic Nation'. She said "As long as you think there is an Arabic nation, there should be an Arabic language. SA is a broken language and it does not have grammar." This lady went on to express a conspiracy that Western powers are following to weaken the Arabic language and the Arab nation. Surprisingly, she even accused me, my teachers and my university of being part of the conspiracy. I explained to her in a diplomatic manner the academic purpose of this study. This clearly reflects the sensitivity of the topic and the strong attitudes held by some people at the school towards Fusha.

Another example is one of the parents who burst into tears while talking about how important the school is for her and her family. She told me "You can't imagine how happy I am with the school!" She was very proud that her daughters learned a lot about Islam and they now speak "the classy proper Fusha Arabic." Furthermore, some people at the school were even

wondering why I am interested in this topic since it is obvious that the right choice is to teach the language of Quran, Fusha!

5.3 <u>The Students:</u>

It is necessary to start by a general description of students' backgrounds and the demographic structure of their families. The responses showed a very diverse demographic structure of the families. In the majority of families, both parents were native Arabic speakers, while in some families, only one parent was a native Arabic speaker. In some families, both parents are from the same Arab country, while in other families, parents came from different Arab countries. Furthermore, Arab parents come from all over the Arab countries such as the Levant area, the Gulf, and North Africa. Parents and students reported various 'amount' of Arabic spoken at their homes. Mainly when one of the parents was not a native Arabic speaker, Arabic was spoken less at home. In addition, some parents and students from North African Arab countries reported that Arabic, English and French are spoken at their homes.

Despite the demographic diversity of the families, this school is somehow a community centre. Most of the teachers have children at the school. Teachers and administration staff usually refer to the students, as 'our children' or 'our kids.' Also, teachers and school administration seemed to have good relationships with the families of the students. All participants agreed, or strongly agreed, that a very important motivation for their children to come to the school was to build connections and friendships with other students at the school. Also, many parents reported having more than one child at the school and many students reported having siblings at the school. The Arabic school has become "more like a family tradition" as one student told me. Also, the number of years students have spent at this school ranged from one to thirteen years. Two students wrote that they have been coming to this school since they were born!

Moreover, many parents and students reported that Arabic is still functional in their daily life outside the school. Many participants reported having Arabic TV channels at their homes and watching Arabic programs as a family activity. In addition, many parents and students reported that students travel to Arab countries regularly.

5.4 <u>School's goal:</u>

According to a member of the School Board, since its establishment, the focus of this school has been teaching the Arabic language. He explained that the inspiration behind establishing the school was for the children who might have to continue their studies in Arabic if their parents decided to relocate to the Arab world. At the founding stage, the school sent a questionnaire to a large number of Arab families in London and asked them what they wanted their children to

study at the school. In addition to Arabic, the questionnaire options included religious studies, geography, history, biology and maths. All parents who responded to the questionnaire wanted Arabic language; hardly any of them wanted math, history or geography. About 95% wanted Quran and Islamic studies.

All participants in this study, with the exception of one parent, stated that reading Quran was a very important reason for students to come to the Arabic school. Similarly, there was an agreement among all participants, with one exception, that students are coming to the school because it is part of their Arabic identity and to reconnect with their parents' root. All participants agreed it is important for students to build connections and friendships with other students. Responses varied regarding other reasons: to pass GSCE, to utilize it in their university studies, to access Arabic literature and media, and for future job opportunities.

In addition, participants listed other reasons for coming to this school. Some of these reasons were "To speak with family members who don't know English," "To communicate with Arab friends and family," "I like the language and I like reading history," And "to be able to communicate with my relatives from Sudan, my native country, and make my parents happy." A parent expressed his wish that his children speak Arabic like native speakers. He said: "We send our kids to Arabic school to learn Arabic and speak it as if they are native speakers who were born in Eygpt, and to be interested in the culture of our country to be able to watch a movie and listen to music."

However, the school director and the head teacher had a relatively different opinion regarding the main goal of the school. The school director stated "at certain age, 13 to 14, students should be able to speak Fusha; if they still can't speak Fusha, it means that the school failed in achieving its goal." The head Teacher stated that the goal of the school is "to teach 'kids' to be able to read Quran, and to read Arabic books." However, they both later responded that it was either important or very important for the students to learn Arabic as part of their Arabic identity, to reconnect with their parents root, and to build connections and friendships.

This shows, from the very beginning, that there is a contradiction in setting the school's goals. Due to Arabic diglossia, literary skills are to some extent different from oral skills. While school administration seemed to prioritize Fusha, other participants showed interest in Arabic as an identity marker, and for communication purposes that are not fulfilled through speaking Fusha.

6. Attitudes and perceptions

6.1 <u>Status of Fusha and Spoken Arabic</u>:

It seems that Fusha has a high status among the participants for many reasons. First of all, all participants agreed or strongly agreed that Arabic is a holy language. Only one parent left this question unanswered. The explanations for these responses were mainly that Arabic is the language of Quran and some of them believed that it is the language of 'Heaven'. However, since the religious status of the Arabic language is associated with Fusha, Fusha is considered more important and more prestigious than SA, as Ferguson (1959) argues.

The second reason is that Fusha is viewed as a unifying force for all Arabs since it is shared all over the Arab world, unlike SA which is characterized by a high level of variation (Ferguson, 1959; holes, 1995). All participants, with the exception of one parent, agreed or strongly agreed that Fusha represents a common linguistics ancestry for all Arabic speakers in different countries. For example, an Algerian parent said during her interview that she preferred Fusha to be taught at the school because "the origin of Arabic is Fusha. Fusha unites us, while each area has a special SA ... Fusha brings us all together and unites us through the same language."

 The third reason for favouring Fusha is, native Arabic speakers view Fusha as connected to the "glorious past," as Ferguson (1959) states, while SA is associated with backwardness and viewed as a legacy of colonization.The school director stated that "To achieve high level, you have to separate the language from the people. The Arabic language (referring to Fusha) has a high status... I cannot plan according to people and the low level of education of the Arabic speakers. It is unfair to the language itself." Similarly, the member of the School Board said: "We, Arabs, went through hundreds of years of backwardness, and colonization, and as a result our language went through dark stages." A similar opinion was expressed by one of the teachers who stated that SA is a result of French colonization. She said: "You know what they did, the colonizers, when they first came? When the French came, they said 'No Arabic, speak French'. But they could not impose French, so they started encouraging regional dialects. You are Algerian, you are Moroccan, and you are Syrian." Then she angrily stated: "We are all Arab!"

6.2 <u>Contexts and domains for speaking Fusha by native Arabic speakers</u>

The majority of the participants reported that they rarely or never speak Fusha in their daily life outside the school. Furthermore, when they were asked in which context they thought native speakers of Arabic speak Fusha, the parents' answers showed it is mainly religious or literary

functions, such as praying, reading Quran, helping their children with school homework, and some TV programs and news reports. One parent stated that "All Arabs do not speak Fusha, because SA is used for speaking." Teachers expressed similar opinions to those of the parents. One of the teachers said: "Even on the day of our graduation, the graduation ceremony was in SA." Some teachers and parents stated that Fusha is spoken in inter-dialectal conversations. However, when they answered the question regarding what speakers of different Arabic dialects speak when they meet, some of the participants who earlier stated Fusha was spoken in interdialectal conversation choose "their regional dialects, ammiyah, with some modifications to ensure mutual intelligibility."

On the other hand, students list more occasions and places where they thought Fusha is spoken. Example of students answers are: in royal Arab families, people of high status, speaking to somebody who is highly respected, job environment, in formal conversation, and presentations and conferences, in addition to prayers, school assignments, and news reports. One student wrote, "I think most of the people speak Fusha Arabic" while another wrote that "They speak SA all the time so they hardly ever speak Fusha."

In the available accounts and studies of the use of Arabic varieties, it is widely agreed on that Fusha is rarely used in spontaneous conversations, or intimate informal domain (Ryding, 1991; Holes, 1995; Stevens 2006; Wahba, 2006; Wilsomen, 2006). Comparing teachers' and parents' responses with students' responses indicates that some students seemed to have overestimated the contexts for using Fusha.

6.3 <u>Do people need a school to learn SA?</u>

Most participants strongly agreed or agreed that most native speakers of Arabic learn a regional spoken dialect before they learn Fusha at school, as argued by Ferguson (1959) and Holes (1995). In addition, most participants agreed or strongly agreed that it is the parents' responsibility to teach SA. A student explained that "the school should teach Fusha, because SA is only learned at home."

Many parents and teachers strongly agreed that only Fusha should be taught at school. One teacher stated, "You need a school to learn Fusha, you can easily learn SA through other ways." Similarly, the member of the School Board stated "There are many ways to learn SA, such as family, neighbours, and TV. But for Fusha, it can only be learned at school." One parent said: "Studying should always be in Fusha. SA is used among people. But for sure, a school should definitely teach Fusha." Another parent told me: "Well, I was born and raised in Egypt, and for SA you learn it at home and you go to school to learn Fusha."

This shows a lack of contextualization of the teaching of Arabic as an immigrant language at the school. Most teachers and parents expect a similar educational pattern to the one they followed back in their Arab countries where they natively learned to speak SA at home, and learned Fusha at school. However, schools in the Arab countries, where students learn Fusha, do not require teachers and students to speak Fusha inside classrooms.

6.4 Arabic varieties spoken inside the classrooms

The member of the School Board mentioned that during the establishment process of the school, there was a division among parents regarding what language variety should be spoken in classrooms. A similar pattern was identified from the participants' responses. There is a clear division among parents regarding the language, or the language variety, that can be spoken in the classrooms. Half of them agreed that when teachers insist on speaking Fusha, it creates artificial classroom situations that do not reflect the everyday use of the Arabic language, while the other half disagreed. Similarly, about half of them agreed that classrooms become more interactive if students and teachers speak their SA. Some parents accepted that teachers can speak a mixture of SA and Fusha Arabic according to class context. On the other hand, the head teacher, the school director and the member of the school board disagreed with the previous statements regarding artificial classrooms' situations, more interactions, and mixing Fusha and SA.

In this discussion, it is necessary to on elaborate the opinion of the head teacher. She holds a degree in civil engineering from Lebanon and currently works as an Arabic teacher at a university in London. She is an influential figure at the school because she trains and supervises teachers, and she is always keen on maintaining the 'Speaking Fusha' policy inside classrooms. She stated that "speaking SA inside the classroom is wrong!" In explaining why, she said because it depends on the teaching context. She told me that at the university where she works, they teach courses of SA. She explained: "My students who are learning SA will go to an Arab country, so they need to understand Arabic. I will not deny the importance of SA in that case. Therefore, it should be a language that is taught through an official curriculum." This explanation shows the head teachers' understanding of the need for SA for communication with Arabs. She even stated that "It is not possible to teach someone Fusha, and then tell him 'now you can go and live in Saudi Arabia, for example…. he needs to communicate with Arabs, who speak SA!"

This opinion, however, seems contradictory to her insistence that SA is 'wrong' inside the classroom. She stated that the goal of the school is to teach 'kids' to be able to read Quran, and to read Arabic books. However, as Younes (2006) argues, in that case, the school should design reading classes without conversation elements. The head teacher even said that "We do not need Spoken Arabic in the classes because that the spoken language for the children is English."

She replied to my question regarding what teachers should speak if students do not understand Fusha that they can speak English, but no SA! Then she stated that "unfortunately, I sometimes go into classrooms and hear teachers speaking SA"

On the other hand, one of the teachers stated that the school administration cannot change teachers' epistemology and they cannot force them to speak Fusha with the children all the time. She said "We try our best to speak Fusha, but sometimes we need SA because it is easier to communicate with children." One teacher said "I do not think the school is capable of making the children speak Fusha in only one day a week!"

One of the teachers explained that she dedicated fifteen minutes where students must speak only Fusha. She said "Students do not need more than this and I cannot ask them for more!" When I interviewed a student from that class, she expressed a very positive opinion regarding this practice. She said: "we love it and we laugh a lot!" The student was so happy with the teacher and told me that her previous teacher was really strict; she explained: "If we spoke SA, that teacher used to tell us 'you lost points, you lost points!'" I asked that student what her current teacher speaks in the classroom. The student said "she speaks Fusha, SA and English… She is an amazing teacher… she knows how to communicate with us." However, the school director once conducted a class observation in that class, and sent the teacher a note saying that she must reduce the amount of SA in the classroom, as the teacher told me.

Moreover, many students responded to the question what languages they would choose to be spoken in the school if they were the head of the school that they would choose Fusha. Even though this answer might seem surprising given the difficulty of speaking Fusha, many students explained that they chose Fusha because it is the proper language.

A few teachers talked about a simplified Fusha which is not complicated. One teacher talked about "a general Arabic which is a mix, not Syrian, not Yemeni. it is something that people can understand me if I speak it, and I can understand people if they speak it." In their description of the simplified Fusha, and the 'general Arabic,' they are talking about Ferguson's (1959) intermediate variety, and what Michell (1986) calls Educated Spoken Arabic. The majority of the participants in this study agreed that "teachers can speak Educated Spoken Arabic: a spoken Arabic close to Fusha."

6.5 Challenges to speaking Fusha inside the classrooms:

Since the current policy of the school is that Fusha should be spoken in the classroom, it is necessary to explore the challenges to this policy. The head teacher and the school director stated that not all teachers are capable of and willing to speak Fusha in the classrooms, even though they all are native speakers of Arabic and they hold university degrees from Arab countries.

In addition, some teachers expressed that they find it difficult to speak Fusha. Some of them claimed that with time, they got used to it. One teacher indicated that it is hard to speak Fusha because unconsciously "you find yourself speaking SA." Another teacher told me it is so annoying to listen to a person who is not a competent speaker of Fusha when they try to speak fusha. She exclaimed, "It kills; it kills!" These responses are similar to Younes's (2006) description of Arabic teachers who are confused and overwhelmed with the task of speaking Fusha in Arabic classrooms. One of the students answered the question of what she would change in the school if she were the head of the school that "I would recommend teachers to speak more Fusha so we can learn it." This statement shows that some students are aware that their teachers do not speak Fusha and at the same time teachers ask their students to speak Fusha.

 Furthermore, a teacher stated that the school's policy of speaking Fusha discourage students from talking in the classroom because "they become afraid and self-conscious about their spoken dialects." Three parents mentioned that it is difficult for students to speak Fusha. Many students expressed that they find it hard to speak Fusha. A student stated that "Fusha for me is hard to speak... I am used to writing it, not speaking it. I get confused with the pronouns, and feel like I am speaking Jebrish (unknown language)" Another student said: "it is hard to learn because you do not hear it all the time, you only hear it at school and on TV. I can't speak Fusha properly, it is hard, but I can speak SA." Similarly, a student said: "It is kind of annoying if you do not speak it properly." These opinions show the psychological burden on the students who feel they are learning two languages in one, (Ferguson, 1971; al-Batal, 1992). In addition, students' frustrations with their ability to speak SA, but not Fusha reflects Stevens' 2006 argument that speaking Fusha fluently actually involves surpassing 'nativelike' performance.

6.6 <u>What happens if students speak Fusha to Arabs</u>?

In addition to the previous challenges, a major challenge to speaking Fusha in the classroom is that Fusha is not usually used for speaking in daily life (Holes, 1995; Wahba, 2006; Wilmsen, 2006). When asked what happens if students speak Fusha to Arabs, either in London or in Arab countries, many participants answered that it will be 'weird' and 'awkward' and that people will laugh at them. One of the parents answered that "People would really be surprised, and might laugh at them... and the children will not want to speak Arabic any more. And they would speak English instead." One of teachers indicated that it will be entertaining and amusing for people in Arab countries to listen to those children speaking Fusha. She said "People will stand to watch him; they will gather around them and laugh a lot!"

However, a few participants answered that speaking Fusha will be appreciated. A student explained that people will be surprised, and ask her "What are you doing?!!" but then she stated that they also might say "Oh wow she can talk proper!" Another student said that it is

"not expected to speak Fusha, but even if you speak it, it just makes you feel as if your parents have done their duty and taught you what they were supposed to teach you." When asked why it is not expected, she stated: "Basically because everyone speaks to each other in SA so you do not like... you gonna have in a way to try to adapt with them." One of the teachers, whose children studied at the school, indicated that her father always asks her "Why do your children speak like that?" and she proudly answers, "It is the right way!" A parent stated that if her children go to Syria and speak Fusha, people would be really pleased because "those are foreigners and they speak Fusha!" Similarly a student said: "if people in Morocco know that you are British and you speak Fusha, they will be impressed!"

All in all, participants' responses show that they are aware that speaking Fusha in daily conversations is not expected and it might be an object of ridicule as stated by Ferguson (1959), and Holes (1995). In addition, some participants think that speaking Fusha is tolerated and appreciated when the children are treated as 'foreigners.' These statements are similar to the argument of Kaye (2002) that speaking Fusha is part of the foreign talk. However, this contradicts the school's goal in teaching Arabic as part of the students' Arabic identity and to make them feel they belong to the Arabic culture.

6.7 Vertical and horizontal varieties:

So far, this study reflected a pattern of attitudes among participants that give Fusha a higher and more prestigious status than SA. However, responses showed a division among participants regarding the school policy of speaking Fusha in the classrooms. Furthermore, some participants who preferred speaking Fusha argued Fusha is the only means for communication among speakers of different Arabic dialects.

In this particular context, the school's dilemma is dealing with numerous Arabic varieties, both horizontal and vertical. Beside the Fusha/SA dichotomy, there are many regional spoken dialects interacting at this school. Unlike the situation in most schools in Arab countries where most students in a classroom have the same or similar dialects, teachers and students at this school have a wide range of spoken varieties. Some of these varieties are even mutually unintelligible. Therefore, another reason why the school resorted to the 'speaking Fusha' policy is that it is an attempt to achieve mutual intelligibility among the diverse regional spoken dialects. A teacher said: "Every child matters! If you let the Lebanese or Syrian teachers speak their SA in classes, what would happen to the Algerian and Moroccan students who do not understand them?" Similarly, another teacher said: "It is unfair to allow teachers to speak their SA when some students do not understand it." I asked those teachers that given the difficulty of speaking SA in a multi-dialects classroom where mutual intelligibility might not be possible, if they think the school should divide students into classes according to intelligibility of their SA. They totally disagreed with the idea, like other teachers and school administration. They all

stated that dividing students according to their regional dialects will reinforce division among Arabs. This shows that the nationalistic feelings of some participants are enhancing the speaking Fusha policy.

Furthermore, it is not only about mutual intelligibility, but also about prestige and preference. As Holes (1995) states that dialects of metropolitan cities tend have more prestige than rural areas. One day I was talking to the head teacher at the school and she whispered in my ear: "Can you imagine I once went into a class and found the teacher talking to the students in a 'village' dialect?" She imitated how that teacher was speaking and said: "How embarrassing it will be if any of the parents hears a teacher talking like this?" Therefore, she concluded that teachers must speak Fusha!

In addition, some parents prefer their children to learn their dialects. For example, an Algerian parent emphasized that she teaches her children to speak Algerian at home, while the school should only teach them Fusha. On the other hand, other parents did not mind if their children are learning Syrian or Lebanese Arabic. A Sudani parent stated: "It is OK if my children come home and speak Syrian Arabic; it is all Arabic." Similarly, an Egyptian parent said that he would not mind if his children learn to speak a dialect other than Egyptian. He stated that Syria Arabic is fine. However, he then said that Moroccan Arabic might be difficult for the children.

6.8 <u>Summary:</u>

Most participants have shown favorable attitudes toward Fusha for many reasons. Fusha is the language of the Quran. It represents a unifying force, and it connects the community with its glorious past. On the Other hand, SA is viewed as divisive and it is sometimes associated with backwardness and legacy of colonization even though it is used in everyday speech of Arabic native speakers. Furthermore, Fusha has a writing system and it has grammar while SA has no official writing system, and it is learned natively without explicit discussion about grammar. Furthermore, most participants seemed to believe that SA is learned at home, while a school should teach Fusha. All these attitudes are common among native Arabic speakers in different countries, as stated by Ferguson (1959) and more recently by Holes (1995).

However, when it comes to actually speaking Fusha in classrooms, there were mixed opinions. While the school administration insists on the speaking Fusha policy, opinions among teachers and parents varies a lot. Students' responses showed that they find it difficult to speak Fusha. However, some of them prefer the school's policy of speaking Fusha in the classroom, because they have the perception that Fusha is the 'proper' Arabic. There are major difficulties and challenges to speaking Fusha. Many teachers are not qualified, and not used to speaking Fusha. Some participants agreed that speaking Fusha is artificial because Fusha is not usually spoken outside the school.

In addition, a contributing factor to the complication of the situation is the wide range of spoken varieties interacting at this school. Given that these varieties are sometimes mutually unintelligible, supporters of speaking Fusha in the classroom find it as the only available option.

7. Arabic varieties spoken at the school:

In conducting observations at the school, there are some particular considerations given the complexity of Arabic varieties. There is no general agreement among linguists regarding Arabic varieties and the description of each variety. Therefore, I will adapt a scale of three levels, 1) Fusha which includes Classical Arabic and Modern Standard Arabic, 2) Educated Spoken Arabic, ESA, and 3) Spoken Arabic, SA. I am using Mitchell (1986) and Holes (1995) descriptions of Arabic varieties in this scale. In addition, given that I have studied for a Master's degree in English Language Teaching and Applied Language Studies, I am not a 'naive native speaker' who is unable to differentiate between Arabic varieties. However, I am not an expert linguist who has extended linguistics and sociolinguistic trainings. Another shortcoming in this study is that I intended to use a recorder inside the classrooms. However, the school administration did not approve it and I had to work with the available options that I had.

7.1 General observations at the school:

To start with, it is important to give a general picture of the school and to juxtapose what goes on inside and outside the classrooms. This school is a centre for inter-dialectal interactions since it brings together Arabic speakers of various backgrounds. Most interactions among teachers were in SA or ESA, with some code-switching between Arabic and English. When parents were talking to teachers and to school administrators, it was mainly in SA, ESA and sometimes in English. During all my observations of interactions and communications at various locations and various occasions, I never witnessed any conversation in Fusha. The only time people used Fusha in their speech was when they were quoting something from the Quran, a saying of the prophet, or an aphorism. Furthermore, during teachers' meetings and the teacher training workshops, all the talks were in SA and ESA. Even during presentations, it was a common practice that the presenter read their slides in Fusha, and then directly switched to either ESA or SA for discussion.

Furthermore, some of the school staff did not speak good English, so they had to speak mostly in Arabic to everybody. They managed to communicate with people from different Arab countries using both SA and ESA, but no Fusha. In addition, I observed few inter-dialectal conversations among staff from North Africa, Moroccans and Tunisians, and people from the Levant area. None of them were in Fusha.

The most interesting thing to observe was teachers attending Arabic grammar workshops. Most teachers were struggling to understand the detailed rules of Fusha. Teachers were even sharing their frustrations with each other. Sometimes, they were sarcastic how they could not figure out the correct case endings in the exercises they were doing during those workshops. This observation highlights the contradictions of expecting students to speak Fusha, while teachers themselves cannot master the rules of Fusha, let alone apply them while speaking. Even during those grammar workshops, teachers spoke SA or ESA. They only used Fusha when they were reading from a handout or from the slides.

Furthermore, I observed the interactions that took place among the students at different places in the school, such as the playground, the prayer room, and the dining area. Throughout the three months that I spent at the school, there was not a single incident of students conversing in Arabic with each other. They rarely said any Arabic words, except when students were calling each others with their Arabic names. Interactions between parents and students were a mixed of English and Arabic. Sometimes, parents spoke in Arabic and students responded in English. This pattern, according to Fishman (1991), is an indicator of a language shift more than of language maintenance.

7.2 <u>Classroom observations:</u>

The main focus of classroom observations was languages, and language varieties spoken in the classrooms. In addition, it was helpful in estimating students' competence levels in Arabic and contrasting it with their use of Arabic, which was observed outside the classroom.

7.3.1 General patterns:

The best word to describe the situation of the classrooms is 'variation,' not only because of the interactions of many SA varieties, but also because students' various competence levels within each class, the amount of Fusha spoken in classrooms, and teachers' competence in Fusha.

Within each class, students had different competence levels in Arabic. After investigating the reason, it turned out that the school divided students into classes according to their ages, not according to their competence levels. Therefore, within most classes, students' levels ranged from fluent mastery to passive mastery where students understood Arabic but always responded in English. It was a common pattern in the classes that some students spoke a lot of SA and some ESA, while others said only few words, mainly in English. Regarding Arabic varieties spoken by teachers, they ranged from teachers speaking spoke mostly Fusha, to teachers speaking mostly SA. In addition, there were lot of mixing Fusha, SA and ESA. Also, the amount of English that teachers spoke varied from class to another. In addition, during Islamic

studies lessons and calligraphy lessons, which are part of the school curriculum, teachers mostly speak SA, ESA.

Even though the observations did not focus on pedagogical issues, it is worth mentioning that most classes were teacher-centered. In addition, most classroom activities involved students parroting the teachers, or doing exercises from the book. There were few discussions in most of the classes that I observed. In addition, there was a great deal of repetition in most classes. For example, when students speak English, they are asked to repeat in Arabic, and when they speak SA, they are asked to repeat in Fusha. Sometimes when students say something in SA, teachers repeat what the students said in Fusha. In addition, when teachers say something spontaneously in SA, they usually repeat the same thing in Fusha. Even the head teacher, the 'speaking Fusha' advocator, said few things in SA when she was giving a demonstration lesson, but then repeated what she said in Fusha. For example, she said "liesh" which means 'why' in SA and then said it in Fusha "Lematha."

7.3.2 Error Correction:

In most classes, teachers were very keen on correcting students' mistakes. Even when students spoke SA, teachers corrected them. For example, at a reception class[2], where students are 4 to 5 years old, the lesson was a short story about a mouse, Fofo, who wanted to go into Aref's kitchen to steal food. The teacher was very keen on correcting students' mistakes, even case endings mistakes. For example, in the story there was a sentence "The cat entered Aref's kitchen" or "the cat went into Aref's kitchen."The word kitchen is "matbakh" in Arabic. Given the inflectional case endings in Arabic, in the first sentence where kitchen is the object of a verb it should be "matbakha," while the second sentence where kitchen is the object of a proposition, it should be "matbakhi." Many students confused them and the teacher kept on correcting this mistake that required advanced understanding of Arabic grammar. As I discussed earlier in chapter three, even educated Arabs often avoid case endings in their sppech. This reception class was still learning the Arabic alphabet!

After this session, I had a short chat with the teacher and asked her about error correction and she insisted on the importance of correcting all mistakes so that the students will learn "proper Arabic in the proper way." Similar views were held by other teachers and the school director who indicated that "The case endings are merely a rhythm and music of the language; therefore, it does not hurt if you correct their music. In addition, it is better for them to get used to listening to the right rhythm." But then the school director said, "At this age, we should be happy that at least children know that 'kitchen' is 'Matbakh'"

---

[2] Appendix four is a journal entry for this class observation

Another example of strict error correction is reading lessons. Reading aloud is a common practice in almost all classes. The books used at the school are Lebanese books designed for native Arab children. The teacher's manual states that in a reading lesson the teacher should read aloud the whole text and then students should read aloud while the teacher corrects their pronunciation. In a reading lesson in level six, the teacher started by a short introduction about the topic. Then the teacher read aloud the one page long text. After that, it was the students' turn to read aloud. But some of them seemed not very comfortable with it. The teacher was correcting every single pronunciation mistake they made. One of the students did not want to read, and she told the teacher, in English, "I do not know how to read" and the teacher answered her in English as well "You just read." Another student told the teacher "I do not like reading!" and the teacher responded "You like it!" Then one student was telling the teacher that she wanted to read later. In that particular class, there seemed to be a gap between the teacher and the students. a After the class, the teacher told me that reading aloud is very important because it improves their self-confidence and it is also good for speaking since they speak Fusha at the school.

7.3.3 Tolerance to SA:

While students speaking SA were usually corrected in most classes, only a few teachers were tolerant to SA in their classes. For example, in a translation lesson in the A level class, they had an Arabic text to translate to English. Students were working in small groups. Within each group, students were mainly talking to each other in SA and sometimes in English. There were a few incidents of mixing SA and Fusha. For example, a student read a sentence as it is written in Fusha, explained it to her group in SA and then they together translated it to English. During the class discussion, students were mixing SA, Fusha and English. They used Fusha only when they were reading or referring to parts of the text, which is a native like practice (Ferguson, 1959; Badawi, 1973; Holes, 1995). The teacher spoke Fusha most of the time.

After the lesson, the teacher told me that she always encourages students to speak Arabic, and she does not correct them if they speak SA. She always explains to them that SA is derived from Fusha, so they should not worry if they say something in SA, but then they should try to modify it to become Fusha.

7.3.4 Understanding Fusha:

Observing classroom interactions and communications shows that the majority of the students were able to understand Fusha when the teachers spoke Fusha, even though most students did not speak it. In addition, when students listened to CDs and watched videos in Fusha, they seemed able to understand it and answer questions about it. For instant, in a listening class in

level 2, they listened to a story in Fusha about the beginning of winter. After listening to the story, the teacher chose a student to narrate the story. The student narrated it in Lebanese SA. She said a couple of words in English. This student understood the story which was in Fusha, but could not narrate it in fusha. Then, the teacher played the CD again and she was paused it frequently and asked questions about the details of the story. Students answered mostly in SA, and the teacher often repeated what they said in Fusha. For example, the teacher asked what the old man said. Two students replied in SA "Arbou"- in English "come closer"- and the teacher repeated it in Fusha "Ektarebou."

7.4 <u>Summary:</u>

Students who go to this school are put amid lots of contradictions. They are asked to speak Fusha, the literary variety of Arabic, and their SA is often corrected and doomed as inappropriate. At the same time, many teachers sometimes speak SA inside the classroom and none of the Arabic speakers at that school speaks Fusha outside the classroom.

During observations outside the classrooms, students did not converse with each other in Arabic, while many students were able to speak SA fluently inside the classrooms. This shows a gap between students' competence in Arabic and students' use of Arabic outside the classroom. In addition, even though most students did not seem comfortable in speaking Fusha, they generally seemed able to understand Fusha when they heard it from their teachers, CDs or videos.

Given the limited scope of this paper, I cannot discuss the pedagogical considerations of error correction and the reading aloud exercises which are very common in most classes. However, it is reasonable to argue that there are critical psychological implications of correcting students' SA that SA is perceived by the students as being not a proper or correct language. This might discourage the student from speaking SA. In addition, it is more frustrating for the students to require them to speak Fusha which they do not master, and which is not usually spoken by native Arabic speakers.

 Add to these contradictions, inside the classrooms, teachers themselves do not always speak Fusha. Furthermore, Islamic studies lessons and calligraphy lessons are conducted in SA, ESA and English. Fusha is only used when quoting a verse from Quran or a prophet saying. This emphasizes the puzzling situation, because even though Fusha is encouraged as it is the language of Quran, Islamic studies lessons are not conducted in Fusha.

8. Language maintenance at the school

During her interview, the school director said: "We are fighting a lost battle!" She called me the next day and told me that she felt that she might have sounded pessimistic. However, she stated that she wanted to be honest with me because she cared about my research and sincerely wanted to express the hard struggle of the school. The critical question is "what makes the school's effort 'fighting a lost battle'?"

Like other immigrant languages in the United Kingdom, Arabic is competing with the dominant English language. Ethnic schools' role is usually maintaining, and reinforcing the immigrant language, while also providing the students the opportunity to gain literacy in that language. However, unlike other languages, there are additional difficulties and challenges inherited in the Arabic language itself. As I discussed above, Arabic is a diglossic language; the literary variety is different from the spoken varieties. Even though Fusha and SA are closely related, they differ in many aspects in phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics. Ferguson (1971) explains that students have to learn "two languages in one" and Al-Jabiri (2003) states that for native Arabic-speaking children, learning Fusha is like learning a new language.

Furthermore, what is particular about this school is that it is run by native Arabic speakers who highly value Fusha while they associate their spoken dialects with backwardness and legacy of colonization. The school's dilemma is how it can maintain SA when SA has a very low status, and is not considered to be a proper language. Instead of encouraging students to speak SA, the school's policy requires teachers and students to speak Fusha in the classrooms.

8.1 Is it really language maintenance?

Many times, while conducting this study, I was wondering if what the school is doing can be considered as Arabic language maintenance or whether it is only teaching Fusha Arabic. When analyzing participants' responses regarding students' motivations for coming to the school, almost all participants, including the school administration, strongly agreed or agreed that Arabic is an identity marker for the students, and it is important to reconnect with their parents' root and build connections and friendships with other students. In addition, students wanted to learn Arabic to be able to talk to Arab friends and family members who do not speak English. All these responses fit the motivations for immigrant language maintenance.

However, this contradicts the schools' director statement that the school's main goal is to teach students to speak Fusha, which is not usually spoken by native Arab speakers. In addition, speaking Fusha might have foreignness implications, as expressed by Kaye (2002). However, when I asked the school director if Fusha is spoken in the everyday interactions of Arabs, she

responded: "If you want to minimize the Arabic language to fit the current situation of Arabs, then I prefer to communicate with the students in English." This shows that the school's efforts for language maintenance is handicapped with the concept that SA is not proper, and it is not worth teaching to the extent that the school director prefers speaking English than speaking SA. Similarly, the head teacher stated that speaking SA is wrong and if teachers cannot explain something in Fusha, they can speak English but not SA.

In addition, during class observations, students speaking SA were often corrected and asked to repeat what they said in Fusha. Many students expressed that they find it difficult to speak Fusha, which also was obvious during classrooms observations. However, many students said that Fusha is the proper Arabic, while SA is only spoken at home with parents. Therefore, it seems that when the school insists on the speaking of Fusha, it is hindering, instead of fostering the continuity of speaking Arabic by heritage students. Furthermore, the elephant in the room is the fact that students mostly speak English at the school, and there is hardly any encouragement from the school to speak Arabic. This is another reason I was uncertain about calling the school efforts as language maintenance.

Even the argument that Fusha is necessary given the diversity of students' spoken dialects is contradicted by the inter-dialectal conversations that take place at the school, none of which are in Fusha. As argued by Holes (1995), S'hiri (2002) and others, Arabic speakers tend to modify their dialects when speaking to speakers of other dialects. However, they never speak Fusha in face-to-face conversations. Furthermore, some teachers were aware of the middle variety and they talked about 'general Arabic' and a 'simplified Fusha' which seems to be a potential solution for inter-dialectal interactions and which is referred to as Educated Spoken Arabic, ESA. During my observations at the school, ESA was used a lot in many cases. ESA seems like a promising solution to bridge the gap between Fusha and SA and to facilitate inter-dialectal interaction. However, further studies are required to support this argument, and to examine the effective way of introducing it to Arabic weekend schools.

All in all, what the school is doing is the opposite of Fishman's (1991, p.344) model of language maintenance where he advocates for a "dialectal permissive approach." He emphasizes that teachers must accept and encourage students to speak their dialects. This study shows that given the low status of SA among native speakers, the school is not capable of recognizing, utilizing, and dignifying the spoken Arabic dialects which are essential elements of effective language maintenance efforts as Fishman (1991) explains.

8.2 Conclusion:

This exploratory study investigated an exceptional case of language maintenance where Spoken Arabic is generally discouraged and underestimated. As part of Arabic language maintenance,

this school is providing the students with opportunity to gain literacy in Arabic. However, the school is discouraging the students from speaking SA. Furthermore, there were no observed efforts of encouraging students to speak Arabic outside the classrooms. Students at the school were observed speaking to each other mostly in English. In addition, many students stated that SA is only spoken at home with parents, while Fusha is the proper correct language.

There are many contradicting factors contributing to this strange situation where the school administration prefers speaking English rather than speaking SA in the classrooms. This school is run by native non-linguists Arabic speakers who highly value and appreciate Fusha Arabic, the literary variety which is not usually used in speaking. This study reflected that the majority of the participants appreciated Fusha because it is the language of the Quran. It is also viewed as a unifying factor among all Arabic speakers and it connects them with the glorious past. On the other hand, SA is viewed in association with backwardness and colonization.

At this particular school, speakers of various spoken Arabic dialects interact with each other. During all the observations, there was not even a single conversation in Fusha. However, with the absence of a standard spoken Arabic dialect, Fusha seemed to some participants and to the school administration as a solution to this dilemma of having students from different backgrounds together in the classrooms. However, this is contradicted with the language varieties spoken outside the classroom.

It goes without saying that discouraging the students from speaking SA does not suggest effective language maintenance efforts. In the context of Arabic in the United Kingdom, Arabic is competing with English which enjoys a wide spread internationally. Therefore, discouraging students from speaking SA because it is perceived as inferior and requesting them to speak Fusha, the prestigious literary variety that is not usually used in speech, is very likely to weaken Arabic in it is completion with the dominant English language. However, it is beyond the scope of this study to accurately evaluate the actual implications of the school's policy. In addition, there are other factors contributing to the Arabic maintenance. Many participants stated that Arabic is still functional in their families and communities and many of the students reported watching Arabic TV and traveling to Arab countries frequently. All in All, this study provided an analyses and a description of the current situation at the school, and reflected some of the complications and challenges that the school faces. Further research is required to develop effective strategies for Arabic language maintenance which take into considerations both the spoken varieties and the literary variety.

Reference

Al-Batal, M., 1992. Diglossia Proficiency: the Need for an Alternative Appraoch to teaching. In Rouchdy, A. (ed) *The Arabic Language in America*. Wayne State University Press.

Deusen-Scoll, N., 2003. Toward a definition of Heritage Language: Sociopolitical and Pedagogical Considerations. Language, Identity, and Education, 2(3), 211-230.

Edwards, J., 1994. *Multilingualism*. Penguin.

Eisele, J., 2002. Approaching Diglossia: Authorities, Values, and representations. In Rouchdy, A (ed) *Language Contact And Language Conflict in Arabic Variations on a Sociolinguistic Theme*. RoutledgeCurzon.

Ferguson, C. A., 1959. Diglossi. In Gigioli, P. (ed) *Language and Social Context.* Penguin Education.

Ferguson, C. A., 1971. *Language Structure and Language Use: Essays by Charles Ferguson.* Stanford University Press

Fishman, J., 1966. *language Loyalty in the United States: The maintenance and perpetuation of Non-English Mother Tongues by American Ethnic and religious Group*. Mouton & Co.

Fishman, J., 1972. *The sociology of Language.* Newbury House.

Fishman, J., 1991. *Reversing Language Shift: Theoretical and Empirical Foundations of Assistance to Threatened Languages.* Multilingual Matters LTD

Fishman, J., 2001. Reversing Language Shift: The best of Time, the Worst of Time. In Fishman, J. (ed) *Can Threatened Languages Be Saved? Reversing Language Shift, Revisited: A 21st Century perspective*. Multilingual Matters LTD

Fishman, J., 2002. "Holy languages" in the Context of Social Bilingualism. In Fishman, J. (ed) *Opportunities and Challenges of Bilingualism*. Mouton de Gruyter.

Holes, C., 1995. *Modern Arabic: Structures, Functions, and Varieties*. Longman.

Ibrahim, R., and Aharon-Peretz, J., 2005. Is literary Arabic a Second Language for Native Arab Speakers?; Evidence from Semantic Priming Study. Journal of Psycholinguistic research, Vol 34, No 1 pp. 51-71

Al-Jabiri, M. 'Innovation in the language in the letters of words and meanings.' Al-Ittihad,16 September 2003.

Kaye, A., 2001. 'Diglossia: the state of the art.'International Journal of the Sociology of Language. 152, pp 117-129

Kaye, A., 2002. Comment. International Journal of the Sociology of Language. 152, pp 117-129

Mahmoud, Y., 1986. Arabic After Diglossia. In Fishman, J et. Al. (eds) *The Fergsonian Impact: In Honour of Charles A. Ferguson, From Phonology to Society*. Mouton de Gruyter.

Mitchell, T. F., 1986. 'What is educated spoken Arabic?' International Journal of the Sociology of Language, 16, 7-32.

Ryding, K., 1991. Proficiency Despite Diglossia: A New Appproach for Arabic. The Modern Language Journal 75. 212-218.

S'hiri, S., 2002. Speak Arabic Please!; Tunisian Arabic Speakers' Linguistic Accommodation to Middle Easterners. In Rouchdy, A (ed) *Language Contact And Language Conflict in Arabic Variations on a Sociolinguistic Theme*. RoutledgeCurzon.

Stevens, P., 2006. Is Spanish Really So Easy? IS Arabic Really So Hard?: Perceived Difficulty in Learning Arabic as a Second Language. In Wahba, K. et al. (eds) *Handbook for Arabic Language Teaching Professionals in the 21st Century.* Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Younes, M., 2006. Integrating the Colloquial with Fusha in the Arabic-as-a-Foreign language Classroom. In Wahba, K. et al. (eds) *Handbook for Arabic Language Teaching Professionals in the 21st Century.* Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Wahba, K., 2006. 'Arabic Language Use and the Educated Language User.' In Wahba, K. et al. (eds) *Handbook for Arabic Language Teaching Professionals in the 21st Century*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Wilmsen, D., 2006. 'What is Communicative Arabic?' In Wahba, K. et al. (eds) *Handbook for Arabic Language Teaching Professionals in the 21st Century.* Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Appendixes

Appendix One: Parents' questionnaire

Appendix Two: Students' questionnaire

Appendix Three: teachers' interviews

Appendix One: Parents' Questionnaire

Dear Parents,

I am studying for a Master of Arts degree in International English Language Teaching and Applied Language Studies at London Metropolitan University. I am currently conducting a study about Arabic language teaching at the ------------------ School as a part of my MA degree. Would you please take a few minutes to fill in this questionnaire? I do appreciate your help.

If you have any queries or would like more information about the study, please feel free to contact me at fardous.bahbouh@gmail.com

Sincerely,

Fardous Bahbouh

Part one: home languages

1. What are the languages spoken at your home?

2. What is the father's and mother's native language?

3. What regional dialects of Arabic (e.g. Syrian, Lebanese, Moroccan… etc) are spoken at home?

4. In general, the percentage of Arabic spoken at home is:

Less than 20%	20% to 40%	40% to 60%	60% to 80%	more than 80%

Part two: Standard Arabic "Fusha" and Regional Dialects "Ammiyah"

1. In your daily life, how often do you **speak** 'Fusha' Arabic?

Always	most of the time	sometimes	rarely	Never

2. Generally, in which contexts do you think Arabs speak 'Fusha' Arabic?

………
………

3. Do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly Agree	agree	disagree	Strongly disagree
Arabic is a holly language				
Fusha Arabic represents a common linguistics ancestry among Arabic speakers in different Arab countries				
Comparing various regional dialects of Arabic, "Ammiyah" might serve as entertaining conversations				
It is not natural to speak Fusha while talking about cooking and shopping				
It is easier to tell jokes in Ammiyah than in Fusha Arabic				
Most native speakers of Arabic learn a regional dialect, Ammiyah, before they learn Fusha at school				

4. Choose the most realistic option in describing the spoken Arabic in the following situations:

I. In formal places such as ministries and universities, Arabs speak

a) Fusha Arabic only   b)Ammiyah only   c) Educated Spoken Arabic: a spoken Ammiyah close to Fusha

II. When speakers of different Arabic dialects meet, they speak

a) Fusha only   b) their regional dialects with no change

 c) their regional dialects with some modifications to ensure mutual intelligibility.

Part three: Arabic at the school:

1. How many children do you have at the school?

2. How old are they?

3. Do they travel to Arab countries? How often?

4. Why do they study Arabic? Rate the following reasons

	Very important	Important	Not important
To read Quran and learn about Islam			
The Arabic language is part of their Arabic identity			
To reconnect with their parents roots			
To pass the GCSE exam			
To utilize it in their university studies			
To gain access to Arabic literature and Arabic media			
To enhance future job opportunities			
To build connections and friendship s with other students			

5. Are there other reasons? Please mention them:

……

……

6. In which of the following situations do your children speak Arabic:

	Always	Mostly	sometimes	rarely	never
expressing their feelings					
talking on the phone					
selling, buying and bargaining					
acting in emergencies					
consulting medical personnel					
translating					
traveling: making reservation, eating in restaurants, etc.					

7. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly Agree	agree	disagree	Strongly disagree
It is more important for my children to be able to speak 'Fusha' than to speak Ammiyah				
It is more important for my children to feel that they belong to the Arabic culture than just to learn the language				
At the school, only Fusha should be taught				
It is the parents' responsibility to teach their children Ammiyah				
It is more important for my children to learn to speak and understand spoken Arabic than to read and write in Arabic				
Teachers can speak a mixture of Ammiyah and Fusha Arabic according to the class context				
Teachers can speak Educated Spoken Arabic: a spoken Ammiyah close to Fusha				

	Strongly Agree	agree	disagree	Strongly disagree
When teachers insist on speaking Fusha Arabic it creates artificial classroom situations that do not reflect the everyday use of the Arabic language				
Classrooms become more interactive if students and teachers speak their Ammiyah				
Speaking Fusha Arabic is a strategic policy given the various regional dialects, Ammiyah, spoken by students at the school.				
Given the various dialects, Ammiyah, of the students, English is the language of wider communication at the school.				
Given the various dialects, Ammiyah, of students, Fusha is the language of wider communication at the school.				

Part four: personal thoughts:

If you were the head of the school and it was up to you to decide which language or languages should be spoken at the school, what would you choose? Why?

………
………
………
………
………
……..

Would you be interested in participating in a follow up interview? If so please provide contact information below:

Name : …………………………..

phone and/or email :………………………………

Appendix Two: Students' Questionnaire

Dear student,

I am studying for a Master of Arts degree in International English Language Teaching and Applied Language Studies at London Metropolitan University. I am currently conducting a study about Arabic language teaching at the ------------------- School as a part of my MA degree. Would you please take a few minutes to fill in this questionnaire? I do appreciate your help.

If you have any queries or would like more information about the study, please feel free to contact me at fardous.bahbouh@gmail.com

Sincerely,

Fardous Bahbouh

Part one: home languages

1. What are the languages spoken at your home?

2. What is your father's and mother's native language?

3. What regional dialects of Arabic (e.g. Syrian, Lebanese, Moroccan… etc) are spoken at home?

4. In general, the percentage of Arabic spoken at home is:

Less than 20%	20% to 40%	40% to 60%	60% to 80%	more than 80%

Part two: Standard Arabic "Fusha," and Regional Dialects "Ammiyah"

1. In your daily life, outside the school, how often do you speak Arabic?

Always	most of the time	sometimes	rarely	never

2. In your daily life, outside the school, how often do you speak 'Fusha' Arabic?

Always	most of the time	sometimes	rarely	never

3. Generally, in which contexts do you think Arabs speak 'Fusha' Arabic?

………

....

4. Do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly Agree	agree	disagree	Strongly disagree
Arabic is a holly language				
Fusha Arabic represents a common linguistics ancestry among Arabic speakers in different Arab countries				
Comparing various regional dialects, Ammiyah, of Arabic might serve as entertaining conversations				
It is not natural to speak Fusha while talking about cooking and shopping				
It is easier to tell jokes in Ammiyah than in Fusha Arabic				
Most native speakers of Arabic learn a regional dialect, Ammiyah, before they learn Fusha at school				

5. Choose the most realistic option in describing the spoken Arabic in the following situations:

I. In formal places such as ministries and universities, Arabs speak

a) Fusha Arabic only   b)Ammiyah only   c) Educated Spoken Arabic: a spoken Ammiyah close to Fusha

II. When speakers of different Arabic dialects meet, they speak

a) Fusha only   b) their regional dialects with no change

 c) their regional dialects with some modification to ensure mutual intelligibility.

Part three: Arabic at this school:

1. How old are you?

2. How long have you been studying at the school?

3. Do you have other siblings at the school? If yes, how many of them?

4. Do you travel to Arab countries? If yes, how often?

5. Why do you study Arabic? Rate the following reasons

	Very important	Important	Not important
To please my parents			
To read Quran and learn about Islam			
The Arabic language is part of my Arabic identity			
To reconnect with my parents roots			
To pass the GCSE exam			
To utilize it in my university studies			
To gain access to Arabic literature and Arabic media			
To enhance future job opportunities			
To build connection and friendship with other students			

5. Are there other reasons? Please mention them:

……

………

6. In which of the following situations do you speak Arabic:

	Always	Mostly	sometimes	rarely	never
functioning in the Arabic classroom					
expressing your feelings					
talking on the phone					
selling, buying and bargaining					
acting in emergencies					
consulting medical personnel					
translating					
traveling: making reservation, eating in restaurants, etc.					

7. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly Agree	agree	disagree	Strongly disagree
It is more important for me to be able to speak 'Fusha' than to speak Ammiyah				
It is more important for me to feel that I belong to the Arabic culture than just to learn the language				
At the school, only Fusha should be taught				
It is the parents' responsibility to teach their children Ammiyah				
It is more important for me to learn to speak and understand spoken Arabic than to read and write in Arabic				
Teachers can speak a mixture of Ammiyah and Fusha Arabic according to the class context				

	Strongly Agree	agree	disagree	Strongly disagree
Teachers can speak Educated Spoken Arabic: a spoken Ammiyah close to Fusha				
When teachers insist on speaking Fusha Arabic it creates artificial classroom situations that does not reflect the everyday use of the Arabic language				
Classrooms become more interactive if students and teachers speak their Ammiyah				
Speaking fusha Arabic is a strategic policy given the various regional dialects, Ammiyah, spoken by students at the school.				
Given the various dialects, Ammiyah , of the students, English is the language of wider communication at the school.				
Given the various dialects, Ammiyah, of the students, Fusha is the language of wider communication at the school.				

Part four: personal thoughts:

If you were the head of this school, and it was up to you to decide which language or languages should be spoken at this school, what would you choose? Why?

………
………
………
………
………
……….

Would you be interested in participating in a follow up interview? If so please provide contact information below:

Name : …………………………..

phone and/or email :………………………………

Appendix Three: Teachers' interview

Part one: Teacher's background

1. Where are you from?

2. How long have you been in the United Kingdom?

3. What did you study and where?

4. Did you participate in teacher training workshops, or courses?

5. How long have you been teaching at the school? Do you have other teaching experiences?

Part two: Fusha and Ammiyah

1. In your daily life, how often do you speak 'Fusha' Arabic?

2. Generally, in which contexts do you think Arabs speak 'Fusha' Arabic?

3. What is the relation between Ammiyah and Fusha?

4. Do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly Agree	agree	disagree	Strongly disagree
Arabic is a holly language				
Fusha Arabic represents a common linguistics ancestry among Arabic speakers in different Arab countries				
Comparing various regional dialects of Arabic, "Ammiyah" might serve as entertaining conversations				
It is not natural to speak Fusha while talking about cooking and shopping				
It is easier to tell jokes in Ammiyah than in Fusha Arabic				
Most native speakers of Arabic learn a regional dialect, Ammiyah, before they learn Fusha at school				

5. Choose the most realistic option in describing the Arabic varieties spoken in the following situations:

I. In formal places such as ministries and universities, Arabs speak

a) Fusha Arabic only   b)Ammiyah only   c) Educated Spoken Arabic: a spoken Ammiyah close to Fusha

II. When speakers of different Arabic dialects meet, they speak

a) Fusha only   b) their regional dialects with no change

 c) their regional dialects with some modifications to ensure mutual intelligibility.

Part three: Arabic at the school:

1. Who are the students at the school?

2. Why do they come to the Arabic school?

3. Rate the following reasons

	Very important	Important	Not important
To read Quran and learn about Islam			
The Arabic language is part of their Arabic identity			
To reconnect with their parents roots			
To pass the GCSE exam			
To utilize it in their university studies			
To gain access to Arabic literature and Arabic media			
To enhance future job opportunities			
To build connections and friendship s with other students			

4. What is the school's role of maintaining the Arabic language among the students?

5. What is the school's policy regarding speaking Fusha, Ammiyah, and English in the classroom? What do you think about it?

6. What are the challenges of speaking Fusha in the classrooms?

7. While teaching, do you speak English? If yes, when and how often?

8. While teaching , do you speak A'mmiyah? If yes, when and how often?

9. If you speak your own regional dialect, "local Ammiyah", can all students understand you?

10. When students ask you questions, do they speak Arabic or English?

11. If they ask you a question in English, do you ask them to repeat in Arabic? Do you answer them in Arabic or English?

12. If they ask you in Arabic:

       a) Do they usually speak Fuha or A'meyiah?

       b) If they speak A'meyiah, do you ask them to speak Fusha?

14. When students talk to each other, which language do they usually speak?

15. Do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly Agree	agree	disagree	Strongly disagree
It is more important for the students to be able to speak 'Fusha' than to speak Ammiyah				
It is more important for the students to feel that they belong to the Arabic culture than just to learn the language				
At the school, only Fusha should be taught				
It is the parents' responsibility to teach their children Ammiyah				
It is more important for the students to learn to speak and understand Spoken Arabic than to read and write in Arabic				
Teachers can speak a mixture of Ammiyah and Fusha Arabic according to the class context				
Teachers can speak Educated Spoken Arabic: a spoken Ammiyah close to Fusha				
When teachers insist on speaking Fusha Arabic it creates artificial classroom situations that do not reflect the everyday use of the Arabic language				
Classrooms become more interactive if students and teachers speak their Ammiyah				
Speaking Fusha Arabic is a strategic policy given the various regional dialects, Ammiyah, spoken by students at the school.				
Given the various dialects, Ammiyah, of the students, English is the language of wider communication at the school.				
Given the various dialects, Ammiyah, of students, Fusha is the language of wider communication at the school.				

Part four: personal thoughts:

If you were the head of the school and it was up to you to decide which language or languages should be spoken at the school, what would you choose? Why?